



June 2021

MURTOA PROGRESS ASSOCIATION



**Murtoa
Progress
Association**

Serving Murtoa since 1888

Our Community Plan

Murtoa Lakeside Town Moving Forward

Murtoa residents were surveyed through a letter box drop and online surveys. A summary of the 59 responses received portray Murtoa's strength, assets, challenges and vision in this Community Action Plan 2019-2023.

The Murtoa community has achieved many great things in the past five years when reflecting on the last community action plan, including successful completion of listed projects such as the Lake Marma redevelopment, the new Neighborhood House building, refurbished Murtoa Railway Station, and multiple upgrades to sporting facilities.

“Murtoa is a safe place to raise children with schools and a supportive community”

Murtoa is a proud lakeside town, located on the main rail line from Melbourne to Adelaide. Our vibrant community benefits from being located close to the Wimmera's regional centre, Horsham. On the Silo Art Trail, our own tourist attractions include the Stick Shed (National Heritage listed Murtoa No.1 Grain Shed), the museum precinct (Water Tower Museum, Railway Station & Concordia College [first Lutheran college in Australia]) and Lake Marma managed by a local Committee of Management, complete with the Caravan Park [operated by Yarriambiack Shire Council] and community owned Cabins on Lake Marma.

The town is central to the farming community and agricultural industry, with some major employers, excellent schools, services, retail sector and key trades available. The diverse community and sporting facilities are managed and maintained to a high standard by volunteers. Connectivity to NBN along with Telstra and Optus towers enhances business and social opportunities.

OUR COMMUNITY

Murtoa is a beautiful lakeside town in the heart of the Wimmera on the Silo Art Trail and home to The Stick Shed.



Population

865



Median Age

48
(State avg 47)



Private Dwellings

364
= 80% occupied



Median Household
Income

\$911
(State avg \$1,419)



Volunteered

in 12 months
38%
(State avg 19%)

Source: ABS Census 2016

OUR STRENGTHS

- **Our People & Community Spirit**
- **Forward thinking, driven, community that gets things done**
- **Rural Lifestyle and Location**
- **Local Businesses & Shopping has all the essentials you need**

OUR ASSETS

- **Local Businesses, Local Services & Local Employers**
- **Lake Marma**
- **The Stick Shed**
- **Tourism & Public facilities**
- **Community Events**
- **Strong farming culture & Agriculture Industry**

OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES

- **Small businesses able to continue & expand**
- **Accommodation for sale, rent, for elderly and for visitors**
- **Local access to healthcare, Doctors and Childcare**
- **Centre of town needs a boost. Revive the main street.**
- **Build population - Attract new people and keep people here**
- **Employment opportunities**
- **Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance**
- **Inclusion, cohesion, engaging youth & supporting new ideas**
- **Access to community funding**
- **Volunteer fatigue**
- **Development opportunities**

OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Frequent future challenges the Murtoa community raised in 2019:

- Growing Our Community: Keep people in Murtoa & attract new people to Murtoa
- Support local businesses and attract new businesses
- Retain & build services (health & child care)
- Maintaining & improving current infrastructure
- Space for furthering development, industrial and tourism opportunities

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Ideas raised in the community survey that we, together with our Murtoa Progress Association, can explore together:

Basic Services

- ❖ **Child Day Care centre developed** for community. There is a huge demand for local daycare. There is a huge demand and wait list for take a break. Sufficient resources locally.
- ❖ **Access to health services** locally, including access to Doctor supported
- ❖ **Invest in quality housing development** for all demographics (including rentals). Accommodation desperately needed (housing & rentals)
- ❖ **Minimise the drugs boom** and the effects it has on small communities.
- ❖ **Manage feral pigeons**

Community & Connectivity

- ❖ **More community Events Sponsored** to promote social inclusion – Like the Big Weekend Family Fun Night and Look over the Farm Gate events. Perhaps 3 per year.
- ❖ **Youth engagement** improved, including develop meaningful youth engagement activities
- ❖ **Sustain community groups** and maintain and support volunteers, including more easily accessible **funding** for community groups
- ❖ **Town strategic plan** developed that is holistic
- ❖ Have **coordinated group** with representatives for all groups work together to support each other, share skills, resources and promote develop Murtoa.
- ❖ **Public gym** to encourage fitness
- ❖ **Promote Murtoa** - great place to live for young families, elderly and commuter base for Horsham
- ❖ **Youth activities:** bumper cars, lazer tag or circus

Infrastructure Opportunities

- ❖ **Footpaths improved.** Pedestrian, gopher and pram safe footpaths e.g. Lake, Degenhardt and Comyn Streets. With the recent dry conditions, it appears there has been more movement in surfaces (cracking, lifting and dropping) and further action is required for public safety.
- ❖ **Street Scape improvements.** Paint the shop facades of McDonald St (all private, public benefit)
- ❖ **Street trees** in areas where this is practicable and needed. Appropriate selections to avoid causing hazards. E.g. McClintock St. from the highway to Breen St. is one area for consideration.
- ❖ **Review town entrances** from North, South, East and West and consider ways to enhance further. Perhaps drought tolerant garden with a few striking specimens, may help create a lived-in feel.
- ❖ Murtoa **Industrial area expanded** and promoted to encourage investment and employment.
- ❖ **Maintaining current infrastructure** - a lot of buildings in town will need work in the future, where does this money come from?
- ❖ **Flooding at pool entry:** Water unable to drain away from Swimming Pool entry area.
- ❖ Maintaining clean and regular **lake supply**
- ❖ Get **free Wi-Fi**
- ❖ Install a **toddler playground**
- ❖ Improve **public transport** (including rail)
- ❖ **Maximise use of limited resources** by seeking creative ways of sharing resources rather than replicating facilities: costs of maintaining and developing local infrastructure can be a problem.
- ❖ **Bus shelter** in Marma St built as a second shelter

Economic Development Opportunities

- ❖ **Local business supported** through initiatives developed to support and boost local businesses. Promote shopping local ("look local first"). Business thrives, they employ more people, more people come and spend in town, community thrives. It's simple but hardly ever acknowledged
- ❖ **Business investment encouraged,** use recent case studies.
- ❖ Attract new **employment** to Murtoa
- ❖ **Become a tourist destination.** Murtoa as a lifestyle location promoted for commute and quality of lifestyle. Enhance tourism and do more to promote the town and maximise impact of tourism for benefit of local economy. Set up a tourist information centre
- ❖ **External perspectives.** Interesting to get perspectives from non-locals or former locals. They can often see things that we don't. E.g. great features that we take for granted. Comments left on social media, visitor books or in passing, may give useful insights.
- ❖ Specific locations for **truck parking in town centre** to encourage shop locally, economic benefit.
- ❖ **Promote an agribusiness** that value adds to local produce and would provide employment and boost economy via flow on effects. Farms getting bigger - losing families from district
- ❖ Make the **caravan park** bigger
- ❖ **Lake development** potential: café/bar

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- ❖ **Free camping options.** Travelers have several options for ‘free camping’ in this region and elsewhere. This would make Murtoa another option for some travelers who have self-sufficient rigs. Some have already found spots around Murtoa to stop overnight for free.
 - ❖ **Meal Access.** Coordination of business hours to ensure access on long weekends and holidays.

OUR MURTOA PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

The Murtoa Progress Association has represented the Murtoa Community since 1888. The purpose of Progress is to promote and support Murtoa and district in the enhancement of:

- Community connectivity, consultation and local representation
- Local businesses, services, ag-culture and economic development opportunities
- Tourism and livability
- Shared leadership and enable community leaders

Specific tasks include to manage:

- Promotion of local business and community events
- Representation of community issues, concerns and interests
- Community Units and Cabins on Lake Marma
- The Murtoa website and social media
- The Murtoa Community Action Plan as a consultative process
- The fortnightly newspaper the “Murtoa and District Advertiser”

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Email: murtoaprogress@gmail.com

Website www.murtoa.net **Facebook** www.facebook.com/murtoa

OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS (2019-2023) – Annual Update 2021 – By Theme

1. Community, Connectivity & Livability Opportunities

	Theme	Project	Summary	Need	Lead & Who Involved	Comments	Contact / Submission	Email Address
A	Health, Recreation & Sport	Public exercise equipment	Exercise stations to be placed around the Lake Marma walking track Encourage people outside for fitness. Add strength training to fitness program.	Public access to exercise equipment Strength training is important for all, particularly as we age, for strong healthy bones & improved balance. Meet and chat with like-minded community while getting fit	Lake Marma COM		Lake COM Hamish Gawith (Secretary) Local Resident	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
B		Toddler playground	Develop a new, or add to existing playgrounds with playground equipment suitable to toddlers	No toddler playgrounds suitable to under 3 years of age	YSC	Suggestion for Rabl Park next to older playground	MPA	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
C		Netball - Second netball court	Second netball court	Standards for netball	Showyard COM, YSC		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
D		Netball - Women's change facility	Women's change facility		Showyard COM, YSC		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
E		Oval - Raised seating for court/s and oval	Raised seating for court/s and oval		Showyard COM		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com
F		Basketball ring installed for youth	Basketball ring installed within the Lake Marma or Rabl Park area.	Basketball is popular with youth in Murtoa. No public space to play.	Lake Marma COM	Half Basketball Court option.	Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
G		Youth activities & spaces	Youth activities: Some suggestions - bumper cars, lazer tag or a visiting circus		YSC, schools		Local youth - 6yo	
H		Skateboard park upgrade	Skateboard park safe & user-friendly improvements – Rabl Park		YSC, Murtoa College		Murtoa P-12 students	
I		Rabl Park Off- Lead Dog Park	Suggested location - Rabl Park other side of bridge to the toilet car park. It would be securely fenced, with dog-litter disposal units, and signage. It will provide a safe space for dog owners to exercise their dogs.	Nowhere on public land for dogs to be safely be off -leash. Provide added protection for people, animals and birds from off-leash dogs. Travellers with dogs onboard seek towns with off-leash dog-parks.	YSC, Dog owners		Local Resident	pmclark60@bigpond.com

			Provide a social experience for both dog and owner.				
J	Bowls Club - Refurbish men's toilets.	The current men's toilet is in serious disrepair. It is fragile and is not suitable for the elderly or people with disabilities to use safely. If there is no progress on the project below we require urgent assistance to refurbish the toilets to make them safe.	There is a risk to our members and visitors health and safety.	Murtoa Bowls Club, YSC		Tony Baker (Chair)	tony-tash@bigpond.com
K	Bowls Club – Architectural design	This project involves appointing a suitably qualified architect to develop detailed design for the project listed below (in relation to the building components)	To deliver on the activities below a detailed architects drawing is required and relevant Council planning requirements met. This will ensure a 'shovel ready' project that can apply for a greater range of grants.	Murtoa Bowls Club, YSC	We have been limited in opportunities to apply for grants because our project is not 'shovel ready'.	Tony Baker (Chair)	tony-tash@bigpond.com
L	Bowls Club - Demolish and rebuild men's toilets.	The current men's toilet is in serious disrepair. It is fragile and is not suitable for the elderly or people with disabilities to use safely. Need to demolish the current toilets which is detached from the main clubhouse. Then extend the club house to include the toilet in the main building. This would require moving tanks and some plumbing and walking paths.	There is a risk to our members and visitors health and safety.	Murtoa Bowls Club, YSC	We are a small club with a growing membership. Need to upgrade our facilities to continue to attract membership.	Tony Baker (Chair)	tony-tash@bigpond.com
M	Bowls Club – Outdoor Spectator Area	Need for improved outdoor spectator area	Nowhere suitable for spectators	Murtoa Bowls Club, YSC		Tony Baker (Chair)	tony-tash@bigpond.com
N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennis Club further funding for finalisation of newly completed top surface of Court #3. Lighting update to existing light towers, and installation of additional lighting towers to light up other two courts. Purchase of a high pressure court cleaner to avoid excessive future maintenance costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further funding for top surface of Court #3 (low slip synpave acrylic court surface and final line marking) to finalise recently completed fill within this area (funds did not allow complete fill required to avoid pooling). Additional lighting update to install additional lighting towers to light up #3 and #4 for a possible (more efficient) night competition. High pressure court cleaner will avoid mold buildup and further costs associated with this issue going forward. 	A Friday night competition considered to replace Saturday afternoon tennis due to increased Saturday commitments of players. The shift of the standard tennis format to attract new players of varying skill levels to enjoy tennis as a fun sport and enjoy the recreation reserve. The need for quality lighting and surface of Court #3 will complete the tennis arena and set up for future generations. Maintenance equipment will prevent future costly issues and assist members in maintaining court preservation.	Murtoa Tennis Club	Tennis Club will research required equipment for additional lights and source quotes. Tennis Victoria support importance of Court #3. Assistance from YSC Rebecca Botheras will be actioned for larger grant applications.	Natasha Pietsch (Secretary)	tony-tash@bigpond.com
	Murtoa Swimming Pool - Computerised water testing system	Reduce man hours and therefore cost of running pool, by installing a computerised water testing system. Water testing is required four hourly every day	reduce the running costs of our local swimming pool	Swimming Pool Comm.		Maree Baker	mabaker3@tpg.com.au

O		Murtoa Swimming Pool- Installation of solar panels to reduce power expenses	the committee has applied for government funding for this project, and is waiting to see if we will be successful. If not, we still wish to plan for solar panels	Reduce running costs of our local swimming pool. A necessary but costly facility for our community, in our hot summer climate.	Swimming Pool Comm.		Maree Baker (Secretary)	mabaker3@tpg.com.au
P		Public places to tether dogs	A suitable place to tether a large dog outside the Commonwealth Bank	the only possibility is around a pole in Cromie Street and then I rapidly run out of dog lead as the pole has a large girth	YSC		Local Resident	loeliger@bigpond.com
Q	Accessibilit y	Ambulant golf cart	Purchase ambulant golf cart	Enable access for all visitors	The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
R		Water Tower Internal Lift	Replace internal stairs with a 2-person lift	Accessibility to upper floors for everyone	Historical Society		Peter Adler President MDHS	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
S	Heritage	Historical Society – Digitalisation Project	Digitisation of Microfiche & Microfilm Rate Records & Dunmunkle Standard.	Essential for research purposes	Historical Society	Dependent on Local History Grant	Sue Dollin (Secretary)	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
T		Concordia Maintenance	Painting of interior window Frames and sills	Urgent	Historical Society, Painter	Dependent on Shire Share Grant 2021	Sue Dollin Secretary MDHS	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
U		Water Tower Repairs	Assessment of brick integrity, window frames, internal floors, internal pipes	Urgent assessment & repairs	Historical Society, Historical Architect	Initial stage to determine suitability for Heritage Grant 2021 - 2022	Sue Dollin Secretary MDHS	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
V		Water Tower Top Floor Lighting	Install lighting for displays and viewing the tank	As funds become available	Historical Society, volunteers		Peter Adler President MDHS	murtoamuseum@outlook.com
W		Street Plaques of Notable Businesses and Homes	Historical photo and information/history of the location	150 th Anniversary in 2022	All	Mounted on the building or on a free standing pole. Possible grant	Local resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
X		Develop Connections to Country partnership with local aboriginal community Construct a labyrinth	Create an artwork with local aboriginal artists. Signage to celebrate and educate about traditional ownership. A Labyrinth is a complicated irregular network of paths & difficult to find one's way - similar to a maze. Designed and constructed in consultation with Indigenous Community -a way to connect with the past and provide an opportunity to reflect on our connections with indigenous culture.	Recognise traditional ownership. Celebrate artistic cultural expression. Community education and reconciliation. Provide locals and tourists with a unique experience, be educated and reflect on the spiritually and values of our indigenous peoples.	Barengi Gadjin Land Council, YSC, WPCP		Local Resident	pmclark60@bigpond.com

2. Infrastructure Improvement Opportunities (Including Beautification Projects)

	Location	Project	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact	Email Address
A	Town Centre	Upgrade toilets in Marma St	Many people visit Murtoa since Stick Shed & Silo Art Trail have become popular. Also, locals on their walks around lake, etc.	Aged & not pleasant. No mirror & sanitary arrangements to be improved. Entrance too dark.	YSC		Local resident	
B		Truck parking areas	Truck parking area required in various locations in town to support local businesses (apart from rest stop at Rabl Park which is some distance from shops)	Ag is a huge part of our area & employment. There is nowhere for trucks to park & purchase items / rest in Murtoa.	YSC, VicRoads, Local businesses	Determined legal to park trucks up to one hour in any street in Murtoa.	Local resident	
C		Beautify McDonald St Shop Facades	Work with private shopfront owners to paint (Progress / public funds) shop facades for benefit of town beautification.	McDonald St shop fronts deteriorated	Shop / building owners, MPA		MPA	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
D		Bus shelter	Bus shelter in Marma St built as 2 nd shelter		YSC		Local Resident	
E		Environment - Create opportunities for involvement in Urban Landcare activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting for shade, habitat • Town beautification • Community gardening / composting / repairs • Plant propagation • Beekeeping • Litter control • Garden produce sharing 	Improve liveability of] town by creating opportunities for participation in things that improve the local environment and beautifying the town streets, parks and entrances.	Neighbourhood House, YSC, Landcare, Schools, U3A, Men's Shed		Local Resident	pmclark60@bigpond.com
F	Footpaths / Walking Tracks	Walking track from Murtoa Cemetery to McDonald Street	A walking track that takes people from McDonald Street, along existing footpaths, down Marma Street, the Highway and onto the Murtoa Cemetery Road.	Residents and visitors often walk to Cemetery, which lacks a track. Adds value to footpaths. It would also act as a useful running track.	YSC for guidance		Local resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
G		Bike & running track from Murtoa to Barrabool State Park Bike track brochure for Barrabool State Park	Bike & running track from Murtoa to Barrabool State Park. A brochure produced on bike tracks to follow in the State Park.	Tourism and local fitness opportunity to take advantage of beautiful State Park. Murtoa-Glenorchy Rd is unsuitable for recreational bike rides.	YSC for guidance		Local resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
H		Town footpaths improved.	Pedestrian, gopher and pram safe footpaths e.g. Lake, Degenhardt and Comyn Streets.	Cracking, lifting and dropping) and further	YSC		Local resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com

				action is required for public safety.				
I	Lake Marma	Lake landscaping at north-west	Develop the North West corner area of the Lake reserve. Looking at incorporating a grassed area, tables, BBQ area etc		Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
J		Landscaping swimming pool parking area	The planting of trees in the swimming pool / tennis court area. Something like Weeping Myall	Having more asphalted road to link in to the sealed road to the rotunda.	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
K		Sound Shell	A sound shell structure at the grassed area near the new BBQ area. Maybe along the swimming pool fence.	For community entertainment at the Lake	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
L		Lake car parking area improvements	Improvements to the large car parking area near swimming pool. More asphalted road to link in to sealed road to the rotunda. Levelling to help stop the pooling of water near the swimming pool, and to eradicate pot holes.	User friendly	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
M		Lake tree replanting plan	A plan to be developed as to the best way for tree replanting around Lake. Have plan for more regular arborist reports to assess tree health.		Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith (Secretary)	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
N		Sprott Fountain beautified	Refurbish Sprott Fountain	Maintain historical assets and beautify the area	Lake Marma COM		Hamish Gawith	hamish.gawith@masexperience.com.au
O	The Stick Shed	Identify and replace damaged poles	Develop comprehensive maintenance plans which concur with Heritage guidelines		The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
P		Landscaping information centre area	Landscaping of area surrounding VIAB following redevelopment.		The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
Q		The Stick Shed entrance widened	Widening of Stick Shed driveway to provide for two-way traffic	Dual carriage way for visitor vehicles as dense traffic during open hours.	The Stick Shed COM		David Grigg (Secretary)	stickshedcom@gmail.com
R	Sports oval / Recreation Reserve	Masterplan for whole Recreation Reserve Kitchen upgrade	Masterplan with all stakeholders developed Upgrade community centre (full windows, carpet, chairs, etc.) Kitchen upgrade (refrigeration, auto dishwasher, sink, etc.)	Masterplan for Rec Reserve area Aged Kitchen	YSC, Rec Reserve COM, Cricket Club, Football&Netball, A&P Society		Brian Storey (Chair)	storeybrian@outlook.com

3. Economic Development Opportunities (Including Tourism)

	Project	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact	Email Address
A	Silo Art in Murtoa	Silo art painted on south side of Wheat Silo facing town. Ideas presented by student from Murtoa.	Attract visitors to Murtoa with positive impact on local businesses	Murtoa Progress Association (MPA)	Artist selected. Pending grant.	Local Resident	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
B	Free-camping options in Murtoa	Investigate incorporating a free camping area within the Lake reserve. We do not want to detract from the existing caravan park.	Tourism to boost local economy	YSC Lake Marma COM	Possible on Rabl Park, as Shire land. Requires community consultation to proceed.	Local Resident	
C	Industrial Area Expanded	Expand the industrial area in Murtoa to have physical space for new industry to be established in Murtoa.	Lack of physical space for industrial area to expand, thus expanding business & local employment opportunities	YSC, Businesses	Need interest from industry to explore this option.	Local Resident	

4. Support Basic Services

	Project / Issue	Summary	Need	Who will be Involved	Comments	Contact	Email Address
A	Early Learning Centre in Murtoa	Establish an Early Learning Centre in Murtoa for childcare, maternal health, kindergarten.	Many families in need of childcare locally. Impacts on family income as unable to work. Families seek childcare in Horsham, which takes time & investment away from Murtoa.	Community, parents, YSC, Federal MP	In progress – goal apply for grant in mid 2021 for build by mid 2022.		
B	Local businesses supported / Attract new employment / Promote Agri-business	Support local businesses through promotion. Encourage new businesses to town. Promote an agribusiness that value adds to local produce	Local businesses sustained and attract new businesses to town. Build on agricultural business interest. Promoting education with relevance to primary production.	MPA, businesses, schools		MPA	murtoaprogress@gmail.com
C	Address Murtoa pigeon problem	Work with partner organisations to manage feral pigeons that are a pest for town	Pidgeon feral population soaring	YSC, land owners	Completed. Businesses contact Shire for eradication costs. Public land Shire cover.		
D	Housing / Community housing	Invest in quality housing development for all demographics.	Accommodation desperately needed (housing & rentals). Public housing needed to support aging or disadvantaged population.	YSC, Murtoa Community Assets Committee	Murtoa Community Assets Committee aims to purchase land in 2021 for additional community units.	Community Assets Committee (MPA)	murtoaprogress@gmail.com