

Deans Marsh  
& Districts

# Community Action Plan 2020 - 2030



Prepared in 2019 by  
Deans Marsh Community Cottage  
& Peter Kenyon, Bank of I.D.E.A.S with support from:



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# Acknowledgements

The Deans Marsh and District Community Action Plan (the Plan) was formulated by members of the Deans Marsh and District Community through the MaDCAP campaign, coordinated by Deans Marsh Community Cottage (DMCC) Committee Members and staff.

The project was facilitated by and the Plan written with the assistance of Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S.

Thank you to the many Deans Marsh and District Residents who participated by sharing their ideas in order to develop the Deans Marsh and District Community Plan.

The creation of the Deans Marsh and District Community Plan was initiated by the DMCC with financial support from Regional Development Victoria through the Stronger Regional Communities Program together with funding and staff support from the Surf Coast Shire Council.

Whilst the information for the Deans Marsh and District Community Plan has been researched, collated and expressed in good faith, no guarantee can be given for total accuracy.

Additionally, the contents do not necessarily take into account all the factors which need to be considered before implementing the specific recommended elements of the Deans Marsh and District Community Plan.

Accordingly, the Deans Marsh and District Community Plan should be used in conjunction with ongoing research, consultation and professional technical assistance.

# Foreword – Peter Kenyon

I love the words of Margaret Wheatley - “There is nothing more powerful than a community discovering what they care about”.

The process of formulating this ‘Deans Marsh and District Community Action Plan’ is a wonderful demonstration of these words in action. While the tangible outcome is a ‘roadmap’ to the future with identified priorities and practical strategies and actions, the real community benefit has been the MaDCAP process - that of multiple conversations enabling the sharing of local residents ideas, values, aspirations and opinions, simply focussed on what people wanted to ‘retain’, ‘regain’, ‘change’ and ‘create’. The process has also provided a focus for community members to collectively identify, connect and mobilise the community’s unique assets.

I have no doubt, knowing this community’s sense of connection, heritage, passion, creativity, and energy, this ‘roadmap’ will be translated into multiple initiatives creating a healthy, sustainable, and enterprising future for the Deans Marsh and District and its members.

Thank you for the privilege and pleasure in being a participant in your journey of discovery and creation.

Peter Kenyon, Bank of I.D.E.A.S.

# The MaDCAP Process

Between October and December 2019, a community consultation and engagement campaign called MaDCAP was conducted. The campaign was about connecting, listening, and generating ideas about how our community can work together to shape our future. The overall aim of the campaign was to utilise the ideas and opinions generated as the basis for the Deans Marsh and District Community Action Plan.

## Madcap Engagement Activities

- Launch of MaDCAP process community dinner - 22 attendees
- Cottage AGM – Guest speaker on community planning - 48 attendees
- MaDCAP promotion at Market/CFA day - 200 people received opportunity to hear about MaDCAP and receive information from entry to event and information table set up at market
- Social Media Regular posts on Cottage Facebook - Ongoing, averaging three posts per week
- Posters on Community Noticeboards
- MaDCAP email update - fortnightly
- Media Release in the Croaker - Two articles and MaDCAP update inserts
- Media Release in the Colac Herald - Two feature articles
- Media Release in Groundswell - One article
- MaDCAP Surveys - 140 responses
- My BIG Idea postcards - 180 responses
- MaDCAP Conversations - Nine focus groups, 80 participants
- Mighty MaDCAP Café Conversation - 73 participants
- MaDCAP Open House - 8 participants
- MaDCAP Engagement Review Working Groups - 25 participants
- Draft plan reference group - 10 participants



The total output excludes the numerous informal conversations held in community spaces, around kitchen tables and on the shop corner.

# Natural and cultural heritage

**The Deans Marsh Community Cottage (DMCC) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal custodians of Deans Marsh and District. The DMCC recognises their continuing connection to their country and the wrongs visited upon them and the rich and abundant cultural heritage and landscapes of this place. We pay our respect to them, their culture, country and to Elders both past and present.**

We acknowledge that for many Aboriginal people sovereignty was never ceded and that the appointment of a crown, commonwealth and state government over traditional lands and the trauma inflicted because of this is ongoing, we endeavour to ensure that all Aboriginal peoples feel safe and comfortable to access service and participate in activities at the DMCC.

We acknowledge that Victoria's Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP) are Traditional Owner groups, legally recognised under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. They're responsible for managing and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage for their respective areas, in the case of the Deans Marsh and District these groups are Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation.

We acknowledge that these groups are the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage and are the primary source of advice and knowledge on matters relating to Aboriginal places and objects in the Deans Marsh and District areas.

The core work of a RAP is inclusive of but not limited to: evaluating Cultural Heritage Management Plans, assessing Cultural Heritage Permit applications, making decisions about Cultural Heritage Agreements, providing advice on applications for interim or ongoing Protection Declarations, entering into Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreements with public land managers, nominating Aboriginal intangible heritage to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and managing intangible heritage agreements. We make a commitment to work with respective area RAPs on Action Plan projects that incorporate these elements.

## Gadubanud and Gulidjan Country – Maar Nation

Gadubanud Country of the broader Maar Nation, makes up most of what is now known more commonly as the Otway Ranges including most of the Deans Marsh district.

The Gadubanud have five documented clan groups, but we must remember that historical documents written by those observing could have discrepancies with the truth, especially so in areas identified as remote where trust or permission was not or rarely gained by settlers and language gaps provided significant barriers.

The Gadubanud clan group who inhabited the Deans Marsh area was made up of kinship groups that identified as 'of Yan Yan Gurt', an area that is to the east of the Barwon River upstream from the Pankalak border with the Wadawurrung All Maar Peoples and Family Groups have a significant and intimate connection to land, sky, sea and water and the spirits attached to their homelands. Yan Yan Gurt is from Gadubanud language that is connected to the birth and ever flowing spirit of the waterways of the region.

At the foothills of the Otway district, water spirits and water movements have dictated the way of life and survival for tens of thousands of years. These systems continue to nourish and grow Gadubanud Country to this day. Dotted through the region are many a spring. These springs are known and related to by the Gadubanud as a sacred birthing place and the Gadubanud are of the belief that all that is birthed on Country remains healthy through the blood of its mother (country) – it's water.

The deepest of springs and underground water systems birth the highest of mountains and ridges – Gadubanud knowledge shares with us that 'Benwerrins' – Men's mountains - and 'Yalwerrins' – Women's mountains - in the district were and are still used for differing cultural practices such as dance, song and for healing or isolation purposes, where necessary.

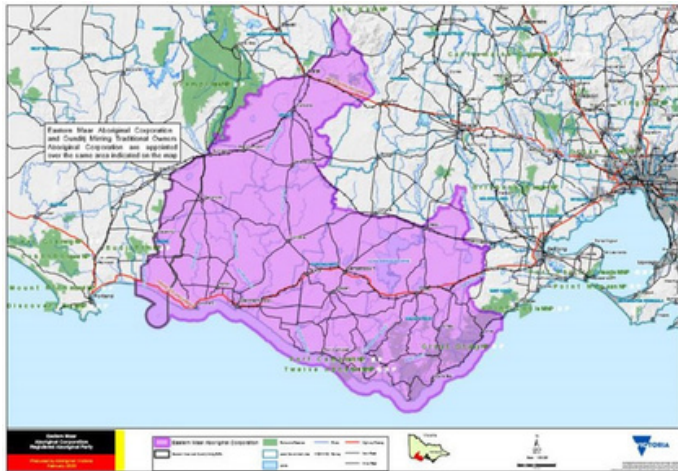
The ability to be the bridge between the saltwater and the volcanic plains provided those living in the district with a unique and rich diet of traded and smoked goods and a place of safe passage for travel for other Maar residents.

## Wadawurrung Country – Kulin Nation

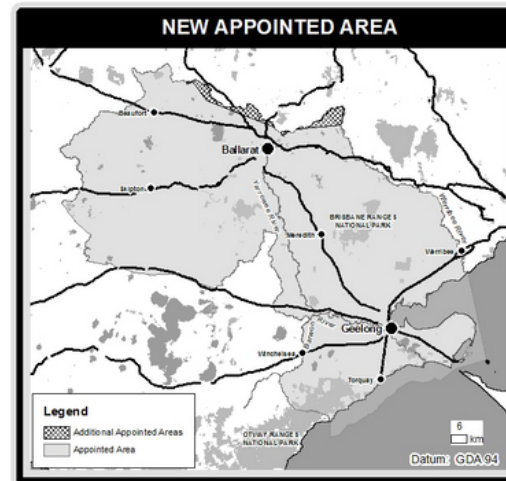
The Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (WAC), trading as Wadawurrung, is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for Wadawurrung Country. With the statutory authority for the management of Aboriginal heritage values and culture, under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006.

Wadawurrung Country of the Kulin Nation consists of many of clans (family groups) and are the Traditional Owners for the lands running north from Painkalak Creek, Aireys Inlet, includes the Deans Marsh district towns of Boonah and Bamba.

Historical documents record that the Wadawurrung clan the Gerarlture balug – who resided to the west of Lake Modewarre and would have been the closest family group to the Boonah and Bamba towns now in the Deans Marsh district. Although no documentation shows residence further than just west of Lake Modewarre, oral knowledge of seasonal burning or hunting within the border exists. Wadawurrung have offices in Geelong and Ballarat and are active in the caring for country space. If you have driven between Deans Marsh and Winchelsea, you will see welcome to Wadawurrung Country signage in Wadawurrung language erected on the board.



Eastern Marr Aboriginal Corporation Appointed Area



Wadawurrung Corporation Appointed Area



# Deans Marsh Beginnings and Early Years

The land in and around Deans Marsh and district was first selected soon after white settlement began in Port Phillip in 1835. One of the original squatters, William Roadknight came through the Deans Marsh area during the search for Hesse and Gellibrand in 1837. He returned to establish a new pastoral run at Yan Yan Gurt in 1838. While the original Yan Yan Gurt station was a huge 16,000 acres, local historian and schoolteacher, the late Ron Millard's writings detail how it was later subdivided into smaller blocks of land with sections sold to different owners.

Millard reports a long-held belief that a shepherd named Charles Dean grazed sheep on all the marshland beyond the boundaries of the original Yan Yan Gurt, even as far as Pennyroyal, and so that area became known as Dean's Marsh.

Growing into a settlement of some 40 houses by 1862, in the years that followed, land allotments were sold in Bambra, Boonah and Pennyroyal, and even as far towards the coast as Benwerrin and Wymbooliel, further increasing the population and contributing to the development of other small village centres.

By the 1880s, Deans Marsh had grown into a thriving farming community and transport hub, facilitating and hosting the many visitors making their way to Louttit Bay/Lorne. The township hosted a store, blacksmith, butcher shop, a hotel and stables, Anglican church and a state school.

In 1889, Deans Marsh welcomed a railway station to help the movement of travellers, as well as the transport of produce from local farms to markets in Geelong and Melbourne. In the 1890s, Deans Marsh grew to include a bank, a Presbyterian church, a wheelwright and bakery. Tearooms catering for travellers opened in the early 20th century.

Over time the construction of the Great Ocean Road between Anglesea and Lorne in 1932 had a significant impact in lessening tourist traffic through Deans Marsh, especially after the closure of the railway in 1956. However, Deans Marsh has remained a service centre for visitors and the local farming community. Since the 1970s, new families with a commitment to sustainable horticulture and agriculture have joined the community, contributing to the formation of many active groups including the Memorial Hall and Park Committees, Tennis Club, Cricket Club and Community Cottage. In recent years tourism traffic has again increased and visitors now stay in our area to explore the coast and our hinterland.

# Demographic Snapshot of Deans Marsh and District

## Deans Marsh Demographic Profile

### Age and Households

The population of the Deans Marsh area is 269. See above for geographical area running up but not including Bambra in the north east, Boonah in the south east, Pennyroyal and Murroon in the south west and Whoorel to the west.

According to 2016 ABS census data, there were 171 dwellings with an average of 2.5 people per household. This is marginally less than the Surf Coast Shire and Victoria average of 2.6 people per household. Under 4's comprise of 3.2% of the population in Deans Marsh, compared to 6.3% in the Surf Coast Shire and Victoria respectively. Children aged 5 - 9 make up 11.1% of the Deans Marsh population (28 people), compared to 7.2% and 6.2% respectively in the Surf Coast Shire and Victoria. Young people aged 10 - 14 years make up 6.7% of the population (17 people). Proportionally, this is marginally lower than in the Surf Coast Shire (7%) and higher than Victoria (5.8%). Deans Marsh residents aged 15 - 19 years make up 5.2% of the population (13 people), compared to 5.6% and 6% in Surf Coast and Victoria.

The young workforce age groups (20 - 24 and 25 - 29 years) are 4.8% and 2.0% of the population respectively. The 20 - 24 year old age group is comparable to that of the Surf Coast (4.1%) but the 25 - 29 age group is much lower (4.3%), and both age segments are lower than in Victoria where 20 - 24 year olds represent 7.0% of the population and 25 - 29 year olds represent 7.4%. Proportionally, the Deans Marsh population is comprised of fewer 30 - 34 year olds (3.2% vs. 5.6% in Surf Coast and 7.6% in Victoria). However, the variation between local and state averages is reduced in the 35 - 39 year age bracket (6% vs. 6.5% vs. 6.8%), 40 - 44 years (8.7% vs. 7.5% vs. 6.8%) and 45 - 49 years (7.5% vs. 7.4% vs. 6.8%). 50 - 54 year olds make up 5.2% of the population, compared to 6.9% and 6.4% in Surf Coast and Victoria. The largest age group is 55 - 59 year olds (36 people) which represents 14.3% of the Deans Marsh population (compared to 7% and 6% in Surf Coast and Victoria). 60 - 64 and 65 - 69 year olds make up 9.1% and 6.3% of the population, higher than in the Surf Coast (6.9% and 6.4%) and Victoria (5.4% and 4.9%). The proportion of 70 - 74 year olds is comparable (4% vs. 4.4% vs. 3.7%) There are seven older residents, aged 75+, living in Deans Marsh making up 2.8% of the population compared to 7.6% and 7% in Surf Coast and Victoria.

Nearly 36% of households are made up of couples with children, which is lower than the Surf Coast (47.2%) and Victoria (46.3%). Nearly 46% of households were couples without children. This is higher than both the Surf Coast and Victoria (41.1% and 36.5%). There is a higher proportion of single parent families (19.0%, compared to 10.8% in the Surf Coast Shire and 15.3% in Victoria).

The proportion of single person households (23.2%) is higher than the Surf Coast average (19.8%) and lower than the Victorian (25.4%). Approximately 0% of Deans Marsh residents live group households compared to 2.9% and 4.5% in the Surf Coast Shire and Victoria respectively.

The three most common ancestries in Deans Marsh according to the 2016 Census are English, Australian and Irish. Of those born overseas, New Zealand is the highest country of birth, followed by England.

Of people aged 15 and over in Deans Marsh, 14.5% report having completed Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, 18.6% have completed a Certificate III or IV and 16.8% have completed an Advanced Diploma or Diploma.

### **Industries and employment**

The Deans Marsh labour force is 147 people. Seventy-five people (51%) work full time hours and 56 (38.1%) work part-time. This is a similar breakdown to the Surf Coast Shire (53.3% full time; 37.3% part time). The Victorian average is 57% in full time employment and 31.4% in part time employment. The unemployment rate in Victoria is 6.6%, which is higher than the Surf Coast Shire (3.8%) and Deans Marsh (2.7%).

Seventeen percent of Deans Marsh residents work in hospitals. This is higher than the proportion of Surf Coast Shire and Victorian workers employed in hospitals (4.2% and 4.1% respectively). Similarly, 9.0% of Marsh residents work in the accommodation industry, compared to 2.6% in the Surf Coast and 0.8% in Victoria). Other common industries include house construction (6.3%), gardening services (5.4%) and electrical services (4.5%).

A higher proportion of residents are employed as 'managers' in Deans Marsh than the Surf Coast Shire (24.5% compared to 16.5%; Victoria 13.5%) and a lower number of residents are employed as professionals (21.5% compared to 25.1%; Victoria 23.1%). A comparable proportion of Deans Marsh residents are employed as 'technicians and trades people' (15.8% compared to 14.8% and 13.1% in the Surf Coast Shire and Victoria respectively). The industry of 'community and personal service' makes up 9.4% (compared 10.9% and 10.6%) and 'labouring' makes up 8.6% compared to 7.7% and 9.0% in the Surf Coast and Victoria. Nearly 17% of Deans Marsh residents work from home compared to 8.8% in the Surf Coast Shire and 4.6% in Victoria)

Nearly 37% of percent of Deans Marsh residents (15 years and over) are involved in some form of voluntary work, compared to 27.9% in the Surf Coast Shire and 19.2% in Victoria. Just over 34% of residents provided care to children compared to 33.3% in the Surf Coast Shire and 27.4% in Victoria. Of the nearly 80% of residents who complete unpaid domestic work, 30.6% do more than 14 hours each week (compared to 25.3% in the Surf Coast Shire and 19.6% in Victoria). Just over 12% of residents provide assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age, compared to 11.7% and 11.6% in the Surf Coast Shire and Victoria.

The median household income per week in Deans Marsh is \$1,162 compared to \$1,571 in the Surf Coast Shire and \$1,419 in Victoria. A higher proportion of Deans Marsh households earn less than \$650 per week (24.7% compared to 15.9% and 20.3% in the Surf Coast and Victoria respectively). Conversely, there is a smaller proportion of households earning more than \$3000 gross weekly income (4.7% compared to 17.3% in the Surf Coast and 15.5% in Victoria).

## **Housing**

In Deans Marsh, 61.4% of private dwellings are occupied and 38.6% are unoccupied. 83.7% of dwellings have three or more bedrooms, compared to 84.9% in the Surf Coast and 72.8% in Victoria. In the Surf Coast Shire 58.1% of private dwellings are occupied (41.9% unoccupied). In Victoria 88.3% of private dwellings are occupied (11.7% unoccupied). Seventy-eight percent of Deans Marsh households are purchasing or fully own their home, compared to 72.5% in Surf Coast Shire and 67.6% in Victoria. Twenty-two percent are renting privately, compared to 18.6% in the Surf Coast Shire and 28.7% in Victoria.

Of those purchasing their home, 11.8% of Deans Marsh mortgagees had monthly mortgage payments greater than or equal to 30% of household income, compared to 6.5% and 10.4% in the Surf Coast and Victoria. The median mortgage repayment is \$1,419 compared to \$1,842 in the Surf Coast and \$1,728 in Victoria.

The median weekly rent in Deans Marsh is \$175 compared to \$363 in the Surf Coast Shire and \$325 in Victoria. Just over 7% of Deans Marsh residents are paying more than 30% of their income towards rent, compared to 7% in the Surf Coast and 7.5% in Victoria.

Nearly 91% of Deans Marsh residents access the internet from their dwelling, compared to 87.8% in the Surf Coast and 83.7% in Victoria.

The average number of motor vehicles per dwelling is 2.3 and 66.7% of Deans Marsh residents drive to work (62.9% as a driver and 2.8% as a passenger). This is comparable to the Surf Coast Shire 2.2 and 69.1% (65.6% as a driver; 3.5% as a passenger) and 65.8% (61.8% as a driver; 4.0% as a passenger). The proportion of Surf Coast residents living within 400 metres of public transport is significantly lower than the Victorian average (33.2% vs. 73.9%). This is consistent with census data for commuting to work. No residents commuted via public or community transport and 4.2% of residents, or 6 people, walked.

### **Bambra Demographic Profile**

According to the 2016 ABS Census, there are 101 people in Bambra. Of these, 54.3% are male and 45.7% female. The median age is 52 years. There are 61 private dwellings in Bambra, housing 31 families. The average number of people per household is 2.5 and of families with children, there is an average of 1.8 children.

The median weekly household income is \$1,800 and mortgage repayments are \$2,113. There is no information about renters the average median weekly rent is recorded as \$0 and there are 2.5 motor vehicles per dwelling.

### **Boonah Demographic Profile**

According to the 2016 Census, there are 21 people living in Boonah. Of these, 80% are male and 20% are female. The median age is 37 years.

Boonah is home to 16 private dwellings with an average number of 1.5 people and 2 motor vehicles per household.

The median weekly household income is \$1,074. Median monthly mortgage repayments and median weekly rent are recorded as \$0 which might mean that there are no renters and that all property owners own their properties outright or that the numbers are too low to support reliable data.

### **Pennyroyal Demographic Profile**

According to the 2016 Census, there are 86 people living in Pennyroyal. Of these, 47.7% are male and 52.3% are female. The median age is 47 years.

There are 58 households of 29 families in Pennyroyal. The average number of people per household is 2.6 and of families with children, there is an average of 1.7 children.

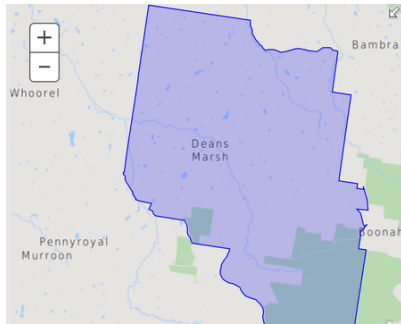
The median weekly household income is \$2,071 and median monthly mortgage repayments is \$2,284. There is no information about renters – the average median weekly rent is recorded as \$0 and there are 2.9 motor vehicles per dwelling.

## Murroon Demographic Profile

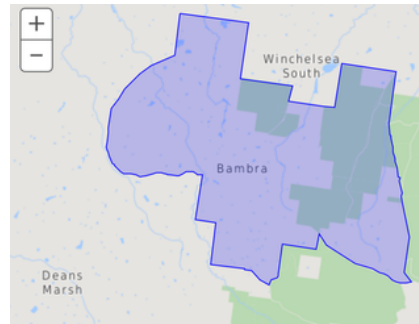
According to the 2016 Census, there are 83 people living in Murroon. Of these, 48.8% are male and 51.2% are female. The median age is 46 years and the average number of people per household is 2.8.

There are 39 dwellings, housing 20 families with an average of 2.8 people per household and, for families with children, the average number of children is 2.

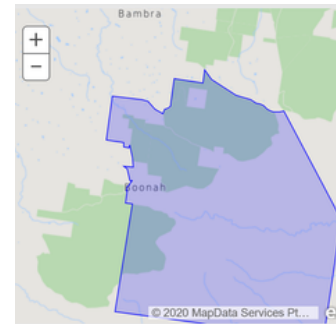
The median weekly household income is \$1,187 and the median monthly mortgage repayment is \$1,419. There is no information about renters – the average median weekly rent is recorded as \$0 and there are 2.1 motor vehicles per dwelling.



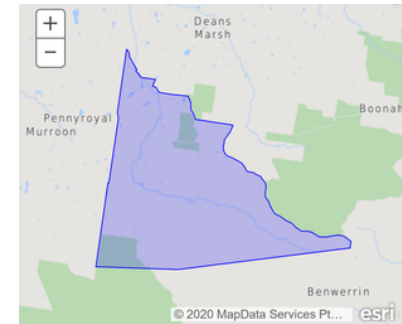
Deans Marsh



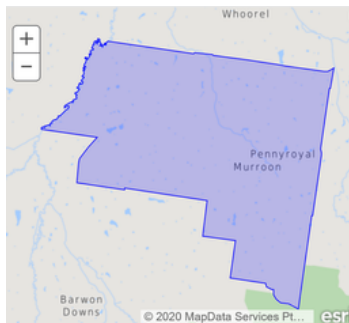
Bamba



Boonah



Pennyroyal



Murroon

# Who We Are and What Matters To Us

## Identity

A clear and strong identity is the common thread that joins us together as a community. It informs our actions and helps us celebrate our shared values and passions. This identity can then be projected beyond our community helping to increase desirable forms of support, investment, and visitation.

The Deans Marsh way of doing things...

- Sharing voice
- Positive, active, collaborative
- Effective community leaders
- We have a history of doing things our way
- Getting on with it
- Unpretentious
- Authentic
- Adaptable
- DM has always done stuff itself
- DM District way of doing things
- Open
- Diversity
- People care about the community and environment
- Hybrid community
- Age integration
- Equality
- Equity
- Knowledge sharing
- Emotional support
- Love
- Inclusiveness
- Environment



# Our Community Guiding Values

The MaDCAP process clearly identified what residents cared about as well as the key values that were highly regarded. The following guiding principles come from this process and provide the philosophical context for the Deans Marsh and District Community Plan. The values will guide any proposed community action.



**We are a caring and connected community who celebrate and share our unique community spirit**



**We are responsible custodians who respect and protect our natural environment**



**We act to build the resilience and adaptability of our community, our local economy and our environment**



**We have a collaborative, creative, resourceful and proactive culture**



**We are committed to retaining our rural landscapes and rural village lifestyle**

## Our Community Vision

**To have a thriving rural community that balances care for the land and its people.**

“If our community was currently music....  
It would have a slow, soulful rhythm...  
In the future it needs to have a bit more pace to it,  
more layers and more instruments...”



# Our Priorities

The Deans Marsh and District community's priorities directly flow from the MaDCAP process. Our community can work together to bring the projects of the Community Action Plan to realisation. In doing so the Deans Marsh and District Community will be able to realise our community goals.



- **Community Connections**
- **Community Infrastructure**

- **Support Local Business**
- **Encourage Local Spending**
- **Attract External Support**

- **Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation**
- **Land use & planning**
- **Streetscapes**

# Priority One

## Our Local Community

### **What we want to make happen:**

**1.1 Our community connections have broadened and deepened.**

**1.2 Our infrastructure supports the needs of all community members – now and in the future.**

### **Background**

The Deans Marsh district is made up of people of all backgrounds and interests. The Deans Marsh community is skilled and supportive with a myriad of social and cultural capital in addition to the natural, built and economic assets. Many locals identified Deans Marsh's natural, social and cultural assets as being as vital as economic considerations in terms of health and wellbeing outcomes.

Investing in local health, social services and education is seen as important. With community members recognising the role that keeping the school open plays in keeping people in the locality. More people living and working locally enables more people to fulfil civic functions, contributing to schools, community groups, CFA. Participation promotes social connection and community cohesion and belonging which in turn improves mental health and wellbeing.

The Deans Marsh and district community has a vibrant and creative culture with a variety of land based and creative arts activities operating at a community and commercial level.

## 1.1 Our community connections have broadened and deepened.

A wide variety of age groups and family structures are present within the Deans Marsh community. We are committed to providing support to our youth, families and elderly population to ensure that residents can live a connected, productive, independent and enjoyable life as part of this community.

We acknowledge the vital importance of community connections and lasting friendships in preserving the mental health and wellbeing of our residents. We value our primary school, childcare and Out of School Hours Care (OHSC) programs and the role of these institutions in supporting families and growing the potential of our young people. We value the contribution and retention of our youth population and hope to improve the social opportunities and support the growing independence of our young people.

The Deans Marsh community seeks to provide greater support for its ageing population and foster relationships between generations. The community hopes to facilitate stronger support and social networks for parents of pre-school age children. What makes Deans Marsh special is our strong sense of community. The residents of Deans Marsh strongly value the development and maintenance of strong community connections and opportunities to gather as a community.

We desire to be a friendly place to live where all residents are welcomed and supported to make connections with and contribute to the community. Many members of our community are passionate about sharing their skills and learning from one another.

### **Key Actions:**

- Create opportunities for community members to share skills and knowledge
- Facilitate opportunities to share and trade resources
- Facilitate a program of regular community social occasions
- Develop and deliver programs for our young people
- Early Years Reference Groups including Deans Marsh principal/ prep teacher/ welfare teacher)
- Kindergarten Readiness and School Readiness programs through Lorne Kindergarten
- Playgroup established through First Time Parents Group (currently online due to pandemic)

- Extend SCSC/Deans Marsh Primary School Children's Week collaboration Local Food Program
- Develop and deliver programs to enable older residents to age in place
- Develop and deliver a program of social learning for pre-school aged children
- Develop and deliver multi-generational social gatherings and groups

### **Lead Group/s**

- Community Connections Working Group
- Deans Marsh Community Cottage

### **Role of Deans Marsh Community Cottage**

- Support of Working Group
- Program Development
- Funding support

### **Possible Partners**

Local, State and Federal Funding Bodies for Community Hub, Cottage, Hall Committee, Landcare, Surf Coast Shire, Grow, Make, Gather, Community members with a specific area of expertise, Cricket Club

### **Possible Resources**

- Work with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and DHHS to develop funding models to enable expansion of inclusive social and recreational, education and vocational training programs
- Support Volunteer Involving Organisations through provision of and access to regional resources and training
- SCSC Early Years Program support and Parent Education program
- Casuarina Leadership program – placed based, teams of residents from townships, asset-based capacity building to work with communities to develop priority projects .

- SCSC Sport and Recreation Team's work with sporting clubs and recreation groups to increase community input into the design of community facilities and spaces
- Small Grants Program for an aged friendly grant stream/round Explore business start-up / social entrepreneur incubator resources. SCSC Community Project Development Program Resourced initiatives in line with Creative Places focus areas: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, Place-making, Enhancing Creative Emerging creative industries grants. Broader region arts and creative industries support

### **Success Indicators**

- Opportunities for community members to share skills and knowledge provided
- Opportunities to share and trade resources facilitated
- Program of regular community social occasions for young people, older people and across generations
- Program of social learning for pre-school aged children developed and delivered.
- Programs to enable older residents to age in place developed and delivered

## 1.2 Our infrastructure supports the needs of all community members – now and in the future.

Public and community transport is a key consideration and need in creating an age friendly community and providing connection and accessibility. Public transport has been a key long term issue for local residents. Community transport models have been highlighted as a priority to facilitate.

Pathways play a vital role in promoting healthy communities. Pathways are most effective when they form a comprehensive and interconnected network. Where possible pathways should combine to form loops within the path network. A network of paths can help improve:

- Connectivity and mobility within the community
- Interaction between community members
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- A sense of character and place
- Tourist appeal

There are multiple potential users of pathways including; pedestrians, bikes, horses and wheelchairs. New pathways may run beside existing roads or travel 'cross country'. An inner network of paths around the centre of Deans Marsh could branch off to connect other local population centres like Bambra and the broader landscape.

The town has clearly identified the need for a warm, welcoming multi-purpose community space suitable for gatherings of all sizes, particularly during the cold, wet months. This space will enable a range of community learning, engagement and social opportunities which will improve the connectedness of the community. There are a range of public halls and buildings within the district available to be activated.

### Key Actions

- Trial and evaluate Community and Public transport services
- Design a colour coded network of possible pathways with a funding plan
- Develop existing and new spaces that foster our community



## **Lead Group**

Pathways Working Group

## **Role of Deans Marsh Community Cottage**

Working Group Support

## **Possible Partners**

- Local Bus Operators
- Local and State Government
- PTV Walks Victoria VicHealth
- RDV Surf Coast Shire Council: Support the development of community and tourist access Alpaca maps – developing hinterland self-guided trail maps pathways and loops. Potential for the concept to be Community owned / council maintain
- TAC Community Safety Grants
- Surf Coast Shire Walk to School Program. Seeking to layer with spatial mapping to understand and improve walkability. Community Travel has come up in the Age-friendly research across the Shire. Scope options to broker access to volunteers/insurance, etc. as Council's volunteer roles for direct services change. Positive Ageing considering transitioning vols from delivered meals to delivering library books (in partnership with GRLC) other delivery or community transport options could be explored.

## **Possible Resources**

- Community Transport Models – Adapt co-operative/community owned school bus transport model (similar to remote QLD station school bus model)
- Community Bus from Surf Coast Shire.
- SCS happy to support initiatives creating increased use of the reserve and buildings.

- Community Development Program will support the identification and project development, resource planning identified community infrastructure.
- Volunteer Drivers – Surf Coast Shire vols. Insurance
- Community Noticeboard as a networking tool
- Local Bus Operators Local, State and Federal Government
- Local Public Buildings
- In Kind Community Support
- Local Trades People
- Deans Marsh Community Hall
- Bambra Hall
- Pennyroyal Hall
- Uniting Church Buildings
- Surf Coast Shire Pathways strategy – supporting the development of pedestrian and cycling access adjoining and separate to roadways
- Surf Coast Shire Climate Emergency Response (under development) – elevating the priority of sustainable transport options including pathways for active transport, public/community transport and electric vehicle infrastructure.

### **Success Indicators**

- Community and Public transport services trialled and evaluated
- Colour coded network of possible pathways designed, and funding plan scoped
- Existing and new spaces that foster community developed/programmed.

# Priority Two

## Our Local Environment

### **What we want to make happen:**

**2.1 Our natural environment is resilient and supports our industries - Land use & planning**

**2.2 We all contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures**

**2.3 Our streetscapes reflect our community identity**

### **Background**

Many local farmers and growers participate in stewardship through agroforestry and Landcare initiatives. Locals recognise the ecosystem services provided by the area's biological infrastructure, i.e., existing and regenerated trees and shrubs reduce erosion, protect pasture, crops, wildlife, farm animals, improve nutrient-cycles which enhance water quality and sequester carbon.

There is a clear commitment among locals to restore landscape function and build economic, ecological and social resilience into rural landscapes. Locals work to create multipurpose forests as opposed to industrial monocultures and many farmers and growers demonstrate or are close to demonstrating carbon neutral agricultural production.

Additionally, the Bambra wetlands provide educational programs for schools and universities and public agroforestry tours. The Otway Agroforestry Network have established a peer group mentor and Master Tree Grower Program.

The immense benefit to local community of protecting remnant vegetation must be balanced with public safety and emergency management concerns – as the Otway ranges is considered some of the most fire prone country in the world.

The Deans Marsh community are clearly passionate about maintaining and regenerating our local environment, including both our natural environment and our farming environment. There is a strong importance placed on the continuation of already existing environmental based groups and businesses and a strong emphasis on protecting and maintaining our local waterways and bushland.

In addition, a keen passion for opportunities for new environmental initiatives to blossom that have a focus on creating a strong local food culture in Deans Marsh. Of interest are finding ways for the community to engage with regenerative farming; creating new farming opportunities for young people; creating local food initiatives where the community can engage with local produce, gardening, food education etc and creating ways to connect our local farms, businesses, community groups and individuals.

There is a keen interest in having a built physical space in Deans Marsh that enables local food activities, events and food/farming education to take place and being a space where the local community and broader community can connect and collaborate around food, farming and the environment.

Streetscapes were identified as a key aspect of our environment. Creating vibrant streetscapes personalised to the unique character of Deans Marsh is a priority for the community. Improving our streetscapes will help strengthen a sense of place and identity, both for our community and for those visiting our community.

## **2.1 Our natural environment is resilient and supports our industries - Land use & planning**

The evidence that has come forward due to the MaDCAP process indicates there is strong support for more flexibility in the planning scheme for land use. The Deans Marsh district requires a more flexible approach to shire planning and housing permits. Flexibility in the planning scheme will lead to new enterprises and a creative approach to land use management generating new opportunities with the potential to attract younger people into the community. This will help develop a succession plan for the

### **Key Actions**

- Further explore key community concerns and potential solutions to increase land use flexibility
- Identify and analyse useful examples from other rural communities.

- Investigate the available planning mechanisms available to facilitate our preferred outcomes
- Lobby state and local Governments, where appropriate, for changes to current planning restrictions
- Engage Surf Coast Shire Council to negotiate the best course of action to gain support

### **Possible Partners**

- Surf Coast Shire Council
- Victorian Government (DELWP and ministries of planning and agriculture)
- Councils piloting model of affordable housing in rural areas

### **Possible Resources**

- Identifying alternative options to subdivision – e.g. paddock lease, share farming, co-op owned land parcels – separating productive land use and living spaces
- Case Studies
- Areas of State Significance
- Advocate for Surf Coast Shire Council to re-evaluate relevance of existing Deans Marsh Precinct Plan and available residential land

### **Success Indicators**

- Key community concerns and potential solutions to increase land use flexibility explored
- Useful examples from other rural communities identified and analysed
- Available planning mechanisms available to facilitate our preferred outcomes investigated Governments, where appropriate, are lobbied for changes to current planning restrictions
- Surf Coast Shire representatives engaged, and the best course of action negotiated

## 2.2 We all contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures

Being able to adapt to a changing climate is imperative if our community is to remain resilient. Our community has expressed a clear desire to act to meet this challenge.

A healthy population is diverse. It includes a wide range of demographics, with people of all ages, lifestyles, skill sets and interests able to live here. The population size should reflect the community's identified need to be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Creating an environment that maximises the number of community members contributing to community climate resilience activities is a clear foundation to becoming a carbon neutral community.

Minimising our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering gases where possible is critical in becoming a carbon neutral community who can demonstrate to others how we can live comfortably with carbon neutral systems.

Priorities include investigating and actioning our community becoming 100% off grid, independent and self-reliant using renewable energy sources. Additionally, waste and seeing it as a resource to be recycled, for example, sewerage/green waste composted to feed back into agricultural systems, compost used as a heat source, plastic free community, and water recycled for irrigation.

### **Key Actions**

- Take action for our community to become 100% off grid, independent and self-reliant using renewable energy sources
- Deliver a comprehensive workshop, education and information program
- Facilitate the Deans Marsh Township Sustainability Plan
- Work together with Fire Agencies on township/district-based planning and community identified shelter options

- Support the development of a range of target Initiatives including community compost, local waste management and water recycling.
- Create an adaptation plan for food and fibre security
- Develop a food hub/ education centre
- Create a regenerative agriculture action plan

### **Lead Group**

Climate Mitigation & Adaptation Working Group

### **Role of Deans Marsh Community Cottage**

Working Group Support

### **Possible Partners**

- Federal, State and Local Government
- Surf Coast Shire Towards Environmental Leadership Program, which includes Council's Climate Emergency Response, Local Food, Renewable Energy (Powered by Positive) and waste programs.
- Workshops – partner with Local Food Program, Agri farm Focus Skills delivery
- Neighbouring Communities
- Energy Providers
- Climate change and community energy organisations, e.g. Beyond Zero Emissions
- All local groups SCSC food hub demo sites.
- Community farms model. Production from under-utilised farming land. Hinterland Futures.
- Regenerative Agriculture – Demonstration sites –Hinterland Futures Implementation

## Possible Resources

- Local, State & Commonwealth funding opportunities to be explored
- Powered By Positive program (SCS)
- Sustainability Victoria or Commonwealth support, co-operative business model Surf Coast Shire target initiatives
- Sustainable Agribusiness Strategy for the G21 Region
- Potential for SCS/DELWP/CSIRO workshop on bushfire resilient and sustainable house design
- Support the development of a range of target Initiatives including community compost, local waste management and water recycling.
- SCS Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy action 5.8: Support the development of innovative beneficial recycled water reuse schemes.
- Sustainability Victoria Investment Support Grants – Packaging: increase or improve recovery of packaging waste – connect to community supported or private business operated recyclable or compostable packaging cardboard, food and organics waste in vessel composting proposal)
- SCS Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy
- Sustainable Agribusiness Strategy for the G21 Region
- The Agri Collective (G21 Agribusiness Forum)
- The Gordon TAFE
- CCMA Proposed 4 year project – supporting the development of sustainable land management knowledge sharing and Whole Farm Management planning for horse, small scale and hobby farms across the Corangamite CMA region (Geelong, Bellarine, Surf Coast Shire, Golden Plains, Colac) – TBA – commencing 2021



## **Success Indicators**

- Initiatives to support community to become 100% off grid, independent and self-reliant using renewable energy sources scoped
- Comprehensive workshop, education and information program delivered
- Deans Marsh Township Sustainability Plan engagement facilitated township/district-based planning and community identified shelter options
- An adaptation plan for food and fibre security developed
- A food hub/ education centre scoped
- A regenerative agriculture action plan developed

## **2.3 Our streetscapes reflect our community identity**

Create vibrant streetscapes personalized to the unique character of Deans Marsh. Improve our streetscapes to help strengthen a sense of place and identity, both for our community and for those visiting our community.

### **Key Actions**

- Develop a streetscape concept plan
- Erect new community designed signs at the entrances to town
- New street tree plantings
- Encourage more street art
- Where possible reduce the number of existing Council signs

### **Lead Group**

Streetscapes Working Group

## **Role of Deans Marsh Community Cottage**

Working Group Support

### **Possible Partners**

- Surf Coast Shire
- Colac Otway Shire
- VicRoads
- Local artists

### **Possible Resources**

- Local artists
- SCSC Strategic planning department – advocating for Precinct Structure Plan renewal
- SCSC Economic Development /Roads Maintenance to support review of non-compliant Council erected signage

### **Success Indicators**

- Streetscape concept plan co-developed
- Community designed signs erected at town entrances
- Communal street tree planting conducted and ongoing care regime in place

# Priority Three

## Our Local Economy

### **What we want to make happen:**

#### **3.1 Our produce, producers, and providers are well supported in local, regional and international markets**

##### **Background**

Deans Marsh district is characterised by robust and resilient landscapes and people. Small scale regenerative farming has brought interest, diversity, economic growth and social connectedness. There has been a change in land uses over the last 30 years, shifting from dairy, sheep, beef cattle and pear and potato production on large swathes of land to smaller industries such as native plant nursery, wineries, cellar door sales, berry, olive, garlic and vegetable growing, bee keeping and honey production, short stay accommodation, cafes, agroforestry farms.

The Deans Marsh District community is vibrant and creative, with a variety of land based and creative arts activities operating at a community and commercial level. These complementary economies, including ceramics and other fine arts offer many tourism related opportunities.

Young people need support to establish leaseholds and to participate in rural enterprises. Deans Marsh district residents identified many opportunities to involve farmers and growers in small scale agricultural industries to generate agriculture and culture related employment opportunities.

An additional commercial business would be good for community morale and could contribute to increased tourist traffic. The closing of Martians has had a significant effect on the community. With a small amount of capital investment existing community spaces could be made more functional to allow community and semi-commercial uses.

## Key Actions

- Support Local Business
  1. Create and promote local branding
  2. Develop mentoring program for local business
  3. Explore community investment funds for new business development
  4. Arrange for sharing of resources i.e. equipment, premises, marketing
  5. Create a networking platform for local environmental groups and primary producers
  
- Encourage spending locally
  1. Research local buying and spending habits
  2. Identify opportunities to process products or value add locally
  3. Develop a community currency
  4. Explore community cooperative models
  
- Bring money in
  1. Consider existing skills and hobbies that could be turned into a business
  2. Design and trial tailored ecotourism program
  3. Develop agricultural, value adding and tourism trails
  4. Complement regional anchors
  
- Attract Government Assistance
  1. Develop projects that attract government funding
  2. Utilise community assistance aids from government for business development and infrastructure
  3. Ensure that community members have access to aids from government for business development and infrastructure
  4. Support local community representatives in lobbying for assistance from higher forms of government.

## **Lead Group**

Local Economy Working Group

## **Role of DMCC**

Working Group Support

## **Possible Partners**

- Project Officer Funding: State/Federal Government
- Deans Marsh Hall – potential case study/demonstrator site for shared community owned resource for start-up business use – Under new management scheme, indicators are that commercial use of this space is possible, provided it doesn't exclude community access for existing community programs
- Accelerator programs – SproutX, RocketSeeder, FindeX – projects and mentoring – RDV &/or SCSC can facilitate connection to programs
- SCSC EcoDev – mentoring and upskill programs – small business, e-marketing & distribution, Farm Focus Skills, Better Business Skills programs)
- FRRR springboard program
- Agri Collective (G21 Agri Forum)/The Gordon Agri & Agribusiness certificate programs – facilitating new in-community delivery options of Cert III & IV Agriculture & Agribusiness
- State Gov Agri/Food & Logistics JobSeeker retraining & redeployment fund Private RTOs & ACFE funded RTOs – local in-community delivery options
- Doing Business Better P/L – Small scale (12 participant/session) In Business Agribusiness CertIV
- Assistance with research
- Training and Education
- Spaces for enterprise development – Deans Marsh Community Hall – as above – potential partner with RTOs/SproutX/FindeX
-

- G21 Agribusiness Strategy Implementation group – guidance on product branding and why a regional produce ran was not a feasible/desirable option (E.g. Mornington Peninsula Produce style – organic development of reputational brand based on quality of produce rather than manufactured branding) Sustainable Agribusiness Strategy Action 3.3: Support the development of appropriate group and/or destination branding, rather than whole-of-region branding. Action 1.2: Promote the range of agribusiness investment opportunities within the region to Invest Victoria, other relevant government agencies and the broader private sector.
- Shared administrative spaces/services –Co-Op owned spaces
- Skills within the community

### **Success Indicators**

- Capital and technology, Skills and Emerging Industries Audits completed.
- Business Development & Mentoring program provided.
- Share economy platform for resources i.e. equipment, premises, marketing, etc. Trialled.
- Local Branding, Agricultural, Value Adding and Tourism Trails created and promoted community currency trialled.
- Funding schemes for business identified and funding attracted to the region.
- All levels of government lobbied for assistance.
- Local branding and value adding created and promoted
- Agricultural and tourism trails developed
- Business development & mentoring program developed and delivered
- Networking platform for local environmental groups and primary produce businesses created ecotourism program designed and trialled
- Share platform for resources i.e. equipment, premises, marketing designed and trialled community currency trialled
- Funding schemes for business and attracting funding to the region identified
- Assistance from all levels of government advocated for and obtained



The Deans Marsh and District Action Plan was formulated by members of the Deans Marsh and District Community through the MaDCAP campaign.

The project was aided by and the plan written with the assistance of Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S.

Thank you to the many Deans Marsh and District Residents who participated by sharing their ideas in order to develop this Deans Marsh and District Community Plan.

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Please contact the Deans Marsh Community Cottage for further information on how you can support making the actions in this plan happen!

Supported by Deans Marsh Community Cottage  
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