



Community comments on the draft Council Plan 2021-2025

Feedback 1:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Council Plan/MHWPPlan 2021 – 2025.

I will take the opportunity to make the following suggestions for a happier, healthier, safer, smarter and more sustainable Shire.

1 HAPPIER MANSFIELD

From personal experience in Bhutan, I have learnt that a whole national government agenda can be organised around the real tool of a GNH (not the more traditional tool of a GNP.) Gross National Happiness works. All policies are measured against it, If the policy doesn't promote community happiness and add to quality of life and the environment, it doesn't get up.

Planning for GNH starts with the planning department.

Good planning, good outcomes.

Good planning needs to be years ahead of what's happening on the ground.

Good planning needs to be preventative, otherwise there will be development outcomes that are ban for health, the environment, safety and happiness.

1. Strategic Planning: I would like particularly to comment on the content of P20 under:

*Strategic Objective 3 Future focused: Intelligent land use and infrastructure
Strategy 3.1 Protect natural vistas and farmlets Strategy 3.2 Enhance township character Strategy 3.3 Improve roads, drainage and footpaths f Strategy 3.4 Plan for and encourage appropriate housing*

In a rapidly growing shire (2.5 x regional average) getting strategic planning right will be imperative to 'protect unique characteristics of Mansfield Shire townships' (and farmland), and the emphasis given to this in the plan will be very helpful in guiding future decision making.

2. HEALTHIER MANSFIELD

MHWPlan: :The figures on family violence, smoking, and alcohol related harm (all above the state average) are worrying. They are difficult to 'solve' at Local Government level, but highlight the importance of Mansfield Shire's promotion and endorsement of GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS

as the assessment and planning tool for planning and development.

Examples experienced recently in Mansfield:

Are the following going to make Mansfield healthier?

Fast food drive through?

A fast flo diesel bowser 5 metres from a resident's fence?

A town Center hotel offering gambling and poker machines to passers by?

3. SAFER MANSFIELD

MEP: Further consideration could be given to the wording regarding an Emergency Services Precinct on P17. The current ambulance service crisis cannot be solved from the current ambulance premises. The Saleyards site has been supported again and again by the SES membership as the best location for the SES. The CFA premises, while currently 'adequate' will not, in say, ten years be large enough. Similarly, the fact that the Police Station is inadequate for a 24 hour presence is, and will increasingly, put our growing community at risk. The wording:

'Determine the need and scope for a Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct ... (Our Role) ..Partner'

.. is a statement that lies well behind the position that is now well established in the community and in its Emergency Services sector regarding both 'need' (established) and 'scope' (SES and ambulance, with CFA and /or VicPol to follow 'as needed' in the medium term future). The statement is too weak to enable Council to adequately advocate and activate this need with the relevant state government instrumentalities, most especially Ambulance Victoria, who will do nothing given the chance that such a statement affords. The 'need' is established by both the SES need to rebuild on an agreed site, and the ambulance growing imperative to move to an adequate (co-located) site. There are numerous examples of such co-located facilities around the state. This should now be at the stage of political activism, not prevarication, and the Plan should underpin a much stronger and realistic Council position.

There is no support in the community for a site other than the Saleyards and this should be clarified within the Plan. The Shire is currently in the process of planning for 2040. Our established understanding of the emergency needs of the future need much greater strength within the wording of the Plan.

Strategic Objective 8 states:

Advocate for the delivery of projects such as the Lake Eildon Masterplan, Mansfield Station Precinct, Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct, Lakins Road Industrial Precinct, a Year-around Aquatic Facility in Mansfield, Lords Reserve Community Hub and redevelopment of the Resource Recovery Centre... Advocate ..

This is more in line with where the Plan should be taking us .. ie: '*Advocate for the delivery of .. the MEP*'. It is, at face value, at odds with, or at least inconsistent with '*determine if the need for .. an MEP*' above. The 'need' and 'scope' are both already well established.

4. SMARTER MANSFIELD

Take more opportunities to apply for funding for projects that increase knowledge and awareness of the region, that will in turn make Mansfield a centre of knowledge and excellence.

The ongoing development of the historic precinct at the Station, is an apt example.

5. A MORE SUSTAINABLE MANSFIELD

Environmental Sustainability: Similarly, the emphasis given to environmental issues (*Strategic Objective 4* and most particularly Council's advocacy for the Local Power Plan (as listed) is important, so that Ratepayers can see Council taking a lead position on sustainability and energy generation.

Using planning to avoid fast food drive through litter sources in the shire.

Mansfield is a hub to the environment, not a stop off on an interstate highway.

Litter will be taken to every extreme of our mountains, lakes and rivers.

Yours Sincerely,

Feedback 2:

Draft Council Plan 2021-2025 Incorporating Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

I commend Council and staff on the plan with its fresh language and focus on community wellbeing as well as the protection of liveability and the sustainability of the natural beauty and amenity of the district. I am very reassured to read that Council sees its role, in partnership, to protect, improve and promote the health and wellbeing of the community.

That statement should be prominent in all communications and, where appropriate, in council signage.

In the face of a proposed 'revamp' of state planning laws, I believe that it is imperative that Council acts immediately to adopt documentation such as this that will protect the "local" values and aspirations that have served Mansfield so well and set it apart as being different from so many other rural municipalities.

I would like to make the following comments on the draft document:

Our Shire

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The statement fails to mention the Education Sector when referring to the Shire economy. This is a serious omission given that for four decades Mansfield has been fortunate to host a diverse and large education base that actually attracts people to come and live here for that reason. From pre-school to secondary level there is a remarkable choice of public and private education options including Steiner primary and secondary, residential autism care, bush campuses for Geelong Grammar and Lauriston, The Farm kindergarten, state primary and secondary schools and Catholic primary. This does not include the seasonal visitation of statewide school groups to our 'outdoor classroom'. The proposed multi-million-dollar development at Mansfield Autism Statewide Services will trigger a major injection into the local economy on many fronts and a serious boost in Mansfield's population. The benefits to our shire from this alone are extraordinary and sustainable.

I would suggest that the Education Sector in Mansfield is probably the biggest employer with the flow-on of benefits to escalate dramatically. It deserves prominent billing when discussing Mansfield's economy, especially as it is an 'industry' that leaves a soft imprint on the environment with minimal cost to the shire.

Theme 1: Connected & Healthy Community

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Determine the need states the obvious. The ambulance and SES facilities are currently below standard and technically unsafe. It should state:

Confirm the need . . . Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct.

Page 18. Initiatives

Tourism strategies have been ongoing for four decades. Mansfield tourism is now at a more mature stage and needs to be managed as a priority.

It should state: **Develop a Tourism Management Strategy**

Theme 2: Vibrant Liveability

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Strategic Objective 3

Intelligent land use and infrastructure

Suggest: **Sustainable** land use and infrastructure

Initiatives

Develop planning scheme amendments that protect vistas **and land conservation**, along with.

Forge and nurture smart partnerships that contribute to **enhanced natural beauty**

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Foster community access to the benefits of the Local Power . . . instead of encourage

NB: There is no reference to water management, availability, recycling etc in relation to sustainability. I think it should be referenced in this document as water is a big issue.

How we'll know we've been successful

I do not agree with the target of increasing the Number of Visitors to the Mansfield Shire until we can manage and provide services for our existing population and visitation. This opened-ended strategy would be poor planning practice and unsustainable, creating more problems that compound and impact on liveability for all.

I suggest:

Number of Visitors to the Mansfield Shire: Develop a strategy to manage tourism visitation with appropriate services and facilities

Finally and importantly, I also suggest that we develop a liveability/wellbeing tool so that we can measure if the council has been successful. The factors that should be assessed include:

Community - Environment - Psychological Wellbeing - Health - Living Standards – Economy - Social Support - Life Satisfaction – Work – Tourism - Learning, Arts & Culture.

For example: Residents of 13 local government areas that make up Central Victorian Goldfields recently participated in an online survey, The Happiness Index. It is based on a Bhutanese model designed with Oxford University and devised by The Happiness Alliance, a non-profit organisation which promotes individual happiness and community wellbeing. The model is recognised by the OECD as best practice and is being used as a positive management tool worldwide by communities who have high visitation rates. Its aim is to strengthen destination sustainability and the quality of life of the host community based on data collected in surveys. Survey questions on the tourism sector are detailed and relevant. More information is available on these sites.

<https://www.ourheritageourhappiness.org/>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42413-019-00038-6>

<https://www.ourheritageourhappiness.org/how.html>

Mansfield Council already conducts satisfaction surveys and may not be ready to take the step described above at this stage.

But, as an initial step, the current survey tool could be expanded to cover the factors mentioned above, providing important data to ensure council can safeguard community wellbeing as well as sustainability of the attractions that bring people to Mansfield.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Good luck.

Feedback 3:

To: Mansfield Shire Council

7/9/2021

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Council Plan/MHWBPlan 2021 – 2025. Congratulations to staff and Council for a very clear and forward-thinking document.

This submission has a couple of suggestions for amendments to the Draft for Council to consider and a couple of comments that could be seen more as a natural consequence of the Draft's aspirations.

1. Strategic Planning: I would like particularly to comment on the content of P20 under:

Strategic Objective 3 Future focused: Intelligent land use and infrastructure Strategy 3.1 Protect natural vistas and farmlets Strategy 3.2 Enhance township character Strategy 3.3 Improve roads, drainage and footpaths f Strategy 3.4 Plan for and encourage appropriate housing

In a rapidly growing shire (2.5 x regional average) getting strategic planning right will be imperative to 'protect unique characteristics of Mansfield Shire townships' (and farmland), and the emphasis given to this in the plan will be very helpful in guiding future decision making.

2. Environmental Sustainability: Similarly, the emphasis given to environmental issues (*Strategic Objective 4*) and most particularly Council's advocacy for the Local Power Plan (as listed) is important, so that Ratepayers can see Council taking a lead position on sustainability and energy generation.
3. MHWPlan: : The figures on family violence, smoking, and alcohol related harm (all above the state average) are worrying. They are difficult to 'solve' at Local Government level, but highlight the importance of local government's 'engagement' in the health and well-being initiatives listed under Theme 1 (Connected and Healthy Community). It is good to see these given due emphasis.
4. Grants / Staff: Strategic Objective 7. '*Grow other revenue through grant applications*'

This objective raises an interesting conundrum. While it may seem possible to cut costs by sourcing outside funding for social projects and infrastructure, in fact, such '*other revenue*' can/will only be sourced (and, even more importantly projects delivered on time and on budget) by a strong, skilled, well-resourced and motivated workforce. The health and well-being, and infrastructure initiatives listed in the Draft Plan will only happen / succeed if staffing levels are maintained at a level which can source 'value for money' by successful grant applications, and then successfully 'deliver' the initiatives listed within the Draft Plan. This goes to the issue of recurrent revenue (as distinct from grant revenue) and can be considered in the short and long term.

Short term: Staff costs are always an LGA's major recurrent expenditure line item. Staffing levels to achieve the advocacy and delivery which the Draft Plan aspires to (without a revolving door of 'burnt-out' staff) will only be achieved by maintaining and strengthening the shire's (recurrent revenue) rate base.

Long term: While the above may fluctuate somewhat year by year, Councillors should continue to give due consideration to the long term consequences (to future Councils) of any failure to maintain the rate base (as allowed under rate capping) to protect the shire's future as it grows, and its ability to deliver on its future social and infrastructure needs.

5. MEP: Further consideration could be given to the wording regarding an Emergency Services Precinct on P17. The current ambulance service crisis cannot be solved from the current ambulance premises. The Saleyards site has been supported again and again by the SES membership as the best location for the SES. The CFA premises, while currently 'adequate' will not, in say, ten years be large enough. Similarly, the fact that the Police Station is inadequate for a 24 hour presence is, and will increasingly, put our growing community at risk. The wording:

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Necessarily, submissions tend to concentrate on suggestions for changes in the Plan, rather than points of agreement. There is, however, much to like about the Plan's aspirations and goals.

Yours Sincerely,

Feedback 4:

Continue to work on the Community Themes especially of connectivity of people and improving paths and facilities in all Community locations