



# Central Goldfields Shire Council

Economic Development  
Strategy 2020 - 2025





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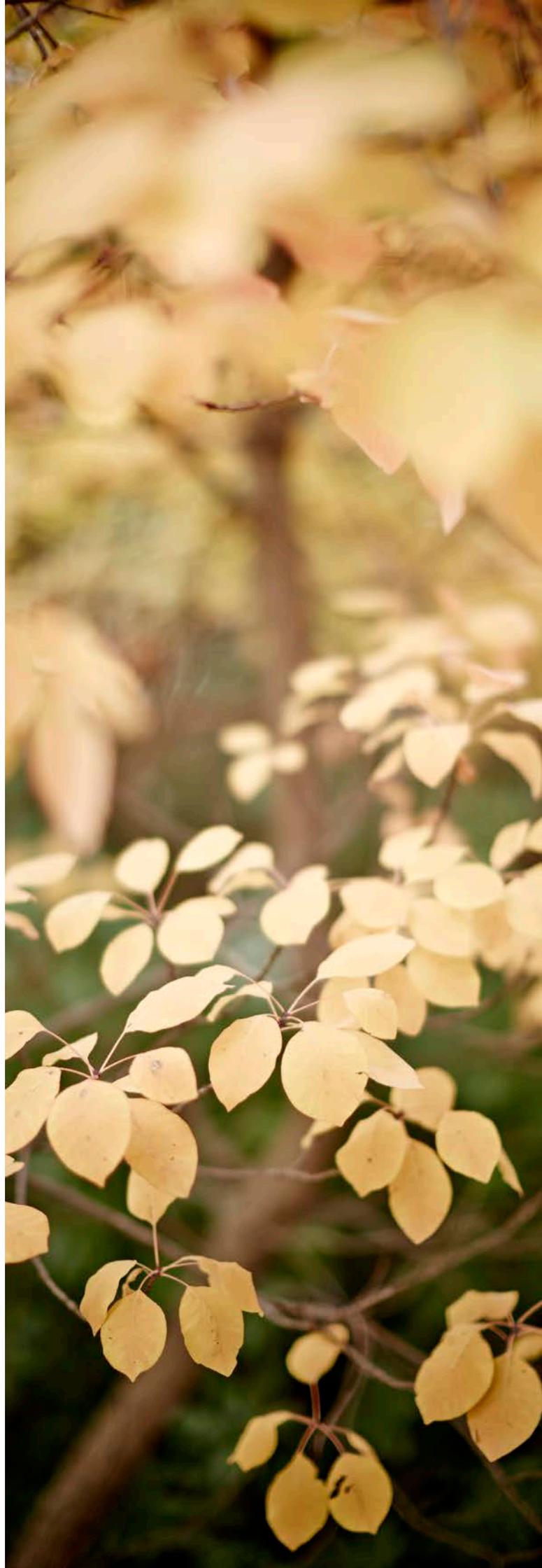
### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges the ancestors and descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung. We acknowledge that their forebears are the Traditional Owners of the area we are on and have been for many thousands of years. The Djaara have performed age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Council gratefully acknowledges the contribution made by stakeholders who contributed to the consultation phase by attending workshops and meetings, and completing surveys, including:

- Community members;
- Local businesses;
- Government agencies; and
- Central Goldfields Shire Council.



## Acronyms

<b>AAGR</b>	Average Annual Growth Rate
<b>AEMO</b>	Australian Energy Market Operator
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>CRM</b>	Customer Relationship Management
<b>DELWP</b>	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
<b>DMP</b>	Destination Management Plan
<b>EDS</b>	Economic Development Strategy
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>LQ</b>	Location Quotient
<b>MEC</b>	Maryborough Education Centre
<b>NBN</b>	National Broadband Network
<b>RDV</b>	Regional Development Victoria
<b>SEIFA</b>	Socio Economic Index For Areas
<b>SME</b>	Small to Medium Enterprise
<b>SRV</b>	Sport and Recreation Victoria
<b>VGTE</b>	Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive
<b>VPA</b>	Victorian Planning Authority

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Gross Regional Product</b>	The total value of final goods and services produced in the region over the period of one year.
<b>Output</b>	Represents the gross revenue generated by businesses/organisations in each of the industry sectors in a defined region. Gross revenue is also referred to as total sales or total income.
<b>Propulsive Industry</b>	Key drivers of the Central Goldfields economy in terms of regional exports, employment, value-added and local expenditure on goods and services (backward linkages)
<b>Regional Exports</b>	Represents the value (\$) of goods and services exported outside of the defined region that have been generated by businesses / organisations in each of the industry sectors within the region.
<b>Value-Added</b>	Represents the marginal economic value that is added by each industry sector in a defined region. Value-Added can be calculated by subtracting local expenditure and expenditure on regional imports from the output generated by an industry sector, or alternatively, by adding the Wages & Salaries paid to local employees, the gross operating surplus and taxes on products and production.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

Central Goldfields Shire Council is planning for the Shire's economic future by preparing an Economic Development Strategy, providing a clear vision and action plan for growing Central Goldfields economy.

The Strategy aims to encourage economic growth in the Shire and outline a clear economic focus for the key townships of Maryborough, Talbot, Carisbrook and Dunolly.

The Strategy considers the economic and demographic trends and macroeconomic influences that are impacting the local and regional economy. The research and analysis presented in this Strategy highlights the issues that should be addressed and the opportunities that could be unlocked to achieve positive outcomes for the Shire's economy and community.

The information in this Strategy is informed by independent research and analysis, as well as consultation with representatives of community groups, organisations, businesses and Government stakeholders.

### Economic Context

Central Goldfields Shire's economy is small relative to the broader Loddon Campaspe region, and is attributed to the lower population base. The Shire accounts for 6% of the region's population, 4% of employed persons and 4% of businesses. Resident, business and jobs attraction is needed to improve the long term economic conditions of the Shire.

Based on employment data, the industry strengths of the Shire are closely aligned to the Loddon Campaspe region, with the highest employing sectors identified as health care and social assistance, manufacturing and retail trade.

The profile of the Shire's economy highlights that there are a number of industries that are driving the local economy. These include:

- **Primary and trade industries** (agriculture, construction, manufacturing and transport);
- **Population-driven industries** (retail, hospitality, personal and household services);
- **Knowledge and public sector industries** (health, education and government agencies); and
- **Tourism** (accommodation, hospitality, arts and recreation services).

### Themes

Based on research, analysis and consultation, four key themes form the framework for the Economic Development Strategy.

1. **A Productive, Sustainable and Creative Shire**  
Leverage economic outcomes from industries of competitive advantage and growth sectors in the Shire such as health, education, agriculture and food manufacturing, as well as emerging industries including tourism, renewable energy and other green industries.
2. **Invest in People and Place**  
Address skills gaps by partnering with industry and the community to encourage a 'job ready' labour force. Prioritise investment initiatives that enhance liveability characteristics and build economic resilience.
3. **A Thriving Business Community**  
Provide business support through regular and meaningful engagement. Help businesses overcome specific challenges that they face and identify opportunities that could be further leveraged to achieve positive business outcomes.
4. **Tailored Economic Development Practice**  
Implement a tailored approach for economic development in Central Goldfields to ensure that industry growth is supported and aligned to the unique local conditions and resources available.

### **Transformative Projects**

A number of transformative projects in this Strategy are discussed below. Other ideas and opportunities are presented later in this Strategy.

#### **Satellite Tertiary Education Campus**

Engage with tertiary providers in the region to investigate the potential to establish a higher education campus in Maryborough. This could be delivered as a satellite campus to established providers in Ballarat or Bendigo. Collaborate and partner with institutions such as Federation University and Latrobe University to improve pathways for secondary students and increase the proportion of students enrolling and attaining tertiary level qualifications.

#### **Community Renewable Energy Project**

Support the delivery of a community-led renewable energy project in the Shire (e.g. small scale solar farm, waste to energy) and other green initiatives. The project should consider capacity building and social inclusion across the community and aim to reduce power costs.

#### **Retail Development Strategy**

Complete a Retail Development Strategy with core objectives focusing on nurturing resilience into the retail sector; identifying gaps in retail provision across the Shire's key townships; better equipping traders to respond to structural changes in the industry; and improving tourist retailing to service visitors.

#### **Maryborough Railway Station Masterplan, Arts and Cultural Hub**

Assess the feasibility of transforming the Maryborough Railway Station Precinct into an iconic, game changing local and visitor hub that accommodates a mix of tourism, commercial, transport and community uses.

#### **Talbot Waste Water Treatment Project**

Advocate for funding to support investment in reticulated sewerage infrastructure to allow for further investment, development and growth within Talbot.

#### **Resident Attraction Strategy**

Prepare a Resident Attraction Strategy to attract and retain residents to the Shire, focussing on attracting a diverse mix of age profiles to replenish the local labour force and address skills gaps that exist in the Shire.

#### **Maryborough Food Cluster**

Prepare an investment strategy for the food manufacturing industry, targeting food manufacturers to establish in Maryborough to create a regional scale food cluster.

#### **New Social Enterprise**

Engage with the Social Enterprise arm of Business Victoria to identify avenues to support the establishment of social enterprises in the Shire that align with the Shire's competitive industry strengths (e.g. food manufacturing, agriculture, green industries, health care, retail and hospitality).

#### **Age Care and Disability Co-operative**

Investigate the potential to establish an aged care and disability co-operative in Central Goldfields that delivers aged care services and home care packages for elderly persons and people with disabilities that need assistance.

#### **Better Approvals**

Investigate providing and implementing a more formal process to respond to planning enquiries. This could include an online resource administered through Council's website, or face-to-face sessions by appointment.

#### **A Co-working Facility**

Assess the feasibility of establishing a co-working facility in the Shire to support micro and home-based businesses.

#### **Economic Development Officer**

Appoint a full-time economic development officer to undertake the core roles and functions of the unit, including regular business engagement, proactive investment attraction, responding to investment enquiries, undertaking industry research and strengthening regional partnerships.

#### **Grow the Intensive Agricultural & Horticulture Industry**

Undertake an assessment for the expansion of intensive agricultural and horticultural uses in the Shire, such as hydroponics. This should consider availability of water, power, gas and other services.

## BACKGROUND

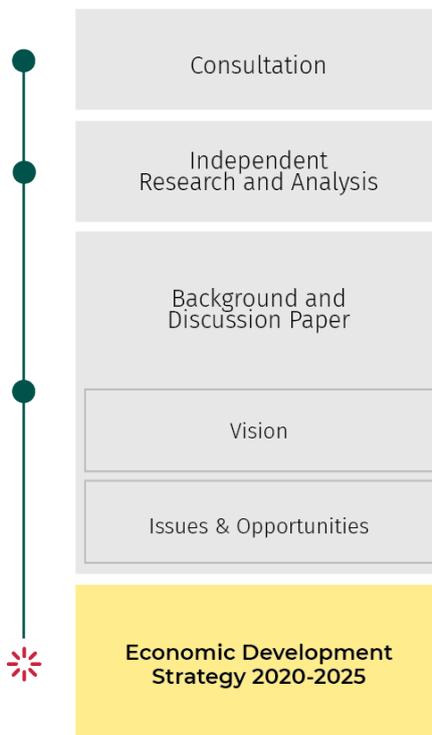
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The Strategy aims to encourage economic growth in the Shire and outlines a clear economic focus for the key townships of Maryborough, Talbot, Carisbrook and Dunolly.

### The Process

This Strategy considers the economic and demographic trends and macroeconomic influences that are impacting the local and regional economy. The research and analysis presented in this Strategy highlights the issues that should be addressed and the opportunities that could be unlocked to achieve positive outcomes for the Shire's economy and community.

The information in this Strategy is informed by independent research and analysis, as well as consultation with representatives of community groups, organisations, businesses and Government stakeholders.





### What is economic development?

At a high-level, economic development at a local government level is:

“To build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business and non-government sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation.”



### What is Council's role in economic development?

Local Government plays an important role in facilitating economic growth within their municipalities. Typically, Council's role in economic development includes business engagement and support, investment attraction, promoting liveability initiatives and undertaking advocacy efforts.

#### Common objectives adopted for economic development across Local Government include:

- Supporting the existing business base (promoting growth within the existing business base);
- Attracting new businesses and jobs (promoting growth by attracting new investment and businesses);
- Promoting liveability and sustainable communities; and
- Undertaking advocacy efforts.

## VISION AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Council's vision for this strategy sits within its overall vision for the Central Goldfields community and specific objectives for the local economy, as expressed in the Council Plan.

**Our Vision:**

*'To be a vibrant, thriving and inclusive community.'*

**Our Purpose:**

*'To achieve the best outcomes for the local community and having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions.'*

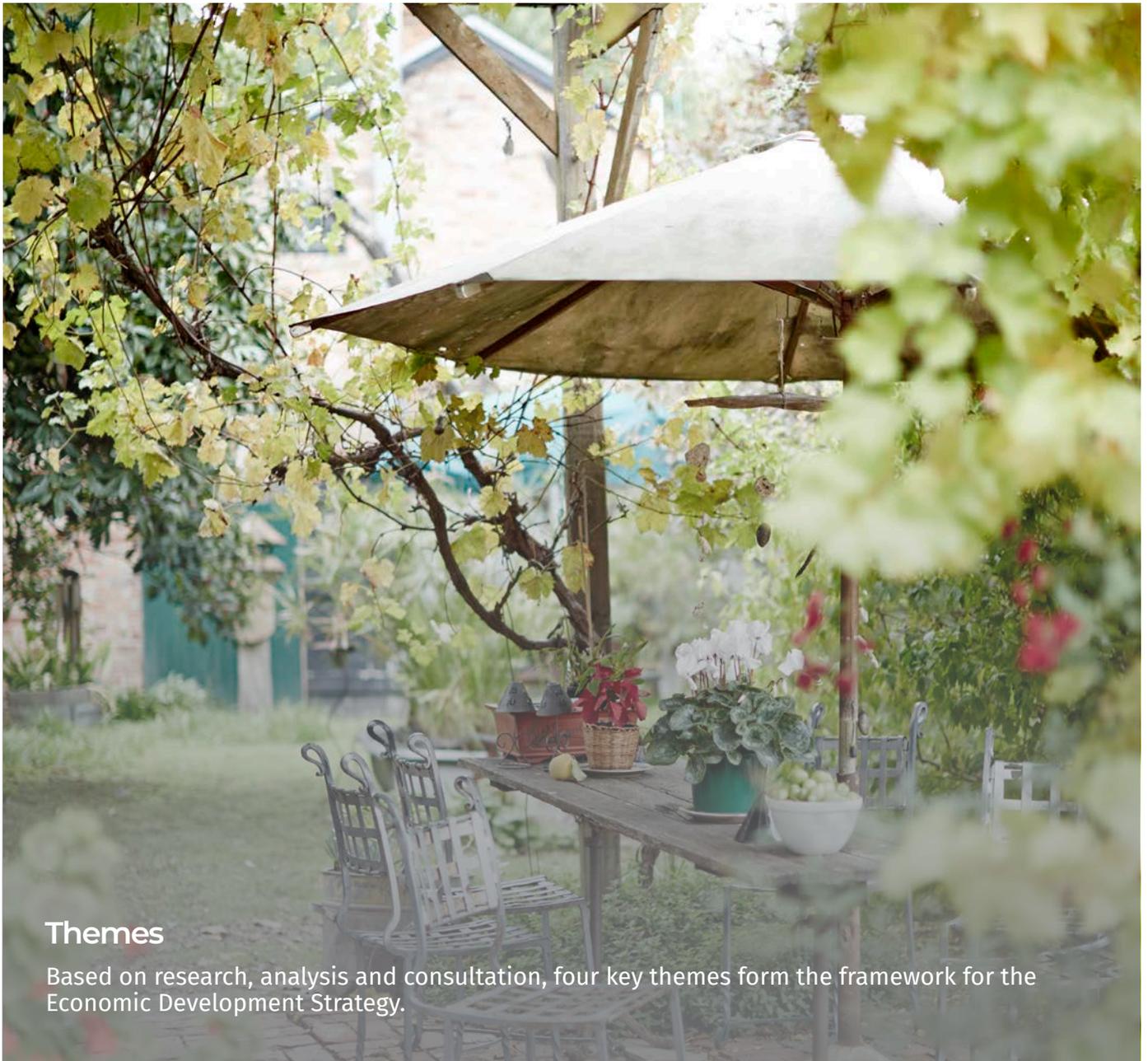
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**Economic Development Outcome:**  
**'A vibrant local economy which contributes to the municipality's economic prosperity.'**

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### Economic Objectives

- Facilitate an environment which is conducive to industry/business growth and employment growth and retention.
- Develop a skilled workforce to support economic growth
- Promote Central Goldfields as a place of choice to live, work and play
- Provide a supportive environment for existing business to prosper
- Strengthen and facilitate diversification for the Agri-business and food processing sectors
- Grow the digital capability of the Shire
- Capitalise on tourism and the visitor economy through growth of events and promotion of unique local experiences.



## Themes

Based on research, analysis and consultation, four key themes form the framework for the Economic Development Strategy.

**1**

### **A Productive, Sustainable and Creative Shire**

Leverage economic outcomes from industries of competitive advantage and growth sectors in the Shire such as health, education, agriculture and food manufacturing, as well as emerging industries including tourism, renewable energy and other green industries.

**2**

### **Invest in People and Place**

Address skills gaps by partnering with industry and the community to encourage a 'job ready' labour force.  
  
Prioritise investment initiatives that enhance liveability characteristics and build economic resilience.

**3**

### **A Thriving Business Community**

Provide business support through regular and meaningful engagement. Help businesses overcome specific challenges that they face and identify opportunities that could be further leveraged to achieve positive business outcomes.

**4**

### **Tailored Economic Development Practice**

Implement a tailored approach for economic development in Central Goldfields to ensure that industry growth is supported and aligned to the unique local conditions and resources available.

## LOCATION & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Location

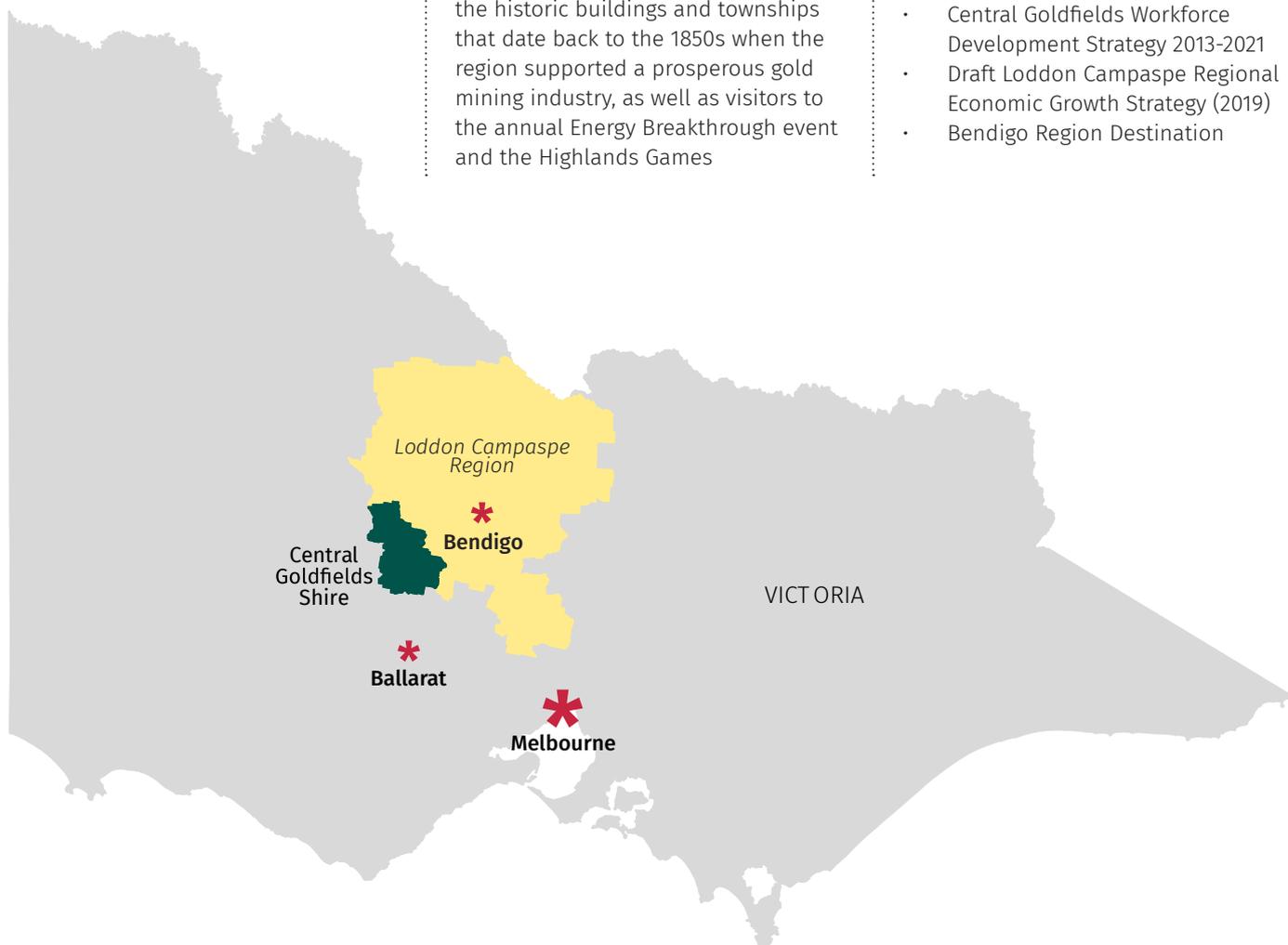
Central Goldfields Shire is located approximately 150 km north west of Melbourne. The Shire is uniquely located between two regional cities, approximately 40 km north of Ballarat and 55 km south west of Bendigo.

Located at the geographic heart of Victoria, Central Goldfields Shire is home to just over 13,000 people. Maryborough is the Shire’s major business centre and is a health and retail centre for surrounding towns including Castlemaine, St Arnaud, Avoca, Talbot and Dunolly. The Shire also hosts a number of food manufacturing businesses. The Shire is part of the Goldfields Tourist Region, with many visitors coming to see the historic buildings and townships that date back to the 1850s when the region supported a prosperous gold mining industry, as well as visitors to the annual Energy Breakthrough event and the Highlands Games

### Regional Context

The following documents have been reviewed to inform this Strategy:

- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2017-2021
- Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2018
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Freight Study (2018)
- Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (2014)
- Central Goldfields Workforce Development Strategy 2013-2021
- Draft Loddon Campaspe Regional Economic Growth Strategy (2019)
- Bendigo Region Destination



- Management Plan (2015)
- Central Goldfields 5-Year Events Strategy (2014)
- Destination Central Goldfields Strategic Tourism Plan 2010-2020
- Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan (2018)
- Maryborough Brand Disciplines Blueprint (2016)
- Developing Victoria’s Goldfields Into Australia’s Cultural Heritage Region (2012)
- Goldfields Visitor Services Review (2017)
- Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive Annual Plan (2018)

Whilst Central Goldfields Shire Council and regional tourism organisations have undertaken key strategic projects for tourism and events development such as the Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan, there are limited examples of strategic work that has been undertaken in respect of economic development in the Shire.

Central Goldfields’ proximity to Bendigo and Ballarat is of strategic importance, given the growth of these regional cities. There are long term opportunities for Central Goldfields to leverage from this growth in terms of population, business and visitor attraction.

More recently, Strategies and Plans have been prepared at a regional level such as the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan and the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan. The priorities for economic development in these Plans are focussed around capitalising on emerging strengths in tourism, renewable energy, resource recovery and green energy, and leveraging greater business, employment and investment outcomes from growth sectors such as health, education and professional services.

Another opportunity that is identified is the potential to grow the agriculture industry by improving supply-chains, providing greater water security and stability of supply and harnessing value-add opportunities such as downstream processing, food manufacturing and diversified farming activities.

Demonstrating an alignment of priorities of the EDS with regional strategies may present partnership and collaboration opportunities with regional stakeholders in order to deliver key projects, initiatives and programs over time.



## TRENDS INFLUENCING THE ECONOMY

### Overview

A number of trends are influencing the economy in Australia, including a transition that is occurring across a number of industry sectors due to a range of technological, environmental and social factors such as:

- Technological advancements and digital disruption;
- A growing and aging population, both domestically and globally;
- Changing work preferences (i.e. flexibility, collaboration, innovation); and
- Environmental challenges (e.g. climate change and extreme weather events, urban encroachment).

An overview of some of the key macroeconomic trends that are impacting the national and state economy are discussed.

### The Victorian Economy is diversifying

The Victorian economy is becoming more diversified and service driven. Manufacturing in Victoria accounts for 28% of Australia’s manufacturing production and contributes a larger share to the economy relative to other states and territories. However, Victoria is progressively transitioning from an industrial economy that has traditionally been reliant on Manufacturing to a more innovative, knowledge and services based economy.<sup>1</sup>

Recent analysis identifies that the sectors that are forecast to drive future economic growth in Victoria are health care, international education, wealth management, agribusiness and tourism. These sectors are well placed to capitalise on growth in Asia. Victoria can also capitalise on strengths in medical research, ICT, food processing and financial and insurance services.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of the knowledge economy is based on a highly educated labour force, sophisticated technologies and innovative products and services. The industry composition of Victoria’s economy will continue to shift toward services in the future. By 2046, it is projected that the most significant employment growth will occur in professional, scientific and technical services, financial and insurance services, healthcare and education.<sup>3</sup>

### Industries Forecast for Highest Employment Growth by 2046



Professional, Scientific and Technical Services



Healthcare and Education.



Financial and Insurance Services

<sup>1</sup> The Current and Future State of Victoria, Deloitte, 2016

<sup>2</sup> The Current and Future State of Victoria, Deloitte, 2016

<sup>3</sup> The Current and Future State of Victoria, Deloitte, 2016

### Digital Disruption is revolutionising the way we work

Automation, globalisation and collaboration are revolutionising the way we work. Technological advancements and the digitalisation of data analytics are creating a step change in technological capabilities, particularly given the advances in robotics, analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning.<sup>4</sup>

There is an evident disparity in the way in which business and industry are harnessing these technologies as they disrupt global economies. The industries that are most likely to be most significantly impacted by digitalisation include information and communication technology, media, professional services, financial and insurance services, wholesale trade and advanced manufacturing. Industries less likely to be impacted include agriculture, construction, hospitality, healthcare and government agencies.<sup>5</sup>

Approximately 70% of young people are entering the workforce in jobs that will be radically affected by automation and 60% of students are being trained in jobs that will be impacted by automation. The types of occupations that have been impacted by automation are generally cognitive and manual routine jobs, whilst non-routine jobs which require interpersonal skills, problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity are less exposed to automation. The jobs that will be most affected include

machinery operators, technicians and trades, administration and labourers.<sup>6</sup>

For Central Goldfields digital disruption will mostly affect the agricultural sector, manufacturing and wholesale industries in terms of labour force requirements. This may have a positive effect in terms of making these industries more financially viable and less reliant on labour.

### The Importance of Small to Medium Enterprise (SME)

Small to medium enterprise are crucial to the health of the Australian economy as they support approximately 7 million ongoing jobs and contribute 57% to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>7</sup>

Since 2005, the barriers to start a business are lower. In particular, costs have fallen 65%, encouraging younger people to start a business. Approximately 50% of SME's have been in business 10 years or less with 56% being either millennials or generation X, indicating strong growth in younger business owners.<sup>8</sup>

There is a notable difference between millennial SME's compared with others. Research shows that Millennials are more focussed on business investment having regard to business growth and are heavily reliant on digital channels as a means to generate revenue.<sup>9</sup>

50% of SME's identify competition as one of the key challenges facing business growth, citing that a

significant number of competitors in the industry is stymieing growth. However, many SME's believe the competitive advantage of the industry is the ability and capacity to be adaptable and flexible to change.<sup>10</sup>

Home based business is prominent in Central Goldfields and with the growth in lifestyle residents drawn to the region, SME's may increase over time.

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<sup>4</sup> What's Now and Next in Analytics, AI and Automation, McKinsey and Company, 2017  
<sup>5</sup> What's Now and Next in Analytics, AI and Automation, McKinsey and Company, 2017  
<sup>6</sup> The New Work Order, Foundation of Young Australians, 2017  
<sup>7</sup> Understanding Australia's Small to Medium Enterprises, NAB, 2017  
<sup>8</sup> Understanding Australia's Small to Medium Enterprises, NAB, 2017  
<sup>9</sup> Understanding Australia's Small to Medium Enterprises, NAB, 2017  
<sup>10</sup> Understanding Australia's Small to Medium Enterprises, NAB, 2017

## TRENDS INFLUENCING THE ECONOMY

### A Rise in the GIG Economy

‘The gig economy’ refers to contract, temporary and free-lance work. The popularity and regularity of people working within the gig economy is on the rise in Australia and New Zealand. Whilst there are clear examples of the gig economy across platforms such as Uber and Airbnb, it is also extending into roles such as administration, hospitality, marketing and graphic design.<sup>11</sup>

The gig economy is predominantly underpinned by advancements in technology, but is also largely driven by the younger cohorts entering the labour force who are seeking flexibility, as well as the growing demand for niche skills across various sectors.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst it is recognised that the gig economy will never replace permanent working arrangements, there is a need to recognise its growing popularity and understand the work implications, which may extend to a rise in home-based businesses and a lesser requirement for permanent business accommodation due to the ability to work remotely.

5G networks are the next generation of mobile internet connectivity, offering faster speeds and more reliable connections on smartphones and other devices. As with 4G before it, 5G is focused on mobile data.

#### 5G will provide:

**Australia is home to over 170 co-working spaces; 49% of which are located in Victoria. Of the co-working facilities in Victoria, only 7% are found in Regional Victoria.**

- Faster network speeds;
- Lower latency – the time it takes information to get from your phone to the wider internet and back again; and
- More simultaneous connections - 5G will allow more devices to connect to the network at the same time.

The 5G network will contribute to a rise in Internet of Things technology, providing the infrastructure needed to carry significant amounts of data, allowing for a smarter and more connected world. This will provide major advantages for businesses utilising technologies such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), robotics, drones and 3D printing. A limited number of Telcos have released the 5G network, but is expected to be rolled out throughout 2020.

### The growing popularity of Co-working Spaces

Australia is home to over 170 co-working spaces; 49% of which are located in Victoria. Of the co-working facilities in Victoria, only 7% are found in Regional Victoria.<sup>13</sup>

Co-working spaces provide the critical support infrastructure and services often required for businesses in their infancy to grow and mature. The benefits of the co-working model are associated with creating a space which supports collaboration, openness, knowledge sharing, innovation, and the user experience.<sup>14</sup>

Demand for co-working spaces is predominantly being driven by growth in tech and creative industries, but is also becoming increasingly popular amongst professional and financial service industries.<sup>15</sup>

The popularity of these types of facilities in regional areas are on the rise, with a growing number of facilities establishing in key regional areas including Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Warragul and Mildura.

Some examples of established co-working facilities in close proximity to Central Goldfields Shire are Runway in Ballarat, Synergize Hub in Bendigo and Cohoots Coworking in Castlemaine.

Given that 55% of business in Central Goldfields Shire are non-employing,<sup>16</sup> a co-working facility could be beneficial to micro-businesses in and around the Shire, providing benefits of temporary work spaces that

<sup>11</sup> Understanding the Gig Economy, SEEK, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Understanding the Gig Economy, SEEK, 2018

<sup>13</sup> Victorian Start-Up Ecosystem Report, LaunchVic, 2018

<sup>14</sup> The Australian Co-Working Market Report, Office Hub, 2018

<sup>15</sup> The Australian Co-Working Market Report, Office Hub, 2018

<sup>16</sup> Business entries/exit, Central Goldfields Shire, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018

provide support to businesses in their infancy by creating a professional and collaborative environment.

The Shire’s business base is much smaller when compared with Ballarat and Bendigo, therefore a co-working facility with a smaller floorplate may be more appropriate for Central Goldfields Shire. Further work would be required to assess the demand for a co-working facility, the types of existing businesses that would use such a facility and the delivery and operating model.

### The Global Demand for Food

Population growth and an increase in average incomes are driving an increase in global demand for food. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the global population is projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050; an additional 2 billion persons compared with 2017 (7.6 billion).<sup>17</sup>

Asia and the sub-continent are the fastest growing regions and will drive a large proportion of demand for food in the long term. The FAO estimates that the current level of global agricultural production will need to increase by 50% to meet the global demand for food by 2050.<sup>18</sup>

Food and fibre production across Australia has increased significantly in recent years, as a result of a growing international demand for Australian agricultural produce. Australia produced approximately 69.5m tonnes of food and fibre in

2017 compared with 56.7m tonnes in 2013, representing a 23% increase. In 2017, Victoria contributed one quarter (25%) of Australia’s total food and fibre production (11.2m tonnes, valued at \$12.8bn).<sup>19</sup>

Strong population growth domestically and internationally particularly in Asia and India, in conjunction with Australia’s strong reputation for high quality agricultural produce is expected to generate further demand for food and fibre production.<sup>20</sup>

Central Goldfields has a growing opportunity in intensive agriculture which will potentially link to the growing demand for food domestically and internationally. This is an area that is discussed further in the Economic Development Strategy framework.

## In 2017

**Victoria contributed one quarter (25%) of Australia’s total food and fibre production (11.2m tonnes, valued at \$12.8bn).**

### Restructuring of Manufacturing Activities

Employment in Manufacturing across Victoria is in decline. The loss in jobs is partly a result of the withdrawal from the automotive industry, but also a broader transition away from traditional manufacturing practices to more technical and advanced manufacturing. This is in response to strong international competition, particularly from Asia.<sup>21</sup>

Manufacturing remains an important industry in Victoria in terms of export value and value-added to the economy. Whilst the Manufacturing industry faces notable challenges, it is also in the midst of a transformational change through revolutionary technological advancements such as robotics, drones and 3D printing.<sup>22</sup>

Employment in manufacturing declined by 2% between 2011 and 2016 in the Shire. However, the jobs decline in manufacturing is significantly lower compared with the broader jobs loss experienced across Victoria. The lower decline in manufacturing jobs in the Shire is likely due to the growing sub-sector specialisation in food manufacturing, which has buoyed the sector through larger-scale business and investment attraction.

<sup>17</sup> Agricultural Outlook, OECD-FAO 2018 to 2027, 2018

<sup>18</sup> Agricultural Outlook, OECD-FAO 2018 to 2027, 2018

<sup>19</sup> Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report 2016/17, Agriculture Victoria, 2018

<sup>20</sup> Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report 2016/17, Agriculture Victoria, 2018

<sup>21</sup> The Current and Future State of Victoria, Deloitte, 2016

<sup>22</sup> Digital Disruption: What do Governments Need to Do? The Productivity Commission, 2016

## TRENDS INFLUENCING THE ECONOMY

### A Low Carbon Economy

In 2016, the Victorian Government committed to legislating a long-term target for Victoria of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Victoria's Climate Change Act (2017) aims to achieve a net zero greenhouse gas emissions, climate-resilient community and economy.<sup>23</sup>

In 2017, the State Government legislated renewable energy generation targets of 25% by 2020 and 40% by 2025. This is estimated to reduce average annual power costs for medium-sized businesses by \$2,500 and for large companies by \$140,000 and reduce Victoria's electricity sector emissions by approximately 16% between 2019/20 and 2034/35.<sup>24</sup>

There is a trend towards decentralised electricity generation from renewable energy resources and an increase in energy storage, with generation plants ranging from small-scale behind the meter installations through to front of meter large-scale solar and wind.

There is growing investment in solar and wind energy production projects in regional and rural areas across Victoria. Western Victoria is experiencing an influx of investment into renewables, with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) predicating that 5,000 megawatts of new renewable energy will be generated in the state's west by 2025. The key constraint for renewable energy generation in the west are the capacity limitations of the existing system to store and distribute power.

The AEMO estimates that investment in the order of \$370 million is required to upgrade the network, including double circuit transmission lines between Ballarat, Bulgana and Sydenham, augmentations to existing lines between Moorabool and Terang and Red Cliffs and Bendigo, as well as a possible new terminal station at Ballarat.

Biomass is another renewable energy opportunity that is developing in some regional areas. Biomass refers to the fuel that is developed from organic materials, a renewable and sustainable source of energy used to create electricity or other forms of power. Some examples of materials that make up biomass fuels are scrap lumber, forest debris, certain crops, and manure.

Bioenergy production and its associated value chain could benefit regional development in a number of ways, some of which satisfy numerous objectives such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, re-using waste, generating power in a sustainable way and generating flow-on economic benefits such as employment and output.

Industries that rely on biomass produced from broadacre farming systems provide the most suitable candidates due to the long value chains and the size of their potential production of energy.

Biomass is an emerging source of energy production. There are a number of well-established bio-diesel, bio-gas

and wood waste production sites in Regional Victoria. Examples include Barnawartha, Leongatha, Learmonth, Laverton and Kaniva.

There are a growing number of solar and wind projects completed, underway or proposed across the State, with a number of solar projects emerging in the Shire. Central Goldfields has an opportunity to attract further investment into renewable projects over time.

Investment in renewable energy may present flow-on opportunities for new projects, particularly for rural properties and agricultural businesses seeking to diversify their income with off-farm income streams. Given the current size and scale of approved solar projects in the Shire, Central Goldfields may be more suited to accommodate small to medium sized solar, wind and biomass projects, as well as smaller community-led projects and initiatives.

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**In 2016, the Victorian Government committed to legislating a long-term target for Victoria of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**

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<sup>23</sup> Climate Change Act, DELWP, 2017

<sup>24</sup> Australia's 2030 Climate Change Target, Department of Energy and Environment, 2015

## Growing Demand for Health Care

The number of people aged 65 years and over in Victoria is likely to almost triple from 2016 to 2051 as the significant population currently aged between 45 to 65 years moves into the 'senior' and 'elderly' category. The forecast ageing of the population is partly attributed to the increase in life expectancies borne from advancements in health care and social assistance.<sup>25</sup>

Global healthcare is growing rapidly and is attributed to a significant increase in global healthcare spending, increasing from \$7 trillion USD in 2015 to a projected \$8.7 trillion USD in 2020. Consistent increases in global healthcare spending is attributed to:<sup>26</sup>

- Revenue pressure and rising industry costs are demanding more innovative and cost effective solutions to patient care;
- An ageing population is resulting in higher health related issues in developed economies;
- Higher-income households;
- Increase in chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes, heart disease); and
- Unprecedented population growth in developing and developed economies.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the highest employing sector in the Shire, accounting for 17% of employed persons. The sector experienced a 7% (+47 jobs) increase between 2011 and 2016, indicating that the sector is growing.

The impending redevelopment of the Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS) hospital will strengthen the role of health care industry in the Shire.

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**Global healthcare is growing rapidly and is attributed to a significant increase in global healthcare spending, increasing from \$7 trillion USD in 2015 to a projected \$8.7 trillion USD in 2020.**

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## The Changing Nature of the Retail Industry

Retail and consumer spending are important components of the economy, as they provide economic stimulus through direct expenditure. Despite steady employment growth, household finances have come under pressure from stagnant wages growth and declining wealth, and this has reduced consumer sentiment and household's inclination to spend.

Whilst retail turnover growth slowed throughout the second half of 2018 and into 2019, there is a more positive outlook for the sector, expecting to improve in the second half of 2019.<sup>27</sup>

Digital retailing is becoming more prevalent. In 2018, the number of online purchases in Australia grew by over 20%. While Australia's major capital cities still drive much of the online purchasing, there is also notable growth in online shopping in regional areas. It is expected that growth will continue to disrupt traditional forms of retailing.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the growth in online sales, 90% of retail transactions remain in-store, indicating that in-store retailing remains the preferred option. With the growing prevalence of online retail activity, retailers are increasing their omnichannel retail strategy, enabling people to interact either in-store or online, on a multitude of devices.<sup>29</sup>

Some retailers and retail centres are responding to online competition by seeking to improve the shopping "experience", something that cannot be replicated online. This includes a greater focus on hospitality, entertainment and meeting places co-located with retailers.<sup>30</sup>

Maryborough is the retail hub for the Shire and has a strong and loyal local catchment. Consideration of expanding the retail mix with a focus on experience and entertainment should be considered in order to strengthen the appeal of Maryborough as a retail and tourist destination.

<sup>25</sup> Population Forecasts, Victoria in Future, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), 2016

<sup>26</sup> Global Healthcare Outlook, Deloitte, 2016

<sup>27</sup> Australia Economic Outlook, Deloitte, 2019

<sup>28</sup> Inside Australian Online Shopping, e-commerce industry report, Australia Post, 2019

<sup>29</sup> Retail Trends: What is Digital's Impact on the Retail Sector, PWC, 2017

<sup>30</sup> Retail Trends: What is Digital's Impact on the Retail Sector, PWC, 2017

## ECONOMIC PROFILE

Central Goldfields Shire’s economy is small relative to the broader region, and is attributed to the lower population base. The Shire accounts for 6% of the region’s population, 4% of employed persons and 4% of businesses.

Based on employment data, the industry strengths of the Shire are closely aligned to the Loddon Campaspe region, with the highest employing sectors identified as health care and social assistance, manufacturing and retail trade.

The Shire has a small population base. Resident, business and jobs attraction is needed to improve the long term economic conditions of the Shire.

### Industry Composition

The profile of the Central Goldfields Shire economy is based on a range of economic indicators, including employment and business by industry and sub-sector.

The economic profile provides a snapshot of the Shire’s areas of competitive advantage and identifies emerging and growth sectors, as well as those that may be in decline. The profile of the Shire’s economy highlights that there are a number of industries that are driving the local economy. These include:

- **Primary and trade industries** (agriculture, construction, manufacturing and transport);
- **Population-driven industries** (retail, hospitality, personal and household services);
- **Knowledge and public sector industries** (health, education and government agencies); and
- **Tourism** (accommodation, hospitality, arts and recreation services).

	Central Goldfields	Loddon Campaspe
Population (2016)	12,993	232,903
Employed Residents (2016)	4,112	101,109
Highest Employing Sectors (2016)	1 Health Care & Social Assistance 2 Manufacturing 3 Retail Trade	1 Health Care & Social Assistance 2 Retail Trade 3 Manufacturing
Local Businesses (2018)	831	20,283
Median House Price (2017)	\$190,000	\$322,000

### Economic Snapshot - Central Goldfields



**Population-Driven**  
Retail, Hospitality,  
Other Services



**Primary Trade**  
Agriculture, Construction,  
Manufacturing, Transport



**Knowledge & Public Sector**  
Health, Education, Government



**Tourism**  
Accommodation, Hospitality, Arts  
and Culture

Source: Urban Enterprise 2019, derived from economic indicators (employment, business), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011, 2016

Maryborough is the economic centre of the Shire, accommodating the majority of residents, businesses and employment. Maryborough services the Shire and other rural areas outside of the Shire for essential services such as health care, education and retail. Notable health and retail anchors such as the Maryborough and District Hospital and higher order retailers (e.g. supermarkets, discount department stores) attract residents from smaller, nearby townships and rural areas.

There are quite a diverse range of industries contributing to the Shire's economic ecosystem. However, the propulsive nature of each industry and their capacity for growth differs. Employment analysis suggests that the Shire's competitive advantages relevant to Regional Victoria are in manufacturing, transport and distribution, health care and social assistance, retail and arts and recreation services.

### Primary and Trade Industries

Whilst employment in manufacturing declined by 2% between 2011 and 2016, the decline is significantly lower than those that have been experienced across much of the state, since the withdrawal of the automotive manufacturing industry and the restructure of manufacturing activities. The lower decline in manufacturing jobs in the Shire is partly due to the growing sub-sector specialisation in food manufacturing, which has buoyed the sector through larger-scale business and investment attraction.

Given the land availability in the Shire, there is an opportunity to grow this sector further through targeted investment attraction.

Agriculture is an important industry in supporting business and employment and contributing to supply-chain networks for downstream processing (food manufacturing), transport and distribution.

Agricultural uses in the Shire are primarily sheep and cattle grazing, and some grain and cereal production. Employment analysis indicates emerging specialisations in less traditional agricultural activities such as fruit and vegetable growing, poultry farming and nursery and floriculture.

### Knowledge and Public Sector Industries

Knowledge and public sector industries in Central Goldfields Shire are primarily focussed around health, education and government agencies. Health and education are high employing sectors that are growing as a result of low to moderate population growth and the organic demand for these services that additional

residents create, coupled with investment into improving/upgrading existing infrastructure including the Maryborough and District Hospital. Further, the age profile of residents is ageing, and this trend is forecast to continue, with a growing number of senior and elderly aged cohorts generating greater demand for health and related services.

In terms of knowledge sectors, there is a smaller representation and potential under provision of white collar jobs in the Shire. Specifically, professional and financial services, which have a much lower proportion of jobs compared with Regional Victoria. This could be a result of skills gaps in the labour force, or these jobs escaping to nearby regional cities (Bendigo, Ballarat). This presents opportunities for the economy to address the gap in these types of jobs and grow the professional services sector.

### Population-Driven Industries

Population-driven industries are reliant on demand generated for personal and household goods and services such as retail and hospitality.

Given that Maryborough is the higher order retail centre in the Shire, the retail sector is expected to continue to account for a large proportion of employment, particularly as the resident and visitor population increases.

Retail, hospitality, personal services and tourism related industries are critical to the economic role of the Shire's smaller towns of Talbot and Dunolly, as they support local employment and account for the majority of the businesses in the town centre's of these areas.



### The Shire's Employment Profile

A high level of employment in an industry can often indicate a competitive advantage for a given area, particularly if that sector is experiencing jobs growth over time.

The highest employing industries in the Shire are health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing, education and training, accommodation and food services and agriculture, forestry and fishing. Combined, these industries account for 72% of jobs. The most significant being health care and social assistance and retail trade, which account for 17% respectively.

Retail trade experienced a 7% decline (-45 jobs) between 2011 and 2016, but still remains a critical sector to the health of the Shire's economy, particularly given that Maryborough is the highest order retail centre in the Shire and services residents in the smaller townships within and surrounding the Shire for convenience-based retail (i.e.) supermarkets, speciality retail, retail services and hospitality.

Employment in health care and social assistance experienced a 7% increase (+47 jobs) between 2011 and 2016, affirming the sector's importance as a major employer in the Shire. This trend is forecast to continue with the \$100 million redevelopment of the Maryborough and District Hospital and increased demand for health care and medical services that is generated organically through population growth and an ageing population.

Other industries that experienced notable jobs growth include accommodation and food services (+68 jobs), agriculture, forestry and fishing (+27 jobs), transport, postal and warehousing (+29 jobs) and arts and recreation services (+25 jobs).

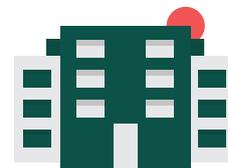
### Top Industries of Employment



Health Care and Social Assistance



Retail Trade



Manufacturing

	2011 No. (%)	2016 No. (%)	Change 2011-16 No. (%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	646 (17%)	693 (17%)	+47 (7%)
Retail Trade	635 (17%)	590 (14%)	-45 (-7%)
Manufacturing	547 (14%)	537 (13%)	-10 (-2%)
Education and Training	385 (10%)	390 (9%)	+5 (1%)
Accommodation and Food Services	224 (6%)	292 (7%)	+68 (30%)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	234 (6%)	261 (6%)	+27 (12%)
Public Administration and Safety	213 (6%)	217 (5%)	+4 (2%)
Construction	202 (5%)	174 (4%)	-28 (-14%)
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	144 (4%)	173 (4%)	+29 (20%)
Other Services	125 (3%)	149 (4%)	+24 (19%)
Inadequately described	19 (0%)	143 (3%)	+124 (653%)
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	88 (2%)	94 (2%)	+6 (7%)
Arts and Recreation Services	48 (1%)	73 (2%)	+25 (52%)
Administrative and Support Services	60 (2%)	72 (2%)	+12 (20%)
Not stated	3 (0%)	57 (1%)	+54 (1800%)
Financial and Insurance Services	53 (1%)	46 (1%)	-7 (-13%)
Information Media and Telecommunications	53 (1%)	40 (1%)	-13 (-25%)
Wholesale Trade	67 (2%)	39 (1%)	-28 (-42%)
Mining	16 (0%)	31 (1%)	+15 (94%)
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	22 (1%)	21 (1%)	-1 (-5%)
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	23 (1%)	20 (0%)	-3 (-13%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,807 (100%)</b>	<b>4,112 (100%)</b>	<b>+305 (8%)</b>

### Industry of Employment - Employed Residents - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011 & 2016

### Occupations of Working Residents

The most common occupations held in Central Goldfields Shire are Labourers (15%) and technicians and trade workers (15%) and professionals (15%).

Between 2011 and 2016, there was a reduction in the proportion of professionals (-1%) and managers (-2%), but an increase in labourers (+2%) and community and personal service workers (+2%)

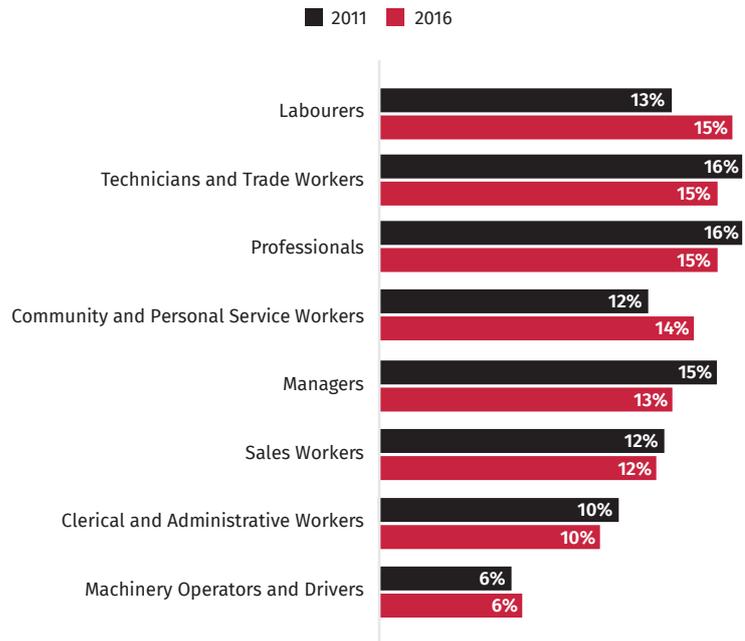
### Out-Commuting

The figure to the right shows the location of work (Council area) for employed persons in Central Goldfields. The figure shows the percentage of employees who live and work in the Shire and those who travel outside of the Shire for employment.

Typically, a higher rate of job containment is preferred, as it can indicate that there are sufficient and suitable jobs available locally to support the local skills and qualifications of the labour force.

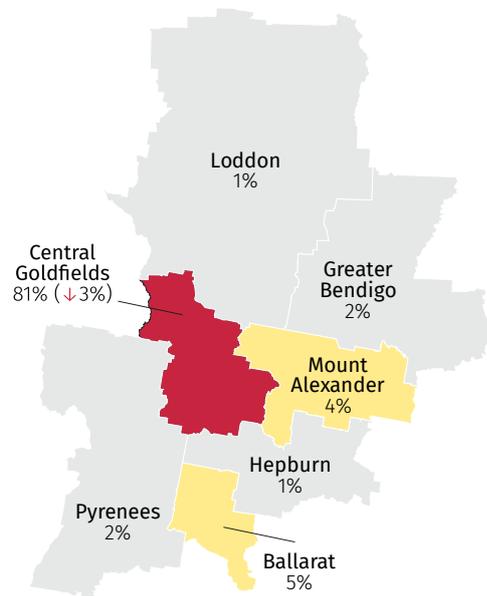
In 2016, Central Goldfields Shire had a job containment rate of 81%, representing the percentage of employees who live and work in the Shire. The job containment rate decreased by 3% between 2011 and 2016.

The highest proportion of employment escapes to Ballarat (5%), Mount Alexander (4%) and Greater Bendigo (2%) Local Government Areas.



Occupations of Employed Residents - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016



Out-Commuting - Employed Persons - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Journey to Work, Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016, derived by Urban Enterprise 2019



### The Shire's Business Profile

The business base in Central Goldfields Shire is primarily small businesses (i.e. employ less than 20 staff). 98% of businesses in the Shire are considered small business and 55% of those are non-employing businesses.

Only 2% of business in the Shire employ between 20 and 199 staff and there are currently no businesses in the Shire that employ more than 200 staff.

The table shows the number of businesses by industry sector in the Shire in 2018. The industry sectors with the highest number of businesses are agriculture, forestry and fishing (191 businesses), construction (118 businesses) and retail trade (67 businesses). Combined, these industries account for almost half of the business base in the Shire. The higher number of businesses across these sectors may be a result of a larger number of sole operators and non-employing businesses, which

can often be the case with farmers, technicians and trade workers.

The highest employing businesses are in manufacturing, transport, postal and warehousing, accommodation and food services and administrative and support services. Each of these sectors includes three businesses that employ between 20 and 199 staff

	Non-employing	1-19 Employees	20-199 Employees	200+ Employees	Total
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	110	81	0	0	191
Construction	69	49	0	0	118
Retail Trade	19	45	3	0	67
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	31	24	3	0	58
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	49	10	0	0	59
Accommodation and Food Services	17	31	3	0	51
Manufacturing	27	21	3	0	51
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	26	15	0	0	41
Financial and Insurance Services	34	6	0	0	40
Other Services	18	22	0	0	40
Health Care and Social Assistance	10	25	0	0	35
Wholesale Trade	12	11	0	0	23
Education and Training	12	3	0	0	15
Administrative and Support Services	8	4	3	0	15
Arts and Recreation Services	8	5	0	0	13
Information Media and Telecommunications	0	5	0	0	5
Mining	3	0	0	0	3
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	3	0	0	0	3
Public Administration and Safety	0	3	0	0	3
Currently Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>831</b>



Non-employing Businesses



Small Businesses



Employ 20 to 199 Staff

### Business Counts - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Business Counts (by employment range), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016, 2018

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### Demographic Snapshot

Central Goldfields Shire has a population of approximately 13,000 people, increasing by 0.8% (+85 persons) per annum between 2011 and 2016. The majority of the population is concentrated to Maryborough and Carisbrook (including Flagstaff), accommodating approximately 70% of the Shire's population.

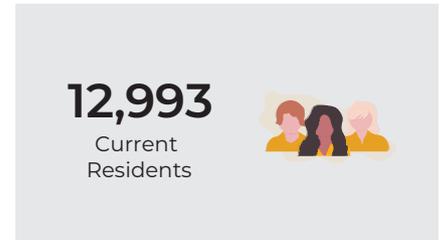
The Shire's rural areas account for less than 20% of the Shire's population, but are responsible for approximately 85% of the population growth between 2011 and 2016, growing by 3.8% per annum.

Across the major townships, Maryborough's population increased by 0.8% per annum, adding 291 persons between 2011 and 2016, but Talbot and Dunolly experienced a decline in population, decreasing by 276 persons (-38%) and 13 persons (-1%) respectively.

The Shire accounts for 6% of the Loddon Campaspe region's population. However, the region includes Greater Bendigo, which comprises close to 50% of the regional population. Central Goldfields Shire's population growth rate is notably lower than the Loddon Campaspe region, which is growing at 1.5% per annum.

Central Goldfields Shire is forecast to experience low to moderate population growth to 2036, adding a further 1,600 residents at an average annual growth rate of 0.6%.

The Loddon Campaspe region is projected to grow at a higher rate, increasing from approximately 233,000 persons to 300,000 persons by 2036, which equates to an average annual growth rate of 1.3%. Much of the forecast population growth is projected to occur in Greater Bendigo, accounting for two-thirds of the region's growth.



### Demographic Snapshot

Source: Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016 / Victoria in Future (VIF) 2016, derived by Urban Enterprise 2019

### Population by Townships

Source: Population Growth, Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016

Locality	Central Goldfields
Maryborough	7,922
Carisbrook (inc. Flagstaff)	1,209
Dunolly	894
Talbot	441
<b>Total Townships</b>	<b>10,462</b>
<b>Total - Rural Areas</b>	<b>2,531</b>
<b>Central Goldfields</b>	<b>12,993</b>
<b>Loddon Campaspe Region</b>	<b>232,903</b>

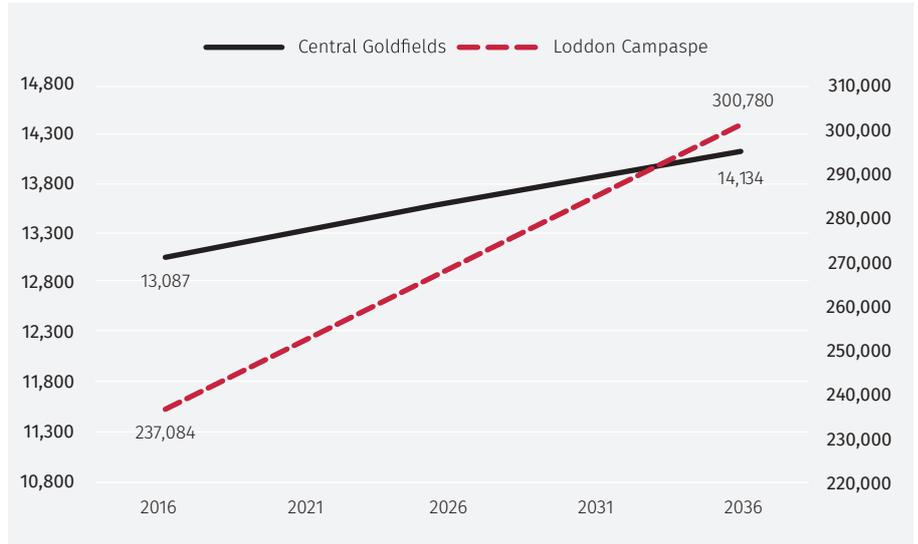
### The Shire's Age Profile

The median age of the Shire's residents is 50 years, which is notably older when compared with the median age across Victoria (37 years) and Regional Victoria (43 years). In Central Goldfields Shire, there has been a decline in the number and proportion of younger aged cohorts including 'babies and pre-schoolers' (aged 0 to 4 years) and 'secondary schoolers' (aged 15 to 19 years).

The proportion of 'parents and homebuilders' aged between 35 and 49 years has also declined between 2011 and 2016. Comparatively, there was an increase in senior and elderly aged cohorts, with a notable increase in the proportion residents aged over 65 years.

Historical trends are forecast to continue to 2036, with a projected increase in seniors and elderly (aged 70+ years), as well as a reduction in younger cohorts: primary, secondary schoolers and young workers.

The forecast change in age structure may have implications for the local economy and labour force, which may extend to potential challenges for businesses in employing young workers, as well as ensuring that older residents are well serviced for health and medical services, accessible retail and townships are suitably designed to incorporate accessible and aged friendly infrastructure.



**Forecast Population Growth - Central Goldfields & Loddon Campaspe Region - 2016 to 2036**

Source: Population Forecasts, Victoria in Future, 2019, derived by Urban Enterprise



**Current & Forecasted Age Profile - Central Goldfields Shire - 2016 to 2036**

Source: Population forecasts, Victoria in Future, 2019, derived by Urban Enterprise, 2019



### Socio-Economic Profile

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. The index is derived from attributes that reflect disadvantage such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. A higher score on the index means a lower level of disadvantage (or higher level of advantage). The national average index score is 1,000, with a score below 1,000 on the index indicating that area has a higher level of disadvantage relative to the national average.

According to SEIFA, Central Goldfields Shire is the most disadvantaged Local Government Area in Victoria, with an index score of 870.

	2011	2016	Ranking in VIC (Level of Disadvantage)
Central Goldfields	895	870	1
Greater Dandenong	927	915	2
Latrobe	914	916	3
Northern Grampians	934	921	4
Mildura	930	921	5

#### Central Goldfields Shire: Socio-economic Index for Areas - 2011 to 2016

Source: Population forecasts, Victoria in Future, 2019, derived by Urban Enterprise, 2019

### Housing Profile

There are approximately 6,600 dwellings in Central Goldfields Shire; 87% of which are occupied private dwellings and 12.7% are unoccupied.

Between 2006 and 2016, dwellings increased by 641, growing at an average rate of 64 dwellings per annum.

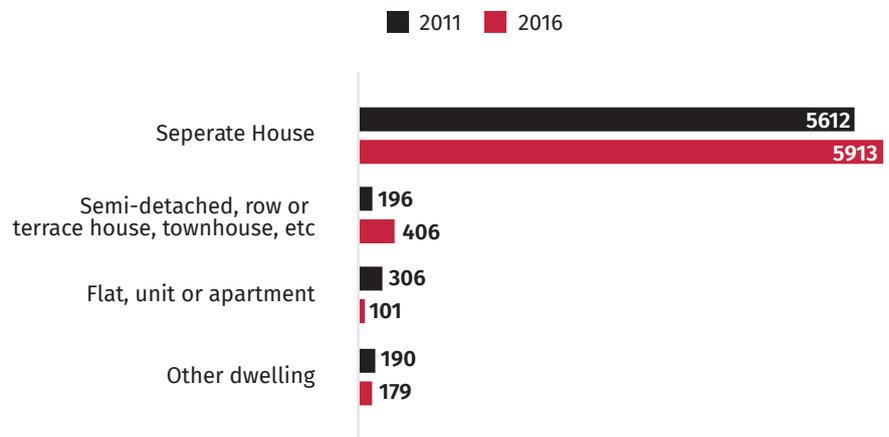
There is evidence of residential development activity in Maryborough, with a growth front concentrated to the north of the town centre; to the west of Park Road.

Dwelling growth is typically a product of population growth and provides an indication that residential development and construction activity is occurring, often bringing flow-on supply chain benefits to a region.

	2006	2011	2016	Change 2006-16 (No.)	Change per annum (No.)
Occupied Private Dwellings	5,238	5,654	5,789 <b>87%</b>	+542	+54
Unoccupied Private Dwellings	752	0	841 <b>12.7%</b>	+89	+9
Non-private Dwellings	15	16	17 <b>0.3%</b>	+2	+0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,998</b>	<b>5,667</b>	<b>6,639 100%</b>	<b>+641</b>	<b>+64</b>

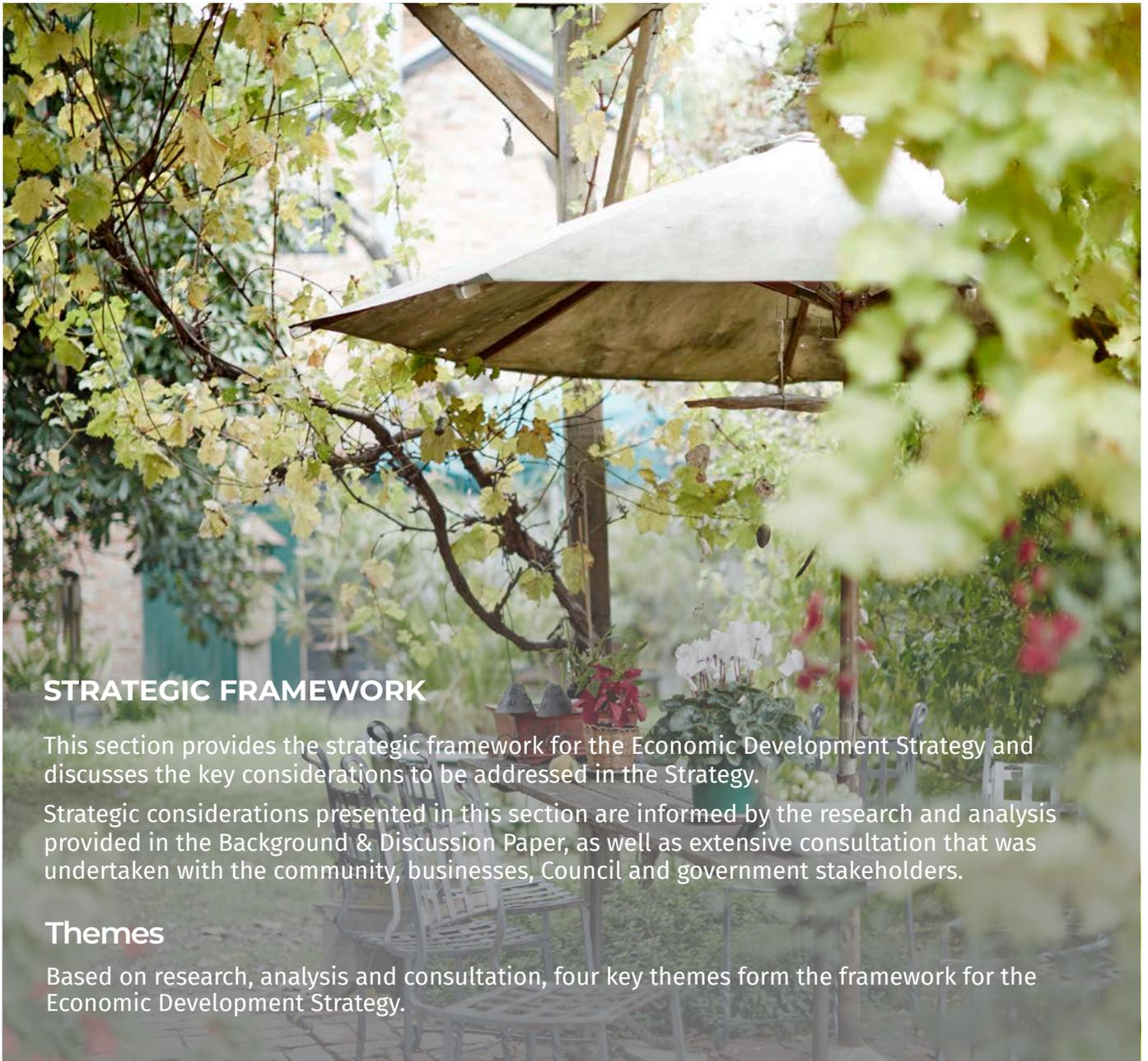
### Dwelling Growth - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016



### Types of Dwellings - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This section provides the strategic framework for the Economic Development Strategy and discusses the key considerations to be addressed in the Strategy.

Strategic considerations presented in this section are informed by the research and analysis provided in the Background & Discussion Paper, as well as extensive consultation that was undertaken with the community, businesses, Council and government stakeholders.

### Themes

Based on research, analysis and consultation, four key themes form the framework for the Economic Development Strategy.

<b>1</b> <b>A Productive, Sustainable and Creative Shire</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Invest in People and Place</b>	<b>3</b> <b>A Thriving Business Community</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Tailored Economic Development Practice</b>
<p>Leverage economic outcomes from industries of competitive advantage and growth sectors in the Shire such as health, education, agriculture and food manufacturing, as well as emerging industries including tourism, renewable energy and other green industries.</p>	<p>Address skills gaps by partnering with industry and the community to encourage a 'job ready' labour force.</p> <p>Prioritise investment initiatives that enhance liveability characteristics and build economic resilience.</p>	<p>Provide business support through regular and meaningful engagement. Help businesses overcome specific challenges that they face and identify opportunities that could be further leveraged to achieve positive business outcomes.</p>	<p>Implement a tailored approach for economic development in Central Goldfields to ensure that industry growth is supported and aligned to the unique local conditions and resources available.</p>



## A Productive, Sustainable and Creative Shire

The Shire has an opportunity to leverage greater economic outcomes from industries that are recognised as competitive advantages such as health, education, agriculture and food manufacturing as well as growing and emerging industries including tourism, renewable energy and other green industries.

Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:

- Improving education & training pathways
- Promoting growth in infrastructure, innovation & capabilities in the local agriculture sector
- A food manufacturing hub
- Renewable energy and green industries
- A growing health care and social assistance sector
- Arts and culture development

### Improving Education & Training Pathways

Education and training accounts for 9% of local jobs (390) in the Shire. Employment in this sector increased between 2011 and 2016, albeit by 1% (5 jobs). Preschool and school education accounts for 91% of employment in the education and training industry and jobs in this sub-sector have grown, increasing by 10% (+34 jobs) between 2011 and 2016.

The only state secondary education provider in the Shire is the Maryborough Education Centre (MEC), which offer prep to year 12. MEC indicated that student enrolments have declined in recent years, which may reflect the reduction in younger aged cohorts experience across the Shire.

Discussions with local education providers indicated that actively working to improve education outcomes and standards should be a priority for the Shire, including ongoing support for community-led initiatives such as Go Goldfields.

Other sub-sectors in the education and training industry are less represented in terms of employment, particularly given that there is no tertiary institution in the Shire with Maryborough TAFE closing approximately six years ago. There may be an opportunity for the Shire to collaborate and partner with institutions such as Federation University and Latrobe University to improve pathways for secondary students and increase the proportion of students enrolling and attaining tertiary level qualifications.



Another opportunity could be to investigate establishing a university or TAFE campus in Maryborough to capitalise on the Stage Government's free TAFE programs. This could be delivered as a satellite campus to larger providers in Ballarat or Bendigo.

### Transformative Project: Satellite Tertiary Education Campus



Engage with tertiary providers in the region to investigate the potential to establish a higher education campus in Maryborough. This could be delivered as a satellite campus to established providers in Ballarat or Bendigo.

Collaborate and partner with institutions such as Federation University and Latrobe University to improve pathways for secondary students and increase the proportion of students enrolling and attaining tertiary level qualifications



### Promoting Growth in Infrastructure, Innovation & Capabilities in the Local Agriculture Sector

Agriculture in Victoria is performing well, and the outlook is generally positive. The growing demand for food and the buoyant price for food, fibre and wool products, coupled with Australia's highly regarded quality of food is expected to drive the demand for Victorian produce. This is anticipated to occur across Asia and the sub-continent in countries such as China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and India.

The agriculture industry is also experiencing change. Data shows that the number of agriculture businesses are in decline across the nation as a result of viability pressures placed on smaller land holdings, coupled with harnessing new technologies that are providing greater efficiencies within the industry.

Climate remains an ongoing challenge across the industry. A period of drought in Australia and volatile weather conditions are creating uncertainty for farmers. Strong residential demand in metropolitan Melbourne's growth areas and Victoria's peri-urban areas are placing increased pressures on the quality and productivity of rural land.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing accounts for 6% of total employment in the Shire. Sheep, beef cattle and grain farming is the highest employing agricultural sub-sector in the Shire, accounting for over 50% of jobs in the sector. Employment in this sub-sector decreased by 22% (-38 jobs) between 2011 and 2016. This could be a result

of the consolidation of enterprise or less labour force requirements due to increased mechanised farming techniques, driven by new technologies such as GPS-guided tractors, computerised irrigation systems, laser levellers and precision sowing and harvesting technologies.

More intensive agricultural sub-sectors experienced employment growth between 2011 and 2016, indicating that niche agricultural specialisations are emerging in the Shire. Agricultural sub-sectors that experienced jobs growth between 2011 and 2016 include poultry farming (+20 jobs), mushroom and vegetable growing (+14 jobs) and nursery and floriculture production (+6 jobs).

According to Agriculture Victoria, there are a number of common challenges and opportunities for the State's agricultural sector, all of which are considered to be relevant to the industry in Central Goldfields Shire:

- **Infrastructure:** Addressing supply chain inefficiencies including improving road and rail freight flows, using ports more efficiently and maintaining airfreight capacity.
- **International markets:** Victoria is well placed to capitalise on a growing international middle class. However, there are certain challenges such as technical trade barriers.
- **Capability:** Adapting to climate change, using new and emerging technologies, responding to the potential for increased land use conflict, managing agriculture's social license to operate and meeting rural health needs.



- **Climate change:** Becoming more susceptible to weather volatility and extreme weather events such as floods, rainstorms and drought.
- **Innovation:** Stagnated productivity after years of stagnated growth. Opportunities exist in new and emerging technologies such as robotics, new packaging material, biotechnology and digital and wireless technologies for data measurement, weather monitoring, animal monitoring, geospatial monitoring and water management and chemicals.



**Transformative Project:  
Grow the Intensive Agricultural  
& Horticulture Industry**



Undertake an assessment for the expansion of intensive agricultural and horticultural uses in the Shire, such as hydroponics. This should consider availability of water, power, gas and other services.

**Other Opportunities**

1. Identify agricultural investment opportunities for the Shire and promote opportunities to agricultural business in the Shire, including industry, market and value-add opportunities. These may include:
  - Export market opportunities;
  - Domestic market opportunities (e.g. supermarket, wholesalers, farmers markets);
  - Information around innovation and technology in the agriculture sector that could be harnessed;
  - Off-farm income opportunities (e.g. renewables);
  - Value-add opportunities (e.g. recycling waste, food manufacturing, farm gate tourism; agri-education)
  - Engage with agricultural businesses to identify potential infrastructure constraints that are impacting the industry (e.g. road and transport issues, water access and supply, climate change challenges).
  - Build partnerships with regional shires surrounding Central Goldfields

Other opportunities exist in diversifying income for larger rural landholdings through alternative land uses such as utilisation of land for renewable energy projects (e.g. solar and wind farms).

It will be critical for the Economic Development Strategy to support agricultural activities in the Shire, particularly in addressing supply-chain inefficiencies which may exist (e.g. road, transport infrastructure), as well as promoting market opportunities locally (e.g. supermarkets wholesalers, farmers markets), interstate and internationally.

It will be important to further understand the challenges faced by the agricultural sector, as well as promote market opportunities and other best case industry opportunities that could be realised. These may include:

- Road and transport issues;
- Export market opportunities;
- Domestic market opportunities (e.g. supermarket, wholesalers, farmers markets);
- Information around innovation and technology in the agriculture sector that could be harnessed locally;
- Off-farm income opportunities (e.g. renewables).



### A Food Manufacturing Hub

Employment in manufacturing declined by 2% between 2011 and 2016 in the Shire. However, the jobs decline in manufacturing is significantly lower compared with the broader jobs loss experienced across Victoria since the withdrawal of the automotive manufacturing industry and the restructure of manufacturing activities domestically. The lower decline in manufacturing jobs in the Shire is likely due to the growing sub-sector specialisation in food manufacturing, which has buoyed the sector through larger-scale business and investment attraction.

Given the land availability in the Shire, there is an opportunity to grow this sector further through targeted investment attraction. There may be an opportunity to undertake a targeted investment strategy for food manufacturers, targeting medium to large-scale food manufacturers to relocate from metropolitan Melbourne, similar to some of the larger operators in Maryborough.

The key focus should be to promote the advantages of relocating in the Shire, including:

- An emerging cluster and network of food manufacturers in Maryborough;
- Affordable land prices compared with metropolitan Melbourne;
- Large tracts of vacant and suitably zoned land (e.g. Hamer Industrial Estate in Maryborough);
- Locational advantages, located in close proximity to market opportunities in fast growing regional cities (Bendigo, Ballarat);

- Transport and distribution strengths in the region; and
- Potential supply-chain advantages of being closer to primary producers.

There are also opportunities for existing agricultural/horticultural businesses to up-scale and expand through investment in infrastructure, new technologies and other resources. A successful example of this has occurred in Carisbrook, with the planned expansion of a Hydroponics company in Carisbrook. The organisation applied for and received a State Government grant, which is being invested into expanding its glasshouse, increasing the capacity to grow produce. The expansion is expected to generate an additional 40 FTE jobs to assist with packing, pruning, pollinating, winding, picking and de-leafing.

This provides a successful local example of a business that is capitalising on the growing demand for food, the availability of suitably zoned land, secure and reliable access to water and a well-established transport and logistics network in the region.

### Transformative Project: Maryborough Food Cluster



Prepare an investment strategy for the food manufacturing industry, targeting food manufacturers to establish in Maryborough to create a regional scale food cluster.

Promote the advantages of relocating to Central Goldfields Shire, including:

- An emerging clustering and network of food manufacturers in Maryborough;
- Affordable land prices compared with metropolitan Melbourne;
- Large tracts of vacant and suitably zoned land (e.g. Hamer Industrial Estate in Maryborough);
- Locational advantages: located close to market opportunities in fast growing regional cities (Bendigo, Ballarat);
- Transport and distribution strengths in the region; and
- Potential supply-chain advantages of being closer to primary producers.



### Renewable Energy and Green Industries

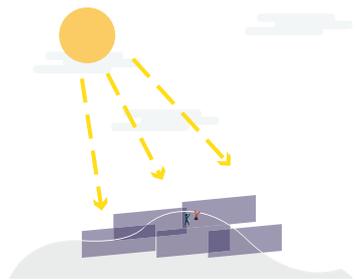
There are a growing number of solar and wind projects completed, underway or proposed across the State, with a number of solar projects emerging in the Shire. Central Goldfields has an opportunity to attract further investment into renewable projects over time.

Investment in renewable energy may present flow-on opportunities for new projects, particularly for rural properties and agricultural businesses seeking to diversify their income with off-farm income streams as well as attracting large scale commercial operators. Given the current size and scale of approved solar projects in the Shire, Central Goldfields may be more suited to accommodate small to medium sized solar, wind and biomass projects, as well as smaller community-led projects and initiatives.

There is an opportunity for Central Goldfields to support the establishment of community-led renewable initiatives. An example of this can be seen in Natimuk in Western Victoria. Natimuk Community Energy (NCE) aims to be a leader of community-generated energy in Western Victoria and be 100% renewable by 2030. NCE have collaborated with private and government stakeholders to deliver community-led renewable energy projects and initiatives including solar hot water systems and rooftop photovoltaic (PV) systems.

Renewable energy projects in the Shire will need to balance economic aspirations with environmental and social impacts, with consideration of protecting productive agricultural land and mitigating the potential negative impacts on surrounding residents.

### Transformative Project: Community Renewable Energy Project



Support the delivery of a community-led renewable energy project in the Shire (e.g. small scale solar farm, waste to energy) and other green initiatives. The project should consider capacity building and social inclusion across the community and aim to reduce power costs.



### Maryborough Aerodrome

The Maryborough Aerodrome was previously under the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) Subpart 139 Registered Aerodromes*.

The Aerodrome was primarily used by and for the community for activities and such as emergency services, fire control and backburning, powerline inspections, chartered flights and events.

Now that the Aerodrome is no longer subject to the CAS regulations, there may be an opportunity to investigate commercial development of the aerodrome site that may have been restricted before, to become a major economic asset in the Shire (e.g. use by airlines for pilot training).



### A Growing Health Care and Social Assistance Sector

Health Care and Social Assistance is the highest employing sector in the Shire, accounting for 17% of employed persons. The sector experienced a 7% (+47 jobs) increase between 2011 and 2016, indicating that the sector is growing.

The hospitals sub-sector is the highest employing sub-sector (228 jobs), followed by residential care services (154 jobs) and other social assistance (129 jobs), which is reflective of the ageing population and the growing demand for aged care, nursing home and accommodation services for the elderly in the Shire.

Jobs in the hospitals sub-sector declined by 14% (-38 jobs) between 2011 and 2016, but this is expected to be mitigated with the redevelopment

of the Maryborough and District Hospital, adding more floorspace and a more comprehensive facility offering.

Typically, local government Economic Development Units (EDU) have limited capacity to influence the health care and social assistance sector. The key role for the unit will be to support the redevelopment of the Maryborough and District Hospital and communicate updates to the business and resident community.

Another key component will be to support health and related businesses in addressing potential skills gaps in the Shire. Anecdotally, it can be difficult to attract and retain health related professionals in the Shire and there is a current shortfall in occupation types including General Practitioners.

### Opportunities



- Engage with MDHS to investigate the potential to increase the number of placements, graduate and work experience positions arising from the redevelopment.
- Provide regular updates to the business and resident community in relation to the redevelopment of the MDHS Hospital. Provide updates as they arise.
- Investigate opportunities for commercial development and activities on the Maryborough Aerodrome Site.



### Arts and Culture Development

Supporting the emerging role of arts and culture in the Shire presents an opportunity to positively influence and shape the narrative and identity of the region, in order to improve liveability and social inclusion outcomes for current residents, as well as attract new residents and visitors to the Shire.

Arts communities have the capacity to drive regeneration of townships through creating enhanced social inclusion and liveability outcomes, with recent examples including Castlemaine, and on a larger scale, Hobart, Tasmania.

Improvement of the public realm through arts interventions, and access to free community arts and culture events, create mechanisms to bring disparate community groups together, and in particular appeal to youth cohorts leading to increased engagement outcomes for this sector.

The Central Goldfields Arts Gallery is already undertaking work in the youth and early childhood education space to actively engage school age children in the arts, giving them both an outlet for creative expression and connection, and also identifying a greater breadth of available career pathways, including those which can be achieved within the Shire.

The opportunity for Council's Arts and Culture team to work collaboratively with existing arts community members should be further explored, including creating platforms for local artists and interested community members to connect, generate ideas and share resources and knowledge.



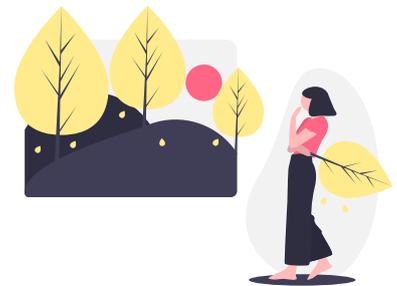
Creative programs delivered or facilitated by Local Government can be an effective tool and a catalyst to support local artists and creatives and achieve growth in the sector (i.e. output and employment). An example of an effective program is one which was implemented by Moreland and Yarra City Councils who are considered leaders in this space.

Whilst these are metropolitan examples, they provide a best case approach for Arts and Cultural programs, which are both extensive and diverse. There are a number of festivals, projects and exhibitions that are produced, curated or provided by these Councils, including:

- Festivals and Events Program;
- Public Art Programs and regular Gallery exhibitions;
- Council-presented activities, such as workshops;
- The commissioning of public art works; and
- A program of author talks, events and forums.

There is an opportunity for Central Goldfields Shire to investigate delivering a tailored arts and culture program, providing opportunities for local artists and creatives to thrive. The preparation of an Arts and Culture Strategy for the Shire could facilitate such programs.

### Opportunities



Investigate delivering a tailored arts and culture program, providing opportunities for local artists and creatives to thrive. Examples include:

- Festivals and Events Program;
- Public Art Programs and regular Gallery exhibitions;
- Council-presented activities, such as workshops;
- The commissioning of public art works; and
- A program of author talks, events and forums.

## Invest in People and Places

Population retention and attraction can be a challenge for rural Shires, particularly given the growing trend of centralisation and the increase in rural-urban migration. Prioritising investment in initiatives that enhance liveability characteristics and build economic resilience can be an effective way to attract and retain population. Combined, these two factors strengthen the attractiveness of an area, as they can create employment opportunities, as well as an attractive and vibrant place to live; providing high-quality infrastructure and services in health, education, retail, hospitality, entertainment and community uses.

One of the key issues that is impacting the Shire is the skills shortages and gaps that exist across the local workforce, making it difficult for some businesses to employ people who are 'job ready'.

It will be critical for the Economic Development Strategy to identify and support strategies that address skills gaps, as well as partnering with industry and the community to encourage a 'job ready' labour force.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Enhance the shire's townships to support liveable communities
- Population attraction and retention
- Investing in people to support a 'job ready' labour force
- Support for an aging population
- Addressing changing housing needs



### Enhance the Shire's Townships to Support Liveable Communities

Given that the majority of the Shire's population is concentrated to the townships of Maryborough, Carisbrook, Dunolly and Talbot, prioritising township improvements should be encouraged. This includes smaller-scale 'quick win' projects such as streetscape, public realm and infrastructure upgrades that improve access, connectivity, amenity and safety. It also includes game changing and transformational projects that can become a catalyst for flow-on investment and economic stimulus, such as transformational commercial, community and tourist attractions and facilities.

Central Goldfields Shire has many favourable aspects that contribute to its liveability including a strong health and education sector, a diverse retail mix, daily train services and attractive heritage town's. To strengthen the appeal of the Shire as a residential location and encourage greater retention of population, there is an opportunity to identify any gaps or improvements in infrastructure and service provision that could enhance the Shire's appeal to existing and prospective residents (e.g. more train services, improved internet).

There have been a number of priority projects identified that would support and enhance the Shire's liveability including the Deledio Reserve Upgrade in Dunolly, the Maryborough Youth Hub and the Maryborough Aquatic Centre Upgrade. Investing in infrastructure that benefits the

resident community can provide a catalyst for attracting and retaining population. The Shire should continue to prioritise infrastructure and service development that enhances liveability and builds economic resilience.

The most iconic and recognisable attraction in Maryborough is the Railway Station. There is potential for the broader precinct to be transformed into a vibrant mixed use precinct, accommodating transport, commercial and tourism uses.

Current examples of railway station precincts that are undergoing redevelopment and revitalisation in Regional Victoria can be seen in Wodonga and Ballarat. Wodonga's former historical railway (Junction Place) is in the process of being redeveloped. Recognised as Regional Victoria's largest urban renewal project, Junction Place is planned to accommodate entertainment, restaurants, cafés and public open spaces. Junction Place has similar locational attributes to Maryborough Railway Station, notably its location and proximity to the CBD, as well as heritage elements that needed to be considered. The restoration and revitalisation of the Goods Shed component of the precinct is complete and operational. The Goods Shed includes hospitality uses and is also used as a function and events venue, attracting locals and visitors.

Another example of a train station precinct that is currently being redeveloped is the Ballarat Station Precinct. The multi-million dollar redevelopment has commenced and once completed will include:

- A 77-room Quest Apartment Hotel;
- A refurbished Goods Shed featuring a conference and events centre with meeting rooms, a 300-seat banquet space and a 300-seat theatrette, as well as retail and hospitality uses;
- A public plaza suitable for community events, markets, and general use.

The Ballarat Station Precinct and the Goods Shed is of cultural and historical significance, presenting similarities to the Maryborough Railway Station Precinct. The Ballarat project consists of preserving the historical significance of the precinct, whilst also unlocking the economic potential of the site. Once complete, the precinct will become a high-quality destination with a mix of tourism, community and retail uses.

In Maryborough, train services operate two daily services and any potential development in proximity to the railway station and rail line would need to consider potential impacts on the train services and surrounding uses. However, there are a number of vacant parcels to the north of the train station, presenting opportunities for future development. Further work would be required to consider current ownership and tenure, planning controls and physical constraints of candidate sites in the precinct, as well as an assessment of feasibility to determine the highest and best-use, land use concept options and delivery models.

Local traders in Talbot and Dunolly are increasingly dependent on capturing passing trade to support their business. Promotional and wayfinding signage is a critical factor in attracting people to stop and spend in town. A review of the signage in Dunolly and Talbot could help understand the current gaps in the provision of signage and may identify advocacy opportunities for increased signage on the major highways (e.g. tourist signs) with VicRoads and other stakeholders.

The heritage buildings and historical characteristics of Maryborough, Dunolly and Talbot are linked to the town's identity and unique aesthetics. Some heritage buildings are at risk of gradual degradation due to a lack of maintenance. Maintaining and repairing buildings and assets of heritage significance can be a cost burden and difficult to undertake due to onerous restrictions.

The Living Heritage Program was established by the Department of Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) provides funding for 'at risk' heritage buildings. The Program aims to enable owners and managers to undertake necessary conservation works to address the needs of their heritage place or object, and in doing so, support the ongoing and sustainable use of our most significant heritage assets. Funding has been provided to support projects that address the risk to the place or object and that deliver and demonstrate benefits for the community. There may be future opportunities to access funding for 'at-risk' heritage buildings in the Shire.

### Transformative Project: Maryborough Railway Station Masterplan, Arts and Cultural Hub

Assess the feasibility of transforming the Maryborough Railway Station Precinct into an iconic, game-changing local and visitor hub that accommodates a mix of tourism, commercial, transport and community uses.

#### Other Opportunities

- Identify gaps in retail provision across the Shire's key townships and support the retail industry to better equip traders to respond to structural changes in the industry (e.g. growth in online retailing).

- Identify potential gaps or improvements in infrastructure and service provision that could enhance the Shire's appeal to existing and prospective residents (e.g. more train services, improved internet, community hub).
- Prioritise community infrastructure needs and apply for funding through the relevant State Government streams to deliver improved community infrastructure and services.
- Investigate potential funding avenues to address 'at risk' heritage buildings in the Shire.
- Review wayfinding and tourist signage in Dunolly and Talbot. Identify any gaps in the provision of wayfinding and tourist signs in strategic areas. Lobby VicRoads and other stakeholders to implement improved/upgraded signage.

### Transformative Project: Talbot Waste Water Treatment Project

Advocate for funding to support investment in reticulated sewerage infrastructure to allow for further investment, development and growth within Talbot.





### Population Attraction and Retention

Central Goldfields Shire has a population of approximately 13,000 people, growing by 85 residents each year (between 2011 and 2016). Anecdotally, historical population growth in the Shire is being driven by a combination of birth rates, an attraction of lifestyle/retiree residents and rural residents migrating from outer rural areas to be closer to the amenity found in the town centres.

Central Goldfields Shire is forecast to experience low to moderate population growth to 2036, adding a further 1,600 residents. The Shire’s population is growing, albeit at a much lower rate than the broader Loddon Campaspe region. Population growth is important for regional economies to remain sustainable and competitive. An increase in population typically generates organic economic growth through increased demand for personal and household goods and services (e.g. retail, hospitality, health, education).

Importantly, population attraction is often linked with employment prospects. With the exception of retirees or commuters seeking lifestyle benefits, the availability of employment is key to the movement of population, as opposed to population growth driving jobs growth in isolation.

Attracting and retaining population should be an ongoing priority for Central Goldfields Shire. Investment into the Shire’s assets and infrastructure that contributes to the Shire’s liveable characteristics will

strengthen its appeal to existing and potential residents. Examples include:

- Historical and heritage aesthetics of the Shire’s key townships;
- Train services to Melbourne via Ballarat;
- More affordable housing compared with the Regional Victorian average;
- Maryborough and District Hospital - \$100 million redevelopment;
- High-quality secondary schools;
- Arts and Cultural product offering;
- An emerging regional culinary scene;
- Uniquely located in close proximity to Bendigo and Ballarat.

There are avenues and platforms to promote the Shire as a resident destination in an effort to attract residents from metropolitan areas.

### Transformative Project: Resident Attraction Strategy



Prepare a Resident Attraction Strategy to attract and retain residents to the Shire, focussing on attracting a diverse mix of age profiles to replenish the local labour force and address skills gaps that exist in the Shire.

#### Other Opportunities:

Promote the Shire as an attractive resident destination via a range of avenues and platforms to attract residents from metropolitan areas.



### Support the Establishment of New Social Enterprise

There are more than 3,500 social enterprises that are currently trading across metropolitan and Regional Victoria, employing an estimated 60,000 people and contributing \$5.2 billion to the Victorian economy. Typically, social enterprises:

- Are driven by a public or community cause, be it social, environmental, cultural or economic
- Derive most of their income from trade, not donations or grants
- Dedicate the majority of their profits to achieve their social mission.

Victoria’s Social Enterprise Strategy (2017) states that social enterprise can deliver outcomes effectively in remote, rural and disadvantaged areas and be effective community-driven responses to local issues.

The strength of the social enterprise landscape in Victoria reflects a shared commitment between the Victorian Government, businesses and the social enterprise sector to achieve economic and social outcomes. In total, there are currently 18 social enterprises operating in Central Goldfields Shire. The types of existing enterprises in the Shire are varied, but include affordable housing, op shops, banking, employment services and community radio.

An example of a social enterprise that has been successful in achieving positive community, economic and environmental outcomes in Victoria is ‘Enable’. Enable is a social enterprise that is dedicated to breaking



unemployment cycles by enabling disadvantaged cohorts to connect with community and environment, improving their prospects of participating in gainful employment through supportive work and learning programs.

Enable achieves its goals via commercial ventures: Enable IT Recycling, an online shop, fulfilment and storage services. These businesses reuse, repair or recycle technology whilst providing vital work and learning opportunities for those in need. In 2018, their IT Recycling business created 10 employment pathways while diverting 133,046 kg of e-waste from landfill.

Investigating the potential to establish social enterprises such as Enable in Central Goldfields presents an opportunity to support and achieve positive economic, employment, community and environmental initiatives.

### Transformative Project: New Social Enterprise



Engage with the Social Enterprise arm of Business Victoria to identify avenues to support the establishment of social enterprises in the Shire that align with the Shire’s competitive industry strengths (e.g. food manufacturing, agriculture, green industries, health care, retail and hospitality).

### Invest in People to Support a 'Job Ready' Labour Force

Based on consultation with local businesses, a key challenge is employing staff who are 'job ready', including a potential lack of suitable skills and expertise required to meet specific business needs. Results from the online business survey found that 50% of respondents have had difficulty with recruiting staff, with the most common difficulty being skills shortages (82%).

Respondents who selected 'other' specified that issues around a lack of funding to support specific staff types,

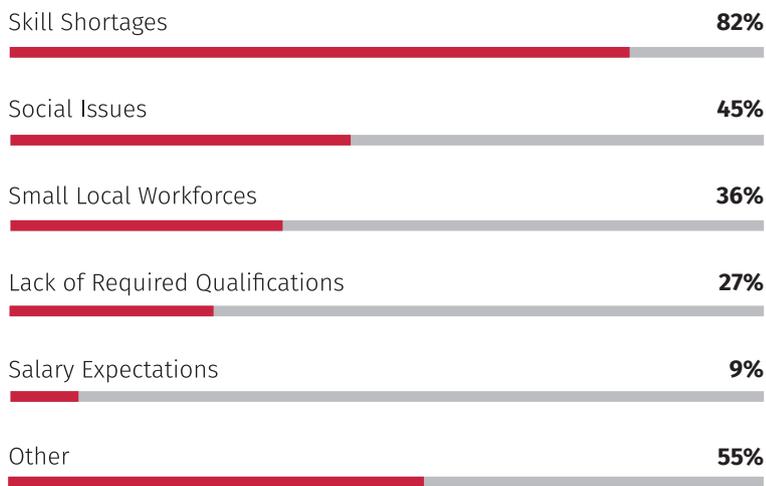
staff who have difficulties finding affordable childcare options and issues experienced with employing persons who are 'job ready'

Challenges in employing 'job ready' people can stymie a business's capacity to operate effectively and can have negative implications on growth prospects. Go Goldfields have established an Employment, Education and Training Action Group, which partners with employment, education, training and work readiness service providers to improve employment and education outcomes in Central Goldfields Shire. The program works

collaboratively with education and industry to address barriers to economic participation and improve employment pathways for young peoples. Support for these types of programs and initiatives are vital.

Some other opportunities that could be explored include:

- Engaging with businesses to understand the specific skills that they require. Investigate training programs that could be initiated by the private sector to promote up-skilling, pointing to private enterprises that have successfully established in-house training processes and procedures as a best case approach, with a view to promoting this to local businesses.
- Engaging with local employment service providers to identify the issues that are common across the labour force and developing strategies to address specific skills shortages.
- Meeting with local and regional education institutions such as secondary and tertiary institutions to identify opportunities to further develop skills across younger aged cohorts.
- Advocating for increased Government support for social issues such as disengaged youth and mental health through programs/initiatives and supporting/partnering with community organisations (e.g. Go Goldfields and the Engage Program).



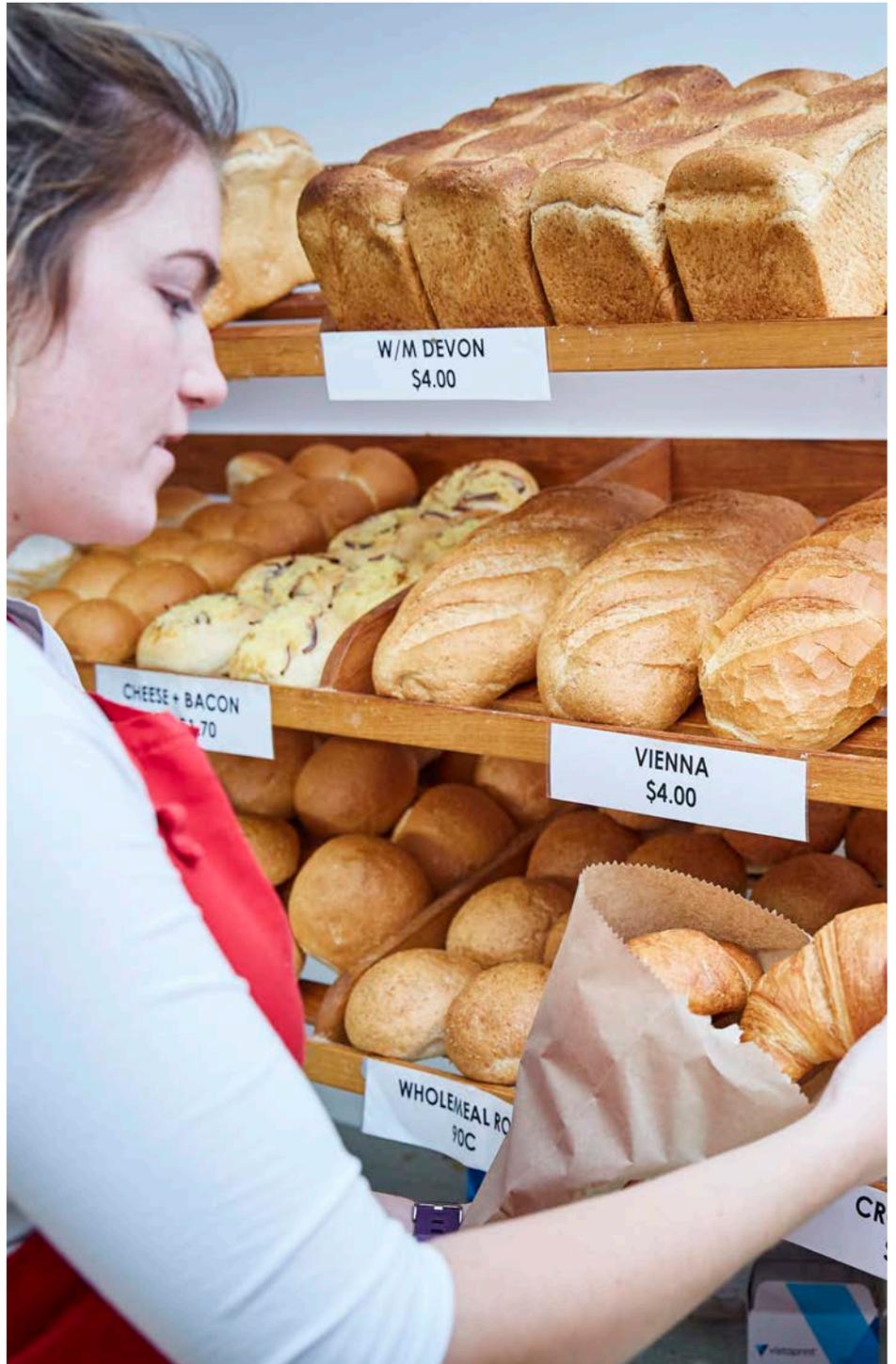
#### Issues Faced by Businesses when Recruiting Staff

Source: Central Goldfields Business Survey, Urban Enterprise 2019

### Opportunities:



- Engage with local employment service providers to identify the issues that are common across the labour force and develop tailored strategies to address specific skills shortages/gaps.
- Engage with businesses to understand the specific skills that they require. Investigate training programs that could be initiated by the private sector to promote up-skilling, pointing to private enterprises that have successfully established in-house training processes and procedures as a best case approach.
- Meet with local and regional education institutions such as secondary and tertiary institutions to identify opportunities to further develop skills across younger aged cohorts.
- Advocate for increased Government support for social issues such as disengaged youth and mental health through programs/initiatives and supporting/partnering with community organisations (e.g. Go Goldfields and the Engage Program).





### Support for an Ageing Population

Central Goldfields population is ageing. Between 2011 and 2016, there was a decline in the number and proportion of younger aged cohorts in the Shire, including ‘babies and pre-schoolers’ (aged 0 to 4 years) and ‘secondary schoolers’ (aged 15 to 19 years).

Comparatively, there was an increase in senior and elderly aged cohorts, with a notable increase in the proportion residents aged over 65 years, indicating that the Shire’s age profile continues to get older.

Age structure forecast suggest that historical trends will continue, with an expected increase in seniors and elderly (aged 70+ years), as well as a reduction in younger cohorts: primary, secondary schoolers and young workers.

An ageing population and a reduction in younger persons presents challenges for businesses to access workers and creates a more competitive environment to employ staff. An ageing demographic is a trend that is being experienced across rural and regional areas in Victoria.

Support for an ageing population can be provided in a number of ways, including:

- Residential aged care services to support ‘age in place’
- Ensuring there is suitable and sufficient aged care facilities and accommodation; and
- Ensure the townships are accessible and include accessible and ‘age friendly’ infrastructure.



### Addressing the Changing Housing Needs

Between 2006 and 2016, dwellings in the Shire increased by 641, growing at an average rate of 64 dwellings per annum. Much of the dwelling growth has occurred in Maryborough and Carisbrook (including Flagstaff). There is evidence of residential development activity in Maryborough, with a growth front concentrated to the north of the town centre; to the west of Park Road.

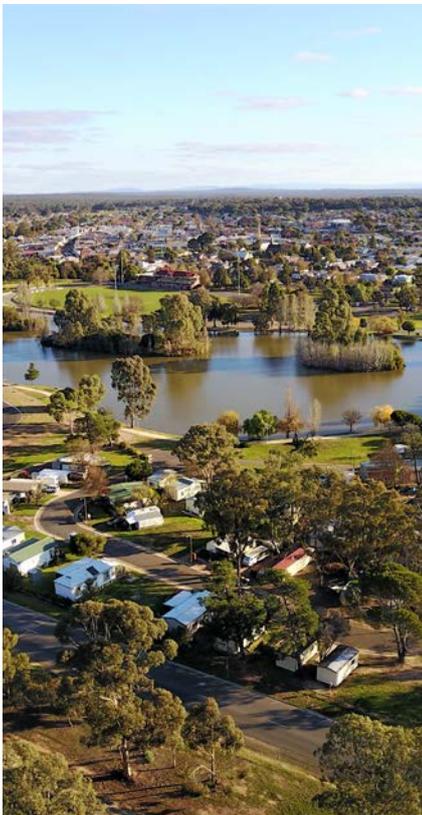
According to local agents and developers, suitably zoned and developable residential land in Maryborough is approaching capacity. There is a need to consider the locations for future residential growth in Maryborough, with the logical location continuing in the current growth area, to the north of the town centre. However, further work is required to understand the residential lot capacity within existing residentially zoned land, analyse forecast demand for new lots and identify the most suitable locations to accommodate future growth (i.e. access to services, proximity to the town centre etc.). This could be undertaken as part of the forthcoming Residential Strategy for the Shire.

According to local agents and developers, there is a current shortage of rental properties in Maryborough. Anecdotally, rental vacancies are being leased quickly. This could be a result of rising house prices and the affordability challenges of home ownership, as well as temporary labour force requirements who are in the region and are seeking short to medium term leases.

Talbot experienced a decline in population between 2011 and 2016. Anecdotally, residents have moved to Talbot since that time. Currently, Talbot’s capacity to attract residents may be restricted from the unavailability of a formal sewerage and wastewater system. Whilst there have been several studies completed in the past to address this issue including a business case completed by DELWP in 2010, the project has not progressed and is yet to receive funding. This project is identified as a critical project in promoting increased economic activity in Talbot through an attraction of residents and visitors to the town.

The majority of dwelling stock in the Shire is separate houses, accounting for 89% of dwellings. Given the growing proportion of older aged cohorts such as seniors and elderly that is expected to materialise in the Shire over the next 15 years, there may be a need to consider the changing nature of housing needs and preferences in the Shire and diversify the housing stock in the Shire. This may extend to providing more semi-detached, medium density dwellings in close proximity to the Maryborough town centre, as well as an increased provision of aged care (e.g. facilities and/or capacity).

Typically, ‘age in place’ is the preferred approach for elderly residents but this can become difficult, particularly as elderly persons become increasingly dependent on full-time carers. Anecdotally, local aged care facilities in the Shire are nearing capacity. Aged care facilities can be economic drivers in their own right, creating employment opportunities, supply-chain benefits for goods and services provided on-site and the attraction of visiting family and friends. However, the challenge for aged-care providers and home services can be the reliance on Federal Government for ongoing funding contributions, which can fluctuate.



**Transformative Project:  
Age Care and Disability  
Co-operative**



Investigate the potential to establish an aged care and disability co-operative in Central Goldfields that delivers aged care services and home care packages for elderly persons and people with disabilities that need assistance.

**Other Opportunities:**

Support the delivery of the Residential Strategy for the Shire. Ensure it considers the following:

- Diversifying the current housing stock to support changing housing preferences and needs, particularly to support an aging population;
- The most suitable locations for future housing growth in Maryborough and Carisbrook;
- Address the potential shortfall of rental properties to support the rental market;
- Addressing barriers to housing growth in Talbot and Dunolly; and
- Understanding the current capacity of aged care providers in the Shire and whether they have the capacity to support an increase in elderly aged cohorts.



## A Thriving Business Community

A core function of economic development units in Victoria is the provision of business support services, typically enabled through regular and meaningful engagement, with a view to helping businesses overcome specific challenges they face, and help identify opportunities that could be further leveraged to achieve positive business outcomes.

Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:

- Training, mentorship and networking for business
- Grant opportunities for business
- Planning and compliance barriers
- Co-working facility
- Improving telecommunications & digital infrastructure

## Planning and Compliance Barriers

For the majority of businesses, the most common engagement they will have with Council is through the planning department. It can be challenging for businesses to understand the complex nature of the Local Planning Scheme including issues relating to planning and compliance.

Council should continue to have a proactive and facilitative approach to planning systems particularly when assessing projects which will deliver investment and jobs to the region and are within strategic areas locations or clustering of industry.

For more straightforward and low impact planning permit applications, Council could promote the VicSmart program. Essentially VicSmart is a streamlined assessment process for straightforward planning permit applications. Classes of application are identified in the planning scheme as being VicSmart and have specified requirements for information, assessment processes and decision guidelines. Key features of VicSmart include:

- A 10-day permit process
- Applications are not advertised
- Information to be submitted with an application and what council can consider is pre-set
- The Chief Executive Officer of the council or delegate decides the application.



### Transformative Project: Better Approvals



Investigate providing and implementing a more formal process to respond to planning enquiries. This could include an online resource administered through Council's website, or face-to-face sessions by appointment.

#### **Other Opportunities:**

Promote the VicSmart planning program on a range of communication channels to assist residents and businesses with more straightforward and low impact planning permit applications.

### Co-working/Co-Sharing Facilities for Home-Based and Micro Businesses

The business base in Central Goldfields Shire is primarily small businesses (i.e. employ less than 20 staff). 98% of businesses in the Shire are considered small business and 55% of those are non-employing businesses.

Further, 38% of respondents to the business survey indicated that they are home-based businesses. Respondents indicated that low costs and more flexible working hours as key benefits of working from home.

A select number of respondents also indicated that their business is not ready to stand-alone, as well as a lack of available business premises in the Shire as reasons for operating a home-based business.



#### Home-based Businesses in Central Goldfields Shire

Source: Central Goldfields Business Survey, Urban Enterprise 2019

Australia is home to over 170 co-working spaces with 49% of facilities located in Victoria. Of the co-working facilities in Victoria, only 7% are found in Regional Victoria.

Co-working spaces provide the critical support infrastructure and services often required for businesses in their infancy to grow and mature. The benefits of the co-working model are associated with creating a space which supports collaboration, openness, knowledge sharing, innovation, and the user experience.

Demand for co-working spaces is predominantly being driven by growth in tech and creative industries, but is also becoming increasingly popular amongst professional and financial service industries.

The popularity of these types of facilities in regional areas are on the rise, with a growing number of facilities establishing in key regional areas including Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Warragul and Mildura.

Some examples of established co-working facilities in close proximity to Central Goldfields Shire are Runway in Ballarat, Synergize Hub in Bendigo and Cohoots Coworking in Castlemaine. Runway is an accelerator facility in the Ballarat Central that is directly adjacent to Federation University. The facility includes co-working spaces, a workshop and on-site café.

The workshop offers a range of contemporary tools and products such as laser cutters, sewing machines, 3D printers, electronic assembly and testing facilities, desktop milling machined, vinyl cutters, embroidery machines and large format printers.

The workshop allows creatives and manufacturers to test and prototype products without having to purchase the equipment, which can often become a cost burden.

Given that 55% of business in Central Goldfields Shire are non-employing, a co-working facility could be beneficial to micro-businesses in and around the Shire, providing benefits of temporary work spaces that provide support to businesses in their infancy by creating a professional and collaborative environment.

Further work would be required to understand the feasibility of establishing a co-working facility, including the need to assess the level of demand for a co-working facility and the most suitable operating model, as well as type and scale of facility. Specifically, further information is required to understand:

- The types of home-based and micro-businesses currently operating in the Shire;
- Business needs and preferences in terms of office accommodation;
- The level of interest across the business community to establish a co-working facility; and
- Potential operating and delivery models, including the potential to partner with existing operators in the region.

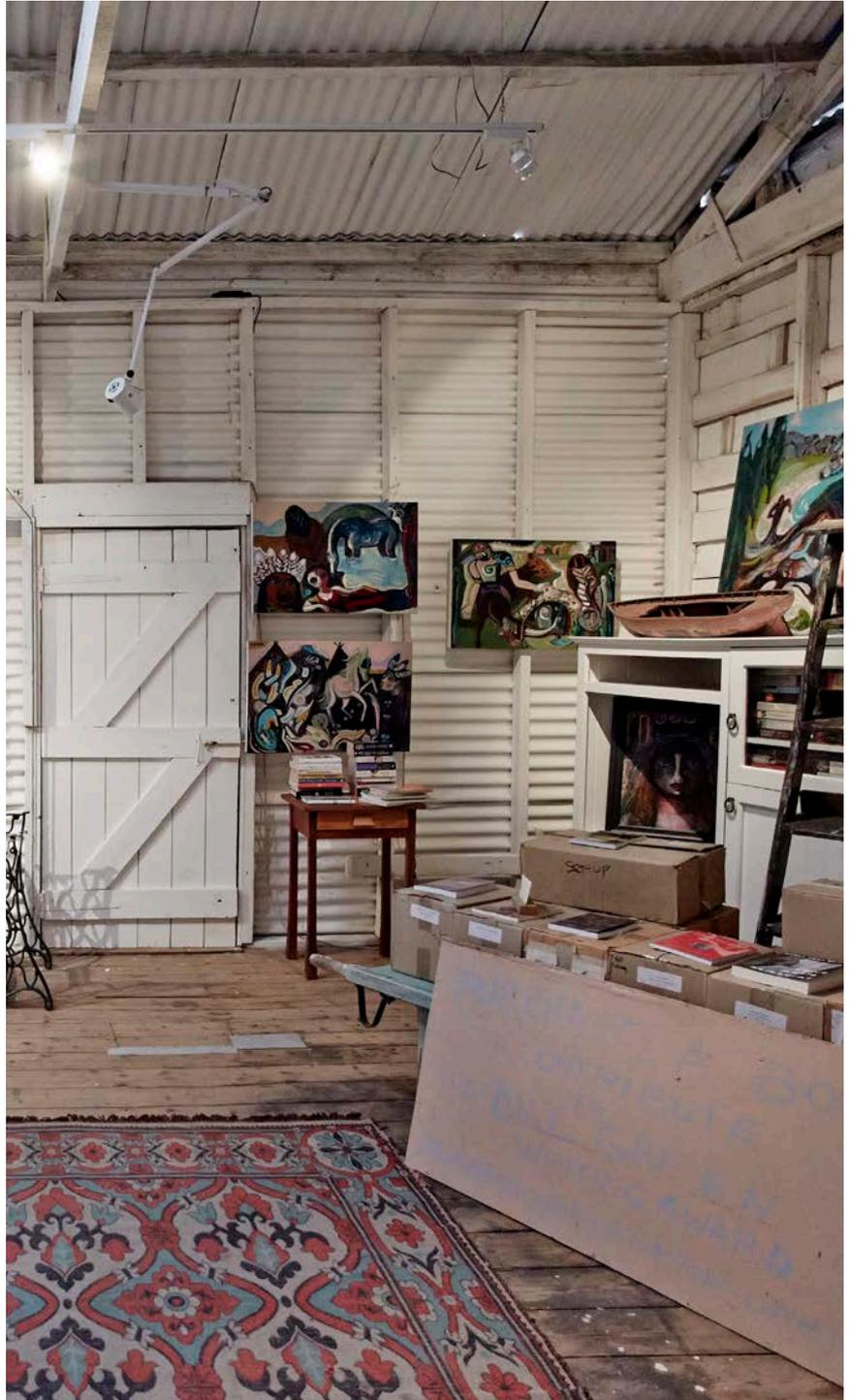
Given the relatively unknown profile of micro and home-based businesses in the Shire, a smaller scale facility may be a more appropriate option in the short term.

### Transformative Project: A Co-working Facility



Assess the feasibility of establishing a co-working facility in the Shire to support micro and home-based businesses, focusing on:

- The types of home-based and micro-businesses currently operating in the Shire;
- Business needs and preferences in terms of office accommodation;
- The level of interest across the business community to establish a coworking facility;
- The suitable size, scale and preferred location for a facility in the Shire; and
- Potential operating and delivery models, including the potential to partner with existing operators in the region.



### Training, Mentorship & Networking

Given that 98% of businesses in Central Goldfields Shire are considered small (i.e. employ less than 20 people), promoting and facilitating networking and is recognised as a key opportunity in the Shire.

Local businesses indicated that they are interested in attending local business networking and training events and would consider attending. The most common topics that businesses are seeking training in include:

- Marketing;
- Social media and digitalisation (e.g. website development & online presence);
- Business Planning;
- Information technology (IT);
- Financial Management; and
- Contracts and tenders.

Business networking is a key opportunity across industry sectors. It can help businesses collaborate and share information, as well as creating supply-chain, business to business opportunities.

There are examples of industry networking that is occurring in the Shire, with a number of manufacturing businesses engaging with one another to address seasonality challenges and the change in labour force demands that it creates. This may extend to a temporary loan of casual workers to service peak periods.

There is a potential for Council to facilitate networking and training opportunities for businesses, targeting those businesses who are seeking to

upskill in certain areas of business management. This opportunity could be facilitated and administered through a dedicated CRM, as well as in partnership with established community-led organisations such as the Committee for Maryborough.

Business Victoria is a comprehensive online resource designed to help people start, run and grow their business. The website is operated by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and provides the following:

- Access information about key business issues and get your questions answered
- Access information about specific industry sectors
- Identify the government licences and regulations that apply to your business
- Step through interactive guides customised to your business situation
- Find relevant financial support, advice and training.

Business Victoria’s website is a useful resource that can provide businesses with information relating to a number of business topics, including marketing and sales, hiring and managing staff, financial management, information regarding grants and financial assistance, as well as tourism industry resources.

Promoting this online resource to the business community via a number of communication channels (e.g. website, social media) may be useful for businesses in the Shire and provide insightful information and opportunities for improving their business.

### Opportunities



- Partner with Committee for Maryborough to facilitate business training, mentorship and networking events/ programs, focussing on areas that businesses wish to upskill in (e.g. marketing, financial management, business planning etc.).
- Promote online resources to the business community via a number of communication channels (e.g. website, social media) to provide insightful information and opportunities for improving their business (e.g. Business Victoria, Invest Victoria).

### Grant Opportunities for Businesses

According to the Business Survey results, the priorities for business support are focused around financial assistance and further understanding grant opportunities that may exist, as well as requiring assistance in overcoming planning and compliance barriers.

Business incentives and grant schemes can provide critical funding support for businesses to invest in growth through an increase in staff and resources, investing in plant and equipment or research and development.

Currently there are only a handful of Councils in Victoria which have a formal business grant or incentive schemes. It is acknowledged that Central Goldfields Shire Council may not have the resources available to implement such a scheme, but could be more suited to promoting Government grants, schemes and incentives that are available for small to medium enterprises and assist with the application process.

State Government departments such as Business Victoria, Invest Victoria and Grants Victoria offer a range of grant programs for Victorian businesses. There may be an opportunity to promote these funding opportunities to businesses in the Shire.



#### Priorities for Business Support

Source: Central Goldfields Business Survey, Urban Enterprise 2019





### Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructure

Local businesses and the community have indicated that existing internet speeds, connections and coverage is a current issue in large parts of the Shire. For businesses to operate effectively, they should have reliable access to these enabling services and infrastructure. Network connections are also necessary to ensure safety within a fire prone environment.

Whilst the National Broadband Network (NBN) has been rolled out in parts of the Shire such as Maryborough, Flagstaff and Carisbrook, it remains unavailable for large tracts of rural areas and smaller towns such as Talbot. This presents challenges for businesses in the Shire, particularly those that rely on digital platforms to enable operations such as accommodation or other booking services, online retailers and agriculture businesses harnessing machinery and equipment that requires a network connection.

With the growing use of digital technologies in everyday business activities, the stability and reliability of internet and mobile coverage should be an ongoing priority for the Shire going forward.

A potential opportunity for the Shire is to apply for the Federal Government’s Mobile Black Spot Program, which is one of the largest ever expansions of mobile coverage in regional and remote Australia. Areas receiving new mobile network coverage have been announced in multiple rounds since 2015.

Since the program’s inception, Telstra and the Federal Government have invested over \$280 million and built over 780 new sites to improve coverage for regional areas around the country.

#### Opportunities:



- Advocate for the NBN to be rolled out across the remaining areas in the Shire. This could be achieved by applying for the Mobile Black Spot Program.
- Investigate the potential to access the digital infrastructure along the rail corridor.
- Promote the impending availability and benefits of the 5G network to the business and resident community.

## Tailored Economic Development Practice

Implement a tailored approach for economic development in Central Goldfields to ensure that industry growth is supported and aligned to the unique local conditions and resources available.

Whilst the current rate capping environment can make it challenging for budget planning and decision making across Council, the economic development unit should consider and prioritise where they allocate their resources.

Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:

- Economic development resource allocation
- A contemporary approach to business engagement
- Collaboration, strategic partnerships and advocacy

**Economic Development Resource Allocation**

In Victoria, the number of staff (FTE) dedicated to economic development varies across metropolitan, regional and rural Councils and is generally a product of the size and scale of the Local Government Area and the amount of resources that are made available for economic development purposes.

An Economic Development Australia (EDA) Survey that was conducted in 2016 collected information relating to the number of staff dedicated to the role of economic development and tourism. On average, Regional Cities dedicate the highest number of staff (FTE) to economic development and tourism services with an average of 5.9 staff. This is closely followed by Metropolitan LGAs with 5.6 staff and Regional Shires with 4.5 staff.

Currently, Central Goldfields Shire has 0.8 FTE staff dedicated to economic development. The responsibilities are split between two staff members. Before December 2018, there were no resources dedicated to economic development.

As at October 2018, the role of the Shire’s tourism unit consists of tourism, events and arts and culture (including the Visitor Information Centre). Combined, the unit includes 4.8 (FTE) staff and includes:

- Manager Tourism, Events and Culture (1 FTE);
- Events Officer (0.8 FTE);
- Art gallery (2 FTE); and
- Visitor Information Centre (1 FTE).

	Metropolitan Melbourne	Regional Cities	Regional Shires
Avg. No. of Staff dedicated to economic development and tourism services	5.6	5.9	4.5

**Average Number of Staff (FTE) Dedicated to Economic Development**

Source: Central Goldfields Business Survey, Urban Enterprise 2019

Combined, the economic development and tourism unit dedicates 5.6 (FTE) staff to economic development and tourism. However, the figures are considered to be skewed, given that the Shire is responsible for managing both the Central Goldfields Art Gallery and the Visitor Information Centre.

The current structure of the economic development unit at Council is significantly limiting the capacity for the unit to undertake and implement positive economic development initiatives that are typical across regional and rural shires in Victoria.

Currently, economic development initiatives occur on an ad-hoc basis, as roles are generally focussed around business engagement, meeting with regional bodies (e.g. Regional Development Victoria) and responding to investment inquiries.

There are evident inefficiencies in splitting the economic development role (0.8 FTE) across two staff members. Resources that are dedicated solely to economic development tasks would improve efficiencies through an increase in productivity and would also create

increased confidence amongst the existing business community through a familiar and regular presence within Council.

Based on benchmarking of comparable regional and rural Shires, the most common approach is to outline the priorities and objectives for the economic development unit and then clearly define the roles and responsibilities to ensure an efficient and productive use of resources.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the tourism and events unit have a range of additional responsibilities such as managing the art gallery and the Visitor Information Centre, the economic development component is currently under resourced.



### Transformative Project: Economic Development Officer



Appoint a full-time economic development officer to undertake the core roles and functions of the unit, including regular business engagement, proactive investment attraction, responding to investment enquiries, undertaking industry research and strengthening regional partnerships.

#### Other Opportunities:

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the economic development unit.
- Ensure all investment enquiries are shared across the relevant Council departments (e.g. planning, economic development, assets & infrastructure).



### A Contemporary Approach to Business Engagement

Given the relative underrepresentation of economic development resources, engaging with the business community is currently conducted on an ad-hoc basis and without a clear strategy in place.

Engaging with the business community is a common function of economic development units, particularly in regional and rural areas. It is critical to understand the needs of businesses to ensure they are operating effectively and remain economically sustainable and competitive.

There is an opportunity for Central Goldfields Economic Development Unit to modernise business engagement techniques. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a contemporary approach to business engagement that is being adopted and implemented by Councils across Australia. It is an effective tool that Councils can use to formally and frequently engage with businesses and is commonly being implemented by economic development units across Australia.

It allows Councils to track and record the frequency of business engagements, eliminating the potential loss of historical engagements. It also provides the added benefit of communicating with the business community via a range of platforms such as e-newsletters, allowing critical information to be circulated to businesses.

### Opportunities:



- Develop a dynamic and up-to-date business database for the Shire. crossreference with the Australian Business Register to validate information. The database should include the following:
  - Business name;
  - Business type;
  - Lead and secondary business contact;
  - Address;
  - Contact details;
  - Industry classification; and
  - Business size (i.e. number of employees).
- Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to guide Council's approach to business engagement. Investigate implementing a contemporary approach to business engagement such as a dedicated CRM.
- Track and record the frequency of business engagements.



### Collaboration, Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

Forming and strengthening strategic partnerships with State government and regional economic development bodies is a common approach adopted by Local Governments to collaborate and align thinking, identify partnership opportunities and facilitate investment outcomes for a given region.

Central Goldfields Shire forms part of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership, which is one of nine Partnerships across the state, established by the Victorian Government. The region encompasses the Local Government Areas of Bendigo, Loddon, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander and Macedon Ranges. The partnership's investment roadmap demonstrates an alignment of priorities for Central Goldfields Shire, particularly in terms of encouraging economic diversification, supporting engaged and healthy communities and collaborating on a regional level to achieve positive economic outcomes.

Given the clear alignment of economic objectives and the strengths in supply chains between Central Goldfields Shire and the Loddon Campaspe region, ongoing collaboration of economic development initiatives and advocacy efforts should continue. This could be facilitated through regular meetings with partnership Council organisations and Regional Development Victoria.

### Opportunities



Meet with regional economic development bodies and regional councils to align thinking, collaborate on economic development initiatives and prioritise regional advocacy efforts.



**Action &  
Implementation Plan**

### Action & Implementation Plan

The Economic Development Strategy includes four key themes, strategies and an action plan to support the implementation of the Strategy over the next 5 years (2020 to 2025).

An indicative timeframe and relevant stakeholders are identified for each action. Timeframes are categorised as follows:

- Short term (1 year);
- Medium term (2 – 3 years);
- Long term (3 – 5 years); and
- Ongoing.

This Economic Development Strategy has been prepared in the context of the Shire's planning framework and broader regional priorities in Loddon Campaspe. The Strategy will be implemented over time in partnership with state and federal agencies, local business and industry, Business and Trader associations and the community.

The implementation of the EDS should be regularly monitored and evaluated. High-level targets are provided under each theme and are in-line with historical growth rates (where applicable). Each target proposes an indicator to monitor in order to track progress at choice intervals.

Learnings also need to be captured to improve future delivery and decision making. The Strategy will be monitored by Council's Economic Development Unit (EDU). The team will work with key stakeholders to undertake an annual review to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant and responsive.

An annual progress report on the strategy's implementation should be considered. Additional information sources that will be used to track progress, include:

- Participant feedback in business and community workshops;
- Business / traders Associations and group meetings;
- The release of ABS Census of Population and Housing; and
- Australian Business Register data.



THEME 1  
**A PRODUCTIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND CREATIVE SHIRE**

**STRATEGY 1**

Improve education and training pathways

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
1.1	Engage with tertiary education providers in the region to investigate the potential to establish a higher education campus in Maryborough. This could be delivered as a satellite campus to established providers in Ballarat or Bendigo.	Strategy and Economic Development, Bendigo TAFE, La Trobe University, Federation University	Short term
1.2	Collaborate and partner with institutions such as Federation University and Latrobe University to improve pathways for secondary students and increase the proportion of students enrolling and attaining tertiary level qualifications.	Strategy and Economic Development, La Trobe University, Federation University	Ongoing
1.3	Engage with MDHS to investigate the potential to increase the number of placements, graduate and work experience positions arising from the redevelopment.	Strategy and Economic Development, MDHS	Short to Medium Term

**STRATEGY 2**

Attract investment and develop infrastructure, innovation & capabilities in the local agriculture sector

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
2.1	Grow the intensive agricultural and horticultural industry. Undertake an assessment for the expansion of intensive agricultural and horticultural uses in the Shire, such as hydroponics. This should consider availability of water, power, gas and other services.	Strategy and Economic Development, Statutory Services	Short Term
2.2	Promote agricultural opportunities to industry. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Export market opportunities;</li> <li>• Domestic market opportunities (e.g. supermarket, wholesalers, farmers markets);</li> <li>• Information around innovation and technology in the agriculture sector that could be harnessed;</li> <li>• Off-farm income opportunities (e.g. renewables);</li> <li>• Value-add opportunities (e.g. recycling waste, food manufacturing, farm gate tourism, agri-education).</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development, Agriculture Victoria	Ongoing

**STRATEGY 2** (cont.)

Attract investment and develop infrastructure, innovation & capabilities in the local agriculture sector

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
2.3	Facilitate and participate in an annual roundtable event for local Agriculture industry representatives. Discussion points should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current state of the industry (economic conditions);</li> <li>• Current challenges/barriers to industry growth;</li> <li>• Opportunities for industry growth;</li> <li>• The regulatory environment; and</li> <li>• Research and innovation.</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development, registered agricultural businesses	Short to Medium Term
2.4	Build partnerships with regional councils surrounding Central Goldfields	Strategy and Economic Development, Loddon, Greater Bendigo, Pyrenees, Mount Alexander, Hepburn, Northern Grampians	Short Term

**STRATEGY 3**

Establish a regionally significant food cluster in Maryborough

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
3.1	Prepare an investment strategy for the food manufacturing industry, targeting businesses to establish in Maryborough to create a regional scale food cluster. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the advantages of relocating to Central Goldfields Shire, including:</li> <li>• An emerging clustering and network of food manufacturers in Maryborough;</li> <li>• Affordable land prices compared with metropolitan Melbourne;</li> <li>• Large tracts of vacant and suitably zoned land (e.g. Hamer Industrial Estate in Maryborough);</li> <li>• Locational advantages: located close to market opportunities in fast growing regional cities (Bendigo, Ballarat);</li> <li>• Transport and distribution strengths in the region; and</li> <li>• Potential supply-chain advantages of being closer to primary producers.</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium Term

**STRATEGY 4**

Support renewable energy and green industry initiatives and projects

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
4.1	Support the delivery of a community-led renewable energy project in the Shire (e.g. small scale solar farm, waste to energy) and other green initiatives. The project should consider capacity building and social inclusion across the community and aim to reduce power costs.	Strategy and Economic Development, Infrastructure, Go Goldfields.	Medium to Long Term

**STRATEGY 4** (cont.)

Support renewable energy and green industry initiatives and projects

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
4.2	Encourage and attract private sector interest and investment into small to medium renewable energy projects and green industries. Engage with the AEMO to understand potential limitations to the capacity of the existing system to store and distribute power.	Strategy and Economic Development, Infrastructure, AEMO.	Ongoing

**STRATEGY 5**

Support the emerging role of arts and culture

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
5.1	Investigate delivering a tailored arts and culture program, providing opportunities for local artists and creatives to thrive. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals and events program;</li> <li>• Public art programs and regular gallery exhibitions;</li> <li>• Council-presented activities, such as workshops;</li> <li>• The commissioning of public art works; and</li> <li>• A program of author talks, events and forums.</li> </ul>	Strategic and economic development	Short to Medium Term

**TARGETS & MONITORING**

TARGET	MONITOR
Increase in the proportion of residents attaining tertiary education qualifications (e.g. certificate level, bachelor, post-graduate degree)	Every four years using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.
Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits relating to agricultural development.	Every two years using Council's database.
Agricultural employment and business growth.	Every four years using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.
Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits relating to food manufacturing.	Every two years using an adopted CRM for business.
Food manufacturing employment and business growth.	Every four years using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.
Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits relating to renewable energy projects.	Every two years using an adopted CRM for business.

THEME 2  
**INVEST IN PEOPLE AND PLACES**

**STRATEGY 6**

Enhance townships to support liveable communities and strengthen the tourism appeal of the Shire

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
6.1	Complete a feasibility study and concept plan to investigate the transformation of the Maryborough Railway Station Precinct into an iconic, game-changing local and visitor hub that accommodates a mix of tourism, commercial, transport and community uses.	Strategy and Economic Development, VicTrack	Short Term
6.2	Advocate for funding to support investment in reticulated sewerage infrastructure to allow for further investment, development and growth within Talbot.	Strategy and Economic Development, Infrastructure, Operations, DELWP	Short to Medium Term
6.3	Identify potential gaps or improvements in community, entertainment and recreational infrastructure and service provision that could enhance the Shire’s appeal to existing and prospective residents (e.g. more train services, improved internet, community hub).	Community and Recreation Development, Infrastructure, Operations	Ongoing
6.4	Prioritise community infrastructure needs and apply for funding through the relevant State Government streams to deliver improved community infrastructure and services.	Community and Recreation Development, Infrastructure, Operations	Ongoing
6.5	Investigate potential funding avenues to address ‘at risk’ heritage buildings in the Shire.	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium Term
6.6	Review wayfinding and tourist signage in Dunolly and Talbot. Identify any gaps in the provision of wayfinding and tourist signs in strategic areas. Lobby VicRoads and other stakeholders to implement improved/upgraded signage.	Strategy and Economic Development, VicRoads	Medium Term
6.7	Engage with the Social Enterprise arm of Business Victoria to identify avenues to support the establishment of social enterprises in the Shire that align with the Shire’s competitive industry strengths (e.g. food manufacturing, agriculture, green industries, health care, retail and hospitality).	Strategy and Economic Development, Business Victoria	Medium Term

## STRATEGY 7

Maintain and enhance the vibrancy and primacy of Shire's activity centres

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
7.1	<p>Complete a Retail Development Strategy. The core objectives of the Strategy should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurturing resilience into the retail sector;</li> <li>• Identify gaps in retail provision across the Shire's key townships;</li> <li>• Better equip traders to respond to structural changes in the industry (e.g. growth in online retailing); and</li> <li>• Improve tourist retailing to service visitors</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium Term

## STRATEGY 8

Attract and retain population to stimulate economic growth

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
8.1	Prepare a Resident Attraction Strategy to attract and retain residents to the Shire, focussing on attracting a diverse mix of age profiles to replenish the local labour force and address skills gaps that exist in the Shire.	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium Term
8.2	Promote the Shire as an attractive resident destination via a range of avenues and platforms to attract residents from metropolitan areas.	Strategy and Economic Development, RDV	Ongoing
8.3	Investigate the potential to implement a residential municipal assistance scheme for first home buyers to attract and retain skilled residents of working age (e.g. those who are eligible can apply for a 2-year period in which municipal charges are waived).	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium Term

## STRATEGY 9

Invest in people to support a 'job ready' labour force

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
9.1	Complete a workforce development plan. Engage with local employment service providers to identify the issues that are common across the labour force and develop tailored strategies to address specific skills shortages/gaps.	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium Term
9.2	Engage with businesses to understand the specific skills that they require. Investigate training programs that could be initiated by the private sector to promote up-skilling, pointing to private enterprises that have successfully established in-house training processes and procedures as a best case approach.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term

**STRATEGY 9**

Invest in people to support a ‘job ready’ labour force

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
9.3	Meet with local and regional education institutions such as secondary and tertiary institutions to identify opportunities to further develop skills across younger aged cohorts. Explore potential partnership opportunities (e.g. development and pathway programs)	Strategy and Economic Development, local and regional education institutions	Short Term
9.4	Explore the opportunity to establish a regional scale event that celebrates successful local entrepreneurs and promotes entrepreneurship across the community.	Strategy and Economic Development, Committee for Maryborough	Medium Term
9.5	Advocate for increased Government support for social issues such as disengaged youth and mental health through programs/initiatives and supporting/partnering with community organisations (e.g. Go Goldfields and the Engage Program).	Strategy and Economic Development, Go Goldfields	Ongoing

**STRATEGY 10**

Support a diversity of housing stock in strategic areas to respond to changing market needs

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
10.1	Investigate the potential to establish an aged care and disability cooperative in Central Goldfields that delivers aged care services and home care packages for elderly persons and people with disabilities that need assistance.	Strategy and Economic Development, Go Goldfields	Long Term
10.2	Support the delivery of the Population, Housing and Residential Settlement Strategy for the Shire. Ensure it considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversifying the current housing stock to support changing housing preferences and needs, particularly to support an aging population;</li> <li>• The most suitable locations for future housing growth in Maryborough and Carisbrook;</li> <li>• Address the potential shortfall of rental properties to support the rental market;</li> <li>• Addressing barriers to housing growth in Talbot and Dunolly; and</li> <li>• Understanding the current capacity of aged care providers in the Shire and whether they have the capacity to support an increase in elderly aged cohorts.</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development, Statutory Services	Medium Term

**STRATEGY 11**

Leverage greater economic productivity from the Shire’s unique assets

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
11.1	Investigate opportunities for commercial development and activities at the Maryborough Aerodrome Site.	Strategy and Economic Development, Infrastructure	Medium Term

**TARGETS & MONITORING**

TARGET	MONITOR
Decrease in vacancy rates for retail/commercial properties in activity centres.	Every two years, using Council’s Property Rates Database.
Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits relating to residential development.	Every two years using Council’s database.
Population growth above historical growth rates (annual).	Every four years using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.

THEME 3  
**A THRIVING BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

**STRATEGY 12**

Productive and efficient planning approvals

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
12.1	Investigate providing and implementing a more formal process to respond to planning enquiries. This could include an online resource administered through Council's website, or a concierge tool with face-to-face sessions by appointment.	Strategy and Economic Development, Statutory Services.	Short to Medium Term
12.2	Deliver the Central Goldfields Planning Scheme Review and implement the findings.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term
12.3	Investigate the opportunity to implement and promote the VicSmart planning program on a range of communication channels to assist residents and businesses with more straightforward and low impact planning permit applications.	Strategy and Economic Development, DELWP	Short Term

**STRATEGY 13**

Provide critical business premises and infrastructure for businesses to thrive

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
13.1	Conduct research into home-based and micro businesses in Central Goldfields Shire to further understand business motivations and intentions, growth constraints and business needs.	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium to Long term
13.2	Assess the feasibility of establishing a co-working facility in the Shire to support micro and home-based businesses, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The types of home-based and micro-businesses currently operating in the Shire;</li> <li>• Business needs and preferences in terms of office accommodation;</li> <li>• The level of interest across the business community to establish a coworking facility;</li> <li>• The suitable size, scale and preferred location for a facility in the Shire; and</li> <li>• A suitable operating and delivery model, including the potential to partner with existing operators in the region.</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development	Medium to Long term
13.3	Advocate for the NBN to be rolled out across the remaining areas in the Shire. This could be achieved by applying for the Mobile Black Spot Program.	Strategy and Economic Development, Federal Department of Communications and the Arts	Short Term

**STRATEGY 13** (cont.)

Provide critical business premises and infrastructure for businesses to thrive

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
13.4	Investigate the potential to access the digital infrastructure along the rail corridor.	Strategy and Economic Development, VicTrack	Short Term
13.5	Promote the impending availability and benefits of the 5G network to the business and resident community.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term

**STRATEGY 14**

Facilitate training, mentorship, funding and networking opportunities across the business community

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
14.1	Partner with Committee for Maryborough to facilitate business training, mentorship and networking events/programs, focussing on areas that businesses wish to upskill in (e.g. marketing, financial management, business planning etc.).	Strategy and Economic Development, Committee for Maryborough	Ongoing
14.2	Promote online resources to the business community via a number of communication channels (e.g. website, social media) to provide insightful information and opportunities for improving their business (e.g. Business Victoria, Invest Victoria).	Strategy and Economic Development	Ongoing

**TARGETS & MONITORING**

TARGET	MONITOR
Reduce the median number of days taken to provide a planning permit decision in line with the Victorian average.	Annually using data published by Know Your Council.
Increase the average number of attendees and participants at training, mentorship and networking events.	Annually, recording attendance for each session.

THEME 4  
**TAILORED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE**

**STRATEGY 15**

Encourage and implement best practice in economic development

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
15.1	Appoint a full-time economic development officer to undertake the core roles and functions of the unit, including regular business engagement, proactive investment attraction, responding to investment enquiries, undertaking industry research and strengthening regional partnerships.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term
15.2	Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the economic development unit.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term
15.3	Ensure all investment enquiries are shared across the relevant Council departments (e.g. planning, economic development, assets & infrastructure).	Strategy and Economic Development	Ongoing
15.4	Access up-to-date economic data and research to monitor trends in the local economy and inform decision making. Consider platforms such as Remplan economy and Economy Id.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term and Ongoing

**STRATEGY 16**

Implement a contemporary approach to business engagement

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
16.1	Develop a dynamic and up-to-date business database for the Shire. Cross reference with the Australian Business Register to validate information. The database should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business name;</li> <li>• Business type;</li> <li>• Lead and secondary business contact;</li> <li>• Address;</li> <li>• Contact details;</li> <li>• Industry classification; and</li> <li>• Business size (i.e. number of employees).</li> </ul>	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term

**STRATEGY 16** (cont.)

Implement a contemporary approach to business engagement

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
16.2	Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to guide Council's approach to business engagement. Investigate implementing a contemporary approach to business engagement such as a dedicated CRM.	Strategy and Economic Development	Short Term
16.3	Track and record the frequency of business engagements.	Strategy and Economic Development	Ongoing

**STRATEGY 17**

Strengthen strategic partnerships, encourage regional collaboration and prioritise advocacy

No.	Action	Lead & partners	Timeframe
17.1	Meet with regional economic development bodies and regional councils to align thinking, collaborate on economic development initiatives and prioritise regional advocacy efforts.	Strategy and Economic Development, RDV	Ongoing

**TARGETS & MONITORING**

TARGET	MONITOR
Record the number and frequency of business engagements.	Track and record the number of businesses engaged, the purpose and method of engagement and outcome (e.g. response). Monitor annually and achieve an increase in the number of business engagements year on year.
Develop and maintain an up-to-date business database.	Review and update annually, using the Australian Business Register (ABR).

## Appendices

### Appendix A Stakeholder Summary

Workshops	Location	Attendees	Date	Consultant	Format
Community	Talbot	15	4/06/2019	Twin Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Community	Maryborough	6	5/06/2019	Twin Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Community	Maryborough	20	12/06/2019	Twin Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Community	Dunolly	11	11/06/2019	Twin Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Council Officers	Maryborough	15	13/06/2019	Twin Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Council Officers (Tourism)	Maryborough	7	13/06/2019	Twin Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop

Name	Industry	Company	Consultation Date	Consultant	Format
Peter McAlister	Food Manufacturing/Manufacturing	True Foods & C for M	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Windsor Main	Food Manufacturing/Manufacturing	Edlyn Foods	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Kerrie Dowling	Food Manufacturing/Manufacturing	Sonac Australia/Committee for Maryborough	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
David Sutton	Education	Maryborough Education Centre	19/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Terry Welsh	Health	Maryborough District Health Service	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Carli Springate	Education	Bendigo TAFE - Castlemaine	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Darren Ross	Agricultural	agric, hay and straw baling	16/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Charles Williamson	Agricultural	lamb and wool	12/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Mark Dellavedova	Property/Real Estate/Land Development	Land Developer/Real estate/business owner	16/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Kate Ashton	Property/Real Estate/Land Development	Maryborough Ballarat Real Estate	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Anthony Nigro	Retail	McDonalds owner/ Business owner	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Maria Smith	Professional Services / Education & Training	Bounce Australia	9/08/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one

