



Ararat Rural City

# ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY VISION 2031

Over the next ten years Ararat Rural City Council will develop into a community characterised by:

*Strong population growth trajectories that buck trends in rural Victoria.* This is underpinned by a planning scheme that provides certainty to the community while providing capacity for further residential, industrial, and commercial growth.

*Continuous and sustainable economic development which is focused on job creation through value adding in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and tourism.* Ararat Rural City Council has a strategic advantage provided through the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct, which is a world leading example of a research partnership between a university and a rural community.

*Leadership in pragmatic approaches to local environmental management.* Ararat Rural City Council is a leader in managing a circular economy through a focus on local management of resource recovery. We are home to a number of successful bio-mass and waste to energy power generators which contribute significantly to our positioning as a net zero emissions community.

*Sustainable and effective local transport networks underpinned by careful technical and financial planning undertaken jointly between asset users and asset owners.* Enabling infrastructure in the form of roads, drainage and utilities is in place to support the social and economic growth of the municipality. Renewal of all asset classes is managed to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

*Communities that are enhanced by access to artistic, cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities that meet needs and expectations.* Volunteering is a key part of community life and its resurgence has breathed new life into a range of community organisations and activities. Ararat Rural City is a place that is known for its cultural inclusion and connection to traditional owners.

*Strong and robust democratic processes underpinned by transparent governance, good financial management and organisational innovation.* Ararat Rural City Council is seen as an exemplar of what rural local government can be and achieve for its community.

It is a place of strength, compassion, self-reliance and new ideas. It is a place that knows how to make things happen!

## *Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners*

Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.



# ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025



Ararat Rural City

## 1. GROWING OUR PLACE

*We will create the settings to support growth across our municipality through an improved planning scheme, actively pursuing new housing options and exploring models for in-migration.*

- 1.1 Develop a new planning scheme for Ararat Rural City that is clear in its intention, supports growth and builds confidence and certainty around land use.
- 1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.
- 1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, and not-for-for profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City to grow our population.

## 2. BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

*We will develop strong relationships to build and strengthen a diverse local economy, focussed on creating jobs and wealth through adding value to existing strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and hospitality.*

- 2.1 Partner with Federation University Australia to deliver the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct.
- 2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging "behind the meter" power.
- 2.3 Engage with Grampians Tourism and local businesses to drive growth in high yield tourist outcomes.



### **3. PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT**

*We will take pragmatic approaches to ensuring that Ararat Rural City Council takes a regional lead in responsible environmental management and engagement with the circular economy.*

- 3.1 Position Ararat Rural City Council as a prime mover in driving circular economy policy in waste management, including local processing and management of recyclables, and in use of renewable energy for Council purposes.
- 3.2 Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste.
- 3.3 Partner with local organisations and scientific experts to develop an appropriate and pragmatic local government Environment Strategy, focussed on the circular economy, emission reduction through renewable energy and management of Council assets.

### **4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE**

*We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.*

- 4.1 Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031.
- 4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety, and align with Council's financial sustainability.

### **5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE**

*We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.*

- 5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making.
- 5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.
- 5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and traditional owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.

### **6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

*We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.*

- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.
- 6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.
- 6.3 Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while acknowledging the need for a range of different techniques to ensure effective engagement.

# MEASURES OF SUCCESS



## GROWING OUR PLACE

- Completion of new planning scheme by 30 June 2023.
- New planning scheme supports commercial and industrial land provision for growth.
- Available residential land increased by 600 lots by 30 June 2025.
- Residential housing stock increased by 300 properties by 30 June 2025.
- Total population of the municipality increased by 750 by 30 June 2025 (6.3%).

## BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

- Increase in jobs in local economy by 15% by 30 June 2025.
- Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct fully functional with 8 PhD scholars in place.
- Business park developed and lead tenants established in agricultural value add sector.
- Ararat Rural City Council identified as the tourism leader in the Grampians Region.
- Tourism visitation and stays in Ararat Rural City increased by 50% by 30 June 2025.

## PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Fully implemented new waste plan, aligned with circular economy outcomes by 30 June 2022.
- Local processing of waste recyclables in place by 31 December 2022.
- All energy used by Ararat Rural City Council is from renewable sources, with a preference for local solutions such as rooftop solar/battery by 30 June 2024.
- Industrial bio-mass power plant, utilising straw waste in final pre-construction phase by 30 June 2025.
- Environment Working Group has produced draft Environmental Strategy by 31 December 2021.

## DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Aradale planning project funded and completed by 30 June 2023.
- Planning and funding models for rural roads "spine" developed and endorsed by Rural Roads Group by 30 June 2022.
- Negotiations with government and utility providers to ensure future industrial, commercial and residential development is supported by essential trunk infrastructure by 30 June 2023.
- Policy in place regarding sealing of urban gravel roads and sealing of significant urban laneways by 31 December 2021.
- Implementation of key infrastructure projects from the Asset Plan 2021-2031 during the planning period.

## ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

- Increase annual visitation to the Ararat Art Gallery by 30% p.a.
- Increase community use of the Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase audience sizes at commercial and funded performances at the Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase Ararat Rural City Council's volunteer numbers by 20% per annum.
- Explore a model for improving the viability of Gum San by 31 December 2021.

## STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Council budgets continue to deliver public value and return efficiency dividends where appropriate.
- Risk management processes continue to be effective and approved by Audit and Risk Committee.
- Community engagement process show longitudinal signs of improvement.