



Engagement Plan

Planning for our future



Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.

Community Vision:

Hepburn Shire – an inclusive rural community located in Dja Dja Wurrung country where all people are value, partnerships are fostered, environment is protected, diversity supported, and innovation embraced.

The Future Hepburn project

A once in a generation project, the Future Hepburn project aims to protect and enhance the existing character of our towns and rural settlements through community inclusive strategic planning controls on growth and development. Through our other engagements we know that our community loves and wishes to protect their rural lifestyle, the look and feel of their township, our biodiversity and environment and our agricultural land.

These things are important to us too, and we want to make sure that we leave a legacy that protects the things we value, creates frameworks for better planning decisions and creates an opportunity through good place-making that allows our townships and settlements to thrive and develop into the future. Together we will work to understand what and how we will protect what we value, how we shape the identity of our townships and rural settlements, and what planning controls we can put in place to deliver the shared visions we have for our townships and rural settlements.

We have a lot of work to do. Over the coming year we will be asking you, our community, and other stakeholders to work with us in the development of two shire-wide strategies including an Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy and an Integrated Transport Strategy. We will work with you to review, assess

and set frameworks for Urban Design and Neighbourhood Character. We will be partnering with our Traditional Owners to conduct Cultural Values Assessments for each township. All this work will inform the development of township Structure Plans for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford & Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon and Trentham. Our Strategic Planning team has been busy undertaking the background work that will lay the foundation for our conversations, and we will share this with you.

Our strategic planning challenges include planning for climate change impacts, managing appropriate growth and development, the protection of biodiversity, cultural heritage, significant agricultural land, landscapes and environmental features, and planning for our future infrastructure needs allowing our communities, businesses and people to thrive into the future. These challenges present us with

a unique opportunity, a once in a generation project, that will shape the way we live and connect as communities thirty years into the future. Taking a community inclusive approach, Council will work together with stakeholders and community members to understand and address the challenges and issues we face together to ready Hepburn Shire for the future through a variety of community engagement methods.

This high-level engagement plan provides the outline for how engagement will be undertaken over the Future Hepburn project. For more detailed information on the shire-wide strategies and place-based strategic planning documents please read the information contained on Council's community engagement platform at <https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au>.



Purpose

Each of our strategic planning elements presents a unique challenge. Council is committed to working with the community to address these challenges. Take a moment to read through a short description of each of the elements. More detail including what can be influenced, what is not changing, our key discussion points and how you can participate are included on Council's community engagement platform, Participate Hepburn.

Structure Plans

Structure Plans express the desired outlook for a town's future. They plan how things like new buildings, parks and infrastructure should develop over time, guide the management of residential growth, and provide sufficient zoned land for housing, employment and community infrastructure. They protect and enhance the town's unique character and biodiversity. Structure Plans seek to develop a shared vision for the future guiding appropriate development that protects what we value, improves liveability, and empowers our communities to thrive.

Our challenge: How might we protect the character of our townships, respond to our challenges, and ensure appropriate growth in keeping with our shared vision?

Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy

The strategy seeks to identify and protect what the community values about living in their rural area, guiding appropriate development that is more consistent with the things that are important to us. It will determine our future agricultural needs and requirements, ensuring that they are adequately protected and help us better understand the risks and challenges posed in our rural settlements.

Our challenge: How might we protect the agricultural productivity and biodiversity of our rural land from inappropriate development while providing for the future planning needs of our small rural settlements?

Integrated Transport Strategy

The Integrated Transport Strategy will guide the future strategic direction of infrastructure development, asset management and programming, and activation of walking and cycling throughout the Shire. The strategy seeks to improve our transport connections both within and externally to our Shire in response to identified community needs now and into the future.

Our challenge: How might we create improved connections between our townships, improve active transport participation and opportunities, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability now and into the future?

Township Neighbourhood Character Assessments & Urban Design Framework

The Neighbourhood Character Assessments seek to guide the design and placement of new development in residential areas, ensuring that it respects and responds to a township's preferred and valued character. The Urban Design Framework seeks to bring this discussion up to a township level, setting out and shaping an integrated design vision for desired future development and growth.

Our challenge: How might we plan and guide development that enhances what we value about the character of our towns and neighbourhoods that allows our communities to thrive into the future?

Township Cultural Values Assessments

Working closely with our Traditional Owners these assessments will recommend key mechanisms for protecting important cultural objects, landscapes and places as part of structure planning for our towns. They seek to investigate and identify the key issues relating to the identification, protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage within Hepburn and the policies and actions required to address these issues.

Our challenge: How might we partner with and empower our Traditional Owners and broader community to acknowledge, understand, celebrate and preserve our areas culture, traditions and environs?

Timeline

Each Future Hepburn strategic planning element will be completed before the exhibition of the Draft Structure Plans as each of the final shire-wide strategies and place-based project elements contribute to the development of the township Structure Plans. More detailed project timing will be included on Future Hepburn's Participate Hepburn project page.

October 2022 to March 2023

Engagement Planning

March to May 2023

Community Activation

April to July 2023

Initial Community Engagement

July to October 2023

Deeper Community Engagement

October to December 2023

Structure Plan Exhibition Period

December 2023 to March 2024

Seek to adopt Final Draft Structure Plans, Strategies and Frameworks

Stakeholders

In developing the Future Hepburn engagement process, a detailed stakeholder analysis was undertaken identifying community members, groups of community members, organisations or government bodies that may be interested or impacted by each of the project elements.

This analysis has informed the list below of key stakeholder groups and community members that we will endeavor to engage with throughout this project. It is important to note that once the draft Structure Plans have been adopted by Council, Council will make the decision as to whether to take the next step and apply for an amendment to the Planning Scheme.

Category	Stakeholders
Decision makers:	Council Executive and staff
Important stakeholders:	Council's Community Advisory Groups Project Working Group members State government departments Water Management Authorities Traditional Owner Groups Neighbouring Councils Industry Peak bodies e.g. tourism, agriculture Businesses from across Hepburn Shire e.g. agribusiness, agritourism, retail & hospitality Local community groups Residents and ratepayers of Hepburn Shire Public Health and wellbeing networks and advisory groups Council Advisory Group members Local politicians Media

Note: This stakeholder list is provided in no particular order (based on influence or interest)



// We love the natural bushland...and being part of a small town community.

Hepburn Shire community member, Hepburn Together 2021

Our Engagement Commitment

During the Future Hepburn project we will be using several engagement activities that will have different levels of influence. The level of influence across the project will range from **inform** to **collaborate** on the International Association of Public Participation spectrum. When collaborating with you we promise to consider your advice and recommendations to the maximum extent possible.

We promise to:

- Work closely with our community and stakeholders to understand, express, refine and develop options that address local priorities and challenges.
- Use simple and clear language when we communicate with community and stakeholders.
- Value our community's creativity and expertise in working through our strategic planning challenges and actively listen without judgement to what people say.
- Continue to share information with the community and stakeholders, reporting back what we have heard and providing feedback on where input has not been included.

Future Hepburn roadmap

Project Planning and Activation

Council officers have worked across teams to understand and define the purpose, objectives, scope and limitations of each of the Future Hepburn projects. Specialised work is currently underway, reviewing and analysing data and information that will inform the development of the township structure plans. Detailed stakeholder analysis has been undertaken for each project element, giving consideration to how community members will be impacted. A detailed Communications Plan has been developed and will be implemented alerting community members to upcoming engagement opportunities.

Community Engagement

Community engagement will take place in two stages: an Initial and Deeper stage. In the Initial stage we will be looking to understand the vision, priorities and preferences, and values of our community. A variety of communication and engagement methods including Background Papers, Survey, in-person community sessions and other community and stakeholder activities. At the completion of this phase an Engagement Report will be developed and shared with the community. This will serve as a foundation for the second, deeper stage.

We are also asking community members to register for our Future Hepburn Engagement Pool. Council will use the Engagement Pool to 'spread the word' among the community, share their feedback

on project activities and tools, share their lived experiences and participate in small focus groups, individual interviews or other activities particularly when we feel that we are lacking community representation on certain issues or challenges. You can find out more about this on the Participate Hepburn website.

The Deeper stage requires more extensive conversations including focus groups, interviews and co-design sessions with communities and stakeholders. A final engagement report will close the loop with community and stakeholders. Upon the completion of the two engagement stages work on the draft strategies, frameworks and Structure Plans will begin.



Draft presented to Council

When the draft strategies, place based work and draft structure plans have been completed, they will be presented to Councillors for consideration. Council officers will recommend that draft documents be placed on public exhibition for feedback from the community, relevant agencies and identified stakeholders. If the drafts need more preparation prior to engaging with the community, officers will continue to work on the document and repeat this step.

Public Exhibition

Community and stakeholders will be invited to comment on and engage with each of the individual projects. Council will place advertisements in community newsletters, social media, Participate Hepburn updates, press releases, and use other communication methods to ensure that community and stakeholder will have adequate time to consider the draft documents.

Assessment of submissions

After the close of the public exhibition period, officers will review every submission made to each exhibited document and update it if appropriate. If documents require minor changes, recommendations for changes will be made and be presented to Council. If documents require extensive review, they will be redrafted, and an additional round of engagement may be considered.

Council Adoption

If all submissions have been addressed, the completed draft documents are presented to a Council meeting for consideration. Council may resolve to adopt the strategy, request further changes and or engagement, or refuse to adopt the strategy.

Planning Scheme Amendment

Once adopted, if the documents include new planning policies, or proposed rezonings of land, Council will seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare a planning scheme In addition to a planning scheme amendment, the Future Hepburn plans and strategies will inform other Council actions such as advocacy and works, or strategies in a Council Plan.

	Stage 1: Engagement Planning	Stage 2: Community Activation	Stage 3: Initial Community Engagement	Stage 4: Deeper Community Engagement	Stage 5: Development & Completion
	October 2022 – March 2023	March to May 2023	April to July 2023	July to October 2023	October 2023 to March 2024
Objectives	Build commitment of decision makers and internal stakeholders creating organisational readiness to engage. Design the Engagement Plan that will guide each Future Hepburn project element.	Build ownership and awareness of the Future Hepburn project. Inform stakeholders and community about Future Hepburn project alerting them to engagement opportunities.	Engage widely to capture broad perspectives relating to the community's vision, values, priorities and preferences. Distill and analyse inputs to inform collaborative engagement activities.	Design and deliver a collaborative engagement process that generates explores ideas that addresses emerging issues identified during the broad community engagement. Further refine priorities and preferences with identified stakeholders.	Develop the Future Hepburn project elements including both the shire-wide strategies, place based elements and structure plans. Close the loop and communicate with community, stakeholders and staff how their input has influenced the final documents, ensuring an open and transparent process.
Relates to	Structure Plans Technical Studies & Reviews: Biodiversity Review Bushfire Review Post-Contact Heritage Buffer Study Shire-wide strategies: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy Integrated Transport Strategy Place based projects: Neighbourhood Character Urban Design Frameworks Cultural Values Assessments	Structure Plans Shire-wide strategies: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy Integrated Transport Strategy Place based projects: Neighbourhood Character Reviews & Assessments Urban Design Frameworks Cultural Values Assessments	Structure Plans Shire-wide strategies: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy Integrated Transport Strategy Place based projects: Neighbourhood Character Reviews & Assessments Urban Design Frameworks Cultural Values Assessments	Structure Plans Shire-wide strategies: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy Integrated Transport Strategy Place based projects: Neighbourhood Character Reviews & Assessments Urban Design Frameworks Cultural Values Assessments	Structure Plans Shire-wide strategies: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy Integrated Transport Strategy Place based projects: Neighbourhood Character Reviews & Assessments Urban Design Frameworks Cultural Values Assessments
Activities	Co-design workshops with internal stakeholders to develop and test engagement approaches. Project planning & design. Undertake internal review of past engagements. Undertake and complete technical studies & reviews. Stakeholder mapping and analysis.	Develop branding and engagement collateral. Engagement packs for Briefing for decision makers on all elements of Future Hepburn. Activate Future Hepburn engagement page, information sharing and stakeholder communications. Staff activation and project based meetings.	Future Hepburn project page on Participate Hepburn. Letter delivered to every household. Future Hepburn survey. Targeted conversations & interviews with identified stakeholders. Community Conversation sessions x 6 Online community and stakeholder Focus Sessions. Engagement Pool recruitment.	Emerging Options Papers. Online community and stakeholder Focus Sessions. Community Codesign sessions in each of the five townships. Councillor workshop. Engagement Pool activation.	Draft final shire-wide strategies, place based projects and Structure Plans ready for public exhibition. Review feedback from public exhibition period and make necessary changes. Final adoption at Council. Communicate outcomes to community and stakeholders.
Outputs	Future Hepburn. Engagement Plan.	Township based Conversation Starters. Staff, community and stakeholders ready to participate.	Township Emerging Options papers. Data analysis and Engagement Findings Report.	Recommendations for inclusion in draft shire-wide strategies, place-based projects and structure plans.	Final project elements including both shire-wide strategies, place-based projects and structure plans. Final Engagement Report.

Hepburn

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