



Photograph: Courtesy of Tourism Macedon Ranges Inc.

Macedon/Mt. Macedon Community Plan

Communications Program

December 2011 – December 2012

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to enable the Macedon/Mt. Macedon Community Planning Group (MMCPG) to interact with local community members, established groups, media and other key stakeholders about its activities associated with the Macedon/Mt. Macedon Community Plan (the plan).

This includes the five nominated priority projects as identified by the local Macedon/Mount Macedon community and is in cooperation with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC).

It describes the objectives of group communications, measures of success, examines target audience characteristics and suggests appropriate communication channels.

It offers a draft communications program for the next 12 months and sets out key milestones.

All feedback to enhance the communications program is welcome.

Feedback can be offered via the feedback form on www.ourcommunityplan.com

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2. Communication objectives

Investing time to communicate appropriately with the local community is essential to the success of the implementation of the Macedon/Mt. Macedon Community Plan.

Without direct local community input, ownership and involvement, the effectiveness of its activities is greatly reduced.

The key communication objectives for the MMMCPG are to:

2.1 Macedon/Mt. Macedon residents, businesses, established groups

- Be transparent
- Deliver information about the plan and its projects
- Provide updates on the progress of plan implementation
- Continually engage the local community to build trust
- Invite feedback and input on any aspect of the plan and its projects
- Encourage participation in developing and delivering the plan
- Demonstrate a genuine commitment to success

2.2 Government agencies/departments, public and private enterprise

- Demonstrate smart and sustainable thinking ('we think long term')
- Become a symbol of practical action ('we get it done')
- Build and reinforce an effective community profile ('we get results')
- Show leadership in the delivery of a community plan ('we share our experiences with others')

3. Expected outcomes

The following results are expected during the December 2011 and December 2012:

INDICATOR	OUTCOMES (TO MONITOR, COLLECT AND MEASURE)
Community engagement sessions	5 information sessions held 25% of audiences interacting at sessions
Increasing community awareness	50 queries from local community, businesses, established groups, sponsors and media
Increasing website traffic to www.ourcommunityplan.com	Increasing trend of traffic the website Consistent new hits to web page Consistent downloads of the plan
Community feedback on plan and projects	5% response via blog/email/telephone/post
Media coverage	12 media articles/mentions
Blog participation (via website)	Increasing no. of blog followers/retention Increasing no. of followers linking/referring blog elsewhere Steady frequency of blog traffic (community comment vs. MMMCPG response) Increasing no. of contributing comments Increasing no. of unique contributors
Community satisfaction	10 community testimonials to publish on website Feedback received via blog/email/telephone Word of mouth reports (stories to tell) Score of 3 in post campaign satisfaction survey

4. Communications strategy

4.1 Target audience overview

The ABS Census data (2006) reports:

Macedon and Mt. Macedon suburbs

We are predominantly a population of commuters and local shire employees with a family. Half are female and half are male. Most of us are married couples with families or couples without children.

A good proportion of us are under 15 (22%) and we have a small mature-aged community (10%).

We are reasonably educated. Mostly own, or are paying off, our own homes. The average investment in a home in Macedon is no different to that of the rest of Australia. Though, housing investment is slightly higher than the Australian average for residents in Mt. Macedon. Family income in both Macedon and Mt. Macedon is higher than the Australian average.

A small number of us speak Polish, German, Italian, Dutch, Greek, Spanish and Latvian at home.

WHO ARE THEY	WHAT DO THEY WANT
Macedon/Mount Macedon residents (commuters, families, youth, mature-aged community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the rural beauty of the area • Develop only what we need • Improve quality of life • Create more opportunity for the young • Better access to essential services
Business owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow business opportunity • Raise awareness of products or services • Entice tourism • Increase traffic to/through their business
Established community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve established project goals
Government (state/local)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate action on the ground • Effective use of grants and budgets
Public/private enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to invest to differentiate and build reputation

4.2 Benefits

Target audiences engaging with the MMMCPG communication activities can expect:

- Access to the latest information about the plan, its projects and progress
- Opportunities to get involved in shaping and implementing the plan
- Opportunity to volunteer to help design and deliver projects
- A channel to voice a constructive opinion
- An avenue to introduce a better idea (enrich community thinking)
- A forum in which to contribute to community debate
- A way to learn more about what's happening in the community
- New business and social networks

4.3 Desired response

To be successful, the target audiences need to:

- Visit www.ourcommunityplan.com and click through to read the plan
- Talk to us and to others about the draft ideas (word-of-mouth)
- Join the debate online
- Contribute and respond to a project blog
- Refer and/or link comments to a project blog
- Share ideas, learn from one another and work together

4.4 Value proposition

Join the debate. It's your plan.

4.5 Top 3 messages

- Submit ideas
- Get involved
- Enjoy the results

5. Communication channels

The available communication channels to the MMMCPG are:

Local newspapers (Gisborne Gazette, The Leader, The Free Press, Midland Express, Macedon Ranges Weekly)

Dedicated website: www.ourcommunityplan.com

Monitored project blogs

Monthly noticeboard newsletter updates
(schools, post office, cafes, restaurants, supermarket, and churches)

Letterbox drop

Monthly email update

Community surveys

Online polling

Personal presentations (such as: sporting groups (Macedon Football club lunch as a guest speaker), pre-schools (approx. 70 families), playgroup (approx. 40 families) and special interest groups (CWA, Horticultural Society etc).

Word of mouth

Local radio (Highlands FM); and

Opportunities as they arise.

We welcome interested parties with new and different ideas to communicate the community plan, its projects, progress and results. To do so, please contact:

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6. Communications program

For the duration of 12 months, the following activities are recommended to effectively communicate the plan, its projects and progress to the residents, business owners, establish groups, government and public/private enterprise.

The launch phase aims to raise awareness about the plan and to invite feedback.

LAUNCH PHASE	
KEY MESSAGES: SUBMIT IDEAS, GET INVOLVED	
Mail out to community (rates database)	Dispatch summary of projects and ideas to community for review and preparation for community session
Follow up community meeting	To invite the community to ratify and help prioritise the projects
Poster (A3/A4)	To promote follow up community meeting and pro forma for use to promote to community groups
'It's your plan' information sessions	Identify established working and community groups (see Gisborne Gazette for start list) Facilitate community sessions and brainstorm draft plan ideas (post dates/times on website) Collate, implement feedback and report results back to the community via website and newsletter
Media release	Dispatch media release to local newspapers Follow up with a call to editor/offer interviews
Launch newsletter (paper-based and pdf)	Promote plan, website, blogs, feedback mechanisms Invite community to respond, get involved, join monthly email newsletter list Distribute widely locally, and virally on email
Website: www.ourcommunityplan.com	Post a news announcement Promote plan, website, blogs, feedback mechanisms Invite community to respond, get involved, join monthly email newsletter list Lobby other websites to link/promote website
Casual call campaign	Use personal networks to share the message about the plan. Give friends, family, neighbours and colleagues a call. Ask their views, capture their responses, summarise and report feedback back to the community.
Project blogs	Kick off the blogs by tabling a question to start conversation Lobby other bloggers to link in with a project blog

Community poll	Ask the community about their vision for the community plan with an online poll via the website
Radio session	Invite the MRSC to announce the initiative, describe the intention, results seen in other local areas
Feedback reminder campaign	Promote the deadline for feedback from the community via the website, media, email, poster and word of mouth.

The progress phase aims to keep the community informed on the latest progress against each project and to invite the community to participate.

PROGRESS PHASE

KEY MESSAGES: GET INVOLVED, ENJOY THE RESULTS

Regular local newspaper updates (using MMMCPG and MRSC media networks)	Report results Highlight major milestones from launch effort Share stories about community learnings/experiences Share examples of progress/success/roadblocks
Publish news via website	Report frequent snippets as updates across each project via the News section of the website
Monthly newsletter	Prepare and dispatch hard copies locally and online to subscribers and personal networks
Monthly radio session	Educate the community about the project Discuss benefits, possible challenges Debate the key issues with specialists Promote progress Search for sponsorship
Personal networks	Touch base with local community members, groups and associations you know promote progress and community involvement
Monthly blog question	Continue to promote progress via each project blog to encourage the community to respond and debate Submit a new question as often as possible, at a minimum, one question, once a month (weekly is preferred).
Weekly community poll	Ask the community about a key aspect on a project with an online poll via the website One poll per week on one project (over the course of a month roughly each project would have one question polled each)
MRSC newsletter	Promote activities, progress and results – where appropriate – to planners, managers and decision makers within the MRSC to share with their networks

The results phase shares successes and challenges to be met, inviting the community to celebrate the successes and offer new ideas to tackle road blocks.

Communicating results reinforces an ongoing commitment to the plan and its projects. It also seeks to raise community satisfaction scores.

RESULTS PHASE

KEY MESSAGES: GET INVOLVED, ENJOY THE RESULTS

Regular results reports	When there's great news, share it immediately online on the website under 'Results' or in the 'News' section, in the next newsletter, via the local media and project blog
6-month review announcement	<p>Prepare a summary of outcomes</p> <p>Highlight completed projects, meeting/exceeding expected outcomes, blog activity statistics, social media statistics/discussion summary from wide range of target audiences</p> <p>Include comments, feedback received, testimonials, quotes, summary/analysis of conversation strings</p> <p>Publish the report and promote highlights via the website in the 'News' section, via the next newsletter, direct to key groups, via project blog and update the local media</p>
12-month review announcement	<p>Prepare an update of the summary of outcomes</p> <p>Publish the report and promote the highlights via the website in the 'News' section, via the next newsletter, direct to key groups, via project blog and update the local media</p>
Community satisfaction survey	Option to send an email version to subscribers and paper-based via letter box drop to gauge the efforts of the community plan and the implementation groups

7. Timing

KEY MILESTONES		
Review draft communications program	MMMCPG, MRSC	FROM 19 AUGUST 2011
Approve communications program	MMMCPG, MRSC	21 OCTOBER 2011
Draft MMMCPG responsibilities to fulfil the program	ADM	5 NOVEMBER 2011
Approve MMMCPG responsibilities	MMMCPG	12 NOVEMBER 2011
Mail out to the community (exec. summaries and invitation)	MMMCPG, MRSC	23 NOVEMBER 2011
Follow up community session	MMMCPG, MRSC	3 DECEMBER 2011
Release draft community plan	MMMCPG, MRSC	8 DECEMBER 2011
Final deadline for community feedback	Local residents	20 JANUARY 2012
Refinements to community plan	MMMCPG, MRSC	31 JANUARY 2012
Respond to feedback submitters	MMMCPG, MRSC	31 JANUARY 2012
Submit final plan to MRSC	MMMCPG	1 FEBRUARY 2012
Endorsement by MRSC	MRSC	w/c 20 FEBRUARY 2012
6 month results review	ADM (with MRSC and MMMCPG support)	3 MAY 2012
12 month results review	ADM (with MRSC and MMMCPG support)	3 DECEMBER 2012

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Document Status

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