

Deans Marsh & District  
Community Plan

# Mid-Term Review 2025

Reflecting on our progress and  
community priorities



Produced by the Community Plan Working Group  
October 2025

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# 1. Introduction

This summary outlines the findings and reflections of the 2025 Mid-term Review of the Deans Marsh Community Plan 2020-2030 (The Plan), which was undertaken by a community working group as part of a refining of The Plan, conducted at the direction of the Deans Marsh Community Action Network (CAN) with the support of the Surf Coast Shire.

The purpose of this Mid-Term Review document is to:

1. Provide a progress update to the community on the actions in The Plan.
2. Document key changes within, or affecting, the Deans Marsh community since The Plan's inception in 2020; and/or any 'gaps' in the current plan.
3. Provide broad evaluation and comment on the success of The Plan and its implementation thus far, including identifying any barriers to – and opportunities to further support – success.
4. Analyse and document relevant key lessons from implementation of The Plan to date.
5. Identify recommended changes to The Plan, to be considered by the community for adoption during the 2030-40 Plan development process

This review does not reflect or integrate the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) developed as part of the original Community Plan. It is recommended that the MEP be revisited and considered as part of future monitoring and evaluation in the development of the 2030–40 Community Action Plan.

## 2. Action progress update

The 2020 Deans Marsh Community Plan contained 35 actions split across three key priority areas and six key outcomes (Table 1).

*Table 1: Deans Marsh Community Plan 2020-2030 Priority Areas and associated Outcomes*

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1. Our Local Community	1.1 Our community connections have broadened and deepened 1.2 Our infrastructure supports the needs of all community members – now and in the future
2. Our Local Environment	2.1 Our natural environment is resilient and supports our industries – land use & planning 2.2 We all contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures 2.3 Our streetscapes reflect our community identity
3. Our Local Economy	3.1 Our produce, producers, and providers are well supported in local, regional and international markets

Actions were listed in the original plan without timelines for completion, to provide flexibility in action implementation and facilitate enaction by community groups/members as best suited the timing, effort and resources available.

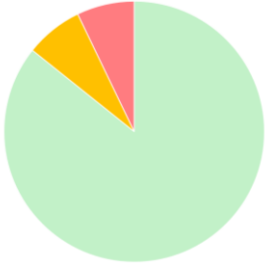
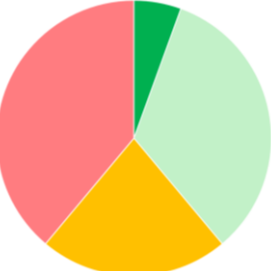
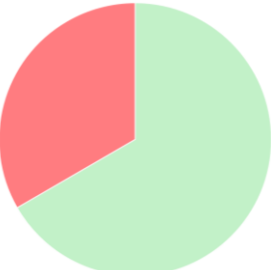
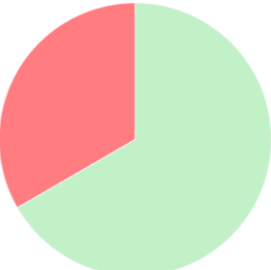
Table 2 provides an updated summary of progress towards the 2020 Deans Marsh Community Plan actions, listed by Priority Area.

A full update on current action status and progress to date, including nominating current (2025) status and summarising achievements to date is provided in Appendix 1.

Of the 35 actions:

- 1 (3%) is considered completed
- 20 (57%) are progressing well
- 5 (14%) have commenced (but with limited recent/current action)
- 9 (26%) are not yet commenced

Table 2: Deans Marsh Community Plan 2020-2030 Priority Areas and associated Outcomes

PRIORITY AREA	TOTAL ACTIONS	Completed	Progressing well	Commenced (limited action)	Not started	Status graph
<b>1. PRIORITY ONE: OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
1.1. Our community connections have broadened and deepened	11		9	1	1	
1.2. Our infrastructure supports the needs of all community members – now and in the future	3		3			
<b>2. PRIORITY TWO: OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	
2.1. Our natural environment is resilient and supports our industries – land use & planning	5			4	1	
2.2. We all contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures	8		4		4	
2.3. Our streetscapes reflect our community identity	5	1	2		2	
<b>3. PRIORITY THREE: OUR LOCAL ECONOMY</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
2.1. Our produce, producers, and providers are well supported in local, regional and international markets	3		2		1	

## 3. Reflections

### 3.1 What key changes have occurred over the past five years?

There have been various significant changes of relevance to the Deans Marsh community over the five years since the inception of The Plan, which are outlined below.

#### *Covid-19 pandemic*

The Community Plan was completed in late 2019 – only months before the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the world, which remained a significant influence on people's lives for the next several years. Covid-19 affected different members of the community in different ways, and whilst there was considerable diversity in how individuals experienced and managed through this time, this period brought challenges for most. Key impacts included the direct health risks posed by Covid-19, social isolation requirements (including mandated lockdowns) and uncertainties associated with the timing, availability and appropriateness of Covid-19 vaccinations.

Throughout the significant challenges of this period, the local community largely demonstrated its resilience, supportiveness and ability to 'pull together' – despite (indeed perhaps because of) the diversity of existent viewpoints and struggles. Of note, this period:

- **Highlighted the merits and pitfalls of our geographic location**
  - Like all of Victoria, the community was subject to government-mandated lockdowns to reduce the risk/spread of Covid-19, however avoided the longer period of lockdown imposed on metropolitan Melbourne.
  - Our rural location and lower living density allowed many to still access, enjoy and recreate in nature, and reduced both the likelihood of local Covid occurrence and the risk of inter-person transfer.
  - This period also highlighted the significant number of 'part-time locals' (or those with primary residency elsewhere) and the inter-connectedness with other areas, particularly Greater Melbourne. This also highlighted the challenges of property management, for those based elsewhere, during lockdown periods – and the risk of Covid transfer between the more densely populated metropolitan areas and the local community.
  - For some, our relative isolation (and beautiful surrounds) provided a sense of comfort and gratitude, and others keenly felt the distance from loved ones and the inability to connect with significant people in their lives. Indeed, many felt both.
- **Promoted migration to the local area (particularly from metropolitan areas)**
  - The impact of lockdown restrictions – and the broader reflection on personal priorities that Covid prompted in many - saw a substantial influx of 'tree changers' and new residents to the local area and nearby coastal locations. Amongst other positive and negative impacts, this saw a rapid and very substantial increase in the value of local properties (see more below), with a lasting knock-on effect in terms of affordability and local demographics.

- **Highlighted the value of diversity of lifestyles in our community**
  - A number of our local community adopt lifestyles with a focus on natural and healthy living, wholesome food, self-sufficiency, community care and natural medicine. During the ‘panic buying’ and (prospective) supply shortages which occurred at times during the pandemic, the ability of many in the local community to provide their own food and fundamental needs provided a source of relative independence and comfort. It is seen as an opportunity to develop a community self-sustaining model as part of a resilience strategy.
  - Whilst there were already a number of households in our community homeschooling children prior to Covid-19, the mandated homeschooling requirements (as local schools were closed for period of the pandemic) may have encouraged some people (and discouraged others) to opt for homeschooling in the longer term. This has potentially had implications for student numbers/attendance at local schools, post pandemic. In response, Deans Marsh Primary School has been adaptable and responsive to accommodate these diverse preferences (including hybrid home/school education models).
  - Like most places, there were diverse views in the local community about the appropriateness of the government-driven Covid-19 vaccination program and associated requirements (e.g. workplace/education restrictions for those not vaccinated, which may have affected employment options for some).

The Covid-19 pandemic provided many valuable reflections and insights (including those broad observations above) and prompted many to re-consider their own priorities. In terms of the impact on the Community Plan itself, naturally the ‘social distancing’ required throughout the pandemic – and the general hardships the period involved – somewhat restricted the pace and extent of collaborative implementation on many of The Plans’ actions and ideas, though considerable progress has still been achieved.

### *Increase in local property demand*

As noted above, the Covid-19 pandemic and associated mandatory lockdowns helped drive a significant demand for local property from (predominantly metropolitan) buyers, during and following the pandemic. The ‘work from home’ arrangements employed by many workplaces during the pandemic created a ‘new normal’ where many people saw the possibility of remote working – which has been largely sustained ongoing – and proximity to one’s workplace thus became of somewhat less importance.

The area’s relative proximity to Melbourne (and the rapidly-growing Geelong region) and coast, as well as its natural beauty and well-regarded community makes it a particularly attractive place to live. Indeed, rapid population growth has also been seen in many other nearby townships such as Winchelsea, Moriac and Colac, for similar reasons.

Further to this Covid-driven ‘treechange’, additional changes in taxation policy (including the significant increase in State Land Tax for properties beyond one’s primary residence, unless used for primary production, e.g. farming) and council rate valuations have seen many people with investment properties in nearby coastal areas selling up – some instead, favouring investment in nearby rural/farming land, where tax incentives

are available and combine with significant capital appreciation to make for a financially-beneficial, tax-friendly investment.

This increase in demand (further driven by high immigration numbers and housing demand nationally) has had considerable affordability implications for local people – particularly younger generations – who may not have access to the finances required to secure local property. Relatively limited availability (and affordability) of rental properties further exacerbates the housing opportunities for locals with limited financial resources.

These influences are all significant for the local community, in that they help shape the local demographic.

Beyond (but partly driven by) the current housing crisis, Australia finds itself in a cost-of-living crisis, where many households are finding it difficult to make ends meet. Social commentary suggests a growing divide between the ‘rich’ and ‘poor’, and statistically, the proportion of Australians living in poverty is alarmingly high.

### *Challenges for local economy/businesses*

The Covid and post-Covid years have had a considerable impact on local businesses, with domestic and international tourism very substantially hit during the pandemic, and taking some time to recover thereafter. The ‘Martians pub’ in the centre of Deans Marsh – after opening and closing in various guises over some years – is currently closed, and The Store (also in the heart of town) closed its post office branch in an effort to support the sustainability of the business. Both these businesses/properties have changed ownership in mid-2025. Amongst these local business impacts, Gentle Annie’s – emerging from the pandemic under new ownership – has become a much-loved gathering place for community members, with regular Friday evening openings over the warmer months and other public and private events throughout the year.

It appears that current conditions, economic climate and local demographics are all having an impact to creating a challenging environment for local business viability – yet most locals would agree these businesses are critical to the vitality, liveability and appeal of our town.

### *Deans Marsh Community Hall / Hub Redevelopment*

The condition of the Deans Marsh Hall — including the childcare facility and the Community Cottage has been an increasing concern for both the community and the Surf Coast Shire Council. In 2021, the Shire engaged a range of consultants and specialist contractors to thoroughly assess the building and advise on how best to meet the community’s future needs. Following this review, it was determined that, due to escalating structural deterioration and complex compliance issues, the only viable option was to replace the existing hall with a new, fit-for-purpose Hub. A new facility would not only resolve the current challenges but also significantly improve usability, accessibility, acoustics, layout and suitability as an emergency refuge.

A comprehensive community consultation and planning process was then undertaken with the support of a Shire and an appointed architectural firm. Community members expressed support for the new Hub and its proposed plans, although some concerns were raised regarding heritage and sustainability impacts associated with removing the

existing structure. In March 2024, the Surf Coast Shire Council approved the plans and allocated \$2.7 million in the 2026/27 budget as seed funding toward the project. The estimated cost to deliver the approved design in 2025 is \$8.41 million, with construction dependent on securing additional external funding. Further information about the Hub renewal process – including investigation findings, community engagement outcomes and project plans – is available from Surf Coast Shire Council.

### 3.2 What have we learned over the five years of implementation?

#### *Success factors & enablers*

- Our active, talented and diverse community are well positioned to effectively achieve positive change in line with The Plan’s aspirations.
- Our community, whilst diverse, is generally able to align in its broad vision and there is minimal resistance or conflict around the various actions and objectives within the plan.
- The informal structure of the plan – including lack of timelines and clear responsibilities – works well for our community, enabling collaboration and leadership to develop ‘organically’ by interested community members.

#### *Challenges, barriers and constraints*

- In our small community, there are a limited number of volunteers to draw upon, and care needs to be taken to avoid volunteer burnout within the relatively small group of repeat contributors.
- The current economic climate – including restricted government budgets and cost of living pressures – constrains availability of grant/philanthropic funding opportunities and may slow budget-dependent actions, though opportunities remain. We need to continue to ensure we pursue available opportunities, whilst remaining realistic about financial constraints, value, and opportunity cost.
- There may exist some tension between elements of The Plan which need to be considered and worked through in more detail – for example, retaining Deans Marsh as a small community vs economic limitations/lack of opportunities; or protecting our rural landscape and environment vs enabling more flexible land use opportunities.
- The actions in the ‘our local economy’ priority appear larger in scope (and therefore potentially less achievable) than those in the other two priorities. It might be useful to reconsider/re-express these actions to support ease of implementation, align with the format of the other priority areas, and ensure they optimally contribute to the desired outcomes.

#### *Opportunities*

- Support community awareness of The Plan and the opportunity to contribute new ideas and/or support development/implementation of existing actions.
- Harness the ideas and energy of new community members to progress initiatives that align and resonate with the broader community.

- Promote opportunities for further engagement of community members to bolster local volunteerism<sup>1</sup>.
- Clarify oversight/governance responsibilities for the current Plan and review/formalise such arrangements in developing the 2030-40 revision.
  - *Background:* A governance model was not established for the implementation of The Plan during its original inception. The Plan was developed by the Deans Marsh Community Cottage in partnership with the community. In 2024 the Deans Marsh Community Cottage formally passed The Plan over to the Community Action Network (CAN). CAN was established in response to The Plan's development and is a representative networking body of the major community and working groups present in the Deans Marsh District, and accessible to any community member who chooses to be actively involved. The CAN, whilst not a decision-making body, brings together a large representation of the community, including a representative of each of the seven formal groups in the community, and thus, is a credible central point in which new ideas, working groups and questions can be raised, and feedback can be sought in relation to moving forward with current or new elements of the plan.
  - There is an opportunity to clarify CAN's governance role in relation to the current plan (including initiating the 2030 revision), and it is recommended that a Governance model is workshopped and established as part of the 2030-2040 Plan consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> 2021 Census data indicates 29% of the community volunteered in the past 12 months, relative to a pre-pandemic Australian average of 36%.

## 4. Evaluation conclusions

The mid-term review concludes that:

- The vision and objectives of the Community Plan appear to still broadly reflect community aspirations.
- The 35 actions listed in the plan broadly remain relevant to our community – although there is a need to refine and/or further develop the ‘local economy’ section to provide additional detail and better align with the format and style of other sections.
- Whilst no timelines for implementation of Community Plan actions were formally set within the 10-year lifespan of the original plan, implementation appears to have progressed relatively well, with approximately three quarters of all actions at least commenced, and around 60% progressing well or completed.
- The informal nature of The Plan, including open timelines and loosely-defined actions, appear generally appropriate to our community and do not require ‘tightening up’ in any revision.
- The Plan does not clearly articulate how, by whom, or at whose direction any material changes to the Plan can/should be made – including as it nears the end of its current lifespan in 2030. Providing clarity on these oversight/governance arrangements would assist the community’s understanding of how and when the Plan can be changed, and accordingly could support improved community engagement, input and involvement.
- There is opportunity to start community engagement and begin working towards refining direction and evolving/developing new actions, well in advance of 2030 when the current plan expires. This will allow better continuity and streamlining and avoid excessive ‘downtime’ in implementation whilst a new plan is being formalised.

## 5. Recommendations/Suggestions

Based on the findings of the 2025 Mid Term Review of the Deans Marsh Community 2020-30, the following recommendations are made for community consideration and, as appropriate, adoption. It is envisaged that the Deans Marsh CAN provides a suitable forum to endorse, on behalf of the community, which recommendations should be supported/implemented.

RECOMMENDATION/SUGGESTIONS	PRIORITY
<b>Coordination &amp; oversight</b>	
1. Determine and formalise an appropriate group of community representatives (e.g. Community Action Network or Working Group?) to oversee Community Plan implementation and periodic revision/renew with support of the Deans Marsh Community Cottage.	H
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure appropriate monitoring of the Community Plan actions/achievements over the remaining five years of the current plan.</li> </ul>	M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure appropriate reporting (and celebration) of action progress to/with the local community.</li> </ul>	M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an appropriate and timely process/plan and schedule for the renewal of the plan in 2030, allowing ample time for suitable community engagement/consultation and a fluid transition to the new Plan.</li> </ul>	H
<b>Action amendments</b>	
1. Seek to establish a working group to help refine and further develop the economic actions in the current plan.	M
2. Other/new actions??	
<b>Community engagement</b>	
1. Ensure locals (and particularly new residents):	H
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are aware of the Community Plan and can readily access it</li> <li>are encouraged to (and know how to) get involved in implementing ideas</li> <li>are encouraged to contribute new ideas for local/community improvements</li> </ul>	
<b>Fostering new ideas</b>	
1. Provide opportunity and encourage new ideas from the community for inclusion in future plans.	M
This could include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a suitable mechanism for collecting and storing new ideas from community members (e.g. 'submit an idea' section on deansmarsh.org.au website?), for consideration and inclusion in future iterations of the Community Plan (i.e. start developing ideas now, in advance of a formal revision/update of the Plan)</li> <li>Brainstorming events/opportunities with the community.</li> </ul>	

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 – Action progress status and achievements to date

*Note: The listed status/achievements relative to these actions was based on anecdotal and collective knowledge as available to the Working Group at the time of preparing this review. It may not be fully accurate or complete.*

Table 3: Action implementation status (progress update) and summary of achievements to date

Key Actions	Status	Notes
<b>PRIORITY ONE: OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY</b>		
<b>1.1 Our community connections have broadened &amp; deepened</b>		
A. Create opportunities for community members to share skills and knowledge	Progressing well	Cottage provides a platform for local people to share skills & knowledge. Could we put in more detail e.g. what are the opportunities , attendance?
B. Facilitate opportunities to share and trade resources	Commenced (limited action)	Organically occurs through Facebook Community Page & Word of Mouth? CO-OP Working group (some progress, now stalled) Share-pantry at Cottage Deans Marsh Beekeepers Group actively share honey harvesting equipment
C. Facilitate a program of regular community social occasions	Progressing well	Cottage (including Community Dinner), Cricket, SPaRK, CFA, Landcare all providing regular programs & opportunities
D. Develop and deliver programs for our young people	Progressing well	Youth Group Active - Need more volunteer parents
E. Early Years Reference Groups including Deans Marsh principal/ prep teacher/ welfare teacher)	Not started	?
F. Kindergarten Readiness and School Readiness programs through Lorne Kindergarten	Progressing well	DMPS partnership with Lorne, Birregurra & Winchelsea
G. Playgroup established through First Time Parents Group (currently	Progressing well	Meli run Playgroup 2024-25

online due to pandemic)		
H. Extend SCSC/Deans Marsh Primary School Children’s Week collaboration Local Food Program	Progressing well	DMPS Kitchen Garden working with Cottage for Community Lunch annually & utilising the GMG Pantry & Community Garden
I. Develop and deliver programs to enable older residents to age in place	Progressing well	Positive Aging - Sue Cole with Cottage
J. Develop and deliver a program of social learning for pre-school aged children	Progressing well	Meli Playgroup Playgroup through Cottage School Holidays Programs Home School Playgroup Bamba?
K. Develop and deliver multi-generational social gatherings and groups	Progressing well	History Chats Pen Pals with DMPS & Community During COVID Positive Aging Activities e.g. Trivia event with DMPS Scrabble DMPS & Adults 2024 Community Dinners

**1.2 Our infrastructure supports the needs of all community members – now and in the future.**

A. Trial and evaluate Community and Public transport services	Progressing well	Juliet Beatty update?
B. Design a colour coded network of possible pathways with a funding plan	Progressing well	Streetscapes Working Group (\$40k Shire grant for street trees)? Pathways Working Group (currently dormant): - Plan developed with potential pathways. - Path delivered along DM-Birregurra. Other opportunities currently not progressing (worth revisiting)
C. Develop existing and new spaces that foster our community	Progressing well	“The Stage” at the oval/reserve. Reserve Maintained & Improved Grow Make Gather Community Gardens CFA Open to Community Meetings etc Cottage Lounge Area

## PRIORITY TWO: OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

### 2.1 Our natural environment is resilient and supports our industries – land use & planning

A. Further explore key community concerns and potential solutions to increase land use flexibility	Commenced (limited action)	Changes to SCS Policies? (regulations now facilitate second dwelling to 60m2 on the same lot, depending on zoning) Deans Marsh Structure Plan? Informally discussed/progressed through Working Group (now stalled)
B. Identify and analyse useful examples from other rural communities.	Commenced (limited action)	Informally discussed/progressed through Working Group (now stalled)
C. Investigate the available planning mechanisms available to facilitate our preferred outcomes	Commenced (limited action)	Informally discussed/progressed through Working Group (now stalled)
D. Lobby state and local Governments, where appropriate, for changes to current planning restrictions	Commenced (limited action)	Presentation (at Yan Yan Gurt West?) to Councillors on district visit, ~2 years ago.
E. Engage Surf Coast Shire Council to negotiate the best course of action to gain support	Not started	

### 2.2 We all contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures

A. Take action for our community to become 100% off grid, independent and self-reliant using renewable energy sources	Progressing well	PowerMaD Phase 1 & 2 Completed. Reassessed that not 100% off grid but focus on renewables. Grant obtained to facilitate the above
B. Deliver a comprehensive workshop, education and information program	Progressing well	PowerMaD Process, Geelong Sustainability Workshop & Home Assessments conducted
C. Facilitate the Deans Marsh Township Sustainability Plan	Not started	
D. Work together with Fire Agencies on township/district-based planning and community identified shelter options	Progressing well	SCS has the Hall as the Rescue / Relief location - Tool Kit under Sink in Main Kitchen. DMPS 5&6's Emergency Leadership Course. CFA Open Days & Info Sessions
E. Support the development of a range of target initiatives including community compost, local waste management and water	Progressing well	SCS Compost Bins in place. Recycling Station at the Cottage & School working well. Costs to recycle "hard to

recycling.		recycle” items are increasing.
F. Create an adaptation plan for food and fibre security	Not started	GMG Community Garden Private Groups - Share Gardening
G. Develop a food hub/ education centre	Not started	GMG? (also discuss with James McLennan) Co-op?
H. Create a regenerative agriculture action plan	Not started	
<b>2.3 Our streetscapes reflect our community identity</b>		
A. Develop a streetscape concept plan	Completed	Streetscapes Working Group Plan
B. Erect new community designed signs at the entrances to town	Not started	Other suggested action is to slow cars down as they enter town, e.g. paint the road to indicate a designated slow zone
C. New street tree plantings	Progressing well	Streetscapes Working Group update
D. Encourage more street art	Progressing well	Artistic Carving of the Tree in Playground (Community Initiatives Grant 2024)
E. Where possible reduce the number of existing Council signs	Not started	

**PRIORITY THREE: OUR LOCAL ECONOMY**

**3.1 Our produce, producers, and providers are well supported in local, regional and international markets**

<p>A. Support Local Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create and promote local branding</li> <li>2. Develop mentoring program for local business</li> <li>3. Explore community investment funds for new business development</li> <li>4. Arrange for sharing of resources i.e. equipment, premises, marketing</li> <li>5. Create a networking platform for local environmental groups and primary producers</li> </ol>	<p>Not started</p>	
<p>B. Encourage spending locally</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research local buying and spending habits</li> <li>2. Identify opportunities to process products or value add locally</li> <li>3. Develop a community currency</li> <li>4. Explore community cooperative models</li> </ol>	<p>Progressing well</p>	<p>COOP Group Update</p>
<p>C. Bring money in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider existing skills and hobbies that could be turned into a business</li> <li>2. Design and trial tailored ecotourism program</li> <li>3. Develop agricultural, value adding and tourism trails</li> <li>4. Complement regional anchors</li> </ol>	<p>Progressing well</p>	<p>Otway Harvest Trail?</p> <p>We (The Store) tried to start a local business group and identified an annual food festival as a starting point to build the town's profile and bring in \$\$ to the local economy, (Mushroom Festival). Fell over after 1 year due to a realisation that our population is the problem. The town needs something more permanent to encourage visitation, or it needs to grow to support the local economy. We've had multiple meetings with Council to build our case for support, suggested overnight camping at the Reserve, supported a rebuild of the toilet block, better signage for stopping in town, slowing tourists down.</p>

## Appendix 2 – Review methodology

In early 2025 Surf Coast Shire representatives informed the Deans Marsh Community Action Network (CAN) there was funding available for The Plan to undergo an update process. This initiative was discussed at a CAN meeting and agreed on in principle. A call was then put out to the wider Deans Marsh community to see if there was sufficient interest to form a Plan update working group.

The call for nominations for the community Working group was advertised through publicly-accessible channels including the Croaker and The Cottage newsletter as well as direct requests to various individuals. The community working group was accordingly formed and comprised the following members:

- Liza Bush
- Jamie Comley
- James Maund
- Virginia Morton
- Julie Ryan
- Caroline Shelbourne
- Toni Stevens

Helen Jennings (Wayfarer Consulting) was appointed by Surf Coast Shire as the external facilitator, supporting the review process.

The community working group met on five occasions to define the scope of the review, determine the preferred approach and discuss desired content and changes. The evaluative aspects of the review were undertaken at a high level only, utilising the representative community working group's collective knowledge of action progress, key changes/influences since the Plan's inception, and recommendations for future implementation and refinements.

This Mid-term Review document has been provided separately to the updated Community Plan document (which has been restructured, refined and reformatted – but not materially changed) to enable the Plan to remain a live, standalone document and to provide the freedom to note broader contextual changes, ongoing 'process considerations' and future recommendations, without disrupting the flow of the substantive Community Plan itself (as such inclusions may confuse the reader and interfere with the key purpose of the Plan).