2025 UPDATE

Community Vision

2021-2040



TOWARDS 2040

Your Vision. Our Future.

Mildura Rural City Council



Acknowledgment of country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.

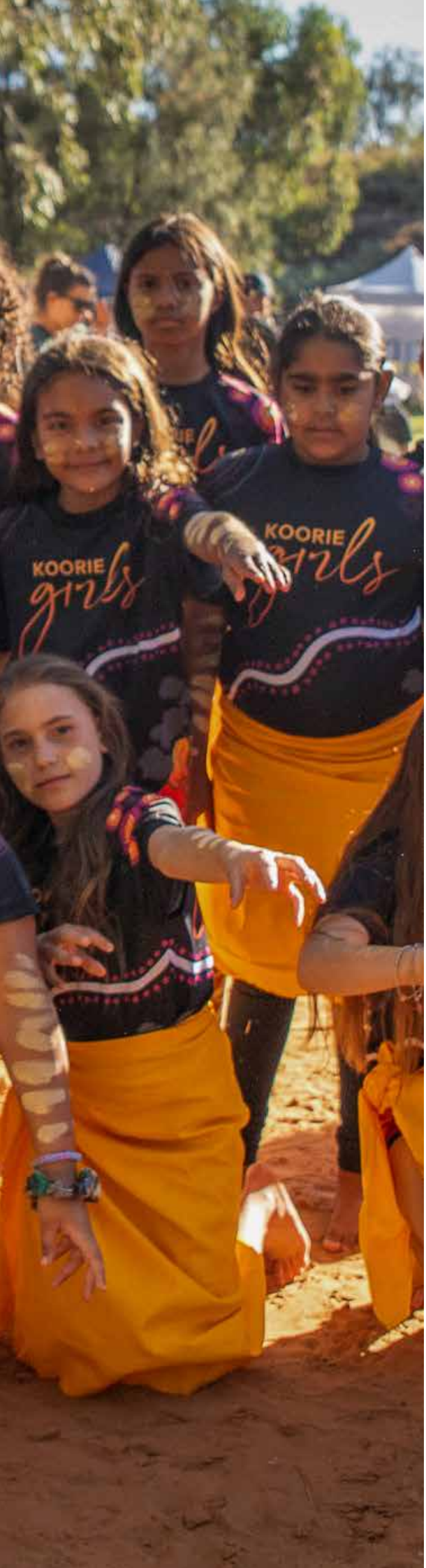


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Our liveable people-friendly region

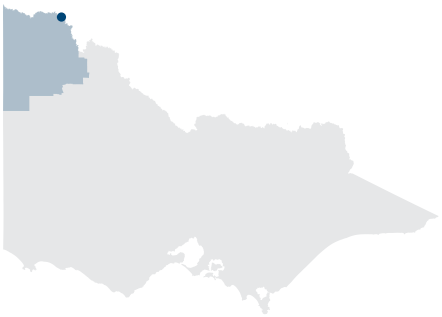
Mildura Rural City is located in the north-west of Victoria and covers an incredible 10 per cent of the state of Victoria.

The local landscape boasts vegetation unique to the Mallee, while also being famous for broad acre grain properties, fresh fruit production (citrus, avocado, table grapes and wine grapes) and vibrant and welcoming townships.

The municipality shares borders with both NSW and South Australia, making it a regional service centre for all three states.

The jewel in the municipality's crown is its connection to the Mighty Murray River, which winds its way through much of the region. It's a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

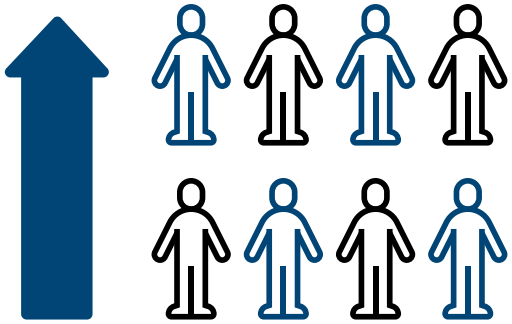
22,082km2
Land area





57,544
2023 estimated resident population

62,600
2031 projected resident population



Key industries

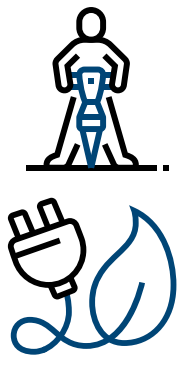
Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

Our towns

- Cabarita
- Cardross
- Colignan
- Cowangie
- Cullulleraine
- Irymple
- Merbein
- Meringur
- Mildura
- Murrayville
- Nangiloc
- Nichols Point
- Ouyen
- Red Cliffs
- Underbool
- Walpeup
- Werrimull

Emerging industries

Renewable energy generation, aquaculture, mineral sands mining and recycling



$8.157 billion
Annual economic output

9.4%
Born overseas

4.6%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

5,386
Businesses

4.1%
Unemployment rate

7.5%
Need assistance with core activities

25,016
Jobs

12.3%
Speak a language other than English at home

Sources: 2023 update to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Development Victoria and REMPLAN as of 17 December 2024.




GRANDA CLOTHING
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GRANDA CLOTHING



Community values

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Our community believes that everyone should be able to live healthy, safe and happy lives.

We welcome and celebrate our diversity, believing it helps our region grow.

We value our community's range of identities, lifestyles and experiences, regardless of age, ability, cultural and linguistic background, gender, political perspective or beliefs.

Inclusion and participation remain the key to building a strong community.

We value the need to preserve a person's dignity, while ensuring our community remains open, inviting and accessible to everyone.

We also acknowledge, and commit to addressing, systematic barriers which exist for those in our community experiencing gender, sexual, race, cultural, age or disability-based discriminations or disadvantages.

Sustainability

Sustainability is about more than just our natural environment. Our community values sustainable development and communities.

Our community remains committed to taking action to address climate change, while ensuring our natural areas, parks and communities remain healthy for future generations to enjoy.

Art, culture, events and tourism

Our region is enriched by our creativity. Landscapes covering the Murray River to the Mallee outback and tight-knit country towns make for an incredible cultural tapestry.

Our history dates back more than 40,000 years, and we respect the deep and continuing connection Traditional Owners have to the land and water.

Much of our country's fruit, vegetable, nut and cereal crops are grown here, with agriculture and horticulture remaining an important part of our local identity.

Our community is deeply engaged in arts and culture, and we acknowledge that arts, culture, events and tourism remain transformative.

They help make our towns attractive places to live, work and invest, while building identity and community connection.

There are incredible opportunities to use arts, sport, recreation, events, tourism and culture to improve wellbeing and social connectedness, while building and growing the local economy.

This also helps showcase our region's character, diversity and heritage.

We are committed to maintaining our cultural unique and creative identity, while celebrating our Indigenous history, the many wonderful locations and landscapes that make up our region through vibrant events, tourism and cultural experiences.

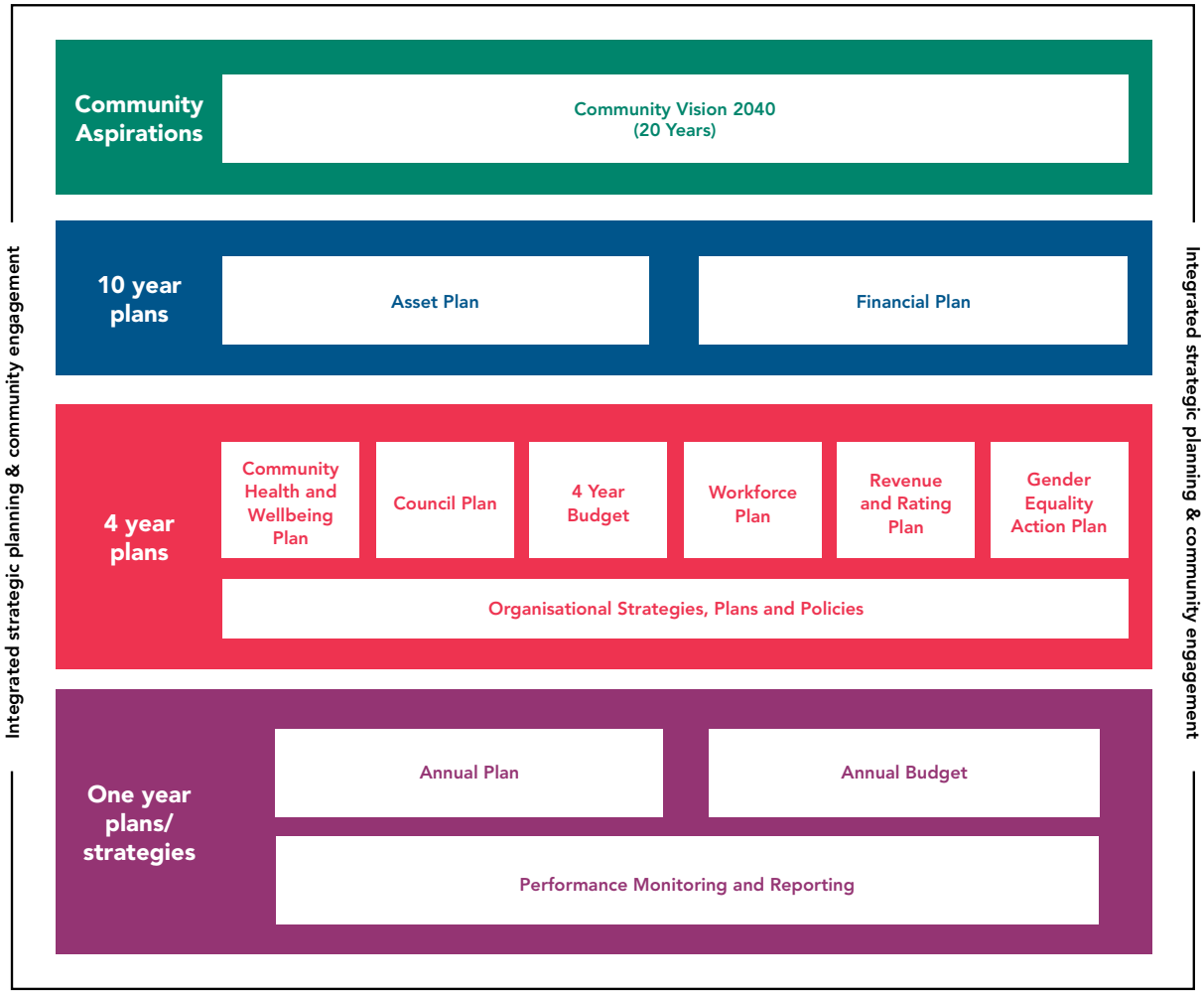
What is a Community Vision?

A Community Vision describes what everyone wants for the future of their region and community. It highlights what the community values most and sets out a long-term vision and key priorities for achieving that vision.

The 2040 Community Vision is driven and owned by our community, with Council facilitating its development in 2021, while touching base with our community about its values and objectives in 2024. The Community Vision helps guide Council's strategic planning and decision-making, particularly the four-year Council Plan.

Other local organisations and the wider community – including business groups, not-for-profits and service providers – also use the Community Vision, ensuring everyone can work towards common goals. All Victorian Councils must work with their community to develop and maintain a Community Vision under the Local Government Act (2020).

The diagram below outlines the relationship between several strategic Council documents and the Community Vision through our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.









Creating our Community Vision

Launched in March 2021, Imagine 2040 was a community engagement program by Mildura Rural City Council to develop a shared vision for the region's future

At the time we asked our community to look ahead to the future, and imagine what they would want our community and region to look like in 2040.

Almost 2000 people who live, worked, visited, studied or played in our region participated in that process, helping to create our 20-year Vision for the future.

In August 2024 – four years into the Vision – we began our Towards 2040 campaign.

Towards 2040 saw us touch base with our community to check that the themes, Vision statements and outcomes remained relevant and consistent with our community's expectations.

Our Towards 2040 campaign ran from August to September 2024, and included an online survey and several in-person consultation sessions across the district.

More than 1,300 people took part, helping to update the Community Vision and continue our push Towards 2040.

We will continue to work with the community throughout the duration of the Vision to ensure it remains relevant and resonates with residents.

Engaging with our community

Phase 1: March – April 2021

Throughout March and April 2021 we conducted an extensive and broad engagement process to understand what our community's vision was for 2040. We asked people what they value most about our community, what challenges they face today, what would make it a better place by 2040 and what priorities we should focus on.

We then worked alongside an independent social researcher to analyse and theme the feedback which was received through online and paper surveys, community events, facilitated conversations, illustration cards, an online visioning wall, vox pop interviews, social media and a youth Minecraft challenge.

Phase 2: July 2021

The analysed community feedback was used to generate Vision Statements and Goals under the five key themes of Environment, People, Place, Economy and Leadership. These Vision Statements and Goals were presented back to the community in July 2021 for further review and feedback.

Phase 3: August – September 2021

We again engaged an independent social researcher to analyse the community's feedback and work alongside us as we adjusted the Vision Statements and Goals to ensure they reflected the intent and aspirations of our community. The Draft Community Vision was then presented on public exhibition, before finally being adopted in late 2021.

Phase 4: August to September 2024

With a new Council term on the horizon, and being four years into the Community Vision, the time was right to check in with the community to ensure the Vision Statements and Goals outlined remained relevant.

The Towards 2040 campaign provided the chance to engage via an online survey and face-to-face at several in-person events. We asked our community to once again tell us what they loved about our region, while also touching on what would make it better and the challenges still faced.

We again engaged an independent social researcher to analyse the community's feedback, with sustainability, Hospitals/GPs, education, tourism and job opportunities highlighted as the top priorities moving forward.

The community also told us that the riverfront remained their favourite place, and that they loved the friendliness and people that make up our community.

Improving roads and parking, public transport and a focus on more activities for children were among the top items listed as ways our community could be made better.

2024 response breakdown

Age

5% 15-24

16% 25-34

27% 35-44

24% 45-54

16% 55-65

7% 65-74

1% 75+

3% Prefer not to say

44% With children at home

15% Renters

2% Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

6% Living under the poverty line

4% Living with a disability

10% Speak a Language other than English at home

Location

We received feedback from residents in communities including:

- Mildura
- Merbein
- Meringur
- Werrimul
- Millewa
- Irymple
- Nichols Point
- Ouyen
- Murrayville
- Underbool
- Walpeup
- Red Cliffs
- Colignan
- Hattah
- Cardross
- Koorlong

Gender

61% Women

35% Men

1% Self describe

3% Prefer not to say

Our Community Vision Themes

Five themes frame the priorities that are most important to our community. By focusing our efforts on these themes, we will be able to monitor the progress of our region striving to become a more liveable and people-friendly community.

Environment

We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations

Community

We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community

Place

We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle

Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity

Leadership

We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making





"The play areas are safe and secure for young children."



"The great sporting opportunities, open spaces and shade."



"The family-friendly atmosphere."



"Our volunteers who give up their time to help those less fortunate than themselves."



"The determination and strength of our small business owners! They are heroes!"



"Shopping and services – easily accessible within reasonable distance."

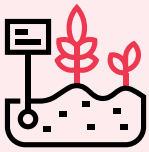
Why our community loves living here



"Our easily accessible public spaces, including our spaces for recreation."



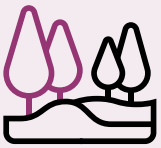
"The sunsets, river, sand. Our LGBTIQA+, arts and migrant communities."



"Our important agriculture industry."



"Our wide-ranging interests, from art to farming, sport, food and nature."



"Our First Nations People, and their country and water."



"Our city's location on the river. It's place and wider proximity to the desert. It's unique landscape."

Environment



We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations



Value, protect and sustain the river, natural resources and unique environments



Reduce waste and enhance resource recovery



Actively address the causes and impacts of climate change



Increase community knowledge, skills and action to live sustainably

From our community

What we value

- River/local lakes
- Weather
- Trees
- Green spaces
- Natural environment
- Our local produce

Priorities

- Education to support sustainable communities
- Plant more trees
- Protect the natural environment
- Improve maintenance of trees
- Better waste and resource recovery education
- Better climate change strategies

Challenges

- Waste management and associated costs
- Access to water and water security
- Stopping illegal dumping of waste

Community



We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community



Access to quality local health services to support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing



A community where people feel safe



Arts, culture, heritage and activities that connect families, community and improve health and wellbeing



Health and wellbeing is promoted for everyone that lives, learns, works and plays in our community



Social and cultural diversity is respected, supported and celebrated



Youth are supported to reach their full potential



Respect Aboriginal culture, connection to country and Traditional Owners of the land

From our community

What we value

- Our relaxed lifestyle
- Accessibility of sport and recreation
- The people
- Cultural Diversity

Challenges

- Access to alcohol and drug support
- Education opportunities
- Rising crime

Priorities

- Bigger hospital
- More access to GPs and health professionals
- Access to further education
- More activities for children/youth
- Mental health support

Place



We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle



Well planned development that considers the diverse and changing needs of our community



Outdoor spaces, green spaces and public facilities where people of all ages and abilities can exercise and relax



Adequate and sustainable infrastructure to meet future demand



Accessible and connected transport options within and to our region



Affordable housing and a range of options to suit community needs



Friendly places and towns recognised for their individual strengths and unique communities

From our community

What we value

- Our regional location
- Easy to get to places
- Our CBD
- Mildura Riverfront
- Rural/city lifestyle balance
- Bike and walking tracks
- Playgrounds
- Safety
- Roads and parking

Challenges

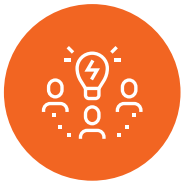
- Distance from capital cities
- Access to affordable housing
- Access to affordable transport

Priorities

- Infrastructure meets community needs
- Improved public toilets and accessible facilities
- Public transport
- Improved access to parking
- Advocate for more affordable housing

Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity



Resilient local businesses that are supported to thrive, contributing to the viability and character of our towns



A valued and vibrant tourism industry and recognised visitor destination



An agile economy underpinned by innovation and industry diversity that attracts investment



Access to a range of education, training and employment pathways



A skilled workforce that meets current and future industry needs



Equitable access to digital infrastructure to support education, health and economy

From our community

What we value

- Local restaurants/cafes
- Community Markets
- Agricultural industries

Challenges

- Lack of external investment
- Increased cost of living
- Housing availability
- Recruitment/retention of specialists

Priorities

- Tourism campaign
- Job opportunities
- Support for start-ups and small businesses
- Recruitment and retention of specialists

Leadership



We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making



Community is engaged in decision making with opportunities to share their views on things that affect them



Keep the community informed to build a relationship of transparency, understanding and trust



Accountable, trustworthy and efficient governance and operations that serve the interest of community



Serve the community by providing great customer experience, value for money and quality services



Strong and consistent advocacy for local needs and priorities



Collaborative partnerships that build capacity and increase opportunities

From our community

What we value

- Transparency
- Input in decision-making
- Innovative and forward thinking leadership
- Value for money

Priorities

- Reduce financial pressures on ratepayers
- Advocate for increased government funding and support
- Improved communication

Challenges

- Cost of living
- Financial sustainability
- Access to accurate information


Australian Citizenship



Measuring our progress

Developing a shared Community Vision is only one part of the journey. As our community continues Towards 2040 we will continue to monitor and report on the progress being made to ensure that we can celebrate what's being achieved, while recognising what's still to come.

How are we making the Vision a reality?

The Community Vision guides all of Council's planning and decision-making and is implemented through our four-year Council Plan.

Our Council Plan highlights medium-term goals and priorities that we will work towards to ensure we are achieving the outcomes outlined in the Vision.

Initiatives will be delivered through partnerships with stakeholders, including community groups, service providers, businesses and other levels of government.

Our Integrated Planning Framework ensures that Council activities and resources meet the needs and expectations of the community.

We remain committed to ongoing transparency and accountability with the community, and will continue to celebrate achievements, recognise efforts, monitor trends and identify room for improvement.

Environment	We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations	Value, protect and sustain the river, natural resources and unique environments
		Reduce waste and enhance resource recovery
		Actively address the causes and impacts of climate change
		Increase community knowledge, skills and action to live sustainably
Community	We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community	Access to quality local health services to support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
		A community where people feel safe
		Arts, culture, heritage and activities that connect families, community and improve health and wellbeing
		Health and wellbeing is promoted for everyone that lives, learns, works and plays in our community
		Social and cultural diversity is respected, supported and celebrated
		Youth are supported to reach their full potential
		Respect Aboriginal culture, connection to country and Traditional Owners of the land
Place	We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle	Well planned development that considers the diverse and changing needs of our community
		Outdoor spaces, green spaces and public facilities where people of all ages and abilities can exercise and relax
		Adequate and sustainable infrastructure to meet future demand
		Accessible and connected transport options within and to our region
		Affordable housing and a range of options to suit community needs
		Friendly places and towns recognised for their individual strengths and unique communities
Economy	We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity	Resilient local businesses that are supported to thrive, contributing to the viability and character of our towns
		A valued and vibrant tourism industry and recognised visitor destination
		An agile economy underpinned by innovation and industry diversity that attracts investment
		Access to a range of education, training and employment pathways
		A skilled workforce that meets current and future industry needs
		Equitable access to digital infrastructure to support education, health and economy
Leadership	We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making	Community is engaged in decision making with opportunities to share their views on things that affect them
		Keep the community informed to build a relationship of transparency, understanding and trust
		Accountable, trustworthy and efficient governance and operations that serve the interest of community
		Serve the community by providing great customer experience, value for money and quality services
		Strong and consistent advocacy for local needs and priorities
		Collaborative partnerships that build capacity and increase opportunities



Acknowledgements
More than 3,000 people helped create and review this Community Vision. Thank you to the community members who shared their ideas and feedback. We also acknowledge the contributions of Councillors and Council staff involved in this project.

Photography
All images appearing in this publication depict people and settings from the Mildura Rural City local government area. All photos were captured by local photographers.

Alternative formats
This publication is available online at mildura.vic.gov.au
If you require an alternate format place contact us on 03 5018 8100 or email mrcc@mildura.vic.gov.au

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Information contained in this publication was correct at the time of printing. Every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, however no liability is accepted for any inclusions, advice given or omissions.

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