

Wye River & Separation Creek Community Plan 2013

**Adopted at public meeting
10th February 2013**



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1. Local Information



Wye River and Separation Creek are located on the Great Ocean Road, west of Lorne in a most picturesque and beautiful location. The community has limitations of access with the only roads into Wye River and Separation Creek being along the Great Ocean Road along the east and west. This has helped preserve the beautiful and pristine environment of the community. There is 4 WD access via the Wye Track and Wye Rd.

Wye River is home to a small local population that swells when non- resident owners and tourists visit the community. In the 2006 census Wye River/Separation Creek had a permanent population of 144. Wye River and Separation Creek were first occupied by white settlers in 1882 by brothers' Alex and Donald McCrae who were seeking to undertake farming and fishing enterprises. The first settlements were at Separation Creek and they named the river, the Wye River after the river in England. The Wye River post office opened in 1914 and the Surf Lifesaving Club, which is a key local feature, was first started in 1958.

Today Wye River/Separation Creek is known for its spectacular coastal views, the scenic Great Ocean Road, the adjoining Great Otway National Park and year round surfing. From a tourism perspective there are two caravan parks in Wye River. A General Store and Hotel caters for the needs of locals and visitors.

2. The Community Process



The Colac Otway Shire has engaged a facilitator to assist with developing a community plan in Wye River and Separation Creek. This process was achieved through funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development (State of Victoria).

The process of undertaking the community plan was completed by holding a number of meetings in the Wye River community including:

- || Attending a community session organised by the Wye River Progress Association
- || Meetings with individual groups
- || Conducting a meeting of persons representing all organisations to explain the community planning process
- || Sending out invitations to meetings, suggestion sheets and a note in the local newsletter
- || Conducting a community session to discuss and develop priorities for a community plan (March 2012)

The community considered the value of coordinating and combining effort for community initiatives and supported the concept of the community planning process for Wye River and Separation Creek. At the conclusion of the session (March 2012), a local community member volunteered to organise an invitation to all organisations and those interested present to assist in the implementation of the community plan.

3. Administering the Community Plan



In order to implement the community plan it was suggested that representatives from local groups and interested individuals form into a coordinating group with the group's goal to:

- || Coordinate the efforts of the community
- || Maximise access to resources and funding
- || Involve community groups and residents to contribute in developing the initiatives and priorities

The coordinating group could provide leadership to ensure improvements are gained to manage and organise priority initiatives when planning and development of the priority initiatives are undertaken. Well planned and structured initiatives with full community support will increase the chances of all levels of government supporting funding for implementation.

The coordinating group could also ensure that for major projects, working parties are established that will enable broad sections of the community to contribute and participate in areas of their interest or passion. In order to undertake the various projects or initiatives the community group may form a new working group or use an existing community group to take the lead in developing those detailed plans or to implement projects.

The coordinating group can also provide opportunities to review of the community plan at least every two years and may amend the community plan if there is sufficient justification and a public process involving its alteration.

All residents and groups are encouraged to participate or contact the coordinating group to find out more and how the community plan process can help them achieve their projects or initiatives.

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At the public meeting held on the 10 February 2013 the following groups were nominated to appoint a representative (together with a reserve representative) to the coordinating group:

- ▮ WYSC Progress Association
- ▮ Sporting & Social Club of Wye River, Separation Creek & Kennett
- ▮ CFA & Women's Association
- ▮ WRSC Progress Association
- ▮ Harrington Park Committee
- ▮ Wye Riders Local
- ▮ Wye River Surf Lifesaving Club
- ▮ Wye River CFA
- ▮ Wye to Wongarra Landcare
- ▮ Wye River Community Volunteers

In addition to the above nominations for the coordinating group, the following community members were also appointed to the coordinating group:

- ▮ Sue Hughes
- ▮ Aida Krasts
- ▮ Mark Stokes
- ▮ Andrew Pattison
- ▮ Marino Dicamillo
- ▮ Daryl Abrahams
- ▮ Sibylle Noras

4. Community Priorities – Key Topics



The Wye River & Separation Creek Community Plan is divided into the following topic areas:

1. **Community Events and Activities**
2. **Recreation & Leisure**
3. **Public Infrastructure**
4. **Environment**
5. **Fire Safety**
6. **Other**

The following pages identify the key initiatives and priorities under each topic area from the community session conducted on 31st March 2012. Although this was a public meeting of all residents, unfortunately not all residents could be present.

4.1 Community Events & Activities



Wye River and Separation Creek is a beautiful place to live and visit. The community places significant importance on being engaged in initiatives occurring within the community and in connecting people that includes physical connection.

The activities that link the community are therefore central to enhancing community life and a better place to live and visit. It provides the community with an opportunity to build on the distinctive character of Wye River and Separation Creek and the chance to participate in activities that improve the area.

The events and activities also provide us with an opportunity to welcome visitors to our community, especially during the tourist season and participate in what we believe is a wonderful community.

The following suggestions were made to the public session, with 3 gaining overwhelming support:

1. Improve walking tracks that include sign posting on walking tracks and improve walking around the town to make more “family friendly”
2. “Summer in the Park” activities program – Harrington Park
3. More accessible bush walks. Construct a safe walking access between Wye River and Separation Creek by stabilising and upgrading Paddy’s Path
4. Develop interpretation area for history of the Wye River/Separation Creek community

4.2 Recreation & Leisure



The outdoor lifestyle and respect for our environment provides an opportunity for wonderful open spaces within the Wye River and Separation Creek communities. The development of facilities that enhance the community's needs and aspirations provide an opportunity for promoting the growing reputation of Wye River and Separation Creek as a great place to visit and to undertake recreation and leisure activities.

Connecting the community with activities and recreation within the community provides an opportunity to sustain the strong sense of community and associated willingness to enhance the key focal points of our natural beauty and the beach. Maintaining infrastructure that supports healthy activities is considered to be an important aspect that will impact on the community's vision for venues, facilities and space for fun and recreation.

The following suggestions were made to the public session, with points 4, 6 & 8 gaining most support:

1. Expanded playground (more climbing equipment)
2. Recreation/picnic space north side of bridge adjacent to car park
3. West bound walking track along Great Ocean Road
4. Multi-purpose recreation facility - Harrington Park (project underway)
5. Adventure playground on Council reserve abutting Harrington Park
6. Extension and renovation of Surf Life Saving Club
7. Endeavour to gain access to a gym (including classes)
8. Endeavour to establish a recreation oval in Wye River preferably behind the Big 4 Caravan Park
9. Upgrade the local recreation area near the shop and improve the tourist information on this site
10. Construct a fishing platform on the river

4.3 Public Infrastructure



The development of infrastructure within this community plan provides a framework to ensure that existing and future communities are provided with a full range of infrastructure to meet the needs for the next ten to twenty years. Planning infrastructure is acknowledged by the community as being a long term process and often the necessary funds are provided through government agencies. The development of the community plan focuses the community's view that the key infrastructures identified in this plan are the types of facilities and infrastructure that will be needed to strengthen the community, address environmental issues and provide levels of safety for the residents.

The provision of this infrastructure is considered important to enable the community to continue to grow into a safe, creative, active and health community, where people can meet, interact and undertake activities.

The following suggestions were made to the public session, with points 1 & 2 gaining most support:

1. Pedestrian bridge across Separation Creek
2. Continue to explore opportunities for sewerage for community as new innovations occur (in turn will improve water quality)
3. Ensure there is sufficient water as the community continues to grow in size and increased tourism occurs
4. Pedestrian access on steep section of the Boulevard
5. Pedestrian crossing adjacent to general store to the beach
6. Improve pathways within the townships in particular the pathway from the end of Dunoon Street to Paddy's Path.

4.4 Environment



Wye River and Separation Creek is widely acknowledged as one of the most beautiful places to live in Victoria. This is thanks, in no small part, to its outstanding beauty and pristine natural environment. The Wye River and Separation Creek community believe the preservation of the natural environment is vital to retain the community's character and its appeal to residents and visitors alike.

In order to maintain our position as an attractive place to live and visit, we must encourage activities that offer environmental, social and economic benefits that contribute to the unique quality of life in Wye River and Separation Creek. It is therefore important our activities protect and enhance our natural asset - the natural environment.

This community plan builds on the previous extensive work undertaken by a number of organisations with the aim to ensure Wye River and Separation Creek is a sustainable community that is vibrant, green and diverse.

The following suggestions were made to the public session, with points 1 & 3 gaining most support:

1. Weed eradication across public and private land in Wye River and Separation Creek
2. Weed management and control, particularly in Harrington Park
3. Bin solution for people not around on Monday / improved rubbish bin arrangements (Colac Otway Shire are currently resolving this issue)
4. Consider bagging rubbish rather than utilising bins (a public meeting in September 2012 resolved to keep the bin collection service)
5. Responsible management of septic tanks

4.5 Fire Safety



Unfortunately bush fires are a natural part of the Australian environment. Community preparedness and support for individuals to formulate their responses is considered the safest option for residents in the community. Critical decisions have to be made within a community and it is important that the whole community understands the message on different levels of fire danger ratings and how they are going to respond in those circumstances.

Victoria has adopted the new national Fire Danger Ratings and the new scale recognises the increase in severe bush fire conditions over the past decade.

A key part of the Wye River and Separation Creek Community Plan is supporting the efforts of the CFA in facilitating and planning for fire safety within CFA established guidelines. The CFA is constantly preparing for bush fire survival and is making important decisions to support the community in understanding its options.

The following suggestions were made to the public session, all points fully supported:

1. Create and maintain a fire buffer on land outside town boundary
2. Make new footpaths to serve as an alternative escape in case of fire
3. Community to continue to develop fire safety planning measures and seek government approval and funds for implementation
4. Seek support to have the power lines placed underground in the Wye River/Separation Creek district

4.6 Other



The following issues do not directly relate to the key topics set out earlier in this community plan but are important in terms of ensuring the community engages with relevant authorities and business to continue to build and strengthen partnerships that will be required to bring sufficient resources to make a difference.

The following suggestions were made to the public session, with points 3 & 5 gaining most support:

1. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between associations
2. Acquisition of valley “paddock” for community use (this initiative cannot proceed following Council decisions)
3. A plan for traffic control during peak tourist seasons and resolve the car parking overflow problems.
4. Develop community contribution scheme to benefit from large events
5. Donleavy Fitzpatrick land to National Park status
6. Contain current development and do not allow further growth of the town.
7. Improve community communication to better inform residents and absentee owners (currently being undertaken).
8. Improve telecommunications in the Wye River & Separation Creek community, primarily to assist potential fire disaster issues and high holiday periods.

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4.7 Initial Priorities

At the public meeting held on the 10th February 2013 the following were nominated as the most important key issues to be undertaken initially:

1. More accessible bush walks. Construct a safe walking access between Wye River and Separation Creek by stabilising and upgrading Paddy's Path.
2. Pedestrian bridge across Separation Creek.
3. Weed eradication across public and private land in Wye River and Separation Creek.
4. Community to continue to develop fire safety planning measures and seek government approval and funds for implementation.
5. Develop a plan for traffic control during peak seasons and resolve car parking.

5 Other Administrative Matters



Administration and processes

The Wye River & Separation Creek Coordinating Group offers a leadership role and to provide transparency when establishing procedures that could manage community affairs when implementing the community plan initiative. These procedures will be developed to ensure democratic processes.

Alterations to the community plan

Since the community plan has been established through a public process, any alterations to the community plan also need to be undertaken through a public process. The community coordinating group therefore reserves the right to establish the procedures associated with any proposed change in order to retain the community plan as a vibrant, flexible and dynamic document.

Review of the community plan

The community plan will be reviewed approximately every two years through a public process to be determined by the community coordinating group.

Dispute resolution

In the event of any dispute, all parties concerned should meet, discuss and resolve the matter as soon as possible. If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute, they must hold a meeting in the presence of a person nominated through the Colac Otway Shire Council.

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6 Other Plans and Strategies

List of Council Strategies, Plans and Other Documents that may impact on Wye River & Separation Creek (as at October 2012)

Current Documents

a) Leadership and Governance

- ▮ Garbage Collection Safety Review – GHD (2012)
- ▮ Heatwave Strategy
- ▮ Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- ▮ Municipal Fire Management Plan
- ▮ Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan
- ▮ Municipal Relief and Recovery Plan

b) Physical Infrastructure and Assets

- ▮ Amended Road Management Plan
- ▮ Colac Otway Stormwater Management Plan
- ▮ Great Ocean Road Landscape Assessment Study 2004 (State Government)
- ▮ Road Asset Management Plan
- ▮ Road Safety Strategy
- ▮ Three Towns Drainage Strategy

c) Land Use and Development

- ▮ Colac Otway Planning Scheme
- ▮ Great Ocean Road Landscape Assessment Study 2004 (State Government)
- ▮ Kennett River, Wye River and Separation Creek Structure Plans (2008)

- ▮ Rural Living Strategy (2011)

- ▮ Skenes Creek, Kennett River, Wye River and Separation Creek Neighbourhood Character Study (2005)

d) Environmental Management

- ▮ 2012-2014 Environment Action Plan
- ▮ Environment Strategy 2010-2018
- ▮ Great Ocean Road Drainage Reserve – Land Management Plan
- ▮ Greenhouse Action Plan
- ▮ Roadside Vegetation Management Plan
- ▮ Waste Water Management Wye River, and Separation Creek – Issues Paper
- ▮ Weed Management Strategy
- ▮ Wye River Drainage Reserve – Land Management Plan

e) Economic Development

- ▮ Action Agenda for Economic Development 2009 – 2013
- ▮ Colac Otway Tourism Review (2006)

f) Community Health and Wellbeing

- ▮ Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2009/2013
- ▮ Positive Ageing Strategy 2008/12
- ▮ Public Open Space Strategy 2011
- ▮ Recreation Strategy 2006/2010

g) Documents to be reviewed

▮ Environmental Management

Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

▮ Community Health & Wellbeing

Festival & Events Strategy 2007/2011