



Ararat Rural City

# ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY VISION 2035

Over the next ten years Ararat Rural City Council will develop into a community characterised by:

*Strong population growth trajectories that buck trends in rural Victoria.* This goal is underpinned by a planning scheme that provides certainty to the community while providing capacity for further residential, industrial, and commercial growth. Council is committed to continuous and sustainable economic development which is focused on job creation through value adding in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and tourism. Ararat Rural City Council has a strategic advantage provided through the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct, a world leading example of a research partnership between a university and a rural community.

*Leadership in pragmatic approaches to local environmental management.* Ararat Rural City Council is a leader in managing a circular economy through a focus on local management of resource recovery. We are home to a number of successful bio-mass and waste-to-energy power generators which contribute significantly to our positioning as a net zero emissions community.

*Sustainable and effective local transport networks underpinned by careful technical and financial planning undertaken jointly between asset users and asset owners.* Enabling infrastructure in the form of roads, drainage and utilities is in place to support the social and economic growth of the municipality. Renewal of all asset classes is managed to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

*Communities that are enhanced by access to artistic, cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities that meet needs and expectations.* Volunteering is a key part of community life and its resurgence has breathed new life into a range of community organisations and activities. Ararat Rural City is a place that is known for its cultural inclusion and connection to Traditional Owners.

*Strong and robust democratic processes underpinned by transparent governance, good financial management and organisational innovation.* Ararat Rural City Council is seen as an exemplar of what rural local government can be and achieve for its community. It is a place of strength, compassion, self-reliance and new ideas. It is a place that knows how to make things happen!

## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, the Eastern Maar, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk, and Wadawurrung peoples, and recognise their connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



# ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COUNCIL PLAN 2025 - 2029



Ararat Rural City

## 1. GROWING OUR PLACE

*We will create the settings to support growth across our municipality through an improved planning scheme, actively pursuing new housing options and exploring models for in-migration.*

- 1.1 Develop a strategic land use planning framework with annual targets to support sustainable urban growth.
- 1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.
- 1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, educational institutions and not-for-for profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City to grow our population.

## 2. BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

*We will develop strong relationships to build and strengthen a diverse local economy, focused on creating jobs and wealth through adding value to existing strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and hospitality.*

- 2.1 Partner with Federation University Australia to deliver the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct with a focus on engaging with local agribusiness, industry and community.
- 2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging "behind the meter" power.
- 2.3 Engage with Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism and local businesses to improve the quality of experience and drive growth in high yield tourist outcomes.



### 3. PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

*We will take pragmatic approaches to ensuring that Ararat Rural City Council takes a regional lead in responsible environmental management and engagement with the circular economy.*

- 3.1 Position Ararat Rural City Council as a prime mover in driving circular economy policy in waste management, including local processing and management of recyclables, and in use of renewable energy for Council purposes.
- 3.2 Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste.
- 3.3 Partner with local organisations and scientific experts to implement the Environment Strategy 2024-34, with a focus on circular economy, emissions reduction and sustainable management of Council assets.

### 4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

*We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that deliver strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.*

- 4.1 Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2025-2035.
- 4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, are mindful of intergenerational equity and enhance community wellbeing and safety. These approaches will explore strategic use of debt to fund long-term assets and ensure Council's financial sustainability.

### 5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

*We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.*

- 5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making.
- 5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.
- 5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and Traditional Owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City into a more inclusive, welcoming, tolerant and diverse community.

### 6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

*We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at their centre through effective financial management, well measured risk management, and implementation of effective community engagement practices.*

- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.
- 6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.
- 6.3 Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while ensuring that Councillors' roles as elected community representatives are understood and reflected in decision-making.

# MEASURES OF SUCCESS



Ararat Rural City

## GROWING OUR PLACE

- Achieve strategic land use planning framework targets on an annual basis.
- Increase available residential land to support housing availability by 600 lots by June 2029.
- Increase residential housing stock 300 properties by June 2029.
- Ensure that 25% of all new residential housing is affordable housing.
- Grow the population of the municipality by 1000 by June 2029.

## BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

- Increase jobs in local economy by 15% by June 2029.
- Achieve Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct annual engagement and development targets.
- Establish circular economy business park and lead tenants in agricultural value add sector by June 2029.
- Increase tourism visitation and stays in Ararat Rural City by 50% by 30 June 2029.
- Increase 4 star and above accommodation options by 80 by 2029.
- Establish a municipal measure of economic growth for annual reporting.

## PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Decrease waste to landfill by 20% by June 2029.
- Decrease total waste and recyclables tonnage collected by 20% by 2029.
- Achieve annual Environment Strategy outcomes.

## DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Progress the outcomes of the Aradale Development Strategy.
- Achieve quarterly meetings with the Rural Roads Group that will inform the annual capital works program.
- Meet annual targets for Urban Gravel to Seal Program.
- Implement key infrastructure projects from the Asset Plan 2025-2035 during the planning period.

## ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

- Increase annual visitation to Ararat Gallery TAMA by 20% p.a.
- Increase community use of Ararat Town Hall by 10% p.a.
- Increase audience sizes at commercial and funded performances at Ararat Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase participation in community organisations in Ararat Rural City by 5% per annum.

## STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Continue to deliver Council budgets which deliver public value and return efficiency dividends where appropriate.
- Continue to deliver effective risk management processes approved by Audit and Risk Committee.
- Continue to deliver community engagement processes which show longitudinal signs of improvement.