

# Ouyen - A Town Of Choice



*A Community Plan for Ouyen, developed by the community as a component of Rural Futures Initiative, a collaborative project delivered in Ouyen by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and Mallee Track Health and Community Service.*

*The Ouyen Rural Futures Initiative was supported by Mildura Rural City Council and Ouyen Incorporated.*



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# Contents

Contents	Page 3
Introduction	Page 4
Context	Page 5
Vision	Page 6
Ouyen ~ A Town Of Choice	Page 8
Community Priorities	Page 9
Other Issues	Page 17
Methodology	Page 18
Ownership of The Ouyen Plan	Page 22
Climate Change	Page 23
Demographics	Page 24
Health	Page 25
Agriculture	Page 26
Emergency Management	Page 27
Community Endorsement	Page 28
Appendix 1	Page 29
Reference Group Project Officer Consultant Futurists	
Appendix 2	Page 30
Causal Layered Analysis Spiral Dynamics	
References	Page 32

# Introduction

The Ouyen Community Plan was developed from a partnership project between the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) as a component of the Victorian Governments Rural Futures Initiative (RFI).

The Ouyen RFI has been supported by Mildura Rural City Council and Ouyen Incorporated, as well as the Ouyen community.

The Rural Futures Initiative is a drought initiative designed to support Victoria's rural communities to proactively prepare and respond to pressures and change.

These changes may include but are not exclusive to:

- Rapid restructure of the food and fibre supply chains resulting in changes to agricultural industries;

- Climate change including increased climate variability;

- Land use change;

- Changes in the demographic characteristics of people living in these communities;

- Changes in the allocation, use and management of natural resources such as water:

The Ouyen Community has a history of self reliance, planning and community engagement. There are a number of active and relevant planning documents that form the foundation of this plan. This was complimented by a Futures Forum to explore possible futures for the Ouyen community to a 2030 horizon.

## Context

Ouyen is located in the Victorian Mallee, 450 km's north of Melbourne, 100 km's south of Mildura and about 400 km's east of Adelaide.

Traditionally, the major economic input to the community has been agriculture, with a particular focus on dryland cropping and prime lamb production. However in recent years, tourism, retail, education and medical services have provided increased levels of local employment.

Mineral Sands Mining is currently in a start up phase and may provide a short term increased economic activity for the community. There may be an impact on population and employment opportunities as a result of the Mineral Sands industry.

Ouyen has maintained a stable population, whilst many other rural communities have experience declining populations for some time. There are many reasons for its survival during a time of rural recession, but a common thread is a strong sense of community in the town, and willingness to adapt and embrace new ideas and approaches.

As the major town in a 100 km radius, Ouyen has approximately 1384 (2006 Census Data) residents and a district population of 2400 people.

Ouyen is within the Mildura Rural City Council local government area, and has an MRCC Service Centre and works depot located in town. There exists a strong link between the Ouyen Community and Ouyen Inc. in particular to MRCC through the staff at the Ouyen service centre.



Youth Leadership Program



Opening of the Roxy Theatre

# Vision

The collaborating and partner organisations of the Ouyen Rural Futures Initiative all have significant roles to play in Ouyen becoming the type of community that it desires to be in the future. These organisations have undertaken significant planning and have developed visions of their own. It is important that the vision developed and presented in this plan is congruent with those of the collaborating and partner organisations.

From the Futures Forum, the Ouyen Community developed the vision: *Ouyen, A Town Of Choice*. That is a town where people choose to live, choose to work and invest, choose to retire, choose to visit and choose to participate in education.

During the ‘Deep Design’ (Appendix 2) process at the forum, other metaphors for the community were developed. These metaphors were developed by separate groups but had a high level of similarity in their vision of the Ouyen community in the future. This bodes well for the future of the community, as each group saw the future as a desirable place to be, and one worth working hard to achieve.

These futures included the metaphor of the Malleefowl, able to survive in a harsh environment, adaptable, diligent, and hardworking with independent young.

Another metaphor developed was that of a light house to the future. A unique beacon conveying a viable future with the community recognised Australia wide for its rural medicine excellence, education facilities, adoption of technology in dryland agriculture and as a prosperous rural community.

Ouyen was also seen as a community on a dynamic journey. One that has leading education facilities, high class health networks, cutting edge education related to agriculture and management of our natural resources, an equitable community that has a strong sense of social inclusion and offers opportunities for our youth.



For the community to achieve the aspirational goal, Ouyen **A Town Of Choice**, it will need the assistance of a range of partner organisations. The key organisations are listed below with their own vision statements. If for example, MTHCS makes significant inroads into achieving its vision, then Ouyen will certainly become a town of choice. Similarly, if MRCC and/or Ouyen Inc. move toward achieving their visions, again the Ouyen Community will become a town of choice. When Ouyen becomes **A Town Of Choice**, we will have contributed to the vision the State Government has for all residents of Victoria.

There is a high degree of alignment between the aspirational visions for each of the organisations and the vision developed by the community during this process.

### **Mallee Track Health and Community Service**

*Vision ~ To be the healthiest rural community in Australia.*

### **Mildura Rural City Council**

*Vision ~ Our municipality will be 'The most liveable, people-friendly community in Australia'*

### **Ouyen Inc.**

*Vision ~ To provide the vision, direction, leadership and unity to create a dynamic future for Ouyen.*

### **Victoria**

*The Victorian Government's vision is that by 2010 Victoria will be a state with: Thriving economy, quality health and education, healthy environment, caring communities and a vibrant democracy.*

### **Mildura Social Indicators 2005**

The Mildura Social Indicators Report 2005, challenged us to look strategically at our strengths and the challenges we face in the region. It provided benchmarks with which to move forward and measure progress.

The Ouyen Community Plan is a mechanism that will allow us to contribute to maintaining the good and improving the areas of deficiency. As Ouyen becomes a Town Of Choice, we will improve the social indicators, as well as economic and environmental aspects of our community.

## OUYEN ~ A TOWN OF CHOICE.

At the Ouyen Rural Futures Forum held in March 2008, people were passionate about building our community into a **TOWN OF CHOICE**.

### *Ouyen ~ A Town Of Choice*

*A town where people choose to live, choose to work and invest, choose to retire, choose to visit, choose to undertake their children's and their own education. They make this choice because of the opportunities Ouyen affords them. They make this choice because of the quality of our health services, the support networks, the schools and the quality of the people who have already made the choice to live in Ouyen.*

There was a solid recognition of the input and success of Ouyen Inc, by many of the workshop participants. The role of Mildura Rural City Council was acknowledged, and they have a significant role to play in assisting the community to make Ouyen a Town of Choice.

There was also recognition of the contribution made by 'Social Entrepreneurs' in the community who are predominately volunteers. The community would not be in its present strong position without the selfless contribution by the many volunteers in the Ouyen community.

One of the challenges identified at the Futures Forum was the understanding that for the community to embrace the opportunities identified, to make 'Ouyen, a Town Of Choice' is that support for the community is needed. To expect the social entrepreneurs to continually drive this on a voluntary basis will be unsustainable.

The forum identified a number of significant projects that would move the community toward becoming a Town of Choice. These projects were presented back to the community to gain input into the importance the community placed on the projects and to gain a commitment from the community to work toward the implementation of the project ideas. The key projects identified by the community are presented here with some initial steps to progress these to the next stage.

Each project whilst distinct has an impact on other projects. The development of the community through this process needs to have a systematic approach, with synergies between projects identified early in the development to both eliminate duplicated effort and to build on existing current knowledge



*The Projects listed here need to be fully scoped, the objectives refined and discussed further. The stakeholders listed are suggestions made by groups at the forum and from community feedback, contact needs to be made to determine if the stakeholders are able to be involved.*

## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

### **Project:**

#### **SOLAR TOWERS POWER GENERATION**

### **Brief description of the project:**

The Ouyen Community believe that the pursuit of a significant project which involves the generation of power through means of solar towers is one that needs further exploration. This project will build on earlier work undertaken by Ouyen Inc. and make the best use in the emerging government policy around climate change and renewable energy.

### **Project Objectives:**

- Develop a relationship with key stakeholders in the Solar Energy industry to promote the attributes of the Ouyen community and the Mallee region
- Engage in dialogue with relevant government agencies to explore the opportunities afforded by developments in Climate Change and Greenhouse policy documents

### **Statement of Benefits to the community:**

- An increase in economic activity during any construction and operation of the project.
- The opportunity to use renewable energy and reduce the carbon footprint of the community
- Utilisation of by-products of the generation of solar power. (Water and Salt)

### **Stakeholders:**

- Ouyen Incorporated
- Mildura Rural City Council
- Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board
- Individuals who identified themselves as willing to assist

**Project:**

**RECYCLING PARK**

**Brief description of the project:**

The development of an efficient system of recycling was a project of importance to a significant number of residents who participated in the feedback process. This involves identifying the type of recycling to be offered, the systems required to operate in an efficient manner and the most relevant business model.

**Project Objectives:**

- Develop a business model that has recycling as its core business that can operate in an efficient manner
- Explore funding opportunities that may exist for start up businesses

**Statement of Benefits to the community:**

- An increase in employment opportunities available in the community
- Reduce the amount of recyclable material entering landfill from the community
- Increase the amount of recycling undertaken in the Ouyen community
- Reduce the input Climate Change footprint

**Stakeholders:**

- Mallee Landcare
- Mildura Rural City Council
- Ouyen Service Providers

Individuals who identified themselves as willing to assist

**Project:**

**RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

**Brief description of the project:**

There was significant support under the Housing and Health theme for several closely aligned projects. These included a retirement village, affordable housing and housing that is centrally located, within walking distance to the shopping precinct. As the Ouyen community ages, there is now a recognition that the number of people seeking supported independent living is increasing and needs to be scoped further.

**Project Objectives:**

- To examine the real need for retirement housing in Ouyen
- Identify organisations and individuals who may be able to assist in this project
- Determine the most appropriate locations for future development of retirement housing and housing in close proximity to the business centre

**Statement of Benefits to the community:**

- An increase in economic activity during the construction of the project
- Retirement housing may increase the opportunity for those outside Ouyen to retire to the area, as Ouyen becomes a town of choice
- Support services for a retirement Village or nursing home may create business and employment opportunities in the community
- Reduce the reliance on motor vehicles in the community

**Stakeholders:**

- Mallee Track Health and Community Service
- Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board
- CWA
- Ouyen Inc
- Private builders and developers
- Individuals who identified themselves as willing to assist

**Project:**

**RECREATION FACILITIES FOR YOUNG AND OLDER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

**Brief description of the project:**

A large number of respondents identified the need for alternate activities for the young and older residents that were not focussed around sport.

**Project Objectives:**

- To explore existing opportunities afforded by the community to the identified cohort
- Identify alternate activities that may be presented to the community in regard to recreation and social interaction
- Promote the existing and new activities to gain community support and interaction with the identified cohort

**Statement of Benefits to the community:**

- The development of social interaction for those members of the community who are not involved in sport
- There are considerable health benefits from social interaction to be gained from this project
- The evolution of a range of new activities or facilities that will benefit existing and new members of the Ouyen and Mallee communities

**Stakeholders:**

- Mildura Rural City Council
- Ouyen Inc.
- Mallee Track Health and Community Service
- Neighbourhood House
- Blackburn Park
- Ouyen Probus Club

**Project:**

**BECOME A KEY CENTRE FOR TRANSPORT**

**Brief description of the project:**

Ouyen has a significant volume of agricultural commodities produced locally and delivered through our rail and road infrastructure. Improving the ability to deliver these goods may provide opportunities for the community.

The movement of passengers to and from Ouyen and those who transit through Ouyen is also an avenue for improved services.

**Project Objectives:**

- To examine opportunities for infrastructure improvement to ensure efficient freight movement
- Increase rail freight to remove road traffic, to ensure a safer community for Ouyen residents
- Improve passenger transport from Ouyen to Melbourne and other destinations

**Statement of Benefits to the community:**

- Improved economic benefit from infrastructure development
- A safer community by moving road traffic to rail
- Reduce greenhouse emissions from the movement of agricultural commodities
- Passenger services to be improved will improve accessibility for those members of the community who are unable to access alternatives.
- Provide services for those who desire to utilise public transport.

**Stakeholders:**

- Mildura Rural City Council
- Ouyen Inc.
- Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

**Project:**

DEVELOP OUYEN AS A CLIMATE CHANGE ROLE MODEL

**Brief description of the project:**

The Ouyen community is well placed to capitalize on the move toward environmental sustainability around climate change. This could include, power generation, water harvesting, reduced environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emission from a community wide perspective.

**Project Objectives:**

- Explore current government policy for opportunities to build the Ouyen community into a role model for climate change.
- Look at ways to reduce the environmental footprint of the whole community
- Training programs to provide new skills and workforce re. Climate Change
- This project links into several others included in the Ouyen Community Plan

**Stakeholders:**

- State and Federal Governments
- Mallee Research Station
- NFF/VFF
- Schools
- Universities, as a research project partner

**Project:**

DEVELOP AN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, BASED AROUND THE MALLEE RESEARCH STATION

**Brief description of the project:**

As the Ouyen community and the Mallee in general still retain a strong agricultural focus, the need for ongoing and relevant training is paramount. The opportunity to retain young people in the agriculture industry has many benefits, and developing a leading college may assist in improving this cohort across the region.

**Project Objectives:**

- Work with the Mallee Research Station to explore the training opportunities at the facility
- Develop linkages with the Mallee Agriculture Research Foundation to gain support for the project idea
- Establish networks between education providers in the region who can move the project forward
- Examine the Future Farming Strategy from the Victorian Government (2008) for opportunities around funding and support for the project
- Work with the Walpeup Community, who also have identified this as an important project for their community

**Stakeholders:**

- State and Federal Governments
- Mallee Research Station
- Mallee Agriculture Research Foundation
- Walpeup community
- Sunraysia TAFE
- MADEC
- Secondary Schools
- Universities

**Project:**

WATER HARVESTING

**Brief description of the project:**

There may be significant changes in the rainfall patterns in the future due to the impact of Climate Change. Information from the forum as well as the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO suggest that rainfall events may decrease in the future and rainfall events may become more extreme. Improvements in the town infrastructure is required if the community is to make the most of these rainfall events.

**Project Objectives:**

- Explore current government policy for opportunities to improve the Ouyen community storm water infrastructure
- Work closely with MRCC to prioritise and timeframe infrastructure developments around storm water.
- This project is closely linked to others in the Ouyen Community Plan

**Stakeholders:**

- State and Federal Governments
- MRCC
- Ouyen Inc
- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water
- Sunraysia TAFE



## OTHER ISSUES

The Ouyen Futures Forum identified a number of projects that the community saw as desirable in the future. These projects were presented back to the community during the prioritising process.

Above are the top eight projects that the community identified as the highest priority and the ones that have the most potential to build the community into a Town of Choice. Other projects were rated lower but still received support and have the potential to move the community forward. These projects could be prioritised more highly when they are explored more extensively, or could be progressed if significant opportunities arise.

Projects suggested at the forum but not prioritised into the top eight include:

- Supplying goods and services to the mining industry
- Support for the Iluka Mineral Sands development
- Build a 'community portal' a web based location for information from community based organisations. This would allow community organisations to provide more information on their services and activities
- Providing more information on the available health, welfare and support services available in the Ouyen community and across the Mallee Track
- Affordable medium density housing located close to the centre of Ouyen, within walking distance to the shopping centre
- A University of the Third Age, and beyond. (This could be linked into the Ouyen Education Plan, and other community projects)
- The return of Trotting events to Ouyen Trotting facility
- An aquatic park, for recreational boating and fishing. This build on the Inland Sea project of Ouyen Inc, which has had some hydrogeology work done around this theme.

## METHODOLOGY

### Engaging the Community

The Ouyen Rural Futures Initiative sought the input of community members through establishing a Reference Group for the project. Included on the Reference Group was the CEO and a senior manager of the Mallee Track Health and Community Service, two farmer members, one of whom is a board member of MTHCS, the other active in the Victorian Farmers Federation, the Chair of Ouyen Incorporated and the General Manager of Community and Culture Department of MRCC. The Reference Group made a significant contribution to the project and assisted in community engagement and representation.

Members of the Ouyen Community participated in a Futures Forum, held in March 2008.

The forum was promoted through the local press with feature articles for several weeks prior to the event, radio interviews were also conducted prior to the forum on ABC local radio. This was supported by advertisements inviting the community to attend the forum. The advertisements ran for 3 weeks prior to the event. The forum was also promoted at two community meetings of Ouyen Incorporated as the peak community body in Ouyen.

Individual letters were sent to almost fifty identified community organisations, inviting them to represent their members at the Rural Futures Forum.



### Ouyen Rural Futures Forum

The Futures Forum involved the delivery of information from expert speakers on 4 themes, Climate Change, Social Demographics, the implications of these two factors on the health of Mallee residents and the changing face of agriculture.

Participants were then invited to undertake a ‘Conversation Café’ approach to three distinct futures in light of the information delivered in the presentations. These futures were derived from ‘Spiral Dynamics’ a theory of human development, that alters to meet more challenging problems.

(Appendix 2)

Finally a ‘Deep Design’ (Appendix 2) process was used to explore drivers and alternate metaphors for the future of Ouyen. It was from this process that the ‘Ouyen as a Town of Choice’ was developed along with the aspirational projects identified.



## Youth Forum

Although the School Captains from Ouyen Secondary College and other young people from Ouyen attended the Futures Forum, further engagement was undertaken to ensure the future leaders of the community had the opportunity to contribute to the Ouyen Community Plan.

A short forum was held with the Student Representative Council (SRC) from Ouyen Secondary College and the Junior School Council from Ouyen Primary School, this involved 28 students from Prep through to Year 12. The students were provided with background information, along the same format as the Futures Forum but in an abridged form. That is, short presentations on Demographics, Climate Change, Agriculture and Health.

The students were then posed with two questions,

1. What makes Ouyen a Town of Choice now?
2. What would make Ouyen a better town in the future?

In small mixed groups, the students were asked to discuss the question and write their response on a single sheet of paper, and present their best idea back to the whole group. This process was repeated for the second question also.

The responses showed a high level of understanding of the issues and a strong awareness of the social imperatives of a small rural community.

For the most part the responses were aligned with the information from the Futures Forum and supported the projects developed as a part of the community plan.

Their insights also showed an awareness of the systems with the community. The links between feeling safe, a sense of community and being healthy were identified by the students as critical factors to Ouyen being a Town of Choice now.

They also identified that to make Ouyen better in the future that community support for our health care and aged care needs to be maintained and improved, education was seen as critical to the future of Ouyen, as was a strong economic base.

The youth forum allowed the student leaders of our schools to work together to discuss some important issues, they attacked the task with passion and clear understanding of the importance the future has for the whole community.



### **Engaging the Community Post Forum**

All of the data developed during the forum as written up as a basis for the Community Plan. The Forum identified a number of issues for exploration and ideas for the future of Ouyen.

These project ideas were presented back to the community by way of a mail-out to each delivery address in the 3490 postcode area. This was supported by individual letters to the community groups invited to the Futures Forum. Each letter was accompanied by a reply paid envelope to facilitate the timely return of the information sought. Each letter listed the projects identified during the forum, and the community were asked to select the projects that would move the community towards becoming a Town Of Choice. Respondents were also asked to identify key organisations that could be involved in the project, and also were asked to identify if they were interested in becoming involved in any of the projects in the future.

A mail-out process was utilised for several reasons. Using this process enabled many more residents to contribute to the process of prioritising the list of projects for the community. It also negated the need for another community meeting or forum, where the projects could be prioritised. Having residents identify organisations who could be involved also provided a broad approach to progressing the projects, with a number of organisations being identified who have the potential to become partners in the future.

This process also enabled the community to take time to consider their responses to the question of involvement in the projects in the future. It has created a database of interested residents who may not have otherwise committed to working on the identified projects.

## OWNERSHIP OF THE OUYEN PLAN

The Ouyen Community Plan has several themes for the future of the community as developed from the Futures Forum.

These include Education, Environmental Prosperity, Business and Enterprise, Housing and Health, Recreation and Social Enterprise.

*The Ouyen Community Plan has been developed to position the community to overcome challenges and make the most of opportunities in the future. The community has a huge stake in what happens, and ownership of the plan lies essentially with the community.*

There was a solid recognition of the input and success of Ouyen Inc, by many of the workshop participants. The role of Mildura Rural City Council was also acknowledged, and they have a significant role to play in assisting the community to make Ouyen a Town of Choice.

Ouyen Incorporated is recognised as a key representative organisation of the Ouyen community by Mildura Rural City Council. There exists a strong working relationship between these two organisations.

There was also recognition of the contribution made by ‘Social Entrepreneurs’ in the community who are predominately volunteers. The community would not be in its present strong position without the selfless contribution by the many volunteers in the Ouyen community.

Ouyen Inc. may take a lead role in facilitating development of key networks with local organisations, the community and government sectors to drive the development of the identified projects. Partnership organisations may include but not be exclusive to, MTHCS, MRCC, DPCD, DPI, DEECD and community based organisations. Some projects may also fall under the auspice of Ouyen Inc. portfolios, which relate to the portfolios of Mildura Rural City Council.

As such Mildura Rural City Council could also have a role in contributing to the implementation of the Ouyen Community Plan; this may be through its own portfolio’s or through aligned organisations such as Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board and Mildura Tourism.

There is a strong social element to the Ouyen Community Plan, with health, aged care facilities and other aspects of community service identified as priority areas for the future of the Ouyen community.

Mallee Track Health and Community Service is constantly scoping opportunities for the community and exploring how MTHCS may be able to meet the changing needs of Ouyen and across the whole of the Mallee Track.

*As a component of the Ouyen Futures Forum, presentations were held on 4 factors of influence on the future. These were Climate Change, Demographics, Health and Agriculture. The presentations were delivered by experts in their field and provided a background as to the potential social and physical environment in which the Ouyen community may be operating in the future. A synopsis of these presentations is provided to allow the plan to have some context around the project ideas developed during the forum.*

## Climate Change

As debate continues around the existence of Climate Change, government policy has been changing to mitigate and address the potential impacts of Climate Change. The community needs to understand and plan within the context of these policy changes surrounding climate change, to ensure it is at the forefront of any opportunities presented by changing government policy.

The exact impact of climate change on the Ouyen community is unknown but projections are available on the Australian Government's Climate Change Website:

<http://www.climatechangeinaustralia.com.au>. It is widely accepted that the future climate will be different from today. It may become hotter with rain events less frequent but more violent. Higher temperatures are expected to increase aridity because of increased evaporation, even if rainfall increases slightly.

Current Climate Change research indicates that increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> is the major driver of CC. Changes in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> have been mapped over more than 400,000 years using ice core samples and current concentrations are about one-third higher than at any time in that period. Globally, the 14 warmest years on record occurred since 1990. Impacts are likely to affect people and businesses in the Mallee. The Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO report, 'Climate Change in Australia, Technical Report 2007' has several projections regarding rainfall, temperature and sea level.

Weather patterns are already quite variable in Australia and climate change is an inter-decadal phenomenon. It will be most easily noticed as an increase in the frequency, extent and duration of extreme events (such as heat waves, storm events and low rainfall) and will increase the range and scale of risk faced by primary producers. Risk involves challenges and opportunities. Aussie farmers are very good at managing risk. They have an excellent track record of adjusting to emerging needs and taking advantage of opportunities.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Like many rural communities, Ouyen has had fluctuating fortunes, closely associated with the changing seasonal conditions and service industries such as Railways, SEC, and other government bodies.

The population of the township of Ouyen has remained relatively stable for a long period, with a small decline since a population peak of 1594 in the mid 70's. Data from the 2006 census has the Ouyen Population at 1384; this is the highest population since the 1981 census and represents a 19.4% increase on the 2001 census.

Ouyen also suffers from youth drain, a common theme among many rural communities.

The population age is also increasing, with more people living longer, and higher proportion of the population aged above 60 years old. The 2006 census has 28% of the Ouyen Population above 60 years old.

The increasing proportion of those aged over 60 years old and these people maintaining their independent living arrangements may have an impact on the services required in the community into the future.





## HEALTH

Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) is the major health provider in the Mallee. It is a Multi Purpose Service; it delivers services in four communities and provides employment for approximately 180 people across the Mallee Track.

MTHCS provides a wide range of services to the community through its own staff and facilities as well as hosting visiting services.

There are a number of challenges that MTHCS have identified that may impact on the Mallee communities into the future. These include the

- An aging population
- Diminishing workforce available/skills shortage
- An increase in chronic disease
- Increased burden on carers
- An increase in the elderly living alone
- Unknown impact of Climate Change on health and wellbeing of the community

MTHCS is taking a proactive approach to healthcare in the Mallee by a shift in focus from bed based to primary health, health promotion and education. They are also continuing to advocate for improved and increased services that meet the needs of the communities across the Mallee Track. The recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff remains a high priority for the Health Service and for the communities which it services.

Mallee Track Health and Community Service is proactively monitoring research into the impact climate change may have in the future, whilst there is uncertainty about the exact effects that may occur from a health perspective, there will no doubt be impacts.



## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the dominant economic interest across the Mallee region. It is a significant employer of people across the region, and there is beginning to be a subtle shift from family owned and operated enterprises to corporate farming.

Farmers in the Mallee are recognised for their resilience and adaptability. In particular their ability to remain viable in the face of climate variability, dry seasonal conditions and the impact the global markets has on their return on investment.

History has shown us that there are ongoing changes to the numbers of farmers who operate in the Mallee, and to the age of farmers across the entire agriculture sector. The farm size continues to increase as smaller farms are bought out and older farmers retire from the industry.

These changes are accompanied by improvements in agricultural systems and an increase in machinery size. What once took a farm family an entire week to do now can be done in a single day by one machine operator. This comes at a cost. The capital invested in machinery is significant, and needs to be considered in the long term. Also a single large farm manager can now farm an area that once supported many families; this has had a significant impact on the population and sustainability of many rural communities.

The adoption by leading land managers of farming systems that are more environmentally sustainable, have less impact on the land and contribute less greenhouse gasses show that the Mallee farmer is still working to remain viable in spite of the increasing evidence of Climate Change.

As the industry moves into the future, opportunities are still afforded those who wish to remain in farming. Increased land size may require farm staff to be employed, Mallee farmers could become role models to others around Climate Change, alternate farming practices are being developed and trialled, and the Mallee Research Station may offer opportunities for further research and training.



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The community of Ouyen and the surrounding districts are well resourced with a range of emergency services.

Ouyen has full time policing, with several staff members working across the area.

The community has volunteers committed to the Country Fire Authority and the State Emergency Services. Like many other volunteer organisations, a larger base of volunteers would make these vital services more sustainable.

The Mallee Track Health and Community Service provide a range of high quality health and emergency services to the wider community.

Ouyen has a staffed Ambulance station with two ambulances available, this service is supported by a number of volunteer ambulance officers, who are committed to ongoing training and service to the community.

An increase in the number and severity of worldwide destructive events may cause the Ouyen community to examine how it could be possible deal with a large scale emergency event. Many of these events have occurred in areas not associated with disasters, and these areas have been found lacking in their ability to deal with the impact of the event.

The Ouyen Community may need to spend some time in association with MRCC and the local emergency services to develop a plan to develop responses to any potential significant event.

## **COMMUNITY ENDORSEMENT**

The Ouyen Community Plan was developed in consultation with the community, and a major component was the endorsement of the plan by the community through Ouyen Inc. as the key community representative body. The Ouyen Community Plan was also endorsed by the following community organisations.

Ouyen Inc

Ouyen Probus Club

Ouyen Senior citizens Club

# APPENDIX 1

## REFERENCE GROUP

John Senior	CEO, Mallee Track Health and Community Service
Mark Wilson	Chair, Ouyen Inc
Cathy Hastings	Agriculture Representative
Keith Erhardt	Agriculture Representative
Martin Hawson	General Manager, Community and Culture, Mildura Rural City Council
Jag Dhaliwal	Mallee Track Health and Community Service
Grant Doxey	Mallee Track Health and Community Service
Ken Ashton	Department of Primary Industries

## PROJECT OFFICER

Steven Vallance      Department of Primary Industries

## CONSULTANT FUTURISTS

PSPL              Ph. 0408 579 492

Rowena Morrow

Dr. Peter Hayward

<http://www.pspl.com.au>

## APPENDIX 2

### **Spiral Dynamics**

*Spiral Dynamics* argues that human nature is not fixed: humans are able, when forced by life conditions, to adapt to their environment by constructing new, more complex, conceptual models of the world that allow them to handle the new problems. Each new model includes and transcends all previous models. According to Beck and Cowan, these conceptual models are organized around so-called Memes: systems of core values or collective intelligences, applicable to both individuals and entire cultures.

Sometimes called levels of psychological existence theory, this work lays out a pattern of human diversity and a trajectory for change. It addresses why we have unique perspectives on living, and how our own senses of what the “real world” is like can vary.

The three futures discussed at the Ouyen Futures Forum were derived from three different Memes.

Further information - <http://www.spiraldynamics.net>

<http://www.spiraldynamics.org>

[http://www.12manage.com/methods\\_graves\\_spiral\\_dynamics.html](http://www.12manage.com/methods_graves_spiral_dynamics.html)

**Deep Design**, as used in the final session of the Futures Forum is also known as **Causal Layered Analysis** (CLA) and is one of several futures techniques used as a means to inquire into the causes of social phenomena and to generate a set of forecasts as to the future course of the phenomena. As a theory, CLA seeks to integrate empiricist, interpretive, critical and action learning modes of knowing (loosely, science, social science, philosophy and mythology). As a method, its utility is not in predicting the future but in creating transformative spaces for the creation of alternative futures. It is also likely to be of use in developing more effective — deeper, inclusive, longer term — policy.

Causal layered analysis consists of four levels: the litany, social causes, discourse/world-view and myth/metaphor.

1. The first level is the litany – the official unquestioned view of reality.
2. The second level is the social causation level, the systemic perspective. The data of the litany is explained and questioned at this level.
3. The third level is the worldview/discourse. Deeper, unconsciously held ideological, worldview and discursive assumptions are unpacked at this level.
4. The fourth level is the myth-metaphor, the unconscious emotive dimensions of the issue. The challenge is to conduct research that moves up and down these layers of analysis and thus is inclusive of different ways of knowing. Doing so allows for the creation of authentic alternative futures and integrated transformation.

CLA begins and ends by questioning the future.

For further information - <http://www.metafuture.org/Articles/CausalLayeredAnalysis.htm>

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