

Rejuvenating the Vincentia Village Centre A Residents' Initiative¹

June 2017



¹ The Process was designed and hosted by Vincentia Matters Inc. a local Residents' Group

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Introduction

In the 1840's convict gangs cut a track from Braidwood to Jervis Bay – that track is known today as The Wool Road. The road provided the rich-in-wool plains around Goulburn with a route to the sea and a loading wharf near Holden Street, Vincentia. At this time, Jervis Bay was considered as a rival port to Sydney Harbour.

Whilst the need for a road route to the sea for wool lasted only a few years until the arrival of the railway through Goulburn, the interest in Jervis Bay led to the establishment of the township in 1840. Originally known as "Old Township" or "South Huskisson" the name was changed to Vincentia in the 1950's by a land developer.

Vincentia today sprawls along 6.5 kilometres of the white sandy Jervis Bay beaches, it is flanked by two National Parks that are covered in diverse flora and fauna and are rich in Aboriginal heritage. Approximately halfway along the beach front where Wool Road reaches its Jervis Bay endpoint is the Vincentia Village Centre – the heart and soul of village life.

Once the social and commercial Centre of the Village it bustled with activity, bursting out in all directions during the peak tourism periods. However, over the last 10 years the Village Centre has gradually lost its 'mojo' and the Village's vibrancy and community spirit has diminished.

The decline can be traced back to the Shoalhaven City Council's LEP decisions in 2009 where the development of a Regional Shopping Marketplace a kilometre away from the Village Centre led to recommendations that the Centre be rezoned to promote various configurations of holiday style housing. There is no doubt that the original intentions for the Regional Shopping Mall were to build a place where not only commercial activities could be renewed and extended but the 'heart and soul' of Vincentia would also be transplanted to the new complex.

As the planning for the new Regional Shopping complex proceeded all the infrastructure elements necessary to transfer the 'heart and soul' of a community to the new Marketplace were sacrificed in the name of efficiencies so that when it opened in 2016 only the core commercial dimension had been built. While not the only cause of the decline of the Village Centre it was a major one.

During this time (2009 – 2016) the Vincentia Village Centre stagnated, Landlords were uncertain what the future held and many Retailers decided either to join the new Regional Marketplace or leave the area, and as a result the community's 'heart and soul' became, fragmented and neglected. By 2017 residents had learned that a Regional Shopping complex has little time for the wellbeing of the village that abutted its premises. Everything was focused on achieving the best commercial outcomes. It is residents, not others, no matter how well meaning, who are fundamentally the custodians and alone thus responsible for their community's 'heart and soul'.



Distribution of flyers to most homes throughout Vincentia, advertising in shop premises and with the word circulated by several Vincentia organisations, resulted in over 150 residents and their supporters participating in a Community Forum held at the Vincentia Golf Club on

Wednesday May 17 2017. The aim of the Forum was to explore how residents and other stakeholders could lead the 'Rejuvenation of the Vincentia Village Centre' (to find and enshrine its 'mojo' again),

The passion and commitments directed to the Centre's rejuvenation and finding its future viability, together with the numerous apologies from residents unable to attend; and the many emails of supportive commentary following the meeting indicated a strong commitment from Residents, Landlords, and Retailers about the retention of the Village Centre. There could be no doubt about the importance that Residents place on the Village Centre's significance to community spirit, coherence and wellbeing.

Shoalhaven City Councillors who attended noted the energy and enthusiasm of residents to be part of the rejuvenating process. Village Centre Retailers and Landlords present were encouraged by the potential for improved viability of their enterprises, whilst Residents were themselves inspired by the creativity and innovative ideas that were shared and developed during the evening's conversations.

The Vincentia Village Centre Challenge

The Community Forum has enabled a wide range of ideas to be tabled and debated. Residents and Shopkeepers can see in these ideas the possibility of a new era and have the energy and motivation to make it happen. Councillors and Council Staff were supportive and encouraging. The next step is to take the ideas, outlined in this Report, and move them forward into a Strategic Plan that can be assessed against time, skills and finance available so appropriate elements can be successfully implemented.

Today our challenge is to move, as a community, from Brainstorming to Planning – What is the 'big' picture for rejuvenating the Vincentia Village Centre? What are the priorities for achieving this picture? What can residents, retailers and landlords do collaboratively? When, where and how can the Shoalhaven City Council contribute? Where are the sources of experts and funding that will be needed?

This Report is the completion of the Brainstorming stage and the opening of the Planning stage. The covering letter with the Report is an invitation to Residents, Retailers and Landlords who want and can be actively engaged in the Planning Stage to come to the next gathering of the Rejuvenating Vincentia Village Centre movement to form a group to lead the community through this stage.

The Community Forum

The agenda for the Forum is set out below:

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

General Introduction

In the Village Centre precinct, there are three driving forces that shape its success and sustainability

- Infrastructure provided by landlords and Council;
- Business relevance and capacity supplied by retailers; and
- Customer loyalty and engagement provided by Vincentia residents.

During the Forum, we are seeking to explore the viability, sustainability and resilience of each of these influences over the next few years. No one of the influences is more or less important than the other two as the quality of the Villages future will be determined by the collaboration and commitment to optimising these three simultaneously. So, while during the Forum we will first discuss them separately we anticipate that our conclusions will be a synthesis – a coming together – of the three.

Panel 1

Gordon Clark SCC Strategy Planning, Erica Jones Vincentia Chamber of Commerce, Matthew McKenzie, Property Owner

Infrastructure that defines and is the crucible for Village Centre life is not just the buildings and facilities. It also includes the ambience of the environment created by the Centre, access to it by foot or vehicle, mobility around it and its lure or attractiveness relative to alternatives. To guide our exploration of this key influence of the future of the Village Centre, we'd like our panelists to respond to the following questions:



- What are the development parameters of the Village Centre area under the current LEP and other Local or State regulations? (Council)
- Are these parameters consistent with your aspirations for the area in the next few years? (Panelists)
- What role/function does the Village Centre area play in Council's longer term vision of Vincentia and how might this impact on access and attractiveness? (Council)
- Over the next 10 years what role/function do you think the Village Centre should contribute to the quality of life of residents and visitors? (Panelists)

Table Group discussion 1

What needs to be supported, initiated, or ceased to enhance the sustainability of the Village Centre with respect to infrastructure?

Panel 2

Business viability, its capacity to sustain and grow is affected by many different factors that ebb and flow in the life of any business – product relevance, sales volume, marketing penetration, human resource skills, customer service, supply chain reliability and communications, for example. As we consider this dimension of the Village Centre's future we can, in general terms, think of a business as being viable when the business is returning a profit that is sufficient to provide a return on the retailer's investment while also meeting the commitments to the business creditors. To guide our exploration of this key influence of the future of the Village Centre, we'd like our panelists to respond to the following questions:

- What are the most challenging factors in managing a viable business in the Village Centre?
- Which of the factors that are outside your control if they could be changed would make the biggest positive difference to your viability, how feasible is making this change, and what suggestions for influencing this change do you have?

Table Group discussion

What needs to be supported, initiated, or ceased to enhance the sustainability of the Village Centre with respect to business viability?

Panel 3

Building an enduring relationship between business and customer (or Village Centre businesses and Vincentia residents) is the both the heart and lifeblood of its success. The relationship follows the well-walked path of all the relationships we have formed across our years of life – “attracting attention and interest”; “experiencing positive and rewarding activities’ that generate mutual goodwill”; and “sharing open and honest communications and support in times of need”. To guide our exploration of this key influence of the future of the Village Centre, we’d like our panelists to respond to the following questions:

- Which of the three aspects of relationship building are being done well in the Village Centre and which ones need more attention?
- How can residents contribute to enhancing all the aspects over the next few years to exceed the needs and aspirations of Vincentia residents for its Village Centre?
- What other interests in our community could add value to the Centre?

Table Group discussion

What needs to be supported, initiated, or ceased to enhance the sustainability of the Village Centre with respect to customer loyalty?

Reviewing the insights that the Table discussions generated from the three sessions, compile a brief statement about future actions required to shape a sustainable Vincentia Village Centre

Final Plenary,

Appreciation to Panelists and attendees.

Closing

The Emergent Themes for Rejuvenating the Village Centre

Overview of Themes

The 400 plus suggestions and comments recorded from the Table discussions, from the Panelists and from subsequent emails were sorted into 'association' clusters. Not surprisingly there was some overlap but also several different perspectives of these overlapping issues. A short explanatory paragraph statement was created about each Cluster. 42 Clusters were identified from this material and all are listed below.

While it is evident that all stakeholders in the future of the Vincentia Village Centre will need to contribute to achieving most of the clusters' intentions it was decided to assist the reader with some further sorting. To this end the Clusters were allocated to stakeholder or to a specific interest activity that could be the natural leader to initiate action. The Cluster statements are present in five Sections. Ideas from previous research are briefly referenced in a 6th Section.

- Themes that specifically relate to Shoalhaven City Council authority – In general these ideas refer to infrastructure on Council property, Council services and issues associated with Community governance.
- Themes that pertain to Commercial Viability – These Clusters reference the activities, or need for activities in the Commercial life of the Centre. Specifically, they identify the types of services Residents are looking for and the quality of the relationship between Retailers and Residents.
- Themes pertaining to Burton Street Areas Development Management – The Clustered ideas in this Section involve the strong participation of all stakeholders and importantly they need to be considered in relation to each other. This will probably be achieved by incorporating them in a Community endorsed Plan for the area. Some ideas are mutually exclusive of others, hence the need for a planning process that enables comparative discussions and informed decision making.
- Themes pertaining to Signage and Public Relations – The ideas in these clusters were of one mind, the paucity of signage and information about the Village Centre being the greatest drawback to its capacity to flourish.
- Themes that aim to integrate Vincentia and reinforce its core – Clustered of ideas in this Section engaged the perspective that the Village Centre was a key aspect of a bigger Village picture. The links to this bigger picture need to be emphasised.
- Themes from the 'Vincentia 2025' Future Planning Project (2015) – Finally a few Clusters of ideas that a large number of Residents contributed two years ago, are represented along with a Research Graph that shows how the Village Centre's Rejuvenation was rated, at that time, as the most significant issue for forward planning.

Themes that specifically relate to Shoalhaven City Council authority

Shoalhaven City Council Promotion

Council has a role to ensure all businesses survive and that existing businesses do not suffer. Council should promote the area in its published material. Perhaps a 'one stop shop' supported by Government.

Redevelopment Planning

Current Council regulations indicate a need for the Village Centre to be maintained. Businesses may see a need for more residential activities above the shops. All aspects need to be thoroughly considered in any future planning for the area taking all aspects into consideration including residents' views on the needs for its village.

Filtered Bay Views

While one at times can hear the sea nearby and perhaps smell it at other times there are no fleeting vistas of the Bay itself from the Village Centre. Ways of providing such filtered views should be investigated as they would add significantly to the ambience. Even a small public tower that could provide such views could be erected near the Excellent Street end of the Courtyard and become an iconic piece of infrastructure.

Access to the Bay

The Church Street link to the beach from Elizabeth Drive needs to be restructured and presented as an exit/entrance connection between the bayside activity and the refreshment, rest, shopping activities of the Village Centre. This link could be the inspiration that frames and ignites the whole rejuvenation of the Village Centre.

Water-point

Installation of a water station and bottle filler in the square to meet the needs of cyclists and walkers using any of the intersecting pathways in the area (appropriate signage also needed)

Special Events DA

Provide a generic DA that can be used by various groups for activities within the precinct of the Village Centre. (One was developed for H&JB Network that covers most issues.)

One-Stop Information Shop

Federal, State and Local Government information shop, catering for both residents and tourists. (May involve dedicated computers with guidance in their use available)

Waste Management

Positioning of bins to be relevant to activities in the Centre but as non-intrusive on available space as possible. The positioning of charity bins also needs further consideration.

Mobile Library

The mobile library currently stops along Elizabeth Drive some distance from the Village Centre. A spot within the Burton Street parking area could be allocated offering library visitors the ability to connect with the shopping and dining precincts.

Public Toilet Block

There was almost unanimous agreement that the Toilet Block is a significant barrier to achieving many of the 2017 aspirations for the area. Ideally the Block would be transferred immediately to another nearby site that did not interfere with the movement of people around the Village Centre. However, if that is not immediately feasible the Block should be screened in a way that beautifies the area and that at least the equivalent area of land occupied by the Block be excised from the northern carpark. This would enable the outdoor area to accommodate viable, attractive outdoor activities. This action should be taken as soon as possible.

Remove the Wall

The stub wall that surrounds the Centre's outdoor plaza works against the purpose of a free-flowing area for recreating, socializing and entertaining activities. The walls create a closed-in perspective when viewed from The Wool Road, and their removal will improve the feeling of welcoming and participation as new activities are developed for the area.

Public Liability Insurances

Now buskers and other informal activities are dissuaded because such activities are not covered by a precinct public liability insurance. The costs of such insurance are beyond the resources of performers. Council should therefore initiate negotiations with all stakeholders (performers, landlords, shopkeepers and Council) to develop a way of meeting this precinct need.

Themes that pertain to Commercial Viability

Vincentia Chamber of Commerce

The Forum congratulates the Village Centre retailers who have established and joined the new Chamber of Commerce and supports its intentions to improve the effectiveness of communication, promotional marketing, theme adoption and branding for differentiation. It is hoped that this association will enable a clear voice to be heard by external interests and be a single ear for all to hear about opportunities and threats. The Association is an essential partner with the Residents to Rejuvenate the Vincentia Village Centre.

Post Office

The services provided by a Post Office or Agency or Annex stimulates a lot of resident activity in an area and by shifting this facility the lives of residents have been depreciated and the consequence for surrounding businesses has been a significant setback to their viability. Services of this type should be returned to the Centre as soon as possible.

Retail Diversity

A flourishing vibrant community orientated Vincentia Village shopping centre will include the following retail activities:

- Deli – featuring local produce
- Butchery – featuring a sensitivity to the size of residents' purses
- Ice Creamery
- Supermarket – featuring sufficient capacity to service residents and tourists at peak times.
- Pharmacy – featuring access and parking for less abled residents and visitors.
- Seafood
- Clothes including Fashionable wear
- Toys and Recreational aides
- Newsagency
- Electrical goods and services
- Handyman and home help products and services (including key cutting, shoe repairs)
- Flowers/Nursery
- Dollar/ Reject commodities
- Rental services – featuring bicycles, kayaks and other outdoor and beach equipment
- Fruit and Vegetables – featuring as much as possible local crops.

Retail Services And Loyalty

Retailers need to look at all services and consider options. Suggestions included:

- Shop locally points rewards systems.
- Discount days and possible prizes (target clientele).
- Need for the Chamber of Commerce to promote activities. They could also source and provide customer service training.
- Food theme activities.
- Promotion of competitions and workshops.
- Reward shop owners for promotions (incentives from landlords).
- Make shopping area a drawcard for business services (NSW Government) and get employment agency type shops to build on customer loyalty.
- The need to maintain a large supermarket for locals and visitors was seen as vital.
- But, the existing supermarket needs to lift its game in respect to reductions in its core supermarket activities. The whole supermarket area needs to be updated and go up market, but not just another mall like the negative aspect of the Marketplace.
- A plastic bag free Vincentia.
- People like quiet shops and customer service from staff, not machines.
- Shopping trolleys are a problem and their location needs to be considered.

Food, Alcohol and Dining

Many respondents made specific comments about the importance of the availability of varied dining experiences in and around Vincentia Village. Vincentia Village needs to differentiate itself from Huskisson rather than replicate what is already available to become a local affordable dining precinct. What has become clear is that Vincentia residents want an opportunity to enjoy casual outdoor dining and wining within close proximity to home: Suggestions include:

- A Bar bistro; a place to have a drink without necessarily buying food
- BYO cafe/ restaurants
- Gourmet deli dine in takeaway especially for holiday makers
- Artisan pop ups on weekends and holidays
- Twilight or weekend artisan food markets.

Outdoor Dining

Clearly the emphasis is on better utilisation of the outdoor area around the village and assumes the central common area is redesigned and landscaped to take advantage of the natural environment and encourage more investment in sophisticated food and beverage operations. Accordingly, dialogue with local landlords would be advantageous with a view to promotion of available premises for food and beverage operations that will enhance existing businesses. A key consideration will be the ratio of income to rent and return on investment.

Courtesy, goodwill and welcoming

The shopkeepers and their staff provide the basic 'feeling' the Centre embodies and reflects to residents and visitors shopping, dining, relaxing or playing. A positive welcome to an eco-friendly, conversation buzzing, smiling precinct will garner similar responses from others.

Differentiation

While the full engagement of Vincentia residents will provide a base for commercial viability it will be how the Vincentia Village Centre differentiates itself from other villages that will enable it to flourish. The Centre needs to adopt a small number of themes that most businesses can adopt and develop, like the one suggested – 'the seaside end of Wool Road' – so it becomes a destination for visitors, like Milton and Berry.

Themes pertaining to Burton Street Areas Development Management

Funding of Improvements

Improvement suggestions need to be turned into a Strategic Plan for the Village Centre, costed and then used to obtain funding from external agencies who see the improvements of adding value to the community and advancing their purposes. Funders could include agencies associated with tourism, healthy lifestyles, job creations, decentralisation,

environmental conservation, etc. The Plan in its final draft should be assembled by experts and adopted by residents.

Street and Square Scope

There are many specific ideas of what the Centre should physically look like in the future – some ideas being mutually exclusive of other suggestions. However, some perspectives recorded that were generally endorsed included:

- Better lighting
- Beautification
- Tables and chairs and umbrellas
- Courtyard area linked by easy and open access to shops, carparks and pathways.
- A raised stage for performance enhancement.
- Safe level surface through pedestrian spaces.
- Upgrading of shop frontages.
- Utilisation of some of the Burton Street car parking area to increase dimensions of the Courtyard.
- A relaxing place to be in.

There was some advice that the whole Courtyard area, including the Toilet Block, should be studied and a Master Plan created before any single improvement is initiated. Failure to create a Master Plan of the whole area previously is now apparent with issues of the Toilet Block.

Street Art

Join with SeeChange 2018's intention to feature Wool Road as an opportunity to establish the Centre as an area for local artists to develop themes relevant to the Vincentia/The Wool Road relationship. Through art, sculpture, video, music and performance, invigorate the area and encourage ongoing activities beyond the Festival.

Gardens

Gardens can be used to link the various sections of the Village Centre – current asphalt paths could be softened with hedging and gardens linking east to west and north to south. The gardens could be developed as community gardens that are maintained and developed by interest groups or families. Several areas would lend themselves to colourful planter boxes as another way to create differentiation from other Village Centres.

Rest Areas

The central area needs community space and rest areas to be a destination for all including cyclists, dog owners, mothers, children which could include tables and chairs, and a playground for children.

Broadband and Social Media

It was highlighted by many that the existing area has significantly limited WIFI facilities and that this is inhibiting business growth and competition with other areas. Visitors and locals need to have facilities that allow for adequate communication with the outside world. Vincentia is a black hole and much needs to be done to improve WIFI and social media. For example, Shops could offer specials/deals through a website/Facebook page to attract custom. Internet cafes are a positive drawcard to the area.

Bus Services

Bus services to the area are limited and could be enhanced. Special buses could be organised to bring people from other local areas (e.g. retirement villages) to the Centre. A shuttle service could perhaps be added to a home delivery service. For tourists and residents from Huskisson without a motor vehicle may not want to walk the 5 Km. to Vincentia and thus there is a need for frequent public transport.

Employment Agencies

The emergence of employment agency type shops in the village centre has not a positive for the shopping centre as they do not add value or contribute to the viability of the other shops. They are totally irrelevant for tourists who play a major role in the economy of the area. Also, employment agency staff need to be aware of not occupying parking spots that are used by shoppers.

Courtyard Atmosphere

The current courtyard area is outdated and needs to reflect current and future expectations. It needs to incorporate a friendly and inviting area. Reference was made to an 'Urban Oasis' as seen on '<http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/gardening/FA1605V008S00#playing>'. Any plan for the courtyard would need to be sympathetic to the beach and bush and could focus on the large trees currently there. More plantings of appropriate foliage to attract birdlife and provide shade was suggested. Perhaps an ecosystem that provides educational value to the area. Shade sails are another option.

Courtyard Functionality

The courtyard is the connecting factor for the various shops in the village and a unique area of Vincentia. There were many comments on how this could be improved or enhanced including a piazza with seats and a fountain, fresco dining/meeting areas, places to sit and relax, enlarging the area, possible undercover walkways to connect the various areas which is needed in poor weather. Changes to the area could include designed areas for outdoor activities like, chess boards, an Amphitheatre incorporating a stage, children's play/park area (including soft fall area). Usage of the area is not maximised at present and beautification could attract other uses like live music, buskers, tai chi or exercise activities, open air theatre. The need for some form of music was strongly supported and could include local school presentations, advertised/regular events, loud speakers from one of the shops. All current limitations on buskers is in need a review.

Courtyard Markets

Many proposals were put forward to productively utilise the courtyard open space area. There is strong interest in some form of produce/farmers/handicraft type markets to attract people. Music and the Arts should be incorporated.

Surrounding Access

Access to the Village Centre is not great with many uneven surfaces and steps. Elderly residents like a flat even walking surface. There could be a safety issue with outdoor eating areas utilising sloping surfaces. Easy parking is seen as important. The roundabout into Burton Street could be enhanced with many features, but not ones that may cause traffic hazards.

Arts

There is a strong arts community in Vincentia. The village centre and surrounds could play a key role in binding the community through displays of art work. This could include outdoor/street art, activities with art/music, decorative art leading to the shopping village, a trail through the shopping area. The creation of an indoor or covered arts space which could incorporate the village toilets was suggested.

Tourism/Information Centre

The need for a more functional community area was strongly supported. The current hall located in the car park is regarded as inadequate, fails to meet community needs and is thus not regularly supported by the community. Many proposals were put forward regarding viable alternatives. The creation of an information centre which could also incorporate the community's needs plus offer a centre where visitors could obtain information on local issues. The centre could provide a history (including naval) of Vincentia, accommodation guidance, a library (which would be more accessible to residents than other suggested areas), directory of shops, items of local interest including educational and cultural activities; in other words, a multi-functional community centre and hub. Local environmental groups, government agencies (like, Marine Parks Authority, National Parks, Wildlife Services, Indigenous Groups, etc.) could be invited to participate. Several currently vacant shops could be utilised as an Information Centre.

Brochure

A communication brochure on aspects of Vincentia could be a worthwhile visitor tool. Perhaps locals could be enlisted to assist in promoting the area and providing guidance and history. There is currently an ad hoc approach where visitors approach locals for assistance which could be more formally centralised.

Themes pertaining to Signage and Public Relations

Pathways and Beaches

Signs to assist people to navigate to and around the Vincentia Village Centre are almost non-existent, signs that provide the following information need to be urgently put in place:

- Directions to Village Centre from Round-the-bay Shared Pathways intersection with Church Street and Holden Street.
- Direction to Village Centre from Wool Road/Navel College Road Roundabout.
- Direction to Village Centre from Leisure Centre precinct.
- Direction to Village Centre from Moona Creek bridge
- Index of all businesses and facilities within the Village Centre at all entrances.
- Direction to each of the five beaches and to Leisure Centre from the Village Centre

Shops' Unique features

There is a need to inform visitors and locals about the unique characteristics of local shops including features like – Cafes in a quiet environment; Coles fully stocked supermarket; locally made produce from Bakeries etc.

Natural Beauty

The natural beauty of the environment in which Vincentia is located needs to be celebrated and promoted through creating associational images and activities in the Village Centre – like a common backing for every sign.

Orientating to Village Centre

All signs referring to Vincentia should be orientated so they point towards or refer to the Vincentia Village Centre. Institutions on Naval College Road should not be sign posted as Vincentia. The goal of all signs should be to make the Vincentia Village Centre visible.

Tourist Maps – Shoalhaven Information Centres

All material pertaining to Vincentia should feature references to the Vincentia Village Centre as the accredited source for local information and services. Staff of shops in the Centre should be trained to disseminate local information.

Traffic and Parking

The entry and exit of traffic into the Vincentia Village Centre from The Wool Road and Excellent Street needs more prominent signage. During peak tourist season Parking/No Parking signs are required to ensure continuous traffic flow around the Village Centre.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian movement around the Village Centre needs to be secure and usable by everyone no matter what their degree of mobility. Pathways from the Service Station and the Eastern side shops to the Westside shops and Coles carpark using the lane beside Celebrations.

Traffic Flow

At peak tourist times the traffic at the Wool Road/Elizabeth Street Roundabout becomes extremely congested making entry and exit to the Village Centre very difficult. Through traffic (going beyond the Village Centre) should be directed along Beach Street to a new roundabout at its junction with Wool Road. Council in consultation with residents should devise a new master traffic plan for the streets surrounding the Village Centre which recognises the pivotal role of the Centre in community life.

Themes that aim to integrate Vincentia and reinforce its core

Plantation Point and Five Beaches

Plantation Point and Five Beaches events need to be tied into the Village Centre presence. This could be done through various shops adopting a beach or the Point displaying pictures and information that integrates the community's natural beauty assets with its commercial and social assets.

An alternative view of the future

If the preferred option of rejuvenating the Village Centre fails a number of ideas were put forward during the Forum. However, these came as single suggestions and no general discussion was held about them. They are recorded here for the sake of a complete record of the Forum's sharing. The area could be used for:

- High-rise, medium density housing
- Retirement Village
- Open space including, playground, gardens and outdoor performance centre
- Two levels of houses above ground shops focusing primarily on food and beverages.

Themes from the 'Vincentia 2025' Future Planning Project (2015)

The following extract from the Report of the Study, published in February 2015, supports many of the propositions presented during the Community Forum in May 2017:

“Three Themes stand out in the results as being highly significant in the future planning for Vincentia in both their contribution to quality of life and economic viability (see Table below from Study). Further the Standard Deviation of responses for these three was very low indicating a high level of agreement about their value by Contributors. These Themes are:

- ***Village Social Hub***
Upgrading the Burton Street mall to enable it to become the Village's appealing and attractive 'social hub'. Upgrade may include - a space for parklands, gardens and incorporating a space for performances and markets, with family friendly

playgrounds and picnic areas, relocation of the toilet block, and additional cafes and restaurants with outside dining.

- **Public Transport**

The public transport system needs to be significantly improved to reduce the dependency for high usage levels of private motor vehicles. The improved public transport system would support tourism in the area, be a contributor to preserve what is unique and beautiful in Vincentia and provide access to many of the Bay and Basins' unique features through a regular network of mini buses.

- **Links to the World - Telecommunications**

New telecommunication services to address the lack of adequate telecommunications, including poor digital TV reception, black spots with broadband, poor Internet access and mobile reception, which limit the quality of life and commerce enjoyed in other Centres.

Interpretation: These three items typify many of the interdependencies associated with community development, in this case there is a strong need for appropriate infrastructure to form a basis for enhanced social interaction between residents and with their networks outside of Vincentia. Further the infrastructure requires a partnership between Government and Private Enterprise to gain optimum outcomes. This implies that the Project Management Group should be expanded to include Private Enterprise representatives from Telco providers, Bus operators and Burton Mall shop owners. There is the possibility that the social hub could have associated with it a Public Transport Exchange and a high-speed Internet and digital communication hub. In bringing these three high preferences of the community into a mutually reinforcing Centre would facilitate the emergence of a Community Heartbeat in this area.

Some of the specific ideas included:

New Garden Centre

Open a garden centre is needed, info on plants that are suitable for local gardens - plants to purchase, get information, share discussions, hub of garden social media group (like Jetto's Patch in Perth). (286)

Update the village centre shops

Modernise the existing shopping centre. Include nice grocery/wholefoods store, butcher, some cafes and one or two restaurants along with the practical shops like chemist, hardware etc. (305)

Redesign or redevelop Shopping centre around Coles

The current shops are great but not always easy to visit due to lack of parking and ease of access to parking area. The proposed Woolworth's development means less incentive to spend money in the village but not everyone will want to visit the shopping centre (307)

Vincentia Plaza

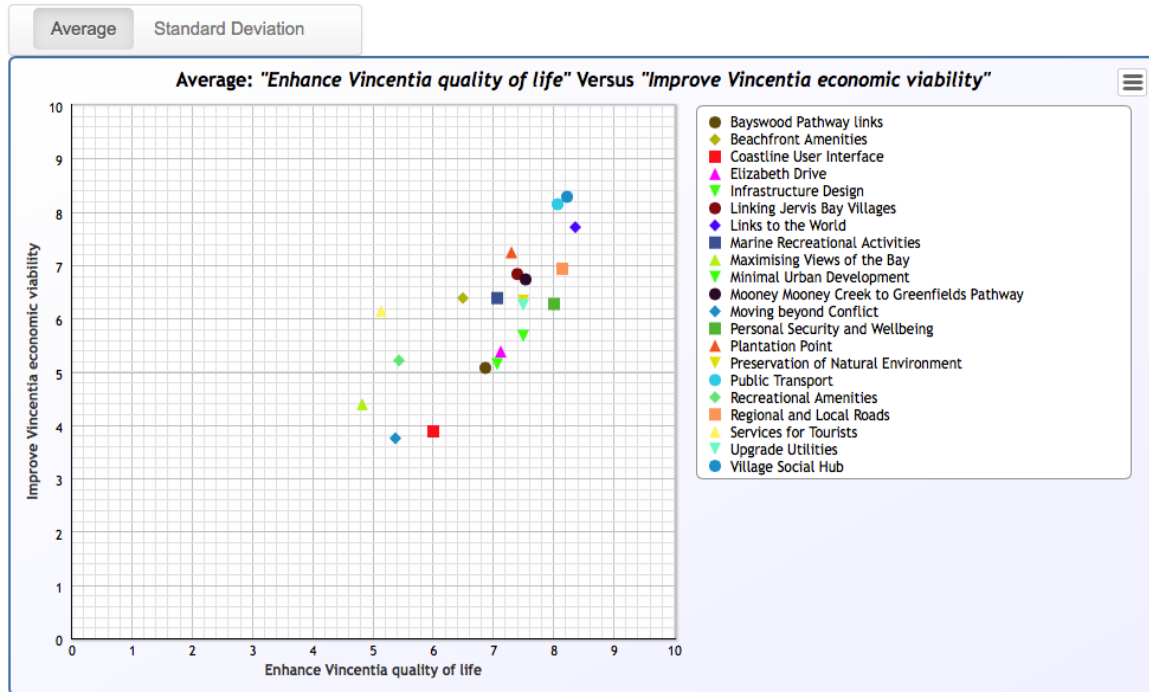
The retail centre will have all the parking at the rear and a fully integrated and pedestrian friendly/ safe paved and landscaped zone fronting some quality cafes, village shops and customer friendly service providers. Plenty of seating, great signage and passive recreation space would be a highlight. (316)

Village Centre Social Hub

With the imminent opening of the Woolworths Vincentia shopping centre, what a great opportunity to turn the existing village centre into a social hub with cafes, restaurants, live acoustic music etc. (think Huskisson). It's perfectly positioned on the outstanding Huskisson, Plantation Point, Sanctuary Point bike path so provide plenty of bike parking. Convert the front roundabout carpark into open area with cafes (possibly elevated for view. Move all retail, Real Estate agents etc. to the rear of the village. Convert the small rear carpark into an award-winning kids' playground. Definitely don't convert the Village centre into units, a club, retirement village etc. (323)

Scatterplot of Vincentia Strategic Improvement Ideas (2015)

In 2014-15 A Vincentia Community Study (Vincentia 2025) on its future collected the ideas and preferences of more than 500 Community residents, the graph shows the distribution of those preferences against the variables of wellbeing and viability. **The Village Centre (labelled Social Hub) is shown as the most significant.** More details available from Vincentia Matters Inc.)



Next Steps

The goal of many Vincentia Residents to see a Vincentia Community Strategy Plan created is a continuing challenge for Vincentia Matters Inc.. This Plan would embody the community's aspirations for the next 20 years.

The widely-supported Vincentia Futures Plan (Vincentia 2025) started the process and while the initial timeline and engagement of professional town planning expertise was derailed for the last two years, the success of the Community Forum indicates that the goal of a Strategy Plan with strong community engagement is possible and desirable.

Comments from several attendees at the Forum and from various associations of residents since the Forum, suggests that the starting point for the wider Strategy Plan should be initiated through following through on the Forum's outcomes.

Creating a Vincentia Community Group dedicated to the planning project, which is free from the community politics associated with a myriad of other events provides the best way forward.

To establish such a group and endow it with the outcomes from the Community Forum, Vincentia Matters Inc. will convene a follow-up meeting on Wednesday 28th June at 7pm at the Vincentia Golf Club. The meeting is for those in Vincentia who would like to be a part of the Vincentia Community Strategic Planning Group. It is anticipated that people participating in the group would need to devote approximately 6 hours a month to the exercise until the end of 2017. The Group would require people with a range of skills including, researching, interviewing, documenting, negotiating and communicating as well as the more formal knowledge associated with the Planning discipline.

Those unable to attend the meeting but interested in participating can record their interest by emailing the Vincentia Matter Inc. Secretary who will present the interest to the Meeting.

In the time between the completion of this Report (04/06/17) and the proposed Follow-up Meeting (28/06/17) it is hoped that the Report of the Outcomes will be read and be the subject of extensive conversations within the community. Individuals or groups who have insights about the contents of the Report, when and how certain outcomes should be initiated or any other matters pertaining to the Rejuvenation of the Vincentia Village Centre are invited to email this knowledge to Vincentia Matters Inc. who will create a log and digest of the emails as an addendum to this Report for use by the Planning Group.

The email address of Vincentia Matters Inc. is:

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