

A young child with blonde hair, wearing a colorful striped sweater and khaki pants, stands in a lush green field, flying a kite. The kite is colorful with a blue bird-like design and a long, multi-colored tail. The background is a bright, clear sky. The image is overlaid with large, semi-transparent geometric shapes: a light blue triangle in the top right and a teal triangle in the bottom left.

# Partnering for **stronger** communities

**2018-2023**

The logo for Wannon Water, featuring a stylized white wave or ribbon shape above the text.

WannonWATER

# BEYOND WATER FOR *strong* COMMUNITIES

## **Partnering for stronger communities 2018-2023 is Wannon Water's second Community Strategy.**

It outlines the ways we are developing and maintaining community partnerships that will create shared value for both us and our region - south-west Victoria.

The strategy is a key part of delivering our strategic direction 2023: *Beyond water for strong communities.*

We believe that building stronger communities is inextricably linked with building value for our customers, building value for our community and making our contribution to a better world.

## **Three key concepts underpin this strategy:**

- **Creating shared value**

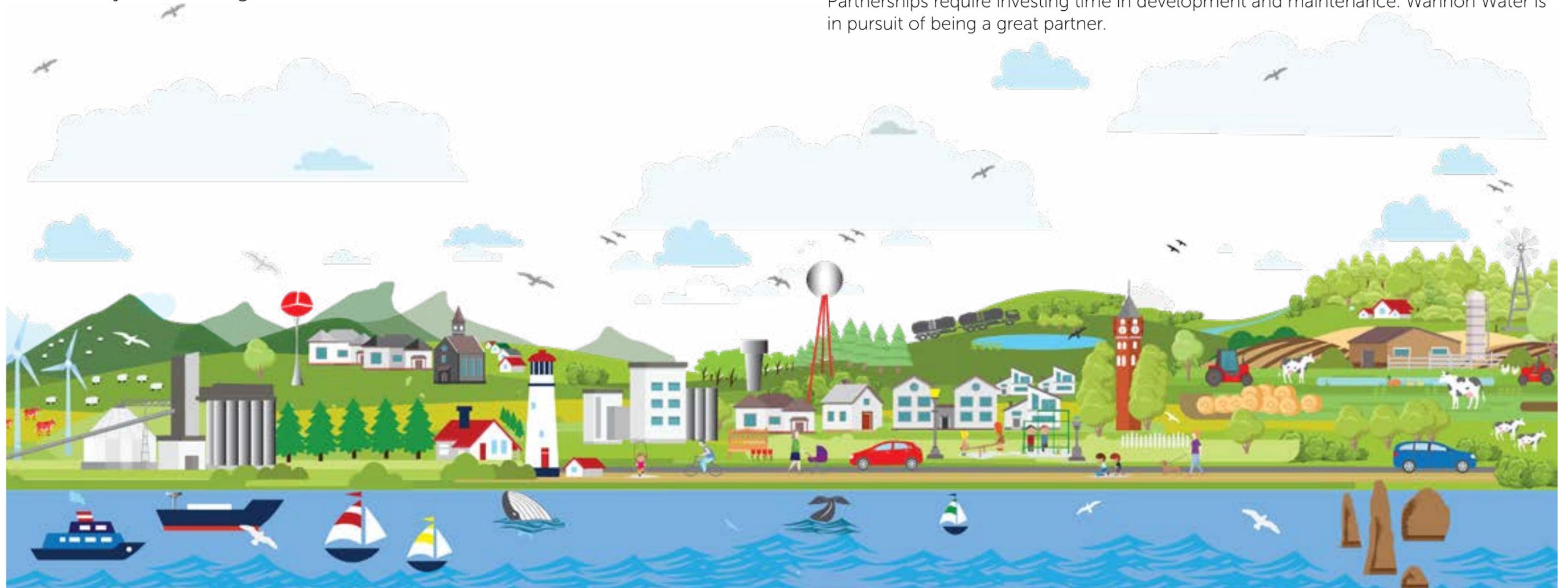
This Community Strategy will 'create shared value' for our customers and the communities within south-west Victoria. At its heart, creating shared value is about identifying and working on "win-win" solutions for Wannon Water and our communities.

- **Community engagement**

Wannon Water's definition of community engagement is a genuine process of working with people to build capacity, strengthen relationships and inform decisions. To that end, Wannon Water is committed to best practice approaches to community and stakeholder engagement.

- **Partnership**

Wannon Water recognises the importance of collaborating with others to strengthen our communities. We know that best practice partnerships do not just happen. Partnerships require investing time in development and maintenance. Wannon Water is in pursuit of being a great partner.



# Keeping our focus

Wannon Water's purpose is to provide safe, reliable, innovative and sustainable water services, and strengthen communities in south-west Victoria.

We do this while keeping bills affordable for our customers.

Our focus on stronger communities does not require a significant investment in extra resources. Instead, we are finding smarter ways to maximise public value as a part of our 'business as usual' work.



## Our key themes

Our inaugural *Partnering for Stronger Communities Strategy 2016-2017* allowed us to increase our understanding of the region and identify four key themes that deliver shared value for both us and the community.

### Regional prosperity

Wannon Water believes part of serving this region is to contribute to economic development and foster regional prosperity through our products, services and actions. We will:

- Foster sustainable growth of industry.
- Build capacity in our region with a focus on leadership, engagement, partnership, strategy and advocacy.
- Champion research, development, innovation and entrepreneurship to provide for a viable and innovative regional economy.
- Enhance our social procurement capability.

### Education, training and volunteering

Wannon Water relies on a skilled workforce and regards it as important for regional prosperity. Access to quality education, training and volunteering pathways is essential for the region to have a skilled and active workforce. We will:

- Foster skills development, including improving Year 12 or equivalent attainment.
- Support young people to consider and access career possibilities in this region.
- Attract and retain a skilled, adaptable and valued workforce for our region.
- Support existing regional education providers and advocate for future services.

- Sponsor volunteer community participation to sustain social, economic, environmental and cultural activities.

### Health and wellbeing

Being healthy and well is influenced by genetics and how we live, work and play. It is important for all aspects of social and economic life and is therefore important to Wannon Water. We will:

- Enhance public health through quality water and sewerage services.
- Support and advocate for diverse and inclusive regional communities.
- Foster healthy public open spaces and sporting facilities to enhance social connection and physical and mental wellbeing.
- Support those experiencing vulnerability.

### Natural environment

Healthy and sustainable ecosystems are crucial in providing communities access to clean water and unpolluted air, and in the production of food. Natural environments provide valued amenity, can contribute to people's physical and mental health and have their own inherent value. We will:

- Support activities and initiatives that help to adapt to, mitigate and monitor the effects of climate change.
- Contribute to integrated planning and management of natural resources, natural assets and biodiversity.
- Support healthy catchments.
- Foster partnerships with Aboriginal communities and conserve cultural heritage.

# What we will do

## Outcome 1:

### Wannon Water understands its communities

We will regularly engage with our communities and regional stakeholders, stay up to date with key data and issues, analyse information, and share our learnings.

- The annual Wannon Water Engagement Cycle will inform our decisions.
- Regular scans of key data and issues will help us understand the State of the Region.
- Information gathered from engagement and regional scans will be analysed and shared.
- We will report regularly on our learnings.

## Outcome 2:

### Wannon Water acts on priorities for our communities

We will take action on what we learn about our region, internally and through our partnerships. We build the capacity of our employees, customers and stakeholders to strengthen communities by focusing on best practice, innovation, regional prosperity and collaborations.

- The Ripple Effect program will be the umbrella program for all partnership initiatives.
- The Water for Community program will be the umbrella program for all internal community initiatives relating to water, sewerage and corporate services.

- Our Community Leadership program will support employees in community engagement and shared-value partnerships.
- Wannon Water's communication and education plans will inform our customers and community about the importance of our services and environmental sustainability.

## Outcome 3:

### Wannon Water measures its influence on communities

We will understand, regularly measure and report upon our influence on communities. We will keep track of our community activities and people's perceptions.

- The Wannon Water Engagement Cycle will measure customer and community perceptions.
- The bi-annual Stakeholder Perceptions Review will measure the perceptions of our regional stakeholders.
- The Ripple Effect and Water for Community programs will be detailed in Wannon Water's annual reports.
- Activities from our Community Leadership program will be reported annually to the Wannon Water executive team.
- Key Community Strategy initiatives will be assessed against our Community Value Framework.
- We will measure the activities undertaken as part of our communications and education programs.



# Making a genuine difference

**Initiatives that are most likely to deliver benefits for both Wannon Water AND for communities will be the ones delivered as part of this strategy.**

We have developed a filter to assess the relative merit of a multitude of worthy community initiatives and projects taking into account how well initiatives:

- Align with our themes and areas of focus.
- Align with our organisational capabilities.
- Deliver shared value.
- Meet our risk assessment criteria.

A bi-annual action plan will implement this strategy.



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