Shepparton & Mooroorpna 2050
Regional City Growth Plan
Key Issues and Opportunities Report
Community Engagement Summary Report
June 2019
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) considers the input and opinions of Victorian communities as integral to achieving our vision of planning great places. As such we are committed to undertaking robust and comprehensive engagement with community and other stakeholders.

This community engagement report summarises the feedback received during the engagement process on the Key Issues and Opportunities report for the Shepparton and Mooroopna area. This report forms part of a larger planning process that will ultimately deliver the Shepparton & Mooroopna 2050: Regional City Growth Plan (Growth Plan). Best efforts have been made to accurately reference feedback from all contributors.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The VPA is working with Greater Shepparton City Council (council) to prepare the Growth Plan to provide a vision and guide the sustainable development of Shepparton and Mooroopna to the year 2050. The Growth Plan will be a high-level document that identifies the region’s strengths, addresses key challenges and sets a vision to guide growth and development to 2050.

The Growth Plan will be used to coordinate, guide and inform the preparation and consideration of future, more detailed, local plans and planning processes. Pre-planning and project scoping occurred throughout 2018 and included the procurement of several technical services to provide background reports on the area. This information has been gathered and summarised into the Key Issues and Opportunities report.

1.3 PREVIOUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Early community engagement on the Shepparton and Mooroopna planning process occurred throughout 2018 as a part of the project scoping phase. The VPA and council have engaged in targeted conversations with key stakeholders and young people from the Shepparton-Mooroopna area.

The VPA and council engaged with government agencies and authorities through a key issues and opportunities workshop in April 2018 and held meetings with key community organisations in May 2018. Following advice from council, further consultation with community groups occurred in August 2018. Targeted engagement with young people occurred in August 2018 and included conversations with 33 year five and six primary school students from St Mary’s Primary School and Mooroopna Primary School. The purpose of the primary school engagement was to understand what the students currently love about Shepparton–Mooroopna and what they would like to see change in the future.

This feedback was then incorporated into the Key Issues and Opportunities report, which was released for public comment in February and March 2019.
2.0 WHAT WE HEARD

There were three main avenues used to gather feedback on the Key Issues and Opportunities report:

- Interactive online story map
- Community priorities survey
- Written feedback

This feedback was collected online, via email and at face-to-face engagement events. Council officers also presented to four community plan steering committees with approximately 10 people in attendance per meeting. Overall, the VPA and council received:

- 225 pieces of feedback online
- 46 written submissions
- 90 conversations at face-to-face engagement events

2.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Feedback generally indicated the community are supportive of Shepparton and Mooroopna capitalising on new growth predicted for the area. A consistent message emerged about better utilising the natural features of the area and promoting these features to encourage more investment. Continuing to support and protect the agricultural industry, ensuring the environment is protected and delivering infrastructure to support growth were also reoccurring themes that were heard.

While a range of feedback was provided throughout this engagement process, key themes have been summarised into six principles for the VPA and council to consider in future planning:

1. Continue to celebrate the open space offerings of the area
2. Renew rundown sites to revitalise Shepparton and Mooroopna
3. Resolve uncertainty around future residential and industrial land supply
4. Support and prioritise the delivery of infrastructure to support growth
5. Improve access to and use of the river and its surrounding environment
6. Ensure agricultural land continues to be productive
2.2 ONLINE STORY MAP

2.2.1 WHAT YOU LOVE

The online interactive map asked users to drop pins on an online map and tell us about places they love in the area. 37 “love” pins were dropped on the map during the engagement.

According to the interactive map, public parks and open space are the most loved areas in Shepparton and Mooroopna. Victoria Lake, Kids Town, Queens Gardens and Charles Street park received favourable feedback, with one person commenting that “public open space is important. The lake area is so well utilised.”

This feedback indicates that future planning for the area should continue to celebrate the open space offerings in Shepparton and Mooroopna. People shared their love of the café precincts in the area, especially the “smaller retail feel in Mooroopna”. Comments showed appreciation for the close proximity of retail and services to surrounding residential areas.

Other comments were made about safety signals on roads and quality of road infrastructure as priorities for the area.

An overview of the findings from the online story map for ‘places I love’ are shown on Plan 1 and Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Breakdown of total comments received places I love](image-url)
Plan 2 - Heat mapping of the areas that received “change” pins
2.2.2 WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE CHANGED

Users were invited to drop pins on the map in areas that they would like to see changed or improved. 116 “change” pins were dropped during the engagement.

People most commonly used “change” pins to give feedback about current road infrastructure and parking. The community expressed mixed views about the bypass road which has been proposed by Regional Roads Victoria. Some people thought the bypass was essential to ensuring the safety of Shepparton and Mooroopna residents, while others thought the phased delivery of the bypass was causing traffic issues within Mooroopna. People would like to see the delivery of well-connected and safe street networks for all road users, with better access to parking.

Feedback was generally supportive of more residential growth occurring in the Shepparton area. Lots of “change” pins were left on the map at places which are rundown and need renewing, such as the “pub across the road from the court house”. One comment suggested the planning should “force landowners to clean up vacant blocks”. The community felt residential development should be encouraged West and East of the area, not just North and South.

There was a clear push for more cycling and pedestrian paths too, with lots of change pins dropped across the map for proposed lanes. Other community infrastructure for parks and public places was also requested.

An overview of the findings from the online story map for ‘places for change’ are shown on Plan 2 and Figure 2.
2.3 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES SURVEY

The online survey asked participants to prioritise their top three ideas under four themes identified in the Key Issues and Opportunities report. The survey received 72 responses, though not all participants answered every question. A copy of the full results from this survey can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

2.3.1 GROWTH AND CHARACTER

The first theme in the survey was Growth and Character. 70 out of 72 people answered this question.

Developing vacant and rundown sites to improve amenity received equal highest number of votes, with 48.6% of people selecting this in their answers. It ranked equally with Protecting productive agricultural land, which received the same number of votes.

The third priority was Preserving the green character in urban areas, which received 24 responses (34.3%).

Interestingly, each of the eight ideas under this theme received 12 votes or more, highlighting the overall importance of the future growth and character of the area.

2.3.2 ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The second theme in the survey proposed ideas about future Economy and Employment. 67 out of 72 people selected their top three priorities under this theme.

The top priority emerged as Continuing to revitalise Shepparton CBD, with 33 responses, or 49.3%. Next was encouraging events and festivals to promote the region’s strengths, with 40.3% of responses supporting this idea.

The third priority emerged as planning for the potential loss of major employers. These responses indicate the community has an appetite to develop the economic offer of the Shepparton region to encourage more visitors and resulting investment in the area.

2.3.3 ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

The third theme in the survey was Environment and Water. 58 out of 72 people answered this question.

62.1% of these people selected improving the use of river environment (waterfront, recreation and eco-tourism) as a top priority. This feedback was echoed in face-to-face engagement also. The next priority was encouraging design that better manages water supply in a sustainable way. This idea was supported by 43.1% of people who responded to this question. The third priority was aligning drainage infrastructure with open space to enhance functionality (e.g. drainage basins with a recreation component) which was supported by 32.8% of people.

2.3.4 INFRASTRUCTURE

66 out of 72 survey users prioritised ideas in the survey under the Infrastructure theme.

Investing in road and rail projects to improve connectivity emerged as the top priority, with 71.2% of people agreeing this was important to the future of the region. 54.5% of people also indicated that investing in education and health infrastructure to meet changing demographics was the next priority, and a further 36.4% of people supported the idea of exploring the relocation of Shepparton Airport and the potential for a strategic redevelopment site.
2.4 WRITTEN FEEDBACK

46 people wrote submissions to the Key Issues and Opportunities paper. A number of submissions were received from government agencies such as Major Road Projects Victoria and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. The VPA will continue to work with government agencies as the draft Growth Plan is developed. The VPA also collected comments at the face-to-face engagement events with 30 comments received. Another 13 people left comments in the open-ended section at the end of the online survey. A summary of the key themes of this feedback is outlined below:

2.4.1 INFRASTRUCTURE

A number of submissions stated the provision of more infrastructure, particularly for cycling, is important for the area. Uncertainty around the future road network particularly the delivery of the bypass and the potential east west link along Ford and Wanganui Road were identified as needing to be resolved by submitters. Public transport was also a strong theme and submissions where supportive of increased train and bus services. One submitter stated “I would like to see a bigger focus on infrastructure that promotes and supports cycling as a “safe” commuting option”.

2.4.2 LAND SUPPLY

30 of the written submissions received were in relation to land zoning changes, particularly the uncertainty around the investigation areas that were previously identified by the Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011. Evident in this statement “The investigation areas have led to confusion and uncertainty by landowners”. This emphasises the importance of the Growth Plan resolving future land supply needs for both residential and industrial land and providing certainty on where future growth will go and the timing of this.

Written submission also highlighted the need for focussed density in the Shepparton CBD and renewing underutilised sites in both Shepparton and Mooroopna.

2.4.3 OPEN SPACE

Open space was a common theme in written submissions, including support for the Victoria lake precinct and a desire for the river and its surrounding environment to be opened up for further recreation activities. This echoed feedback heard online, reiterating the importance of this fact to the community. The planting of more trees and greening of the area was commonly identified as something that needs to be encouraged in both Shepparton and Mooroopna. One submitter stated “The lake and surrounding parks, walking tracks and Aquamoves precinct are a credit to the council”.

2.4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Submitters highlighted the importance of sustainability initiatives for the region’s future. This includes encouraging more renewable energy, particularly solar farms and the provision of solar panels on council buildings, new developments and major infrastructure. Water security for the longevity of productive agricultural land was also a common theme that the community agreed was important for the region. One submission stated something to change as “a greater focus on renewable energy and environmentally sustainable infrastructure”.

2.4.5 MOOROOPNA

Specific submissions on Mooroopna emphasised the importance of it retaining its own identity and enhancing it as a destination for visitors through initiatives such as a boutique shopping strip, making Mooroopna a RV friendly town, better pedestrian and cycling connections, public transport and connections to the river.

Submitters raised concerns on the future of specific sites and what these could become in the future. Ideas for the Mooroopna high school site include a community school and community arts centre. It was identified the Mooroopna hospital site could be redeveloped for an education campus and student accommodation or an extension of the existing heritage museum. It was suggested the SPC site could be re-purposed for a trade school campus. One submitter stated “Mooroopna has a different identity to Shepparton, it retains the feel of a country town but has the benefits of being located close to Shepparton”.

2.4.6 SMALLER TOWNS

A number of written submissions emphasised the importance of the outlying towns for the region such as Dookie, Toolamba and Murchison. There was concern amongst submitters that the smaller towns within the municipality are sometimes overlooked.

A number of submissions supported the further growth of these small towns to disperse the population in the Greater Shepparton municipality. Cycling infrastructure and connections to smaller towns was also highlighted as an important consideration.

Submitters stated that the Growth Plan should “encourage growth and rural living in smaller towns” and “provide sewerage infrastructure in small towns! This will enable rural living and will spread out the community”.
3.0 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

3.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this engagement process was to consult with the Greater Shepparton community and other identified stakeholders to provide them with accurate information on the project so that they can give informed feedback and shape the priorities for future growth of the region.

To achieve this, the VPA looked to maximise opportunity for community participation by actively promoting the engagement, explaining the planning process and communicating technical information that will also be considered in this process.

The following objectives shaped the engagement:

- Stakeholders understand the relationships, context and propositions of the Regional City Growth plan sufficiently to be able to comment on the plan
- Stakeholders understand the process of developing the Regional City Growth plan and how they can provide ideas and feedback
- Current and future residents of the city are both given the opportunity to influence and provide feedback to the process
- Stakeholders understand the engagement timeline and opportunities for input
- Accurately report back what was heard during engagement in a timely and genuine way

3.2 ENGAGEMENT METHODS

This phase of community engagement occurred from Friday 22 February to Monday 25 March 2019. The VPA promoted the opportunity to get involved through social media (including a paid Facebook ad on council’s page), targeted stakeholder emails (see Appendix 2), and a project postcard (Appendix 3) that provided a brief introduction and instructions about how to get involved in the engagement process.

The VPA used several different engagement methods to ensure that the engagement process was robust and inclusive.

3.2.1 ONLINE STORY MAP

[Image of online story map]

Provide your feedback

Places I love

Add Place

Places to change

Add Place
The VPA developed an interactive story map to seek community feedback in an accessible and explanatory way. A story map is a web-based feature which hosts information, interactive maps, surveys and images within it.

The VPA combined information with an interactive map and survey to build the Shepparton-Mooroopna story map and explore key issues and opportunities for the Shepparton region. A hyperlink to the full Key Issues and Opportunities report was also provided.

The interactive map allowed users to drop “pins” onto a map of the broader project area. Pins allowed for two types of feedback – a “what I love” pin and a “what I’d change”. Overall, 153 pins were left on the map.

The story map also hosted an online survey. The survey summarised the key issues and opportunities from the paper into four themes – growth and character, economy and employment, environment and water and infrastructure. Participants were asked to prioritise the top three ideas under each theme. 72 responses were received.

Introductory information about the project, next steps and planning process was threaded into the story map.

### 3.2.2 FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT

A series of “community pop-ups” were held to promote the project, meet with the community and replicate the online feedback activities in the story map.

The community pop-ups were hosted at three locations - the Shepparton Summer City Festival (Friday 22 February, 9am – 4pm), the Mooroopna Aldi/Woolworths car park (Thursday 14 March 1pm – 3pm and the Kialla Riverside Plaza (Thursday 14 March, 4pm – 6.30pm).

At the pop-ups, participants were able to speak to VPA and/or council representatives and ask questions about the process. There was a large map of the area with two coloured sticky notes. Participants used pink sticky notes to write down comments about areas that they love, and orange sticky notes to highlight places in the area they would like to see change. Participants were welcome to leave as many sticky notes as necessary.

There were also survey boards available at the pop-ups which replicated the survey in the online platform. Participants were asked to choose their top three priorities for future development under four themes – growth and character, economy and employment, environment and water and infrastructure.

If participants felt like the Key Issues and Opportunities report had missed something, they were invited to add any extra comments at the end of the process.

### 3.2.3 WRITTEN FEEDBACK

The VPA invited community members to provide written feedback to the paper. Written comments were received via mail, email and online.

### 3.3 REFLECTION AND IMPROVEMENTS

The VPA reviews every engagement process it hosts, to build on success and amend processes that did not hit targets.

This phase of engagement for the Shepparton and Mooroopna planning project was well attended and well received. The engagement was delivered collaboratively with council, the process benefited from council’s understanding of the local area.

The duplication of the online feedback methods at the face-to-face pop-ups meant that the engagement was accessible to all participants. The face-to-face events allowed people to ask questions and have more in-depth conversations about their concerns. Hosting pop-ups across Shepparton, Mooroopna and Kialla encouraged maximum participation from people from across the region.

The online survey provided clear information about people's priorities, supported by the option to expand answers in the open-ended feedback section. Overall, the feedback received was very helpful in understanding the community's priorities for shaping the future of the region.

One downside of this engagement process was the missed opportunity to sign interested people up to the project database, limiting their ability to stay informed with the planning process as it progresses. We also missed the opportunity for people who attended a pop-up to evaluate their experience. The VPA will ensure an exit survey is available to participants next time.

The timing of the pop-ups will also be re-considered for future events, as the day time events were better received and captured more feedback than the evening session.
4.0 NEXT STEPS

The VPA and council will now prepare a draft Growth Plan. The draft plan will respond to technical inputs, and agency and community feedback received during this phase of community engagement. The community will have the opportunity to be involved in engagement on the draft plan later in 2019.

The VPA and council will then address concerns before finalising the Growth Plan, which will be included in the policy section of the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme.

The final Growth Plan will be used to coordinate, guide and inform the preparation and consideration of future, more detailed local plans and planning processes.

Figure 3  Timeline
5.1 APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY RESPONSES

Shepparton - Mooroopna community priority survey

Key stats
Responses 73
Total visits 553
Unique visits 224
Completion rate 32.6%
Average time to complete 03:39

Response summary

Theme 1: Growth and Character
70 out of 73 people answered this question (with multiple choice)
48.6% Developing vacant and rundown sites to improve amenity
48.6% Protecting productive agricultural land
37.1% Preserving the green character in urban areas
34.3% Facilitating higher density development in the Shepparton CBD
22.9% Improving the quantity and quality of social housing
20% Improving the public realm to encourage an inclusive community
17.1% Encouraging more street art
17.1% Enhancing heritage significance

Theme 2: Economy and employment
67 out of 73 people answered this question (with multiple choice)
49.3% Continuing to revitalise the Shepparton CBD
40.3% Encouraging events and festivals to promote the region’s strengths
40.3% Planning for the potential loss of major employers
36.8% Encouraging expansion of the solar industry
31.3% Partnering with industries to provide trade
23.9% Identifying land for industrial growth in appropriate locations
20.9% Encouraging the boutique retail offering in Mooroopna
10.4% Investigating a creative arts hub in Mooroopna

Theme 3: Environment and water
58 out of 73 people answered this question (with multiple choice)
62.1% Improving the use of the river environment (e.g. Waterfront, recreation and eco-tourism development)
43.1% Encouraging design that better manages water supply in a sustainable way
32.8% Aligning drainage infrastructure with open space to enhance functionality (e.g. drainage basins with a recreation component)
31% Improving river amenity and connections to promote it as an integral aspect of Shepparton’s character
27.6% Continuing the “Greening Shepparton” initiative

Theme 4: Infrastructure
56 out of 73 people answered this question (with multiple choice)
71.2% Investing in road and rail projects to improve connectivity
54.5% Investing in education and health infrastructure to meet changing demographics
36.4% Exploring the relocation of Shepparton Airport and the potential for a strategic redevelopment
27.3% Improving the quality, frequency and network coverage of the bus network
24.2% Continuing to deliver a connected cycling network
24.2% Providing appropriate accommodation to support CBD workers, students and visitors
22.7% Delivering adaptable and well-linked community infrastructure
10.6% Improving the signage and design of existing car parking areas

Any other comments?
68 out of 73 people answered this question

Speed limits across the area need to be increased by a minimum of 10kph. Less traffic lights and more roundabouts. Less paid parking and much more free parking throughout the region.

Hello, I have read your report and I am sorry to say it is inaccurate. The EAST WEST link you said will win along Wanganui Ford road is not a given yet. There is a draft being investigated ATM and has been for over 18 months and the finding will not be released to the end of 2019 or early 2020. Do not assume that Ford Road will be the EAST-WEST Link. Please make a thorough investigation.

The road network needs a strategic plan with the vision of incorporating more cycle friendly roads. Moving trucks and busses from small residential roads and closing off some streets in the central residential area. e.g. Clive st at Baladava rd.

Maglev train connecting Melbourne, Shepparton, Sydney, and Brisbane.

Another dog park on north end of Shepparton as it takes nearly 20min to get to the only one and is always over crowded.

Up to date and functional website regarding local public transport.

Connection via cycling paths should expand to smaller towns.

would like to see the mall re-opened to cars, allowing boats back on the lake, need better train services.

Invest in recycling plastic options. Install more drinking stations for dogs around the town to encourage more people to spend time walking their dogs and getting fit.

Stop flogging a dead hose (Current Mall), and dump the international village mark 2 (SAM). Our beautiful rivers and bush-land are wasted with very little access for water sports.

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Stop flogging a dead hose (Current Mall), and dump the international village mark 2 (SAM). Our beautiful rivers and bush-land are wasted with very little access for water sports.
It is helpful for us to know who has responded to our survey, to ensure all groups have had input into the planning process.

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Please select your gender

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View all responses
5.2 APPENDIX 2 – STAKEHOLDER EMAIL LIST

- Project steering group
  - Victorian Planning Authority
  - Regional Development Victoria
  - Greater Shepparton City Council
  - Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Technical reference group
  - Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
  - Goulburn Murray Water
  - Regional Roads Victoria
  - Country Fire Authority
  - State Emergency Services
  - Environmental Protection Authority
  - Transport for Victoria
  - Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
  - Parks Victoria
  - Public Transport Victoria
  - Department of Education
  - Aboriginal Victoria
  - Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
  - GV Waste & Resource Recovery Group
  - Chair of Goulburn Valley Regional Partnership
- Community groups
  - Goulburn Valley Health
  - La Trobe University
  - Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE
  - Goulburn River Valley Tourism
  - Shepparton Chamber of Commerce
  - Shepparton Show Me
  - Word of Mouth Group
  - Sustainability Working Group
  - Committee for Greater Shepparton
  - Disability Advisory Committee
  - Safer City Advisory Committee
  - Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
  - Ethnic Council of Victoria (Shepparton Division)
  - “Better Local Government Association”
  - GV Grammar
  - Notre Dame
  - Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
  - The Lighthouse Projects
  - Women’s Charter Alliance Advisory Committee
  - ACE Education Centre
- Primary schools
  - St Brendan’s primary school
  - Bourchier street primary school
  - Shepparton east primary school
  - Gowrie street primary school
  - St Georges road primary school
  - Guthrie St primary school
  - St Luke’s catholic primary school
  - Wilmot road primary school
  - St Mels education community
  - Congupna primary school
  - Orrvale primary school
  - Mooroopna primary school
  - Lemnos primary school
  - Kialla central primary school
  - St mary’s Mooroopna
  - Notre Dame College
  - Verney road school
  - Macguire college
  - Mooroopna park primary school
- Kindergartens
  - Apple Blossums
  - Knight street multi-age learning
  - Goodstart Shepparton Archer Street - Childcare Centre
  - Goodstart Shepparton Bourchier Street - Childcare Centre
  - my child preschool
  - Family day care
  - Florina pre-school and daycare
  - Wyndham early learning
  - community kids - early education
- High schools
  - Wanganui park secondary college
  - Shepparton HS
  - Shepparton Christian college
  - McGuire college
  - Mooroopna SC
- Individual community members (2)
The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) in partnership with Greater Shepparton City Council is preparing the Shepparton & Mooroopna 2050: Regional City Growth Plan to guide the sustainable development of the Shepparton–Mooroopna urban area to the year 2050.

Have your say

The VPA and Council have prepared a Key Issues and Opportunities report that has lots of ideas for future change in Shepparton and Mooroopna. This report will inform the final Growth Plan.

The report is available for your comment from 22 February to 25 March 2019. The report can be downloaded from the project page: https://vpa.vic.gov.au/project/shepparton-mooroopna-2050/

You can provide feedback in four ways:

1. Meet with VPA and Council staff to discuss your ideas and learn more at one of the following times:
   - 1pm–3pm, Thursday 14 March, 2019
     Woolworths/Aldi, Mooroopna (car park side)
   - 4pm–6.30pm, Thursday 14 March, 2019
     Riverside Plaza, Kialla

2. Go online to provide your feedback. Visit the project page for more information: https://vpa.vic.gov.au/project/shepparton-mooroopna-2050/

3. Send your written comments on any or all of the issues and opportunities identified in the report via email to emily.killin@vpa.vic.gov.au or via post to:
   Victorian Planning Authority
   Level 25, 35 Collins Street
   Melbourne Vic 3000
   Attention: Emily Killin

4. Fill out a response to the sentences on the back of this postcard.

If you have any questions for the project team, please call Emily Killin at the VPA on 9651 9600 or Michael MacDonagh at Council on 5832 9730.
Finish the sentences below to share your thoughts and aspirations for Shepparton and Mooroopna:

**The things I love about Shepparton and Mooroopna are:**

**The things I would like to see change in Shepparton and Mooroopna are:**

Drop your completed postcard to Greater Shepparton City Council at 90 Welsford Street, Shepparton, or take a photo and email it to emily.killin@vpa.vic.gov.au by 25 March 2019.