

TRENTHAM

... ON THE WAY !!

TRENTHAM & DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN

“Trentham . . . On the Way!” was the theme suggested for the Community Plan by a leading local business operator. It is not meant to replace “Trentham Cool Country” but helps focus our thinking on issues: Trentham’s identity, recent and projected future population growth and an assertion of the town’s significance – for far too long overlooked.

Review Edition, May 2013

Foreword to the 2013 Review Edition

This edition includes all of the original 2009 text, available since then via www.trentham.org.au plus the recent review of progress undertaken by the Trentham Community Groups FORUM.

Just as Trentham has grown and changed greatly over the intervening three years, much of the Plan and a great deal more has been achieved in that time: notably the establishment of the Community Bank, the Trentham Library and the formation of the Trentham Community Groups FORUM as a united voice. These three achievements illustrate the spirit of this community and the key premises of the Plan. Trentham is a strong, independent community with a long history of working together to get things done and the Bank is an outstanding example of this, returning banking services to the town after 15 years. Similarly the strength of community input was the key feature in getting the Library in place with greatly expanded services when the former mobile service was discontinued. The FORUM was a direct response to many calls from the local community for ‘all the committees to work together’. While much of what has been achieved belongs to widely-based community actions, the FORUM has provided an overarching framework and strategy for action in addition to its primary representation and advocacy role.

The FORUM has taken on the role of oversight of the Community Plan but emphasises that the Plan belongs to the community. Unlike other community plans, ours is not a ‘shopping list’ – it is the statement of our hopes and goals and the basis for action to ensure that our community retains the characteristics we value while benefiting from sensitive growth and development.

The Plan was conceived and developed by the Trentham community based primarily on the challenges of change and how we, as a community, might influence and manage change. Population growth (currently at ~ 10% per year) and housing development have been major changes in our community over the recent past. There has also been welcome revitalisation of the main retail centre and service provision, particularly the ‘re-birth’ of the Cosmo and the major building works at the primary school and aged care facility.

These developments, together with population growth pressures along the Calder corridor, have served to increase the attractiveness of Trentham and districts for further growth and therein lies our greatest challenge. A population double the current population is conceivable over a time frame in which the current water supply system will come under stress. Informal consultation with the community indicates that the sense of community and town character remain the foremost values residents identify as the reasons they like living here. The community has limited capacity to ‘control’ how the town might change (and Council is similarly limited by State level planning guidelines). However we will only have influence if we have strong consensus in how we would like the town to develop and the Community Plan is the primary basis for articulating this and for our representations to government. A clear vision backed by active community engagement (or, as we’ve been told, ‘eternal vigilance’) is the means for shaping the future as we would like it to be – rather than wait for it to literally ‘hit us between the eyes’ and then fight a rear-guard action.

The Library, walking trails and several other projects have seen the community work constructively with Hepburn Shire Council. Notwithstanding these successful projects we have so far failed to get any real action from Council on the fundamental, structural rate inequality that sees Trentham receive significantly worse treatment with respect to services and facilities than the other towns in the Shire. Until our community is satisfied that it is receiving ‘a fair go’, its trust in its relations with Council will remain a stumbling block for both: we contend that a small, resource-strapped municipality can only survive if it has good working relationships with all its communities.

Growth, equity and future water supply are just some of the influences which will shape the future of our community. The launch of this ‘review edition’ of the Plan is also the base for a renewal process which will be carried out over coming months. Childcare, housing, streetscape, the town plan (and surrounding settlements) are some of the issues that have been signalled as gaps in the current Plan. We want as many people as want to be involved to participate in the renewal process so that we have a Plan that is truly owned by the community and one that will serve us well over the coming three years.

TRENTHAM COMMUNITY PLAN

2013 Review Edition

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Acknowledgements:

Some 250-300 local people had input to the Community Planning process – it is to their interest and contributions that the plan owes its existence. Different people have contributed variously to the development of the Plan and all of their help is greatly appreciated. The Plan does not name particular contributors – their acknowledgement will come from the community taking ‘ownership’ of the plan and contributing to its implementation.

Special thanks go to the individuals and groups who have contributed to achieving so much of the ambitious agenda outlined in the 2009 Plan – of such is the richness of community in Trentham.

Thanks should also go to TRATA – the former Trentham Residents and Traders Association - which provided an auspice and resources to support the development of the Plan and to the Shire of Hepburn, which provided funding for the cost of the facilitator for the workshop. Hepburn Shire also provided financial support for the earlier Business Support Project.

1 Introduction

A Community Plan enables a community to give voice to its values, hopes, ideas and concerns . . . and to identify the priority actions it wishes to take so that it can have a real say in shaping its future. The influence of a community plan is limited only by the imagination and commitment of the community – it is a means for resolving priorities and differences within the community and representing agreed community priorities to government and other funding sources.

A community plan is a celebration of the strengths and achievements of a community and the community's determination to take positive responsibility for its future.

The emergence of community plans is part of a renaissance in communities – recognition of the values of community; confidence that communities can (and should) take greater responsibility for their own future; and growing frustration with the failures of existing social and governance structures. A community plan is a declaration that we, the members of the community, are the first line of response to the needs of our community and that we need to ‘roll-up-our-sleeves’ rather than sit around complaining ‘why doesn’t someone do something about it’.

*The Trentham Community Plan is **our** plan
– and we, the citizens of Trentham and districts, are responsible for making it happen.*

2 Executive Summary

This Community Plan has been written by the people of Trentham through their input to the survey forms, interviews, a community workshop and review of the draft – it is a community-driven Plan.

The Plan presents a statement of what people value in their community, their hopes and concerns for the future and the projects and action they would like to see happen – action that will protect what we value and give us real input to shaping our future.

If it is possible to encompass the input of the nearly 150 responses to the Community Plan surveys into a single statement, it would be that Trentham people . . .

“want to retain the friendliness and community character of Trentham and ensure that future development respects this, the townscape and environmental values”

This summary statement has been used as the basis for the structure of our plan.

Trentham is big enough not to be totally dependent on larger surrounding towns although not big enough to claim that we’ve got all we need. Trentham does, nonetheless, have a strong sense of self-reliance borne of its climate, location and heritage as a timber and potato growing community. The qualities of resilience, belief in a fair go and a strong sense of community; together with its wonderful natural attributes: water, rich soil and proximity to the Wombat Forest; have been the basis of Trentham’s past vitality, survival and for its future potential.

Trentham folk are realistic and recognise the realities of change: change which happens organically within our community and external changes which will affect us to varying degrees. How we manage and respond to change is a core element of this Plan. While we are proud of the qualities that help to define our community, there is also a strong sense that Trentham has been neglected in the past: the Plan is therefore also an advocacy document.

3 Structure of the Plan

The Plan is in three broad parts: **community** priorities; business **development**; and **environment**.

These reflect the summary statement of community aspirations which emphasises community values; development; and the built and natural environment. This structure for the Plan address the three pillars on which our community operates.

This document provides the overview and specific Community priorities, the parts of the Plan dealing with Development and Environment include some specific actions and recommend respectively the development of an economic and employment strategy and an open space strategy. When developed, these strategies will be part of the total Community Plan.

The Plan is based primarily on the responses to the Individual/Household Surveys, which asked very open ended questions. These are reported further in Appendix B and are generally discussed as an introduction to the three main parts of the Plan (see Section 6).

4 Context

Trentham and district people are very proud of their town and community. Either as born-and-bred, long-term residents or more recent arrivals we all have one thing in common: *we chose to live here*. The individual and household surveys revealed widespread agreement in what we value – although we have a greater variety of views on what we believe should be done to shape our future. In this we are probably similar to most small towns.

However, we recognise that there are important contextual issues that influence our present and future community. These include global changes in climate, peak oil, financial systems and population. All of these will have impacts on Trentham and, while we can't do much about any of them, we do need to try to manage these impacts. For example, the ageing of the population and Melbourne growing to >5 million people will have 'knock-on' effects on our community.

Trentham's water supply and proximity to other centres [20 minutes to Daylesford, Kyneton and Woodend and one hour to Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne] mark our district as strategically located. Add to these, our rich volcanic soils, proximity to the Wombat Forest and general lifestyle advantages and we can expect continuing development pressures, which we should seek to manage, or at least influence, so that we can retain the values that contribute so much to defining our community and the quality of life we enjoy. Our major disadvantage is generally agreed to be that we have no access to natural gas.

The surveys for the Community Plan were undertaken in late 2008, before the worst bushfires in Victoria's history. Trentham and surrounding districts are vulnerable to bushfires, and the town has now been identified in the State listing of most fire threatened towns. Fire safety has now emerged as the major priority for the community.

As Hepburn Shire CEO Kaylene Conrick said at the TRATA AGM November, 2008:

"Trentham's challenge will be to control its future development".

A strong, coherent and agreed community plan
is the best means we have for responding to change and influencing our future.

5 Priorities

A number of key themes and issues were distilled from the many responses to the surveys and used as the ‘first cut’ broad priorities for the community workshop (31 March 2009) at which participants were invited to confirm, challenge, elaborate and add to these themes and issues.

The workshop then identified, through a process of inviting people to champion and contribute to developing particular ideas and projects, the priorities for the coming year. A further opportunity for people who were not able to attend the workshop to identify priorities was offered through the April Community Newsletter: a total of 14 priorities were identified.

These priorities will be the action agenda for the coming year – but it will be important for us to regularly review the progress of the Plan and renew it every 2-3 years. Some priorities will be specific or readily achieved while others will be long-term and strategic. In seeking to be comprehensive, we will inevitably be too ambitious, and other opportunities will come along, so the Plan must be flexible and seek to reconcile optimistic ambition with tangible achievement. Setting priorities and targets and regular review are the means through which we will obtain that balance.

The priorities identified for the coming year are:

- **increasing community safety against the threat of fire;**
- **supporting the growth of local businesses;**
- youth activities;
- sporting facilities;
- community hub;
- **improving communications & coordination between community groups;**
- seeking better working relations with Hepburn Shire;
- sustainability, climate change, peak oil and the natural environment;
- promoting volunteering;
- strategies to respond to population growth and ageing;
- **reviewing our tourism product & positioning;**
- **promoting the community bank concept;**
- **weed control & elimination;**
- access & mobility;

Even this list is ambitious, however good work is already underway in several areas (shown in bold).

6 The Plan

The single composite statement emerging from the surveys is that Trentham people . . .

“want to retain the friendliness and community character of Trentham and ensure that future development respects this, the townscape and environmental values”

This section – the detailed part of the Plan – is arranged under the three broad headings of *community*, *development*, and *environment* rather than the conventional categories of youth, health & well-being; business & industry; environment & sustainability; education & learning; sport & recreation; culture; and community. Even so, these three broad headings often overlap. For example, the concept of Trentham as ‘a walking & cycling town’ – should this be listed under ‘community’ or ‘environment’? Fire safety is another broadly-based issue.

There is another key word in the composite statement . . . *respect*. Respect is an intangible quality that can say a lot about a community. The word respect wasn’t used much in the responses people made to

the surveys although it was often implied and qualities of tolerance and acceptance were also identified. It seemed the most appropriate word to use when constructing the composite statement. Respect is not something we can manage as a community – it comes from within – however, it is a quality that should, desirably, underpin the community we would wish to encourage through this Plan.

6.1 COMMUNITY

This Community Plan is for Trentham and Districts and is therefore based on a geographic definition of community. The Plan does not draw a boundary line or list the surrounding districts that might comprise ‘Trentham and Districts’ (although see Appendix B – Newsletter reports re Community Plan) – people in these surrounding areas effectively self-define their connections to Trentham through their various interactions with the town. Part-time residents are also part of our community. Survey responses were received from district and part-time residents: thus the Plan is for all who identify or have any affiliation with the town and who have an interest in its future.

There are numerous communities of interest within Trentham. The various clubs and organisations reflect the vitality and range of interests across the larger community – and should be celebrated as a measure of the rich diversity of our community life. Some responses to the Surveys challenged the need for so many groups. In those areas where this argument has some validity moves are already underway to better coordinate and rationalise the efforts of these groups. The important consideration is for community support so that the contributions of these groups are sustained and ‘the whole is greater than the sum of the parts’ – and that is an important purpose of the Plan.

The emphasis on community and the friendliness of the community in the survey responses to the questions about what people like about living in Trentham, and its greatest values / strengths / advantages underline the value of this quality. How we nurture and grow this sense of community and how we seek to manage change are two key themes that run through the Community Plan. Community is an elusive quality; difficult to define but something we know when we are part of, something very important to our personal and social well-being.

Community issues arising from the survey responses, workshop and community representations:

- fire safety
- public transport
- population growth & ageing
- access & mobility issues
- working together
- a social/community centre
- indoor sports facility
- volunteerism
- health services
- affordable & sustainable housing

Each of these issues is discussed briefly below with proposed actions/strategies as relevant.

Fire Safety

The devastating bushfires in February 2009, in particular the threats posed by the fires burning eastwards from the west / north-west, brought into sharp focus Trentham’s exposure and vulnerability to fire. Emerging from this awareness are clear priorities for greater preparedness for fire through (i) awareness, householder responsibility and supporting the emergency services in the implementation of the Township Protection Plan, and (ii) a proposal for a facility to provide a fire assembly point and other community services. The latter has been formulated from within the community with strong initial support for this project as the ‘No 1’ priority for the community. Weed control is also very

important for reducing the fire risk and was identified at the workshop as a major priority (cross-referenced under 6.3 Environment).

Action:

- 1 *Build on the CFA-community collaboration established during 2009, community awareness and support for the CFA to promote widespread 'ownership' and implementation of the Township Protection Plan.*
- 2 *Establish a broadly-based community steering committee to drive the Multi-function Indoor Facility project (and develop a professional concept proposal, including a feasibility study, for the Facility).*

Public Transport

Public transport was identified in the 145 completed survey responses as one of the most frequently identified issues - 'More/better public transport (79 responses)' was second only to 'Business sector / main street (132 responses)'. While public transport is a composite issue involving numerous reasons, including the age profile of the community, commuting for work, rising fuel costs to name some of those identified, it is clearly an issue we must address as the need will become greater rather than diminish. Local community transport needs were also identified and there is support for a community bus.

Action:

- 3 *Develop a public transport strategy which encompasses travel to nearby towns, links to rail transport, and a community network.*

Population and ageing

This is also a composite (and complex) issue that has two main dimensions: (i) managing the growth of population so that the character of the town and values of the community are maintained – which will be discussed in section 6.2 Development, and (ii) meeting the needs of the resident population, in particular the existing and anticipated age profile. Access and mobility issues relate strongly to ageing and specific access needs and road/footpath surface concerns have been identified as in need of urgent attention.

The local Hepburn Health Hospital and Hostel facility is identified as one of Trentham's key strengths.

Action:

- 4 *Develop a local response and strategy complementary to the Hepburn Shire Positive Ageing Strategy.*
- 5 *Address specific and urgent access needs, particularly to retail premises.*

Working together

A lot of survey responses identified what were seen to be shortcomings in how our community operates and encouraged existing groups to work together; for new residents to be welcomed; and an expectation that new residents should become involved in the community. Two current initiatives – for greater awareness / coordination / support by the main existing community groups and a proposal to bring 3 natural reserves under one Committee of Management (refer 6.3 Environment) – partly address this concern and should be encouraged: the former could provide the vehicle for community 'ownership' of the Plan. [The existing cooperation between the three churches through the Trentham Combined Churches Committee is noted.]

Calls for a community centre, or 'hub', also clearly connect with this issue – see below.

One of the real advantages of smaller communities is their capacity to 'get their act together', which is a primary purpose of this Plan. Another critical factor is communications . . . traditionally 'the grapevine' and, hopefully, more effectively through the monthly Newsletter and shop-window notices: the case for greater use of web-based communications was identified as a priority at the workshop.

Another dimension of ‘working together’ is in the community’s relationship with the Shire. A significant number of survey responses found fault with the Shire and, while there is strong evidence that Trentham has not been getting ‘a fair go’ in the municipal budget, it must be recognised that Shire funds are limited. Similarly, the Shire’s consultation with the community regarding priorities is seen to be either non-existent or wastefully expensive. There is a corresponding obligation on the community to determine its priorities and to communicate (and when necessary negotiate) these to the municipality: the Plan is a major part of this process. Resource realities demand that both Shire and community seek to optimise outcomes rather than taking adversarial or ‘squeaky wheel’ approaches.

Action:

- 6 *Endorse the ‘awareness-coordination-support’ initiative between community groups.*
- 7 *Develop a ‘welcome-kit’ and strategy to engage new residents.*
- 8 *Review the effectiveness of existing communications and explore the potential for web-based and mobile communications*
- 9 *Establish processes for on-going communication and collaboration with the Shire.*

Youth activities

“It takes a village to raise a child” – African saying, quoted by Hillary Clinton.

Like most small country towns Trentham has the experience of young people moving away in their late teens for education and career. Rather than take an approach of looking for ways ‘to keep our young people here’, the premise of this Community Plan is to seek to make young people’s experience of growing up in Trentham a really positive one. We believe this is the best means of encouraging a lifelong affection for their home town where they spent their formative years and which might play out in various ways over their lifetimes.

On a first glance Trentham offers a limited range of sporting opportunities (footy, netball, table tennis, cricket, tennis), a swimming pool and a skate park for young people. Less obviously recognised is the access to surrounding bushland and mobility by cycle which gives young people similar opportunities to those enjoyed by older residents in their youth. The local Milk Bar is an important meeting place where young people ‘hang out’. A small youth theatre group is operating. But still, the perennial cry of early teens that ‘there’s nothing to do’ has some validity.

The approach underlying this Plan as far as young people are concerned is a combination of respect – as a community we need to communicate to young people that they are valued – and engagement. We will seek to provide opportunities for young people to be heard and be involved in the community.

Major initiatives in this Plan must take real account of the interests of young people.

Suggestions for expanding the range of youth (and community) activities include providing for new sports (soccer and hockey, paintball and BMX); enhancing the potential of the skate park and swimming pool (possibly through shared ‘add-on’ re-locatable facilities); films at the Mechanics Institute; and more innovative ideas such as cycle/small engine maintenance in association with a Men’s Shed, community service, junior Landcare, creative arts, health and wellbeing, personal growth and self-esteem building initiatives. The possibility of a community bus as part of a public transport strategy would be important for extending the range of activities that could be offered to teenagers. Survey responses calling for more employment opportunities for young people will be addressed in the recommended economic and employment development strategy.

[NB The focus of this section is on young people in the age range 8-9 to late teens. Younger children seem to be well-catered for through activities largely organised by parents. The Kindergarten and Primary School are recognised as major assets in the community.]

Action:

- 10 *A youth engagement strategy based around a concept of a ‘Kidspace’ be developed and requiring all community projects to be subject to review for their relevance to youth and youth involvement.*
- 11 *Opportunities for widening the range of activities for young people to be pursued through both the sports facilities review (Action 15) and the youth engagement strategy.*

A social/community centre

Trentham has a number of community facilities: the Mechanics Institute, the Neighbourhood Centre, and the Railway Station, plus specific purpose facilities, including the churches, historical police precinct, sports ground and cemetery. The community therefore carries a huge maintenance responsibility which is mainly met by voluntary fund-raising and labour. (Other similar facilities in Hepburn Shire are owned by the Shire and are therefore eligible for annual Council maintenance funding.) The numbers and age profile of the committees maintaining Trentham's facilities suggest that generally we are fighting an up-hill battle to maintain these at satisfactory levels (and that's barring any major renovations or repairs). And yet, respondents to the surveys identified the need for a community centre or 'hub', including strong support for a library, a social venue other than licensed premises, exercise facilities and Men's Shed. The Multi Function Indoor Facility priority proposed in the Plan exacerbates the general issue of maintaining community facilities.

Proponents of change must be sensitive to long-standing community 'ownership' of these facilities, although a planned strategy for their future must be better than genteel decay.

Action:

- 12 Review the existing inventory of community facilities, their 'fit-for-purpose', maintenance needs, funding and management structures*
- 13 Establish a funding agreement with Council for equitable pro-rata maintenance funding for community facilities*
- 14 Seek a collaborative definition of the concept of a community 'hub' and how this might be provided.*

Indoor Sports Facility

A significant number of survey responses identified the need for an indoor sports facility, some proposing a heated indoor swimming pool. Generally the condition of facilities at the sports ground falls seriously short of acceptable and any proposals for up-graded sports facilities should be part of an integrated overall strategy. Sports facilities are a fundamental element in the overall structure of a community and the current condition of the main sports ground is short-changing the community, particularly our young people (too many parents are driving their children to nearby towns for all their sport and training). Again, the efforts of the stalwarts who have maintained these facilities over decades are not being criticised – you can only do so much with voluntary support and limited funding.

Action:

- 15 Undertake a review of sports facilities and prepare a development strategy as a matter of urgency.*

Volunteers

Much of Trentham's community spirit derives from a strong tradition of volunteering – but, similar to many other communities, the ranks are thinning and ageing as needs grow. The decision to volunteer is ultimately a personal one based on interests, sense of community and the welcome extended by the community group. Action 7 will go some way to assisting the engagement of new residents. Groups should also consider how they can enhance their skills in recruiting, managing and recognising their volunteers. Some survey responses wanted newcomers to make more of a contribution along with a sentiment that 'we've done our turn' – this may not be a productive line of discussion but it points to a need for some ongoing debate about what 'community' means and how we 'grow community'. As leading Australian sociologist Jim Ife has said when faced by overwhelming change, the only action the individual can take is 'to build community'. Ideally community groups will collaborate in this debate – see also Working Together.

Action:

- 16** *Community groups collaborate to provide training in the recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers.*
- 17** *Encourage an on-going discussion regarding community values.*

Health Services

The Hospital and Hostel is widely seen to be one of Trentham's main assets and employers (ref 6.2 Development) and its current re-building program will allow for some increased services. The extent and range of additional services requested by survey respondents depends on government funding formulae and levels of demand. Similarly, calls for increased medical, dentistry and para-medical services are ultimately policy and/or commercial decisions. Aged care is a growing need generally and in our community (Actions 3, 4 & 5 in part address this) and the community should explore other means of supporting an ageing population. The current 'strengths exercise' program offered through the Neighbourhood Centre is one example and more ambitious programs, such as more independent living units, should be explored.

Action:

- 18** *Investigations be undertaken into how the community can work with Hepburn Health Service to encourage the provision of increased health services.*

Affordable and sustainable housing

Affordable housing is another issue that is largely outside the influence of the community but nonetheless a very real problem for many people. The Shire and the Uniting Church have a very limited number of lower rental properties. A related issue is that of energy efficiency in many older dwellings, where the owners or occupiers are not willing or able to make the necessary modifications resulting in ever-increasing heating and utility costs. The Hepburn Shire's Council Plan includes encouragement of 'a wider, more attractive, environmentally sustainable range of property, housing and lifestyle choices' and a commitment to 'reviewing our Planning Scheme to provide for different housing and lifestyle choices which are more resilient, less dependent, environmentally sustainable and socially cohesive.'" (Council Plan 2009-2013, p 22)

Action:

- 19** *Preliminary exploration be undertaken into avenues that may be available to the community to influence the provision of affordable and energy-efficient, sustainable housing.*

6.2 DEVELOPMENT

[This section draws on the Business Support Project the results of which, as of August 2009, are currently being analysed, the Community Bank initiative and more generally on the Survey responses and Workshop.]

Trentham is emerging from a relatively depressed economic period, symbolised in recent years by the burnt shell of the Cosmo, but now with a variety of new enterprises around town contributing to a greater sense of confidence. Nonetheless some important small traders are still doing it tough. The Business Support Project (BSP), initiated under TRATA and largely funded by the Shire with extensive voluntary contributions from the community, offers the first real overview of the local economy and provides a strong basis for an economic and employment strategy. Results from preliminary analysis of the BSP are congruent with many of the issues identified through the community surveys.

The issues listed below are the priorities identified by the BSP, Community Plan surveys and workshop.

- supporting the growth of local business & economic viability

- streetscape
- retail mix & competitiveness
- bank – promoting the Community Bank concept
- tourism product & positioning
- signage
- infrastructure & relations with Council
- overdevelopment & local input to planning & development

Issues such as future water supply; the implications of peak oil in increasing fuel costs; and maintaining heritage and character are addressed under 6.3 Environment. Improving communications and coordination; working together; and relations with Council addressed under 6.1 Community, are also relevant under Development and, as appropriate, are addressed in greater detail in the BSP recommendations.

Supporting the Growth of Local Business & Economic Viability;

Streetscape;

Retail mix and competitiveness.

These three issues are grouped because they are addressed in the substance and recommendations of the Business Support Project. A strong message from the community surveys was the need for more employment opportunities, particularly jobs that ‘enable people to pay a mortgage and raise a family’. The nature of the Trentham economy, its local base and the importance of tourism all need to be drawn together in an economic development strategy. The potential for ‘social enterprise’ should also be explored. Streetscape issues are intimately connected with business viability and tourism. While many responses to the community surveys identified Trentham’s intrinsic qualities, there was a great deal of concern about its generally ‘down-at-heel’ appearance.

Trentham has great potential to become an important local centre of a prosperous sub-region. The existing business mix, supplemented by banking services, a butcher and fresh food outlets, together with its outstanding lifestyle options marks the town for steady development.

Action:

20 *Business and general community endorse and implement the strategies and recommendations in the report on the BSP, including:*

(preliminary major recommendations . . .)

21 *Over the coming year, develop an economic development and employment strategy.*

22 *In association with the High St traders, the Shire and incorporating an integrated signage strategy, develop a Streetscape Plan*

Provision of enhanced Banking Services

The lack of banking services beyond deposit and withdrawal facilities was identified as an issue by two-thirds of the businesses interviewed through the BSP. Community survey responses also identified the lack of banking services as a limitation on the viability of Trentham, with many making the observation that any resulting ‘out trading’ obviously has a flow-on impact on other businesses. Local support for the current Community Bank initiative seeks to remedy this situation and to harness a share of the ‘social dividend’ for community projects.

Action:

23 *Community to support the establishment of a Community Bank branch in Trentham and, when established, ensure its success and the consequent flow of support for community projects.*

Tourism product & positioning

Trentham is located in the centre of the Daylesford – Macedon Ranges tourism region, currently the focus of a major State-funded tourism promotion campaign. Trentham is 15-20 minutes from the three surrounding towns, an hour from Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne and close to the attractions of the

region, the Wombat State Forest and Trentham Falls. Aside from these natural advantages, the existing tourism 'product' is relatively modest with a number of tourism operators, mainly in accommodation and dining, but no local coordination or strategy. Such tourism connections as have existed have been divided between Macedon Ranges to the east and Daylesford and the Spa Country to the west.

Fundamental to the need for a tourism strategy are issues of identity and promotion. Trentham – Cool Country is strongly supported within the community but not promoted to any significant extent with the consequence that there really isn't a Trentham 'brand' out in the marketplace.

The community recognises the importance of tourism as a key economic driver for the regional and local economy and contributes to its promotion through a voluntary Visitor Information Centre and several events. Spudfest is probably the most uniquely authentic event in Trentham as both an attraction for visitors and engaging a wide spectrum of the local community. Trentham also offers the Cool Country Classic, an Art & Craft Show, the Spring Festival and two monthly Markets which all attract visitors. These activities absorb a huge amount of volunteer effort and are a great measure of community spirit. Spudfest and the Cool Country Classic probably offer the greatest potential for growth and suggestions have been made for how these or new activities might develop.

Action:

- 24 *Prepare a tourism development and promotion strategy in association with emerging regional initiatives.*
- 25 *Community groups responsible for existing tourism events meet to review and coordinate how these might be better promoted and developed.*

Signage

Current signage to and within the town is not satisfactory and needs a total re-vamp. Good signage is fundamental for promoting tourism and the presentation of the town for visitors and locals alike. Hepburn Shire has indicated the possibility of a major review of signage using Trentham as a pilot.

Action:

- 26 *Develop and implement a signage strategy for Trentham and surrounds.*

**Infrastructure & Relations with Council;
Overdevelopment & Local Input to Planning & Development.**

These issues are grouped because meaningful action can only proceed in association with Council. As one respondent to the community surveys stated in relation to the streetscape, road and footpath issues, 'we need \$2m spent on infrastructure'. That estimate may be accurate but it does not recognise the realities of funding. Trentham's recent experience in seeking to have its priorities included in a fair and equitable Council budget allocation provides a strong case for a better and more respectful process between Council and the community, with clear mutual obligations (see also Working Together under 6.1 Community and recommendation 9). This Plan and community process must demonstrate the local capacity to represent community priorities to Council, which should then reciprocate by either responding to these priorities or providing satisfactory explanations for why it cannot.

Concerns about future water supply, heating costs, retaining the built and community character of the town, fire protection measures and the retention of productive agricultural land all argue for an engagement, rather than adversarial, approach between Council and community particularly in relation to planning. Increasing State intervention with development and planning issues provides further argument for a strongly collaborative approach between Council and community.

Action:

- 27 *Trentham establish 'a town committee' responsible for coordinating and representing priorities for and input into the future development of the town,*
- 28 *Commitment be sought from Council for a fair and equitable funding model for all ratepayers and to a genuinely consultative process for determining priorities for spending.*

29 *This Plan be developed over the next 1-2 years to incorporate long-term limits to growth and the influence of external factors on the town and surrounding districts.*

[Notes;

- (i) the recommended action to establish 'a town committee' should **not** be read to mean TRATA which may be the nearest we currently have to a progress and development committee, but cannot really discharge the suggested 'whole of community' role without a mandate, some necessary re-structuring including the basis for membership and, as has been suggested, a name change. A 'town committee' presumably would also have the role of 'the keeper of the Community Plan'. Refer also the section on Working Together.
- (ii) the suggestion is to review the Community Plan at 12-18 month intervals and a major renewal every 3 years.]

6.3 ENVIRONMENT

[This section draws on both the Surveys and current initiatives to coordinate the management of natural reserves and weed management. Streetscape issues overlap with Development. However, the devastating February 2009 fires have taken a clear priority in community thinking and therefore re-ordered the priorities of the Plan.]

Trentham is located in close proximity to forests (Gateway to the Wombat State Forest), productive agricultural land and a spring-fed water supply – all priceless assets which distinguish our town. Local heritage and town character (interesting buildings, tree-lined streets and Town Square) further enhance the environmental appeal of the town and districts and contribute to the quality of lifestyle for residents and attractiveness to tourists. As so many responses to the community surveys identified, Trentham is a friendly, welcoming community nestled in some truly picturesque countryside. Some survey responses also identified our weather (Trentham: Cool Country) and the stars among our natural assets.

Nonetheless, there are limitations to this arcadia. Global population growth and the ever-increasing sprawl of Melbourne will discover our secret. Projected climate change impacts, largely mediated through water, will influence all our futures; future water supply may not meet projected long-term demands; population growth will potentially alter the character of the townscape; and community, heating and transport costs need innovative solutions or will have serious impacts on the town's future development.

The suite of issues: population, climate change, and peak oil were a major focus at the community workshop with recommendations for action to promote greater sustainability across a wide range of community activities and future development. Some of these issues are addressed through recommendations in section 6.2 Development, and see also the section on Affordable and Sustainable Housing.

The issues listed and discussed below also overlap with some earlier issues, for example weed control is addressed here as an environmental concern but it obviously connects with fire safety under 6.1 Community.

- maintaining the natural environment
- links to surrounding forests
- maintaining heritage & character
- overdevelopment
- streetscape
- future water supply
- sustainability
- weed management

Maintaining the Natural Environment: Links to Surrounding Forests

Trentham township is close to the Wombat Forest and Trentham Falls, key assets in our tourism mix. Trentham's aspiration to develop as 'a walking and cycling town' has relevance for residents and tourists – the latter in terms of walking trails and mountain biking. Currently the Domino Trail is the only designated walking trail. Requests for walking trails, particularly to Trentham Falls, are one of the most common enquiries at the Visitor Information Centre.

The Trent and Stoney Creeks link the forest to the south directly into the centre of town and help define its character. The creek reserves, until recently badly overgrown with weeds creating an eyesore and fire hazard, require sensitive management if they are to provide the multiple services the community expects. Council is currently completing a consultant study re the management of the Bath St Reserve. Recent initiatives to better coordinate the management of these reserves should be encouraged and extended.

Action:

- 30 *Develop an Open Space Strategy which promotes the concept of Trentham as a walking and cycling town.*
- 31 *Investigate the development of additional walking / cycling trails including to the Falls, a rail trail to Lyonville/Bullarto and in the adjoining Wombat Forest to the south of the town.*
- 32 *Implement the proposed single committee of management for the three natural reserves within the town boundaries.*
- 33 *Instigate an annual Trentham FutureCare forum involving all the groups with interests in protecting and managing the natural environment.*

Overdevelopment

As already noted under Development, residents are concerned to have some influence over the future development of the community so that the character and environmental values of Trentham and districts are retained. Overdevelopment is identified as the major threat. This is a difficult issue in a market economy where the responsible regulatory agencies are constrained by legislation that limits the influence of citizens. Nevertheless the community should seek to work with these agencies to ensure that such controls that are available are used to protect the community and environmental qualities that everyone, presumably also including developers, recognises as valuable.

Although receiving almost no direct mention in the survey responses, the issue of protecting productive agricultural land has subsequently emerged as a concern *per se* and in relation to population growth and the continuing sprawl of Melbourne. This issue is subject to current State inquiries and should be kept under review. Trentham and districts' attractiveness for future development is obvious but the value of productive land so close to >5 million people in an uncertain future is an asset society should seek to protect.

Action:

- 34 *Consultative processes between the community and Council as recommended above to ensure provisions for community consultation and input to planning and development.*

Streetscape; Maintaining Heritage and Town Character

Streetscape issues, particularly the generally rundown appearance of High St, were, in aggregate, one of the most frequently raised concerns in the community surveys. Many responses also commented positively on the pleasant ambience of tree-lined streets outside High St. The presentation of the town is important for residents and visitors and, while it is acknowledged that many individuals and agencies have responsibilities and contributions to make, some basic agreed guidelines will give the community the means for coordinated action.

Action:

35 *Consistent with Council planning provisions, the Open Space Strategy and recommendations emerging from the Business Support Project, develop streetscape, heritage and town character guidelines.*

Future Water Supply

Trentham's spring-fed water supply is one of its chief assets. Yet, in a presentation by Coliban Water (May '08), based on projected yield, likely climate change impacts and population growth, demand is expected to outstrip supply by 2050. This is one of the major constraints on the future growth of population in Trentham, which should be incorporated into overall planning strategies. Recent prolonged low annual rainfalls and reduced groundwater yields also have major implications for potato growing and other agricultural production. Coliban Water will instigate a further program of testing yields from the existing two urban supply bores and exploring other sources.

Apart from maintaining 'a watching brief' no action is proposed in this first Community Plan.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a complex concept (often best dealt with as an adjective), although the World Commission on Environment and Development gave a useful and ethical explanation in stating that *humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their . . . needs* (Our Common Future, 1987). Concerns expressed through the community surveys and workshop are probably best addressed in the short term by raising awareness of sustainability issues and exploring approaches such as the Transition Town concept.

Action:

36 *Promote awareness of sustainability issues and seek to have sustainability considerations as an overlay on all future development in subsequent iterations of the Community Plan.*

Weed Management

Gorse, Blackberry, Cape Broom and English Broom collectively are the major blight on Trentham's green and pleasant land. We might choose to define a weed as a plant in the wrong place, but the ecological, agricultural and amenity damage done by these plants puts them in an especially negative category. But by far their most dangerous quality is in the risks posed for the spread of fire and its control. In particular, dense stands of these weeds provide the 'ladder' for fire to reach the eucalypt canopy and create a crown fire.

Following the 2009 summer bushfire much has been said and written about who or what agency is responsible for weed control. It is necessary to be clear on responsibilities but, with another dangerous fire season threatened, action is imperative. Coordinated action, endorsed by an informed and supporting community, has the best prospect of successful implementation. Landcare has endorsed a 'Weed-free Trentham' campaign which will involve the responsible agencies, land managers and citizens in a voluntary capacity. This may sound unrealistically ambitious but it is in all our interests to back the initiative. [Note that weed control is only one of a suite of actions that must be taken to ensure maximum fire preparedness.]

Action:

37 *Community and responsible agencies work cooperatively to implement the Weed-free Trentham initiative.*

7 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS – March 2013 Review

NB The 37 actions / recommendations listed here give the scope of the aspirations and needs identified in the first iteration of the Trentham Community Plan, November 2009. This summary review (report & status) is based on the March 2011, November 2012 and March 2013 reviews by the Trentham Community Groups FORUM.

Action / recommendation – report & status
<p>1 Build on the CFA-community collaboration established during 2009, community awareness and support for the CFA to promote widespread ‘ownership’ and implementation of the Township Protection Plan.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> The CFA continues to conduct fire awareness and information sessions and Community Fire Guard groups operate – the success of the latter depends on individual commitment and drive. A community-led communications plan for Emergencies currently in preparation. <i>Status:</i> minimal action</p>
<p>2 Establish a broadly-based community steering committee to drive the Multi-function Indoor Facility project (and develop a professional concept proposal, including a feasibility study, for the Facility).</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Facilities Review (Action 12) underway in collaboration with HSC and has funding (\$40,000). <i>Status:</i> significant progress</p>
<p>3 Develop a public transport strategy which encompasses travel to nearby towns, links to rail transport, and a community network.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> A trial bus service to Kyneton in 2010 received little patronage. No progress on a strategy. <i>Status:</i> no action</p>
<p>4 Develop a local response and strategy complementary to the Hepburn Shire Positive Ageing Strategy.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Has been a priority on Forum-HSC consultative agenda and listed on the HHS Community Nurse’s work program. <i>Status:</i> no action</p>
<p>5 Address specific and urgent access needs, particularly to retail premises.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Pharmacy has addressed this . . . should be looked at as part of ‘streetscape’ project. <i>Status:</i> minimal action</p>
<p>6 Endorse the ‘awareness-coordination-support’ initiative between community groups. (Refer also Action 27)</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Trentham Community Groups FORUM established June 2009 <i>Status:</i> complete</p>
<p>7 Develop a ‘welcome-kit’ and strategy to engage new residents.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> TNC with Community Bank, Sustainability Group, others have implemented a welcome ‘package’ <i>Status:</i> partially achieved – no community-wide strategy</p>
<p>8 Review the effectiveness of existing communications and explore the potential for web-based and mobile communications</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Trentham TRUMPET has high demand for space and is ‘on-line’ but otherwise little change in community communications. Trentham is not included in NBN roll-out for Hepburn Shire. Revamped Trentham Community FORUM to explore use of social media. <i>Status:</i> incomplete</p>
<p>9 Establish processes for on-going communication and collaboration with the Shire.(Refer also Actions 13 & 34)</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Regular meetings between FORUM and senior Council managers since July 2010 <i>Status:</i> complete</p>

<p>10 A youth engagement strategy based around a concept of a ‘Kidspace’ be developed, with direct input from young people, and requiring all community projects to be subject to review for their relevance to youth and youth involvement.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> TNC hosts youth activities, BMX track now completed, and significant children’s and young adult sections in new library, but no real action on the wider ambitions in this recommendation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> no strategy action</p>
<p>11 Opportunities for widening the range of activities for young people to be pursued through both the sports facilities review (Action 14) and the youth engagement strategy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Report & Status:</i> as for 9 above</p>
<p>12 Review the existing inventory of community facilities, their ‘fit-for-purpose’, maintenance needs, funding and management structures (Cross-ref to Action 2)</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Trentham Library opened July 2012 in temporary premises. Facilities Review now underway – to report mid 2013</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> in progress</p>
<p>13 Establish a funding agreement with Council for equitable pro-rata maintenance funding for community facilities</p> <p><i>Report:</i> FORUM has made extensive submissions to Council budget process and conducted ‘rate equity’ campaign, commencing Oct 2011 – rate equity questions prominent in OurSay exercise and Facilities Review should contribute to progress.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> slow progress</p>
<p>14 Seek a collaborative definition of the concept of a community ‘hub’ and how this might be provided.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> will be considered in Facilities Review.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> current</p>
<p>15 Undertake a review of sports facilities and prepare a development strategy as a matter of urgency.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> A \$5,000 Strategy Plan has been undertaken, new Change Rooms built and a current replacement of the oval lights is underway. The Sportsground will be a main focus for the Facilities Review.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> in progress</p>
<p>16 Community groups collaborate to provide training in the recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> no action</p>
<p>17 Encourage an on-going discussion regarding community values.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> No specific action but partly encompassed in the La Trobe University collaborative town planning project and in review of Trentham Community Plan.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> on-going</p>
<p>18 Investigations be undertaken into how the community can work with Hepburn Health Service to encourage the provision of increased health services</p> <p><i>Report:</i> No specific action but a community-initiated project to investigate care for brain trauma people has commenced.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> no action</p>
<p>19 Explore the avenues that may be available for the community to influence the provision of affordable and energy-efficient, sustainable housing.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Sustainability Group has two initiatives re sustainability underway.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> in progress</p>
<p>20 Business and general communities endorse and implement the strategies and recommendations in the report on the Business Support Project.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Business & Tourism Group formed, with representation on Shire Tourism Board – restricted by resources.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> limited progress</p>
<p>21 Over the coming year, develop an economic development and employment strategy.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> FORUM has prepared a draft strategy with 3 main areas of focus: food production, health services and tourism – limited resources for implementation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status:</i> in progress</p>

<p>22 In association with the High St traders, the Shire and an integrated signage strategy develop a Streetscape Plan.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Progress on signage in High St – ‘streetscape’ pending Council priorities. <i>Status:</i> no action</p>
<p>23 Community to support the establishment of a Community Bank branch in Trentham and, when established, ensure its success and the consequent flow of support for community projects.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Trentham & Districts Community Bank opened August 2011 <i>Status:</i> complete</p>
<p>24 Prepare a tourism development and promotion strategy in association with emerging regional initiatives.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Discussions at Business & Tourism Group. <i>Status:</i> minimal action</p>
<p>25 Community groups responsible for existing tourism events meet to review and coordinate how these might be better promoted and developed.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Main events entail large demand on volunteers. Spudfest now has MoU with Council. <i>Status:</i> No progress on coordination</p>
<p>26 Develop and implement a signage strategy for Trentham and surrounds.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Some action re town entrances, but no agreed strategy – Council prefers Shire-wide style. <i>Status:</i> no action</p>
<p>27 Trentham establish ‘a town committee’ responsible for coordinating and representing priorities for and input into the future development of the town.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Community Groups FORUM established (ref #6 above) encompassing 12 main groups and initiatives – recently moved to widen membership and seek incorporation for more effective advocacy. <i>Status:</i> complete + on-going</p>
<p>28 Commitment be sought from Council for a fair and equitable funding model for all ratepayers and to a genuinely consultative process for determining priorities for spending. Some optimism in Council Plan 2013-2017</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Ref Items 11, 12 & 13 above. <i>Status:</i> on-going / minimal progress as of writing</p>
<p>29 This Plan be developed over the next 1-2 years to incorporate long-term limits to growth and the influence of external factors on the town and surrounding districts.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Town planning project in collaboration with La Trobe University currently addressing these issues. Refer also current Council review of MSS. <i>Status:</i> on-going but no commitment from council thus far.</p>
<p>30 Develop an Open Space Strategy which promotes the concept of Trentham as a walking and cycling town.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Considerable work on walking & cycling trails and involvement in Council and regional strategies – also town plan but no Open Space Strategy <i>per se</i>. Extended Domino Trail – from Lyonville to Trentham – opened March 2013 <i>Status:</i> on-going</p>
<p>31 Investigate the development of additional walking/cycling trails including to the Falls, a rail trail to Lyonville/Bullarto and in the adjoining Wombat Forest to the south of the town.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> as for #30 <i>Status:</i> considerable progress</p>
<p>32 Implement the proposed single committee of management for the three natural reserves within the town boundaries.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> implemented (Bath St Reserve transferred from Council without resources) <i>Status:</i> complete</p>
<p>33 Instigate an annual Trentham FutureCare forum involving all the groups with interests in protecting and managing the natural environment.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Proposal submitted to Sustainability Group but not yet implemented. <i>Status:</i> no action</p>

<p>34 Consultative processes between the community and Council as recommended above include provisions for community consultation and input to planning and development.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Will be tested through the Town Planning process – FORUM has sought for Trentham Town Plan to be brought forward in response to rapid population growth and development (also significance of Calder corridor) – so far without success. <i>Status:</i> on-going</p>
<p>35 Consistent with Council planning provisions, the Open Space Strategy and recommendations emerging from the Business Support Project develop streetscape, heritage and town character guidelines.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> refer various above – ‘catch-all’ recommendation: refer to town planning process / La Trobe collaboration. <i>Status:</i> on-going</p>
<p>36 Promote awareness of sustainability issues and seek to have sustainability considerations as an overlay on all future development in subsequent iterations of the Community Plan.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Sustainability Group has relevant projects underway and has indicated interest in taking greater responsibility for ‘sustainability’ matters in the Community Plan. <i>Status:</i> on-going</p>
<p>37 Community and responsible agencies work cooperatively to implement the Weed-free Trentham initiative.</p> <p><i>Report:</i> Weed Free Trentham formed mid 2009 and regular working-bees since – supported variously by Landcare, TNC and Reserves Committee. <i>Status:</i> complete (need never ending!!)</p>

In summary:

Complete	Ongoing	In Progress	Minimal action	No action	Total
6	10	7	4	10	37

NB

- (i) By their nature some actions are intrinsically on-going (e.g. # 17 re community values) – and note some overlap between actions.
- (ii) While there are only 6 ‘complete’ actions, some of these are particularly significant, e.g. establishing the Community Bank, formation of the Community Groups FORUM and regular meetings with Hepburn Shire Council.
- (iii) As part of the renewal process all actions and recommendations that are not complete will be assessed to be retained, modified or discarded.

APPENDICES

Appendix A The Process of making the Trentham Community Plan

Most of the 52 people who attended a Global Warming presentation in February 2008 agreed that Trentham needed a community plan and Sustainability Group. TRATA (the Trentham Residents and Traders Association) provided an auspice for a community planning interest group which, over following months, developed a simple open-ended survey form, seeking the input of individuals and households to the following questions:

- What do you like about living in Trentham?
- What are Trentham's greatest values / strengths / assets / advantages?
- How can we protect Trentham's values / assets / strengths?
- What are Trentham's main challenges or disadvantages?
- What are the things you would most like changed or that we need in Trentham?

The results of these surveys were reported back to the community via the Trentham Community Newsletter (see Appendix B). Responses to the survey were maximised via a doorknock of the town. Some respondent 'profile' information was also collected but subsequently not analysed. The group received great encouragement from the then Manager of Community Services at Hepburn Shire Council but declined the offer of assistance from the Council-retained consultant: the planning group decided that it would rather develop its own plan in the full awareness that this might be more demanding but that the final result would be better and the community would have a much greater 'ownership' of the Plan.

Much of 2009 was taken up with preparation of the Plan and getting key actions underway – primarily the Community Bank and the Community Groups FORUM. A facilitated community workshop was held 31 March 2009 – an honorarium for the Facilitator was paid by Council. The outcomes of the workshop by and large reinforced the main themes and directions identified through the surveys and informed the final draft.

The 'draft' Plan was posted on www.trentham.org.au in early 2010 and it is that edition which is reproduced above (with minor editing) together with the recent review of actions and recommendations conducted by the FORUM. The intention to produce a 4-page summary of the Plan did not eventuate – inevitably the active members of the planning group became involved in implementing the projects in which they had interests: planning is important up to a point and then people want action.

Appendix B Summary of results as reported in the monthly Newsletter

The following pages reproduce the summaries of individual and household responses (mostly as quotes) to the surveys as reported in the Community Newsletters published in December 2008 and February 2009.

Trentham Talking . . . a summary of responses to the Community Plan surveys. This is Part 1 (of 2) of a report on the final tally of 145 completed survey forms (representing 224 people in total) – a big thank you to everyone who took the time to think about the questions and complete the survey.

Some indication of the significance of the responses can be made from the numbers of responses where it was possible to make a count. It isn't valid to convert these to percentages because some people gave more (or fewer) responses to particular questions – a consequence of the 'open' survey format, which, by definition, doesn't lend itself to numerical analysis. There was also some overlap across questions and difficulties in 'grouping' responses.

What is important is that we now have an extremely valuable resource documenting what Trentham and district people value, what they are concerned about and the ideas they have for 'shaping the future for our town and

community'. The complete set of responses will continue to be used to inform the community workshop in February (*actually held 31 March*) and the groups that will take responsibility for implementing the priorities we set at that workshop.

What do people like about living in Trentham?

1 PEOPLE 95 responses - friendly, accepting people; secure, safe community; being part of a small community > sense of belonging; people greet each other; neighbours that look out for each other; small enough and friendly enough never to be lonely; good for ageing; diversity of people and interests; skills of recent arrivals; new friends; community values and people care for each other.

2 VILLAGE / TOWN CHARACTER 127 responses - relaxed pace; pretty town; village atmosphere; it's quiet!!; most facilities & services available; room for chooks and a big vegie patch; Spring Festival; rural feel; local charm & local history / great sense of history; lake; café, hotel, newsagent, chemist, East Trentham Hotel; police who know the town and people; opportunity to participate in & influence local community; can walk to shops; it's a peaceful place in an increasingly chaotic world; its simplicity, friendliness, real conversations and helpfulness; the 3 churches joining together; history; unpretentiousness; swimming pool; lovely town square and cemetery.

3 ENVIRONMENT 110 - fresh air, adequate rainfall, plenty of room to move; Wombat Forest; birds; bushwalking; night sky (stars); '4 distinctly different seasons: nothing bland about our climate!'; water; great soil; beautiful scenery; great walks & bike rides; great climate for gardening.

4 PROXIMITY 33 - close to Melbourne; handy to Bendigo, Ballarat and the Big Smoke; close to Daylesford, Woodend and Kyneton; reasonable access to most services; efficient emergency treatment at Daylesford Hospital cf 3-4 hour wait at RMH

5 OTHER 14 - 'it's home'; golf course; living active churches; since retirement I have found plenty to occupy my time and brains; town clock; Red Beard; Neighbourhood House – great range of courses; not a major tourist centre; everything; 'I love it here'

"The way the township is interwoven with the natural and agricultural environment, both in its 'streetscape' etc, and in its social fabric – human-scale 'structures' and 'pace of life'."

"Good climate & water supply, quiet, peaceful small town and community with interesting old buildings, wonderful old deciduous trees around the town and beautiful farmland and forests."

What are Trentham's greatest values / strengths / assets / advantages?

1 PEOPLE / SOCIAL / HEALTH / WELL-BEING / COMMUNITY – 121 responses – these were very similar to the responses above with some specifics, including; unique history still largely preserved acceptance of different families (eg same sex couples); potato farming heritage & sawmilling; most amenities no further than 15 minutes away; good chemist; aged care/Bush Nursing Hospital; churches; school & kindergarten; Shirley's morning tea – a gathering of old friends and new; positive attitude general in town; Police Station; community values, closeness and camaraderie; number of groups & committees; Trenam Footy Club; active groups – Landcare, Book Club, Film Society etc; being greeted & recognised; knowledge of the locals is an asset

2 TOWNSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE – 97 responses – again similar to those above, with specific mentions for Red Beard bakery; Jargon; sporting facilities; Railway Station; 'best country golf course in Australia'; Lions Club; Twiggs; Quarry St Reserve; TRATA; unique town – streetscape in High St – fantastic; "plus Neighbourhood Centre, Hospital/Nursing Home . . . all businesses & organisations currently running are essential assets of the community".

3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & RESOURCES – 126 responses: nature/environment generally – 28; Trentham Falls – 16; climate/water – 33; Wombat Forest / forests – 29; soils / land /rural - 20

4 LOCATION - 50 responses, very similar to those under what we like about Trentham above.

5 OTHER – 28 responses, with various mentions of "Old World Charm"; history; relatively unspoilt and undeveloped; and the "obvious strength of community, as shown by the Market, Spudfest, Hairy Arch, Feldspar Spring Festival".

How can we protect Trentham's values / assets / strengths?

1 PEOPLE / SOCIAL / HEALTH / WELL-BEING / COMMUNITY – 69 suggestions with main themes around: involving people; working together as a community; the need to be open to change; creating a community 'hub' to foster a sense of connectedness & well-being.

2 TOWNSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE – 96 suggestions, including: supporting local shops and businesses; incentives & encouragement for new businesses (not just based on tourism); many calls for controls and restrictions on future development to protect the town's character; restoration of the streetscape; better public transport; enforce by-laws on cats & dogs.

3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & RESOURCES – 40 suggestions including: keep farming areas and support farming community; upgrade forest walking tracks and signage; don't stress water supply and other natural resources; eradicate weeds along forest edges, waterways and open spaces; protecting the forests; strengthen Landcare; develop new uses for natural areas; town should reflect the richness and value of the natural surroundings; promote investment in food crops using organic methods.

4 LOCATION / TRANSPORT – 6 calls for better access and public transport.

5 OTHER – 32 diverse suggestions: overall environmental plan; a proactive Council member; ensure Council 'adopts' community plan; people who live here p/t need to put more \$\$ into the town; promote a festival with heritage theme – potato farming/sawmilling; various suggestions around tourism; resist change; increased development/population > cars, so need a strategy to deal with this, which should include bicycle paths, car-free areas & public transport; "there are groups & processes in place to protect the environmental aspects, although balance is always needed. Balancing 'peaceful & serene' against 'progression & development' is a tricky one".

What are Trentham's main challenges or disadvantages? (What are the things people would most like changed or that we need in Trentham?)

As a preview of the Part 2 report, the main challenges identified were: lack of public transport (72 responses); restoration of the Cosmo (43); concerns about Council and infrastructure (19); – but by far and away the major concerns were about the business sector/main street (157 responses, not including comments re tourism, controlling development and employment).

The Part 2 report will also cover the things people would most like to change or that we need in Trentham and the thoughtful and, in some cases, inspiring concluding thoughts that people offered.

Trentham Talking . . . a summary of responses to the Community Plan surveys. This is Part 2 of a report based on the 145 completed survey forms (representing 224 people in total). Part 1 (see December Newsletter) reported on what people like about living in Trentham; what they saw as Trentham's greatest values and advantages; and how these can be protected.

What are Trentham's main challenges or disadvantages?

The 'big' issues identified were: - lack of public transport (72 responses);
- restoration of the Cosmo (43) – *now hopefully on the way*; and
- concerns about the business sector/main street (157).

Many of the other responses can be grouped around themes, including: *the need to control / balance development*; the need for the community to work together; *youth activities and employment*; tourism attractions and services; *interest and support from the Shire*; meeting the needs of an ageing population; *tourism*; and other issues eg natural gas.

[In grouping responses under these themes and the 'business sector/main street' issue there is a risk that much of the detail and valuable suggestions could be lost. The intention is that, when we as a community have identified our priorities, all these responses will be given to the groups responsible for action to draw on when developing and proposing strategies and projects. Responses reported below attempt to give examples of the range and emphasis of the responses.]

Restoration of the Cosmo - *lack of action has multiple impacts: economic, aesthetic and psychological*

Lack of public transport - *no transport to Kyneton or convenient transport to Daylesford & Woodend*; everyone drives – you can't demand public transport when people don't use it; *bring back the train*; particularly

for those who are ageing; *increasing travel costs for locals to access shops & services elsewhere and for tourists to come and visit.*

Business sector / main street - *strengthening the retail & services sectors; lack of choice & lack of competitive prices at our supermarket; some commercial development without compromising historical/village atmosphere; out-shopping / people driving to Kyneton/Woodend/Daylesford for shopping; encouraging new business people with local incentives eg upgrading street verandas; no butcher, lack of good fruit shop, lack of food shops eg deli, & quality cafes/ restaurants; no bank; inability to attract light industry; need \$2m spent on infrastructure; low population makes it hard for local businesses to survive on purely local trade; main street looks rundown, apparent lack of interest in presentation, unswept, dirty windows, dog poo, cigarette butts; more variety in the main shopping strip while retaining the character & charm of the town; self fulfilling situation with poor shopping leading to dependence on neighbouring towns; disabled access, particularly a ramp at the PO*

Controlling & balancing development - *attain balance between encouraging tourism & respecting residential needs & precious natural resources; over population; to stay small and retain the current quality of life; getting to a size just large enough to support businesses; resist overdevelopment that will impinge on natural assets; to avoid overdevelopment and 'urbanisation'; limit housing development; avoid too many 'weekender' and holiday homes; restrict small size sub-divisions & some types of home building; managing population pressure and future water supply; cheaper houses and rental properties; being marketed as 'only an hour from Melbourne' leads to suburban, 'dormitory' use; need to recognise, retain & build on strengths and assets.*

Working together as a community - *getting more volunteers; factions that don't see eye-to-eye; too many egos for the real good of the town; utilize the energy and money of new residents; town needs a high profile co-ordinating body eg Progress Assoc or Committee; residents won't work together – some people are unrealistic; poor social infrastructure – need community centre/social gathering spot – not Pub; lack of social opportunities for single people; working together rather than as separate small groups – all self-interested; community feels divided & communication is poor between different sections of the community; people joining committees for their own agenda, but when it comes to doing any work they are always 'too busy'; need to become part of a broader community; vision for future – what way is the best?*

Youth activities and employment - *lack of things to do; little or no scope for the younger generation, especially teenagers, to spend their time outside school meaningfully, for developing interests, skills beyond what schools have to offer; not much for youth / children; youth activities: not necessarily running new events, but making events out of town accessible; kids sporting facilities / stadium; indoor sporting facility; skate park not much; start a technical school; lack of employment opportunities; need to create employment for existing and new residents; more factories/work for young; we need f/t employment with genuine substance – tourism does not offer this, it's a mile wide and an inch deep – employment that can raise a family and pay a mortgage is now missing.*

Lack of Shire interest - *poor service from our local govt – Trentham needs a 'fair go'; Shire is dysfunctional, faction-riddled and has incurred enormous, unnecessary debts; better road maintenance & my own road sealed; more Council support for community; narrow roads.*

Ageing population - *small & ageing population; ageing population & needs.*

Tourism - *perceived positioning in tourism; improve our tourist attractions (Falls & parks) while protecting what we have; promoting tourism without losing small town appeal; need to develop tourism drawcard(s); lack of tourism infrastructure; further develop/promote 'Spudfest' & festivals to attract 'tourists'; more tourist & local restaurants.*

Other responses - *image/identity problem; town stagnant – needs to be energised; more community facilities: indoor heated pool & gym; improve signage; retain history & culture but plan for the future; no library; no natural gas; no hospital/resident doctor; lack of child care; increasing numbers of weekenders – need resident families; dogs allowed to defecate on footpaths / bark at night; large infestations of weeds; staying alive as a town.*

What are the things you would most like changed or that we need in Trentham?

Responses to this question reflected many of the concerns raised above.

Restoration/appropriate development of the Cosmo (49 responses - many similar) - *highly visible & historically significant; could be the hub for attracting tourism and locals; integral part of town – 'we need her back'.*

More / better public transport (79 responses) – similar to above, plus *local public transport*; need strategies for future public transport; *taxi service or community bus*.

Business sector / main street (132 responses) – generally similar to above with emphasis on a *bank/community bank*; more variety in the retail sector – butcher, fruit & veg; *streetscape – historical coherence - we need a main street makeover*; range of goods and prices at supermarket; and some once-off suggestions, including *pave the laneway to the Red Beard Bakery*; pedestrian crossings in main street; *petrol station should be open on Sundays*; Trewhella factory site cleaned up; *feeling better about ourselves & therefore better presentation of shop-fronts*; attract a business that would employ a lot of local people; *campaign to encourage retailers to invest*.

More Shire interest (22 responses) - *more attention to road upkeep*; better footpaths to encourage people to walk; *lower rates as little service provided*; Hepburn Shire shuns Trentham whenever possible or convenient. Residents expected to go to Daylesford – Clunes (Creswick?) has an office so residents can go down the roads to view Council activities; *hard rubbish pick-up*; dogs are a nuisance.

And ideas for how we might better plan the future: *real local input (and control?) into land use planning*; no more housing sub-divisions (don't want to be like Daylesford); *essential that any new residential development is conditional on the availability of water*; active local groups involved in planning issues is critical; *sustainability of environment, agriculture & economy*; household sustainability, particularly energy efficiency; *lobby State & Federal members*; paid position for town manager/promoter.

Working together as a community – *support for each other and all groups, teams, organisations, committees; working together, rather than in a fragmented manner, towards the town's/community's goals*; a local welcome pack should be available to teach newcomers; *greater co-operation between/by TRATA/Lions/Service Groups etc*; we all need to be singing out of the same 'Hymn Book'; *needs a body to assist with co-ordinating the efforts of local organisations*; strong, accountable 'town committee' (could be TRATA); *ensure all community development groups are united in their objectives*; elders of the town are not respected by the 'blow-ins' – they blow-in, cause problems and then blow out; *social planning approach that supports education, training & employment, sport, recreation, music, performance and other activities for all ages*; expansion of Neighbourhood house; *a responsible water body committee*; a forum to discuss the pros and cons of volunteerism; *street parties arranged by Neighbourhood Watch – to 'know the faces' / neighbourliness / general safety / community coherence*.

More community facilities - *community garden*; flower/garden festival; *bigger community centre for sporting activities (indoor facility)*; create a 'hub' or community 'owned' resource – library/reading room, meeting rooms, films & activity centre (several variations – incl. a place to hang out and meet people/youth hub; somewhere for young kids to meet/hold events; community café); *improve sporting amenities/buildings at sports ground/indoor sports stadium*; pool is a wonderful asset.

Youth, recreation and employment - *need to retain more of our young people*; young people having a voice; *need amusement for the youth eg better skate park (a proper half pipe would be good!) or BMX park next to skate park*; to hold the younger people we need some reasonable jobs otherwise the town will be an old people's village . . . just a place to sleep; *training hall at the footy*; outdoor recreation area that teaches people about the environment; *develop facilities/trails for walkers/bikes*; make Trentham the regional centre for mountain biking; *fitness circuit around lake*; a swing for adults & human-sized chess board

Other ideas (not grouped) - *an outpatients service*; films at the Mechanics Hall; *a Chinese restaurant*; underground power lines for Cosmo Rd to enable trees to grow; *assistance for elderly and infirm to maintain their properties*; Trewhella factory should be a tourist attraction; *tourist walk to the Falls*; community festival with input from Blackwood, Bullarto, Spring Hill, Tylden etc - there are not enough willing souls otherwise; *deciduous/more trees in streetscape*; ban the growing of GE food crops; *market moved to High St for local traders to benefit*; gallery for local people to display & sell hand-crafted items; *set up a caravan park/camping ground/motel*; plaques on historical buildings; *blow-ups of Arthur Beattie's photographs*; Tidy Town campaign; *eradicate English broom on the road verges*; town / natural gas; *ADSL2 broadband*; independence of electricity power supply; *link 'farmers' market to promotion as a good food destination*; civil disobedience; *no need for change – have all we need*.