

Mansfield Shire • Community Vision

(v0.2 Updated October 11, 2021)

Feedback responses

The Mansfield Shire Community Vision has been built on a long significant co-design and deliberative process. It is a vision by the community for the community. At various stages throughout project, draft documentation has been posted to the Engage Mansfield website for additional public feedback. This document is a summary of all feedback and spur:’s response to how the feedback has been incorporated into the final vision.

NB:

- Names have been included where the individual has published their name in a public forum (e.g. Engage Mansfield) or formally stated feedback is on behalf of an entity. Names have been redacted to “Private Citizen” where feedback has not been public. This does not necessarily mean the individual wishes to remain anonymous, but spur: wishes to err on the side of privacy.
- Extremely minor formatting changes have been made to the following content. These edits do not change the meaning or nature of the feedback.

Feedback 1

Date	July 2021
From	Helen
Feedback via	Engage Mansfield

Message

“Thanks Lee and the team for presenting the draft Vision (only 10 days since the last community engagement meeting.) Thousands of words, which resonate, and reflect with why we became residents in the first place. A positive view to improve and bring quality living to the area and surrounds. Complex questions, evaluations, and hopefully implementing the valuable projects that will lead us to the desired outcomes in 2040. Much Appreciated.”

Response

No response required.

Feedback 2

Date	August
Feedback from	Private citizen
Feedback via	Email

Message

This feedback occurred as an exchange of emails:

Private citizen:

“[Redacted] has kindly forwarded the summary document for Mansfield Vision and I regret to say I am very disappointed that it is not 'stronger' in language but then the cynical side of me recognises that the Shire is your client.

In particular the 'Environment and Place' section needs to contain more about the concerns for climate change. If there is no recognition of that, then most of the rest is just a sweet dream, rather than reality.

And planning. The current rate of land subdivision and building will ensure that Mansfield runs out of potable water for the township in the next major drought.

I took place in the Saturday session recently and would like to be involved in future sessions.

Regards”

spur:'s response:

“Thanks so much for your email—it's great to hear your feedback. What has been published so far is just a draft and subject to change based on your (and the rest of community's) feedback.

There are a couple of things I'd love to highlight as well as ask your opinion on: From the start of this project, I've been really clear with Council that the vision should be 100% determined by community and not Council. They've been incredibly respectful of this position and the draft that has been published has not had any content edits from Council at all. So, if you're unhappy with language being not strong enough, then that's on spur:, not Council.

The purpose of the “destinations” in the vision are to describe the ideal future state of the Shire—that is, if Council and community get everything right in the next two decades, then these destinations will become a reality. The idea is that key challenges or barriers to these destinations must then be taken into account over the next 20 years, such as climate change, etc. Because if these

factors aren't taken into consideration then Mansfield Shire won't or can't achieve the vision. This allows community to push back on plans that go against the vision. For example, if council plans a new subdivision which will put water resources in jeopardy and is contrary to the vision of "A Mansfield that has infrastructure that is equitable and accessible for all", then community has a mandated position to push back against that subdivision.

That said, I understand your point of view that the vision is idealistic in its framing (albeit purposefully), yet does not necessarily articulate some of the key challenges in achieving it. So, how would you feel if we added another line into the framework between destinations and journeys which outlines key challenges or barriers to achieving the destinations? This would list major considerations such as climate change, etc.? That way, the ideal destination of where we want to go to remains the same, but it more clearly and tangibly puts challenges of getting there into the spotlight? Would love to know your thoughts!

Private citizen:

"Thanks so much for your email, I am delighted to note dot point 1!

The idea of a 'challenges' segment is crucial but the placement of it I'm still not entirely comfortable with. Doesn't it need to precede 'destinations' as unless those challenges are met, many of the destinations won't occur?

I try to apply a SWOT analysis in these contexts. Assume you are familiar with it. It's the acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

And ... be hard-hitting with challenges so that both the community and council will sit up and take notice.

Do appreciate you getting back to me.

Response

spur: has edited both the "Vision on a page" and master document in response to the citizen's feedback.

Of note:

- A "barriers" layer has been added to the vision on the page to make it clearer that achieving the vision faces myriad challenges both large and small. NB: specific challenges have not been included here as challenges are dynamic and change depending on context, people, and time.
- A section on barriers has been added to Page 24 of the master document outlining what barriers are.

Feedback 3

Date	16th September
Feedback from	Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF)
Feedback via	Email

Message

VFF Submission to Mansfield Shire · Mansfield Community Vision 2040

The Mansfield branch of the Victorian Farmers Federation represents the interest of farmers in the Mansfield Shire. Our members business's cover the following:

- Cattle
- Sheep meat
- Wool
- Grass seed
- Horticulture
- Viticulture
- Hay production
- Milking goats

The Mansfield Shire has a vibrant and progressive agriculture sector, rich in history with industry leading operations in its mix. As in most shires, the agricultural industry is largely taken for granted. They are not seen as “new and cutting edge” in comparison to other sectors such as tourism and the economic benefit they bring to the shire is generally underestimated.

Agriculture in the Mansfield area generates significant inflows of revenue to the shire and is a major source of employment. According to the 2016 census, the single largest industry of employment in the Mansfield Shire is agriculture, employing some 620 people which is 30% more than the next largest industry being tourism (accommodation and food services) at 478 people.

Farming businesses in the shire also play a unique role in enabling and enhancing the potential for lifestyle tourism and related business that set up in the Mansfield Shire by maintaining the rural amenity that is so valued by visitors to the area.

Our vision for the shire is one where all industry sectors are recognised, supported and valued and the role that the farming sector has in enhancing and managing the rural amenity is understood and acknowledged through appropriate planning regulation.

The Mansfield VFF would like to highlight the following issues that farmers believe are important in our vision for the Shire in 2040.

1. Planning.

The VFF believe that farmland should be appropriately valued by the community and protected accordingly from inappropriate subdivision and development. Part of the attraction of the area to visitors and people looking to reside in the area is the scenic beauty of the district. Farming land is key to that. Inappropriate subdivision of rural land will ultimately destroy that natural advantage that the shire has over other areas. The planning scheme should be rigorously adhered to including continued application of the ridge line development rules.

More specifically the VFF sees the need for a planning system that:

- Not only protects agricultural land but facilitates growth in production through support of modern farming systems
- Ensures farmers right to farm is not eroded by secondary uses which create land use conflict
- Does not adversely impact the future growth of farming enterprises through non-agricultural land uses (including dwellings not used in conjunction with agriculture) and fragmentation by subdivision
- Specifically ensure that all land holders, including absentee, control weeds, pests and vermin.
- Ensure that overlay controls have considered impacts on agricultural use and are designed within the purpose of the zone

2. Right to farm.

The VFF would like to see that the Mansfield Shire ensures planning, environment and other regulatory systems do not adversely impact the ongoing and productive use of farmland or the ability of farmers to use new production systems, technology or genetics.

The VFF advocates that Shire policies are underpinned by a 'Right to Farm' policy statement, as well as topic specific positions such as 'renewable energy' and 'native vegetation'.

The Right to Farm policy should bring together a collection of actions including:

- reinforcing rights and responsibilities
- establishing a baseline, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of land use conflicts
- strengthening land use planning
- ensuring ongoing reviews of relevant environmental planning instruments including consideration of options to ensure best land use outcomes and to minimise conflicts
- improving education and awareness on management of land use conflicts

3. Equitable rating strategy.

The VFF believe that the Mansfield Shire should continue to pursue an equitable rating strategy through adjustments to the differential to ensure that no single rating segment is disadvantaged due to sudden spikes in property values in that segment.

The Mansfield Shire should be aware of the financial pressure that increased rates have on the viability of farm businesses.

Response



In general, spur: believes the Mansfield Shire Community vision largely aligns with the feedback from the VFF. It is important to note that the feedback of the VFF largely falls into, what the vision document refers to as, “destinations” and “journeys”—i.e. where we want to get to as a community and how we’ll get there. The purpose of the vision is to clearly articulate the destinations, with the journeys outlined in shorter term plans such as the Council Plan, etc. Therefore, it is important to separate VFF’s journeys from destinations. For example:

“The VFF believe that farmland should be appropriately valued by the community and protected accordingly from inappropriate subdivision and development. Part of the attraction of the area to visitors and people looking to reside in the area is the scenic beauty of the district.”

Becomes:

Destinations	Journeys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland appropriately valued by the community • Scenic beauty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection from inappropriate development

Spur: believes these destinations are reflected in the vision’s principles of environment and place, and prosperity and economy.

 <p>Environment and place</p>	 <p>Prosperity and economy</p>
<p>Mansfield Shire's environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is rich in flora and fauna. • Has a unique character connected to its roots. • Has open spaces for all of community. • Has clean air, water, and land. 	<p>Mansfield Shire's prosperity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is contributed to by all. • Is resilient and diversified. • Enables opportunity and choice throughout whole-of-life. • Equitably benefits all.

Feedback 4

The following feedback from community is all based around a similar theme, therefore the messages have been combined into a single section.

Date	September (various)
Feedback from	Various
Feedback via	Engage Mansfield

Messages

Message #1:

“We strongly support the need for an Indoor Aquatic Centre in Mansfield. While such a facility is essential to secure the water safety of future generations, it is equally important for older people to maintain their health and welfare, and to secure appropriate access to physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.”

Message #2:

https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/50110/

[RLS_NationalDrowningReport2021_LR.pdf](#)

“As a parent of 4 young children and local small business owner of support services for people living with a disability, I plead Council to implement all means necessary to provide the local community with all year round Indoor Aquatic Centre ASAP!

Each of our four children started swimming lessons before 12months of age at George's Fish School. This decision was based out of equipping our children with the knowledge of water safety as early as possible due to the lifestyle we are blessed to have living in the High Country with all types of water activities at our fingertips - lakes, dams, rivers, boating activities and backyard pools. At age 2, our eldest now 8 years of age, fell into a pool, I was already in the pool and in a position to reach her, but due to my confidence in her water safety education at George's Fish School, I decided to let her put her training into practice and she did exactly that! I was ready to aide her any second that she showed any sign of stress but I didn't need to, she did every thing that she had been taught and got herself back to the edge and to safety at age 2 and a half! Her water safety education could of saved her life that day if no one had seen her fall in. Our local children currently do not have access to this type of education.

Our youngest is now 2 and there is no way he would be able to save himself in the same situation that his sister found herself in at the same age. I am concerned for the development of my children's swimming ability since not being able access local swimming lessons on a regular weekly/fortnightly basis. Living in such an area as the Mansfield Shire, we should be made aware that the Royal Life Saving National

Drowning 2021 report has found that the highest number of drownings occurred in rivers/lakes (fresh waterway types) and the second highest type of activity was boating!

As a Support Worker for people living with a disability in the local Mansfield Shire, the positives of an Indoor Aquatic Centre extend further than water safety, these include but are definitely not limited to:

- <https://autismswim.com.au/2019/08/18/some-of-the-many-benefits-of-swimming-and-aquatic-therapy-for-those-with-asd-other-abilities/>
- <https://cerebralpalsy.org.au/our-research/about-cerebral-palsy/interventions-and-therapies/hydrotherapy-for-adolescents-and-adults/#:~:text=While%20a%20person%20with%20cerebral%20palsy%20is%20recovering,circulation%2C%20reduce%20their%20muscle%20spasms%20and%20relieve%20pain>

Please consider such a service being made available for those who need such a resource for their health and wellbeing as well as medical needs.”

Message #3:

“The town is in desperate need of the year round aquatic center! It is long overdue and would be such a huge asset for our town.

It's so important to teach our kids to swim especially in our shire where we have creeks, rivers, the lakes and farm dams. Currently the only option in town is the council pool which is only open seasonally which is not conducive to having swim lessons for children year round or for younger babies. This means parents have to take their children all the way to Benalla to access a year round heated pool with year round lessons. While doing that they purchase fuel and shopping in Benalla which takes away opportunities for our local businesses.

An aquatic center doesn't only benefit children and their swim lessons, it would benefit the whole town by being able to be used for rehabilitation, disabled people, swimming for seniors and exercise for all. It would also be a great asset year round for a place for people to enjoy and exercise without having to worry about weather conditions.

It would add another place for visitors to enjoy while they visit our town. I can guarantee an indoor aquatic center would be busy all the time in Mansfield!

Please do consider having enough parking and safety around the parking area so everyone in our community is kept safe.”

Message #4:

“The vision is excellent. The key features for me are an Aquatic Centre that meets the needs of all children as swimming is a vital skill as well as recreational activity. It is a way of keeping teenagers fit and socially engaged. It should also meet the needs of the elderly, the disabled and those needing rehabilitation. An indoor heated pool benefits everyone in the Mansfield Shire.

In terms of infrastructure planning, some things need to be considered right now while housing development is surging ahead. Walking and bike paths need to be included by developers so that there is access to all parts of the township without the need for a car. Children should be encouraged to ride bikes and be able to walk safely, crossing as few major roads as possible. This is particularly important in a town that has a severe shortage of properly surfaced footpaths.”

Message #5:

“I have a 5 year old and three year old, since they were babies we have regularly used a privately run business in town for swimming lessons. Because of this service my children have begun developing their swimming ability. Without this service their skills would be far less progressed.

Since this pools closure, we have been privileged enough to travel to Benalla's aquatic centre for swimming lessons, however, I feel this is not accessible to all families and many of Mansfield's children are not learning vital swimming skills.

As well as the importance of teaching children to swim, adults of all ages would benefit from an indoor aquatic centre, for enjoyment, rehab, exercise, social interaction and improved mental health.

Message #6:

“My family and I would utilise an indoor aquatic facility for the following purposes:

- Recreation for my two teenage children;
- Employment opportunities for my two teen age children;
- Triathlon and open water swimming events training;
- To provide swimming lessons to the wider community, I am a teacher of swimming and water safety;
- To ultimately become a Hydrotherapy provider (therefore we need a hydro pool to provide this service);
- My youngest son would like to join Mansfield Swim Club
- When my family visits.

With an indoor aquatic centre our Shire will save lives:

Royal Life Saving Society Australia National Drowning Report 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

- drowning deaths totalling 294
- near drownings 674 an increase by 20% on the previous year
- the most of any age group Rivers remain the leading location for drownings.
- Deaths among children aged 0-4 years increased by 9% compared with the 10-year average and most concerning 108% compared with last year
- 0-4 years 8 drowned in swimming pools, 7 in lakes and dams, 1 in a river

- 80% of all deaths were male
- Spikes in drownings occurred directly after lockdowns.

Royal Life Saving Society Australia – Benchmarking Australian Childrens’ swimming and water safety skills: Swim school data Part 1 5-12 years 2017

- 50% of primary school leavers where not reaching set benchmarks in stroke development and
- 68% were not able to tread water for two minutes
- Figures are still relevant due to the pandemic”

Message #7:

“We moved here a few years ago and found it really difficult to get my son swimming lessons as George’s Fish was the only pool in operation all year round. We were on the waiting list for about a year as it was so booked out, and unfortunately my son only got to attend for one term before it closed down. It is imperative that Mansfield have an aquatic centre... the children need to learn about water safety & obtain life saving skills whilst also having the opportunity to engage with members of the community. Thank you.”

Message #8:

“I moved to Mansfield 6 years ago with a baby and a toddler. Our property like many others who live here has a dam and a creek. The lifestyle in our district is all about enjoying our beautiful rivers, lakes and swimming holes, and cooling off in backyard pools. Every kid (and adult!) deserves the opportunity to thrive safely in this environment.

There was no public indoor year-round pool on offer but my kids were lucky enough to learn water safety and skills in that window that George’s Fish was open. We now drive the 1.5hr round trip every Saturday to Benalla so they can continue their journey to being confident and safe swimmers.

So what about those who understandably don’t want to or can’t make that trip one day a week? By the way, there is no chance I would have done this with pre-schoolers – naps, nappies and the very real chance they wouldn’t get in the water when we got there!

This is a whole generation of well-meaning families who simply don’t have a year-round comfortable and convenient option to make sure their kids are water safe. And beyond this, individuals who would like to or need to swim regularly for fitness, recovery and/or mental health.

If as a community we are trying to make sure the people of Mansfield are physically and mentally healthy, are happy and comfortable, safe and secure AND connected to each other, we really fall well short of this without a year-round pool on offer. It’s about supporting that vision but mostly it’s now about saving lives.”

Message #9:

“We need an all year round aquatic centre to ensure all of the children can swim, it’s a life skill. We also need a hydro pool for our ageing population to help with mobility so that they can stay fit and in their own homes for as long as they would like to.”

Message #10:

I strongly advocate for a year round indoor aquatic centre for the health and well being of community members. The indoor aquatic centre would provide a centre for children to learn to swim. This is critical to reduce the number of drownings in regional Victoria. It would also provide a safe and appropriate centre for exercise for adults and teenagers alike, particularly for people who benefit from non-weight bearing exercise, such as myself. The centre could also incorporate a hydrotherapy pool for people with chronic health conditions and for people recovering from surgery. The centre would also provide job opportunities, too.

Message #11:

As I grow older I am sure I will be in need of more health and wellbeing services that can be provided by council and other health organisations. I feel an indoor aquatic centre would benefit the community - right across all age groups - particularly those in need of hydrotherapy and aquatic exercise classes as well as the younger generations in learning to swim and water safety. Safe walking trails for exercise are also very important - therefore I agree with the footpath renewal project as present - tripping for older people can lead to broken bones - and even death as a result so this is also of great importance. A healthy community leads to growth and wellbeing for all residents, from newborns to the very elderly. Council's vision will only be realised if it has the community support.

Message #12:

I am a citizen in this shire and to assist me with my arthritis suffering I decide to join Aqua Aerobics firstly at the Farmhouse and when that closed Cass Pentony opened her swim school for the people to continue with this exercise. It helped me immensely. I was getting the exercise I needed to keep moving and to assist with pain management.

It is a non weight bearing exercise for joints and wonderful for a cardio workout, and provide rehabilitation after surgery. The benefits are endless.

We were all extremely disappointed when George’s Fish closed. To have an all year round Aquatic Centre in Mansfield would be so beneficial to all citizens young and old.

Message #13:

Our community would make great use of a facility like this. Kids learning to swim, older people safely exercising, therapeutic recovery from injury, fitness training, water aerobics - the uses are many. We have needed a year round Indoor Aquatic Centre for a long time and our community is only getting larger.

Message #14:

Mansfield has needed a facility like this for years. Kids swimming, swimming club, therapeutic health sessions, hydrotherapy, safe and fun exercise for the elderly, water aerobics, fitness swimming sessions, the list of uses is long. It is a sporting facility that all parts of our community would find extremely useful and beneficial. I hope it will happen.

Message #15:

We have driven to Benalla three times a week to use their pool for many years. This has become impossible for obvious reasons, and it leaves a large gap in our lives. An Aquatic Centre in Mansfield would be wonderful.

spur: response

The community is clearly extremely passionate about a year-round, heated public pool. Similar to the the VFF's feedback, it's important to separate destinations from journeys. The scope of a vision isn't to focus on individual item, rather it is to describe the state of the community in 2040. Therefore, although the specific request to build a pool falls outside the remit of a vision, it is critical to note the the alignment between the vision and why the community says a pool is needed. Many of the submissions above speak to: mental health, physical health, accessibility, equitable infrastructure. These are reflected within the current vision which provide credence to the submissions' arguments by demonstrating how a pool aligns to the vision.