

Penshurst Community Plan 2019-2021



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

A community plan will provide Penshurst 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 has a 'whole of community' focus and identifies partnerships which help achieve action.

Our Vision - Penshurst will:

- be a resilient, diverse and thriving town with a strong sense of community
- be a safe and attractive place to live
- be a desirable tourist destination
- have a strong supporting infrastructure with quality services and facilities
- service a range of existing industries and encourage new commercial activities

Our Location

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

Agriculture has been the long-standing backbone of the community's economy since Penshurst 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, Penshurst is an important tourist destination, located closely to other well-recognised tourist centres such as Dunkeld (30km), Port Fairy (64km) and Halls Gap (94km); and 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), Penshurst 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

In the 2016 Census, the Peshurst district had a total population of 624 people. (https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC22044?opendocument).

The median age of residents living within the Peshurst township in 2016 was 52 years and the age structure of the town population was as follows:

Age Structure	No. of people	% of total population
0-19 years	145	23%
18-24 years	18	3%
25-44 years	88	14%
45-64 years	203	33%
65-74 years	92	15%
75+ years	70	12%

Our History

Mt Rouse or Kolor 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 Kolor Gundidj clan occupied the land around the Mount and took their name from Kolor 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 Peshurst 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 Peshurst 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 Community Facilities and Services

The Penshurst 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 •Penshurst Primary School •Penshurst 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 & ‘Never Fail Spring’ •Mount Rouse Reserve Lookout and Walking Trails •Courthouse and History Trail •Yatmerone Wildlife Reserve •Swimming Pool •Recreation Reserve (football, netball and tennis) •Bowls Club •Racing Track •Caravan Park •B&B •Cafes & Takeaway •Penshurst Memorial Hall •Penshurst Men’s Shed •Penshurst Hotel & The Penny Tavern

Our Landscape and Assets

The Peshurst 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 Peshurst 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.

Peshurst is located on the third largest **volcanic plain** on earth and the **Volcanoes Discovery Centre** located in the heart of Peshurst 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 & 'Never Fail Spring'** are hidden gems in the heart of Peshurst. The spring is a continuous water resource fed by the aquifers beneath Peshurst 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 barbeque 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 two-and-a-half-year period from July 2019 to December 2021. 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 two+-year time frame, 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 the Peshurst Progress Association, 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 the Peshurst Progress Association through a consultation process with the Community that included:

- A Community Planning Session held in March 2019 to review the 2016 Peshurst Community Plan and to workshop future inclusions.
- Drafting of the 2019 - 2021 Peshurst Community Plan
- Circulation of the Draft Plan for comment to the Peshurst Progress Association Members in May 2019
- Provision of opportunities for the broader community to comment on the Draft Plan in June 2019.
- Finalisation of the Plan in June 2019.
- Endorsement of the Plan by the Peshurst Progress Association in June 2019.

Implementation

The Peshurst Progress Association 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 2019 and will finalise in December 2021.

In December of each year the Peshurst Progress Association 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 the Peshurst Progress Association no later than June 2020 so that new plan can be developed to commence in January 2021. The Peshurst Progress Association and the Peshurst community may wish to review the plan earlier should it lose relevance or require updating.

Sustainability	Responsibility
Safe & Healthy Environment	Safe & Healthy Environment
Water	
- understand our aquifers	While it is wise to have a watching brief over these categories, it is not within the premise of the Progress Association to have much effect, except, perhaps, a small voice, or an offer of support, both our presence and through some material means specific to each case.
Educate for change	
- Climate change & the environment	
CFA & Training Ground	
Ambulance Service	Maintaining our Resources
NBN access for the whole town	It is vital that the town's people support our local businesses and volunteer groups. This means shopping local, utilising the Medical Facilities, the schools and preschool, and volunteering with the many and varied organisations that help maintain our wide variety of facilities and activities.
Maintain	
1. our infrastructure - shops & businesses	
2. Medical Facilities - doctors, hospital & Kolar Lodge	
3. Schools & Pre-school	
4. Memorial Hall	Volunteer Organisations
5. Volcanoes Discovery Centre	Penshurst and District Racing Club
6. Courthouse	Penshurst Football Netball Club
7. Senior Citizens building	Penshurst Lawn Bowls Club
8. Recreation Reserve	Penshurst Pony Club
Sustainability	Mt Rouse and District Historical Society
Repurpose	Penshurst Progress Association
- Tennis Court Building to Camp Kitchen	Lions Club of Penshurst
- Infant Welfare Building to (plans to be decided)	Penshurst Cemetery Trust
Volunteering and Active Living	Penshurst Senior Citizens
Increase Public Transport	Penshurst RSL
	Volcanoes Discovery Centre
	Mt Rouse News & Views Newsletter
	Penshurst Men's Shed
	Penshurst Memorial Hall
	Friends of Yatmerone
	Friends of the Botanic Gardens
	Penshurst Swimming Pool
	Friends of Mt Rouse Reserve
	Hospital Ladies Auxiliary

Sustainability

Business or Retail

Penshurst Post Office & Gift Store
Pharmacy Depot
Penshurst Grocery & Liquor Store
Kelly's Hardware and Rural Supplies
Penshurst Newsagent & Takeaway
Mandy's Hair Salon
Fuel Station
Book Store
Penshurst Hotel
'The Penny' Wine Bar
Agricultural equipment and small
motors sales
Motors Car Repairer
Trade, engineering, transport and
agricultural services
Madigans Airbnb's
Penshurst Caravan Park
Builders
Electricians
Plumbers

Communication

Useful Town website & Facebook page

Encourage the growth of readership of
Mt Rouse Newsletter as a form of town
communication

Encourage better communication with
Southern Grampians Shire Council
& State and Federal Government

Encourage communication between
all Associations, groups and clubs
within Penshurst

Progress Association Projects

Growth

Septic or Sewerage – continue the
discussion with the SGSC

Economic -

Shop local, support a friend

Support local events & activities

Revitalise our streetscape

Enhance our community assets -

1 understand our community members

2 Support our 'Friends of' groups

- Yatmerone

- Botanic Gardens

- Mt Rouse Reserve

3 Improve cycling/walking tracks

Action our Botanic Gardens Masterplan

Food for thought –

How do we

Retain our young people

Fill the empty shops

Progress Association Projects

Tourism

- promote Peshurst as a tourism location
 - update town historical information - signs and brochures
 - Improve directional signage around the town
 - create Branding for the town
 - find and apply for Grants to fund our projects
- encourage increased Accommodation including cabins at the Caravan Park (in the Gardens Master Plan)
 - audit numbers of visitors & road traffic (VicRoads)
- Translate our brochures into another language

Progress Association Projects

Host an Annual Event

At present we have

- Peshurst Art Exhibition & Photo Show
- Christmas Market
- Boxing Day Races

Other events

- Hall Markets (2)

What else can we add?

Support the Progress Association

- join the Association or email/postal list
- help develop a succession plan for future committees
- get involved with projects

Up for review

There are some issues to address, such as the location of the 'area of last resort' during bushfires that is a green space behind the Senior Citizen's building that has trees.

Annual Action Plan Template

Each year Penshurst Progress Association 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.

Start Date	End Date	Implementation Oversight		
Community Priority	Action	Completion Date	Who is Responsible	Required Funding & Resources