

# West Wimmera Shire Community Consultation and Engagement Report

Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan  
June – July 2021



## PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

This report has been prepared by **Planning for Communities Pty Ltd** to support the development of a Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan for West Wimmera Shire.

Planning for Communities worked closely with Council officers to design the consultation and engagement program and completed the analysis and reporting.

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## VERSION CONTROL

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## 1.0 Introduction

This Report presents the results from the community consultation and engagement undertaken to inform the development of the West Wimmera Shire Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Key elements explored through the consultation were:

- What the community loves the most and considers to be the strengths of the West Wimmera community
- The community's vision for West Wimmera Shire i.e. what type of community do people want West Wimmera Shire to be in 20 years' time.
- The big ideas community members have for West Wimmera Shire.
- What needs to change or be improved to achieve the community's vision or deliver the big idea.
- What are the biggest issues or concerns about the health and wellbeing of the West Wimmera community.
- What should be Council's priorities for the next 4 years to meet the economic, environmental, social and health and wellbeing needs of the community.

Engagement with the community occurred in the following way:

- **A Community Survey** which was available through the Council's website, at key community venues and was delivered to every household in West Wimmera Shire. **In total 270 surveys** were completed. The survey was open from the 7<sup>th</sup> of June to the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.
- **7 Community Listening Posts** held between the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2021:
  1. Apsley
  2. Dergholm
  3. Edenhope
  4. Harrow
  5. Goroke
  6. Kaniva
  7. Serviceton

In total 63 people participated in the Community Listening Posts.

- **Children and teenagers** were invited to complete an activity sheet about what they love the most about where they live, what they like to do the most on the weekend, their favourite place to visit and what they would do to make the place they live better. **In total 179 children** from 3 schools participated (St Malachy's School, Kaniva P – 12 College and Goroke P – 12 College).

To make the community aware of the consultation and engagement program, a large-scale marketing and promotion strategy was implemented running from 6 June to 12 July. The strategy included:

- Use of online tools including the Council’s website and social media feeds.
- Emails to community organisations and committees of management.
- Direct mail of the survey to every home in West Wimmera Shire.
- Posters and information available about the consultation in key community locations.

The community listening posts were also an important way of letting community members know about the survey.

## 2.0 Key Findings

The consultation and engagement program has identified some clear messages and themes to consider in preparing the West Wimmera Shire Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. A summary of the findings from consultation is outlined below with more detailed information provided in the sections 3 – 5 and in the attachments.

### Children and young people

Children and young people most like to spend time with are their **family and friends**. The activities they most like to participate in are recreation and sporting activities, playing or listening to music, playing video games and watching TV, spending time outdoors on the farm, at the lakes or going to the beach, visiting the local shops, going to the library, visiting local playgrounds or parks.

**Recreation and sporting spaces, facilities and opportunities are really important** to children and young people.

- The recreation and sporting activities they like to participate in the most are skating, bike riding, motor bike riding and sporting activities like netball, football, hockey and tennis.
- The recreation and sporting facilities and spaces they like to use the most are skateparks, the pool, the Recreation Reserve, netball courts, football ground, tennis courts, playgrounds, Fauna Park.
- The recreation and sporting facilities and spaces they would most like to see developed or improved are **bike tracks**, BMX bike track, **heated indoor pool** (with water slides), the **skatepark**, a **hockey field**, **basketball stadium**, new **netball courts**, ninja warrior course, water park, mini golf course, a cinema, bigger and better **playground**.

Other ideas children and young people have for making their local community a better place to live are:

- **Improving services** like the **internet**, **public transport**, **health services** including a Headspace program for young kids and young adults.
- **Improving roads and footpaths** and **cleaning up rubbish in our parks and towns**.

### What the Community Values

- **The community places a high value upon the sense of community, belonging, friendliness and safety** in local towns and the wider West Wimmera Shire. These attributes are essential to the community's future vision for West Wimmera, along with being a community that cares for each other, where people work together and support each other, and where volunteering is strong.
- **The natural environment, peace and quiet and rural lifestyle are highly valued by the community and considered to be assets** that can help to attract people to visit and live and work in the townships of West Wimmera. The community has identified there is enormous opportunity to build a stronger tourism economy and to attract people to live and work in our communities by marketing these features.

## The Community’s Vision for West Wimmera in 20 years

	<p><b>We value diversity</b>, are inclusive of everyone and remain friendly and welcoming for all. Women are valued and supported to contribute to our community.</p>
	<p><b>Our population is growing</b> and diverse in its make up (families, young people, older persons, farming families), and this is underpinned by our ability to adapt and evolve as a community.</p>
	<p><b>Our community is active, healthy and safe.</b></p>
	<p><b>We have access to the right services</b> to help our community to thrive including <b>childcare</b>, utilities, <b>health services</b> (acute services, mental health, older adults and allied health), retail services and public transport.</p>
	<p><b>We value, protect, and enhance our natural environment</b> and open spaces. Lake Wallace is full, Kaniva has a manmade lake, we have more walking tracks as they are great assets for the local community and an attractor for visitors.</p>
	<p><b>We offer vibrant community, cultural, recreation and sporting</b> activities and opportunities through our thriving community groups, and by providing the right community infrastructure in the right locations.</p>
	<p><b>Our economy is thriving</b> with strong primary and secondary industries, new businesses, a strong <b>tourism and visitor economy</b>. Supporting this there will be substantially increased access to childcare and housing, a road network that supports the movement of goods and people, <b>town streetscapes that are attractive</b>, pedestrian friendly, and offer great experiences to attract visitors to our region.</p>
	<p><b>We have sustainable businesses, practices, environment, services, and agriculture</b>, and we focus upon educating our community about sustainability.</p>

## What needs to change and why

The community believes the things that MOST need to change to deliver on the vision are.



Also, improved health services and supports, programs, activities and supports for young people, public and community transport, and programs, activities and supports for children and families.

These need to change because:

- **Our population** is declining and consequently the businesses and services available to our community are reducing along with **employment** opportunities.
- **The lack of childcare** means it is difficult for both parents to work, hard to attract and retain qualified professionals (and their families) to work in our community, particularly health and community service professionals, new businesses cannot establish and grow, and our townships cannot grow and thrive.
- **The condition of our roads is variable** and, in some locations, very poor. Our roads should enable the safe and efficient transport of goods and people.
- **Access to community and health services is poor.** We cannot attract and retain community members if we don't have access to services.
- **Our community infrastructure needs to be improved** so we can attract visitors and better support our community.
- **We find it difficult to retain young people and families in our community** because employment opportunities are limited, and childcare is not available.

Priorities community members would like Council to focus upon over the next 4 years

	<p><b>Supporting businesses and creating employment opportunities</b> including helping small and local businesses to prosper and grow, supporting and encouraging new businesses, attracting investment and new businesses to the Shire, minimising red tape for business, and <b>building tourism</b> to support local business.</p>
	<p><b>Improving access to quality and affordable childcare</b> including before and after school care.</p>
	<p><b>Improving and maintaining roads</b> including safety, business outcomes and for liveability.</p>
	<p><b>Access to and promotion of health services / medical</b> including specialist care, attracting health professionals, equitable access to health services, allied health services being available locally (dental, physio, chiro, nutrition etc).</p>
	<p><b>The environment, sustainability, and climate change</b> including water and soil health, maintaining, protecting and restoring the natural environment, taking action on and adapting to climate change, habitat conservation, making use of the natural environment features to increase tourism.</p>
	<p><b>Increasing the availability of short term and long-term housing</b> to increase job opportunities and support people to live in our communities. Reducing red tape is seen as a key change needed to increase the availability of housing.</p>
	<p><b>Upgrade of recreation facilities</b> including tennis courts, netball courts, toilets in recreation reserves, exercise equipment in parks, facilities to support water-based recreation opportunities and implementing reserve master plans.</p>
	<p><b>Preventing all forms of violence, improving mental wellbeing and reducing harmful alcohol and drug use</b>, plus increasing active living and increasing healthy eating were identified by the community as the <b>most important health and wellbeing priorities</b> for the West Wimmera community. For mental health, key priorities include recognising and understanding it, the mental health of young people and farming communities, and access to mental health services locally.</p>
	<p><b>Improving town centres</b> including public toilets, improvements to footpaths, addressing untidy shop fronts, street lighting and improvements to the streetscapes.</p>
	<p><b>Advocating for reliable and quality potable water supply.</b></p>

### 3.0 Community Survey

The survey of community members was open between 7 June and 11 July 2021. It was available through Council's online engagement platform Have Your Say. Hard copies were also available in key community and service locations and copies were posted to every household in West Wimmera Shire. In total 270 people completed the survey which equates to 9.1 percent of the population aged 19 years or older.<sup>1</sup>

The survey asked respondents about what they see as the strengths and challenges for West Wimmera, identify their vision for west Wimmera Shire and what they believe needs to change to achieve this vision. The survey specifically sought information about:

- What people love the most about West Wimmera.
- What do they consider to be the strengths of the west Wimmera community and why.
- What is their vision for West Wimmera Shire by responding to the sentence *I want to live in a community that.....*
- Whether they have a big idea for West Wimmera.
- What needs to be changed or improved to achieve their vision for the West Wimmera community and why.
- How important the Victorian Government health and wellbeing priorities are to improving the health and wellbeing of the West Wimmera community.
- What they believe are the biggest challenges to improving health and wellbeing in the West Wimmera community.
- What they believe should be Council's top priorities over the next 4 years for the West Wimmera community, health and wellbeing, environment and economy.
- Any other comments or information it is important for Council to consider as part of developing consider as part of developing the Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan for West Wimmera.

The survey also collected key demographic data to assist in understanding how representative survey respondents were of the West Wimmera community and asked people to indicate how they would prefer Council to engage with them in the future.

Detailed survey results are provided in Attachment A as a separate attachment to this document.

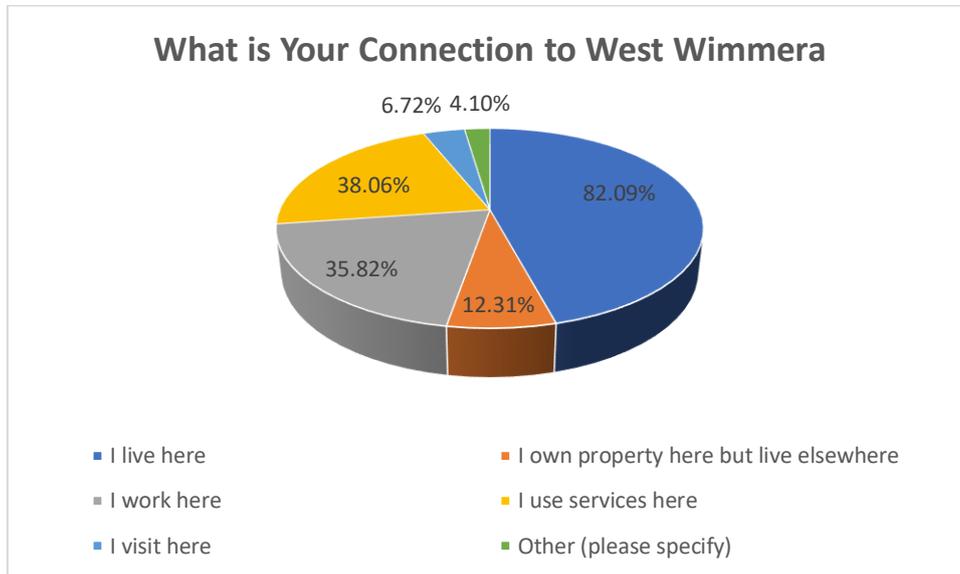
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<sup>1</sup> ABS, [2016 Census QuickStats: West Wimmera \(S\) \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

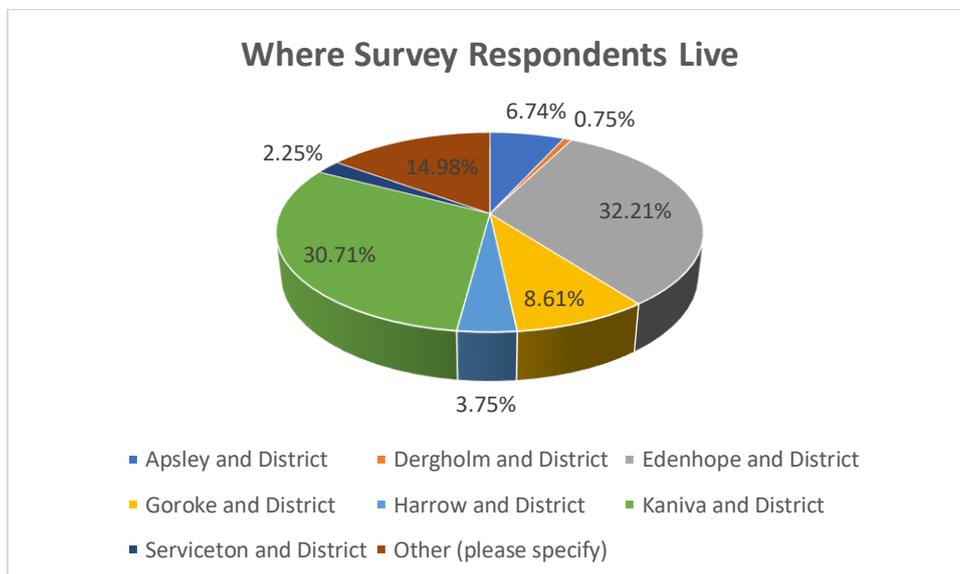
### 3.1 Key Findings from Survey Results

#### Who Completed the Survey

Most people who completed they survey **live in West Wimmera Shire (82.1%)**, some also use services in the Shire (38.1%) or work in the Shire (35.8%).



**Most in Edenhope and District (32.2%) or Kaniva and District (30.7%)**. This is to be expected as at the 2016 Census, the Edenhope and Kaniva accounted for 24.2 percent and 20.6 percent, of the West Wimmera Shire population. In contrast there were very few survey respondents who indicated they live in Dergholm and District (0.1%), Serviceton and District (2.3%) and Harrow and District (3.8%).



The majority of survey respondents were **female (65.9 percent)**, and while overall there was a reasonable spread of survey respondents aged 25 years or older, there was a **high proportion aged 50 – 59 years (25.8%), 35 – 49 years (21.7%), 25 – 34 years (14.2%)**, when compared with the 2016 ABS Census data. There was a very low response from those aged 24 years or younger, with only one survey respondent aged less than 18 years. However, extensive consultation was undertaken directly with schools, which has helped to ensure the voice of children and young people is captured.

**What people LOVE the most or consider to be a STRENGTH of West Wimmera community**

The aspects people **LOVE the most** about West Wimmera community are:

<p><b>The friendliness of the community,</b> people and townships,</p>	<p><b>It is a quiet and peaceful place</b> to live, its remote from the city.</p>
<p><b>The natural environment</b> including the national parks, wetlands, birds, wildlife, the bushland, the red gum trees, fresh clean air, Aboriginal history, the lakes, open space, the beauty of the landscape, connection to nature, the sense of space, the wide-open spaces.</p>	<p><b>The sense of community and belonging</b> including the caring community, community spirit, community resilience, the community works together to help each other and remain viable.</p>
<p><b>Small population,</b> small communities.</p>	<p><b>The rural lifestyle.</b></p>

Consistent with this, the **biggest strengths** of the community are considered to be the **rural lifestyle**, followed by the **sense of community and belonging**, access to the **natural environment** and our **local townships**.

**Reason why people love these aspects** the most or consider them to be a strength are having access to quality of services and supports; that the natural environment is so important to our wellbeing, and we have the opportunity to protect it; that we have the opportunity to meet people and feel a part of the community; and that our communities are pursuing the things that are important to them.

**The community’s vision for West Wimmera in 20 years**

**I want to live in a community that.....**

- **Values its people**, and is diverse and inclusive of everyone, both those who have lived here for a long time and those who are newer to the community.
- **Adapts to prosper in changing circumstances**, is continuing to evolve, is not afraid of change, is thriving, is vibrant, is somewhere I am proud to live.
- **Remains friendly and welcoming for all**, where the community cares for each other, is supportive of each other, community spirit is strong, where people work together, where volunteering is strong.
- **Has an increasing population** / where there is no longer population decline, where our community has as many young people as older people, where young families are in abundance.
- **Is supportive of women** and understands how important they are to having vibrant, attractive and viable communities. Childcare is critical to supporting the needs of women, particularly to support their involvement in the workforce.
- **Has access to the same or better services** e.g. utilities (gas, water, internet), health services including specialist and mental health services, retail services, public transport.

- **Values, protects, and improves open space and the natural environment.**
- **Supports specific cohorts to remain a strong part of our community** – older persons, families, young people and farming families.
- **Has strong and vibrant community activities and opportunities** e.g. sporting activities, arts and culture is thriving – full of music, art and live events.
- **Is sustainable** i.e. sustainable businesses, practices, environment, services, and agriculture, and we focus upon educating our community about sustainability.
- **Has thriving a thriving economy.**
- **Has increased access to housing**, particularly more affordable and better quality housing.
- **Has thriving community groups** and there is equitable support community groups.
- **Has attractive and appealing and townships.**
- **Is healthy and active**, and promotes healthy and active lifestyles.
- **Continues to be a safe place to live.**
- **Is listened to by Council** and Council acts on community feedback, and where Council plans for growth and development to keep our towns thriving and relevant.
- **Maintains and improves facilities and infrastructure** e.g. roads, sporting facilities, and arts spaces.

#### Most frequently identified big idea for West Wimmera is.....

- **Improving the local economy** through developing and supporting primary and secondary industries, supporting small businesses, building a strong tourism and visitor economy, incentivising and attracting people to live and work in the local community and providing employment opportunities.
- **Providing access to childcare** to support families to move to the area and stay in the area, to support towns to grow and survive, to support women in the workforce. There is a strong sense of frustration this is not being addressed and a very strong link between the provision of childcare and the capacity of families to work and remain living in West Wimmera.
- **Making the most of and enhancing our lakes, especially Lake Wallace.** There is strong support for filling Lake Wallace to help underpin industry, tourism and the future of Edenhope township.
- **Enhancing and celebrating the natural environment and implementing initiatives which will improve the sustainability of West Wimmera** and position West Wimmera as a leader in the sustainability field.
- **Ideas for Kaniva**, with a particular interest in seeing a manmade lake developed on the old racecourse site. The community sees this as an opportunity to attract visitors to the area.

#### Consistently identified big idea for West Wimmera is.....

- The provision of more housing, of long term and short-term accommodation to encourage people to move to the area and to support seasonal workers.

- Improvements to community infrastructure including centralising sporting facilities, improving hospital facilities, making aged care facilities available, and better open space and recreation facilities.
- Improvements to road infrastructure including more sealed roads and better-quality roads.
- The community working together more effectively, looking out for each other, being more united, for the good of everyone.
- To celebrate what we have to offer, have pride in our community and what we offer and to use this as a way to attract people to live in our community:

### What needs to change or improve to achieve the community's vision and big ideas and why

The things that MOST need to change to achieve the community's vision and big ideas are:

- **Employment opportunities, early years services** and the **road network**.
- Also, health services and supports, programs, activities and supports for young people, public and community transport, and programs, activities and supports for children and families.

The primary reasons the community believes these need to change are:

- **The lack of access to childcare** constrains the ability of parents to work, undermines the attractiveness of West Wimmera as a place for families, impacts upon being able to attract qualified professionals, undermines the local economy and access to quality health and community services, means our towns will die.
- **The poor and variable condition of roads.**
- **Our declining population is resulting in a loss of local businesses and services** e.g. banks, medical, schools. We need to look at ways to help our population to grow, to create employment opportunities for young people especially so we can retain them in our communities and keep the towns alive and growing, incentives for teachers to come to and stay in country towns, attract new businesses that will bring jobs and families.
- **We need better access to community and health services.** We cannot attract and retain community members if we don't have access to services - for older members of the community, for families, for our farming communities, access to specialist services, mental health services, medical, allied health, and dental services, and services for people with a disability.
- **The need for community infrastructure to be improved:** e.g. sporting facilities, public halls, information and direction signs, better walking track around Lake Wallace, continue to upgrade our lakes because they are a major drawcard (playgrounds, BBQs), better playgrounds, places for young people, very limited public transport.

Other reasons are:

- The cost, lack of and poor condition of housing
- The community needs to work together more - we need to include and welcome new community members.
- Our natural environment needs more protection.

- Many in our community are missing out – there are not many activities for middle aged people still working, our young people are isolated and have little access to programs, services, employment and traineeships, older members of the community are not looked after.

## Health and Wellbeing

The **health priorities** considered to be **MOST important** by the community are:

- **Preventing all form of violence, improving mental wellbeing and reducing harmful alcohol and drug use.**
- Also considered to be important but less so are *increasing active living and increasing healthy eating.*

The **biggest challenges** to improving the health and wellbeing of the West Wimmera community are:

- **Lack of access / poor access / delayed access to health services / poor quality health services.**
- **Mental health** including a lack of access to mental health supports locally, depression amongst farmers, and the stigma of mental illness.
- **Our isolation** and distance from services and larger communities.

Other key challenges are:

- ***Unhealthy community attitudes to alcohol and drugs***, the normalisation of drug and alcohol use / abuse, a drinking culture.
- ***Lack of awareness of and lack of information*** about health and support services available and what healthy living means.
- ***Getting our community more active*** including a lack of facilities and opportunities for fitness and a lack of participation in fitness or active lifestyles
- ***Overweight and obesity***, encouraging healthy diets and eating habits.
- ***Unhealthy attitudes towards women***, gender equality, misogyny.
- ***Violence***, violence towards women, family violence.
- ***A lack of access to childcare*** means parents can't work, it means we cannot attract health professionals to our community, it means families experience financial hardship because both parents cannot work.
- ***Housing availability and affordability.***

Other challenges identified consistently were the aging population and lack of support for older members of the community, the lack of acceptance of difference and diversity, the need to provide more opportunities for people to connect, particularly those who are new to the community, the cost of and access to healthy foods, the lack of support and employment for young people, the need to protect the environment, poverty and disadvantage in the community.

## Priorities

Community members believe the following should be the **top priorities** for Council over the next 4 years:

- **Supporting businesses** including helping small businesses to prosper and grow, *supporting and encouraging new businesses*, attracting investment and new businesses to the Shire, long term viability of businesses, supporting local businesses, *minimising red tape for business*, connecting with local businesses, promoting the industrial estate, building tourism to support local business, local businesses to be wheelchair accessible, educating local businesses, keep businesses in towns, the sustainability of businesses,
- **Improving access to childcare** including access to quality childcare, access to affordable childcare, before and after school care,
- **Roads** including improving and maintaining them, roads in Kaniva, bridges, improving them to improve business outcomes and liveability, keeping our roads safe, upgrading black soil roads, maintenance on back roads, and better roadside waste management,

Followed by:

- **The environment, sustainability, and climate change** including water and soil health, maintaining, protecting and restoring the natural environment, adapting to climate change, reducing the local impacts of climate change, taking action on climate change, habitat conservation, making use of the natural environment features to increase tourism.
- **Creating employment opportunities** including attracting industries and businesses to create employment, employment / training for young people, long term employment, encourage more jobs to our town.
- **Mental health** including recognising and understanding it, the mental health of young people and farming communities, access to mental health services locally, the impact of lockdowns upon mental health, and affordable access.
- **Access to and promotion of health services / medical** including specialist care, attracting health professionals, equitable access to health services, allied health services being available locally (dental, physio, chiro, nutrition etc).
- **Housing** including reducing red tape to develop housing, increased subdivision to develop housing, hostel type housing, housing availability, more housing, affordable housing for workers to keep people here, housing to increase job opportunities.
- **Community health and wellbeing** including mental health, healthy food choices, healthy aging, the health value of engaging with our natural environment, healthy activity, youth sexual health.

Other priorities identified multiple times were schools and education, improvements to Lake Wallace, access to public and community transport, community education about health, sustainability, safety, drugs and alcohol, the environmental, and new technologies, aged care services or facilities, the Grampians water pipeline.

## Other Considerations for Council in developing the Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan

A range of considerations were raised by survey respondents, with those raised most consistently including:

- **Changes to the approach taken by Council** about a number of aspects including reducing red tape, listening to the community and keeping them involved in decision making, ensuring Councillors are representative of the whole community, Council being more positive about progress and be prepared to change, providing more support to groups who help the community, creating better links between Council and schools to engage young people and ensure projects that Council starts are finished.
- **Opportunities around tourism** including telling people about our unique part of the world so we can attract visitors / build tourism, having a plan and vision for tourism, and providing free camping to attract visitors.
- **Concerns about the cost of Council and wastage.**

## 4.0 Listening Posts

As noted previously, 7 Community Listening Posts were held between 12 May and 17 June 2020, with each forum targeted at a particular district, with the exception of the Youth Council Forum. The timetable for the forums and the number of participants is outlined in table 4.1 below.

Focus / Locality	Date	No. of Forums	No. Participants
Apsley	30 June 2021	1	5
Dergholm	30 June 2021	1	2
<b>Edenhope</b>	<b>25 June 2021</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>
Harrow	29 June 2021	1	6
Goroke	1 July 2021	1	6
<b>Kaniva</b>	<b>6 July 2021</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>
Serviceton	6 July 2021	1	9
<b>Total Participants</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>63</b>

Table 4.1: Number of Community Listening Posts West Wimmera Shire Community Consultation, June / July 2021

The sessions explored issues regarding the preferred future for West Wimmera by posing the following questions:

- What do you love the most or consider to be the biggest strengths of West Wimmera?
- I want to live in a community that ....
- My big idea for West Wimmera is ....
- What do you think should be Council's priorities for the next 4 years?

A range of information was gathered through the listening posts. A summary of the key issues and opportunities, ideas and priorities are outlined below.

### What do you love the most or consider to be the biggest strengths of West Wimmera?

- **The atmosphere**, which is one of safety and freedom where we can enjoy the peace and quiet.
- **The natural environment** which features lakes, fresh air and good soil. The picturesque nature of the region and the wide open spaces add to its liveability.
- **We enjoy a high quality of life in a place where it's safe to raise children and young families.** This is a friendly community with strong levels of volunteering and a welcoming nature.
- **Community facilities** including our playgrounds, tennis courts and facilities in parks including bbqs.
- **The attractions in our towns** which add to what's on offer and make it a good place to live and retire.
- **Our farming community** which is such an important part of our history and who we are today.

## I want to live in a community that ....

Residents were asked to reflect on the sort of community in which they would like to live in the future. Consistent themes were:

- **Access to health services** including home assistance and community transport.
- **Has a sustainable childcare service** in place to support families.
- **Improved facilities at Lake Wallace** to support local recreational activities.
- **More accommodation, more tourism**, info centre at Serviceton Railway Station.
- **Increased availability of a skilled workforce.**
- **More walking tracks** in natural areas and adjacent to lakes and waterways.
- **Support for volunteer organisations and volunteers.**
- **Improvements to roads** and associated signage to improve safety and encourage tourism.

Other themes raised included:

- Undergrounding of powerlines.
- Increased opportunities for 4WD activities.
- Provision of public toilets in town centres and public places.
- Provision of dog parks for off-lead dog activities.
- Retention of the current service mix in towns to support the community.
- Improvements to playgrounds across the Shire.
- Improvements to water quality.

## My big idea for West Wimmera is ....

A very wide range of big ideas for west Wimmera were raised by residents. Ideas primarily reflected interest in improving the liveability of our communities, stimulating economic activity and improving service and transport infrastructure. Key ideas were:

### Improving the liveability of our communities

- Development of walking/bicycle trails and works to enhance camping and fishing opportunities.
- Streetscape improvements in town centres to make them more pedestrian friendly including installation or upgrade of public toilets and installation of seating.
- Sustainable presence of water in lake Wallace including removal weeds.
- Initiatives to celebrate the past and protect heritage including our gold history.
- Increased availability and quality of housing in towns.
- Undertake works at Lions Park to provide improved amenity and facilities.
- Active living and health promotion programs and initiatives.
- Construction of a new playground in Apsley.

- Removal of sediment from waterways in Harrow.

### Stimulating economic activity and tourism

- Promotion of local sporting stars to increase West Wimmera's profile.
- Provision of tourist attractions in towns including silo art.
- Attracting new and emerging industry to the Shire.
- Employment options, labour shortage.
- Initiatives to upgrade shopfronts in towns that are degraded.

### Improving service and transport infrastructure

- Provision of buildings for the Mens Shed and Historical Society in Apsley.
- Improved quality of town water and water pressure.
- Advocate for improved mobile phone coverage.
- Upgrades to local roads to enable safe and efficient transport of goods.
- Addressing the narrow bridges on local roads that are unsafe.
- Development of a road bypass of Edenhope.

### What do you think should be Council's priorities for the next 4 years?

Residents were asked about their views on Council's priorities for the next four years. A wide range of specific comments were made covering the breadth of Council's programs and services. Priorities identified most consistently were:

- **Upgrade of recreation facilities** including tennis courts, netball courts, toilets in recreation reserves, exercise equipment in parks, facilities to support water based recreation opportunities and implementing reserve master plans.
- **The provision of more childcare** and better access to childcare.
- **Improve local roads** including signage, widening of narrow roads, sealing of road verges and seasonal weed spraying and mowing of roadside vegetation.
- **Advocate for reliable and quality potable water supply.**
- **Support for tourism and economic development** including additional cabins at caravan parks, additional walking tracks and bike paths, way finding signage, infrastructure to support RVs (recreational vehicles), creation of events to attract visitors to the Shire, a visitor campaign to attract visitors, attracting home based online businesses, buy local campaign.
- **Improvements to town centres** including public toilets, improvements to footpaths, addressing untidy shop fronts, street lighting and improvements to the streetscapes.
- **Community programs and activities** including expansion of library programs, more activities for young people, expansion of grant programs to support community organisations and their activities and support for volunteer organisations and volunteers.
- **Improving the availability and quality of housing.**

## 5.0 Children and Young People

A short survey was distributed to 5 schools and 3 kindergartens in West Wimmera Shire including Edenhope College, St Malachy's School, Apsley Primary School, Goroke P-12 College, Kaniva P - 12 College, Edenhope Kindergarten, Kaniva Kindergarten and Goroke Kindergarten.

In total 179 children and young people completed the survey from:

- **Goroke P – 12 College**
- **St Malachy's School (Edenhope)**
- **Kaniva P – 12 College.**

Children (aged around 10 and above) and young people were invited to respond to 4 questions:

- What I like most about where I live.
- My favourite place in my community is.
- The things I like to do the most after school and on the weekends are.
- If I was in charge of Council, I would.

Younger children were invited to respond to 4 similar questions which were more appropriate to their age. These included:

- What I love the most about where I live is
- My favourite place to visit is
- What I like to do most on the weekend is
- If I could do anything to make where I live better I would.

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

### What I love the most about where I live

- My family, friends and neighbours.
- My home e.g. our farm, our dam.
- Features of our community the silos, harvest time, the peace and quiet, its safe.
- Community and recreation facilities e.g. skatepark, football oval, the pool, playgrounds, trampolines.
- Local businesses and shops e.g. cafes, milkshake shop, take away shop.
- School.
- The activities we can access e.g. sports, community events, fishing.

### What I most like to do on the weekend or after school is.....

- Home based activities e.g. playing video games, playing games, watching TV, cooking, puzzles.
- Spending time with my friends or family.
- Sporting activities e.g. football, netball, hockey.
- Informal recreation activities e.g. skatepark, bike riding, climbing trees, 4 wheel driving, motor bike riding, swimming, playing an instrument, listening to music.
- Spending time outdoors e.g. going to the farm, going to the Lake, going to the beach, going to the Fauna Park.

### My favourite place to visit is....

- Friends or family.
- Our farm.
- Community and recreation facilities including the Fauna Park, the local pool, the skatepark, the Recreation Reserve, the netball courts, the football ground, the playground, the tennis courts, , the library, the Fauna Park.
- Businesses and shops including the icecream shop, the petrol station, the supermarket, kmart.
- Places outside West Wimmera e.g. Thailand, Naracoorte, Swan Hill and Barwon Heads.

### If I could do anything to make where I live better, it would be ...

- **Improved or more recreation facilities** including more bike tracks, BMX bike track, heated indoor pool (with water slides), upgrade the skatepark, a hockey field, basketball stadium, new netball courts, ninja warrior course, water park, mini golf course, a cinema, bigger and better playground.
- **Different activities** including horse riding, a kids truck centre, festivals and events.
- **Improve services** including internet, better public transport, more doctors, a Headspace program for young kids and young adults.
- **Improve roads and footpaths** e.g. fix the local roads, put lines on the roads and footpaths, install a pedestrian crossing at the IGA, repair the footpaths.
- **Different retail business** including a model shop, a pet shop, a puppet shop.
- **Looking after our community better and changing how we behave.**
- **Cleaning up rubbish** in our parks and our towns.

## 5.2 Kaniva P – 12 College

In total **128 students** from Kaniva P – 12 College completed the survey.

### What I love most about where I live is ...

What students from Kaniva P – 12 College love the most about where they live are:

- Things related to their home i.e. our farm, my family.
- Key features of our community i.e. the silos, harvest time, the peace and quiet and trees.
- Community facilities and spaces e.g. school, Kaniva skatepark, football oval, the pool, the cafes, local shops and milkshake shop.
- Knowing everyone.
- The sports we have access to.

### What I like to do most on the weekend is ...

The activities raised the most consistently by students were:

- Working on the farm.
- Family time.
- Play an instrument.
- Sporting activities i.e. football (Auskick), netball, hockey, riding my bike, motor bike riding.
- Hanging out with friends.

Other activities that were raised by only one or two students were 4-wheel driving, camping, visiting the fauna park, ice cream, watching Netflix, playing video games, playing with pets, cooking, visiting grandparents, going to the beach and puzzles.

### My favourite place to visit is ...

There was a very high level of consistency in responses to the question about my favourite place to visit.

- Local football matches.
- Friends or family e.g. my grandparents house, my friends house.
- Our farm.
- Community and recreation facilities including the Fauna Park, the local pool, Kaniva skatepark, the Recreation Reserve, the netball courts.
- Shops including the icecream shop, the petrol station and the supermarket.

### If I could do anything to make where I live better, it would be ...

This question resulted in an extensive list of everything that children have ever wanted to do. The ideas that were mentioned by several students have been captured below:

- **Recreation facilities** including more bike tracks, heated pool with water slides, basketball stadium, ninja warrior course, water park, min golf course.
- **Activities** including horse riding, a kids truck centre.
- **Improve services** including infinite internet, better public transport, more doctors.
- **Retail business** including a model shop, a pet shop, a puppet shop.
- **Looking after our community better.**
- **Cleaning up rubbish** in parks.

## 5.3 Goroce P – 12 College

In total **42 students** from Goroce P – 12 College completed the survey.

### What I love most about where I live is ...

What students from Goroce P – 12 College love the most about where they live are:

- Things about my home i.e. my family, our farm, our dam.
- Key features of our community i.e. the silos, the peace and quiet.
- Community facilities and spaces i.e. The local pool, the playground.
- Community activities and people i.e. our neighbours, community events, playing sport, fishing.
- The takeaway shop.

### What I like to do most on the weekend is ...

A range of active and passive activities were identified. The activities that received a mention from several students were:

- Sporting activities including playing football and football training, playing netball, playing hockey.
- Informal outdoor activities including going to the skatepark, bike riding, climbing trees.
- Going 4-wheel driving.
- Playstation.
- Watching TV.
- Cooking.
- Visiting family.

Other activities that were raised by only one or two students were going swimming, going to the farm, going to Lake Charlie Graff, riding go karts, listening to music and motor bike riding.

### My favourite place to visit is ...

There was a very high level of consistency in responses to the question about my favourite place to visit with a **big focus upon recreation and sporting facilities** including the football ground, the skatepark, the local pool, the playground and tennis courts. Others identified frequently were the IGA and our farm.

Other places nominated but less frequently were visiting other family members, Kmart, the Library, Jim's takeaway, Thailand, Naracoorte, Swan Hill and Barwon Heads.

### If I could do anything to make where I live better, it would be ...

Responses typically involved **improvements to recreation facilities** including improvements to Recreation Reserves, upgrade the skatepark, more bike tracks, heated indoor swimming pool, a hockey field, BMX bike track, new netball courts

Other students identified initiatives that are more about the liveability of West Wimmera and of broader community relevance. These included:

- **Change the way we behave** and think about school and others.
- **Roads and footpaths** e.g. fix the local roads, put lines on the roads and footpaths, install a pedestrian crossing at the IGA, repair the footpaths.
- **Improving our townships** e.g. clear up litter and rubbish in the town, make the shops bigger, build more houses, fix the town water.
- **Fill up the lakes** with fish and water.
- **Develop a Headspace program** for young kids and young adults.
- **A cinema.**

## 5.4 St Malachy's School Edenhope

In total **9 students** from St Malachy's School completed the survey.

### What I love most about where I live is ...

What students from St Malachy's School love the most about where they live are largely related to their **family, home and school**. Responses received from the students included:

- My family
- Trampolines

- School and play time
- I have a warm home
- I have a good family
- The pool and my school
- It is safe.

### What I like to do most on the weekend is ...

A range of active and passive activities were identified, and most were **related to home-based activities and spending time with family and friends**. Responses included:

- Spending time with nature
- Motorbike riding
- Having bonfires and marshmallows
- Playing Xbox and, Minecraft
- Playing with my lambs
- Visiting my friends
- Playing games
- Playing on the trampoline.

### My favourite place to visit is ...

There was a high level of consistency in responses to the question about my favourite place to visit with a **big focus upon family and friends**. Community facilities including the pool and the possum park (Fauna Park) were also identified, and the snow.

### If I could do anything to make where I live better, it would be ...

The initiatives identified by students were:

- Pick up rubbish around towns
- A better and bigger playground
- Local festivals and events
- A greenhouse
- Have a good life
- A Jumping castle and other playspaces
- Take care of my house.

## Attachment A – Detailed Results from Community Survey

The detailed survey results are provided as a separate document.