

25th February 2018



Warwick Bennett
General Manager
Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Goulburn NSW 2580

Dear Warwick

Re: Submission in response to the CBD Masterplan

On behalf of The Goulburn Group (TGG), thank you for the opportunity to comment on what TGG views as a progressive, responsible and creative CBD Master plan. We believe that if implemented the plan will greatly improve the amenity of the city, community connection, climate adaptation and attraction for visitors and future residents. Our comments and suggestions are made constructively to enhance what is already a commendable plan in our view.

Please be bold!

Most community input is likely to come from older residents who have time, vested interests, people anxious about change or those enthusiastic about the plan.

Although TGG has members from 19 – 75 years of age, most members are over 50. TGG is increasingly aware that when public consultations are held in our region on a range of issues or plans, there is an over representation of older members of the community, a proportion of whom can be averse to change, skeptical about research evidence, and overly concerned about public safety. Such input can tend to create a drag on progress.

TGG asks that you as the GM and the Council be bold and embrace a strong commitment to implementing the CBD Masterplan in a coherent way and resist the temptation to "cherry pick" the plan to appease opposition that with time will fade.

A plan fit for the future

Many communities have embraced a slowing of traffic, relocation of parking away from main thoroughfares, community plazas, public art, shared pedestrian and cycle ways and tree planting despite initial opposition. We ask that you stand firm and allow the integrity of this plan to proceed so that Goulburn can be responsibly prepared for the next 20 – 30 years when our young people will inherit the city and current families and older people will age within it.

Goulburn needs to become a city fit for purpose in the 21st Century. Despite the uncertainty of the future, we know from the evidence that the climate is warming, that we will inevitably need to decarbonise our activities, that connecting with each other as we move about is vital for individual and communal wellbeing and safety.

What we like in particular!

- **Investment in image and amenity**

The CBD Masterplan is a great opportunity for Goulburn to invest further in the *Goulburn Australia* image and at the same time make a positive contribution to the amenity of the CBD.

- **Visitor, new resident and business attraction**

TGG has consistently supported projects that attract a broader demographic and progressive entrepreneurship to the region. We are confident that this Plan and future extensions of the plan will attract visitors to the centre of town and provide greater incentives for people and business to re-locate to Goulburn.

- **Bike lanes**

There are an increasing number of bike riders in Goulburn including young people, commuters and social riders. Please keep bike lanes as a key part of the plan and look to expanding and linking these in future plans.

- **Laneways, small plazas and parklets**

The plan allows for small plazas where people can be with each other enroute to shops, banks and facilities. It makes great use of pedestrian laneways and shifts the focus from cars to walking, cycling and accessibility for prams and mobility aids.

The Masterplan's inclusion of plazas promotes economic and social opportunity. Well designed and maintained, they will promote a safe and inviting space for people to gather and socialize, creating a social atmosphere which research shows has positive health as well as economic benefits for the community.

- **Heritage retention and enhancement and public art**

The Plan integrates amenity with public art and retained heritage. The parklets, colour palette, small plazas, café culture, tree lined streets and bike lanes give a welcoming inclusive and modern vision for the CBD that shows off our wonderful built heritage. This continuity between the past, present and future is a good feature of the Plan.

- **Creating attractive conformity with outdoor seating, recycling and waste bins and signage**

The current situation is messy! Better integration in design will be pleasing to the eye.

- **Traffic calming infrastructure and removal of trucks from Auburn St**

Raised pedestrian crossings, changes to parking, connecting with parking areas behind Auburn St are welcome. We note that studies undertaken confirm that there is sufficient surplus parking in Goulburn for our needs.

- **Commitment to the health and vigor of street trees and planting.**

We must climate proof our city. Street trees must grow to their full potential to provide shade in summer and must be cared for appropriately. We must resist the temptation to give a higher priority to parking over street trees. Trees are critical to the well being of our community and to supporting biodiversity within our urban landscape.

- **Illumination of laneways and plazas; energy efficiency and design of street lights**

Increased lighting for laneways & plazas provides a sense of safety and amenity and will assist with the acceptance of the reduction in main street parking. The CBD plan indicates a commitment to LED lighting which we applaud.

TGG's recommendations to enhance the plan

1. Commit to a high standard of works

We note that this is a long-term plan with shorter projects within a longer time frame. It is clear that some improvements made to the CBD in recent years will have to be redone, e.g. improvements in drainage and depth of soil to allow Auburn street trees to reach their full potential to provide the shade and attractiveness that our city requires in Summer. We ask that a commitment to completing works to a high standard so that a repeat of this situation is avoided.

2. Pedestrian laneways running East/ West must be wind proofed

- The proposed Plazas are connected to Laneways that run East/West (wind tunnels for parts of the year) – this means that they have the potential to become uninviting 'wind traps' for pedestrians and potentially places to avoid. Good structural design must make sure that they are wind protected.
 - These laneways should also be protected from rain and summer sunlight. Examples of these can be found in Bowral where glass ceilings have added protection from rain to enable comfortable walking in all weather conditions.
3. Plazas must be weather proofed to maximize the attraction for the community.

They need to be constructed with aspect and prevailing winds in mind so as to be sun traps in winter but that also have a sufficient shade element that makes them comfortable in summer.

4. All parking areas should be covered and include the opportunity to double as mini solar farms through partnerships between Council, business and community groups such as CE4G.

With increasing temperatures in summer it is imperative that all car parking be covered so as to protect cars and passengers from overheating. Covered car parking will encourage more people to use these car parks.

The opportunity to also use solar panels as part of the structures should be explored, particularly east/west facing panels that will capitalize on the higher prices for power in the peak periods and provide an investment opportunity for Council, business and community.

5. Implement a public education for shared zones such as cycle ways and recycling

- Shared zones for cycling, mobility vehicles and pedestrians are relatively new in Australia. Often opposition to the introduction of shared zones and cycle ways comes from a lack of experience and uncertainty about the "etiquette" or rules for sharing these valuable transit lanes.

- Recycling bins are not used consistently for recycling in our CBD.
- TGG strongly recommends that Council implements an education process using social media videos and cinema advertising to promote community understanding and appreciation of both shared zones, cycle ways and recycling bins.

6. Source outdoor furniture from Replas and ensuring that existing furniture is recycled or repurposed through appropriate channels.

Where possible outdoor seating should reflect the natural and build heritage with less concrete and more sculpted furniture. There is an opportunity for Council to boost its sustainability credentials by using Replas as a supplier of furniture and raised parklets. Currently Coles Red Cycle bins collect and supply Replas with soft plastic. It would be great for this waste loop to come full circle to provide long wearing and attractive outdoor furniture for our city.

- "Replas offers a broad range of quality recycled plastic outdoor furniture. Made from durable recycled plastic it is virtually maintenance free and comes in a range of widths and lengths". www.replas.com.au
- Furniture can be embossed with council logos or images to create a unique and consistent theme to enhance conformity. Council could promote the use of Replas products as part of its corporate commitment to waste reduction and environmental integrity.

See Pictures below



7. Include public murals of a high quality with positive messages

Goulburn and surrounding districts have a strong artistic population and the presence of our Regional Art Gallery gives public art a strong advocate.

We applaud the installation of both visual and sculptural works more recently in the CBD and we strongly support high quality public art being used to design murals that fire the imagination and promote positive connections between our community, biodiversity, heritage and wellbeing.

Some high quality artworks made from recycled materials could feature as a means of reflecting our commitment to environmental sustainability.

8. *Develop and adopt a community verge garden policy to enhance community participation and “sense of ownership” of the streetscapes.*

Many cafes and residents are interested in small, well managed, verge gardening opportunities. Such gardens are becoming a feature of many urban areas throughout Australia and internationally. They project a positive community image of the city but require a policy framework for ensuring that there is good management, aesthetics and safety built in to the structures.

As more cafés spring up it may be that growing herbs and flowers for the café also enhances the streetscape and image of the CBD and environs.

See City of Sydney's policy framework below not just for the CBD but also for surrounding urban streets.

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/gardening-on-the-footpath>

TGG appreciates the work that has gone into the CBD plan and hopes that our recommendations provide useful community input.

Regards

Mhairi Fraser
President, The Goulburn Group.
president@goulburngroup.com.au