



“Our Town, Our Say”

Bransholme & District Community
Plan 2014 - 2020



Introduction:

Southern Grampians Shire Council (SGSC) has been part funded over three years (until September 2015) through the State Government's Putting Locals First Program to implement the Southern Grampians Shire's Community Planning Framework and Small Town Action Plan program. Eight towns will be working in partnership with SGSC to develop their own community action plan.

Community planning assists local people to decide what they would like to see happen in their own community and implement their own future visions and projects.

The plan is designed to set out a medium to long-term vision for the future of a town. It connects people with each other, the resources of their local community, the Council and other levels of Government.

This Community Plan has been created by the Branxholme community. It is a summary of their hopes and vision for a place which they

are strongly connected. The Branxholme community should be proud of their efforts in creating this plan. It has involved strong leadership from a dedicated group that has worked hard to engage their community, seeking input to identify what is working well, what needs to be improved and what the community in partnership with other organisations can achieve for the future of Branxholme.

Branxholme has a unique village feel and the community comes together to get things done. The community planning process uses the strengths of the community and builds on what is already working well. The plan identifies areas that can improve the liveability of Branxholme.

The Community Plan document is broken into four sections:

- Our Place, Our Plan
- Our Future Our Vision
- Our Action
- Appendices

The action plan priorities have four main themes:

- Community Life
- Environmental and Historical Assets
- Community Leadership
- Town Beautification

The next step in the community planning process is a crucial one: turning the communities' vision into action. The people of Branxholme will lead the implementation stage and work in partnership to achieve their aspirations for their community.

Branxholme will be:

A peaceful and attractive place to live, in which people feel safe and secure, valuing its village-like atmosphere, historic beginnings, parks and open space, native flora and fauna; able to offer high quality education and sport and recreational opportunities for children; an attractive place for tourists to stop.

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Our Place: Branxholme of Yesterday:

Kurtuk-Kurtuk, meaning sisters is the traditional place name for Branxholme. The area was home to the Nillan Gunditj and Direk Gunditj clans of the Gunditjmara Nations. In 1836 Major Mitchell and his party camped near Pound Paddock. Branxholme was surveyed in 1852 by Lindsay Clarke and was first known as Arrandoovong and then later as Best's or Best's Crossing. It is believed that Clarke named the town and parish, Branxholme after a town in Scotland. The population in 1857 was 221 which probably included Condah; the school was also established in that year. Branxholme was proclaimed a town in the Government Gazette in 1861. The town continued to develop with houses, churches and hotels being built. In the 1890's the Condah Swamp was surveyed and drained, opening up more land for closer settlement.

Branxholme was the junction of the Portland, Hamilton and Casterton rail way line and the railway provided connections for the locals and opportunities for visitors to stop in Branxholme for a cool drink or a short stay. The historic charm of Branxholme still is visible today with many old houses still standing. There are two notable historic homesteads that reflect the grand architecture and local lifestyle of the 19th century, Arrandoovong Gardens and Inverary Garden. Lanark is a grazing property owned by the Fenton family for decades that the distinction of being home to hundreds of birds of many species.



Branxholme of Today:



Branxholme of today retains its village like feel and values its historic beginnings. It is in a prime position between the larger centres of Hamilton and Portland on the Henty Highway. It is a picturesque township with spectacular views of the volcanic plains. Branxholme is a rich farming region producing quality beef, lamb and wool, with agriculture being one of the primary industries for the area. For a township of its size, it has a large number of services; a recently built CFA shed provides protection to the community and also a community meeting space. There is a police station and early education opportunities are well catered for by the Branxholme Kindergarten and the Branxholme and Wallacedale Primary which also has a shared community playground. The Branxholme Wallacedale Football Netball club is very strong and are continually upgrading their facilities.

In the 2011 Census, the population of Branxholme was 386 with a median age of 41 years which is 4 years above the Australian average. Over 88% of the population were born in Australia, 4% New Zealanders and around 1% each from France, England, Croatia and Austria. The majority of residents own or are purchasing their home (76%); speak English (98%); is either full or part time employed (86%) and has a median household income of \$961 per week.

Groups & Organisations:

Branxholme CFA
Branxholme Cricket Club
Branxholme Hall
Branxholme Parent's Club
Branxholme Progress Association
Branxholme Recreation Reserve Committee
Uniting Church

Branxholme Wallacedale Football Netball Club
Cemetery Trust
Craft Group
Indoor bowls
Junction Hotel 8 Ball Team
Junction Hotel Darts Team
Pony Club



Branholme Business:

Junction Hotel
Stalkers Bend General Store Viewbank
Joinery

Events:

Australia Day Celebration
Branholme Rodeo

Services:

Branholme & Wallacedale Primary School
Branholme Kindergarten
CFA
Post Office
Victoria Police



Our Plan:

The Southern Grampians Shire Council is facilitating the development of community plans through the community planning framework with eight towns across the Shire. The framework is a new way for Council and towns to work together to make decisions about their future. Community plans developed through this planning process are designed, owned and implemented by the local community. The community plan is a living document that can be reviewed every two or three years. It is essential to remember that in order for projects and actions to work the community will need to participate and own the actions.



What is a community plan & why do we need one?

A community plan will provide Braxholme with a focus on key future directions and a common reference when working with all levels of government. A plan provides a community with a strong voice and strengthens connections and communication across the general community. The plan outlines a vision, short to medium and long-term goals, with solutions that will assist the future development of the town. It is a 'whole of community' focus and identifies partnerships which help achieve action.

Development of the Braxholme Community Plan:

The community planning process has four main stages: each with a series of actions that need to occur before commencing the next planning stage.

Introduction, initial discussions, background report of history, town profile and current challenges

A survey to obtain feedback on the values, assets and community needs

Community Forum: to develop key priorities and actions that will aim towards achieving priorities

Completion of plan and presentation to Council and key agencies that work with community and government

August 2013

December 2013

May 2014

March/April 2015

The Branhholme community commenced its community planning journey in August 2013 when a leadership group was formed with representation from various groups and organisations. Several meetings were held to determine the best ways of engaging the broader community. A survey was developed and distributed to all residents and a facilitated community forum was held to further explore the priorities for the Branhholme community.



The leadership group reviewed the survey results and the work achieved at the community forum. This information was all used by the leadership group to create a draft action plan. The draft action plan was then put out to the community for further feedback to ensure all potential partnering community clubs and organisations were able to contribute in the plans development. The community feedback form also provided information to determine the prioritisation of the draft initiatives.

The community planning framework comes from an asset and approach, building on the current strengths of the community and considering all physical, social, environmental and economic assets. It also looks at existing work that has taken place in recent years including the Urban Design Framework and Planning Scheme Review. The plan was also informed by existing Council plans and strategies such as the Southern Grampians Council Plan 2013-2017 and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Branholme Community Planning Leadership Group:

David Batten
Michele Batten
Phil Baulch
Stuart Boden
Joy Bunting
Warren Bunting

Sara Butler
Jim Gough
Midge Gough
Joe Price
Lyn Price
David Tongon

Branxholme Community Plan Survey:

Summary of Branxholme Survey Results 2014: (19 Surveys completed by community members)

What do like most about living in Branxholme?

Community: community spirit, safe, good for the kids

Natural environment: peace and quiet, views and scenery

What is one thing about Branxholme and your community that makes you proud?

Community: community spirit, community comes together to get things done, people to lead projects

Local history

Natural Environment

Facilities: playground, Football/netball

What could be improved to make it a better place to live?

Growth

More diversity

Improvements to the recreation reserve

Improved drainage

Secure school and kinder

Community gathering space

Better infrastructure

Our Future, Our Vision:

Branxholme will be:

A peaceful and attractive place to live, in which people feel safe and secure, valuing its village-like atmosphere, historic beginnings, parks and open space, native flora and fauna; able to offer high quality education and sport and recreational opportunities for children; an attractive place for tourists to stop.



What do we hope to achieve through this plan?

This community plan is owned and driven by the residents of Branxholme and District and is an expression of what they want for their community now and in the future. With a strategic and collaborative approach, this plan will provide a clear direction for the community to work together in partnership with all levels of government and other organisations. It provides a vehicle to confidently communicate, validate and progress ideas into action for the improved liveability of their community.

Key Priorities for the Branxholme Community: A plan for moving ideas into action.

The identified priorities outlined in the action plan below have been grouped together under the themes of Community Life, Natural and Historical Assets, Community Leadership and Town Beautification.

The initiatives were then placed in order of priority determined by wider community feedback. The following priorities are seen as their key areas of importance and will be the first initiatives that the community will work together on to achieve.

COMMUNITY LIFE:

Goal: To provide activities and facilities for residents to strengthen the sense of community, improve their health and wellbeing and support the Branxholme community to continue to be vibrant and sustainable.

Explore options for a community water source

Establishment of public conveniences in the town centre

Create a community gathering space with facilities that could be used by residents, visitors and to hold community functions

Explore options to resolve waste water and drainage issues in the township

NATURAL & HISTORICAL ASSETS

Goal: Preserve, enhance and promote the natural and historical assets of the Branxholme area so they may be enjoyed by both locals and visitors.

Preserve and maintain the old Railway water tank for its historic value in a practical working order.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Goal: Development of a strong, diverse and representative leadership group to coordinate planning and activities for Branxholme.

Strengthen the Progress Association

TOWN BEAUTIFICATION

Goal: To enhance the appearance of the community

Comprehensive streetscape plan that builds on existing resources and plans for suitable future plantings including planting for drainage.

