



Community Vision

2021-2040



Mildura Rural City Council

Acknowledgment of country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land, which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.





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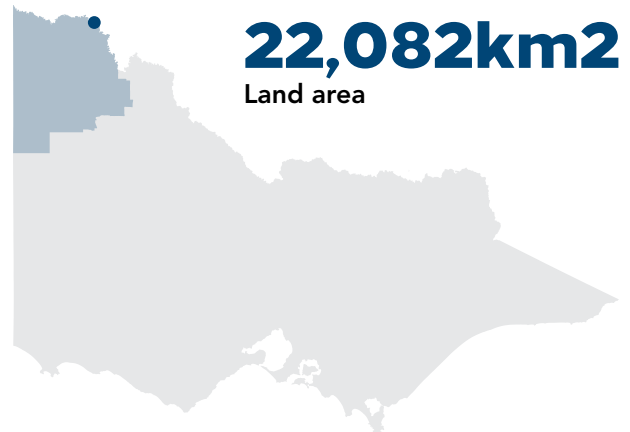
Our region

Located in north west Victoria, the Mildura Rural City Council area covers almost ten per cent of the State.

The region's landscape includes unique Mallee vegetation, broad acre grain properties, extensive horticultural farms and vibrant towns.

Mildura Rural City shares borders with New South Wales and South Australia, which makes it a strategically important regional service centre for three states.

The beautiful Murray River winds its way through much of the municipality and is a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

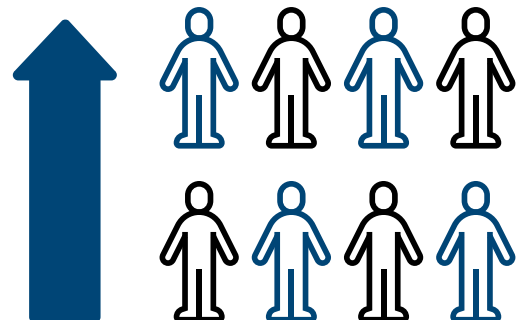


55,937

2021 estimated resident population

59,439

2031 projected resident population



Key industries

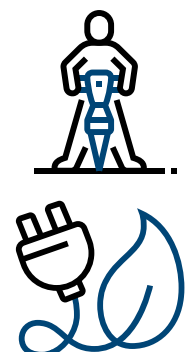
Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

Our towns

Cabarita	Merbein	Ouyen
Cardross	Meringur	Red Cliffs
Colignan	Mildura	Underbool
Cowangie	Murrayville	Walpeup
Cullulleraine	Nangiloc	Werrimull
Irymple	Nichols Point	

Emerging industries

Renewable energy generation, aquaculture, mineral sands mining and recycling



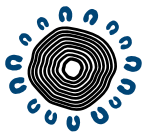


\$6.839 billion

Annual economic output

10.4%

Born overseas

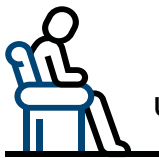


4.5%

Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

5,362

Businesses



3.87%

Unemployment rate

6.8%

Need assistance
with core
activities



22,368

Jobs

9.5%

Speak a language
other than English
at home



From your Mayor and Councillors



**Mayor
Jason Modica**



**Deputy Mayor
Helen Healy**



Cr Stefano De Pieri



Cr Mark Eckel



Cr Cyndi Power



Cr Ian Arney



Cr Jodi Reynolds



Cr Glenn Milne



Cr Liam Wood

We are proud to present the first ever long-term Community Vision for the Rural City of Mildura.

Over the past six months we have taken a remarkable journey together. In the face of a global pandemic that has profoundly impacted our entire lives, we have embraced the opportunity to Imagine 2040 and document a shared roadmap for the next two decades.

The result is a bold and ambitious Community Vision. It is underpinned by five equally important themes of Environment, People, Place, Economy and Leadership.

These five themes define the qualities that you, the community, have told us you love about our region. They also provide a clear path of action towards our preferred future as we look towards 2040.

As a Council, we will use this Vision to guide all our planning, decision making, programs, services and advocacy. But no one area of Council, community or other levels of government can help to achieve the Community Vision alone.

As a new group of Councillors, we have been committed to listening and learning from our community and we are confident this Vision is a true reflection of you. It was developed over more than six months, with contributions, ideas and input from almost 2,000 people.

Sustainability, gender equality, preventing family violence, access, inclusion and diversity came up consistently throughout the engagement process. Council's effort in addressing these issues is fundamental to our community's future state and we commit to them through our actions and advocacy.

We commit to this journey to 2040 with you all.



Access, equity and inclusion

The community of Mildura Rural City Council believes everyone should have fair and equitable opportunity to live healthy, safe and happy lives.

We welcome and celebrate diversity and believe it fosters growth and strength.

We value the diverse range of identities, lifestyles and experiences of all members of our community, including people of all ages, abilities, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, gender, political perspectives and religious beliefs.

Inclusion and participation are key to building a strong community.

We are committed to preserving the dignity of all people and to ensure services, facilities and public spaces are openly inviting and fully accessible.

Gender equality to prevent family violence

Family violence is a significant issue in the Mildura Rural City Council community.

It prevents those affected from fully participating in society and impacts individuals, families, workplaces, the community, and the economy.

We recognise that improving gender equality can help prevent violence and make our community safer, healthier, and more prosperous.

We have zero tolerance for all forms of violence and believe raising awareness and supporting respectful relationships is crucial to bring attitudinal and behavioural change.

We are committed to all people enjoying the same opportunities, rights and obligations and will advocate for a whole of community Gender Equality and Primary Prevention of Family Violence Strategy.



“We are a Council of diverse views, but share common values. We believe these outcomes are fundamental to our community’s future”

Sustainability

In March 2020 Mildura Rural City Council declared a state of climate change emergency requiring urgent action by all levels of government.

As a Council we will show leadership and work with our community to build resilience, explore adaptation and mitigation measures, reduce carbon emissions and identify opportunities such as renewable energy systems.

Sustainability is about more than just our natural environment. We value sustainable development, sustainable communities and financial sustainability.

We recognise that resources are finite and must be used responsibly to meet our current needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

Through responsible stewardship of our natural areas, taking action to address climate change and incorporating sustainability measures and goals in everything we do we will strive to leave a positive legacy for future generations.

We are committed to creating and becoming a more sustainable community and region.

Art, culture, events and tourism

The Mildura region is enriched by our creative spirit and energised by our diverse community. Contrasting landscapes – from the Murray River to the Mallee outback and tight-knit country towns – make for an incredible cultural tapestry.

History dates back over 40,000 years and we respect the deep and continuing connection Traditional Owners have to these lands and waters.

Much of Australia’s fruit, vegetable, nut and cereal crops are grown in the region, therefore agriculture and horticulture are deeply entwined in local identity.

Local communities are deeply engaged in arts and cultural practices and experiences, and these are important to them. We acknowledge that arts, culture, events and tourism are transformative. They help to position towns as attractive places to live, work and invest. They help build identity and foster community connection.

There is incredible opportunity to use arts, events, tourism and culture as ways to improve wellbeing and encourage social connectedness, to contribute to the sustainability of the local economy and to showcase the character, diversity and heritage of our region.

We are committed to maintaining our reputation as a culturally unique and creative community. We will continue to celebrate our Indigenous history, many iconic natural wonders and picturesque locations through vibrant events, tourism, cultural and arts experiences.

What is a Community Vision?

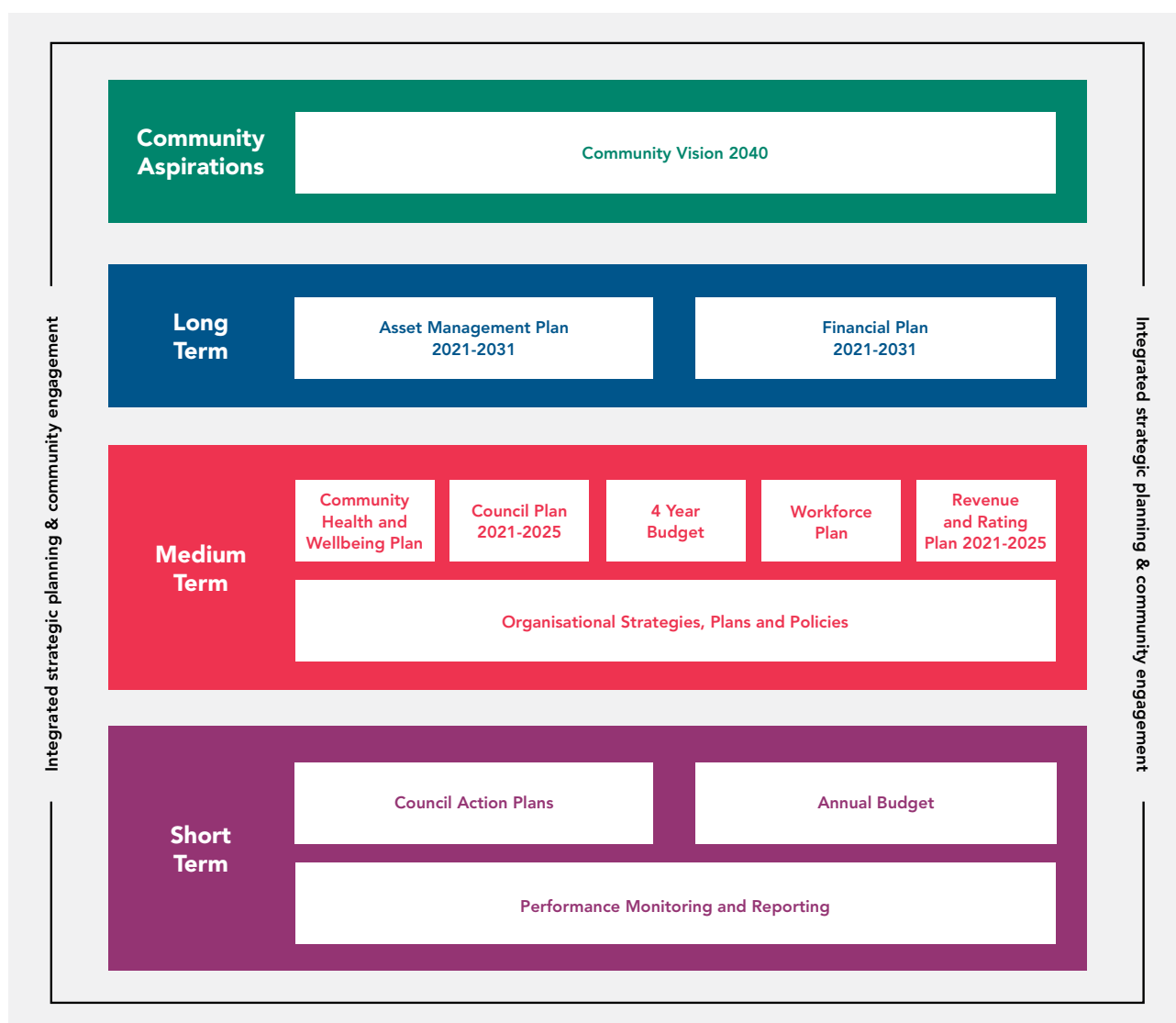
All Victorian councils are required to work in partnership with their communities to develop a Community Vision using deliberative engagement practices under the new Local Government Act (2020).

A Community Vision provides a long-term roadmap for the whole community, Council and other levels of government to partner together and create a future that enhances our region as a great place to live, work, play and visit. It highlights what the community values most and sets out long-term aspirations and key priorities.

Council will use the Community Vision to guide all planning, decision-making, programs, services and advocacy. The Vision is also legislated to guide Council in developing and implementing a Council Plan, Financial Plan, Community Health and Wellbeing Plan and an Asset Plan.

The diagram below outlines the relationship between these documents and highlights the importance of the Community Vision as the peak of Council's integrated planning and reporting framework.

While Mildura Rural City Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing, and maintaining the Community Vision on behalf of the local community, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, State and Federal Government, local organisations and the wider community – including business groups, not-for-profits and service providers – can also use the Community Vision, so everyone can work towards the same common goals for our region.





Creating our Community Vision

In March 2021 Mildura Rural City Council launched Imagine 2040 – a major deliberative engagement process to consult with our community and together develop a new Community Vision.

In the midst of a global pandemic we asked our community to look ahead to the future and imagine what they want our community and region to be like in two decades time.

The sudden impact of COVID-19 and ongoing restrictions meant many scheduled face-to-face community discussions were unable to proceed. But despite this almost 2,000 who live, work, visit, study and play in the Mildura City Council area participated and contributed.



16

**Minecraft challenge
participants**



29

**contributions to
online vision wall**



444

online surveys



7

staff workshops



320

**participants in 33
community conversations**



320

**individual chalk board
contributions**



490

hard copy surveys



7

written submissions



110

illustration cards



30

vox pop interviews



29

Facebook comments



18

community events

Engaging with our community

Phase 1, March – April 2021

Throughout March and April 2021 we conducted an extensive and broad engagement process to understand what our community's vision was for 2040. We asked people what they value most about our community, what challenges they face today, what would make it a better place by 2040 and what priorities we should focus on.

Council then worked alongside an independent social researcher to analyse and theme the feedback which was received through online and paper surveys, community events, facilitated conversations, illustration cards, an online visioning wall, vox pop interviews, social media and youth Minecraft challenge.

Phase 2, July 2021

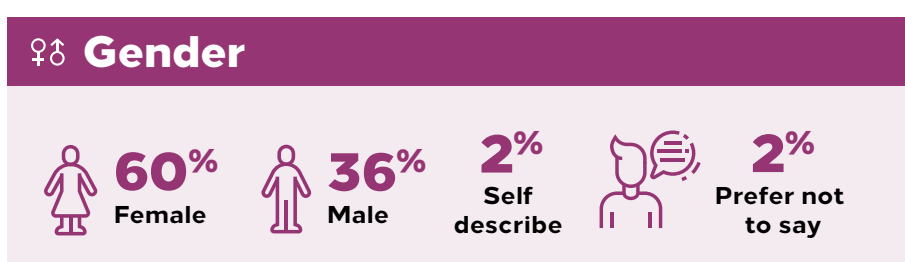
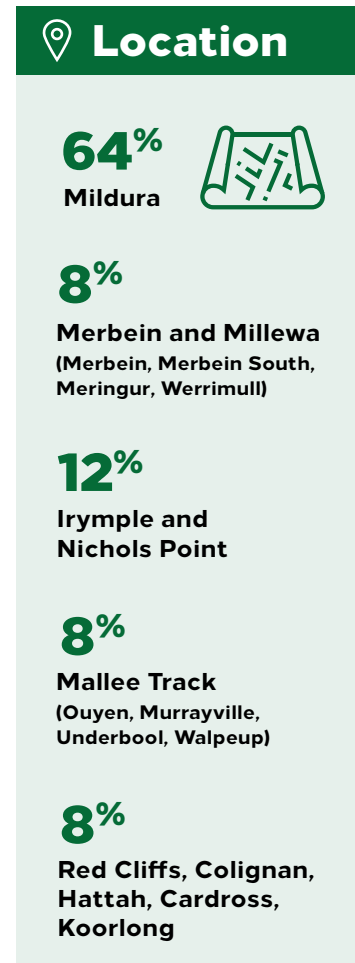
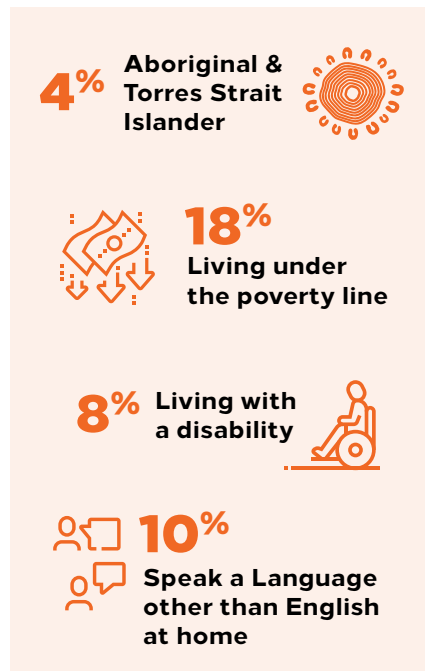
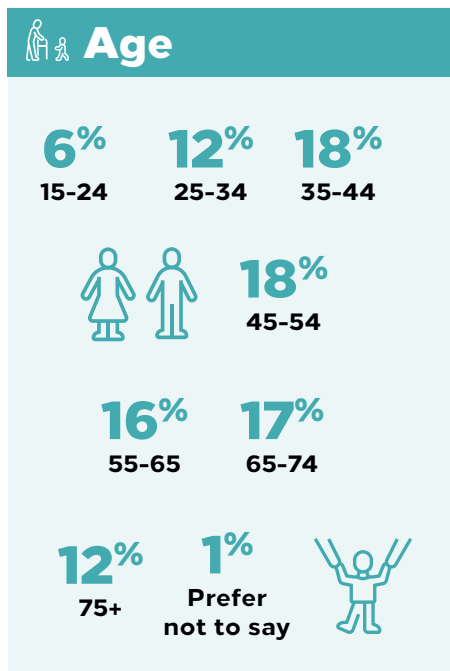
The analysed community feedback was synthesised and used to generate Vision Statements and Goals under the five key themes of Environment, People,

Place, Economy and Leadership. These Vision Statements and Goals were presented back to the community in July 2021 for further review and feedback.

This period of engagement provided a chance to check in, for community to look over how we had interpreted their input and let us know if anything wasn't right. Once again, our engagement process was challenged by the pandemic with the region's first confirmed cases of COVID-19 announced as the consultation launched.

Phase 3, August – September 2021

We again engaged an independent social researcher to analyse the community's feedback and work alongside us as we adjusted the Vision Statement and Goals to ensure they reflected the intent and aspirations of our community. The Draft Community Vision was then presented on public exhibition.





Our Community Vision Themes

Five themes frame the priorities that are most important to our community. By focusing our efforts on these themes, we will be able to monitor the progress of our region growing even more liveable and vibrant over time.

Environment

We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations

Community

We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community

Place

We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle

Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity

Leadership

We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making





Environment

We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations



Value, protect and sustain the river, natural resources and unique environments



Reduce waste and enhance resource recovery



Actively address the causes and impacts of climate change



Increase community knowledge, skills and action to live sustainably

From our community

What we value

- River
- Trees
- Green open spaces
- Access to natural bushland, the river and parks
- Protection of the environment and natural ecosystems

Challenges

- Climate change
- Water health and security
- Waste management

Priorities

- River health and amenity
- Protecting green spaces
- Plant more trees
- Climate change and sustainability
- Recycling and resource recovery

"Our drying environment will pose challenges to our community and it will affect more than just our farmers."

"Water sustainability needs to be addressed urgently. We are living in an environment that will be challenged by dryer periods."

"Keeping our region clean and green! Keep maintaining all parks, add in lots of grass and trees!"



"Trees, trees and more trees to reduce temperatures. Green Mildura and surrounds. All houses to be eco friendly - especially all new estates. More parks safe for families and elderly."

"I'd love to see a city and region that is acutely aware of the environmental challenges that are facing us and the impact this is going to have on future generations. I would love to live in a city that is at the forefront of change and adopts it for all."

"I enjoy the amount of community groups and organisations there are to be a part of. There is so much to do and be involved in if you choose to be."

"I appreciate the important agriculture occurring in this region, but I am most impressed by (and most keen for) solar development, and sustainability and climate control measures."



Community

We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community



Access to quality local health services to support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing



A community where people feel safe



Arts, culture, heritage and activities that connect families, community and improve health and wellbeing



Health and wellbeing is promoted for everyone that lives, learns, works and plays in our community



Social and cultural diversity is respected, supported and celebrated



Youth are supported to reach their full potential



Respect Aboriginal culture, connection to country and Traditional Owners of the land

From our community

What we value

- Relaxed lifestyle and friendly communities
- Feeling safe and healthy
- Cultural diversity
- Sport, recreation, cultural and community groups, events and activities
- Public facilities like libraries and the Mildura Arts Centre

Challenges

- Isolation and distance from other major centres
- Accessing specialist medical services
- Accessing mental health services
- Drug use and abuse
- Ageing population
- Crime rates
- Social disadvantage

Priorities

- Attracting doctors and medical specialists
- A bigger hospital
- Activities for children, families and young people
- Community and major events
- Safer streets
- Address crime and drug issues
- Being inclusive of all
- Acknowledging Aboriginal culture
- More education opportunities and options
- Communicating what is available
- Aboriginal reconciliation



"We need to address social problems and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. We can't sit back and wait for these problems to be addressed on a national level. We need to take the lead at a local level and make changes to improve the future."

"We need more access to GP's that understand our challenges. It's hard driving from Murrayville and Underbool to a Dr."

"Non English speaking community members find it very hard to express their needs when their English is limited - it is not that we don't have the knowledge or the understanding but it can be very frustrating and difficult to communicate what you want/need."

"Lack of access to healthcare, the community is growing very quickly however the healthcare community is not. It's difficult to see a doctor when you need and is only getting harder. We are also starting to overflow in the schools."



Place

We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle



Well planned development that considers the diverse and changing needs of our community



Outdoor spaces, green spaces and public facilities where people of all ages and abilities can exercise and relax



Adequate and sustainable infrastructure to meet future demand



Accessible and connected transport options within and to our region



Affordable housing and a range of options to suit community needs



Friendly places and towns recognised for their individual strengths and unique communities

From our community

What we value

- Unique communities and townships
- Rural lifestyle and city benefits
- Weather and location
- Access to the river, National and State Parks and lakes
- Green open spaces to relax and exercise in
- Trees, playgrounds and parks
- Car parking
- Minimal traffic and short commute
- Airport
- Good public facilities and infrastructure

Challenges

- Lack of public transport
- Travel costs
- Links to capital cities and regional centres
- Maintaining a large road network
- Keeping smaller towns and communities going

Priorities

- Making the river accessible
- More trees and parks
- Walking paths
- Road maintenance and safety
- Train and public transport
- Affordable housing

"Make wider roads in new areas, everyone has cars now and streets are getting narrower. Park each side of the road and can hardly fit through."



"Opening up land, a lot of the young people want to build housing now, locally."

"I feel we have the best of both worlds with most of the essential services we need, but still a relatively quiet lifestyle"

"Things that I like about our region and community is that there are friendly people, a lots of places like park and market that are close to houses, people are careful when they drive, and good ecosystem."

"More infrastructure at Mildura South to meet the need of the growing population out there - like schools, pre-school/ day care"

"Social connectedness - we live in a technological world. We need to encourage meeting spaces, people playing/ knowing their neighbours and listening to communities voice."



Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity



Resilient local businesses that are supported to thrive, contributing to the viability and character of our towns



A valued and vibrant tourism industry and recognised visitor destination



An agile economy underpinned by innovation and industry diversity that attracts investment



Access to a range of education, training and employment pathways



A skilled workforce that meets current and future industry needs



Equitable access to digital infrastructure to support education, health and economy

From our community

What we value

- Affordable cost of living
- Development of Mildura riverfront
- Vibrant Mall, retail and shopping precincts
- Variety and quality shops, restaurants, services and markets
- Supporting local small business
- Agriculture and horticultural industries

Challenges

- COVID-19 impact on business and economy
- Telecommunications and digital connectivity
- Vacant commercial and retail spaces
- Industry and economic diversification
- Competitive domestic tourism market
- Attracting investment and government funding

Priorities

- Rebuilding after COVID-19
- Job creation and pathways
- Attracting skilled labor and workforce
- Recruiting and retaining specialist professionals
- Activating retail and shopping precincts
- Tourism attraction and diversification

"A thriving economy with growth of small business, a massive injection of funds into the tourism sector and better control of water usage, so that there is equitable distribution and specific shortages to certain sectors can be avoided."



"We need to promote our tourism and sporting facilities and make sure local businesses and industries are supported and contracted in the growth of our towns. Get local contractors before city based contractors! Grow our own, not have temporary citizens!"

"A stronger university that offers more options. Being able to retain more of our young people rather than so many leaving for study would be advantageous."

"I think Mildura needs tertiary education to keep more younger people in the community. I feel it lacks creative young people staying and adding to our overall offering. More students = more hospitality and entertainment = more tourism = better economy for everyone."

"More job opportunities - particularly for people who don't speak good English. Most job interviews ask about your previous experience - its so hard to get experience, as we find it hard to get jobs. Work experience is not very highly regarded."



Leadership

We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making



Community is engaged in decision making with opportunities to share their views on things that affect them



Keep the community informed to build a relationship of transparency, understanding and trust



Accountable, trustworthy and efficient governance and operations that serve the interest of community



Serve the community by providing great customer experience, value for money and quality services



Strong and consistent advocacy for local needs and priorities



Collaborative partnerships that build capacity and increase opportunities

From our community

What we value

- Being listened to by decision-makers
- Honesty
- Responsible financial management
- Prompt and respectful service
- Efficient planning and use of public resources

Challenges

- High property rates
- Competition to secure investment and government funding
- Small population, large geographic area
- Competing priorities and demands
- Building and retaining integrity and trust

Priorities

- Engaging community in decision-making and listening to feedback
- Advocacy and collaboration across all levels of government
- Building strong partnerships across government, business, community, services and agencies
- Attracting private investment and government funding to the region

"Council needs to increase engagement with community - involve the community in decision-making."



"A lot of our population is reliant on government support and we literally cannot afford the extra fees and taxes constantly dumped on us. Use local people wherever possible for council work even if they have to consult with city firms."

"I think Mildura needs to pick some industries in which to build our future around outside of agriculture. Is this solar, tourism, mining etc. We also need to do things that reduce costs not increase them. Our rates cannot continue to increase"

"Reduce rates. I pay double what a mate pays in Adelaide & his house is worth double mine."

"Challenge of not being able to advocate collectively, politically or powerfully enough as a region to attract government and private investment in our community."





Measuring our progress

Developing a shared Community Vision is only the start of the journey. As our community works towards these desired outcomes, we will continually monitor and report on progress to ensure that we can celebrate what has been achieved and recognise what is still to be done.

How we will make this Vision a reality

The Community Vision will guide all of Council's planning and decision making and will be implemented through the Council Plan.

The Council Plan identifies medium-term goals and priority areas that will work towards the future desired outcomes identified by the community and outlined in the Vision.

Initiatives will be delivered through partnerships with a range of stakeholders including community groups, service providers, businesses and other levels of government.

Our Integrated Planning Framework ensures that all Council activities and financial resources are aligned to meet the aspirations, needs and expectations of the community.

We are committed to ongoing transparency and accountability with the community. We will prepare progress updates over the life of the 2040 Community Vision to celebrate achievements, recognise efforts, monitor trends and identify areas for future improvement.

Environment	We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations	Value, protect and sustain the river, natural resources and unique environments
		Reduce waste and enhance resource recovery
		Actively address the causes and impacts of climate change
		Increase community knowledge, skills and action to live sustainably
Community	We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community	Access to quality local health services to support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
		A community where people feel safe
		Arts, culture, heritage and activities that connect families, community and improve health and wellbeing
		Health and wellbeing is promoted for everyone that lives, learns, works and plays in our community
		Social and cultural diversity is respected, supported and celebrated
		Youth are supported to reach their full potential
		Respect Aboriginal culture, connection to country and Traditional Owners of the land
Place	We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle	Well planned development that considers the diverse and changing needs of our community
		Outdoor spaces, green spaces and public facilities where people of all ages and abilities can exercise and relax
		Adequate and sustainable infrastructure to meet future demand
		Accessible and connected transport options within and to our region
		Affordable housing and a range of options to suit community needs
		Friendly places and towns recognised for their individual strengths and unique communities
Economy	We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity	Resilient local businesses that are supported to thrive, contributing to the viability and character of our towns
		A valued and vibrant tourism industry and recognised visitor destination
		An agile economy underpinned by innovation and industry diversity that attracts investment
		Access to a range of education, training and employment pathways
		A skilled workforce that meets current and future industry needs
		Equitable access to digital infrastructure to support education, health and economy
Leadership	We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making	Community is engaged in decision making with opportunities to share their views on things that affect them
		Keep the community informed to build a relationship of transparency, understanding and trust
		Accountable, trustworthy and efficient governance and operations that serve the interest of community
		Serve the community by providing great customer experience, value for money and quality services
		Strong and consistent advocacy for local needs and priorities
		Collaborative partnerships that build capacity and increase opportunities

Acknowledgements

Almost 2,000 people helped bring this Community Vision to life. Thank you to the community members who shared their ideas and feedback with us as part of our formal consultation process. We also acknowledge the contributions of Councillors and Council staff involved in this project.

Photography


All images appearing in this publication depict people and settings from the Mildura Rural City local government area. All photos were captured by local photographers.

Alternative formats

This publication is available online at mildura.vic.gov.au and in large text format. If you would like large text copy please contact us.

Disclaimer

Information contained in this publication was correct at the time of printing. Every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, however no liability is accepted for any inclusions, advice given or omissions.



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