



August 2020

MURTOA PROGRESS ASSOCIATION



Our Community Plan

Murtoa Lakeside Town Moving Forward

Murtoa residents were surveyed through a letter box drop and online surveys. A summary of the 59 responses received portray Murtoa's strength, assets, challenges and vision in this Community Action Plan 2019-2023.

The Murtoa community has achieved many great things in the past five years when reflecting on the last community action plan, including successful completion of listed projects such as the Lake Marma redevelopment, the new Neighborhood House building, refurbished Murtoa Railway Station, and multiple upgrades to sporting facilities.

“Murtoa is a safe place to raise children with schools and a supportive community”

Murtoa is a proud lakeside town, located on the main rail line from Melbourne to Adelaide. Our vibrant community benefits from being located close to Wimmera's regional centre of Horsham. On the Silo Art Trail, our own tourist attractions include the Stick Shed (National Heritage listed Murtoa No.1 Grain Shed), the museum precinct (Water Tower Museum, Railway Station & Concordia College [first Lutheran college in Australia]) and Lake Marma managed by a local Committee of Management, complete with the Caravan Park [operated by the Yarriambiack Shire Council].

The town is central to the farming community and agricultural industry, with some major employers, excellent schools, services, retail sector and key trades available. The diverse community and sporting facilities are managed and maintained to a high standard by volunteers. Connectivity to NBN along with Telstra and Optus towers enhances business and social opportunities.



OUR COMMUNITY

Murtoa is a beautiful lakeside town in the heart of the Wimmera on the Silo Art Trail and home to The Stick Shed.



Population

865



Median Age

48
(State avg 47)



Private Dwellings

364
= 80% occupied



Median Household
Income

\$911
(State avg \$1,419)



Volunteered

in 12 months
38%
(State avg 19%)

Source: ABS Census 2016

OUR STRENGTHS

- **Our People & Community Spirit**
- **Forward thinking, driven, community that gets things done**
- **Rural Lifestyle and Location**
- **Local Businesses & Shopping has all the essentials you need**

OUR ASSETS

- **Local Businesses, Local Services & Local Employers**
- **Lake Marma**
- **The Stick Shed**
- **Tourism & Public facilities**
- **Community Events**
- **Strong farming culture & Agriculture Industry**

OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES

- **Small businesses able to continue & expand**
- **Accommodation for sale, rent, for elderly and for visitors**
- **Local access to healthcare, Doctors and Childcare**
- **Centre of town needs a boost. Revive the main street.**
- **Build population - Attract new people and keep people here**
- **Employment opportunities**
- **Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance**
- **Inclusion, cohesion, engaging youth & supporting new ideas**
- **Access to community funding**
- **Volunteer fatigue**
- **Development opportunities**

OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Frequent future challenges the Murtoa community raised in 2019:

- Growing Our Community: Keep people in Murtoa & attract new people to Murtoa
- Support local businesses and attract new businesses
- Retain & build services (health & child care)
- Maintaining & improving current infrastructure
- Space for furthering development, industrial and tourism opportunities

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Ideas raised in the community survey that we, together with our Murtoa Progress Association, can explore together:

Basic Services

- ❖ **Child Day Care centre developed** for community. There is a huge demand for local daycare. There is a huge demand and wait list for take a break. Sufficient resources locally.
- ❖ **Access to health services** locally, including access to Doctor supported
- ❖ **Invest in quality housing development** for all demographics (including rentals). Accommodation desperately needed (housing & rentals)
- ❖ **Minimise the drugs boom** and the effects it has on small communities.
- ❖ **Manage feral pigeons**

Community & Connectivity

- ❖ **More community Events Sponsored** to promote social inclusion – Like the BW Family Fun Night and Look over the Farm Gate events. Perhaps 3 per year.
- ❖ **Youth engagement** improved, including develop meaningful youth engagement activities
- ❖ **Sustain community groups** and maintain and support volunteers, including more easily accessible **funding** for community groups
- ❖ **Town strategic plan** developed that is holistic
- ❖ Have **coordinated group** with representatives for all groups work together to support each other, share skills, resources and promote develop Murtoa.
- ❖ **Public gym** to encourage fitness
- ❖ **Promote Murtoa** - great place to live for young families, elderly and commuter base for Horsham
- ❖ **Youth activities:** bumper cars, lazer tag and circus

Infrastructure Opportunities

- ❖ **Footpaths improved.** Pedestrian, gopher and pram safe footpaths e.g. Lake, Degenhardt and Comyn Streets. With the recent dry conditions, it appears there has been more movement in surfaces (cracking, lifting and dropping) and further action is required for public safety.
- ❖ **Street Scape improvements.** Paint the shop facades of McDonald St (all private, public benefit)
- ❖ **Street trees** in areas where this is practicable and needed. Appropriate selections to avoid causing hazards. E.g. McClintock St. from the highway to Breen St. is one area for consideration.
- ❖ **Review town entrances** from North, South, East and West and consider ways to enhance further. Perhaps drought tolerant garden with a few striking specimens, may help create a lived-in feel.
- ❖ Murtoa **Industrial area expanded** and promoted to encourage investment and employment.
- ❖ **Maintaining current infrastructure** - a lot of buildings in town will need work in the future, where does this money come from?
- ❖ **Flooding at pool entry:** Water unable to drain away from Swimming Pool entry area.
- ❖ Maintaining clean and regular **lake supply**
- ❖ Get **free Wi-Fi**
- ❖ Install a **toddler playground**
- ❖ Improve **public transport** (including rail)
- ❖ **Maximise use of limited resources** by seeking creative ways of sharing resources rather than replicating facilities: costs of maintaining and developing local infrastructure can be a problem.
- ❖ **Bus shelter** in Marma St built as a second shelter

Economic Development Opportunities

- ❖ **Local business supported** through initiatives developed to support and boost local businesses. Promote shopping local ("look local first"). Business thrives, they employ more people, more people come and spend in town, community thrives. It's simple but hardly ever acknowledged
- ❖ **Business investment encouraged,** use recent case studies.
- ❖ Attract new **employment** to Murtoa
- ❖ **Become a tourist destination.** Murtoa as a lifestyle location promoted for commute and quality of lifestyle. Enhance tourism and do more to promote the town and maximise impact of tourism for benefit of local economy. Set up an tourist information centre
- ❖ **External perspectives.** Interesting to get perspectives from non-locals or former locals. They can often see things that we don't. e.g. great features that we take for granted. Comments left on social media, visitor books or in passing, may give useful insights.
- ❖ Specific locations for **truck parking in town centre** to encourage shop locally, economic benefit.
- ❖ **Promote an agribusiness** that value adds to local produce and would provide employment and boost economy via flow on effects. Farms getting bigger - loosing families from district
- ❖ Make the **caravan park** bigger
- ❖ **Lake development** potential: café/bar

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- ❖ **Free camping options.** Travelers have several options for ‘free camping’ in this region and elsewhere. This would make Murtoa another option for some travelers who have self-sufficient rigs. Some have already found spots around Murtoa to stop overnight for free.
 - ❖ **Meal Access.** Coordination of business hours to ensure access on long weekends and holidays.

OUR MURTOA PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

The Murtoa Progress Association has represented the Murtoa Community since 1888. The purposes of Progress is to promote and support Murtoa and district in the enhancement of:

- Community connectivity, consultation and local representation
- Local businesses, services, ag-culture and economic development opportunities
- Tourism and livability
- Shared leadership and enable community leaders

Specific tasks include to manage:

- Promotion of local business and community events
- Representation of community issues, concerns and interests
- Community Units and Cabins on Lake Marma
- The Murtoa website and social media
- The Murtoa Community Action Plan as a consultative process
- The fortnightly newspaper the “Murtoa and District Advertiser”

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Email: murtoaprogress@gmail.com

Website www.murtoa.net **Facebook** www.facebook.com/murtoa

OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS (2019-2023) – Annual Update 2020 – By Theme

1. Community, Connectivity & Livability Opportunities

	Theme	Project	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact / Submission	Email Address
A	Health, Recreation & Sport	Public exercise equipment	Exercise stations to be placed around the Lake Marma walking track Encourage people outside for fitness. Add strength training to fitness program.	Public access to exercise equipment Strength training is important for all, but particularly as we get older, for strong healthy bones and improved balance. Meet and chat with likeminded community while getting fit	Lake Marma COM		Lake COM Hamish Gawith (Secretary) Local Resident – Maree Baker	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
B		Netball - Second netball court	Second netball court	Standards for netball	YSC, Showyards COM		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
C		Netball - Women's change facility	Women's change facility		YSC, Showyards COM		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
D		Oval - Raised seating for court/s and oval	Raised seating for court/s and oval		Showyards COM		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
E		Basketball ring installed for youth	Basketball ring installed within the Lake precinct area.	Basketball is popular with youth in Murtoa. No public space to play.	Lake Marma COM, MPA	Half Basketball Court option. Supported by MPA & Murtoa Tennis Club	Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
F		Toddler playground	Develop a new, or add to existing playgrounds with playground equipment more suitable to toddlers	No toddler playgrounds suitable to under 3 years of age	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
G		Youth activities & spaces	Youth activities: bumper cars, lazer tag and circus		YSC, MPA, schools		Local Resident	
H		Rabl Park Off- Lead Dog Park	Suggested location - Rabl Park near the toilet car park. It would be securely fenced, with dog- litter disposal units, and signage. It will provide a safe space for dog owners to exercise their dogs.	Currently nowhere on public land for dogs to be safely be off -leash. Provide added protection for people, animals and birds from off- leash dogs. Travellers with dogs onboard seek out towns with off-leash dog- parks and plan their stops accordingly. Provide a social experience for both dog and owner.	YSC, MPA, Dog owners		Local Resident Paula Clark	pmclark60@bigpond.com

la		Bowls Club - Demolish and rebuild men's toilets.	The current men's toilet is in serious disrepair. It is fragile and is not suitable for the elderly or people with disabilities to use safely. We would like to demolish the current toilets which is detached from the main clubhouse. We would then extend the club house to include the toilet in the main building. This would require us to move tanks and some plumbing and walking paths.	There is a risk to our members and visitors health and safety.	Murtoa Bowls Club, YSC	We are a small club but with a growing membership. We need to upgrade our facilities to continue to attract membership.	Tony Baker (Chair)	
J		Bowls Club – Outdoor Spectator Area			Murtoa Bowls Club, YSC		Tony Baker (Chair)	
K		Tennis Club future funding for final top surface of Court #3 to finalise newly funded asphalt works. Lighting update to existing light towers, and installation of additional lighting towers to light up other two courts.	Future funding for top surface of Court #3 (low slip synpave acrylic court surface and final line marking) will finalise the newly funded asphalt works. This will complete the overall project and assist the Lake Recreational Reserve's beautiful appearance with a complete and attractive tennis arena. Additional lighting update to existing lighting of Courts #1 and #2, and installation of additional lighting towers to light up #3 and #4 for a possible (more efficient) night competition.	A Friday night competition considered to replace Saturday afternoon tennis due to increased Saturday commitments of players. The shift of the standard tennis format is hoped to attract new players of varying skill levels to enjoy tennis as a fun sport and enjoy the recreation reserve. The need for quality lighting and surface of Court #3 will complete the tennis arena and set up for future generations.	Murtoa Tennis Club	Tennis Club will research required equipment for additional lights and source quotes. Tennis Victoria support importance of Court #3	Natasha Pietsch (Secretary)	tony-tash@bigpond.com
L		Public places to tether dogs	A suitable place to tether a large dog outside the Commonwealth Bank	the only possibility is around a pole in Cromie Street and then I rapidly run out of dog lead as the pole has a large girth	MPA, YSC	Keep up the wonderful work you are doing and a very big thank you	Local Resident Dr. Jan Schmidt-Loeliger	loeliger@bigpond.com
M	Accessibility	Ambulant golf cart	Purchase ambulant golf cart	Enable access for all visitors	The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
N		Internal Lift in the Water Tower	Enable disabled access to each level of the Tower	Qualified personnel			Peter Adler (President)	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
O	Heritage	Historical Society - Digitalisation Project	Digitalise Microfiche, Microfilm records & Photographs	Grace Info Management & MDHS	Historical Society	Dependent on Local History Grant	Sue Dollin (Secretary)	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
P		Rabl Park Develop Connections to Country partnership with local aboriginal community	Seek funding to create an artwork in Rabl Park with local aboriginal artists. Signage to celebrate and educate about traditional ownership.	Recognise traditional ownership. Celebrate artistic cultural expression. Community education and reconciliation.	BG Land Council, YSC, MPA, WPCP			Local Resident Paula Clark

2. Infrastructure Improvement Opportunities (Including Beautification Projects)

	Location	Project	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact	Email Address
A	Town Centre	Upgrade toilets in Marma St	Many people visit Murtoa since Stick Shed & Silo Art Trail have become popular. Also, locals on their walks around lake, etc.	Aged & not pleasant. No mirror & sanitary arrangements to be improved. Entrance too dark.	YSC		Local resident	
B		Truck parking areas	Truck parking area required in various locations in town to support local businesses (apart from rest stop at Rabl Park which is some distance from shops)	Ag is a huge part of our area & employment. There is nowhere for trucks to park & purchase items / rest in Murtoa.	YSC, MPA, VicRoads, Local businesses		Local resident	
C		Beautify McDonald St Shop Facades	Work with private shop owners to paint (Progress / public funds) shop facades for benefit of town beautification.	McDonald St shop fronts deteriorated	MPA & building owners	D. Noonan proposal to paint north side shop wall.	Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
D		Bus shelter	Bus shelter in Marma St built as 2 nd shelter		YSC		Local Resident	
E		Environment Create opportunities for involvement in Urban Landcare activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting for shade, habitat • Town beautification • Community gardening / composting / repairs • Plant propagation • Beekeeping • Litter control • Garden produce sharing 	Improve the liveability of the town by creating opportunities for participation in things that improve the local environment and beautifying the town streets, parks and entrances.	Neighbourhood House, YSC, Landcare, Schools, U3A, Men's shed Lake COM, MPA		Local Resident Paula Clark	pmclark60@bigpond.com
F	Town Entrance / Industrial Area Town Entrance	We need a new more attractive entrance that is safer for the public	We need our own gateway so we don't go through Schier Cabinet Makers yard	The public need to enter through Schier's property and we feel this could complicate any incident on the property. It would be better for us to have a better system for entry to our Rally at the Big Weekend.	Dunmunkle Sumpoilers	Our future is a concern, because of the age of a lot of the members, so we need young people to get involved	Graham Gellatly (President)	gellbrooklu@bigpond.com
G		Signage improved for road	Need sign to compliment our existing sign from other direction		Dunmunkle Sumpoilers	Our future is a concern, because of the age of a lot of the members, so we need young people to get involved	Graham Gellatly (President)	gellbrooklu@bigpond.com
H		Shrub planting on roadside	Beautification of east side town entrance	Main highway entrance, make an impressive entrance to Murtoa, without blocking view of GrainCorp or Stick Shed	YSC, MPA, Local Businesses	Drought tolerant. Low height. Various varieties.	Local Resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
I		Industrial Area Enhanced		Lack of physical space for industrial area to expand, thus expanding business & local employment opportunities	YSC, MPA, Local Businesses		Local Resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
J	Swimming Pool	Computerised water testing system	Reduce man hours and therefore cost of running pool, by installing a computerised water testing system. Water testing is required four hourly every day	reduce the running costs of our local swimming pool, a necessary but costly facility for our local community, in our hot summer climate	Swimming Pool Committee		Maree Baker	mabaker3@tpg.com.au

K		Installation of solar panels to reduce power expenses	the committee has applied for government funding for this project, and is waiting to see if we will be successful. If not, we still wish to plan for solar panels	reduce the running costs of our local swimming pool, a necessary but costly facility for our local community, in our hot summer climate	Swimming Pool Committee		Maree Baker (Secretary)	mabaker3@tpg.com.au
L	Lake Marma	Lake landscaping at north-west	Develop the North West corner area of the Lake reserve. Looking at incorporating a grassed area, tables, BBQ area etc		Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
M		Landscaping swimming pool parking area	The planting of trees in the swimming pool / tennis court area. Something like Weeping Myall	Having more asphalted road to link in to the sealed road to the rotunda.	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
N		Sound Shell	A sound shell structure at the grassed area near the new BBQ area. Maybe along the swimming pool fence.	For community entertainment at the Lake	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
O		Lake car parking area improvements	Improvements to the large car parking area near the tennis court / swimming pool. Having more asphalted road to link in to the sealed road to the rotunda. Levelling to help stop the pooling of water near the swimming pool, and to eradicate pot holes.	User friendly	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
P		Lake tree replanting plan	A plan to be developed as to the best way for tree replanting around Lake. Have plan for more regular arborist reports to assess tree health.		Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
Q		Sprott Fountain refurbished	Refurbish Sprott Fountain	Maintain historical assets and beautify the area	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
R		Museum Precinct	Concordia maintenance	Repainting interior window frames and walls		MDHS, Volunteer labour		Sue Dollin (Secretary)
S	Water Tower Inspection		Assessment of brick integrity and window frames		MDHS, Qualified personnel		Peter Adler (President)	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
T	The Stick Shed	Redevelopment of info centre office and toilets	Redevelopment of info centre office and toilets		The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
U		Landscape pond and surrounding area	Landscape pond and surrounding area and aeration of pond		The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
V		The Stick Shed entrance widened	Widening of entrance drive	Dual carriage way	The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
W	Recreation Reserve	Upgrade community centre	Upgrade community centre (full windows, carpet, chairs, etc.)		Showyards / Rec Reserve COM		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
X		Kitchen upgrade	Kitchen upgrade (refrigeration, auto dishwasher, sink, etc.)		Showyards / Rec Reserve		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
Y	Rabl Park	Construction of a Labyrinth	A Labyrinth is a complicated irregular network of paths & difficult to find one's way - similar to a maze. Designed and constructed in consultation with Indigenous Community -a way to connect with the past and provide an opportunity to reflect on our connections with indigenous culture.	Provide locals and tourists with a unique experience, be educated and reflect on the spiritually and values of our indigenous peoples. It will also be a unique tourist attraction within the region.	MPA, YSC, Barengi Gadjin Land Council		Local resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com

3. Economic Development Opportunities (Including Tourism)

	Project	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact	Email Address
A	Silo Art in Murtoa	Silo art painted on south side of Wheat Silo facing town. Ideas presented by student from Murtoa.	Attract visitors to Murtoa with positive impact on local businesses	MPA, Yarriambiack Tourism	Community survey conducted: Widely supported. Ideas presented in MADA.	Local Resident Aiden Hart	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
B	Free-camping at Lake Marma	Investigate incorporating a free camping area within the Lake reserve. We do not want to detract from the existing caravan park.	Tourism to boost local economy	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
C	Promote Murtoa in Horsham as a great place to live	Enhance population. Promote liveability of Murtoa, including campaign in Horsham of living in Murtoa & commuting to Horsham	Sustained / enhanced population	MPA		MPA Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
D	Promote Murtoa as the ideal place to reside	Short video campaign to target elderly, young families, disabled	Sustained / enhanced population	MPA		Local Resident Ken Haby. MPA Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com

4. Support Basic Services

	Project / Issue	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact	Email Address
A	Child Centre set up in Murtoa	Discuss with YSC to understand scenario and what can be done to support childcare set up in Murtoa	14 families in need of childcare support. Families seek childcare in Horsham, which takes focus and investment away from Murtoa.	MPA, YSC, D.Edu	Priority from community survey & meeting. Interest in set up of family day care. In progress.	MPA Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
		Need full day care offered in Murtoa.	Women in particular with young families and are looking at their options for child care and some will choose to work in Horsham if child care not available locally.	YSC, Uniting Horsham and anyone interested.	Need to look at infrastructure available and if this could be utilised for child care. I.e. as an extension to kindergarten	Local Resident Tracey Chenoweth	tracec2460@gmail.com
		Childcare centre established	Identify land and lobby for the acquiring of land to create a replacement Children's centre for Murtoa and district.	MPA, YSC Neighbourhood House, Families		Local Resident Paula Clark	pmclark60@bigpond.com
B	Local businesses supported / Attract new employment	Survey with local businesses to understand what support can be provided by Progress and community to support businesses. Start "shop local" campaigns	Local businesses sustained and attract new businesses to town.	MPA	Progress ran Shop Local Campaign with \$1,000 in prizes. Ask advice from business owners	MPA Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
C	Promote Agri-business	Promote an agribusiness that value adds to local produce	Need to provide employment and boost economy via flow on effects. promoting education with relevance to primary production.	MPA, local businesses, local people, innovators	Farms getting bigger - losing families from district	MPA Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
D	Address Murtoa pigeon problem	Work with partner organisations to manage feral pigeons that are a pest for town	Pidgeon feral population soaring	DEDJR, YSC, MPA, land owners	Progress advised that Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) applications by persons/businesses impacted are required. (Also advice from YSC.)	MPA Melinda Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
E	Public housing	Invest in quality housing development for all demographics (including rentals).	Accommodation desperately needed (housing & rentals)	MPA, YSC, Community		MPA M. Keel (Chair)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com