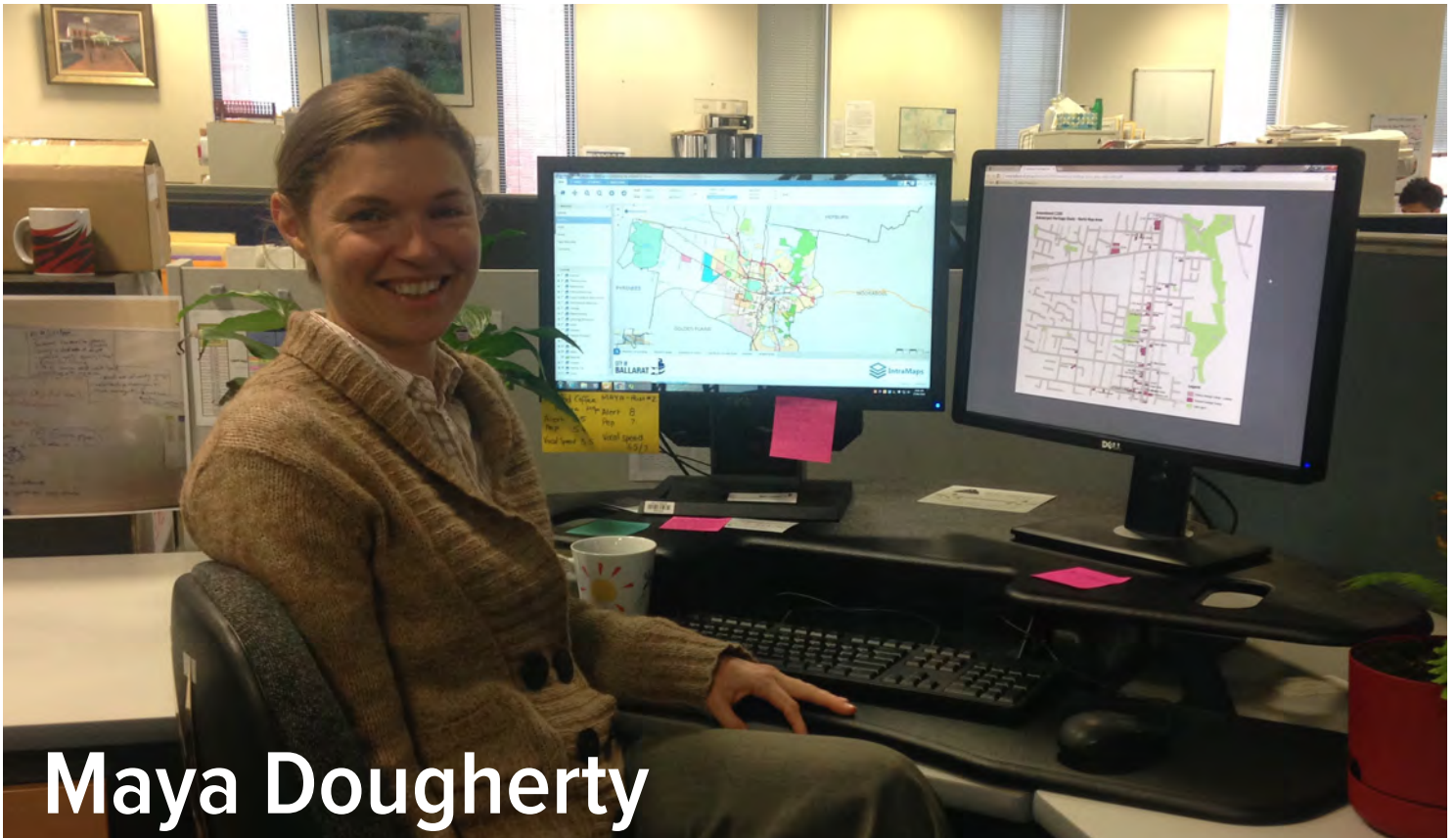


# I am a Geographer ...



## Maya Dougherty

### Strategic Planner, City of Ballarat

I studied Geography in high school, then completed a Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Management), then a Masters of Urban Planning at university.

I work in the Strategic Planning team at the City of Ballarat. We look at how we can shape change with the aim of ensuring cities are sustainable and liveable for communities into the future. This includes analysing past events, current situations and projections for the future and applying technical knowledge to the built- and natural landscapes. I work with other town planners, as well as other sectors within Ballarat Council.

Although I call myself a strategic planner, the work I do can be described as Geography – the definition being “*Geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environment*”. My education in both Environment and Urban Planning has led my daily considerations to be shaped by that context. When looking at future uses for the land, I think about the natural environment e.g. topography,

flood data, flora and fauna, bushfire risk; the built environment e.g. historical buildings, solar access, infrastructure; and I also think about people’s relationship with the environment. Community engagement is a large part of my role and I ask users of the land to identify what it means to them and consider that as part of a future plan for an area.

I remember the senior Geography project I completed in high school. It was the first proper research assignment I had ever undertaken and I loved looking at the interrelationships of the landscape, rainfall, vegetation and soil and analysing the data to try to discover what that might mean for future management of the land. This led me to study environmental management, which in turn piqued my interest in the relationships between the built environment and the natural environment. So then I studied planning.

An understanding of relationships between people and environment is key for urban planning, however further study on urban environments would be required to work in the field.