



# COBARGO TOURIST & BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

*Our Towards 2032 Strategic Plan*



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#### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of the Bega Valley Shire, the people of the Yuin nation, and show our respect to elders past, present and emerging.

#### Acknowledgement of Funding

This is a Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Although funding for this project has been provided by both the Australian and NSW governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.



**Australian Government**



**NSW  
GOVERNMENT**

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cobargo is a strong, diverse, and creative community. Forward planning is crucial for us to be able to embrace a future full of opportunities for growth, celebration and prosperity.

The Cobargo Tourist & Business Association are very grateful to have partnered with the Bega Valley Business Forum, who were successful in receiving grant funding that made our strategic planning sessions and community engagement possible.

The process of coming together to sit down and look at ways we can better collaborate, communicate and work together as businesses, community groups, individuals to help recover from the past, identify current opportunities and develop a clear vision for the future, has been an important one.

This strategic plan with its clear vision and priorities will help the Cobargo Tourist & Business Association advocate for improvements, seek funding, and continue to strive for a future that we can all be proud of.

I would like to thank all that contributed, most importantly to those who gave up their time and actively participate in our strategic planning sessions, the community drop-in day or by completing the engagement survey.

I'm looking forward to working together to grow our plans, achieve our goals and strengthen our commitment to supporting a thriving, creative and inclusive village for all.

**Janet Doolin**  
President  
Cobargo Tourist & Business Association



## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Background

This Plan was developed through engagement with the members of Cobargo Tourist & Business Association and the wider community strategic planning sessions, an engagement survey and a community drop-in day held in September-2022.

It shares a vision for the Cobargo Tourist & Business Association, our priorities, and a set of short-, medium- and long-term actions and opportunities to help achieve this. It is specifically focused on Cobargo and Quaama. The Plan seeks alignment with other strategic plans developed for Cobargo and the Bega Valley Shire (the Shire).

### 1.2 Our priorities

The analysis and engagement completed to develop this plan identified a set of future priorities to guide the future development of our places.

Add info graphics that the (3) reflect themes



*Thriving:*  
an attractive and welcoming  
town for locals and tourists



*Creative:*  
a vibrant and adaptable  
village that inspires others



*Inclusive:*  
a friendly and diverse community that  
works together to respond to challenges  
and create opportunities

### 1.3 Cobargo Village Character Statement

The area now known as Cobargo lies on the traditional lands of Yuin people. Cobargo is situated on the Princes Highway north of Bega, the closest regional centre, and is close to the coast at Bermagui. It serves as the local village for the nearby localities of Coolagolite, Wandella, Yowrie and Dignam's Creek.

On 30 December 2019 Cobargo suffered devastating losses in the black summer bushfires. However, the community bond and spirit continues to shine, and Cobargo is welcoming visitors back to the village once again. Cobargo is a close-knit rural community and remains resourceful, creative, hardworking, and welcoming even in the face of so much adversity.

Hundreds of international and local musicians flock to town each year for the Cobargo Folk Festival with great folk and roots music, markets, camping and poetry. The popularity of the festival has continued to grow, and it now attracts thousands of festival-goers every year to the beautiful Bega Valley. Cobargo also offers a peaceful and relaxed rural setting with the Annual Cobargo Agricultural Show an ever-popular showcase of the regions rich farming and agricultural prowess.

### 1.4 The Action Plan

To address common challenges and achieve the future priorities, an Action Plan was developed using the ideas and initiatives generated by the engagement survey and at the community drop-in day. (see Table 2 Action Plan).

### 1.5 How it will be delivered

The Cobargo Tourist & Business Association will support the delivery of the actions in partnership with the primary owner of the initiative. The Association's support will be provided through facilitating discussions to activate opportunities, participating in advocacy efforts, contributing to plans, gathering inputs from our members and seconding funding requests.

The Association has limited resources, however we can provide considerable value through our member network and connecting people and opportunities in Cobargo and surrounds.

The existing Bega Valley Business Forum comprises six Chambers of Commerce across the Shire and has regular meetings. This forum will also be used to promote and advocate for some of the projects outlined in this Plan.

There is approximately \$19,000 to help support some of the actions identified within this plan.

This Plan can be refined using inputs from our members and partners. used to guide the Chamber's future efforts and engagements. It will adapt to the challenges and opportunities that emerge, in addition to applying our learnings along the way.



The old Bank in the main street of Cobargo.

## 2. PURPOSE

From July through to September 2022, we shared an engagement survey, held strategic planning sessions and hosted a community drop in day with the aim of developing a 10 Year Strategic Plan that will help guide our decision making and actions over the next 10 years.

The intent is that this Plan articulates our priorities, targeted initiatives and the key short-, medium- and longer-term steps to achieve these.

### 2.1 Geographical Scope

This plan is focused on the Cobargo village and Quaama. It also recognises the importance of Cobargo as a community and the northern gateway to the Bega Valley Shire, and the benefits the proposed actions may bring to the region.

Therefore, the Cobargo township is noted as the area of focus and the Bega Valley Shire Council Local Government Area (the Shire) is the area of influence for the Plan and its delivery.

### 2.2 How we will use this Plan

We will use this Plan to share our vision for the Cobargo Tourist & Business Association to support the efforts of our members and other community and business groups in progressing initiatives, highlight related opportunities and to support funding applications.

We want this Plan to complement the plans and strategies delivered by our partners at Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC), local businesses, as well as our local elected and industry representatives.

This Plan balances aspiration with achievable actions that everyone can contribute and will continue to inform community decision making so Cobargo can continue to do great things, leverage funding opportunities, and maintain momentum.



Main street of Cobargo.

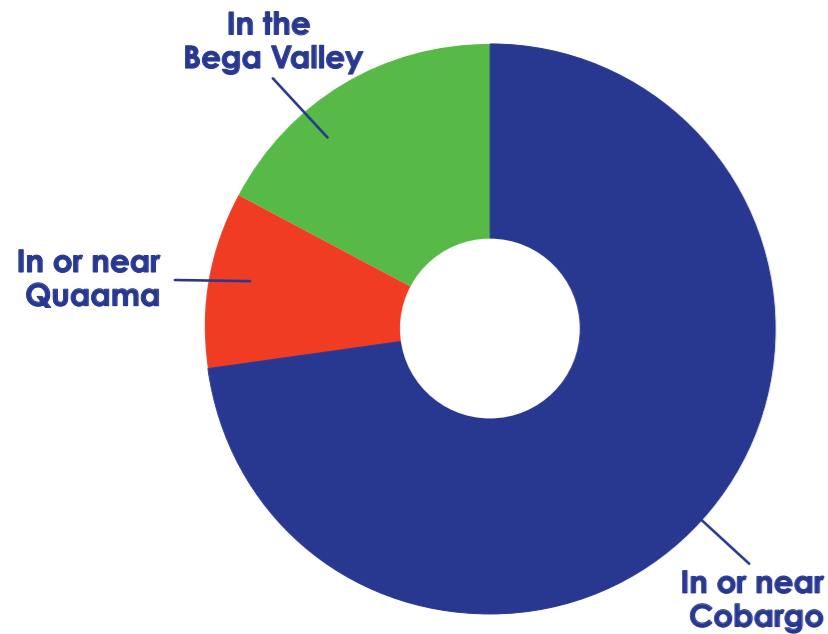
### 3. THE CASE FOR CHANGE - OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This Plan aims to discuss and draw a direct connection between our challenges and the opportunities we have to address them. Our consideration of challenges and opportunities has been informed by a stakeholder engagement survey, desktop needs analysis and discussions during our community drop-in session.

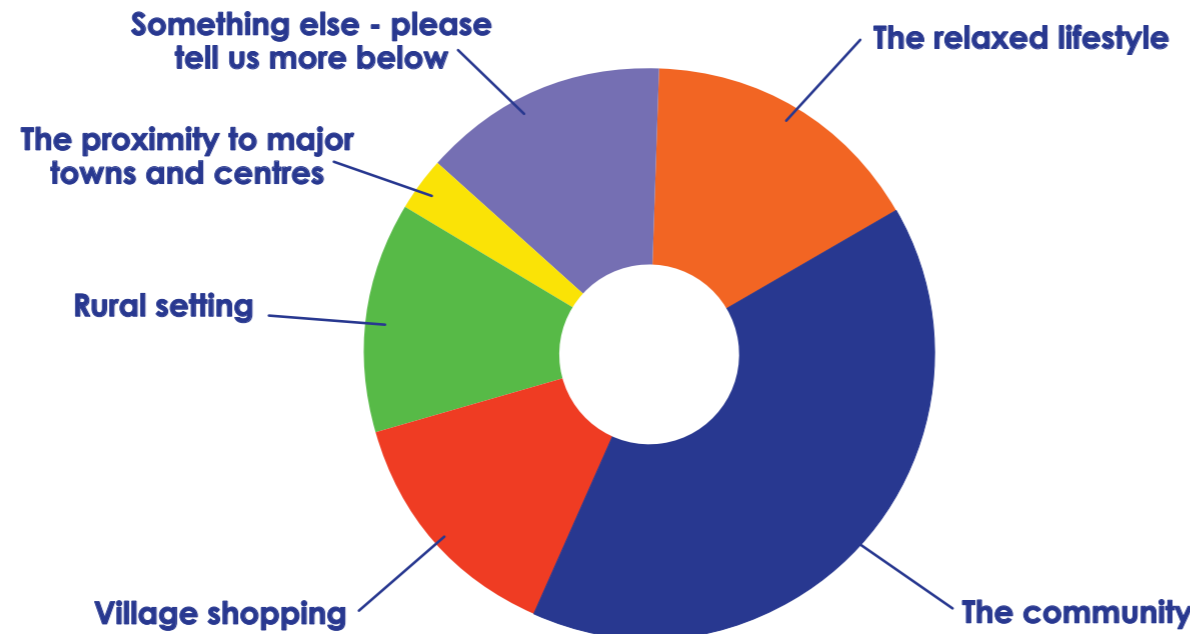
#### 3.1 Survey finding

30 people completed the survey which asked respondents to identify what they love about Cobargo, what are the towns perceived strengths, areas that could be improved and opportunities for future investment. Importantly the survey identified the respondent's top priorities that are important to them.

Q1: WHERE DO YOU LIVE (OR WORK) IN RELATION TO COBARGO AND QUAAMA?



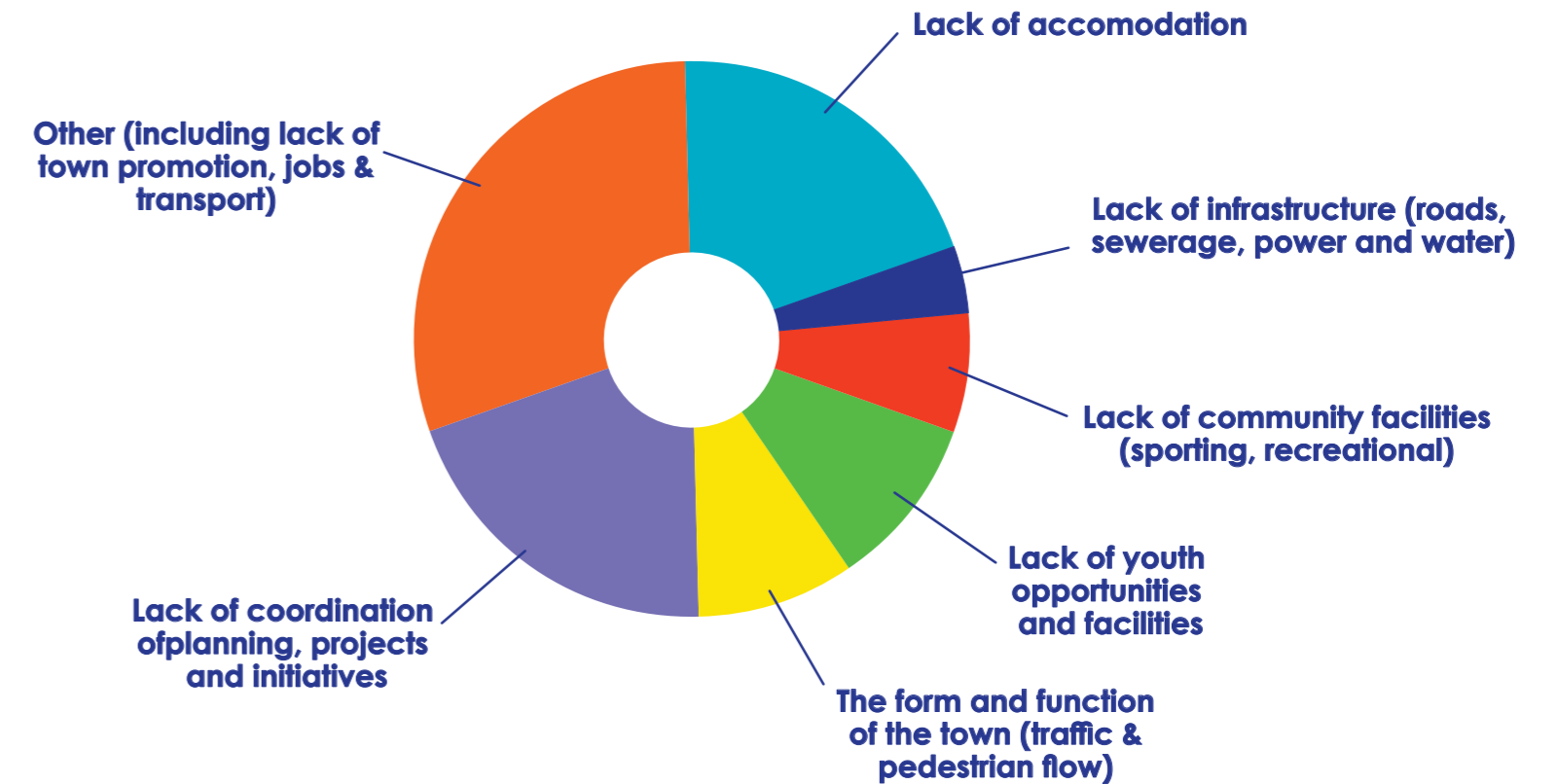
Q2: WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE COBARGO DISTRICT (INCLUDING QUAAMA)?



Q3: WHAT ARE OUR STRENGTHS AS A DISTRICT AND A COMMUNITY?

**town** beautiful people support **community** rural setting **diverse** relaxed

Q4: WHAT'S HOLDING THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY BACK?



Q5: WHAT ARE YOUR ASPIRATIONS FOR COBARGO & DISTRICT IN 20 YEARS?  
HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERNT FROM TODAY?

**Cobargo Village** *service flows* **tourist market** *businesses facilities*  
*locals* **food town people** *Thriving mix* **accomodation better**

Q6: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD FOCUS ON OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS?



Q7: IF YOU COULD HYPOTHETICALLY INVEST IN COBARGO TOWN CENTRE -  
WHAT WOULD BE YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES? SELECT YOUR TOP 3 OPTIONS BELOW.

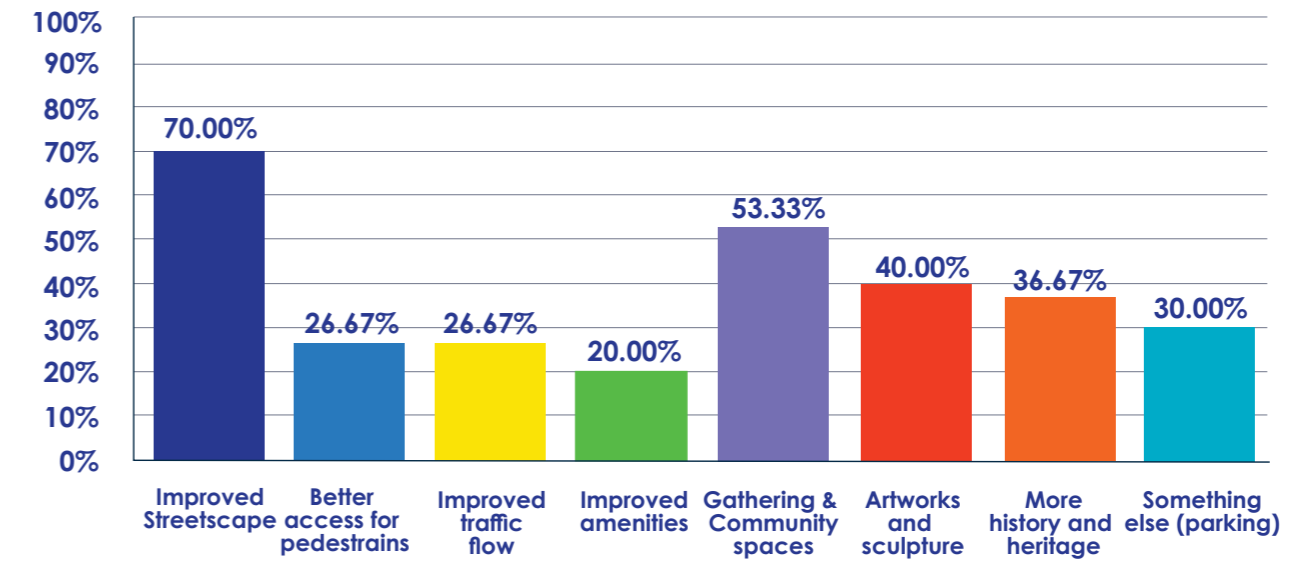
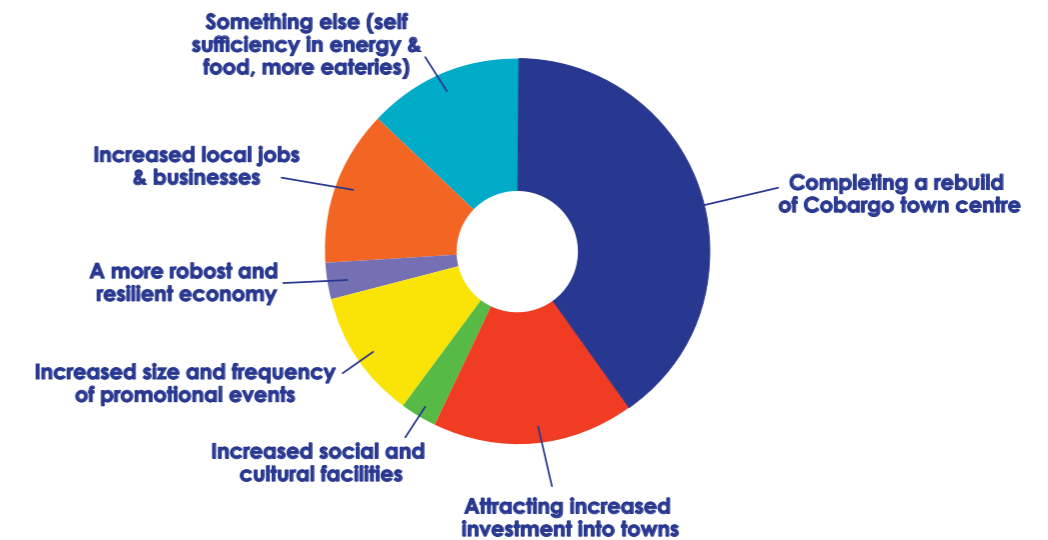


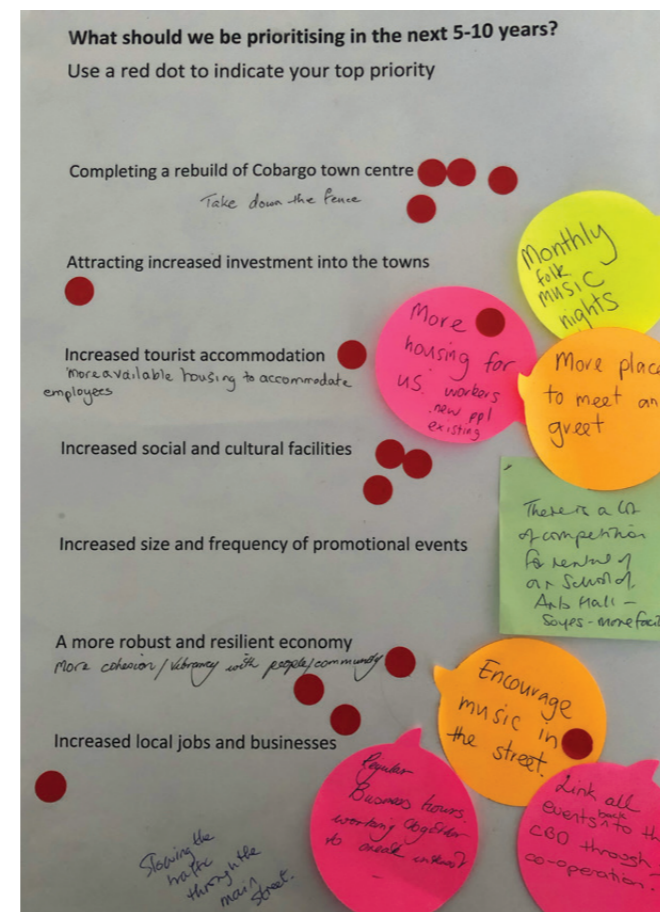
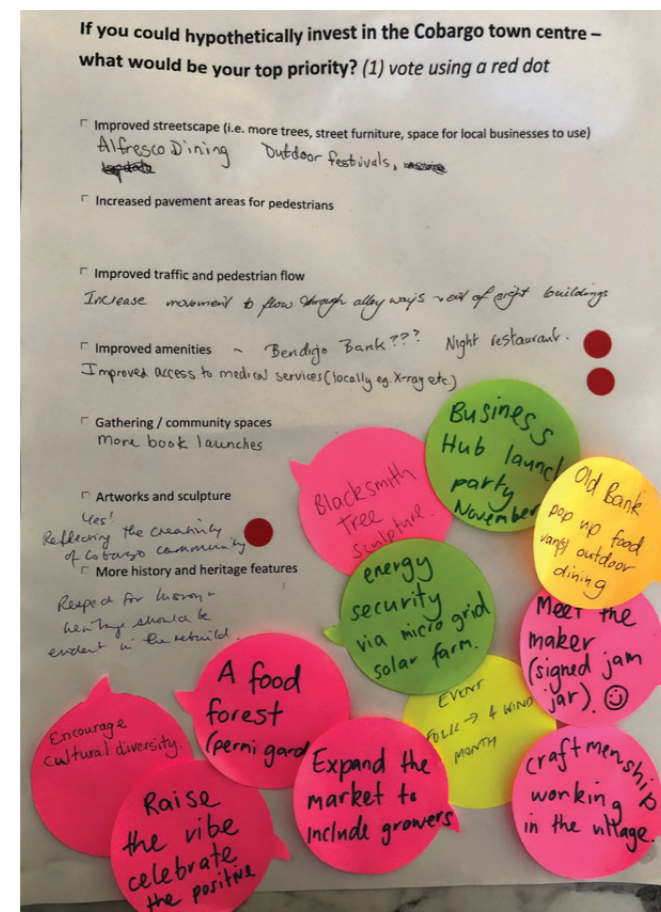
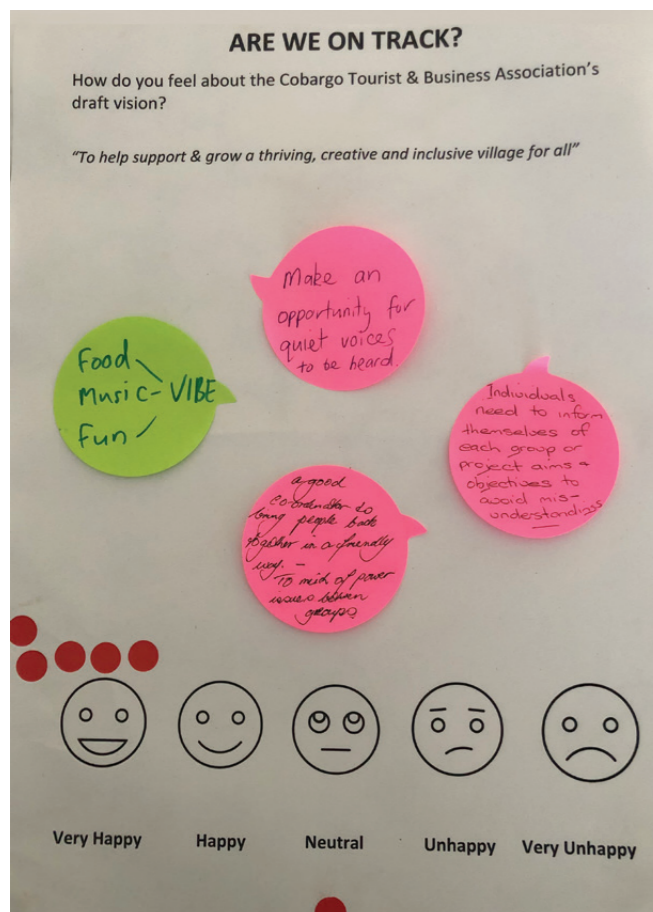
Figure: Top Priorities

Q7: WHAT SHOULD WE BE ACHIEVING IN 5-10 YEARS?



### 3.2 Community Drop In Results

The following are the recording sheets that show the responses received at the community drop-in day. It reveals that the majority of those that participated in the drop-in day felt happy about the Cobargo Tourist & Business Association's vision "to help support and grow a thriving, creative and inclusive village for all".



Results from Community Drop in

## 4. OUR PRIORITIES

"To help support & grow a thriving, creative and inclusive village for all"

COBARGO TOURIST & BUSINESS ASSOCIATION VISION STATEMENT

### 1. Our Vision for Cobargo – what does the future look like?

Our community drop-in day brought together our big ideas for Cobargo and surrounds for the next 10 years.

Through discussing the issues and opportunities we established a set of priorities that can guide the development of our key initiatives and actions (Figure 31). Collectively these priorities form a vision for Cobargo.

### 4.2 Strategic Alignment

These priorities help to support the delivery of the following Local, State and Federal strategies:

- ✓ 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- ✓ Regional Development Framework
- ✓ South East and Tablelands Regional Plan
- ✓ NSW State Infrastructure Strategy
- ✓ Far South Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy and Bushfire Addendum
- ✓ Regional Development Australia Far South Coast Transport Landscape and Connections Analysis
- ✓ NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan
- ✓ NSW Southern Regional Transport Plan
- ✓ South East and Tablelands Sport and Active Recreation Plan
- ✓ Canberra Region Joint Organisation Strategic Plan
- ✓ South Coast NSW Destination Management Plan
- ✓ NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy
- ✓ Bega Valley Shire Community Strategic Plan

## 5. HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE OUR VISION

The opportunity for the community to identify priorities for the town and surrounds to focus on for the next 10 years.



Valiant Coffee



Cobargo Historic Walk

Category	Projects/initiatives
Improved Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spaces for alfresco dining.</li> <li>• Increased pavement areas for pedestrians and improved pedestrian flow in main street.</li> <li>• Activation of alleyways to unseen shops and buildings.</li> <li>• Creation of bumping places for community to meet and gather.</li> <li>• More art installations that reflect the creativity of Cobargo.</li> <li>• Interpretative history and heritage features eg signage, use of QR codes.</li> </ul>
Diverse experiences and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved coordination of food offerings to reduce service gaps.</li> <li>• Pop-up food vendors in vacant spaces to create interest and diversity.</li> <li>• More celebration of our unique heritage, diversity, and creative talents.</li> <li>• Reducing seasonality through coordinating year-round experiences such as more book launches, monthly folk nights, pop up music in the street and expansion of the weekly markets.</li> <li>• Use the "Celebrate Cobargo" brand to apply for more event funding and supporting collateral eg reusable shopping bags.</li> </ul>
Improved coordination and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved coordination between businesses, community organisations and council through frequent open table discussions and joint events.</li> <li>• Work to create regular business hours for Cobargo</li> <li>• Collaborative marketing to increase cut through and amplify messages</li> <li>• Strengthen the brand for Cobargo eg Visit Cobargo website, social media and short videos. visibility of "Celebrate Cobargo" through</li> <li>• Shared training opportunities in areas such as governance training, digital skills development and opportunities to attract and train new volunteers.</li> </ul>
A thriving town for local and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing options for locals and workers</li> <li>• More accommodation for tourists</li> <li>• Improved access to facilities such as banking and medical services</li> <li>• Dedicated youth spaces and more youth events.</li> </ul>
Future focused self-sufficient village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support energy security through promoting community micro grid and solar farm opportunities.</li> <li>• Advocate for better public transport servicing Cobargo and connecting villages.</li> <li>• Investigate the expansion of weekly markets to include local growers.</li> </ul>
Strengthen Cobargo's creator network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen destination marketing around the creative talents that Cobargo is well known for.</li> <li>• Collaborate with regional and state tourism agencies to position Cobargo and the folk festival as the leading festival on the far south coast which opportunities for spin off events.</li> <li>• Formalise makers and creators' network and convert into a creators trail.</li> </ul>

## 6. OUR ACTION PLAN

We have taken on board the ideas shared through our strategic planning sessions, the community drop in and the engagement survey and created a high-level action plan aimed at focusing our support and partnership efforts to support our vision. The Actions are presented by Priority Area with projected timeframes. While the Association is not responsible for all these activities, we will provide targeted support (subject to resources) and collaborate with other groups to ensure our collective vision for the future can be realised.

Code for relevant timeframes are as follows: S - Short term means 1-2 years M - Medium term means 3-5 years L - Long term means 6-10 years O - Ongoing

Priority Area	Action	Time Frame (S/M/L)	Cobargo Tourist & Business Association's role
Improved Streetscape	Support alfresco dining and activation of alleyways to unseen shops and buildings.	S	Provide letters of support for applications for alfresco dining, activation of alleyways to unseen shops and buildings.
	Support art installations that reflect the creativity of Cobargo	S	Assist local artists, makers and creators with their applications to install sculptures and art installations that celebrate Cobargo.
	Interpretative history and heritage features eg signage, use of QR codes	M	Identify funding opportunities for cultural and heritage improvements. Liaise with historical groups and business owners regarding ways they can improve current signage and heritage feature.
	Creation of bumping places for community to meet and gather.	M	Continue to work with Council and other community groups to demonstrate the benefit of creating shared community spaces.
Diverse experiences and events	Coordinate availability of local food outlets to ensure tourists can get a meal. This may include requesting council leases include standard opening times.	S	Work with local business to help coordinate food offering and service times.
	Pop-up food vendors in vacant spaces to create interest and diversity.	S	Support suitable applications for temporary food vendors that offer diversity and vibrancy whilst the main street is being rebuilt
	Extend "Celebrate Cobargo" brand by producing supporting collateral eg reusable shopping bags.	S	Use appropriate funding streams to print and distribute bags.

Table 2. Action Plan



Priority Area	Action	Time Frame (S/M/L)	Cobargo Tourist & Business Association's role
	Reducing seasonality through coordinating year-round experiences such as more book launches, monthly folk nights, pop up music in the street and expansion of the weekly markets.	M	Invite community groups to discuss and coordinate regular events.
Improved coordination & capacity	Improved coordination between businesses, community organisations and council through frequent open table discussions and joint events.	S	Attend Cobargo Community Catch Ups or similar networking events. Invite guest speakers quarterly to CTBA meetings.
	Strengthen the brand for Cobargo eg website and social media presence, commission short videos and professional photos.	S	Pay a coordinator to improve current brand, web and social media presence for Cobargo.
	Undertake a skills and training needs assessment for members and key stakeholders that will help build capacity, attract, and retain new volunteers.	M	Identify shared training needs and pursue funding opportunities.
	Collaborative marketing campaign to increase cut through and amplify key events and key messages like "Celebrate Cobargo"	M	Work with Destination NSW, Destination Southern and regional tourism bodies to develop marketing campaigns that benefit Cobargo.
A thriving town for local and visitors	Affordable housing options for locals and workers	S	The Association to advocate and support the Bega Valley Affordable Housing Strategy
	Encourage applications for the development of more tourist accommodation	M	Where appropriate support applications for more tourist accommodation.
	Support investor interest in affordable housing development that is in keeping with Cobargo village atmosphere	M	Promote opportunities within member networks and seek out potential investors.
	Improved access to facilities such as banking, medical and community services	M	Support application for a dedicated Community Access Centre in Cobargo
	Dedicated youth spaces and more youth events	M	Partner with local and state government to develop projects and events for young people. Support existing community groups by co funding events like the Cobargo Triangle Youth Series.
Future focused self-sufficient village	Support energy security through promoting community micro grid and solar farm opportunities. Advocate for better public transport servicing Cobargo and connecting villages. Investigate the expansion of weekly markets to include local growers.	S	Promote and participate in the information session for community micro grid project to help improve energy security and reduce energy costs.

Priority Area	Action	Time Frame (S/M/L)	Cobargo Tourist & Business Association's role
	Advocate for better public transport servicing Cobargo and connecting villages.	M	Work with Council to advocate for better public transport. Explore opportunities for community transport to service Cobargo.
	Investigate the expansion of weekly markets to include local growers.	M	Coordinate discussions with existing growers in the Bega Valley.
Strengthen Cobargo's creator network	Strengthen destination marketing around the creative talents that Cobargo is well known for. Formalise makers and creators' network and convert into a creator's trail	S	Coordinate in cooperation with Sapphire Coast Tourism.
	Collaborate Cobargo Folk Festival organisers to position Cobargo and the folk festival as the leading festival on the far south coast which could also include opportunities for spin off events.	M	Collaborate with Cobargo Folk Festival and regional tourism organisations.
	Strengthen destination marketing and collaborate with regional and state tourism agencies to position Cobargo as creative hub of the south coast.	M	Coordinate in cooperation with Sapphire Coast Tourism



## 7. EVALUATION AND UPDATING THE PLAN

This plan is to be considered a living document to be reviewed annually and updated as projects are completed, and new opportunities emerge.



Benny's Butchers in the Main Street



Images from around Cobargo



Old R.S.L Memorial Hall

*Thank you*

TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE TOWARDS 2032: COBARGO 10 YEAR PLAN



Djiringanj and Thaua Country

Bega Valley Shire

Home of the Sapphire Coast

