

MOUNT GAMBIER



A community vision for our regional capital

**“A volcanic past with a
crystal clear future.”**



Acknowledgement of Country

The Boandik people are the Aboriginal people of the lands around Mount Gambier/Berrin. They have been here for thousands and thousands of years. Their creation story *Craitbul*, is oral evidence of the timing of eruptions of Mount Muirhead/Beleter, Mount Schank/Parreen and Mount Gambier/Berrin.

Through the ancestors and Elders teachings; values, laws and culture have been passed down. The strong connection to Country and the Waters of the lakes, sinkholes and sea is evident in the name – The Boandik – ‘the people of the reeds and rushes’.

Their ancestors practiced what is now the oldest living culture on Earth.

They respected Country and knew the seasons. They listened to Mother Earth and moved to different sites to allow new growth, for resources to replenish, to gather medicines for healing, burnt Country to cleanse Country and maintain rich hunting grounds and access to songlines. The ancestors lived with the Land and cared for the Land. Nothing was taken for granted. Respect and honour systems were in place.

The Boandik people and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community continue to uphold these values today but need support. Support from all community to walk the path, hand in hand, step by step, to build a stronger future together.

Aunty Michelle Jacquelin-Furr
*Boandik Elder and Mount
Gambier 2035 Community
Panel member*



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The Vision Statement

The vision statement is the overarching message about how we want to approach the future for Mount Gambier. It consists of a simple and poetic statement that reflects the key themes of our community's values and aspirations.

Informed by the inherent strengths and shared values of the city, it outlines a path forward that emphasises family, connection, nature and growth.



A volcanic past with a crystal clear future.

In 2035, Mount Gambier is a connected hub nestled on the slopes of an ancient volcano; a haven of natural beauty. It is a place of stories, where our community is family, nurtured through growth, opportunity and connection.

Our inherent strengths and shared values of family, connection, growth, and nature have been identified as fundamental to our vision and are outlined below.

Mount Gambier is where our community is family which provides us with:

- support and care.
- opportunities.
- interactions.
- a foundation to find meaning.

Mount Gambier is a hub for connection to:

- services.
- the wider region.
- networks.
- our natural environment.
- culture/s.
- each other.
- share stories and history.
- celebrate.

Mount Gambier is a hub for considered and sustainable growth through:

- innovation.
- diversity.
- accessibility and services.
- entrepreneurship.
- ourselves, family and community.
- economic ambition.
- affordability.

In Mount Gambier, our natural environment holds significant value, and it is important that that:

- we maintain our access to interact with nature.
- we prioritise sustainability in our utilisation of natural resources.
- we act as custodians, preserving and protecting our natural environment.
- we enjoy urban living within a rural setting.
- we uphold the quality of our natural resources, including water, air, and soil.

Strategic Priorities

Five strategic priorities represent the key focus areas that will contribute to achieving our vision for the future.

These priorities are interconnected and underpinned by three key principles. We need to ensure Mount Gambier is: connected, accessible, and sustainable. These principles acknowledge that we will only achieve our community vision when all of the strategic priorities work together, ensuring that whether you are new to Mount Gambier, or an existing member of our community, that you feel valued, supported, and enabled to thrive.

The priorities are about Mount Gambier in the future – reflecting some of what the city is now, but also what our community wants it to become.

Idea submission: 'How would you like Mount Gambier to be described in 2035?'

“Progressive, vibrant, creative, inclusive, culturally diverse. ‘A connected community’.”



Key Principles

The key principles are not stand-alone; they underpin how we should approach everything we do.

Connected

The ripple effect:

We consider how working on one priority can link to the others to multiply the outcome for our community.

Local, national, global:

We consider how our city can be strengthened by connecting with others - our local communities (District Council of Grant, South-West Victoria), regional and state (Limestone Coast towns, tourism, health and education), national (investment and business), and global (export and trade).

Accessible

Welcoming:

We consider how our strategic priorities can be welcoming and inviting for all to participate. A vibrant community is where people of all abilities, linguistic, cultural backgrounds and age groups can connect, contribute and are valued.

Universal design:

We consider the principles of co-design to ensure the incorporation of universal design - informational, physical, systematic, communication, and cultural accessibility.

Sustainable

Environmental stewardship:

We embed a culture of environmental responsibility among residents and industries, collectively working together for the stewardship of the air, land, soil and water.

Protecting and preserving our natural resources:

We consider urban planning and design principles that ensure our unique natural resources are protected and preserved - clean air, volcanic soil, crystal clear groundwater, green and open space (sinkholes, crater lakes and urban parks).

Circular Economy:

We demonstrate leadership and consider infrastructure that supports a circular economy and reduces waste to landfill.



Idea submission: 'What do you value about our city?'

“Cleanliness, pretty, easy to get around, would not live anywhere else, affordable.”

Environment and Liveability

We are custodians of the landscape, committed to protecting and preserving our natural environments, creating a liveable city.



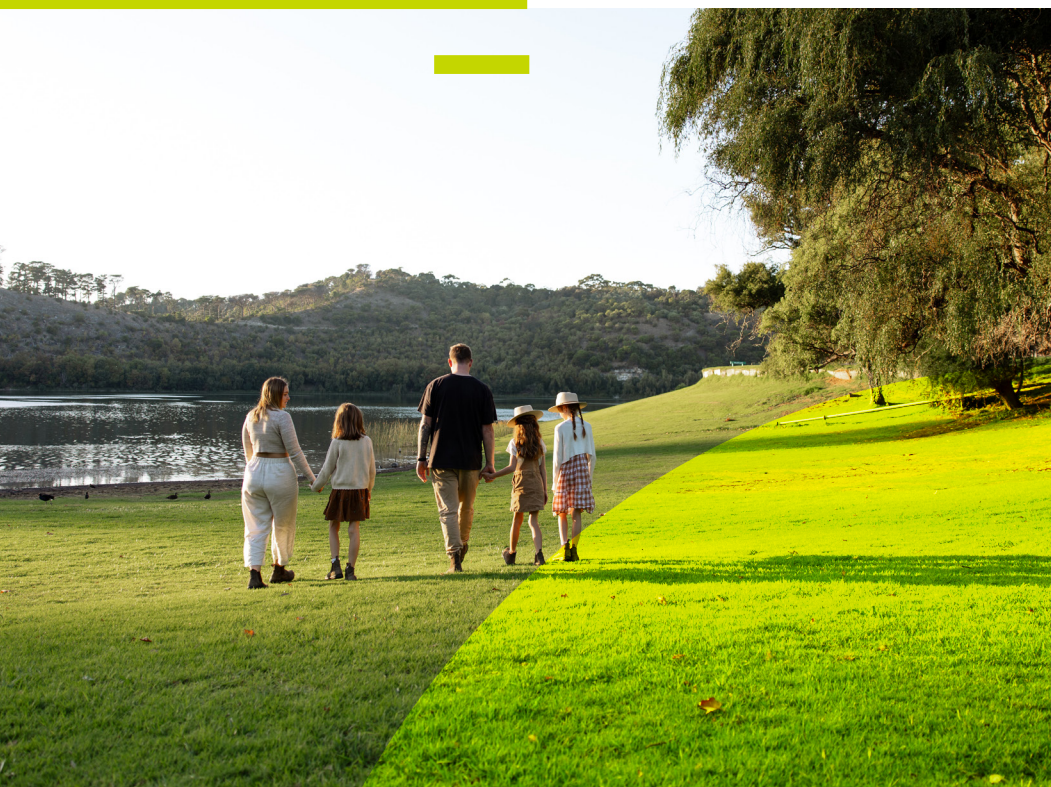
Areas under this priority include:

- Biodiversity.
- Land management of the Crater Lakes precinct and other natural assets.
- Reducing urban sprawl impacts.
- Sustainable energy.
- Tourism.
- Waste management.
- Water; security and sustainable use.

In 2035 success looks like...

- Our green connections, such as wildlife corridors along the Rail Trail and interconnected track networks, enhance the connectivity of our city, including the Crater Lakes precinct.
- We protect and preserve our Crater Lakes precinct, including weed management and considered, connected design for a sustainable track and trail network.
- We protect and preserve our natural assets, acknowledging the key role they play in our tourism economy and the vibrancy of our city.

- We enhance the connection of our city to nature and green spaces to make a liveable city that helps to attract and retain people.
- Our volunteers are actively engaged and contributing in the custodianship of our nature and green spaces.



Idea submission: 'What do you value about our city?'

"A beautiful, safe, clean and friendly place to visit. With so much natural beauty there is so much to offer visitors."

Learning and Innovation

A regional learning hub that fosters innovation and local industries.



Areas under this priority include:

- Career development and pathways for experts and professionals.
- Education options for all ages.
- Emerging technologies.
 - Education, use, support, and opportunities.
- Equitable learning options.
- Industry training.
- Pathways that lead to ongoing learning and development in the city.
- Seamless connections across all levels of learning.

In 2035 success looks like...

- We are a local learning hub.
- We have learning pathways linked to our local industries - forestry, fisheries, dairy, agriculture.
- We encourage business innovation and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- We attract experts in their field and support innovative business initiatives.
- We are an attractive place for professionals to develop and grow in their respective fields.

- Regional students can earn and learn here.
- We can attract the experts we need to live, learn and grow.
- We retain professionals by having further development and promotional opportunities.
- We share and connect community elder knowledge to younger people.
- We create opportunities for people to innovate and find solutions to the issues impacting our region.



Idea submission: 'How would you like Mount Gambier to be described in 2035?'

“Future proof and ready for anything. A hub of development and opportunity for regional SA.”

Infrastructure and Services

A high quality, affordable lifestyle where people are happy, healthy, and housed and able to access all available resources.



Areas under this priority include:

- Aged care.
- Air transport.
- Community safety.
- Emergency services.
- Health services.
- Healthy child development.
- High-quality sport and recreation spaces and facilities.
- Housing and accommodation.
- Infrastructure.
- Public transport.
- Social services.
- Sustainable healthy food system.

In 2035 success looks like...

- We have easy access to health services with experts who maintain an ongoing presence within our community.
- We have access to transportation that supports everyday life by connecting essential services such as schools, dentists, hospitals, medical centres, and green spaces.
- We have access to affordable, accessible and reliable air transport that helps connect Mount Gambier to the rest of the world.
- We have transportation that links the community and tourists to our iconic sites.
- We have access to aged care services that are compassionate, inclusive, and high-quality, supporting the health, wellbeing and dignity of our elderly population.
- We have equitable health and social services that are accessible locally.
- We have diverse recreation spaces that are connected and accessible.
- We have diverse and affordable housing options that meet the needs of our community.
- We live in a great place to raise a family, with the support and services to be happy and healthy.
- We feel safe in our community and out in public, both day and night.
- We look out for one another.
- We have the infrastructure that supports active transport and a sustainable lifestyle.



Idea submission: 'How would you like Mount Gambier to be described in 2035?'

"A clean city where you can learn, work and play. An affordable lifestyle city."

A creative, entrepreneurial mindset that creates a thriving, resilient community.



Areas under this priority include:

- Business and regional development.
- Business development and learning.
- Circular economy with waste management.
- Events.
- Freight transport.
- Investment and development opportunities.
- Migration.
- Revitalisation and improvements of commercial precincts.
- Tourism.

In 2035 success looks like...

- We have diversity within our commercial mix, both in supply and consumer offerings.
- We have diversity in our local industry creating employment opportunities and contributing to our local economy and resilience.
- Our local businesses are thriving due to a strong local economy and tourism.
- Our local businesses and industries are supported by modern and efficient freight networks that enhance our connectivity to regional and international markets.
- Our people have an entrepreneurial mindset and are enabled and supported with opportunities to 'start-up'.
- Mount Gambier is seen as a place for young professionals.
- Our affordability is our strength as a place to invest or start a business.
- We enable our creative industry to contribute to employment opportunities and the social fabric of the city.

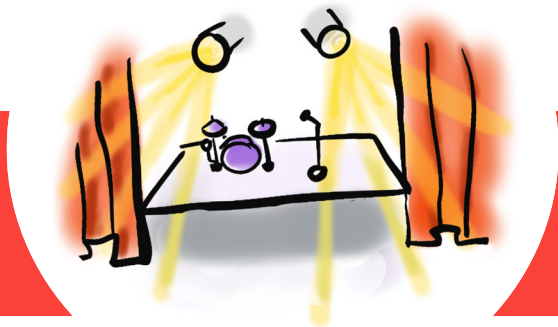


Idea submission: 'What do you value about our city?'

"We are becoming a region rich with cultures, and the more inclusive we become, the more open we are to change and growth."

A Vibrant Community

Events, activities, sport and recreation all contributing to a vibrant city during the day, at night and across all seasons.

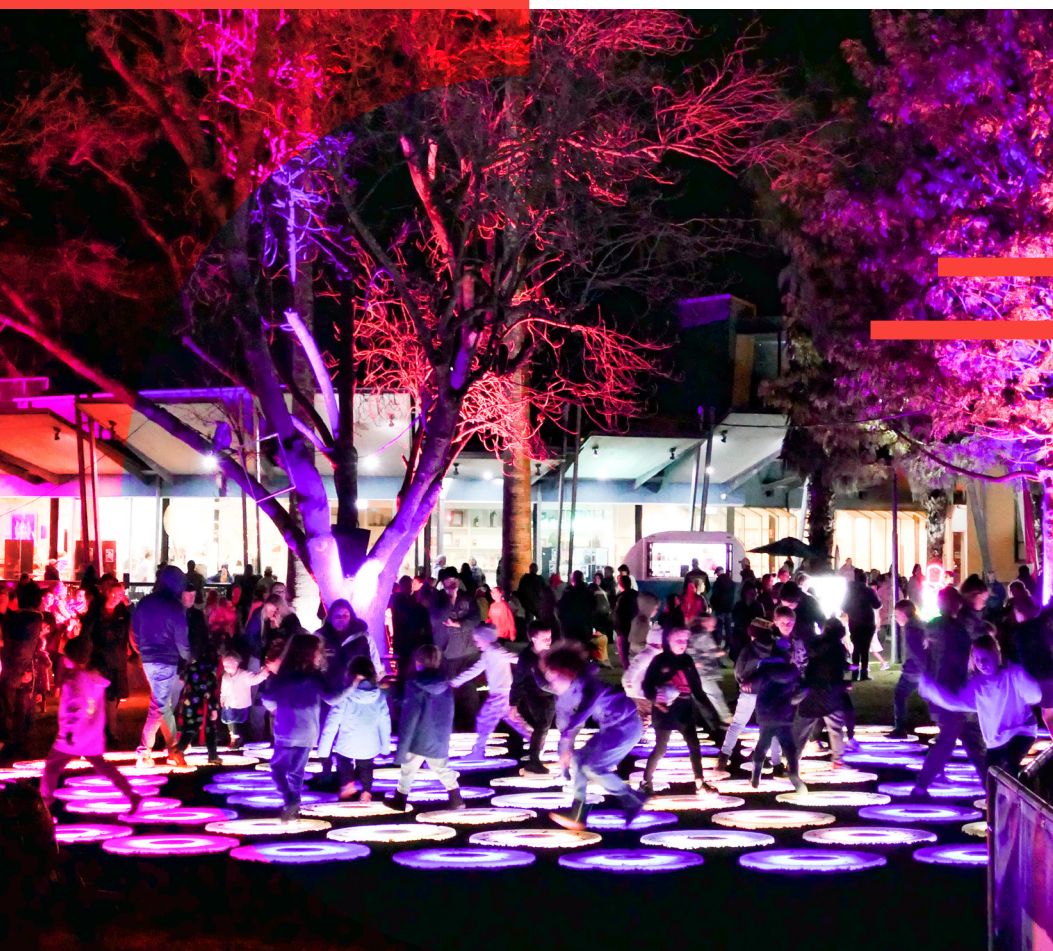


Areas under this priority include:

- Creative Industry.
- Culture and heritage.
- Events.
- Multiculturalism.
- Sport and recreation.
- Tourism.
- Volunteering.

In 2035 success looks like...

- Our arts and cultural events are accessible across an annual calendar and through all seasons.
- Our public spaces and activities create opportunities to connect and engage, day and night.
- Our events, activities, sport and recreation provide opportunities for connecting and engaging within the community.
- We have energetic and enthusiastic volunteers engaging in initiatives that provide opportunities for people to connect and contribute to the community.
- We have a diversity of events and activities that celebrate our first nations' heritage and shared cultural diversity, people and places.
- Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre is activated (i.e. concerts, conferences, trade-shows) to contribute to the city's visitor economy and vibrancy.
- We have social networks and opportunities for all age groups.
- We have events, activities, sport and recreation opportunities that are inclusive and accessible to everyone.



Idea submission: 'How would you like Mount Gambier to be described in 2035?'

"A vibrant, exciting and liveable city on nature's doorstep."

Identity Statement

This identity statement summarises the stories, values and unique qualities of what it means to be from 'the Mount'.

These insights were gathered through community feedback, survey responses and reflections from the lived experiences of community panel members.

Not all the themes identified were positive, and some were mere perceptions, or potentially common to any regional city. The challenge was to dig deeper into the common statements about our city and identify the real cultural challenges that matter.

It became apparent that we might not be as welcoming or inclusive as we aspire to be. Community panel members contemplated how to shift this narrative while avoiding lofty statements that could lose their authenticity and meaning.

Ultimately, being from the Mount is about belonging, a connection to place.

This statement, or parts of it, may not speak to everyone, but it is the start of a conversation and future storytelling. With meaningful words that honestly convey who we are as a community and our potential for change, it captures the most powerful themes that emerged from the feedback of our people.

Dwelling amidst a place of contrasts – fire and water, hills and valleys, tradition and potential – we are friends, we are family, we are all custodians of our unique home on the slopes of Blue Lake/Warwar.

We've been here for millennia, for generations, for a long time, for a short time, and we want it to feel like home for all.

In this big little city where we're each other's neighbour, our independence and resilience has shaped our unique character. In the Mount, we do things our way.

Our rich natural, creative, and industrial resources allow us to thrive independently and in isolation, while embracing the developing technologies that connect us.

We're a regional hub where opportunities arise from our collective skills and experience. We prioritise the life of our community, looking beyond ourselves and our circles to work stronger together. We celebrate, support and champion each other.

Whenever we leave, the light on the hill calls us home.



What is a community vision and why do we need one?

A community vision is an agreement outlining what everyone wants the community to look like in the future. Mount Gambier 2035 is a community vision for our regional capital which articulates our community's collective values and aspirations for how Mount Gambier will look and feel in 11 years time.

There are many benefits for creating a community vision, including:

- To understand the long-term aspirations of our community.
- To provide a future lens to unite all planning and decision making for councils, government and the community.
- To build community pride and social cohesion, and
- Strengthen community identity.

Mount Gambier 2035 – A community vision for our regional capital includes:

- A vision statement describing the aspirational future state of Mount Gambier in 2035,
- Five strategic priorities, underpinned by three key principles, that represent the key aspirations of our community to 2035,
- A statement of identity which is a summary of the stories, values and special qualities of what it means to be from 'the Mount'.

MOUNT GAMBIER



A community vision for our regional capital

The three parts reflect what people value and aspire for Mount Gambier. They were developed through a visionary community engagement process and are designed to complement and reinforce each other. The three parts should be used together, with the vision as whole informing work on any single aspect of it.

How was the community vision developed?

From November 2023 to May 2024, an extensive program of community engagement was undertaken to inform Mount Gambier 2035. While City of Mount Gambier facilitated the process, many people beyond those living within Council's boundaries participate in, and have a stake, in the life of the city.

With this in mind, anyone who lives, works, studies, visits, owns a business in Mount Gambier, or has any connection to the city was invited to contribute towards the community vision for Mount Gambier, the regional capital for South Australia. Community members and key stakeholders contributed their stories, ideas and perspectives which were provided to a community panel to inform their thinking and discussion in creating the future vision for Mount Gambier.

The City of Mount Gambier acknowledges and thanks all members of our community panel for volunteering their time, and for their passion and commitment in working together to produce our vision.



Mount Gambier 2035 Community Panel

The vision was created by a community panel of 28 people who represent the diversity of our city.

Early in the engagement process, an expression of interest was open for members of the community to self-nominate to be part of the Mount Gambier 2035 community panel. From those expressions of interest, an independent selection process was undertaken to determine final panel membership. The community panel met across three separate sessions in May 2024 to shape and inform the final community vision by responding to the following three questions:

- **What are the key elements that will inform the vision for Mount Gambier 2035?**
- **What should the strategic priorities be for our community as we approach 2035?**
- **How might we describe our cultural identity as a city?**

The community panel included a broad cross section of the Mount Gambier community and brought diverse expertise, ideas, and life experiences to review and reflect on the feedback provided by our community.

The community panel worked hard to honour our community's feedback and was committed to ensuring that everyone could see themselves in the future vision for Mount Gambier.

“The passion that the community panel showed during this process demonstrates how invested they were in their role. The end result is absolutely fantastic, it is really powerful, and they should be very proud of themselves and what they have done for the future of Mount Gambier.” - Mayor Lynette Martin OAM



How do we get there?

Everyone who lives, works, studies or visits Mount Gambier has a role to play in achieving our vision and priorities. Mount Gambier 2035 provides exciting opportunities for us all to engage with and help shape our future.

Its success depends on the engagement and response of all Mount Gambier stakeholders, including the federal and state governments, business and industry, and the community at large.

All community organisations, businesses and anyone wanting to contribute to the future of Mount Gambier are encouraged to use this document to inform their planning and decision making processes.

The City of Mount Gambier's commitment

The City of Mount Gambier is proud to support this community led vision, produced by people who live in Mount Gambier and based on the aspirations of our wider community.

The City of Mount Gambier considers it a privilege to be the custodians of this vision on behalf of our community. We see ourselves as having an important role in ensuring carriage of this vision to the broader community and future Councils. In demonstrating its long-term commitment to the community vision, City of Mount Gambier will:

- Show leadership and inspire others to come on board with the vision.
- Consider the vision to inform Council's strategic planning.
- Work in partnership, actively seeking to work toward vision outcomes in collaboration with other councils, the state government, the federal government, and other stakeholders.
- Work collaboratively ensuring our future is not left to chance, but we are proactive in the preferred future of our community.
- Celebrate our successes and those in our community, helping to bring our vision to life.
- Encourage a network of champions, people who are positive ambassadors for our place, who can share our stories, support others and build on our strengths.
- Continue to engage and reconnect with contributors to our vision, ensuring it remains dynamic and continues to evolve.
- Recognise that each decision, no matter how small, affects the future of our city.
- Ensure that the vision continues to reflect community values, needs and aspirations.
- Work with elected members, staff, and the community to ensure understanding of the vision, so that it remains central to Council thinking beyond election and planning cycles.



Idea submission: 'How would you like Mount Gambier to be described in 2035?'

“A welcoming and inclusive community that values everyone and has events and places for all to enjoy.”