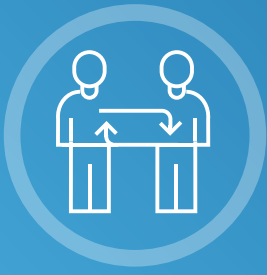




**BULOKE**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

# ADVOCACY STRATEGY





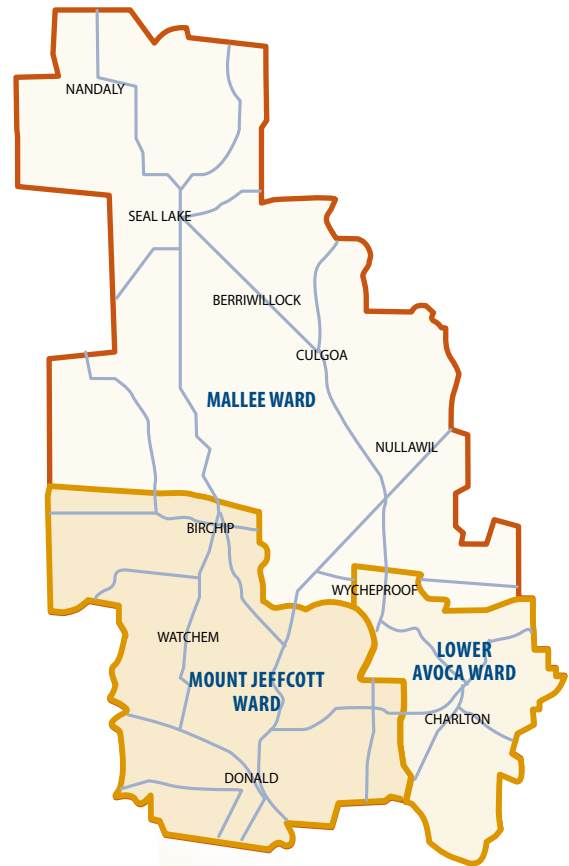
**Council continuously works with other levels of government, agencies and organisations to achieve its goals for the community.**



# OVERVIEW

This document outlines key advocacy priorities Council is committed to focusing on, and seeking partnerships in relation to, over the next three years. The projects identified in this document align with the themes and objectives of the Council Plan 2021-25, which sets out the long-term vision for the Shire.

Many of the projects in the agenda are chosen to recognise the challenges that Buloke Shire faces, as one of the geographically largest municipalities, with an ageing and declining population. Many rural councils face similar challenges and it is important to recognise that Council cannot, and does not, act alone – but works in partnership with all areas of society and other levels of government to deliver on our vision for the future. Council continuously works with other levels of government, agencies and organisations to achieve its goals for the community. The projects identified in the Strategy are not the only advocacy issues for Council and the Buloke community. Work will continue on a number of other advocacy issues as outlined in the Council Plan 2021-25 and Long Term Community Vision and other adopted policies and strategies. However the Advocacy Strategy outlines our top tier asks impacting our community right now.



# OUR SHARED VISION

## Building a Better Buloke

- A healthy, connected, inclusive and prosperous community..



### OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Our future Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by and responsive to the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.



### OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Our future Buloke. . . is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.



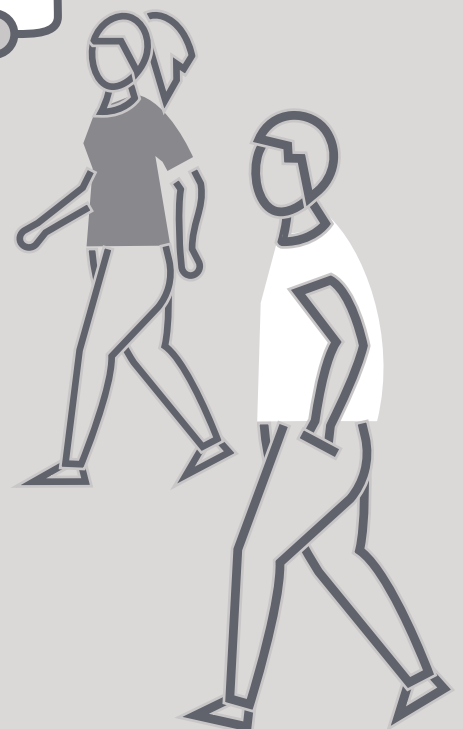
### OUR ECONOMY

Our future Buloke. . . is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.



### OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Our future Buloke. . . is dynamically led by a Council that informs community, has active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued community services in a responsible way.



# ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES



The priorities within this document have also been identified in the Council Plan 2021-25 and Long Term Community Vision, Council's Capital Works Plan, and other relevant policies, plans and strategies adopted by Council



The priorities are realistic and attainable, in the short to medium term. We will stage or breakdown larger and longer-term priority projects



The priorities have a clear community need and benefit and are backed up by evidence



The priorities have broad community support



The priorities align with those of State and Federal decision-makers and Council will seek to work in partnership with other levels of Government, as well as candidates for election to other levels of Government, to deliver these priorities



Council has indicated the resources it will commit to these priorities as a partner



Council will also work with other advocacy organisations and local community groups where our interest align, to build support for our priorities

# ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES



Council will undertake a range of activities to promote and deliver on our advocacy objectives. These activities will be undertaken by council officers, the Senior Leadership Team and Councillors as appropriate. Activities may include:

**Undertaking public campaigns** and producing collateral to raise awareness of the issues in the community and encouraging their involvement in advocacy efforts

**Developing partnerships with key stakeholders**, local and regional organisations, and peak bodies whose interests align with the Advocacy Strategy objectives

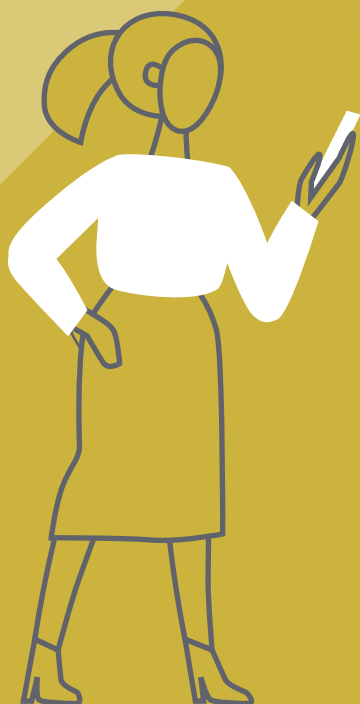
**Liaising with government priorities** to local Members of Parliament, state and federal ministers, shadow ministers, opposition and cross bench members, and local state and federal election candidates

**Aligning Council activities** and participating in the advocacy work of peak bodies and regional organisations including the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA)

**Making submissions** to government and parliamentary enquiries to advance the goals of the Advocacy Strategy

**Identifying and applying for grants** to secure funding in order to deliver on our advocacy priorities

**Promoting commitments**, where we receive them, to encourage other parties and stakeholders to lend their support



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Over the next three years, Council will ask other levels of government as well as various agencies and organisations to join in developing and delivering these vital projects. The strategy is designed to be a live document and remain relevant as work on the advocacy priorities develops. Council will monitor progress towards delivery of these priorities on an ongoing basis, with regular updates provided to Council and the community through Council reports and a formal annual review.

## PRIORITIES

The following priorities have been established through a range of engagement activities with the wider Buloke community. These projects have clear strategic linkages from:



**LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025**



**COMMUNITY PLANS**



**RELEVANT MASTER PLANS, SUCH AS STREETScape AND RECREATION RESERVE MASTER PLANS**



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY**



**INDUSTRY GAP ANALYSIS**



**INCLUSIVENESS PLAN**



**RECREATION STRATEGY**

Perhaps most importantly, this Advocacy Strategy has been developed in close alignment with the Buloke Shire Council Long-Term Community Vision, that sets out the vision and aspirations of the Buloke Community and the strategies, projects and actions that will deliver them.

PROJECT	REQUEST	STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT	FEASIBILITY/ BUSINESS CASE	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	CONSTRUCTION
<b>OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>					
<b>Drainage and Flood Mitigation</b>	\$3million for flood mitigation and drainage and harvesting projects at Charlton, Donald, Birchip and Nullawil	Complete	Complete	Underway	
<b>Greening Buloke</b>	\$500,000 per year over five years to implement Council's Climate Change Strategy, including retrofit environmentally sustainable design features at community facilities, improve tree canopy within towns and establish EV charging stations	Complete	Underway		
<b>Buloke Roads of Strategic Importance</b>	\$1m annually for rural council's to invest into country roads, to ensure our agricultural supply chains, which span the equivalent of Melbourne to Jakarta, meet community expectations	Complete	Complete	Complete	
<b>Civic Precinct and town centres</b>	Implement the Birchip Town Centre masterplan and improve streetscape and parks at Nandaly, Berriwillock, Culgoa, Nullawil and Watchem	Complete	Complete	Underway	
<b>Buloke Heritage Places</b>	\$1million to enhance and restore and key heritage buildings such as court houses, halls and museums	Complete	Underway		
<b>OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING</b>					
<b>Community Hubs Development</b>	\$2million for vital upgrades to community facilities across towns and hamlets.	Complete	Underway		
<b>Buloke's premier sporting reserves</b>	\$4million for upgrades to the Birchip, Wycheproof, Nullawil and Sea Lake Recreation Reserve facilities	Complete	Complete		
<b>Buloke's premier sporting reserves</b>	\$4million for upgrades to the Birchip, Wycheproof, Nullawil and Sea Lake Recreation Reserve facilities	Complete	Complete		
<b>Donald and Birchip Early Years Upgrades</b>	\$500,00 for upgrades at Birchip and Donald Early Years Centres	Complete	Underway		
<b>Charlton Driver Education Centre</b>	\$500,000 for the upgrade to facilities at the Charlton Driver Education Centre	Complete	Complete	Complete	
<b>OUR ECONOMY</b>					
<b>Tourism and Seasonal Accommodation</b>	\$3million for cabins across seven caravan parks to accommodate for tourism and seasonal accommodation	Complete	Complete	Complete	
<b>Birchip Community Housing Expansion</b>	\$1.5million for the development of six new units for the Birchip community, targeting aged residents	Complete	Complete	Complete	
<b>Donald Tradie Park</b>	\$1.2million to develop a tradie park in Donald on the Industrial estate, including six trades sheds	Complete	Underway		
<b>Connecting Buloke</b>	Upgrade Sea Lake NBN to Fixed Wireless. Construction of phone towers for the three worst blackspots:	Complete	Complete		
<b>Boosting the Art Trail</b>	\$350,000 for the expansion of the existing arts trail through the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region, through the street murals, activation of silo art and value-adding to trail	Complete	Complete		
<b>OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP (POLICY ASKS)</b>					
<b>Clear decentralisation and housing policy</b>	The development and funding of a very clear decentralisation policy, that aims to address transport, housing, health and jobs				
<b>Asset Stabilisation Fund</b>	The establishment of an Asset Stabilisation Fund to assist small rural Council's with largest renewal gap to address infrastructure needs				
<b>Rural-proofing Childcare provision</b>	Establish a new childcare funding model that meets the needs of rural people				
<b>Murray Basin Rail</b>	Full completion of the Murray Basin Rail project, including the standardisation of the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines.				



# PRIORITIES OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## DONALD, CHARLTON, NULLAWIL AND BIRCHIP FLOOD MITIGATION AND DRAINAGE WORKS.

ASK:  
\$3MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$3.3MILLION



Charlton and Birchip are two of Buloke's largest townships and have had a history of flash flooding in recent years, causing damage to infrastructure and property. Nullawil has also had a history of flooding. Reviews and investigations have found the underground drainage for each township was not designed to meet current climatic changes and large rainfall events.

Upgrades at Birchip, Nullawil and Charlton will mitigate against flash flooding, protect vital community and private property and provide these communities with improved security. In addition, completion of the temporary levee at the Donald Levee Bank is a necessity to protect from future flooding. Designs have been completed for these works and are ready to proceed.

## GREENING BULOKE

ASK:  
\$500,000  
PER YEAR (5 YEARS)



TOTAL COST:  
\$2.5MILLION



Over a five year period, the Buloke community aims to significantly improve its sustainability performance and provide a more liveable community for residents and tourists. The aim of this project is to have a network of Electric Vehicle charging stations that ensure ease of visitation, to improve tree canopy cover and provide an appealing and cooler township and to retrofit key community facilities, such as sporting clubs, with environmentally sustainable design features.

Council has worked closely with the CVGA to identify priority locations for EV Charging points and tree canopy deficiencies. In addition, facility audits in conjunction with Sustainability Victoria have highlighted opportunities to address energy and water reduction in our heavily utilised community assets.



# PRIORITIES OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## BULOKE ROADS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

ASK:  
\$1MILLION  
ANNUALLY



This project is aimed to improve the efficiency of the road network and remove blockages for freight to use the most direct route to get products to port. Key projects include pavement rehabilitation, seal widening, line marking, improving dangerous intersections and first-and-last mile issues.

By improving efficiency of freight movements, more money will end up in farmers pockets to reinvest into their businesses. This project extends beyond dry-land farming, and considers the emergence of intensive agriculture as a driving industry within the Shire.

Many projects have been designed and costed, with projects such as the Jeffcott and McLoughlans Road requiring urgent works.

## CIVIC PRECINCT AND TOWN CENTRE UPGRADES

ASK:  
\$4MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$4.4MILLION



Implement the upgrades to town centres, streetscapes and parks across the smaller towns of Nullawil, Watchem, Berriwillock, Nandaly and Culgoa.

Project also includes the implementation of the Birchip Civic Precinct Project and expansion of the town park and improving green space in the community.



# PRIORITIES

# OUR BUILT AND

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## BULOKE HERITAGE SPACES

ASK:  
\$1MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$1.2MILLION



The Buloke townships have amazing history and many of the heritage community buildings have an amazing story to tell. Buildings such as the Watchem and Wycheproof Halls, Charlton, Birchip and Wycheproof Courthouses and Auchmore Museum (Nullawil) stand to tell the stories of generations and pioneers of our region and are central to civic pride of current day residents. Yet, there is a need to preserve and upgrade these historical buildings and make them suitable for current day use.

This project will see the refurbishment, critical renewal works and expansion of Council's halls, museums and courthouses. These facilities are some of the most utilised facilities in the Shire and are arts and culture hubs within the township and a tourism drawcard.



# PRIORITIES OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

## COMMUNITY HUBS DEVELOPMENT

ASK:  
\$2MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$2.2MILLION



Town halls remain the hubs of many of Council's smaller townships and hamlets. For communities such as Litchfield, Coonooer Bridge and Corack, these halls are the key social gathering place and many are in need of improvements to meet current requirements and address accessibility issues.

This project will see upgrades across the five smaller townships and other hamlets with halls to upgrade toilets, kitchens, air conditioning and other urgent repair needs.

## BULOKE PREMIER SPORTING FACILITY UPGRADES

ASK:  
\$4MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$4.8MILLION



The Birchip, Nullawil, Wycheproof and Sea Lake Recreation Reserve facilities are some of Buloke's highest utilised community assets. Currently, some of these facilities do not provide female friendly change spaces and therefore restrict the current and future usage.

The upgrades will create a function space that acts as the hub for each community, create viewing spaces, improve oval lighting and improve accessibility for players, spectators and umpires. These facilities are the heart of these communities and will increase community connectivity and participation in physical activity into the future.



# PRIORITIES

# OUR COMMUNITY

# WELLBEING

## BULOKE AQUATIC UPGRADES

ASK:  
\$1,300,000



TOTAL COST:  
\$1,700,000



With seven pools across the Shire all built between 1950 - 1970 (Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Birchip, Watchem and Berriwillock), the need for investment into Council's aquatic facilities is significant. Upgrades to plant, pipework and pools shells are all important to ensure the pools remain accessible into the future, and value additions, such as solar heating and splash parks are required to drive additional patronage.

## DONALD AND BIRCHIP EARLY YEARS UPGRADES

ASK:  
\$500,000



TOTAL COST:  
\$580,000



Complete much required upgrades to improve staffing, storage and play space area for children and educators at the Donald and Birchip Early Years Upgrades. This funding will improve safety for the educators and improve the early learning outcomes for children attending these important services.



# PRIORITIES OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

## CHARLTON DRIVER EDUCATION CENTRE

ASK:  
\$500,000



TOTAL COST:  
\$500,000



**The Charlton Driver Education Centre provides an essential learning service for students' right across Victoria. Whilst the cars and roads at the centre are in good condition, there is no adequate classroom and staff amenity.**

This funding will see the development of a new office and classroom area for students to learn the theory as well as practice at this essential learning service.



# PRIORITIES OUR ECONOMY

## TOURISM AND SEASONAL ACCOMMODATION

ASK:  
\$3MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$3.2MILLION



Across Buloke, there has been a lack of both tourism and seasonal accommodation for many years. The continued rise of visitation to the Shire has highlighted the need for a variety of accommodation offerings and this project will see cabins installed at seven different caravan parks and lakes across the Shire.

Cabins will be installed at Watchem Lake, Tchum Lake, Green Lake, Sea Lake Caravan Park, Wycheproof Caravan Park, Charlton Travellers Rest and Wooroonook Lake to cater for seasonal accommodation needs and tourists.

## BIRCHIP COMMUNITY HOUSING EXPANSION

ASK:  
\$1.5MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$1.6MILLION



The Buloke Shire has a housing shortage and has been actively looking at ways to improve the housing offerings for all segments of the market. This project expands on the impressive work of the Birchip Community Housing Committee by building another six units on the old bowling green site.

This will cater for the ageing population and will serve to open up family homes as retirees downsize into these custom built units.



# PRIORITIES OUR ECONOMY

## DONALD TRADIE PARK DEVELOPMENT

ASK:  
\$1.2MILLION



TOTAL COST:  
\$1.3MILLION



This project aims to deliver a new tradie park in the industrial estate in Donald. It will service and build a series of medium size sheds to allow for the expansion of the many tradespeople that Donald has and will also promote the relocation of other tradies to town to utilise the sheds.

This will build between 6-8 sheds on the industrial estate using local trades and will support the community by having many trades located on the one site.

## CONNECTING BULOKE

FIBRE TO THE NODE  
FOR SEA LAKE

3 MOBILE TOWERS



Sea Lake does not have fibre to the node NBN and would be one of the largest towns in Victoria that has Skymuster as a poor alternative. With two schools, a hospital, ambulance, burgeoning tourism sector, large population and many businesses, there is a clear need to upgrade Sea Lake's NBN offering to fixed wireless. Without the upgrade, Sea Lake remains disadvantaged, with poorer speeds and higher costs.

In addition, Buloke has a range of mobile blackspots and in a time with technology in agriculture is creating significant efficiencies, connectivity is vital. The key blackspots for Buloke that need addressing are located north of Birchip, Wooroonook/Jeffcott and Coonoer West.



# PRIORITIES OUR ECONOMY

## BOOSTING THE BULOKE ART TRAIL

ASK:  
\$350,000



**In recent years, Buloke has been invigorated by public and community art, and has seen the benefits of community connectedness and enhanced tourism outcomes. Off the back of the Silo Art Trail, there are now amazing painted silo's in Sea Lake and Nullawil and also wall art through many towns.**

To build on this, and create a critical mass and a major international tourism drawcard, there is the need to create public art in the 'gaps' and enhance existing art through night time activation and augmented reality. This project will paint an additional silo, street art, create night time viewing and augmented reality on key public art spaces.



## PRIORITIES

# OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP (POLICY ASKS)



### CLEAR DECENTRALISATION AND HOUSING POLICY:

There is the need for the development and funding of a clear decentralisation policy that aims to address key inhibitors such as transport and accessibility, housing, health and jobs.

### ASSET STABILISATION FUND:

A recent KPMG report into the sustainability challenges of small rural councils highlighted the need for an asset stabilisation fund to address key asset renewal challenges that face Council's such as Buloke. The challenge of maintaining buildings across 10 towns and 5,300kms or road is growing for the declining rate base and a structural funding solution that addresses these challenges would make a significant difference to the liveability of these communities.

### RURAL-PROOFING CHILDCARE PROVISION




All five of the larger Buloke communities are set to have state-of-the-art childcare facilities, however the existing funding model is broken and requires adjustment for rural families. In Buloke, there is the need for more flexible childcare services, such as fewer days or after-school care, however the existing funding model does not allow these services to be offered in an affordable way. A model that considers a place-based approach to Childcare is needed to allow service providers and families to develop a service that meets the needs of Buloke communities.

### MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT

Council considered the Murray Basin Rail Project one of the most important funding wins for the region over many years. With the Mildura line standardised, and the Sea Lake still on broad gauge, the outcome is simply poorer for the Buloke community. Council advocates for the full project to be completed to ensure that Buloke farmers have access to all ports in an efficient manner.

In addition to rail, \$2million to upgrade the Charlton Avoca River Bridget to take Heavy Vehicles.

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