

November 2024

2025 – 2030

Millgrove Community Plan

Our Future Vision



Millgrove Residents
Action Group

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MRAG Members (L-R): Phil Pomaroff, Gia Underwood, Lou Dalla Riva, Betty Dalla Riva, Bob Lillie, Maureen Halit, Mick Corrie, Russell Falkenberg and Mayor Cr Sophie Todorov (2023/24)
Absent: Kate Baselier, Gordon Elliott, Kevin Gibson

Facilitated by Millgrove Residents Action Group

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Cover Photo: A section of the River Rd Trail, now called the Courtney Dix Trail

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Foreword

Millgrove Residents' Action Group are proud to establish and maintain many strong, collaborative relationships with local organisations and leaders. We invited some of our local leaders to share a few words with Millgrove.

“

I commend you all, whether you're a resident or a visitor to our amazing village of Millgrove. This the next iteration of Millgrove's Community Plan; a live document, ever-changing through community consultation.

This revised plan looks at new goals and priorities, following on from the successes of the previous plans. This revised Millgrove Residents' Action Group (MRAG) Community Plan, together with the Resilience Plan, are the cornerstones for a vibrant and safe community - for today and the future. Thank you, MRAG.



- Cr Jim Child JP

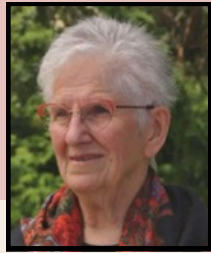
Yarra Ranges Council

Mayor 2012- 2013, 2021-2023

“

I would like to commend the Millgrove community for their aspirations and visions for a sustainable future. May this example inspire other communities to follow, and that Millgrove continues to thrive as a model of resilience for generations to come.

It is with my heartfelt appreciation, I say thank you to Millgrove community.



- Maureen Halit

Founding Member of MRAG

President and long-time resident of Millgrove

“

I've always been impressed by the work of the dedicated volunteers at the Millgrove Resident's Action Group. Not only does the entrance to the town always look great but they always have something in the pipeline to continue to make the town better for everyone. They established the Millgrove Avenue of Honour and memorial and worked hard on the river trail for all to enjoy.”



- Cindy McLeish MP

State Member for Eildon

Shadow Minister for Women

Shadow Minister for Prevention of Family Violence

Shadow Minister for Small Business

Shadow Minister for WorkCover and the TAC





Acknowledgments

We thank the Yarra Ranges Council for supporting the community planning day and this report through its community grants.

A big thank you to everyone who helped contribute to this plan, including:

- Participants in the Planning Day
- Resident feedback from various local events
- MRAG committee members and supporters
- Cr Jim Child, Yarra Ranges Council
- Michael Goodrich, Community Development Officer, Yarra Ranges Council
- Chelsea Cooper and Lisa Glassborow from Hatrick and Co who facilitated the planning day
- Madeleine Coyle's expertise in collating, editing and writing this report

Acknowledgement of Country

On behalf of the community, Millgrove Residents Action Group would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, as the custodians of the land in Millgrove. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present who are an integral part of the history of this region.



Photo: Yarra River, Millgrove. The Yarra River's traditional Aboriginal name is Birrarung, which means "place of mists and shadows"

The 2025 Plan at a glance

The Millgrove Community Plan 2025 builds on the Community Plan 2021, Resilience Plan 2023, and Draft Future Vision 2024. It incorporates insights from recent community consultations, addressing current needs and aspirations to foster a vibrant, sustainable future for Millgrove while ensuring local voices shape decision-making.



6 Key Vision & Project Areas that emerged for this 2025-2030 plan:

Create Village Atmosphere		Upgrade Memorial Reserve		Lake, Playground & Community Hub	
Community Gardens		Community Resilience & Recovery Hub		Safety & Well-being	

Executive Summary

The Community Plan 2025-2030 outlines our goals and aspirations for the next five years.

The Community Plan 2025-2030 marks an important milestone in Millgrove's journey toward a brighter, more resilient future. This plan unites the Community Plan 2021, the Resilience Plan 2023 and proposed Future Vision document (2024), along with new ideas gathered through extensive community consultation, into one comprehensive plan: formalising **our Future Vision**. With a focus on inclusivity, care, positivity, and resilience, the 2025 Plan builds on our collective strengths and addresses the evolving needs of our growing town, whilst recognising the future increasing tourism.

Our vision remains steadfast: **“Working to create a welcoming, safe and vibrant place, by being inclusive, caring, positive, and resilient.”** This guiding principle underpins all aspects of the 2025 Plan and reflects the values that make Millgrove unique.

Through a combination of conversations across the community and a dedicated planning day, we identified six core Vision Areas that will shape Millgrove's future progress and development. These themes incorporate projects and strategies identified by the community from the previous Plans, while also integrating fresh perspectives from residents and stakeholders.

The Vision Areas represent the diverse needs of our community and serve as the foundation for practical actions that will guide Millgrove toward a prosperous and sustainable future. Together, these themes are designed to enhance our town's quality of life, boost economic growth, promote environmental sustainability, and foster a stronger sense of belonging.

The People of Millgrove



Population: 1,666
Male: 50.5%
Female: 49.5%
Families: 413

Based on 2021 census data

The Places of Millgrove



Soccer grounds
Primary School
Kindergarten
Village Shops
Saw Mill
Fire Refuge

The Yarra Ranges Council Health and Wellbeing Plan emphasises the importance of creating **healthy, connected communities through collaboration and shared resources**. This aligns with our vision for Millgrove, where fostering community engagement and promoting well-being are central to our development goals. By integrating the principles outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Plan, we aim to enhance the quality of life for all residents and ensure a vibrant, inclusive community.

In moving forward, the Community Plan 2025 represents not just a document, but a shared commitment to uphold the spirit of Millgrove. This is a place where neighbours care for each other, where challenges are met with creativity and resilience, and where every step forward is taken with pride. Millgrove will continue to grow, evolve, and thrive—while always remaining **a place we are proud to call home**.

What's in a name?

While the name "Millgrove" may relate to the area's long-standing timber mills, it is likely derived from early settler John Kennedy, who named his property after his hometown in Tipperary, Ireland. Kennedy's land, located north of the Yarra River, featured undulating terrain, contrasting with the hilly forest to the south.

Millgrove Fast Facts

Millgrove has an Australian Rules football team (Warburton Millgrove).



The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail runs through the center of Millgrove, where the former railway station has been transformed into a public park featuring barbecue facilities and restrooms.



“In order to survive and thrive, we must step into the Citizen Story. We must see ourselves as Citizen - people who actively shape the world around us, who cultivate meaningful connections to their community and institutions, who can imagine a different and better life, who care and take responsibility, and who create opportunities for others to do the same”

- Jon Alexander, Citizens

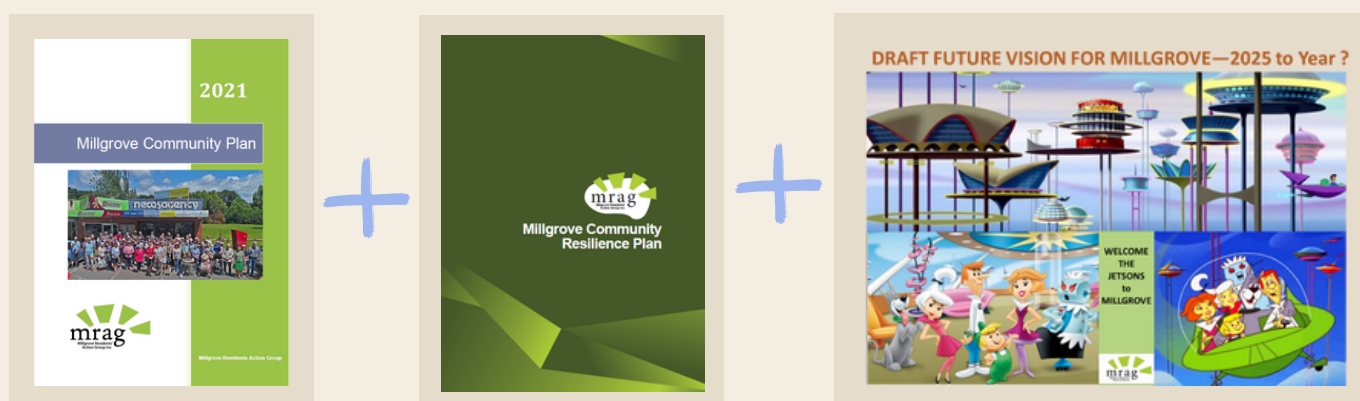


Introduction

Purpose of this Report

The first Community Plan, developed by MRAG through community consultation, was published in 2015 ([reference 1](#)) and expanded after further input, resulting in a second plan released in 2021 ([reference 2](#)). Since then, a major Resilience program was undertaken, with its report findings issued in 2023 ([reference 3](#)).

The community has since been envisioning Millgrove's future and the projects needed to achieve it ([reference 4](#)). To avoid overlapping objectives, it was decided to consolidate all current and proposed plans/documents. This report represents the community's collective efforts, outlining a vision for the future and the projects identified to help realise it.



**2021 Community Plan + Resilience Plan + Draft Future Vision
= Community Plan 2025**

MRAG: A Brief Background

Established in 2005, the Millgrove Residents Action Group (MRAG) is one of the longest serving township groups in the Yarra Ranges. In 2012 the group was named Community Group of the Year by Yarra Ranges Council Australia Day Awards and proudly again in 2024.



MRAG's Vision Statement

Working to create a welcoming, safe and vibrant place, by being inclusive, caring, positive and resilient.

Millgrove, a place we are proud to call home.

MRAG's Mission Statement

To contribute towards and foster the community spirit within Millgrove.

MRAG's Vision Objectives

- Highlight and promote the many positives within our community
- Encourage and nurture partnership in community initiatives
- Contribute to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns
- Raise awareness of services and opportunities within our community

Left: Presentation of the **Australia Day Community Group of the Year 2024** award to MRAG at the Yarra Ranges Council offices.

Aaron Violi MP, Cindy McLeish MP, Cr Jim Child, Maureen Halit, Mayor Cr Sophie Todorov



Key Plans & Future Vision

Community Plan 2021



There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about”

- Margaret J. Wheatley
Writer



This Community Plan 2021 was built upon the success of the 2015 plan; 65% of the original project had been completed up until this point. Through further community consultation, the 2021 plan defined **5 key areas of focus**:

1. **Provide better Infrastructure**
2. **Address Community Safety**
3. **The Environment**
4. **Provide better Services**
5. **Set up Tourism and Recreational activities**

Strategies and project ideas that emerged from these areas of focus were detailed in the plan (page 25-37). These included ongoing projects from the previous plan. This plan was completed in May 2021 and presented to every household by mailbox drop, email and social media.

As of September 2024, more than 20 of the projects have been completed, or are currently underway (see **Appendix A**). Uncompleted projects that were still of priority have been carried over.

Some of the projects achieved to date:

New Avenue of Honour dedication



Community Garden
(coming soon!)



Light Trail
2024

Dee Rd Reserve Muster

Bush Dance

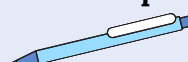


Free Games at the Market

River Rd Walking Trail
Stage 1



Research trips



Defibrillators



Community
Open Days

Installation of bike rack
at Memorial Reserve



Resilience Plan, 2023



**We were asked to dream big.
This is how we become more resilient”**
- **Maureen Halit**

MRAG President, Resilience Plan

Millgrove can be vulnerable to fire and flood. Under certain conditions, our community is one of the most fire-exposed in the state, as well as prone to flooding from the Yarra River and large storm events, such as in June 2021.

In 2019, MRAG was approached to develop a Community Resilience Plan, focused on reducing the risk of fire and flood to our township and building our connection as a community. Working with the **Minderoo Foundation** and the **Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR)**, the plan led to the identification of 6 initial and 3 longer term priorities for Millgrove. In 2023, this plan was presented outlining the following priorities:

Initial Priorities

A.1

Increase Community Awareness and Emergency Preparedness

A.2

Install a community defibrillator

A.3

A regular light show

A.4

Local renewable power

A.5

Climate resilient properties

A.6

Reduce fire risk in the sawmill



Longer Term Priorities

B.7

Strengthen phone and Internet communications

B.8

Community gardens

B.9

Enhance roads and trails

These priorities were organised around 6 ‘environments’:
Social, Cultural, Economic, Built, Natural, and Health & Safety.



Draft Future Vision – Powerpoint Presentation Document

“

As for the future, your task is not to foresee it, but to enable it”

– Antoine de Saint Exupery
writer, poet, journalist & aviator

Draft Future Vision

To provide a safer, more functional town centre, incorporating vibrant shops that we can be proud of, allows community access that flows from the Millgrove Memorial Reserve to the Millgrove Recreation Reserve including infrastructure that caters for both local residents and expected increase in tourists.

MRAG developed a draft future vision document (reference 4), which was presented at the 2024 Light Trail Event to obtain feedback from the community.

Light Trail Event 2024

On 24th April 2024, Millgrove explored its rich history on a theatrical walking tour that featured light projections along local trails.



MRAG members (L-R)

Front: Kate Baselier, Jan Burney, Maureen Halit & Bob Lillie

Rear: Kevin Gibson Mick Corrie, Gia Underwood, Russell Falkenberg & Phil Pomaroff

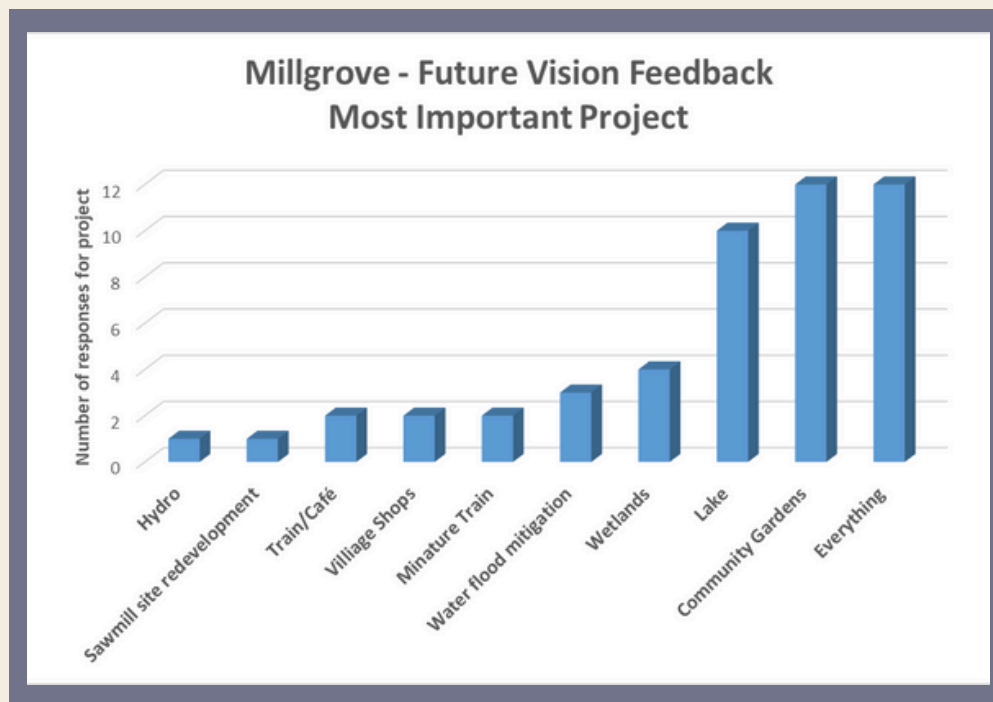
We discovered the town's evolution from early settlement, gravel pits, saw milling, and gold mining to schooling and housing. Attendees dressed in period costumes to enhance the experience, with prizes awarded for the best costumes in each tour group. This family-friendly event was presented by Yarra Ranges Council, Community Bank Warburton and Yarra Junction Bendigo Bank, MRAG, and The Dreaming Space.

It was a wonderful, free community activity full of vibrant conversation about our community's past and present, as well as future aspirations.

Light Trail Feedback

The light trail event celebrated Millgrove's early history and the provided a glimpse into a potential future revitalised Millgrove.

Over 70 participants of the event provided feedback on what they thought was the most important project for Millgrove, the results are shown in the following graph. Overwhelmingly the Community Garden and a reformed lake were the most important projects ([Reference 6](#)).



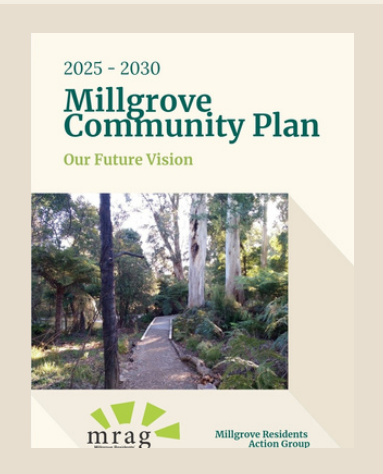
Graph: Feedback from Light Trail Event

“

Events like these, we believe, provide the residents with a sense of pride, and a sense of inclusion, which builds resilience. The Light Trail is a fun way to educate and share the unique aspects of Millgrove and it is a chance to connect with fellow neighbours...”

- MRAG, [Star Mail](#)





Community Plan 2025 - 2030

“

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has”

- Margaret Mead
Cultural anthropologist

Millgrove exemplifies the perfect blend of small-town charm and forward-thinking innovation. Our picturesque setting and close-knit community foster a strong sense of belonging and friendliness. At the same time, Millgrove has a longstanding tradition of embracing progressive ideas through active community planning. Initiatives like community planning and the Resilience Plan reflect the town’s commitment to preparing for future challenges while enhancing its unique character. MRAG’s proactive efforts have consistently ensured that Millgrove remains a vibrant and adaptive community, seamlessly integrating innovative solutions with its cherished traditions.

Now it is time to unify Millgrove’s forward-looking strategies into a cohesive vision. Combining the 2021 Plan, the Resilience Plan, and the Future Vision into a single, comprehensive plan will provide a streamlined approach to the town’s development. This new plan will integrate past insights and current goals, aligning various initiatives under one strategic framework. By doing so, Millgrove will build on its history of innovation and community engagement, creating a unified path forward that supports both its enduring charm and its aspirations for the future.



*Community Plan 2021 + Resilience Plan +
Future Vision = Community Plan 2025*

Consultative Process

Community Planning Day

On Sunday, 28 July 2024, MRAG held a community planning session for Millgrove residents. Everyone who lives, works, or spends time in Millgrove was encouraged to join. Lisa Glassborow and Chelsey Cooper from Hatrick and Co facilitated the session at the Millwarra Community Building.



Left: Lisa & Chelsey from Hatrick & Co.



Right: approx. 50 residents participated, including a diverse range of ages and young families.

The Planning Day ran as follows:

- **Cr. Jim Child acknowledged the contributions of the Wurundjeri people** and their ancestors. MRAG President Maureen Halit explained the significance of the Planning Day and provided an overview of MRAG's purpose and activities.
- **Engaged in small group conversations** to discuss why attendees came, what we love about Millgrove, and potential improvements. These discussions aimed to foster connections and encourage participants to reflect on their community's strengths and future aspirations.

We were asked to consider...



What is important for us to hold on to in the future?

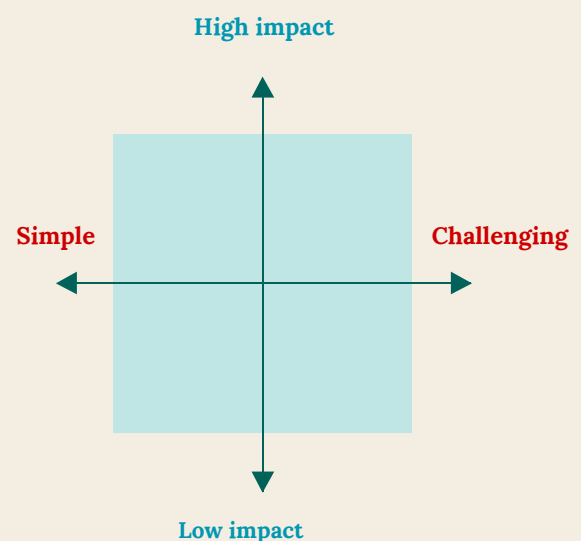
What needs to change to help us move into a thriving future here in Millgrove?

- **Conversations at the tables began with a review of Millgrove's history**, including significant events like the bushfires that led to MRAG's creation. Attendees reflected on both past highlights and current issues, noting aspects of Millgrove they want to maintain or improve. These reflections were documented and displayed on the wall for everyone to see.
- Following this, participants reviewed the "**wall of possibilities**," which listed actions from the Community Plan, Resilience Plan, and Future Vision. They were encouraged to add new ideas and then return to their tables to express their hopes for Millgrove's future. Using provided materials, attendees created "possibilities flags" to visually represent their aspirations, which were collected and displayed at the end of the session.
- To prioritise actions, **attendees reviewed all options on the wall and selected one to discuss in groups of 4 to 8 people**. They either chose an existing action or proposed new ideas. Each group described their selected action and its potential benefits to Millgrove. Actions were set aside and labeled as "priority C", and noted for MRAG.



- Next, groups used a matrix (like below) to plot their actions based on different criteria. After reviewing and discussing these plots, **attendees selected their top choice to work on further**. They then completed worksheets to develop detailed action plans for their chosen ideas. Unselected ideas were labeled "priority B" and provided to MRAG for consideration

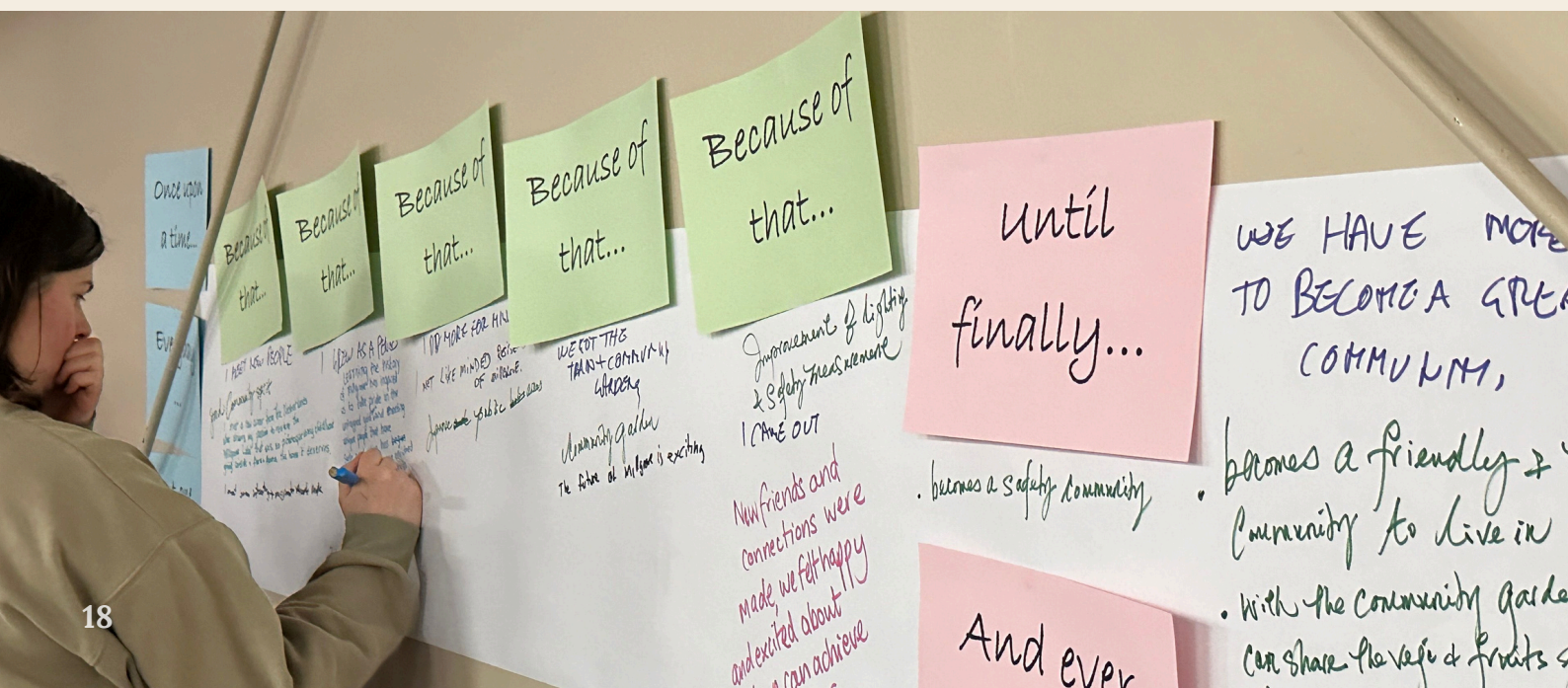
- The prioritisation process concluded with attendees pitching their expanded actions to the group, highlighting each idea's benefits for Millgrove. This allowed participants to share enthusiasm and potentially inspire others to get involved. **Eleven actions, identified as most exciting, were develop further and labelled "priority A."** Actions not chosen are still considered important but received less immediate focus. The detailed ideas were collected and provided to MRAG at the end of the day.

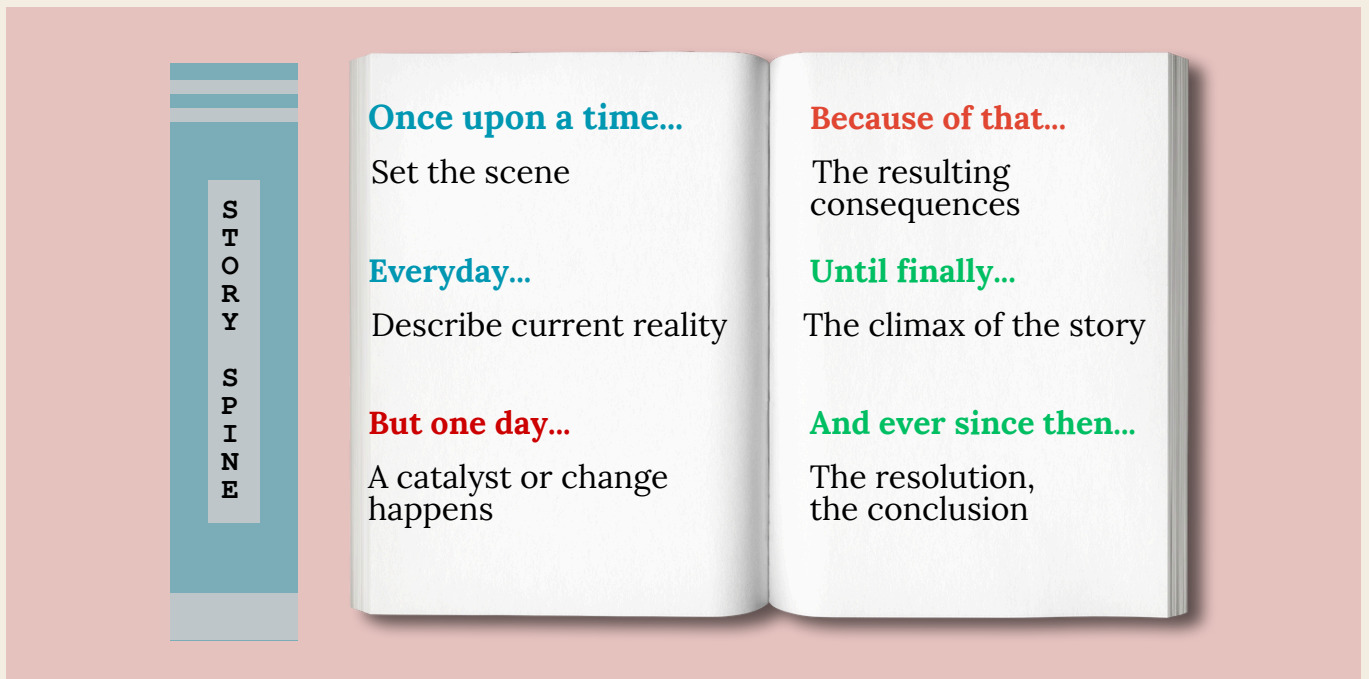


In no particular order, the final 11 prioritised ideas were:



- The final portion of the day focused on **individual contributions and a collaborative story-writing activity about Millgrove**. Attendees identified and appreciated each other's special gifts, such as expertise, listening skills, or helpfulness. They then shared these observations, gaining insight into how their unique qualities could contribute to Millgrove.
- **A survey was distributed** to gather information on attendees' willingness to commit to ongoing contributions, helping MRAG identify potential collaborators.
- The day concluded with a **collaborative story-writing exercise** using the “Story Spine” structure. Attendees contributed to creating a new story for Millgrove, starting from a pre-written introduction and developing the heart, climax, and conclusion.





- To close, attendees shared parts of the story they co-wrote, reflecting on their experiences and future ideas for Millgrove. The collected stories were then handed to MRAG.
- A story reflecting those produced on the day was written (a snippet below) and shared in full in *Appendix B*.



Millgrove Community Story

Once upon a time...
 There was a small town nestled in the beautiful hills of the Yarra Ranges called Millgrove where many people, and thousands of creatures, called home.

Everyday...
 People enjoyed living, working and visiting Millgrove, where the sounds of nature played like a symphony, and the warm hug of the winding river brought a sense of grounding, calm and comfort to all. For many, Millgrove was a welcoming town, where people exchanged friendly greetings, and brief chats often developed into meaningful conversations – it was a place where strangers became friends.

But one day...
 An article in a newspaper called the town's reputation into question. This article surprised many and sparked outrage in the community, and so a group of concerned residents came together to see what they could do to retell their story and shape their town, and its story, into the place they knew it to be. A town meeting was held and many residents turned out to share their stories, ideas and hopes for Millgrove.

And because of that...
 The Millgrove Residents Action Group (MRAG) was formed by people from all backgrounds united in their shared love and sense of pride in the town. The group developed a Community Plan and delivered exciting projects and initiatives in Millgrove through that Plan.

- Pages 14 to 17 provide an overview of **Millgrove Community Planning Wellspring Report** produced by **Hatrick & Co** (reference 5),
- Please refer to *Appendix C* for **History Wall photos prior to 2005** and *Appendix D* for **History Wall photos since 2005**.

Future Vision: Consultative Process

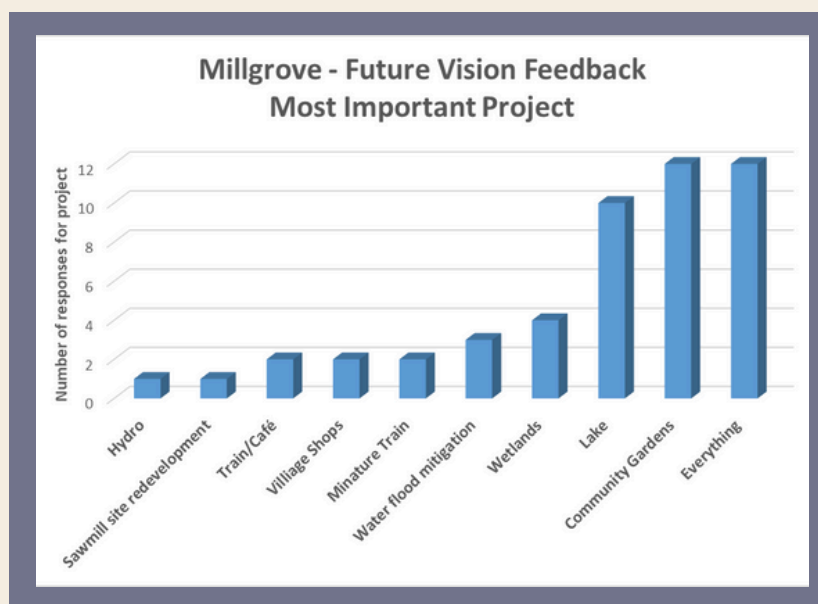
Additional Community Feedback

Upon reviewing the Planning and Future Visions surveys, three clear themes of interest were identified:

1. To reinvigorate the **shopping precinct and surrounding areas**.
2. To continue and create **more opportunities to gather as a community**, such as the Light Trail Event, bush dances and musical entertainment, community hubs, and places to socialise and connect.
3. To **increase public transport**, particularly into housing density areas, including areas that are particularly hilly/steep terrain.

A note about the scope of feedback: A wide range of ideas and areas of focus were expressed in these surveys. While not all ideas fit into the above themes, MRAG have kept record of *all* community feedback.

The below graph presents the order of project priority, as expressed in the Future Vision feedback, when asked “What is one thing to improve in Millgrove?” This includes projects such as Community Gardens, Lake & Wetlands, Water Flood Mitigation, Miniature Train, Village Shops and Everything (*all projects*).



Graph: representing the feedback provided on “One thing to improve in Millgrove” survey question



‘Priority Flags’ and Ideas Worksheets

Key Vision and Project Areas

Six key vision project areas, as shown in the map below, have been identified as follows:

1. Create Village Atmosphere (Shopping zone)
2. Upgrade Memorial Reserve (Recreational zone)
3. Potential Lake, Playground, Museum, Community Hub Area & Social Housing
4. Community Gardens
5. Community Resilience & Recovery Hub
6. Safety & Well-being



Above: Aerial view of Millgrove, defining the six zones covering the six visions

Under each vision area, all former and current projects identified by the community have been aggregated (Refer to Appendix F for a simple graphical representation). Some will have a higher priority and greater impact than others, but nonetheless, may be of equal importance to some residents. A priority of Low, Medium and High has been allocated together with the likely timeframe; Short Medium and Long. These are provided as follows.

Create a Village Atmosphere

To revitalise and reimagine the shopping precinct, bringing warmth and community to the heart of Millgrove



Create Village Atmosphere	Priority	Timeframe
Erect a cover over picnic seating at Millgrove shops	HIGH	MEDIUM
Visibility Traffic Island at shop precinct	MEDIUM	SHORT
Free food cart for sharing home grown produce	LOW	MEDIUM
Art on “blind” shop walls – (middle between shops)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Millgrove Village Shops Sign Board	HIGH	MEDIUM
Restore old sign on Little Joe Nursery shed	LOW	MEDIUM

Create an Updated Memorial Reserve

To breathe new life into this natural space for the community to enjoy and take pride in its ongoing care



Upgrade Memorial Reserve	Priority	Timeframe
Erect a rotunda around BBQ in Memorial Park	HIGH	MEDIUM
Install gabions around Memorial Park Reserve (protection from Highway traffic)	HIGH	MEDIUM
Parks & gardens improvements - see Appendix G (Seal roadway through park)	MEDIUM	LONG
Install park furniture	MEDIUM	SHORT
Develop wetlands	MEDIUM	LONG
Create miniature railway	MEDIUM	LONG
Better Lighting	HIGH	SHORT
Playground equipment	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Research & document Millgrove's History (Heritage walking trail)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Signage for public amenities	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Train, carriage and food vendor	MEDIUM	LONG
Create a log bogey	LOW	MEDIUM
New toilet block	HIGH	MEDIUM
Interpretation gateway with map (Information Board)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Electric recharge station	MEDIUM	LONG

Create a Lake, Playground & Community Hub

To restore and create new areas for community gathering and connection

Lake, Playground & Community Hub	Priority	Timeframe
Heritage Sawmill Museum (Viewing platform at the sawmill)	MEDIUM	LONG
Restore Millgrove Lake	MEDIUM	LONG
Establish Community Hub	MEDIUM	LONG
Adventure Playground	MEDIUM	LONG
Reduced Fuel Load	HIGH	MEDIUM
Water Mitigation (Prices Rd to proposed Lake)	HIGH	LONG



Create a Community Resilience & Recovery Hub

To strengthen the community's resilience with a well-resourced hub

Community Resilience & Recovery Hub	Priority	Timeframe
Renewable Power	HIGH	LONG
Standby Power Generator	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Communication Centre Power Backup	MEDIUM	MEDIUM



Create Community Gardens

To create a space that fosters local food production and strengthen community connections

Community Gardens	Priority	Timeframe
Community Garden	HIGH	MEDIUM
Education and Training	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

Create a Safer and Inclusive Township

To promote unity, equity and enhance overall community well-being

Safety & Wellbeing	Priority	Timeframe
Community Awareness and Preparedness	HIGH	SHORT
Defibrillator	HIGH	SHORT
A regular Light Show	HIGH	SHORT
Local renewable power & Hydro projects	MEDIUM	LONG
Resilient Housing	MEDIUM	LONG
Strengthened phone & internet communications	HIGH	MEDIUM
Enhancing roads and exits	HIGH	MEDIUM
Fun events	MEDIUM	SHORT
Bike path Dee Rd to O'Shannassy Aqueduct	MEDIUM	LONG
Lobby for better transport, affordable/emergency housing, utility services, seating on aqueduct trail, mirror Cnr Mcnamaras and Dee Rd, erosion/landslip control on River Rd and Dee Rd	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
(Re-Open) Trail to Platt's Falls	MEDIUM	LONG
River Road observation deck and Pedestrian extension to Dee Rd bridge	LONG	LONG
Better lighting & CCTV McKenize King Reserve	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Stage 2 River Rd Trail extension	HIGH	MEDIUM

Action Plan

MRAG has gained significant experience over the last two years in developing action plans and strategies to progress the implementation of key priority projects under the resilience program.

Although the overall task is somewhat daunting, it is anticipated that breaking them down to smaller projects and seeking community support through consultation, will help to achieve wins along the way. Each win will help to eventually reach the **Future Vision Goal**.

Some key elements of an action plan are discussed below:

1. Community Engagement
2. Risk Management Action Plan
3. Grant Funding Opportunities
4. Next steps





1. Community Engagement

- Engaging the community is essential to the successful implementation of various projects, fostering collaboration, ownership, and shared responsibility in shaping our collective future. It is intended to do this through several ways:
- ‘Handing over’ the ownership of the Community Plan to the Millgrove community. MRAG has facilitated the process; however, **this plan belongs to us all**. We will do this through the following actions:
 - o Ensuring the Community Plan is easily accessible for all residents, in digital and hardcopy, as well as the abridged version.
 - o Facilitating accessible spaces for community members to have their voices heard.
 - o Seeking out and celebrating individual special gifts; recognising the value of every community member in what they can and are willing to contribute.
 - o Recognising the value in short-term volunteering. Often if a positive experience is had by a person, they may be later willing to take on further commitments (Hughes 2007)
 - o Celebrating and sharing individual and collective successes.
 - o Actively approaching and inviting community members to get involved (Hughes 2007)
- Focusing on the **relationships** we build during these projects.
- Accepting **ad hoc contributions**, which can be particularly beneficial during crises (e.g. natural disaster, covid-19) (Hendriks et al 2023).
- Regularly **communicating** with the community about the Community Plan and its projects.
- Engaging with **local community leaders** who have their own networks, resources, and abilities to promote and garner community support.

2. Risk Management Action Plan

As a community group, we may face many barriers to achieving the community's vision. The table below identifies some of the potential barriers we may face, and the possible actions we could take to overcome them.

Potential Barriers (RISKS)	Planning to Overcome these Barriers (ACTIONS)
Human resources to plan, liaise, aggregate community support, prepare submissions to stakeholders to secure use of land, funds and other resources from land owners, council, government departments, community, etc.	Build and nurture our community networks, to facilitate resource and information sharing
Strict zoning of land, Crown land restrictions, and private land and their owners	Strong network of council and political support, landowner support, DEECA, Dept Transport & Planning
Gaining and managing significant grant funding	Sound structure
Dealing with the liability and risks associated with funding and reporting	Review MRAG policies and procedures to ensure a sound structure
Managing large contracts without the specialist support network	Skills training, seek out specialists - either volunteer or paid
Significant time requirements for such large projects	Skills training in time management, sharing the load and use of outside skills as necessary
Getting unanimous support for projects from a small community group	Practicing deliberative democracy when focusing on the exchange of ideas, and when dealing with disagreements, while also recognising the power differentials in our community, and differences in confidence, knowledge and skills. All this to be done to find common ground upon which we can move forward on a project in a harmonious way (Kenny & Connors, 2016).

Table: Risk Action Plan

RISKS continued...	ACTIONS continued...
Having the skills and abilities to progress projects through to implementation	Leaders network and training
Overcoming negative issues and people not wanting change	Regular meetings
Increasing administration costs for office equipment & supplies to manage the programs	Efficient office set up
Compliance requirements	MRAG to function as a creative community organisation. Regulations do not need to hinder the ability to work creatively and resourcefully
Ongoing maintenance with projects	Celebrate volunteers to promote an active participant culture; the contributions, hard-work and successes of MRAG and volunteers in the wider community
Cultivating the ongoing support of the projects in the community	Community updates and frequent promotion of the Future Vision

Table: Risk Action Plan, continued



3. Grant Funding Opportunities

To help in identifying where each project fits within the traditional grant funding categories, a table has been generated with the projects against those six main categories; i.e. infrastructure, safety, transport, environment, services, tourism/recreation and resilience Please refer to Appendix E which can be used to help in applying for grants.



4. Next Steps...

MRAG will promote the outcomes of this report to our local Federal and State government representatives, our local council representative, the Yarra Ranges Council and to the broader Millgrove community.

MRAG will seek out community project leaders to develop more detailed action plans and to consult with stake holders to ascertain what the requirements will be to achieve the desired outcomes in a timely, safe and cost-effective way.

MRAG welcomes all residents to be involved in the projects and participate in a committee or project without being an active MRAG member.

We can be reached through our contact details on **page 1.**



Millgrove on the left in the foreground

“

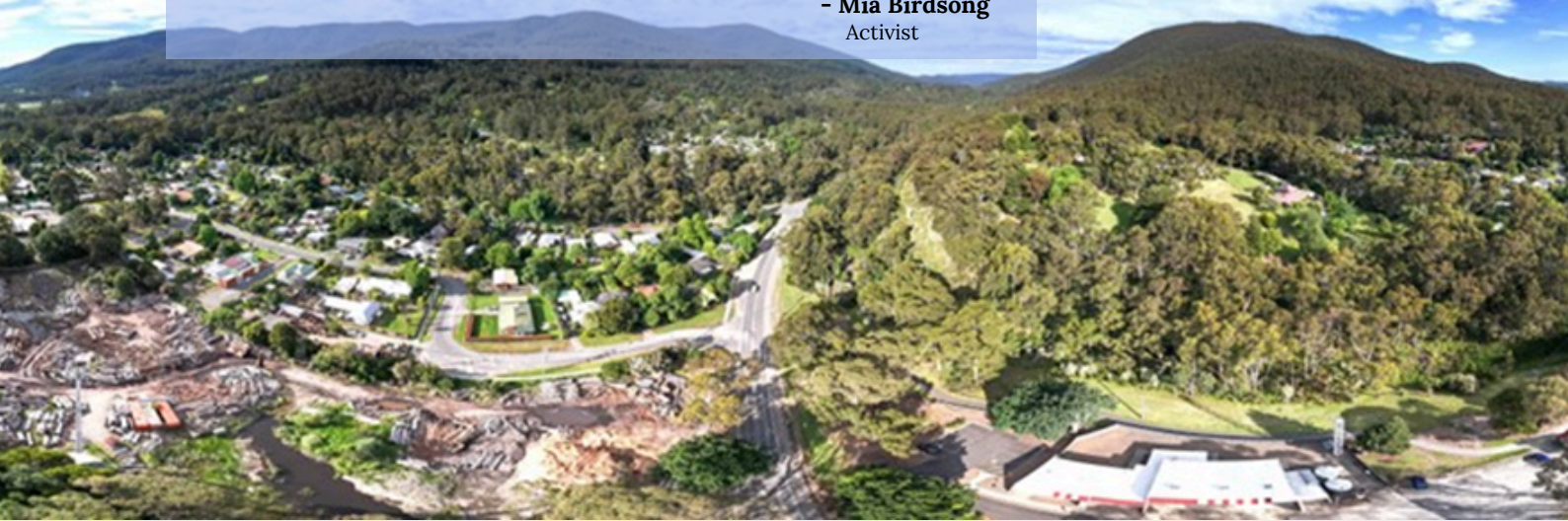
It's amazing what can be achieved when we all work together”

– Cathy Freeman OAM
Aboriginal Australian athlete

“

We need a vision of community that is relevant and future-facing. A vision that brings us closer to one another, allows us to be vulnerable and imperfect, to grieve and stumble, to be held accountable and loved deeply. We need models of success and leadership that fundamentally value love, care, and generosity of resources and spirit”

- Mia Birdsong
Activist



Millgrove: A 360 panoramic view,
photo taken from behind CFA

References

1. [Millgrove Community Plan 2015-20Nov2015-FINAL](#)
2. [Millgrove Community Plan 2021-25May2021-FINAL](#)
3. [Millgrove Community RESILIENCE Plan Update - OCT 2023](#)
4. [Draft Future Vision Millgrove, presented at the Light Trail Event April 2024](#)
5. [Millgrove Community Planning Wellspring Report](#)
6. Hand Written SURVEY-Feedback on night of Light Trail-2024

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Appendices

Appendix A: Progress of Projects since 2021

Project	Plan	Status
Dee Rd River Reserve Muster	Resilience	Three-day event completed April 23
River Rd Walking Trail – Stage 1	Community	Completed Mar 23, official opening July 24
Dee Rd Walking Trail	Community	Major refurbishment completed July 23, ongoing improvements & Signage
Installation bike rack Memorial Reserve		Completed Mar 2024
Community open Day 2022, 2023	Resilience	Successful events; with increased attendance, to 500 people in 2023
Light Trail 2024	Resilience	Full capacity of seven tours, 350 attended
Community planning day	Resilience & Community	Professional facilitation. Attended by leaders, residents, all age demographics represented aside from adolescences
New boardwalks along Hwy next to the sawmill	Community	Partnered Yarra Ranges Council completed
Installed Banner frames	Community	MRAG committee early 2024
New office & meeting room	Resilience & Community	Privately gifted. Completed August 2024
New Avenue of honour dedication	Community	Official opening June 2023
Fuel load reduction burns	Resilience	Regularly
Research trips	Resilience & Community	Newport Railway museum, Mt Toolebelong Renewable energy
Community Resilience & Recovery Hub	Resilience	Grant in progress, communicating with stakeholders
Defibrillators	Resilience & Community	Two installed, third grant in progress
Hydro	Resilience	Innovation working group set up. Research and data be recorded.
Community Garden	Resilience & Community	Lease Agreement signed with Dept of Transport. Liaising with Yarra Ranges council for permit, researching grant support
New shipping container storage	Community	Two containers. Storage space donated
Free Games at market	Community	Monthly market use and other public event. A fun attraction well received
Fun Event for families – Bush Dance	Community	Post-Covid socialisation
History Documentation of Township	Community	Grant monies assisting with digitisation of records and photos
Update picnic table by shops	Community	Welcoming local and visiting customers
Address Yarra river bank erosion	Community	Mitigate banks by swimming hole and River Road damage

- For a complete list of community projects completed prior to 2021, please refer to Reference 2



Millgrove Community Story

Once upon a time...

There was a small town nestled in the beautiful hills of the Yarra Ranges called Millgrove where many people, and thousands of creatures, called home.

Everyday...

People enjoyed living, working and visiting Millgrove, where the sounds of nature played like a symphony, and the warm hug of the winding river brought a sense of grounding, calm and comfort to all.

For many, Millgrove was a welcoming town, where people exchanged friendly greetings, and brief chats often developed into meaningful conversations – it was a place where strangers became friends.

But one day...

An article in a newspaper called the town's reputation into question. This article surprised many and sparked outrage in the community, and so a group of concerned residents came together to see what they could do to retell their story and shape their town, and its story, into the place they knew it to be.

A town meeting was held and many residents turned out to share their stories, ideas and hopes for Millgrove.

And because of that...

The Millgrove Residents Action Group (MRAG) was formed by people from all backgrounds united in their shared love and sense of pride in the town. The group developed a Community Plan and delivered exciting projects and initiatives in Millgrove through that Plan.

And because of that...

More people got involved in helping to ensure Millgrove was a welcoming, safe and vibrant place by being inclusive, caring and positive. A groundswell of activity took place, igniting curiosity in others.

New iterations of the Community Plan were created by two more town planning days, ensuring that the needs, hopes and ideas of the community continued to come to life.

Projects were imagined, and projects were delivered... creating momentum and building on that sense of community pride.

Until finally...

The townspeople felt more connected to their home and each other. People who didn't usually speak up felt safe and included, and began sharing their thoughts, inspired to have a voice.

Projects took on a life of their own, where those who were interested leaned in and felt supported to have a go through the backing and experience of the MRAG.

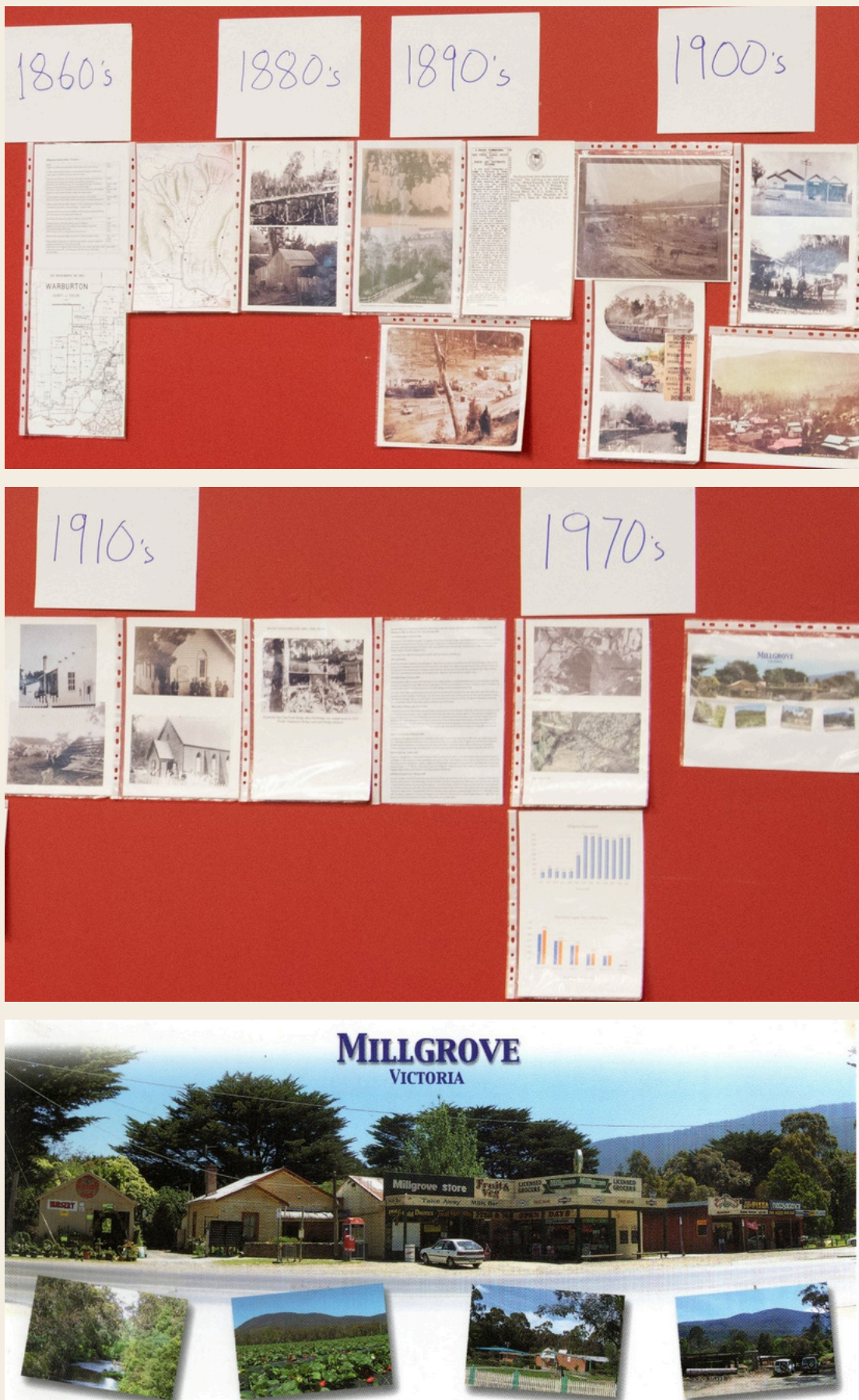
The people and creatures who live, work and visit Millgrove now enjoy...

A serene living experience, surrounded by lush landscapes and the tranquil flow of the Yarra River; a peaceful retreat from the bustle of city life... The people enjoy the strong sense of close-knit community, with residents often engaged in local events and activities.

And ever since then...

This small town nestled in the beautiful hills of the Yarra Ranges called Millgrove is a village. A village of people who work together and support each other to make Millgrove a place they are **proud to call home**.

Appendix C1: Consultation Photo Wall, displayed at Community Planning Day 2024
– History of Millgrove up to 2005



Appendix C2: Consultation Photo Wall detailed timeline, displayed at Community Planning Day 2024 – *History of Millgrove up to 2005*

Millgrove's History Wall – Timeline

Significant Event	Date
Upper Yarra Valley land subdivided, and area opens up to some farming. In 1869 pioneers, John & Bridget Kennedy, obtained through Land Selection a large property called "Mill Grove" North of the Yarra River	1860's
Sawmills start operating. Up to 18 operated locally. Small township with local businesses start to open up to support local workers and travellers	1880's
Warburton State School built near Yarra Gap (opposite Dee Rd). First Shire of Upper Yarra Meeting held at Warburton State School 1889, closed 1903	Approx. 1884 – 1903
First Shire of Upper Yarra Hall/Office built opposite the school (Cnr Dee Rd/Hwy). Burnt down in 1903. Nearby Kennedy's Bridge and an early water wheel.	Approx. 1890 – 1903
Gravel Pit opens to supply railway ballast (current site of the sawmill)	Approx. 1890's
Railway line opens from Lilydale to Warburton and cuts through school ground	1901
Railway Station built and called "Millgrove", after Local Residents lobbied and contributed 20 pounds to Victorian Railways – Closed in 1965. Township then becomes known as Millgrove after being previously identified as part of Warburton, Yarra Gap and the Gravel Pits	1905
Post Office (with telephone) opens in Millgrove. Closed in 1995	1906
Residents operate and fund a primary school in Millgrove	1909
Residents fund and build a Community Hall, demolished in late 1970's	1914 – 1970's
First Church building (Methodist), removed in the 1930's	1915
WW1 Avenue of Honour trees planted along main road after the war ends	1919
Major floods wash away bridges across the Yarra River and isolate residents	1891, 1934, 1950's
Major residential subdivision in McKenzie King property, resulted in significant population growth from 270 to well over 1000	1970's
Major Fires around Millgrove, Black Sunday (1926), Red Tuesday (1932), Black Friday (1939), Black Sunday (1962), Ash Wednesday (1983), Mt Little Joe (1991), Black Saturday (2009)	Many dates

Appendix D: Consultation Photo Wall, displayed at Community Planning Day 2024
– *History of Millgrove beyond 2005*



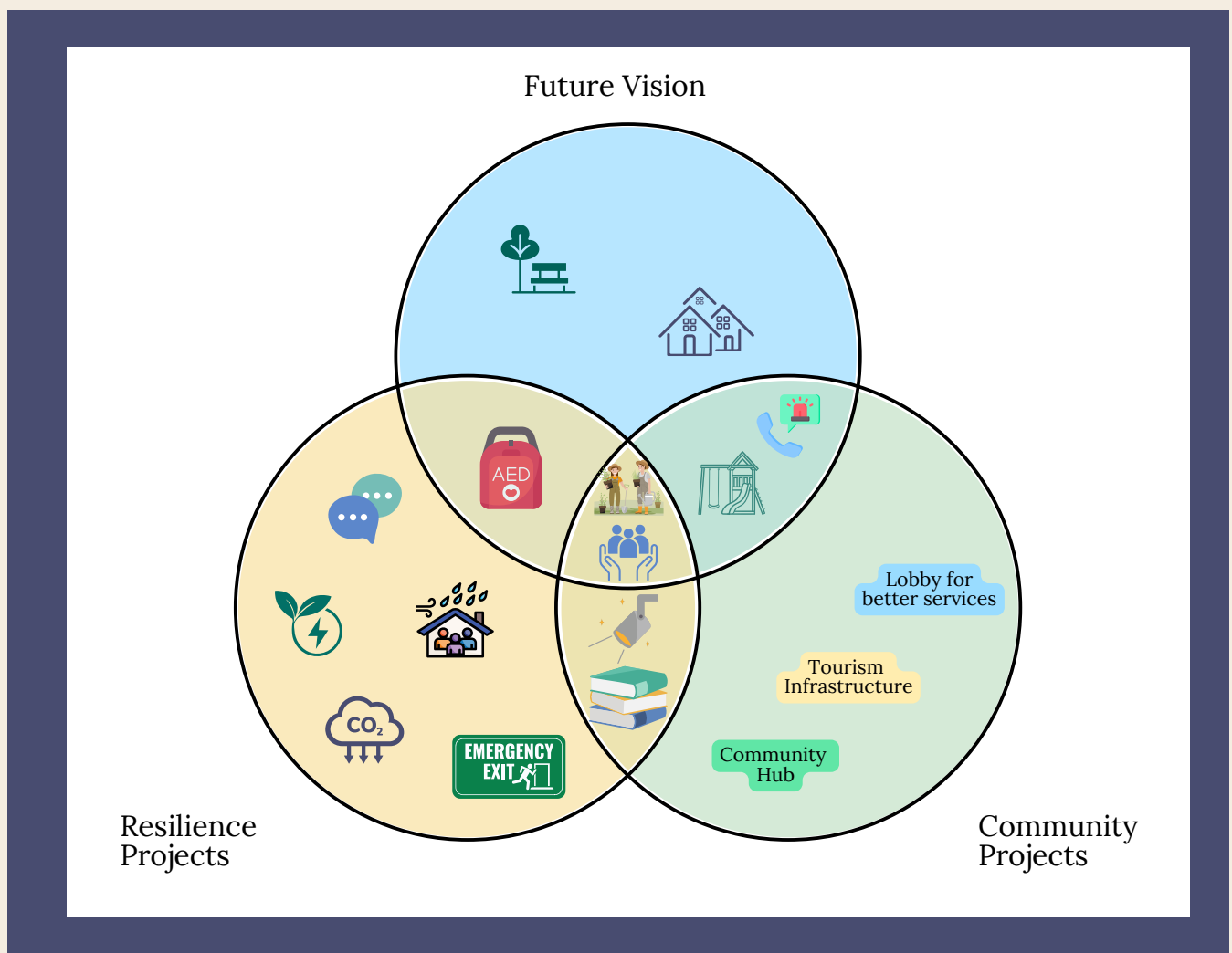
Appendix E: Classification of Projects by Functional Category

Infrastructure, safety, transport, environment, services, tourism/recreation, resilience

Project	Infra	Safety	Transport	Enviro	Service	Tour/Rec	Resilience
Erect a cover over picnic seating at Millgrove shops	✓						
Visibility Traffic Island at shop precinct		✓					
Free food cart for sharing home grown produce				✓			
Art on “blind” shop walls –(Middle between shops						✓	
Millgrove Village Shops Sign Board					✓	✓	
Restore old sign on Little Joe Nursery shed						✓	
Erect a rotunda around BBQ in memorial park	✓						
Install gabions around Memorial Park Reserve (protection from Hwy traffic)	✓	✓					
Parks & gardens improvements (Seal roadway through park)	✓	✓					
Install park furniture	✓					✓	
Develop wetlands	✓			✓		✓	
Create miniature railway	✓					✓	
Better Lighting	✓	✓			✓		
Playground equipment	✓				✓	✓	
Research & document Millgrove’s History (Heritage walking trail)	✓				✓	✓	
Signage for public amenities	✓				✓		
Train, carriage and food vendor	✓				✓	✓	
Create a log bogey	✓					✓	
New toilet block	✓				✓	✓	
Interpretation gateway with map (Information Board)	✓				✓	✓	
Electric recharge station	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heritage Sawmill Museum (Viewing platform at the sawmill)	✓					✓	
Restore Millgrove Lake	✓			✓		✓	

Project	Infra	Safety	Transport	Enviro	Service	Tour/Rec	Resilience
Establish Community Hub	✓	✓			✓		✓
Adventure Playground	✓				✓	✓	
Reduced fuel load		✓		✓			✓
Water mitigation (Prices Rd to Lake)	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Renewable power	✓			✓	✓		✓
Standby power generator	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Communication Centre Power	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Community Garden Plots	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Education and Training		✓		✓	✓		✓
Community Awareness and Preparedness		✓			✓		✓
Defibrillator	✓	✓			✓		✓
A regular Light Show					✓	✓	✓
Local renewable power & Hydro projects	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Resilient housing	✓	✓					✓
Strengthened phone & internet communications	✓	✓			✓		✓
Enhancing roads and exits	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Fun events					✓	✓	✓
Bike path Dee Rd to O'Shannassy Aqueduct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lobby for better transport, utility services, seating on aqueduct trail, mirror Cnr Mcnamara and Dee Rd, erosion control on River Rd	✓	✓				✓	✓
Trail to Platt's Falls	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
River Road observation deck and Pedestrian extension to Dee Rd bridge	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Better lighting & CCTV McKenize King Reserve	✓	✓			✓		✓

Appendix F: Bringing together the Community, Resilience projects and the Future Vision



	Park Upgrade
	Village Atmosphere
	Defibrillator
	Safety and Well-being
	Community Garden
	Fuel Reduction
	Lake, Playground & Community Hub

	Community Resilience & Recovery Hub
	Education
	Light Show
	Exit Strategies
	Renewable Energy
	Housing Resilience
	Communications

Appendix G1: Memorial Reserve Proposed Upgrade



Above: Proposed Memorial Reserve gravel road sealing and miniature train upgrade, looking East.

Right: Drone photo of the gravel road, CFA and vacant land.



Appendix G2: Memorial Reserve Proposed Upgrade



Above: Proposed Memorial Reserve gravel road sealing and miniature train upgrade, looking West.

Right: Drone photo of the CFA, gravel road & market area.



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