



# Walpeup and District

COMMUNITY PLAN 2023-2028









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# introduction

This is the second community plan for the Walpeup and District Community, covering the period of 2023-2028 outlining the community's long-term goals, aspirations and priorities. The Torrita Township is also incorporated into the plan.



# vision and mission statements

## **Vision Statement**

To maintain and improve the quality of life of this community into the future.

## **Mission Statement**

Promote the social, economic and cultural wellbeing now and into the future through effective Governance and community engagement.

## **Values**

Our community values include: Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility and Community.

## **Objectives**

We will create a safe and supportive place to live, where diversity and lifestyle opportunities are encouraged; and there is opportunity for participation in arts, culture, sport and recreation to enhance wellbeing.

## **Our Mission**

### **Developing the Walpeup and District Community Plan**

The Walpeup and District Development Committee Inc. in consultation with the community developed the first community plan in 2014. The plan focused on a number of actions including maintaining existing assets, making improvements and upgrading town assets.

# history

The Walpeup community is situated in the Mallee region, in north-west Victoria, on the Mallee Highway approximately 29kms from Ouyen. The name 'Walpeup' is derived from an Indigenous word and means 'big smoke'. Agriculture settlement began in the 1880s with intensive cereal production occurring and by 1920, 65% of the country had been occupied with the remainder being sandy inferior country.

The township was established along a railway route in 1909 when farming land allotments were offered and the first store opened. A school began in 1912, and by 1920, Walpeup had a population of 400 people – a general store, butcher, bank branch and other businesses.<sup>i</sup>

The area contributed around 45% of Victoria's wheat. Typical Mallee soils and the dry climate conditions saw the need for further research

into cereal production in this region. In 1932 the establishment of the 'Walpeup Research Station' occurred, closing in 2009, then managed by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (State Government).<sup>ii</sup>

In more recent times, local tourism attractions have been developed. The Walpeup Wayside Stop, located at the corner of Cregan Street and Murphy Road, allows travellers to stay over. The Walpeup Dryland Memorial Garden, under the management of friendly local volunteers, contains many Mallee native trees and shrubs. The area also boasts interesting walking tracks, including Schubert's Walk.

The Walpeup Memorial Hall is home to a wide range of memorabilia highlighting the district's military, sporting and social history.

# climate

Most of the Murray Mallee region is classified as warm temperate and semi-arid. Walpeup is at the more southern and more humid limit of the range.<sup>iii</sup>

From 1939 to 2021, the mean maximum temperature for Walpeup has been highest in the month of

January at 32 degrees Celsius, with a mean minimum temperature of 4.8 degrees Celsius for the month of July.<sup>iv</sup>

Mean rainfall for the years 1939 to 2021 had the highest average of 34.5mm in the month of August.<sup>v</sup>







# population

In 2021, Walpeup had a population of 171 people with a median age of 50 years. The population has a approximate 50:50 split of men and women, and 36 families call the township home.

In 2016, Walpeup had a population of 158 people and the increase is largely due to the availability of vacant housing during the pandemic. The township is seeing a number of newcomers, including active retirees willing

to contribute to the volunteer economy.

In 2021, Torrita had a population of 51 people, inclusive of 13 families.

# former mallee research station

Walpeup was once home to the Walpeup Research Station, commonly known as the Mallee Research Station (MRS). The Victorian Government agricultural research station was established in 1932 and closed in December 2009.<sup>viii</sup>

The facility was operated by highly trained scientists working in the laboratory and the field, conducting experiments with cereals, sheep, pasture improvement and control of soil erosion.<sup>ix</sup>

The research farm also developed practices specific to Australia's climate and conditions.

In the early years, wind erosion occurred due to the lack of understanding of the environment and land use in a dry climate. Finely-worked bare fallows led to widespread erosion, a method known and used in higher rainfall country.<sup>x</sup>

Improvements in erosion control occurred due to the amalgamation of farming units, greater emphasis on grazing sheep, favorable seasons and changing stable farming methods/practices developed by the Research Station.<sup>xi</sup>

Managing heritage values from a range of historic, social and technical criteria at the differing levels of significance; 'Establishing Significance', 'State Significance' and 'Local Significance' requires a multifaceted approach involving experts and members of the community.<sup>xii</sup>

The whole farm is of scientific significance due to its role in agricultural development, as well as providing State historic value and social value for the community.<sup>xiii</sup>



# walpeup memorial hall

The Walpeup Memorial Hall was established in 1923, with funding from the Australian Government, to commemorate the history of soldiers who had fought in World War 1.<sup>xiv</sup>

Involvement from farmers, shop-keepers and other community members, along with subsidised Government funding, enabled the construction of the Walpeup Memorial Hall.

The Hall holds an extensive archive of Walpeup's history including one of the last remaining First World War 'welcome home' banners. This was created in 1919 by local women and displayed at the local railway station for soldiers returning home from the war.<sup>xv</sup>

Today the Memorial Hall is used as a multipurpose facility that includes community celebrations, farewells, sporting competitions, the outreach library service, meetings and is the home of district memorabilia.

## Mildura Rural City Council

The Mildura Rural City Council's Community Futures Branch launched a Community Planning Team to assist with the development of a new plan that would progress existing and identify new projects that would enable the community to apply for potential funding opportunities. The Community Plan has a grassroots approach to shaping the future of the community, outlining the long-term goals, aspirations and priorities over the next five years.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a number of consultation challenges, and in response Mildura Rural City Council supported the Walpeup and District Development Committee with an extensive media strategy that incorporated various engagement methods.

The residents of Walpeup and district community participated in a visioning session, completing detailed online and hard copy surveys, phone interviews, video conferencing, email and social media. The residents were highly

engaged in issues and demonstrated commitment to the community by completing detailed responses. The survey data was collated, thematically analysed and drafted for the community to provide feedback.

## The Key Reference Group

The Walpeup and District Development Committee's Key Reference Group (KRG) participated in the community planning process to determine the relevance of previous findings and to determine if there were any new or emerging trends.

In addition, data was considered from the Advancing Country Towns Project 2011-2017 and Mildura Rural City Council Imagine 2040 consultation.









# about walpeup and district

The former 'Shire of Walpeup' existed from 1911 to 1994 and was a well-known Local Government Area located in North West Victoria, bordering South Australia and covering 10,964 square kilometres.<sup>xvi</sup>

It is surrounded by large national parks, including: The Big Desert, Murray-Sunset National Park and Wyperfeld National Park. The 'Shire of Walpeup' was merged with the Shire of Mildura and Mildura City Council amalgamating into 'The Rural City of Mildura'.

## **Purpose of the Walpeup and District Development Committee Inc.**

The Walpeup and District Development Committee was established in 1995:

- To provide Council with insights into the needs, circumstances and future direction of the community
- To support the development and implementation of Walpeup local Community Plan
- To lead and support its community in the delivery of Community Plan actions and activities
- To assist Council to connect and communicate effectively with local communities
- To advise Council to the nature of changes within their area, including; developmental and decision-making
- To be inclusive and include broad community participation in the function of the Advisory Group and Community Planning process

- To work closely with all stakeholders, including Mildura Rural City Council and maintain clear communication channels

Membership is open to all members of the Walpeup and district community residents or property owners within the Mildura Rural City Council.

## our 10 key themes

1. Our Values
2. Our Vision
3. Community Wellbeing
4. Protecting our History
5. Protecting our Natural Environment
6. Building a strong Local Economy
7. Connecting our Region
8. Leadership and Governance
9. Our Concerns
10. Project Action Plan

# achievements to date

## **The Walpeup community has successfully achieved the following:**

- Walpeup Memorial Hall Building Stabilisation and Restoration
- Walpeup Rural Outreach Library Service
- Walpeup Dryland Memorial Garden
- Walpeup Cemetery upgrades to lawn and gazebo areas
- Wayside Stop upgrade to fire service provision and installation of defibrillator
- Walpeup Wayside Stop Speed Cushioning Project
- Christmas Decoration Project
- Production of YouTube Community Videos – Walpeup Community and Walpeup Memorial Hall
- Walpeup Shop Maintenance

## **Events**

- Australia Day Breakfast
- Anzac Day
- Walpeup Christmas Community Celebration

## **Community Facilities, Groups and Services**

The Walpeup and District community is home to a number of community facilities, groups and services that include:

## **General facilities**

- Walpeup Memorial Hall
- Walpeup Cemetery

- Walpeup Wayside Stop
- Walpeup Dryland Memorial Garden
- Glen Park
- Walpeup Racecourse Reserve
- Churches
- Torrita Hall

## **Community Groups**

- The Walpeup and District Development Committee Inc.
- The Walpeup Memorial Hall Committee
- Walpeup Cemetery Trust
- Walpeup News Facebook Group
- Weeah Landcare Group Inc

## **Sporting Groups**

- Walpeup Recreation Reserve
- Walpeup Table Tennis
- Ouyen United Kangas Football and Netball Club

## **Health and Wellbeing**

- Mallee Track Health and Community Service Community Car

## **Businesses**

- Walpeup General Store
- Walpeup Post Office
- Poole and Jackson

## **Government**

- Country Fire Authority
- Mildura Rural City Council Outreach Library Services







# our priorities

## 1. Our Values

Walpeup is a people-friendly community with a relaxed lifestyle.

As a community we value:

- A supportive community with a strong spirit
- Peaceful, quiet and friendly environment
- A small community feel
- Local history
- Dedicated volunteers
- Safety and security
- Locally delivered goods and services
- Native flora and fauna
- The natural environment with wide open spaces

## 2. Our Vision

The community sees Walpeup as a place which supports:

- A clean and tidy appearance
- Improvements to existing facilities to increase opportunities for community
- Promotion of tourism opportunities that attract visitors, that connect us to the region and that encourage local spending
- New industry
- Advocacy to Local, State and Federal Governments for grant opportunities to support local businesses and facilities
- Access to local essential services
- Preservation of historically significant landmarks

- Attraction of outreach services to the community
- Long-term sustainability

## 3. Community Wellbeing

Activities and initiatives that produce a vibrant township with a safe and healthy community.

This includes a focus on:

- Creating a sense of belonging for residents
- Clean, safe community and public amenities
- Advocacy for a treated water supply
- Well maintained parks and gardens
- Opportunities for children and youth
- Access to transport services
- Access to health and wellbeing services
- Access to recreational activities
- Partnerships with other communities, i.e. Mildura, Ouyen, Underbool, Murrayville
- Funding support for economic development
- Trained and experienced volunteer emergency services (CFA)
- Continuation of Outreach Library Service
- Heritage preservation

## 4. Protecting our Natural Environment

Working towards conserving and promoting the Mallee region.

This includes a focus on:

- Protecting, sustaining and maintaining our bushland, parks, walking tracks, streetscapes and reserves
- Ongoing maintenance of the Walpeup Dryland Memorial Garden, Glen Park, Schubert Walk and the Wayside Stop
- Beautification of town entrances and streetscapes
- Maintenance and improvement of existing community assets (e.g. Racecourse Reserve)
- Improved drainage management and systems
- Environmental initiatives
- Animal, plant and pest control



## 5. Building a Strong Local Economy

Supporting the community to maintain and strive for economic growth and employment opportunities.

This includes a focus on:

- Maintaining business viability and supporting new services
- Creating and capturing tourism opportunities
- Diverse economic infrastructure
- Employment opportunities for all residents
- Business support from Government
- Attracting new residents
- Building partnerships with outlying communities
- Providing opportunities for new volunteers to support local initiatives

## 6. Connecting our Region

Linking our towns and connecting our region.

This includes a focus on:

- Partnerships with Mildura, other LGA's and neighbouring Mallee Track communities
- Place-based projects funded and supported by Local, State and Federal Governments

- Local transport service for students to Ouyen P-12 College
- Lobby for higher quality, better maintained, safer roads
- Access to transport services including Mallee Track Health and Community Service Community Car
- Locally delivered and visiting outreach services
- High speed phone and internet connectivity
- New and improved Township Entrance Signage

## 7. Leadership and Governance

Ensuring strong leadership and meaningful governance for community

This includes a focus on:

- Strong relationships with Government and neighbouring communities
- Communication through Walpy News, community noticeboard, North West Express
- Support and direction from government departments
- Expertise for delivery of initiatives and projects
- Support, access and prioritisation of grant funding
- Participation in Council decision-making

## 8. Protecting our History

Preserving our culture and local heritage.

This includes a focus on:

- Walpeup Memorial Hall
- The former Mallee Research Station
- The former Walpeup Primary School Site
- Glen Park
- Walpeup Cemetery
- Streetscapes including Cregan Street and Glen Street
- Access to quality arts and library services
- Building partnerships with Mildura Arts Centre and relevant organisations to deliver a diverse range of arts and cultural experiences



## 9. Our Concerns

The community planning process raised a number of concerns.

The concerns that were highlighted included:

- An ageing and declining population
- Geographical isolation and distance from larger cities
- Limited access to essential food, medical, specialist, health and wellbeing services
- Lack of transport options for community to access essential services
- Limited employment and educational opportunities
- Volunteer fatigue and changing patterns of volunteerism
- The need to maintain high quality roads, walking tracks, laneways and footpaths
- Poor and unreliable phone and internet services
- Limited access to entertainment, sporting, non-sporting activities
- The gap between rural community and urban policy (red tape)
- The quality of our domestic water supply
- The future of the Walpeup General Store



## 10. Project Action Plan

The next four pages list the projects that the community identified as part of the planning process.

Project Description	Next steps	Partners
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Walpeup Memorial Hall Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to review the maintenance and preservation plan for the historic building</li> <li>• Continue to explore funding options</li> </ul>	Walpeup Memorial Hall Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
Walpeup Wayside Stop Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider 'dump point' for visitors to entice longer stays</li> <li>• Reinstall seating at playground equipment</li> <li>• Evaluate and upgrade signage</li> <li>• Continued maintenance of buildings and gardens</li> <li>• Explore funding options</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
Walpeup War Memorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community consultation and engagement with key partners</li> <li>• Explore funding options</li> </ul>	Walpeup Memorial Hall Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
Walpeup Primary School site development opportunities  Suggestions Low maintenance sculpture park, history and machinery display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued community consultation around use of the site</li> <li>• Explore funding options including MRCC purchase of the land and rental to the community</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
Walpeup Township Entrance Signage Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community consultation for the design and layout of signage</li> <li>• Review and conduct a township signage audit</li> <li>• Form partnerships with authorities</li> <li>• Location and development of signage</li> <li>• Explore funding options</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council  Regional Roads Victoria



Project Description	Next steps	Partners
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Walking Trail Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate existing walking trails and potential expansion and connection to community assets</li> <li>• Upkeep and maintenance plan for the area</li> <li>• Explore funding options for development</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
Walpeup Recreational Facility Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community consultation in regards to the development and maintenance of area</li> <li>• Explore options of connecting walking trail to sporting and exercise facilities</li> <li>• Explore funding options to restore golf course</li> <li>• Explore funding options to restore tennis courts</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Racecourse Reserve Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
Walpeup Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate options to install a toilet facility in the Walpeup Cemetery</li> <li>• Investigate tree plantings options to create wind break on North end</li> <li>• Explore funding options</li> </ul>	Walpeup Cemetery Trust
<b>Industry, economics and tourism</b>		
Silo Art Tourism Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate to Mildura Regional Development</li> <li>• Investigate and determine project scope, objectives, forecast costing, budget and implementation</li> <li>• Consultation with stakeholders</li> <li>• Explore funding opportunities</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Regional Development
Walpeup Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support and advocate for local businesses</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee
Mallee Highway Shelter and Street Furniture (opposite Walpeup Store)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate options for shelter, seating and tree planting</li> <li>• Explore funding options</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council



Project Description	Next steps	Partners
<b>Industry, economics and tourism</b>		
Streetscaping to beautify the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for streetscape beautification throughout the town</li> <li>• Maintenance of streetscapes and roads</li> <li>• Investigate development of existing and new walking trails</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council  Regional Roads Victoria
Promote community assets, national parks and history through online presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a tourism strategy for Walpeup and district communities to highlight offerings</li> </ul>	Mildura Rural City Council  Mildura Regional Development  Walpeup and District Development Committee
Electric Vehicle (EV) Fast Charger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form partnership to explore funding opportunities</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council
<b>Access and safety</b>		
Improve internet coverage in outlying areas and connection speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form partnerships with neighboring communities and advocate for better connectivity and internet speed</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee
Improve road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widening of Glen Street</li> <li>• Maintenance of unsealed roads</li> <li>• Review of kerb and channel throughout the township</li> <li>• Review of hazardous intersections and entrances throughout the township</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council  Regional Roads Victoria
Improve footpath safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for provision of new footpaths</li> <li>• Improve and maintain existing footpaths</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee  Mildura Rural City Council  Businesses



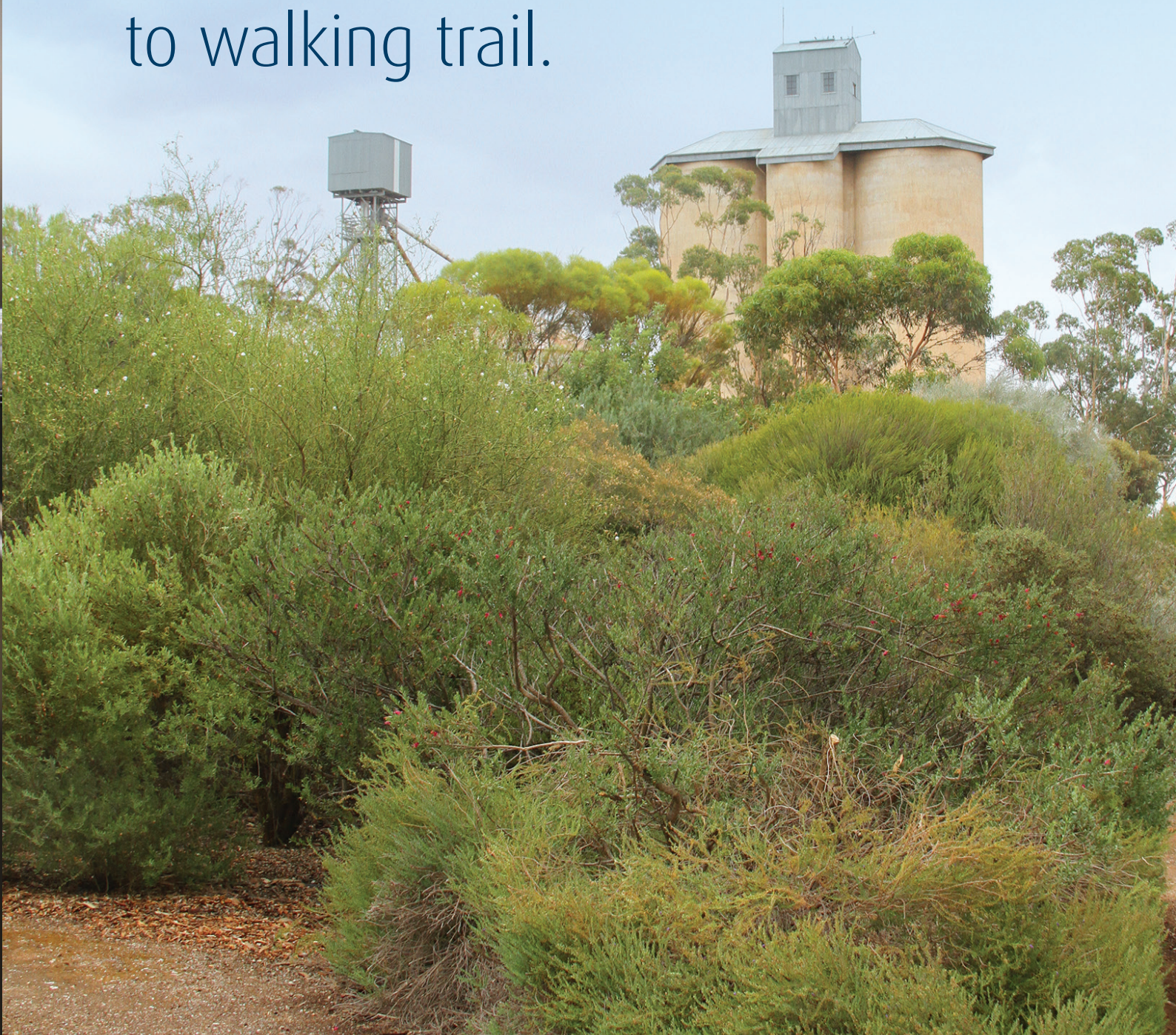


Project Description	Next steps	Partners
<b>Access and safety</b>		
Review access to immediate emergency resources (Defibrillator located at Wayside Stop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review local emergency resources and advocate for locally accessible resources</li> </ul>	Ambulance Victoria Mallee Track Health and Community Service Community Groups
Walpeup Fire Station (CFA) improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunity for a new fire station</li> </ul>	Walpeup Fire Brigade Country Fire Authority
Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing consultation with community</li> </ul>	Walpeup and District Development Committee Mildura Rural City Council Community

Image courtesy of Pamela McNamara



A future project and initiative is the development of a water tower for tourism and connection to walking trail.







CFA Walpeup

## References

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- ix 'The Mallee Research Station' - Youtube, 2021
- x 'Mildura (Former Shire of Walpeup) Heritage Study Stage 2' - MRCC/Context Pty Ltd, Mildura Rural City Council, 2013
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- xiv Mildura Living Magazine, Ben Pisconeri, Mildura Rural City Council 2015
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- xvi 'Mildura Former Shire of Walpeup) Heritage Study Vol 1 - Final Stage 1' - MRCC/Context Pty Ltd, Mildura Rural City Council, 2009



# acknowledgments

The Walpeup and District Community Plan was developed by the Walpeup Development Committee in collaboration with Cassey Gloster, Geoff Burr and Darcy Hulland from Mildura Rural City Council. Thank-you to Kate Pole for working closely with the community in the development of this plan.

The Walpeup and District Community Plan 2023-2028 was endorsed by Mildura Rural City Council on the 22 December 2022.

For Speech or Hearing impaired:  
National Relay Service TTY 13 36 77  
Speak and Listen 1300 555 727

This community plan was developed by the community of Walpeup in collaboration with Mildura Rural City Council.

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Walpeup and District Development Committee Inc. and Mildura Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional 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.



Mildura Rural City Council



