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## 9.3 Review of Derrinallum Community Plan

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**File No:**

**Previous Council Reference:** Nil

### Declaration

Acting Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Acting 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 recent review and updating of Derrinallum's community plan, *A Plan for Derrinallum: Community Priorities for Township Development 2012–2022*.

### Introduction

Derrinallum was the fourth of Corangamite Shire's 12 townships to develop its community plan under the Building Stronger Corangamite Communities partnership with the Victorian Government.

A review of the Plan has included a public meeting held on 30 October 2014, a town survey conducted in February and March 2019 with a further public meeting held in April 2019.

### Issues

The Derrinallum Community Plan was received by Council on 22 April 2012. Achievements since that time have included:

- Installation of new town entry signage
- Completion of the curving gravel path through the elms
- The trail to the entrance of the Mount Elephant Reserve
- New gas BBQs and shelter at Deep Lake.

These projects were financed (in whole or part) using the \$52,500 in seed-funding provided by Council.

The State funding announcement for the Mount Elephant Centre on 6 November 2014 (with \$50,000 contributed by Corangamite Shire) was another success for both the Derrinallum and Lismore communities. These projects were a demonstration of the value of building partnerships to assemble resources and secure funding to develop community assets.

In 2014, the Derrinallum Community Plan was in need of review as many priorities had been achieved, and some of the remaining priorities were broadly aspirational and practically

beyond the local community to directly influence. Whereas 45 people participated in the formulation of the original Plan, only nine people attended the 2014 review public meeting (with written responses from another four). Then In 2018 a younger generation of Derrinallum residents stepped forward to propose some new projects for the town. They called for a review of the Community Plan so that their ideas could find a place alongside those priorities already established. The offer to take a leading role in securing wider community participation was taken up. It led, directly and indirectly, to an increase in participation in the 2019 review, to 214 persons in all.

A contested issue was the proposal from some community members to create a garden in the Walker Street median strip where the old elms had been taken down and a new planting opportunity created.

A town survey was conducted. Of the 172 people who recorded their postcode in the survey, only 90 (52 per cent) were from the Darlington, Derrinallum, Lismore area. A further 28 (16 per cent) were visitors to Derrinallum or passers-by. The survey was completed by 97 females and 50 males, with 36 people not disclosing their gender. Using the 2016 Census as a baseline, the Town Survey sampled a broad age demographic.

The Town Survey established that the things respondents value most about Derrinallum are the town’s friendly people (88 survey mentions); the town’s safe and quiet character (45), location (33), Mount Elephant (29), the avenue (28), village atmosphere (27) and shops (25). A group exercise involving 31 Derrinallum P-12 students arrived at similar conclusions.

The upshot of the Town Survey was a comprehensive review of the Derrinallum community Plan, giving twelve clearly-supported priorities.

REVISED PRIORITIES

	PRIORITY	SURVEYS	YES	NO	NET
1	Encourage tradespeople to town		114	13	+ 101
2	Upgrade toilet block	24	105	19	+ 86
3	Fitness Equipment	13	95	39	+ 54
4	Walking track to Deep Lake	8	88	27	+ 61
5	Bike path between Derrinallum and Lismore	3	85	49	+ 36
6	Walker Street garden		84	41	+ 43
7	Develop small retirement village	9	75	28	+ 47
8	Open a local produce store		73	41	+ 32
9	Improve shops/ Opening hours/ More shops	30			
10	Develop Recreation Reserve	24			
11	Upgrade Hotel	19			
12	Provide more things to do	16			
	Splash park		68	63	+ 5
	Establish Northern Food trail		56	46	+ 10
	Skate park		53	70	- 17

(N=175)

	Existing community plan priority
	New project proposal
	Priority identified in Survey

The twelve established priorities in the 2019 Derrinallum Community Plan are:

**1 *Encourage tradespeople to town***

Originally Priority 8 in 2012, and Priority 10 in 2014, this is now nominally Derrinallum's Priority 1 in 2019. Some work will be required on the part of interested community members to develop this idea if it is to become a project capable of implementation. At the heart of this proposition is the recognition locally that some active steps need to be taken to stabilise and to grow the township population.

**2 *Upgrade toilet block***

There is strong community member view that the current 1950s public toilets require replacement. This was the top priority in 2012 and again in 2014 and is still arguably the town's top priority in 2019 (taking the 18 April public meeting into account). The community generally considers that the toilets are inadequate.

**3 *Fitness equipment***

The Derrinallum Fitness Project was originally proposed as a Pick My Project initiative in 2018. It was costed at \$20,400 and attracted 60 votes, which fell short of the funding cut-off mark. The project has now become Derrinallum's Priority 3, with 94 supporters (and 39 detractors). The 'No' response may be overstated here due to the framing of the question which included reference to using the equipment.

**4 *Walking track to Deep Lake***

Walking tracks were a strong theme in the original 2012 Community Plan, coming in at Priority 2. Following completion of the walking track from the town centre to Mount Elephant, the proposal for a walking track to Deep Lake became Priority 7 in 2014. It now sits at Priority 4 in 2019. Some work was done on mapping and costing this project, which uncovered some difficulties associated with the terrain, changing width of road verges and safety concerns with required multiple road crossings. Additional scoping work is required to assess whether these difficulties could be overcome.

**5 *Bike path between Derrinallum and Lismore***

A proposed bike path between Derrinallum and Lismore became Derrinallum's Priority 5 in 2019, with 85 supporters. This was also Priority 2 for Lismore in 2016 (rising from priority 4 in 2012) with another 42 supporters. One proposal is to form a gravel track along the fire break on the north side of the Hamilton Highway, crossing to the south as it nears Lismore. The 12 kilometre track would cross the rail line as it nears Derrinallum. Another route proposal involves using railway reserve land to connect both towns through Lake Tooliorook. Scoping work is required to identify options and to assess the practicability of these and perhaps other proposals.

**6 *Walker Street garden***

According to the Town Survey results this previously contested project has become Derrinallum's new Priority 6. The project concept did eventually secure support from the Shire, however the Progress Association decided to withdraw its support however this does not prevent another community group coming forward to deliver the project.

**7 *Development of small retirement village***

Priority 4 in 2012, Priority 5 in 2014, and now priority 7 in 2019 with 75 supporters, the idea of developing a small retirement village remains an aspiration for the Derrinallum community. The capacity to influence such a development may be minimal but supporting

the notion of ageing in place is linked to the broader issue of retaining and growing the town's population.

### **8      *Open a local produce store***

This was Priority 3 in the original Derrinallum Plan, and became Priority 4 in the 2014 review. These ranking we based on some low numbers, but the idea has 73 supporters in 2019. Forty-one (41) people oppose it. The convenor of the working group set up to investigate and develop the idea decided it could be realised through an existing retail food outlet, but that concept has since lapsed with the closure of the Front Paddock café.

### **9      *Improve shops/ Opening hours/ More shops***

Painting the town's shopfronts was Priority 6 in both 2012 and in 2014, and this broadened priority slips to Priority 9 in 2019. The earlier rankings were prior to the introduction of Council's Retail Area Façade Improvement Program. The aspiration that Derrinallum could have more shops and/or shops with longer hours of opening is noted, however the practicality of influencing this priority is questionable, especially given recent closures in the township.

### **10     *Develop Recreation Reserve***

This item, now Priority 10 for Derrinallum in 2019, includes a range of project ideas, from establishing a new playground at the Reserve (Priority 12 in 2014), building a fence along the Highway frontage (for child safety), establishing an outdoor gym, building a dirt bike track and constructing outdoor eating areas, to name the main ones. Proposals to establish a Splash Park (Priority 13) and a Skate Park (Priority 15) are also centred on the Recreation Reserve.

### **11     *Upgrade Hotel***

Priority 9 in 2012, then Priority 13 in 2014, 'Upgrading the Hotel' becomes Priority 11 in 2019. As noted at the previous review, this is a matter for the owners of the establishment to consider and to undertake, however the community's aspirations for their 'local pub' and recognition of its importance to the social life of the town for locals, visitors and potential new residents are acknowledged.

### **12     *Provide more things to do***

There was a wide range of ideas put forward including that there should be a greater range of things to do, for children, teenagers and adults.

Three other ideas received some level of support, but insufficient to fall within the twelve priorities. These were:

- Splash Park
- Establish northern food trail
- Skate Park.

## **Policy and Legislative Context**

The Council Plan 2017-2021 outlines Corangamite Shire's community planning initiative and describes how, over the past six years, it has systematically surveyed local residents and assisted them to develop Community Plans. Recognising the many benefits of community planning and supporting its delivery, the Council Plan includes a commitment to support Council's Community Planning Program as part of its objective to engage with and listen to our communities.

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Importantly, the Derrinallum Community Plan review process contributes to Council's Vision: 'We strive for a thriving and connected community' and gives expression to Council's Values of Respect, Innovation and Collaboration.

### **Internal / External Consultation**

The Derrinallum Community Plan review process was developed in consultation with members of the Derrinallum community and through meetings of the Derrinallum Progress Association. It was promoted through local Facebook networks and the *News and Natter* newsletter. It involved an extensive Town Survey available in print and on-line versions and workshops held with different groups of students at the Derrinallum P-12 School. Townspeople, including local retailers and service providers helped promulgate the survey and collected completed responses. All surveys were collected and collated by Corangamite Shire and results reported through the *News and Natter* newsletter and to an open public meeting held on 18 April 2019, where different perspectives were shared and a further voting exercise was conducted.

More recently the township community has worked with Council to develop a set of priorities to be addressed in the town's \$200,000 Streetscape Improvements project scheduled for completion in the 2019-20 budget year. Local networks and new partnerships have brought external resources and expertise to support local experience, knowledge, talent and drive.

Derrinallum community members have also been enthusiastic participants in Council's current 'We Volunteer' Volunteer Training program.

### **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.

### **Options**

Council may choose to receive the Derrinallum Community Plan Review or not.

### **Conclusion**

The community of Derrinallum made great progress on its Community Plan to complete five of its 15 priorities in two-and-a-half years. Derrinallum community members have also contributed strongly to the Volcanic Lakes & Plains tourism development project, and to the establishment and operation of the Mount Elephant Visitor Centre and its related projects.

*A Plan for Derrinallum* has been recast through the 2019 process of review, with a high level of participation across the local community and beyond. It has outlined some practical projects for Derrinallum to build on its impressive track record of community strengthening and development.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council receives the Review of the Derrinallum Community Plan**

### **Attachments**

1. Derrinallum Town Survey Results 2019 - Under Separate Cover