



# ouyen urban design advice



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**Mildura Rural City Council**

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The Former Ouyen Court House  
Now the Local History Resource Centre



Town Entrance from the Calder Highway

VISION, IMAGE AND THEME:  
***'An attractive town centre that offers a high standard of amenity for residents and visitors.'***



## 1.0 BACKGROUND

### 1.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ouyen is a compact, busy small town 100km south of Mildura on the Calder Highway. During the 1980's, townscape improvements in Oke Street enhanced the appearance and amenity of part of the central retail area. Further works are required to improve the current level of shopper comfort and commercial vitality of the township.

This study involved the preparation of concepts for streetscape works, planting and other cost effective urban design ideas, in consultation with Council and community representatives. It considered traffic flow, parking and pedestrian access, amenity including shade, town identity and budget costs for the various works.

With the assistance of this study, Council intends to apply to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) for a Pride of Place grant (Small Townships) to assist in the associated Capital Works.

### 1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to :

- Research the strengths and weaknesses of the Township's layout and landscaping;
- Identify current and future works requirements for the Township based on a review of use patterns;
- Prepare draft sketches and/or themes to be conveyed to the Ouyen Consultative Group and Council;
- Prepare a report outlining the works;
- Provide an estimate of the cost of works required to implement the design advice;
- Provide a strategy for staging the implementation of works.



The Mural

### 1.3 PROCESS

Developing the Ouyen Urban Advice involved the following

- Background Literature Review
- Extensive field studies.

Public Consultation Sessions in November 2003 and February 2004.

Parties consulted included

- Mildura Rural City Council – various departments
- Ouyen Inc.

### 1.4. PROJECT BOUNDARIES

The study area relates to the business precinct in Ouyen township. It includes the area bounded by Cooper Street to the north, the Railway Reserve, to the east, Gregory Street (Mallee Highway) to the south and Oke Street as identified on the adjoining Mao.

The project study area has been identified on the adjoining picture.



The Study Area

VISION, IMAGE AND THEME:  
**'An attractive town centre that offers a high standard of amenity for residents and visitors.'**

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### 2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT AND IDENTITY

Ouyen is one of the largest towns in the Mallee, and the centre of the dryland area of the Mildura Rural City.

The town is located at the intersection of the Mallee Highway (Adelaide-Sydney) and the Calder Highway (Melbourne – Mildura), 457 kilometres north-west of Melbourne and 103 kilometres south of Mildura.

The town developed around a railway station which was established in 1906 after the Melbourne to Mildura line passed through the area. Blocks in the area were sold in 1910 and cleared for sheep, wheat and oats. Ouyen is now a transport and service centre for a vast area occupied by agricultural and pastoral properties. Lengthy convoys of trucks line up at harvest time to ship oats to Portland and wheat to regional flour mills. The town's grain silos are a clear sign of its economic orientation.

Nearby towns which rely upon Ouyen for services include Underbool and Walpeup which are located further west along the Mallee Highway and Manangatang to the east.

Mildura, some 100km north, is the largest town within the general region.

### 2.2 CLIMATE

Ouyen's climate is hot and dry, pointing to the need for shade within the Town Centre.

Table 1: Ouyen Climate

Climate averages for Station: 076031 MILDURA AIRPORT.													
Element	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ann
Av max temp	32.2	31.5	28.4	23.3	18.8	15.7	15.1	17	20.1	23.6	27.1	30.1	23.6
Av min temp	15.3	15.3	12.9	9.4	7.2	5.1	4.3	5	6.7	8.8	11.3	13.5	9.6
Av rainfall	20	24.9	20.2	21.7	32.2	29.8	31.4	33.5	32.9	36	26.8	23.6	332.9

Source: B.o.M 2004.

The annual average maximum temperature is 23.6 deg C - monthly averages vary from 15.1 deg C in July to 32.2 deg C in January. The annual average minimum temperature is 13.5 deg C, monthly values varying from 4.3 deg C during July to 15.3 deg C during January and February.

The annual rainfall total of 332.9 mm is fairly evenly distributed through the year, but is more concentrated in the winter and spring months. The prevailing wind is southerly in summer, whilst in winter, the prevailing northerly wind in the morning tends westerly in the afternoon.

### 2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS

#### 2.3.1 Population

The population of Ouyen comprised of approximately 1157 people in 2001.

Unlike other towns in the Rural City of Mildura there has been a constant population decline since 1981, when the towns population was 1527.

Ouyen is also an ageing town. All age groups under 24 years of age have declined consistently since the 1980's whilst the population of residents over the age of 50 continues to increase. The smallest population age group is that of the 18-24 group. This can be attributed to people moving for further education or employment purposes upon the completion of secondary education.

However, discussions during the study indicate that there is the prospect of growth in the Town, resulting from new interest in rural town living, the enhanced role of the township in the delivery of social and health services and the new mineral sands industry.

Table 2: Ouyen Age Structure

Age (years)	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
0-4	143	115	115	96	61
5-17	382	334	253	232	211
18-24	168	145	96	72	61
25-34	229	233	188	166	110
35-49	242	263	259	278	246
50-59	138	146	132	123	161
60-74	153	163	181	170	168
75+	72	105	113	115	140
Total	1527	1503	1337	1251	1157

Source: Towns in Time

#### 2.3.2 Household Size

Statistics show that households in Ouyen are continuing to decline in size, which is consistent with trends across the State. The number of households comprising of 4 and 5 or more people has declined dramatically since 1981, whilst the number of single and two person households has increased significantly. The change in household size is also evident in the variation in the age structure of the town. If new households are formed (refer 2.3.1 above), it is possible that there may be changes to household profiles.

#### 2.3.3 Municipal Population Profile

Population within the Mildura Rural City Council had grown by 3,472 to 49,283 people by 2001. The municipal population is anticipated to grow to 59,932 by 2021 and 63,329 by 2031 which are increases of 10,649 and 14,046 respectively.

Council estimates that there are approximately 1627 people within the wider district of Ouyen. (Refer to Table 5). Towns such as Underbool, Walpeup and Manangatang and their surrounding districts add to the towns population catchment area.

#### 2.3.4 Comment

Improved township identity and amenity could enhance the attractiveness of Ouyen to existing and prospective households.

Table 3: Ouyen Household Size

House Size	1981		1986		1991		1996		2001	
House s	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1 pns	78	17.4	125	25.1	109	23.2	128	28.2	133	30.0
2 pns	117	26.1	134	26.9	144	30.7	145	31.9	167	37.6
3 pns	75	16.7	67	13.4	66	14.1	81	17.8	56	12.6
4 pns	79	17.6	87	17.4	87	18.6	46	10.1	48	10.8
5 or pns	100	22.3	86	17.2	63	13.4	54	11.9	40	9.0
Total	449	100	499	100	469	100	454	100	444	100

Source: Towns in Time

Table 4: Ouyen Census Night 2001

Summary Data	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Total population	1527	1503	1337	1251	1157
Visitors on census night	64	122	78	88	93
Population in non-private dwellings	99	88	63	93	79
Male / female population ratio	51/49	51/49	49/51	51/49	50/50
Popn living at same address 5 years ago	777	799	754	724	700
Proportion of LGA's population (%)	4.0	3.6	3.0	2.8	2.4

Source: Towns in Time

Table 5: Mildura Council Total Population

Year	1991	1996	2001	1991-1996 Change	1996-2001 Change
Population	44,589	45,811	49,283	1,222	3,472

Source: Council website

Table 6: Township/District Population

Area	1996	2001
Mildura City	24,142	23,893
Ouyen	1251	1624
Underbool	233	326
Walpeup	N/A	117

Source: Council website Note: assumes wider district

Table 7: Mildura Rural City Council – Estimated Resident Population

Year	2002	2006	2011	2021	2031
Population	49,833	51,948	54,491	59,932	63,329

Source: DSE Website/know your area - Mildura

## 2.4 INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

Ouyen is well serviced by infrastructure.

### 2.4.1 WATER, SEWERAGE, POWER, IRRIGATION

The town is well serviced by water, sewerage and electricity. Origin Energy is the provider of gas in the region, whilst Telstra is the main provider of telecommunications.

The Grampians Water Authority is responsible for the provision of water and waste water services to Ouyen and the surrounding region. Sunraysia Rural Water Authority is responsible for the provision of irrigation water to the district.

### 2.4.2 PARKS AND RECREATION

The recreational pursuits enjoyed by the residents are common for regional Victoria.

- Ouyen – harness racing
- Football
- Lawn Bowls
- Cycling Race
- Basketball
- Netball
- Swimming Pool.

### 2.4.3 TOWN SERVICES

Ouyen Maternal and Child Health Services are located in Cooper Street. Mallee Track Health and Community Services are located in Britt Street.

### 2.4.4 RESIDENTIAL AND TOURISM ACCOMMODATION

There is an ample supply of land zoned for residential purposes, however there is a shortage of dwellings.

Tourists are well provided for through:

- Three motels;
- One hotel;
- Caravan Park;

Beyond the town, accommodation is also available in several parks and farm stays within the wider region.

### 2.4.5 EDUCATION

The Ouyen Secondary College is renowned for its scholastic facilities.

Schools within the town include

- Ouyen Secondary College
- St Josephs Primary School
- State Primary School
- Ouyen Pre-school (Oke Street).

### 2.4.6 Ouyen Regional Saleyards

The Ouyen Regional Saleyards is the regional centre for the trading of livestock. The Saleyards are located in Britt Street and are linked to the town centre and Calder and Mallee Highways by Rowe and Oak Streets.

The saleyards attracts buyers and sellers from North-western Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. They are important economic and social contributors to the town and region. Strong links between the Ouyen Traders and the Ouyen Regional Saleyards will be mutually beneficial for both parties.

## 2.5 TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND POTENTIAL

Ouyen is located on the intersection of the Calder and Mallee Highways.

The Mallee Highway forms a link between New South Wales and South Australia. Whilst the Calder Highway links Mildura, Broken Hill and South-west New South Wales with the remainder of Victoria. The opportunity exists to promote Ouyen as a break point for journeys to and beyond the region.

Highlights include :

- Ouyen Vanilla Slice festival in August
- Cycling
- Harness Racing
- Autumn Art Show
- Farmers Festival
- Mallee Wildflower Festival
- Murray Sunset National Park & Pink Lakes Trails
- Wyperfeld National Park.

Ouyen is part of the Murray Outback tourism region. Opportunities exist to further promote the town, through regional promotions.



The Mallee Bakery



The Roundabout in Oke Street





Ouyen Context Plan.



The original mural provides visitors with a snapshot of Ouyen's story.



Existing powerlines clutter the Oke St streetscape.



Streetscape improvements should include aerial bundling of power cables and updating of street furniture.



Deep shady verandahs and decorative building facades contribute to the amenity of Oke St.



The Community Park has an ideal location in the centre of the main street and could become an important green space for both locals and tourists.



High quality street planting and hard landscape works set a precedent at the Oke - Pickering Street roundabout.



Currently caravans park across 45 degree carpark.



## 2.6 URBAN DESIGN FEATURES AND ASSETS

The town of Ouyen has many features that underlie its character and appeal to locals and visitors alike.

Well established amenities and streetscape contribute greatly to the main retail and civic area of Ouyen, with recent improvements to the landscaping and pedestrian paths at the Pickering and Oke Street intersections adding significantly to the town's overall character.

Annual festivals and events such as the Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph and the Qantaslink Tour of Sunraysia cycle race have a positive impact on the area and make good use of Ouyen's amenities and public open space.

It should also be noted that there are several factors that detract from the character of Ouyen. Several opportunities to enhance the character and amenity of Ouyen for residents and visitors are shown on the plan : *Ouyen Urban Design Advice : Opportunities and Constraints.*

### 2.6.1 URBAN DESIGN FEATURES AND ASSETS

The following features of Ouyen have been identified on the attached Opportunities and Constraints plan.

Positive features of the study area include:

- Established planting in medians and along some streets.
- Quality landscaping and shade pergolas at Pickering and Oke Street Roundabout.
- Community Park area accessible to main commercial precinct.

Negative features of the area include:

- Absence of planting in Oke Street south, Pickering Street, west of Gregory Street.
- Need for more shade.
- Need for better identified visitor long term parking.
- Lack of town identity at gateways that identify the town for visitors.

### 2.6.2 TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Ouyen is located at on the junction of the Calder and Mallee Highways, thus ensuring that numerous travellers will pass the town. Ouyen is a considerable distance from other larger towns, in the region. The Mallee Highway is used as an alternate to the Sturt Highway for travel between Adelaide and Sydney, or for those wishing to travel from Sydney to the south-east of South Australia (ie Mount Gambier).

Better provision of long bay parking for buses and tourists with caravans/boats is desirable. Car parking is well distributed through the town. Towards the southern end of Oke Street, further line marking could identify additional spaces.

Issues

- Need to provide additional shade to car spaces, where possible.
- Increase the availability of long bay parking.

#### *Pedestrians & Footpaths*

Some of the footpaths are past their life and need replacement to improve appearance and safety of walking surfaces. Improved linkages

between the Community Park and western side of Oke Street would help pedestrian movements through the town.

## 2.7 CHARACTER - LANDSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

### *Landscape and Vegetation*

The valuable contribution of planting has been noted, especially at the Oke / Pickering Street intersection. The low level planting at the intersection needs replacement with more hard species, and better maintenance.

Iron Barks in Pickering Street (east of) Oke Street and Ashes in Oke Street (north) establish distinctive themes at these locations.

### *Key Sites*

The Community Park has a notable Kafir Plum which must be protected. This is a fine park but the open gravel area that is used for occasional bus parking presents an opportunity for extending the park.

### *Street Furniture*

Additional tables and contemporary design seats and bins could be used to enhance amenity throughout the Centre.

## 2.8 CHARACTER - BUILT FORM

Built form character of Ouyen comprises primarily of modest single storey structures although several two storey buildings exist.

Key buildings which positively contribute to the character of the town include:

- The Theatre;
- Historic Court House;
- Victoria Hotel, Rowe Street.

The mural adjacent to the Community Park showcases the pioneering history of the district. It is an outstanding feature of the Town.

There are also several facades which detract from the Town's image. Improvement of these, possibly assisted by Council's policy of co-contribution, would yield positive enhancements.

The opportunity exists to enhance the view of buildings at night through the appropriate location of street lighting. The use of aerial bundled cable in Oke Street would enhance the views along the street.

### *Key Sites*

The Court House is significant not only for the role that it has played in the development of the town and the region, but also for its settling within Oke Street. The weatherboard Court House has been constructed in a federation style and has been designed with hot climate in mind. The building is now used by the Ouyen Local History Resource Centre.

The Theatre is representative of past days and the then new technology of silent films and 'talkies'.

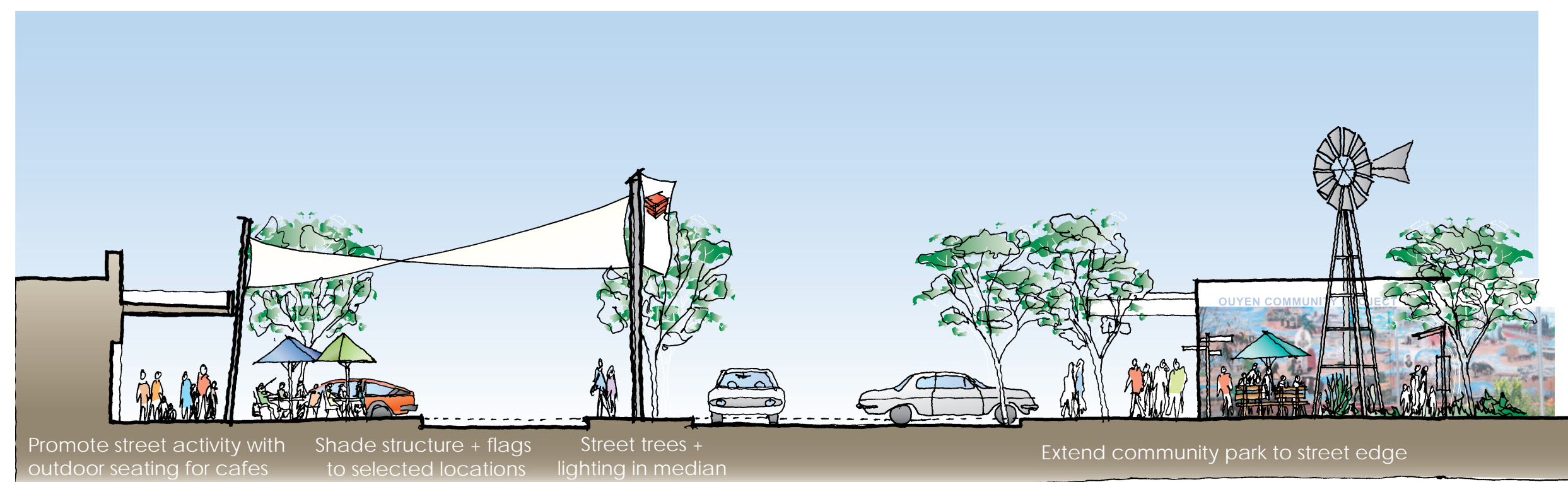


The Mural at the Entrance to Community Park

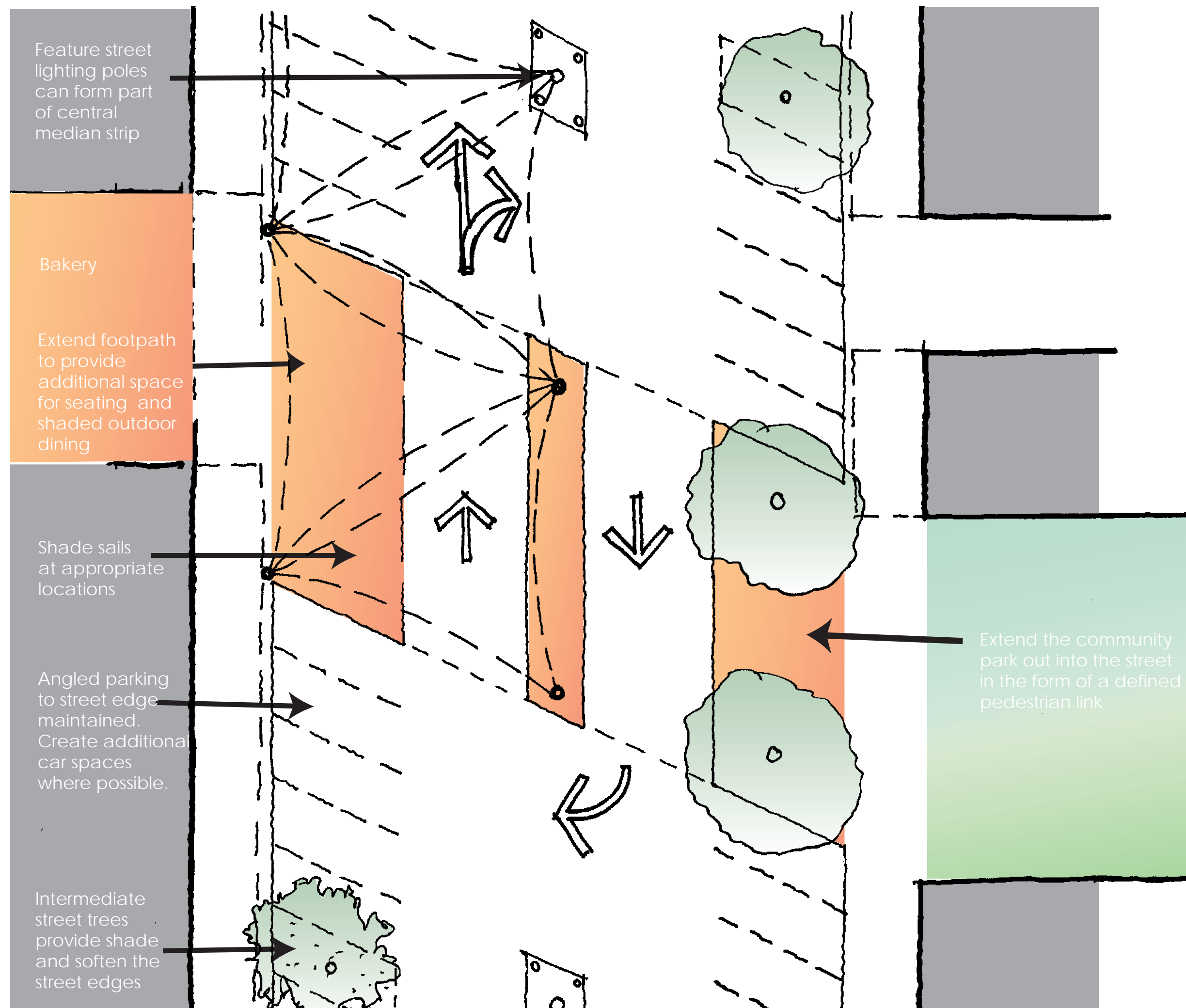


Oke Street Entrance to Community Park





Section through Oke St showing proposed overhead sails and cafe space.



Plan of Oke St showing proposed overhead sails and cafe space.



Samples of possible street furniture and pavement treatments.





## 3.0 URBAN DESIGN PROPOSALS

The proposals are identified on the second plan : *Ouyen Design Advice : Town Identity*.

Ouyen is an attractive and remote regional centre with significant potential to be further realised. The early traffic and landscape works at the corners of Pickering and Oke Streets, together with the Community Park, developed with great passion by the Ouyen community, all provide a solid basis for extending the urban design works.

### 3.1 Entrance Nodes

The strength of the Town's foundation grid can be realised as a major entrance node that defines the Town's main entrance street, Oke Street. It is proposed to accent the three (3) intersections of Gregory, Pickering and Cooper Streets with large coloured squares of asphalt, signifying their importance and acknowledging the urban centre.

It is noted that Cooper Street would also benefit from the introduction of a roundabout, as a means to slow traffic. This is important considering the proximity to a pre and primary school. It would also "book end" the main street in the Town Centre.

### 3.2 Centre Median to Oke Street

This part of Oke Street is very wide and can be enhanced with a central median comprising street trees, bollards and new feature lighting pylons. The inclusion of the median will help reduce the large scale of the street whilst maintaining its practical functioning for car parking and through traffic.

### 3.3 Lighting to Oke Street South

Tall contemporary lighting pylons (say 20m tall) are intended to be a defining component of this section of Oke Street. A strong row of 8-10 lights will be seen from some distance away along the Calder Highway and Mallee Highway. By day or night, they will signify the main commercial centre of Ouyen and pronounce its presence accordingly.

### 3.4 Pedestrian Link to Oke Street South

There are currently two pivotal features either side of this section of Oke Street: the much loved Community Park and the "Vanilla Slice Award Winning" bakery on the other. Between the two it is intended to encourage a pedestrian link. This will be formed in a number of ways. Car spaces here will give way to increased footpaths, enabling the bakery outdoor seating to spill into the street. On the other side, the Community Park will be visually extended into the street.

Coloured asphalt and/or paving may then continue the journey across the area. Cars may still pass through, but will slow as they cross a point of difference in the road.

The link is strategically poised on an angle to match that of the parking bays and thereby ensure that any lost car spaces are obtained through greater efficiencies in the areas that are currently under-utilised.

### 3.5 Street Tree Planting to Oke Street South

This section of Oke Street can benefit from additional street tree planting to both street edges, and also to the newly created centre median. The trees should continue the established native/eucalypt theme that is already prevalent in this streetscape.

### 3.6 Sail Shades to Oke Street South

With the introduction of the centre median strip, there is the possibility of introducing shade sails that stretch across half the width of the street (ie. from street kerb to centre median). Locations for shade sails may be "checker plated" and used in selected areas in which they are deemed most appropriate. One primary point to be shaded is the newly created pedestrian precinct. Whilst the shade cloths will provide much appreciated solitude from the vibrant Ouyen sun, they will also add a unique identifying feature to the Town that may become a symbol of it.

### 3.7 Community Park

The Community Park in the heart of the Commercial District is an outstanding initiative and one of which the community is clearly very proud. It should be further encouraged and extended to occupy at least the entire lot. The gravel roadway that currently reduces its size significantly should be removed and replaced with more soft landscaping that complements the Park. Car and bus parks can be better located in adjacent Oke Street, and some carparking could even be located off the laneway to the rear of the Park.

### 3.8 Outdoor Theatre

The outdoor theatre is a unique heritage asset that should be preserved and linked to the Community Park via a neighbouring outdoor amphitheatre and/or performance space. This space can provide a strong focus for community functions such as New Year, concerts and the like.

### 3.9 Pickering Street Landscaping

Whilst the sections immediately east and west from Oke Street have some well advanced street trees, these could be further reinforced with additional trees located in visible gaps. This would contribute to an overall softening of the streetscape.

### 3.10 Oke Street North Landscaping

This section of Oke Street is somewhat narrower than the other, and this prohibits a centre median without major infrastructure adjustments. Rather, the already attractive and well established section of exotic street tree species should be continued to available spaces along the street's edge. It is important that these trees are brought into the carparking zone (ie between cars), so that maximum useful shade can be obtained.

### 3.11 Upgrade Street Furniture

The upgrade of street furniture including chairs, benches, bins and signs would provide a substantial aesthetic lift to the streetscape. The secondary town centre sign (on the Mildura side of Ouyen) should be disbanded, thus bringing all visitors through the Town's rightful "front door" off Gregory Street.



Street Furniture in Oke Street



Vehicles and Caravan Parking



## 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

As part of his project, Council identified some works which could be undertaken as a priority

The budget cost estimates in Table 9 have been prepared by Quantity Surveyors Davis Langdon Pty Ltd. This table includes works identified by Council.

The estimates are based on standard rates and are to be used as a guide to establish budgets and further funding. It is considered that the indicative costs identified below could be reduced through the use of Council staff or voluntary labour (ie Lions or Rotary Clubs).

The opportunity exists for local businesses and community groups to contribute to and/or sponsor these projects.

Table 8: Council Identified Priorities

No.	Description	Qty	Unit	Rate	Total	Comments
	Street Tree Planting in Pickering Street, west of Oke Street, Gregory Street and Oke Street near Gregory Street				\$5200	Plus watering system
	Aerial bundled cabling					Powercorp estimate \$3500 to \$500 per bay (pole), possible half cost with powerline relocation grant
	Rearranged/rationalised line markings to car park bays in Oke Street West of Pickering Street				\$1200	Including sandblasting
	Street Furniture		Bins Seats	\$1100 \$900		Includes removal of old and installation of new
	Pedestrian Paving between Bakery and Community Park in Oke Street				\$2800	Possibly spray on or painted coloured pebble mix
	Car park sealing at Community Park			7	\$5,500	2 coat seal

Table 9: Ouyen Master Plan - Order of Costs

No.	Description	Qty	Unit	Rate	Total	Comments
	Entrance node to Gregory Street		Item		15,000	Allowance only for coloured asphalt and construction of minor roundabouts
	Entrance node to Pickering Street		Item		15,000	Allowance only for coloured asphalt and construction of minor roundabouts
	Entrance node to Cooper Street		Item		15,000	Allowance only for coloured asphalt and construction of minor roundabouts
	Centre median to Oke Street South		Item		50,000	Allowance only for trees, bollards and new feature lighting pylons
	Lighting to Oke Street South		Item		10,000	Allowance only
	Pedestrian link to Oke Street South		Item		15,000	Allowance only for coloured asphalt and extending the footpath to provide greater area
	Street tree planting to Oke Street South	50	No	500	25,000	Assumed medium/mature size trees
	Sail shades to Oke Street South	10	No	10,000	100,000	Including for support structure
	Community Park upgrade works		Item		25,000	Allowance only for soft landscaping and the relocation of some car parks
	Outdoor theatre upgrade		Item		15,000	Allowance only for minor restoration works
	Pickering Street landscaping		Item		20,000	Allowance only for soft landscaping
	Oke Street North landscaping		Item		20,000	Allowance only for soft landscaping
	Upgrade street furniture		Item		25,000	Allowance only
	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>350,000</b>	
A.	Preliminaries			15%	53,000	
	<b>Building Works Total</b>				<b>403,000</b>	
B	Design Contingency			5%	20,000	
C	Construction Contingency			8%	34,000	
D	Professional Fees			12%	55,000	
E	Authority Charges		Item		20,000	
	<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>532,000</b>	



Community Park View from the Rear



Oke Street and Community Park Entrance