1. Settlement Overview

1.1. Location & Distances
Burcher is a settlement located in the south-eastern part of the Lachlan Shire. Driving distances are approximately:

a) 45km (~40 mins) from Ungarie (outside Shire);
b) 63km (~50 mins) from West Wyalong (outside Shire);
c) 63km (~50 mins) from Condobolin (via The Gipps Way);
d) 120km (~1.5 hours) from Lake Cargelligo.

1.2. Brief History
Burcher is likely to have grown from the construction of the rail line from Wyalong that was authorised in 1923 with the line opening on 16 December 1929. Originally the terminus was called ‘Euglo’ but the name changed to Burcher on 4 August 1936 (Wikipedia / Australian Railway Historical Society Bulletin (Sept 1972) p.176-184)). Further information should be sought from the local museum. The village has been a winner and placed several times in the Tidy Towns Competitions. It is also the closest settlement to Lake Cowal and is close proximity to the Lake Cowal Gold Mine. Lake Cowal is the largest inland lake in NSW. The gold mine is held by Evolution Mining and has been producing gold since 2006 (Wikipedia).

1.3. Population & Demographics
Burcher’s Census District is only defined by a State Suburb (SSC 10692) that includes the surrounding rural areas. As at the 2016 Census there were 82 people in this catchment district; 39 private dwellings; a median age of 54, 15 families but due to the small population limited information has been provided. The area that forms part of the Village Zone would be only a portion of these figures. The community would like to see more population growth / opportunities for the village.
2. Planning Controls & Growth

2.1. Zoning (Land Use)

The key planning controls are in Lachlan Local Environmental Plan 2013 that applies Zone RU5 Village to the settlement with Zone SP2 Infrastructure at the Waste Depot (as the rail line is not active it is not in Zone SP2). A Village Zone is a suitable category at this time. The settlement has a minimum lot size of 4000m² for subdivision.

The settlement is surrounded by Zone RU1 Primary Production (that includes the golf course) with Zone RU3 Forestry to the north of the golf course. There are no Zone RS Large Lot Residential areas around or near the settlement.

2.2. Crown Land & Growth Opportunities

This Plan does not consider changes to zoning or lot size boundaries but it is assumed there is sufficient area for residential and other land use growth at this time.

However, as the diagram above shows, a large amount of Burcher’s Village Zone is actually Crown land. It may be worth approaching the Crown Lands Department to see if some crown lands can be released for private development (if required) particularly along Bena and Curran Streets where there are existing road frontages.

The aerial photo does not accurately align with lot boundaries so the village may need to be resurveyed by the NSW Government.

3. Access & Utilities

3.1. Rail & Road

Burcher is located on Burcher Road / Lake Cowal Road approximately 10km to the east of The Gipps Way (known as the West Wyalong Road). As the village is not located on a major road it has limited passing traffic which means tourist opportunities need clear signage/communication (see Signage Section) but this also means it does not need additional traffic calming for safety/amenity.

Burcher is located at the terminus of the Burcher Branch Rail Line which connects by Lake Cowal to Wyalong Junction. The station is closed. ARTC officially ‘closed’ the line on 30 June 2005 (Wikipedia / The Railway News (August 2005 p.109)).

3.2. Roads (Quality)

All roads in and immediately around Burcher are local roads (not RMS funded). The Gipps Way is likely to be a classified / RMS road.

Burcher Road to the west of the settlement is sealed but the seal ends as it becomes Lake Cowal Road to the east. The community has suggested that Lake Cowal Road could be sealed to the Forbes Road (42km) as it is used to take stock to Forbes saleyards – but this may be a longer-term project (subject to Council funding / not costed).

Within the settlement, only Bena Street (east-west) is sealed. The community would like to see roadside edges fixed and widened. Specific areas for these works need to be identified before this can be costed.

It has a unique split road system with a main two-way road and then an adjacent local road along the southern edge. For visitors some additional signage of the traffic priority of the split-roads may be required (but doesn’t appear to have caused an issue so far / not costed). See Main Street Section below for additional works.

The community has not raised a concern with sealing of other local roads but ideally in the medium to longer term Kurrajong Street and then parts of Myall and Curran Streets should have a narrow seal (not costed).

3.3. Drainage

Burcher is not in close proximity to Sharpless or Humbug Creeks to the west (near The Gipps Way) or Lake / Nerang Cowal (to the east) but it is very flat and low-lying so there is likely to still be a risk of overland flooding during peak rainfall events (not confirmed). However, drainage does not appear to be a major issue for this settlement.

However, the town relies on the water reservoir for non-potable water. The drainage channel to the water reservoir is silted up and need cleaning. In the medium to longer term it probably needs upgrading to improve collection and may require sealing to increase water collection and minimise siltation.

3.4. Utilities

Burcher relies on rainwater for individual buildings/lot. The reticulated supply is non-potable as it comes from the reservoir. This is a potential limitation to growth. The community has expressed a desire for potable water supply, possibly from bore water (suggestion of Les Gould’s property near waste depot) but bore water may be brackish. Further investigation required as this may be a longer-term objective (not costed).

Burcher also does not have access to reticulated sewerage so it is reliant on on-site sewage management systems such as septic systems – but there was no comment these are not working.

Burcher has a Waste Depot to the east of the village which allows for residential waste to landfill and provides a transfer station for recyclables and some specific wastes (e.g. Drum Muster). Council needs to cap some of the landfill areas as the photo above shows the refuse areas are becoming large and could become wind-borne. This is run by the local community.

The community has requested additional bins be provided at key locations in the main street, parks and sportsground.
4. Key Facilities & Attractions

4.1. Public Facilities

Burcher has a public hall for meetings and events on the south side of Bena Street near Warriah St. The community has highlighted the need for repairs to the hall including fixing the leaking roof on the annexe side and fixing exit signs.

The main park with the Memorial Gates is on the north side of Bena Street nearly opposite the hotel (see Key Sites for details).

The Old Bakehouse Museum is currently at the corner store at Bena / Myall Street. The community wishes to relocate the museum to the hall (with additional signage).

There is a Roman Catholic Church on Bena/Kurrajong St (requiring some rear drainage), an Anglican Church (not used?) east of the rail line, and a beautiful Bush Chapel just to the west of the settlement that are important local/visitor attractions.

Down Kurrajong Street is the Rural Fire Services Shed and the Showground/Sportsground (Mick McKinley Oval) with camping and recreation (See Key Sites section below for more details). Up Kurrajong Street is the Golf Club and Golf Course that is used outside summer (no water) and could be a major attraction for a bush course.

The Burcher Public School is closed and now in private ownership. The nearest school is at Ungarie. This may limit the attraction for young families unless good school bus services are available.

4.2. Retail & Employment

At the intersection of Bena and Myall Streets is a corner store and The Old Bakehouse Museum which is also the Post Office.

Further west on Bena Street is the Burcher Hotel (a focal point for the settlement) but this was for sale in March 2017 and needs support to keep open. A pub of this nature could have the potential to become a destination (like the Rabbit Trap Pub in Albert) if it was upgraded and outdoor seating expanded (private costs). There may be some other home businesses/industries.

GrainCorp has a grain storage down Myall Street. Agriculture is the main employer of the area. Whilst Lake Cowal Mine is nearby it does not promote significant employment in Burcher as most connections are to West Wyalong.
4.3. Heritage & Culture

A comprehensive history should be prepared by local historians/community (local cost) to inform visitors and guide this plan and ideally be summarised on a Central Information Board.

There are no listed heritage items in or immediately around Burcher in the Local Environmental Plan. However, the Heritage Inventory includes 19 listings including the Hotel, Memorial Park, Public School, Railway Master’s Residence, Railway Terminus, Bush Chapel, General Store, Catholic Church, Old Bakery, Public Hall, Water Reservoir and several residences and shops/garages. Upgrades to these should buildings should seek heritage advice.

There is a memorial on The Gipps Way ‘To the Pioneers of the Bena-Wamboyne District’ (at the site of the first District Post Office 1892) that could be better sign-posted/highlighted.

Lake Cowal is listed on the Register of the National Estate and is also an important meeting place for the Wiradjuri peoples (see www.lakecowalfoundation.org.au). We have not investigated Aboriginal heritage in this area but it could be an opportunity for cultural education and tourism in the area that links in with the natural environment opportunities (not costed).

4.4. Major Events

Major events include, but are not limited to the key recreational facilities including annual cricket and golf competition(s). There is potential to consider other annual events to raise the profile of Burcher and utilise the significant recreational facilities.

4.5. Other Tourist Facilities/Attractions

It is worth reiterating the free (by donation) camping facilities in the area to the north of the Sportsground. In June 2017, a new amenity block with hot shower was being constructed with good camping sites within close proximity to the hotel, park, and corner shop. The community has highlighted the need for improved camping signs at the turn-off to Burcher (see Signage).

Ridley Rest Area on The Gipps Way provides a rest stop near the turn-off to Burcher. If tourists stop here there may be potential to provide additional signage with a list of local attractions to get them to come to Burcher.

There is potential to create a regional bird watching trail, particularly with the birdlife associated with Lake Cowal and other waterways/parklands in the area with signage directing visitors through Burcher (Central Info. Board). We have not investigated the flora/fauna of Burcher but significant vegetation/Crown reserves surrounding the settlement may provide opportunities for bird hides and trail/educational signage (not costed).
5. Entrance Design & Signage

5.1. Shire Tourist Trails

There are limited tourist, heritage, or environmental attractions (at this time) at Burcher but it is a good stopping point on the way to Lake Cowal and could form part of a regional bird-watching trail (see above) with additional Aboriginal heritage cultural education opportunities and potentially visits to the Lake Cowal gold mine.

The free (donation) camping combined with some local services and recreation needs to be highlighted. RMS brown tourist trail signs should be investigated.

5.2. Shire Location & Navigation Signage

Burcher (like Tullibigeal) faces the challenge that it is not located on a key road route between major destinations but requires tourists to turn off The Gipps Way or drive via Lake Cowal.

Currently there are good Key Facilities Signs (White on Blue) prior to the Burcher Road turnoff on The Gipps Way (see opposite). At the intersection there is a clear ‘Burcher’ (White on Green) sign. There is also a faded camping sign.

However, there is no signage to Lake Cowal and the key visitor facilities such as the free (by donation) campground, golf course, and recreation area could have some additional signage without introducing signage clutter. Ridley’s Rest Area is located on The Gipps Way near the Burcher Road intersection and could be an opportunity for an information board to direct travellers to Burcher.

5.3. Town Entrance Signage & Gateways

Generally, the large green/cream welcome signs at the western and eastern entrances are well located and designed. There is an opportunity to highlight the entrance signs with a widened / updated planting blister and low landscape that also acts as a traffic calming device.

5.4. Key Intersections & Navigation

Burcher has a simple layout but the local navigation signage still needs upgrading to provide clear directions to key public facilities including the camping area and sportingground, the golf course, the bush cemetery, and the waste depot. Most of this signage needs to be at the intersection of Bena & Kurrajong Streets (current signage bent/unclear).

5.5. Central Information Board

There is no central information board currently in Burcher. The most suitable location is likely to be at the Park on the northern side of Bena St. However, it should not clutter the Memorial Gates or park entry. It should be a simple structure with shade with a map, points of interest, local history, local bird and wildlife, and key emergency contact details.

5.6. Advertising

Generally advertising signs do not clutter entrances or main streets. However, as stated above, it is unusual that a settlement of Burcher’s size has facilities like a corner store, post office, and hotel. Perhaps these could be better supported with some consolidated, clear, and well-designed advertising signage at key turn-off to Burcher, village entrance signs, and/or incorporated into the Central Information Board. The faded sign for the hotel on The Gipps Way should be relocated and/or replaced.
6. Main Street

The Entrance Design & Signage section above highlights the key gateways / intersection / signage issues, particularly along Burcher Road / Bena Street. This Section focusses more on other main street upgrades along Bena Street.

6.1. Built Form

Burcher is predominantly single storey in character. Detached dwellings setback from the street dominate with the corner store / hotel / hall having zero or reduced setbacks to create a defined street edge / focal point.

Most of the buildings are in good repair but the hall could do with some maintenance and repainting and landscape works around the building. As stated above there are no listed heritage items in Burcher so it is not possible to seek heritage funding for upgrades until some (e.g. hall/ corner store) are considered for listing.

6.2. Street Trees & Landscape

With broad streets and low/setback buildings landscape has the greatest potential to reinforce the street character. It is desirable that a street tree master plan is created for Burcher. It would be a relatively simple plan for Bena Street and perhaps down Kurrajong Street into the sportsground area for additional shade trees building on Council’s draft Street Tree Replacement Procedure (2014) & draft Tree Replacement Plan/Policy.

The overall landscape character appears to be dominated by native trees but there is some potential for ornamental non-native plantings at key locations to provide colour and variety using species that would not interfere with overhead power lines (north side of Bena St).

The plans in this Chapter show some indicative street tree planting areas (subject to more detailed investigation) that would reinforce the native character of Bena Street but utilise the central landscape strip to get some denser clusters that define the street and key focal points.

Localised planter boxes or hanging flower arrangements (a lot more maintenance intensive) could be provided at the corner store and possibly hotel but would need to be maintained by the owners (not costed).

6.3. Intersection Upgrades / Pedestrian Crossings

As stated above, Burcher has a unique ‘split-road’ main street with the main thoroughfare on the northern side and a ‘local’ street on the southern side. Whilst it creates a wide road reserve it also creates a central landscape strip. There are both formal and informal connections between the main thoroughfare and the local road.

A bitumen seal has been provided in front of the hotel (perhaps the most used crossing / parking area) but the landscape edges could be formalised for protection.

There is also potential to formalise / upgrade the Bena / Kurrajong Street intersection to facilitate access to the camping area / sportsground as the landscape strip is not sealed / crossing is not formalised.
6.4. Kerb & Gutter
Kerb and gutter is only provided along some sections of Bena Street (see diagram on page above). The community has requested kerb and gutter in the main street. Generally, this would only require small extensions or infills along Bena Street (as shown on plan – see list at end for details).

6.5. Footpaths & Crossings
The existing footpath provides connection along the southern side of Bena Street between the corner store at the eastern end, past the hotel in the middle as far as Kurrajong Street. The only other footpath is the central walkway in the park.

Ideally the footpath would extend to the Hall to connect the major public facilities. The community has requested that the existing footpath is repaired/maintained as it is cracked and has some trip points. The existing path is less than 1m and would ideally be replaced with a 1.2m wide path over time.

6.6. Accessibility & Pedestrian Crossings
There are no existing formal pedestrian crossings but the low traffic densities combined with the central landscape strip and narrow roads and good sight lines mean that formal crossings are unlikely to be required.

It has been suggested that there is one resident who has a mobility impairment and lives just east of the park on the north side of Bena Street. Therefore, it is desirable that the footpath and kerb/gutter is extended from the park and its existing kerb cut/ramp so there is access across Bena Street to the Burcher Hotel and the existing path system.

6.7. Bicycles
There are no dedicated or shared bicycle routes in Burcher and generally it would be expected to utilise existing wide local streets so no changes are proposed at this time.

6.8. Street Furniture
There is no substantial need for street furniture except for some seating outside the Post Office / corner store and perhaps outside the hotel (or licence for outdoor seating/dining). Most seating is provided in the park where there is shade and amenities. Some seating could be added at the cricket / sportsground under the existing shelter.

6.9. Public Art
There is an opportunity for increased public art in Burcher to provide visual interest, attract passing visitors, and highlight some of the history of the area.

There is already a range of public art/memorials in the park (including the Memorial Gates) and the windmill feature in Bena Street (buckets needs repair). The aim is not to have a lot of visual clutter, but as part of the master plan for Bena Street to incorporate some public art that showcases the local community/history and provides points of interest for visitors.

For example, the Hall could potentially have a mural or artwork. The hotel and corner store could have some above awning sculptures. There is also potential to attract visitors from West Wyalong through Lake Cowal and onto Condobolin having road-side art features (for example, ‘Animals on Bikes’ on the Molong to Dubbo road via Cumnock and Yeoval) – possibly linked into the bird-watching trails (not costed).
7. Key Sites

7.1. Management Plan(s)

For all Crown Lands (and also Council Community lands) ideally there would be a Plan of Management prepared that would guide all future decision making in these areas and include the community and Crown Lands Division in their preparation. Whilst there is a more generic Parks and Reserves Five Year Improvement Plan (2008) – site specific studies should be conducted where possible. As upgrades in Burcher are of a limited impact/scale this may not be a priority but should remain a longer-term goal.

7.2. Burcher (Memorial) Park

The main park and Memorial Gates are an important outdoor community focal point and event space. The community obviously spends a great deal of effort in maintaining the park and have added their own memorials and achievements of the community. Council’s role should be to facilitate the community to manage the park.

A small master plan / planting plan for this park may be worthwhile to ensure that there is a longer-term plan for desired projects and landscape so they don’t create an inconsistent ‘cluttering’ effect and are suitable for its mixed-use.

Whilst it is part of the character to re-use and recycle park furniture – attempts should be made to replace furniture over time with compatible and robust materials in similar colour schemes. The old BBQs should be removed and/or consolidated with the newer electric BBQ or enclosed for table space with improved seating.

The community have requested updated play equipment. The current equipment looks in reasonable condition but some additional pieces could be added where they don’t create clutter and are safe for children. Shade for the play area is also needed and currently in Council 2022/2023 budget.

This is often the first stop point for tourists to Burcher so either here (or outside the Hotel) would be an ideal place for a small Central Information Board with a short history of Burcher, explanation of the points of interests / services / facilities, and key emergency contact numbers.

Council should continue to support small villages with an outdoors crew attending a minimum of two (2) times a year working with the community for a couple of days on maintenance, repainting and vegetation management/ replanting.
7.3. Recreation Ground / Camping Area

We understand the sportsground is primarily used for an annual cricket competition. If there was more regular use then the cricket nets could be upgraded (not costed). The tennis courts also need maintenance (only if used) (not costed). The cricket ground has a basic shelter that could use some seating.

Existing play equipment either requires maintenance or consolidation with the park play equipment. A 2008 survey indicated some would like goal posts installed but there would need to be clarification it would be used.

There is potential for some additional shade tree planting around key facilities for amenity in summer. There is a new amenities block being constructed for the camping ground and sportsground. No additional works have been highlighted for the sportsground at this time. The community has suggested some additional waste bins outside the RFS shed and camping ground.

The camping ground has good access on a dirt track for tents and caravans. There may need to be improved information / education about this facility on suitable websites (especially those used by regular travellers, ‘grey-nomads’, and avid bird-watchers who may be visiting Lake Cowal and other vegetated areas. No additional works have been highlighted for the campground at this time.

7.4. Golf Course

The golf course apparently is used occasionally through the year (except summer as there is no water). Whilst it is a bush course with limited facilities, it is still a significant piece of recreational infrastructure with a small golf clubhouse. Further discussions with the local golf members may elicit opportunities to increase usage of the golf course and attract visitors to Burcher.

7.5. GrainCorp Facility / Closed Rail Line

The GrainCorp facility and closed rail line are a key site that requires further investigation. There are some important heritage features including (but not limited to) the Burcher Railway Terminus and Railway Master’s Residence that need protection and accessibility for appreciation. Previous community surveys have suggested opening up walking trails along the closed rail line but this may require the line to be formally closed and needs consultation with the rail authorities (further investigation required/not costed).
### 8. Summary Action Table (Subject to Community Consultation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item Description (does not include labour if constructed by Council or the community)</th>
<th>Indicative Timing: Short (1-3 years) / Medium (3-5 years) / Long (&gt;5 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENTRANCE DESIGN &amp; SIGNAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dandaloo Road/The Gipps Way intersection - Signage to Lake Cowal / Free Camping / Golf Course / Hotel in Burcher</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Widen/upgrade entrance sign blister w</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Replant entrance sign blister with low maintenance plantings</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Repainting Town Entrance Signs (every 5-8 years)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Navigation signage on Bena St /Kurrajong St to Camping/Golf/Hall/Churches</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Central (tourist) information board - 1 panel with small shade structure (information to be provided by community / regional bird watching opp.)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Signage for new museum at hall added in Bena Street</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sign at Ripley's Rest Area with list of Facilities at Burcher</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Signage for Pioneers Memorial/old Post Office at The Gipps Way</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Signage for Bena Street (through road / local road - two way)(if required)</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN CENTRE / MAIN STREET(S) - STREET UPGRADES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Extend footpath - Bena Street (north side) east of Park (~60m)</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Extend kerb &amp; gutter - Bena Street (north side) east of Park (~36m)</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Extend footpath - Bena Street (south side) west of Kurrajong St (~120m)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Extend kerb &amp; gutter - Bena St (south side) infill sections (~57m)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Extend kerb &amp; gutter - Bena Street (north side) west of Kurrajong St (~80m)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Roadside edges fixed and widened (need to determine locations)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Kurrajong / Bena St intersection - formalise &amp; seal</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bena St central parking area outside hotel - formalise landscape edges</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Narrow seal Kurrajong Street (6m seal on 8m gravel by 130m long)</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Upgrade existing footpath Bena St (south side) to 1.2m wide (~165m)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Seal parts Myall &amp; Curran Streets (narrow seal)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Seal Lake Cowal Road (~42 km)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN CENTRE / MAIN STREET(S) - BUILDING / SITE UPGRADES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Windmill Bena Street - repairs</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Hall - fix leaking roof on annexe side</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Hall - fix exit signs</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Relocate museum to the hall</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Repaint Hall (possible mural/artwork if no heritage impact)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Review &amp; upgrade drainage to rear of Anglican Church</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN CENTRE / MAIN STREET(S) - LANDSCAPE UPGRADES</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Street tree master plan (Bena &amp; Kurrajong Streets)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tree planting &amp; protectors at two entrances to village</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Bena St street trees &amp; protectors (supplementary)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Kurrajong St street trees &amp; protectors (supplementary)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>