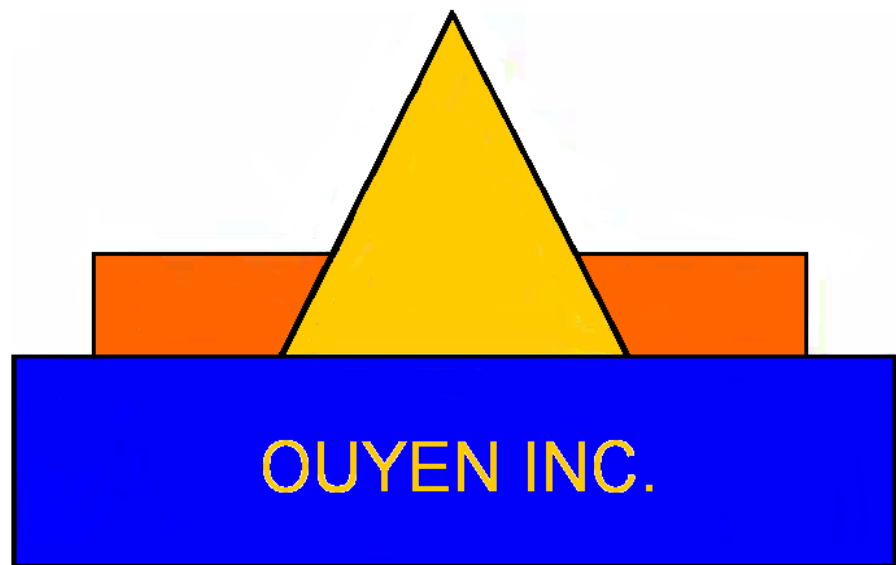


**2011-  
2015**

# Ouyen Inc.

## Business and Strategic Plan



Representing Our  
Community  
Creating Our Future

Incorporation Number. AOO35830C

PO Box 168 Ouyen Vic 3490

**Acknowledgments:** Thank you to Mark Wilson as Chair of Ouyen Inc, Eddie Warhurst and Associates, Steven Vallance and the committee of Ouyen Inc for their contribution to the Ouyen Inc Strategic and Business Plan 2011-2015

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## **1. Chairman's Introduction**

Ouyen Inc is a product of circumstance, opportunity and determination. Since 1997 Ouyen Inc has developed and matured as the peak community representative body of the community of Ouyen.

Ouyen Inc has been nurtured and guided by the Mildura Rural City Council whose support has been vital in our growth. As a community 100km's south of Mildura, our municipality centre, we have understood the need to be pro-active to achieve outcomes that provide social and economic benefit for the community of Ouyen. Many of these achievements are listed herein.

The Ouyen Inc 'Business and Strategic Plan 2011-2015' is the result of a consultation process which included the engagement of a professional consultant, the establishment of a working group and a combination of research and consultation of the current Ouyen Inc committee who are elected as representatives of the community at the annual public meeting.

This document represents the culmination of 13 years experience of consecutive committees representing thousand's of volunteer hours, the mistakes made and the triumphs earned.

I pay tribute to my 3 predecessors, Mr Denis Gniel (inaugural Chairman), Mr Geoff Kay and Mr Tony Hall, all of whom set lofty standards yet simultaneously understood the diplomacy required to achieve community aims.

I commend this fluid document to the reader and take pride in the fact it's been my turn to lead this community endorsed group.

Yours Sincerely

Mark Wilson

Chairman 2006 – 2012

## 2. Overview of Ouyen, the Community and History

Before European settlement the area is thought to have been occupied by the Wergaia Aborigines. Some believe the name Ouyen derives from the Wergaia term 'wuya-wuya', the name of a pink-eared duck, presumably once common in the area. Others suggest it means 'ghost waterhole'.

The township of Ouyen developed around a railway station which was established in 1906 after the Melbourne to Mildura line was built. Farming blocks (640 acre's) in the area were sold in 1910 and cleared for sheep grazing, wheat, barley and oat production. Water supply was initially caught in large catchment dams and transported by horse drawn wagons, later a system of gravitation channels were constructed from the Grampians in the Wimmera.

The reason the Mallee was the last region to be settled in Victoria is evident in one of the town's choice of symbols. Beside the Calder Highway at Blackburn Park Recreation Reserve, in the heart of town, lies the largest Mallee stump in Australia.

It is a reminder of not only of the difficulties faced by European settlers in clearing the area, but also of the agricultural basis of the region. The scrubby territory was once covered in the drought-resistant eucalypt (Mallee), which proved immensely difficult to uproot and destroy (Mallee root – *lignotuber*). Any remnant of the subterranean root system led to regeneration and a heartbreaking renewal of efforts at clearing. Today the dense wood is used for wood turning and heating, although its availability as a resource is limited.

Ouyen is now a transport and service centre for a vast area occupied by dryland agricultural (predominantly cereals) and grazing properties. Enormous convoys of trucks (road & rail) transport barley & wheat to Portland and various regional flourmills.

Ouyen boasts the sixth largest Livestock Exchange in Victoria, with sales of 250,000 head of sheep and lambs per year.

Ouyen is situated on the crossroads of the Calder Highway (Melbourne-Mildura) and the Mallee Highway (Sydney-Adelaide). Regional centres are

Mildura 110 kilometres to the north and Swan Hill 150 kilometres to the east. The township and surrounds are serviced by the Mallee Track Health & Community Service, Ouyen P-12 College, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, Victoria Police, State Emergency Service (SES), Country Fire Authority (CFA), Ambulance Victoria, a thriving Football & Netball Club, Lawn Bowls, Lawn Tennis Courts, Golf Course, Swimming Pool and Trotting Complex. Ouyen is also serviced by an all weather airstrip, supermarket, the Ouyen Club, the Victoria Hotel and has a vibrant shopping centre. Ouyen has sustained a population of 1300 + since the late 1970's.

The Ouyen township is in the heart of the Victorian Mallee and surrounded by a beautiful array of national parks, Wyperfeld, Hattah-Kulkyne and Murray Sunset National Parks. The northern area of Wyperfeld is 60 kilometres to the south-west, Hattah Lakes & Murray River are only 40 kilometres north and the Pink Lakes part of the Murray Sunset National Park, are 70 kilometres to west. All three parks have an abundance of drought-resistant wildflowers (as many as 100 varieties), unique wildlife and breathtaking landscapes, with access tracks throughout (4 wheel drive is advisable).

Ouyen celebrated the centenary of its proclamation year in 2009 with 12 months of celebrations, hosting 9 major events all featured on DVD 'Ouyen a Town of Choice'.



2009 Centenary Committee

### **3. Overview of Ouyen Inc and History**

During the period of 1995-96 Victorian communities were involved in the Council amalgamation process which was implemented by the State Government of the day. For the community of Ouyen, as part of the former Shire of Walpeup, this was a period that generated much debate as to which Council's should be joined.

The State Government appointed 'Commissioners' to oversee the amalgamation of several councils to form a single entity. As part of this process and to ensure that the smaller councils were not lost or forgotten in the process, the Commissioners were visionary and endorsed the creation of 'Community Consultative Committees', who were able to provide input regarding the amalgamation process to the commissioners which reflected each individual community's needs and aims.

Four key community members, Robert Jardine, Mark Wilson, Denis Gniel and Steven Vallance with the support and guidance of the Ouyen Consultative Committee, developed the concept of an 'umbrella' organisation that became the community group Ouyen Inc. It was felt that this new, Council recognised group was the next step in the development of Ouyen. This is to the absolute credit and foresight of the Commissioners and the Ouyen Consultative Committee whose aim it was to work for the betterment of the community of Ouyen as part of the new Municipality.

Ouyen Inc is a group of community elected individuals who bring a range of views to the Ouyen Inc table seeking economic and social development for the community of Ouyen.

Ouyen Inc conducts monthly public meetings where the ordinary business of Ouyen Inc is undertaken but also where the community has opportunity to raise points of concern and possible development for Ouyen Inc to pursue and prioritise.

Ouyen Inc is representative of the community and liaises with Council and other levels of government; it also investigates opportunities with the private sector as they emerge.

For 14 years from 1997 to 2011 Ouyen Inc proudly conducted the unique event known as the 'Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph'. This event raised the profile of Ouyen to a broader community and was a recognisable point of difference about Ouyen. The event did more than create a profile for Ouyen or professionally endorse the baker with the best vanilla slice; the event has shown that the Ouyen community is capable of achievements that are perhaps considered beyond our reach.

Ouyen Inc is a group that strives for economic and social advantage for the community of Ouyen and in conjunction with our community plan enhancing Ouyen as a 'Town of Choice'.

The Ouyen Community Plan identifies Ouyen as a Town Of Choice. This was an output of the Futures Forum delivered in 2008 as a component of State Government Rural Futures Initiative.

### *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.*



#### 4. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of Ouyen Inc is identified in our vision/mission statement.

##### **Representing our Community Creating our Future**

The Vision/Mission of Ouyen Inc. has evolved over the past 14 years from the original

**“Creating an Absolutely Dynamic Ouyen”**

to

**“To provide the vision, direction, leadership and unity to create a dynamic future for Ouyen”**

The current Mission Statement distils the previous statements to their essence, of effective representation and being involved in influencing our future in a positive manner.

Our objectives are identified as follows:

- To support opportunities for Ouyen residents, volunteers and Ouyen community groups
- Encourage economic and social growth
- Advocate to local, state and federal government on behalf of the Ouyen community
- Provide opportunity for community leadership and foster participation
- Foster special events and pursue identified projects
- Sustain and promote local heritage and community assets
- Sustain and improve our local environment
- Develop, maintain and review an effective operational structure to achieve our objectives and priorities



## **4. Actions**

We will deliver the above objectives by undertaking the following activities over the next 4 years.

### **Internal Activity**

- Research, develop and implement a succession plan for the executive and committee of Ouyen Inc
- Encourage youth leadership, representation and involvement with Ouyen Inc
- Offer capacity development opportunities to the committee of Ouyen Inc and the wider community
- Continually assess, review and refine our operations and procedures
- Develop a 'Operations Manual' for the roles within Ouyen Inc with a particular focus on the Executive positions

### **External Activity**

- Continue to engage with the community where ever possible
- Foster the already strong relationship with councillors and staff of MRCC
- Build a working relationship with the State and Federal Administrations
- Promote the work and worth of Ouyen Inc
- Support the development and implementation of opportunities identified in the Ouyen Community Plan
- Promote the 'Ouyen Inc.' story to other communities across Australia
- Work closely with the Strategic Project Manager – Mallee Track in the Advancing Country Towns Project 2011-2015

## **5. Ouyen Inc Structure**

To deliver on the identified objectives and to fulfil our purpose, Ouyen Inc has developed a structure that maximizes the support, effectiveness and focus of the volunteer base that forms the core of Ouyen Inc.

Ouyen Inc has developed a Portfolio and Sub-Group structure. Each portfolio has a leader and consists of 3-4 Ouyen Inc committee members and co-opted community members if required. Sub-groups mainly consist of people within our community who are pursuing special interest projects. These sub-groups operate under the auspice of Ouyen Inc and are aligned with a specific and relevant portfolio.

Portfolios have a defined role and focus. This allows existing and new members to contribute to the portfolio that best aligns with their area of interest, therefore ensuring enthusiasm around that particular portfolio. Each portfolio is responsible for pursuing the identified community priorities. These priorities are contained within the relevant reference documents such as the Ouyen Community Plan. (Other reference documents are identified in Section 11) Other pursuits of Ouyen Inc are determined through regular community consultation, refer Section 10.

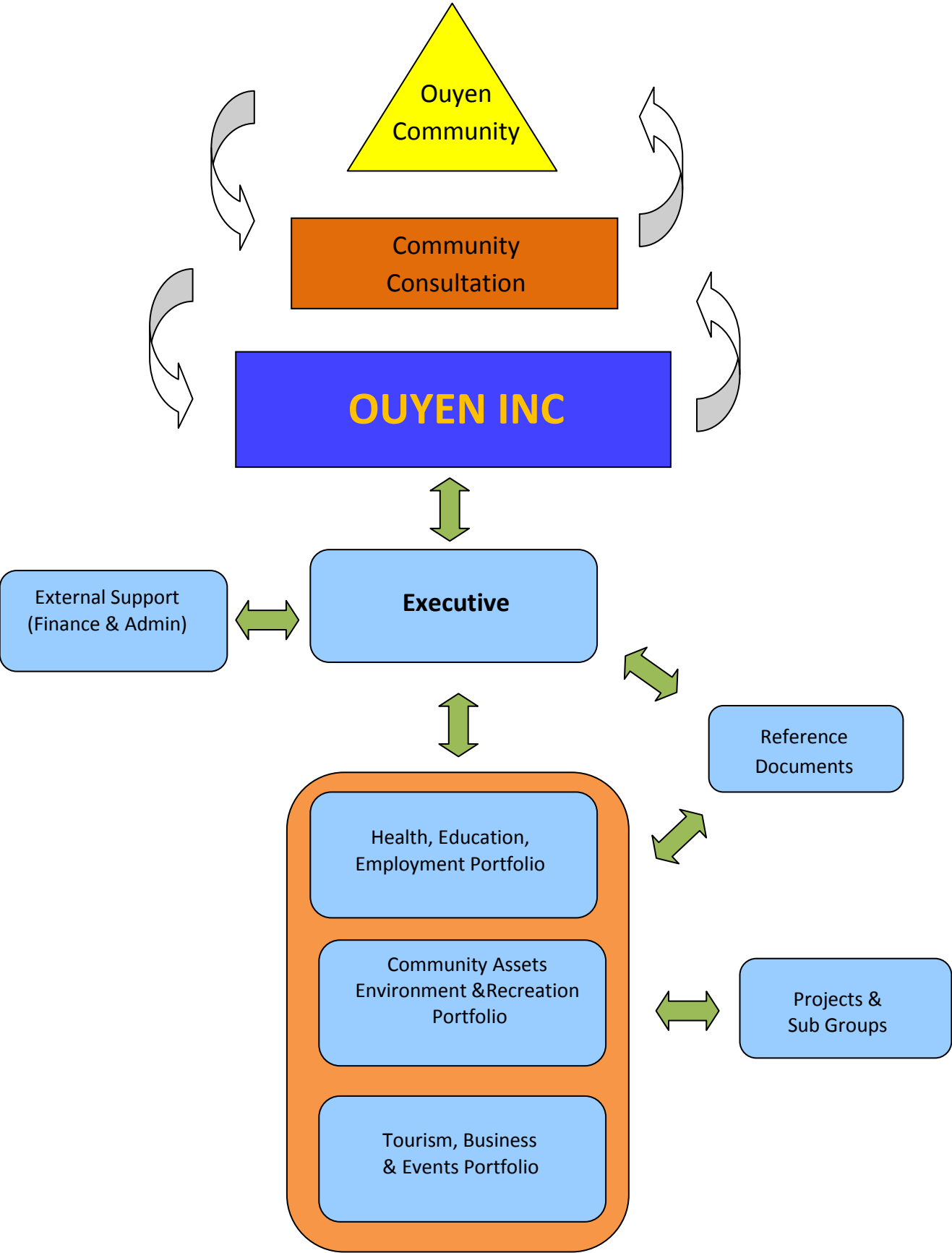
Each portfolio is required to report at our monthly meeting and is responsible for adhering to the guidelines of our Constitution which is administered by the Executive of Ouyen Inc.

The Executive of Ouyen Inc consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Executive are responsible for governance, administration, finance, leadership, representation and for the day to day activities of the committee, portfolios and sub-groups.

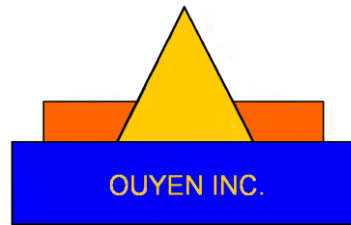
This activity is supported via administrative assistance from the Mildura Rural City Council, professional advice to our Treasurer via the engagement of accountancy firm WHK and further professional business advice on an as need basis through various consultants and advisors.

The Ouyen Inc structure is represented by the following diagram.

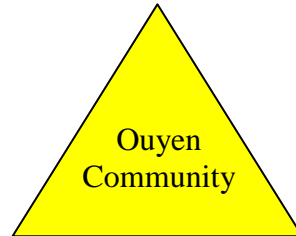
**Ouyen Inc Structure**



## Ouyen Inc Logo



The Ouyen Inc logo consists of three parts and three colours, each is uniquely representative:



The first and most important part is the triangle representing the community of Ouyen. The triangle is recognised internationally as the 'Triangle of Reference'

The colour Yellow is interpreted as meaning; Creative, Intelligent and Wise.



The rectangle features twice in our logo. The rectangle is recognised to mean the same as the shape of a square. The square [rectangle] features four sides and four points. The four sides represent the boundaries of our domain whilst the four points are representative of the four points of the compass.

The colour Orange is interpreted as meaning; Stimulation, Enthusiasm and Creativity



Again the rectangle (square), the colour Blue is interpreted as meaning Sincere, Careful and Inspirational.

*We have a **sincere** and **inspirational** organisation that through **stimulation** and **creativity** supports an **intelligent** and **wise** community.*

## 7. Election Process/Meeting Guidelines/Strategy

### Election Process

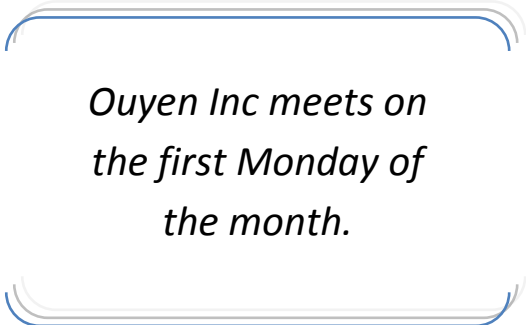
In line with the Ouyen Inc constitution, an Annual Meeting is publicly called to hear the annual report of the past years activities of Ouyen Inc. The report also identifies progress on current projects and the anticipated future projects.

This public AM also determines the committee for the next 12 month period. Nominations are called from the public gallery in attendance after which a nominee can accept or decline the nomination. A maximum of 15 committee members are elected. The newly elected committee then convene a week later to determine the Executive, Portfolio Leaders and Portfolio members.

The AM provides an opportunity for any resident of Ouyen to nominate to become a member of the Ouyen Inc committee.

### Meeting Guidelines

Ordinary monthly meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of the month and are where the committee has opportunity to report to the community. Ouyen Inc operates a report style meeting where reports are tabled allowing for any points to



*Ouyen Inc meets on  
the first Monday of  
the month.*

be highlighted and/or discussed if required. The public gallery is able to ask questions, make comment or suggestion as the meeting progresses. The General Business agenda item of the meeting allows for the tabling or raising of issues, opportunities or concerns by any member of the committee or member of the community present.

## Strategy

The strategy of Ouyen Inc is to incorporate the documented and identified community aspirations into an achievable list of priorities. Priorities are assessed via the Ouyen Inc 'Prioritisation Framework'. The committee of Ouyen Inc, via its structure, pursues, researches and aims to realise these priorities through planning, representation and action. Periodic consultation with the community reaffirms aspirations and flags potential future priorities.

Ouyen Inc regularly liaises with local, state and federal governments and their departments to identify relevant funding, resources and support to achieve the community's aspirations. Further, Ouyen Inc is committed to maintaining a positive profile with its stakeholders and partners.

Ouyen Inc will work closely with the Advancing Country Towns, Mallee Track Project to achieve the two key project objectives of Economic Development and Adaptable Services.



## 8. Prioritisation Framework

As a volunteer organisation that has grown, it is vital to implement a prioritisation process. This is designed to maintain focus and maximise effort toward identified priorities. When a possible priority is identified it is assessed against our prioritisation framework as follows;

1. A potential project is identified
2. The project is then directed to the relevant portfolio and assessed against the Ouyen Community plan and other relevant reference documents
3. A Prioritisation Framework Checklist is then completed, identifying a number of elements about the potential project. The checklist focuses on the essential, basic information required. All elements of the checklist need to be completed before further consideration. This may require research and further consultation as required
4. At completion of the checklist, the information is circulated to the rest of the Ouyen Inc committee via the Executive for their consideration, questions and input
5. The relevant portfolio will then present the Project Proposal to the ordinary meeting of Ouyen Inc with a recommendation to be either accepted or to be dismissed
6. If accepted, the project proposal will then be determined as a short term priority, requiring the necessary attention to progress, or a future priority that is 'parked' and may be elevated in the priority list depending on funding and other opportunities that present

The following is a copy of the Prioritisation Framework Checklist.



## Prioritisation Framework Checklist

Name of Project Proposal	Relevant Information
<b>Portfolio Responsible</b>  <b>Person/s Responsible</b>	
<b>Is Community Consultation Required?</b>  <b>Does the Community need information?</b>  <b>Has Community Consultation occurred?</b>	<div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>
<b>Is the Project identified in the Ouyen Community Plan and other existing reference documents?</b>  <b>Identify the relevant information in those documents.</b>	<div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>
<b>Who are the anticipated stakeholders?</b>  <b>Possible funder or resource identities.</b>  <b>Is external professional advice, research or consultation required?</b>	<div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>
<b>Has the relevant portfolio identified all answers to the above information?</b>	<div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>
<b>Has the portfolio provided a brief of information to the Ouyen Inc committee for consultation, feedback and questions?</b>	<div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>
<b>Has the portfolio determined if this project proposal is ready for recommendation to the Ouyen Inc ordinary meeting?</b>	<div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>

## 9. Communication Strategy

Communicating progress, direction, success and challenges to the community of Ouyen is one of the primary responsibilities of Ouyen Inc.

This responsibility to communicate serves a number of purposes as follows:

- Maintains awareness of the activities of Ouyen Inc to the community
- Informs stakeholders of the activities of Ouyen Inc
- Highlights to the community and stakeholders the support of various funders, supporters and sponsors received for projects being pursued
- Fulfils a primary responsibility

Ouyen Inc undertakes communication in a number of ways:

- Conduct monthly public meetings
- Conduct annual community consultation forums
- Initiate media releases, particularly to the local media
- Being available for interviews to media locally and beyond
- Providing a copy of monthly minutes to all Councillors and senior management of Mildura Rural City Council
- Undertaking regular briefings with both state and federal politicians
- Provide information about projects and priorities on as need basis to relevant and substantiated enquiries

Ouyen Inc does this by:

- Writing and releasing relevant media releases
- Engaging professional media assistance as required
- Direct contact with community, governments and media as required
- Utilising our web site ([www.ouyen.vic.au](http://www.ouyen.vic.au)) and other forms of electronic communication

## Communication Framework

	Message	Method	When	Responsible
Ouyen Community	Update of projects Emerging issues Evolving projects Results of other meetings	Public Meetings  Media Updates	Monthly  When required	Executive  Media Consultants
Mallee Track Health and Community Service	Explore collaboration opportunities	Meetings as required	As Required	Executive  Portfolio Leaders
Mildura Development Corporation	Update on activity and project reports. Emerging community issues Community funding opportunities	Regular Meetings  Meeting Minutes	Monthly  As Required	Secretary  Executive
Mildura Rural City Council Councillors	Update on activity and project reports. Emerging community issues Success of collaboration between MRCC and Ouyen Inc	Meeting Minutes  Regular Meetings	Monthly  As Required	Secretary  Executive  Portfolio Leaders
Mildura Rural City Council Staff	Update on activity and project reports Emerging community issues. Success of collaboration between MRCC and Ouyen Inc	Meeting Minutes  Regular Meetings	Monthly  As Required	Secretary  Executive  Portfolio Leaders
Ouyen P-12 College	Explore collaboration opportunities	P-12 Principal at Ouyen Inc Meetings  Meetings as required	Monthly	P-12 Principal  Executive  Portfolio Leaders
Parliamentarians	Project updates and reports	Electronic and Meetings	As Required	Executive
Regional Development Victoria Regional Manager	Update on activity and project reports Emerging community issues Community funding opportunities	Meeting Minutes  Regular Meetings	Monthly  As Required	Secretary  Executive
SuniTAFE	Explore collaboration opportunities	Regular Meetings	As Required	Executive

## **10. Consultation Processes**

Consultation with community occurs via the monthly public meetings and the Annual Meeting.

Consultation with community also occurs with an annual public meeting where the community has opportunity to review existing priorities and highlight new priorities.

Consultation with all levels of government, senior departmental staff business leaders and consultants occurs regularly. This increases their awareness and understanding of our priorities and provides channels of information that links current and emerging opportunities with community needs and priorities.

Ouyen Inc aims to consult with the community on a regular basis to review its own performance, reputation and to profile or gain feedback on issues of importance.

## **11. Reference Documents**

In the course of its operations, Ouyen Inc has at its disposal a number of key documents that are the foundation to its business. These documents either relate too or have an impact on the community of Ouyen.

- Ouyen Inc- Business and Strategic Plan 2011-2015
- Ouyen Inc- Constitution
- MRCC- Endorsed Ouyen Community Plan '*Town of Choice*'
- MRCC- Endorsed Ouyen Structure Plan
- MRCC- Endorsed Ouyen Urban Design Advice
- MRCC- Social Indicators Report 2008
- MRCC- Council Plan 2009-2013
- MRCC- Community Well Being Survey Report 2008
- Warhurst and Associates- Framework Document 2010
- Advancing Country Towns, Mallee Track Project Plan 2011

**Other documents are also utilised when appropriate**

## **12. Review and Reporting Processes**

Ouyen Inc has a number of strategies in place to both report progress and success to the community, stakeholders and partners of our community.

Each monthly meeting has reports from each portfolio, project and sub-group.

This is supported by regular updates and reports in the media, delivered by the executive or the media consultant.

Ouyen Inc also has regular meetings with the Mayor, Councillors and senior staff from Mildura Rural City Council.

The executive of Ouyen Inc. along with the committee promote the achievements of the organisation to State and Federal Government Ministers, staff and advisors at every opportunity.

Ouyen Inc regularly undertakes a review of its profile and effectiveness by giving the residents of the community the opportunity to comment and provide feedback by way of a community wide survey. The results are analysed and reported to the community and to MRCC at an Ouyen Inc meeting.

Reports such as the Mildura Social Indicators Report and MRCC Community Wellbeing Survey Report provide an additional data source for Ouyen Inc to examine and work with MRCC to enhance the lifestyle of Ouyen residents.

### **2010 Review**

The 2010 review of Ouyen Inc's performance and profile was very encouraging.

When asked 'How do you rate the efforts of Ouyen Inc on behalf of the community?' More than half of the responses rated the effort at 10 and more than 95% of all responses at 8 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest) this is a strong recognition of the contribution people see Ouyen Inc making to their community.

The response here is a strong endorsement by the community, recognising the effort that Ouyen Inc makes on behalf of the community.

Other significant findings in the 2010 review were:

- 95 % of respondents were aware of Ouyen Inc and what it does in the community
- Of all those who responded, 80% were aware of the monthly Ouyen Inc meetings
- The information provided to the community by Ouyen Inc on its projects etc was sufficient, with more than 90% satisfied with the method and information
- More than 98% of those who responded to the question of whether Ouyen Inc. should continue to implement the Community Plan indicated in the affirmative
- There was a varied response to reviewing or updating the Ouyen community Plan, with 45% agreeing to a review, 30% responding with a 'NO' and 25% not responding to the question of a review

(This may indicate a satisfaction with the plan and people seeing no reason to revisit a successful document. Alternatively there may be a number of respondents who feel that the community is over consulted, with a number of planning and consultation events held by various organisations throughout the year)

The 2010 review conducted by Ouyen Inc shows outstanding community support for the organisation and the work that it does on behalf of the community.

### 13.Achievements

**Projects:** Ouyen Inc. has a history of completing a range of successful projects, including:

- Ouyen Inc inception 1997
- Ouyen Community Park (Travellers Rest) commencement 1998
- ROXY Theatre Restoration (Ouyen ROXY Theatre Inc)
- Visitor Information Centre, redevelopment and coordination
- Ouyen 'A Town of Choice' DVD (Ouyen Inc Sub-group) 2009
- Oke Streetscape and lighting
- Pedestrian Safety Crossing – Williams Street & Cross over Farrell Street for students of Ouyen P-12 College
- Blackburn Park Redevelopment Project commenced 2007
- Skate Park 2007/08
- Ouyen Community Plan in collaboration with DPI and MTHCS 2007
- Blackburn Park, Photovoltaic Project (Ouyen Inc Sub-group) 2011

**Events:** Ouyen Inc has run a number of significant events; the aim is to provide these events at little or no cost to those who attend.

- 14 consecutive years of 'The Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph'
- Publication of 'Mallee Routes to Vanilla Slices' History of Ouyen over the past century (Ouyen District History and Genealogy Centre)
- Beaut Blokes, Prime Mallee Man Weekend
- Bidgee Finance Rain Dance
- Ouyen Centenary 2009
- Hot Summer Concert 2007
- Tour of the Murray River Cycle Tour in collaboration with GAVST

