



DRAFT - Penshurst Community Plan 2017 - 2020



About Peshurst

Our Location

Located at the junction of four major highways within the Southern Grampians Local Government area of Victoria, Peshurst is a historically significant rural township that lies within an internationally unique volcanic landscape. The township of Peshurst is set at the foot of the dormant volcano, Mount Rouse.

Agriculture has been the long-standing backbone of the community's economy since Peshurst was first founded in the mid 1800's and highly productive agricultural lands and food and fibre production enterprises continue to surround and support the township.

Sitting on the main tourist route between the Great Ocean Road and the Grampians National Park, Peshurst is an important tourist destination, located closely to other well-recognised tourist centres such as Dunkeld (30km), Port Fairy (64km) and Halls Gap (94km).

Within close proximity to a number of larger regional centres including Hamilton (32km), Warrnambool (70km), Ararat (106km), Portland (107km), Colac (147km), Mount Gambier (157km) and Horsham (160km); Peshurst offers many opportunities as a place to do business and is an ideally located central meeting place for the business community. Geelong (205km) and Melbourne (276km) are also each located within an easy commute.



Our People

According to the 2011 Census, the Peshurst district had a total population of 708 people. The population comprised 455 people living within the township and a further 253 people living in the surrounding district (atalas.id.com.au).

The median age of residents living within the Peshurst township in 2011 was 51 years and the age structure of the town population was as follows:

Age Structure	No. of people	% of total population
0-17 years	96	22%
18-24 years	14	<1%
25-44 years	90	20%
45-64 years	131	29%
65-74 years	53	12%
75+ years	71	16%

A total of 204 households are located within Peshurst and on average the number of people living within each household is 2.09. Of all occupied households in Peshurst approximately 46% are owned outright by the occupants, approximately 26% are occupied by owners with a mortgage and approximately 17% are occupied by people who are renting. 8.6% of dwellings are unoccupied.

Approximately, 18% of the households in Peshurst are occupied by couples with children, 5.4% by one parent families with children, 30.4% by couples without children, 36.8% by lone persons and 2.9% are group or shared households (atalas.id.com.au).

About Peshurst

Our Community Facilities and Services

The Peshurst community is set apart from many other small rural communities by the extensive range of facilities and services that it offers. Some of these include:

Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Joseph’s Catholic School • Peshurst Primary School • Peshurst Pre-school and Playgroup • Mobile Library
Health and Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Station • Ambulance Service • CFA and CFA Training Grounds • G.P. Clinic and District Health Service • Kolor Lodge Aged Hostel • Home and Community Care Services • Maternal & Child Health Services • Meals on Wheels
Tourism and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volcanoes Discovery Centre • Botanical Gardens and ‘Never Fail Spring’ • Mount Rouse Reserve Lookout and Walking Trails • Courthouse and History Trail • Yatmerone Conservation Reserve • Swimming Pool • Recreation Reserve (football, netball and tennis) • Bowls Club • Racing Track • Caravan Park • B&B and Tea rooms • Winery

Sporting and Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peshurst and District Racing Club • Peshurst Football Netball Club • Peshurst Lawn Bowls Club • Peshurst Pony Club • Mt Rouse and District Historical Society • Peshurst A&P Society • Advance Peshurst • Lions Club of Peshurst • Peshurst Cemetery Trust • Peshurst Senior Citizens • RSL Peshurst • Volcanoes Discovery Centre • Peshurst Newsletter • Friends of Yatmerone
Business and Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Office and Gift Store • Pharmacy • Grocery Store • Hardware and rural supplies • Newsagent • Cafes and Takeaway • Hairdressers • Antiques and Gift Store • Fuel Station • Book Store • Hotel, Wine Bar and Liquor Stores • Agricultural equipment and small motors sales • Trade, engineering, transport and agricultural services

About Penshurst

Our History

Mt Rouse or Kolorer is a key landmark for the Djab wurrung Aboriginal people and the mount marks their traditional language boundary (Clark, 1995) that included Mount William Range, Gariwerd to the Pyrenees Ranges in the east, and the headwaters of the Hopkins River flowing south. Within the Djab wurrung people the Kolorer gundidj clan occupied the land around the mount and took their name from Kolorer which meant lava and lava stone that was used to rub ochre (Dawson, 1881) (Mount Rouse Reserve Management Plan, 2016-2021).

In 1839, John Cox became the first squatter to take up land around the Penshurst area. Thereafter two pioneer families farmed on and around Mount Rouse. John and Daniel Twomey leased the Kolor run in 1852 and later bought the freehold. David Hutton leased the Purdeet run then purchased the leasehold (later renamed Cheviot Hills, after the region in southern Scotland) in 1851.

The Western District of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate operated from 1839 until 1849 and the central station, located at Mount Rouse, commenced in 1842. The Protectorate failed after ten years and from about 1852 the township of Penshurst began to develop centred on the remaining government buildings.

Bluestone from Mount Rouse, can be found in the State Parliament and Treasury buildings in Spring Street, Melbourne. Mosaic and stained glass works of art, created by Mervyn Napier Waller who was raised in the area can be seen at the Hall of Memory at the Australia War Memorial in Canberra.

Our Landscape and Assets

The Penshurst District boasts many important landscape features and natural assets. The **Mount Rouse Reserve** overlays the area of land surrounding the summit and crater of Mount Rouse, an extinct volcano adjacent to the Penshurst township. As a distinctive volcanic formation with geological features that are unique internationally, Mount Rouse is the volcanic eruption point of ancient lava flows which extend more than 60 kilometres to the coast at Port Fairy. Mount Rouse offers 360-degree scenic views, picnic areas, volcanic crater and walking tracks.

Penshurst is located on the third largest **volcanic plain** on earth and the **Volcanoes Discovery Centre** located in the heart of Penshurst provides a fascinating and interactive visitor experience that explains the volcanic history of Western Victoria. The centre also provides interesting insights into how volcanoes are formed, volcanic rock formations and lava flows.

Yatmerone Wildlife Reserve is a local sanctuary for birds, wildlife and is home to the critically endangered Western Swamp Crayfish. Actively maintained by a group of committed local volunteers, Yatmerone offers a walking track and bird hide and provides a great visitor experience.

The **Botanic Gardens and 'Never Fail Spring'** are hidden gems in the heart of Penshurst. The spring is a continuous water resource fed by the aquifers beneath Penshurst and flows into wetland gardens that offer a great spot for a picnic and a walk. The Botanic Gardens are filled with towering trees and expanses of lawn area, and includes a bbq shelter, playground, caravan park and amenities and provides a great location for visitor stop overs and for community events.

About Our Plan

Purpose

This plan outlines priorities for the Peshurst Community covering the three and a half year period July 2017 to December 2020.

The plan is ambitious and is intended to guide actions and activities that can be undertaken by the Peshurst community and the groups within it to grow and enhance Peshurst, its people and its assets. It is recognised that not all actions included within the plan can be achieved within a three-year timeframe, however, the plan acts as a ledger of community priorities so that they are not lost. These priorities can be continually amended in future plans as community interests and priorities change.

The plan will also act as an important reference document for Advance Peshurst, when seeking funding and support for projects and initiatives from the Southern Grampians Shire Council, State and Federal Government departments and other funders.

How the Plan was Developed

The Peshurst community plan has been developed by Advance Peshurst through a consultation process with the Community that included:

- A Community Planning Session held in June 2016 to review the 2013 Peshurst Community Plan and to workshop future inclusions.
- Drafting of the 2017- 2020 Peshurst Community Plan
- Circulation of the Draft Plan for comment to Advance Peshurst Members in January 2017

- Provision of opportunities for the broader community to comment on the Draft Plan in February 2017.
- Finalisation of the Plan in April/ May 2017.
- Endorsement of the Plan by Advance Peshurst in June 2017.

Implementation

Advance Peshurst will take the lead on implementing this plan and will seek the support and contribution of the Peshurst community and the groups within it to achieve the goals that have been set.

The plan will be implemented from July 2017 and will finalise in December 2020.

In December of each year, Advance Peshurst will use the action plan template included at the back of this document, to identify a set of realistic and achievable actions that can be taken forward from this plan and implemented in the upcoming year.

Reviewing the Plan

A review of this plan and the inclusions within it should be led by Advance Peshurst no later than June 2020 so that new plan can be developed to commence in January 2021. Advance Peshurst and the Peshurst community may wish to review the plan earlier should it lose relevance or require updating,

Our Priorities 2017 - 2020

Priority 1: Ensure Our People are Healthy, Happy and Connected

Priority 2: Enhance our Community Assets

Priority 3: Sustain Penshurst's Natural Environment

Priority 4: Become A Destination of Choice for Tourists

Priority 5: Promote what Penshurst has to Offer

Priority 6: Strengthen Community Leadership and Advocacy

1. Ensure Our People are Healthy, Happy and Connected

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Increase pride in our community through ongoing annual events and community initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and expand on existing events within Penshurst that bring the community together and that promote community pride and a sense of belonging. Maintain at minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia Day Ceremony (including a new resident welcome event) Christmas Market Anzac Day Ceremony International Wetlands Day/Clean Up Australia Day. Recognise existing volunteers that contribute to events and establish a pool of volunteers that can share the workload in organising and running events. Increase opportunities for arts activities and events that allow for creative methods to increase pride, celebrate community (and history) and develop skills. Explore new events and initiatives, i.e. arts/photography shows, produce co-operative, farm art. 		On-going
Understand and value our people assets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a demographic profile for Penshurst's population that helps to better understand our community make up and future growth prospects. Undertake an audit of the skills and knowledge within the community Promote strengths and skills within our community and co-ordinate opportunities for the community to learn new skills where gaps exist. 		
Provide opportunities for our young people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Youth Committee of Advance Penshurst Actively seek to involve young people in local committees and projects Co-ordinate activities and events with and for young people 0 -18 years and explore links with the Western District Health Service Youth Boards and fReeZa events. Ensure that the Botanic Gardens Master plan includes equipment for youth such as a basketball ring, improved tennis court etc. 		
Establish a Community Space/ Men's Shed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study for a Men's Shed/Community space that includes a community garden and links to produce pop-up shops in vacant buildings in Bell stand local markets. Seek funding and establish a Men's Shed/Community space 		
Encourage Volunteering and Active Living	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly promote the benefits of volunteering and establish a volunteer's noticeboard Establish and promote activities and events in Penshurst that encourage the community to socialise, be active, stay fit and be healthy. 		

2. Enhance our Community Assets

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Maintain quality health services within Penshurst	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that Penshurst maintains a G.P. clinic on an on-going basis 2. Ensure that Penshurst maintains and strengthens local health services 		
Ensure that our schools and kindergarten are well supported	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain regular conversation between Advance Penshurst and the town's schools and pre-school to ensure that their needs are understood and well supported by the community. 		
Establish and maintain a banking service for Penshurst	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to advocate and work with Bendigo Bank to make available an ATM for Penshurst residents/visitors 		
Support and maintain our Emergency Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise, support and advocate for our local police, ambulance and CFA. 2. Promote and encourage volunteering for our local emergency services 		
Improve cycling/walking tracks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a walking/cycling loop that connects the Botanic Gardens, the walking track to Mount Rouse and Yatmerone Wildlife Reserve. 2. Identify opportunities to improve accessibility of public land / tourist sites 3. Increase shared pathway access/accessible options 4. Develop an annual list of pathway priorities 		
Expand our Community Recreation Hub and Maintain our Recreation Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore expansion of the Recreation Reserve into a community hub with a renovated community grandstand and facilities for families and children (aquatic centre/skate park, tennis, bowls, gym, playground) 2. Investigate recreation opportunities to encourage a broad variety of recreational activities available to all ages across town and visitors 3. Maintain a sustainable, accessible and viable swimming pool for Penshurst. 		
Revitalise our Streetscape	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake a feasibility study to improve the Penshurst streetscape in order to encourage more visitor stopovers and increased business presence. A particular focus should be placed on Bell and Martin St including building facades, new tree plantings on Bell St between Martin and Burchett St. revitalising the sign board at bus stop and branding the town. 2. Seek funding and undertake a streetscape revitalisation project 		

2. Enhance our Community Assets (Continued)

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Explore sewerage options for Peshurst	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek grant funding to conduct a feasibility study for sewerage options for the Peshurst township including a small town sewerage scheme that allows for the growth of the town and to protect the aquifer 2. Work with Southern Grampians Shire Council and State Government to allow for the growth of Peshurst and to reduce constraints on new residential buildings relating to septic tank requirements. 		
Increase access to public transport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work with Southern Grampians Shire, Department of Transport and the Great South Coast Group on public transport issues. 2. Explore the potential for community to purchase a bus to help with transport issues – audit groups that require a bus service. 3. Explore the potential for a community taxi /car pool scheme for people travelling into Hamilton/Warrnambool 4. Investigate a local school bus run to improve school retention 		
Revitalise our botanic gardens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Southern Grampians Shire Council to prepare a Botanic Gardens Master Plan and explore: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increasing the caravan park capacity and accommodation b. Creating a Napier Waller walk linking the botanic gardens to the main retail strips and the recreation reserve; c. Possibility of renaming to the "Napier Waller Gardens" d. Reviewing vehicle access and entrance features e. Include botanic education and links to Volcanic Discovery Centre, Yatmerone and review the possibility of translating material/information in another language to reach greater audiences f. Revitalising the playground area. g. Links with the VDC such as placing lava lamps/ volcanic theme playground 2. Undertake works to revitalise the Peshurst Botanic Gardens 		

3. Sustain Penshurst's Natural Environment

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Understand our aquifers	1. Investigate the groundwater aquifers underlying Penshurst and surrounds and identify environmental, indigenous and cultural significance and history and interconnection with the Mt Rouse volcano and other nearby Wetlands including Yatmerone.		
Pilot sustainable energy projects	1. Explore innovative projects that prepare for a low carbon energy future, reduce electricity consumption and increase efficiency energy use. 2. Explore partnerships to pilot sustainable energy projects in Penshurst		
Educate for change	1. Access training and development to raise awareness on how to implement environmentally sustainable practices throughout the town, individually or within projects 2. Explore projects to divert waste from landfill and encourage recycling in public space.		
Improve the Mount Rouse Reserve	1. Re-establish a Friends of the Mount Group 2. Work with the Southern Grampians Shire Council to ensure the implementation of the Mount Rouse Reserve Management Plan.		

4. Become A Destination of Choice for Tourists

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Increase availability of Accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore options that make available more accommodation in town 2. Increase and accommodate additional school visits from Melbourne 3. Increase accommodation options for CFA training school 4. Investigate farm stay experiences 5. Investigate low cost or free camp sites for backpackers travelling between the Great Ocean road and the Grampians. 		
Host a biennial major event in Peshurst	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the feasibility of a major event to be held in Peshurst every two years that attracts a large number of visitors and generates economic revenue for the community. Options may include an event associated with volcanoes and a "blow yourself away" weekend including pyro technics. 2. Stage an annual community led "Peshurst Spring" festival involving a theme around water, spring (season), gardens, volcanoes, music indigenous, cultural and environmental significance. 		
Create Branding for Peshurst	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a major branding icon for Peshurst and actively promote Peshurst as being the heart of the volcano country. 2. Ensure appropriate logo/branding on activities and events to increase consistency of branding 3. Develop a public relations and marketing campaign that supports the promotion of Peshurst as a vibrant community and a great place to live and visit. 4. Ensure that the community notice board is kept up to date and reflects what is happening with town. 5. Promote the town as family friendly and as a destination for retirement or alternative lifestyle to the city. 		
Establish the Mervyn Napier Waller Memorial Walk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up Story boards in garden, spring back to bridge – both sides 2. Consider art projects that work to educate and celebrate the history of Peshurst, in particular in relation to Mervyn Napier Waller 3. Develop materials that show case historical sites within town. 		

4. Become A Destination of Choice for Tourists (Continued)

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Continue to strengthen the Volcano Discovery Centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the possibility of a paid position by the SGSC to act as a tourist information centre, Volcanic Discovery Centre advisor and executive support for Penshurst projects. 2. Ensure that facilities and services continue to be available on a seven days per week basis for visitors and tour groups. 3. Annually develop and review induction processes, rosters, access to building, and education/training to increase the skill and knowledge of volunteers 4. Consider tour guide training to ensure a number of volunteers are available and skilled to be tour guides for visitors/schools and other groups 5. Review hire policy/guidelines annually 6. Review volunteers training/skills and needs to match needs of visitors/tourists 7. Continue to work and develop partnerships with other Visitor Information sites (Dunkeld, Hamilton, Coleraine and those with neighbouring Councils and metropolitan areas) 		
Promote natural assets and services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and keep an up to date record of services available to visitors to Penshurst. 2. Promote assets such as the historical walk/Napier Waller 3. Explore new tourism ventures that could benefit tourism such as the potential Cruise Ships 'day trips from Portland,' Mt Rouse, Yatmerone, Winery, Old Shearing Shed, wetlands, 4. Develop a range of visitor activities for people visiting the area such as walking tours and other low cost options that include bird watching, walking, cycling and annual events. 		

5. Promote what Penshurst has to Offer

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Maintain an up to date and useful website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the Penshurst Victoria website with relevant information about the town, district and community events. 		
Continue to grow and Enhance the Penshurst Newsletter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review current newsletter layout – develop a survey with community or review the process to ensure the current newsletter satisfies community knowledge, connection and celebrates personal achievements 2. Continue to develop the newsletter to inform local community 3. Investigate other forms of distribution of newsletter to save on paper and costs associated 		
Maintain professional and informative Penshurst Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing brochures promoting VDC and Penshurst – include SGSC • Print a Historical walking trail and town attractions map • Develop information that can be in either hard copy or electronic format that promotes local attractions and information on Penshurst. 		
Marketing / Directional Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve signage across the township • Explore links to new tourism options across the region for example cruise ships arriving in Portland, Great Ocean Rd-Grampians Link and the Budj Bim World Heritage Area. • Conduct an audit on the number of visitors to town, traffic passing through over a period of time to help inform better marketing approaches (VicRoads Traffic Count) • Improve and develop directional signage to key facilities and places of interest within the Penshurst community 		

6. Strengthen Community Leadership and Advocacy

Objective	Actions	Who Needs to be Involved	Achieve by
Ensure that Advance Penshurst Remains Strong and Effective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage membership of Advance Penshurst and sub-committees Develop a succession plan for the Committee of Management Regularly update the community on Advance Penshurst progress through the Penshurst Newsletter Ensure that a culture of respect, positivity and productiveness is upheld within the Committee of Management, sub-committees and membership. Maintain a strong connection with the Southern Grampians Shire Council and ensure that the sustainability of Advance Penshurst is supported. Advocate confidently for the needs of Penshurst to council, funding bodies, key stakeholders and other relevant agencies as needed. 		
Access training and learning opportunities that strengthen leadership skills within the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify gaps in leadership skills within the community and co-ordinate access to training and learning opportunities to address these. Ensure volunteers are supported in their capacity to deliver projects by providing opportunities for mentorship, training – up skilling, succession planning, support new residents/committee members 		
Implement the Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance Penshurst to set an annual action plan in December each year that includes key areas of action from this plan. Advance Penshurst to review overall progress of this plan in December of each year. Every two years conduct a mid-term review of the relevance of the community plan and address as needed. 		

Annual Action Plan Template

Each year Advance Penshurst will select up to six key actions from within this plan that they will focus on for the coming twelve months. They will work in partnership with other community groups in Penshurst to ensure that other actions are also progressed.

Annual Action Plan				
Start Date	End Date	The Implementation of this Action Plan will be Overseen by		
Community Priority	Actions to be Progressed	Completion Date	Who is Responsible	Required Funding and Resources

Monitoring and Review Template

Each year Advance Penshurst will use the following template to conduct a review of progress against the Community Plan to assess what it achieved against the previous year's actions plan and what still needs to be achieved.

Penshurst Community Plan Monitoring and Review					
Date Last Assessed	Date of This Assessment	This Assessment Was Conducted by			
Community Priority	Actions	Our Success Measure	Status		Notes
			Complete	Not Yet Complete	