

Connecting Gannawarra

LALBERT & DISTRICT

COMMUNITY PLAN
2024 – 2029



LAKE LALBERT



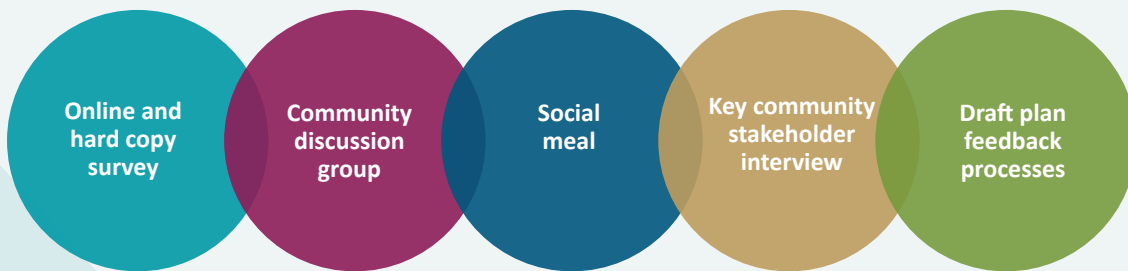
WILDLIFE RESERVE

Lalbert & District Community Plan

The Lalbert & District Community Plan 2024-2029 sets out the community's vision for the next six years.

Developed and owned by the community, the plan captures the community's voice for what is most important for them.

Community planning commenced in January 2023 and was completed in September 2023. Community members in and around Lalbert and District were invited to share their input into the planning process via a variety of methods:



The Lalbert & District Community Plan is a community owned plan that captures community aspirations across a broad range of areas (not just local government). This project was delivered with funding from the Agriculture-Dependent Community Resilience Project.

Our Vision

In 2029 Lalbert & District will LOOK LIKE, FEEL LIKE and HAVE:

- The Lalbert Shop is successfully trading at a level that meets the needs of the local community, passing traffic and regional industries
- As a community we are connected, united, communicating clearly with all members and coming together for regular social events
- We are supporting our volunteers and using their time wisely, including through amalgamating existing groups where interest and agreement exists
- We are a tidy and well-maintained community with parks and public areas and assets that are cared for and fit for purpose
- We have key local services and assets that enable our community to live and age well locally, including some coordinated public transport and visiting services as reasonable
- We are building on local assets and opportunities to attract overnight stays and increase visitor spending in our community
- We are capitalising on opportunities for local community and businesses to benefit from key regional industry including Agriculture and Mineral Sands Mining

Building On Past Work

The Lalbert & District Community Plan also builds on existing community plans and community consultation efforts. These include:



Key observations from the above documents and plans, which have been considered in the development of the Lalbert & District Community Plan 2024-2029, are shown in Lalbert & District Consultation Summary Report (Appendix 1).

A number of elements from the Gannawarra Shire Integrated Community Plan for Lalbert are noted below because of their enduring nature as continuing priorities for the district.



- Lake Lalbert/Lalbert Golf Club - Upgrade of amenities in the Lalbert Golf Club/ Lake Lalbert precinct including toilets and BBQ and picnic facilities.



- Overnight Stopover - Creation of an overnight stop over to encourage tourism in the town and transport linkages.



- Landscaping - Landscaping of Lalbert streetscape, including tree planting and roadside vegetation clearance.



- Recreation Reserve Master Plan.



- Community/Cooperative Hub - Explore opportunities to create a community cooperative/hub including a shop and hotel.



- Networking Local Clubs - Explore opportunities for local clubs/groups to participate in joint events with surrounding districts.



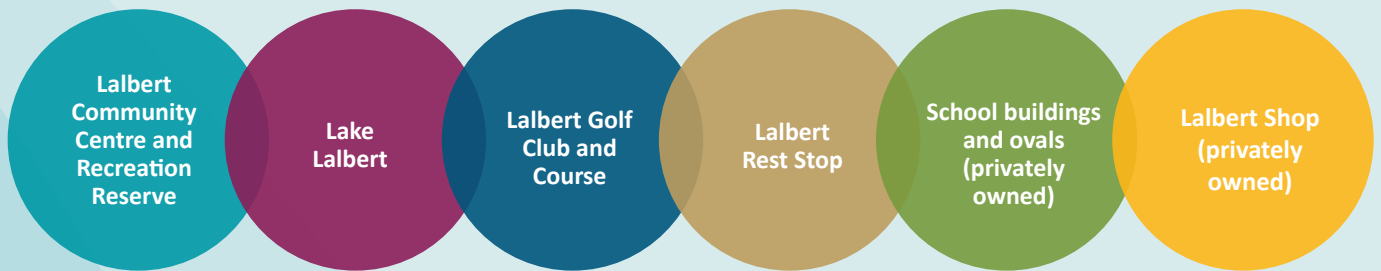
- Lalbert Community Complex - Invest in the upkeep and carry out fabric repairs to the Lalbert Community Complex and identify opportunities for complementary and diversified events and activities.

Our District

Located west of Kerang in the heart of the Mallee wheat growing area, Lalbert is a small township in the Avoca Ward of Gannawarra Shire Council that provides basic services to the surrounding rural hinterland.

Lalbert is 55km west of Kerang and 40km to the south of Swan Hill. Melbourne is 330km to the south of Lalbert.

KEY COMMUNITY FEATURES [BUILT AND NATURAL]



Lalbert & District

KEY STATS & FACTS - 2021



Population
139

Male **54.8%**
Female **45.2%**
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples **2.2%**
(VIC 1.0%)
Country of birth (Australia): **80.4%** (VIC 65.0%)



Age

Median age in Lalbert: **52 years** (VIC 38 years)
Children aged 0-14 years made up **14.9%** of the population (VIC 18.0%)
and **29.8%** of the population are aged 65 years and over (VIC 16.8%)



Dwellings
61

11.9% of dwellings were unoccupied (VIC 11.1%)
\$168 / week was the median rent (VIC \$370)



Households

74.1% were family households (VIC 70.1%)
25.9% (25 people) were living in single person households (VIC 25.9%)
0.0% were group households (VIC 4.0%)
5.6% of households had no car (VIC 7.5%)



Employment

63.3% worked full-time (VIC 56.2%)
21.7% worked part-time (VIC 32.3%)
0.0% were Unemployed (VIC 5.0%)
5.0% were away from work (VIC 6.5%)



Household
Income

In Lalbert **42.0%** of households had a weekly household income of less than \$650 (VIC 16.4%) and **14.0%** of households had a weekly income of more than \$3,000 (VIC 24.2%)



Health

5.8% of Lalbert residents reported three or more long-term health conditions (VIC 2.9%)

Community Consultation

Residents living in Lalbert & District were invited to share their thoughts on the strengths, challenges and opportunities for their community.

A range of strategies were selected from to ensure as many community members as possible could inform the development of the Lalbert & District Community Plan. Strategies included: an online and hard copy survey, community discussion group, comment boxes at frequently visited community locations, and attendance at community social meals.

The following broad community engagement was achieved:

- 12 people filled in a survey
- 2 key stakeholders and community members attended a community workshop
- 10 people attended a social meal
- 5 people completed comment slips
- 4 people participated in interviews
- 5 people attended the Community Plan feedback session to provide final comments on the draft Plan

Overall, a total of 38 people shared their thoughts, ideas and dreams for the future of Lalbert & District.



In Lalbert & District We Love....

The top three things survey respondents liked about their community were:

The people, a friendly town with a great sense of community

The community events and activities, Mallee Eagles Football and Netball Club, Golf Club, Social Meals

A peaceful community with proximity to Swan Hill

Residents who attended the community workshop and social meal shared that they really liked that Lalbert & District had:

- Friendly people
- The Recreation Reserve and Community Centre
- The Mallee Eagles Football and Netball Club
- Local infrastructure such as the upgraded railway
- The opportunities presented by local industries such as Agriculture and soon, Mineral Sands Mining
- Some cleverly delivered services and assets, the community buses from Wycheproof and Quambatook for example

The people and community spirit, Mallee Eagles Football and Netball Club, and opportunities like Mineral Sands Mining were shared across all groups.



Key Issues/Challenges

The most important issues/challenges that survey respondents shared were:



Additionally, residents who attended the community workshop and social meal shared a range of challenges/issues/threats:



› The loss of critical services such as the Lalbert Shop



› The maintenance of local roads



› A lack of key services and assets to attract industry such as Goschen Mineral Sands Mining, including the local shop, pub and accommodation options in terms of both family housing and temporary accommodation



› The lack of amenities to encourage passing traffic to stop and stay



› Decreasing numbers of volunteers and attracting new community members to volunteering roles



› Town beautification

Lack of housing, ageing population, volunteering, flood events, roads, maintaining community infrastructure and mobile phone and internet service were common themes across consulted groups.

NOTE a complete summary of findings from the community consultation processes can be found in the Lalbert & District Consultation Summary Report.

Our Key Priorities

Gannawarra Shire Council’s 2021 - 2025 Council Plan is guided by the following Strategic Statement:

“The Gannawarra will be renowned as an Australian destination and home of choice for its liveability and unique opportunities in innovative agriculture, renewable energy and nature-based tourism.

We focus on inclusive services and assets that enhance the health and wellbeing, cultural heritage, connectivity and productivity of our communities.”

The achievement of which will be achieved through action on three goals.

**Goal 1.
Liveability**



Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and services.

**Goal 2.
Growth**



Grow the Gannawarra through a diverse and broad economy.

**Goal 3.
Sustainability**



Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

The Lalbert & District Community Plan is couched within these goals of Liveability, Growth and Sustainability. In this way the Lalbert & District Community Plan both aligns with and extends Council’s strategic focus.

Goal 1. Liveability

Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and services.

LALBERT & DISTRICTS' STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

1: SUPPORT, RECRUIT, RESOURCE AND REDUCE WORKLOAD ON VOLUNTEERS

1. Strengthen relationships and connections between community groups to support each other, share resources and remain viable. Consider the amalgamation of the Lalbert Recreation Reserve and Community Centre Committee with the Mallee Eagles Football and Netball Club (MEFNC).
2. Create opportunities to encourage new volunteers, especially younger and new residents.
3. Seek support from Council to increase the annual contribution to the Recreation Reserve and Community Centre to meet insurance costs (approximately \$7,000). This acknowledges this facility as critical community infrastructure used by all ages and for all purposes in the community.

2: A WELCOMING AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY WITH REASONS TO COME TOGETHER

1. Value and maintain spaces, programs and events that bring the Lalbert & District communities together – specifically the Recreation Reserve and Community Centre and Golf Club and Lake Lalbert amenities.
2. Advocate for social programs that strengthen community inclusion and connections, noting the value of the Social Meals model currently delivered by Gannawarra Shire Council.

3: ADVOCATE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF, AND ENHANCEMENTS TO, EXISTING SERVICES

1. The current community bus services from Quambatook and Wycheproof that offer pick-ups in Lalbert are at least maintained and remain timely to local residents.
2. That any services lost from Lalbert if Gannawarra Shire Council stops delivering Community Care services are replaced with a model that offers the local community comparable quality and affordability.

Goal 1. Liveability

Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and services.

LALBERT & DISTRICTS' STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

4: ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND WELL-MAINTAINED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Key community assets such as the Lalbert Recreation Reserve & Community Centre, Lake Lalbert foreshore and Lalbert Golf Club are valued, maintained, inclusive and accessible.
2. A crushed rock walking track from Lalbert township to Lake Lalbert (2-2.5m wide), with small carpark in the middle and some seating and adult exercise equipment along the track.
3. Public areas and spaces are well maintained and fit for purpose.

5: TOWN BEAUTIFICATION AND SIGNAGE

1. Continue to work towards themed signage which is clear and comprehensively promotes the Lalbert community and surrounds.
2. Work with Council, corporate bodies and community to identify and clean up untidy properties and spaces.

6: SUPPORT HEALTHY AND ENGAGED AGEING IN PLACE

1. Uphold the importance of our ageing community members, valuing their contribution to our communities across many years and current and ongoing contribution.
2. Pursue strategies to support people to age in place – facilitating their right to stay healthy, well, empowered, connected and local.

Goal 2. Growth

Grow the Gannawarra through a diverse and broad economy.

LALBERT & DISTRICTS' STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

1: STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Explore interest in and ability to open a 'Lalbert Shop' that is successfully trading at a level that meets the needs of the local community, passing traffic and regional industries. Consider community owned models in these conversations. Explore models using the Community Centre kitchen as a lunch operation which then provides some basics as a community shop.
2. Consider use of the Lalbert Community Centre as a training / conference centre for the Goschen Mineral Sands Mining operations.
3. Work towards sealing of View Street, Lalbert, from town to Lake Lalbert, to promote connectedness for the town and the golf course and promote Lake Lalbert for nature walks and bird watching (when there's water).

2: MONITOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

1. Capitalise on renewable energy developments – including the proposed wind farms in Cannie.

3: A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT

1. Develop and implement a stage approach to capturing visitor dollars and increasing overnight stays. For example, install a community owned vending machine at the Rest Stop to provide basic drinks and snacks whilst continuing to explore the re-opening of the Lalbert Shop (privately or community operated). Create several overnight RV parking bays whilst progressing conversations about the potential for a larger RV Park and fixed cabins which might also attract industry workforce.
2. Promote Lalbert's place in the Backroads Bike Trail.

3: A STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY

1. Explore and align with opportunities presented by both local agriculture, Mineral Sands Mining and similar developments.

Goal 3. Sustainability

Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

LALBERT & DISTRICTS' STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

1: PARTNER WITH GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL TO ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE

1. Develop a framework for working together with Council that includes clear communication and roles and responsibilities and a joint strategy for ongoing community improvement that is led by community.
2. Invite Gannawarra Shire Council leadership to one meeting each year of the Lalbert community. Dedicate this meeting to strategic planning and set priority actions and requests for the year ahead.

Putting Our Plan Into Action

One intention of the Lalbert community, voiced during the community planning process, was for the Lalbert Community Centre and Recreation Reserve Committee to join with the Mallee Eagles Football Netball Club as a means of reducing volunteer workload.

Representatives from both these organisations were a part of the community planning process and intend on pursuing this merger. Implementation of the Lalbert & District Community Plan will be reviewed and led by this merged volunteer base in line with the goals and actions of the Mallee Eagles Football Netball Club and in partnership with Gannawarra Shire Council.

If you would like to get involved contact: Col Shepherd

