DRAFT Vision

You know you've arrived in McLaren Vale when you leave suburbia behind and step into somewhere truly special.

The shift is immediate. The air feels fresher, the sky wider and valleys frame your view. Native trees line the road and dappled sunshine moves across textured facades, natural materials and green edges. There is a quiet confidence here - not flashy, not forced - just a clear sense of identity and care.

This is a working wine region with a living town at its centre. Agriculture is visible. Heritage is respected. Creativity is welcomed. It feels generous and grounded.

Entrances are green and welcoming in every direction. Streets are cool, shaded and invite you to slow down. You want to walk rather than drive. Wide paths connect to side streets, courtyards and trails. Bikes move easily between the town and wineries. Traffic slows naturally. Children cross safely. Trucks bypass the centre. Parking exists but doesn't dominate. Movement feels calm, reliable and intuitive.

Buildings are occupied and alive. Frontages - whether business, residence or verge - feel thoughtful, connected and maintained. Timber, stone and natural materials sit alongside contemporary touches. It's also the life between the buildings that draws attention. There are long lunches that drift into the afternoon, outdoor tables under vines, a lively piazza that hums without chaos. Fires glow in winter. Seasonal colour shifts throughout the year. You hear birds between conversations. It feels relaxed yet alive - somewhere that you naturally linger longer.

Locals run into neighbours while visitors ask for recommendations - and everyone feels like they belong. Families use the playground. Teenagers have spaces that are theirs. Older residents play boules in the shade. First Nations stories and the town's agricultural and cultural roots are visible and respected. Events align with vintage, harvest, bushing and blossom, drawing the community together and in rhythm with our landscape - we are part of something larger.

Wine remains central - but it is not the only story. The economy is diversified and future-ready. Agriculture, food, knowledge industries and creative ventures sit alongside cellar doors. Empty buildings become temporary studios or pop ups. Mentoring supports new enterprise. Entertainment is available into the evening. Public art unfolds as you walk, telling stories of land, season and culture. Young people see opportunity here. Businesses see stability and growth. Residents see a town that works for everyday life, not just the weekends.

You can feel it working because people stay. They sit. They talk. They return. They care for the place as stewards, not just users. There is a shared direction - a balance between protection and progress.

McLaren Vale is not trying to be somewhere else. It is distinctly itself - a village with heart, history and a future shaped together.

Key Themes

Across all tables - whether economic, streetscape, community or transport - the same patterns kept repeating:

🌿 A Cooler, Greener, Softer Town

People consistently described:

- Lush trees and greenery
- Dappled sunshine
- Shade
- Biodiversity
- Waterpoints
- Soft signage
- Natural materials (timber, stone)
- Harsh spaces needing softening

This is about:

- Climate resilience
- Comfort
- Walkability
- Pride
- Dwell time

Public spaces will be shaded, biodiverse and seasonally expressive. Dappled light, trees and water will define the experience. Cooling and greening are essential infrastructure, not decoration. The community wants the public realm to feel generous and restorative — not hot, exposed and car-dominated.

🚶 A Walkable Village, Not a Through-Road

There is strong desire for:

- Less cars - Trucks bypassing town
- Slower traffic
- Wider footpaths
- Pedestrian crossings
- Clear wayfinding
- Bike infrastructure: Links to Shiraz Trail, McLaren to Flat trail, other bike paths & wineries

The signal is clear:

> McLaren Vale will prioritise people over vehicles. Main Road will function as a civic space — not a bypass. Walking, cycling and lingering will feel easier than rushing through. Main Road should feel like a place, not a highway.

🤝 A Town of Belonging, Energy & Shared Life

People consistently described:

- Welcoming
- Safe
- Inclusive
- Intergenerational
- First Nations recognition
- Child-friendly - play areas
- Generous
- Locals and visitors together
- Youth opportunity
- Family spaces
- Piazza alive
- Night economy
- Seasonal events
- Art trails
- Food trucks
- Start-ups and incubators
- Artist studios in empty buildings

This is about:

- Belonging
- Social connection
- Economic diversification
- Youth retention
- Evening vitality
- Seasonal rhythm
- Intergenerational exchange
- Community pride

Spaces will be safe, welcoming and alive across generations. Public life will extend beyond weekends and into evenings. The piazza, side streets and underused buildings will host activity — from seasonal agricultural celebrations to art, food and enterprise. Young people will see opportunity here. First Nations, historic and contemporary stories will be visible and respected. Belonging will be as important as beautification — because a town that feels alive all year is a town that stays resilient.

🌾 Agriculture + Nature + Heritage as Core Identity

Repeated insistence on:

- Protect agricultural land
- Paddock to plate
- Sustainable wine growing
- Heritage buildings
- Timber & natural materials
- First Nations stories
- Rural character
- Bespoke, not generic

This is critical:

> Growth must strengthen rural character — not erode it. All future development will strengthen the Vale's rural identity. Wine, paddock-to-plate, bush, beach and historic stories (First Nations and heritage) will be visibly woven into the township. Unique, distinctive not generic.

🏗️ Diversification & Economic Resilience

- Knowledge industry
- Diversification of sectors
- Artist studios in empty shops
- Business incubator
- Multiple storey dwellings
- Density to support services
- Renew projects
- Services to Old Mill Court

There's recognition: The economy must evolve — but in a way that aligns with identity. We will protect existing businesses while fostering new sectors — including knowledge industries, creative studios, and innovation hubs.Vacant spaces will become opportunities.
Diversification strengthens resilience.