

Group Conversation Toolkit

IMAGINE
2040

Your Vision. Our Future.

Setting the scene for a conversation

When discussing the survey questions, please think about the entire Mildura Rural City Council region, which includes all towns and communities in the municipality i.e. the Millewa, Mildura, Merbein, the Mallee Track, Murrayville and everywhere in between.

About your group

What is the name of your group?

.....

What is the purpose of your group?

.....

.....

How many people are in your group?

.....

What are the age ranges of your group participants?

.....

Would your group like to be part of future conversations about this project?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Email address:

Where are we now?

Understanding the current situation is often helpful when looking ahead to the future. Refer to the following four background fact sheets for more information about our region and your community in 2021.





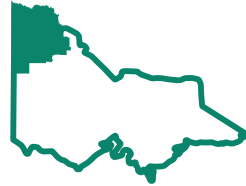
Our People & Community

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Your Vision. Our Future.

Community is everything here in the Mildura region and within that we have a range of diversity across everything we do. From employment, our family structures and the languages we speak at home, we have differences which make us unique and also a tight community together.

Here is a snapshot of where we are today.



22,300 sq. km – **9.9%** of the state

The Mildura region is located in north-west Victoria with Mildura itself on the Murray River on the border of New South Wales. 550km north-west from Melbourne, 400km north-east of Adelaide and 1080km west of Sydney.



20.7%² did voluntary work through an organisation or group

Age

People aged **65 years** and over made up **18.7%**² of the population

40 years
Median age



Religion

11.9% Anglican
33.5%² No Religion
10.6% Not stated
22.1% Catholic
6.7% Uniting Church

Employment

55.9%²
Full time

31.1%
Part time



7.3%
Unemployed



5.7%
Away from work

3.8%¹
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



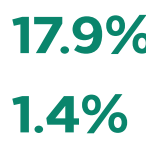
Top languages spoken at home²

English, Italian, Turkish, Greek, Mandarin and Tongan



41.3%² Couple family without children

39.5% Couple family with children



17.9% One parent family

1.4% Other family



Country of birth

79.3%²
Australia

1.4%
England

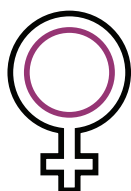
1.2%
Italy



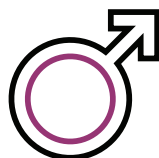
18.1%
Other



79%¹
different nationalities officially recognised



50.9%²
Female



49.1%
Male

Projected population growth

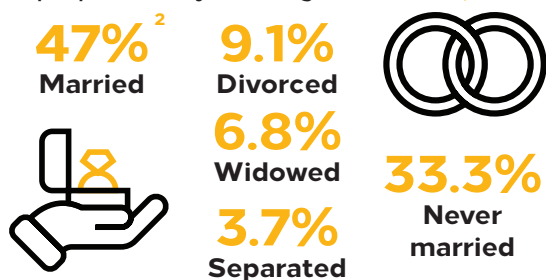
2021
55,257

2031
59,439³

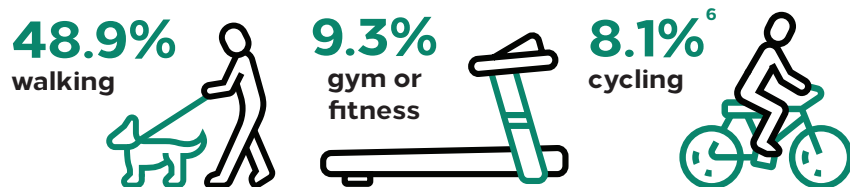


Marital status

(people over 15 years of age)



The three most popular non-organised physical activities were



309,321¹
attendees at
aquatic facilities



36,127⁴
hours of aged
and disability
care support provided



273,815⁴
library items borrowed



\$210 Median weekly rent
\$1064² Median weekly household income



66%⁶ of residents
felt they live in a
close-knit community

2.4²
people per
household



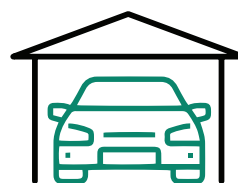
74.2%⁶ of residents
agreed that people in their
neighbourhood are
willing to help
each other out



66 groups
assisted
by annual
community
grants totalling
\$344,044.63⁴
(GST exclusive)



1.9² average motor
vehicles per
dwelling



Residents rated
themselves
7.8/10⁶
in life
satisfaction

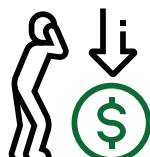


COVID-19 impacts on our community

44%⁵ were exercising less
35% want more exercise
opportunities



12%⁵ were
unable to pay
their rent or
mortgage



50%⁵ of people
want to see more
community events



42%⁵ said their mental
health had been
impacted
32% want more mental
health support

The following Mildura Rural City Council
strategies aim to create a safe, supportive
place to live, where diversity and lifestyle
opportunities are enhanced:

- Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy
- Aquatic Facilities Redevelopment Strategy
- Community Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Domestic Animal Management Plan
- Library Service Strategy
- Mildura Tracks and Trails Strategy
- Municipal Early Years Strategy
- Public Lighting Strategy
- Public Open Space Strategy
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Recreation Strategy
- Road Safety Strategic Plan
- Youth Engagement Strategy

¹ mildura.vic.gov.au ² ABS Census 2016 ³ knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au

⁴ Council Annual Report 2019-2020 ⁵ Council COVID-19 Impact Survey ⁶ VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015





Our Economy

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The structure of the region's economy and a significant transient population for employment purposes sees the Mildura area serve a regional population across three states – Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

While renowned for quality horticultural and agricultural production, the local economy has diversified and expanded over many years to include a variety of industries. Value adding industries such as manufacturing (predominantly wine, fruit and vegetable processing) have become well established in the region and benefit from the area's tri-state location and transport infrastructure.

Tourism is also a strong element within the local economy and the Mildura region has become a popular tourism destination. With excellent infrastructure and a Mediterranean style climate creating an abundance of sunshine hours and clear days, Mildura has more recently become an area of great interest to the renewable energy sector and is viewed as a preferred solar location.

Annual economic
output of
\$6.645¹
billion



\$931.8m
from the
manufacturing
industry sector

This makes
the greatest
contribution to
economic output
in the region,
accounting for
14.02%
of total output



Home to
55,777¹
people



22,368¹
jobs

Produce

The Mildura region grows the following percentage of Australia's produce:

98%²
of dried
vine fruit



24%
of citrus

75%
of table grapes



24%
of carrots

68%
of almonds



23%
of asparagus

48%
of pistachios

20%
of wine
grape crush

Jobs in the Top 10 Industry Sectors

3,228¹
Healthcare & Social
Assistance



3,006
Retail Trade



2,364
Agriculture,
Forestry & Fishing



2,044
Education & Training



1,728
Accommodation
& Food Services



1,563
Construction



1,336
Manufacturing

1,224
Public Administration
& Safety



1,068
Administrative &
Support Services



994
Transport, Postal
& Warehousing



29,688³
Rateable properties



23,864³
Residential

2,409
Business



1,547
Dryland farming

1,783
Irrigated farming

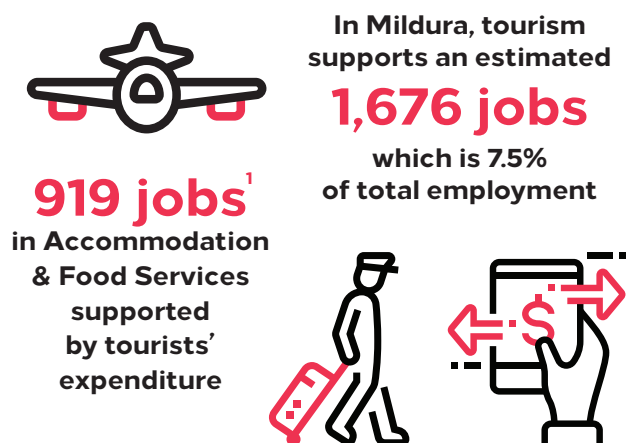


85
Cultural and
recreation
properties

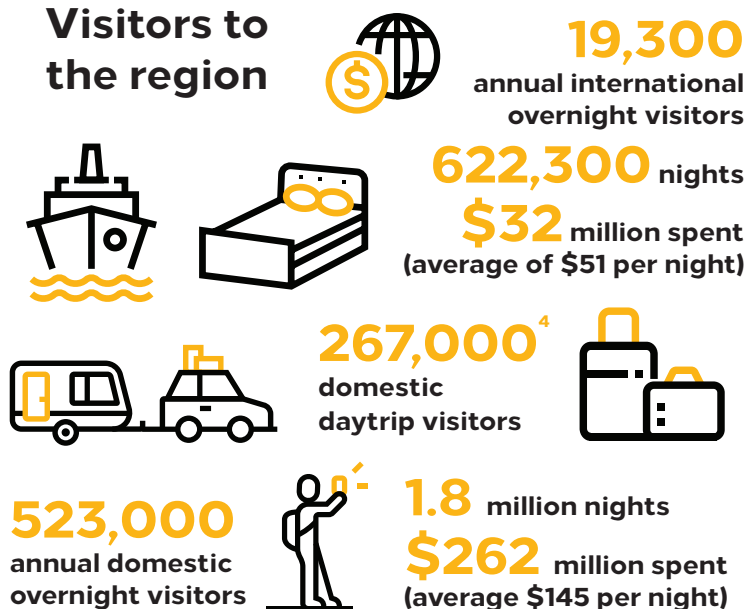


Tourism

Our region's climate, location between three states and proximity to natural wonders and national parks makes it a popular tourist destination. Most people visit our region for a holiday with visiting friends and relatives coming a close second.



Visitors to the region



The following Mildura Rural City Council strategies aim to encourage diverse and sustainable economic development that provides growth in jobs, investment and quality of life:

- Chaffey Trail Strategic Plan
- Events Strategy
- Mildura Regional Development Strategic Plan



COVID-19 impacts on our economy

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our local communities and regional economy. Many businesses have experienced temporary closures or restrictions, and individuals have lost work. As the spread of the virus is contained and restrictions are gradually relaxed, it is anticipated that the negative impacts of the pandemic will lessen.

Prior to COVID-19 and the introduction measures to manage the pandemic, the total employment across all local industry sectors was estimated at

22,368¹

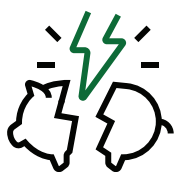
For December 2020, total employment is estimated at

21,993

15%⁵ spent savings

19% want financial assistance for individuals

Young people, those with children, and renters showed higher instances of financial vulnerability than other sectors of our community.



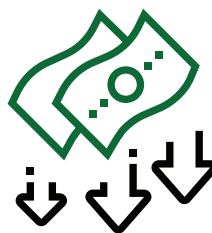
117⁵ business owners responded



34% said they had changed their method of service delivery to adapt

28%⁵ employment impacted

15% on JobSeeker / JobKeeper



39% switched to online purchasing

29% spent less money in general

27%⁵ of people who answered this survey were living below the poverty line.

Council's \$1.5 million Community Recovery Fund was ⁶ set up to support our community through the social and economic elements of this emergency. To date this has included waiving a range of business permit and registration fees, waiving rates for community groups and clubs, waiving lease and licence fees, waiving interest accrued on overdue rates and a range of grants and rates credits for businesses.

¹ remplan.com.au ² Mildura Visitor Information and Booking Centre ³ MRCC Annual Report 2019-2020

⁴ milduraregion.com.au ⁵ MRCC COVID-19 Community Impact Survey, November 2020 ⁶ mildura.vic.gov.au





Our natural & built environments

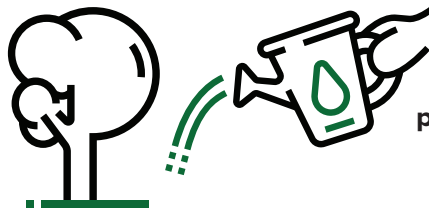
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Your Vision. Our Future.

At 22,330 square kilometres, the Mildura Rural City Council area covers almost ten per cent of the state of Victoria and includes unique Mallee vegetation, broad acre grain properties, intensive horticultural farms and vibrant towns. The beautiful Murray River winds its way through much of the municipality and is a focal point for visitors and about 55,700 people who call the region home.

The places and spaces where we live, work and play have a huge impact on community health and wellbeing. Council manages and maintains a huge range of community infrastructure and delivers many services that help promote and sustain our natural and built environments.

28¹ nature strips converted as part of our Low Water Use Nature Strip Program



1274 trees were planted in the 2019-2020 season

Roads, Footpaths and Road Drainage

420km¹
Footpaths and shared paths



470km
Kerbs and channel for road drainage



1,047km
Sealed roads



4,145km
Unsealed roads

Waste Management

Council provides a range of waste management services to keep our municipality clean and safe. These services assist residents, visitors and businesses to responsibly dispose of the waste they make, extend the life of local landfills and improve the sustainability of our environment.



6,936²
Tonnes of organic waste collected in kerbside green bins since July 2020



9 Landfills and transfer stations³

26,206²
Rubbish bins collected each week

25,993²
Recycling bins collected each fortnight

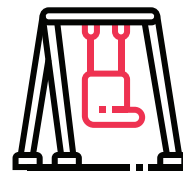


Public Open Spaces

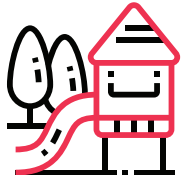
8¹
Swimming pools



17
Sporting reserves



111
Parks



4 Wetlands



60 Playgrounds



4
Skate parks



1176¹
Council maintained buildings

3
Wharfs and mooring



Drainage

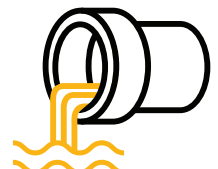
337km¹
Pipes



11,377
Pits and gross pollutants



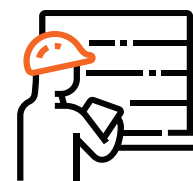
80
Stormwater management areas





Building and Planning

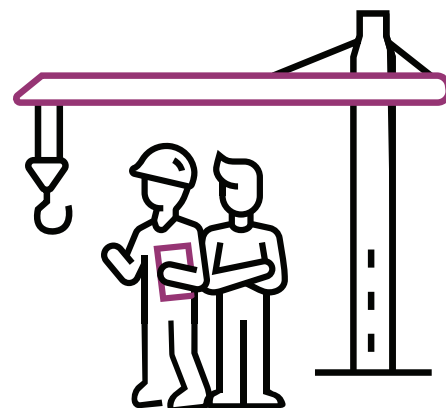
986²
building permits issued
for building works totalling
\$174,224,004



593
planning
permit
applications
received

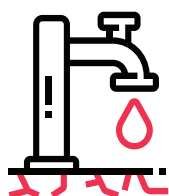
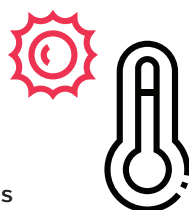
Mildura Rural City Council provides the following services to support our natural and built environments:

- Parks and gardens
- Waste management
- Building and enforcement
- Strategic land use planning
- Works and infrastructure services
- Engineering services
- Asset management
- Statutory planning
- Building facilities
- Environmental sustainability



Climate Change³

Climate change has the potential to affect our community, the economy and our environment adversely. Victoria is already experiencing climate change impacts, increased and longer fire seasons and extreme fire warning days, and is becoming hotter and drier in the recent years.



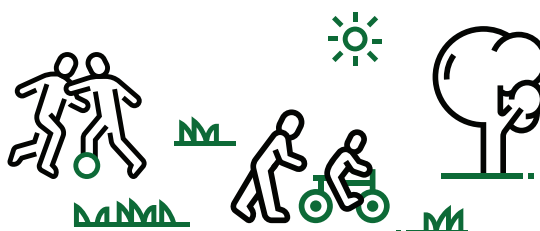
On 26 February 2020 Council declared a climate emergency and is currently setting up a Climate Emergency Reference Group which will provide input and guide the development of a Climate Emergency Plan containing community owned climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.



COVID-19 impacts on our natural & built environments

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our community. During this time lockdowns placed limits on time away from the home for outdoor activities such as exercise. Other restrictions have also encouraged us to socialise outdoors over indoors to reduce the chance of spread. This has shown us how important it is to have open spaces, facilities and features such as parks, playgrounds, reserves and gardens to enjoy individually and with others, and how vital they are in playing a part in our general wellbeing.

Sometimes there is nothing better than getting outside and into fresh air and nature.



The following Mildura Rural City Council strategies aim to create and promote sustainable natural and built environments:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Deakin Avenue Master Plan
- Energy Management Plan
- Mildura CBD Plan
- Environmental Education Plan
- Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy
- Invasive Plants and Animals Plan
- Mildura Retail Strategy
- Road Management Plan
- Public Toilet Strategy
- Native Vegetation Plan
- Mildura Riverfront Master Plan

¹ MRCC records

² MRCC Annual Report 2019-2020

³ mildura.vic.gov.au





Your Council

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Your Vision. Our Future.

Mildura Rural City Council delivers more than 100 services that focus on the health, economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of our region. This includes public health, traffic, parking and animal management, planning, maternal and child health, cultural development, aged and disability services, waste management and much more.

As well as three Customer Support Centres (two in Mildura and one in Ouyen) the organisation's workforce is spread right across the region based at works depots, libraries, swimming pools, landfills and other community facilities. As a local government organisation, Council is also responsible for enforcing various federal, state and local laws, providing leadership and advocating on behalf of our community.

20 January 1995¹ Mildura Rural City Council was established following the amalgamation of the former City of Mildura and the Shires of Mildura and Walpeup.

2020-21 Council Budget Breakdown⁵

2020-21 Council Budget

\$148.94 million

These figures detail how different services and facilities are funded in the 2020-21 Council Budget



2.56%
Recreation
& Leisure



3.73%
Youth, Children &
Family Services

1.87%
Libraries



9.56%
Asset & Building
Management

1.00%
Community
Recovery Fund



0.67%
Mildura
Airport ILS

0.81%
Sustainability
& Environment

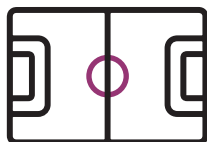
3.41%
Aged Services

4.90%
Community
Development



4.37%
Parks,
Playgrounds
& Trees

12.72%
Mildura South
Regional Sporting
Precinct



2.48%
Tourism &
Economic
Development



8.15%
Waste,
Recycling &
Street Cleaning

1.20%
Major Projects

2.44% Community Safety, Health & Wellbeing

4.30%
Drainage

15.58%
Roads

2.65%
Town Planning



1.69%
Local Laws
& Permits

11.35%
Council
Operations

2.20%
Customer
Services

2.36%
Arts, Culture
& Events



36,127²
hours of aged
and disability
care support
provided

599³

food Safety permits
issued in 2019-20



577

food Safety and Health
inspections in 2019-20

9,315³

pets registered

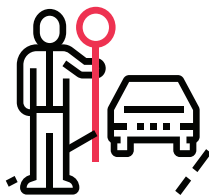
7,846 dogs
1,469 cats



663

animals rehomed
from the Mildura
Animal Pound

26²
school
crossings
supervised



64,402²

phone calls
answered by
the customer
call centre



\$1.24 billion²
worth of community assets
maintained to support
residents and visitors to the
region (including property,
infrastructure, plant
and equipment)

209,653

hours of childcare provided
through Playalong
Early Learning
Centre and
Family
Day Care



50.2%²

Female

49.8%

Male



464.79

Full Time
Equivalent Staff



593²

planning permit
applications
received

986

building permits issued for
building works totalling
\$174,224,004

55,777¹

Estimated
resident
population



\$50.74 million⁵

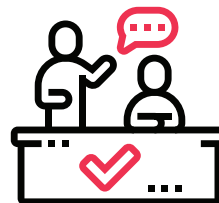
Capital Works budget
to improve and upgrade
community assets



COVID-19 impacts on your Council

The global pandemic required Mildura Rural City Council to innovate, adapt and respond quickly. As well as changing how staff work and deliver services for the community, Council has a leading role in local response and recovery efforts. This includes:

- Providing a Community Relief Service for emergency food, wellbeing and other supports
- Deferring rate payments and waiving a range of Council fees, charges and rates for businesses and community groups
- Establishing a \$1.5 million Community Recovery Fund in the 2020-21 Budget
- Advocating for our cross border communities impacted by state border closures
- Supporting hospitality businesses to increase their outdoor dining offering
- Providing Grants and Rates Credit opportunities for impacted businesses
- Delivering a range of community activation and connection events and activities



9 Councillors²

publicly elected to serve a
four year term. The 2020 local
government elections were held
on Saturday 24 October 2020.

22,330 km²

Mildura Rural City¹
Council has the largest
geographic area of all
Victorian Councils



These Mildura Rural City Council strategies aim to manage resources in a sustainable manner to provide services that are relevant, of a high standard and respond to identified community needs:

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Human Resources Strategy
- Information Systems Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Mildura Future Ready Advocacy Plan

¹ mildura.vic.gov.au ² MRCC Annual Report 2019-20 ³ MRCC records

⁴ knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au ⁵ 2020-2021 MRCC Annual Budget



1. What do you like most about our region and community?

We are looking for a range of views from the group here; everyone's answer is valuable we do not expect agreement. However if everyone happens to be in agreement on a particular idea, please note that.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

2. What would make our region and community a better place to live, work and play?

This question helps us understand how people would like our region to look, feel and function in the future. Go around the group and ask people individually for their thoughts, then discuss the ideas as a group what do participants agree on and are there any differences. Write down all outcomes of the discussion.

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3. What challenges do we face as a region and community?

What are the challenges for our community and region? Ask people individually or in small groups to consider their response, are there any ideas the participants agree on and any differences (differences are ok)

After the group discussion revisit the question with the group, are there any additional points to add? Add any additional points the group feels are missing.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

4. Thinking about our region and community in the year 2040, what should be the top priority for the future?

What is the top priority for our community and region in the future? Ask people individually or in small groups to consider their response, are there any ideas the participants agree on and any differences (differences are ok) After the group discussion revisit the question with the group, are there any additional points to add? Add any additional points the group feels are missing.

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**Thank you
for your time!**

**IMAGINE
2040**

Your Vision. Our Future.

We look forward to hearing your about your conversation soon.

You can submit your Group Conversation survey responses online at yoursay.mildura.vic.gov.au/imagine or

Assign a group member to write your group’s responses to the survey questions in the space provided within this Toolkit and return it by:

- Post to Mildura Rural City Council, PO Box 105 Mildura 3500.
- Drop in one of the Imagine 2040 ballot boxes located at Council Service Centres, libraries at other locations throughout the region.
- Email it to mrcc@mildura.vic.gov.au
- SMS a photo of it to 0448 846 458