

**SHEPPARTON-MOOROOPNA 2050**

# **PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

OCTOBER 2018

GREATER  
SHEPPARTON



vpa  
Victorian Planning Authority

VICTORIA  
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# INTRODUCTION

## THE VPA'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is committed to undertaking robust and comprehensive engagement with community and other stakeholders on our projects. The VPA and Greater Shepparton City Council recognise that inclusion and engagement, particularly at the early and formative stages of this project, is vital to building and maintaining community trust and producing a better plan and outcome for the community. The VPA believes all voices contribute to good engagement practices, regardless of age, cultural background, gender or beliefs.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In association with council, the VPA is preparing the *Shepparton Mooroopna 2050 Regional City Growth Plan* (Growth Plan). The Growth Plan will provide long term guidance for future land use and strategic planning, investment decisions and approvals up to 2050 (Greater Shepparton City Council, 2018).



# PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

## ENGAGEMENT BACKGROUND

The St Mary's Primary School and Mooroopna Primary School engagement activity is part of a larger engagement process undertaken in the Shepparton–Mooroopna area involving a variety of stakeholders and community voices, including local primary and high schools, land owners, business owners, community groups and Landcare groups.

The ideas heard at the primary school engagement, in addition to other community voices, are intended to inform the Growth Plan drafted in partnership with the VPA and council.

The primary school engagement is a valuable element of the wider engagement process to capture the voices of younger generations in the community and hear feedback about what they love in their community and what they hope their community will be like when they are older. The key messages heard at the primary schools will be used to inform the wider initiatives of the Growth Plan to guide the future development of the region.

## ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

On Friday 20 July 2018, the VPA and council engaged with Year Five and Six primary school students from St Mary's Primary School and Mooroopna Primary School. The VPA and council worked with students from the Shepparton–Mooroopna area to find out what they currently love about Shepparton–Mooroopna and what they would love to see in the future.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of engaging with primary school students in the Shepparton–Mooroopna area were to:

- ascertain what the students love and value about their local area
- understand what is missing from the area, and
- discover what changes the students would like to see.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- 1 That the workshops receive strong student participation so that a good dataset is collected.
- 2 That students understand the basics of planning and why this work is occurring.
- 3 That students feel they can provide honest and creative feedback in a safe learning environment.

## ENGAGEMENT METHOD

The VPA and council met with 33 students across the two schools. The students' ages ranged from 10 to 12 years of age.

Representatives from council, the VPA and school teachers worked in teams of five at each of the engagement workshops. Each table worked through three activities in one hour with a facilitator at each table.

The activities included:

### ACTIVITY 1

What do students love about the Shepparton–Mooroopna area?

- Students were asked to stick post-it notes on an A1 map of Shepparton–Mooroopna demonstrating where areas of interest are in the community.

### ACTIVITY 2

What do students currently enjoy about the area and what could be improved in the future?

- Students were asked to stick images and words such as “more shade” or a picture of a playground in places that were identified as lacking.

### ACTIVITY 3

Imagining life in 2028

- Students were asked to write a postcard to a friend as if it were the year 2028, identifying what has changed and what they love about Shepparton–Mooroopna.

# WHAT WE HEARD

## THE STUDENTS' COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Key phrases and images included:

- open space and recreation
- places to learn
- colourful
- live music
- more trees
- pedestrian movement and transport, and
- community facilities and places to move and play.

## VISUAL EXAMPLES FROM THE STUDENTS





# KEY THEMES

There were five key themes that emerged through asking the students what they loved about the Shepparton–Mooroopna area and what they wanted to see in their community in the future.

## 1 ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION

There was overwhelming support from the students for the maintenance and improvement of sport and recreation facilities within the Shepparton–Mooroopna area. Many of the students highlighted the importance of outdoor activities as a pillar for facilitating both formal and informal social activities. Students mentioned adding small bridges for fishing or building a jetty to facilitate recreation along the Goulburn River.

The students expressed a love for the current sport facilities and highlighted the need to maintain and improve/upgrade sports facilities including netball, soccer, football, skateboarding, walking/running tracks and basketball. A basketball court, outdoor pool and soccer pitch for Mooroopna was also encouraged by the students.

Many of the students expressed an interest in having an outdoor cinema, outdoor activities like zip lining or a giant chalk board in town and an increase of social events including live music, showground shows or general entertainment at night. Lastly, there was large support for providing a 'teens' town' or an entertainment/hang out area for young adults aged from 11 to 15 years of age.

## 2 THE ARTS

A recurring theme throughout the engagement was improvement to arts and culture within the townships including street art and the Westside performing arts. Students appreciated the current 'MOOving art' and 'weird sculptures' throughout the community and wanted this kind of street art to be improved making the streetscape more 'colourful with street art, murals, statues and creativity'. Suggestions included painting the silos in town, drawing centres for kids and more art schools. The appreciation for arts and culture within the community was also reflected in students expressing desires for more live music and art shows.

### 3 OPEN SPACE

The students all loved the open spaces within the Shepparton–Mooroopna area including the Goulburn River, Ferrari Park and Victoria Park Lake. They enjoyed ‘the walking spaces and places to have picnics’, fishing and the walking and riding tracks in the region.

The students expressed a desire to clean up the Goulburn River and the parks in the community to improve river and environmental health. Students would love to see improved or new paths for walking around the lakes and parks including adding a walking track around the Craigmuir Lake. Increasing the amount of trees and vegetation and even the potential of creating a fauna park in Mooroopna was mentioned excitedly by the students.

### 4 BUILT FORM & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Elements of the built form which were appreciated by the students were the cafés such as Lemon Tree café, and Bill and Beats, the library, the TAFE, the swimming pool and the playground. Cosy cafés, green grass, parks, and trees were encouraged. A large emphasis was placed on improving the street lights within the town centres and there was frequent mention of improving the lighting along the causeway.

Students expressed a desire to improve and clean up old and/or dirty buildings but ‘not to make them bigger just nicer’ such as the Shepparton Hotel. A large proportion of students were keen to see the Mooroopna welcome sign improved to better reflect the community, and a hospital or medical centre in Mooroopna. Other facilities such as rentable bikes, a science museum, more schools and a public veggie patch were mentioned as key ideas to implement in the community.

### 5 SHOPPING & COMMERCIAL

Some of the students’ favourite elements of the town were the markets, showgrounds, cafés and shopping centres. They loved the food and wanted to see more variety and restaurants/cafés such as “Greek food” and “pizza” to bring people into Shepparton–Mooroopna to eat and enjoy the town.

Improving the “hang out” spaces near the theatre was an important point and introducing commercial shops such as Starbucks or 7-Eleven. Overall the students enjoyed the shopping spaces but wanted to see an improvement in the shops and the areas around the shopping centre.

## “IMAGINE LIFE IN 2028” POSTCARD ACTIVITY

The postcard activity was a huge success. The students shared creative and exciting ideas for the future of Shepparton–Mooroopna. The students visualised a well-connected and vibrant community that attracted lots of visitors and encouraged them to stay.

Many students wrote about trains that enabled their friends to visit them from Melbourne in under an hour. They visualised clean streets and upgraded buildings with lots of activities to do at night with a variety of shops and restaurants.

Additionally, many of the students mentioned clean rivers and more parks for outdoor activities, including upgraded sporting facilities. The students imagined a safe, colourful, vibrant and exciting Shepparton–Mooroopna with lots to do and a beautiful place to visit.

### Some examples from the students:

I am in mooroopna at the moment  
its awesome there is a ~~bike~~ track  
around the lake and a <sup>hoverboard</sup> gold stan  
cinema in shepparton I just  
went to a cattle show in  
shepp and the statue cows  
move like robots, it is awesome  
so much has changed

from Mason

mooroopna is soo cool. It has  
a great big skate park and  
a soccer pitch with a big grand  
stand. There is also a cool as  
pool. The bike paths are amazing  
with good lighting. Lots of shops  
are in the main street. More shows  
at the show grounds. There is  
a giant hotel.

from Darcy

Wow How good is Shepparton / Mooroopna  
now we've got free wifi, lighting on the  
~~footpath~~ footpath even a sandbank at the  
Lake. we have gold class cinema. At the  
moment they are building a massive footy facility wider  
roads. But my favourite things is everything.  
I hope we get Starbucks Taco bell and a lot.

from Liam

Word of advice, move back to Mooroopna.  
And if you don't want to move back to  
Mooroopna, move to Shepparton  
(they've got plenty of space for housing if you were  
to build). The streets are a lot safer now, no  
delinquents to worry about! And they're not only safer,  
they're brighter! There's colour! Murals, street-art,  
statues! Areas to relax, to pray, eat, listen to  
music, party, and just have fun! It's cleaner  
to! No more litter! And don't worry, we're  
still spacious! Please move back!

from Angus

We got a tree surfing place and a  
gangsta fun house for adults. We have  
a ~~big~~ outdoor door cinema. There is crazy  
art around the town. We have a big  
bright sign that says Welcome to Mooroopna  
and when you leave it says you should live  
here. We also have a Giant Potato with  
tree surfing and 20 different types of  
chips! We have a cat centre where you can  
play with cats or adopt them. No wonder I  
have 3 cats. **Opps!** See you at the  
Big Potato in a week.

from Your Friend

# EVALUATION

## WERE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ENGAGEMENT MET?

The objectives of the primary school student engagement were to collect a wide array of opinions and aspirations from Shepparton and Mooroopna primary school students to help inform the Growth Plan.

The objectives of providing creative and engaged responses from students were achieved. The diversity of activities provided both visual and written prompts, which made the engagement accessible and appealing. The feedback received was very insightful and well thought-out.

## REFLECTION AND REVIEW OF THE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The engagement was a successful process reaching a total of 33 students at St Mary's and Mooroopna Primary School. The students were engaged throughout the three activities and provided a wide array of responses and reflections about the Shepparton–Mooroopna area.

The range and complexity of activities that were undertaken during the engagement process were appropriate for students in year's four to seven. These age groups provided creative and well thought out responses. With age groups younger than year four, a different depth of response would be expected. There is potential to continue this activity with high school students.

The years five and six students' answers were imaginative yet realistic, which provided the VPA and council with exciting recommendations and suggestions for what the future of Shepparton–Mooroopna could look like. The VPA and council were able to capture this feedback and will use it to guide future planning in the area.

The teachers at both schools advised that they would continue the process with the rest of their students, reiterating the success of the engagement.

The success of the activity is reflected in the depth of responses. Many students enjoyed writing the areas that they liked in the town or what they would like to see in post it notes.

Most of the children also enjoyed writing their postcards, although some students struggled to comprehend who to address the postcard to as the instructions only stipulated "write to a friend". Once this confusion was overcome and a few examples were provided, students capably completed the exercise.

The size of the images in Activity 2 and the size of the map meant the visual representations were somewhat cluttered. There is an opportunity to make this clearer to help promote a greater understanding of exactly where students would like to see changes in the regions.

The students enjoyed the process and on reflection could have benefitted from exploring their thoughts deeper for a fourth activity. However, the hour session was sufficient in providing a strong perspective on many of the student's diverse perceptions of Shepparton–Mooroopna to be of use in informing the Growth Plan.

# NEXT STEPS

Council and the VPA have spoken to a number of stakeholders and community members to understand what is required in the future plan for the Shepparton–Mooroopna area.

The outcomes of this engagement will be fed into a Key Issues and Opportunities paper which will identify a 'draft vision'. The Key Issues and Opportunities paper is expected to be made available for public comment in 2019.

Following consultation on the Key Issues and Opportunities paper, a draft Growth Plan will be prepared. This draft Growth Plan will include a Strategic Framework Plan for Shepparton–Mooroopna.

The Growth Plan will:

- set a **vision**
- identify and address **key issues** and **challenges**
- build on the **opportunities** and **strategic advantages**
- develop an **infrastructure framework** and **urban design principles**, and
- **inform decision-making** regarding:
  - population, housing and community infrastructure
  - natural environment
  - economy and employment
  - transport and car parking
  - major infrastructure
  - growth areas and settlement boundaries, and
  - strategic sites.

Release of the draft Growth Plan for public comment is expected to occur once endorsed by council.

A final Growth Plan is expected to be adopted by the council by the middle of 2019 incorporating any necessary changes made as a result of public feedback to the draft Growth Plan.



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