



20.5.21

Budget Submission by Vision & Voice of Edenhope (Progress Association)

To David,

Vision & Voice of Edenhope would like to submit to the West Wimmera Shire Council the following budget submission.

Edenhope, located just 30kms from the South Australian border has been impacted by the Covid pandemic through restrictions on business and travel within Victorian and by the closure (including a period of hard border closure) of the South Australian border. The impacts have been felt across the community, including mental health, physical health and financial health. While there has been some recovery, we believe more specific investment is required to help the community bounce back and look forward to the future. We believe our community has a great range of services and opportunities for those looking to live in a small centre, as well as providing services and opportunities for rural residents and those in nearby smaller towns.

We welcome the investment that has taken place in planning in our town and take great pride in the way West Wimmera Shire Council undertake activities to make our streetscape welcoming, but hope that West Wimmera Shire Council re-consider the budget to include some funding for infrastructure. Our concern is that without some allocation in the next 12 months, these plans run the risk of gathering dust on a bookshelf, instead of taking advantage of some exceptional grant opportunities by State and Federal governments.

Our priorities for investment are listed below.

Lions Park

Last budget, we submitted as a high priority for a Lions Park Masterplan. We received written correspondence (20.7.20) from Mel Jordan on behalf of the shire that no funding was needed, due to staff completing the project internally. Following repeated requests for update by our group, we were finally made aware in 2.March.2021 that no staff were capable of completing the project. WWSC councillors voted to use the existing allocation of \$20K for playground equipment (which we had requested was moved from Henley Park equipment to Lions Park equipment) to conduct a consultancy. The consultancy, further was expanded to include major recreation areas in the town.

(17.3.21 - That Council reallocate the \$20,000 carried forward for the purchase and installation of additional playground equipment at Henley Park to the development of an Edenhope Play Spaces Masterplan.)

Jess Nelson, President, Vision & Voice of Edenhope 0438 220 285



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- We wish to request the return of an allocation of \$20,000 for playground equipment to Lions Park, with the specific location and type to come from the recommendations in the Master plan, which we were told would be completed by July (though recent correspondence indicates this date has moved back).
- We support the carry forward of \$70,000 to repair/replace the public toilets, currently located at the Edenhope Tennis Courts. As we previously submitted, we expect to be involved in public consultation regarding the site and type of toilet facilities so that the best possible outcome is made for the users of the Tennis Courts, Bowling Club Tourism Centre and Lions Park, including disabled users and those providing care for infants. We have been in contact with the other users and look forward to working collaboratively with them and the shire to improve the area.

As previously declared in our 2020 submission, Vision & Voice of Edenhope is prepared to contribute \$500 towards Stage 1 of the Lions Park Masterplan implementation as a sign of our commitment to this project.

Lake Wallace

We believe the key to a long-term improvement of our town includes a better connection between the town more broadly and Lake Wallace. We understand there is currently a draft plan with Council and believe it is appropriate to allocate funds to implement projects, for which the community have been asking council since the lake re-filled in 2016. We have enjoyed being part of the extensive group of representatives in the Community Consultative Committee and look forward to continuing to work in collaboration with other community groups to continue to improve the lake.

Regarding specific budget requests:

- Improved connectivity to and around the lake through footpaths
 - We hope current funding is carried forward (as we can't see any allocation in the draft budget)
 - from Elizabeth Street to the Pier,
 - to seal in front of Lake Wallace Station and
 - to undertake repairs, in particular near the Ann Street playground.
- We request there an allocation to have a Lake Street footpath from Wallace Street to Henley Park, to improve connectivity with the two schools and kindergarten to the Lake and major recreation area – Henley Park.
- **We wish to request WWSC include a funding allocation to implement Stage 1 recommendations from the Lake Wallace Strategic Plan of \$50,000 with detail to be provided following release of the Final Plan and public consultation via at least the CCC.**



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- We are investigating the opportunity to conduct a 'Park Run' style event around Lake Wallace, including a event launch and follow-up opportunities that people can run/walk the distance independently. While we are not yet ready to implement the project, we hope to work with the shire and other potential sponsors of the initiative to get locals more active and to encourage visitors to the town to participate and to offer it as a 'value adding' experience in town. At this stage we are still scoping the project rather than providing a budget request. We believe this to be a low risk-high reward opportunity for our community.

It is our hope that Lions Park developments and improvements to Lake Wallace and Edenhope more broadly can continue to be implemented through a partnership with our Progress Association to fundraise over coming years.

We wish to put our support to submissions regarding two other priorities we believe are key to the town's recovery

Childcare

Many of our members, and those we represent, have faced and continue to face ongoing issues accessing consistent childcare in Edenhope. Over the past decade, only Family Day Care has been provided. Our experience is that while it is a wonderful option for some, it should not be the primary care option offered. Employees working 9-5 and those self-employed, particularly without access to other care arrangements, are greatly affected. There have been many occasions where the centre is booked out, closed or where parents must make last minute arrangements when the provider is ill. Approximately every two years the provider has ceased their business, leaving families with no option for care for months at a time. We believe the key to attracting more staff and using the skills in our community is to provide a Day Care Centre. This has the advantage of: more positions for children, the ability to have temporary staff to cover staff illness, consistency in positions for the children (12 month use), the ability to have before and after school care. This means that people can take on work and projects, including volunteering in the community, knowing they are guaranteed consistent, safe and qualified care for their children.

We support calls for a business case to be funded to investigate funding a Day Care Centre in Edenhope.

Town Signage

The Edenhope community have long wanted large town entrance signs to promote our town and attractions. We believe the town itself has high visual amenity and a great range of boutique shopping options that should attract visitors. We further believe that making a good first impression will encourage more people to notice our brand 'Eden Hope' and to make a point of stopping. By highlighting our key assets (e.g. Lake Wallace) we also encourage visitors to stay longer, and hopefully even decide to live here one day.

We support calls for funding for cover administrative costs (permits etc) for town signs to be constructed (funding by Tourism Inc for construction of 1 entrance)



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Birdlife

We wish to make aware to councillors, as we have to WWSC staff that the Birdlife project is no longer the highest priority for the group, as we believe further work on scoping and collaboration is needed, and this is outside the capacity of our group in the next 12 months. We have decided to focus on the priority sites of Lake Wallace and Lions Park for upgrades to attract visitors. We intend to re-visit the project later in the year, but more specifically, we aim to ensure that Lions Park has its upgrades completed prior to taking on the Birdlife Project, so the birds connect destinations throughout the township when they are up to scratch.

Looking forward

Vision and Voice of Edenhope have participated in recent community engagement opportunities. This includes, but is not limited to, the Lake Wallace Plan and the Edenhope Streetscape Plan (and previously the Edenhope Community Centre HUB). We do note with some frustration that there are a number of plans happening in our community, but no overall Edenhope Township Plan. We are often told our ideas or priorities are 'outside scope' and this is frustrating. We are hoping that staff undertake a review to look at how the various plans can be integrated and any omissions in planning be reviewed. We look forward to an opportunity to meet with senior staff to discuss our Vision & Voice for Edenhope.

Some priorities that have thus-far fallen outside scopes include:

- School Crossing east-west along Wallace Street, near the intersection with Lake Street
- Streetscape review – outside the CBD area (we were surprised to find the project limited to the CBD in scope)
- Land availability and housing availability review
- West Grampians Pipeline – work to ensure accurate and extensive data regarding benefits of a piped water supply to Edenhope and District, including Lake Wallace
 - Including wildlife surveys
 - Including potential land subdivision / housing opportunities
 - Including tourism venture opportunities

You Sincerely,

Jessica Sambell

Secretary, on behalf of Vision & Voice of Edenhope, 3318

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