



A plan for Noorat

Community priorities for township development 2013 - 2023

Prepared for the community of Noorat 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.



July 2013



OVERVIEW

This plan is a product of community consideration of three questions: What aspects of Noorat 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 Noorat to make it a more prosperous and liveable place? *A Plan for Noorat* outlines a set of initiatives which local residents see as important to Noorat's future, to be implemented over the next 10 years.

The planning process involved a written community survey (which drew 29 completed responses), a public 'Soapbox event' (attended by 16 people on 15 May 2013), and a Public Forum on 17 June 2013 (attended by 24 people). In all, a minimum of 34 different people or 20.4 per cent of Noorat's estimated residential population of 167 (ABS Census 2011) participated in at least one of these three engagement activities.

Whereas efforts were made to secure the involvement of a broad demographic (across age and gender), these met with limited success. In the end, the actions represented in this plan were principally shaped by the older (and predominately female) members of the Noorat community. Perhaps as a by-product of the community planning initiative, a greater number of Noorat residents are excited about the prospect of achieving long-held aspirations to improve local conditions and develop attributes of the town.

This plan is best seen as a promising start to a community development process which will increase involvement and participation as it gathers momentum. Opportunities are available to involve more men and more adults in their middle years as listed projects are planned, scoped and implemented.

Starting with the rehabilitation and reinstatement of the Mount Noorat Walking Track, replanting the indigenous garden, upgrading footpaths and improving the three approaches to town, the progress of *A plan for Noorat* will be able to be tracked through the new *Noorat Newsletter*.

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This is the ninth 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.

The progress of these and other projects will depend upon the active involvement of community members, but many will also depend on the establishment of effective dialogue between and partnerships with community organisations, Corangamite Shire and the State Government and its agencies. Some projects will be dependent on the decisions of private business interests and/or commercial investment.



The community planning process unearthed 73 ideas for Noorat, ranging across eight broad themes: Town development and tourism; Town promotion; Town amenity and appearance and amenity; Access, safety and roads; Recreation and sport; Provision of services; and Business, industry and economic development.



Recommendations and priorities listed in this plan have been identified through a community survey and two public meetings.

The plan also draws upon the work of individuals and community organisations. Further meetings and forums are foreshadowed to develop the scope of listed projects, as part of a continuous planning process which will create further opportunities for involvement and partnership formation.



A total of 27 projects have been identified across these themes, which need to be scoped, costed, scheduled and implemented over the next 10 years.

MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY LITTLE TOWN

A prominent landmark on Victoria’s Western Plains, Mount Noorat has long been at the centre of things. It was named by Major Mitchell in 1836, reportedly after ‘Ngoora’, an elder of the Kirrae Wuurong.

For generations of local aboriginal tribes the Mount was a gathering site for ceremony and trade – until the arrival of the Europeans. The populous semi-nomadic clans that lived along Mount Emu Creek were decimated first by smallpox then annihilated in the massacre of 1839, led by William Taylor of the Strathdownie Run who fled to Canada to eventually escape prosecution. Enter Niel Black, who purchased the property on behalf of a company of British pastoral investors in which he held a quarter share. Noorat then became a centre for the vast Glenormiston run, which eventually stretched over 120,000 acres from Gnotuk to The Sisters.

Crafting a colonial version of the British landed gentry, generations of the Black clan exerted their considerable financial and political influence on State and local development. Third generation brothers Stuart and Archibald were influential in establishing the Glenormiston Butter Factory (in 1895, located to Noorat in 1910) and later Trufoods (1911), which achieved early success exporting dried skim milk powder to Great Britain. A number of other ventures spun out of these interests, such as the Glenormiston Trufoods Animal Health Service. These pioneering initiatives in agriculture and food processing drew a substantial workforce to the Noorat district.

In addition to the farming workforce, the Noorat township served the factory workers and their families. (Famous Noorat son Alan Marshall worked for a time in the office at Trufoods.) By 1920 Noorat had two general stores, a hotel, three blacksmiths, a saddler, a plumber, a butcher, a baker, a boot-maker, two fruiterers, a



Glenormiston Butter Factory 1908, *Source: www.slv.vic.gov.au*

Post Office, a primary school and a Mechanics Institute. Many a student has delighted in Alan Marshall’s memoir of his younger years *I can jump puddles*. His is a barely disguised account of local people and places of the Noorat district in the early twentieth century.

The closer settlement which followed the steady break-up of the large land holdings brought in small-time farmers, some of whom

raised their large families on their 40-acre holdings. (Locals recall that the trip down and back the two-kilometre Wallaces Lane filled the school bus.) These families contributed to the rich social and sporting life of the district, centring on the Mount Noorat Football League, which was established in 1931 and ran for 60 years before finally folding into the Warrnambool and District Football league in 1991.

MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY LITTLE TOWN

(Robert McLaren’s (2006) *Milking Cows and Playing Footy* provides a window on rural life in the Western District through this period.)

The local area became a centre of another kind in 1971 with the establishment of Glenormiston Agricultural College on part of the original Glenormiston Estate. It was absorbed into Melbourne University, which eventually lost interest in its rural and TAFE operations to concentrate instead on the lucrative postgraduate market. Like many things reduced from their heyday, Glenormiston College is now a vestige of Warrnambool-based South West TAFE. The Gnurad – Gundidj Leadership School now occupies a northern section of the old Estate, drawing secondary students from across Victoria.



The coming and going of pastoral empires, food processing enterprises, service businesses, sporting and educational institutions has had expression on the fabric of the Noorat township. Social change, especially in

relation to mobility, has meant that ‘village life’ is no so self-contained and self-sustaining. Many residents of Noorat travel far and wide for their work and are connected to the economies of larger towns.

Although many things have come and gone from Noorat, the town still offers much more than other towns of its size, and for the fortunate few, it is still remains the ‘Toorak of Terang’.

DEMOGRAPHICS

When the results of the 2011 Census were finally published, Noorat residents were concerned that their township had lost its status as a 'town'. The ABS protests that it has no role in what conurbations choose to call themselves, but the spread-out nature of Noorat means that there are fewer than 200 people who can be counted within one square kilometre, the new Australian Statistical Geography Standard defining of a 'town'.



In the 2011 Census, there were 167 people in Noorat (State Suburbs) of these 52.1% were male and 47.9% were female. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 3.6% of the population.

Age	Noorat	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
People						
0-4 years	4	2.4	344,733	6.4	1,421,050	6.6
5-9 years	4	2.4	326,121	6.1	1,351,921	6.3
10-14 years	20	12.1	327,939	6.1	1,371,054	6.4
15-19 years	20	12.1	345,339	6.5	1,405,798	6.5
20-24 years	11	6.7	375,108	7.0	1,460,673	6.8
25-29 years	3	1.8	388,669	7.3	1,513,236	7.0
30-34 years	4	2.4	372,214	7.0	1,453,775	6.8
35-39 years	3	1.8	383,415	7.2	1,520,138	7.1
40-44 years	15	9.1	391,197	7.3	1,542,879	7.2
45-49 years	20	12.1	372,367	7.0	1,504,142	7.0
50-54 years	15	9.1	354,110	6.6	1,447,404	6.7
55-59 years	15	9.1	317,438	5.9	1,297,244	6.0
60-64 years	5	3.0	293,812	5.5	1,206,116	5.6
65-69 years	5	3.0	224,911	4.2	919,319	4.3
70-74 years	7	4.2	177,316	3.3	708,090	3.3
75-79 years	7	4.2	140,338	2.6	545,263	2.5
80-84 years	4	2.4	114,020	2.1	436,936	2.0
85 years and over	3	1.8	104,995	2.0	402,681	1.9
Median age	45	--	37	--	37	--

The median age of people in Noorat (State Suburbs) was 45 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 20.0% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 15.8% of the population.

Age-structure for Noorat compared to Victoria and Australia as a whole, derived from the ABS Census 2011. The detailed profile shows that Noorat has less than half the average number of infants (0 to 9 years), double the average number of people in the 10 -19 years age grouping, and very few residents in the 25 to 39 age range.

Source: ABS Quickstats 2013

According to the ABS Census 2011, the State Suburb (SS) of Noorat had an estimated residential population of 167 people, an apparent decrease of about 33 per cent on the recorded population of 251 in 2006.

This is a statistical aberration arising partly from the changed ABS methodology in estimating the residential population, but more substantially by a revised criteria for defining localities. The Bureau does not publish data on the broader Noorat 'Gazetted

Locality', so it is difficult to get a grip on where the local demographics are trending. The 2011 Census records that Noorat's population of 167 is made up of 42 families with an average of 1.9 children, living in 68 dwellings.

As the map of the Noorat State Suburb shows, many people who consider they live at Noorat are not counted within the tight boundaries of the official count.

DEMOGRAPHICS (CONT.)

Like much of South West Victoria, Noorat’s population is decidedly Anglo-Saxon, with more than 90 per cent of the population having Australian, English, Irish and Scottish ancestry. Ninety-two per cent of Noorat residents were born in Australia compared to the Victoria average of 68.6 per cent. Whereas 31.8 per cent of Victorians report that both parents were born overseas, for Noorat that figure is only 8.1 per cent. Noorat residents have strong religious affiliations, (76% of the population) reflecting the ancestry of its population. In a wide departure from the Victorian average, Presbyterians and Reformed Church members make up the largest religious group (31.5%), reflecting the influence of Terang’s Scottish settlement history, followed by Catholics (30.3%), reflecting the Irish influence. Anglicans make up 10.3 per cent of the population, just under to the State average. Around a quarter of Victorians report ‘no religion’ – for Noorat this figure is 20.0 per cent.

<u>Ancestry, top responses</u>	Noorat	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
English	70	30.2	1,614,911	23.5	7,238,533	25.9
Australian	60	25.9	1,606,233	23.3	7,098,486	25.4
Scottish	38	16.4	436,976	6.4	1,792,622	6.4
Irish	38	16.4	522,025	7.6	2,087,758	7.5
German	9	3.9	183,700	2.7	898,674	3.2

The most common ancestries in Noorat (State Suburbs) were English 30.2%, Australian 25.9%, Scottish 16.4%, Irish 16.4% and German 3.9%.

<u>Birthplace of parents, stated responses</u>	Noorat	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
Both parents born overseas	13	8.1	1,911,658	38.1	6,876,586	34.3
Father only born overseas	9	5.6	343,515	6.9	1,407,270	7.0
Mother only born overseas	3	1.9	230,297	4.6	989,220	4.9
Both parents born in Australia	136	84.5	2,528,189	50.4	10,757,087	53.7

In Noorat (State Suburbs), 84.5% of people had both parents born in Australia and 8.1% of people had both parents born overseas.

<u>Religious affiliation, top responses</u>	Noorat	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
Presbyterian and Reformed	52	31.5	142,217	2.7	599,515	2.8
Catholic	50	30.3	1,428,758	26.7	5,439,268	25.3
No Religion	33	20.0	1,283,881	24.0	4,796,787	22.3
Anglican	17	10.3	656,706	12.3	3,679,907	17.1
Uniting Church	6	3.6	250,938	4.7	1,065,795	5.0

The most common responses for religion in Noorat (State Suburbs) were Presbyterian and Reformed 31.5%, Catholic 30.3%, No Religion 20.0%, Anglican 10.3% and Uniting Church 3.6%.

<u>Median weekly incomes</u>	Noorat	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
<i>People aged 15 years and over</i>						
Personal	659	--	561	--	577	--
Family	1,611	--	1,460	--	1,481	--
Household	1,333	--	1,216	--	1,234	--

Source: ABS Census 2011

DEMOGRAPHICS CONT.)

Noorat is quite different to other Corangamite towns along a number of dimensions. Personal, Family and Household median incomes are substantially above State and national reported averages. This ties in to the higher levels of employment in professional, technical and trade occupations, which for Noorat are substantially higher than for other Corangamite towns.

A breakdown by industry of employment shows the high proportion of School Education workers – three times the State average – and Dairy Cattle Farming. This underscores the importance of farming and Noorat’s two schools to the town (and district) economy. Labourers and sales occupations are also more highly represented in Noorat than for the rest of Victoria and the Australia, suggesting that there is a fair share of Noorat residents working for the Terang Co-Op Supermarket and Hardware outlets.

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Noorat</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Victoria</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Australia</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>Employed people aged 15 years and over</i>						
Professionals	24	25.3	564,781	22.3	2,145,442	21.3
Technicians and Trades Workers	18	18.9	350,758	13.9	1,425,146	14.2
Labourers	15	15.8	227,185	9.0	947,608	9.4
Sales Workers	14	14.7	245,334	9.7	942,140	9.4
Managers	9	9.5	332,929	13.2	1,293,970	12.9
Clerical and Administrative Workers	7	7.4	364,498	14.4	1,483,558	14.7
Community and Personal Service Workers	4	4.2	234,381	9.3	971,897	9.7
Machinery Operators And Drivers	4	4.2	154,543	6.1	659,551	6.6

The most common occupations in Noorat (State Suburbs) included Professionals 25.3%, Technicians and Trades Workers 18.9%, Labourers 15.8%, Sales Workers 14.7%, and Managers 9.5%.

<u>Industry of employment, top responses</u>	<u>Noorat</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Victoria</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Australia</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>Employed people aged 15 years and over</i>						
School Education	12	12.6	111,140	4.4	467,373	4.6
Dairy Cattle Farming	8	8.4	10,863	0.4	18,726	0.2
Supermarket and Grocery Stores	4	4.2	59,698	2.4	235,773	2.3
Hardware, Building and Garden Supplies Retailing	4	4.2	16,710	0.7	62,085	0.6
Hospitals	4	4.2	99,286	3.9	361,011	3.6

Of the employed people in Noorat (State Suburbs), 12.6% worked in School Education. Other major industries of employment included Dairy Cattle Farming 8.4%, Supermarket and Grocery Stores 4.2%, Hardware, Building and Garden Supplies Retailing 4.2% and Hospitals 4.2%.



Noorat’s acknowledged community spirit is also captured in Census statistics. Of the total population of 167 in 2011, 51 people of 15 years and over (38.1 per cent) undertook voluntary work as part of a group or organisation over the previous 12 months. This compares to the State average of 17.7 per cent.



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

THE SOAPBOX

Sixteen people attended the Noorat Soapbox event held at the Noorat Recreation Reserve Community Centre on Wednesday 15 May 2013, with most people present either putting forward their ideas for Noorat’s future or joining in the conversations that followed.

The format of the evening involved a brief outline of the community planning process in train, followed by an invitation for individuals to come forward and speak for between three and five minutes on any of the questions outlined in the town survey. At the conclusion of the meeting there was a general question and answer session, with both questions and answers offered by members present.

The Soapbox format was designed to generate discussion and interest to build the number of completed surveys returned. It attracted the interest of a mature demographic, including a number of local community leaders, but a number of younger people were also in attendance.



One upshot of the meeting was the common view that the current village feel of the town should be maintained and that Noorat is not in need of ‘development’ or ‘modernization’.

In regard to the reported decline in the town’s population, several speakers spoke of the need to attract and retain population so as to secure the future sustainability of the primary school in particular, but the town’s services in general. These observations led to a range of proposal to promote Noorat and the many advantages it has to offer

to young families as well as older residents.

The need to re-open the Noorat Store was a common theme, and others mentioned that something needs to be done about the state of the decaying old Glenormiston Butter Factory.

Safety concerns for pedestrians due to speeding cars and trucks were raised, as well as the issues of numbering of residential addresses, replanting the town’s central garden and more information on the town’s history.

The meeting heard of work in train on the restoration of the Mount Noorat Walking Trail and noted the recent publication of the ‘Noorat Newsletter’.

A report on the Soapbox event appeared in the *Terang Express* on Thursday 23 May 2013 (page 3). Unfortunately, a number of speakers did not appreciate being quoted in the newspaper, reporting that their views were selectively quoted, without context.

SURVEY RESPONSE

The Town Survey attracted a total of 29 responses. These contributions represent a response rate of 17.4 per cent of the estimated residential population of the State Suburb of Noorat– (167 persons at the ABS Census 2011).

The gender distribution of respondents was typically uneven, with almost twice as many females responding as males. All respondents provided age group information, although two did not provide any gender information. Twenty of the 29 respondents gave ‘Noorat’ as the Postcode and eight did not provide any Postcode information.

A comparison of the response profile with current ABS data on age distribution of the township population shows good representation of persons in the 15 – 24, 55 – 64 and 75+ age groupings, and an under-representation of primary school students (the 1-14 years quota).

Gender	Age grouping								Total
	1 – 14	15 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75+	
Male		2				1	7		10
Female	1	2			1	3	8	2	17
Unknown		1		1					2
No info									-
Total	1	5		1	1	4	15	2	29
Per cent	3.4%	17.2%	-	3.4%	3.4%	13.8%	51.7%	6.9%	100%
Census*	16.9%	18.8%	4.2%	10.9%	21.2%	12.1%	7.2%	8.4%	100%
Count*	28	31	7	18	35	20	12	14	165

NOTE: Some survey respondents did not supply any ‘age grouping’ information, hence the discrepancies in totals

* ABS Census 2011 for Noorat (State Suburb) estimated residential population 167.

Survey response rate is 17.4 per cent.

The big gap in the survey is the non-participation of younger adults. In the critical 25 to 54 age range only two respondents participated. Persons in the 65 – 74 age grouping made up over half the survey sample.

The conduct of the survey was advertised in and editorially supported by WD NEWS through the local newspaper – the *Terang Express*. The survey opened on 5 April and closed on 10 June 2013 and was mailed directly to all Noorat and district residents by Australia Post through the Noorat Post Office.

Additional copies were made available at the Noorat Post Office and the Noorat Hotel, as well as hand delivered at football/netball home games at the Noorat Recreation Reserve. Advertisements were placed in the *Terang Express* newspaper to encourage participation, with the Noorat Post Office and the Noorat Hotel acting as collection agencies for completed surveys. Some completed surveys were returned by post to Corangamite Shire.

Presentations were made to, and advice sought from, the Noorat

and District Residents’ Association on the timing and conduct of the survey. Despite efforts to reach some of the recognised ‘difficult to reach’ groups, the survey response is no doubt skewed to the literate, socially-connected and perhaps more comfortably placed members of the community. The sample certainly included people with a passionate interest in their town and their community, but did not secure the involvement of many people in the 25 to 54 age range.

IDENTIFYING ASSETS

The first question on the survey asked the question ‘What things do you most value about Noorat, which need to be maintained or protected?’ The clear consensus was ‘Mount Noorat, which not only topped the count of survey mentions but found expression in reference to the town’s village atmosphere and rural setting.



A plan for Noorat

What things do you value most about Noorat?

MOUNT NOORAT	Mount Noorat, View of Mount Noorat, Mount Noorat walking track	10
SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	Excellent educational sporting and recreational facilities for such a small town, Recreation Reserve and facilities, Showgrounds, Noorat Community Centre,	8
SCHOOLS	Schools, Excellent educational facilities	7
AVENUE AND TREES	The trees in the avenue, The avenue, Trees, lawns and maintenance by Shire	6
VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE AND RURAL SETTING	Unique Village atmosphere, The rural country town atmosphere, Noorat’s strong identity, Rural setting, Well-kept town, pretty spot with Mount Noorat as focal point	6
COMMUNITY	Residents who look out for each other without being intrusive, Sense of community, Volunteers, Community,	5
THE PUB	The Pub	5
POST OFFICE	Post Office	5
RURAL STORE	The Factory/ Scanlon’s Rural Store, Farm supplies	3
SAFE QUIET TOWN	Safe, quiet town for families to raise a family, Crime free environment (to date!)	3
TOWN LAYOUT	Town layout, town centre	3
	Noorat Show	2
	The interpretive signage	2
	Presbyterian Church, Niel Black Church	2
	Children’s playgrounds	2
	Alan Marshall, Allan Marshall monument	2
	Footy Club, Cricket and Netball, Gun Club,	2
	Blacks Lane	1
	A lot more to Noorat than Alan Marshall	1
	Landmark buildings (eg Beehive Store)	1
	Dairy industry, beef and sheep	1
	Roads	1
	Glenormiston College	1

The physical form of the township, with its avenue and trees is highly valued by residents, who are appreciative of the Shire’s care and maintenance of Noorat’s public realm.

Noorat’s outstanding educational, sporting and recreational facilities are also much valued, and it is understood that these assets are exceptional for a township the

size of Noorat.

Although Noorat’s General Store is no longer operating, it’s re-opening is at the top of the town’s wish-list. Some survey respondents are appreciative of the efforts of Scanlon’s Rural Store to fill the gap, yet it is the social role of the General Store (like the ‘social infrastructure ‘ of the Post Office and The Pub) that

contributes to Noorat’s sense of community , above and beyond the retail service functions they perform. This picture is nevertheless incomplete. Having regard to the survey sample, it remains an unanswered question as to what the younger middle-aged adults of Noorat (particularly men) value about their town.



PUBLIC MEETING

A public forum was held at the Noorat Recreation Reserve Community Centre on Monday 17 June 2013, with 24 people attending. This figure represents 14 per cent of Noorat’s population. Different people attended the Soapbox and Public Meeting events, with some attendees explaining that for families with young children one parent attended one event and the other parent the other.

The 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 29 completed returns. 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’ would be drawn upon those ‘most valued’ aspects of Noorat identified in the survey responses.

ISSUES AND THEMES

Survey responses were categorised under 7 key themes and an 'Other' category. Adding the public meeting 'votes' and 'gold sticker' priorities provides a rough map of the major issues of concern to participants, with 'Access, safety and roads' the top issue, in terms ideas, survey mentions and votes. 'Business, industry and economic development' came in second in terms of survey mentions, followed closely by 'Recreation and sport'.

Sifting through the detail of proposals and commentary contained within these themes uncovers some key concerns which are at the heart of a variety of proposed 'solutions' around given topics. There are four broad concerns which provide context to the 27 priority objectives which follow, all of which are inter-related and some of which could be combined into a single project.

Safety, access and walkability

Relocating (reduced) speed limit signage is part of general concern for the safety of pedestrians,

	Themes	Ideas	Survey mentions	Votes	'Gold'
1	Town development and tourism	9	19	17	4
2	Town promotion	11	15	16	5
3	Town appearance and amenity	10	18	21	-
4	Access, safety and roads	14	32	33	3
5	Recreation and sport	8	27	14	7
6	Provision of services	10	15	17	1
7	Business, industry and economic development	8	28	13	2
8	Other	3	-	5	2
	Total survey responses = 29 Public meeting attendees = 24	73	154	136	24

Minimum estimated participation of 34 people or 20.4 per cent of Noorat State Suburb ERP of 167 (ABS, 2011)

particularly school children. This is linked to the walkability of town and the need for new footpaths/ tracks and repairs to some existing footpaths.

Local business and economy

The re-opening of the General Store is one of two top priorities, which is important to the social life and identity of Noorat as a 'town'. The idea of recovering lost economic opportunities is expressed through references to Glenormiston College and the old Butter Factory. The need for additional population to ensure the future of the Primary School

is another element, as well as local support for the ongoing future of the much-loved Post Office and the Noorat Hotel.

Town presentation and amenity

There are many ideas for making fine-grain improvements to the presentation of Noorat, most of which would be relatively inexpensive. Similarly, proposed improvements to amenities (eg mobile phone coverage, a bus shelter) would improve the liveability of Noorat. For locals, a sensitivity to maintaining Noorat's 'village' feel remains critical.

Town development and promotion

Ideas for reinstating an upgraded Mount Noorat Walking track and re-opening access to Lake Keilambete are key propositions for creating opportunities for locals and visitors to enjoy the spectacular landscape and natural environment of Noorat and district. These developments, along with improving the approaches to town, will enable Noorat to develop a more expansive 'town slogan' to better market the various attributes which make Noorat a desirable place to visit – and to live.



<p>VISION</p>	<p>Some people are at home in the bustle of the restless city and others enjoy the more leisurely convenience of a large country town, but for those with a taste for county life, it doesn't get much better than Noorat. It's the obvious reason why those who belong in Noorat are impossibly cheerful and friendly.</p> <p>More than just a pretty little town, Noorat is blessed with outstanding educational, sporting and recreational facilities that make it a great place to live for families young and old. For them, as for those who have retired to Noorat, it is only a short drive to</p>	<p>Terang for those things a little village can't be expected to offer. Just as it used to be, a home in the 'Toorak of Terang' is as sought after as it ever was, and the town's historic Beehive Store is buzzing again, the hub of the Noorat community once more.</p> <p>The town is looking neat and smart, and passing traffic naturally slows along the new avenues which signify the town. Crowds still flock to the Noorat Show each year and to local sporting events, but Noorat is also a popular place for day trippers and other visitors. Mount Noorat has always been a special place, as those who have</p>	<p>walked the lip of the Mount Noorat crater and felt the rush of eagles wings can attest. With the Walking Trail open once more visitors can enjoy the watchful company of curious black wallabies which have hopped down from their sanctuary in the disused quarry. Lake Keilambete provides another attraction to the area now that it too has been re-opened.</p> <p>Noorat's 'vision' is not so much about 'development' or becoming something else, but rather one of restoration and preservation of a much-loved rural village and its community.</p>
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PRIORITY PROJECTS

P	Project descriptions from survey	S	V	G	Subject
1	Improve the walking track up the Mount, Fix the track and fences, Gravel the walking track, Work with Black estate to develop Mount Noorat walking track, including interpretive signage, A couple of picnic tables or covered area at the lookout on Mount Noorat, Bubble taps, picnic tables and maybe BBQ at top of Mount Noorat, Put more picnic tables in, Fix the hut, Improve walking safety on Mount Noorat, clearer paths	18	8	7	IMPROVEMENT NOORAT WALKING TRACK
2	General Store (combined with Post Office), A functional 7-day-a-week shop/ store, Re-open our shop, Community Store, Re-open Beehive Store, Milk bar or general shop,	17	11	2	RE-OPEN GENERAL STORE
3	More footpaths, Create footpaths for mobility, Repair dangerous footpath outside 17 Terang Road, More footpaths and walking tracks around town, A footpath from town centre to Scanlon's Rural Store, past Lake Lolly and Primary School	6	11	1	MORE FOOTPATHS
4	Entrances to Noorat from all directions need to be 'beefed up', beautified and made appealing	1	10	-	TOWN ENTRANCES
5	A real monthly Farmer's Market, Farmer's Market or Trash and Treasure Market in avenue	5	9	-	FARMER'S MARKET
6	Install Lighting at Glenormiston Road/ Mackinnons Bridge Road intersection, More lighting around the town, Lighting of intersections	4	9	-	STREET LIGHTING
7	Offer more at Glenormiston College, Promote Glenormiston College	2	6	2	GLENORMISTON COLLEGE
8	Succession planting of trees in the avenue, including filling present gaps, Update trees in the avenue, Keep avenues cut more often	5	5	-	AVENUE PLANTINGS
9	Enforcement of speed limits, Road safety for schools, relocate speed restriction signs further out of town,	5	4	-	SPEED LIMITS
10	Improve mobile phone reception in town	3	5	1	MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION
11	A big glassed-in signage providing direction and telling information about walking track to crater, Allan Marshall precinct, Recreation Complex and new Fire Station, Directional signage to Recreation Reserve and children's playground	2	5	-	DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE
12	Bigger playground with more for teenagers, More playground equipment in main street	2	5	-	PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS
13	Promote history of Noorat and district	1	5	2	PROMOTE HISTORY
14	Upgrade toilets at Recreation Reserve	1	5		UPGRADE TOILETS AT RESERVE
15	Natural gas through Noorat	-	5	1	NATURAL GAS

S means survey mentions, V means votes at public meeting, G means 'gold sticker' top individual voter priority

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

P	Project descriptions from survey	S	V	G	Subject
16	Seal Blacks Lane to prevent bumpiness, Seal Blacks Drive,	2	4	-	SEAL BLACKS LANE
17	Develop butter factory, Put the old butter factory to some use, Turn old factory into a dairy museum from horse and cart deliveries to the present	4	-	-	RE-PURPOSE BUTTER FACTORY
18	Noorat needs a new 'town slogan'	1	4	1	TOWN SLOGAN
19	A new bus shelter along Glenormiston Road opposite the old Catholic Church	1	4	-	BUS SHELTER
20	Some form of hard waste collection (maybe once a year), Twice a year hard rubbish day	3	3		HARD RUBBISH COLLECTION
22	Open up Lake Keilambete to the public as tourist attraction, Promote as tourist attraction,	3	1	2	LAKE KEILAMBETE
23	Encourage more young people to come and live in Noorat so that schools will grow, Attract more children to the State School	3	1	-	ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE
24	Connect water to Allan Marshall garden so plants can be maintained, Replant well-chosen indigenous plantings in an enlarged garden setting, Revamp of public gardens	3	1	-	WATER FOR RE-PLANTED GARDEN
25	Upgrade unfinished roads to beautify the town, Sealing road section from 23 Terang road to Terang-Mortlake Road	2	3	2	SEALING OF ROADS
26	A Noorat newsletter	1	3		NOORAT NEWSLETTER
27	Install new fence around the Presbyterian Church, fence needs fixing	3	-	-	CHURCH FENCE

S means survey mentions, V means votes at public meeting, G means 'gold sticker' top individual voter priority

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

In considering how to confront the list of potentially 27 projects, it is useful to sort them into groups under the principal agency through which action will need to be carried out. This approach gives the following breakdown:

Community (6 projects)
 Community/Shire partnership (2)
 Council (6)
 State Government (5)
 Private commercial interests (2)
 Community organisations (2)
 Unspecified (2)

Given that the Noorat Community Plan has a 10 year horizon, it would be possible to complete the plan in that timeframe by addressing three priorities each year, although those that involve private commercial interests or substantial investments by the State government might be less amenable to influence. There is some scope to connect to existing work in progress, and perhaps to combine some of the listed projects.

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTION AGENCY

P	PROJECT	S	V	G	AGENCY
1	IMPROVEMENT NOORAT WALKING TRACK	18	8	7	PRIVATE/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
2	RE-OPEN GENERAL STORE	17	11	2	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
3	MORE FOOTPATHS	6	11	1	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
4	TOWN ENTRANCES	1	10	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH PARTNERS
5	FARMER'S MARKET	5	9	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT
6	STREET LIGHTING	4	9	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
7	GLENORMISTON COLLEGE	2	6	2	SWTAFE/ STAT GOVERNMENT
8	AVENUE PLANTINGS	5	5	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
9	SPEED LIMITS	5	4	-	VICROADS/ STATE GOVERNMENT
10	MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION	3	5	1	COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND PROVIDERS
11	DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE	2	5	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH VOCROADS
12	PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS	2	5	-	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
13	PROMOTE HISTORY	1	5	2	COMMUNITY PROJECT
14	UPGRADE TOILETS AT RESERVE	1	5		COMMUNITY GROUP/ RESERVE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT?
15	NATURAL GAS	-	5	1	STATE GOVERNMENT
16	SEAL BLACKS LANE	2	4	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
17	RE-PURPOSE BUTTER FACTORY	4	-	-	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
18	TOWN SLOGAN	1	4	1	COMMUNITY PROJECT
19	BUS SHELTER	1	4	-	STATE GOVERNMENT/ SCHOOL?
20	HARD RUBBISH COLLECTION	3	3		CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
22	OPEN LAKE KEILAMBETE	3	1	2	?
23	ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE	3	1	-	?
24	WATER FOR RE-PLANTED GARDEN	3	1	-	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
25	SEALING OF ROADS	2	3	2	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
26	NOORAT NEWSLETTER	1	3		COMMUNITY PROJECT
27	CHURCH FENCE	3	-	-	COMMUNITY GROUP/ CHURCH COUNCIL?

P means Priority, S means survey mentions, V means votes, G means 'gold' top voter priority



In developing a schedule of activities, there might be value in establishing Action Groups to work on individual projects and relationships with the key government agencies. One approach might be to prioritise projects by implementation agency, and to work through these in order.

Experience suggests there is value in focusing on two or three priorities at a time, lest the list of proposed projects becomes overwhelming for the people involved. Early achievement of a tangible project can provide confidence that time spent on community planning is worthwhile.

**SUMMARY OF PROJECTS
(CONTINUED)**

The clear priority for those who participated in the formulation of Noorat’s community plan is reinstating the Mount Noorat Walking track. This is tied to the recognition by community of Mount Noorat as the town’s most cherished asset. Work on this project is well-advanced, with the first stage scoped and costed and work in train to secure funding to enable it to proceed. BSCC seed funding is available to support this work or to contribute to later stages.

The re-opening of Noorat’s General Store is also a high priority for the community, and it is recognised that this may not necessarily be easily achieved. While the sale of the premises to a new owner might occur, another option is to explore the social enterprise models which have been successful in other rural localities (eg Wangoom).

These issues outnumber all others in terms of survey mentions and were the two clear highest priorities.

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTION AGENCY

P	PROJECT	S	V	G	AGENCY
1	IMPROVE MOUNT NOORAT WALKING TRACK	18	8	7	PRIVATE/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
2	RE-OPEN GENERAL STORE	17	11	2	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
4	TOWN ENTRANCES	1	10	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH PARTNERS
5	FARMER’S MARKET	5	9	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT
11	DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE	2	5	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH VICROADS
12	PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS	2	5	-	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
13	PROMOTE HISTORY	1	5	2	COMMUNITY PROJECT
17	RE-PURPOSE BUTTER FACTORY	4	-	-	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
18	TOWN SLOGAN	1	4	1	COMMUNITY PROJECT
22	OPEN LAKE KEILAMBETE	3	1	2	?
23	ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE	3	1	-	?
26	NOORAT NEWSLETTER	1	3	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT

P means Priority, S means survey mentions, V means votes, G means ‘gold’ top voter priority

Projects led by the community or the community with partners

The next three highest priorities attracted a similar number of votes at the public meeting.

A variety of suggestions were put forward for improving the walkability of Noorat, including specific footpath repairs and construction as well as a gravel/sand walking track from the town centre to the recreation reserve. It has been agreed that the township should work with the Shire on this issue with a view to scheduling works in future Council budgets.

The proposals to improve the approaches/ entrances to Noorat

took a variety of forms, from improving directional signage to the creation of new avenues. This overlaps with some lower priorities (Priority 8, Priority 12 and Priority 24) relating to improving the appearance of the township and its presentation to visitors.

The establishment of a regular Farmers Market (or a variant thereof) came in as priority number five. Again, there is scope to work with the Shire to place Noorat on the schedule of monthly Farmers Markets which already feature at several Corangamite towns.

There are potentially 13 projects of the 27 where the community could take a lead role – three of them in partnership with Council.

Projects linking to town promotion might be combined, as could the several projects relating to town appearance and presentation.

There is potential to work with Terang residents on a project to re-open access to nearby Lake Keilambete.

A deal of scoping work is needed on all but two of the listed community-led projects.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

Corangamite Shire Council might be involved in the planning and implementation of up to 11 listed priorities, and will need to partner with the community on at least three.

The five projects connecting with State and Commonwealth government responsibilities provide advocacy opportunities, with three of the six projects only requiring simple and inexpensive actions. Aspirations in regard to natural gas connection, mobile phone coverage and Glenormiston College are more complex or problematic.

Two projects are the province of relevant community-based groups, leaving three that could potentially be delivered by private commercial interests or through some social enterprise initiative if there was sufficient local interest and commitment.

P	PROJECT	S	V	G	AGENCY
3	MORE FOOTPATHS	6	11	1	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
4	TOWN ENTRANCES	1	10	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH PARTNERS
6	STREET LIGHTING	4	9	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
8	AVENUE PLANTINGS	5	5	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
12	PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS	2	5	-	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
16	SEAL BLACKS LANE	2	4	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
20	HARD RUBBISH COLLECTION	3	3	-	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
22	OPEN LAKE KEILAMBETE	3	1	2	?
23	ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE	3	1	-	?
24	WATER FOR RE-PLANTED GARDEN	3	1	-	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
25	SEALING OF ROADS	2	3	2	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL

P means Priority, S means survey mentions, V means votes, G means 'gold' top voter priority

Projects intersecting with the responsibilities of Council

P	PROJECT	S	V	G	AGENCY
7	GLENORMISTON COLLEGE	2	6	2	SWTAFE/ STAT GOVERNMENT
9	SPEED LIMITS	5	4	-	VICROADS/ STATE GOVERNMENT
10	MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION	3	5	1	COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND PROVIDERS
11	DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE	2	5	-	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH VICROADS
15	NATURAL GAS	-	5	1	STATE GOVERNMENT
19	BUS SHELTER	1	4	-	STATE GOVERNMENT/ SCHOOL?

P means Priority, S means survey mentions, V means votes, G means 'gold' top voter priority

Projects involving the State Government and its agencies

P	PROJECT	S	V	G	AGENCY
14	UPGRADE TOILETS AT RESERVE	1	5	-	COMMUNITY GROUP/ RESERVE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT?
27	CHURCH FENCE	3	-	-	COMMUNITY GROUP/ CHURCH COUNCIL?

P means Priority, S means survey mentions, V means votes, G means 'gold' top voter priority

P	PROJECT	S	V	G	AGENCY
2	RE-OPEN GENERAL STORE	17	11	2	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
17	RE-PURPOSE BUTTER FACTORY	4	-	-	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
22	OPEN LAKE KEILAMBETE	3	1	2	?

P means Priority, S means survey mentions, V means votes, G means 'gold' top voter priority

Projects dependent on business decisions of community groups or private commercial interests

IMPLEMENTATION

Two the Noorat’s listed 27 priorities are currently being implemented. Two editions of the **Noorat Newsletter** have been published, and some finance secured from Corangamite Shire to support its ongoing publication. The **Mount Noorat Walking Track** is scoped and costed, and funds are currently being assembled to allow work to commence of the first stage. BSCC funds may be used to meet any shortfall or to fund further stages.

Work on repairs and extensions to **the footpath network** might be referred to Corangamite Shire for consideration in future works plans. On common with other towns, this might also involve a community project to build a gravel/sand path from the town centre to the Recreation Reserve.

Replanting of the memorial garden with local indigenous plants could be an achievable early project, replacing dead plants and installing an adjacent **water supply** to allow supplementary watering through at least the first few summers.



Lake Keilambete: Highly saline 30,000 year-old circular volcanic maar lake located and west of Noorat and 4 km north of Terang, roughly 1.8km in diameter and up to 11 metres deep, surrounded by basaltic tuff ring rising to 30 metres.

The core idea of making better use of outstanding natural assets provides the rationale for the re-opening of **Lake Keilambete** to

public access, taking advantage of an existing. The construction of a jetty an public bathing boxes might form part of this project.

The community could work with Council on small items such as **installing a light** on the west wall of the public toilets, as well as selecting and **planting a new avenue** and **maintaining the present oak avenue** on The Sisters Road.

There is nothing to prevent letter-writing and advocacy in regard to items such as provision of a new **bus shelter**, improving **mobile phone coverage**, a **hard-rubbish collection** trial, corrected **directional signage** and new/ revised **speed limit zones**, or establishing a **Farmers Market**.

In terms of the \$50,000 BSCC seed funds allocated by Council to Noorat Plan implementation, it is proposed not to assign funds to projects at this time, until they are scoped and costed so that the local community is in a position to decide how to make best use of its investment. Some small projects could be funded in full or seed funding leveraged through grant applications for more substantial projects.

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 local organisations, not the least through activation of local interest and involvement in projects deemed to be of high priority by the local community.

Through its Residents Association, the Noorat community is well-advanced with its major priority of restoring and re-opening the Mount Noorat Walking trail, and has taken several steps to secure funding for initial works. The Association has also secured some funding support for the ongoing production of its new town Newsletter.

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 the *A Plan for Noorat* 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 Noorat 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

NOORAT SOAPBOX FORUM

Wednesday 15 May 2013, 7.30 pm
Noorat Recreation Reserve Community Centre

NOORAT COMMUNITY MEETING

Monday 17 June 2013, 7.30 pm
Noorat Recreation Reserve Community Centre

CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 23 July 2013, 7.00 pm
Noorat Recreation Reserve Community Centre