

Newstead Community Plan 2013



Town of
NEWSTEAD
Parish of Strangways
COUNTY OF TALBOT

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G.A. 181-180.



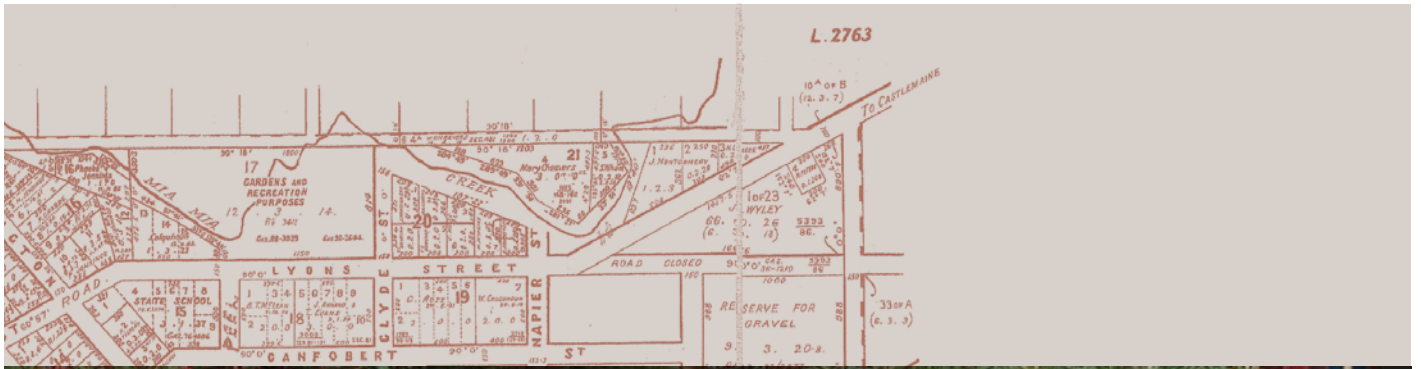
MOUNT ALEXANDER
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Our town, our say



Executive Summary

Newstead is a diverse, creative and cohesive community with a steadily growing population, an abundance of natural and built resources. We value our rich history and village atmosphere and have a high level of community participation and volunteerism.

We also recognise the importance of outlying locales (Strangways, Green Gully, Sandon, Strathlea, Welshmans Reef, Clydesdale etc.) to our community life.

Locals are keen to have a say in the future of their town. We estimate one in four of us has been actively engaged in the plan's development.

The Newstead Community Plan identifies four areas of focus. They are:

Open Spaces

Dollars and Cents

Community Life

Bricks and Mortar

For each of these themes we have identified our aspirations, together with a set of objectives and strategies (often in the form of specific projects at different scales) to be realised.

OUR PRIORITIES

At this stage the plan suggests a set of major projects:

1. Refurbishing and revitalising the Newstead Station as an arts precinct
2. Creating a pedestrian bridge across the Loddon River to connect both sides of town
3. Establishing a skate and bike park and community activity centre
4. Establishing a connected network of walking and bike paths and trails between Newstead and surrounding towns, using existing easements and bushland areas
5. A major renewal of street trees within the town precinct
6. Establishing a "Support and Sustain our Volunteers" initiative for volunteers and community groups
7. Developing a local business strategy for Newstead to build business and employment opportunities
8. Planning for a liveable Newstead, to ensure Newstead retains its unique built and natural values into the future
9. Catering for our ageing population through access and accommodation
10. A road safety focus to minimise traffic impacts and create a safe and quiet township

A longer list of projects, some large, others small has been detailed in the section on STRATEGIES and ACTIONS.

While we have identified 10 priorities, all projects are 'on the table' depending on individual and community energy and intent.

This is a 'rolling' plan, with a 15-20 year timeframe, but to be reviewed every 3-5 years. It provides a snapshot of our community in 2013.

The Plan aligns strongly with the recently produced Mount Alexander Shire Council Plan 2013-2017. The next step is to work with local, regional, state and federal bodies to make these projects real.

We would like to acknowledge that Newstead is part of Jaara Country of which the members and elders of the Jaara community and their forebears have been custodians for many centuries and have performed age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

OUR PRIORITIES (continued)

1. REFURBISHING AND REVITALISING THE NEWSTEAD STATION AS AN ARTS PRECINCT

Background:

The Newstead station has been vacant and is fast becoming derelict. When the lease came up for renewal in 2012, VicTrack decided that the station was not a commercially viable lease proposition, but that it may qualify for restoration and renewal under the Community Vacant Use Program (VicTrack support the community to restore the station subject to the establishment of a business enterprise). This would not preclude the possibility of trains running again on the railway line. The CVU program was placed on hold whilst the State government decided on the feasibility of opening the line and the future of the CVU program. The station buildings and precinct would provide a valuable social, cultural and economic hub for the west side of the town.

Current Status:

A Friends of Newstead Station group was formed in August 2012 to look at ways to save the station, including restoration, renewal and alternative uses. Interest grew during the community planning process.

The group submitted an application for Regional Arts Victoria's Small Town Transformation project to restore the station buildings, create an arts hub and link with the pedestrian bridge across the Loddon and walking trails to Castlemaine. The RAV application was unsuccessful but provides a clear plan for the project and the support of over 50 practising local artists.

The group is awaiting news from VicTrack on the status of the CVU program.

The rail revival study/feasibility report was released in June 2013 when State Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the costs of returning passenger trains was high, the Maryborough-Castlemaine section of the line (incl Newstead) would require complete reconstruction to allow trains to safely run at 100kph and that buses might be better although, with the population growing, trains may become viable in future years.

Next steps:

Follow up with VicTrack about the status of CVP and possibilities for restoration and renewal.

Identify other potential funding sources (Regional Growth Fund, etc) and supporters of the project.

Further develop the RAV funding submission to produce a detailed plan for the station, including timelines, costings and project partners.

2. CREATING A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE ACROSS THE LODDON RIVER TO CONNECT BOTH SIDES OF TOWN

Background:

The Newstead township is divided by the Loddon River and two major roadways. The current road bridge across the Loddon River is perilous for cyclists and pedestrians, especially school children who travel to the primary school each day. Heavy vehicle and general traffic has increased and despite reduced speed limits across the bridge, the community is concerned about user safety. There are no other direct, all-season river crossings connecting both sides of Newstead.

Current Status:

Mount Alexander Shire Council has engaged a firm called Lambert and Rehbein to undertake the survey and design of the Newstead pedestrian bridge. \$35,000 has been allocated to the design phase.

Lambert and Rehbein has completed a site survey and geotechnical testing and is liaising with North Central Catchment Management Authority to determine the 1 in 100 year flood levels. This will determine the height of the bridge as there must be a clearance of 600mm above the 1 in 100 year flood level.

Mount Alexander Shire Council has advised we can have some impact on the design of the bridge which will be iconic for Newstead. In the meantime, "we need to have it shovel ready and the design and costing finalised so when money becomes available, the bridge is ready to go".

Next steps:

Establish an interest group and set up a process to ensure the community has some input to ensure the bridge design reflects the unique nature of the community and local setting.



OUR PRIORITIES (continued)

3. ESTABLISHING A SKATE AND BIKE PARK AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTRE

Background:

The idea to build a Bike and Skate Park in Newstead was first proposed in 2009 through a locally distributed petition that received over 200 signatures of support. In 2010 the idea was taken directly to Newstead Primary School students and received an enormous amount of support from the younger generation and their parents.

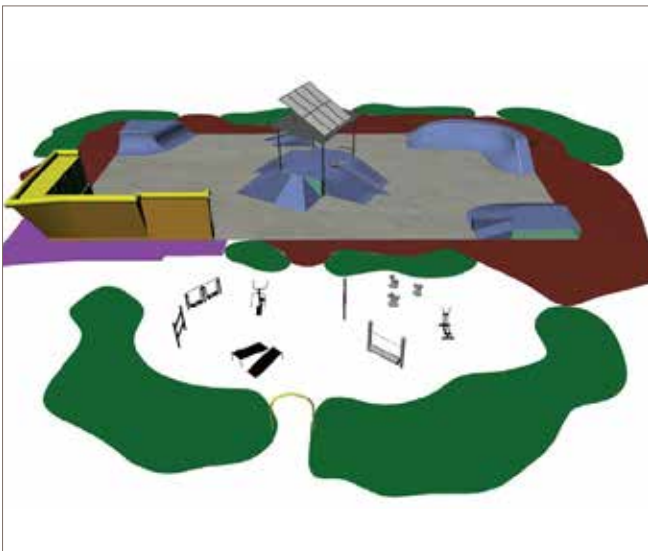
Current Status:

The old netball court at the corner of Hilliers and Canrobert Streets is the favoured site. It has a number of advantages, including proximity to the recreation reserve, the primary school and shops. Development of this site as a bike and skate park would also clean up and utilise an underused area. It creates a central activity zone, in conjunction with the Football and Netball Club.

The intention is to create an integrated activity park which would allow younger and older generations to engage in social and physical activity. The space also is adaptable to performance which may be used by Newstead Live, The Newstead Short Story Tattoo as well as residents and groups, eg. school, football club, Men's Shed, etc. (See Appendix I).

Next Steps:

A committee led by Steve Proposch has developed a design and will run a Festival of Gaming as an inaugural fundraiser for this project.



4. ESTABLISHING A CONNECTED NETWORK OF WALKING AND BIKE PATHS AND TRAILS BETWEEN NEWSTEAD AND SURROUNDING TOWNS, USING EXISTING EASEMENTS AND BUSHLAND AREAS

Background:

Newstead is ideally located to take advantage of the surrounding river and bushland and to promote walking and cycling within and without the township. The idea of paths connecting with surrounding towns – Guildford, Maldon, Castlemaine – as well as more locally, along the river and between the west and east side of town, via off-road routes, accessible and safe for all, was strongly supported during the community planning process. The proposed Railway Arts Precinct and Pedestrian Bridge form key links in the proposed trail network. Benefits include enhanced community connections, health and fitness and possibilities for tourism and economic development.

Current Status:

MAS Council has committed \$800,000 towards a bike and walking path from Newstead (starting at the Newstead Railway Station) to Castlemaine via Guildford, alongside the rail line route. The Council has also established a Trails Advisory Committee as part of their 2010 – 2020 Walking and Cycling Strategy, to improve and increase this activity in the Shire.

Next steps:

Get a group of interested locals together to define local township and intra town walking, bike riding and safe connections linking to the extensive network of tracks in the surrounding bushland areas, eg Muckleford Forest, Loddon River.

Ensure local knowledge and input into MAS Trails Advisory Group and that Newstead's needs are represented, including access and safety issues.

Create and update guide maps for local walking and cycling trails and opportunities for unobtrusive interpretive signage along routes.

To find out more about any or all of the projects, visit the blog: www.newsteadplan.wordpress.com or contact: N2021, c/- Newstead RTC, 45 Lyons Street, Newstead 3462

OUR PRIORITIES (continued)

5. A MAJOR RENEWAL OF STREET TREES WITHIN THE TOWN PRECINCT

Background:

Age, drought, disease and inappropriate tree pruning regimes have taken their toll on our iconic street trees, especially the elms in the main street. European plantings from Newstead's settlement days make an important contribution to our unique streetscapes and residents are concerned about their future. The Avenues of Honour are also in need of care and should be included in this project.

The planning process also identified areas for further plantings to link native vegetation corridors and easements, based on local indigenous species.

Current Status:

After the 2008 N2021 Summit, an extensive audit was carried out to assess the health of street trees in the township and identify potential replacements and renewals for both European and native species. (See Appendix J).

Next steps:

Develop an implementation plan to renew /replace the European iconic streetscape trees and native species to service the township for the next 150 years.

Work with MAS and local horticulturalists to implement the plan.

Investigate the Avenues of Honour (2013/4) funding program to assist rehabilitation of town entrances and Memorial Parks.

6. ESTABLISHING A "SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN OUR VOLUNTEERS" INITIATIVE FOR VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Background:

Newstead has some 40 plus active and diverse community groups and a high level of volunteerism. Our demographic profile shows an aging population. Sustaining the current levels of volunteerism will require specific support and strategies. Alongside this, we are experiencing some growth with new housing and residents and community members are keen to explore ways to involve and engage new residents to Newstead, especially as the population grows.

Newstead 2021 was established as an umbrella group to support the many projects that arose from the 2008 summit.

Current Status:

Newstead 2021 and the Rural Transaction Centre auspice community groups and activities, allowing small projects or activities to get under way without the need for incorporation or organisational legalities.

A Volunteer Register for identifying community needs and offers, and a Newcomers Kit were both discussed during the community planning process.

Next Steps:

Support the role of N2021, the RTC and other groups in auspicings community projects.

Seek support for a local community volunteer support worker, to assist in grant seeking, developing a volunteer register, sustaining volunteers and improving community group functions.

Develop a "Support and Sustain our Volunteers" proposal which focuses on succession, leadership and mentoring and governance, and seek backing from MAS, state and federal government, philanthropic and corporate bodies.

To find out more about any or all of the projects, visit the blog: www.newsteadplan.wordpress.com or contact: N2021, c/- Newstead RTC, 45 Lyons Street, Newstead 3462

OUR PRIORITIES (continued)

7. DEVELOP A LOCAL BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR NEWSTEAD TO BUILD BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Background:

Newstead has many small home-based businesses, beyond the main street retailers. Finding ways to enhance existing local business and identifying opportunities for new employment opportunities are the keys to this project. Creating rentable office spaces and networking are priorities. Currently no traders' or business group exists in the town.

Current Status:

During the planning process, the business focus group identified some practical strategies to assist them in day to day business (see objectives and strategies) and suggested regular information sharing sessions could be valuable.

Next steps:

Set up a working group of interested locals, MAS economic development, Bendigo Bank and seek funding from Regional Development Victoria for business plan.

Investigate models for a business hub, community enterprise or shared office/meeting spaces.

Audit and promote business, employment and industry possibilities (eg technology, art, tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, retail) and traffic surveys to determine business potential from passers by.

8. PLANNING FOR A LIVEABLE NEWSTEAD, TO ENSURE NEWSTEAD RETAINS ITS UNIQUE BUILT AND NATURAL VALUES INTO THE FUTURE

Background:

The planning process stimulated strong feelings among residents about the built and natural environment. Newstead residents acknowledged the population growth and projections forecast for our area and are keen to retain the built and natural values that make our town and outlying smaller communities unique. Increased population will impact on bushfire and biodiversity planning, social connections, etc.

Town and landscape scale planning is integral to implementing the projects in the community plan.

Current Status

Newstead Framework Plan, Heritage Study are part of MAS Planning Scheme.

Next Steps:

Understand the current planning context for Newstead and future projections for growth and settlement.

Explore options for maintaining the character and liveability of the town, including town square, community connections, aged housing, water, energy (see Appendix G), open spaces, trails, fire and biodiversity planning (see Appendix H).

Revisit and review Newstead's Urban Framework in the MAS Planning Scheme in light of local and regional strategic plans.

Initiate community conversations around planning and liveability through Rocket Science session and other avenues.

Hold a planning charette with local expertise, relevant agencies and planning authorities.



OUR PRIORITIES (continued)

9. CATERING FOR OUR AGEING POPULATION THROUGH ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION

Background:

Ease of accessibility will become more significant as our population ages. The plan identified a desire for more suitable accommodation options so residents can remain in Newstead as they age.

Current Status:

Accessible Newstead project.

Volunteer Register concept developed.

Shire currently provides some support services.

Community Bus.

Next Steps:

Establish an interest group to investigate options/models for aged care, community and supported accommodation in Newstead.

Support the town-wide implementation of Accessible Newstead.

Investigate shire-supported services and their outreach to Newstead (eg visiting health services, script pickup service, etc).

Continue to support the Newstead Community Bus.

10. A ROAD SAFETY FOCUS TO MINIMISE TRAFFIC IMPACTS AND CREATE A SAFE AND QUIET TOWNSHIP

Background:

Heavy vehicles, and traffic generally, through the town has increased significantly. The community is concerned about bridge, main street and school zone road safety. Slowing (or stopping) through traffic will improve township safety and boost opportunities for business and tourism.

Current Status:

Reduced speed limits over the bridge resulting from the 2008 summit.

40 km zones operate outside school during school hours.

Next Steps:

Make our streets more pedestrian and bike friendly with a pedestrian bridge across the Loddon and pedestrian focussed walking and cycling routes

Work with VicRoads to explore ways to reduce the impact of traffic, especially heavy vehicles, through town, including extending reduced speed limits, safe pedestrian crossings in main street and school zones, and main street parking.

To find out more about any or all of the projects, visit the blog: www.newsteadplan.wordpress.com
or contact: N2021, c/- Newstead RTC, 45 Lyons Street, Newstead 3462

Introduction

WHY ARE WE PLANNING?

The Newstead Community Plan is part of the Mount Alexander Shire Local Community Planning Project, funded by the Victorian Government to create nine local Community Action Plans over three years. Communities involved to date are Chewton, Elphinstone, Guildford, Harcourt and Taradale. Other small communities throughout Victoria are also engaged in community planning under this State Government program.

In Mount Alexander Shire, the council is running the planning process in all towns except Newstead. Here a group of local volunteers has led the process, believing a locally produced plan will better reflect community needs and draw on local knowledge, skills and expertise. We also ran the last major community planning event, the 2008 Newstead 2021 Summit.

The Newstead Community Plan aims to assist Newstead to plan, prepare and respond for the future (2021 and beyond).

The final Newstead Community Plan:

1. Provides a snapshot of our community's shared values, aspirations and needs,
2. Revisits and build on plans, objectives and outcomes from the 2008 Newstead 2021 Summit and identifies new community perspectives and ideas,
3. Outlines how our community might achieve its plans and objectives, sets priorities for future community action, and will identify roles and responsibilities,
4. Improves social connections and communication across our community,
5. Gives us influence, a strong voice and a common frame of reference when working with local government and other bodies.

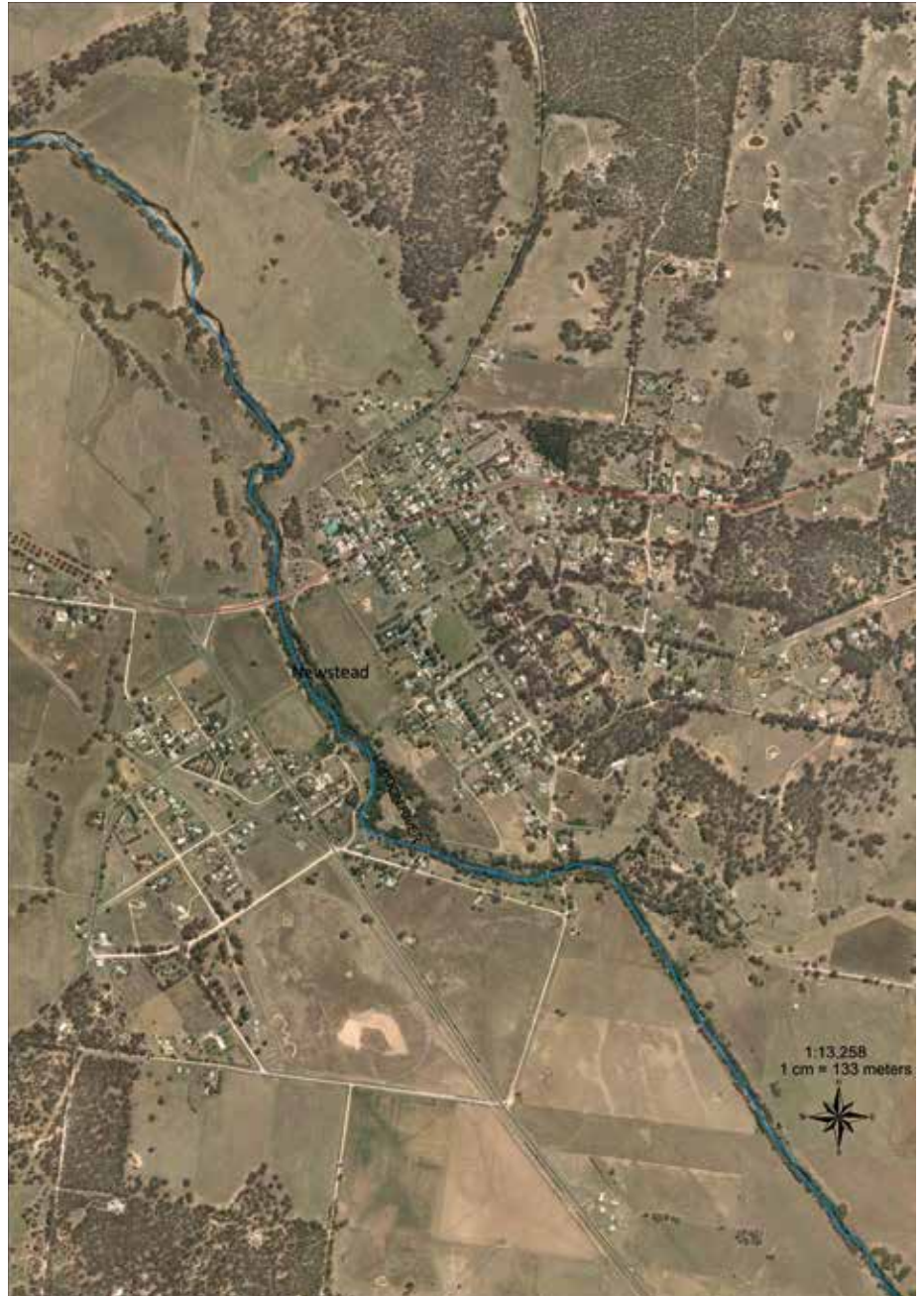
This plan acknowledges and aims to build on all that has gone before. Gathering input and ideas from as many people and groups as possible, we aimed to produce 'whole of community' plan for Newstead that reflects recent change and looks to the future.



Newstead – an overview

WHERE WE ARE

Newstead is an old river crossing town in Jaara country on the banks of the Loddon River, about 150km, or 1.5 hours' drive by car from Melbourne. The town spreads across both sides of the river and is in Mount Alexander Shire. Nearby larger towns are Castlemaine (home to the shire headquarters) and Maldon, both about 15 minutes by car away, and Daylesford, about 25 minutes by car. Newstead is in the Loddon catchment, immediately upstream of the Cairn Curran Reservoir, and is in the area covered by the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan. It's surrounded by bush and farmland and the settlements of Welshmans Reef, Werona, Clydesdale, Strangways, Sandon, Strathlea, Joyce's Creek, Green Gully, Yapeen and Yandoit, whose residents are very much part of Newstead community life. Formal Census borders are irrelevant when it comes to work and play. Certainly borders didn't matter when it came to developing this community plan. Residents from all these areas took part and their ideas are infused throughout this document.



WHAT'S HERE?

A supermarket, a seven-day a week milk bar, a café/restaurant, butcher, two pubs, a motel, bed and breakfast accommodation, a second-hand antiques shop, a police station and a Rural Transaction Centre, which houses a laundry, library, local community bank, gallery, childcare service, opportunity shop and booking service for the local community hall and community bus, make up the local street frontage business life of this community.

But much is hidden.

Scattered throughout the community are home-based businesses and consultancies ranging from farming (sheep, grain, cattle, vineyards, industrial scale chicken and honey) enterprises, allied health practitioners (shiatsu, massage etc), management and road planning consultants, scientists, graphic artists, IT specialists, writers, musicians, artists and other professionals. We have gardeners, a native plant nursery, a small arborist and tree management business, a hairdresser, a transport company, painters, builders and an electrician.

Two magazines – one online and another, on paper – with national circulation are produced here. Artists and musicians abound in number and diversity of creative pursuits. Our recent submission to Regional Arts Victoria, for funding to create an Arts Hub at the Newstead Railway Station identified 10% of our community as practising artists!

We have a pre-school (20 children), primary school (63 children), a playground, a sporting oval (home to 12 netball, football teams), volunteer-run sporting clubs, fire brigade, swimming pool, men's shed and community garden. An old racecourse accommodates small and large scale events, offering good camping and cooking areas and toilet facilities. Some surrounding communities also have churches and halls. There are many notable public and privately owned buildings listed on a heritage overlay.

The town hosts:

- Newstead Live music festival held annually in January
- Newstead Short Story Tattoo held every two years in May
- Newstead Chopped Rod and Custom Show held annually in October
- Newstead Automotive Swap Meet held annually in February
- The British Bike Rally conducted annually in April

Our Historical Society keeps the community's rich legacy and valuable archives. Our Swimming Pool is seen as a model for volunteer run and managed facilities. The Newstead Echo continues its 117 year newsprint run, in its current monthly guise since 1978. Our RTC is staffed and run by a team of 45 volunteers.



WHO ARE WE?

The 2011 Census gives us some clues on this. In the area deemed a state suburb by the Census, which includes some but not all the settlements listed on page 4, there are 802 people, more males (424) than females (378) and the average age is 50.

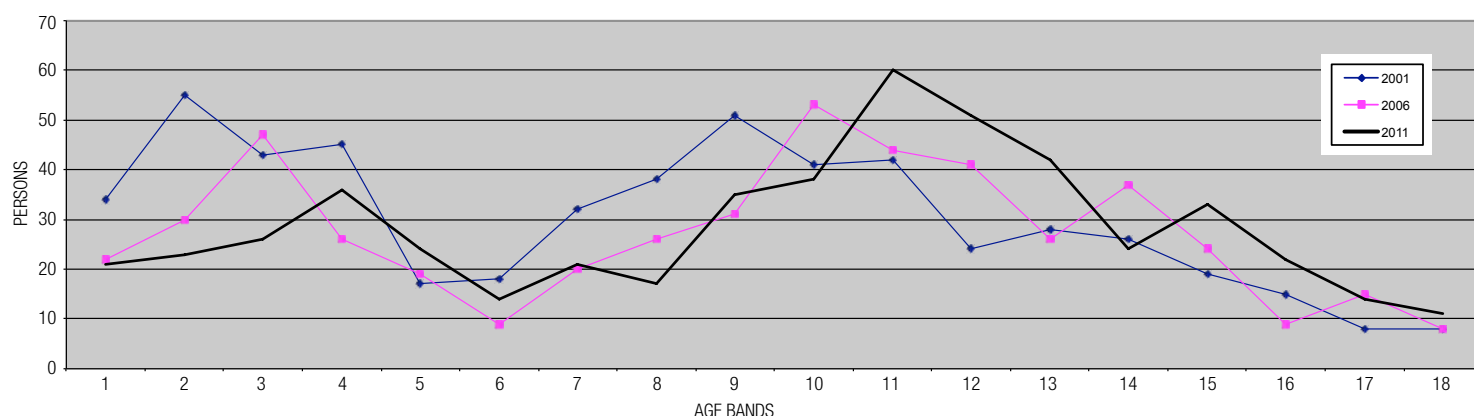
We are, largely, of Anglo-Saxon descent and most of us (82.6 per cent) were born in Australia and speak English at home. Just four males are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Also, we are

largely irreligious with 36 per cent of us declaring we have no religion. That's heaps more than Victorians, on average 24 per cent, and Australians, 22.3 per cent.

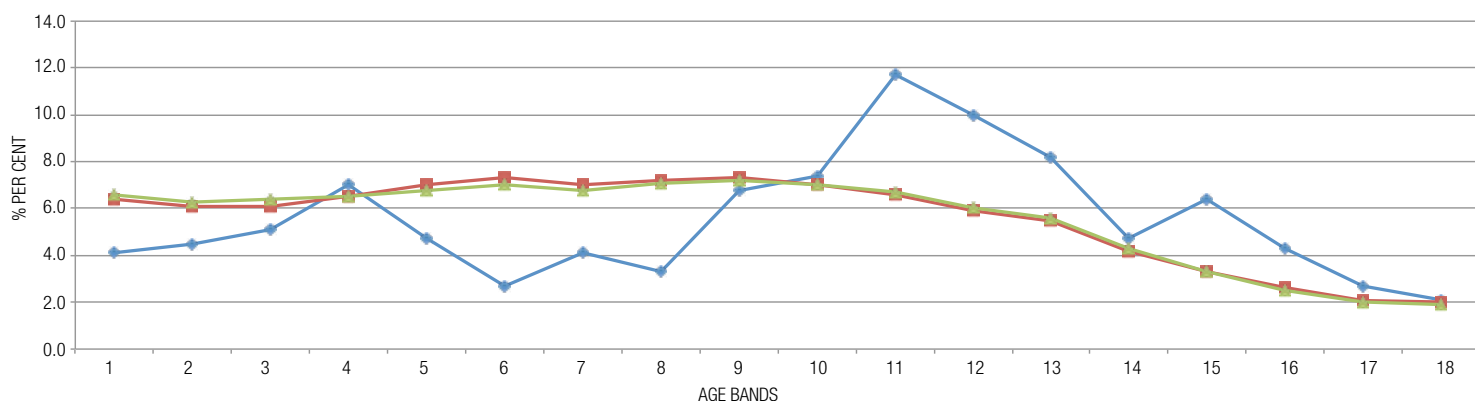
We have 1.9 kids and 1.9 cars for every family and 55-to-59 year olds are the biggest age bracket, comprising 11.7 per cent of the population. The number of young people rises through the years up to 19 years of age but then tends to fall as our kids leave home. There

are more people again aged 40 and upwards. Almost one-fifth, 19 per cent, of the population is aged 65 years or over. More than half of us aren't married i.e. we're separated, divorced, widowed or we've never married. Just seven per cent of us are university or tertiary educated against the state average of 15.2 per cent. Most of us who are currently getting educated are at primary school.

Newstead's changing age profile 2001-2011



Newstead's age profile compared with Victoria and Australia 2011



Source: compiled from 2001, 2006 and 2011 census data (ABS) by Ray Culvenor

More than half of us work full-time (51.3 per cent) but we also have a lot of part-timers (38.7 per cent) and our unemployment rate, at 4.9 per cent, is below the state (5.4 per cent) and national (5.6 per cent) averages. Of our workers, many are professionals and farming is a comparatively large employer. Indeed we have many more people employed in farming (7.4 per cent) than does Victoria (0.9 per cent) and Australia (1.2 per cent). We earn less than Victorians and Australians on average but we do more volunteer work. We mostly travel by car and live in houses, not flat, units or townhouses and almost half (46.7 per cent) the occupied houses are owned outright. We have more people living alone (35.7 per cent of households) compared with Victoria (24.5 per cent) and Australia (24.3 per cent) on average.

Newstead has always been distinguished by a large number of active community groups (See list in Appendix A), from croquet to footy to scrapbooking to Landcare. Not surprisingly, there is a high level of volunteerism (confirmed by Census data) with many community members involved in multiple groups.

HOW ADVANTAGED ARE WE?

The town of Newstead is more disadvantaged socio-economically than almost 70 per cent of Australia, most of the rest of Mount Alexander Shire and even the area immediately surrounding it. From 2006 to 2011 this disadvantage reduced.

A tool for measuring advantage and disadvantage, the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD), tells us this. It summarises the economic and social conditions of people and households in different areas. The town's IRSAD score for example is 927, below Mount Alexander Shire's on 970 and Maldon's on 965. Yet pockets immediately surrounding Newstead such as Sandon/Werona (994) Welshmans Reef (964) and Joyce's Creek/Strangways (989) are somewhat higher.

None of this takes into account the beautiful bushland and bird and animal life that surrounds us, nor the fact that volunteerism, albeit increasingly under pressure, is strong.

[Note: A detailed tabulation and analysis of socio-economic data developed by Ray Culvenor can be found at Appendix B]

So what's to conclude from all this data?

One might say we're a white, not very middle class, irreligious, bunch of oldies who don't earn much but volunteer lots, however, remember that this data doesn't include all of us.



OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Newstead is located in a unique ecological setting. It is nestled at the boundary of three distinct bioregions, the Goldfields, Victorian Volcanic Plain and Central Victorian Uplands. The local area features very different landscapes with forests, woodlands and plains country. The region is rich with flora and fauna – for example 213 different bird species are recorded locally.

The Loddon River, which rises in the highlands over the Great Dividing Range, near Trentham, is fundamental to our sense of landscape and place. Its floodwaters have regularly threatened the town. The river has always been a focal point for recreation with a rich history of agriculture and gold-dredging on the Loddon floodplain. In recent decades the Loddon River has regenerated remarkably following a history of prior disturbance.

Within the local district there are a number of significant environmental features, including Muckleford Nature Conservation Reserve, Muckleford and Sandon State Forests, the wetlands of the Moolort Plains and Cairn Curran Reservoir, in addition to our precious Loddon River. Small areas of public land such as the Rise and Shine Bushland Reserve are a focus of our local Landcare work and provide important areas for passive recreation. Private landholders, including the farming community, play an important role as custodians of biodiversity and there is a significant area of land under voluntary conservation agreements, including Land for Wildlife properties and Trust for Nature covenants. The Muckleford Gorge, located on private land on the Muckleford Creek, just upstream of its confluence with the Loddon River, is of major geological, landscape and ecological significance.



OUR PLANNING HISTORY

Before European settlement, the area was home to the Jaara people who used the rich plant and animal resources of the district to sustain their economy, cultural and spiritual activities.

Major Thomas Mitchell and his party were the first European explorers to visit the region in 1836. They passed close to where Newstead is today, crossing the Loddon River on September 27, 1836.

"At length, we entered on a very level and extensive flat, exceedingly green, and resembling an English park. It was bounded on the east by a small river flowing to the north-west, (probably the Loddon), and abrupt but grassy slopes arose beyond its right bank ... Sheltered on every side by woods or higher ground, the spring seemed more advanced here than elsewhere, and our hard wrought cattle well deserved to browse on that verdant plain. The stream, in its course downwards, vanished among grassy hills to water a country apparently of the most interesting and valuable character".

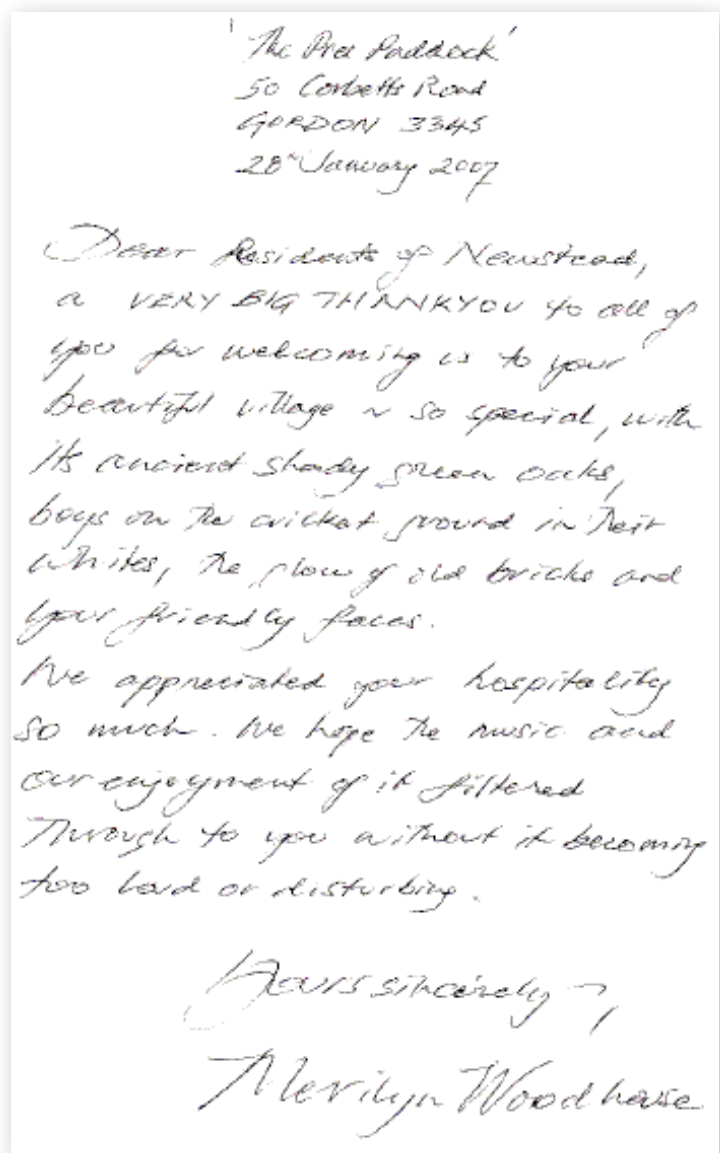
– From the Diary of Major Thomas Mitchell.

Sheep farming, gold mining, river dredging and other farming and business pursuits followed. At least since settlement, the area has a history of formally determining and planning for its own facilities and community life. The Shire of Newstead was formally declared in 1865. It amalgamated with Mount Alexander Shire in 1915, split off again in 1949 and re-amalgamated in 1996.

In the early 2000s the town began to be seweraged, which enabled more intensive housing development. Many residential areas have since been subdivided and new houses are springing up, mostly on the eastern side of the river.

In recent decades formal community planning efforts have included workshops with community development specialist Peter Kenyon (mid 1990s), the Newstead Forum, the Newstead Taskforce, the Newstead 2021 Summit (2008), Focus on Newstead (2012) and more recently, of course, in 2013 the development of this community plan.

The 2008 summit resulted in the establishment of a new community garden, a wi-fi service for the CBD, a plan for Loddon River, restoration activities, a town website and a new pirate ship playground. It led to the introduction of reduced speed limits through town and an audit of street trees. 'Newstead 2021', an ongoing community group, was incorporated as an umbrella organisation to support and assist other community projects and "Rocket Science" sessions at Dig Cafe continued the conversations.



NEWSTEAD ECHO

Wednesday, March 5, 1913

The attempt to instal the electric light in Newstead has not been abandoned. Enquiries are being made with the view of ascertaining the price of plants, and a public meeting will shortly be called to try and float a local company.

Wednesday, April 23, 1913

Newstead has lately been shaking itself up. After last week's dissipation the folk seemed to have kept awake fairly well, for the meeting on Monday night to consider the better lighting of the town resolved itself into three before concluding. The lighting question was the first discussed. It will cost the council £140 to put in acetylene gas and plant to light the streets, and £240 to supply the public. It would cost trades people about £28 to have it laid on to their premises and householders for five lights, £14. Such being the case several present thought it would be cheaper for those who wanted it to put in a plant of their own, and let the council do as they please with regard to the lighting of the town.

The next question raised was the formation of a progress association. Cr House, who occupied the chair, said that such an association would be a help to the shire council by bringing matters before that body. He said the park could be improved, and also that steps should be taken to uncover and utilise the spring that was found when dredging operations were in progress just above the town. Several other gentlemen backed Mr House up in the matter, and it was resolved that an Association be formed. The members fee was set at 2s 6d per annum. Meeting nights were fixed for the first Friday in each month, so that whatever was deemed necessary could be brought before the council the following Thursday. The chairman then brought up the subject of trustees for the Newstead racecourse. He and others spoke of past management, and the necessity for alterations for rules and regulations.

A Thank-you Letter from New Zealand

We recently visited Guildford/Strangways/Newstead/Clunes researching my Great Grandfather Joseph Jobson who emigrated from England as an 18 year old to settle in this area in 1854.

Through your columns could we acknowledge the marvellous work being done by Dawn Angliss of the Newstead and District Historical Society, and by Ray Pattle, President of the Castlemaine Historical Society Inc.

Both these people drove us to sites where my family had been landowners, and we took copies of maps, documents etc of great significance to the Jobson family.

I can see why my family settled in that area – it is beautiful farming country, with a great climate (and yielded some gold in those early times!).

Forget about the Commonwealth Games—Ray and Dawn and their respective Historical Societies deserve a gold medal for their voluntary work in preserving the history of your area—you are very fortunate to have such devoted local citizens to carry out this important work.

Yours sincerely
Barry Jobson Wellington
New Zealand

Echo May 2006

Community engagement – what we did

In 2012 an informal planning group of residnets with Mount Alexander Shire's financial and moral support, appointed local Janet Barker to help develop this plan.

It was no accident that the focus of this planning process was about conversation – from the logo, 'Our Town, Our Say', to the 'talking points kit' for focus groups, we sought to encourage a community conversation about the future of our town and community.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Between November 2012 and March 2013, the planning group consulted widely to gather thoughts and ideas from the community in the lead up to the Community Planning Day on March 3, 2013. We used:

Print and Post

- "My gift to Newstead" Christmas postcard campaign – 68 responses
- Newstead Echo insert and question/prompter – 19 responses

Face to Face

- Newstead Kids – classroom session and postcards – 58 responses
- Attending meetings of existing community groups
- Attending community-wide events
- Focus group with newcomers
- Focus group with small business owners
- Focus group with artists

- Focus group with Green Gully fireguard group
- Focus group with farmers
- Focus group with carers
- Interviews and discussions with individuals
- Presence at RTC for 4 hrs/week (over 2 days)

Internet

- Web-based survey – 17 responses
- Dedicated website/blog and Facebook Page – 98 responses

Other

- Roving blackboards/graffiti boards at community events/sites – 45 responses
- Display at RTC

Consultation was designed to be deep and broad. An estimated 3000 hours of volunteer time between November 2012 and March 2013, generated a huge amount of data and responses from our local community.

[See Appendix C for Engagement plan diagram]

SUMMARY TABLE OF ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND RESPONSES

Method	No. of ideas*	No. respondents**
Person to Person^	197	100
Post Cards	75	68
Primary School Post Cards	113	58
Website blog	18	20
Focus on Newstead	12	30
Survey	117	17
Echo	28	19
Blackboard	45	45
Facebook	28	78
RTC Display	1	4
Total	634	439**

^ inc. focus groups, interviews, personal contact, events, etc

* single ideas raised

** some respondents provided ideas via more than one method and more than one idea

"really good conversations = really good engagement = really good results"

Community engagement – what we did (continued)

We asked what people valued about Newstead, what they saw as the main challenges or needs and how they would like Newstead to be in the future. We also asked people to consider how they might contribute to that picture.

Despite the timing (leading into Christmas and the school holidays over January) and rescheduling the planning day, the many opportunities for input engaged a broad cross section of the community and yielded more than 620 responses. On the planning day another 100+ were added.

The number and scope of responses reflects the intent of the engagement plan. Participants were encouraged to think broadly, not led by previous planning or closed/limited questioning.

We estimate at least one in four locals has been engaged in the plan's development. Between 150 and 200 people were engaged in the planning process before March 3 (a conservative estimate because some respondents gave several ideas and used more than one method). One hundred people attended the planning day - over half of them had not been involved in any community planning activities beforehand. We can confidently say that more than 200 people have been involved in the planning process to date.

THE PLANNING DAY

All value statements and responses were collated leading up to the planning day. The responses were grouped into four categories – 'Open Spaces', 'Bricks and Mortar', 'Dollars and Cents' and 'Community Life'. These themes formed the basis to prompt small group discussions on March 3. A fifth "Open" category was added on the day to avoid narrowing the focus.

The day began with a 'mapping exercise' where participants identified the places, spaces and projects important to them. A 'storytelling' session followed with individuals from key groups, businesses and sites in Newstead providing a snapshot or vignette.

(See planning day program in Appendix E.)

Group discussions centered around the ideas on display for each category and three questions were asked:

- **'What's your response or reaction?'** – to the ideas already gathered during the engagement phase
- **'What's missing?'** – to include any new ideas
- **'What do we need to do to progress the ideas?'** – to develop and expand the conversations

Participants could take part in three brief (20 minute) discussions across the categories. Afterwards they selected three projects or ideas that they supported (i.e. should definitely be included in the community plan) and two projects they wanted to help make happen (i.e. prepared to contribute or assist in some capacity). This allowed us to gauge support for specific ideas and also the level of potential action around them.



WHAT WE LEARNT FROM THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

- Using many different methods to engage people worked better than using a single approach, say just having a public meeting alone
- Newstead locals prefer face to face contact (and more creative ways of engaging)
- Surveys had limited return rates but yielded valuable information (fewer than 20 responses gave more than 100 ideas)
- Focus groups served a dual purpose; an opportunity to meet and discuss issues of common interest and for social connection, especially for businesses and newcomers
- Younger people responded enthusiastically via postcards and the blackboard at the pool
- Working with the primary school was vital for two major reasons. One, it emphasised to the kids that they can influence change. Two, we involved the generation most likely to be affected by this plan
- Meeting people and groups where they gather, connect and converse is just as important (and can be more effective) as creating new opportunities and activities
- A set time and place for consultation, based in the community (the RTC) provided two-way benefit and an effective way for locals to own and access the project
- Involving the broader N2021 steering group to spread the word and the workload helped reach diverse strands in the community
- The value of using local expertise and skills in designing and implementing community plans can't be underestimated



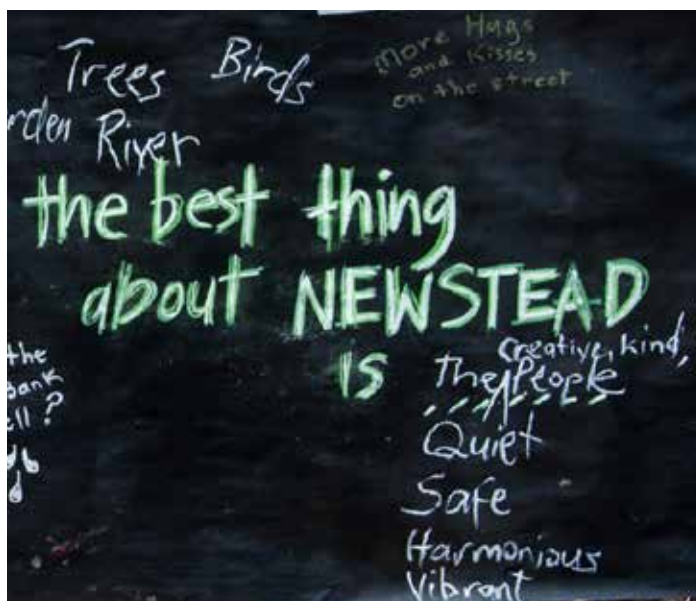
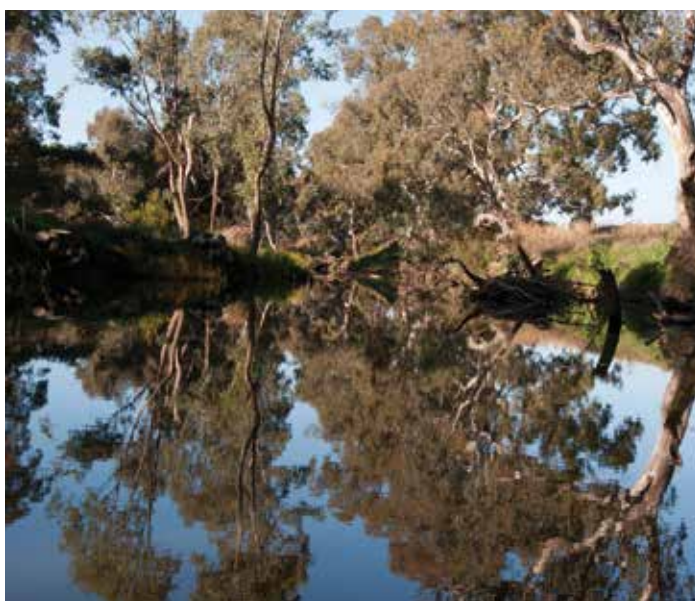
Consultation results – what we found

OUR VALUES

Newstead people value the town's village and small rural town feel, its heritage and history, the quietness, the natural environment and open spaces, the good communication and links between groups and individuals, the strong and active community, its facilities and services, its creativity, and the friendly and inclusive feel.

Over 200 recorded values were grouped into these categories: People, Community Spirit, Connections, Community Groups, Facilities and Events, Physical attributes, Natural Attributes, Spirit of Place, Heritage and Legacy.

Newstead's physical attributes ranked highest (22%), closely followed by its facilities and events (20%), community spirit (16%) and natural attributes (15%).



CONNECTIONS:

“people know and help one another” ... “friendly support network” ... “able to have input into community life” ... “access to council through our local representative Michael R” ... “relationships” ...

COMMUNITY SPIRIT:

“the possibilities and positiveness” ... “the determination of the community” ... “positive community, engaged, creative and creating” ... “sense of heart in the town” ... “inclusive, allowing” ... “confidence, people doing their own thing, quiet achievement” ... “people care about each other and sustainability” ... “go ahead ideas for a small place” ... “safe” ... “friendly” ... “a community ethic of participation and volunteerism” ... “nurtures a culture that values community cooperation and shared activities and beauty” ... “welcoming” ... “Newsteadians value ‘community’” ... “capacity to pull together to achieve things” ...

FACILITIES AND EVENTS:

“Echo is a community treasure” ... “services and places for kids – preschool, school, pool, playground” ... “supermarket, Post Office, RTC, bank, pub, cafe, laundry, swimming pool” ... “music” ... “wireless connection” ... “what it offers for a town of its size” ... “butcher” ... “facilities and services you need to live without a car – grocer, bank, school, PO” ... “community centre classes, RTC, wireless, community garden, Echo, local businesses” ... “pub, dig” ... “the level of skills and expertise, from professional through to trades and services” ... “V-Line bus” ...

COMMUNITY GROUPS:

“the camaraderie of groups” ... “strength and variety of interest groups” ... “all the community groups – the most community groups in Australia? – achieving tangible things” ... “people get involved in things they like doing” ... “wide range of cultural activity” ...

HERITAGE AND LEGACY:

“the old buildings” ... “heritage and historic buildings being used as businesses” ... “lack of change” ... “the way the community treasures its history” ... “The layers of history – gold and now, European trees and gum trees, peeling back things, the old and new people; the old farmers are the most tolerant cookies I’ve ever come across and I know how un-inclusive they can be” ...

NATURAL ATTRIBUTES:

“the river and the environment surrounding town” ... “the seasons – autumn, winter, spring” ... “the big, big sky” ... “open spaces and access to nature” ... “space and peace of rural woodlands” ... “walks and birdlife” ... “the river is a defining feature” ... “the ancient river redgums, magic, even without water” ...

PEOPLE:

“the people are fabulous, tolerant” ... “the ‘x factor’ – misfits, eccentrics, independence of individuals; not a homogenous community” ... “rural families” ... “interesting and committed people” ... “influx of new people and ideas” ... “you can talk to anyone, interesting people – scratch beneath the surface and we have amazing talented people, but they are ordinary” ... “diverse population mix – ages, interests, skill-sets” ... “artists and musicians” ...

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES:

“it is a village, not a town” ... “proximity to larger centres” ... “the main street” ... “the elm trees” ... “space” ... “close to Melbourne but a small town feel” ... “the highway keeps people coming through – good for business” ... “able to work from home” ... “close to work and family” ... “picturesque township and shade trees” ... “wide streets and trees” ... “size of houses and space of blocks” ... “big enough to have school and businesses, services, facilities but small enough that people need to volunteer and contribute/participate to get things done” ... “the smaller outlying localities and sense of community” ...

SPIRIT OF PLACE:

“the ‘feel’, the spirit of the place” ... “the country atmosphere” ... “safe” ... “an easy place to be by yourself” ... “peace and quiet” ... “great place for kids to grow up, secure and grounding” ... “good energy” ... “the time and the mental isolation and mental space to be an artist” ...

OUR CHALLENGES

The planning process focused on finding out what people saw as Newstead's current and future needs. Implicit in this and underlying the responses was that Newstead cannot afford to stand still and let change roll over us.

The challenges facing Newstead are no different to those facing other small rural towns in Victoria and further afield. However local values mean that some challenges are more pressing or specific to our community. Managing growth and development whilst preserving the spirit and sense of place, and maintaining our ethic of caring and volunteerism are examples.

Some saw the challenges as very close to home – noisy neighbours, gutters and road grading, having access to water or petrol, time to spend with friends and family, places to play. For others the challenges were local – being able to travel on public transport, knowing where to go when bushfire threatens, making an income, growing old here. Some saw broader, global issues the most crucial – climate change, economic and social restructure, and having input into government decision making.

The draft plan attempts to reflect and address all these views, small and large, singular and complex. These quotes summarise some of the challenges:

Open Spaces

Protecting our natural environmental assets and open spaces

Accommodating population growth in ecologically sensitive and fire prone environment, esp. in surrounding areas of township

Bricks and Mortar

Streetscaping and urban planning and development that is in keeping with the sense of space/place

Insufficient suitable low energy housing, especially for people as they age

Providing support for increasingly aging population of farmers and townspeople and enabling them to stay in Newstead rather than into supported/care in larger centres

Bushfire safety

Affordability of housing as population grows being balanced with liveability and social connections

Dollars and Cents

Planning for higher energy and resources costs in the future and to provide alternatives.

Can Newstead provide employment/income opportunities beyond butcher, baker, etc.

Choice and access to businesses and services (food, fuel, etc) that larger centres have

The world economy and how it is affecting jobs. Living in a small town does mean fewer options for work. We need as a family to look at how we will balance the lifestyle benefits of living in Newstead with how to earn a viable income.

Generating a sustainable income from my property/farm.

Sustainability as a community; food, water, waste, energy, communications

Community Life

Being overwhelmed by the growth anticipated by being labeled either a dormitory/satellite town or a self-starter & go-getter town.

How do we keep our values and the things we love about the place yet embrace the future?

At a more personal level - giving friendships and relationships the attention they deserve

Increasing demands, time constraints – a small community is very dependent on volunteers and while this is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, develop and broaden one's skills and interests, it is also time consuming and can be exploitative of small communities in that it means there is a lot of responsibility resting on fewer shoulders.

Continuing to attract new people with ideas and energy

Decision making at a distance - ensuring community has input into policy and decisions that affect them

PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT – NEWSTEAD IN THE BIGGER PICTURE

The Southern Loddon Mallee Regional Strategy (Regional Development Australia) recognises that “small towns and villages (like Newstead) play an essential role in the function and character of the region. Many have significant historic or landscape value and offer an alternative lifestyle from the more urbanised and larger centres. Supporting the diversification of the economy of these (and other) small towns is important, as is maintaining social infrastructure and services.”

The Strategy re-iterates the challenges that Newstead people see as important, including:

- Investing in liveability, infrastructure and urban design initiatives to make our towns great places to live.
- Building community connectedness and reduce areas of social disadvantage.
- Providing appropriate housing and services for an ageing population is a challenge that needs to be managed.
- Managing growth within a naturally hazardous landscape, particularly when considering flood and bushfire risk and adapting to the potential impacts of changing climate.
- Attracting and maintaining younger age groups for both education and further employment will be critical to maintaining community diversity and a vital economy.
- Providing infrastructure and protecting assets are critical to achieving and managing growth. Providing safe drinking water is essential and the quality of water sources has a major impact on human health. Protecting the health of catchments is important to ensure the region has safe and adequate water supplies.
- Managing growth so that it does not overwhelm the social attributes that are attracting growth and in a way that protects the environmental assets and natural resources of the region.

The Southern Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan Draft (Department of Planning and Community Development) highlights that the region (of which Newstead is a part) has experienced, and is expected to continue to experience, strong population and economic growth over the coming decade. Specifically it notes that in the next 30 years Bendigo is anticipated to increase in population to something approaching 200,000 people.

Over the next 20 years it is highly likely that Newstead will experience moderate growth in population and will welcome a diversity of new residents from a broad range of cultural backgrounds.



OUR ASPIRATIONS

A great number and diversity of ideas were raised during the consultation phase. These ideas were grouped under four themes.

Open Spaces – 182 ideas

Dollars and Cents – 161 ideas

Community Life - 170 ideas

Bricks and Mortar - 173 ideas

On the planning day, these ideas were refined or expanded and more ideas were added by the 100 participants.

The day itself was a terrific success and elicited some diverse responses from participants.

"Wow!"

"Cross over in themes"

"Inspiring"

"Strong agreement in views"

"Vision"

"Exciting"

"Confusing"

"Good ideas"

"Prioritising"

"Potential"

"Catalyst"

"Community input planning"

"Shows that people value our non built environment"

"It will take a while to distill into action – so many ideas"

"Need to look at how ideas work together – some may clash, compete"

"So many ideas!"

"Great there are so many ideas"

We have used four themes to classify our aspirations and objectives. Obviously some cut across themes; an idea may encompass more than one theme and vice-versa. But we found this the most workable way to develop our plan.

Open Spaces	Dollars & Cents	Community Life	Bricks and Mortar
WE SEEK/ASPIRE TO:			
Shade, gathering spaces, connectivity and a healthy natural environment around our streets, bushland and river	An economically sustainable, job rich community with strong transport and IT links, powered by low-cost, renewable energy	A healthy, creative community where people look out for each other. We work and play together, connect and share differences and talents, regardless of age, disability and skills. People feel free to step up and take responsibility	A well planned, low-energy town that loves the old, welcomes innovative development and is pedestrian and bike friendly and accessible to all
OUR OBJECTIVE IS:			
To take care of our trees	To provide secure, low-cost energy, water and waste management	To foster a culture of welcome where people are valued and their skills and talents nurtured	To minimise the impacts of traffic to create safe, quiet township
To create connectivity with bike and walking paths	To bring outside dollars into Newstead	To be an art-rich community that provides opportunities for creativity	To be a disaster ready community that knows what to do to defend and protect its people and facilities
To love and look after our river and bushland	To keep dollars in Newstead	To have a fit and healthy community	To ensure our existing community facilities meet current and future needs of our town and visitors
To create open spaces where people love to go, be, play and chat. These spaces have heart and spirit	To create an IT-savvy, connected community	To cater for our kids	To preserve and care for our historic buildings
	To get moving sustainably	To be an accessible town	A well planned town with modern, essential services

Strategies and actions

– where to next?

Open Spaces		
ASPIRATION – Shade, gathering spaces, connectivity and a healthy natural environment around our streets, bushland and river		
Objective	Strategies	
1.1 Take care of our trees	1	Restore, repair and renew main street trees
	2	Restore trees and name plates to Avenue of Honour trees
	3	Underground powerlines in the main street
	4	Adopt and update 2009 street tree audit and use as a basis for renewal and development of heritage tree overlays and local management plan
	5	Provide new plantings for shade around key community venues e.g. outside pool, netball courts, community centre, etc
1.2 Create connectivity with bikes and walking paths	1	Link both sides of town with a pedestrian and cycling bridge that is part of an arts trail from the railway station, up Canrobert Street to the Newstead Primary School
	2	Create nature trails with unobtrusive interpretive signage through local bushland areas using local knowledge
	3	Create and update guide maps for local walking trails
	4	Off-road walking and cycling trails to nearby towns in Maldon, Castlemaine, Guildford and Maryborough
	5	Ensure trails are accessible and safe for all
1.3 Love and look after our river and bushland	1	Support the Newstead Landcare Group to implement the Loddon River Plan
	2	Develop a local whole of landscape plan to protect biodiversity
	3	Eradicate litter along the river and local roadsides with <i>Clean up the Loddon Day</i> and other ongoing campaigns
	4	Minimise vehicular traffic in riverside areas near town by creating parking areas in less sensitive areas
	5	Educate the community about local weeds and carry out an eradication program
	6	Create and enhance wildlife corridors through the town
1.4 Create open spaces where people love to go, be, play and chat. These spaces have heart and spirit	1	Expand the pirate playground and Memorial Park to create town-square like spaces
	2	Revitalise Rotunda Park to include a Playground, Music venue and Botanical Garden using local native species. Improve toilet facilities and repair Band Rotunda.
	3	Support existing and create new local Management Plans for key open spaces (Rotunda Park, Newstead Racecourse, Railway precinct, Playground, Newstead Swimming Pool)
	4	Commission street art
	5	Improve our town entrances
	6	Develop a village square with restful places, chess boards, shady trees and grown-ups' socialising area
	7	Develop a skate/bike park and activity centre in the township

Dollars and Cents

ASPIRATION – An economically sustainable, job-rich community with strong transport and IT links, powered by low-cost renewable energy

Objective		Strategies	
2.1	Provide secure, low-cost energy, water and waste management	1	Capture, store and re-use local storm water and encourage water wisdom
		2	Create a local depot for recycling, including larger materials and hard goods, run along the lines of the Newstead Op Shop or “Freecycle” especially for outlying communities
		3	Develop local energy generation using renewable sources (Newstead Power)
		4	Establish woodlot for firewood
		5	Establish Newstead as a plastic water bottle and plastic bag free town and install permanent drinking taps
		6	Install strategic and low energy/solar powered street lighting
		7	Provide secure, low cost energy, investigate bulk buying electricity and other possibilities (e.g. negotiate township collective energy prices with distributors)
2.2	Bring outside dollars into Newstead	1	Audit and promote business and industry opportunities in technology, art, tourism, agriculture, energy, retail (e.g. petrol co-op with an automated pre-pay petrol station, garage/fuel, hardware, caravan park, holiday accommodation, art gallery, local energy recharge service) and undertake traffic survey to determine business potential from passers by
		2	Develop QR code labels for locations in the town that link to appropriate websites
		3	Employ a local grant writer to coordinate effort in sourcing funds for projects
		4	Develop a business hub incorporating office and meeting spaces
2.3	Keep dollars in Newstead	1	Promote and support local businesses and the RTC through patronage and extended services (e.g. Chemist script pick-up, mail delivery and Post-Office boxes)
		2	Provide mentoring, training and a blog for local businesses and build connections with important partners including the shire and bank
		3	Help local businesses prepare for and profit from large events
		4	Provide parking area for large vehicles and caravans to encourage them to stop and park easily (e.g. Rear of community centre could be paved and signposted)
		5	Improve liaison between local businesses and Council (and other agencies, e.g. Powercor) to minimise business disruption from infrastructure work
		6	Build business links between farmers and local community
		7	Encourage local home-based and CBD businesses to get together and share info
		8	New and more visible town entrance signs (similar to Carisbrook, Maryborough) that are proud and attractive
2.4	Create an IT-savvy, connected community	1	Provide local training in use of new technology/social media and IT support especially for aged and isolated community members
		2	Get Newstead connected to the National Broadband Network (NBN) with fibre and improved broadband access for remote areas
		3	Review, update and expand the capacity of the Newstead website and keep content current
2.5	Get moving sustainably	1	Encourage greater patronage of the local Community Bus and explore timetables to connect to Melbourne/Bendigo train services
		2	Develop off-road cycling and walking tracks to nearby towns including Maldon, Castlemaine, Maryborough and Guildford
		3	Investigate car pooling and share car register using RTC or social media

Community Life		
ASPIRATION – A healthy, creative community where people look out for each other, work and play together and connect, share difference and talents, regardless of age, disability and skills. People feel free to step up and take responsibility.		
Objective	Strategies	
3.1 Foster a culture of welcome where people are valued and their skills and talents nurtured	1	Train, mentor and support our volunteers to help avoid burn-out, match skills and support generational change in community groups (eg. training for Newstead Echo in publishing and on-line journalism)
	2	Develop a 'Newcomers welcome pack' with essential contacts for local organisations and services, for new residents
	3	Encourage connections within Newstead and with outlying communities through events (e.g. sports days, festive celebrations)
	4	Hold a speed dating event where community groups introduce themselves to residents
	5	Build connections between generations by recording the stories of our elders and by visiting them
	6	Develop links with existing Leadership programs and encourage them to visit and connect with Newstead. Encourage local community members to participate. Establish a Leadership Fund to support community members' involvement in leadership programs
	7	Bring new ideas into the town through Rocket Science, leadership programs, Salon, and annual weekend for international students and create forums for conversation and community development
	8	Develop umbrella organisation/s to streamline financial management and governance of the town's many groups
	9	Celebrate with an annual 'Newstead Day'
	10	Develop a community volunteers register – in the event of age, illness, disability – where you can give and receive assistance (eg. prescription pick-up, shopping, transport, childcare)
3.2 Be an art-rich community that provides opportunities for creativity	1	Re-establish a theatre group along the lines of NAPE
	2	Create a purpose-built arts hub (e.g. railway station, Givoni Mill)
	3	Support and encourage activities such as the Newstead Short Story Tattoo, Salon, Children's Literature Festival
	4	Establish and fund an artist-in-residence program, with our own and visiting artists
3.3 A fit and healthy community	1	Explore options for establishing more exercise opportunities, inc obstacle course, cycling and mountain biking, gym, social tennis, mini biking, BMX, skate park, pony club, basketball, table tennis, exercise, horse riding, off-leash dog walking
	2	Create small scale facilities for soccer, rugby, basketball
	3	Maintain community ownership and management of the Newstead Swimming Pool and build participation, e.g. squad swimming, activities for teenagers
3.4 Cater for our kids	1	Establish after-school programs such as cooking club, gardening, scouts and girl guides, art classes
	2	Explore ways to engage our kids in community development and community life (e.g. Kids Thrive, community planning, leadership programs and mentoring)
	3	Establish a skate and bike park in Newstead
3.5 Recognise the importance of surrounding communities	1	Help small rural communities do their own plans linked to this plan. Sandon, Strangways, Welshmans Reef, Green Gully, Clydesdale etc. are important to Newstead and vice versa
3.6 Create an accessible town	1	Ensure physical access within the town centre and important locations
	2	Provide support for isolated residents to have access through IT and computer based connections

Bricks & Mortar

ASPIRATION – A well planned low energy town that loves the old, welcomes innovative development, and that is pedestrian and bike friendly and accessible to all

Objective		Strategies	
4.1	Minimise the impacts of traffic to create safe and quiet township	1	Extend 50 km/h limit beyond the Newstead Primary School and establish 'Safe Street' crossing at the school (including flashing lights) and in the main street
		2	Explore ways to make our streets more pedestrian and bike friendly
		3	Re-introduce kerbed angle parking at Newstead Post Office to improve safety and access
		4	Consult with VicRoads to explore ways to reduce impact of heavy traffic through town and to prevent vehicles passing in the main street
		5	Work with Mount Alexander Shire on road grading to ensure habitat is protected and gravel roads are safe, and install 'NO SPEED: NO DUST' signs at strategic locations
4.2	Disaster-ready community that knows what to do to defend and protect its people	1	Work with the Newstead CFA, Newstead Police, MAS and SES to develop a Community Fire and Flood Plan for Newstead and surrounds and run information sessions on what to do in the event of an evacuation
		2	Consult with Mount Alexander Shire to repair, raise and maintain the levee bank
		3	Develop a fire plan that takes into account the impacts on habitat for birds, plants and animals (See Appendix H)
4.3	Ensure our existing community facilities meet current and future needs of our town and visitors	1	Improve the pirate ship playground by adding tables and chairs, a climbing frame, more trees and toilet facilities. Investigate options to expand the area to include Men's Shed and Givoni's Mill
		2	Add play areas to Rotunda Park and the Newstead Recreation Reserve
		3	Ensure the Newstead Recreation Reserve remains a multi-purpose venue that can accommodate events such as Newstead Live
		4	Support the Primary School's fortnightly "Green Canteen" and the development of its food garden
		5	Add an off-leash dog walking area
		6	Add facilities for caravans at the Newstead Racecourse
		7	Investigate best options for toilet facilities and consider Pirate Playground, Rotunda Park and Memorial Park
4.4	Preserve and care for our historic buildings	1	Find ways to encourage preservation of iconic public and private privately owned buildings, especially in the main street, including churches, courthouse and railway station
		2	Restore and renew the Newstead Railway Station to create an arts precinct/ business/community hub with artists' studios, workshop spaces, gallery and other related businesses

Strategies and actions – where to next? (continued)

4.5 A well planned town with modern, essential services	1	Revisit and review Newstead's Urban Framework in the MAS Planning Scheme in light of local and regional strategic plans
	2	Create opportunities for continuing community conversations around planning and sustainability (e.g. Rocket Science, visiting speakers, etc)
	3	Have input into regional planning strategies and initiatives, through N2021 and other formal avenues
	4	Ensure Newstead is connected to the National Broadband Network
	5	Tap Newstead into the natural gas pipeline
	6	Investigate options to make petrol available to local residents
	7	Create retirement accommodation, hostel or supported aged housing and low-cost social housing in keeping with the area's natural values
	8	Develop office/commercial spaces for new and established businesses
	9	Underground power lines, especially in the town's iconic streets
	10	Maintain operating standpipes on both sides of the river
	11	Provide safe accessible walking tracks for health and fitness
	12	Provide secure, low cost energy (e.g. community bulk buying from electricity suppliers or creating energy locally)



IMPLEMENTING OUR PRIORITIES

The results reflect our community — its history, values, challenges and aspirations.

We had a huge array of ideas and strategies and our next step is to work out which ones to act on. Initially we can be guided by the level of support for various ideas (expressed as ‘votes’ at the event), but our plan must also be guided by what’s possible and broader agendas. But the most important factor will be our own motivation and desire to see things happen.

During the consultation process, the most popular ideas were about natural gas, petrol, skate park, swimming pool water slide and the Newstead Railway Station restoration and renewal.

On the planning day the most popular ideas were around the Newstead Railway Station renewal, play equipment and playground improvements, street and township tree care, pedestrian and cycle tracks and trails, sustainability (inc. waste, energy and water use), mentoring and leadership, and creation of a volunteer registry/exchange scheme.

In addition to these major projects there are many and varied smaller projects that are a priority. Newstead has a strong tradition of making good things happen as a result of individuals or small groups of people acting according to the motto ... “First do no harm”. With this in mind many of the ideas proposed will rely on individual and/or collective action to be realised. Some ideas will lay dormant until the energy and will is found to enact them, while other ideas may generate immediate interest. The Plan is therefore a smorgasbord of choices, not to direct our future, but to inspire and motivate.

It was our intention during the community feedback phase to examine these ideas further and to apply a consistent set of criteria to further gauge their level of support, need and feasibility. The purpose of this evaluation is not to ‘knock out’ or promote certain ideas but to road test their possibility.

During the consultation phase, these new priorities emerged and the strategic actions strengthened

We have been guided by the proposed criteria for project will include, but not be limited to the following:

- How important is the project/idea in terms of community benefit?
- What is the risk to the community of not proceeding with the project?
- Is it possible to develop a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) objective?
- Is it technically feasible to undertake the actions required to enable the project to succeed?
- If the project requires private citizens/community members to change their behaviour/act differently what is the likelihood of this occurring?
- If the project requires change by other institutions (e.g. Local government, state government departments) is there a good chance that this will occur?

- 1. Refurbishing and revitalising the Newstead Station as an arts precinct**
- 2. Creating a pedestrian bridge across the Loddon River to connect both sides of town**
- 3. Establishing a skate and bike park and community activity centre**
- 4. Establishing a connected network of walking and bike paths and trails between Newstead and surrounding towns, using existing easements and bushland areas**
- 5. A major renewal of street trees within the town precinct**
- 6. Establishing a “Support and Sustain our Volunteers” initiative for volunteers and community groups**
- 7. Developing a local business strategy for Newstead to build business and employment opportunities**
- 8. Planning for a liveable Newstead, to ensure Newstead retains its unique built and natural values into the future**
- 9. Catering for our ageing population through access and accommodation**
- 10. A road safety focus to minimise traffic impacts and create a safe and quiet township**

HOW OUR PLAN ALIGNS WITH REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PLANS

Ultimately, Newstead recognises it is part of a region, state and nation so has been careful to consider current planning scenarios, taking place at those levels.

Our plan fits the following.

- **The Mount Alexander Shire Council Plan 2013-2017 has a vision for “a thriving community working together to create a sustainable and vibrant future.”**

The Plan has four goals:

1. A vibrant, healthy community
2. Better community facilities
3. A thriving local economy
4. Building sustainable communities

The four-year council plan is supported by an Annual Plan which details activities that support the Objectives and Strategies defined in the Council Plan. The Newstead Community Plan is strongly aligned with these MAS Plans. Our community will work closely with the MAS in coming years to ensure the specific projects and initiatives we have identified are supported by council's short and long term planning and resourcing processes.

Furthermore the Newstead Community Plan is consistent with MAS strategies and plans, including:

- Disability Action Plan 2011-2015
- Arts Strategy 2011 – 2015
- Environment Strategy 2010-2014
- Greenhouse Action Plan 2011-2015
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2010-2013
- Investing in Sport: A strategic plan for Council's investment in sport
- Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2020
- Waste Management Strategy 2010-2015

A strength of the Newstead Community Plan is that it provides specific and tangible opportunities for our community to work with the MAS to enact these plans and strategies across the Shire, in ways that generate benefits to Newstead and the broader regional community.

- **The draft Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan**, Department of Planning and Community Development Victoria.
- **The Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan, Southern Region.** This plan explicitly sets six key strategic directions, one of which is to strengthen our communities, especially our small towns. Newstead wishes to build its profile and engagement in this plan. This plan, like the one above, sets out ways to accommodate growth without destroying the alluring nature and character of the area.
- **Regional Change Strategies – Regional Development Australia and Regional Management Forum.** These groups have nominated five key change catalysts for the Southern Loddon Mallee Region including Railing Ahead, Transformative Towns, Bendigo-Our Networked Regional City, Solar and Renewable Energy Industry, Ports of the Murray River. Newstead participated as a case study in the Transformative Towns toolkit that will be used to identify transformative projects in 10 towns in the Southern Loddon Mallee Region.
- **2012-2018 North Central Regional Catchment Management Strategy.** This strategy seeks to engage communities in protecting and enhancing the integrity of the catchment. Care of the Loddon River which runs through Newstead and our bushland is very much part of Newstead's Community Plan (See Open Spaces).
- **Mount Alexander Shire Rural Land Study.** A future directions paper proposes preferred directions for planning of the shire's rural lands. Newstead has identified that a large sector of its workforce is employed in the surrounding agricultural sector and believes protection of farm land and key environmental assets needs to be considered.
- **Sustainable Regional Australia.** Newstead has been a key partner with Sustainable Regional Australia's Central Victoria Solar City project. It has run community-wide energy audits and is in the early stages of developing ideas for generating energy from renewable sources locally in a way that could generate funds and jobs for the community.
- **Regional Arts Australia National Strategic Projects 2013-2016.** Newstead's ambitions for building community by supporting our incredibly rich creative sector aligns with RAA's projects especially its “animating spaces” project which provides support for communities to host and present arts events in non-traditional spaces. The renewal of the Newstead Railway Station (see Bricks and Mortar) fits this objective.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: List of Newstead community groups

- Accessible Newstead
- Anglican Church
- Bowling Club
- Canasta
- Cemetery Trust
- CFA
- CFA Auxiliary
- Community Bus
- Community Centre Committee of Management
- Community Garden
- Community Walks
- Cricket Club
- Croquet Club
- CWA
- Echo Committee
- Football Netball Club
- Friends of Newstead Railway Station
- Green Gully Fireguard
- Historical Society
- Karate
- Landcare
- Library Volunteers
- Mens' Shed
- Newstead 2021
- Newstead Racecourse
- Playgroup
- Pole Walking
- Preschool
- Produce Exchange
- Renewable Newstead
- Rotunda Park
- RTC Volunteers
- Scrapbookers
- Spinners
- St Annes Catholic Church
- Swimming Pool
- Tai Chi
- Uniting Church
- Yoga

APPENDIX B: Notes on socio-economic indexes for Newstead

Prepared by Ray Culvenor 30th April 2013.

The following note has been extracted from the ABS publication 2033.0.55.001 "Technical Paper – Socio-Economic indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 2011".

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census.

SEIFA 2011 is based on Census 2011 data, and consists of four indexes, each focussing on a different aspect of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage and being a summary of a different subset of Census variables.

Some common uses of SEIFA include:

- determining areas that require funding and services,
- identifying new business opportunities, and
- assisting research into the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and various social outcomes.

The indexes and associated documentation are free of charge on the ABS website.

For SEIFA 2011, the notion of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage is the same as that used for SEIFA 2006. That is, the ABS broadly defines relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society.

SEIFA 2011 consists of the same four indexes as produced for SEIFA 2006 and 2001, each referring to the general population:

- the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD),
- the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD),
- the Index of Education and Occupation (IEO), and
- the Index of Economic Resources (IER).

While SEIFA is very detailed (i.e. having four indexes and many various indicators of rankings), for the purposes of the Newstead Planning document, a summary table for Newstead and surrounds has been prepared using just one index – the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD).

For comparison purposes, the indexes for Mt Alexander Shire and Maldon have been included, as have a number of areas (SA1s) located around Newstead.

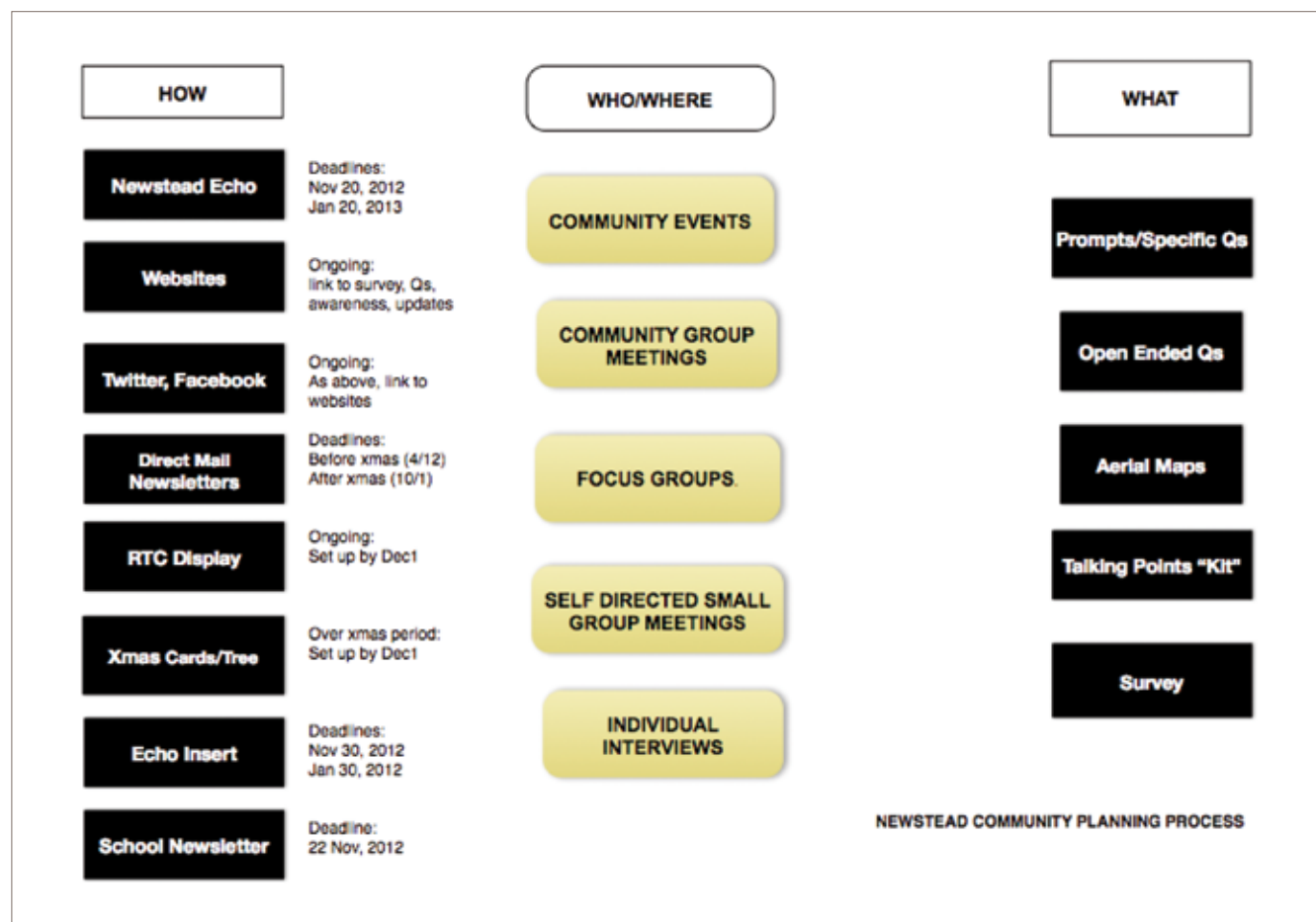
Area name (or description)	ABS Area type	ABS Area Identifier	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage		Usual Resident Population
			Score	Decile	
Mt Alexander Shire	LGA	25430	970	6	17605
Newstead SSC	SSC	21013	949	3	798
Maldon SSC	SSC	20831	965	4	1432
Newstead	SA1	2102802	927	3	512
Around N (Joyces Ck, Strangways)	SA1	2102811	989	5	286
Around N (Sandon, Werona)	SA1	2102812	994	5	187
Around N (Yapeen)	SA1	2102813	995	5	309
Around N (Welshmans Reef)	SA1	2102820	964	4	431
Around N (Guildford)	SA1	2102822	946	3	244
Around N (Clydesdale, Yandoit)	SA1	2101119	981	4	309

Notes:

1. ABS Area types are: LGA = Local Government Area, SSC= State Suburb, SA1= Statistical Area Level 1. (Note that the Newstead SSC has a larger coverage than the SA1 centred on the Newstead town and thus a larger usual resident population.)
2. Scores: a lower score indicates that an area is relatively disadvantaged compared to an area with a higher score. Scores should only be used in distributive analysis. To enable easy recognition of high and low scores, the CD index scores have been standardised to have a mean of 1,000 and a standard deviation of 100 across all the area sets in Australia.
3. Deciles: all areas are ordered from lowest to highest score, the lowest 10% of areas are given a decile number of 1 and so on, up to the highest 10% of areas which are given a decile number of 10. This means that areas are divided up into ten groups, depending on their score. Decile 1 is the most disadvantaged relative to the other deciles. Note that deciles have equal number of areas, not people. The decile shown above relates to the set of areas for each area type – thus Mt Alexander Shire decile of 6 means the 6th decile of all LGAs, and Newstead SSC decile of 3 means the 3rd decile of all SA1s.

Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2006

APPENDIX C: Engagement plan diagram



APPENDIX D: Community planning day flyer/invitation



OUR TOWN, OUR SAY

COMMUNITY PLANNING DAY – Sunday March 3

NEWSTEAD COMMUNITY CENTRE, 11AM - 3PM

CHILDCARE AVAILABLE

LUNCH PROVIDED BY NEWSTEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

PLEASE BRING A PLATE TO SHARE FOR MORNING OR AFTERNOON TEA

BE A PART OF CREATING NEWSTEAD'S PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

JANET - 0439 003 469, GEOFF - 5476 2593, GEN - 5476 2633 OR [ECOLOGICA@BIGPOND.COM](mailto:ecologica@bigpond.com)

COMMUNITY PHOTOS - COURTESY OF THE NEWSTEAD ECHO

Dear

We invite you to **Newstead's Community Planning Day** on Sunday **March 3**, to help create a plan for Newstead's future.


A group of local volunteers has been working since late last year on Newstead's Community Planning Project - '**Our Town, Our Say**', with hundreds of responses from Newstead and surrounding areas.

Now it's time to talk about themes and ideas and decide what should be part of Newstead's Community Plan.



Please join us see over for details

OUR TOWN, OUR SAY:
DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR NEWSTEAD



General Knowledge Quiz (see Feb Echo insert) drawn ... prizes for adult and u/14 child

Music, good food, displays

Catch up with your friends, neighbours and welcome newcomers to Newstead

NEWSTEAD COMMUNITY PLANNING DAY

Sun 3 March, 11am - 3pm
Newstead Community Centre
Childcare available

**LUNCH CATERED FOR BY NEWSTEAD
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Please bring a plate for morning
or afternoon tea**

RSVP, or for more info:
Janet 0439 003 469
Geoff 5476 2593
Gen 5476 2633
ecologica@bigpond.com

**YOUR RSVP WILL HELP US BUT IS
NOT NECESSARY**

APPENDIX E: Community planning program



COMMUNITY EVENT, SUNDAY 3RD MARCH 2013 AT THE NEWSTEAD COMMUNITY CENTRE Event structure and Running Sheet

Purpose of the event

Getting the Newstead community together to discuss our future

Goals

1. Identify priorities for the community to focus on over the next 1, 3 and 10 years
2. Encourage community participation and involvement in projects that will sustain us into the future
3. Recognise and building connections and leadership

Running Sheet

Note: We need volunteers to help set up decorations, hall, catering on the day or day before, PA, powerpoint gear etc. Please let Janet or I know if you can help and when you might be available.

Time	Activity	Notes
11.00am	Gather and Welcome to Country in the area at the rear of the Community Centre Marcus the musician is playing Registration Table (Bronwyn)	Name tags
11.10am	Welcome to Country	Neil Boyack
11.10am	Where are we on the Map?	Horse and Bob Clutterbuck have agreed to develop map on drop sheets Janet to describe activity
11.25am	Move inside	Historical photograph display (Gail Leech) Slide show – images of Newstead as backdrop (Dave Stratton. and Gail to develop)
11.30am	Telling our Story	
	THE STORIES Monique Kerr (Kate Tucker to contact) Newstead Railway Station – Peter Kerr (GP) Newstead Swimming Pool – Sue Pollard (GP) CFA – Doug Richardson (GP) Loddon River – Patrick Kavanagh (GP) Agriculture – Julie Butler (JB) Business – Peter Moloney, Listening Earth, Darren Gervasoni/ Newstead IGA (JB) Arts – Belinda Prest/Julie Patey (JB) RTC – Suzan Redlande (GP) Racecourse – Rob Sewell/Vanessa Boyack/Willo? (GP)	This session will involve a series of short vignettes from local people to represent the diversity and richness of community life. Each story will be ~ 2 minutes and will be linked to the key themes/ideas that have been identified. People will be briefed. This session can also help underscore the values/elements that make Newstead special

Appendices (continued)

Time	Activity	Notes
12 noon	Community Consultation – the results so far The process – what we did (Janet Barker) ... 5 min Summary of findings and key themes (Kate Tucker and Dave Stratton) ... 15min Open discussion ... 10 min	Brief presentations designed to: Summarise the feedback from community consultation, including the process, data etc Highlight the key themes that have been identified Provide a link to what happens next on the day Allow for some open discussion, Q & A
12.30pm	Lunch	Theme tables are setup with distilled ideas (as dot points) plus primary data as a backdrop Participants encouraged to mingle, discuss the ideas, add additional ideas etc over lunch
1.15pm	THEME DISCUSSIONS 3 short, snappy sessions of 20 min each (including changeover) on the following overarching themes: Open Spaces Built Environment Economy Community Life Services and Access Young People Other – open discussion Facilitators: Bronwyn Smith, Chris Johnston, Arn Thoring, Ros Hart, Kate Tucker, Dave Stratton, Phoebe Snep Scribes: Janet Trudgeon, Nick Hudson, Karly Smith etc	Participants will choose three themes of interest and rotate to each group facilitator and scribe for each theme Three focus questions for each workshop: What is your reaction to the ideas presented here? What have we missed? What so we need to do to progress these ideas?
2.15pm	Workshop Feedback Brief report back from facilitators/scribes on each theme – 3 minutes each to be followed by open discussion	
2.45pm	Afternoon Tea	Quiz winner announced
3.00pm	Prioritisation and commitment Participants will be asked to identify: What they see as the priority ideas/projects/areas Participants will be asked to identify which of the ideas etc they would like to lead/contribute to	Have a sign up list for participants indicate interest for specific projects/ideas and contact details – this could be offered prior to lunch, afternoon tea and at the end.
3.15	Newstead Primary School Presentation	Isabel, Lincoln and Ben
3.25	Next steps and close	Articulate what will happen with the information collected today Describe process for drafting the Plan and how feedback on the draft will be sought. How the Plan will be finalised

APPENDIX F: Newstead Echo insert sample

**OUR TOWN, OUR SAY:
DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR NEWSTEAD**

Previous Community Planning in Newstead

Community planning projects and Progress Associations made the news back in the days of the original Newstead Echo. We've had a history of community planning, including the Peter Kenyon workshops in the mid 1990s, the Newstead Forum, the Newstead Taskforce.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PLAN?

☐ It is a plan for the community's ideas, wishes, values and aspirations. It states who we are and what we value and how we would like our community to be in the future (2021 and beyond) and how we might get there.

☐ It isn't a blueprint or a funding plan or a wish list of projects for Council to implement.

In May 2008 around 150 people gathered at the Newstead Community Centre for "Newstead 2021", to talk about their aspirations for the Newstead community, issues and concerns and ideas for the future. Specific projects were identified. Afterwards, several individuals and groups took action - limits on traffic speed through town, the pirate ship playground, the community garden, wireless network for the CBD, revegetation work along the Loddon River, a plan for street tree plantings - were just some of the outcomes. "Rocket Science" sessions at Dig cafe continued the conversations. Newstead 2021 was incorporated and set up to serve as an umbrella organisation, to support and assist other community projects. In June 2012, the Mount Alexander Shire organised "Focus on Newstead", a photography project and conversation, to follow on from the 2008 event. The project documented some of the people, projects and places important to our community.

We want to build on previous activities to develop a 'whole of community' plan for Newstead, gathering input and ideas from as many people and groups as possible. In small rural towns, some things do stay the same. But even since our 2008 event, Newstead has seen development and many more new residents to town, rain and floods, an increase in large events (eg. car and bike rallies, Newstead Live!) and changes in services and businesses. Besides, there are always new ideas and perspectives on old issues.

Why Does Newstead Need a Community Plan?

A good plan will have broad community involvement and enable us to prepare and respond for the future. It will give us influence, a strong voice and a common frame of reference when working with local government and other authorities. It will also strengthen connections and communication across our community.


Mount Alexander Council is running the community planning process in other towns across the Shire. It's probably no surprise that Newstead wants to do it differently. Our community has a history of doing things for ourselves. We also believe that a locally produced plan has more chance of reflecting the needs and wishes of our diverse community. Council will be kept informed and involved throughout the process, but essentially it will be our plan.

HOW WILL WE PRODUCE OUR PLAN?


We will be talking to as many individuals and groups as possible, leading up to the Community Planning Day on 17 February, 2013. We want to gather ideas, plans and information from right across the community, so that even if people can't attend the main planning day, they can have input to it. We will be attending community group meetings, holding specific gatherings, using The Echo and mailouts, setting up a website and using social media, as well as setting up a regular weekly time at the RTC for people to drop in for a chat. We also want to encourage dinner table conversations, afternoon teas or drinks with the neighbors, all sorts of activities to get Newstead talking and planning. We see community consultation as much more than just holding a public meeting.

**OUR TOWN, OUR SAY:
DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR NEWSTEAD**


WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT....




BRICKS AND MORTAR: What should Newstead's streetscapes and businesses look like in the future? What do we need that isn't here?




OPEN SPACES: What are our most valuable places and spaces and how should we protect them?




DOLLARS AND CENTS: What are the biggest contributors to our local economy and how can we strengthen it?



COMMUNITY: Do you feel well connected, are there ways we could improve connections?



YOU: Has your experience of living here changed and how? Are your day to day needs met by the community?



ONE BIG (or small) IDEA: What is one thing you'd like to see happen in Newstead and how?

STILL STUMPED?

A few more prompts ...

☐ What are the three best things about Newstead?

☐ Why did you come here and have your views of the place changed? How?

☐ What do you see as the strengths of the Newstead community?

☐ What makes Newstead unique to other places?

☐ What's the three biggest concerns, challenges or needs for you at the moment?

☐ What's the three biggest concerns, challenges or needs for the Newstead community at the moment?

☐ What would you chuck, change, add or retain in Newstead?

☐ What businesses or services have you used in the last week/month here? What do you need to leave town for?

☐ What are our built needs and how do we respond to growing population?

☐ How would you like to see Newstead (function, look, sound, feel, smell) in another 3-5 years? 10 years? Another 20 years?

☐ How/What could you contribute to that picture? Who else could help and how?

SNAPSHOT OF NEWSTEAD 2011

Township Population **512**
(248 males, 264 females)

District Population **290**
(156 males, 134 females)

Median Age **50yrs**

District families/households are slightly bigger than in towns

We have **1.8** cars per household and **1.8** children per family

Our Average Weekly Income is **\$675 - \$746**

Average House Price **\$298K**
(Maldon \$257K, C'maine \$364K)

**OUR TOWN, OUR SAY:
DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR NEWSTEAD**

Please jot down any comments, answers or questions to these prompts here. Drop it off next time you are in town, at the RTC, PO or at any of the Community Planning "Gift Boxes" around Newstead. You can also go to our website www.newsteadplan.wordpress.com and leave a comment, idea, participate in a discussion, or complete the short survey there.

Why are we Planning again?

Remember the Newstead Summit in 2008? Out of that community planning we now have a community garden, reduced speed limits in town, a pirate playground, Loddon River replantings and funding towards the design of a pedestrian bridge across the Loddon. Project ideas raised by individuals, initiated by locals and supported by the wider community and the Shire Council. Five years on, and it is time to revisit our community planning - as many other small communities across Victoria are doing too - see what we've missed and seek out ideas from as many people as we can.

**OUR TOWN, OUR SAY:
DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR NEWSTEAD**

KEEP THIS DATE FREE!

Come along to our Community Planning Day and help us to create a plan for Newstead's future

Sun Feb 17th

WHAT'S THE CARD FOR?

The Christmas Card is another way to get ideas - we'll be putting them up on our own community Christmas tree at the RTC and gathering gift ideas towards the Plan.

Fill in the card and drop it off at the Community Plan "gift boxes" at the RTC, PO and other locations around town.

Visit the RTC tree and see what others would like to give Newstead for Christmas.

Over the next couple of months we'd like to see Newstead's future being the talk of the town. The festive season provides a great opportunity to catch up for food, drink and conversation. Perhaps you might even talk about our town?

If you are interested in hosting a small get together, please contact us - we can provide some prompts and guidance. Or just start a conversation with family, friends and neighbours and let us know what you came up with.

We will be providing a draft plan to Mount Alexander Shire after the February 17th gathering and seeking final comments and input. We look forward to providing Council with a document which communicates our aspirations, ideas and intentions of Newstead's planning needs and gives us a stronger sense for the future.

Thanks to the Newstead RTC and Mayor Michael Redden for supporting the Community Planning Project.

So far we've talked with people at the Newstead Rotunda Market, Newstead CFA's Open Day and to many individuals. Just a few of the comments:

... the 'spirit' of the place ... friendly, tolerant, welcoming people ... natural gas - the pipeline runs right by us ... Rotunda Park is a fantastic resource (great acoustics) needs refurbishing ... local flood response - is there one/who do we contact locally in disaster? ... walking paths and an off-main-road cycle track to Castlemaine ... skatepark at the old tennis court ... restoring the railway ... better broadband coverage ... fuel/petrol ... water bottle free town (have bubble taps) ... RTC and bank open on Saturday mornings ... recyclable depot in town (cans) ... a new residents kit with info about living in a rural area ... keeping an eye on our ageing folk especially those living alone ... the village feel and compact nature of the place ... retain farming land - limit small blocks... a whole of landscape plan for fire planning and biodiversity ... a great Preschool (we travel from Daylesford) ...

Facebook?
www.facebook.com/NewsteadCommunityPlan

Twitter?
@NewsteadPlanning

Face to Face?

Janet Barker has been appointed to Coordinate the Community Planning Process and will be based at the Newstead RTC, 45 Lyons Street. Drop in for a chat (after 14/12) on Tuesdays 10-12 or Wednesdays 2-4 or contact her on 0439 003 469. Or contact anyone listed below.

WHO'S BEHIND THE COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUM?

We are a group of interested locals keen to plan a creative, vibrant and sustaining future for Newstead, including Genevieve Barlow, Julie Butler, Frances Cincotta, Don Culvenor, Gordon Dowell, Angela Down, Sade Gray, Nick Hudson, Ros Hunt, Danny McBain, Geoff Park, Lesley Philp, Michael Redden, Karly Smith, Ron Snep, Dave Stratton, Kate Tucker.

APPENDIX G: Renewable Newstead



Renewable Newstead commenced in June 2010 as a partnership between the Newstead community and the Central Victorian Solar City (CVSC) project. Since then a number of significant initiatives have been completed and evaluated, establishing the foundation for the next phase of the project. At the outset we suggested ...

Imagine an entire town running on renewable energy

Then imagine that town being ours.

THE VISION

Renewable Newstead is a town taking charge of local energy. Newstead is aiming to be the first Australian town to run on 100% renewable energy. It will become a town where people talk and think about energy and where understanding of our usage and our energy options become widespread in the community.

In achieving this vision Renewable Newstead aims to bring multiple benefits for Newstead and district including a cleaner local environment, education and employment opportunities, and a buffer against future energy shocks. We are looking for energy solutions that are viable, cost effective and strengthen our community, and we want to have fun along the way with community celebrations of our achievements.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Home Energy Assessments –170 HEAs and 8 Business Energy Assessments. This represents a very significant achievement and believed to be the highest proportion of any community in Australia.
- A series of meetings, workshops and public events have been held.
- Established a governance structure.
- The Renewable Newstead website at <http://renewable.newstead.vic.au> is the information hub of the project.
- Conducted a Feasibility Study with Michael McCartney to explore the transition of the Newstead community towards zero net emissions on its stationary energy needs. The study was finalized in September 2011 after a number of rounds
- Social Survey – The Renewable Newstead Steering Committee and Central Victoria Solar Cities (CVSC) conducted a survey in Newstead in August-September 2011. The purpose of the survey was to find out what Newstead & district residents think about energy.

APPENDIX G: Renewable Newstead (continued)

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Step	Actions
Reduce and Retrofit	<p>Support local business development opportunities associated with energy reduction/retrofitting</p> <p>Harness local support for retrofitting – Newstead Men's Shed</p> <p>Pursue grants (e.g. Low Carbon Communities) to assist with low income households, disadvantaged groups</p> <p>Explore opportunities with MAS (streetlights, community buildings), Coliban Water (waste water pumping)</p> <p>Explore bulk-buy options – LED lighting, Solar Hot water, Blow-in insulation</p>
Measure, ring-fence and generate	<p>Investigate/negotiate with Powercor for meter build quote and distribution relief</p>
Business plan and governance structure	<p>Establish Newstead Power Company as an incorporated body with board of directors</p> <p>Develop/consolidate links to Bendigo Bank and SRA</p> <p>Examine and develop business plan for 'solar park' or 'distributed roof' models</p> <p>Fund raising</p> <p>Develop the Newstead Carbon Accounting model based on FS</p>
Sequestration and off-setting	<p>Develop detailed plan and business structure</p> <p>Investigate possible sites on public/private land</p> <p>Develop firewood strategy</p>
Innovation and trials – battery storage, transport	<p>Electric cars – community share model</p> <p>Battery storage trial (for excess solar production)</p>

APPENDIX H: Landscape-scale fire planning

This is a proposal for Project 4.2 (3)
Develop a fire plan that takes into account the impacts on habitat for birds, plants and animals’.

BACKGROUND

Newstead is a small town surrounded by a combination of farming land and remnants of the once extensive box-ironbark woodlands on public and private land. There are also small communities nearby, some with people living in bush settings, and others in pastoral landscapes. The draft community Plan expresses the desire to protect precious bush and other habitats, while reducing the risk to human life and important assets from fire.

There is a Shire-wide ‘municipal fire management plan’ and DSE, as the main public land managers are implementing the State governments 5% annual prescribed burning target.

Newstead has its own CFA brigade that is highly regarded by locals.

CONCEPT

The idea would be to develop a landscape-scale fire plan for Newstead and surrounds, using a community-based approach called ‘joint fact finding’. Together we would:

- Find out about fire risks, recent research and possible management approaches
- Appreciate how changes in the size and extent of the town and the management of the whole landscape influences risk
- Learn about the fire history of our area from records and through oral history
- Better understand the causes of fires in our area
- Appreciate the natural and cultural values of the whole landscape, especially the public forested areas which are currently bearing the brunt of prescribed burning to reduce fuel
- Share information, concerns and fears

- Define what roles the community and individuals are willing to take to manage key parts of the landscape around Newstead and other settlements to reduce risks.

Joint fact finding is an approach designed to build consensus through an open and transparent process where everyone is encouraged to ask questions and get answers. Through the sharing of knowledge and understanding of different values, new types of solutions become possible.

This would be an innovative project – an Australian first – and is likely to become a model for other communities that face similar dilemmas.

WHO WOULD BE INVOLVED?

Key participants would include:

- Organisations with a current role or interest in fire planning and management: for example the Newstead CFA, Shire, DSE/Parks Victoria, local community fireguard groups
- Organisations and individuals with an interest in biodiversity: for example, FOBIF, Landcare, Connecting Country, CMA, and numerous individuals
- Organisations and individuals with an interest in history and research: for example, the historical society and local individuals
- Research-based organisations able to access and analysis data: for example CRC on Bushfires; ANU, CSIRO

As well, wide community involvement would be built into the project. This could include:

- Attendance at open meetings where data gathered is being discussed
- Peer learning circles where people can learn more about fire issues in a small group environment
- Research tasks such as oral history days, mapping of local knowledge about fires, special places etc

FUNDING?

This project would require some external funding, particularly for:

- An overall project coordinator
- Facilitation of open meetings
- Research and analysis: it is likely that some questions that arise during the project will require independent research and/or data analysis

Potential sources of funding could include:

- Regional Development Victoria
- Department of Planning and Community Development (will become Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure)
- CFA
- Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
- Philanthropic organisations with an interest in landscape-scale planning and biodiversity.

LINKS TO OTHER PROJECTS

This project could be linked to several other projects proposed in the draft Newstead Community Plan including:

1.3-2: Develop a whole of landscape plan to protect biodiversity

1.3-6: Create and enhance wildlife corridors through the town

3.1-5: Build connections between generations by recording the stories of our elders

3.1-7: Bring new ideas into the town through ...and create forums for conversation and community development

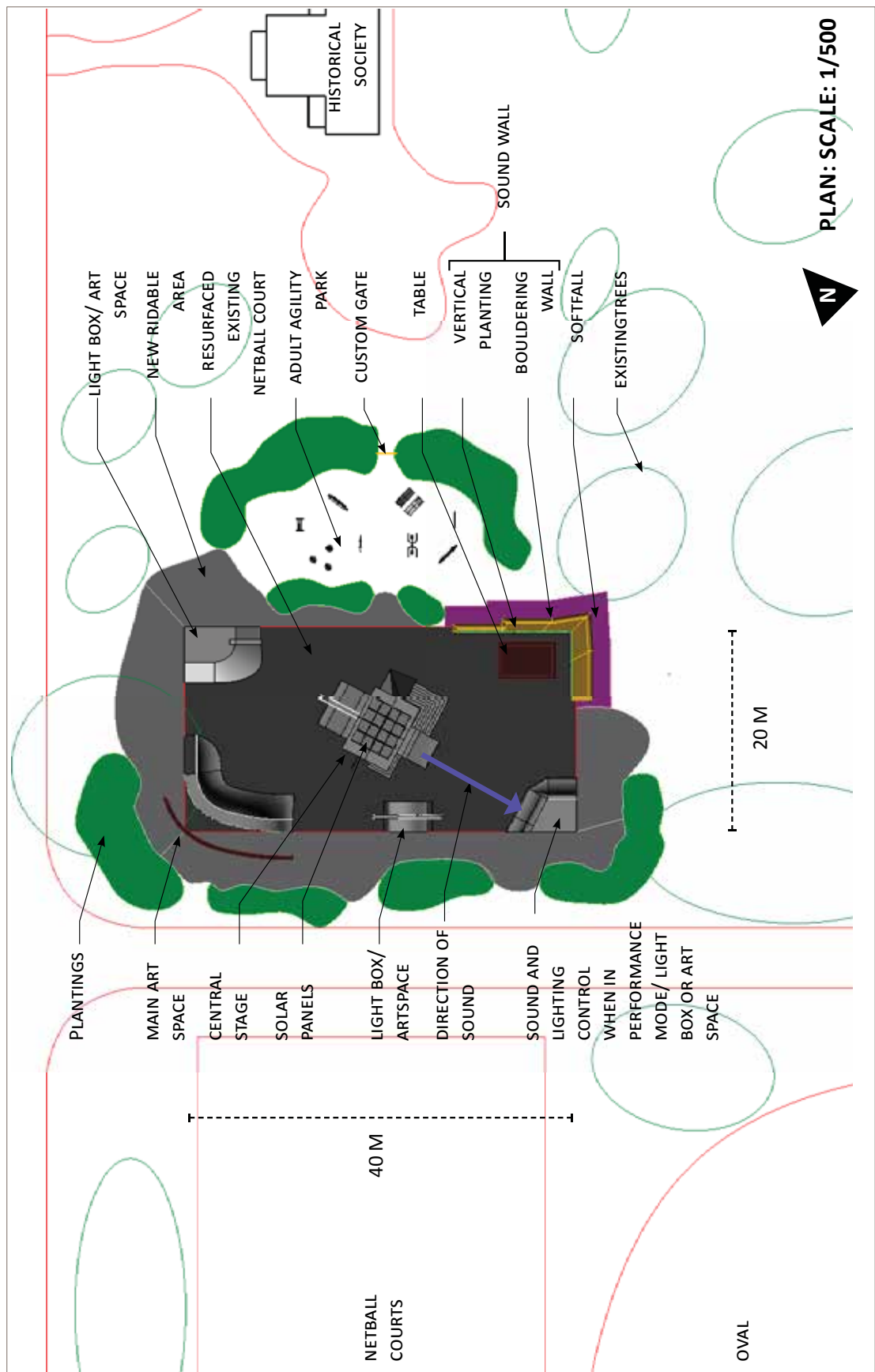
4.2-1: ... develop a community Fire and flood Plan for Newstead and run information sessions on what to do in the event of an evacuation

4.5-1: Revisit and review the Newstead Urban Framework ...

APPENDIX I: Bike and skate park / performance space

The design intent for the space is to create an activity park which allows the younger and older generations of Newstead to engage in social and physical activity in an integrated space.

The space also is adaptable to performance which may be used by Newstead Live, The Newstead Short Story Tattoo as well as residents and associations like the school, football/netball/youth club and Men's Shed.





Thanks to...

Newstead Community Plan Steering Group

Newstead Community Plan Engagement Worker – Janet Barker

Mount Alexander Shire Council – Carolyn Wallace, Glenn Menner, Chris Walters

Mount Alexander Shire Mayor – Cr Michael Redden

Newstead Rural Transaction Centre Committee and Volunteers

Newstead Community Plan writers – Geoff Park, Genevieve Barlow, Janet Barker

Meg Norris Design

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