



Rye Park

Community Plan 2026

(Draft)

Acknowledgement of Country

The Hilltops Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of the Hilltops, the people of the Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal nations, and show our respect to elders past, present and emerging.

More information

This document has been prepared by Hilltops Council in collaboration with Rye Park Progress Association, and the Rye Park Community.

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Information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing in 2026 and is subject to change.

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Foreword

At the Ordinary Council meeting of 27 March 2024 Hilltops Councilors resolved (24/58) to implement the Hilltops Village Planning Program. Its purpose is to identify the needs and issues faced by Hilltops rural Villages, and to create an enduring program of village plans to inform and contribute to the future growth of the Hilltops region. Through the process, Council aims to support village-based communities, encourage economic viability, explore opportunities to improve local infrastructure and enhance the local environment.

Hilltops is home to fifteen rural villages- Bendick Murrell, Bribbaree, Frogmore, Galong, Jugiong, Kingsvale, Koorawatha, Maimuru, Milvale, Monteagle, Murringo, Reids Flat, Rugby, Rye Park, and Wombat. Each village has a rich history, with diverse communities and economies, facilities, and services.

Within each village plan, key areas of strategic focus are discussed, as they are identified in the *Hilltops Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040*, *Hilltops Community Strategic Plan*, *Hilltops Operational Plan* and the *Hilltops Rural and Residential Lands Study 2019* as well as consideration to the goals and actions of the *Southeast and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036* in relation to rural villages. The village plans analyse the current community facilities, economies, heritage items, service concerns, infrastructure, presence of schools and land use zoning at the time the plan was developed. Through consultation with the community, plans explore future goals and aspirations, identify tangible objectives and implementation actions.

The Village Planning Program is intended to be an enduring initiative of Council. Plans are intended to be functional documents providing community groups the insight and guidance for their specific development goals. Plans are also intended to be registered with Council and other relevant stakeholders as evidentiary documents to support development initiatives such as Master Plans and grants applications. Plans are intended to be refreshed towards the end of their notional 5-year lifespan to reflect the changes in activities and priorities that have occurred in that period.



Image courtesy of Andrew Southwell.

Where are we now

Community Overview

Rye Park is a small community comprising a compact village and surrounding rural landholdings. It is nestled in a scenic rural setting: a 20 minute drive east of Boorowa, 30 minutes north of Yass and 70 minutes west of Goulburn.



Former Palmer's Butchery. Image courtesy of Greg Davis.

The 2021 census identified a population of 230 for Rye Park, a drop of 38 from the previous (2016) census.

The village and outlying properties are home to a number of permanent residents as well as transitory occupants from Canberra, Sydney and elsewhere. Farming and allied services such as shearing and land management are the primary occupations although a number of residents commute for work to nearby centres such as Canberra, Yass and Boorowa.

The quiet rural setting is attractive for many who appreciate the more relaxed pace of life. It can be confronting for some newcomers who are unused to the self-sufficiency aspects of rural living and coming to terms with lack of amenities and services. These may include independent water supplies and sewerage arrangements, lack of waste collection services and patchy telecommunications. Then there are the bushfire risks, weed management obligations and the occasional encounters with wildlife, not all of which are benign.

At its peak, the village boasted a range of essential businesses - general store, butcher, baker, blacksmith - as well as a police station and an auto repair garage. With general rural decline, these businesses closed down or moved to larger population centres. Some of the village's early buildings are still evident in the main street such as the butcher's, the baker's and the Bush Nurses Home, but they are in need of renovation.

The most recent development in the area was the construction of the Rye Park Wind Farm (66 turbines, nominal generating capacity 396MW). The development saw significant activity in and around the area from the construction start date of the end of 2021 to the commencement of full operations in mid-2025. The project brought improved road infrastructure as well as infrastructure improvements within the village. The Community Enhancement Fund, administered by Council, is a potential funding source for some of the initiatives identified in this Plan.

With the closure of the school in 2024, the community has only two public gathering places - the Soldiers Memorial Hall and the Showground (also referred to as the Recreation Ground or 'Rec'). Both are the subjects of attention in this Plan with the Rec being progressively upgraded for community use and to welcome visitors.

History and Heritage

Pioneers first settled in the area in the 1840s to farm the land, although there were brief periods of mining for silver and tin. Agriculture - sheep and cattle husbandry for wool and meat - is the primary industry today.

When first surveyed, the locality was known as 'Walla Walla Scrub' ¹ but then assumed the name Rye Park after a local property held by a Messr A. Bembrick named for his native village of Rye in England.

Evidence of the village's early settlers can still be found. Hamilton Hume's family settled in the area in 1865 at 'Everton' and immediately established their renowned superfine merino stud. Their homestead (originally named Llangrove by William Howell in about 1840) remains relatively unchanged from its original construction and it is still a privately owned working sheep property.

Reportedly one of the earliest vineyards in Australia was planted at 'Ainsbury' in Rye Park. Unfortunately, it no longer exists.

Rye Park has eleven items of heritage, as recorded in Schedule 5, Hilltops Local Environmental Plan 2022, as represented by the brown shading in the map below. They are;

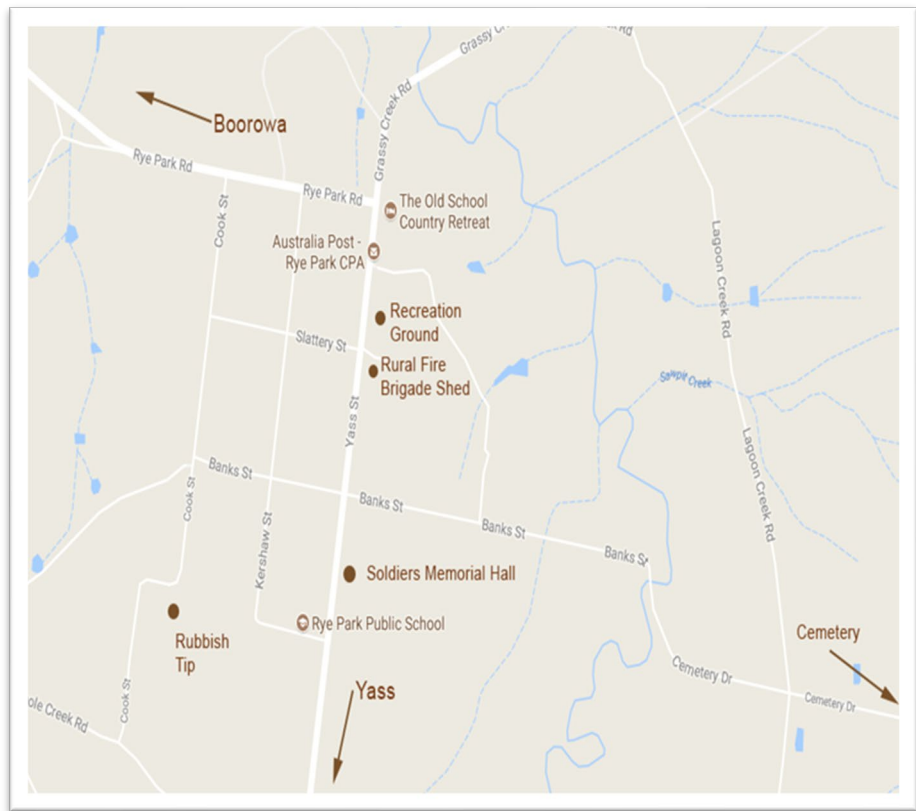
- Rye Park General Cemetery
- St Matthew's Anglican Church (former)
- Rye Park Uniting Church and cemetery
- St Joseph's Catholic Church (former)
- Palmer Butchery (former)
- Old Rye Park Public School (former)
- Everton Homestead Group
- Illyria Homestead
- Rye Park Soldiers Memorial Hall
- Rye Park Bush Nurse Cottage (former)
- Rye Park Recreation Ground



Image courtesy of Andrew Southwell.

¹ Trove: 'History of Rye Park - a Probe by our Representative', The Burrowa (sic) News, 19 October 1934, page 10.

Map of locations of heritage items, and point of interest in Rye Park village.



Community Facilities



Soldiers Memorial Hall (above), and the Showground Pavillion (below). *Images courtesy of Greg Davis.*

Halls

Rye Park Memorial Hall, Yass St

Public restrooms

Available at Showground

Playgrounds

Available at the Rye Park Showground

Places of Worship

Uniting Church, Yass St

Rec/sport facilities

Rye Park Showground

RV/Camping facilities

Available at Showground

Australia Post facility

Post box in front of Uniting Church, Yass St, mail collection from adjacent church building (limited opening hours)



Community Engagement

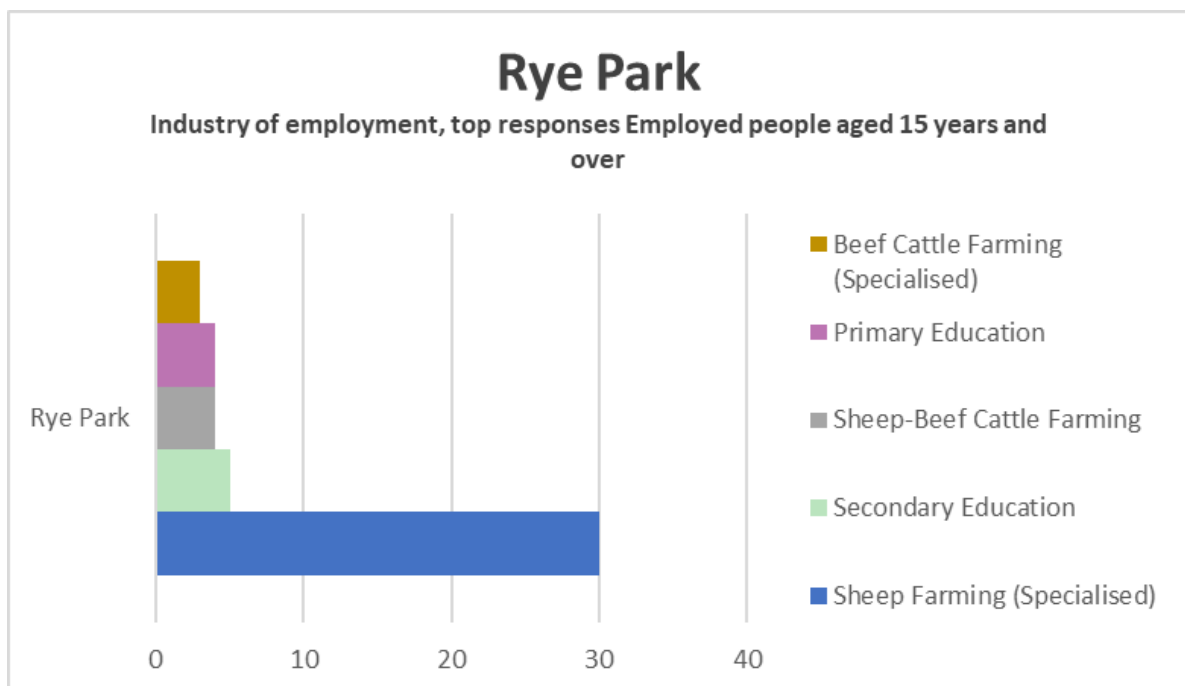
Community Groups

- Rye Park Progress Association
- Rye Park Memorial Hall Trust
- Rye Park Showground Trust
- Rural Fire Service

Local Events & engagement

- ‘Sale of gifts’ - fundraising auction of donated produce etc.
- Rye Park Ute Show
- Community Facebook

Economy and Demographics (2021 Census)



Infrastructure and Services

Mains Water Access

Not present- on-site services required

Mains Sewer Access

Not present- on-site services required

Waste Facility

Rye Park Waste Transfer Station- 92 Cook St, Rye Park

Highway/Arterial Road Access

Rye Park is situated on Rye Park Rd to the west, Grassy Creek Rd to the north and Gunning Rd/Dalton Rd to the south. Rye Park is approximately 20 minutes to Boorowa (west), and 30 minutes to Yass (south).

Health Services

Hospitals and medical services at Yass and Boorowa

Shopping and retail

Yass and Boorowa are the closest for supermarkets, cafes, restaurants

Education

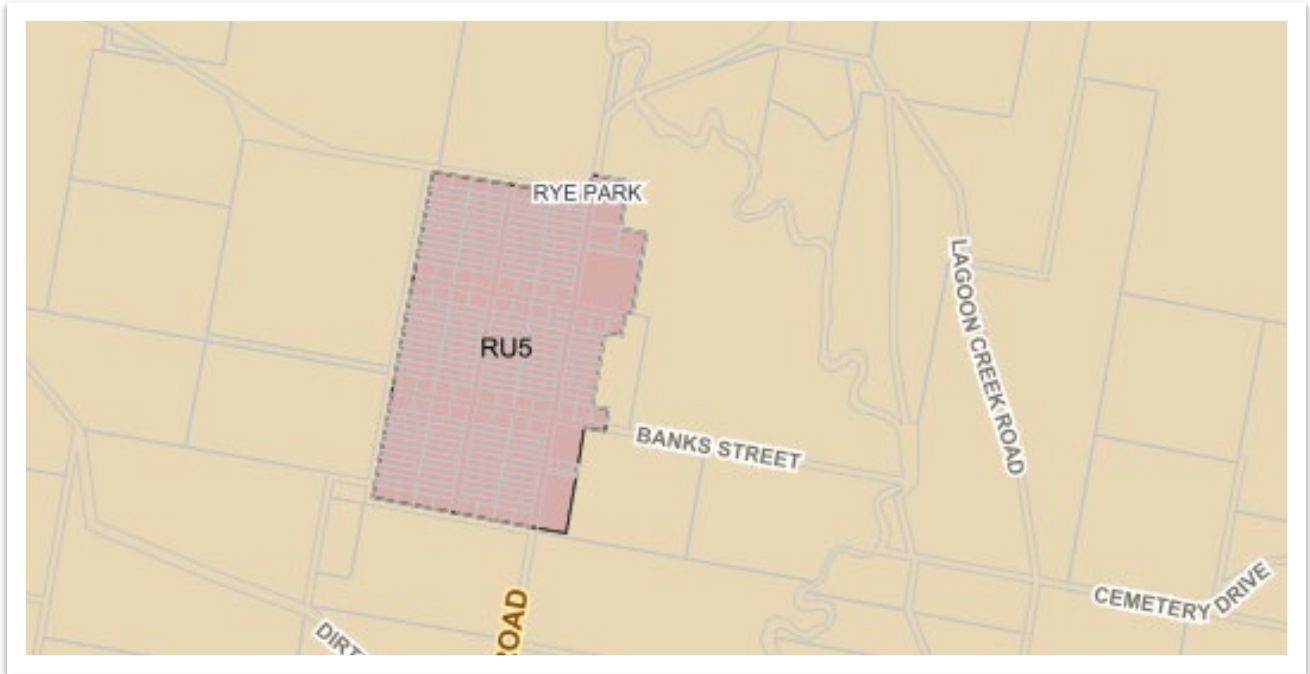
The Rye Park Public School was placed “in recess” in 2024 due to low enrolment numbers and the general consolidation of smaller village schools by the NSW Department of Education and is now closed. Students are bused to out of area schools, the nearest being at Boorowa.



Rye Park Public School. *Image courtesy of Greg Davis.*

Land Use Zoning:

Rye Park is zoned RU5 Village, as per the Hilltops Local Environmental Plan 2022. The surrounding land is zoned RU1 Primary Production, and there is no other land use zoning currently in place.



Map: Land Use Zoning Map of Rye Park – Hilltops Local Environmental Plan 2022

What the community love about Rye Park

The overwhelming responses to this question in the survey cited the peacefulness and tranquility of living in Rye Park and surrounds. Some mentioned the sense of community, particularly family connections which are strong here. Others noted that there was scope for more community interaction to bring the community together.

The Windfarm development brought mixed responses with some feeling that it had a negative impact on their enjoyment of the environment. While the question sought to extract the positives of being at Rye Park, knowing about the less appreciated aspects of Rye Park helps to understand and address these particular points of view.

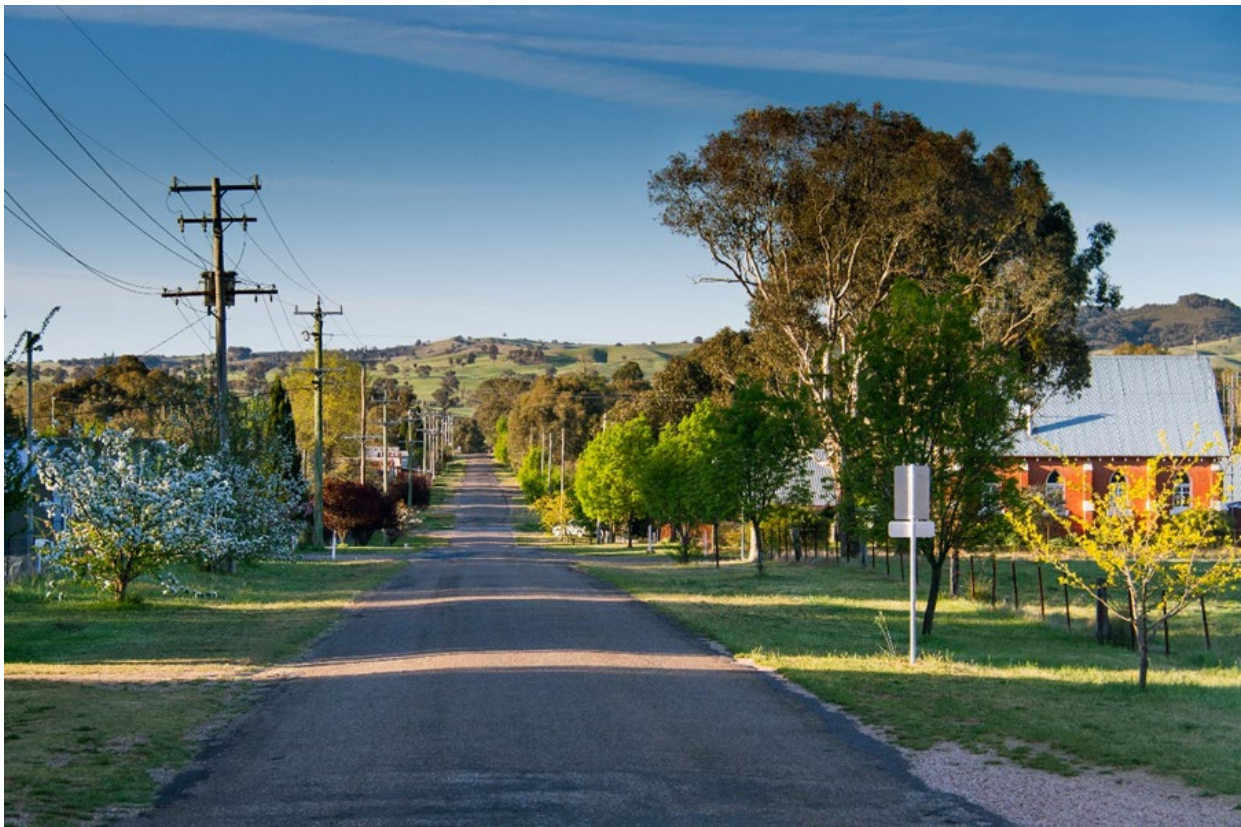


Image courtesy of Craig Southwell

Where we want to be

What the community would like to see improved

In the first half of 2024 Hilltops Council and the Rye Park Progress Association (RPPA) undertook a survey of residents of Rye Park and surrounding areas.

The survey asked two questions:

1. What do you love about your village and the wider Rye Park community?
2. What improvements would you like to see to social and physical infrastructure to help overcome any challenges faced by the community?

The RPPA collected and collated the responses into a list of the following activities and improvements to the Rye Park community facilities and non-tangible assets.

The activities also incorporated earlier work by the Rye Park Progress Association in identifying community improvement initiatives.

The results are broadly grouped into suggestions for the two principal community assets - the Showgrounds (the Rec.) and the Soldiers Memorial Hall - and five themes that apply to the community in general. These general themes comprise the greater number of responses received.

The five (5) general themes are:

- Village improvements
- Traffic management including signage within and outside the village
- Community cohesion
- Commerce and facilities reuse, and
- History and heritage.

In terms of process, the aggregated responses were presented to the community by way of feedback.

Village Improvements

Action	Indicative Timeframe
Restore Yass St to original condition - drainage and better provisions for on-street parking.	Medium-term
Improve TV, radio and phone reception.	Medium-term
High speed internet service available to all residents.	Medium-term
Permanent water supply for village.	Aspirational
Community transportation vehicle	Aspirational

Improve appearance of significant heritage buildings and landmarks.	Aspirational
Upgrade main street to attract visitors - street furniture, gazebos, attractive plantings.	Medium-term
Toilets and better parking at cemetery.	Short-term
Better lighting in the main street and more streetlights in back streets	Medium-term (Subject to further consultation with affected residents)
Consider fire service (RFS) needs.	Ongoing
Continue footpath to intersection of Yass St. and Boorowa Road.	Medium-term
Install post office boxes for out-of-hours mail collection	Medium-term
Murals on power poles in Yass Street.	Medium-term
Bicycle loop around the village.	Aspirational
Place power lines underground	Aspirational
Wind turbine blade display in the village, with mural.	Aspirational

Traffic Management and Signage

Action	Indicative Timeframe
Digital radar speed signs at each end of the village.	Short-term
Better directional signage on roads leading to Rye Park.	Medium-term

Community Cohesion

Action	Indicative Timeframe
Develop a clear vision for the community's future to encourage greater social cohesion.	Community Plan is indicative of action towards this suggestion
Reopen school to attract young families.	Short-term
Promote more community activities such as veggie swaps, movie nights, and Sale of Gifts.	Ongoing

Commerce and Facility Reuse

Action	Indicative Timeframe
Encourage small scale commerce such as a village store run by volunteers. May also be in the form of a small cafe and convenience store with basic groceries and local produce.	Aspirational
Turn Rye Park School into a Historical Society with a cafe and the Post Office.	Aspirational
Set up a small indoor or outdoor play area for the children and mothers to meet.	Aspirational
Renovate some of the significant historical facilities for accommodation.	Aspirational

History and Heritage

Action	Indicative Timeframe
Set up a history subgroup to collate and document the area's history.	Medium-term
Set up information centre with display panels of photos and information on Rye Park's history.	Medium-term
Install information panels about local flora and fauna.	Medium-term
Create a Rye Park heritage trail for self-guided tours with QR code plaques at various places.	Medium-term

Soldiers Memorial Hall

Action	Indicative Timeframe
Replace roof.	Medium-term
Facility improvements - refurbish toilets, a new disabled toilet.	Short-term
Manage outgoings - hall insurance to be met from the community enhancement fund.	Ongoing
Install solar panels and battery storage to reduce energy costs.	Medium-term
Improve car parking.	Short-term

Set up a funeral notice board at the Hall to inform residents of passings.	Short-term
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Showgrounds

Action	Indicative Timeframe
New/upgraded facilities to encourage wider use by community and visitors - water collection, toileting and showers, designated camping areas, waste disposal.	Short/Medium-term
Improve or install new facilities to encourage participation - tennis, netball/basketball, skating, cricket.	Medium-term
Install solar and battery storage to reduce energy costs.	Subject to future energy needs
Install electric vehicle charging for residents and visitors.	Medium-term
Upgrade the children’s play area and install outdoor exercise stations.	Short-term
Provide permanent barbecue installations.	Short-term
Provide additional seating and shade structures for users and visitors.	Short-term
Dedicated and marked camping spots for campers and caravanners.	Short-term
Widen entry gates.	Medium-term
Organise community activities such as “movies under the stars”.	Short-term
Source a dedicated community owned ride-on mower to be shared with the Soldiers Memorial Hall.	Completed

In a follow up event the Rye Park Progress Association, and Hilltops Council, conducted a community workshop to understand which of the survey items were a priority for the community and warranted further focus.

The exercise was conducted as a “Dotmocracy”, whereby participants placed a coloured sticker against the items they felt were of most importance to pursue, and another coloured sticker for items they felt were of least importance. Each participant was given seven green stickers for items they wanted to see pursued, and two blue stickers for those they did not. The exercise produced the following results:

Item	Green Dots (each)
Better radio, TV & phone services, high speed broadband	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital radar speed signs on entry & exit to village, • Refurbish toilets, disabled toilet, install ceiling (soldiers memorial hall), • Improve car parking (soldiers memorial hall), and • New & upgraded facilities – water tanks, toilets & showers, camping areas (Showground/Rec) 	9
Permanent water supply	8
Fix drainage and parking access on Yass St	6
Improve the look of the village - historic buildings, street furniture	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better parking/toilet facilities at cemetery, • Funeral noticeboard, and • Heritage trail, self-guided tours, QR codes 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install PO boxes for out of hours access to mail, • Bicycle loop around village, • More speed warning signs in 50km/h zones, • Community Cohesion, • Information panels - flora & fauna, • Permanent BBQ (Showground), • Additional seating & shade structures (Showground), • Organise community events e.g. movie nights, and • Historical society at school with cafe 	3

Better lighting in village, Directional signs on main roads pointing to Rye Park, Upgrade playground, Widen entry gates (Showground), Small scale commerce, village store, volunteer run	2
Information centre & displays	1

Item	Blue Dots (each)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better lighting in village, and • Electric vehicle charging 	6
Bicycle loop around village	4
Solar panels & battery storage (Soldiers Memorial Hall)	3
Solar panels & battery storage (Showground/Rec)	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent water supply, • Funeral notice board, • Upgrade playground, • Small scale commerce, village store, volunteer run, and • Historical society at school with cafe 	1

Objectives and Outcomes



Support and build resilience within Village communities,



Enhance the built environment and improve liveability in and around the villages,



Encourage economic viability through enabling greater self-determination, and



Enhance and maintain the natural environment in and around the villages.

The village planning program identifies the above four objectives for the rural villages of the Hilltops LGA. The objectives of the program relate to Council's Strategic Objectives for the villages, as outlined in the Hilltops Local Strategic Planning Statement, Hilltops Community Strategic Plan, Hilltops Delivery Program, and the Hilltops Operational plan, in delivering outcomes for our village communities.

The Village/Community Plan aims to support communities in realising the objectives and outcomes of the program through identification of projects and initiatives important to the community, and the assigning of a lead group, or individual, to champion that item.

Objective 1. Support and build resilience within Village communities.

- Provide guidance and insights to the community, via village plans, to be utilised in the realisation of future growth opportunities.
- Stabilising, or increasing village populations through retention of existing residents and encouragement of new residents.

Objective 2. Enhance the built environment and improve livability in and around the villages.

- Retention of current facilities and services
- Increase in facilities and services
- Improved infrastructure within villages.
- Improved linkages to larger towns and centres.
- Facilitate the retention and regeneration of historical buildings and places.

Objective 3. Encourage economic viability through enabling greater self-determination.

- Protect and nurture the role of villages in supporting local agricultural industries and communities.
- Provision of support documents, through village plans, for communities to leverage on when seeking funding for community facilities.
- Village tourism increased.
- Increased responsiveness to growth opportunities.

Objective 4. Enhance and maintain the natural environment in and around the villages.

- Outline/Highlight areas of environmental significance.
- Explore/Consider the value-add of areas of environmental significance for tourism opportunities.

How we will get there:

5-year plan

Projects and lead organisation or person

Throughout 2025, and early 2026, Hilltops Council worked with the Rye Park community to refine the results of the 2024 survey into two groups:

- Projects/initiatives with an identified lead person or organisation to be included in the Community Plan, and
- Projects/initiatives with no identified lead person or organisation that the community would still like to see realised but are more aspirational at this time.

The projects below are community goals based on the 2024 survey results and further community consultation. They have had a person or organisation indicate they would like to explore progressing the project over the next five years. They are projects that the lead feels they could reasonably endeavour to initiate within the next five years.

Completion of projects and initiatives are subject to local conditions, funding opportunities, and community support.

	Action	Lead
Village Improvements	Improve TV, radio and phone reception.	Rye Park Progress Association
	High speed internet service available to all residents.	Rye Park Progress Association
	Toilets and better parking at cemetery.	Rye Park Progress Association & Council
	Better lighting in the main street and more streetlights in back streets (Subject to further consultation with affected residents)	Rye Park Progress Association
	Consider fire service (RFS) needs.	RFS
	Murals on power poles in Yass Street.	Rye Park Progress Association
Traffic Management and	Digital radar speed signs at each end of the village.	In progress
	Better directional signage on roads leading to Rye Park.	Rye Park Progress Association

Community Cohesion	Promote more community activities such as veggie swaps, movie nights, and Sale of Gifts.	In progress
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History and Heritage	Set up a history subgroup to collate and document the area's history.	Rye Park Progress Association
	Set up information centre with display panels of photos and information on Rye Park's history.	Rye Park Progress Association
	Install information panels about local flora and fauna.	Rye Park Progress Association
	Create a Rye Park heritage trail for self-guided tours with QR code plaques at various places.	Rye Park Progress Association
	Old Cemetery Restoration.	Rye Park Uniting Church

Soldiers Memorial Hall	Replace roof.	Rye Park Hall Committee
	Facility improvements - refurbish toilets, a new disabled toilet, new storage shed.	Rye Park Hall Committee
	Manage outgoings - hall insurance to be met from the community enhancement fund.	In progress
	Set up a funeral notice board at the Hall to inform residents of passings.	Rye Park Hall Committee

Showgrounds (the Rec.)	New/upgraded facilities to encourage wider use by community and visitors - water collection, toileting and showers, designated camping areas, waste disposal.	Rye Park Showground Trust
	Improve or install new facilities to encourage participation - tennis, netball/basketball, skating, cricket.	Rye Park Showground Trust
	Provide additional seating and shade structures for users and visitors.	Rye Park Showground Trust
	Upgrading of sewerage systems to facilitate future improvements at the Rec. ground.	Rye Park Showground Trust

Completed and progressing

During the preparation of the Rye Park Community Plan the following items were completed, or are progressing:

- Source a dedicated community owned ride-on mower that can be shared with the rec.
- Provide permanent barbecue installations (can be found at the Rec Ground).
- Digital speed signs have been procured and are awaiting installation.

The promotion of community events such as veggie swaps, movie nights, and Easter breakfast is an ongoing action which is being driven by both community groups and Hilltops Council.



Images: above left- Rye Park RFS Shed, above right- Rye Park Uniting Church and Australia Post, bottom left- signpost to neighbouring towns and villages, bottom right- gates to Rye Park Recreation Ground. From the "Rye Park Welcome Pack" courtesy of Craig Southwell.

Future aspirations and opportunities

Action	Indicative timeframe of when the community would like to see the action initiated.
Upgrade the children's play area and install outdoor exercising stations.	Short-term
Improve car parking at Hall.	Short-term
Set up a small indoor or outdoor play area for the children and mothers to meet.	Short-term
Restore Yass St to original condition - drainage and better provisions for on-street parking.	Medium-term
Permanent water supply for village.	Aspirational
Community transportation vehicle	Aspirational
Improve appearance of significant heritage buildings and landmarks.	Aspirational
Upgrade main street to attract visitors - street furniture, gazebos, attractive plantings.	Medium-term
Continue footpath to intersection of Yass St. and Boorowa Road.	Medium-term
Install post office boxes for out of hours mail collection	Medium-term
Install electric vehicle charging for residents and visitors.	Medium-term
Widen entry gates at Rec ground or find suitable alternative.	Medium-term
Bicycle loop around the village.	Aspirational
Place power lines underground	Aspirational
Wind turbine blade display in the village, with mural.	Aspirational
Encourage small scale commerce such as a village store run by volunteers. May also be in the form of a small cafe and convenience store with basic groceries and local produce.	Aspirational
Turn Rye Park School into a Historical Society with a cafe and the Post Office.	Aspirational
Renovate some of the significant historical facilities for accommodation.	Aspirational

Hilltops Council would like to thank the Rye Park community for their contributions and commitment to the Rye Park Community Plan 2026. Council looks forward to continued work with the community in the ongoing implementation, and iterations, of this and future Rye Park Community Plans.

To contact Council regarding village planning please call 1300 445 586, or email mail@hilltops.nsw.gov.au.

Information on the Village Planning Program can be found at [Village Planning Program - Hilltops Council](#)