



Avenel Action Group Community Plan 2018 - 2022

Avenel Action Group Community Plan 2018

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1.0 Introduction

This Avenel Action Group Community Plan is as a result of a public meeting held on 14th March 2018. The AvAG Group Community Plan is part of a broader Strathbogie Shire support for communities to improve local decision making and for local decisions to enhance the quality of life in each community.

The values for Avenel are:

- **To ensure there is a connected community** – that is, that people are aware of what is happening in their community and contribute to community affairs as they evolve.
- **To ensure a supportive community** – that is, that community can socialise together but also support each other, in order to build community spirit.
- **To demonstrate a community that shares opportunities** – that is, that the physical attractiveness, activities and history combine to build a community that is proud of its location and willing to share it between the community and with others.

Consequently the objectives for the new community plan are around:

- To identify initiatives that bring the community together
- Identify projects that will contribute to the values as outlined above.

1.1 Priorities

The AvAG Community Plan was approved by a meeting of the Avenel Action Group on the 13/6/18 and the most pressing priorities from the plan were determined:

Within the scope of Avenel Action Group Funds

- Tree planting along Avenel Seymour Road
- Fitness stations in or around Avenel
- 2018 -19 major project: Community Garden at Primary School
- Toddler playground
- Street lighting: pursue - advocate
- More footpaths – advocate
- 2018 – 19 minor projects: Provision of CPR /defibrillator and
- Lifeguard courses for locals

Projects that are a significant cost and should be advocated for on the SSC Shire-wide Plan

- Footbridge over Hughes Creek
- Avenel Roadhouse crossing – agitate for road safety improvement/upgrade
- Public transport for elderly residents to Seymour
- Public toilet near Hughes Creek bridge

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- These projects require a partnership between the local community, Strathbogie Shire Council and Federal and State Governments to come to fruition. AvAG and the Shire hope to secure funding for these major community building projects from these governments.

1.2 Avenel History

Avenel got its first accolade from explorer Thomas Mitchell, who described the surrounding country as 'ready for the plough in many parts, as though specially prepared by the creator for the industrious hands of Englishmen'. At least in relation to farming, the prediction proved accurate, with solid agricultural industry producing high quality wool and in particular, lamb.

The town was established along the old Hume Highway with the modern highway now bypassing the outskirts of the town.

It is frequently stated as having been named for a village in Gloucestershire by Henry Kent Hughes. Hughes, a colonial settler, came there in 1838. He laid out the future town and named Hughes Creek, which flows through it. The Post Office opened on 2 June 1858 and the railway station opened on 20 November 1872 becoming an important facility for transporting goods such as wheat from the farming communities of the Goulburn Valley to Melbourne.

In the gold rush era, Avenel was an important staging post between the goldfields of the North East and Melbourne.

Ned Kelly spent some of his childhood living in the town and attended the local primary school. It was during this time that Ned saved a young boy named Richard Shelton from drowning in Hughes Creek. For his bravery, Shelton's parents awarded Ned with a green silk sash. Ned was wearing this as a cummerbund at the Siege of Glenrowan, when he was finally captured.

His father John (Red) Kelly died in Avenel and is buried at the Cemetery. Red also had his dalliance with the law, once charged, but later acquitted of cattle stealing although fined for illegal possession of a hide. His case was heard at the Avenel Court House, which remains standing today.

Avenel boasts one of provincial Victoria's most impressive bridges in the six-arch, stone crossing of Hughes Creek. Built by Hugh Dalrymple in 1850 the bridge remains on the old Hume Highway but was superseded for traffic by a modern structure in 1969.

Today Avenel is experiencing new growth but retains the appeal of a welcoming small community.

(Sources: nagambielakesandstrathbogieranges.com.au, Wikipedia)

1.3 Council's Support for Community Planning

The Strathbogie Shire Council has introduced a New Community Planning Program to:

- increase resident input through their local Action Plans in order to shape the individual needs of each community
- make Community Action Groups more accountable for their spending

The benefits of a community preparing and supporting their local Action Plan for the Strathbogie Shire Council are:

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- To be able to provide improved facilities, services and initiatives that better reflect the community, and are more sensitive to the various stakeholders.
- To contribute to the quality of life issues that benefits each community.
- To identify services, facilities and activities needed in each community.
- To closely assist and monitor community needs and its changes.
- To advocate on behalf of the community to other government agencies for appropriate funding for initiatives needed and identified by communities.
- To identify the services in which Council has a role.
- To develop a better understanding of the needs of communities.

In particular AvAG would like to thank Tracey Reid Community Development Officer - Community Planning of the Strathbogie Shire Council for her thoughtful and energetic support, and for her involvement and input into the Community Plan evening on the 14th March 2018.

Shire Councillor, Malcolm Little, has also been a passionate supporter of AvAg, attending many of the Group's meetings and liaising with Council to progress AvAG projects.

1.4 What are the Key Principals of Avenel Community Action Planning?

- **Partnerships** -at the centre of community planning is the opportunity to build partnerships between the community and stakeholders external to Avenel.
- **Sustainability** – the community is seeking to improve its quality of life. All the outcomes of any actions must be able to be maintained into the future.
- **Consultation** – the community must ensure that its plans and ideas for each initiative is genuinely what local people want, and it fits into the foreseeable future needs of the Avenel community. It includes involving residents in developing each initiative that increase community participation and continuously improve community opportunity and services.
- **Commitment** – the Avenel community in pursuing these goals must ensure that the outcomes are supported by direct community involvement and support, through either recognised and agreed paid resources or volunteer time.

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1.5 Community Action Group

The following residents make up the Avenel Community Action Group 2017-18

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| • Jeff Moran, | President | • Jim Billings |
| • Anthony Kenworthy | Vice President | • Annie Bright |
| • John Hyland | Secretary | • Stephen Garner |
| • Grace Kenworthy | Treasurer | • Marg Greenaway |
| • Frank Dawson | | • Linda Riddell |
| • Helen Dawson | | • Mary Steyne |
| • Rob Gardner | | • Merrill Boyd |
| • Lynj James | | • Jen Arnold |
| • Bob Buntine | | |

However all members of the community may join the group at any time or simply attend meetings.



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2.0 Suggestions for the Avenel Community Action Plan


The development of the Action Plan has evolved through a series of meetings and public discussions. At all stages, residents have been encouraged to participate.

The following suggestions represent all of the initial views and suggestion to come out of the public session. The final outcomes or directions will require further research and development. This will ensure the final concept that is proposed for implementation, represents broad community approval.

By undertaking components of this Community Action Plan, it prepares the Avenel community to seek access to program funding. It also enables potential resource providers to acknowledge that the Community Action Plan represents a combined community direction.

The following suggestions were made at the public meetings in the past:

Avenel Strengths

- 
- Friendly/family oriented/nice feel about town
 - Generous
 - Community-minded/supportive
 - Proactive
 - Energetic
 - Picturesque
 - Heritage buildings /trees
 - Centrally located/good access to freeways/highways
 - Lovely parklands
 - Great community facilities
 - Good signage
 - Avenel Market
 - Avenel Station
 - Safe environment
 - Sporting teams and involvement
 - Mixture of ages and occupations
 - Good volunteering ethic
 - Size of community
 - Street trees
 - Small and supportive businesses
 - Good climate
 - Great Primary School/kindergarten
 - Hughes Creek an asset to be enhanced and developed

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2.1 Topic One - Infrastructure

Proposed Actions to be carried forward from previous plan:

- Paths and walkways
- Drainage
- Town entry signage
- Street lighting
- VicRoads – Roadhouse crossing improvement/upgrade
- Local street improvements – lighting; seating

Other Suggestions from 2018 community meeting

- Street lighting increase
- Road transport Plan and parking upgrades
- Freeway sound barrier
- Footpaths in Avenel and Stewart park
- Footbridge across Hughes creek at Watson Street
- Drainage - general improvement
- Off-grid power supply – solar/wind
- Public toilet upgrades
- Widening Shelton St
- Avenel becoming a “Stand Alone Solar Hub”
- Men’s/Women’s shed
- Greater engagement of people in community activities
- Water slide for the swimming pool
- Continued upgrades of the swimming pool
- Completion of Skate Park
- Establish a Community Garden
- Community courses - CPR and Defibrillator, Lifeguard

Proposed Actions

The group will work on any of the above projects or other projects not listed as it assess the priorities and capabilities of the group.

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2.2 Topic Two – Sport, Recreation & Leisure

Proposed Actions to be carried forward from previous plan:

- Entrance upgrade to Jubilee Park – part of Shire-wide Swimming Pools Strategy
- Tennis Club upgrade of club rooms - Part of Shire-wide Swimming Pools Strategy

Suggestions from 2018 community meeting

- Skate Park development - 2 stages. Funding being sought
- Expansion of netball courts at Recreation Reserve – completed.
- Safe walking program – footpaths. Ongoing
- Tennis Clubrooms refurbishment
- Swimming Pool upgrade – subject of SSC pools strategy.

Proposed Actions

The group will work on any of the above projects and/or other projects not listed as it assess the priorities and capabilities of the group.

2.3 Topic Three – Events & Activities

Proposed Actions to be carried forward from previous plan:

- Support hosting golf sand greens competition
- Local produce store/cooperative - supermarket

Suggestions from 2018 community meeting

- Annual Fun Run
- Annual Autumn Festival Expo/Fair – AvAG agreed to help fund advertising for this event
- Upgrade tourist information
- Digitise historical records – grants being sought.

Proposed Actions

The group will work on any of the above projects or other projects not listed as it assess the priorities and capabilities of the group.

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2.4 Topic Four – Environment

Proposed Actions to be carried forward from previous plan:

- Clean up roads entering Avenel on an annual basis – KAB annual event organized by Frank Dawson
- Tree planting in Avenel increased/replaced – take into account impacts – funding being sought
- Bindi weed removal program – requires SSC input.

Suggestions from 2018 community meeting

- Annual clean-up of roads leading into Avenel – KAB program
- Significant Vegetation Overlay to protect street trees
- Important/heritage building protection
- Tree planting at entrances to town
- Assessment of trees in Avenel with the view to public risk.

Proposed Actions

The group will work on any of the above projects or other projects not listed as it assess the priorities and capabilities of the group.

2.5 Topic Five – Health & Wellbeing

Proposed Actions to be carried forward from previous plan:

- Public transport
- Youth activities – skate park a multi-purpose youth activity centre
- List of visiting services to Avenel and consider promotions etc.
- Promote activity and fitness station(s)

Suggestions from 2018 community meeting

- Town Newsletter – Community Voice?
- Bus service to Seymour – community bus
- Community Garden – Primary School – major project for 2018/19
- Men's/Women's shed

Proposed Actions

3.0 Function of Community Planning

3.1 Action Plan Governance

The Avenel Community Action plan will be led by a community group that nominated at the public session. Any other member of the community can join this group.

In addition, the group shall have:

- President and secretary/treasurer.
- All members of the Avenel community are welcome to attend any meeting.

The process for managing and implementing the Action Plan is set out in the attached table. (Appendix 1.1) The aim of Community Planning in this process is to ensure as many people as possible are involved and support the outcomes identified in the Avenel Action Plan.

In essence, the steps are:

- i. For a working party to be formed (if appropriate) for each topic area or activity that the community identifies as requiring significant attention.
- ii. Working party develops action brief for Community Planning Group for their information and input.
- iii. The working party ensures that they investigate research and develop a suggested set of actions that best suit the residents of the Avenel community.
- iv. The working party discusses the suggested actions with Council or their agencies seeking their support for implementation (which includes funds).
- v. Parties agree to actions including an Action Plan document, timeframe, funding, ownership, perpetuity, issues etc.
- vi. Actions initiated by parties as agreed.
- vii. Working party monitor and report progress to Community Planning Group (monthly or as appropriate).
- viii. Project implemented / completed.
- ix. To provide records in order to develop appropriate reports.

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3.2 Role of Community Action Group

The role of the Community Action Group is to support only the actions nominated within the Action Plan.

This involves:

Coordinating and bringing together all interested parties and the broader community to plan action for any initiative in the Action Plan. Supporting and assisting the development of project plans for each initiative to achieve implementation.

Assisting the focus groups for each initiative to negotiate partners, funds and expertise to complete the project

3.3 Alterations to the Action Plan

The Action Plan has been established through a public process and consequently this process must be respected. Any alteration to the Action Plan requires a public process. This allows the community to have an opportunity to consider any changes at the time and authorise any alterations to priorities as a result of that community meeting. The Action Plan is a vibrant, flexible and dynamic document. It can change, but change should occur through due process.

3.4 Dispute Resolution

In the event of a dispute all parties must meet, discuss and resolve the matter as soon as possible. If parties are unable to resolve the dispute, they must agree to hold a meeting in the presence of a person nominated through the Strathbogie Shire Council. The role of mediation is to guide the parties towards settling the dispute, not make the decision to resolve the dispute. In any dispute, all parties must be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard, to ensure natural justice is applied to the whole process.

Document prepared by Jeff Moran following the AgAG Community Plan meeting on the 14th of March 2018 and by a meeting of the Avenel Action Group.

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Appendices

1.1

