

# **Trafalgar Strategic Plan**

**2004/05 to 2006/07**

**December 2003**

**Prepared for the Trafalgar community by the Trafalgar Community Development Association, the Trafalgar community and Glenlyon Rural Education & Employment Services.**

**This document should be read in conjunction with the Trafalgar Action Plan 2004/05 to 2006/07**



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## 1. FOREWORD

### Not having to say “sorry” to our grandchildren

The development of a plan that will clearly articulate Trafalgar’s future has been a high priority of the Trafalgar Community Development Association (TCDA) for some time. This document is a significant achievement in providing future direction for Trafalgar.

The TCDA saw the involvement of the Trafalgar community as essential to the planning process so that its needs and requirements were met. More than 70 people from the Trafalgar community were involved, together with representatives from the Baw Baw Shire. It has, in my opinion, been an excellent example of how a community can work constructively, and in partnership, with local government.

It is fair to say that some people have put in an inordinate amount of work, and whilst it is unfair of me to single anyone out in particular, my appreciation goes to the members of the Strategic Planning Group, which was set up to oversee this process. This group consisted of a wide range of people from within the community and the Shire. Syd Deam and Mieke Hammond from the Baw Baw Shire were significant contributors throughout the process, and as the Shire’s Strategic Planner, I suspect that Syd’s involvement will continue.

Whilst there has been, as I have said, much work to bring this strategic plan together, it is fair to say that the hard work is yet to commence. It is important that the community take responsibility for its own future. Consequently, many of the identified actions require commitment from the community. It is too easy to say that the shire or State Government should take the lead. Clearly, governments will assist if a community can take the lead and present to them, a clear and coherent picture of the direction it wishes to proceed.

Delivering a plan such as this will not be easy, however, with the support of the Baw Baw Shire, the Trafalgar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the town’s various community, service and sporting clubs, and the Trafalgar community, the TCDA is confident that the strategic goals and actions will be achieved.



Mick Bourke  
President  
Trafalgar Community Development Association

December 2003

## 2. BACKGROUND

A group of people representing various organisations in Trafalgar met with representatives of Baw Baw Shire on 19 June, 2002 to commence developing a strategic plan for Trafalgar's future.

The main objective of the meeting, organised by the TCDA, was to brief those present on the current situation regarding Trafalgar and determine how the community could progress to enable the development of strategic planning in the town.

Baw Baw Shire representatives said that this was the first meeting of its type in the Shire, and outlined the current status of strategic planning in Trafalgar, highlighting current capacity for housing growth.

### **What does strategic mean?**

It means taking the "bird's-eye" view of how Trafalgar should look in three years and beyond, and having an overall plan for Trafalgar regarding such things as sporting and recreation needs, the requirements of its youth and elderly, its businesses and future development.

A structural approach to long-term planning is needed.

### **Growth Management Strategy**

The Trafalgar strategic plan will also ensure that there is mature debate and constructive input into the Baw Baw Shire's Growth Management Strategy. The latter strategy will look at, amongst other things:

- managing growth of towns in Baw Baw Shire;
- supply and demand analysis of towns within the shire;
- improve the viability of Trafalgar;
- sustainable management to allow growth in a manageable way;
- re-examine current zonings against Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) information and projected demand and development.

The 19 June meeting voiced its approval at the impressive youth input to the various projects and saw the need to ensure that the youth maintained their enthusiasm.

Trafalgar is one of the few communities that involves its youth in general town meetings rather than 'special meetings' of the youth alone.

Those present at the 19 June meeting decided to form as a Strategic Planning Group, which will assist the TCDA and Baw Baw Shire in developing a plan to put to the community to ensure Trafalgar's future growth is properly planned and managed.

The meeting heard that town planning should be focusing on a solid plan, forming a unified voice that links people to the town's infrastructure needs. "Working together to create a better synergy for the town."

## **Focus Groups**

The meeting decided that town focus group meetings involving Trafalgar's residents should be held in the coming months to develop this strategy for the town.

Four focus groups were subsequently planned, looking at four separate topics identified by the Trafalgar community as part of the 2001 *Partners in Community Building Program*. These topics were: Recreational Development, Economic Development, Community Development and Land Use Management.

Independent consultants were employed to facilitate each of the focus groups. The first two were selected based on their expertise of the particular topic (recreation and economic development), with the last two topics facilitated by a consultant experienced in facilitation.

Approximately 20 people attended each focus group, with a total of 57 people involved in the focus group process. The attendance at the final community meeting that agreed to the draft strategic and action plans brought the number of people who contributed to the process to 70.

## **Development of the plan**

The TCDA and Baw Baw Shire then contracted Glenlyon Rural Education and Employment Services to analyse the feedback from the focus groups and to produce a draft Strategic Plan and Action Plan.

The remainder of the Strategic Planning Group, representing the TCDA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Trafalgar Youth Resource Centre and Baw Baw Shire then evaluated the documentation content, reducing the number of goals from eight to six, and the number of strategic actions from 62 to 24.

The draft Strategic Plan and Strategic Action Plan was put to the Trafalgar community at a public meeting on 10 November. The plans were then put on public display for a 14-day period to enable further comment.

Responses were received from community groups and community members. This feedback, together with the results of the Communication survey, were used to refine the draft Strategic Plan and Strategic Action Plan (increasing the number of actions to 27) to produce this final document.

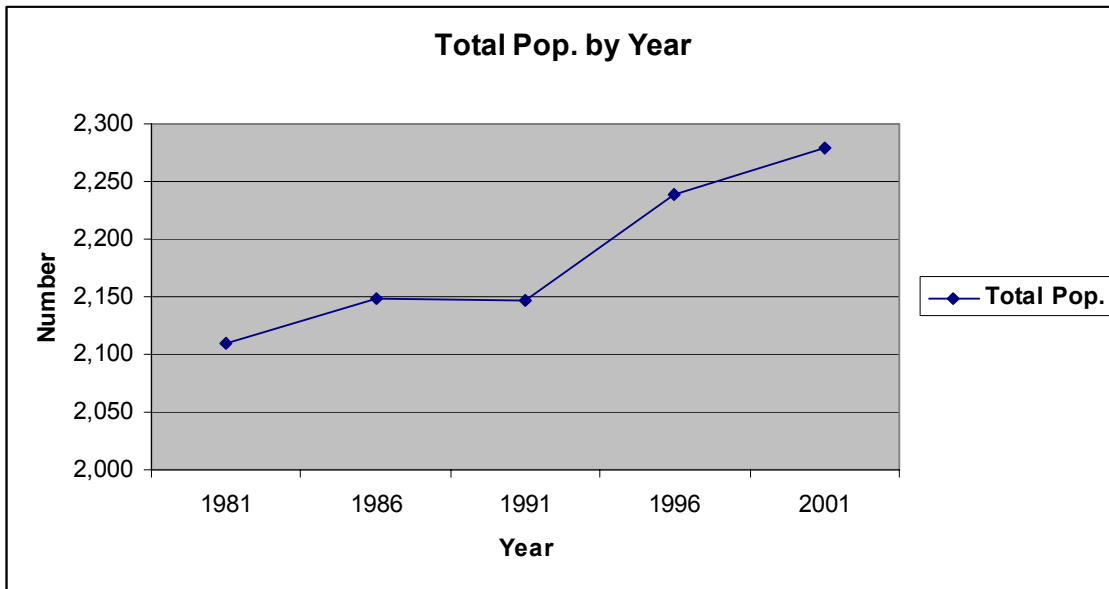
The final Strategic Plan and Strategic Action Plan was approved by the TCDA in December 2003 and will be forwarded to the Baw Baw Shire Council in early 2004. This Plan will form the basis of action at the local community level for the next three years.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

Trafalgar is located 120 kilometres east of Melbourne on the Princes Highway. The town is nestled at the foot of the Strzelecki Ranges and was established in the 1870's with the construction of the railway line.

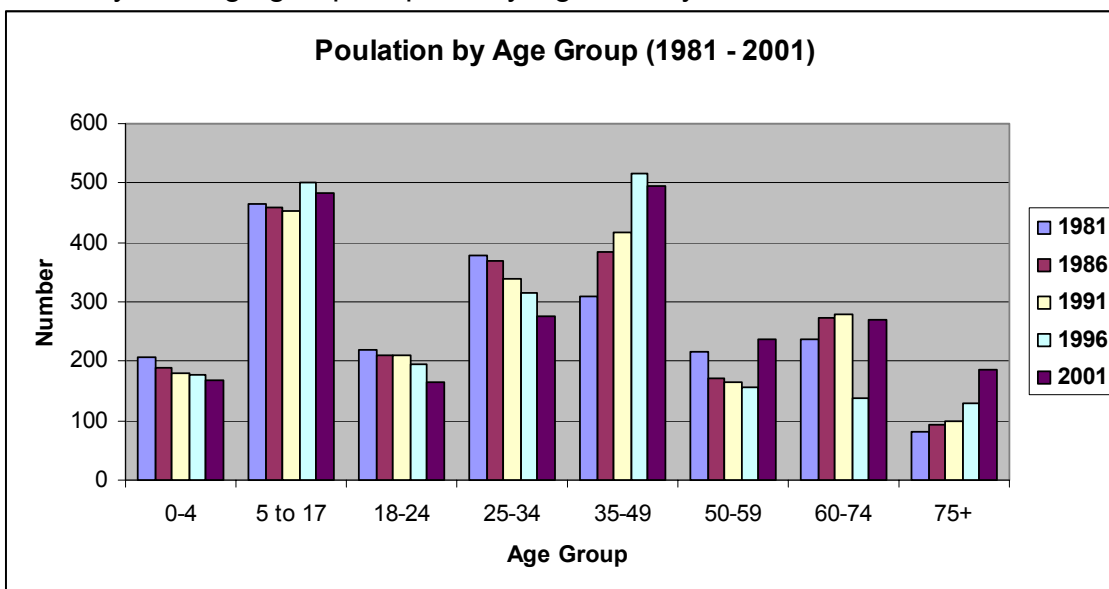
#### Population data

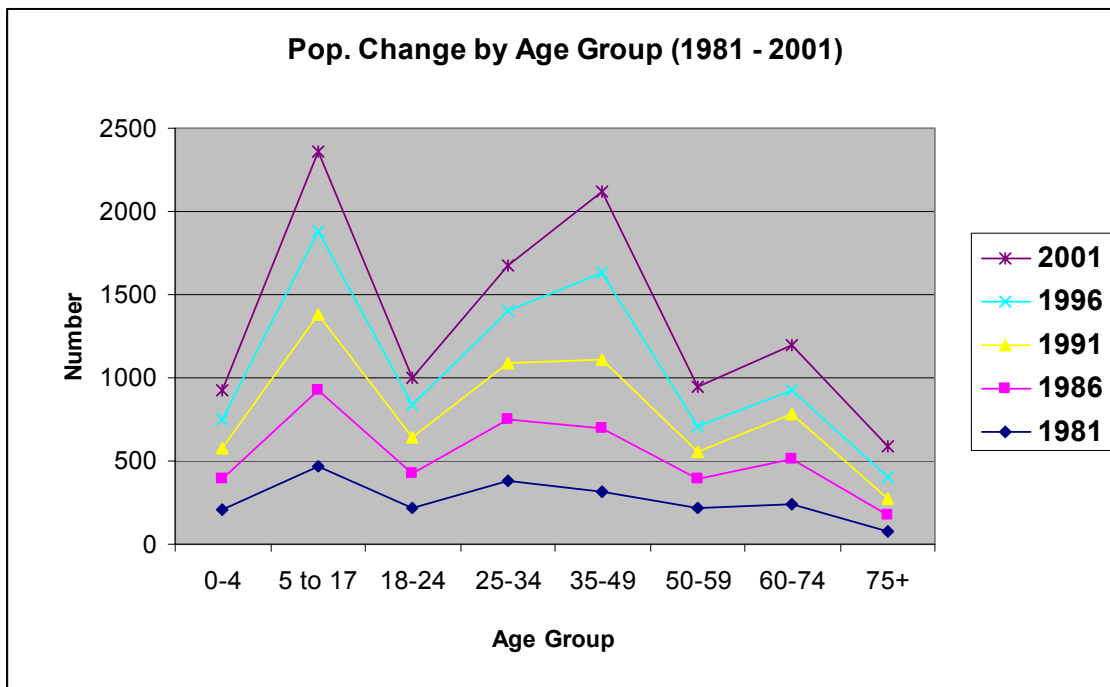
The population of Trafalgar is 2,279 (2001 ABS Census). There has been a small growth in population of approximately 8% since 1981.



In the last 10 years the main growth has been in the older age groups 50+ and in that time increases in the 35-49 age group has been moderate. Over 60 % of households consisted of 1 or 2 people only.

As with most rural communities across Australia the number of young people in the 18 – 24 years' age group drops away significantly.





**Employment and Industry**

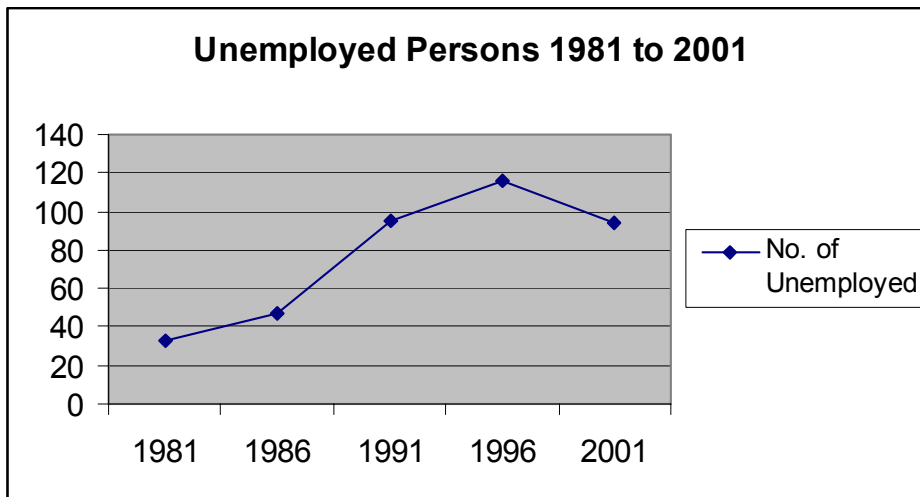
The main industries providing employment for Trafalgar residents are retail (23.6%), construction (12.0%), education (11.1%), and health and community services (11.0%). In the last 10 years the industries employing more people are Health & Community Services (6.2% in 1991 to 11.0% in 2001), Wholesale & Retail trade (18.2% to 23.6%), Construction (6.9% to 12.0%) and Transport and Storage (1.8% to 4.8%). Interestingly, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing increased in 2001 (5.1%) which is up over the levels of employment opportunities provided by this sector in the 1980's.

Since 1996 there has been a significant decline in the number of people employed in manufacturing (from 13.1% in 1996 to 7.4%) and finance and insurance industries (from 11.5% to 9.3%). Since the late 1980's the drop in people employed in the water, gas and electricity supplies has been significant, down from 23.6% in 1986 to 7.4% in 2001.

The unemployed rate had a significant jump between 1986 and 1991, and has remained reasonably constant during the past decade while the participation rate is 58.4%. The participation rate being the proportion of the total number of persons 15 years or older that are either working or seeking work.

**Labour Force**

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
<b>Employed</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>924</b>
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>94</b>
	<b>(3.6%)</b>	<b>(4.8%)</b>	<b>(9.7%)</b>	<b>(11.3%)</b>	<b>(9.2%)</b>



### **Economic data**

Household incomes for residents of Trafalgar have remained reasonably constant over the past 10 years. There has been an increase in the percentage in the lowest income group and slight decreases in the percentages in the higher income group.

The rate of home ownership remains relatively high with nearly 48% fully owned and 28.1% being purchased.

### **Transport**

Trafalgar is located on the main railway line between Melbourne and Bairnsdale. This rail network provides access to a regular service to the larger centres to the west - Warragul, Drouin and Melbourne, and east - Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.

### **Education**

There are three schools within Trafalgar: Trafalgar Primary School (333 students), St Josephs Primary School (99) and Trafalgar High School (541 students).

#### **4. VISION**

To make Trafalgar the best place to live.

#### **5. MISSION STATEMENT**

We will actively participate in community life to enhance the social, environmental and economic viability of our town.

#### **6. VALUES**

Within the scope of this project the development of Trafalgar should be based on the following values:

- Residents of Trafalgar feel safe.
- The community value and support families.
- The community embraces people of all ages.
- People have pride in their community.
- People feel, and are, included.
- The community supports local people, businesses and organisations.
- People live together harmoniously.
- The community appreciate and value the environment.

## 7. OUTCOMES

### **OUTCOME 1: Community involvement is an integral part of the Trafalgar community.**

**GOAL 1:** To promote increased interaction between all ages and groups within the Trafalgar community to build strong social networks (community building).

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Trafalgar offers a familiar, comfortable, connection with people. It has a “small town niceness” about it, which is demonstrated through respect and links between generations. There is a need to make new community members feel welcome and to help find ways in which they can become involved in the community.

Trafalgar is seen as a “dormitory” (commuter) town by many people, that is, people live in the town and travel each day to their place of work and then return home in the evening. It, in fact, has many people living and working in the town together with many retired people who live in town. Housing prices have increased dramatically in recent years but are generally cheaper than areas to its west. In the main, houses are well kept, reflecting general pride in home ownership.

Over recent years there has been a slight increase in the number of people living in the area and a change in the people choosing to live in Trafalgar. There is a precarious balance between increased population and decreased population, and the consequences of either. This has a significant impact on planning and development within the area.

There is an urgent need to attract more people of different ages into community involvement, in particular the younger age groups 30 – 40 years. There is a perception that the older groups (50+) are the ones involved in the local groups. More people bring a greater range of ideas, interests and skills which can assist the town as it plans, and develops, for the future.

The community is generally tight-knit and has good local spirit. There has been some change within the town over recent years. Many people accept that there is a need for further change and see the work of the Trafalgar Community Development Association (TCDA) as a good start as long as some action is undertaken. The community newspaper, Traf News, is a good means of communication that has been established in the community.

Trafalgar is fully self-contained with shops, doctors, railway access, aged accommodation, schools, sports facilities, etc. Education provision, with two local primary schools and a secondary college, is highly regarded by outside communities as well as locals.

Trafalgar is one of three towns in West Gippsland situated on the Princes Highway. There has been an increase in the traffic travelling through the town. The highway and the rail line running parallel to the highway dissect the town creating a number of

access and safety problems. There is some feeling in the town that more could be made of the opportunities presented by the passing traffic.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To increase voluntary involvement/participation.
2. To build links between community groups.
3. To welcome new residents into our community.
4. To increase the social connectedness within the town.
5. To develop a 'family friendly' environment.

**OUTCOME 2: Trafalgar's young people are engaged in community activities.****GOAL 2: To increase the range of opportunities available to young people.****BACKGROUND:**

The numbers of young people (less than 24 years) living in Trafalgar has decreased slightly over the past 10 years of which the main decrease has been in the number of 18 – 24 year olds. There is a nation-wide trend for young people in this age bracket to leave rural areas in search of employment and or higher education and training opportunities.

Education is well provided for in Trafalgar with two local primary schools and a secondary college. These schools are generally well regarded by local people and those from outside the community.

The town offers a broad range of structured sporting activities for young people and a number of clubs and organisations which cater for young people. There is also a growing number of unstructured activities and opportunities available within the community, including skatepark, BMX, trail bike riding, fishing, etc.

Transport access presents a challenge for young people involved in both structured and unstructured activities. Young people perceive the train network is of limited value in assisting their participation in these activities.

There is a strong need for more alternative activities, particularly for those not attracted to structured sport. Like many communities there is an emphasis among some young people on 'parties' where excessive alcohol and drugs are available. Young people need more information on positive alternatives and effective support networks to enable them to address these issues themselves.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To employ a youth worker to support young people in Trafalgar.
2. To support the development of alternative activities.
3. To promote strong peer support networks.
4. To promote healthy lifestyles among young people.
5. To involve youth in the development and management of local activities.

**OUTCOME 3: Trafalgar residents feel safe in their community.****GOAL 3: To make Trafalgar a safer community in which to live.****BACKGROUND:**

Community safety is seen as an issue for sections of the Trafalgar community. Notwithstanding this, many people chose to live in Trafalgar because it offers the advantages of a small rural community (tight knit, close, supportive, etc) with the opportunity to access larger urban areas for employment and other services. For the many older people living in the area, feeling safe and the quieter rural lifestyle are very important.

The highway through the town is a major challenge to commuter and pedestrian safety which needs to be effectively managed. There are some good programs and systems in place to help ensure community safety, for example, the “lollypop people”, manned police station, traffic lights, etc.

However, as the town population grows and more new people move into the area it is important they feel part of the community and embrace the importance of community safety.

There are particular safety challenges for a number of groups within the Trafalgar community. Those groups include: aged citizens, young people, those on farms and in industry, those engaged in travel in and around Trafalgar, and local community members travelling to and from work regularly. It is important that the Trafalgar community examine these issues and take whatever steps are possible to minimise the risks to individual and community safety. An important feature of rural living is the way that people ‘look out for’ and assist each other.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To promote safer movement of people around the town.
2. To promote greater safety on local farms/industry.
3. To reduce the dangers associated with the highway.
4. To reduce the incidence of crime and vandalism in the community.
5. To promote safer living for all ages.

## **OUTCOME 4: Trafalgar has a vibrant business community.**

**GOAL 4: To create a more vibrant local economy that caters for local needs and draws on the passing economy.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Trafalgar is a small rural town with a population of 2,279 and these numbers have remained relatively stable for the past 20 years. There are proposals for new developments comprising approximately 400 blocks, which has the potential to significantly increase the population in the town. The town has a great deal of appeal to families as it offers a full range of educational opportunities - primary through secondary education.

The business area of the town offers a good range of retail and other stores, which are considered adequate for the town's size. The retail area is supported by people living in Trafalgar, people living in the surrounding district, and passing traffic on the Princes Highway.

Trafalgar's proximity to larger population centres (Warragul, Moe, Morwell) has advantages and disadvantages. This location offers a broad range of employment options to people; it also means that people can live in Trafalgar and still access major services such as hospitals, medical centres, community service organisations and entertainment.

The disadvantages are that people working in larger centres may shop in these locations, and establish social and recreational networks outside the town. It is important that local people support local businesses and traders, and it is important that local businesses and traders cater for and support the local community.

The good access to transport (cars and train) provides the opportunity for Trafalgar to continue to develop both as a "dormitory" town and one where people may either live and work, or retire, in. This implies that, notwithstanding that some people work in other different areas, the residents' main community is where they live. This generally requires some understanding and tolerance in the way community groups and organisations are run and in how business is conducted.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To improve the image of the commercial centre.
2. To capture more of the passing traffic trade.
3. To support local businesses and service providers.
4. To undertake a co-ordinated and planned approach to development.
5. To develop a tourism focus for the town.
6. To improve promotions of the town.

## **OUTCOME 5: Trafalgar’s sport and recreational facilities meet the needs of its community.**

**GOAL 5: To improve access to, and the standard of, sport and recreation facilities.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Sport and active recreation plays an important role in Trafalgar by building and strengthening the local community. Apart from the individual physical and mental health benefits that can be gained from regular participation in physical activity, the social interaction provided through sport and recreation provides opportunities for the development of social networks for all ages. In active environments, individuals can establish friendships, undertake voluntary activity, build self-esteem, develop shared values, improve social skills, and plan and advocate for their community.

Trafalgar has a number of sport and recreation clubs and organisations which provide a range of facilities to its community members and visitors alike to pursue their interests. The facilities include an oval for Australian football and cricket, tennis and netball courts, golf club, equestrian centre, bowls clubs, and a swimming pool. There are limited facilities for soccer. Tae Kwon Do, boxing and Tai Chi classes are also conducted in Trafalgar.

The Public Hall and the local swimming pool are valuable community assets that play an important role in providing for the local community and encouraging community interaction across age levels. There is a recreation centre located at the high school which is used by the broader community for sports such as basketball and volleyball.

The facilities are located across the town, which can work against people accessing them. Walking tracks would improve access to these facilities and encourage participation in physical activity. There are a number of parks and walking tracks which provide for recreation pursuits, however, they are not networked.

The reality is that people living in Trafalgar are going to access both local sport and recreation opportunities and those available in the larger centres. This is to be expected, and often why they chose to live in an area like Trafalgar is because it offers them the choice between formal and informal recreation, and the choice between being part of the smaller local community and being part of a larger club or community.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To gain better understanding of people’s sporting and recreation interests and needs.
2. To plan for sport and recreation facilities.
3. To improve existing public facilities.
4. To increase awareness of and participation in arts’ programs.

## **OUTCOME 6: Trafalgar has a plan detailing its future land use requirements.**

**GOAL 6: To plan for Trafalgar’s future land use needs.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Whilst Trafalgar is the third largest town in the Baw Baw Shire, it is, in reality, a small town. The highway, and the railway line that runs parallel to the highway, divide the township. The highway is regarded by many as both a constraint and an advantage.

The floodplains to the north and the landslips and the Strzelecki Ranges to the south limit development potential for the township in these areas. There is flat ground to the east and west of the town that offer more opportunities for development.

Within Trafalgar there is a limited number of vacant sites, and in recent years, development has tended to occur in specific areas such as Seven Mile Road and the southern areas of the town. Development, with the Ferguson Estate, has recently occurred in the central section of the town. In the past year or so there has been greater demand for properties in the area and this has resulted in a significant increase in land and house prices. This trend seems consistent with the experience of other similar rural townships located close to regional centres and with regular public transport services to Melbourne.

Despite the 2001 Census which indicates that there is growth in the west of the shire and a decline in the east of the Shire, Trafalgar is currently experiencing growth, with a large residential development recently approved by the Baw Baw Shire, and retail businesses occupying all shops in the town’s central business district. Trafalgar is, therefore, considered to be in a good situation, but must be supported and promoted. The residential development plan has the potential of increasing the town’s population by up to 50%. This will have a significant impact on the town’s infrastructure, including the business sector, various services such as health and the aged, education, etc.

In addition to the Baw Baw Shire’s Growth Management Strategy (see *Background* above), the Shire and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment have commenced work on the Rural Living Study. This study will address the following:

- The protection of agricultural productivity and soils through better planning and zoning;
- Reviewing the rural zone;
- The spread of housing development, which is seen as a big problem in the Baw Baw Shire;
- Protection of agriculture base;
- Management of urban development.

It is important that there is a plan for Trafalgar, having regard to the current, and other future development plans, while at the same time clearly acknowledging the directions and aspirations of its residents.

The preparation of a “Directions Statement” will guide the development of a long-term Strategic Development Plan. The Directions Statement would contain a clear set of actions that local residents could undertake to contribute.

In developing a Directions Statement, the following tasks are considered necessary:

### **Stage 1 – Analysis and Identification**

- Review of the information provided for the three-year 2004/05 to 2006/07 Strategic Plan and Action Plan.
- Review of Planning Scheme and relevant policies.
- Review any statistical or other information the Baw Baw Shire Council may currently hold with respect to the town and its development.
- Where possible, identify the issues affecting future residential, commercial, industrial and recreational land use development in Trafalgar.

### **Stage 2 - Assessment**

- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the township.
- Assess the need for further community consultation and if so the form that the consultation should take.

### **Stage 3 - Outcomes**

- Completion of a report that details an appropriate process for the development of a strategic plan. The report will highlight issues identified during the assessment process and where possible make some preliminary recommendations regarding land use development and planning policy.
- Provide recommendations for further planning investigation and planning scheme amendments to encourage positive township growth and curtail negative aspects of township growth.
- Provide recommendations for key achievable outcomes in the immediate future.

This, together with the Baw Baw Shire's Rural Living Study and the Growth Management Strategy, will help ensure the management of growth, the viability of the township and develop an understanding of the changing needs of the community.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

1. To prepare a long-term plan that accommodates Trafalgar's future demand.