



EILDON COMMUNITY PLAN

2022—2027

Our Vision:

We value our past, ensuring our history is recorded and available, and acknowledge the Taungurung, the traditional owners of the land.

We embrace the present, delighting in, and preserving our beautiful natural environment.

We look to the future, developing our community's infrastructure and cultural assets, and supporting the health and well-being of all who live, work and play in Eildon.

We thank our Eildon community volunteers, past and present, for their tireless efforts and successes.



Top Priority Ideas for Eildon Community Plan

Priorities with Action Teams:

- **Advocating to attract a medical practice/doctor for Eildon**
- **Opening a community-run gym**
- **Creating an artistic mural on the Eildon spillway**
- **Forming a dedicated group to promote the unique asset that is the Eildon Pondage**
- **Live music for Eildon**
- **Forming a rowing club**

Priorities without Action Teams at time of writing Community Plan:

- Community Cinema
- Tours of hydro and dam wall

Other ideas with strong community support during May voting process:

- Town clean-up days - get it looking loved!
- Christmas decorations for Eildon
- Games clubs e.g board games, chess, table tennis

Other ideas with strong community support during May voting process: ctd

- Oral history project - capturing stories from older residents and others with long family history in Eildon
- Farmers market
- Hard rubbish: Community-run hard rubbish collection
- Brand and Identity: Community group to work on town identity (different from lake) - possibly nature tourism? Outdoors Mecca of Victoria? Eildon Village? Considering something iconic at town entry eg trout or bicycle related
- Friends of the Pondage - advocacy and action around pondage
- Community garden or co-op/share garden
- Pump track below the tennis courts

Existing community facilities, groups or events that received strong support during the Community Planning prioritisation process:

- **Eildon Twilight Market**

We want to support the market to continue, it's really great for Eildon.

- **Eildon Mountain Bike Park**

We want to support the Murrindindi Cycle Club in maintaining the existing mountain bike trails and future developments to expand the trail network as this is an important asset for our community.

- **Bushfire preparedness**

We have a strong CFA in Eildon and we know the CFA can help us with planning for bushfires and how our community could help each other.

- **Eildon Community Centre**

The Eildon Community Centre is a valuable yet underutilised community facility. We want to support the Eildon Community Centre and see it be further developed for community usage.

Top Priority Ideas for Eildon Community Plan
ctd...



Who We Are: Greater Eildon & Taylor Bay :

Population 1,020

(From 2021 ABS Data)

OUR AGES

104 are under 15 years

70 are between 15 and 24 years

498 are between 25 and 65 years

296 are between 65 and 84 years

52 are over 85 years—that's 5% of the population

Median age is 56 - older than the state average of 38 years

HOW WE LIVE

43% of the population are single person households

Of those who do not live alone, the family make—up is:

59% are couples without children at home, and 21% are couples with children

17% are single parent families

MORE ABOUT US

2% of the population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

5% of the population have served in the Australian Defence Forces

Median household income is \$932, compared to the state weekly median income of \$1, 759

78% were born in Australia; 5% born in the U.K and 1% each born in N.Z and India. 5% of households speak a non English language

56% of the population have at least one long-term health condition with arthritis, asthma and mental health conditions being the leading conditions



Our Story So Far ...

Getting Started:

In November:

It all began in November 2021 with a meeting at the Visitor's Centre to hear from Anna Paix, Community Planning Officer, telling us all about what Community Planning is, how it has worked in our neighbouring towns and how, here in Eildon, we too can take advantage of this program.

Our local enthusiasm for our town meant that more than 15 people came along to what was expected to be a gathering of a small few at the Eildon Visitors Centre. Following this meeting a *Core Team* was formed to work along with Anna to work together to follow the process of the program. To date there have been a total of eight community members involved at various points, we are currently sitting with five members.

In December:

Across December and January, the Core Team worked together to start planning for gathering ideas from the community; communicating, and getting as many people as possible from all segments of the Eildon community engaged with the program.

Gathering everyone's thoughts and ideas:

February - April : The Community BBQ

We launched our Community Planning program on February 26th, 2022 with a free community BBQ in Moore Park. More than 70 people attended. We displayed ideas we already had, collected new ideas, sought input on a vision for Eildon and a list of people's thoughts on 'what we love' about Eildon. At the same time, online engagement was set up on the Loop, Murrindindi Shire Council's engagement platform and more than 60 people contributed ideas via this forum to add to our collection.

Community Conversations:

Following the BBQ we held five Community Conversations designed to provide an opportunity to explore complex issues and broad themes that seemed to have a lot of support online and at the BBQ. These events had between twenty and thirty

people come along, some even being followed up with smaller gatherings to continue the conversations. The topics were varied, covering a wide range of interests

Community Conversations:

March: Arts, Culture ; Heritage and Tracks Trails and the Great Outdoors

April: Pub and Activating Unused Spaces; Lake and Pondage

May: Ideas for Locals- Community Connection & Health

Choosing our favourite ideas:

May: The Community Dinner:

On 28 May 2022 we held a Community Dinner for everyone to come together to share a meal, to consider all the ideas and to vote for the projects they felt would make the most difference for Eildon now.

Even though it was a typical chilly Eildon evening more than 60 people attended, enjoying the warmth of conversation and the delicious soups cooked and served by the Eildon Bowling Club. Our Community Centre hummed with buzz of engaged and excited conversations about the large range of ideas posted all around the walls.

In addition, 6 people who couldn't attend had sent through their early votes so their preferences could be included in tally as well. Here's the results:

- **Eight priorities emerged. We held table discussions for interested people about all these ideas, with the aim of building an Action Team for each priority.**
- **Six of the eight projects formed Action Teams, meaning those ideas have a team of people ready to start bringing them to life**
- **Ideas that were either business opportunities or could not be community-led were removed from voting process. These ideas were passed onto relevant authorities as community feedback.**

Involving our Youngest People :

We also talked to the primary school students about these new projects, making sure that the people doing the projects remember to consider children and young people as they plan.

And Now, What's Next?

This isn't the end of the story. Our Action Teams are meeting and working on each of their projects. So, these are gradually coming to life. You may wonder about all the other many ideas we gathered over the process. These are all very valuable and are included here in our plan for future reference. Many of them had strong community support shown in through the voting even though they weren't in the top 8. The beauty of Community Planning is that we now have a great list of ideas and any idea that has an action team formed to work on it can get up and running. After all this whole process is powered by community effort so talk to us if you're keen to get started on one of these other ideas. We can help you get started.

Our Story So Far ctd....



Our History (1)

For tens of thousands of years the Taungurung people lived on, and cared for, the area we now call Eildon.. Some of the first Europeans to settle in the area, Mr and Mrs Archibald Thom arrived in 1846, took up Eildon Station, a run of 25,500 hectares. The name was chosen because the area reminded them of Mrs Thom's birthplace in the Eildon Hills in Scotland.

The small town of Darlingford, near the Big and Goulburn Rivers came into being in the 1860's after gold was discovered in the area. It had seven hotels, five policemen and log gaol, shops, post office and a slab hut used as a school. Small schools at Enoch's Point, Big River, Upper Thornton, Rubicon, Eildon Weir and Sugarloaf Waterworks School, which eventually became Eildon State School No 3931. The small schools opened and closed or operated part time with each other as populations fluctuated.

SUGARLOAF RESERVOIR: Construction began in 1915, and after delays due to World War 1, was completed in 1929. Sugarloaf had a capacity of about 10% of the current dam and resulted in the flooding of the township of Darlingford. Work on the reservoir saw the rise of the new shanty town of Eildon, and the State Rivers Water Supply Commission began erecting some housing, although tents and makeshift bag houses (from sacks waterproofed with tallow), also served. A State School was built and also served as a church and community hall. The original cemetery at Darlingford was relocated to its present site in 1915 and is officially named the Eildon Weir (Darlingford) Cemetery.

THE GREATER EILDON DAM PROJECT began post World War 2, in 1951, and was completed in 1956. Expected to take 5 years to fill, exceptionally wet weather in 1956 saw it fill to its 3,334,158 Megalitre capacity in 18 months. Hydro electricity is generated both there and at the Pondage outlet. In 2004 the height of the dam wall was increased.

THE TOWN: Layout for the town began in 1950, and 300 pre-cut houses from England for the families were complemented by 190 temporary houses and hostel buildings, accommodating 1,275 workers. Shops were originally in High St, (now Moore Park), with the first block of shops in the town square being built in 1954. The cinema, (Billabong Café) showed movies every night, and live entertainment also took place.

Government entities: the State Electricity Commission (SEC), State Rivers and Water Supply Commission (SR&WC), as well as Utah were originally housed in what would become the Eildon Hospital, before new office were established.

Our History (2)

SPORTING CLUBS are often the social hub of country towns, and Eildon offered quite a few avenues for locals to display their sporting prowess!

Over the years, Eildon has had a stand-alone Football Club, Cricket Club, Rifle Club, Pistol Club, Water Ski Club, Ladies' Gym Club, Badminton, Tennis, Darts and others.....apologies if your club has been omitted! Today, the Golf, Bowling and Murrindindi Cycle Clubs are going from strength to strength.

THE SWIMMING POOL: In 1957, an 11 year-old drowned in the pondage. This was the catalyst for the town to lobby for a safe swimming pool. This finally opened on 29th February 1964. The final cost, including fencing, lights etc was \$26,500. Upgrades have taken place over the years, and although an early attempt at solar heating was abandoned. Now, the 'mushrooms', shade sails and hot showers add to everyone's enjoyment.

THE COMMUNITY CENTRE: Whilst the Community Centre is located beside the Primary School, back in 1973 there were plans for a 'Sporting Complex' to be built at the oval, between the Progress Hall and the Cricket Pavilion. Eventually the present site was decided upon with the Alexandra Shire, the Education Department, government grants and nearly \$20,000 raised by the Community Centre Committee to make up the \$240,000 needed. Work done on a voluntary basis by local groups and individuals was valued at \$120,000. It was officially opened in 1981 and has been used for many indoor sports, and the Alexandra Secondary College Deb Ball. The upstairs meeting room and well set up kitchen adding value.

EILDON HOSPITAL: By 1921 Eildon had a cottage hospital, and with the coming of Utah, modified temporary buildings served from 1953 to 1980 when the new hospital opened. Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home was attached to the Eildon and District Hospital in 1991, until the hospitals' closure in 1993. It was extended in 2005 and provides a range of care levels.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY BRIGADE: During the Eildon dam enlargement in the 1950s the Eildon Fire Brigade was registered formally with the CFA on 9 September 1952. The Fire Station in Hillside Ave was constructed by the SR&WSC in the mid-1950s. As the town grew and the brigades risk profile changed and expanded, the present station in High Street was built and opened on 13 September 2015. The original bell, still stamped SR&WSC, has been relocated to the new site. The current brigade consists of 34 enthusiastic and active members. Operational members are highly qualified with extensive experience. Continuous training is required to meet changing risks. These risks that members respond to are: structure fires both industrial and domestic, Wildfire state-wide and interstate, and Eildon Lake marine incidents including Medivac, Police assist and Ambulance assist along with support to other agencies. During the Black Saturday fires 14 members received the National Emergency Medal for outstanding commitment.

Apart from the new 5 bay station with conference and meeting areas, the brigade has a large tanker, a smaller rural tanker, a forward command vehicle, a firefighter transport vehicle, and a large very well-equipped 10metre, 500hp Fire Rescue boat permanently moored on the Lake.

CHURCHES: Eildon was home to three Churches – Anglican, (now the museum), Uniting (now a private dwelling), and St Matthews Catholic Church, which is still open for worship on a weekly basis.

EILDON ACTION INCORPORATED is the body which oversees many of the towns' activities, including:

THE EILDON DAMS MUSEUM, located behind the Visitor Centre, is open by appointment. The dedicated volunteers have curated a fascinating snapshot into our past. It opened in November 2017 and is dedicated to the memory of Margaret McKernan.

EILDON VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE is located in the original Eildon Library building (now replaced by a Mobile library service). Prior to 2019, when the Covid epidemic dislocated all our lives, the Fire Fighters Credit Union provided banking services, and the building also acted as a Resource Centre, with public access computers. Today the building also has meeting space for community groups, a book swap, tourist information and the RSL display.

LANDCARE and the newly established EILDON TWILIGHT MARKET (2021) also operate under this umbrella organisation.

EILDON LIONS: From their home in 'The Lions ' Den' in Riverside Drive, Lions cater for events, run wood raffles and are involved in almost every activity in the town requiring man (or woman) power. They also operate the Big River Camp.

Today, tourism is a major part of Eildon's economy, and houseboats are penned at the Eildon Boat Club, Lake Eildon Marina and Darlingford Waters Boat Club at Jerusalem Creek Marina.

Camping is available at Lake Eildon National Park, Jerusalem Creek (and further towards Jamieson), as well as in the Rubicon Valley.

Public Caravan Parks, (Breeze, the Pondage and Eildon Waters Holiday Park), and the private Boulevard Caravan Park, as well as the Getaway and Eildon Lake Motels cater for visitors.

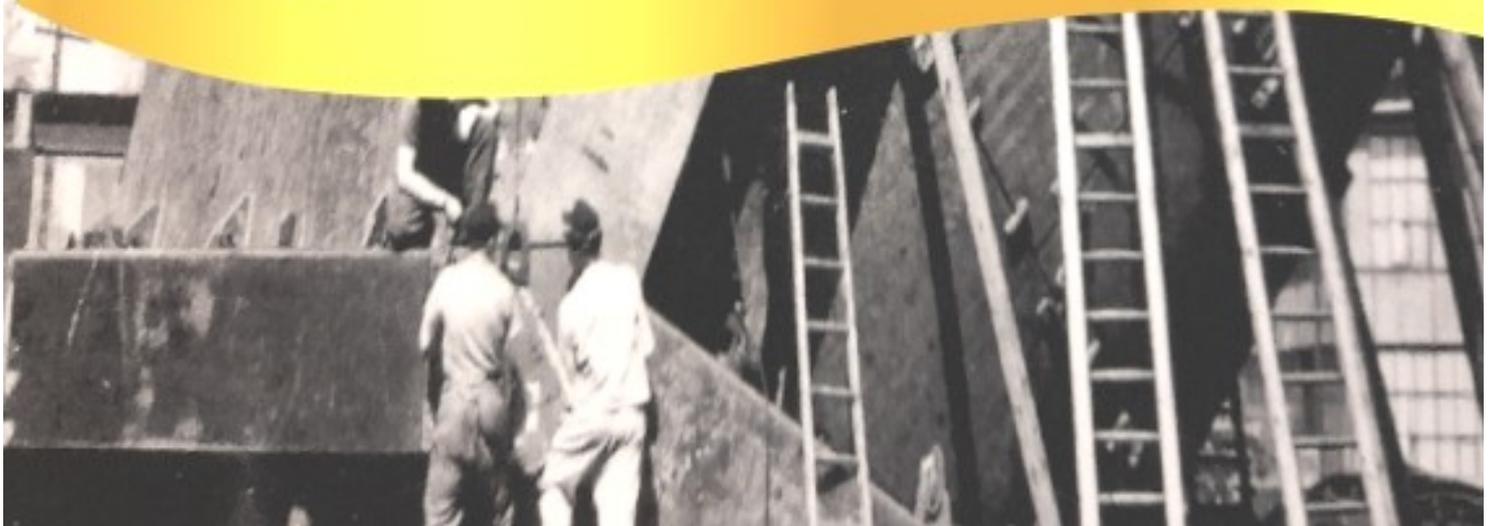
Park, as well as the Getaway and Eildon Lake Motels cater for visitors.

We love our little town, and look forward to seeing it thrive and grow into the future

References: *'Eildon the Whole Dam Story'*: the title for the book was suggested by Ted Putnam, who deserves recognition for this.

'Alexandra and District' by Brian Lloyd.

Our History (3)





Getting the Message Out There

One of our key challenges was finding ways to let everyone in the community know that these events were happening and encouraging as many people as possible to join in and share their thoughts, ideas and wishes. We tried to think of as many ways as possible to spread the word. Here's what we came up with:

Posters in:

- the Post Office window,
- on the Lions Club and Taylors Bay noticeboards
- Chemist
- and the Visitors Centre

Letterbox drops prior to each major event

Announcements on the Murrindindi Shire website via our own page on The Loop, and on Facebook

Information in each Eildon Edition

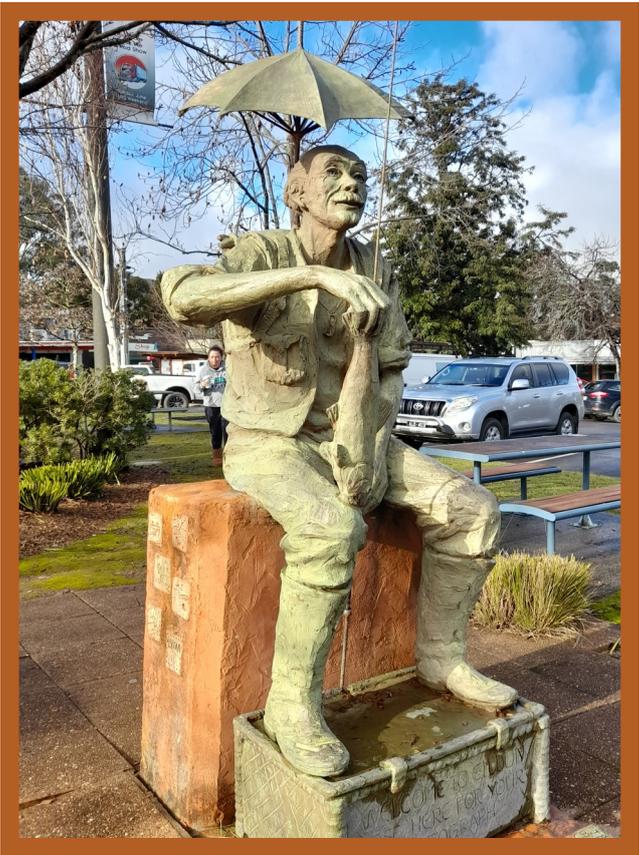
Newspaper articles and advertisements in the Standard

Word of mouth – we talked to anyone who would listen

Announcements on the Primary School electronic noticeboard and in their newsletter

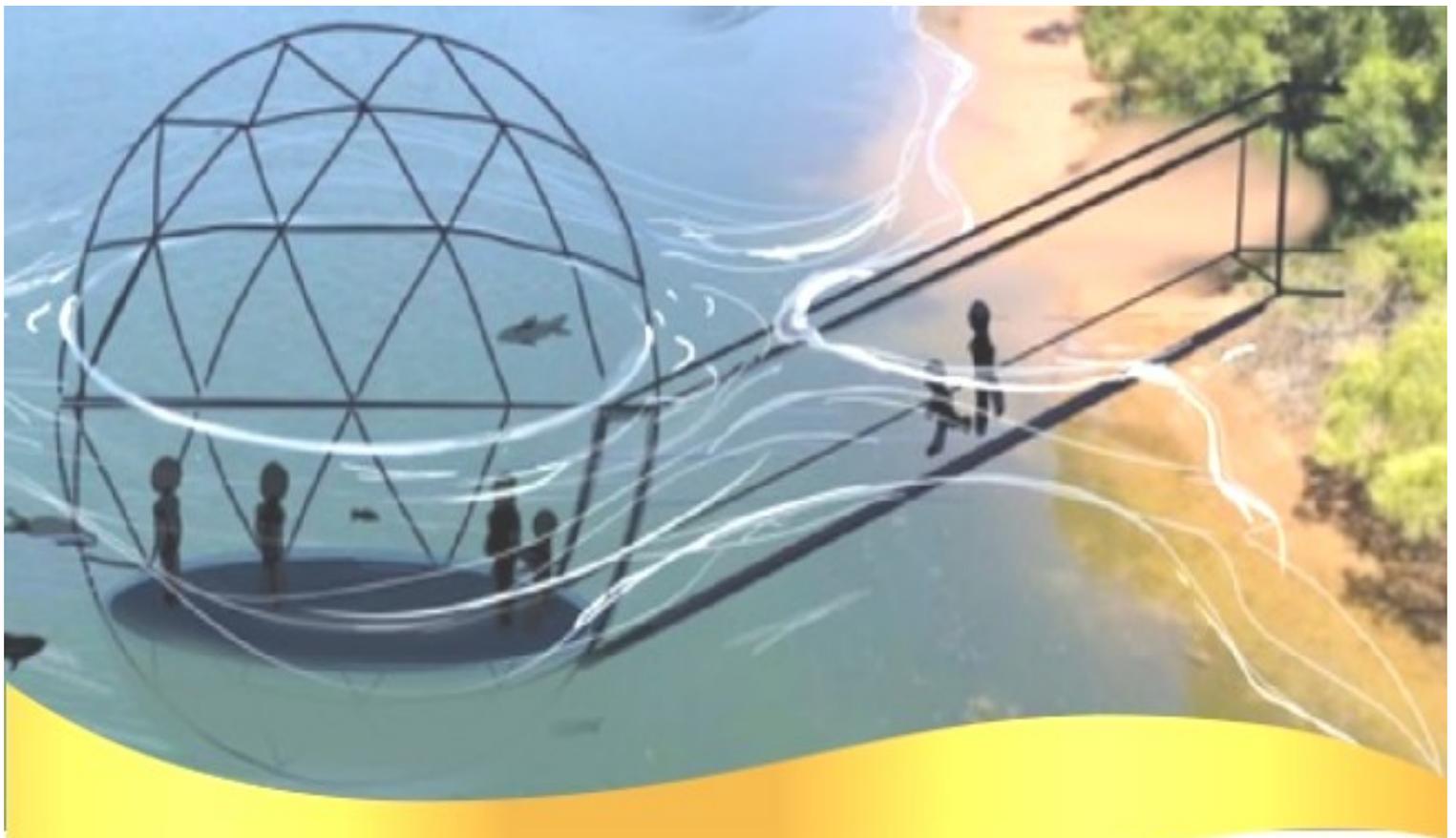
Mike Dalmau from UGFM was kind enough to have us on his show

We respectfully acknowledge the Taungurung People as traditional custodians of this land and pledge respect to elders past, present and emerging; recognising their deep connections with the land and waters in this area.



Eildon:
A Snapshot





Full List of Ideas for Eildon as available for Community voting: collected Sept. '21 – May '22

Medical Services: Leading the Community towards getting a doctor for Eildon, and in future also considering preventative health education services

An underwater feature: Geo-ball in the water to complete upper walking track (see above)

Swimming club: Form a club and also provide lessons for children

School holiday program at community centre e.g cooking classes, games, etc

Community Garden or co-operative /share garden

Public transport improvements (set up a Community Advocacy Group)

Gym: Get the indoor gym open again, perhaps at the Community Centre

Provide a Community-run hard rubbish collection

Community Creative Space: A community house or other community space

Friends of the Pondage – advocacy and action around pondage

Sporting clubs – Strengthen and revive: e.g football, netball, basketball, cricket

UGFM for Eildon: Set up a radio station or plan for some outside broadcasts in Eildon

Spillway Garden project: Revitalise spillway gardens and promote as a feature

On-water access at pondage – Non-powered recreation (Community Advocacy Group)

Sporting/Outdoors Hub: Build on the natural 'sporting hub' at the Cricket Pavilion, to be a base for Murrindindi Cycle Club, the RSL, and proposed Fishing and Rowing Clubs.

Wildlife Focus: Activities to make it safer for wildlife around township

Tourism Centre: Create a tourist centre like Yea's Y Water Centre - to focus on wildlife and waterways

Mobile / Internet Reception: Community Advocacy Group lobbying for better mobile and internet coverage

Pump track - Below the tennis courts

Youth Group Program: Activities for older kids and teens

Wetlands: Create wetlands at Riverside Drive and Eildon Back Road.

Tracks and Trails Reference Group – A community group who will liaise with Goulburn Murray Water, Parks Vic, DELWP and Council to develop and maintain this resource

Tennis Courts' refurbishment

Men's Shed: Get the Men's Shed up and running again

Outdoor Stage at the Pondage

A Community group to work clarifying Eildon township's identity (as separate from the lake) - possibly focusing on nature tourism? 'Eildon, the Outdoors Mecca of Victoria'? 'Eildon Village'?

Erect an iconic entry to the town ; perhaps trout or bicycle related

Public Art Planning - A project to explore, work out what people want in terms of art installations and murals, and guide the creative direction of any public art

Blue-green Algae advocacy group

Micro-grid for Eildon

Lake Action Group - advocating with GMW for all lake-related issues

Music Festival, Theatre or Concerts or join the Festival of Small Halls Tour.

Develop the Bull Ring as a venue for theatre or concerts

Farmers Market

Lions Club support: Get more volunteer support and or members for Lions Club

Rainbow trout on spillway: Work with artist Kati Lansell on mural for spillway

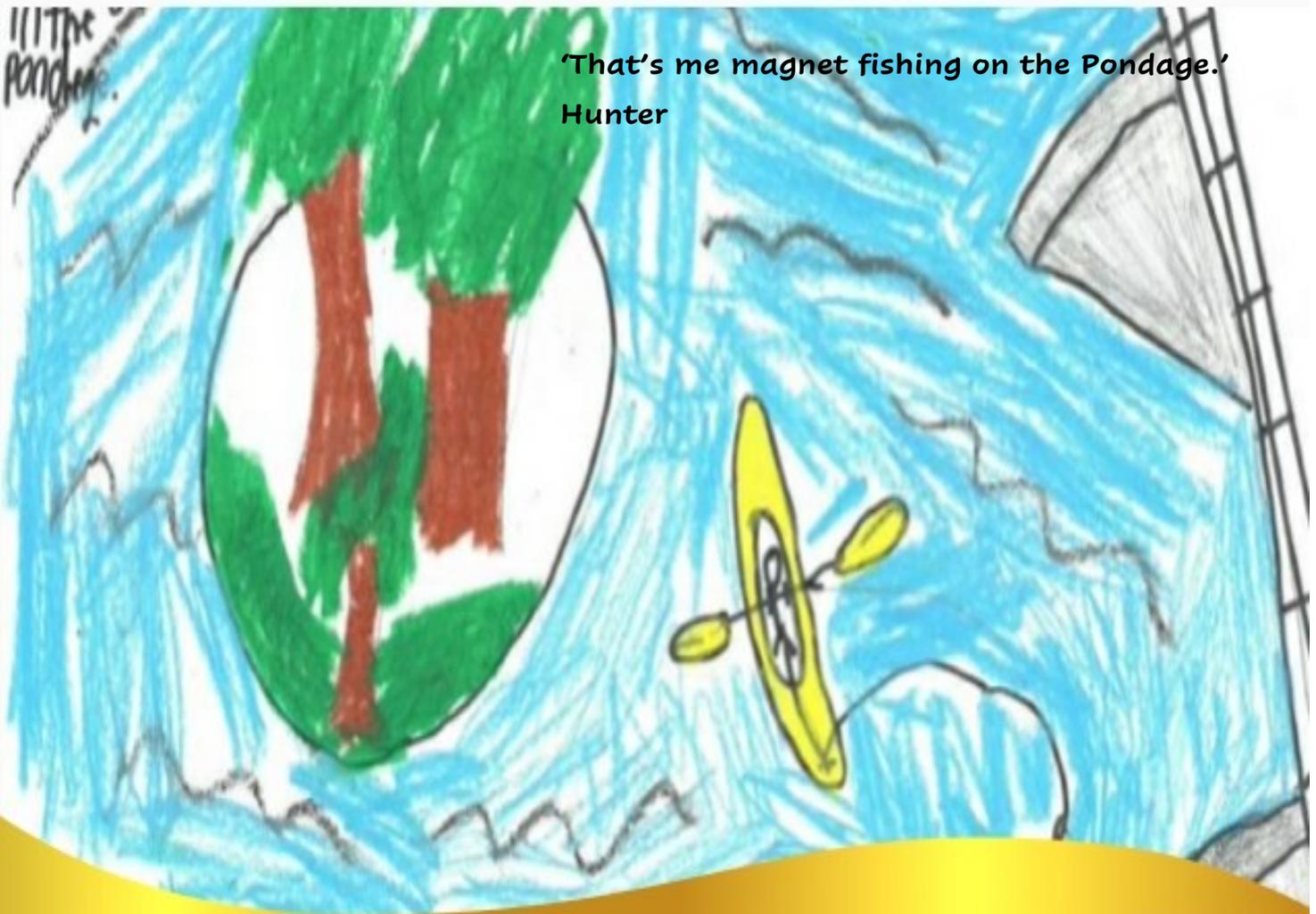
Museum support: Strengthen and grow the Museum beyond its existing focus on the history of the Dams.

Support the Museum to be open more regularly.

Full List of Ideas for Eildon as available for Community voting:
collected Sept. '21 - May '22 ctd

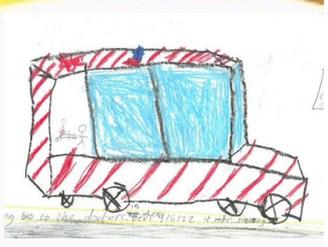
11/17 The Pondage.

'That's me magnet fishing on the Pondage.'
Hunter



Eildon Primary School Students

The Eildon Primary School students enthusiastically embraced

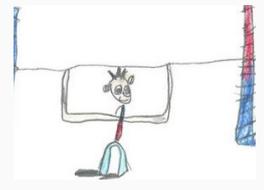


the proposed major projects: A little surprisingly, the benefits of a local doctor had wide appeal—a trip into Alexandra, or worse, to Melbourne when you are not well is certainly a daunting prospect!



'It would be way better if we only had to drive to Eildon instead of Alexandra (to go to the doctor.)'
Jordan

The concept of a Gym in the Community Centre appealed to many: weights, yoga mats (and developing big muscles), featured here.



Live music had supporters too Who can resist dancing under a disco ball ?

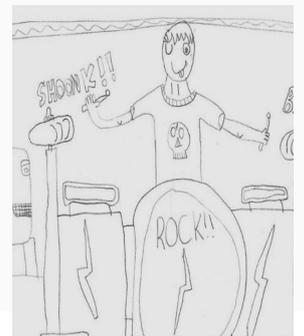
'I think we should have live music in Eildon so I can play the drums more.'
Cody

The idea of boating and fishing on the Pondage was popular, as was Art on the Spillway.



'Spillway art would look really cool.' Jasmine

(Magnet fishing ????? Just what it implies : A magnet on your line to see what metallic objects you can find on the bottom!)





Ideas that were collected but are small business opportunities for potential Eildon entrepreneurs to develop:

- Wine and food events
- Water-ski racing events
- Food vans at ramps on lake or on land between service station and shops
- Guided canoeing on lake or kayaking on Goulburn
- Outdoor specialists in town, creating an agency type business connecting outdoor guides with visitors
- Roller coaster
- Tree top bridge walk over Snob's Creek Falls
- Wakeboard lessons,
- Floating water park,
- Mini-golf,
- Floating bar/eatery,
- Inflatable obstacle course
- Brewery/distillery,
- Tour boat on lake with tours of wineries or local history,
- 'Lazy river' on Pondage,
- Tree-top walk at Snob's Creek,
- Bowling alley,
- Giant waterslide
- Promote the golf course more
- Small pontoon boat to ferry visitors to different areas of Eildon departing from the pondage during peak season.
- Water sport equipment hire eg kayaks, water bikes, paddle boards or fishing rod hire



Eildon Action Inc is overseeing the Community Plan. If you would like more information, or to be involved, please contact Eildon Visitor Information Centre or:

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The Core Team:

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This project was completed with support from Murrindindi Shire Council, and

