

# DOOKIE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2026



## Introduction To Our Community Plan

Since June 2002, residents of Dookie and District have played an active role in shaping the future of their community. This marked the creation of the district's first Community Plan, developed through local consultation, and the formation of the Dookie and District Development Forum (DDDF), a group of locals to ensure the success of the plan. From this foundation, a range of projects were initiated, some successfully completed, while others naturally evolved or became less relevant as community priorities changed.

A decade later, in 2012, further consultation ensured the plan continued to reflect the needs and aspirations of the people of Dookie and District. Building on this process the 2017 plan provided another opportunity to align community goals with emerging challenges and opportunities.

Following a new round of consultation, we present the 2026 Community Plan. This updated plan will guide the work of the Dookie and District Development Forum over the coming years. To remain responsive, the Action Plan (included at the end of this document) will be reviewed annually, ensuring that actions continue to reflect the evolving needs of our community.

We invite you to explore this plan, share in its vision, and consider joining the Committee to help bring these aspirations to life.



### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Without the hard work of the committee and residents of Dookie and District, the creation of this plan would not have been possible.

## Our Vision

### **“Dookie and District – A Community Going Forward”**

While our actions and priorities may have changed over the past several years, our commitment to our original vision has not: we believe that Dookie is inclusive and provides a future for everyone – whether you’re newly arrived or as ingrained into the landscape as our rolling hills. We also continually strive to make Dookie a unique and vibrant place.

**A Future for Everyone** – a progressive community working towards a sustainable environmental, social and economic future for all.

Key Features include:

- A connected, cooperative, happy and safe community
- A community supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for new businesses
- A model of best possible land management

**A Unique and Vibrant Place** – a district recognised as unique and vibrant by its distinctive natural features, a mix of community activities for all ages, progressive agricultural production, small business opportunities and a well utilised university campus.

Key Features include:

- Integrated campus and town community
- Hills, red soil and the colours of the seasons
- Variety of enterprises and community activities



## Our Demographics

The following table provides a snapshot of Dookie’s demographic profile based on the 2021 Census, highlighting key social and economic characteristics of the township.”

Category	Data (2021 Census)
Population	333 people
Gender Split	Male: 48.2% / Female 51.8%
Median Age	48 years
Age Distribution	0–17 years: 27.5%, 18–64 years: 42.6%, 65+ years: 29.9%
Families	96 families
Households	151 private dwellings
First Nations Population	2.4% (8 people) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
Country of Birth	87.7% born in Australia, Top overseas birthplaces: England (2.1%), New Zealand (1.2%), Netherlands (0.9%)
Language Spoken at Home	93.6% speak only English at home, Other languages: Dutch, German, Italian are represented in small numbers

## Our Plan

In updating our plan, Dookie District Development Forum wanted to get as much input from the Dookie and District community as possible. We realised the importance of giving every resident in the area a chance to have their say and guide the future direction of the region.

- The action plan was posted on the community Facebook page and people provided feedback
- A copy was attached in the Saddleback News, a local monthly newsletter
- Two letterbox drops occurred
- Local service clubs and organisations were approached by Dookie and District Development Forum members to increase survey participation.
- The DDDF hosted a BBQ where printed copies of the draft action plan were distributed, and feedback was collated through conversations and people providing their input on sticky notes and butcher’s paper – over 50 participants attended.

## What We Heard from the Community

We had a great response from the community, both in terms of the quantity of feedback received and the quality of feedback. This feedback allowed us to see if the actions contained within the 2017 Dookie Community Plan were still current, as well as gather new actions that are pertinent to the area going forward. As per previous Dookie and District Community Plans, we have divided the actions up into five pillars. These pillars include:

1. Social – projects and events that increase social connectedness in the town
2. Economic – actions that can stimulate our local economy and drive business
3. Built – buildings, facilities and services that are important to our continued well-being and growth
4. Natural/Environment – ways in which we can increase the enjoyment of our natural environment
5. Advocacy – promoting community interests through active engagement and representation

### **Social**

- Increased activity at the Dookie College Campus incorporating the local community
- Develop the Dookie Website
- Delivery of community support services

### **Economic**

- Overnight parking for RV vehicles and other opportunities to improve visitation to Dookie
- Support and maintain local businesses
- Promote and support Dookie Arts projects, festivals and events to promote tourism in Dookie

### **Built**

- Rail Trail and walking trails
- Improve the aesthetics of the town entrance & surroundings of Dookie
- Development of facilities for youth, including the Dookie Youth Spot (stage 4)

### **Natural/Environment**

- Continue to support Dookie Life active in delivery of projects that focus on enhancing the environment, art and community

### **Advocacy**

- Dookie War Memorial Site Expansion
- Continue to advocate for the Primary School and Dookie Kindergarten
- Sewerage – Sustainable water management plan that addresses grey, black and storm water

# Dookie Community Action Plan 2026

## Built

Enhance infrastructure and built environment to support community needs and sustainability.

Priority	Actions	Partnerships
Rail Trail and walking trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress with Stage 3 of the Rail Trail to Cosgrove/ Cosgrove golf course to provide rail trail linkage to Shepparton as well as access to Cosgrove-Caniambo Road.</li> <li>• Liaise with Moira Shire to continue advocating for Rail Trail from their municipality</li> <li>• Investigate installation of tie-up rails and a water trough for horses (near the exercise station)</li> <li>• Continue to seek additional places for inclusion in Dookie Walking Trails including Dookie Bushland Reserve &amp; Lime Kilns, Boxwood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends of the Rail Trail Community</li> <li>• Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>• Moira Shire</li> <li>• State Government</li> <li>• Federal Government (funding)</li> </ul>
Improve the aesthetics of the town entrance & surrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve vegetation plantings or develop alternative infrastructure, signage or sculptures to frame the entrances into Dookie.</li> <li>• Seek funding opportunities to undertake improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to support and develop unused/ degraded Bush and Rail Reserves in the town and surrounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dookie Life</li> <li>• Local farmers</li> <li>• Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>• Local Community groups</li> </ul>
Development of facilities for youth, including the Dookie Youth SPOT (Stage 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing the development of Youth SPOT and improved parking facilities.</li> <li>• Explore the possibility of including a botanical garden at the SPOT.</li> <li>• Inclusion of free public WiFi (available to both SPOT and CWA Gardens patrons).</li> <li>• Continue to advocate for increased usage of the stage as an arts/entertainment venue in Dookie.</li> <li>• Shade Sail at the Youth Spot or Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPOT committee</li> <li>• Ramp it Up Committee</li> <li>• Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>• Recreation Reserve Committee</li> <li>• Telstra</li> </ul>

## Advocacy

Promote community interests through active engagement and representation.

Priority	Actions	Partnerships
Dookie War Memorial Site Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide support to RSL where appropriate</li> <li>Support the expansion of the war memorial site to adjacent land, including future redevelopment of cenotaph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSL</li> <li>Scouts Victoria</li> <li>Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>Lions Club</li> </ul>
Continue to advocate for the Primary School and Dookie Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enquire about the process and advocate to reinstate Kindergarten providing support where necessary</li> <li>Continue to support the Primary School where appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kindergarten</li> <li>Dookie Primary School</li> <li>Department of Education</li> </ul>
Sewerage - Sustainable water management plan that addresses grey, black and storm water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to advocate to Goulburn Valley Water and Council.</li> <li>Investigate and promote information on alternative environmentally friendly sewerage disposal systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>Goulburn Valley Water</li> <li>Local groups/clubs</li> <li>University of Melbourne Dookie Campus</li> </ul>

## Environment

Increase the enjoyment of our natural environment

Priority	Actions	Partnerships
Continuing to support Dookie Life in delivery of projects that focus on enhancing the environment, art and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and build on a ‘think tank’ of project ideas that support the goal of Dookie Life.</li> <li>• Seek funding opportunities to deliver on project concepts across a range of funding sources.</li> <li>• Develop projects and opportunities that bring the community together in celebration of environment, arts and place.</li> <li>• Work with Goulburn Murray Landcare Network to deliver biodiversity outcomes and greater awareness on farms and our local roadsides and reserves</li> <li>• Develop a street market concept for Dookie that may include collaboration with other events, i.e. Secret Garden.</li> <li>• Develop a liaison/ advisory committee between University of Melbourne &amp; Dookie Life to improve communications and to have an active voice in management of environmental assets held by the University.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community groups/clubs</li> <li>• University of Melbourne</li> <li>• Goulburn Murray Landcare Network.</li> <li>• Greater Shepparton City Council</li> </ul>

## Economic

Support local economic development and employment opportunities.

Priority	Actions	Partnerships
Overnight parking for RV vehicles & other opportunities to improve visitation to Dookie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate requirements for overnight stays and preferred location.</li> <li>• Source any required funding and permissions/ permits required.</li> <li>• Discuss with other small towns their methodology for monitoring/ managing short term stays in their towns.</li> <li>• Promotion of events and Dookie experiences in RV and other tourist publications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dookie Recreational Reserve Committee</li> <li>• Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>• Marketing bodies</li> <li>• Small RV friendly towns</li> </ul>

Support and maintain local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote local business to the broader community and region.</li> <li>Maintain vibrant local businesses and assist with the start-up of new businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>Tourism Victoria</li> </ul>
Promote and support Dookie Arts projects, festivals and events to promote tourism in Dookie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek support to facilitate successful events</li> <li>Seek funding opportunities and partnerships to attract and deliver projects.</li> <li>Provide facilities and events that attract visitors to the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>Tourism Victoria</li> <li>State Government (Arts Victoria)</li> <li>Local groups/clubs</li> </ul>

## Social

Foster social inclusion, wellbeing, and community connectedness.

Priority	Actions	Partnerships
Increased activity at the Dookie College Campus incorporating the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach university to investigate possible activities or events</li> <li>Advocate for public use of the facilities at the campus, such as the swimming pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Melbourne</li> <li>Local groups/clubs</li> </ul>
Dookie Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek funding to develop a website that can be used to promote Dookie experiences and events</li> <li>Implement a process for ongoing management of the website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dookie Life</li> <li>Greater Shepparton City Council</li> </ul>
Delivery of community support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a strategy for elderly housing/accommodation</li> <li>Develop Town Services Hub at the Maternal Health Centre for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travelling practitioners</li> <li>Facilitated clinics for the elderly and residents with limited mobility</li> <li>Reinstate playgroup sessions for families</li> <li>A center for social engagement</li> <li>Provide space for community group meetings and events.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Shepparton City Council</li> <li>Local groups/clubs</li> <li>Neighborhood House Victoria</li> </ul>

## Implementation and Acknowledgement

The implementation of the Dookie and District Community Plan will require working in partnership with several stakeholders. Many of these partnerships have already been formed from previous years of action, so continuing to work together is crucial to the success of many of the projects listed in the Action Plan. Where required, DDDF will work with Council, State/Federal Government Departments, University of Melbourne and key community, business and industry groups. The listed priorities will require further research, planning, design and potential fundraising by the community to progress them further.

The community will be the sole driver of this plan: actions will be driven and advocated for by the Dookie and District Forum and the wider community. While DDDF are a strong and resourceful committee, DDDF are always open to welcoming new members and encourage everyone to get involved. Please contact us:

- Leigh Kildey – Chairperson – [kildeyleigh@gmail.com](mailto:kildeyleigh@gmail.com)
- Janet Batten – Secretary - [jbatten20@gmail.com](mailto:jbatten20@gmail.com)

