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YASS VALLEY COUNCIL FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PRIORITIES

October 2022

Working Together for our Community

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1 Introduction

In April 2022 Council endorsed the *Yass Valley Council Federal and State Government Support Priorities (April 2022)*. The paper details the key projects in Yass Valley that Council is seeking to progress on behalf of its community.

These projects are beyond the resources and capabilities of a rural local government area and in some instances are the responsibility of higher levels of government to deliver. Partnerships and funding by Federal and State Governments with Council are essential for their delivery.

While the document details 32 key projects the 12 highest priorities for Council are:

1. Barton Highway Duplication Stages 2 & 3 including Murrumbateman Bypass (\$750M)
2. New Yass Hospital with full time medical staffing, maternity planning and infrastructure (10 year process) (\$300M)
3. Yass Water Treatment Plant Upgrade (% of \$30M cost) and Yass Water Distribution Network Pipe Replacement Program
4. A commitment to the retention of key government services in Yass such as Yass Centrelink and Medicare
5. Support for Local Government Climate Response (\$300M)
6. Murrumbateman Adventure Playground (\$750,000)
7. Yass Soldier's Memorial Hall renovation (\$1.2M urgent works, \$5M upgrade)
8. Crago Mill Precinct Development (\$30M)
9. Yass Soldiers Memorial Pool Renovation and Heated Pool (\$20M)
10. Yass Main Street Upgrade
11. Shingle Hill Way/Federal Highway Junction
12. Gundaroo Sutton Road Upgrade and Maintenance

Since the 2022 Federal Government election two priorities have been addressed i.e.

- Reduction in FBT for Electric Vehicles
- Funding for the Murrumbateman Adventure Playground

All the other priorities remain relevant for Yass Valley.

The advocacy paper has now been updated for the upcoming 2023 State Government Election.

2 General

2.1 Financing Local Government

A commitment to support the Australian Local Government Association position of repairing funding assistance to Local Government by restoring the quantum of Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenues.

2.2 Rate Pegging Review

Seeking commitment to a review of rate pegging and the Independent Pricing and Remuneration Tribunal mechanism for determining the rate peg to ensure Local Councils can continue to maintain pace with inflation impacts and provide the services demanded by the community.

2.3 Support for Local Environmental Work

Renewed commitment from the Federal Government to the Green Army, river restoration, and environmental protection and improvement funds.

2.4 Support for Local Government Climate Response

That a Local Government Climate Response Partnership Fund of \$200M over four years be established to enable planning and preparation to minimise the impact of climate change in local communities and for Councils to improve adaptation to climate change and reduce emissions.

2.5 Addressing NBN and Mobile Phone Blackspots

Continued commitment to funding improvements for NBN and mobile phone blackspots within the Yass Valley. Key examples being the current need to use Sky Muster for NBN on the eastern side of the Barton Highway in Murrumbateman and the Bookham and Wee Jasper mobile phone blackspots.

3 Community Infrastructure

3.1 New Yass Hospital

A commitment to commence the planning for the construction and operation of new hospital by 2030 to meet the needs of the Yass Valley and its growing population. The current Yass Hospital has been in continual decline for a number of years requiring the community to travel to Canberra or Goulbourn for simple support. The growing population of the Yass Valley requires urgent action to reverse the decline in services and a need to start planning for a new facility by 2030.

3.2 Crago Mill Precinct Development

Seeking funding support for the development of the Crago Mill Precinct, particularly \$5M for the new library. The Crago Mill Precinct Development seeks to redevelop the area around the heritage listed Crago Mill to provide a community space for the library, culture and heritage, a community plaza suitable for events and new Council Chambers and Offices. The precinct will be anchored off the Crago Mill which will be reused to provide community space for the arts as well a commercial space for the likes of a café. The town library, currently housed within the old super room of the Soldiers Memorial Hall will be relocated to a purpose built, larger space in a more visible location. A community plaza fronting the Crago Mill and Library will provide space for community events. The current amalgamation of old buildings, including an old petrol station and mechanics workshop which make up the Council Chambers and Offices will be demolished and replaced with a new facility.

3.3 Yass Soldiers Memorial Hall

Seeking commitment of \$1.2M for essential repairs to the Yass Soldiers Memorial Hall in 2022/23, the major priorities are new roof, electrical and fire safety, and the removal of asbestos. The Memorial Hall was constructed through volunteer labour and community contributions 99 years ago and will celebrate its centenary in 2023. The building needs significant work to fix a wide range of legacy issues stemming from its age.

3.4 Yass Soldiers Memorial Pool Renovation and Heated Pool

Seeking commitment to \$1.5M in 2023/24 for the renovation of the Yass Soldiers Memorial Pool. Further work will continue on plans for the construction of a heated pool for Yass which later funding commitments will be sought. The current Yass Pool has significant structural issues that require remediation in the near term. The community has also been seeking a heated pool for many years due to the shortened swimming season in Yass.

3.5 Yass Spur Line Active Transport Corridor

Seeking commitment to the investigation and design of the Yass Spur Line Active Transport Corridor of \$250,000 in 2022/23 with commitments in later years to the completion of the identified works. The Yass Spur Line links central Yass to Yass Junction station. The spur line has been closed since the 1980's and has had the tracks removed in many locations. The line runs down the centre of Dutton Street with lanes on each side making it a traffic hazard. The construction of an active transport corridor along the old spur line will link north and south Yass across the Yass River by a cycle and pedestrian route linking sports fields, parks and playgrounds, commercial areas, multiple schools, and new developments.

3.6 Yass Main Street Upgrades

Seeking commitment to funding to support the upgrade of the Yass Main Street to make it a more pedestrian friendly area in 2024/25. Council has recently prepared a draft Main Street Masterplan to provide the foundation of the upgrade of the Yass Main Street which was last updated after the Yass Bypass was constructed in the late 1990's. The street remains utilitarian with the focus on moving traffic as opposed to supporting the use of the area. Current community desire is for the street to be a more pedestrian friendly community space and with slower traffic.

3.7 Murrumbateman Winery Trail

Seeking commitment of \$1M to complete the pedestrian and cycle winery trail connecting several wineries in the Murrumbateman area. The current trail is mostly complete with two challenging sections close to the Barton Highway remaining. The trail assists in promoting tourism to Murrumbateman and the Canberra Wine Region as well as promoting active transport and recreation and the incomplete trail is already well used by locals and tourists alike.

3.8 Way Finding Signs for the Murrumbateman Wine Region

Seeking a commitment of \$200,000 to establish way finding signs for visitors to the Murrumbateman and Canberra Wine Regions. The growing popularity of the Murrumbateman and Canberra Wine Region has seen a significant increase in the number of domestic local and interstate visitors to the region. The dispersed nature of wineries on local roads requires a good sign network to ensure that tourists travel the appropriate routes to ensure road safety and a good visitor experience.

3.9 Implementation of the Victoria Park Masterplan

Seeking a commitment to support for the implementation of the Victoria Park Masterplan. Along with the upgrades to the pool, Council is seeking to create additional sporting fields and upgrade the amenity at Victoria Park. Council will seek funding through Crown Lands and other community infrastructure grants in the future for these works that support the community and act as the primary playground for the Yass High School.

3.10 Yass Valley Towns and Villages Entrance Signs

Seeking commitment of \$450,000 for new entry signs on the approaches to all towns and villages within the Yass Valley. The increased tourist transit to Yass Valley requires an update of the current signs within all towns and villages to set a common standard across the board and improve the recognition of the region as a single destination.

3.11 High School Planning

Seeking commitment to commence the planning for the construction and operation of a high school for Murrumbateman to meet the projected growth.

3.12 Government Services

Seeking commitment for the retention of government services in Yass (particularly Yass Centrelink and Medicare) to serve the Yass Valley community and the adjoining communities to the north east, north and north west of Yass.

4 Roads

4.1 State Roads

4.1.1 Barton Highway Duplication and Murrumbateman Bypass

Seeking commitment from Federal and State Governments for the continued funding of Stage 2 and 3 of the Barton Highway Duplication and Murrumbateman Bypass in an accelerated timeframe to see construction of both begin in the next three years. The continued growth of Yass and Murrumbateman and the increased demand on the Barton Highway from daily commuters to Canberra is placing increased demand on the network. This has recently been exacerbated by the construction of the Murrumbateman Primary School on the Highway at the northern entry to Murrumbateman.

4.1.2 Shingle Hill Way/Federal Highway Junction

Seeking commitment to the upgrade of the Shingle Hill Way/Federal Highway Junction in the next 5 years. The Shingle Hill Way junction with the Federal Highway has become a key intersection with numerous accidents. It is likely to see increased usage as a tourist route for commuters travelling from the Yass Valley to the South Coast and from Sydney to the world renowned Murrumbateman Wine Region.

4.2 Regional Roads

4.2.1 Gundaroo Sutton Road Upgrade and Maintenance

Seeking commitment of additional funding for the upgrading of the Gundaroo Sutton Road to support increased commuter traffic from Canberra to Gundaroo, Sutton and Gunning areas in 2022/23. This will include upgrades of key intersections with Mulligans Flat Road, Murrumbateman Road and Shingle Hill Way as well as shoulder widening and pavement upgrades. Additional Regional Road Repair funding to support the continued maintenance of the high use route is also required. Council has requested that this route be taken over by TfNSW as part of the Regional Roads Reclassification.

4.2.2 Sutton Bypass

Seeking commitment to \$500,000 funding of the assessment and development stage for the bypass of the town of Sutton in 2022/23. This includes the community consultation, the identification and selection of the bypass route, and the conduct of detailed design works for the route. This will be followed in later years with commitment of funding for the procurement of land and the construction of the chosen bypass. The current route through Sutton requires three 90-degree bends through the centre of town, past the school, and across a low-level culvert crossing which make it unsuitable as a tourist and freight route.

4.2.3 Wee Jasper Road Upgrade

Seeking urgent funding for the upgrade of the unsealed section of Wee Jasper Road from Wee Jasper to the border of Yass Valley Local Government Area to support timber harvesting due to commence in 2023 along the route.

4.3 Local Roads

4.3.1 Back Creek Road and Crossing Upgrades

Seeking commitment to the second stage of the Back Creek Road, Gundaroo sealing and the construction of a new higher bridge to provide all weather access to Back Creek and Yass River areas in 2023/24 Financial year. Stage 1 of the Back Creek Road upgrade will seal half of Back Creek Road which is an important link from the Back Creek and Yass River areas to enable commuters and farmers to access the Gundaroo Sutton Road and Federal and Hume Highways. The current Back Creek Crossing floods easily and the communities are easily flooded in.

4.3.2 Tallagandra Lane Upgrade

Seeking commitment to the sealing and upgrading of 5km of low-level flood prone areas of Tallagandra Lane, Sutton to improve all weather access for commuters and heavy vehicles to Canberra in 2024/25. The Tallagandra Lane area has attracted many commuters to Canberra and civil contractors and the road and connecting roads have suffered because of the increased heavy vehicle traffic.

4.3.3 Mulligans Flat Road Upgrade

Seeking commitment to upgrading Mulligans Flat Road, Sutton including shoulder widening, safety improvements and pavement improvements in 2024/25. The recent sealing of Mulligans Flat Road has resulted in the road becoming a main exit route linking commuters from Canberra to Sutton, Gundaroo and Gunning via the Gundaroo Sutton Road. Council has asked that Mulligans Flat Road be classified as a Regional Road and taken over by TfNSW as part of the Regional Roads Reclassification.

4.3.4 Timber Harvesting Routes Maintenance and Upgrades

Seeking urgent commitment to additional funding to support the upgrading of a number of unsealed local roads in the Wee Jasper area to support the harvesting of timber from the area. Timber harvesting is causing significant damage to the unsealed local road network and, unlike other intense heavy vehicle usage like quarries and filling, makes no contribution to the upgrade or maintenance of the roads.

4.3.5 McIntosh Circuit/South Street Upgrade

Seeking commitment to funding the upgrading of McIntosh Circuit/South Street, Murrumbateman in 2024/25 as this will likely become a main access to Murrumbateman as development moves more to the south and west and the Barton Highway Duplication/Murrumbateman Bypass is constructed. This upgrade will coincide with the completion of a number of new developments which will all exit Murrumbateman to the Barton Highway via McIntosh Circuit and South Street.

5 Water

5.1 Yass Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

Seeking commitment of funding toward the Stage 2 and 3 upgrades of the \$30M Yass Water Treatment Plant to rectify water quality problems of taste, odour and hardness. The upgrade of the Yass Water Treatment Plant has begun with a commitment of \$2.5M for initial works to improve the consistency of supply from the Yass Dam to the Water Treatment Plant along with upgrades to the control and chemical dosing systems. The recent peer review of the options for upgrading or replacing the current 1990 era plant indicated that additional works would be needed to ensure quality of water supplied to the rapidly growing communities relying on the supply.

5.2 Water Distribution Network Pipe Replacement Program

Seeking contribution of \$2M to initiate a program to redress structural issues and replace water distribution pipes that have become coated with manganese deposits due to prolonged exposure to high exposure. The current water distribution network has gradually expanded over the last 100 years and is no longer fit for purpose as it currently has houses serviced off trunk mains that are used to connect reservoirs making maintenance difficult. The ageing pipes also require replacement or cleaning to remove manganese deposits that have built up in them over many years resulting in discoloured, smelly and unpalatable water when high flows or changes in water chemistry dislodge the built up deposits.

5.3 Yass Flood Early Warning System

Seeking \$100,000 for the development and design of the Yass Flood Early warning system with a follow up commitment to funding the installation of the system within the next 5 years. The *Yass Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan 2021* identifies the requirement for the investigation and design of an integrated flood warning system for the Yass Valley which would include the installation of a network of pluviographic rain gauges, along with a series of telemetered stream gauges. An automated alarm and public announcement system should be linked to the telemetered stream gauges warning residents and business owners that a key trigger level(s) has been reached and to monitor and take action where required.