



Connecting communities through spaces

Community Hubs Action Plan 2019 - 2024

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Action Plan

Baw Baw Shire Council's vision is for happy, healthy people sharing prosperity and knowledge from living sustainably and in harmony with our rural identity, thriving villages, productive and inspiring landscapes.

Vibrant communities is one of the four main objectives that has been outlined in the 2017-2021 Council Plan that will help achieve Council's vision.

To elaborate on this objective, Council seeks to support the vibrancy and character of our local community as it grows and changes, through good planning, provision of its community focused services, facilities and infrastructure, and through support for local communities, health and wellbeing, recreation, youth, arts culture and events.

To do this effectively, a need was identified to develop a coordinated approach to community hubs and precincts across the municipality.

In mid 2018, Capire Consulting was engaged to assist Council. Capire Consulting were tasked with:

- Developing a clear understanding of what a community hub means for communities in Baw Baw Shire and outlining the key principles and values,
- Reaching out across the municipality to understand the community's views, and
- Making recommendations to Council about what is needed to improve community hubs and precincts across the municipality.

Ten pop up engagement sessions were conducted across the municipality, along with workshops with Council and service providers. An online engagement hub and social media was also created to allow for community input for those that couldn't make it to a pop up. Over 44,000 people were reached through the engagement process.

Capire's report to Council is titled "Connecting Communities Through Spaces – Community Hub Aspirations" and uses a place based approach to its recommendations. The comprehensive report makes 28 recommendations about community hub provision and/or activation for Baw Baw.

The recommendations relating to community hubs in Baw Baw Shire are broadly summarised in Figure 1.

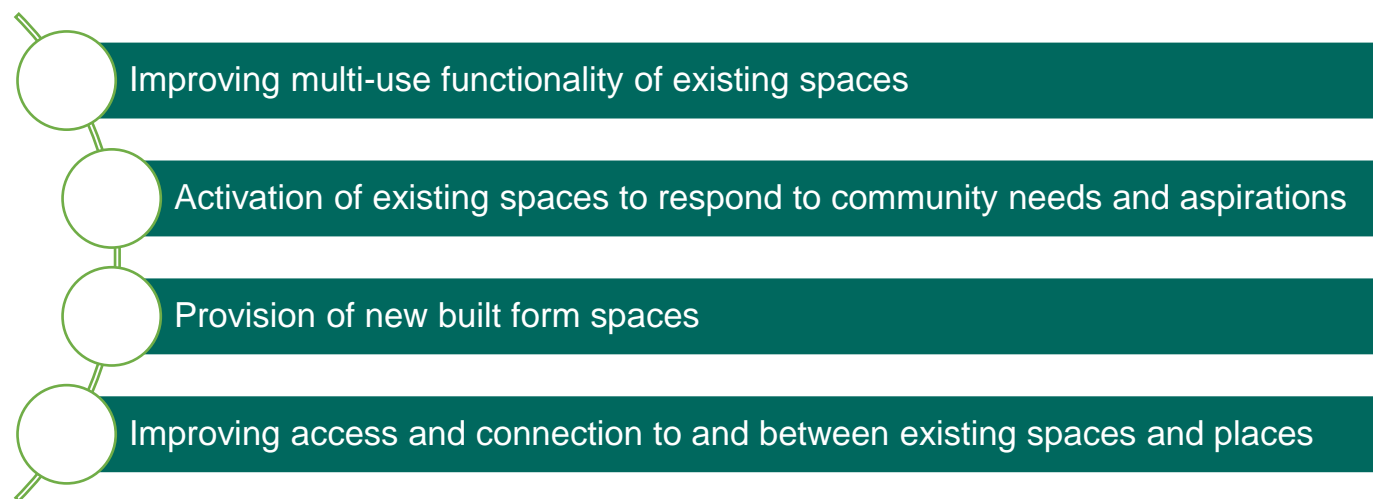


Figure 1

For better understanding the different needs across the municipality, the analysis and recommendations have been broken down to into eight regions. The regions have been defined based on proximity to service centres. The eight regions can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2

The 28 recommendations made in the “Connecting Communities Through Spaces – Community Hub Aspirations” report can be seen in Figure 3.

Neerim South, Noojee and surrounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Work with community to produce a widely supported proposal for additional community space that may be required in Neerim South ○Consider multi-use functionality of existing spaces through the region eg Rokeby Hall ○Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Noojee ○Consider improving multi-use functionality in Noojee ○Support the provision of community spaces throughout the region
Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and surrounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Consider consolidation and improvement of multi-use function of existing community facilities in Erica ○Consider colocation with Rawson Primary School where facilities can be shared ○Consider improvement to mobile community services
Hill End and Willow Grove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Support the activation of existing spaces, particularly the Old School in Hill End ○Explore multi-use functionality of the Old School including the consideration of mobile services ○Continue to support Willow Grove Recreation Reserve
Longwarry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Improving access and connectivity between existing spaces and place ○Improve multi-use functionality of existing, well-cared for spaces such as the Labertouche & District Community Centre ○Improve connectivity over the rail line ○Consider recommendations made in the Longwarry UDF for Bennet Street Reserve ○Improve connection to the Bandicoot trail
Drouin and Warragul
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Work with community on the desired size and service mix of a new integrated community hub facility ○Consider opportunities to work with the Drouin community to support their purchase and activation of the Old Drouin Butter Factory ○Work with the community in Warragul and Drouin as new developments arise ○Continue to engage with youth to identify appropriate provision of a youth focused space ○Continue to engage with Traditional Owner groups to identify suitable opportunities for a cultural space ○Create an integrated master plan for the civic precinct in Warragul
Yarragon and surrounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Consider opportunities to improve the multi-use functionality of existing spaces such as Yarragon Public Hall ○Consider opportunities to support community-led activation of the old Yarragon Primary School site
Trafalgar and surrounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Trafalgar ○Consider repurposing the existing kindergarten facility (dependent on successful advocacy to the state government) ○Improve the connectivity between Trafalgar and Trafalgar East with off-road trails
Towns of the Strzelecki Ranges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Consider improving the multi-use functionality of existing spaces and places to provide for mobile programs and services

Figure 3

Project prioritisation

Council has reviewed all the recommendations proposed and has determined the priority actions for implementation over the next five years. These priorities have been determined through current and future community needs, community feedback through the development of this strategy as well as considering other key strategy recommendations that have been incorporated into this document.

The project prioritisation will be influenced by the results of the co-design. Accordingly, it will be confirmed after the co-design workshops and the public exhibition period.

Baw Baw Shire Council has considered the recommendations made by Capire and the communities' aspirations for community hubs heard through the engagement process. Given the significance of these recommendations and resourcing required to implement them, a five year Community Hubs action plan has been created.

This action plan sets out the priority actions from each geographic area that Council will work on over the next five years. The actions for 2019 to 2024 can be seen in Figure 4. These actions have been prioritised from the 28 recommendations made by Capire based on community feedback from the engagement process, current and projected future community needs, other existing related council initiatives and the readiness of each action to be delivered. Further information about this prioritisation can be found in Table 1 in the Appendix.

The following are the priority recommendations to be considered for implementation in the first 5 years:

- Region 1 - Neerim South, Noojee and surrounds
 - Work with community to produce a widely supported proposal for additional community space that may be required in Neerim South
 - Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Noojee
 - Consider improving multi-use functionality in Noojee
- Region 2 - Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and surrounds
 - Consider improvement to mobile community services
- Region 3 - Hill End and Willow Grove
 - Support the activation of existing spaces, particularly the Old School in Hill End
 - Explore multi-use functionality of the Old School including the consideration of mobile services
- Region 4 - Longwarry
 - Consider recommendations made in the Longwarry UDF for Bennet Street Reserve
- Region 5 - Drouin and Warragul
 - Work with community on the desired size and service mix of a new integrated facility
 - Create an integrated master plan for the Civic Precinct in Warragul
- Region 6 - Yarragon and surrounds
 - Consider opportunities to support community-led activation of the old Yarragon Primary School site
- Region 7 - Trafalgar and surrounds
 - Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Trafalgar
- Region 8 - Towns of the Strzelecki Ranges
 - Consider improving the multi-use functionality of existing spaces and places to provide for mobile programs and services

Table 2 in the appendix set outs the proposed scheduling of these priority actions over the next five years. This scheduling may be subject to Council allocating the required funds to progress each action in the relevant financial year.

There will be a need to evaluate the progress and review the five-year action plan prior to its conclusion in 2024. This will enable Council to determine what actions have been completed and those that still require further work. An updated five-year community hubs action plan can then be developed to further progress Capire's 28 recommendations.

Funding

How much are the actions likely to cost?

The potential costs for each action in the “Connecting Communities Through Spaces – Community Hub Aspirations” report have been estimated. These costs are high level and are likely to change as each action is further scoped and developed.

The total projected costs of the 28 recommendations is in the order of \$44 million, whilst within the five year action plan actions are projected to cost in the order of \$12.17 million. The five year action plan implementation costs are outlined in Table 2 in the appendix.

The Drouin and Warragul region requires the most significant funding (approximately \$10.25 million) over the next five years due to the proposed provision of additional community space and a new integrated community hub facility. These actions will not be able to be realised without significant external funding support.

How will the actions in this five-year action plan be funded?

A combination of funding sources will need to be utilised to complete the actions outlined in this five year action plan. These include:

- Council funds:
 - The Long Term Infrastructure Plan (LTIP) sets out the Council capital funding plan for the medium term. Council will need to fund any recommendations from this strategy through the LTIP process.
- The Community Infrastructure Cash Reserve:
 - Council determined in 2017 to allocate \$2.5 million towards community infrastructure. This reserve was established for progressing community infrastructure, including community hubs related infrastructure projects.
- Grants and funding partnerships:
 - Baw Baw Shire applies for funding grants on a regular basis. These grants are usually either funded by the State or Federal Government and help Council to deliver significant infrastructure projects. There are also examples across Victoria where funding partnerships have been developed between the tiers of government resulting in multi-million-dollar infrastructure outcomes ie \$12.9 million Merrifield West Northern Community Hub.
- Borrowings:
 - Council may need to consider borrowing capital if suitable grant opportunities or funding do not arise. Baw Baw Shire typically uses this option as a last resort given the servicing costs of borrowed funds. Alternatively, the rate at which this action plan is implemented can be slowed.

A breakdown of the proposed funding sources for the five-year actions can be found in Table 2 in the appendix.

Potential Funding Sources

Project funding for integrated community facilities and public realm infrastructure will likely be sourced from several funding sources. This will be subject to project partners, functions and uses.

This section provides an overview of current funding programs that could be relevant for a facility and public realm development in Victoria. Each funding program has dedicated criteria that applicants must respond to. Applicability will depend on the chosen location for projects and the status of the funding programs at the time of the development noting that funding programs change which is normally linked to the budget cycles of government. Capire recommends that funding options are continually reviewed particularly when the Victorian State Budget is released in May of each year. The funding programs are outlined in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1 Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport, Resources (Regional Development Victoria)
– Productive and Liveable Cities & Centres Program

Program description	Funding criteria
<p>The Productive and Liveable Cities & Centres is a Regional Infrastructure Fund program stream. It will support significant infrastructure projects in regional Victoria.</p> <p>The program seeks to support projects that seek to increase spending within regional cities, centres and towns and improve access and connectivity to between transport, retail, services and cultural hubs.</p>	<p>Projects will be considered on an individual basis and will need to address distinct criteria, including how the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the economic performance of the precinct, city, town • demonstrate environmental sustainability in its design and development, and optimise the appropriate use of the areas own resources • adopt universal design principles • improve business, transport, retail, education, social, cultural and industry linkages and integration and support livability, access and connectivity that is appropriate for the community • demonstrate use of integrated land-use model • have a precinct plan in place.

Table 2 Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport, Resources (Regional Development Victoria)
– Rural Development Program

Program description	Funding criteria
<p>The Rural Development Program is to support growing the Victorian regional economy, by assisting rural Victoria’s businesses and communities. The program stream will do this by investing in local infrastructure, creating opportunity for economic growth, and enhancing rural Victoria’s attractiveness and livability.</p> <p>It will provide grants for infrastructure projects that have the potential to stimulate the economic activity of rural areas.</p>	<p>Projects seeking funding will need to demonstrate how they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve economic performance • harness key regional strengths • improve the livability and attractiveness of rural towns • enhance the resilience and competitiveness of the location. <p>Organisation and bodies that are eligible to apply for funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private sector business and agencies • business and industry groups • local government authorities • not-for-profit and community groups that are an incorporated body, cooperative or association and have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or can provide written advice from the Australian Tax Office that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

Table 3 Latrobe Valley Authority - Latrobe Valley Community Facility Fund

Program description	Funding criteria
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To support community projects that will improve the amenity and livability of the Latrobe Valley.

The funding will support the Latrobe Valley region to build strong and resilient communities by investing in community-led initiatives and partnerships under the following two streams:

- Livable Latrobe Valley –support for projects that will make the Latrobe Valley a better place to live, attracting new businesses and residents and helping people to make a difference in their own community.
- Active Latrobe Valley – support for projects designed to make communities a healthier place to live, concentrating on sport and recreation, including open space improvements for families, residents and visitors to enjoy.

30% - What will the project achieve?

Applications will need to demonstrate how the project will:

- Improve the livability, resilience and competitiveness of the Latrobe Valley.
- Improve the attractiveness of the Latrobe Valley rural cities and towns to businesses and families seeking to move to rural Victoria.
- Deliver beneficial economic impact.

30% - Why is the project needed?

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- Is supported by the local government authority, by the community and is consistent with local plans, shared priorities and the directions of regional strategic plans.
- Addresses an existing identified gap or issue.
- Has an identified need for the project or strategic planning supported by evidence of previous investigations undertaken.
- Is supported by local knowledge and information demonstrating the challenges being faced by the Latrobe Valley.

20% - How will the project be delivered?

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- Is investment ready, supported by a clear approach and realistic timeframes.
- Is financially viable, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money.
- Incorporates principles of environmental sustainability and addresses Universal Design while complying with relevant anti-discrimination legislation (for infrastructure projects).
- Uses materials and resources to deliver the project which strengthen the Latrobe Valley community and economy.

20% - Who is involved?

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- Employs a collaborative approach with a range of partners and indicates how they will contribute to the project;
- Is capable of being implemented or can draw upon personnel with expertise to manage the project; and
- Is proposed by a financially viable applicant who is capable of managing and completing the project.

Lastly, Baw Baw Shire is to provide project proposals to contribute to the advocacy for the development of a Commonwealth 'Community Infrastructure' fund. This advocacy is being led by the Australian Local Government Association.

"ALGA is advocating for the Federal Government to establish a regional and community infrastructure funding program which would invest \$300 million per annum over four years. This program is estimated to have an economic impact \$1.41 billion in additional GDP, creating 3,700 new jobs by year three.

Local government is responsible for community infrastructure with an estimated written down value of \$354 billion and an estimated replacement value of \$438 billion. The 2015 State of the Assets report concluded that 11 per cent of this infrastructure is in poor or very poor condition despite the sector's intensive focus in recent years on strategic asset management.

Well-located, well-designed and properly maintained community infrastructure helps produce better quality outcomes for Australian communities as well as facilitating greater social inclusion. It also helps achieve other important social and regional policy outcomes, including attraction and retention of skilled workers, community health and well-being, social cohesion and tolerance, building social capital and enabling broad-based education and learning.

Local government's community infrastructure includes a large range of arts, cultural, educational, sporting and recreation facilities. There is a need for resources to ensure that local community infrastructure across a range of activities can be brought up to a standard which allows equitable access for all, including people with disability, women and older people.

Funding support for community infrastructure will enable all local councils to plan and deliver adequate and appropriate community infrastructure. ALGA is urging political parties to commit to specific local government community infrastructure funding at the level of \$300 million per annum over the next four years." – [Australian Local Government Association](#)

Implementation plan

The implementation plan will cover two '5 year' periods. At the completion of the first 5 year period, an interim review of the action plan along with its recommendations will be undertaken.

Through incorporating the above priority recommendations in the Long Term Infrastructure Plan, various programs can be utilised for funding such as the Footpath Program, Placemaking Program, Council Building Revitalisation Program. For any funding gaps – external funding will be sought. From there, each of the recommendations are to be included in the capital program for delivery within each financial year.

What are the next steps?

Baw Baw Shire Council will work with the community to further refine the scope of the larger scale recommendations, like the proposal for a new integrated community hub in Drouin.

Codesign workshops will be advertised and held to ensure that any proposed infrastructure meets the community's current and future service needs. Once the scope of these projects is refined, planning and design can begin. Having these projects designed and planned will ensure that Baw Baw is best placed for future funding grants when they arise.

The following table provides an example of the approach for undertaking a co-design workshop in Drouin for a possible new integrated Community Hub facility:

Item	Purpose	Output
Presentation of findings - Background review - Community engagement	To educate the community about the outcomes of the background review and community and stakeholder engagement.	Community have a greater understanding of the journey and how recommendations have been determined.

Item	Purpose	Output
Group activity: Review findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of agreement - Surprises - What might be missing 	To validate the findings from the background review and community engagement.	Confirmation of needs and opportunities for a new community hub
Group activity: Design response to meet need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service needs (physical space requirements, integration opportunities, locational considerations) - Community space needs (physical space requirements, integration opportunities, locational considerations). 	To co-design the elements of the new community hub or hubs, with consideration for integration opportunities and locational requirements e.g. what services and spaces should go together and where.	Data needed to create a mud map for the new community hub.
Group activity: Governance and operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council's role - Community's role - Service provider roles 	To understand governance and operation preferences along with the appetite for community-led operation and activation of the spaces.	Guidance for Council to inform the governance and operational model for the future community hub

Other work will take place over the next five years to progress the smaller scale priority actions listed in this plan.

Implementation Framework - Priority Recommendations

Community Aspirational Recommendations	Project justification and readiness								Community Impact		TOTAL	Comment	Priority for Next 5 Years	
	Alignment to plan or strategy	Legislative requirement	Alternatives	Stakeholder Consultation	Project Scope and design	Cost Estimate	Permits	Income	Target group and demographic	Target level				
1 Neerim South, Noojee and surrounds														
1.1 Work with community to produce a widely supported proposal for additional community space that may be required in Neerim South	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	2	11	The recommendation to consider additional community space has been an identified need through strategic and community planning initiatives completed for Neerim South. A range of potential initiatives for how the expansion of community space in the area has been proposed through the community. In parallel, the existing Algie Hall and its future utilisation is required.	Yes	
1.2 Consider multi-use functionality of existing spaces through the region eg Rokeby Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	Delivery to be considered further during the interim review.	No	
1.3 Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Noojee	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	9	Due to the dispersed nature of the existing community facilities throughout Noojee, the improvement of access and connectivity between them is a low cost, long term option that can significantly increase community wellbeing and the incidental social interactions asked for by the community.	Yes	
1.4 Consider improving multi-use functionality in Noojee	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	5	To continue the development of community building within the town, each of the community facilities that currently exist should be considered for improvement to their functionality and utilisation.	Yes	
1.5 Support the provision of community spaces throughout the region	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	Delivery to be considered further during the interim review. This recommendation will be supported in the time being by the annual Public Halls Maintenance Programme.	No	
2 Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and surrounds														
2.1 Consider consolidation and improvement of multi-use function of existing community facilities in Erica	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	5	Delivery to be considered further during the interim review.	No	
2.2 Consider colocation with Rawson Primary School where facilities can be shared	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	Delivery to be considered further during the interim review.	No	
2.3 Consider improvement to mobile community services	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	6	The improvement to mobile community services provides for the highest degree of community benefit to the wider area.	Yes	
3 Hill End and Willow Grove														
3.1 Support the activation of existing spaces, particularly the Old School in Hill End	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	1	7	Due to the recent acquisition of the old school site by the community, this recommendation can provide immediate long-term benefit for the community.	Yes	
3.2 Explore multi-use functionality of the Old School including the consideration of mobile services	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	1	7	Due to the recent acquisition of the old school site, this recommendation can provide immediate long-term benefit for the community.	Yes	

7.1	Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Trafalgar	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	7	Connecting the existing spaces through the town of Trafalgar provides a high degree of shared community benefit. The concept and design of work is advanced by the draft Urban Design Framework.	Yes
7.2	Consider repurposing the existing kindergarten facility (dependent on successful advocacy to the state government)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	Delivery to be considered further during the interim review. Monitor any development of a State Government decision regarding the existing kindergarten.	No
7.3	Improve the connectivity between Trafalgar and Trafalgar East with off-road trails	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	Delivery to be considered further during the interim review. Initial concept planning to be considered in the inter town trail program	No
8 Towns of the Strzelecki Ranges														
8.1	Consider improving the multi-use functionality of existing spaces and places to provide for mobile programs and services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	Baw Baw Shire are committed to ensuring the continued functionality of existing spaces through the region while also considering the improvement of mobile community services in conjunction with recommendation 2.3	Yes

Table 2

Implementation Framework - Proposed Funding [subject to LTIP review]

	Priority Recommendations for Implementation	Total	Implementation Period					Funding Sources							
			Year 1 2019/20	Year 2 2020/21	Year 3 2021/22	Year 4 2022/23	Year 5 2023/24	General Revenue	Reserves	Grants - Fed	Grants - State	Borrowings			
1	Neerim South, Noojee and surrounds	\$350,000													
1.1	Work with community to produce a widely supported proposal for additional community space that may be required in Neerim South	\$100,000	\$100,000								\$100,000				
1.3	Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Noojee	\$200,000			\$200,000						\$200,000				
1.4	Consider improving multi-use functionality in Noojee	\$50,000			\$50,000						\$50,000				
2	Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and surrounds	\$50,000													
2.3	Consider improvement to mobile community services	\$50,000		\$50,000							\$50,000				
3	Hill End and Willow Grove	\$70,000													
3.1	Support the activation of existing spaces, particularly the Old School in Hill End	\$50,000	\$50,000								\$50,000				
3.2	Explore multi-use functionality of the Old School including the consideration of mobile services	\$20,000	\$20,000								\$20,000				
4	Longwarry	\$800,000									*				
4.3	Consider implementation of the recommendations made in the Longwarry UDF for Bennet Street Reserve	\$800,000				\$200,000	\$600,000				\$300,000	\$250,000	\$250,000		
5	Drouin and Warragul	\$10,250,000													
5.1	Work with community on the desired size and service mix of a new integrated community hub facility	\$10,000,000	\$200,000	\$6,666,666	\$3,133,334						\$1,500,000	\$3,333,333	\$3,333,333	\$1,833,334	
5.6	Create an integrated master plan for the Civic Precinct in Warragul	\$250,000	\$250,000								\$250,000				
6	Yarragon and surrounds	\$50,000													
6.2	Consider opportunities to support community-led activation of the old Yarragon Primary School site	\$50,000		\$50,000							\$50,000				
7	Trafalgar and surrounds	\$500,000									**				
7.1	Improve access and connectivity between existing spaces and places in Trafalgar	\$500,000			\$100,000	\$400,000					\$112,000	\$480,000			
8	Towns of the Strzelecki Ranges	\$100,000									***				
8.1	Consider improving the multi-use functionality of existing spaces and places to provide for mobile programs and services	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000			\$100,000				
		\$12,170,000	\$640,000	\$6,786,666	\$3,503,334	\$620,000	\$620,000				\$462,000	\$2,800,000	\$3,583,333	\$3,583,333	\$1,833,334

* open space reserve

** footpath budget

*** renewal budget