
8. INFORMATION BULLETIN

8.1 Camperdown Community Plan Review

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Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – Andrew Mason

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author - Garry Moorfield

In providing this advice to Council as the Community Development Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report provides advice to Council on the review of Camperdown's community plan – *Imagining Camperdown*.

Introduction

Camperdown's 10 year community plan was prepared over the latter half of 2012. It involved an estimated 177 people through a Town Survey, a Soapbox event and a Public Meeting on 30 October 2012. The Plan was finalised in January 2013 and received by Council on 26 February 2013. *Imagining Camperdown* was one of 12 township plans developed through the *Building Stronger Corangamite Communities* project; a joint initiative of the State Government of Victoria and Corangamite Shire. One of its primary objectives was to deliver community development outcomes alongside the more tangible and readily recognized township project outcomes.

The first step in formulating Camperdown's plan was an appreciative enquiry into those aspects of the town the local community most values and which should be protected and maintained. The town's avenues and tree-lined streets headed the list with 93 survey mentions, followed by Camperdown's heritage buildings and charm (71) and Botanical Gardens (70). Natural assets such as the area's lakes (47 mentions) and volcanic forms (40) made up the next level cluster, which includes the Clocktower (42 mentions). Sporting and recreation facilities and the town's shops were also mentioned. A 'Vision for Camperdown' was outlined based on this appreciative enquiry. It speaks of a renewed prosperity for Camperdown based on a recognition (and renewal) of the value of the town's heritage assets to deliver 'quality of life' advantages to drive population growth, visitation and business development.

Six key themes emerged through the initial community planning process. These were: township amenity and appearance; tourism development; highway crossing and pedestrian

safety; recreation and sporting infrastructure; business, industry and economic development; and Arts and cultural development.

These six themes were translated into 14 priority objectives for Camperdown. Progress has been made on all but a few of these fronts, especially where they have taken the form of projects implemented by the community, by Council, or by the State. All of these projects are works in progress, with some still in their planning stage.

In accordance with community development fundamentals, most progress has been made where partnerships have been formed between the community and Council. These outcomes are based on the logic of community planning, which contends that if community plans accurately reflect community priorities, and if Council truly represents its communities, then it follows that community plans and Council plans should tend to align over time. The implementation of the *Imagining Camperdown* plan provides a powerful demonstration of that logic, where successive Council budgets have contributed significant resources in addition to the initial seed-funding provided to advance community priorities.

While attention is drawn to tangible outcomes associated with individual projects, work on the Camperdown Plan has played an important role in ongoing efforts to change the internal culture of Council to improve the way it listens and responds to its communities. Whereas there is strong alignment on many matters, elements of the Camperdown community continue to challenge Council's position on issues. This inevitable outcome of genuine community engagement raises questions and rehearses alternate views, thereby strengthening Council decision-making.

Another key community development outcome has been the revitalisation of the Advance Camperdown organization, which provides a forum for raising and representing community issues as well as supporting a number of township initiatives.

Issues

The review of the *Imagining Camperdown* town plan has been difficult and problematic due to the relatively poor level of participation, yet it is argued that remedial triangulation methodology has ensured that the review has been satisfactorily resolved. The congruence between the initial survey and voting, the review public meeting deliberation and voting and a second open survey shows that the identified priorities are remarkably stable.

It was planned that the Camperdown review be conducted as a deliberative exercise, which required face-to-face exchange through a public meeting. Despite casting the widest possible net in terms of inviting local people, the turnout (in common with the initial plan formulation) was much lower in percentage terms than experienced in other Corangamite towns, some of which involved a majority of the adult population. Targeted communication with and through existing community groups ran the risk of biasing the sampling towards selective interests.

Public meeting review outcomes

A public meeting was held on the evening of 17 June 2015 in the Old Stadium at the Theatre Royal. The purpose was to acknowledge the active citizens of Camperdown and to provide a deliberative forum for community members to consider, discuss and review the *Imagining Camperdown* priorities. Whereas 66 people attended the 30 October 2012 meeting which created the town plan, there were 39 people present at the review meeting. This low turnout prompted the conduct of an additional survey, which secured input from an additional 39 people, bringing the participation count to 78.

The agenda of the public meeting featured three exercises.

The first exercise was a presentation from a representative of each of the Courthouse, Playspace and Botanic Gardens and Arboretum projects. The meeting viewed Powerpoint presentations and acknowledged and celebrated the achievements outlined.

The second exercise involved community members working in groups to list all the active community groups which contribute to the life of Camperdown. This demonstrated to all present just how many local people contribute to the community, even if they don't attend public meetings or have an appetite for the abstract exercise of planning. The breadth and depth of community contributions to maintaining and developing vital social and material infrastructure is astonishing.

The third exercise involved community members again working in groups to outline, discuss and propose their top priorities for Camperdown. These priorities were explained and listed on large worksheets. People then applied their five votes across the 28 listed priorities (existing and new). In addition to identifying their top five priorities, members also nominated their top priority with a gold sticker (as they did for the original plan). In this way a revised set of township priorities was arrived at (see attachment).

Survey response outcomes

Taking in the top-ranking suggestions put forward at the Public Meeting, a print-based survey was prepared, where any person with an interest in Camperdown had the opportunity to indicate their top five priorities on the list of 15 items, with the opportunity to add up to five new priorities if they so wished. The object of the survey was to include additional voices in the review process.

Distribution of the survey was also problematic, given that voting in person had already occurred. The availability of the survey was advertised in the Camperdown Chronicle and through email and Facebook networks, with copies made available at the Council offices and supplied on request. The survey was also posted in electronic form. It became apparent that at least two special interest groups secured multiple copies of the survey and distributed them to members to complete, however very few members of these two groups returned completed surveys (5 out of 40 in one case, 0 out of 50 in the other). Copies of the survey were delivered in person to local businesses, resulting in five additional returns. In all, a total of 39 surveys responses were returned. These responses were collated to arrive at another set of priorities (see attachment).

Revised priorities

A revised set of imagining Camperdown priorities was inferred based on the initial Imagining Camperdown survey response counts and subsequent voting and the 2015 public meeting voting and subsequent survey. The key outcomes of the review are summarised in Table 1.

Priority	Project	V1	S1	V2	S2	P 2012
1	Maintain and develop the Courthouse Tourist Information Centre	19	49	11	23	1
2	Restore the Camperdown Botanical Gardens and Arboretum	23	29	9	22	4
3	Develop tourist information to support local tourism industry development	17	26	8	19	5
4	Develop business and industry, (create more employment opportunities)	10	26	-	19	6
5	Complete the Camperdown Apex Playspace	8	20	9	11	11
6	Improve town entrances and signage	6	22	10	6	10
7	Establish a Gallery/ Performance Space/ Arts Hub (eg 150 seat conference venue)	18	22	6	8	7
8	Reinstate the Lake Bullen Merri Lake access road	-	-	8	19	-
9	Retirement living accommodation	16	10	5	6	14
10	Construct a Lake Walking Track (between North/ South Beach)	-	-	6	15	-
	Highway crossing/ safety	39	1	-	-	2
	Improve Heritage Streetscape	11	35	5	-	3
	Caravan park upgrade/ Camping sites/ Parking	12	21	-	-	8
	Construct heated indoor swimming pool	8	22	-	-	9

'Priority' means revised priority in 2015, 'V1' means votes 2012, 'S2' means survey mentions 2012, 'V2' means votes in 2015, 'S2' means survey mentions 2015, 'P 2012' means priority in 2012. (N=78)

TABLE 1: Revised priorities based on both public meeting voting and survey responses

Table 1 shows that the existing top priorities were confirmed through the review process. Potentially, five of the original 14 priorities have or will fall out of the list as they have been achieved, or are about to be achieved. A number of existing priorities have been elevated on the list as these others have fallen out.

The *Imagining Camperdown* community plan initially described 14 township priorities to be achieved across its ten year scope. Substantial progress has been made on most of these priorities over the past three years. As with other plans, the initial implementation period involved a 'reality-check' on all priorities. Before outlining issues arising through the review process and its outcomes, a brief summary is provided on the implementation of plan priorities. There are three new priorities. Priority six is to make improvements to Camperdown's town entry signage. Priority 8 is to reinstate the Lake Bullen Merri access road, and Priority 10 is to construct a Lake Walking track between north and south beach.

Progress to date

A brief summary of progress to date on each of the original 14 township priorities is given below. Over the ensuing three years some priorities have changed in form in response to opportunities and setbacks. Commentary is also provided on the three new priorities.

1 Maintain and develop the Courthouse Information and Arts Centre

Despite initial scepticism, Council unanimously supported this volunteer Tourist Information Centre function in the then vacant Old Courthouse, enabling the possibility of implementing

what was and remains Camperdown's top priority. Seed-funding of \$40k has enabled the venture to be established and become financially sustainable, and a second two-year lease arrangement has been entered into. This project has been the subject of a separate report to Council, including performance and financial indicators. (It is proposed that a further \$10k in Council seed-funding be allocated to this priority.)

2 Restore the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum

Moving from Priority 4 to Priority 2, the restoration of the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum has taken significant steps forward in regard to succession planting in the northern section of the Arboretum and extensive reinstatement of under-storey plantings within the Botanic Gardens. Some initial progress has been made on reinstating circulation elements of the Guilfoyle plan. While this work has been transformative, its product will not begin to be appreciated for five to 10 years and more.

\$30k in Council seed-funding has been expended on improving the horticultural assets of the Gardens and Arboretum, and Council has contribute \$10k to repair the watering system in the Gardens and allocated \$40k in its 2015-2016 Budget for the development of a Conservation Management Plan for the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum. (It is proposed that a further \$10k in Council seed-funding be allocated to this priority.)

3 Develop tourist information

Formerly Priority 5, Priority 3 received \$10k in Council seed-funding in 2013, however it has not been advanced. Work has started with an Advance Camperdown project to upgrade existing local tourist information, and it is proposed to maintain this funding allocation.

4 Develop business and industry and provide employment opportunities

This Priority 4 was formerly Priority 6. It didn't rate at the review meeting, but was picked up in the survey. It was the town's business operators which highlighted this priority and improved its ranking. A number of other Shire towns are pursuing business development initiatives, however nothing concrete has been proposed by any community or business group to turn this priority into a project to be implemented. (It is proposed to reserve \$10k in Council seed-funding to support any future proposal relating to this priority [and/or priority 7].)

5 Complete the Camperdown Apex Park Playspace

This partnership between Council and the community commenced before community planning came to Camperdown. It was Priority 11 in the community plan, but that ranking may well have been because the project was already underway and not seen to be in need of precious 'votes'. It now ranks as Priority 5, but that too may be because most people can see that the project is nearing completion.

The Camperdown Apex park Playspace will end up being an almost \$700k project including in-kind contributions. The community has raised almost \$100k in sponsorship/fund-raising to add to Council's \$300k contribution. A launch event is being planned for 28 November 2015.

So far there has been no community planning funds contributed to the Playspace, but it is proposed that \$10k in Council seed-funding be allocated to this priority in recognition of the amazing effort across the Camperdown community to create an outstanding recreational and social asset for the local community and for visitors to Camperdown. This allocation will enable the construction of the signature Scoria Cones at the Playspace entrance in early 2016 to complete the project.

6 Improve town entrances and signage

'Improved directional signage' was originally Priority 10, but it didn't feature in the review, instead morphing into 'Improved town entrances' to become Priority 6. There have been several proposals advanced over the past three years to clean up improved signage on the approaches to (and centre of) town, to refurbish the Service Clubs recognition sign, and to improve directional signage for visitors. As yet there are no proposals for iconic Town Entry Signs for Camperdown, as the Avenue is seen to serve the purpose of denoting arrival. A proposal is under consideration to set up a system of events-related signage which would change dynamically around the year. (It is proposed to allocate \$10k in Council seed-funding towards implementation of this priority.)

7 Establish a gallery/ performance space/ arts hub

There was some early movement but ultimately little progress on this stable Priority 7. An Arts Hub location was identified downstairs at the old Public Library, but plans fell through with the leasing of the building to Dairy Australia. Corangamite Arts relocated from the Corner Room to the Courthouse, but that too ultimately didn't work out. There is now an Arts creative space established by Corangamite Arts at the Showgrounds in the Homecrafts pavilion, and still some limited public exhibition space available through the Courthouse. An improvised cinema space has been developed in the Killara Centre by the Corangamite Film Society. Other proposals include some form of redevelopment of the Old Stadium in conjunction with refurbishment of the Theatre Royal (including using the two front rooms of the old Mechanics Institute as a gallery space). These ideas include a black box theatre/ performance space. A 150-seat conference venue is another form of description applied to this currently undefined priority. (It is proposed to reserve \$10k in Council seed-funding to support any future planning relating to this priority [and/or priority 4].)

Council seed-funding of \$12k was allocated towards the Theatre upgrade from Camperdown community planning funds, to add to other contributions to upgrade this major performance space asset.

8 Reinstate the Lake Bullen Merri access road

This new Priority 8 calls for a renewal of the long campaign to have the former Lake Bullen Merri Road re-opened for public access. The Shire, DELWP, Advance Camperdown and community members have sought to influence this matter without success over the past three years. It could be advanced by proponents through the Lake Study Master Plan exercise currently in train, some of whom are on the Stakeholder Reference Group.

9 Retirement living accommodation

The progress recorded on other items means that this former Priority 14 moves up to Priority 9. The Uniting Church worked with Council to secure a \$30,000 RDV (PLF) planning grant which has resulted in the development of concept plans for a retirement accommodation on vacant land adjacent to the Church site. Proponents of this project are keen to secure community support for the further development and eventual realisation of this project to accommodate Camperdown and district's increasing aged population.

10 Construct a Lake Walking Track (between North and South Beach)

This new Priority 8 calls for the development of a new walking trail on the edge of Lake Bullen Merri. It too could be advanced by proponents through the Lake Study Master Plan exercise currently in train, some of whom are on the Stakeholder Reference Group.

11 Highway crossing/Safety

This was priority 2 in the original plan, but it disappeared from consideration at the review meeting and through the survey. The subject has been marginally addressed in the recent

Camperdown Streetscape project, which did canvas some innovative highway crossing design concepts. The ideas for grassed median strips and splitter treatments put forward did not materialise. This priority may be raised in future stages of Streetscape works, but for now it still sits on the priority list, without a ranking.

12 Improve heritage streetscape

This former Priority 3 received minimal support at the review meeting and no recognition through the survey. Two observations might explain this occurrence. The first is that there has been substantial renovation of town centre buildings and some repainting of others. Whereas there were three vacant buildings on the four prime corners of the town centre, currently three are occupied. Secondly, the introduction of the Retail Area Business Façades Improvements scheme (to which Council has provided additional funding) may mean that this priority has been seen to be addressed. Proposed further rounds of the façade improvements projects are still to come. This priority can therefore sit at the base of the list of priorities without a ranking for the time being. (There is still \$25k in Council seed-funding from 2013 available to support this priority.)

13 Caravan park upgrade/ Camping sites/ Parking

This former Priority 8 slipped from trace in the June 2015 review. A lot of work has been done and continues to be done to clean up the Caravan Park, through Council's new contractual arrangements for private operation of the caravan park by 'Lakes and Craters Holiday Park'. It could be that community members consider that the upgrade has been completed. Further plans to develop and extend the Caravan Park mean that this is still an active priority, which should remain on the list without ranking for the time being.

14 Construct heated indoor swimming pool

This former Priority 9 project proposal did not rank in the public meeting voting and survey review. Other Corangamite towns nominated a heated indoor pool in their first plans and these proposals have also dropped off in subsequent reviews. Information has been obtained from a previous study and advice on operational costs of pools in other municipalities sought, indicating the high recurrent cost burden of such a facility. It remains an idea that may be picked up in the future, but at present no community groups or individuals have come together to advance this cause.

Policy and Legislative Context

Recognising the many benefits of community planning and supporting its delivery in the Shire is consistent with the following Council Plan 2013-2017 commitments:

Corangamite Shire's communities are welcoming and provide support and a sense of belonging. Council will work to improve and enhance community health, wellbeing and connectedness. Council has an important role in planning to ensure townships grow in a sustainable manner.

Provide opportunities to improve and enhance the health and wellbeing of our community.

Provide and advocate for a range of services, facilities and support to our people to enable them to fully engage and participate in the community.

Importantly, the Camperdown Community Plan process gives expression to Council's Values and Behaviour embodied in the overriding principle applying across all themes in the

Council Plan, namely the Cultural Change Program within Council and Council's 'commitment to continually improving the way we listen to our communities'.

Internal / External Consultation

Consultation and engagement activities to support the review of the *Imagining Camperdown* plan were based around a public meeting held on the evening of 17 June 2015, followed by a survey. Taking the suggestions put forward at the Public Meeting, a print-based survey was prepared, where any person with an interest in Camperdown had the opportunity to indicate their top five priorities on the list of 15 items, with the opportunity to add up to five new priorities if they so wished. The object of the survey was to include additional voices in the review process.

Printed invitations to the review meeting were distributed to all households in Camperdown. The upcoming event was featured in two newspaper articles and advertisements, and promoted through the websites, email and Facebook networks of various project and community groups, including Advance Camperdown, Corangamite Arts and Rotary as well as to people involved in the Courthouse and Playspace projects. Supper was provided and the Tuniversal music group was engaged to perform. The group includes people across all ages and gender, which served as a 'rent-a-crowd' initiative to involve a more diversified demographic. There were 39 people who participated in the public meeting.

The availability of the survey was advertised in the Camperdown Chronicle and through email and Facebook networks, with copies made available at the Council offices and supplied on request. The survey was also posted in electronic form. Copies of the survey were delivered in person to local businesses, resulting in five additional returns. In all, a total of 39 survey responses were returned.

Financial and Resource Implications

This report is for information only and does not entail any recommendations relating to increased or reduced financial and other resources. The provision of more than \$170,000 in seed-funding by Council has provided the impetus and the means for the local community to identify and pursue projects to strengthen the Camperdown community, to build public participation in decision-making affecting Camperdown's future and to improve the liveability of the township through development projects. Council has also supported projects through the provision of training and printed information, grants, access to facilities, advocacy and additional budgetary allocations linked to the objectives of community projects (for example, Courthouse tenancy agreement, Camperdown Playspace construction, Botanical Gardens and Arboretum Conservation Management Plan).

Conclusion

The community of Camperdown has made significant progress over the first three years of its 10 year community plan, not only on advancing key priority projects outlined in this report but also on community building and social inclusion aspects of these projects. Some examples illustrate this point. The revitalisation of Advance Camperdown saw membership increase from a handful of dedicated people to a membership of more than 70. The Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust became an incorporated association with a membership topping 120 and hundreds of people participating in its public lecture program and monthly working bees. More than 60 people regularly volunteer to operate the Courthouse Information and Arts Centre. Hundreds of local people have contributed to the design, fundraising, volunteering and construction of the Camperdown Playspace. All these activities have created and strengthened linkages and networks between individuals and organisations. The ripples of support generated by such networks have washed through a

broad range of community organisations and initiatives. In many cases the increased vitality of community functions can be traced directly to new social networks. The Camperdown Show, the Corangamite Film Society, the Camperdown Hospital Auxillary, and indeed the long list of community-based groups identified at the review public meeting in June 2015 all draw on these connections to create an expanding social economy for Camperdown and Corangamite Shire.

The *Imagining Camperdown* plan makes extensive reference to the La Trobe University *Towns in time* study published by the Department of Sustainability and the Environment in 1988. Its major conclusion was the local government holds the key to the future prosperity of small towns in Victoria. It is evident from the review of Camperdown's town plan that this conclusion holds true. Almost all progress on township priorities links back to Council in one way or another. That is not to discount the fact that these projects would not have even existed but for the initiative and contributions of community members. However, continued success depends on Council being open to and respectful of community input and advice, and on communities having respect and acquiring faith in their Council to support community aspirations.

The completion of projects will provide unequivocal evidence of the value to communities of committing time and effort to Council's community planning initiative. This value not only relates to project outcomes for communities and for Council, but to the building of the trust which is essential to maintaining productive partnerships which enhance the liveability and prosperity of Camperdown.

Information only

Attachments

1. Attachments to Council Report Review of Camperdown Plan 16-10-2015 - Under Separate Cover

RECOMMENDATION

That the Information Bulletin be received.