

Mildura LGA Planning Scheme Review Round 1 Engagement Report

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Contents

BACKGROUND	3
ABOUT THIS REPORT	3
OVERALL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH	3
ROUND 1 APPROACH	3
NEXT STEPS	4
RESULTS	5
KEY POINTS	5
RESULTS IN DETAIL	6
COMMUNITY VISION 2021 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS	6
MILDURA PLANNING SCHEME REVIEW - ROUND 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	9

Background

About this report

This report outlines the Round 1 engagement activities undertaken for the Mildura Planning Scheme Review and the engagement results. It is designed to give initial guidance on community sentiment relating to living in the Mildura LGA this will form part of the evidence base for the planning scheme review. It is based on a review of the 2021 Community Vision engagement and the results of the community pop up consultations undertaken in the Mildura LGA in May 2024 and the results of an online survey conducted in May and June 2024.

Overall community engagement approach

Community engagement for the planning scheme review will occur over three stages. The staged approach provides multiple opportunities for residents and stakeholders to be involved in the process. The stages are outlined below.

1. The first stage is very broad and designed to gather community sentiment on living in Mildura. No understanding of the planning scheme is required to engage in stage one consultation.
2. The second stage is more detailed and will provide potential planning responses to issues that have been identified in first stage of the engagement.
3. The third stage is a formal process of making submissions on the planning scheme.

Additional engagement will occur during the whole process with key stakeholders including Councillors, staff and other interest groups. This is likely to be more focused on specific issues, locations and ideas.

Round 1 approach

The first round engagement was designed to gather sentiment from community members. It aimed to specifically understand:

1. What is valued in the Mildura LGA and should be preserved
2. What could be changed/improved including the biggest challenges.

This approach ensures that community members do not need a detailed understanding of planning and planning schemes to be involved in the engagement. The information it provides guides the review of the planning scheme to meet the expectations of the Mildura LGA community.

A range of engagement approaches were used, being:

1. A review of the engagement for the 2021 Community Vision
2. An online survey on the Planning Scheme Review website
3. Three pop up stalls at places where the community congregate (Ouyen Post office, Sunraysia Farmers Market - Mildura, and Red Cliffs Country Market).

This approach provided opportunities for a broad range of community members to engage in the process. It allowed people with little or no knowledge of the planning scheme to be included in the process. In addition, it allowed people to talk to planners about how the planning scheme impacts decisions of Council.

Next steps

The results of this first stage of engagement will be used to identify what the planning scheme needs to address and look at some possible planning responses. This will be the foundation of the second round of engagement.

Results

Key points

The results of the review of previous engagement and the pop-up sessions in May 2024 and the survey are outlined in summary below.

What is Valued in the Mildura LGA

Community members strongly valued:

- The size of Mildura City (big enough and small enough)
- The family friendliness
- The relaxed lifestyle
- The river (in Mildura city)
- The community
- Green space and access to nature
- The weather/ climate.

What should be preserved

The elements that were most mentioned were:

- The river and surrounds in Mildura
- The slower pace of life
- The family friendly nature of the area.

What could be changed/ improved

There was a great deal of consistency in relation to what could be improved:

- Access to services – particularly health and education
- Transport to Melbourne and within the local area
- Access to smaller (more affordable) housing
- More/ better tourist offerings and information.
- More business and employment opportunities.

What are the biggest challenges

There were a range of challenges identified with the most common responses outlined below:

- Access to health and social services
- Travel costs
- Access to jobs and business opportunities
- Access to affordable housing (this includes keeping populations in smaller centres)

Results in detail

Community Vision 2021 Engagement results

The engagement for the Community Vision included a survey that was completed by over 900 people. The questions were similar to those asked for the planning scheme review and the answers provide useful data for the planning scheme review. The results have been themed and collated and are outlined below.

What do you like most about our region and community?

Responses included:

- The location
- The access to surrounding communities and unique towns
- Public, green spaces
- Trees, nature and landscape
- Access to the Murray river and riverfront
- Access to the airport
- The climate
- Community infrastructure
- Healthcare/ medical facilities
- Arts and events
- Cultural diversity and inclusion
- Community, people, friendliness
- Relaxed/ slow pace of life
- Tourism
- Markets, agriculture, produce, wineries
- Affordable/ cost of living
- Shops, cafes and restaurants.

What would make it a better place to live, work and play?

- Local transport improvements including parking, roads public transport, facilities for active transport
- More/ cheaper flights
- Improved parks and green spaces
- More trees, nature and landscaping
- More/ better walking tracks/ paths

- More/ better use for the river and river frontage
- More community infrastructure
- Improved accessibility
- Better services (internet and communications)
- Access to housing
- Better health and community services
- More access to education and schools
- More community activities for all age groups
- Greater cultural diversity
- Economic development and job opportunities and retail development
- Increase in tourism.

What should be the top priority for the future?

- Accessibility/ support for disabled and elderly
- Improve housing availability/ affordability
- Improve communications
- Increase community services availability
- Improve health services
- Improve education opportunities
- Increase events and social activities
- Increase community diversity and cohesion
- Improve safety
- Economic development, job opportunities
- Increase retail opportunities
- Increase tourism

What challenges do we face as a region and a community?

- Distance from major cities
- Roads
- Public transport/ connectivity
- Climate change and environmental health
- A need for more green space/ trees/ shade

- Housing affordability
- Isolation and distance from services
- Social challenges (drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, mental health, chronic health conditions, COVID recovery)
- Activities for children, youth and families
- Cultural diversity and inclusion
- Community cohesion
- Crime
- Aging population
- Economic diversity
- Job opportunities
- Tourism development, support and promotion.

Mildura Planning Scheme Review - Round 1 Community Engagement

Pop-ups

Three pop up engagement activities were held between the 3rd and 5th May 2024 at:

- Ouyen outside the Post office
- Mildura at the Sunraysia Market
- Red Cliffs at the Community Market.

These locations provided an opportunity to talk to a wide range of people from across the region. Over 100 people were engaged in the three pop up activities.

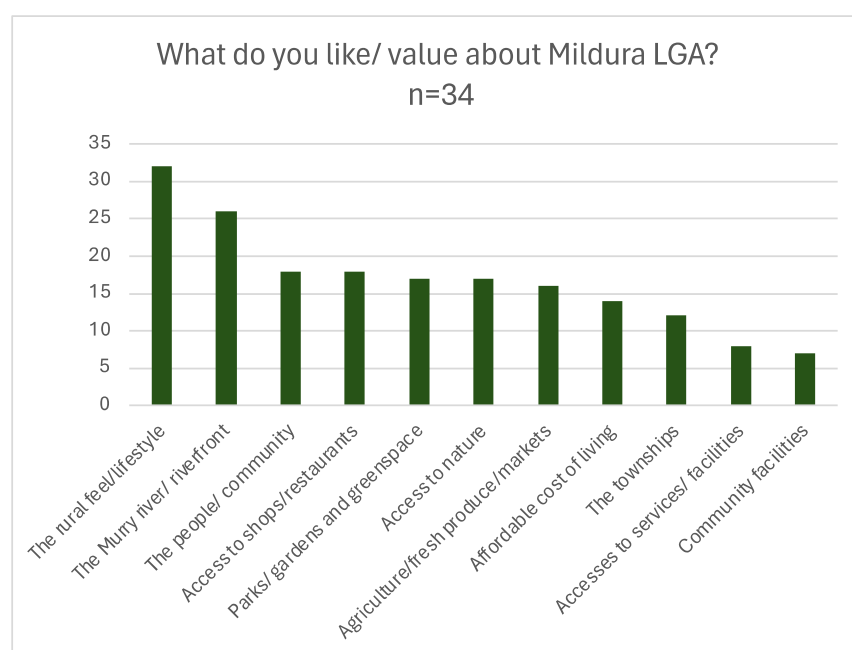
The questions asked were similar to those asked in the Community Vision engagement and elicited similar results.

Online survey

The online survey was available on the Mildura LGA's website and received 34 responses. Slightly more responses from females (21) than males (13) we received. The age of respondents ranged from 20 years to 79 years. Most respondents were from Mildura (18) with additional responses from Irymple, Koorlong, Red Cliffs, Cardross, Merbein, Ouyen and Underbool.

What do you love about Mildura LGA?

Across the different engagement activities there was a great deal of consistency in results. This indicated a love of the rural lifestyle, community and, in Mildura City, the river Murray and riverfront. The results of the survey can be seen in the graph below.



The results of the pop ups are outlined below.

Ouyen

- The Community
- Living Locally
- The sporting clubs.

Mildura

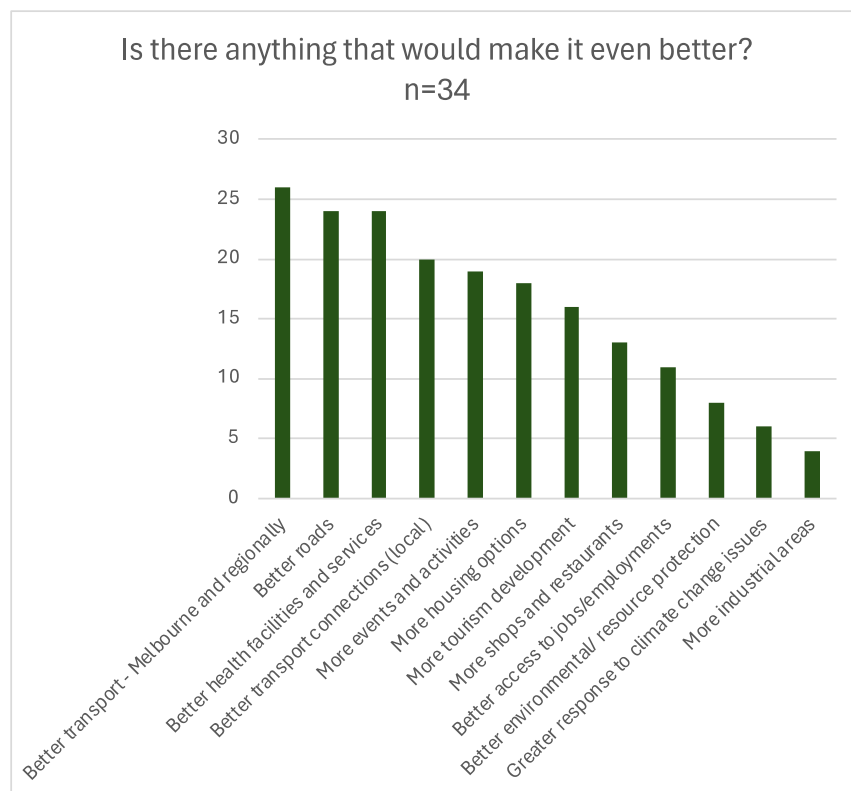
- The climate/ weather
- Family friendly
- Housing affordability
- The river/ river front
- Big enough and small enough
- It's quiet but has what you need
- The Mall (pedestrian priority)
- Self sufficient.

Red Cliffs

- The community (open and progressive)
- Weather
- Riverlands and national parks
- Markets
- Sports.

What could be improved?

In terms of improvements the most commonly cited responses related to transport and access to services. The results of the survey can be seen in the graph below.



The results of the pop ups are outlined below.

Ouyen

- Improved/ increased services – particularly health and long day care
- Need more (affordable housing/ accessible) – opportunities to subdivide, need a range of housing options
- Better transport connections to Mildura and Melbourne (rail?)
- Address staff shortages
- Vacant shops need activating
- The school needs development/ expansion
- More opportunities for development (economic, building, tourism)
- Look at opportunities like RV dump point and EV charging stations to get people into the town
- Small towns need more focus, promotion, could bring economic benefits
- Need more people (residents).

Mildura

- Transport to Melbourne (train?)
- Activities for kids – basketball courts, play equipment
- Dog parks (to promote community connections)
- Activate goods shed
- Improve transport around town (public transport and active travel options)
- Promote tourism
- Address staff retention issues
- More flights to Melbourne
- Activate the Mall.

Red Cliffs

- Increase services particularly health, vet, banks
- Enforcement of permit conditions
- Consistent speed limits
- Do not support the Mildura East subdivisions
- Increase tourism information.

What are the biggest challenges for Mildura LGA?

The survey asked an additional question relating to the biggest challenged for Mildura LGA again access to health and social services and travel were the most commonly cited as shown on the graph below.

