

Dadswells Bridge

Community Plan

2023-2028

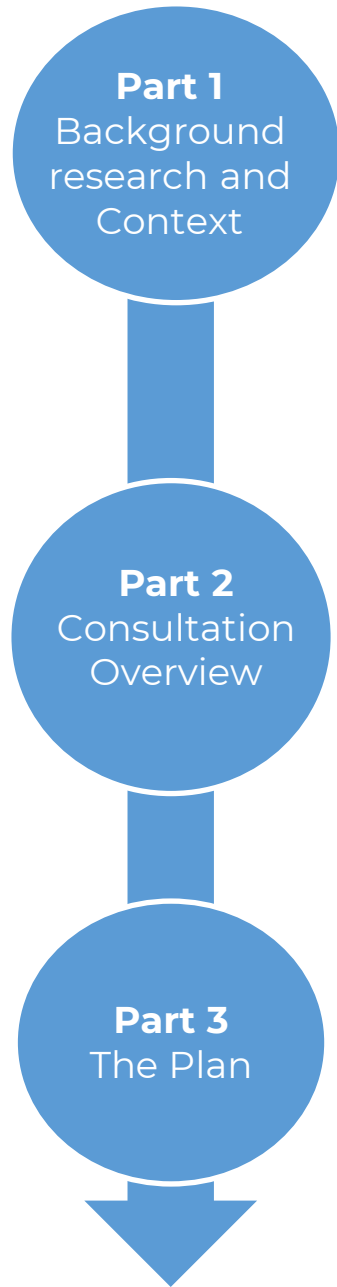
Active community of quirky turkeys



Acknowledgment of Country

La Trobe University respectfully acknowledges the five Traditional Custodians of the lands across Horsham Rural City Council. The Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjahi people.

We extend our respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Australia's First Peoples.



Part 1: Information Gathering

- 1.1 Community Plan
- 1.2 Dadswells Bridge Community Plan 2007
- 1.3 Location
- 1.4 History
- 1.5 Demographics
- 1.6 Socio economic
- 1.7 Food & Fire
- 1.8 The Giant Koala
- 1.9 Top 4 Drivers of Change
- 1.10 Community of Dadswells Bridge

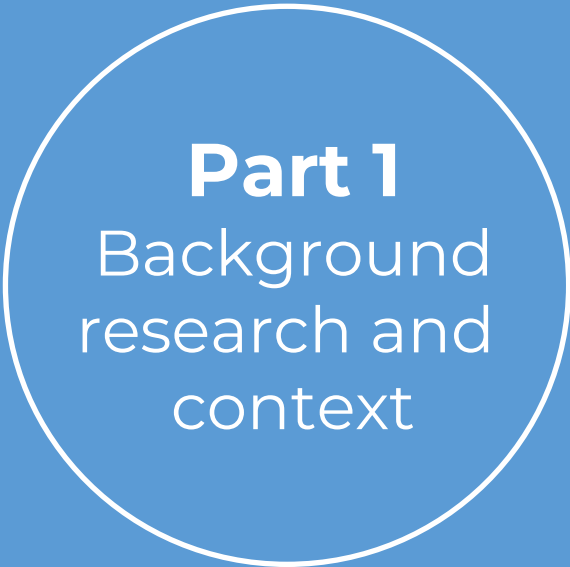
Part 2: 'What we heard'

- 2.1 Consultation Process
- 2.2 Barriers
- 2.3 Opportunities
- 2.4 Identifying assets
- 2.5 Community vision
- 2.6 Uncovering 'Big 'ideas'

Part 3: A 5-year plan of action

- 3.1 Vision and Pillars
- 3.2 Safety and placemaking
- 3.3 Respect and connect with nature
- 3.4 Community strengthening and Council leadership
- 3.5 Business and tourism capacity building and support





Part 1

Background research and context

- 1.1 Community Plan
- 1.2 Dadswells Bridge Community Plan 2007
- 1.3 Location
- 1.4 History
- 1.5 Demographics
- 1.6 Socio economic
- 1.7 Food & Fire
- 1.8 The Giant Koala
- 1.9 Top 4 Drivers of Change
- 1.10 Community of Dadswells Bridge

Information gathering

People and place are at the heart of community planning and development. Grounding The Plan research ensures strategic pillars and actions are uniquely place-based.

A Community Plan

I. Community plan -



A written document that identifies community's strengths and outlines how those strengths/assets can be utilized appropriately to build capacity and enable empowerment for the future.



Captures priorities identified by the community that will play a vital role in building a strong future.



Involves community representatives **engaging the community via consultation** to gain views regarding future opportunities for their town, locality and neighbourhood.



Informs Council and other stakeholders to implement relevant areas of the plan via (advice and information) and provides physical and financial resources to the region.

II. Development of Community Plan-

- Phase 1 - Information Gathering of background research and context
- Phase 2 - Community Consultation
- Phase 3 - Preparation of a Community plan

III. Projects identified within a Community Plan are either advocacy based or require access to funding in order to be completed-

- Advocacy methods
- Funding Options
- Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund

Dadswells Bridge Community Plan 2007

DB community plan of 2007 resulted in the formation of committees to address issues and the achievement of a variety of actions.

This refresh seeks to unpack the changing context of the last 15 years, building on past achievements by advancing existing actions and developing new actions for strengthening and growing DB's community from within.

Vision for the Community

The community values the people, tranquility and atmosphere of Dadswells Bridge and the services and infrastructure that exist. We wish to enhance our sense of community, the natural environment and the prosperity of Dadswells Bridge.

Together we will meet the challenges that face our community and will always celebrate what we have and embrace initiatives which will help us reach our vision. This plan outlines the activities that the community has prioritised through the Community Building Initiative and will focus on over the coming years to assist in reaching this vision.

The people, the location and surrounding natural environment and the sense of community are the key strengths of Dadswells Bridge.

Priority

Status

Clean up and Restore Mt William Creek



unknown

Develop a series of walking and bike trails in the Northern Grampians



Signed walking trail within the township and footbridge over Mt William Creek constructed

Lighting program - outside of the Dadswells Bridge Hall



incomplete

Artists in residence/arts community



unknown

Dangerous intersections in Dadswell's Bridge



Unsuccessful

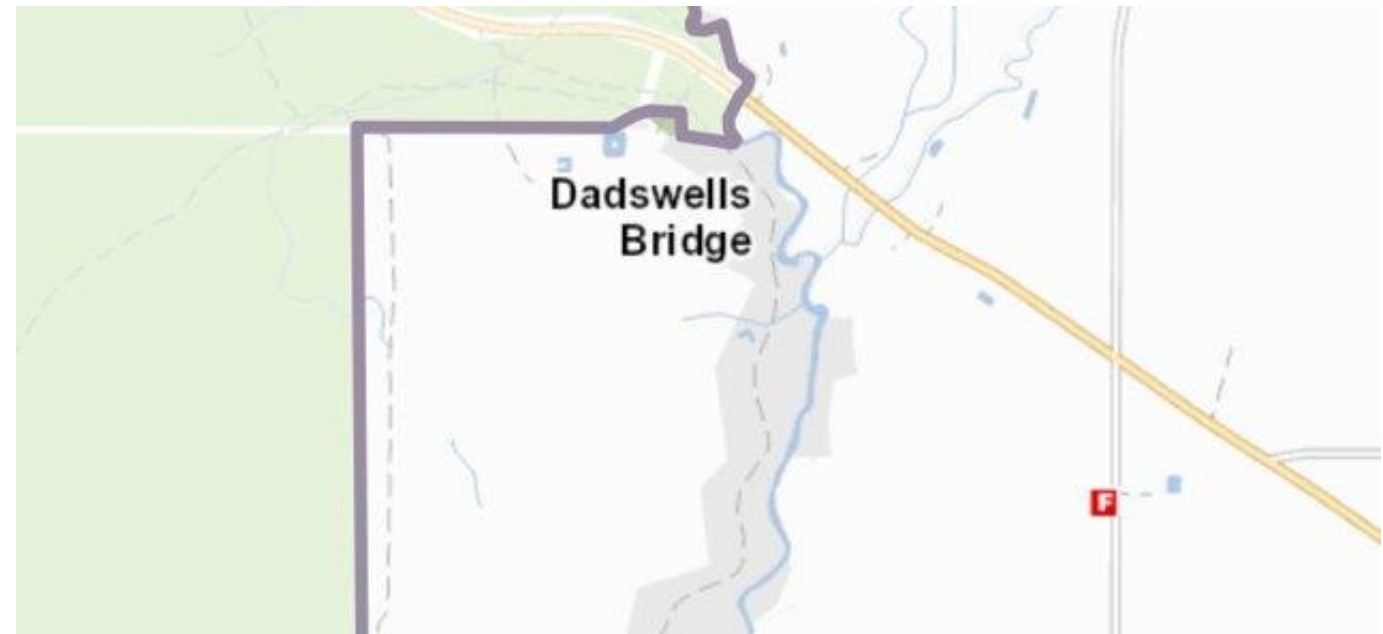
Lighting action



Successful

Location

- Dadswells Bridge is located in a prominent rural location, a short distance from the foot of the Grampians National Park.
- Dadswells Bridge lies within the Horsham Rural City Council & Northern Grampians Municipalities
- The settlement is approximately 20 kilometres south-east of Horsham and is 238 kms from the capital city of Melbourne Victoria.
- The location covers an area of 128.919 square kilometres.
- The settlement is located on Wotjabaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Japaaulk country.



<https://horsham.pozi.com/>



Implications for the Community Plan:

- Barrier: freeway cuts through the town
- Barrier: Boundary between two Councils
- Opportunity: potential customers in vehicles
- Opportunity: Doorstep to the Grampians

History

- In 1865 road was created from Stawell to Horsham and a bridge was constructed over Mount William Creek.
- Farming, tobacco growing, bee-keeping and wine-making were established within the district.
- The Dadswell's Bridge Hall was officially opened on 6th September 1905.
- The giant Koala was built in 1989 and stands approximately 14 metres tall, weighing 12 tonnes and made of bronze and fibre glass set on top of a steel frame. The koala was created by the sculptor Ben Van Zetton who was hired in 1988 to design and construct the piece.

Implications for the Community Plan:

- Barrier: highway cuts through the town
- Opportunity: potential customers in vehicles
- Opportunity: Doorstep to the Grampians



Demographics

- Dadswell's Bridge population is significantly declining.
- No employment record was recorded in 2021
- SEIFA Index for Dadswell's Bridge is 998.00 in 2021 which indicates a well-maintained level of advantage (Community ID).

Implications for the Community Plan:

- Barrier: DB's population has dropped 75% in 15 years
- Barrier: Ageing population

Census year	Population
2011	210
2016	71
2021	69

Population (ABS Census, 2011, 2016, 2021)

Census year	Median Age	Median income	Average Household size
2011	44	890	2.4
2016	58	1,031	2.0
2021	61	1,375	2.0

Medians (ABS Census, 2011, 2016, 2021)

Census Year	Forestry/ Agriculture	Construction	Whole sale	Retail	Transport	Admin	Education	Finance	Accom	Other
2011	44	6	9	10	3	9	9	3	12	18
2016	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	7
2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Employment by occupation(ABS Census, 2011, 2016, 2021)

Socio Economic

- Largely rural land, used for agriculture and wildflower production.
- Famous Australian Turkey Farm
- Popular tourism attraction with the giant koala, café and well known for being in close-proximity to Halls Gap, Grampians National Park.



Implications for the Community Plan:

- Opportunity: Unique and unusual turkeys act as 'draw cards' for DB.
- Opportunity: A great area to buy real estate at an affordable price



Flood and Fire

Flood

- The January 2011 flood event was the largest event on record.
- A history of significant flood events have occurred in 1911, 1912, 1922, 1956, 1957, 1974, 1975, 1990, 1993, 2010 and 2011 .

Fire

- Bushfires threatened Dadswell's Bridge with the most recent bushfires in January 2014.
- 2 homes outside Dadswell's Bridge were destroyed. The main business section unaffected.
- Significant damage was caused at the Orchid Lane Cottages. The business owners were lucky enough to be able to take shelter in an underground bunker.

Implications for the Community Plan:

- Barrier: Community has been through a lot over the last 15 years, taking a toll on spirit.
- Opportunity: Focus on building resilience through preparation and management of future shocks and stresses



Dadswells Bridge Local Flood Guide SES, Dec 2021



Wimmera Mail Times, 2014

The Giant Koala

- Privately owned, along with the next-door café
- Like other “Big Things”, its purpose is economic/commercial, to entice visitors to stop and spend money
- A regional landmark which puts Dadswell's Bridge on the map
- Over time, community members have been involved in improvements like installing the laser eyes and re-painting the tufts
- Significant maintenance and investment is required
- Mixed reviews, 'no publicity is bad publicity'

[-satirical-shittest-shortlist/101173800](#)

Implications for the Community Plan:

- Barrier: Giant Koala is in a state of disrepair
- Opportunity: Landmark asset for the community to draw in tourists.
- Opportunity: tied to community identity



“I painted the Koala, Chris down the road put the red eyes in it.”

- DB Community participant

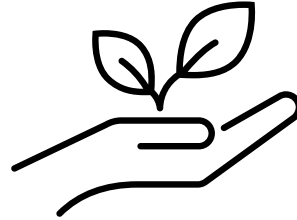
Top 4 Drivers of Change



Authentic and unique place-based experiences

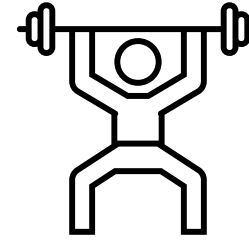
Implications for DB Plan:

- Opportunity to attract new people to DB
- Provide revenue channels for the local community
- Generate employment opportunities.
- Put DB on the map as a tourist destination
- Increased price of land and real estate a



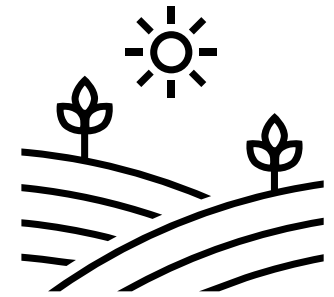
Sustainable futures

- Sustainable future
- Renewable and green energy
- Protect the environment.



Community resilience

- Stronger community networks
- Local knowledge
- Build communication
- Social cohesion



Regional migration

- Increased population
- Foster local innovation
- Address employee shortage in DB

1. Thrive 2030, Australian Government 2022

2. Destination Visitor Survey, Strategic Regional Research, Tourism Research Australia, 2011

3. 7 Travel Industry Trends For 2022, Exploding topics, <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/travel-industry-trends>

5. The future of work in the tourism sector: sustainable and face of recovery. International Labour Organisation, 2022

Community of Dadswells Bridge

- The people in Dadswells Bridge view this locality as a **special place**, halfway between Adelaide and Melbourne, as the **gateway to the Northern Grampians & Wimmera**.
- The common definition of community by locals encompasses the **sense of solidarity** with a strong social capital which cements the behavior and the common goals for a better Dadswells Bridge.
- The natural disasters occurring in Dadswell Bridge are described as one engine of this solidarity.
- The **social configuration** of this community is made of farmers, business owners from diverse cultural backgrounds including migrants.
- They want to retain the young and create opportunities for them in Dadswell Bridge.

Implications for DB Plan:

- All residents in the geographic area should participate in community planning

Part 2

Consultation Overview

- 2.1 Consultation Process
- 2.2 Barriers
- 2.3 Opportunities
- 2.4 Identifying assets
- 2.5 Community vision
- 2.6 Uncovering 'Big 'ideas'

'What we heard' from community

Community planning is formed in collaboration with the community and its local business. It is achieved through: understanding barriers and opportunities and unpacking future vision and big ideas to inform priorities for action over the next 5-years.

Consultation Process

Over 2 days, La Trobe Community Planning and development students gathered community feedback on improvements to DB. A broad range of insights were collected.

Who we heard from:

6 businesses

8 business owners

2 community members



How we consulted:

1 community drop-in session

6 businesses drop-in interviews



Opportunities

Top opportunities identified by DB's Community:

- **Geographic positioning:** Halfway along the main highway between Melbourne and Adelaide. The bus stop in the centre of DB.
- **Doorstep to the Grampians:** DB has an authentic and laidback quintessential Australiana atmosphere encouraging tourist to use DB as a base for visiting the neighbouring Grampians National Park., Pink Lakes and Silo Art Trail
- **Underlying community history and spirit:** Passionate about the Giant Koala the town regularly contributes to its upkeep. The region is rich in gold mining stories and artifacts.

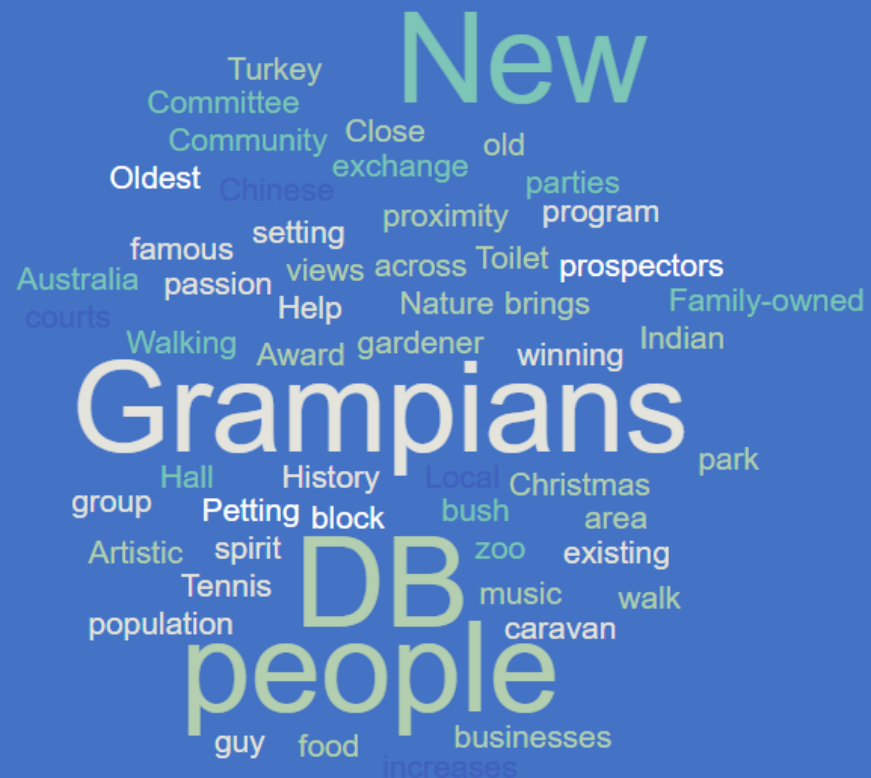


Local Assets

Findings span people, place, associations, organisations and local services and align with the community mapping in the 2007 Plan.

Additional assets since 2007 include:

- **New entrepreneurs:** bringing with them a diversification of businesses and an invigorating mindset.
- **Upgraded Public hall**
- **New trail:** historic nature trail constructed



Community vision

Analysing and piecing together the range of responses, the community's vision for DB became clear.

“This should be a beautiful little community.”

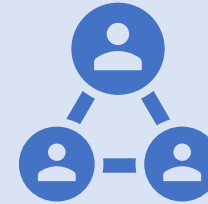
- DB Business participant

“We are not viewed as an entrance to Horsham and we should be.”

- DB Community participant

Top vision statements were:

1



A cohesive and active community with regular activities and events.

2



A safe and clean place for vehicles to stop and appreciate local offering.

3



A welcoming and well-known gateway to the Grampians within a tranquil bush setting.

Uncovering 'Big Ideas'

The Community of DB value their unique identity and assets, they wish to see a restored Giant Koala and improved surrounding infrastructure that highlights its unique place identity.

Five top priorities for action were:

- Assist businesses in working together
- Bring the community together
- Encourage vehicles to slow down and stop
- Clean up the stretch of road along the highway
- Mark Dadswells Bridge on the tourist maps

Top 'Big Ideas' were:

1



Restore and connect the Giant Koala with surrounding assets.

2



Improve the interface with the Western Highway through a slip lane and reduced speed

3



Showcase DB's community quirks and unique place identity through placemaking



Part 3

The Plan

- 3.1 Vision and Pillars
- 3.2 Safety and placemaking
- 3.3 Respect and connect with nature
- 3.4 Community strengthening and Council leadership
- 3.5 Business and tourism capacity building and support

A 5-year plan of action

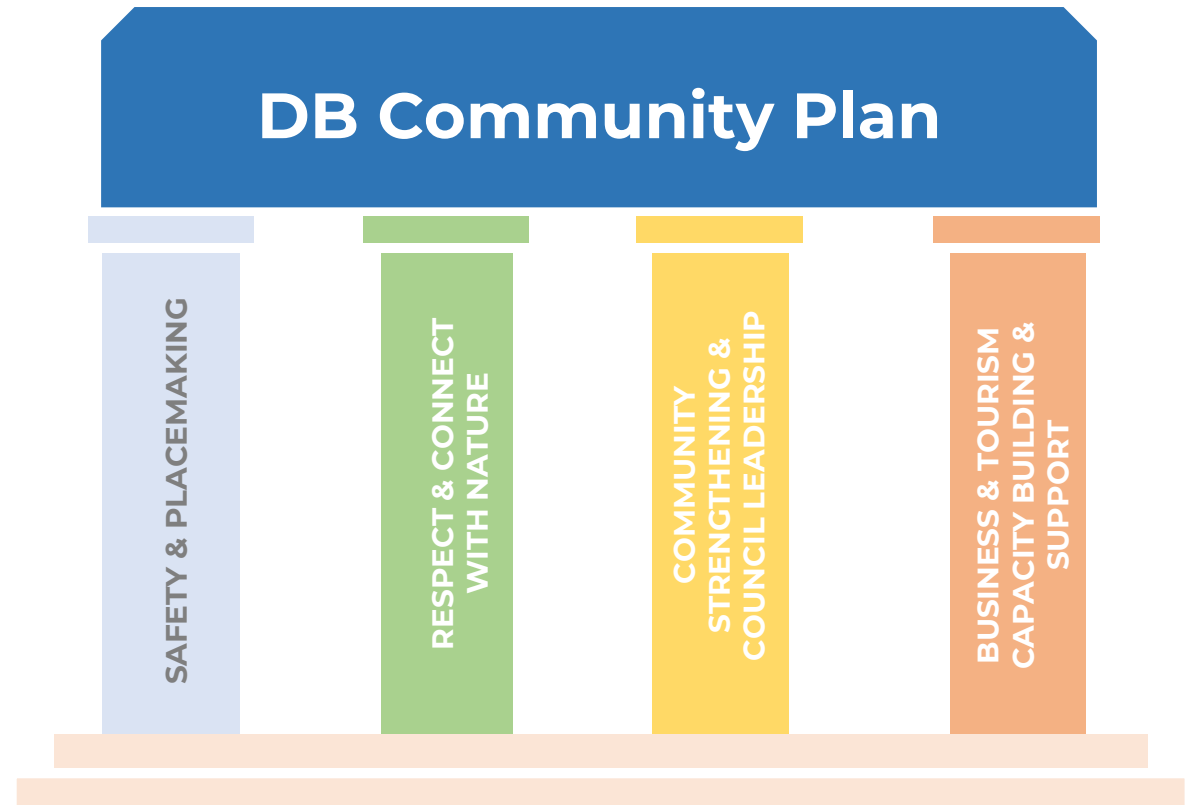
Bringing together background research and community consultation to develop a 5-year plan of action for the development of Dadswells Bridge. Its strategic pillars are goals for driving success, achieved through deliberate actions.

Vision & Pillars

Vision: A cohesive, safe and welcoming Dadswells Bridge for the whole community, visitors and future residents. A refuge from the highway with a balance of activities and events to meet the needs of an evolving, growing and dynamic little community.

Pillars:

- Safety and placemaking
- Respect and connect with nature
- Community strengthening and council leadership
- Business and tourism capacity building and support



Mission

To empower the community, encourage and support opportunities and strengthen the relationships between Local Government and the community

Values

- Diversity and inclusion
- Stronger Community
- Trust and mutual respect
- Environment
- Making a difference

Safety & Placemaking

Outcomes:

- Increased community pride in the township and 'sense of place'
- Reduced incidence and fatalities on road
- Uncreased safety of vehicles and pedestrians
- Increased number of vehicles stopping

Action	timeframe	Method	Responsibility
Investigate funding for co-design streetscape development work	Medium term	Advocacy methods Funding Options	Council and community partnership
Advocate to VicRoads for safety assessment	Short term- on-going	Advocacy methods	Council and community partnership
Map traffic accidents and fatalities/near misses	Short term	Community led	Community
Map locations of nearby public toilets & road stops	Short term	Community led	Community
Record number and types of people who stop	Short term – on-going	Community led	Community
Co-design a streetscape plan for interface with Western Highway in line with movement and place framework	Long term	Council	VicRoads, Council and community partnership
Investigate opportunities for increased facilities for visitors to the Giant Koala complex such as public toilets, photo board for selfies and play equipment	Medium - long term		Council and community partnership
Conduct a road safety assessment and improvements to vehicles entering and exiting Dadswell's Bridge landmarks and businesses	Medium term	Advocacy methods	Council and VicRoads
Improve wayfinding and signage at entry to Dadswell's Bridge	Long term	Funding options	Council
Complete stage 2 lighting project by continuing it down the street	Long term	Funding options	Council
Investigate community or Council ownership of the Giant Koala	Medium term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund (grant)	Community
Investigate funding mechanisms for repairs to Giant Koala	Short term	Funding options	Council and community partnership
Include Dadswell Bridge on all future visitor's maps	Short term	Community led	Community
Launch a DB volunteer award <u>e.g.</u> Local heroes	Short term	Community led	Community
Host a quarterly entertainment night <u>e.g.</u> Local talent night	Short term	Community led	Community
Design and build a path along the side of the road connecting DB assets	Short term	Funding options	Council and community partnership

Respect & Connect with nature

Outcomes:

- Enhanced connection to the natural assets resulting in an increase to number of visitors
- Increased harmony between built and natural environment
- Cleaner DB for all

Action	Timeframe	Method	Responsibility
Maintain and mow the lawn on both sides on the Western Highway	Short term	Community led	Council
Connect assets to walking and cycling tracks	Long term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund	Council and community partnership
Investigate opportunities for waste collection/roadside rubbish clean-up	Short term	Community led	Community
Plant indigenous shrubs at DB	Medium term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund Community led	Community
Regular community rubbish clean-up along Western Highway	Short term	Community led	Community
Install solar panels on the hall roof	Medium term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund	Community
Investigate opportunities for kayaking	Short term	Community led	Community

Community strengthening & Council Leadership

Outcomes:

- Empowerment of community
- Increased trust and rapport between Council and Community
- Increased social cohesion and social capital.
- Grant applications submitted by DB community

Action	Timeframe	Method	Responsibility
Provide and maintain Council and community consultation opportunities to gain a full understanding of the community's needs and vision	Short term		Council
Facilitate the formation of a Dadswell Bridge Committee and provide community development support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• scope community ideas to activate the community and bring people together• apply for community grants	Medium term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund	Council and community partnership
Provide DB community with a regular point of contact at Council	Short term		Council

Business & tourism capacity building & support

Outcomes:

- Empowerment of businesses
- Increased trade and economic development
- Increased trust of Council
- Increased collaboration between DB businesses

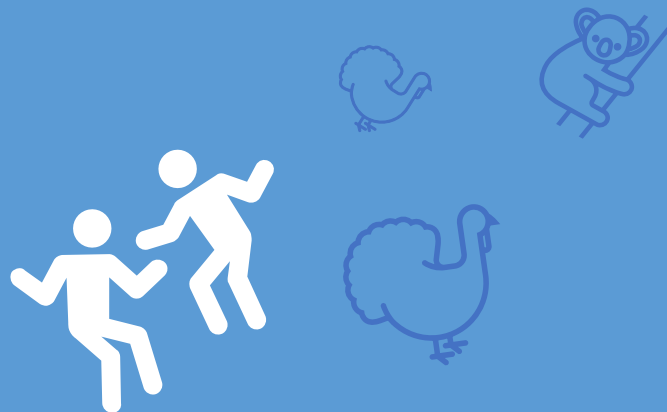
Action	Timeframe	Method	Responsibility
Investigate opportunities to further leverage the Giant Koala complex through inclusion into regional tourism strategies and marketing promotions	Short term		Council and business partnership
Link accommodation with backpackers in Melbourne-offer packages	Medium term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund	Local businesses
Increase and connect with advertising opportunities	Short-medium term	Funding options	Local businesses
Connection to marketing and visitor services	Short term		Local businesses
Link with Silo Art Trail e.g. Pink Lake at Dimboola, Grampians National Park	Medium term		Council and business partnership
Integration of economic policy to assist Dadswell's Bridge community	Medium term		Council
Investigate opportunities for collaboration between businesses within DB	Short term	Council's Community Plan Implementation Fund	Council
Provide information sessions on employees and how to apply for grants	Short term	Funding options	Council
Investigate opportunities for staffing programs	Short term	Funding options	Council

Thank you

Community planning gives a voice to the aspirations of a community.

We hope this work will be a foundation for further consultation and catalyses engagement with the Dadswells Bridge community.

Thank you to all Dadswells Bridge community members and HRCC staff who generously gave their time to this process.



Written by Kirsten Miller, Amy Atkinson, Justine Simpson, Sanjana Gowan, Firmin Dougbou and Esther Kimani.