



Robinvale 2031

Community Plan

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1. Community Vision for Robinvale

Robinvale Improvement Group aims to improve the infrastructure, health, education and tourism for members of the Robinvale community, surrounding districts and visitors, while celebrating our history and heritage.

2. Community Profile

Robinvale is a picturesque town located on the banks of the Murray River in north-west Victoria, about 470km north-west of Melbourne. Aptly named the 'Jewel of the Murray' it has no shortage of natural beauty and wonders. At the 2016 Census, the Robinvale region's population was officially 3,411.

As Robinvale is surrounded by labour intensive agriculture, this population can grow some seasons to double what is recorded. Robinvale has a diverse and culturally rich community made up of some 40 cultures and with over 20 languages being spoken.

3. Background

The '*Robinvale 2031 – Community Plan*' has been developed by La Trobe University, Swan Hill Rural City Council and the Robinvale Community. This Plan came about during the review of the Robinvale Community Plan in 2015. Initially the review aimed to develop a new two-to-three year community plan, as had been done previously. With so many valuable insights, ideas, stories and aspirations from the community captured, a longer term vision and plan was created.

From here action plans can now be developed and implemented as the community and Council work together to make Robinvale a prosperous regional centre now and into the future.

This Plan will be reviewed every four years or as needed, so that as new community issues and priorities emerge, they can be encompassed within the Plan.

Over 200 people have fed their thoughts, hopes, aspirations, stories, ideas and time into this Plan. In October 2015, an empty shop in Perrin Street was used as a 'drop-in' centre, where residents could visit when it suited them and speak with La Trobe researchers and staff as well as Council officers. Other community engagement activities included:

- Formal interviews with service organisations;
- Formal focus group discussions with health service representatives, mothers group, youth group;
- Presentations, group discussion and cognitive mapping with Robinvale P-12 College;
- Presentations about Bromley Road design possibilities by St Mary's F-8` School students;
- Urban design workshops with general community; and
- Email, comments/discussion on Facebook and Twitter (which extended to mid-November).

4 .Previous Projects

Community Planning first began in Robinvale with the 2009 Community Plan. There were 10 community projects identified and included in the latest version of the Robinvale Community Plan from 2011 to 2013. The projects that are yet to be completed have been carried forward for inclusion in this Plan. As the table shows, many are underway or are an ongoing community effort that the Robinvale community to continue support.

Implementation Plan

Action	Progress Toward Completion
1. Town beautification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bromley Road (Current) • Centenary Park (Future) • Town Entrances (Future) • Focus Group—Town Beautification Group 	Design options finalised for Bromley Road Town entrances have had updated signage
2. Robinvale country market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group - Robinvale Euston Rotary Club 	Ongoing successful market run by Rotary Club
3. Memorial park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group - Memorial Park Steering Committee 	Plans completed and works happening
4. Strategic marketing and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop Locally Campaign • Robinvale Information Centre • Graffiti Trailer • Focus Group - Robinvale & Euston Business Association 	Ongoing efforts by REBA (Robinvale Euston Business Association)
5. Physical activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Paths and Tracks with interpretive signs • Focus Group—Walking Track Group 	Riverfront walking and gym equipment installed and well used
6. Almond Blossom Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group - Almond Blossom Festival Committee 	Ongoing community led event
7. Tongan led community garden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group - Tongan Community 	Community Garden established at Robinvale College
8. Acknowledgement of our local Indigenous war veterans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group - Local Indigenous Network Youth 	Not completed – potential for this to be addressed in Memorial Park *on hold
9. Environment and climate change	Ongoing – addressed partly through sustainability strategy.

Projects * on hold are waiting for focus groups to be established to drive the projects on behalf of the community.

5. Swan Hill Rural City Council's Community Planning Program

Community Planning in the Swan Hill Rural City Council began in 2009 and has since involved 11 of the municipality's towns. Robinvale is the first to be presented with a longer term plan.

For community planning to be a success, the community absolutely must be involved and drive the projects included in this Plan. This Plan provides a fantastic opportunity for the people of Robinvale to influence the future of their town and broader community for years to come.

6. Linked and Supporting Plans and Strategies

The plans and strategies listed below are a sample of the documents that Council currently works from that directly impact Robinvale.

- Council Plan 2017 - 2021
- Robinvale Economic Development Strategy
- Active Transport Strategy 2014 - 2034
- Municipal Community Plan
- Bromley Road Masterplan

7. Management of the Plan

A partnership between the Swan Hill Rural City Council and the Robinvale Improvement Group (RIG) will drive both the aspirations and actions of this plan.

The Robinvale Improvement Group will manage the identification of community aspirations and those items within the implementation plan that are within their scope and resource capacity to deliver. As a key stakeholder and partner, Council will provide guidance and advocacy for projects that have been identified as being outside of RIGs scope and work together with RIG to achieve these actions as identified within the plan. Each project should have a focus group member that is also represented on the main group. This focus group representative will report on their progress at each RIG meeting.

A Council Senior Manager or Director will attend each RIG meeting to provide feedback and information to Council departments about the projects occurring. This person will also be able to inform RIG about important Council news and plans impacting Robinvale.

RIG is free to act upon initiatives outside of the Community Plan of its own accord. However, it is suggested that issues with high levels of community support be included in the Plan to enable potential resourcing and assistance from Council.

The Plan will be reviewed every four years or as needed, with a progress report identifying each priority area and the actions taken in each area.

8. Structure of Robinvale 2031

The information that was received during consultation with the Robinvale community was categorised into three overarching themes, with several underlying priority areas for each theme. Within each priority area are the recommendations that were identified as priorities during the consultation. These recommendations are the goals that Robinvale 2031 will seek to achieve in coming years.

9. Priority Areas

Access to services

Access to services is a crucial part of making any community liveable. Services like healthcare, telecommunications, specialist medical services, community safety and a range of shops and employment opportunities were all raised as important for Robinvale's future.

Priority Area 1 - Health and Medical Services

Over a quarter of Robinvale's population is aged over 55 years and more than 20 per cent is under the age of 14, based on the 2016 Census data. This alone makes good healthcare important in order to provide relevant and quality services to both young and older community members.

Projects to address Priority Area 1:

- Work with Robinvale District Health Services to identify how residents can access specialist services through mobile visits, transport options to Mildura or local internships

Priority Area 2 – Agriculture, Retail and Commercial Enterprise

Robinvale is a hub for food production. The district around Robinvale produces approximately 60 per cent of Australia's table grapes, 70 per cent of Australia's almonds and 80 per cent of Australia's olive oil. Agriculture and horticulture also makes up 38 per cent of jobs in the Robinvale community.

For Robinvale to continue thriving as a town, it is important that access to retail and commercial businesses is maintained. In recent years, retail and commercial businesses have been declining as people shop elsewhere and markets change. The community identified maintaining the look and feel of Perrin Street and supporting retailers, traders and commercial enterprise as important.

Projects to address Priority Area 2:

- Develop and implement a shop local campaign (REBA);
- Work with government and contractors to address issues with contracting processes;

- Identify and attract businesses that are needed and will be sustainable in Robinvale;
- Continue to improve the Perrin Street streetscape;
- Identify and develop a suitable space for artists to work and sell work from; and
- Advocate and investigate the development of a renewable energy industry in the district.

Priority Area 3 - Telecommunications

Access to good telecommunication services is becoming more important every year as businesses are able to thrive online no matter where they are based. Connections to other countries for immigrants and reliable phone service are also critical parts of making Robinvale liveable.

Projects to address Priority Area 3:

- Advocate for improved services from telecommunications bodies including services suitable for low and middle income families, in particular:
 - Access to affordable and reliable internet service; and
 - Improved mobile phone and broadband coverage.

Promoting participation

The Robinvale community sees promoting participation in community life and in employment as an important focus area for the town's future. This theme covers areas like leadership, governance, inclusion and education and training. To live in a vibrant and liveable community often means establishing a tight-knit community, willing to get involved in many aspects of community life, from volunteering to mentoring and training youth.

Priority Area 4 – Leadership and Governance

A community with good governance and leadership is able to advocate for its needs, create community solutions to problems and engage with the right authorities to continue developing their community. The Robinvale community identified a number of challenges to promoting good governance and leadership in their community, with a focus on volunteerism, local government service provision and difficulties bringing multiple cultures together to work and make decisions on community issues.

Projects to address Priority Area 4:

- Work with Robinvale-Euston Community Alliance to advocate to government and non-government agencies for funding to complete projects identified in the community plan;
- Work with Council to identify and advocate for community needs; and
- Advocate for improved relationships and contributions from large industry to the Robinvale community.

Priority Area 5 – Diversity and Inclusion

Robinvale is an incredibly diverse community. It is estimated that there are 40 different cultures in Robinvale and over 40 per cent of households have more than two languages spoken. Robinvale is also home to a large population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with an estimated 10.7 per cent identifying as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Robinvale has large communities of Vietnamese and Islander people, further adding to the diversity.

Such a diverse population offers residents a wealth of knowledge about the world, understanding of diverse cultures and many opportunities for amazing festivals and food. The diversity of Robinvale does have challenges though, with the community identifying some racism and difficulties for new arrivals to learn English.

Projects to address Priority Area 5:

- Continue to support and grow local events and festivals including:
 - Mallee Almond Blossom Festival;
 - Carols by Candlelight;
 - Lunar New Year; and
 - Robinvale Ski Race.
- Support new events and festivals where possible;
- Develop an English language resource for new arrivals from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- Develop an invitational ‘inspirational speakers’ and workshop program aimed at secondary level students;
- Encourage entrepreneurship by linking local successful business people to share their stories;
- Compile and work through a list of small research based projects in conjunction with local and regional education providers (eg. photo-essay on local migration stories, Aboriginal history and stories, soldier settlement);
- Extend Nachos, Gunlli & Nasi Goreng program to include collaborative cooking where people learn to cook from peers from different cultures; and
- Attract funding for the development and operation of a Multicultural Resource Centre.

Priority Area 6 – Education and Training

This priority area focuses on enabling people to participate in education and effective training and will ultimately lead to enhancement of the local workforce and economy for Robinvale and district. Education and training for Robinvale is seen as critical to the success of the community, particularly retaining and retention of young people. It is believed by ensuring high quality education is available families will be encouraged to stay in and move to Robinvale, while also offering the best chance for careers to be formed in the district. The community identified multiple challenges in this area, but also provided multiple recommendations.

Projects to address Priority Area 6:

- Support the Robinvale L2P program;
- Support the development of the Community Hub at Robinvale College, particularly the construction of project work spaces;
- Investigate opportunities for community work experience for students (i.e. in the information centre);
- Investigate funding opportunities to develop social enterprise that facilitates skills development and gaining certificates (i.e. youth cafe, farm tours, pop-up restaurants);
- Work with education providers to enable access to education and skills training via online, blended learning and on-site assessments;
- Develop extended learning or advanced learning programs during school holidays; and
- Work to improve access to childcare.

Building infrastructure

Infrastructure is a critical part of every liveable town or city. During consultation, participants were asked what made Robinvale great and where Robinvale could benefit from some improvements. Many suggestions related to physical infrastructure improvements as highlighted in Priority Area 9. However, many suggestions also related to the community building social infrastructure and focusing on tourism and recreation opportunities. This section highlights the three crucial priority areas of Housing; Recreation, Cultural Arts and Tourism; and Built Environment.

Priority Area 7 – Housing

Housing in Robinvale was identified as one of the largest challenges facing the community. As Robinvale relies heavily on thousands of itinerant workers during harvest at the surrounding farms, ensuring access to safe, hygienic and legal accommodation is essential. The community identified health and safety risks due to the lack of affordable housing, and labourers staying in poor quality housing. In addition, the types of housing in Robinvale are sometimes unsuitable for the large family structures of some new arrivals to Australia.

Projects to address Priority Area 7:

- Work with Federal, State and Local governments to develop options for improved housing choice for low and middle income earners.

Priority Area 8 – Recreation, Cultural Arts and Tourism

Robinvale has a strong foundation of recreational, arts and cultural facilities, programs and events. There is widespread leadership and participation among a number of groups throughout Robinvale.

The community centre, community garden, Rotary Park, museum, river, riverside caravan park, walking paths, tennis courts, pool, pub and golf club were identified as valuable local and tourist facilities. NAIDOC Week, the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival, Lunar New Year, NACHOS community cooking, and the annual ski race were identified as positive and enjoyable community activities.

There is strong Aboriginal history and culture, as well as an art centre in the area. The Tongan community is actively involved with the brass band, a choir and Carols by Candlelight.

Most of the facilities and activities are family oriented, but do not necessarily cater to different age groups, for example, youth specific or older people specific places and/or activities.

Projects to address Priority Area 8:

- Develop strategies for utilising empty shops as they become available;
 - Pop-up local history displays
 - Artist displays and workshops
- Find a group to run day trips to other entertainment facilities like paintball, Bounce etc;
- Promote and grow the Men's Shed;
- Continue to support and develop the Robinvale Community Garden;
- Work to establish an events group;
- Establish a youth 'hang-out' space with the help of young people;
- Work with Council to attract shows and performances to Robinvale;
- Investigate establishing a community radio station;
- Conduct a signage audit to improve directional signage in Robinvale;
- Design and implement an interpretive signage program to celebrate Robinvale's heritage;
- Develop the Art Centre, surrounding parkland and Robinvale riverfront area;
- Investigate options for local public transport options;
- Investigate viability of farm tours; and
- Investigate and establish a river tourism industry, like cruises, houseboats and fishing etc.

Priority Area 9 – Built Environment

Robinvale is characterised by a centralised town centre focused on Perrin Street, with single storey shop-fronts. Dispersed social services are located in the streets around this area.

Low-density housing is primarily located to the south-east of the town centre, which transitions to farm zoning to the east along the river and to the south. Rural residential living occurs in pockets to the south-east, north-west and south-west.

Industrial zoning is mostly located to the west of the town, separated by Bromley Road and the railway corridor, although there is land dedicated to industrial uses to the south-east of the residential area.

Land directly adjacent to the Murray River is public, zoned for conservation and resource purposes. Public parks are located throughout the township. Wide roads are the main transport service networks; pedestrian and recreational infrastructures are inconsistent with regard to connectivity, quality of pathways and shade.

Participants identified a number of challenges ranging from a lack of footpaths to poor public transport.

Projects to address Priority Area 9:

- Improve lighting within Robinvale;
- Continue redeveloping residential parks;
- Implement beautification and road improvement projects for Bromley Road;
- Investigate how to make the courthouse more private to offer shelter and dignity to those using it;
- RIG to act as a liaising body for the community's suggestions regarding improvements to the built environment; and
- Investigate and implement shading options over car parking areas.