

# Nomination Form

## Community Use of Vacant Rail Buildings Community Use Program

Date: 19/12/2013

<b>Station Precinct:</b> Newstead
<b>Building or Lot Number:</b> Lots 11, 17, 14
<b>Local Government Area:</b> Mount Alexander Shire
<b>Who are the participating groups? Please complete for each group that will be involved and provide additional documentation if required.</b>
<b>1. Name of the Organisation/Group:</b> Newstead 2021 Inc. (N2021) <b>Contact:</b> Geoff Park or Genevieve Barlow <b>Telephone number:</b> 5476 2593/0427 762 633 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:geoff.park@naturaldecisions.com.au">geoff.park@naturaldecisions.com.au</a> / <a href="mailto:genwords@bigpond.net.au">genwords@bigpond.net.au</a> <b>Postal Address:</b> C/- Newstead Rural Transaction Centre, 45 Lyons Street Newstead 3462 <b>Legal status eg: incorporated, not-for-profit, company limited:</b> Incorporated <b>ABN:</b> 45859452623
<b>2. Name of the Organisation/Group:</b> Newstead Salon <b>Contact:</b> Horse <b>Telephone number:</b> 0431329543 Email: <a href="mailto:hihorse978@gmail.com">hihorse978@gmail.com</a> <b>Postal Address:</b> C/- Newstead Rural Transaction Centre, 45 Lyons Street Newstead 3462 <b>Legal status eg: incorporated, not-for-profit, company limited:</b> - <b>ABN/ACN:</b> -
<b>1. Name of the Organisation/Group:</b> Friends of Newstead Station <b>Contact:</b> Janet Barker <b>Telephone number:</b> 0439 003 469 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ecologica@bigpond.com">ecologica@bigpond.com</a> <b>Postal Address:</b> C/- Newstead 2021 Inc., C/- Newstead Rural Transaction Centre, 45 Lyons Street Newstead 3462 <b>Legal status eg: incorporated, not-for-profit, company limited:</b> Auspiced by N2021 <b>ABN (N2021):</b> 45859452623

## **1. WHAT WILL THE ACTIVITY ACHIEVE?**

### **1.1. What is the role and objectives of the groups involved?**

N2021 is an umbrella organisation for a range of community groups and projects, including Newstead Community Garden, Renewable Newstead, Friends of Newstead Station, the community website, and is the key community planning group in Newstead. Friends of the Station were formed in September 2012 in response to community concerns about the condition of the railway station and surrounds. The Salon was formed in February 2011 as a means for local artists to share ideas and inspiration. These groups have a single vision, to renew and restore the Newstead Station as an arts/business hub, creative gathering place for the community and means to link both sides of the township.

### **1.2. What are the proposed community activities and uses proposed for the rail building?**

The station will become a creative, economic and social focal point for the community through:

- ▶ art gallery and studio/office/workshop/space (for rent and workshop use) and kitchen/cafe area in main station building, studio space (for rent and workshop use) in the goods shed,
- ▶ accommodation to provide for 'artist in residence' programs and other (income generating) accommodation options,
- ▶ performance spaces (music, theatre, film, etc.) using the station platform, buildings and surrounding landscaped parkland,
- ▶ identified start/finish point for local and regional walking tracks, cycling trails (including provision of local and regional arts, business and tourism information) and a link to the east side of township via a pedestrian bridge over the Loddon River,
- ▶ provision of further venue options for existing large and small scale events, such as Newstead Live!, Words in Winter, Newstead Short Story Tattoo, Chopped Rod festival, etc,
- ▶ landscaped art/sculpture garden, incorporating local native species and sculpture for sale.

### **1.3 How many hours a week will the building be used and for what time periods?**

The building will be in use at least 40 hours each week, with the studio/office spaces rented out to practicing artists or professionals on a monthly basis, the gallery/workshop space open on weekends, public holidays and by appointment, and the surrounding station precinct/gardens accessible all hours for community use. A program of workshops and events will be developed to ensure the building is well utilised, vibrant and welcoming. Some after-hours events and functions are also planned. The accommodation will be available for short and longer term lease.

Ideally we would see the station occupied in some form over the bulk of the time/year. One of the key aspects behind the vacant use project is to create a sense of energy, pride and community on this side of the township - the current state of the station buildings adds to and emphasises the current sense of decline and inactivity.

## **2. WHY IS THE ACTIVITY NEEDED?**

### **2.1 What will be the benefits of the proposed activities to the local community/region.**

The project will create a lasting social, cultural and economic legacy for our community through increased participation in the arts, and a more connected, creative and engaged community. We will see local and regional economic development, through increased tourism and trade, and support for our creative community (10% of our population are practising artists) to collaborate, develop and provide outlets for their work.

A number of professionals and small businesses that are currently operating from offices in Castlemaine or further afield, as well as home based activities, will have a local focus/base for networking, knowledge and skills exchange, with the added benefit of keeping businesses, talent and expertise in - and contributing to - our local community.

The station can also provide a base for other community groups and activities currently without a 'home', e.g. The Newstead Echo, our monthly community newsletter, run by a committee of volunteers and a physical presence/contact point for the Newstead Community Plan.

Existing events that attract large audiences to the town will also benefit from an additional venue/focus, especially on the west side of the township where current economic activity is limited. The project will improve the amenity and activity at Newstead's western town entrance and provide flow on benefits to the other businesses on this side of the river.

The restoration and continued care and use of our iconic railway buildings, and a greater understanding of their history and heritage, will be a key benefit for the community, particularly as it links to other iconic sites, such as the nearby Newstead Butter Factory (now privately owned and used for furniture making and other design, also with plans for public activity), courthouse, mechanics institute, etc.

The railway precinct provides the "missing link" to bring together our community, both physically and culturally.

## **2.2 Are the proposed activities in demand and responding to identified needs in the community? Please provide any evidence of community needs analysis, identification of priorities, local plans etc)**

The proposed activities have emerged from an extensive community planning process, undertaken over nine months during 2012/2013. Concerns about the railway station's condition and positive ideas on how to renew it emerged during the planning process and manifested as one of the top ten priorities for our community. (See attached Newstead Community Plan 2013 - page 4). This recent plan builds on previous community planning activities which all have highlighted the need for Newstead to care for its heritage assets, support local economic development and importantly, to continue to sustain and develop community connections and social engagement, through places and activities.

The community planning process also identified the need to build business and employment opportunities locally, particularly in light of the many home based businesses operating beyond the main street retailers (See Newstead Community Plan 2013 - page 7). The creation of a business hub with shared office/meeting spaces or community enterprise was seen as a key action. Since the plan was published, a group of 8-10 home based workers have met fortnightly to provide support, kinship, and exchange knowledge and information. They have expressed interest in a business hub and also developing a broader business strategy for Newstead.

## **2.3 Do you see any opportunities to promote and expand your activities to encourage wider community participation in the new location?**

The station precinct provides many new opportunities for our community, especially for those young and older residents, in the short and longer term including:

- ▶ developing an ongoing program of activities, including exhibitions, artist markets, artists in residence programs, and artist-run workshops, which will invite involvement from individuals and groups specific to Newstead's demographic (e.g. single mothers, pensioners, people with a disability, carers, young children)
- ▶ use of the facilities by the community, local groups and training providers for teaching and training purposes (eg. Castlemaine Community House, local TAFEs, adult learning providers, U3A, Newstead primary and preschools, Newstead Mens' Shed, Newstead Community Garden, etc). We would also look to draw on models for community and neighbourhood houses for ongoing funding and management of the space
- ▶ Use of the facilities to focus on/cater to businesses, especially home-based and sole-operator businesses, such as developing workshops, events and mentoring programs for local businesses, including farming enterprises. We would look to Workspaces Australia and other similar models for inspiration and guidance
- ▶ using the Loddon River valley and surrounding natural environments to provide a focus for linking art and place, and involving environmental groups (Landcare, Connecting Country, Trust for Nature) in the process to create a strong sense of place and identity, including in the development of a landscaped art garden
- ▶ exploring the history of the local indigenous owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung and first contact with Europeans
- ▶ exploring the European history (Newstead and District Historical Society, Maldon Historic Railway, Castlemaine Historical Society, Museum of Victoria) of the area and specifically the railway station and its role in Newstead's development
- ▶ integrating the philosophy and principles of the ' Accessible Newstead' project to ensure the station precinct is accessible to all
- ▶ drawing on Newstead's active volunteerism through the 40+ community groups that gather in our community (CWA to Spinners, football/netball to croquet) and our legacy of strong local leadership (Newstead was the smallest Shire in the State prior to amalgamation in 1990s)
- ▶ extending the reach of the arts precinct to tertiary and higher education arts students (Latrobe Bendigo and Ballarat Universities, TAFE) as a venue to display their work and gain real world experience via exhibitions and collaboration with local artists
- ▶ engaging the local (and global) cyberspace community (via Facebook, web, social media) to participate in the project as another place-making activity
- ▶ creating opportunities to incorporate new media and technology through linkages to local IT expertise and artists and business professionals working in new media
- ▶ Exploring opportunities for both private commission and community art projects that will target the specific participation of individuals and groups across the community
- ▶ Investigating ways to collaborate with other CVU projects and groups around the state, and other arts/business based community enterprises, including the idea of a "CVU open day" with participating communities

#### **2.4 How have you engaged the wider community to develop and generate support for your proposal?**

As noted, the recent community planning process revealed a wide level of support for the proposal, from right across our community. The Friends of Newstead Station group, from a gathering of half a dozen interested locals has grown to around 50 people. Our local Councillor and Mayor, Mount Alexander Shire's Heritage Advisory Officer and Arts Officer are also strong supporters of the proposal. The project is strongly aligned with the Mount Alexander Shire Council Plan (2013-2017) as

well as Council's Arts Strategy (2011-2015) and will provide a strong example to other communities and shires. Our State and Federal local members are also informed and supportive of our efforts to restore and renew the station buildings. Importantly local artists and home-based businesses have come on board to express support for the arts/business hub. We have also met with the current leasee of the goods shed to discuss future plans, including incorporating the goods shed into the project, with a positive response.

The three groups listed on the Nomination Form prepared and submitted an application to the Regional Arts Fund's 2013 "Small Town Transformation" project, based on this proposal. Whilst our application was highly commended, we were unsuccessful securing the grant (in part due to the fact that we had not yet secured a community lease or similar agreement with VicTrack) but the development of the grant proposal was a valuable way to gauge community support and also to clarify our vision and aims for the station, as well as potential supporters and financial considerations.

A high level of engagement and participation already exists around this project. Fundamental to the philosophy of this project is that the Newstead station buildings will be the catalyst to reconnect our community and bring both sides of town alive.

### **3. WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITY?**

#### **3.1 Who are your current customers or participants and what are the current rates of involvement?**

As noted, the development of our "Small Town Transformation" submission revealed a wide level of support for the proposal, from right across our community. Importantly, over 50 artists registered their support for the proposal and suggested ways they would use or support the station as an arts hub. Currently there is no dedicated space in Newstead for local artists to gather, work or collaborate. Several artists have expressed the need for a studio space with power or other equipment to enable them to practice and develop their craft, or to provide an outlet for sales. Other artists have expressed an interest in running workshops and events for the community/community groups/individuals. Whilst the 'art scene' in Newstead is healthy, much of it is unrecognised or under-appreciated by the wider community and the station's arts hub will be a way to bring out the skills and talents to both the community and wider public audience.

Likewise, many small businesses in Newstead operate at home or away from the local area and would value a place to connect, share skills and ideas and reduce isolation. No formal traders or business group exists in the town and the station would create an opportunity to bring diverse professional and service industries together to benefit the community. Around a dozen local small businesses have been meeting and networking since the Community Plan launch.

Current events such as Newstead Live!, Chopped Rod Festival and the Short Story Tattoo bring thousands of visitors to our town and all provide an important economic boost to small businesses and volunteer groups in the community. The station proposal will add to their impact and also provide a focal point for new community enterprise.

Mount Alexander Shire has funding (\$800,000) and plans for a walking/cycle track from Newstead to Guildford following the existing railway line route and the station would be a logical start/finish point. Potential exists for economic development, through providing tourism information, bike hire, walking and cycling tours - self guided or guided - and other activities (e.g. photography workshops, drawing or painting, etc.) as well as on-site accommodation.

#### **3.2 Who will the enterprise employ (either paid or volunteer) and will your activities build capacity in the community?**

Initially the project will be reliant on volunteers - primarily from N2021, Friends of Newstead Station and the Salon - to establish the project. A Station Board or Management Committee will be formed from across the community (see below) to develop policies and protocols for the station's use and to source tenants and venue users. These activities will also build skills and capacity in our community, as well as provide greater connection across sectors of the community, beyond the arts and business.

In the medium/long term, we aim to employ a Station Manager/Master to run the day to day operations of the station, take bookings, develop programs and build the economic sustainability of the enterprise. Key to this would be attracting permanent tenants, alongside others who would use the studio spaces on both regular and casual basis.

Incorporating the Goods Shed into the station precinct would also boost the profile and economic potential of the site, both from using/leasing its internal spaces and also installation of solar panels on its roof to generate power (and potentially a net provider of funds for the station precinct). Artists have expressed the need for larger workspaces at the precinct, e.g. for activities such as sculpture and screen-printing, and the Goods Shed would be an ideal space to house them and significantly add to the drawing power of the precinct.

Newstead is renowned for its high level of community volunteerism and participation in community affairs. We have a strong sense of place and identity and one of the key premises behind this proposal is to build community capacity, socially, culturally and economically.

The local community will be engaged both directly and indirectly with the project through:

- ▶ Establishment of a Project Steering Group and working groups (e.g. art spaces & programming, artistic commissions, landscaping, and trails & connections) involving local expertise, along with regional representation where required
- ▶ Community input to more specific aspects, such as artworks and walking trails
- ▶ Encouraging skilled local tradespeople to tender for the restoration and associated works
- ▶ Involving a range of art-forms to ensure greater artist/community involvement. Alongside sculpture, specific projects at the hub could include oral history, spoken word performance, graphic design, IT, music, theatre, visual arts, new media, ceramics etc
- ▶ Featuring an ongoing program of events and artist run activities, including workshops for community members (inc. childrens' activities), artist residencies, artist markets, salons, exhibitions and gatherings for artists to share skills, ideas and collaborate.
- ▶ Featuring an ongoing program of business/community enterprise events and activities, as above
- ▶ Paying homage to Newstead's rich history and involving the work and resources of the Newstead Historical Society, other history resources around the State, the traditional owners of the area, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans, and local producers - winemakers, apiarists, grain growers, wool and livestock producers, berry growers and orchardists, as well as the Newstead Community Garden and produce exchange
- ▶ Using the local knowledge of field naturalists, farmers and other experts in soils, geology, flora and fauna and landscape ecology will ensure the project reflects the town's strong sense of place (at the crossroads of river, forest and plains) and informs and inspires the art outcomes
- ▶ Promoting and utilising local businesses and services within the town
- ▶ Connecting with railway groups (such as Maldon Historic Railways) individuals and other communities (Beaufort, Yarragon, Creswick, Maryborough, etc.) that have revitalised their stations and heritage buildings, as well as other artist-run spaces in rural areas (e.g. Castlemaine's Lot 19, Cowwarr Arts Space, Anglesea Art House, Yinnar Arc, etc.)
- ▶ Consulting workspaces and business hubs in rural areas (e.g. Halford Street precinct in Castlemaine)

- ▶ Involving and expanding existing events and community activities, to encourage multi-use of the station precinct
- ▶ Linking with Renewable Newstead – this established project will advise on incorporation of Ecologically Sustainable Design principles and integration of renewable energy elements
- ▶ Using the Newstead Echo (monthly community newsletter), local media, and local websites to publicise the project, the town's transformation and creative outcomes
- ▶ Building on the current local network of artists to develop skills and share ideas and collaborate in work and projects, as well as other successful community-based art groups, such as Southern Forest Arts in WA and their "Understorey" project and gallery space, and "Such Fertile Ground" closer to home.

### **3.3 What might be the effects on the town/region of moving your activity to the railway site?**

Newstead has seen little new business created since its heydays, up until the late 1960s, when the railway station was the hub of economic and social activity in our community, vital to farmers for the transport of their primary products (alongside two sale-yards, farm suppliers, several mechanics, etc), the Newstead Butter Factory's value added produce, as well passenger transport. The closure of the railway line spelt the death knell for much local industry and enterprise.

The station can now provide a new economic and social hub for the community which also reflects the changing population and a more sustainable future. The development of an arts/business hub does not preclude the possibility of trains running again on our railway line and in could in fact complement transport linkages provided by rail travel. Other station enterprises around the state have shown that it is possible to bring life and improved returns to a small community. Local businesses, including the supermarket and bakery, cafe, general store, hotels and post office will all benefit, as well as service industries. Local skills and talents can remain in our community, rather than having to find studio or workspaces in the larger centres of Castlemaine or Maryborough, or further afield to Melbourne.

The station project will integrate a town divided by two highways and a river, create a dynamic heart for our town and a focal point for arts, business and cultural development, with the heritage station buildings surrounded by landscaped parkland and giving a vibrant meeting point for gatherings, walking, biking, art events, visitors and tourism. Newstead is the place that visitors pass through, on their way to heritage listed Maldon, Ballarat or Castlemaine, or the spas of Daylesford. The station precinct will provide travellers with a reason to stop and spend time in our crossroads town.

Newstead lacks a town square, a central public place for community gatherings. The station precinct offers this and the opportunity to create a place for people to learn, gain skills and confidence, share ideas and energy and engage people with art and enterprise. The station buildings are surrounded by extensive open space and the War Memorial Park; linking these areas will add to the attraction of the site and also create opportunities for outdoor public use.

The project will convert and connect a wasteland and abandoned relic to create a beautiful and a lasting legacy for the community. We anticipate a new generation of Newsteadians that are creative, engaged and active in the arts and the economic life our community. Small towns must continue to be creative to manage rapid and constant change, the challenges of climate change, local issues such as population growth, land-use changes, fire, flood and drought. Our renewed station can be the catalyst for that creativity.

## 4. HOW WILL YOU SUPPORT YOUR ACTIVITIES?

### Governance and Management

#### 4.1 Will one of the participating groups be a lead group or is an equal partnership proposed?

N2021 serves as an umbrella organisation for many groups in the town and will form the lead group but representatives from the other groups and across the community will be represented, as discussed previously.

Newstead has a history of community leadership and delivering multi-million dollar projects to benefit the town, including the Newstead Community Centre, Swimming Pool and the soon to be re-developed Newstead Recreation Reserve.

Newstead 2021, established in 2008, has a track record of instigating and delivering community planning projects, from consultation and ideas through to the final product. Examples include the 2008 Newstead 2021 Summit (project outcomes included Newstead Community Garden, Newstead Pirate Playground, Newstead Wireless, Renewable Newstead (some \$200,000 worth of projects combined since 2008) and has acted as a mentor for other community groups across the Mount Alexander Shire and beyond.

Newstead 2021 is involved in large scale, complex projects (Renewable Newstead) and services and working with large numbers of volunteers. Members of this group are routinely involved in the conception and management of similar projects, to the scale of \$2-5 million across the government and private sector.

#### 4.2 Will you need to establish a management committee? (Community or council-appointed).

A Management Committee will be established, comprising members with a broad range of skills including project management, evaluation, community engagement, the arts, heritage, philanthropy and sustainability and environmental assessment. A broad cross section from the community/existing groups will also result in enhanced community connections.

We envisage representation from:

- Mount Alexander Shire (MAS) Council e.g. MAS Arts Officer
- Maldon & District Community Bank
- Financial sector
- Local Business
- Local Artists
- Friends of Station
- Newstead 2021
- Existing Events (e.g. Chopped Festival, Newstead Live)
- Newstead and District Historical Society
- MAS Trails and Cycling C'tee
- Marketing/IT/Design
- MAS Council Heritage Advisor
- Mount Alexander Sustainability Group (Renewable Energy)
- Newstead Rural Transaction Centre

Other advisory roles will be engaged as needed, e.g. Lot 19 in Castlemaine could be invited to provide advice/expertise on establishing artist-run events, etc.

## **Business Case**

### **4.4 How will the proposed use of the building be sustained over a period of time?**

The key to the economic sustainability of the enterprise will be to balance the community and commercial use of the spaces. Our local Newstead Rural Transaction Centre, now in its ninth year of operation, provides such a model. Income streams will include lease and rentals, artists commissions and workshop fees, venue hire, accommodation, catering. Additional funding will be sought through grants, funding and philanthropic avenues.

Community use and support will be sustained through the varied and active program of events as well as more spontaneous gatherings and Salons. Active involvement of the community in its establishment and ongoing operations at the station, as well as continued promotion, publicity and use of social media and technology will keep people engaged and informed.

The physical and social nature of the precinct will lend itself to continued use, as well as the development of a more detailed business and marketing plan to utilise the spaces within the station buildings in the medium and long term.

Solar power generation could be a key aspect of the project, given the positive alignment of the buildings and the size of array possible for both Goods Shed and station buildings, given Renewable Newstead's work in this area.

A key to the long term economic success of the project will be the appointment of a paid Station Manager/Master to continue to develop opportunities to develop and utilise the space and to create new initiatives, including a local arts and business development strategy. Ways to fund this position will continue to be explored during the CVU funding period.

In addition there will be the economic benefit flowing directly to the local artists and businesses that operate out of the spaces.

### **4.5 What are the estimated start-up and ongoing operational costs (including overheads)? Do you have the capacity to support this.**

Initially the project will rely on volunteer input and donations, as well as the CVU support. We estimate that the station will be able to support and sustain its operational costs from the first year of operation. Whilst the station buildings will be our focus for the first phase of the project, we have a longer term vision for developing the overall railway precinct.

The recently completed Feasibility Study for opening the Castlemaine-Maryborough line provides a useful indication of the costs to revitalise the station building (although this was for a fully operating railway station function). We have estimated additional costs as follows: Art Garden and Landscaping (design, plan, construction) - \$70,000, Sewerage connection - \$7000, Water Tanks - 2x 20,000L - \$6000, Solar system - \$30,000

#### **The basic startup costs for the project will be as follows:**

- Basic modifications and fittings (lighting, painting, security, etc) - \$3,000
- Gallery Space fitout - lighting, hanging - \$5000
- Workshop/Studio fittings and fixtures - \$5,000
- Computer and Office Equip - \$5,000

- Kitchen/cafe Fit-out - \$10,000
- Council Fees, Licenses, Business Regos, Certificates, etc - \$1,000
- Website (inc. website web hosting + \$165/year + domain name rego \$40) - \$1200
- Accommodation fit-out (furniture etc) - \$5500
- Phone connection - \$300
- ADSL connection - \$500
- Signage - \$3000

Total - \$39,500

**The Estimated Annual Operational costs will be:**

- Insurance - public liability, building, contents, etc. - \$1200
- Bank Fees - \$120
- Fees - council, registrations, etc. - \$1200
- Power - \$1200
- Water/Sewerage - usage \$660 per year, plus consumption \$800 per year - \$1460
- Gas - \$120/bottle x 5 bottles - \$600
- Phone - \$80/month - \$960
- Internet - \$100/month - \$1200
- Catering/Consumables - \$2,000
- Marketing/Advertising - \$2,000
- IT/web domains website upkeep - \$200/year
- Cleaning/Housekeeping - \$20/hr - \$360
- Office costs - stationary, postage, printing - \$2000
- Repair and Maintenance - \$500
- Lease of buildings - \$1250 (max)

Total - \$16,250

Our aim would be to fund a part-time Station Master/Manager(\$30,000 per year) after the end of the CVU funding. We would be working towards that aim during the set up phase and in the next five years of the lease.

**4.6 How will maintenance, insurance and service costs be met during the funding period and beyond eg: will you be charging the users of the activity, do you raise revenue in other ways, will you be seeking support from the community use program until June 2015.**

In the first instance the station will be largely reliant on the CVU program until June 2015, as well as significant volunteer labour, time and support to set up and establish programs and activities.

The main income to cover operational and ongoing costs will be through the lease of cafe, studio/workspace/exhibition spaces, an annual membership of the arts/business hub, and from artists residency/accommodation. Fundraising through an annual art auction and other events will also contribute to annual costs.

Income from the artist-run workshops will go to the artists themselves - we will only receive the fees from leasing the space - because the aim for the project is to generate and encourage other economic and social development in the community. The station will provide the platform (and marketing/promotion) for these activities.

Other funding will also be sought to enhance and augment the project (see 4.8).

Given the level of investment in the restoration by VicTrack, we anticipate that maintenance costs for the first 10 - 15 years of the project will be minimal.

#### **4.7 How much weekly/annual income do you estimate you will be generating?**

Our community ranks in the lower quartile of socioeconomic disadvantage, 51.3% are employed full time, 38.7% are working on a part time basis and median household income is \$746.00 per week. We would be charging a nominal fee for studio/work spaces in order to jump start the enterprise, generate energy and interest and encourage uptake. At the end of the CVU program we anticipate increasing costs to users, based on their turnover.

##### **Budgeted Income:**

- Rentals studios - \$30/week - e.g. 2 studios (3 spaces could be used as studios) over 35 weeks - \$2100
- Exhibition space - \$200 for 2 months (\$25/week) - \$1300
- 15% on commissions - uncertain, not budgeted.
- Accommodation/Residency - \$60/night B&B and/or sliding scale \$180/wk for artists - 8 weekends @\$120/2 nights - \$960, 12 nights @ \$60 - \$720, 6 weeks residency \$1080 - total \$2760
- Catering/kitchen/Cafe rental - \$120 week x 40 weeks - \$4800
- Arts membership/Friends membership - 100 members at \$20/year - \$2000
- Bike hire space - \$15/week - \$525
- Other music and event hire - \$500
- Yearly dinner and art auction - \$3000
- Grants - \$5000

Total - \$21,985

#### **4.8 Will you be seeking funding from other sources?**

We will be investigating local government community grants as well as other state and federal sources of funding. Local sponsorship from businesses and philanthropic bodies, local volunteerism and in-kind contributions will also be a part of our revenue raising.

Social media and Crowd funding applications (e.g. Pozible) will also be investigated as other fundraising options.

Potential sources include:

- Mount Alexander Shire (MAS) Community Grants - to run events, community engagement activities, equipment for art studios
- Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) - artist professional development and community engagement activities, events
- Regional Development Victoria (RDA) - infrastructure, economic development, business planning and strategic planning
- Maldon and District Community Bank (MDCB) - for equipment, artistic activities and events, additional fit out
- Federal Government Volunteers Grants for further equipment and studio fit outs
- Foundation for Rural and Regional renewal (FRRR) - Seeds of Renewal for infrastructure and community engagement activities

#### **4.9 Will you be seeking cash or in-kind contributions from within the community, local business or council?**

See above. The venue users themselves, including local community groups, artists and businesses will also be making significant in-kind contributions to the project.

#### **4.10 How does the proposed use align with local plans and strategies described in 2.2?**

##### **►Newstead Community Plan 2013**

Newstead's community Plan, launched in August 2013, summarises the community's shared values, aspirations and needs. It took 12 months to develop. During this time people from Newstead and its surrounding areas were asked to identify what they loved about living in the area and how they would like it to be in the next 25 years. Focus groups, surveys, a planning day, conversations online, in the local primary school and on the street as well as one-on-one interviews helped distill what mattered most. Among other things, the plan identified priority projects. Refurbishing and revitalising the Newstead Rail Station as an arts precinct heads the community's top 10 priorities. Throughout the planning process residents expressed the strong desire to restore the station. People see it as invaluable part of the town's history and future and feel strongly that it should not be let fall into dereliction and that its restoration can be the genesis of a wider plan to reconnect the two sides of town. This would be via a walking track and pedestrian bridge over the Loddon River linking the rail station in the south with the school in the north of town. The idea to develop it as a place to nourish and nurture the area's many practicing artists was considered most apt.

The community plan is part of Mount Alexander Shire's shire-wide consultation. The shire council is now working to incorporate this first of nine community plans developed by the shire's towns into its own strategies.

##### **►Mount Alexander Shire Council Plan 2013 – 2017**

Newstead is part of Mount Alexander Shire. The shire's 2013-2017 plan has four goals. They are to:

*1. Have a vibrant healthy community that is healthy, resilient and involved.*

– The Newstead Rail Station renewal would involve a wide cross section of our community including artists (running workshops and hiring studios), small business owners (leasing office space) and those overseeing the rail station project. have better community facilities including maintaining and renewing facilities to provide better buildings, roads, footpaths, tracks and trails, parks and gardens.

*2. Maintain and renew our community facilities to provide better buildings, roads, footpaths, tracks and trails, parks and gardens, for our community*

– The Newstead Rail Station is currently empty and vulnerable to dereliction and vandalism. This project would see it renewed and re-opened as the beating heart of an arts and business centre.

*3. Have a thriving local economy including promoting the shire as a great place to invest, innovate and do business and encouraging tourism by showcasing our heritage, environment and local creative industries.*

- The Newstead Rail Project would install creative artists and small businesses as tenants bringing renewed life and attention to a historic building.

*4. Build sustainable communities by demonstrating leadership in sustainability and fostering the development of environmentally responsible, livable communities.*

- A proposed arts garden surrounding the Newstead rail station would promote the importance of sustainability.

### ► **Mount Alexander Shire Arts Strategy 2011 - 2015**

Further, the Newstead Rail Station project specifically matches the shire's arts strategy intentions in the following ways:

*Goal 1: Valuing the vibrant arts and cultural sector's contribution to the shire by strategies specifically:*

- 1.2.1 Supporting community cultural development projects with a local focus to help build social cohesion, a sense of communal ownership of place and generate a sense of local pride.*
- 1.2.2 Exploring the potential for the integration of permanent public art as a value adding and place making opportunity that will contribute to high quality public space through the integration of art, design, architecture and related elements.*
- 1.3.2 Continuing to develop Cultural Tourism as a key tourism product and Mount Alexander Shire as a significant arts and cultural destination.*
- 1.3.3 Promoting opportunities for artists and local arts industry enterprises and become engaged in tourism strategies and planning processes.*
- 1.3.4 Enhancing business and enterprise development opportunities for local arts and culture organisations and individuals in order to attract new markets.*

*Goal 2: Nurturing the sustained growth of arts and cultural industries, specifically*

- 2.2.4 Working with other community venues to promote and maximise partnership opportunities.*
- 2.3.1 Continuing to provide support to cultural organisations through source funding.*

*Goal 3: celebrating and promoting cultural activity in Mount Alexander Shire, specifically*

- 3.1.2 Encouraging community art projects that help the community explore and express their heritage and creatively tell local stories.*
- 3.1.3 Utilising the rich stock of heritage buildings and places of significance for the display of contemporary art works or contemporary performing arts activities.*
- 3.2.2 Strengthening networks of existing local festivals and events to develop initiatives and strategies that improve sustainability through professional development opportunities and connectedness.*
- 3.3.1 Through partnerships with arts and cultural organisations, develop and produce innovative marketing and promotion plans and activities.*
- 3.3.3 Promote the growth of greater arts activity through initiatives such as local artists-in-residency opportunities and linking artists to existing cultural events and supporting their participation.*

There is strong alignment between the aspiration of the Newstead Community, as expressed in the Newstead Community Plan, to develop a community arts precinct at the Newstead Railway Station and the vision, principles, goals and strategies of the MAS Arts Strategy.

### ► **Mount Alexander Shire Economic Development Strategy 2013-2017**

The Newstead Rail Station Project specifically matches the shire's economic development goals, specifically Goal 2 which is to "*promote collaboration and innovation*". The project would see community groups in Newstead collaborating and working together to promote, market and use the building.

The third goal of the shire's economic development strategy to "*promote targeted learning, skill development and business support*" also matches the aims of our project.

## Leasing Requirements

### **4.11 If you already undertake this activity, where are you currently located, how long have you been operating and how do you support your current leasing arrangements?**

None of the groups listed currently have a permanent 'home'; some practitioners have individual leasing arrangements.

### **4.12 Is the proposal supported by your local council? If so, please note name, role, dates and brief summary of discussions and outcomes.**

We have been in consultation with both Mount Alexander Shire (MAS) and the Maldon and District Community Bank (MDCB) in relation to this project and specifically regarding the leasing arrangements. Both MAS and the MDCB are supportive of the proposal. A summary of major discussions is as follows:

- ▶ *January 2013 - December 2013* - ongoing discussions with local Councillor and Mayor, Michael Redden about the station project, resulting in positive response, support and representation on our behalf to fellow Councillors, CEO and senior staff
- ▶ *January/February 2013* - discussions with MAS (Carolyn Wallace, Director Economic and Social Development; Tegan Lang, Arts Officer) about RAV Small Town Transformation Funding Proposal for revitalisation of the station as an arts hub. Letter of support provided by Sue Jones, Manager Community Activity and Culture (20/2/2013)
- ▶ *August 16, 2013* - launch of Newstead Community Plan and highlight of priority projects, inc. The station renewal, to an audience of 100 community members, MAS Councillors, State and Federal representatives, MDCB board members and staff and other agency representatives
- ▶ *November 8, 2013* - Newstead Community Plan briefing provided to a full meeting of Councillors and senior Council staff, including the railway proposal, with positive feedback about process and outcomes
- ▶ *November 28, 2013* - meeting with MDCB Chair Ron Snep and Executive Officer Karly Smith to discuss project including in-principle lease agreement resulting in positive response and request to submit further information for next meeting of the MDCB Board to consider
- ▶ *December 6, 2013* - meeting with MAS CEO Phil Rowland to discuss project and in-principle lease agreement by MAS. Council unable to sign agreement until after March 2014 when next full Council meeting is held but MAS is supportive of the project/CVU nomination
- ▶ *December 17, 2013* - MDCB Board meeting supports CVU nomination form and in-principle agreement to sign as head leasee, subject to continued negotiations with MAS over their role as leasee in the longer term

### **4.13 Has an in-principle lease agreement been negotiated with council?**

As discussed, an in-principle lease agreement has been negotiated with the Maldon and District Community Bank for the CVU nomination.

We intend to continue discussions with MAS regarding their role as head leasee post CVU funding, with a view to Council taking over the lease agreement from MDCB in the medium/longer term.

#### **4.14 What insurance does your group or proposed lessee currently hold?**

- ▶MDCB - Directors & Officers Liability Insurance (Chubb) and \$10 million Public Liability (CGU)
- ▶N2021 - Public Liability insurance

### **Building Maintenance**

#### **4.15 Who will be responsible for the building?**

The community users/groups will be responsible for all non-major maintenance of the buildings and surrounds, excluding structural maintenance. VicTrack will be responsible for any significant maintenance issues as part of their ongoing Building Asset Maintenance Budget Program.

#### **4.16 How will the participating group/s contribute to regular general maintenance and upkeep of the building and surrounds?**

Part of the responsibility of user groups and individuals will be to ensure regular upkeep of their workspace and also the broader space; this will be outlined in a membership agreement. Regular working bees will be held and involve members and supporters of the station. We will look to other community-run models for the best ways to implement a regular program of maintenance.

### **Building Requirements**

#### **4.17 What kind of building space will be needed for each activity and can some spaces be combined to enable multiple uses?**

The station buildings lend themselves to a multitude of uses and in some case multiple uses. In the railway station itself are four smaller rooms which can serve as studio workspaces or office spaces, the ticketing area and large room as a gallery/workshop or entertaining/performance/cafe space and the accommodation area can be modified to suit multiple or single occupancy. The platform area and entryway can also be used as a gallery or entertaining/performance/cafe space, the lamp room could be used as either a gallery space or storage area or another workshop/studio space. The existing laundry would be suitable to site new toilets and kitchen area, creating more flexibility for exhibition and workshop areas.

Outdoor areas around the buildings also lend themselves to multiple uses for gathering, performance and exhibition. Even the external walls could be a focus for possible activity (eg. projecting lighting or film onto the walls of the goods shed across from the station platform).

The focus will be to provide a number of multi-use spaces that can be easily adapted to specific user needs. A kitchen/cafe function area will be critical to the operation of the space, both financially and as a way to connect and engage the various users of the space and also the broader public.

The Goods Shed would also provide expanded options and business opportunities, especially for artists requiring a larger or more specific working space (eg. welding, sculpture, ceramics) and where occupational health and safety may be an issue for co-users (eg dust, paints, ventilation, heat). Including the goods shed as part of the arts/business hub would ensure the integrity of the project in keeping with its history and heritage and ensure greater involvement of artists and community in the longer term.

Ideally expanded/improved accommodation space would be able to generate greater returns from the space.

**4.18 Are there any activities, events or equipment you are proposing to use that have specific building requirements eg: power points, ramp access, telecommunication connections, storage, plumbing, ventilation / exhaust, lighting, wall fixtures, air-conditioning etc.**

In keeping with "Accessible Newstead" propose to make the station wheelchair accessible; however minimal modification would be required for this. Much of the existing infrastructure could be used or easily modified to suit the needs of activities and users. The current kitchen and bathroom/toilet areas will need remodelling/major renovation to meet basic needs. Additional storage, wall fixtures, lighting and heating/cooling would also be required.

We would aim to make minimal changes to the integrity of the existing buildings and any changes would be as unobtrusive as possible, in line with the recommendations of the Shire Heritage Advisor. It would be important that existing plumbing, wiring, etc. is made safe and to ensure it will meet the requirements of the renewal and new uses for the station.

We would also aim to incorporate Renewable Newstead into the restoration of the building, with the idea that the project could be a net exporter of energy and help offset costs to run the project.

**4.19 Attachments:**

1. *Newstead Community Plan - <http://newsteadplan.wordpress.com/the-final-plan/>*
2. *Letter of in-principle agreement for lease and support - Maldon and District Community Bank*
3. *Letter of support - Mount Alexander Shire*
4. *Letter of support - Maree Edwards, MP*
5. *Letter of Support - Lisa Chesters, MP*
6. *Letter of Support - Louise Honman, MAS Shire Heritage Advisor*