



Imagine Horsham

Community & Stakeholder
Engagement

—
KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

Contents

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Introduction

Background to the project

Horsham Rural City Council employed the services of Village Well to facilitate a process of engagement with the Horsham community and stakeholders to gather ideas for future projects that will revitalise the CBD.

The aim of these projects is to enhance the function of the CBD, making it a place that locals love and that continues to attract visitors from the region and afar. The engagement process focused on the following opportunities:

- **Town Square** – understanding community support and ideas for the development of a town square in a prominent location within the CBD.
- **Streetscape upgrades** – understanding preferences for streetscape improvements to enhance local economic development.
- **Town Entrances** – articulating ideas for improving Horsham’s entrances, through signage, landscaping and artistic elements.
- **Local Economic Development** – exploring opportunities to attract people to stay, enjoy and return to Horsham’s CBD.

About this document

This document provides an overview of the engagement findings as well as Placemaking opportunities, with the aim of building community trust and momentum in city revitalisation projects.

This report should be used:

- By Horsham Rural City Council to understand community sentiment and ideas for the CBD, inform further engagement processes, and planning and delivery of future projects.
- By community members, businesses and other stakeholders looking to implement projects, to inform project briefs, identify potential partners and advocate for funding opportunities.



WHO IS VILLAGE WELL

Village Well is a leading Australian Placemaking consultancy, inspiring the search for renewed meaning, purpose and pride in places.

Over the past two decades, Village Well has refined and developed unique processes of analysis, engagement, visioning and concept development, tapping into community potential to discover the DNA of a place that informs its future development and use.

Village Well has gained an exceptional reputation for a creative and holistic approach to development and the activation of places across Australian cities and regional towns, drawing on our expertise across a broad range of areas from town planning, to community development, engineering, design, retail and marketing.

WHY A PLACEMAKING APPROACH

A global movement towards the creation of great places, Placemaking is a gesture that enables people to collaborate on the potentiality to improve the experience of their public realm; a place where they belong and feel safe and where they can choose to participate actively or passively in the public and cultural life of the community.

Engagement Methodology



A shared approach

Engagement provides a shared approach to informing the revitalisation of Horsham's CBD. By facilitating platforms for discussion and input from a wide variety of people, better solutions can be found that draw on the varied experience and aspirations of everyone involved.

An extensive and transparent process ensures that Council and those involved in developing concepts are genuinely embracing the right of, and benefits of, involving community and all stakeholders in influencing the physical and functional elements of Horsham's future CBD.

The engagement process also provides an opportunity for community and stakeholders to hear other people's ideas and develop solutions together. It creates shared ownership and buy in at an early stage. A commitment to continued engagement as the project evolves will enable a shared outcome for revitalising Horsham's CBD.

Objectives

The objectives of engagement have been to:

- Inform community and stakeholders about the CBD Revitalisation Project.
- Build excitement, interest and enthusiasm.
- Offer various ways to participate to encourage meaningful and creative dialogue.
- Provide a genuine opportunity for contribution to Council decision-making.
- Tap into a wealth of knowledge held by locals and visitors to understand the challenges and opportunities in revitalising Horsham's CBD.
- Enhance community ownership of the project and identify advocates and champions.



**THANK YOU TO
EVERYONE WHO
CONTRIBUTED
THEIR IDEAS!**



Process

To inform the recommendations and outcomes in this report, Village Well delivered a series of engagement activities over two phases throughout July 2017.

Phase 1: Understanding the opportunities and broad visioning, involved:

- Kitchen Table Conversations: a series of ten short and informal conversations with identified stakeholders, including community members, business owners and Council officers.
- Business Community Breakfast Forum: an interactive workshop with CBD business owners.
- Community Listening Posts: a series of three drop-in sessions that provided a platform to engage all of the community and in particular passers-by, located on various streets in the CBD over two days.

Phase 2: Presenting back and prioritising actions, involved:

- A Community Workshop: an interactive session that provided an overview of main engagement findings and prioritised and refined actions for short, medium and long-term projects.

Audience

The methods of engagement were tailored and designed to ensure a wide range of input and included formal workshops and meetings, as well as fun and interactive listening posts on the street. A diversity of people had input throughout the process, with our approach tailored to the level of understanding of the project of each particular audience.

Participants included:

- Horsham Rural City Council, including available Councillors.
- Horsham business community and Business Horsham.
- Relevant organisations, agencies and authorities.
- Horsham community members.

Village Well and Horsham Rural City Council acknowledge the need for continued engagement with broad segments of the community, including those who have not yet had a chance to contribute. Further engagement is highlighted as an opportunity in a later stage of this report.

Engagement Findings

The aspirations, thoughts and ideas generated through community engagement activities are represented in this section and inform Placemaking opportunities for Horsham's CBD.

Identity and Assets

The Town Heart

Town Entrances

The River

Governance

Identity

"A friendly place"

"Beautiful landscapes"

"Family and friends"

"Regional service centre and hub"

"An ageing population"

"Difficulty attracting professionals and young people"

"Farming, impacted by drought and generational change"



Assets

FINDING A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY FOR HORSHAM, BASED ON SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS, WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND SHOULD INFORM FUTURE PROJECTS TO ENSURE THEY ARE AUTHENTIC TO THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE HORSHAM UNIQUE.

A place to meet

Big Sky

STARS & SUNSETS

Remoteness

Wheat & Farming

Spirit of Outdoor
& Adventure

ARAPILES & SPORT

Water Lifesource

RIVERS & LAKES

THE HEART OF
THE REGION,
CENTRAL TO CITIES,
RIVERS, MOUNTAINS
AND PLAINS

'PULSES'
UNDER THE
BIG SKY

A PLACE TO
DISCOVER,
EXPERIENCE AND
CONNECT

A WARM,
WELCOMING,
FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY

5 Great Things

PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED 5 GREAT THINGS THAT MAKE LOCALS PROUD AND WILL ATTRACT VISITORS TO HORSHAM NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

1. A vibrant main street

Distinct and beautiful, offering all the services you need, delicious food and boutique retail offerings

2. Events & activities all year round

Wander the night markets, listen to buskers in the main street, admire local art in the laneways, enjoy the twilight buzz while sipping a wine before the show

3. A friendly place

Where the locals are proud and visitors feel welcome, from the entrance to the town to the warm people you meet in the main street

4. Explore the river

Take an afternoon stroll along the river walk, stop for a coffee and take in the view, and relax while the kids play along the promenade

5. Experience the remoteness

Stay for a few nights under the big sky, go fishing in the lakes, climb Mt Arapiles or ride a bike through this vast, beautiful landscape

The Town Heart

— WHERE WE MEET, EAT & PLAY

Opportunities were explored in the engagement process for upgrades to existing streetscapes or creating a new public space, such as a town square.

Ideas were collated about the function of these spaces, activities to activate them and potential locations. There were consistent ideas on what these spaces could be used for and their location, rather than a collective preference towards either option. The area around Roberts Place was identified as 'The Town Heart'.

Whether an upgrade to the existing streetscape or a new public space, the functions of 'The Town Heart' were identified as:

- A meeting place
- A place that's free with things to do for all ages
- A central location that connects other parts of the CBD and surrounds



Town Square

The Town Square would be a meeting place; a stopping point for locals and visitors in a central part of the CBD, programmed with free events and activities. During community engagement, the best location for this square was near Roberts Place and Ward Street, which would provide a link between Firebrace Street, the Town Hall and the Plaza, as well as linking May Park, the Botanic Gardens and the River.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

- Greenery for beauty and shade in summer
- Seating that provides a place to have a chat or enjoy lunch in the sun
- Shelter from sun and wind
- A large screen for films, promotion and games
- Retail and cafés surrounding the square
- A play area for children
- Public toilets nearby
- A new public space, not a mall
- Celebrates local stories and Indigenous history

ACTIVITIES

- Free activities for all ages, including children, young people, families and the elderly
- Programmed with events, such as markets, workshops, groups, films, music

Streetscapes

Streetscapes were described as a place of local pride, that have atmosphere and vibrancy and an identity and character associated with Horsham. It is a place to meet, enjoy, be inspired, access services and shop. The streetscapes provide important connections to places throughout the CBD.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

- More colour for vibrancy and beauty
- Lighting such as fairy lights or uplights in trees
- Vacant shops could showcase local art, photography, or host pop-up shops
- Shade and shelter provided from rain and sun
- More greenery for beauty and colour, such as native trees, flowers or a community garden
- Develop the laneways and side streets with murals and artwork
- Outside dining to make day and night more exciting
- Signage including wayfinding, attractions and what's on
- Protection of remaining heritage buildings
- Historic markers and information telling local stories and Indigenous history
- More seating and meeting areas
- Universal access for people of all abilities and age friendly streetscapes
- Encourage walkability around the CBD by favouring pedestrians

ACTIVITIES

- Regular activities such as markets, events and local performers
- Temporary outdoor cinema
- Music in the street including buskers, local artists and live music
- The city is alive on weekends



Town Entrances

— CREATING PRIDE OF PLACE

The Town Entrances are important for drawing in visitors and creating local pride. There was strong consensus for upgrading all entrances. In summary, the entrances should:

Be a statement of Horsham's identity.

Draw in travelers passing through from surrounding towns and cities.

Promote the town and what's on.

Make the town welcoming at the bridge.

Continue the style and theme into the CBD.

Be attractive, bold and distinctive.

Be completed as a priority.





The River

— OUR NEW MEETING PLACE

The River was identified as an important asset that is currently underutilised. Ideas for activating the River include:

Pop-up café, function centre, restaurant.

Attractive promenade and cycling track.

More events, activities and films for all ages, including at the soundshell.

Passive water recreation, such as paddle boats and fishing.

Better connection to the Botanic Gardens and the Town Centre.

Playgrounds and family activities.

Governance & Capacity Building

— BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE & COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY

Building the capacity of the community and businesses to contribute to revitalisation projects, as well as the need for courageous governance, were important factors raised during consultation for ensuring success of the ideas proposed. These include:

RETAIL

Friday night shopping, especially during summer.

Consistent trading hours.

Encouraging and assisting start up businesses.

Training and support for businesses, such as online shopping, visual merchandising.

GOVERNANCE

A coordinated response is needed, that considers the bigger picture.

Everyone is involved in creating a better town centre.

Courage to try something different.

Capitalising on the Wimmera's assets: promotion and tourism.

Involvement and training for community to run events.



Opportunities & priorities



"Fairy lights along Firebrace Street"



"Wayfinding signage everywhere"



"Beautify and activate the laneways"

LOCATION SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES AND A LIST OF PRIORITIES FOR ACTION WERE IDENTIFIED DURING STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES. BASED ON STAGE 1 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS AND PLACEMAKING INSPIRATIONAL EXAMPLES, PARTICIPANTS IN THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP GENERATED IDEAS FOR REVITALISATION PROJECTS AND HOW THESE MIGHT BE IMPLEMENTED. THESE IDEAS HAVE BEEN COLLATED INTO THE FOLLOWING MAP SHOWING LOCATIONS FOR POTENTIAL PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS AS WELL AS A LIST OF PRIORITY ACTIONS.



"Colour and playful elements"



"Overhead green canopy on Ward Street"



"Outdoor cinema over summer"



"Eat street outdoor dining on Roberts Place"



"Light projections or art mural on the post office"

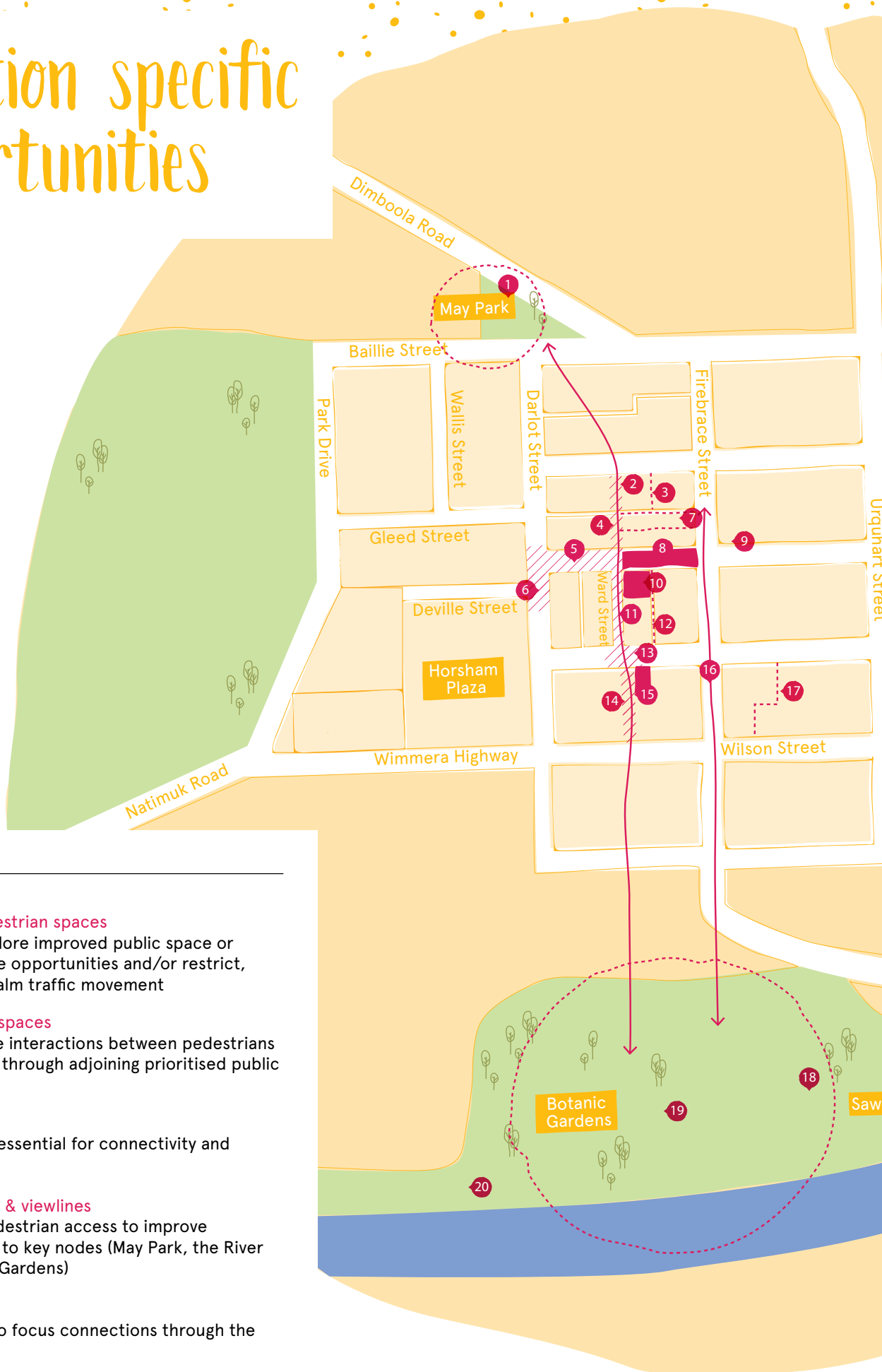


"Interactive play throughout the CBD"



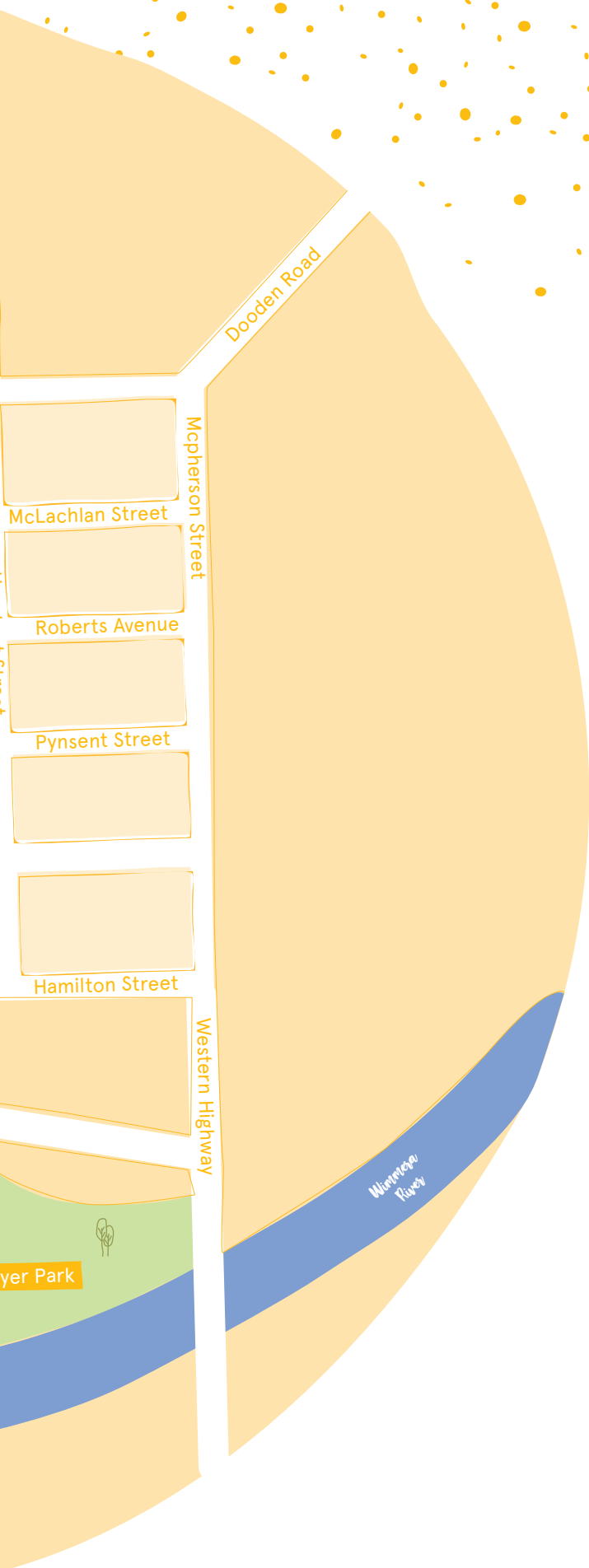
"Events and activities by the river"

Location specific opportunities



Legend

-  **Priority pedestrian spaces**
 Areas to explore improved public space or public square opportunities and/or restrict, remove or calm traffic movement
-  **Safe shared spaces**
 Ensuring safe interactions between pedestrians and vehicles through adjoining prioritised public spaces
-  **Laneways**
 Focus lanes essential for connectivity and activation
-  **Connections & viewlines**
 Essential pedestrian access to improve connectivity to key nodes (May Park, the River and Botanic Gardens)
-  **Key nodes**
 Edge areas to focus connections through the city centre



- 1 Ensure directional signage points people towards the river and city destinations
- 2 Remove building/s to create viewlines through Coles carpark to Town Hall, ensuring clearly defined and safe pedestrian walkway
- 3 Outdoor cinema opportunity
- 4 Making more of the Bradbury carpark through pop-up events (markets and food trucks)
- 5 Altered traffic movements (vehicle drop-off only and/or pedestrian priority space)
- 6 Safe pedestrianised link across Darlot Street
- 7 Focused laneway opportunities, including street art and greenery
- 8 Pedestrianise Roberts Place into 'Roberts Square' or create a shared zone and prioritise as an eat street
- 9 Improved edge with trees, a water feature, music, and co-located with bus stop
- 10 City centre town square priority identified location
- 11 Ward Street softened to a more human scale (connector) with overhead canopy
- 12 Focus outdoor dining space in colourful space
- 13 Eateries around public space
- 14 Remove building/s to create pedestrian connection to river and gardens and give space for a marketplace in the Town Hall carpark
- 15 Heritage celebrated next to potential public space (associated with #14)
- 16 Reinforce spine connection to river and gardens, through tree plantings, lighting or artwork
- 17 Focus for laneway art to create a colourful space
- 18 Key node - bring life back to the River and Gardens (activate, beautify and connect)
- 19 Activities and events by the river (outdoor concerts and use of the sound shell)
- 20 Share Indigenous stories along the river walk

Priorities

THE FOLLOWING LIST OF PRIORITY ACTIONS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FROM THE MAIN IDEAS AND THEMES THAT AROSE DURING THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS. THEY HAVE BEEN LISTED AS QUICK WINS, MEDIUM OR LONG TERM ACTIONS, TO ENABLE OUTCOMES THAT BUILD MOMENTUM AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP, WHILE DEVELOPING PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND INVESTMENT.

Actions listed under each timeframe are in order of importance, based on priorities identified during the community workshop. The priorities table gives detail on each project, timeframes, location and potential partnerships and contributors. These actions are a starting point for Revitalising Horsham's CBD, and should be built on through continued engagement with community and stakeholders, and as projects evolve.



Quick Wins

Now – April 2018

Feature Lighting



WHAT

Fairy lights in trees, up lights on buildings, shop windows lit at night, highlighting heritage buildings and significant trees, art projections

WHEN

Start now

Ongoing

WHERE

Firebrace Street, Pynsent Street (between Firebrace and Darlot Streets), Roberts Place, Ward Street, Wilson Street (near Art Gallery), McLauchlan Street (near RSL)

WHO

Council, Business Horsham, Traders, Community Groups

Vibrancy & Colour



WHAT

Banners in the main street with artwork, pots of flowers and colourful plantings, art murals, advertise events and sports activities on existing flagpoles, involve the community in the design

WHEN

Start now

Ongoing

WHERE

Throughout the CBD, with priority for Firebrace Street, Roberts Place, Wilson Street, Laneways and the River precinct

WHO

Council (esp Arts; Parks & Gardens), Business Horsham, traders, Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Public Art Committee, Real estate agents, community groups, Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, sporting groups, event organisers, Men's Shed, AXIS Works

Quick Wins

Now – April 2018

Regular Markets



WHAT

Produce and craft market, Night food market (combined with Friday night shopping), complimentary to other local markets

WHEN

Start now

Ongoing

During Spring and Summer (November – April)

Friday nights, Saturdays

Weekly or monthly

WHERE

Roberts Place, Ward Street (create a temporary shared zone during market times)

River precinct

WHO

Council (esp Economic Development), Business Horsham, traders, community groups, cultural groups, Horsham Urban Landcare

Activate Vacant Shops



WHAT

Displaying local photography or art in vacant shop windows, uplifting 'tired' facades

WHEN

Start now

Ongoing

WHERE

Vacant shops in the CBD, particularly on Firebrace Street

WHO

Business Horsham, real estate agents, property owners, Horsham Art Gallery, Public Art Committee, local artists, schools, community groups

Quick Wins

Now – April 2018

Outdoor Cinema



WHAT

Events for all ages, free or affordable

WHERE

Sawyer Park, Soundshell, Botanic Gardens, Dudley Cornell Park, Showgrounds, City Oval, Coles car park, Green Lake

WHEN

Late Spring and Summer
(November – April)

Public Holidays
(Grand Final Day, Melbourne Cup)

WHO

Council (esp Arts)

Schools

Pop-Up Cafe on the River



WHAT

A temporary cafe with areas to sit and enjoy the surrounds

WHERE

Sawyer Park, Weir Park, Angling Club, Rowing Club, Showgrounds

WHEN

Spring and Summer (October – April)

Sundays

WHO

Council, food vendors (food trucks, gourmet wine businesses)

Action Group



WHAT

Community members, traders and organisations that are interested in assisting in planning and delivering Placemaking projects

WHERE

Advertise for Expressions of Interest through websites, social media, local paper and radio

WHEN

Start now

Ongoing

WHO

Council, businesses, community, Business Horsham, Horsham Plaza, other interested stakeholders

Medium Term

2018

Signage



WHAT

Improve connections within the CBD and to surrounding areas including the River, Gardens, Roberts Place, May Park, etc. through wayfinding and informative signage

WHERE

Throughout CBD and surrounding areas

WHEN

Commence in 2018

WHO

Council, community

Cohesive Identity and Distinct Branding

WHAT

Continue to develop a cohesive identity and branding for Horsham, with community input and awareness

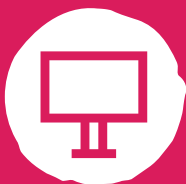
WHEN

Progress now for completion in 12 months

WHO

Council (esp Economic Development), marketing professionals, community

Town Entrance Upgrades



WHAT

Upgrade all town entrances, based on Horsham's identity and branding (a sign trail promoting features; character or identity bollards; acknowledging Aboriginal land and culture; build interest from 5 kilometres out and continue promotion until turn off

WHERE

All town entrances

WHEN

Progress now for completion in 12 months.

WHO

Council, Public Art Committee, businesses, community

Marketing Campaign



WHAT

Promoting Horsham regionally, drawing in travellers, making locals proud, align with identity and branding

WHERE

Television, Social media, Gazettes, Magazines

WHEN

Progress now for completion by end of 2018

WHO

Council (esp business group), Business Horsham, marketing professionals/ consultancy, Grampians Tourism, community

Longer Term

2019+

Town Square or New Public Space	WHERE Roberts Place, Ward Street carpark, Darlot Street carpark, Several sites in the central CBD	WHEN Commence in 2018 Complete within the next 5 years	WHO Council, community, businesses, organisations
River Facilities 	WHAT Restaurant, cafe, function centre, community facilities	WHERE Riverbank, Soundshell, Showgrounds	WHO Private enterprise, Council
Street Improvements 	WHERE Main streets in the CBD	WHEN Commence in 2018 Complete within the next 5 years	WHO Council, community, businesses, organisations

Conclusion

Overview

This Engagement Key Findings Report has provided a synthesis of community and stakeholder engagement activities undertaken throughout July 2017 with the intention of providing Council with a clearer direction of community interest in particular CBD revitalisation projects. The process has demonstrated new opportunities to bring vibrancy to the CBD, as well as the need for further engagement on longer term investment projects.

The process of engagement has been valuable for community and stakeholder input and idea generation, as well as support for future projects. The following main themes came through strongly from engagement across all stakeholder groups:

A culture of collaboration: Collaboration is at the heart of successful, well-loved places. The ongoing process will be successful insofar as it builds relationships with the businesses, industry, local community and the wider region. Equally this is about building partners for the delivery of opportunities and future engagement, be they cultural, event, tourism or community development partners.

A story of place that celebrates Horsham: Distinctive social and environmental assets define Horsham's identity and should be reflected in future CBD projects to ensure the design is unique to the people and the place.

A place of vibrancy and creativity: The CBD plays an important social and participatory role for both locals and visitors. Creating points of interest and vibrant programming, and embedding traders and community in the activation of places, will provoke continued connection, interest and pride in the town centre.

A continuing dialogue: Maintaining communication and transparency will be important for enabling continued support, opportunities for input and ultimately successful projects that are loved and well used.



Next steps

This process has created inspiration, support and momentum for revitalising Horsham's CBD. To ensure that this continues, the following steps should be progressed:

Continue to engage: Building on this initial engagement process, Council should continue to engage with a diverse range of groups to inform future projects, particularly for medium and longer term actions. This might include input from children, young people, traditional owner groups, cultural groups, as well as the many stakeholders that have already been involved. Continued engagement will ensure that projects are informed, valued and inclusive.

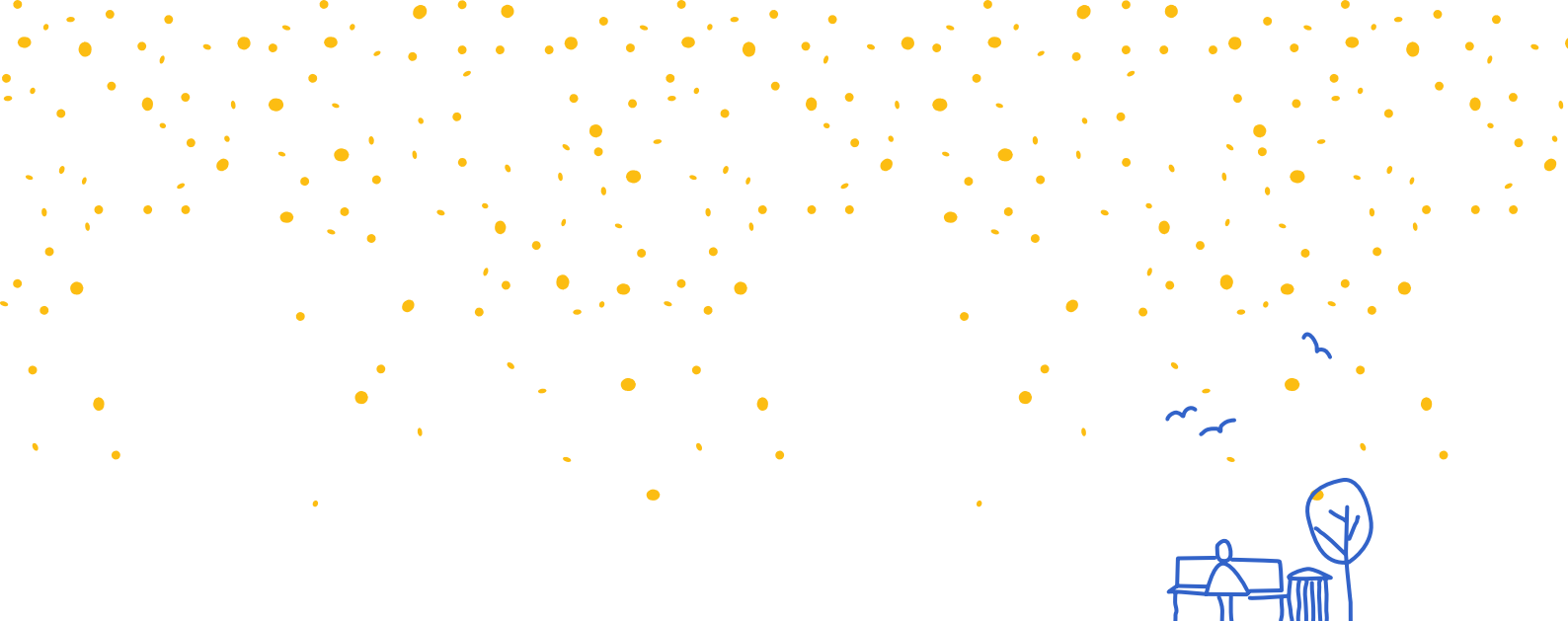
Create an action group: This group would assist in the planning and delivery of revitalisation projects, providing ideas, resourcing and support. A number of people stated they were interested in being involved during the engagement process.

Develop detailed project plans: Prioritising projects, securing funding, committing to timeframes and engaging project partners will enable momentum on identified projects.

Measures of Success

This engagement process and key findings report is a first step in the realisation of Horsham's revitalisation. As a process, it has created inspiration, broadened possibilities, built relationships and developed momentum. Measures of success were identified during the community workshops, and the following aspirations state what continued success through this process would be:

- A vibrant CBD, with things to do for all ages
- Inspired and committed traders, with successful businesses
- Commencement on quick win priorities within the next few months
- Removal of barriers from Council and a culture of 'yes'
- Community support and involvement in revitalisation
- Continued engagement on CBD projects, with a wider audience including young people
- Local pride



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