

BEEAC

Beeac Progress Association Township Plan

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**Change Concepts Pty. Ltd.
35 Johns Crescent
Mount Evelyn Vic. 3796
Ph: 03-9736 2616
Email: commcons@ozemail.com.au**

**THE BEEAC TOWNSHIP PLAN HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH FUNDING
FROM THE VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT
AND THE COLAC-OTWAY SHIRE**



October 2000

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1.0. Executive Summary

1.1. Objectives

To position Beeac to adapt to the on-going process of “community change”; and importantly, continue to offer the community a number of alternative solutions to the issues being faced.

To create a TOWNSHIP PLAN that can be embraced by community members; all levels of government; and the private sector alike, as the “way forward” for the township.

1.2. Positioning Statement

“Beeac – a township that leaves an impression on all who linger”

1.3. Keys to Success

The following attributes need to be in place for our position to be successful –

- Community Commitment To The Vision
- Effective Partnerships With Government
- Effective Community Management Of Our Assets
- Flexibility & Adaptability

1.4. Actions and Desired Outcomes

The desired outcome of the Plan, is the development of a “picturesque” Township –a place that is desirable to reside in; whilst those who “pass through” can enjoy and appreciate the charm and heritage of the main-street.

“The wide main street has a distinctive character consistent with its long history. It has numerous mature trees and an array of historic buildings of great character and quality, including several with broad timber verandahs. There are also very good views down treed side-streets, and to other buildings of interest. Beeac is a township of high heritage and townscape quality, deserving recognition”.

The perfect place for a “day out”.

2.0. “Then to Now” – a brief history

Beeac was originally established as a camper’s reserve, “Beeac” thought to mean “salt lake” [or as some have described, as meaning “grubs” - of which there was an abundance in early days].

It is believed that Beeac was named after the redoubtable “King of Beeac” Jim Crow, an ancestor Of the late Jim Crow, a member of the local aboriginal community.

Following the “Nicholson Land Act” [in 1860] the area was thrown open for selection in Parishes such as Ondit; Turkeith; and Cundare. As people continued to arrive, the Government [of the day] was asked to open up more reserve and the future township was surveyed in 1864.

By the end of the 1860’s the district was the principle wheat-producing area west of Geelong and a community had “settled”. The salt lakes adjoining the township led Mr. Berry [of Melbourne] to establish salt works, and for some years an immense business flourished. The cultivation of wine-grapes was also carried out and a noted vigneron Mr. Buchanan made great quantities of excellent wine.

In 1862, a small building for “divine worship” was erected [on the present site of the Methodist Church] and here Mr. T. Camm conducted school. The construction of the Presbyterian Church soon followed, and in 1867 the original Catholic Church [later used as a Catholic School] was built, with construction of St. Augustine’s Church of England commencing in 1898.

The first hotel in the community was established in the 1870’s by Mr. Bouchier, and right next door was a wine shop. There was a grocery and drapery established on “Mr. Ower’s ground”, while Mr. Adams possessed two [2] keel-bottomed boats which sailed on Lake Beeac [which at this time had a water level of around three [3] feet!].

Messrs George and Alexander Landers had a butchering business, Mr. John Wilson opened a boot-makers shop, Mr. Thomas Bevan had a blacksmith and wheelwright shop, Mr. Moss owned one of the first bakery businesses, Mr. Robert Carpenter kept a “wine room” and the second hotel “The Farmers Arms” owned by Mr. Joab came into existence.

In 1883, the Local Railway League “agitated” for extension of the main railway line from Ondit to Beeac. Construction of the branch line [in 1884] brought the township and its farming district into closer contact with Colac. The 1890’s saw a further extension of the line from Irrewarra to Beeac and [both] wheat and wool farmers brought their yield to Beeac for shipment to Colac - two [2] or three [3] trains ran daily, having upwards of thirty [30] wagons at any one time.

The Beeac of 1896 had a post office; three [3] churches; a branch of the London Bank; a Mechanics Institute; a State School; and one [1] hotel.

In 1901-1902 The Beeac Advocate & Weering Advertiser was published [published by Hogarth & Richmond, and printed by William richmond, Main Street, Beeac]

The following is from the history of the Red Cross:-

“Beeac is a busy centre of a thriving farming community. There are two [2] hotels; two [2] butcher shops; three [3] grocer shops; a tailor; and two [2] schools. There is a railway station with a train daily to Ballarat and Colac, transporting wool; onions; and other produce from the area. There are two [2] sets of sale-yards with weekly stock sales – pigs being sold on Mondays. There are four [4] blacksmith shops catering for all the horses [as transport is horse & buggy]. So with banks, the hospital, four [4] churches, and all the sporting and recreational clubs, Beeac is a

busy, community-minded place where everyone becomes involved in working for and supporting the men who are serving their country”.

In 1918 Beeac was [still] described as a prosperous township, A. O’Dowd wrote that –

“...for a comparatively small town Beeac occupies a glorious position throughout the Western district in the matter of sport and good sportsmanship. In every branch of athletics her sturdy ‘Sons’ have made brilliant victories well and cleanly won”.

Notable are jockey Viv Turner; cricketers Bill Johnston, who with his brother Allan commenced their cricketing careers with the Beeac Club in 1937. Cyclists and footballers – names like Salmon; Gainger; and Judd and amongst these, [considered] Beeac’s greatest athlete - R. E. Bevan, who was not only a footballer but a runner; cricketer; and boxer.

As a result, many sporting clubs thrived within the township, notably, tennis; golf [which still continues today] rifle; pony; and turf club, which, gave rise to another “Champion of Beeac” – “Rufus Youngblood” [Harness Racing Horse of the Year].

At the request of Dr. Cecil Tucker an [early] hospital was opened [by Mrs. T. Gray] in Coulstone Street, to be followed by the construction [by Dr. Cave] of the Beeac Community Hospital in 1928, which has gone from being a “general hospital” to an excellent Community Health Centre, which functions today.

The advent of the “motor-car” [in the 1930’s] meant that people had easy transport to larger towns [Colac, Geelong] and this was the beginning of the decline of this thriving rural community.

Thank-you to:
Dorothy Kilby

3.0. “About Us”

Beeac is located 24 kms from Colac , on the Colac-Cressy Road. The township is a small, picturesque town situated on volcanic plain and surrounded by farms. We are close to two [2] major regional centres, Geelong and Ballarat, both being only one [1] hour away. We are also only one [1] hour away from both Lorne and Apollo Bay, and are in close proximity to the South-West Lakes District.

Beeac is set within a basically flat, but sometimes slightly undulating landscape. It is fairly sparse but attractive, punctuated by trees, the gleam of water in the local lake, and the “blue hills” in the distance.

The state's “youngest volcano” – Red Rock – is in our district [and is still being monitored by Melbourne University]. We would like to attract visitors to view our lake, and enjoy the peacefulness of our surroundings in comfort. We have been included in the Volcanic Trail – part of which includes a visit to the Barrage and Lake Corangamite, with its many water-bird species and “coxiella” shells.

We have a lovely wide main street, typical of country towns, and there are also a number of original shop-fronts still in place.

The population and make-up of the township is said to be “stable”. For instance the 1996 *Census* tells us in summary form:

Key Indicators	1981	1986	1991	1996
Total Population	220	209	249	234
% of Shire Population	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%
No. of Private Dwellings	95	96	100	101
No. of Households	78	78	83	90
Labour Force	71	76	114	82
Unemployment Rate	7.0%	7.2%	16.2%	12.3%
Age Groups %				
0-17	26.0%	24.2%	27.5%	26.6%
18-34	16.9%	21.3%	20.9%	19.2%
35-59	32.9%	30.4%	32.6%	40.2%
60+	24.2%	24.2%	19.0%	14.0%

We also have the following information:

Weekly Income	No.
Nil	09
\$1 - \$39	03
\$40 - \$79	03
\$80 - \$119	06
\$120 - \$159	36
\$160 - \$199	24
\$200 - \$299	18
\$300 - \$399	15
\$400 - \$499	26
\$500 - \$599	06
\$600 - \$699	09
\$700 - \$799	03
\$800 - \$999	03
\$1 000+	00

And finally, those of us who work have the following occupations [1996]:

Occupation	No.
Manager or Administrator	03
Professionals	00
Associate Professionals	09
Tradespersons & Related Workers	08
Advanced Clerical & Service Workers	03
Intermediate Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	06
Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	05
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	03
Labourers & Related Workers	18

4.0. Key Issues

Level One Issues:

4.1. “Creating Our Own Future”

Beeac is typical of small rural communities throughout Australia, in that the past two [2] decades have seen a decline in both public sector and private sector activity within the township –

Specifically, the following businesses and/or services are no longer represented within the township:

- Banking
- Butcher
- Bakery

Again – typically, the impact of this decline is made more difficult due to a lack of a clear community vision being created [either before the commencement of this decline, or once it was recognised what was happening] by the community. The task of creating a “clear community vision” is not an easy one, nor more importantly – getting the community as a whole to accept it, and work with it.

The “history” of the township has developed around agriculture – with both crops [wheat, potato, peas, oats, barley, onions] and dairying dominating as traditional “economic drivers” for well over a century.

While these traditional forms of farming have been the “backbone” of the local economy for many years, the profitability of such markets is declining, and as such there is a need to pursue additional [economic] activities.

This *TOWNSHIP PLAN* is a key step for Beeac to “create its’ own future”. One which will position it [the township] to adapt to the on-going process of “community change”, and importantly continue to offer the community a number of alternative solutions to the issues being faced.

The community has come to recognise that they must “*design their own way forward – no one else will do it for them*”.

Note of Caution: Not all will “see” the future or indeed “like it”

4.2. Maintaining The Primary School

The “life” and future of a township is often measured by its’ “ownership” of an education facility. The Township Plan *must* be such that it creates an on-going requirement for the Primary School – this will happen when an “environment” is created that makes it desirable for new families to re-locate in Beeac and/or the District.

These new families will probably either work in the tourism and hospitality sector; or be in a position to “tele-commute” [eg; work from home] with regard their particular occupation / profession; or indeed physically “commute” to work in either Colac or Geelong.

Level Two Issues:

4.3. Township Character And Heritage

Beeac displays a remarkably rich range of well preserved historic buildings. Unlike many similar sized towns, it still retains a representative collection of buildings typical of its formative historic era – churches; banks; school buildings; verandahed shops [including a couple of corner ones]; the post office; corrugated iron and timber garages; and a variety of cottages, and more substantial houses from mid-Victorian age to Californian bungalows of the 1920's.

4.4. The Central Park

The park has many positive features, including proximity to the general store; toilets; shelters; and play equipment. Given its central location, it deserves to provide a more positive and inviting image, through better integration of its' historic context.

4.5. Streetscaping

In line with 4.4. [above] the appropriate streetscaping of the main street is seen as an enhancement to the character and heritage of the township.

4.6. Recreational Activity For Young People

The development of recreational activities for young people is an integral component of the Township Plan.

4.7. Development Of Public Transport

A key theme within the overall Township Plan is the development of a “desirable place to reside”. For this theme to be exploited fully, public transport to Colac, Geelong, and Lorne needs to be developed.

4.8. Ensuring The On-Going Viability Of -

- The Community Health Centre
- The Post Office – and mail delivery
- The General Store

5.0. Community Assets Assessment

5.1. Location

Beeac is located 24 kms from Colac , on the Colac-Cressy Road. The township is a small, picturesque town situated on volcanic plain and surrounded by farms. We are close to two [2] major regional centres, Geelong and Ballarat, both being only one [1] hour away. The township is also only one [1] hour away from both Lorne and Apollo Bay, and are in close proximity to the South-West Lakes District.

5.2. Industry – Business Profile

The existing *business mix* within the township area is as follows –

Total No: 07

- Post Office [1]
- General Store/Take Away Food [1]
- Retail Petrol [1]
- Hotel [1]
- General Engineering/Fabrication [1]
- Craft Gallery [1]
- Mobile Hairdresser [1]

The “narrow” economic base of the township will not generate a more diverse range of commodities and services; and people will continue to gravitate to major centres in the region such as Colac and Geelong and beyond to Melbourne for more durable household and non-food merchandise.

5.3. Community Services

- Primary School
- Community Health Centre
- Police
- Catholic Church
- Uniting Church
- Public Toilets
- CFA

5.4. Leisure & Recreation

The town is served by a number of leisure and recreational pursuits, all of which are actively utilised by the community and surrounding district –

- Football Oval/Reserve
- Community Hall
- Central Reserve / Park
- Golf Club

5.5. Service Clubs & Groups

- Masonic Lodge
- Local Community Newspaper
- Beeac Progress Association
- Red Cross
- C.W.A.
- Book Group

5.6. Recent Improvements Completed / Business Established

- The new clubhouse at the Golf Course
- Purchase of a Township Australian Flag for use on important occasions
- Wetlands Interpretation Area and Tree Plantings
- Recommencement of the Mobile Library
- Trees trimmed at the Public Toilet site

5.7. Improvements In Progress / Business Development

- Flower Pots at the School-Crossing
- Repairs to the War Memorial
- Construction of a new Police Station

5.8. Improvements “Under Threat” / Business “Under Threat”

- Footpaths along the Main Street and Wallace Street need improving
- The Tennis Courts are in disrepair
- The township in general needs a “face-lift”

All of the above provide a focus for the community and contribute to the “fabric” of the township, generating social activities and maintaining community spirit, pride, interest and association.

6.0. Opportunity Assessment

There are a number of clearly identified “opportunities” for the local community to consider, namely –

- 6.1. Protect and enhance the character of the township’s main street
- 6.2. Development of a “garden theme” in the main street
- 6.3. Narrowing of the main street with traffic islands
- 6.4. Placement of “antique style lamps” for street-lighting
- 6.5. More shade trees and seating in the main street
- 6.6. A Statue of “Rufus Young-Blood”
- 6.7. Getting the Mobile Library to come to the township
- 6.8. Improved signage to the lake from the main street
- 6.9. Town Entrance Signage / Flower Beds
- 6.10. Improved signage on the Public Toilets / Mural
- 6.11. Historic plaques and Heritage signage / At Entrance to the Township
- 6.12. The [Old] Railway Easement
- 6.13. Development of an Avenue of Honour
- 6.14. Rotunda within the Playground / Seats
- 6.15. B-B-Q facilities within the Playground area
- 6.16. Make the Park the township “meeting place” – ie; The Village Green
- 6.17. Development of a “Township Web-Page”
- 6.18. Hold a Community Function for locals
- 6.19. Development of a Rural Transaction Centre
- 6.20. Re-open the Creamery – with displays and demonstrations of how ice-cream was made by hand

Thoughts From A “Local”:

“It’s a nice drive – to what – BEEAC it’s a great place for a picnic. THE SPOT TO STOP – perhaps this is where we could “go” in our efforts to bring people out here. What do people look for at the end of a drive – shelter; seating; cooking facilities; toilet facilities; access to water; food; etc. We have a very pretty township and our main street is such

an asset; with many of you having lovely gardens – perhaps we could make these a feature – a reason to come here.

A suggestion of low maintenance flower-beds around the sign at the entrance to town has been made. Perhaps we could have a statue of Rufus Youngblood? Old fashioned street lamps at either end of town is a possibility. Memorial seats in memory of significant people in our history or in our war services. Getting the school children to paint a mural on the toilet block depicting our lifestyle such as a cow to represent dairying, flowers etc. planting agapanthus or kangaroo paw etc. around it and perhaps a picnic setting near the toilets as well. An Avenue of Honour. A notice-board alerting people to local features, service clubs, school, churches, native birds and animals etc.

A sign is no good around the back – people need to be able to read about it on the main street and it could include activities that people here enjoy such as Elderly Citizens, Golf, Bus Service to Colac, Masonic Lodge, Red Cross, C.F.A., Community Health, Adass, etc.

A market stall day with crafts. Our main street – an asset as it is – but it could be made better. What we have – we have community caring – we have the desire to do something. Maybe a tram car or train carriage providing devonshire teas on a weekend with perhaps a roster and with funding being returned to the town. Remembering that you don't need to be big straight off. As the tennis club is not being used perhaps basketball rings or something similar could be erected. A suggestion has been made that we ask the Uniting Church to allow us to turn their paddock into a grassed area with perhaps a lavender hedge or the like and with seats. This could be called Memorial Park – perhaps to the ministers or early settlers of Beeac. These are all ideas that have come from local people – let's have yours.

We are not here to judge their merits but to access your feelings and your visions for the future of our town and to look at what can be reasonably achieved. Comments we have had from visitors have been about our lovely trees in Buchanan Street, our lake, our lovely sunsets, our open spaces and the friendliness of our people.

All of these are already here.

It is not unusual to see people stopping near the toilets for a rest and a “cuppa”. We have seen families at our playground and people taking a break and also people down at the lake when the weather permits so it is not as though there would be no-one interested.”

Dorothy Kilby

7.0. Financial Considerations

Outlined below, is the suggested development framework for the township plan, together with the key group to take responsibility for “making it happen” –

7.1. Funding Source - The Local Community

Method

7.1.1. Community Activity – Beeac Action Group

Nominated Project[s]

- Protect and enhance the character of the township’s main street
- Historic plaques and Heritage signage
- Hold a Community Function for locals

7.2. Funding Source - Federal Government

Method

7.2.1. Festival Australia Program

Nominated Project[s]

- Not applicable at this time

7.2.2. Rural Transaction Centres Program

Nominated Project[s]

- Establishment of a Rural Transaction Centre

7.2.3. Local Solutions To Local Problems

Nominated Project[s]

- Development of a “Township Web-Page”
- Make the Park the township “meeting place” – ie; The Village Green

7.2.4. Potential Leadership In Local Communities

Nominated Project[s]

- On-going support and resource of the Beeac Progress Association

7.2.5. National Skills Development Program For Volunteers

Nominated Project[s]

- On-going support and resource of the Beeac Progress Association

7.2.6. “Can Do Community”

Nominated Project[s]

- Not applicable at this time

7.3. Funding Source – State Government

Method

7.3.1. Regional Infrastructure Development Fund

Nominated Project[s]

- Re-open the Creamery – with displays and demonstrations of how ice-cream was made by hand

7.3.2. Local History Grants Program

Nominated Project[s]

- Preparation of a “book” – The Story of Beeac
- Historic plaques and Heritage signage
- A statue of “Rufus Young-Blood”

7.3.3. Arts Victoria – Festival & Event Program

Nominated Project[s]

- Not applicable at this time

7.3.4. Living Regional, Living Suburbs Support Fund

Nominated Project[s]

- Make the Park the township “meeting place” – ie; The Village Green

7.3.5. Community Infrastructure Jobs Program

Nominated Project[s]

- Re-open the Creamery – with displays and demonstrations of how ice-cream was made by hand

7.3.6. “Pride of Place”

Nominated Project[s]

- Protect and enhance the character of the township’s main street
 - Development of a “garden theme” in the main street
 - Consideration given to “narrowing” the main street
 - Placement of “antique style lamps” for street-lighting

7.4. Funding Source – Local Government

Method

7.4.1. Local Township Development Fund

Nominated Project[s]

- More shade trees and seating in the main street
- Improved signage to the lake from the main street
- Town Entrance Signage / Flower Beds
- Rotunda within the Playground area

7.4.2. Community Projects Fund

Nominated Project[s]

- Improved signage on the Public Toilets / Mural
- The [Old] Railway Easement
- Development of an Avenue of Honour
- B-B-Q facilities within the Playground area

7.4.3. Recreation Facilities Fund

Nominated Project[s]

- Not applicable at this time

7.4.4. StreetLIFE Initiative Fund

Nominated Project[s]

- Support for the printing of the Community Newsletter

Appendice:**Notes from the Meeting of Wednesday April 19/2000****Q: What makes BEEAC a “likeable place to live” –**

- Everyone “cares” for each other
- Friendly people
- The sense of “community”
- It’s a “pretty “ little town
- We have local [community] services – eg; the Community Health Centre
- It’s a good environment [in which] to bring up “kids”

Q: What makes BEAAC “not so likeable”-

- The lack of [public] transport for older people
- The lack of “teenage activities” for our younger people
- Only having a locum-doctor [1-day a week]
- The [state of] footpaths around the township
- The visual “look” of the main street

QUOTES FROM THE FACILITATOR:

“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has”

Margaret Mead

Global Emerging Trends –

“Growth of self-sufficient communities”

Edward De Bono – The Textbook Of Wisdom p.214

“If you do not design your own life – then someone else will do it for you”

Dr. Robert Manley –

“It isn’t enough for a town to have good leadership. Communities also must have people – “community builders” – who vigorously encourage and support a wide range of activities which benefit the community. These ‘builders’ aren’t self-serving. They’re interested in improving their communities. Find a community with both leaders and ‘builders’ and you find a community that works.”

KEY DOCUMENTS:

‘Pride Of Place’ – Colac-Otway Heritage Study Stage One October 1998 [Mark Sheehan & Associates]

Beeac Heritage Framework [Dale Kelly, Urban Lighthouse June 2000]