



# Connecting communities through spaces

Aspirational Community Hubs Strategy 2019

Baw Baw Shire Council, Version 6, 7 February 2019

Methodology and Background Research

Section 2

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# Background Research and Methodology

This section provide an overview of how research has been carried out to outline the aspirations for Community Hubs throughout the Shire. This overview is structured as follows:

- First, it has reviewed the overall context of Baw Baw Shire by presenting its demographic, planning and geographical data. This sets the base for research of the Baw Baw community.
- Second, a review of Councils wider policy drivers has been reviewed. These formed the key frames for how the research was carried out.
- Third, a review of industry trends around public spaces and community cohesion is presented.
- Lastly, the research methodology used for this project is outlined. This includes the collection of primary data and the way it will be analysed. The main tenant of the research process is that it will consider the Baw Baw Shire region as eight (8) separate areas. It will consider, engage and make recommendations on the basis of Baw Baw Shire being composed of a variety of regions.

## The Baw Baw context

The following section provides a summary of the context in which this project was undertaken including Council's role in the provision of community spaces, the geographical context of the Baw Baw Shire and key population and growth considerations.

This section provides a base for understanding Baw Baw Shire and its constituents.

## Demographic summary

Baw Baw Shire has a population of 48,477 with a similar age profile to Victoria - most of the population being aged between 30 to 64 years (43.9 per cent) or working age. The Shire has a lower proportion of those aged 20 to 29 years, those considered in tertiary education or of young working age (11 per cent) and a slightly higher proportion of the elderly, those aged 75 years and over (8 per cent).

The population is primarily Australian born or of English speaking backgrounds. There is a small community of residents of non-English speaking backgrounds mainly from Asia. Most residents, however, have a high-level of English proficiency. Just 0.5 per cent of the population do not speak English well or not at all and are generally clustered in the Drouin and Warragul areas.

Within the Shire there is some evidence of relative disadvantage according to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), a ranking of areas according to relative socio-economic disadvantage. In Warragul, there are five SA1s (Statistical areas) ranked in SEIFA as demonstrating evidence of significant relative disadvantage, while there are two in Drouin.<sup>1</sup> These are the only areas of disadvantage in Baw Baw Shire according to the SEIFA index.

Below in Table 1, is a demographic snapshot of the Shire. A full set of statistics is located in Appendix three.

**Table 1 Demographic snapshot of Baw Baw Shire**

Indicator	Description
Population (usual place of residence)	48,477
Annualised growth rate 2011-2016	2.5%
Median age	42 years
Median Weekly income	\$585
Labour force participation rate	46%
English proficiency	0.5% speak English not well or not at all.
Motor vehicles per household	40% of households own two motor vehicles
Need for assistance with core activities	5.5%
<b>Disengaged youth (those aged 15 – 24 not engaged in work or study).</b>	540

<sup>1</sup> ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing

<b>Highest year of school completed</b>	31% of residents have completed Year 12 or equivalent, compared to 44% for Victoria
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## Council's role in the provision of community spaces

Across the Shire, Baw Baw has many stand-alone community facilities and spaces. While stand-alone facilities may provide dedicated space for some services and programs, they also reduce flexibility and opportunities for services and programs to integrate. In July 2017 Council undertook an audit of Council-owned buildings and their utilisation. The following outcomes were identified:

- There are 31 public halls (nine Council-owned, two owned by independent committees, and the remainder owned by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)). The overall utilisation of the public halls is considered very low and the condition and size of the spaces vary greatly.
- There are 22 social clubs primarily located on Council-owned (and some DELWP-owned) recreation reserves. Other than the social events hosted by sporting clubs and some private event use, they are largely underutilised facilities for events and as community meeting spaces.
- Minor (Council-owned) public buildings, including over 75 sporting pavilions, 30 reserves with active sporting clubs, 24 ovals, 83 tennis courts, 36 netball courts and 40 cricket nets among others, which vary in size and condition and some of which are extremely underutilised.
- Public buildings, such as the Exhibition Hall, Old Shire Hall, Goods Shed, Drouin RSL, Trafalgar Business Centre, Warragul and Drouin Civic Offices are available for public hire by community and other groups. There are many opportunities and options that have been identified by Council to increase the use of these facilities, particularly raising awareness.
- There are two senior citizen centres in Warragul and Drouin that Council owns but do not manage. These buildings have significant capacity for increased community use as they are largely vacant on weeknights.
- In addition to these facilities Council also has a role in providing spaces for community services and programs such as kindergarten, childcare, maternal and child health services, community health, libraries, etc.

## Planning for community hubs in regional areas

Provision of community infrastructure is often linked to population provision for sustainability and resourcing reasons. This approach can be detrimental to regional and rural towns where a population approach would result in very poor provision. Rural towns can be both physically and socially isolating and providing spaces that connect people is important from a community strengthening perspective, but also to provide static community service provision to ensure the wellbeing of residents.

One of the key principles of Council's *Community Service Planning Framework* (the framework) is 'integration and equity'. The framework outlines that in each major town, medium and small township, one or more community focal points or a community hub will be identified as a 'shared' base for static, mobile and virtual community services, maximising access to a diverse and complementary range of services.

Many rural towns do not have a clear town centre, or the centre is geographically dispersed, therefore providing a focal point may be focused on improving connectedness between spaces and providing increased opportunities for incidental social interaction. Planning for community hubs and spaces across Baw Baw will need to consider the uniqueness of each community, along with their vulnerabilities. This understanding will then inform place-based physical design responses.

## Geographical context of Baw Baw

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the Shire's geographic context. Unless otherwise stated, all data has been compiled from the Census Population and Housing 2016<sup>2</sup>.

Baw Baw Shire is primarily a rural-based municipality made up of many smaller and remote communities. The Shire has a land area of 402,000 hectares with a population of 0.12 persons per hectare. The Shire, however, also has a major peri-urban growth area focused in the centres of Drouin and Warragul.

Most of the Shire's largest towns by population are located along or near to the M1 (Princess Highway) and railway, which runs east from Melbourne and across the centre of the Shire. The Shire's five largest towns by population are shown below Table 2;

<sup>2</sup> ABS 2016 Census Population and Housing

Table 2 Population growth of the five largest towns in the Shire, based on ABS Census of Housing and Population 2011 and 2016.

Town	2011 population	2016 population	% change
Warragul	13,914	15,367	+10.4%
Drouin	9,403	12,034	+27.98%
Trafalgar	3,462	3,779	+9%
Longwarry	1,404	1,992	+41.8%
Yarragon	1,474	1,623	+10.1%

The northern areas of the Shire contain large areas of state and national parks including the Baw Baw National Park. The largest townships of the northern area of the Shire by population are:

- Neerim South: 1,305
- Willow Grove: 593
- Jindivick: 493
- Rawson: 293

The southern parts of the Shire contain significant tracts of farming land and are bound by the Strzelecki Ranges. The largest townships of the southern area of the Shire by population are:

- Thorpdale: 472
- Ellinbank: 232
- Ripplebrook: 223

For this project, the Shire has been divided into eight regions as shown in Figure 2 below.



*Figure 1 Proposed geographic regions*

## Current planning and growth context

By 2031, the resident population of the Shire is expected to increase to 67,700, from 49,000 in 2016, representing a 2.5 per cent annual growth rate (equivalent to an additional 1,247 people each year)<sup>3</sup>. Most of the population growth over the last five years has been in Warragul and Drouin, which increased 13 per cent from 2011 to 2016.<sup>4</sup> Moderate growth is also occurring in other towns along the Princess Highway including Longwarry and Trafalgar.

Population growth in Baw Baw Shire is being driven by several 'push' and 'pull' factors. The push factors include Melbourne's metropolitan boundary expanding eastward and the growth in 'tree change' lifestyle choices<sup>5</sup>. While the pull factors include housing affordability of the Shire as well as lifestyle, employment and business opportunities<sup>6</sup>. As noted in the 'Community Services Planning Framework' (2013), 'Baw Baw Shire is faced with future population growth that will place significant pressure on the capacity of existing services to provide for changing and increasing community needs. Some services may be able to expand in capacity while other services will require greater levels of imagination and creativity to stimulate local solutions that successfully meet community needs' (p.9).

<sup>3</sup> Baw Baw Shire Council, 2013, 'Community Services Planning Framework'

<sup>4</sup> ABS 2016 Census Population and Housing

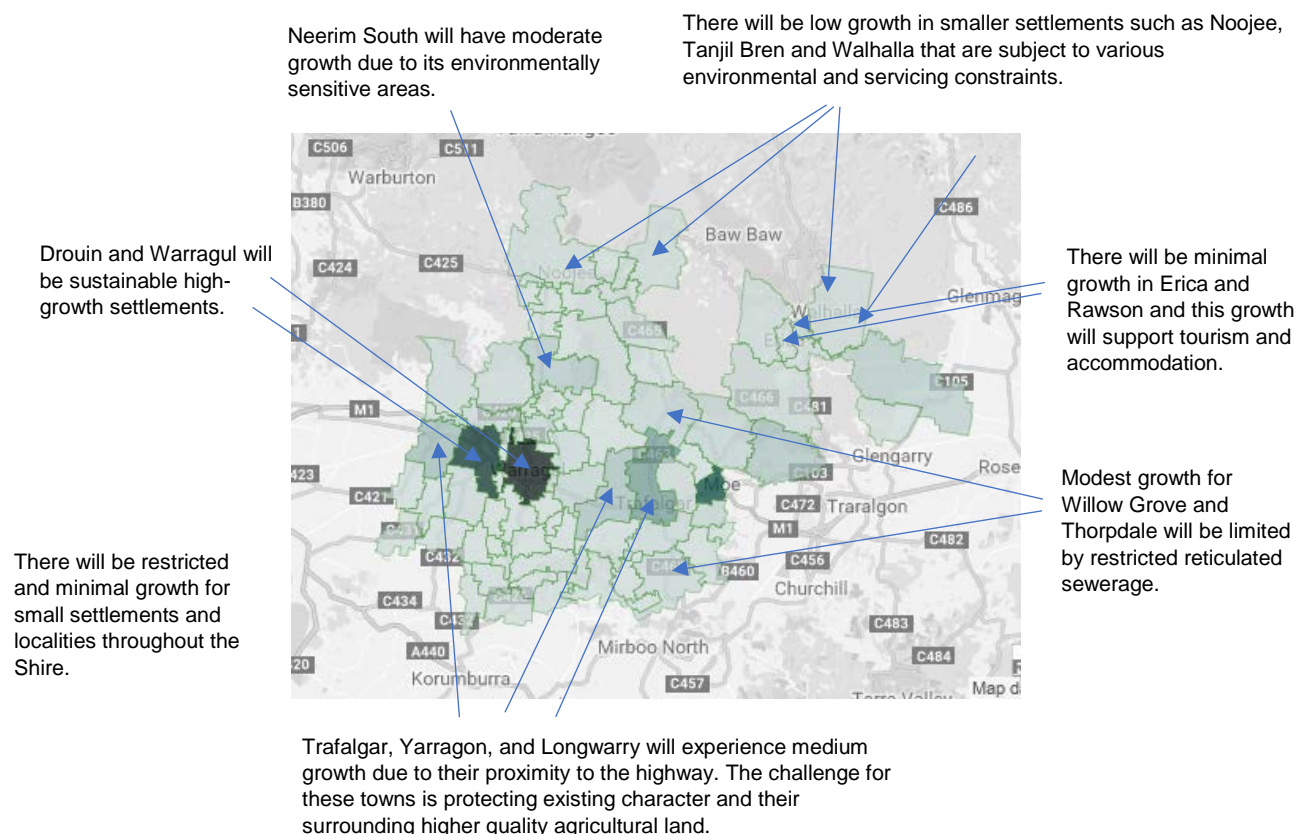
<sup>5</sup> Baw Baw Shire Council, 2013, 'Community Services Planning Framework'

<sup>6</sup> Baw Baw Shire Council, 2013, 'Community Services Planning Framework'

As shown above much of this growth is concentrated and while greater populations can attract superior service provision, they also risk impacting what communities love about their rural towns such as:

- land-use
- services
- local identity
- wellbeing
- infrastructure

Conversely, some of the small communities have declining populations impacting on the viability of existing community service and facility provision. In these cases, residents may feel the townships local identity is being lost and may also face challenges associated with an ageing population. Figure 3 below illustrates the planning and growth context.



Data source: Baw Baw Shire Council, 2013, 'Settlement Management Plan

Figure 2. Growth and settlement context

## Council's current policy drivers

The following section summarises key Council policy drivers behind strengthening community cohesion and connectedness, and the provision of community hubs in the Shire. These have been informed by a review of key Council policies and strategies. A full list of the policies and strategies reviewed is provided in the appendices.

### Community infrastructure is to be multi-use and integrated

As outlined in Council's *10 Year Infrastructure Plan 2017- 2027* (the Plan), the trend across municipalities is towards the development of a range of community facilities as multi-use hubs, including moving away from sole-purpose facilities. The Plan suggests this is the most effective way of optimising use of existing and new facilities, reducing maintenance costs over the life of community assets, and increasing overall community connectedness. The Plan also highlights that the creation of community hubs, delivered in various ways (onsite, outreach, mobile, online, 'virtual') requires careful consideration in terms of design and governance, and commitment from the various community groups that would use them.

Council's *Community Service Planning Framework* also highlights Council's support for multi-use, integrated community facilities and suggests community hub principles should be considered in all aspects of infrastructure planning, master planning, design and the capital works program. The Framework also supports:

- advocating to State Government for the inclusion of kindergartens in schools.
- advocating to State Government for increased community access to educational facilities for a range of services.
- libraries to be multi-functional spaces, integrated with education (particularly tertiary level) and with virtual and on-line services for remote communities.

Council's *Recreation Strategy 2017-2027* includes guiding principles that support multi-use functionality of sporting facilities to promote greater community use, including:

- supporting the development of shared multi-use facilities that comply with relevant sporting design standards
- maximising opportunities for broader community use of recreation reserves by incorporating passive leisure facilities

### Health and wellbeing priorities

The *Baw Baw Shire Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* (MPHWP) identifies five priority health areas. The following table summarises the priorities and strategies that are important considerations in the planning of community spaces:

Table 3. MPHWP 2017-2021 priority areas and strategies relating to community spaces

Strategies	Success factors
<b>Priority area: Improving mental health</b>	
1.3 Improve access to recreation opportunities and places for healthy connections	Public spaces and recreation opportunities are welcoming for people of different ages, cultures, genders and abilities.
1.5 Promote positive mental health	People create environments that make it easier to stay mentally well.
1.6 Provide mental health services	People have access to mental health services that meet their needs.
<b>Priority area: Preventing violence and injury</b>	
2.3 Support the implementation of Child Safe Standards in organisations and the community	Organisation and the community understand the Child Safe Standards and make changes to their environments to meet the standards.
<b>Priority area: Healthy eating and active living</b>	
3.4 Connect food producers, suppliers and retailers with each other and Baw Baw residents	People can get a good variety of locally grown fresh food.



3.6 Improve access to active living programs, sport and active recreation, and community infrastructure	It is easy for people with diverse needs to use community infrastructure and participate in active living programs, sport and active recreation.
3.7 Build people's capacity to eat healthy and be more active where we live, learn, work and play through healthy design, education and policy	The environment makes it easy for people to behave in healthy ways. People take action to encourage healthy eating and being active in their own environments, and for the people around them.
<b>Priority area: Reducing harm from gambling, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs</b>	
4.2 Support smoke-free living	People breath smoke-free air in public places where children live and play, and where people dine.
<b>Priority area: Leadership for a healthy Baw Baw</b>	
5.1 Maintain or improve the provision of public health services and infrastructure	People will have the same or better access to services and infrastructure that protects public health.

## Barriers to participation in recreation

Community engagement undertaken as part of the development of the *Baw Baw Recreation Strategy 2017-2027* (the Strategy) identified the following top barriers to participating in recreation across the Shire:

- facilities are poorly maintained (37 per cent)
- lack of toilets at parks/sports grounds (35 per cent)
- limited provision of spaces (28 per cent)
- lack of parking (26 per cent)

The engagement highlighted that the community's top priorities for improving participation in recreation were:

- improved quality of sport grounds/ovals/courts (40 per cent)
- provision of places/facilities/programs for young people (36 per cent)
- increased supporting facilities including car parking and amenities (33 per cent)
- new/upgraded cycle and walking paths (29 per cent)
- more sports grounds/ovals/courts (27 per cent)

The Strategy also highlights the national, state and local trends in increased participation in informal, unstructured recreation is greater than participation in organised sports. The Strategy recommends considering initiatives such as 'challenge parks', playgrounds (nature play, access, sensory, themed, increased engagement in design stage), technology-based activation of parks for young people, re-purpose unused facilities (such as tennis courts) where appropriate.

## Opportunities for young people to connect

Council is currently in the process of developing its *Youth Strategy 2018*, and as such has been engaging with young people to understand their issues and aspirations. One of the questions asked as part of the engagement included 'Baw Baw is a beautiful place to be, what can we do to keep you around?'. As illustrated in Figure 4, the following answers received the most support:

- create new spaces for you to hang out with friends (54.77 per cent)
- create more events that benefit you (51.50 per cent).

This is consistent with community engagement findings from the *Baw Baw Recreation Strategy 2017-2027*, which identified the desire for more places and programs for young people.



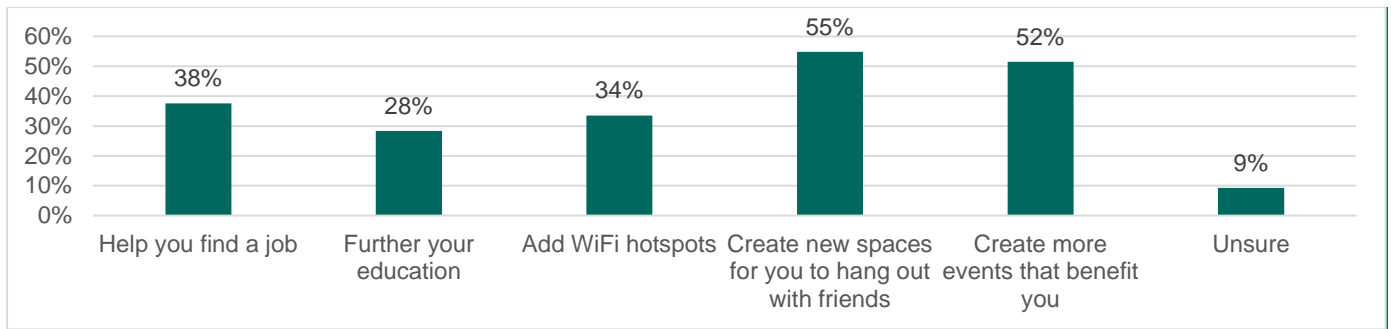


Figure 3 Baw Baw Youth Survey 2018 survey results ‘... what can we do to keep you around?’

## Building on existing planned community infrastructure provision and improvements

There are several existing strategies and planned projects that Council has identified in relation to the provision of new or upgraded community spaces and places. These have all been considered in the development of this strategy. These have been included in three, within their relevant locality, and include recommendations made in developer contribution plans, service strategies and urban design frameworks.

## Supporting Aboriginal community connectedness

In 2014, Council supported the Kurnai Nations Company to undertake a needs assessment project<sup>7</sup> that sought to explore in greater depth, the barriers and issues Aboriginal people in the Baw Baw Shire face in their day to day lives. The assessment identified the following key findings in relation to the needs of the Aboriginal community for community connectedness and community spaces and places:

- There is a strong sense of community within the connected Aboriginal community.
- Events that support the Aboriginal community coming together were highlighted as the most important and positive things in their lives.
- The importance of these community gatherings supports the recommendation to establish a healing centre that will engage and deliver a holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal people.
- The community highlighted that there needs to be more assistance in utilising local sporting club and facilities. The two main barriers identified was cost and the feeling of not belonging.
- Information about what is available is not being tailored for the Aboriginal community.
- It is often felt amongst community that there is no connection to the Council and when they do use Council facilities they do not feel comfortable because ‘it is not our place’.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Mullet and Lisa Williams, 2014, ‘Six Generations Yarning Together – Local Aboriginal Needs Analysis Project 2014 Report’, prepared for the Kurnai Nations Company, funded by Baw Baw Shire Council

## Better practice and industry trends

The following section highlights some key learnings from better practice and industry trends that should be considered in planning for community hubs across the shire.

### The role of public spaces in supporting strong communities

Research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>8</sup> identified public spaces play a vital role in the social and economic life of communities. They act as a 'self-organising public service', a shared resource in which experiences and value are created. The report also highlighted that the success of public space is not solely in the hands of the architect, urban designer or town planner; it relies also on people adopting, using and managing the space – people make places, more than places make people. The report identified the following different roles that public spaces play in the social life of communities:

- the exchange of goods and services e.g. a community market or garden
- education or sharing of ideas
- play
- promoting cultural awareness and cohesion

### The solution to improved community cohesion and community connectedness isn't always physical infrastructure

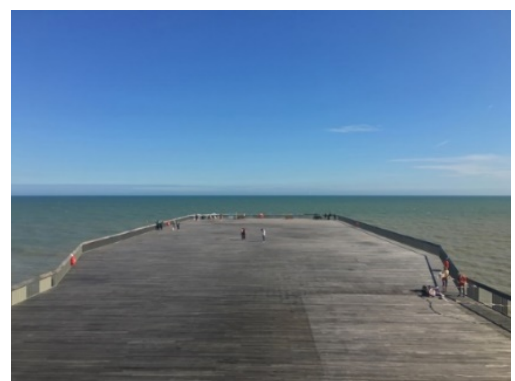
There is large amounts of research that support the role of physical spaces in fostering social cohesion. VicHealth described a 'liveable' city or local area as containing public spaces that are safe, welcoming and aesthetically engaging. It describes how a public space that is well used can create a sense of community, belonging and identity. This can be fostered by the space's location, natural beauty, or because of good design.<sup>9</sup> It is more the opportunity that the space provides for programming or incidental interactions, rather than the importance of the space itself.

The Neighbourhood Project run by CoDesign Studio is testing the social impact of supporting community-led placemaking initiatives. The project is illustrating how providing practical skills in placemaking, and strengthening community ownership of public spaces in neighbourhoods, can build improved social cohesion and community connectedness. By Government stepping back and supporting community members to take the lead, they are supporting increased sense of local pride and care of public spaces and improved utilisation of public spaces for community activity. It is the process of working together to undertake the placemaking project that creates the social impact, not necessarily the space itself.

The findings from The Neighbourhood Project are supported by the research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which identified that the most successful social spaces were places that encouraged people to play a role in the evolution of activities and to help shape these places.

A better practice case study that illustrates the importance of community-led place activation is the 2017 RIBA Stirling Prize Winner – Hastings Pier, United Kingdom. This historic pier was closed in 2008 due to its state of disrepair. However, after a long battle by the community the pier was purchased by the Hastings Pier Charity for £1 in 2013 to drive the pier's restoration and manage its future. They were able to raise enough funds to restore the pier and construct a new visitor centre.

The design of this space was led by the community in partnership with the Architect dRMM with the objective of creating an open space, recognising the importance of space for citizens to occupy and make their own rather than imposing what the team referred to as a 'hero' building. The brief was to design a strong, community led and owned service platform which could accommodate whole host of uses, from music concerts, to international markets.



Source: © Alex de Rijke

Figure 4. Hastings Pier restoration

### Multi-purpose facilities and maximising what we have

<sup>8</sup> Ken Worpole and Katharine Knox, 'The social value of public spaces', *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

<sup>9</sup> John McLeod, Simon Pryer, John Meade, 2004, 'Health in public spaces – promoting mental health and wellbeing through the Arts and Environment Scheme', *Prepared for the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation*

Victorian Government policy encourages joint service and facility planning and delivery, particularly across different levels and departments within government. The State's 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy<sup>10</sup> highlighted that a 2015 report by the local Government sector found that 40 per cent of their community infrastructure is currently not considered to be fit-for-purpose and requires significant investment in maintenance or renewal to bring it up to standard. The strategy also reflects that although the cost spent on maintenance may be better spent on a new facility, communities have strong ties to these spaces and are often resistant to them changing. The strategy recommends that the Victorian Government assist local government to transition these assets to become fit-for-purpose over the coming years through a fund tied to criteria. It also recommends targeting areas experiencing strong population growth or rural areas with constrained resources in the first instance. The recommendations broadly cover:

- better use of existing public spaces.
- turning schools into places for the whole community.
- upgrading existing facilities and building new ones that meet the needs of more than just one group and respond to the changing needs of the community.

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<sup>10</sup> Infrastructure Victoria, 2016, 'Victoria's 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy'.

# Research Methodology

The purpose of the project was to develop a Strategy that contains a shared understanding of what constitutes a 'community hub', including values and principles and recognition of how these may change to respond to the different geographical settings across the Shire. To do this, a mixed methodology approach was employed in two phases. The first phase involved a background review, and included:

- determining geographic setting
- demographic analysis
- policy and literature review

While the second phase involved primary research, and included:

- community engagement
- stakeholder engagement

The following sections expand upon these methods, detail the method of data analysis and the limitations of the methodology.

## Background review

The purpose of the background review was to provide context to the primary research by identifying evidence of potential need or disadvantage and to provide a framework to analyse primary research findings.

## Geographical setting

For this project, the Shire was divided into eight geographic regions. The regions were predefined by Council based on geographical evidence and demonstration of similar patterns of function and characteristics. The Shire was divided into regions to guide localised analysis and to make tailor-made recommendations. Council may review and realign the regions based on the findings of this study. A map of the geographical regions is provided within the Baw Baw Context section.

## Demographic analysis

A demographic analysis using 2016 census data was conducted to identify population trends of service delivery age groups across the Shire. This was completed primarily using the online analytical tool REMPLAN which allows users to create 'projects' based on different geographic boundaries and subsequently map census data. Eight 'projects' were created that directly corresponded with the eight geographic regions. Demographic data from each region was then benchmarked against demographics of the Shire.

## Policy review

A contextual review of Council's policies and strategies was performed to identify overarching principles guiding community hub provision across the Shire. This was conducted to understand known issues, opportunities and planned projects relating to community hubs or spaces for each region. In total, 26 Council documents were reviewed for the project. The following is a list of these:

- Community Plans
  - Yarragon Community Plan
  - Thorpdale Community Plan
  - Tanjil Bren Community Plan
  - Tanjil Valley District Community Plan
  - Seaview Community Plan
  - Rokeby Crossover Community Plan
  - Rawson Community Plan
  - Poowong East Community Plan
  - Noojee Community Plan
  - Neerim and District Community Plan
  - Longwarry Community Plan

- Jindivick Community Plan
- Erica Community Plan
- Drouin Community Plan
- Darnum Community Plan
- Baw Baw Shire Long Term Infrastructure Plan 2017-2026
- Community Service Planning Framework, 2013
- Baw Baw Shire Municipal Early Years Plan 2015-2018
- Draft Youth Strategy 2018
- Baw Baw Recreation Strategy 2017 – 2027
- Draft Municipal Early Years Infrastructure Plan
- Neerim South Urban Design Framework
- Drouin Town Centre Strategy
- Six Generations Yarning Together Report
- Baw Baw Youth Survey 2018
- Warragul PSP
- Drouin PSP

## Literature Review

A review of literature was undertaken to identify the role that community spaces play in fostering community connectedness. Additionally, the review examined key principles that should be considered by Baw Baw Shire in their future planning of community spaces and places. Literature was sourced from academia, government publications and practitioner reports to provide a balance of views. This review provided the project with a framework to compare other research findings and to inform recommendations. The following articles and publications were reviewed as part of this project:

- CoDesign Studio, 2017, 'The Neighbourhood Project', available: <https://theneighbourhoodproject.org/>
- Heart Foundation, 2018, 'Healthy Active by Design'
- Infrastructure Victoria, 2016, 'Victoria's 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy'
- John McLeod, Simon Pryer, John Meade, 2004, 'Health in public spaces – promoting mental health and wellbeing through the Arts and Environment Scheme', Prepared for the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
- Ken Worpole and Katharine Knox, 'The social value of public spaces', Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Linda Mullet and Lisa Williams, 2014, 'Six Generations Yarning Together – Local Aboriginal Needs Analysis Project 2014 Report', prepared for the Kurnai Nations Company, funded by Baw Baw Shire Council
- Royal Academy of British Architect, 2017, 'Hastings Pier by dRMM Architects', available: <https://www.architecture.com/awards-and-competitions-landing-page/awards/riba-regional-awards/riba-south-east-award-winners/2017/hastings-pier>
- VicHealth, 2005, 'Social Inclusion as a determinant of mental health and wellbeing'
- Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development, 2010, 'A Guide to Governing Shared Community Facilities'
- Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development, 2011, 'Indicators of community strength in Victoria: framework and evidence'

## Primary research

Primary research was undertaken through community and stakeholder engagement across the Shire. The following paragraphs outline the engagement approach, while a copy of the engagement and research frame is the appendices.

### Community and stakeholder engagement

Community engagement activities were conducted in each of the project's eight regions, as well as through an online hub. The stakeholder engagement was conducted through a workshop with service providers that operate out of hubs or hub like spaces across the Shire. The objectives of the community and stakeholder engagement were to:

- build a greater understanding of the existing social context including current patterns, strengths, issues and opportunities.
- determine the community's aspirations for community spaces and the role they play in meeting community needs.
- understand the current value of community spaces and any structured or perceived barriers to the use of and access to existing spaces.
- understand the information needs of the community in relation to what community spaces, programs, services and activities are available.
- explore the different roles of community, service providers and Council in facilitating community strengthening.

## Community engagement activities

To engage the general Baw Baw community, two engagement techniques were employed: community 'pop-ups' and an online engagement hub.

The pop-ups involved setting up a marquee in busy and popular locations in each of the eight regions. At the pop-ups the engagement team asked passers-by to fill in surveys containing questions from the engagement frame (refer to appendices for a copy of the survey). Additionally, participants were able to annotate maps of the region to identify places or spaces they believe serve as community hubs. This method was chosen to allow for incidental engagement, whereby community members who would not otherwise engage were presented with the opportunity. In total ten pop-ups were held at the following locations:

- Rokeby Community Market (Region one – Neerim South, Noojee and surrounds)
- Sunday at Noojee Hotel (Region one – Neerim South, Noojee and surrounds)
- Rawson – West Gippsland Mobile Library (Region two – Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and surrounds)
- Hill End vs Thorpdale, Mid Gippsland Football League (Region three – Hill End and Willow Grove)
- Longwarry Fire Brigade Market (Region four – Longwarry)
- Drouin Craft and Produce Market (Region five – Drouin and Warragul)
- Smith St in Warragul (Region five – Drouin and Warragul)
- Yarragon Market (Region six – Yarragon and surrounds)
- Trafalgar Community Garden (Region seven – Trafalgar and surrounds)
- Ellinbank vs Nyora, Ellinbank and Districts Football League (Region eight – North of the Strzelecki Ranges)

The 'online engagement hub' was a web page dedicated to the project. It contained an interactive map in which participants dropped 'pins' on key locations and subsequently wrote a description on their pin drop. Participants could select three styles of pins, these were:

- places they currently connect
- barriers to connection
- potential opportunities to connect

The three pin styles were chosen based upon the approach detailed in the research frame. An online hub was established to reach a broad section of the community, particularly those who lived in remote areas or had barriers to other forms of participation.

Service providers, an identified stakeholder group in the project, participated through a group workshop. The workshop aimed to better understand current service provision and infrastructure needs in respect to community spaces. This included how current spaces function and the identification of future opportunities.

The workshop was facilitated by an engagement team member, who guided participants through a workbook and group discussions. A copy of the workbook with questions is shown in Appendix three.

## Recruitment and advertisement

To generate interest, knowledge and participation in the project, several methods of recruitment and advertisement were used. These were:

- developing a community directory of social and business leaders of Baw Baw and sending out regular emails about the project
- using the 'snowball' sampling method and having community leaders generate interest amongst their networks
- advertising pop-up dates through social media channels, including the Council Facebook and Instagram accounts
- advertising pop-up dates on the Council website
- having key Council members discuss the project in local media, including print and radio
- handing out flyers at pop-up events
- using Council staff relationships to contact services
- requesting service providers to use the 'snowball' sampling method and inform their service users of the project

An initial mailing list was compiled of key community members and organisation. This included 190 subscribers, of which 130 were linked to an organisation. A further 164 people registered their interest online and were sent eight emails throughout the project period while 42 were contacted via paper based mailouts.

The project was advertised through local media. A Baw Baw Shire Council media release was sent out on 18 May and was published on the Council website. An article was published in the The Baw Baw Shire and West Gippsland Trader on 24 May 2018, which discussed the project and opportunities to get involved. Additionally, the May edition of Council News which appears in The Warragul and Drouin Gazette, The Baw Baw Shire and West Gippsland Trader and The Traf News all included a section detailing the project and options for getting involved.

Advertising of the project through Council's social media accounts reached a total of 44,312 people, of which 2,003 people were considered engaged. To be considered engaged on social media, a person must either react, comment or share a post on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter rather than simply viewing a post. The breakdown of these numbers is demonstrated below in table 4.

**Table 4 Social media engagement statistics**

<b>Social media platform</b>	<b>People reached</b>	<b>People engaged</b>
Facebook	42,456	1,957 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Link clicks: 1,397</li><li>- Reactions, comments and shares: 560</li></ul>
Instagram	707	38
Twitter	1,149	8
Total	44,312	2,003

## Data analysis

Community and stakeholder engagement data was analysed by finding themes throughout the data. This method was chosen as it allows for the analysis of large amounts of data. All data was compiled and collated into a spreadsheet. Data codes were developed iteratively through reviewing background research, input from Council officers and primary data.

An analysis of the issues and opportunities for the future provision of community hubs was undertaken at a regional level based on the background research and engagement with the community and service providers. A set of community hub principles was developed based on the combined analysis of the community engagement and background review.

## Limitations

While the project methodology was rigorous and produced valuable research results, there are some limitations which must be acknowledged.

### Lack of a facilities audit



Due to the scope and objectives of the project, a facilities audit was not conducted on hubs or hub like spaces and places across the Shire. Background research produced some data relating to facility provision and condition, however, this data was not exhaustive. This data was used when available, while anecdotal evidence was used in place of audit data when unavailable.

## Mismatch in participation rates across regions

Project participation rates were not evenly spread across the regions. Roughly half of the participants (103) were from Region five – Drouin and Warragul, while Region eight – North of the Strzelecki Ranges had four participants. This mismatch in participation may be a result of differing population sizes between regions or lack of population centres in some regions.

## Engagement lead times and inclement weather

Some constraints were placed on the engagement due to short lead times for pop-up engagements. Many events, such as outdoor markets, do not run during winter. As such, some pop-up engagements did not have the ideal amount of lead time. Similarly, some engagements ran during cold and windy weather. Both factors may have impacted on participation rates.

## Not all participants provided demographic data

Some participants did not provide any demographic data. These participants most likely would have contributed through mapping tools at pop-ups or via online.

## What has been produced

Pursuing this shire wide Community Hubs Strategy has resulted in a document for each of the eight regions throughout Baw Baw Shire. These documents provide an overview of each region's geographic and demographic attributes, shows the engagement findings carried out through the primary research phase and presents principles for community hubs in each region and recommendations to be considered for implementation by Baw Baw Shire Council.

This strategy includes an action plan that considers each of the regions and their recommendations. While the strategy presents the aspirations of communities throughout the region, Council must consider competing demands for funding across Council business and ensure that recommendations are prioritised accordingly.