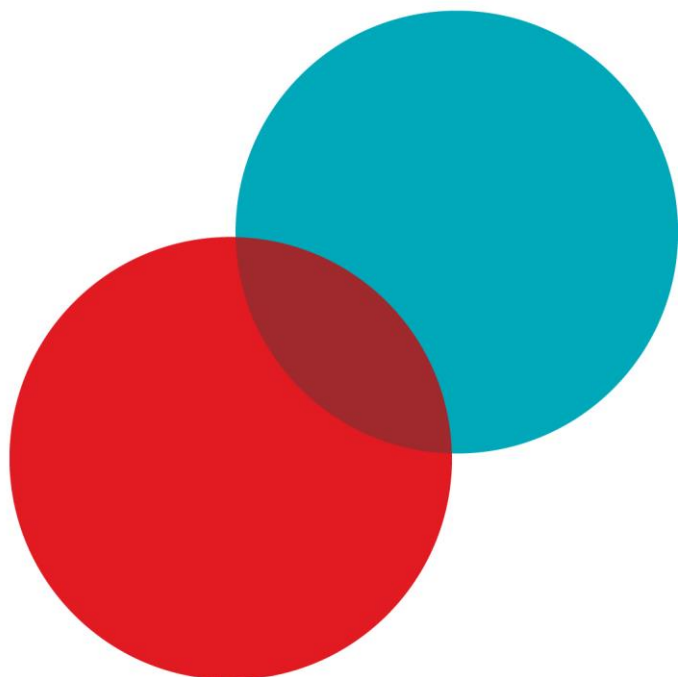


# **District Council of Mount Barker Strategic Planning**


## **Community Engagement Report**



## District Council of Mount Barker Strategic Planning Community Engagement Report

Prepared for the District Council of Mount Barker

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**District Council of Mount Barker Strategic Planning  
Engagement Report**

Prepared for the District Council of Mount Barker

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## INTRODUCTION

The District Council of Mount Barker (the Council) has embarked on a process to develop a new strategic plan for the District. The purpose of the Mount Barker District Strategic Plan is to:

- Provide a vision for the District;
- Guide Council and its community in ensuring a healthy economy, society and environment; and
- Align Council activities with Federal, State and Regional priorities through linkages with relevant strategies such as the South Australian Strategic Plan and the Planning Strategy.

The Strategic Plan will assist Council to work towards the shared aspirations of residents, workers, businesses and visitors in the District. Success in realising the vision will depend on partnerships with State and Federal Government, neighbouring councils, the private sector, community groups and individuals.

A key component of the development of the Plan is to engage with residents from across the District to identify their priorities going forward. This approach confirms Council's commitment to building a plan from the community up.

Consilius was engaged in partnership with Emily Jenke to work with the Council to undertake a number of innovative community engagement initiatives. These activities were specifically designed to complement the existing knowledge and activities undertaken by Council during this time and recent previous engagement activities.

This report provides a summary of the key themes, values, issues and opportunities raised throughout the engagement process. While most of the information has been gleaned from the activities undertaken by Consilius Pty Ltd, it also takes into account the feedback received from the complementary activities undertaken by the Council and previous engagement activities.

This report should be read in conjunction with the report titled '**District Council of Mount Barker Strategic Planning- Summary of Engagement Activities**'.

## THE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The engagement approach was tailored and targeted to the situation, with a large focus being on connecting with **new or under represented people/groups** and **staff**.

The approach used was developed in recognition of the Council's planning framework and approach. It built on the work already undertaken and focussed on areas which required further input and clarification. It also built on a 'what we already know' approach – where input from the community was required to provide more insight and depth to what Council already knows about its community and their needs.

Figure 1 outlines the Council's planning framework and over the page the alignment of the engagement approach is shown in Figure 2 with the proposed structure of the Council's Strategic Plan.



**Figure 1- Planning framework**

In addition to the Planning Framework the Council have agreed to five goal areas as the basis for its new Strategic Plan:

1. The Economy;
2. The Urban Environment;
3. The Natural Environment;
4. Community Wellbeing; and
5. Governance and Leadership.

These five goal areas were used to structure conversations and participation in the engagement activities.

## THE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH



Figure 2- Strategic Plan Alignment with the Engagement Approach

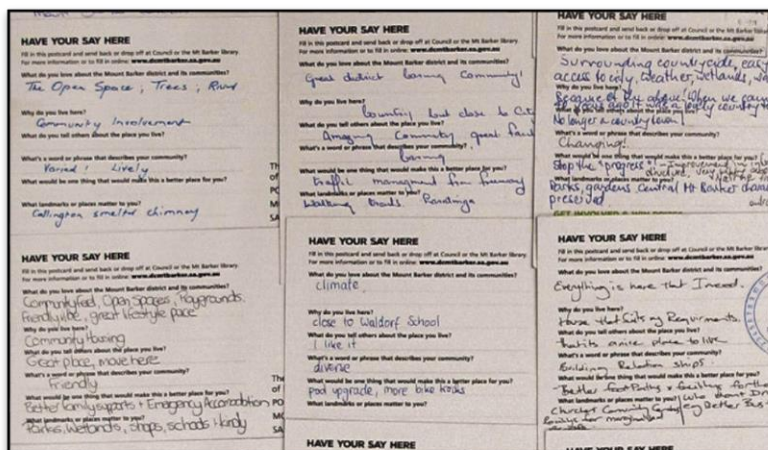
## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The engagement activities have been undertaken in partnership between Consilius and officers from DC Mount Barker. Outlined below is a brief summary of the activities:

1. **Photo Booth** - at shopping centres and workshops locations capturing over 100 photos and messages;
2. **School Photo booth** - at three local high school, including over 50 students;
3. Workshop with the **DC Mount Barker Leadership group**;
4. Workshop with **DC Mount Barker Councillors**;
5. Three Placed based Workshops including:
  - **Callington** (with over 50 people in attendance),
  - **Meadows** (approximately 15 people in attendance),
  - **Mount Barker** ( approximately 8 people in attendance);;
6. Workshop with the '**Barker Crew**' Skate Park Coaches ( 5 people)
7. Workshop with **Seniors** with over 50 in attendance as part of 'Top Hat';
8. **Commuter's** - a workshop held on the bus from Mount Barker to Adelaide- over 40 people participated in this lively event which also attracted media coverage from the Courier;
9. Workshops with **DC Mount Barker staff (five workshops)**
10. **Survey** - available on line – over 60 respondents; and
11. **Postcards** - over 80 respondents.



### Figure 3- Feedback from Photo-booth



#### Figure 4 - Postcard feedback

**More than 400 people (excluding council staff and elected members) participated in engagement activities.**

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

### Previous Research and Engagement

The engagement process to inform the development of the Strategic Plan has included consideration and inclusion of previous consultation initiatives. More recently this has included the following projects:

- Gawler Street and Nairne Main road renewal;
- Mount Barker Market Research;
- Regional Public Health Plan; and
- Regional Town Centre Development Plan Amendment.

Information gleaned from these consultation initiatives (among many others) will all help inform the development of the new Strategic Plan

*A summary of the feedback from participants at each of the above events is provided within the report titled 'District Council of Mount Barker Strategic Planning – Summary of Engagement Activities'.*



Figure 5 - Example of Promotion of Engagement Activities



## WHAT WE HEARD

Each of the engagement activities focussed around asking the following key questions (albeit sometimes in slightly different ways to suit the activity):

1. What do you value about the District?
2. What concerns you at the moment? and
3. What opportunities exist for improvement / what would you prioritise?

A technique known as mind mapping was used to collate the information received and identify the most common themes raised. The outcomes of these mind maps are shown in Figures 3-5 which provide a graphic representation of the key themes that arose across all engagement activities around the above three questions.

### Question 1- What do you value about the District?

The feedback around this question across all of the engagement activities was fairly consistent.

The most common themes raised are outlined in the Mindmap at Figure 6. There are a number of specific issues and values within each theme. The most common values raised included:

- Our Heritage;
- The Rural Township Feel;
- Accessibility;
- Strong Sense of Community;
- Our Natural Environment; and
- Access to Services.

Safety was also raised, however much less regularly.

It is important to consider not only what was said, but how often. Some themes and issues were raised at every engagement opportunity while others less often as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1- Values Mentioned**

WHAT WE VALUE	HOW OFTEN IT WAS MENTIONED			
	A few Times	Often	A lot	All the time
Our Heritage				
Rural Township				
Accessibility				
Environment				
Community				
Services				

Figure 6 over the page describes the most common themes raised at all engagement activities relating to 'what we value'.

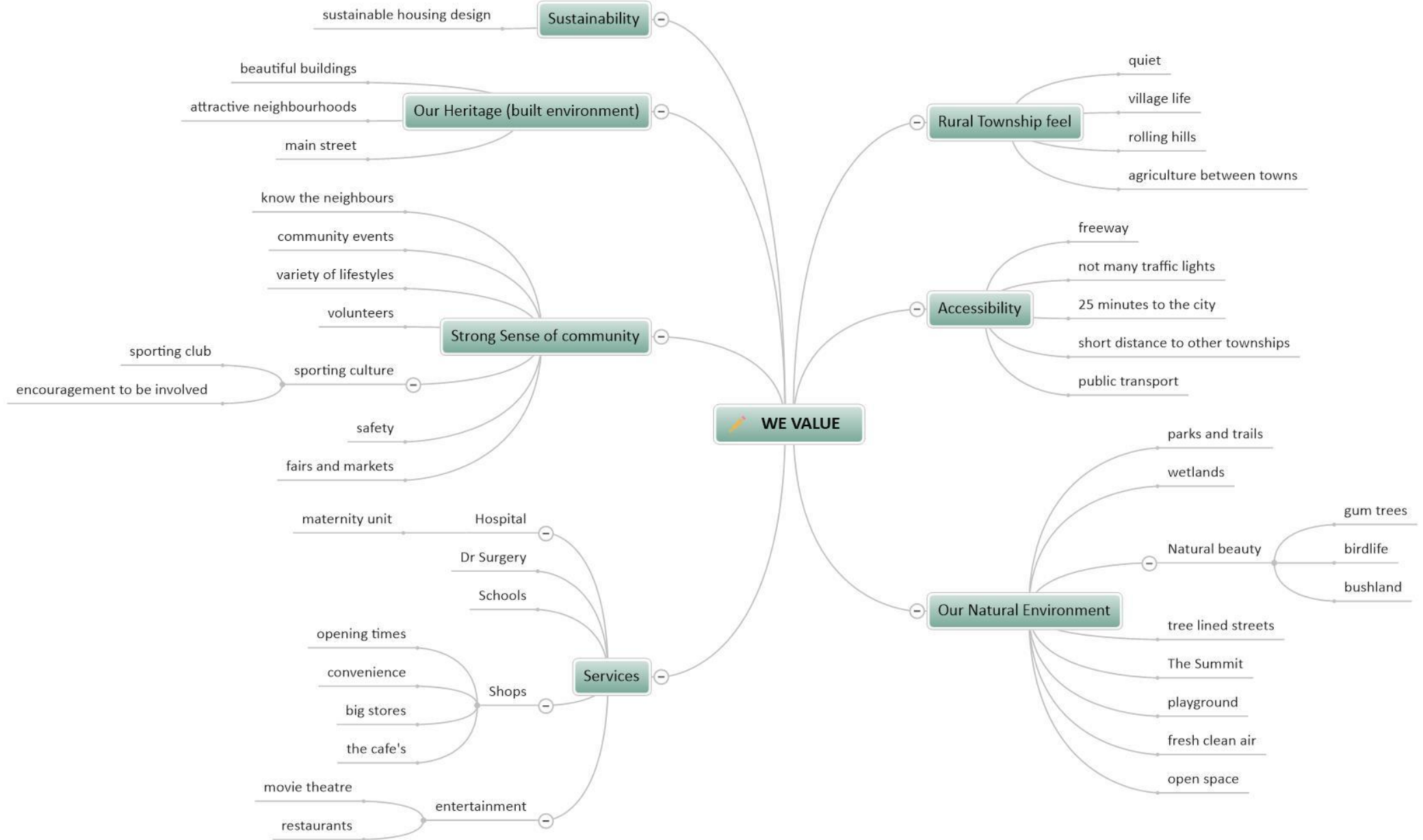


Figure 6- Mapping of Most Commonly Mentioned Values

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Question 2- What concerns you at the moment?

The most common themes raised are described in Figure 7 over the page. Each theme contains specific issues which have been grouped together. The most common concerns included:

- Poor development – not strategic, often not consistent approaches
- Infrastructure to meet needs of growing community
- The economy – access to local jobs
- Community Facilities – shared public spaces
- Roads & Congestion in a growing population
- Our Health Services– 24 hour emergency service etc.
- Loss of Local Heritage – predominately natural and built heritage
- The Natural Environment – preservation as a food bowl
- Lack of Public Transport to meet growing population needs especially in outlying towns such as Meadows and Callington
- Youth – lack of things to do, and to a lesser extent jobs for youth
- Sustainability – waste, energy and housing design

*A theme that ran through all of these concerns was the importance of maintaining the identity of and paying attention to smaller townships.*

Table 2 below outlines how often the concerns were raised.

WHAT CONCERNS YOU	HOW OFTEN IT WAS MENTIONED			
	A few Times	Often	A lot	All the time
Poor development				
Infrastructure				
The economy				
Community facilities				
Roads and Congestion				
Health Services				
Local Heritage				
Public Transport				
Youth Issues				
Sustainability				

Figure 7 over the page describes the most common themes raised at all engagement activities relating to ‘what concerns you.

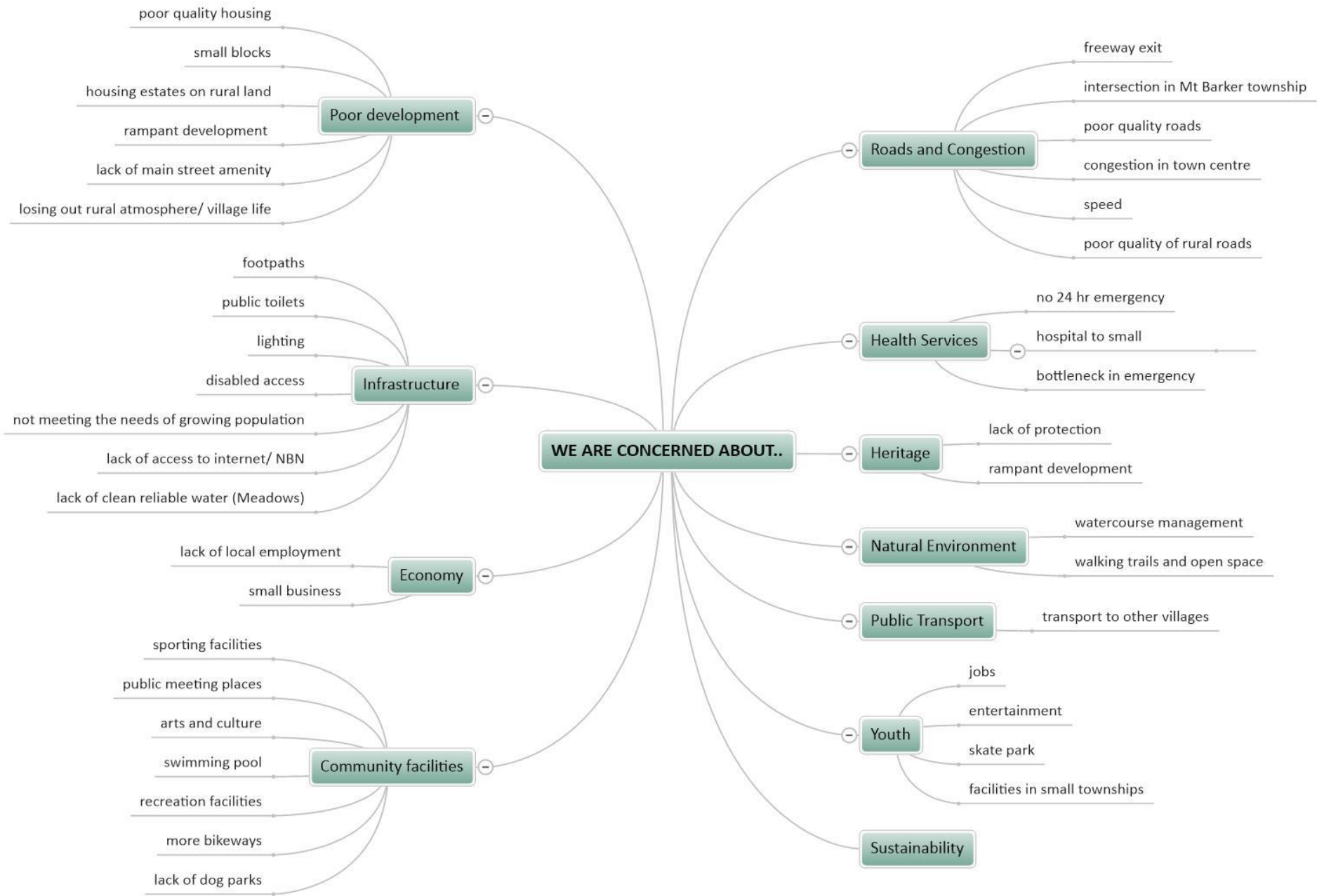


Figure 7 -Most Commonly Raised Concerns

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Question 3 - What opportunities exist for the District?

The opportunities have been grouped under the five goal areas identified by the Council. Table 3 summarises the most common opportunities/ priorities mentioned and Figure 5 provides the map of the opportunities.

**Table 3- Most Common Opportunities raised.**

Focus Area	Opportunities	
	Mentioned Often/ a lot	Mentioned occasionally
The Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support small business</li> <li>• Build on importance of agriculture and food</li> <li>• Tourism opportunities such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation</li> <li>- Food and wine trail</li> <li>- Caravan park</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an innovation hub</li> <li>• More events such as festivals (also mentioned as part of community well-being)</li> </ul>
Community well Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide facilities and activities for youth (in small townships and Mount Barker)</li> <li>• More sporting/ community facilities in townships</li> <li>• Develop integrated sporting facility in Mount Barker</li> <li>• More community events</li> <li>• Access to 24 hour medical facilities</li> <li>• Improve walking trails (lighting, link small towns)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a sporting facility plan for the whole region</li> </ul>
The Urban Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well planned development that incorporates sustainable design</li> <li>• Establish a buffer zone between towns</li> <li>• Protect farming land from development</li> <li>• Improve frequency, after hours public transport</li> <li>• Improve footpaths for safety</li> <li>• Fix up the vacant land in Mount Barker</li> <li>• Town Square in Mount Barker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport between townships</li> <li>• Reinstate a train</li> <li>• Create another freeway interchange</li> <li>• Clean up townships (e.g. Callington)</li> <li>• Create a heritage precinct in Callington</li> <li>• Provide more secure water supply to Meadows</li> </ul>

## WHAT WE HEARD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautification of town square in Mount Barker and other townships</li> </ul>	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better communication and engagement with community</li> <li>• Transparent decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closer with business and industry leaders</li> <li>• Be an employer of choice</li> <li>• Adopt a 'can-do' attitude</li> <li>• Work closer with joining Councils (particularly in Callington)</li> </ul>
The Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education programs</li> <li>• Expand the wetlands</li> <li>• Upgrade the Summit</li> <li>• Maintain and improve open space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect remnant vegetation</li> <li>• More wildlife corridors</li> <li>• More native trees</li> </ul>

**Figure 8 over the page describes the most common opportunities raised at all engagement activities.**

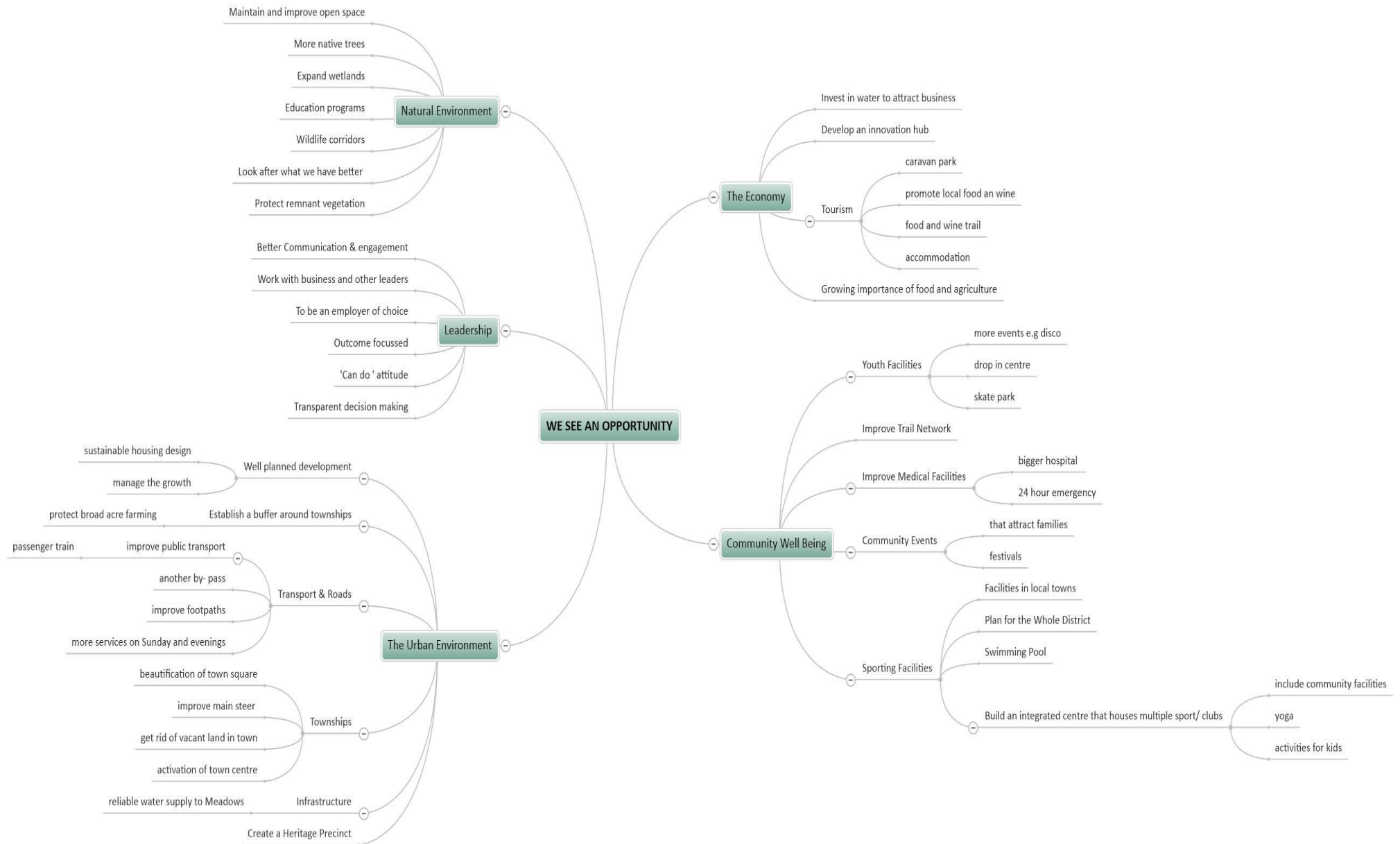


Figure 8- Opportunities

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## INSIGHTS

The engagement activities highlighted a number of important learnings and key messages which should be used to inform the development of the Strategic Plan and future engagement activities including:

- The willingness and eagerness of the community to participate in the future planning of their community. This was evident through the high participation rates and quality of input by community in all of the engagement activities. This should be both respected and embraced. Going forward the community will now want to see how their views have been considered and captured, and this must be evident in the plan. The Council must consider how to best recognise community effort & close the feedback loop to community in a genuine manner.
- People choose to live in the District and have positive views about the area. There remain many opportunities to build on this.
- The importance and high value held regarding the 'semi-rural, village style life' that is offered by living in the district. The community have a strong sense that the Council area is a community of villages and each village has a unique character and community. This is a shared sentiment, and has also been expressed by Council.
- That the townships each have specific issues and priorities that need to be reflected within the Strategic Plan. While these communities value and understand the importance of a district plan, they want to see their own villages' needs reflected in a unique way.
- That what is not mentioned can be as valuable as what is mentioned. For example safety was highly valued but not raised as a concern.

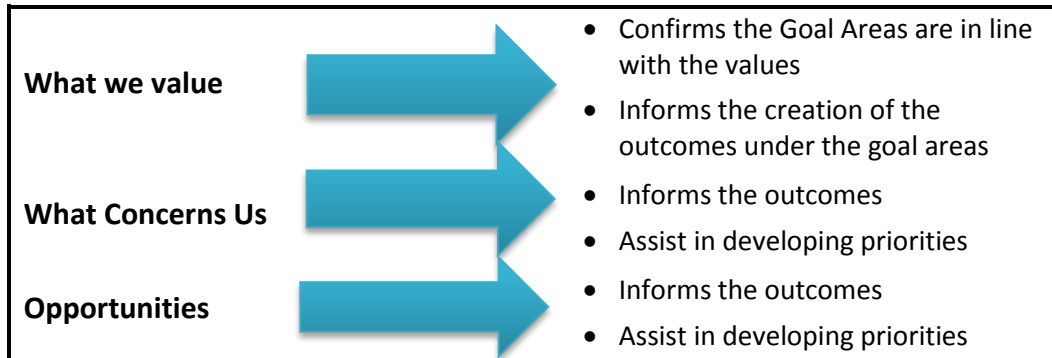
In preparing the strategic plan the Council should consider the following:

- Building the structure and design of the Plan to reflect the villages. This could include providing a summary of how the plan relates to each village, and when identifying priority actions ensuring that there is a balance between those that occur within Mount Barker and those that occur in other district areas.
- Look back into the detail of the community feedback from the engagement activities. This report has highlighted the common themes and issues raised, however there may be some great ideas and/or important issues that have been raised by specific individuals or groups that have not been captured.
- That those engaged should receive some feedback about what 'Council heard' and what they 'did with that input'.
- A number of issues and opportunities (or priorities) identified are not the responsibility of Council (e.g. public transport, some development issues and health issues). However many of these issues are of high importance to the Community. Council should consider how to respond and support the community in progressing these important issues. Importantly Council should also consider their role in establishing robust partners with these agencies in order to provide the best possible service to their community.



## INFORMING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The information gained through the community engagement activities will underpin the drafting of the Strategic Plan. How the information will be included within the Plan is described below in Figure 9.



**Figure 9- Incorporating the community feedback into the Strategic Plan.**

Over the page Table 4 provides an example of how the specific feedback could appear within the Strategic Plan. The example is for illustrative purposes only and does not constitute a draft outline of the Strategic Plan.

The table is not a comprehensive list, rather a snapshot to demonstrate how the information could be used.

Goal Area	Directions	Strategy (examples)	Priority deliverable (2-3 per Goal)
<b>The Economy</b> Supporting employment, investment and business outcomes	Support for Small Business		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek partnerships to develop a Business Innovation Hub</li> <li>Undertake a feasibility study into developing a food and wine trail</li> <li>Develop caravan/ camping park opportunities</li> </ul>
	Create local jobs	Support the food and agriculture industry	
	Grow the Tourism sector		
	Attract new business to the district		
<b>The Urban Environment</b> Creating liveable townships for a growing population	Protect our built Heritage		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out footpath upgrades in high frequented areas</li> <li>Investigate a secure water supply for Meadows</li> <li>Promote and reinforce the existing buffer zones between townships</li> <li>Investigate the potential for a Heritage Precinct in Callington.</li> </ul>
	Provide infrastructure and Services		
	Support planned and sustainable growth	Promote sustainable design and buildings	
	Transport infrastructure and services to meet growth	Work with State government to improve public transport frequency and access to small townships.	
<b>The Natural Environment</b> Protecting and enhancing the local environment for future generations	Manage and improve open space		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend walking trails</li> <li>Upgrade the Mount Barker Summit</li> </ul>
	Protect and improve biodiversity and natural environments	Progress an integrated Biodiversity Management Strategy	
		Continue to protect remnant vegetation	
	Take action on Climate change	Reduce emissions	
	Provide Environmental Education opportunities		

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Goal Area	Directions	Strategy (examples)	Priority deliverable (2-3 per Goal)
<b>Community Wellbeing</b> Providing support and opportunity for all of our Communities	Provide Community and sporting facilities	Plan for district wide sporting facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with State Government to develop 24 hour emergency medical services.</li> <li>• Create more Youth events in townships</li> <li>• Investigate holding more festivals or create a 'Celebrate the Hills Festival'</li> </ul>
	Support community health and well being	Identify and upgrade community facilities in townships to meet demand	
	Develop our Youth		
	Create a vibrant District		
<b>Governance and Leadership</b> Being a 'can- do' Council that drives community outcomes	Be a High Performing Council	Become an employer of Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and improve communication with the community</li> </ul>
	Engage with the community		
	Build collaborative partnerships	Work closely with business leaders Work closely with adjoining Councils to develop mutual outcomes	
	Manage Council finances		