



# SMALL TOWNS POLICY

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RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS,  
POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:  
RELATED LEGISLATION: Community Support Policy

EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:



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Signed by Chief Executive Officer

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**This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.**

## 1 PURPOSE

This policy sets out principles to ensure that each town in the Loddon Shire is supported in appropriate ways so that each town may meet its full potential.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to Council and to staff working on community development projects.

## 3 POLICY

The Loddon Shire has experienced a decline in population for nearly 30 years. There are many factors driving this population decline including a continuing trend of farm consolidation leading to a rural population decline, and the continuing trend of urbanisation of Australian society, resulting in a loss of youth to larger towns and cities.

Council is committed to working to reverse this declining population trend and sees that the future potential for population growth with this municipality lies within our small towns and particularly those towns within easy reach of Bendigo.

This policy will operate in conjunction with the Loddon Shire Community Support Policy.

### 3.1 Community planning

The Loddon Shire commits to localised community planning. This, Council hopes, will build local pride, engaged communities and ownership of each town's future. It will engender a sense of hope and vision for the future of each town and will enhance local community leadership and volunteer participation.

Loddon Shire will:

- provide strategic direction to community planning committees
- support community planning through annual funding allocations. This funding will be confirmed at Council's yearly budget
- structure its community planning funding to encourage projects which underpin the long-term development of each town.

### 3.2 Self-reliance programs

Loddon Shire will:

- support a programme of community grants. These grants will require a co-contribution and significant buy-in from the local community
- provide 10% matching funding for all successful sport and recreation grants from Sport and Recreation Victoria
- provide interest free loans to support community groups.

### 3.3 Long-term planning

Loddon Shire will:

- develop a settlement strategy to guide and promote growth in its townships

- implement its Rural Zones Review to promote rural living opportunities in the south of the Shire and population growth throughout the municipality.

### **3.4 Infrastructure**

Loddon Shire will:

- in consultation with its community planning committees, develop a program of essential community infrastructure projects
- strive to revitalise the main streets of key townships.

### **3.5 Services**

Loddon Shire will work with all service providers to promote improved services to each community.

## **4 HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT**

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007). Loddon Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

## **5 REVIEW**

The Chief Executive Officer will review this policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after adoption of this current version.