

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013



CONTENTS

Section 1: About Council	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council's vision• About the shire• Message from the Mayor and CEO• Councillors• Council's executive staff• 2013 Community satisfaction survey results• 2012/13 highlights – snapshot• 2012/13 major highlights in detail	
Section 2: Corporate and community services	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental health• Sustainability, regulatory assurance and emergency management (SRAEM)• Local laws• Home and community care (HACC)• Tourism• Central Goldfields Art Gallery• Events• Recreation services• Children's services	
Section 3: Go Goldfields	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal• Library services• Grampians Goldfields Healthier Communities	
Section 4: Technical services	38
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engineering and services• Operations• Strategic planning	
Section 5: Organisational development	44
Section 6: Governance	48

Performance statement and full financial reports enclosed on disc.

COUNCIL'S VISION

To add to our proud heritage a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

Five keys of success

Council will achieve its vision by:

1. Building an engaged, connected and inclusive community in which we take pride; and embracing education as the key for advancement.
2. Managing threats to our environment, especially the lack of water and the risk of fire.
3. Establishing a diverse, prosperous and sustainable “new” local economy utilising regional opportunities and capturing the opportunities tourism generates to complement existing strengths.
4. Conserving our cultural heritage and promoting the active development of the shire as an important centre for the arts.
5. Providing urban and rural infrastructure to enhance community life and liveability to meet aggressive population growth targets in line with regional planning.

Three guiding pillars

The guiding pillars are clarifying questions on the actions we propose to ensure a strong foundation to the decisions we make:

- 1. Community:** Does this benefit the community and our plans to close the gaps between current reality and future prosperity?
- 2. Consultation:** Has there been adequate conversation and community input to our deliberations?
- 3. Accountability:** Have we put appropriate risk management processes in place and are we ready to hold ourselves and our partners accountable for the actions and decisions which impact on our community?

This Council vision reflects the 2009 - 2013 Council Plan, against which this document reports. The 2013 - 2017 Council Plan was adopted in May 2013.

ABOUT THE SHIRE

Located at the geographical centre of Victoria, Central Goldfields Shire covers 1,532 square kilometres and has an estimated residential population of just over 12,500 people.

Maryborough is the shire's major business centre with a population of around 7,500. Maryborough has gained recognition in recent years as having some of the finest sporting facilities in regional Victoria, together with significant historical buildings dating back to the goldmining era of the 1850s.

Other towns in the shire include Bealiba, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Majorca, Talbot, Bowenvale-Timor and the rural districts surrounding these centres. All are famous for their heritage architecture and significant agricultural industries.

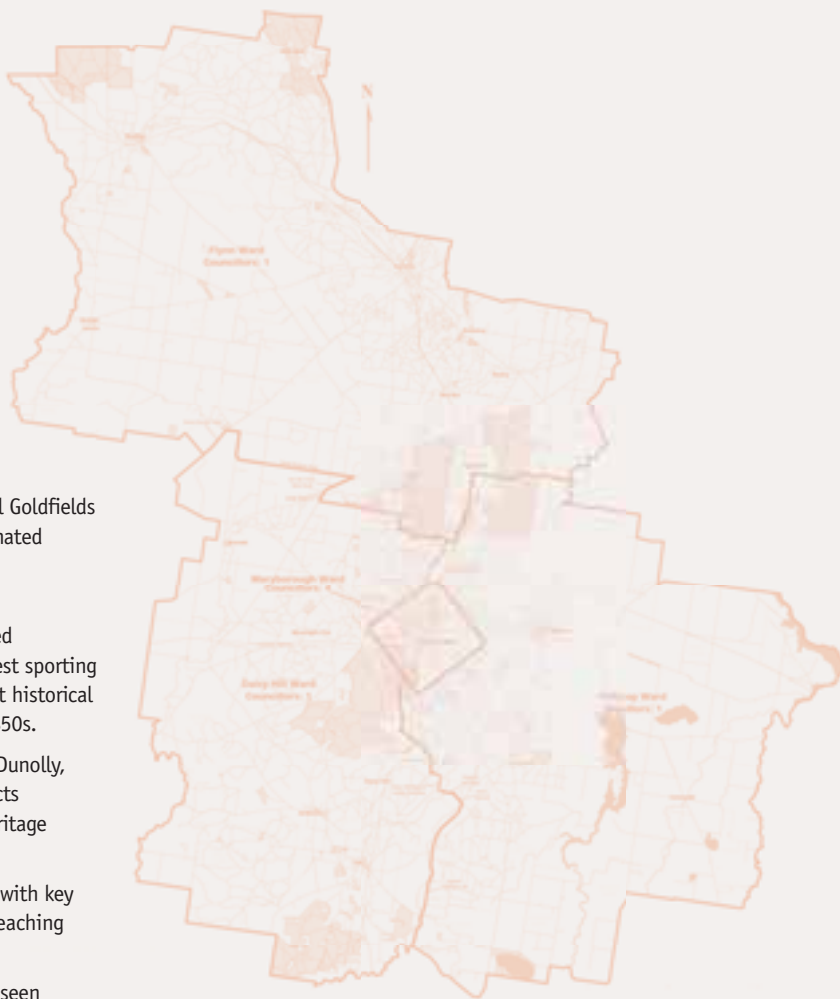
The shire is currently experiencing significant growth with key infrastructure projects and residential developments reaching fruition.

The State Government's commitment to the shire has seen recent investments in the areas of health, education, and law and order, together with assistance to economic development activities initiated by Council.

The shire is located within one hour's drive from main provincial centres of Ballarat and Bendigo and just two hours from Melbourne.

The first democratically elected council for Central Goldfields Shire was elected on 15 March, 1997. In 2005, the Minister for Local Government determined that the number of councillors to represent the shire be increased from five to seven.

The next election will be held in October 2016 with councillors elected for a four year term.



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



It is with great pleasure that we present the Central Goldfields Shire Council Annual Report for the 2012/13 financial year.

In November, the new council was sworn in and set to the important task of developing the **Council Plan 2013 – 2017**. With a vision to be “a community with choice” the Council Plan sets out the long term view of where the Council wants the community to be during its term. The plan lists four core interrelated action areas that will contribute toward achieving the vision: community and culture; economy and growth; built and natural environment; and processes and governance.

By striving to achieve the vision, Council believes it will offer the community the critical component – **quality of life**: a combination of social, environmental, economic and cultural attributes to be enjoyed by existing residents and attract new residents and business investment.

Central Goldfields Shire is faced with social and economic challenges. To address these, Council is implementing its Go Goldfields action plan – specifically targeted programs to address areas of disadvantage.

Supported by the Victorian Government in the amount of \$2.4 million over three years, **Go Goldfields** has developed a series of shire wide, community driven approaches to improve social, education and health outcomes for children, youth and families.

Two years ago our community faced unprecedented challenges as floods devastated the lives of many hundreds, most particularly in the town of Carisbrook. The response to the disaster demonstrated the community’s incredible

strength, and this year, that strength was recognised on a state and national level in the **Resilient Australia Awards**.

The Regional Australia Institute selected the Carisbrook community to be one of four case studies in its 2012 report on economic recovery. Of the communities studied, Carisbrook was found to have had the most rapid and effective economic recovery. We are exceptionally proud of the efforts made by all involved in the recovery.

For our technical services department, the floods created a large amount of restoration works for a number of community and shire assets. A total damage bill in excess of \$30 million was estimated – approximately \$11.1 million was expended in 2012/13.

The number and extent of flood damaged assets has continued to increase, as assets show a higher rate of deterioration due to the long term effects of the floods. Sealed roads, in particular, have experienced underlying structural pavement damage. Council continues to attend to the issues caused by the floods in addition to its regular maintenance schedule.

Collaboration with our neighbours plays a significant role in achieving outcomes for our shire. In September we joined City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council to sign a vital memorandum of understanding to form the **Bendigo Regional Tourism Board**.

This is a big leap forward, as this is the first time we have held a position on a tourism board at a regional level. Bendigo Regional Tourism will provide leadership and support to our tourism operators, and we look forward to the benefits from this partnership.

In another successful collaboration, Council facilitated the formation of a consortium of 16 local government bodies to obtain \$8.5 million from the Australian Government for the **Lighting the Regions project** - a bulk streetlight upgrade project that covers one third of Victoria. It is possibly the largest regional street light changeover project in Australian history.

The streetlight upgrade is just one way we are leading our region to a more sustainable future. We recently completed our **Sustainability Action Plan 2012 – 2020**, with significant contributions from a committed group of local residents and business people. Our community engagement success drew the attention of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Ryan Smith. As a result, Council presented to the Minister's Advisory Committee and a number of other forums on how to achieve replicable levels of community engagement in local government policy making.

We continue to pursue a number of **economic development** strategies to assist existing businesses to grow and to attract new businesses and industries to the area. In November, with State Government assistance, we appointed a **Business Initiatives Consultant**, to assist us in: developing a digital strategy, to ensure our region is ready for the impending introduction of the national broadband network;

boosting the work of the Central Goldfields Business Group to better support existing business; and securing new industry to join the proposed Maryborough food cluster. These projects are well underway.

Our work to lift employment and learning, through **Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal**, has paid dividends with an impressive 102 employment outcomes and 170 training outcomes since the program commenced in 2010.

Getting Ahead, a program that won the inaugural Joan Kirner Social Justice Award for Council in early 2012, has been crucial in assisting people who struggle to get by or obtain employment.

In a very pleasing development, the Hon. Wendy Lovell, Minister for Housing, visited in August to announce a \$1 million State Government funding extension, which has allowed the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal program to continue to 2015.

Another employment success has been the **Maryborough Jobs, Skills and Training Expo**. At the 2012 expo there were 207 jobs displayed and over 400 opportunities available in the area. It is pleasing to see growing career opportunities for our young people.

The activities and achievements reported in the 2012/13 Annual Report demonstrate the continued progress of our shire and Council's commitment to providing better services and facilities for our community.

We take this opportunity to thank our skilled and dedicated staff, who have made these many achievements possible.



Cr Barry Rinaldi
Mayor



Mark Johnston
Chief Executive Officer



The new council was elected in November 2012.

COUNCILLORS



Cr Barry Rinaldi – Maryborough Ward (Mayor)

Barry Rinaldi first became a councillor in March 1997. He was elected to the role of Mayor in November 2012, having previously filled the role from March 1999 to March 2001.



Cr Geoff Lovett – Maryborough Ward

Geoff Lovett has been a councillor for Central Goldfields Shire since amalgamation in 1997. He was Mayor in 2004, 2005 and again in 2007.



Cr Wendy McIvor – Maryborough Ward

Wendy McIvor was elected to the role of councillor in November 2012. It is her first time in the role.



Cr Paula Nixon – Maryborough Ward

Paula Nixon was first elected to Council in a by-election in early 2008, and was the Mayor in 2012.



Cr Ian Robertson – Tullaroop Ward

Ian Robertson has been a councillor for Central Goldfields Shire since amalgamation in 1997. Previously he was a councillor for the Shire of Tullaroop. Ian was Mayor of Central Goldfields Shire in 2001, and again in 2003.



Cr John Smith – Flynn Ward (retired)

John Smith was first elected to Council in November 2008. He retired from the role in May 2012 due to ill health. At the end of the financial year, a new councillor had not yet been elected.



Cr John Van Beveren – Paddys Ranges Ward

John Van Beveren became a councillor in November 2012. It is his first time in the role.



COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE STAFF

CEO and General Managers (back row) support executive staff members who obtained new qualifications from Victoria University through a State Government funded skills recognition program.



Mark Johnston – Chief Executive Officer

As Chief Executive Officer, Mark Johnston leads an organisation focussed on customer service; community participation; financial and strategic management; and value for money services. Strategic leadership is the keynote.

Mark has held the role of CEO since 1995 - initially overseeing the amalgamation process. Prior to that, Mark was the CEO of the former Shire of East Loddon, which followed the completion of the Bachelor of Business (Local Government) qualification.

Heavily involved in local community organisations and activities; a previous Chair of the Bendigo Football League Board of Management, Mark currently serves on the inaugural AFL Central Victoria Commission, and since 2006 has been a Director on the Board of the Bendigo TAFE.

In 2009, Mark was appointed to the Loddon Mallee Committee of Regional Development Australia - an Australian Government initiative that aims to bring together all levels of government to enhance the growth and development of regional Australia.

Mark has led and facilitated several major economic and community development initiatives including the ground breaking Go Goldfields – a community driven approach to tackle entrenched disadvantage and improve social, education and health outcomes for children, youth and families.



Wayne Belcher – General Manager Corporate and Community Services

Wayne Belcher joined Central Goldfields Shire Council in April 1999 as the Director of Corporate Services, assuming the responsibility for both Corporate and Community Services in 2003.

Prior to commencing a career in local government, Wayne had a career spanning more than 21 years in health administration commencing at the Maryborough and District Hospital, before accepting a position with the Sisters of Mercy administering hospitals in Bendigo and Greensborough.

Wayne has a Degree in Accounting / Economics Hospital Administration and a Graduate Diploma of Education.



David Sutcliffe – General Manager Technical Services

David Sutcliffe commenced the General Manager role at Council in April 2009.

David has a Degree in Engineering from Ballarat University, and has worked as a professional engineer with the Ministry of Housing, Bayside Council and the City of Casey. David ran his own business for several years before taking on a consulting engineer role with HDS Australia. He then moved to Baw Baw Shire, going on from there to join Central Goldfields Shire.



Sharon Fraser – General Manager Go Goldfields

Sharon Fraser began her role at Council in November 2011. Sharon was appointed to oversee the State funded Go Goldfields project – a landmark community initiative that targets the needs of children, young people and families throughout the shire and tackles social disadvantage.

Prior to joining Council, Sharon held executive and management roles in health and community health in state, regional and rural services.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Results for 2013

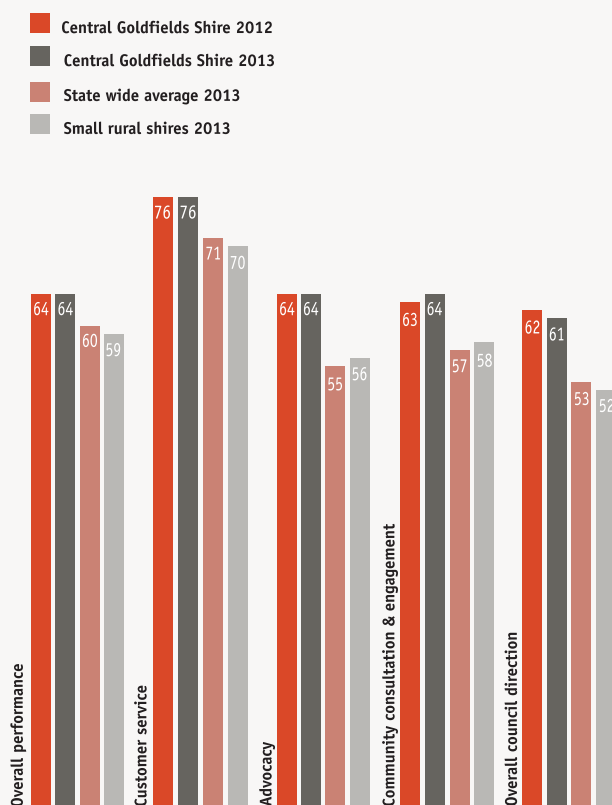
Council is proud to have achieved outstanding results in the 2013 Community Satisfaction Survey, and commends its staff members for performance and dedication.

Each year the Department of Community Planning and Development (DPCD) coordinates and auspices this Community Satisfaction Survey throughout Victorian local government areas.

The main objectives of the survey are to assess the performance of councils across a range of measures and to seek insight into ways to provide improved or more effective service delivery.

In 2013, Council recorded scores **significantly higher** than State wide averages and the average for the small rural shires group across all five key areas of measurement. Exact figures are detailed below.

2013 Community Satisfaction Survey results



2012/13 HIGHLIGHTS SNAPSHOT

July

- Central Goldfields Art Gallery hosts *The Art of Story* – a Books Illustrated exhibition that features a display of Academy Award winning animation.
- The Maryborough Library hosts *Circus in a Suitcase* – a hugely successful children's program.

August

- Minister for Housing, The Hon. Wendy Lovell, announces a \$1 million State Government funding extension for Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal.
- Municipal Fire Management Plan 2012 – 2015 is adopted by Council.

September

- *Returning Comet*, an exhibition by internationally renowned Australian artist Dean Bowen, opens at the Central Goldfields Art Gallery.
- Council signs a memorandum of understanding with four neighbouring councils to form the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board.
- Job seekers and students flock to the 2012 Maryborough Jobs, Skills and Training Expo, where the new Youth Portal is launched.

October

- "Pigs Might Fly" community development project wins the Resilient Australia community award for Victoria, and advances to the national competition.
- The inaugural Spring Fling festival is held – a shire wide celebration.
- Council appoints a Business Initiatives Consultant for a two year term to assist with economic development for the region.
- Maryborough Men's Shed is established.

November

- "Pigs Might Fly" community development project wins the Resilient Australia national community award.
- Central Goldfields Shire's new councillors are announced, with Councillor Barry Rinaldi elected Mayor.
- The Healthy Together Street Harvest project launches.
- Maryborough hosts another highly successful RACV Energy Breakthrough.

December

- Summer in the Domain launches, which includes Domain Carols and Christmas Eve festivities.

January

- Deputy Premier Peter Ryan visits Central Goldfields Shire to make a number of funding announcements for infrastructure improvements around the shire.
- The new Official Visitors Guide for Maryborough and Surrounds is launched.

February

- Maryborough hosts the 2013 Vision Super Central Goldfields Reverse Triathlon.

March

- The 2013 Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards are launched.
- Interpretive signs titled *Villages of the early goldfields* are installed throughout the shire.

April

- The Council Plan 2013 – 2017 is formally adopted, with a vision to be "a community with choice".
- Council participates in the 2013 Regional Victoria Living Expo.
- Maryborough Relay for Life is held.
- Art Central opens at 172 High Street, Maryborough.

May

- Council, in partnership with 15 other councils, successfully obtains funding from the Australian Government for the *Lighting the Regions* project.
- The historic Maryborough Fire Tower is reinstated, following restoration works.

June

- Council hosts the 2013 Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards.
- Maryborough historic fire tower restoration is completed.



Minister Peter Ryan visits Maryborough to announce funding for the historic fire tower, and trials one of Maryborough's vintage fire trucks.

2012/13 MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS IN DETAIL

Central Goldfields Shire elects its new council

In November, 2012 the new councillors for Central Goldfields Shire were officially sworn in. For two councillors, Wendy McIvor and John Van Beveran, it is their first time at the Council table. Returning councillor Barry Rinaldi was elected Mayor for 2013.

One of the first roles of the new council was to develop the Council Plan 2013 – 2017. Adopted in April 2013, the plan has a vision of making Central Goldfields Shire “a community with choice”, focussing on key quality of life aspects that are applicable to all residents.

Award winner in community development

In October 2012, the Carisbrook community's *Pigs Might Fly* program won the Resilient Australia community award for Victoria, and went on to win the national Resilient Australia award in November.

Pigs Might Fly was a community wide planning and prioritisation event held in the aftermath of the 2011 floods and led by Council's Sustainability, Regulatory Assurance and Emergency Management unit. The working groups that formed at this and other events were formalised through a local, incorporated body called Carisbrook Projects Inc.

New interpretive signage improves the shire's visitor experience

Visitors to Central Goldfields have been delighted by new interpretive signage installed throughout the shire to tell the tales of our rich culture and heritage. Titled *Villages of the early goldfields*, the 24 signs provide information about the people that founded the various townships, and the toils and triumphs of the gold rush era that are unique to this area.

Lighting the Regions

Council, in partnership with 15 other local government bodies, was successful in its funding application to the Australian Government for the *Lighting the Regions* project. It is possibly the largest regional street light changeover project in Australian history.

The successful application means reduced costs for participating regional and small rural shires in the order of \$41 million. Central Goldfields Shire has approximately 900 streetlights suitable for upgrade. Potential savings from the project for this shire alone are expected to be in the order of \$1.2 million over 20 years.

New funding extends Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal to 2015

The Hon. Wendy Lovell, MLC, Minister for Housing, visited Maryborough in August to announce a \$1 million State Government funding extension, permitting the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal program to continue to 2015.

Minister Lovell also announced a further \$36,000 for the *Maryborough Works* campaign – a project to promote employment and training opportunities in the area.

Funds secured for the historic fire tower restoration

Acting Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development Peter Ryan visited Maryborough in January to announce the Victorian Coalition Government's contribution of \$92,810 towards the restoration of the Maryborough Art Gallery's historic fire tower.

The former fire station was built in 1861 and is one of the town's earliest and most iconic buildings. The fire tower restoration project involved the removal, restoration and replacement of the 1888 fire tower, which was in poor condition. Restoring the fire tower complements other heritage icons in Maryborough such as the historic Court House, Town Hall and Post Office.

Funding was provided through the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund's Putting Locals First Program. The project was completed in June 2013.

2013 Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards

Council was proud to host the Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards; a biennial event that showcases business excellence throughout the shire, and highlights the many achievements of local traders.

More than 100 nominations were received, and over 60 businesses contested the eight award categories. The event is now considered one of the highlights of the Central Goldfields Shire business calendar.

Inaugural Spring Fling festival

Central Goldfields' inaugural Spring Fling festival incorporated over 80 events in Maryborough, Dunolly, Talbot, Bealiba and Carisbrook. For three weeks in October, the Central Goldfields were alive with theatre, history, children's activities, art, open gardens, dinners, and hot air balloons.

The Spring Fling festival gave visitors the opportunity to explore the Central Goldfields, with lots to do for people of all ages and interests.

Art Central opens

On 10 April, Art Central officially opened its doors at 172 High Street, Maryborough.

Another Go Goldfields initiative, Art Central aims to involve more Central Goldfields Shire residents in community art projects, no matter their age or skill level.

Participation in the arts contributes to the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community. Participants learn new skills, experience increased self esteem and confidence, and build stronger social networks.

The Art Central team works closely with the community to develop programs that reflect local interests and aspirations. Projects are being developed with schools in Maryborough, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Bealiba, Timor and Talbot. Other projects involving mums and babies, and youth are also in development.

Left to right

New signage throughout the shire provides visitors and locals with historical insight.

Young local artists gather for the opening of Art Central.





CORPORATE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Council endeavours to provide an outstanding level of customer service to those who deal with or enquire to Environmental Health. The department is responsible for:

- Food surveillance and regulation of food offered for sale.
- Regulation of shire businesses such as hairdressers, tattooists and accommodation.
- Regulation of the installation and maintenance of septic tank systems in unsewered areas.
- Investigation and resolution of public health incidences.

To improve the efficiency of its service, and the experience for both Council officers and customers, the Environmental Health team made a number of changes and introductions over the past 12 months.

New fee structure

A proposal was made to Council to introduce fairer fees for residents, as well as fees to deter wasting time and ensure compliance. Council approved the proposed changes and the new fees have been implemented.

Introduction of SPEAR

With recent changes to Environmental Protection Agency code of practice, extensive communication was directed to local plumbers to ensure compliance. Council made changes to the relevant application forms and SPEAR (Surveying and Planning through Electronic Applications Referrals) is now being used in conjunction with Council's planning department.

Joint inspections

Realising inspections of premises can involve many Council departments; Environmental Health began engaging in joint inspections with Local Laws, Building and Planning units.

Introduction of RIAMS

RIAMS (Regulatory Information and Management System) was introduced, ensuring consistent policy and procedures are in place. Council now has access to relevant information and standardised documents across a range of disciplines to assist in the management of day to day operations.

Introduction of *Streatrader*

Streatrader, an online temporary and mobile food premises registration database, was implemented for various proprietors and community groups within the shire.

The year ahead

Continuing to implement the new systems and processes will be a focus for Environmental Health over the next 12 months. It will be the first year Council issues permit renewals through *Streatrader*; and other renewal forms will need to be altered to reflect the newly adopted fee structure.

In a continued push to improve efficiency, a web based version of Health Manager will be considered, which will link to Council's finance system.

Environmental Health will also contribute to the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and continue the statutory work of inspections around the shire.

Established food premises and local markets are examples of services that will benefit from Council's new streamlined digital systems and processes.





New solar panels were installed at one of Council's biggest infrastructure assets, the Maryborough Resource Centre.

SUSTAINABILITY, REGULATORY ASSURANCE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (SRAEM)

The SRAEM unit set out with a long list of varied goals for the financial year, and was successful across the board.

Award winner in community development

In October 2012, the Carisbrook community's *Pigs Might Fly* program won the Resilient Australia community award for Victoria, and went on to win the national Resilient Australia award in November.

Pigs Might Fly was a community wide planning and prioritisation event, held in the aftermath of the 2011 floods. The working groups that formed at this and other events were formalised through a local, incorporated body called Carisbrook Projects Inc.

The Regional Australia Institute selected the Carisbrook community to be one of four case studies in its 2012 report on economic recovery. Of the communities studied, Carisbrook was found to have had the most rapid and effective economic recovery, with expansion of its small and medium business base and an increasingly positive outlook on the future.

Central Goldfields Shire Sustainability Action Plan 2012 – 2020 receives recognition

The plan was developed by a committed group of local residents and business people with the support of the University of Ballarat and a number of regional stakeholders over twelve months. It includes five key areas with targets and action items:

1. Energy security
2. Human water use
3. Waste management
4. Food quality and security
5. Ecosystem enhancement
6. Built environment and land use.

There is provision for a seventh category: Transport.

Development and implementation of the action plan was

notable by the high the degree to which Council engaged the community, and drew the attention of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Ryan Smith. As a result, Council presented to the Minister's Advisory Committee and a number of other forums on how to achieve replicable levels of community engagement in local government policy making.

Energy security demonstration project

With financial support from the Clean Energy Corporation, Council developed and implemented an energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofit on the Maryborough Resource Centre. Solar panels now line the roof of this major Council asset and energy user. This project is expected to save Council nearly \$400,000 in energy costs within ten years, and abate 196 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year.

Lighting the Regions

Council facilitated the formation of a consortium to successfully bid for an \$8.5 million bulk streetlight upgrade project that covers one third of Victoria. The project was led by Council's SRAEM unit in collaboration with the Central Victoria Greenhouse Alliance and the Wimmera-Mallee Sustainability Alliance. The region will upgrade nearly 23,000 streetlights through this program, and save ratepayers approximately \$41 million over 20 years in energy costs.

For Council, *Lighting the Regions* equates to a Federal grant of \$200,000 and a financial saving through increased energy efficiency of approximately \$1.2 million over 20 years. Approximately 900 streetlights will be upgraded.

The year ahead

The SRAEM unit plans to introduce anti bullying training over the next 12 months, and also provide training to managers on effective employee welfare management.

The risk management program will be reviewed and updated, and the management of the Workcover process will continue, with an annual goal of reducing claims.

LOCAL LAWS

The tasks of the Local Laws unit are varied, and include responsibilities such as animal management, reducing fire hazards, and monitoring street parking.

Animal management

Animal management is a significant responsibility for Council. There is an ongoing push for residents to register and microchip their pets, in an effort to reduce the number of animals that have to be rehoused. Local Laws rangers continue to make regular visits to schools and kindergartens to educate children on responsible pet ownership of domestic animals.

Disappointingly, a large number of domestic animals are surrendered or seized by Council each year. However; Council was successful in rehousing most of these animals to responsible, caring owners. Regular articles in the local newspaper provide Council the opportunity to advertise animals needing a new home.

The expanding feral cat population is an ongoing issue. Council has introduced a cat desexing program, which has helped to reduce stray cat numbers. All cats that are rehoused from the pound are desexed free through the program.

Fire hazard reduction

Notices were sent to all property owners within the shire in September 2012, warning of the upcoming fire danger period. Pleasingly, the response from the community was very positive, and early warning notices will now be a regular occurrence.

Street parking

Council has increased its parking patrols as a result of ongoing complaints from community members about the abuse of parking rules in the shopping district. Consequently, the number of infringement notices issued has increased, and it is hoped drivers will start to change their habits and abide by parking regulations.

The year ahead

A Domestic Animal Management Plan was completed and adopted by Council in May. As outlined in the plan, an aim for the coming 12 months is to establish an off lead area for dogs to run, play and socialise.

Council will continue to encourage domestic animal owners to desex their pets, especially cats. More education programs will be introduced for schools and other community organisations to promote responsible pet ownership.

Unightly properties are a concern. Council will look to establish a compliance program that ensures property owner compliance.

Left to right

The Carisbrook community shows its true spirit through the award winning Pigs Might Fly program.

Ranger Jane teaches our young community members some important lessons for looking after pets.



HOME & COMMUNITY CARE (HACC)

For the 2012/13 year, the HACC department aimed to provide community members with the care they require, as determined by Council's assessment officers; and to increase activities that prevent social isolation. The department also aimed to implement the new Active Service Model, in which Council assists clients to remain in their homes and as independent as possible.

Funding increases

HACC was successful in obtaining increased funding across a number of areas, enabling the department to provide increased and improved service delivery. This included:

- An additional assessment officer, two days per week.
- Additional social support activities for men through the positive ageing program.
- Support to continue the work with the Australian Red Cross to identify vulnerable people and maintain the vulnerable register.

Active Service Model

The Active Service Model was fully implemented this year. Council is now empowering clients to maintain their independence in their own homes. The assessment is holistic and when required, clients are referred to complementary services to enhance their living skills.

2012 Seniors' Festival

Seniors' Festival week was well attended with activities such as free movies at the local cinema; a live theatre production; photographic exhibition and photography workshop for seniors; and open days at the four senior clubs.

Rural access achievements

Upgrades and improvements were made to a number of services across Central Goldfields Shire, to assist community members in their daily life when out and about.

- A new pelican pool hoist and bariatric wheelchair was installed at Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre indoor pool, which has allowed disabled people of all ages access to the pools and spa.
- *Readspeak*, for those with vision impairment, replaced *Browsaloud* on Council's website.
- A recharge station was installed at the Maryborough Resource Centre, allowing those with scooters to recharge the battery while in town at no cost.
- Council officers worked one on one with clients requiring support in areas ranging from hoarding to liaising with other service providers.

Improving Liveability for Older Persons (ILOP)

The ILOP project is a State Government funded initiative that aims to assist small towns in regional Victoria to deliver projects that will make a positive difference to the quality of life of older people.

The ILOP project in the Central Goldfields Shire has focused on community based initiatives that will have ongoing benefits and promote social connections. A large number of activities took place during the financial year.

• Cooking and sharing meals

ILOP coordinators worked with Council's Healthy Together project officers to support the establishment of the weekly Talbot Talkers Cooking Group. Work was also undertaken with Maryborough Community House to prepare and share weekly community lunches.

• Working with students

ILOP participants had the opportunity to work with Maryborough VCAL students on a photography project that acknowledged older volunteers within the shire, and promoted volunteering as a way of strengthening social connections.

• Maryborough Men's Shed

ILOP coordinators consulted with the community to determine the level of interest in establishing a Maryborough Men's Shed. As a result of the consultation, a shed was launched in October, and the group has 30 registered members, who meet one day each week at the Goldfields Employment and Learning Centre.

Since commencing, the Men's Shed has been an active group in the community, delivering services such as low cost gardening and repairs; building book boxes for the Go Goldfields literacy project; and repairing kindergarten play equipment. The group now manages its own fundraising to ensure its independence and sustainability.

The Maryborough Men's Shed Victoria is now an incorporated body and is applying for a State Government grant to fund the construction of permanent premises.



Left to right

Talbot community members meet weekly to cook, share a meal and a story or two.

The Maryborough Men's Shed was established this year by members of the community, with the support of ILOP.

The year ahead

HACC's aim for the coming year is to ensure it has adequate services to meet clients' needs, empower clients to be as active as possible, and to use a restorative model.

The year will see HACC working closely with occupational therapists to ensure clients continue to do what they can, while HACC services focus on providing for what clients cannot do.

To achieve its aims, the HACC department proposes to:

- Extend its social support to include a men's activity program once a week.
- Complete implementation of the Active Service Model.
- Host an aged care expo in October.
- Seek an increase in funding for assessments.
- Identify vulnerable community members.
- Support activities commenced through the ILOP project.
- Assist and support community members with any access issues.
- Update the Positive Ageing Policy.



Regional CEOs Craig Neimann (City of Greater Bendigo), John McLinden (Loddon Shire Council), Phil Rowland (Mount Alexander Shire Council), and Mark Johnston sign the MoU for the new Bendigo Regional Tourism Board.

TOURISM

Council's Tourism Department had an extensive list of commitments for the financial year; keen to increase visitation to the shire, and improve the visitor experience.

Improved visitor information

A new Official Visitor Guide for Maryborough and Surrounds was launched, with fresh content such as improved images, maps and updated contact information. This document is formally sanctioned by Tourism Victoria, and available in many locations around the State, including Federation Square.

New interpretive signage

New interpretive signage was installed throughout the shire to tell the tales of our rich culture and heritage and greatly improve the visitor experience. Titled *Villages of the early goldfields*, the 24 signs provide information about the people that founded the various townships, and the toils and triumphs of the gold rush era that are unique to this area.

The project is a key component of Council's strategy for developing and forging strong links between cultural arts, heritage and tourism. The development, design and installation of the signage were funded by the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

The signs are located in Maryborough, Dunolly, Talbot, Carisbrook, Bealiba, Moliagul, Bealiba, Timor, Majorca, Amherst and Archdale.

Bendigo Regional Tourism Board

In September, Central Goldfields Shire Council, City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council signed a vital memorandum of understanding to form the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board.

This is a big leap forward for Council, as this is the first time it has had a position on a tourism board at a regional level. Tourism Manager Joel Chadwick and Councillor Paula Nixon (Chair) represent Council on the board.

Bendigo Regional Tourism will provide leadership and support to the regional tourism industry by undertaking the following:

- Consult and liaise with the industry to determine needs and opportunities for regional tourism development.
- Represent the parties to develop and attract visitation to the region.
- Work cooperatively to promote and market the region (intrastate, interstate and international) as a major visitor destination.
- Work cooperatively to assist tourism businesses to deliver enriched visitor experiences.
- Deliver industry training programs that benefit the broader tourism industry.
- Encourage development of tourism related infrastructure and experiences to the region.

Grow Your Business program

As part of the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board, professional development and training courses offered by the board are available to operators within the shire. Three businesses/government departments took part in the Grow Your Business program from Central Goldfields Shire. Each participating business graduated from the program in June, having successfully completed a highly detailed business plan.

First National Heritage Region

Council continues to be a member of the Project Control Group of the First National Heritage Region Project. The project involves 13 municipalities and five government stakeholders. A research project was conducted and the report and project is now managed by the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive. Funding opportunities for the project are now being sought.

Tourist/Visitor Information Centre enquiries - Maryborough

Month	Walk In	Emails	Phone
July 2012	1066	197	202
August 2012	1098	222	234
September 2012	1465	202	194
October 2012	1477	341	235
November 2012	1561	262	314
December 2012	1072	208	185
January 2013	1124	295	197
February 2013	1104	259	213
March 2013	1380	256	199
April 2013	1336	247	223
May 2013	1101	223	205
June 2013	933	217	215
TOTAL	14,717	2,929	2,616

Website

Total website visitors to www.visitmaryborough.com.au
111,580

Total customer enquiries through the website
234

The year ahead

Council will continue its partnership with the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board. Plans are in place for marketing campaigns, industry and professional development, and event funding opportunities for local tourism operators.

Development of the Goldfields Highway will continue in conjunction with VicRoads. The highway will be a tourist route highway from Ballarat to Maryborough and onto Bendigo, giving motorists the opportunity to travel through the heart of the goldfields region.

A tourism sub committee is planned for the Central Goldfields Business Group, and Council's Tourism Manager will join the Goldfields Business board to oversee the new sub committee. This will further assist businesses in the shire to coordinate their tourism offer.

Members of Central Goldfields Shire's tourism industry graduate from the Grow Your Business program.





A selection of vibrant quilts was displayed during the gallery's Golden Textures exhibition.

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY

The Central Goldfields Art Gallery seeks to try new ideas for its exhibition program. Keen to meet changing trends in art and attract a wider audience, the gallery hosted some traditional, and some unique exhibitions in the past 12 months.

The Art of Story

From mid July until the end of August, the gallery hosted a Books Illustrated travelling exhibition of *Shaun Tan: The Art of Story; discovering The Lost Thing - Book to Film*.

This exhibition was a fascinating insight into the creation of *The Lost Thing*, featuring drawings, paintings and other developmental work plus his multi award winning animation, which won an Academy Award for Best Short Animation in 2011. The gallery partnered with Best Start Stronger Families for this exhibition and over 800 school children attended the gallery.

Returning Comet

Opening on 1 September 2012, *Returning Comet*, was a landmark exhibition of works by internationally renowned Melbourne artist Dean Bowen. Born and raised in Maryborough, Dean put together a collection of paintings, sculptures and works on paper. His artwork is held in major Australian galleries, as well as numerous international collections. A joint sponsor of this exhibition was Maryborough based manufacturer True Foods.

Golden Textures

The Central Goldfields Art Gallery commenced its 2013 program on February 23 with *Golden Textures* - a curated contemporary art quilt exhibition which comprised of 35 new works created by 16 selected artists. This was also the inaugural year of the biennial Acquisitive Prize, sponsored by Council. Over 1,000 people visited the gallery from Victoria and interstate.

School holiday art workshops

The gallery's school holiday art workshops continue to grow. Local artist Patricia Walsh joined the tutoring team, engaging children, teaching new techniques and inspiring creativity.

The year ahead

The Central Goldfields Art Gallery will continue with its program to engage and delight art enthusiasts of all ages and with varied interests.

- **For the young and young at heart**

As a biennial event, the gallery will host a children's picture book illustration exhibition during August. Partnering with Best Start Stronger Families, over 800 school children will visit the gallery. The exhibition, *I'm a Dirty Dinosaur*, will travel from Books Illustrated in Melbourne.

- **Exhibition in darkness**

In March, an exciting exhibition opens titled *Flora Non Evidens*, by Warrnambool artist Karen Richards. This installation is an innovative textile work, focussing on rare and endangered plants from Victoria and uses new light reflective embroidery thread and digital embroidery technology to make large scale embroidered works. As the gallery will be in darkness, visitors will enter the space wearing a head torch; the light from the torch reflects off the plants making them bright silver, and they appear to hover in space like ghosts of themselves.

- **Revisiting a crowd favourite**

Planned for the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, the gallery will come alive with a sensory experience, combining two art forms - paintings and flowers.

Following the enormous success of *Bloomin' Art* in 2012, the gallery will once again host this exhibition. This time, the exhibition will be complemented by several floral design demonstrations and some other exciting events.

EVENTS

In 2012/13, Central Goldfields Shire offered more events for residents and visitors than ever before.

The shire's major sport, recreation and tourism event, the RACV Energy Breakthrough, was once again an enormous success attracting a record crowd to enjoy the excitement of *Maryborough's signature event*.

As well as the increasingly popular sporting events, Council launched new festivals and reasons to celebrate, making the most of the world class Station Domain precinct.

Spring Fling festival

Central Goldfields inaugural Spring Fling festival incorporated over 80 events in Maryborough, Dunolly, Talbot, Bealiba and Carisbrook.

For three weeks in October, the shire was alive with theatre, history, children's activities, art, open gardens, dinners, and hot air balloons.

The festival launched with the *Returning Comet* exhibition by Dean Bowen at the Central Goldfields Art Gallery. Further photographic exhibitions, town and cemetery tours in historic Talbot, an open day at Worsley Cottage, Maryborough, the Dunolly Main Street Market and many more events were bundled into the first weekend.

The first weekend also introduced the Dunolly Gilbert and Sullivan Festival. The event started with a grand parade down Broadway, Dunolly's main street, led by Queen Victoria, to join the fun of an English country fair in the Gordon Gardens. Enthusiastic visitors enjoyed singing *The People's Pirates* at the Savoy Gardens; the Savoy Opera Company of Melbourne's production of *Lolanthé*; and a fantastic local production of *Trial by Jury* in the historic Dunolly Court House.

Throughout the festival, Talbot continued its vintage engine displays and heritage tours; while Bealiba hosted a photography exhibition.

The festival also incorporated other annual events, such as the Talbot Farmers Market, Talbot Town Hall Market, the Pink Party fundraising evening for breast cancer research, the Talbot Swap with the Lot, and the Get Up and Go Family Fun Day.

The Spring Fling festival gave visitors the opportunity to explore the shire, with lots to do for people of all ages and interests.

Summer in the Domain

Summer in the Domain launched in December 2012 and continued until February 2013. Four free community events were staged, with each well attended.

- **The Domain Carols - 16 December**

Between 200 and 250 people attended the pre Christmas event, putting the town in the spirit of the season.

- **Christmas Eve in the Domain - 24 December**

Hosted by the Salvation Army, this event had over 80 community members come out to celebrate together.

- **NYE in the Domain - 31 December**

A successful New Year's Eve event was held, with between 400 and 500 people visiting Station Domain during the evening.

- **Australia Day - 26 January**

Approximately 250 attended the Australia Day activities. This year the FReeZa Committee was involved and organised former resident Daniel Lebkowski to perform during the official proceedings and after the ceremony.

- **Mad Hatter's Tea Party - 17 February**

A very successful event was held with around 500 people attending the day. Community groups involved included: Best Start (sponsor), Girl Guides, Scouts, Netball Association, Healthy Communities, AusKick, Highview, Martin School of Dance, Go Goldfields, Tennis Hot Shots, APEX, Rotary, Maryborough City Brass Band.

The Mighty Buzzniks and Mark 'The Mad Hatter' were a big hit with kids both big and small.

The feedback from all that attended has been very positive with attendees looking forward to the next event!

Below, left to right

The highly successful Mad Hatter's Tea Party event concluded the Summer in the Domain program for 2013.

More than just a walk, the Relay for Life keeps participants entertained through the night.





Left to right

Council staff promote the benefits of the Central Goldfields lifestyle at the 2013 Regional Victoria Living Expo.

Bendigo TAFE Apprentice of the year Emma Harrison (left) proudly displays her award with her employer, Caitlyn Calder.

Relay for Life

The fourth annual Relay for Life was held on Friday, 12 April. 41 teams registered and raised over \$72,452.13. Since launching the event in Maryborough, the community has raised \$313,283.03

Relay for Life brings people together for their own unique reasons. The 2013 event attracted a large number of younger members of the community.

Maryborough's relay has a strong commitment from the 20 volunteer committee members, who work together for six months of the year to organise the event.

2013 Regional Victoria Living Expo

Central Goldfields Shire was again represented by Council at the 2013 Regional Victoria Living Expo in Melbourne during April. The event took months of forward planning, but was well worth the effort, as it enabled Council staff to speak directly with Melburnians keen to know about living in Central Goldfields Shire.

The team had a very busy three days that exceeded expectations. More than 9,500 attended the expo, and Council distributed 1000 information packs to interested patrons.

Learning from the 2012 event, Council developed an online survey for expo patrons to complete. The information gathered from the survey has enabled Council to follow up enquiries more efficiently and supply information relevant to each respondent. One lucky respondent won a weekend's accommodation in Maryborough with \$100 to spend in town.

2013 Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards

The biennial Central Goldfields Business Awards were successfully run during the 2012/13 financial year. The campaign commenced in September with the securing of sponsors. Pleasingly, all sponsors from the 2011 event were keen to partner with Council again, including principal sponsor Powercor.

The awards were launched in March, with the opening of the nomination period. More than 100 businesses were nominated by the community across eight categories, with over 60 of these businesses electing to apply.

The presentation dinner was held on 26 June at the Maryborough Highland Society, in front of a crowd of 250 – a sold out event. Highlights for the evening included an address by guest speaker Cameron Brookes, of the highly successful Melbourne based company Kiandra IT; presentation of the inaugural Employee Health and Wellbeing Achievement Award; prizes for all category winners; and attendance by Powercor CEO Tim Rourke and three general managers.

Event strategy

In addition to hosting events, Council contracted SED Consulting to undertake the development of a Central Goldfields events strategy. The final report is currently in development and expected to be completed in the second half of 2013. A small committee of Council staff is still part of the consultation process.

The year ahead

Council will again be heading to the Regional Victoria Living Expo, scheduled for April 2014. As the final event of a three year trial by Regional Development Victoria, Council anticipates hosting a Central Goldfields Shire Hub at the expo. This will involve representation from the Central Goldfields Business Group, health care, education and housing sectors of the community. By doing this, Council hopes to better answer the many questions of expo patrons, provide solid information, and encourage more commitment from Melburnians to make the move to the shire.

The event strategy is due for completion. Once implemented, the strategy will assist Council in optimising the potential of existing events, provide a strategy for attracting new events to the shire, and determine what regional events Council can use as leverage to attract visitors.

It is anticipated Council will adopt the event strategy before 2014.

Planning for the second Spring Fling festival has commenced, and pleasingly, looks to be bigger than the inaugural event.

Council will also continue with its major annual events:

- RACV Energy Breakthrough
- Summer in the Domain
- Relay for Life.

It was a sold out event for the 2013 Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards.



RECREATION SERVICES

Recreation Services are available to the whole community regardless of socio economic background, geographic location, age, sex, or ethnicity. The service liaises predominantly with sport and recreational groups rather than individuals, and has developed and maintained extensive partnerships with other local, state, and federal government organisations as well.

2012/2013 was a significant year for Recreation Services in terms of strategic planning and policy development.

Crossing borders, tracks and trails

Recreation Services was the instigator for and instrumental in the development of a regionally significant strategic plan: *Crossing borders, tracks and trails*. This project brought together Central Goldfields Shire Council, Hepburn Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council and City of Ballarat; and secured commitment from two State Government regional areas in the Loddon Mallee and Grampians regions.

The project of particular interest to Council was the Ballarat – Maryborough Heritage Trail, which will be an on road hybrid tourist cycling route from Ballarat to Maryborough, incorporating the small townships of Creswick, Clunes, and Talbot and the many attractions along the route.

Loddon Mallee Regional Football (Soccer) Strategy

Council has been a significant contributor in the development of the Loddon Mallee Regional Football (Soccer) Strategy, which analysed the health and wellbeing of the sport of soccer in the region, and the opportunities for future development. This plan will be completed in the 2013/14 year.

Personal training policy and application form

In a first for the Loddon Mallee Region, Council developed and established a Personal Training Policy and Application Form.

This document has been promoted throughout the community, and has created enormous interest amongst the other regional councils that are embarking on their own policy development.

Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre

Council and the community continue to be extremely satisfied with the new level of customer service and sport and leisure opportunities provided at the Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre under its new management group, Unified Community Sports and Leisure. Major capital works at the centre's indoor pool have improved the quality of experience for all users regardless of whether they are swimmers, spectators, or staff members.

Cycling capital

Council successfully hosted the:

- South Pacific Veterans Cycling Championships
- Vision Super Central Goldfields Reverse Triathlon
- Mountain Bike Orienteering Victorian State Series

which continues to reinforce Central Goldfields Shire's reputation as one of the most cycle friendly communities in Victoria.

In an effort to encourage cycling as a mode of transport throughout the shire, bike storage facilities were installed in a number of locations, to enable people to lock up and keep their transportation safe while working or participating other activities.





Below, far left

The RACV Energy breakthrough remains the shire's biggest annual event, attracting 20,000 people over four days.

Above, left to right

Council continues to reinforce the shire's status as a major cycling destination.

Families enjoyed the outdoors at the Get Up and Go Family Fun Day.

Youth services

The Central Goldfields Shire Youth Engage Service has played a significant role in the development and management of the new youth portal, All for youth, which was launched during the year.

Major events

- 2012 RACV Energy Breakthrough
- 2012 Get Up and Go Family Fun Day
- 2012 Victorian Seniors' Festival
- 2013 Vision Super Central Goldfields Reverse Triathlon
- 2013 Central Goldfields South Pacific Veteran Cycling Championships
- 2013 Victorian Short and Middle Distance Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships
- 2013 National Youth Week

The year ahead

A successful funding application through the Local Government Youth Inclusion Grant Scheme in the 2012/13 year will see the development of a Youth Advisory Committee to the Central Goldfields Shire in the 2013/14 year.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Goldfields Children's Centre

This year, the Goldfields Children's Centre (GCC) had its first assessment and rating under the National Quality Framework (NQF), being assessed against the National Quality Standards (NQS).

The NQF emphasises quality outcomes for children, regardless of the education and care setting.

The assessment and rating process is very important. During the GCC assessment visit, an authorised officer observed, discussed, and sited techniques to assess the service against each element of the NQS, National Law and National Regulations.

In six of the seven quality areas assessed, the children's centre was rated as meeting the NQS. In the seventh area, collaborative partnerships with families and communities, it was rated as exceeding the NQS.

For the first assessment and rating under the new system, the GCC is very proud of its achievements. Moving forward, the GCC will use the assessment report and work on continuous improvement.

The GCC continued to support educators who are currently studying. Two educators completed their Certificate III and are waiting to begin their Diploma of Children's Services.

The year ahead

Council has been successful in receiving a capital works grant for the development of the existing children's services into a community based early childhood education and care facility – a children's hub.

The new development will include integrating the existing children's centre with maternal and child health; adding an additional two rooms to allow a funded kindergarten program to run; and to include the Best Start supported playgroups, parenting programs and visiting specialist intervention services.

An architect has been chosen and concept planning is underway. The proposed schedule indicates the facility will be completed by October 2014. The next 12 months will be a very exciting time for the GCC and the wider community.

Family Day Care

Family Day Care offers the unique opportunity to have children cared for by experienced educators in a family home environment. Over the last 12 months educators have focussed on planning for children's learning and documenting this learning.

Educators meet once a week and attend a playgroup where they have the opportunity to gather and discuss current issues. Children are given the opportunity to play together with children they would otherwise not know.

A quality assessment and rating visit occurred. The report is not yet received.

The year ahead

Family Day Care will continue its campaign to recruit more carers, as this is critical to the sustainability of the program.

Once the quality assessment and rating report is received, other actions can be determined.

Outside school hours care (OSHC)

The last 12 months have seen the coming and going of different educators at the OSHC service. Recruitment is currently underway for a new supervisor for the service.

The program numbers are steadily increasing. Depending on the families' needs, the enrolment numbers decrease then increase at different times throughout the year.

The vacation care program operates at very high numbers, with children experiencing many different activities including: cooking experiences, playing sports, discos, dressing up, Lego creations, painting, swimming, Zumba, mosaics and movie days. These varied activities aim to keep school children both physically active and mentally busy during the school holiday periods.

The year ahead

OSHC will be preparing for its quality assessment and rating visit, which will provide the basis for future actions.

Supported playgroup

Council established two supported playgroups at Maryborough and Dunolly. 48 families meet once a week for two hours and participate in quality play opportunities with their children.

Funding for the playgroups is provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to target families of pre-school children who are not accessing mainstream community playgroups.

Playgroups are facilitated by trained early learning educators who emphasise the importance of play in a child's development, while enhancing positive parenting practices.

The playgroup provides the opportunity for mothers, fathers and carers to build friendships and links into the wider community.

During the year, 68 children enjoyed the planned activities, story time, visiting artists and musicians, as well as organised excursions to the library and parks.

Parenting programs were offered, including the annual Best Start Early Year's dinner, which 42 families attended to increase their knowledge of children's speech and language development.

Maternal and child health

Council's maternal and child health service continues to be busy. The service offers:

- A universal health service for children from birth to school age and their families, focusing on the promotion of health and development, prevention, early detection of and intervention for physical, emotional and social factors affecting young children and their families.
- Immunisation services for schools, the general public and preschool children.

This year the service received 139 birth notifications for babies born to families who live within the shire. There were 659 active families who received services in this period.

Immunisation rates for the year tracked well. Central Goldfields Shire had an immunisation rate of 94% for the 12 to 15 month age group. This compares well against the Victorian average of 91.7% and the national average of 91.3%.

Maternal and child health has some capacity to provide an enhanced service to families who need some extra assistance. This includes support in:

- Breastfeeding or bottle feeding, education and support.
- Working with families whose children may have sleep and settling issues.
- Working with families who require some assistance with their parenting.
- Providing additional emotional support to families.
- Referring families to support agencies such as the Department of Human Services, St Luke's Anglicare, the Maryborough District Health Service, early years' educators and other Go Goldfields initiatives.

This year also saw the development of a number of mothers' groups, two of which have gone on to run independently.

The year ahead

The maternal and child health service is looking forward to a busy and exciting year as it transitions to working with other early years' services at the new Early Years Centre currently being designed.





Local young artist Chelsea stands proudly by her work at the Art Central opening.

go goldfields
aspiring and achieving

Go Goldfields is an innovative alliance of organisations, created to deliver locally relevant responses to social issues that are too complex and too long term for previous solutions.

Supported by the Victorian Government in the amount of \$2.5 million over three years, the Go Goldfields alliance has developed a series of shire wide, community driven approaches to improve social, education and health outcomes for children, youth and families.

Go Goldfields main aim for this year was to be in full implementation against all of the desired outcomes. Go Goldfields is working towards:

- A reduction of notifications to Child Protection Services (meaning a reduction in re-notifications and out of home care) involving families from Central Goldfields Shire.
- Improved communication and literacy skills, opportunities and positive life experiences for children and their families.
- Improved community connectedness for children, youth and families.
- Improved youth connection to appropriate training and education to achieve employment outcomes.
- Increased breastfeeding rates.

The addition of the breastfeeding outcome is in recognition of Go Goldfields' integration with the Best Start program.

During the year, Go Goldfields made significant inroads into achieving these outcomes.

Communication development

Work began by creating and adopting a shire wide strategy for communication development for children and families. From there, supported work on language and pre literacy skills was implemented at kindergartens, childcare centres and playgroups.

Go Goldfields funded the Maryborough District Health Service (a Go Goldfields Alliance partner) to appoint a speech pathologist, who began new services at the Central Goldfields Children's Centre. These services included:

- Assessing communication skills in children aged 0 – 6 years, to identify areas in need of additional support.
- Providing individual and small group therapy targeting articulation, oral language, fluency, voice and pre literacy skills in children aged 0 – 6 years who have been identified as having difficulties.
- Supporting and educating parents to help them enhance their children's communication skills in the homes on a daily basis.
- Provision of education in the community on the importance of language and other communication skills and guidance on how to do this with children.

A Children's Communication Facilitator position was established to provide targeted therapy to children within early childhood settings. The role also supports educators to put preventative measures in place for the future, under direction of the speech pathologist.

Literacy development

Go Goldfields appointed a Children's Literacy Facilitator, who developed and began implementing a shire wide strategy for improvement in this field. Elements of the strategy delivered this year included:

- The distribution of book boxes into a number of community settings, providing community members free access to books.
- The implementation of Baby Rhyme Time at the Maryborough Library. Library staff have been trained and supported to continue to deliver the program, ensuring it is sustainable. Program attendance has varied from 12 to 50 participants.

The Children's Literacy Facilitator worked closely with childcare providers to build on existing activities. This work included:

- Liaising with playgroup coordinators, staff and kindergarten assistants to incorporate pre literacy and literacy activities into sessions.
- Building the skills of education support staff (ESA, teacher's aides) at the Maryborough Education Centre

to incorporate dialogic reading (speech and language stimulation using a book) into their practice.

- Conducting sessions with parents of kindergarten children to reinforce language and literacy messages, and developing a partnership with the toy library to promote literacy.
- Establishing a professional network of playgroup coordinators to share programs that incorporate reading and language stimulation.
- Trialling a music therapist who used rhyme and rhythm to teach communication skills.

Building stronger families

Maternal and child health nurses began linking new parents to parenting, language and literacy development activities, to enhance their baby's early years learning experiences.

Consultation commenced with 50 families across the shire on what and how Go Goldfields could better deliver its services to families.

A Go Goldfields Family Group Worker was appointed, based at St Luke's Family Services (a Go Goldfields Alliance partner), to run support groups for young mums, grandparents and parents.

The Go Goldfields Alliance also worked in partnership with Maryborough Rotary and the Maryborough Education Centre to establish and allocate a scholarship aimed at developing stronger families within the shire. Eva Julian was awarded with the first of these scholarships, to investigate positive behaviours support strategies and values, with the aim of broadening this approach in the community.

Eva attended a conference in the United States of America on positive behaviour support and visited schools and communities practicing this approach. This experience will help greatly in implementing such an approach in the local community.

Building positive life experience and social connection

In April, Art Central opened at 172 High Street, Maryborough. Art Central aims to involve more shire residents in community art projects, no matter their age or skill level. Participants learn new skills, experience increased self esteem and confidence, and build stronger social networks.

Professional artists were employed to embed art into the Go Goldfields work with children, youth and families and to increase sustainable art within the community.

A workshop program was developed and delivered for Term Two, 2013 and school holidays. A professional development workshop was conducted for St Luke's staff on using art with mental health clients; and targeted workshops with the Go Goldfields parenting groups were delivered.



A young mother enhances her son's literacy skills through reading and interaction.

The Art Central Community Leadership Group was established to engage community leaders in promoting and informing the work.

School artist residencies commenced at the St Augustine's (Maryborough) and Talbot Primary Schools. A partnership through Children's Literacy Facilitators enabled kindergarten children to paint the book boxes for the literacy development program.

Youth connection to education and training

A family literacy partnership was formed between the Maryborough Education Centre, Goldfields Employment and Learning Centre and Go Goldfields literacy facilitators to deliver on this outcome. Additional funding was sourced from Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE).

Through the new partnership, Council's award winning Getting Ahead program commenced for Year 7 students. The program is designed to help those who have experienced generational unemployment to understand the impacts of their disadvantage and learn the "rules and behaviours of the middle class", or life skills, that are needed to get and keep jobs and training.

The partnership is also investigating the potential for the Maryborough Library's Baby Rhyme Time program to be delivered by VCAL students from the education centre.

There is also much work underway with the education centre to increase parental engagement with education and the school.

Family violence

The Central Goldfields Family Violence Strategy was endorsed by Council this year and is in the early stages of implementation. As a start to implementation, training was undertaken by health workers and Council workers to assist with understanding and responding to family violence, should it be suspected or encountered.

Workforce Development Plan

Go Goldfields successfully obtained funding from Regional Development Victoria to develop a Central Goldfields Shire

Workforce Development Plan. The plan focuses on the 'game changers' required within the shire to translate economic development into employment outcomes. The Central Goldfields Business Group has been engaged to support the implementation of the plan.

The year ahead

Go Goldfields wants to engage community leaders to assist in achieving outcomes. This will include a young and emerging leader's engagement forum and ongoing support for youth.

Business leaders will be increasingly engaged in workforce development to help close the gap between economic development and people being 'job ready'. This will coincide with the implementation of the Workforce Development Plan, which is in partnership with the Central Goldfields Business Group.

Further implementation of family violence strategy will get underway; however the actions are dependent on resourcing.

To further the literacy outcomes, Australian Literacy Foundation training will be provided to early years teachers in primary schools, with the aim of developing a shared language for children's literacy. This will help ensure a consistent approach across the shire. Further work will be done with early years service providers to embed literacy, pre literacy and language development within practice.

Artist residencies will be completed in all primary schools in the shire, focusing on language and literacy being fun and creative. Art Central will continue on its path of engaging the community through participation.

Go Goldfields aims to increase community awareness and capacity for parents to engage in education and their child's school; and continue its work with the Maryborough District Health Service on embedding language, literacy and parenting development into antenatal services.

MARYBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal's (MNR) aim for the year was to continue the work listed in the Community Action Plan around six objectives:

1. Lifting employment and learning
2. Improving housing and the environment
3. Increasing community pride and participation
4. Improving health and wellbeing
5. Decreasing crime and increasing safety
6. Improving the responsiveness of services.

Funding extension

MNR received a substantial boost in August 2012, when Minister for Housing, the Hon. Wendy Lovell, MLC, visited Maryborough and announced a funding extension of \$1 million from the State Government. This enables MNR to continue to 2015.

Minister Lovell also announced a further \$36,000 for the Maryborough Works campaign – a project to promote employment and training opportunities in the area.

Employment and learning

MNR's work to lift employment and learning has paid dividends with an impressive 102 employment outcomes and 170 training outcomes since Neighbourhood Renewal started in 2010. Getting Ahead is an important program in assisting people who struggle to get by or obtain employment. The program helps participants to make the changes necessary to get ahead and not just get by. Three Getting Ahead programs have been implemented in the past 12 months and most importantly, organised Getting Ahead facilitator training has been provided for 15 participants, some of whom are local.

Friday morning pancakes at the Spring Street school bus stop have given children, parents and Maryborough Education Centre teachers a chance to have a friendly chat and get to know one another outside the school environment. A number

of parents have reported that they feel more comfortable going to the school if they know some of the teachers. Something as simple as pancake mornings makes it easier for parents to engage in their child's learning.

One of the biggest events each year is the Maryborough Jobs, Skills and Training Expo. At the 2012 expo there were 207 jobs displayed and over 400 opportunities available in area. The event is getting bigger each year, which means more people getting more information about more jobs.

Housing and environment

Proudly MNR achieved 68 of the 72 actions listed in the 2011-2013 plan. Some of these actions were large pieces of work, such as the completion of internal and external upgrades to all public housing properties in Maryborough.

MNR awarded locally based organisation Asteria Services the contract for the external upgrades and by the end of June 2013, the State Government had spent \$3.95 million on public housing upgrades since the start of MNR program.

By the end of the next financial year, the combined total is estimated to reach \$4.75 million. This means that public housing tenants in Maryborough will live in the best possible conditions, with new kitchens and other internal improvements, as well as external upgrades that provide front gardens and fences.

Pride and participation

The famous MNR barbeques have allowed the team to stay in touch with community needs. Much of the information collected at the barbeques has enabled the team plan programs and activities that address the everyday problems that residents face.

One piece of feedback was that residents would like to have more opportunities to attend fun events. With this in mind, MNR hosted trivia and karaoke nights throughout the year and a Christmas party in December.

Left to right

Children at the Neighbourhood Renewal Christmas party pose with Santa.

Show Us Ya Tats looks to be a popular event for the year ahead.





Pancake breakfasts have become a Friday favourite for parents and students.

Health and wellbeing

Over the past few years the vegetable gardens at the Alma Street public housing units had become overgrown and unusable. MNR brought together residents from the Alma Street units and the Goldfields Sustainability Group to get the gardens back in working order. Since then, arrangements for students from Highview College and the Maryborough Education Centre have been put in place to assist residents with some of the more strenuous upkeep. The gardens are now blossoming and full of produce, which encourages residents to keep active and eat healthy.

The year ahead

A new Community Action Plan will guide the work from July 2013 to July 2015, when the MNR project concludes.

The most significant piece of work in the coming year will be to work with the Maryborough Community House to obtain funding for an internal upgrade and extension to the building. The house was built over 30 years ago and is desperately in need of an update. Exciting concept plans have been drawn up following extensive consultation with residents, volunteers, staff and committee. MNR looks forward to building a community facility that meets the needs of the increasing number of users of the house.

Another exciting piece of work will be with volunteers at the Maryborough Community House around events management, so that MNR events can be continued by the community house when the project finishes in two years time.

Some other actions for the coming year are:

- 'The Show us Ya Tats' project, which showcases body art and provides an opportunity for people to tell the story of their tattoo. The tattoos photographed so far have fascinating stories associated with them that range from hilarious to sad and everything in between.
- Continuing involvement with the Street Harvest project that distributes excess home garden produce throughout the community.
- Working with local churches to address food security issues, provide community lunches and distribute rescued food from supermarkets.
- Being involved with the Central Goldfields Business Group to help implement the Workforce Plan.
- The 2013 Maryborough Jobs, Skills and Training Expo, scheduled for 5 September.
- Working with the Goldfields Employment and Learning Centre to deliver Getting Ahead to VCAL students at the Maryborough Education Centre.
- Continuing the very strong links to the Go Goldfields projects to ensure that Maryborough families can make the most of the many opportunities provided for them.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The Maryborough Library focused on learning, literacy and leisure in 2012/13. 2012 was the National Year of Reading, and the library supported the 'love to read' campaign throughout the year. There was a particular focus on children's services this year, aligning with the literacy development focus across the shire.

Children's services

Baby Rhyme Time was introduced and held weekly, with attendance ranging from 12 mums and bubs to 50. With a dedicated children's room, the noise of the group did not disturb other library patrons. Baby Rhyme Time has also ventured out into the community, with sessions for kindergartens and playgroups.

Story Time continued to gain support from the kindergartens and playgroups in particular. Attendance varied, but a dedicated group kept the program sustained.

The library provided a visiting service to all the kindergartens in the shire, providing a tub of books for each kindergarten each term.

The library strived to support the connection between positive life experience and the development of language and literacy in children. As a part of this, the library hosted Terry Cole's Circus in a Suitcase in July 2012. This was attended by 150 children and feedback from the event was very positive.

At Christmas, the children's room was transformed into Narnia from "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by CS Lewis. This proved to be very popular with both children and adults, and brought a bit of white Christmas to Maryborough.

General services

The library had a busy year with the collection reaching more people in the community. Statistics relating to this are:

- Circulation - 65,433 items
- Visits - 59,775
- Enquiries - 12,621
- Turnover per item - 4.2 (item borrowed on average per year)
- Story Time/Baby Rhyme Time - 59 sessions/990 attendees
- Children's programs - 29 sessions/1042 attendees
- Kinder visits - 28 visits/387 attendees
- Adult programs - 12 sessions/161 attendees
- Home Library Service - 115 visits

Talbot Outreach

The Talbot Outreach model was developed in conjunction with the Talbot Community. The outreach service is available at the Talbot community library building. Attendances at the Talbot service have been low, but reviews are underway to improve this.

The year ahead

The focus on learning, literacy and leisure will grow furthering the coming year. The library will continue to enhance children's programs, and look at providing greater outreach for these to maximise access to literacy across the community.

An exciting development is the forthcoming Guerrilla Library - a van with lightweight shelves that will appear at events as a pop up library.

There is potential to provide iPad and android tablet classes, smart phone and SKYPE sessions within the next 12 months.

The library's children's services have increased over the past year, to support literacy initiatives around the shire.



GRAMPIANS GOLDFIELDS HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Grampians Goldfields Healthier Communities is a partnership between Central Goldfields Shire, Pyrenees Shire, and Ararat Rural City to implement Healthy Together Grampians Goldfields (HTGG) and the Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI) across the community.

The HTGG initiative is a population health approach to improve people's health where they live, learn, work and play. It aims to slow the growth of lifestyle related chronic disease by working with local communities to encourage healthy living through eating and physical activity, and reduce smoking and harmful alcohol use.

HCI aims to engage with adults who are facing multiple barriers to participation in the local community due to poor health by promoting physical activity participation and healthy eating, to increase the capacity of services to support healthy living and individual lifestyle behaviour change. The work of the HCI team has seen the alignment of efforts at the community level across the two initiatives.

HCI programs delivered in Central Goldfields Shire have incorporated a suite of targeted healthy living activities.

Street Harvest

Launched in November 2012, the Street Harvest program involves collecting donated excess produce from people's home gardens and redistributing it throughout the community. More than 60 people from community are involved in the collection, distribution and preparation of produce and the administration of the project.

Over 600kg of produce has been distributed since the program launch. Regular collection and distribution points are now established in the community and monthly stalls are held for further promotion and distribution. A committee meets monthly to manage Street Harvest.

Community kitchens

Community kitchens provide lunches and prepare food for distribution. Kitchens have been established at Maryborough Community House; and at various times, the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal office and Goldfields Employment and Learning Centre.

A community kitchen at Talbot, located at the Town Hall, offers community cooking sessions every Thursday. These are run by community members with the support of HTGG and the ILOP (Improving Liveability for Older Persons) project. The sessions are attended by an average of 10 participants per week. They have been running since 2011 and have been self sustaining for the past 12 months.

Other implemented projects include:

- A community garden at the Dunolly preschool.
- Mobile Tool Trailer operating in the shire, which provides access to gardening tools and equipment. There are over 60 members of the community who have utilised the trailer.
- Healthy Community Champions, which engages local leaders to promote healthy lifestyles within the community. This has included distribution of cookbooks, brochures and flyers and health messages such as 'swap it'.

The year ahead

In the coming 12 months HTGG will continue to work closely with organisations, encouraging them to promote health and wellbeing. The message: *Improving people's health where they live, work, learn and play*. HTGG aims to have many schools and workplaces signed up to its Healthy Together Achievement Program, which focuses on them becoming health promoting organisations.

The team has begun to implement the 'Start With' campaign, which is a healthy living campaign targeting eating and physical activity. Support is provided to people to get started - move more, sit less, get socially active and add more vegetables to their diet each day.

Further to this, HTGG is developing a campaign to encourage increased consumption of vegetables amongst families with children aged 0 to 5 years, and has been working with the early childhood centres across the shire to develop campaign materials.

A food forest is being established in Talbot at the library and arts centre. Food forests involve small plantings of vegetables and fruit trees, which are accessible and available for community members, aiming to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Discussions are underway for sites in Maryborough.

A new community kitchen is being developed at the Baptist church in Maryborough, which will operate closely with the Street Harvest program.

Far right

The community finds a way to use locally grown spare produce through Street Harvest.



Goldfields & Pyrenees
Street Harvest

Preserves

Made in Maryborough, by
locals, with donated produce

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Maryborough's Lake Victoria will have a new boardwalk and jetty in time for summer.



ENGINEERING & SERVICES

There are seven key functions managed by Council's Engineering and Services Department. Across each of these functions was a range of goals to be achieved by the end of the financial year. Pleasingly, Council can report a number of successful outcomes for the department.

Asset management

This function monitors and maintains major infrastructure, such as: roads, bridges, parks and recreation, drainage and buildings involving renewal, upgrade and new programs, and financial accounting. Achievements under this function for the 2012/13 year are as follows:

- Council's asset management performance was audited through the participation in the Regional Asset Management Improvement program.
- An asset hazard and condition inspection program was completed and included a detailed collection of sealed road condition data by an external consultant, ARRB.
- A renewal, upgrade and new capital works program was developed and implemented.
- A financial valuation and depreciation of infrastructure assets was completed for audit.
- Council acquired the management of the Maryborough Aerodrome, and key elements of the Aerodrome Master Plan were implemented, including: significant drainage improvement works; clearing of vegetation obstacles; levelling of areas within the aerodrome; construction of a helipad and associated lighting; and taxi way improvements.
- A road safety audit at all high trafficked roads was completed, with the aim to improve road safety features. A program of safe improvements has commenced and will be implemented over the coming year.

Asset protection

Council works to protect its assets located on roadsides. This function monitors road occupation and manages permits for contractors and utility agencies working at Council roadsides. Operational improvements for the last 12 months included:

- Becoming proactive in enforcing contractors and property owners to acquire permits before commencing work on roadsides.
- Conducting on site asset inspections for road occupation and openings, driveways and planning permits checks.
- Contacting contractors, builders and property owners to highlight specific requirements for permits.

Design services

Council's design services perform tasks such as project investigation, survey, design, drafting and documentation, as well as technical project management and supervision services of Council civil contract project works.

The team continues to apply the standards of the Victorian Infrastructure Design Manual to assets and planning permit conditions. The team also looks to integrate the requirements of environmental, cultural heritage and associated legislation more formally into the project preparation phase of design.

Major projects designed and managed for the 2012/13 year were:

- Upgrade of Scandinavian Crescent and Fyffe Street, Talbot.
- Gladstone Street, Maryborough drainage upgrade Stage 2.
- Neill Street, Maryborough renewal and upgrade.
- Freemantle Bridge renewal.
- Lean Street, Gillies Street/Argyle Road intersection upgrades.
- Bull Street, Dunolly upgrade.
- St Arnaud-Dunolly Road and Bealiba-Moliagul Road Y intersection upgrade.
- Lake Victoria boardwalk and jetty.
- Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre pool deck.
- Station Domain amphitheatre shade sails.

A number of additional designs were undertaken as a result of the flood restoration works, including sealed road restorations; drainage works in Talbot, Dunolly and Timor; and \$4 million bridge and culvert restoration around the shire.

Industrial subdivisions at Tullaroop Road, Maryborough and the new renewal park in Carisbrook have been constructed.

A study reviewing traffic management, parking and pedestrian mobility highlighted a number of potential upgrade and improvement projects for the Maryborough central business district. Planning and design works have commenced for these improvements.

Initial projects based on the study include the renewal of Neill Street, Maryborough, which will assist with parking improvements. A renewal of Inkerman Street, Maryborough is another project planned for next year.

Further investigation work will be required as proposals for improved parking facilities are suggested in the study.



Project management

Council provides project management and contract management services for civil and building projects. The main tasks of this function are:

- Establish a system of consistent management of projects across all departments within Council.
- Assist with the implementation of the Contracts Management System.
- Manage construction projects including flood restoration works.
- Integrate project management of in house constructed projects similar to contract managed projects.

Council managed a large number of projects in house over the last 12 months. This included flood restoration projects such as:

- Bridge and major culvert upgrades, unsealed and sealed road renewals
- Sporting oval and court repairs at Carisbrook, Talbot and Dunolly
- Commencement of toilet amenities block at Maryborough Caravan Park
- Goldfields Reservoir and Nuggetty Gully reservoir outlet upgrades.

This is in addition to a large number of civil works.

Engineering planning referrals

This service is for planning developments involving Council assets, to ensure Council's engineering asset design standards are met. The department recently implemented the SPEAR (Surveying and Planning through Electronic Application Referral) software platform to improve the efficiency of the service. Using SPEAR, Council has been involved in several development projects in the 2012/13 year, including:

- Whirrakee Rise Estate, Maryborough stages 5 and 6
- Burns Street, Maryborough residential development
- Calista Gardens/Wellington Street, Maryborough residential development
- Numerous smaller residential developments.

Waste management

This function includes urban waste collection, recycling, green waste, hard waste and street and park litter collection, and transfer station operations.

Council continues to implement the new Waste Management Strategy, with the continuation the Carisbrook Landfill Station. Green waste and scrap steel disposal bins have been provided at Bealiba Transfer Station, which are then transported to Carisbrook Transfer Station.

The green waste kerb side collection service continues to grow. This year the service expanded from 750 participants to 812.

Council implemented a free gas removal process for fridges and air conditioners that are deposited at transfer stations; and also implemented a mobile bin lifting and tipping device at the Carisbrook Transfer Station to improve safety of users.

Preparations have been made for the commencement of the Food to Compost trial, involving the deposit of kitchen food wastes into the green waste bin. Public advice letters have been sent out and construction commenced on the compost facility to allow the trial to go ahead in 2013/14.

Above, left to right

New shade sails over the popular Station Domain playground will provide shelter from the summer sun.

Maryborough historic fire tower is reinstated, following restoration works.

Emergency management

The Engineering and Services Department assists with emergency management planning and coordination for fire, flood, heat wave, pandemic and other risks.

The recommendations of the State Government's Bushfire Royal Commission have continued to be implemented through the Emergency Management Coordinator. State Government funding for the Emergency Management Coordinator position has now been extended to June 2014. The role at Central Goldfields Shire Council is shared with the Loddon Shire Council, and will work towards adapting and implementing an all hazards approach to emergency management planning.

The Municipal Fire Management Plan has been adopted and implemented. The first year review of works programs has occurred, with all relevant agencies working together to effect the program.

The flood events that occurred in September and November 2010, and January 2011 created a large amount of restoration works for a number of community and shire assets. A total damage bill in excess of \$30 million was estimated – approximately \$11.1 million was expended in 2012/13. The works were completed through a number of local contractors as part of Council's annual tender contracts.

The extent of flood damaged assets has continued to increase over time, as a number of assets have shown an increased rate of deterioration due to the long term effects of the floods. Sealed roads, in particular, have experienced underlying structural pavement damage, which is showing up as rutting and heaving of road surfaces on a number of low lying roads. Those roads were addressed during the year, but it is unknown what the long term effects may be. A number of additional major culvert works were also included on this year's program as a result of deterioration that has been discovered after follow up inspections.

The year ahead

A small amount of flood restoration works need to be completed. This will equate to approximately \$500,000.

Further work on asset management software is planned to improve performance measurement, financial risk and work order reporting. The aim is to include more assets onto the system, such as parks and recreation, buildings and drainage.

The Maryborough Aerodrome is an important asset and Council will apply for funding to provide further improvement works in accordance with the Aerodrome Master Plan.

Emergency management staff will be working with emergency agencies to further review the Municipal Emergency Management Plan; review and report on the Municipal Fire Management Plan and Municipal Flood Management Plan; and continue to work with community agencies in gathering information related to vulnerable persons.

Council has commissioned the new municipal emergency management software MECC Central (Crisisworks) and will provide training to relevant staff and emergency response agencies throughout the coming year.

The community will be consulted on traffic management and parking requirements during the development of renewal projects such as the Neill Street, Maryborough upgrade. Feedback is essential to assist Council to fully explore options and incorporate findings into final designs.

New amenities at the Maryborough Caravan Park will help boost the tourism offer and be very useful during the busiest times of year, such as the RACV Energy Breakthrough event.



OPERATIONS

The past 12 months have been greatly successful in the delivery of the capital works program. Examples of key projects delivered in house are:

- Renovation at the Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre.
- Painting of a large number of Council buildings, including all public conveniences throughout the shire.
- Safety upgrades such as sealed road widening; intersection realignments; and school access safety initiatives at Carisbrook, St Augustine's (Maryborough), Timor and Dunolly.
- Oval renovations at key sporting facilities.
- Replanting and beautification initiatives such as replanting of Philips Gardens wetlands; street tree replanting; and nature strip planting.
- Replacement and geographic placement of shire entry and locality signage throughout.
- Pedestrian safety initiatives, such as pathway crossing upgrades in Maryborough and Dunolly.
- The heritage reconstruction of Fyffe Street in Talbot.
- Restoration works on Maryborough's main drain network.

Successful completion of the projects, in addition to general maintenance, was certainly a highlight for all staff involved.

One major disappointment that all operations groups face is public vandalism. Council takes pride in its work and the standards it sets in maintaining facilities. It is a major disappointment to be faced with the repair of reckless vandalism.

Over the 2012/2013 year \$25,000 was spent directly on vandalism, which is mainly from fires and graffiti in public conveniences. The true cost of this is estimated to be in the order of \$40,000 as a lot of vandalism is repaired during the course of general maintenance.

A long term solution on how to minimise the cost of the repair of vandalism and eliminate it altogether is required.

The year ahead

New programs are in place for the coming 12 months and works will be underway immediately. As well as regular maintenance, some additional projects for the year include:

- Major streetscape works in Scandinavian Crescent, Talbot and Neill Street Maryborough
- Continuation of the painting program for local buildings, as well as street planting and road safety programs
- Continued implementation of road safety programs.

Below, left to right

The Philips Gardens wetlands were replanted this year, enhancing the popular picnic area.

Council's sporting facilities, such as Princes Park, require year round maintenance works.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategy development

Within the Strategic Planning department, Council completed the planning scheme review and produced a report that sets the scene for future directions in strategic planning across the shire.

A Residential Settlement Strategy was further developed to examine the issue of how and where residential growth can be accommodated. This strategy will be completed in the 2013/14 year.

A Bushfire Management Overlay schedule was introduced into the planning scheme. This project implements planning for bushfire protection at the local level by undertaking specific analysis and mapping of land at risk of bushfire attack.

Council also sought the feedback on a new Promotion Sign Strategy for the shire.

Subdivision activity

- 14 planning permit applications were received for subdivision this year. 11 of these were two lot subdivisions and the remainder were three to six lot subdivisions.
- Subdivision activity occurred in all areas of the shire, with half the applications applied to land within Maryborough.
- The number of new lots created in 2012/13 was approximately 40.

Planning permit applications received

- Multi dwelling applications for the former Maryborough 404 Primary School Site (Calista Gardens Estate).
- Talbot Railway Station.
- 18 commercial/industrial applications including two telecommunications facilities, extension to tomato hydroponics glasshouse and an industrial waste facility.
- Three mining proposals.

Enforcement

An essential role of Council, under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 provisions, relates to planning scheme compliance or enforcement. This can involve enforcement action against illegal activity or permit condition compliance. Notable major enforcement and related activity for the year included:

- Obtaining a VCAT Order to prevent a three day music festival proceeding without the necessary planning permit. This action was taken to protect community safety and duty of care obligations, avoid traffic hazards and prevent community amenity issues (noise nuisance).

- Magistrates Court (Maryborough) proceedings were instigated regarding major native vegetation removal (without formal approval) on a farm property comprising 21 ancient (200-300 year old) native trees of high significance.
- There was one VCAT Appeal regarding Council's refusal to issue a permit for an expansion of a large broiler farm. The result confirmed Council's decision to decline the permit, based on insufficient resolution of odour issues.

These duties can involve extensive staff time and resources and may also require legal representations and costs.

General planning advice and complex applications

The most complex duties in the Planning Department often relate to the ongoing planning advice functions of the department and the mediation role in the contentious (objection) applications.

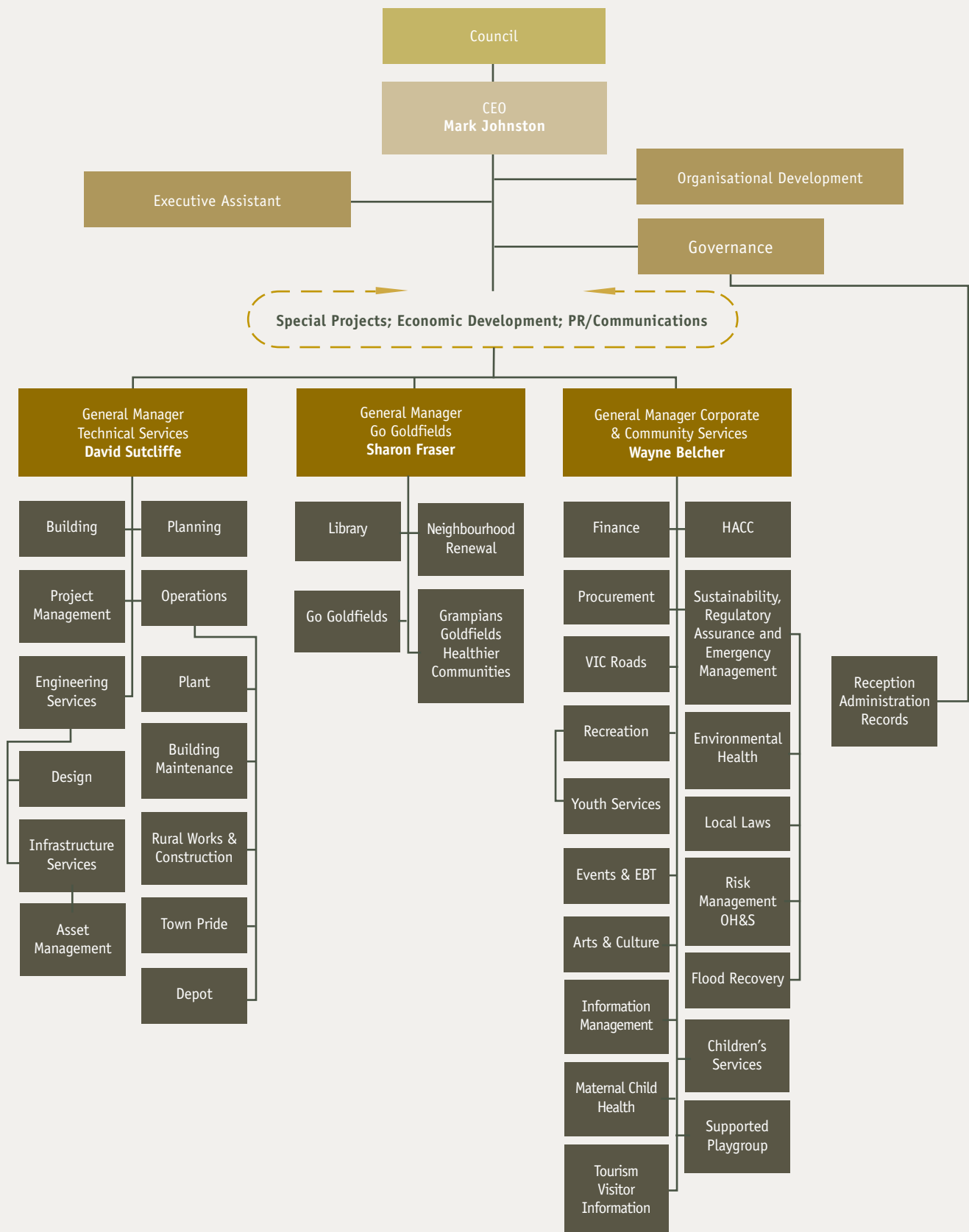
The efforts are not often properly recognised or weighted in the permit activity statistics, although they emerge in the broader community satisfaction surveys of local government. Mediation, if successful, can avoid the extensive time and angst that accompany the alternative VCAT proceedings.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

26 Council staff graduated with new qualifications from Victoria University as part of a skills recognition program, funded by the State Government.



Organisation Chart



STAFF PROFILE

	Full time	Part time	Casual	Total
Female	36	80	31	147
Male	68	19	15	102
Totals	104	99	46	249

As of 30 June 2013 Council employed 249 employees in a diverse range of fields including administration, road maintenance, engineering, planning, parks and gardens, records management, community care, information technology, executive management, libraries, human resources, communication, customer service, risk management, occupational health and safety, maternal child health, asset management, environmental health, local laws, child care, finance, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal, preventive health and community development.

Council operates under the provisions of the Victorian Local Authorities Award and the Central Goldfields Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2011 and is committed to the principles of respect, equity and safety in the workplace.

Recruitment

Council advertised 20 positions over the past 12 months. This was a combination of replacement staff and new positions developed due to further government funding for the expansion of programs such as Go Goldfields.

Council's overall turnover rate was 10%, which is well below the state average.

Work experience program

Council is an active supporter of the work experience program that operates in the school system, and often hosts students from Year 10 and upwards.

During the year, Council hosted students from Highview College and Maryborough Education Centre. Students were assigned to work with teams at the children's centre, recreation, library and engineering over a one week block.

Training and development

Council is committed to providing staff with access to staff training and development opportunities that will enable continuous learning and career growth in line with individual aspirations and Council's goals.

At the annual staff development reviews, employees identify training that they would like to undertake in the following year. Council also provides training that is required for legislative purposes and to keep qualifications current.

During the year, 26 Council staff took part in a skills recognition program instigated by Victoria University (VU) and funded by the State Government. Selected employees were assessed by VU to determine if the knowledge and experience they have obtained through the workforce could be mapped against units from accredited qualifications.

The new qualifications obtained by employees ranged from Certificate IV Frontline Management to Graduate Certificate in Management.

Council has been a Victorian Government Skills Pledge Business since 2010, and is committed to the ongoing professional development of staff.

Staff members also completed training in the following areas:

- Occupational health and safety
- First aid and CPR
- Computer applications
- Competency
- Compliance.

Two staff members graduated from Ballarat University with a Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services Practice (client assessment and case management).

Traineeships

Council supported six childcare staff to complete a Certificate III and Diploma in Children's Services this year. This was supported by external funding.

Long service awards

14 members of Council's staff reached service milestones, and awards were presented in December 2012.

Equal opportunity

Council supports access and equity for all employees and recognises diversity as a valuable strength that will create benefits for employees and the community.

Council's Employee Equal Opportunity policy ensures that any potential breach is resolved impartially and fairly. Council regularly reviews its policies, procedures and practices to ensure equity and transparency for all staff.

Occupational health and safety (OH&S)

Council is committed to providing its employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors with a healthy and safe work environment. Council's objectives are to:

- Prevent work related accidents and illness
- Safeguard all employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors against injury
- Promote welfare and preservation of health
- Provide written procedures and instructions to ensure safe systems of work
- Ensure compliance with legislative requirements and current industry standards
- Provide information, training, instruction and supervision to employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors to ensure their safety.

The implementation of the Central Goldfields Shire Council Occupational Health and Safety Management System, together with recognition of corporate accountability under the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and other relevant legislation, are key drivers for achievement of these objectives.

Staff health and wellbeing

Council has a priority to look after the welfare of all staff and, in recognition of this, Council's Staff Health and Wellbeing Program was introduced this year. Part of this was the implementation of a Health and Wellbeing Policy and a Healthy Eating Policy. The further implementation of this program will address physical and emotional health, plus work and family balance.

Council undertook WorkHealth assessments again this year with 109 staff participating. This enabled Council to successfully apply for a WorkHealth Grant to assist with further initiatives.

Council has also committed to be part of the Healthy Together Victoria Workplaces Program.

Discounted flu immunisation, Weight Watchers at Work and team events were offered to staff as part of the work by the Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Communicating with staff

- **Staff newsletter**

A staff newsletter is distributed fortnightly via the intranet and in hard copy form. The newsletter includes items of interest, job advertisements, coming events and health and wellbeing items.

- **Monthly staff meetings**

Council holds all staff meetings monthly. The meetings provide an opportunity to hear about programs other departments are undertaking. This meeting also allows staff to gain a greater understanding of other areas through departmental presentations. Staff members are also informed of matters taken to the Council table and given the opportunity to ask questions of the executive.

Human rights

Information regarding the Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter is currently available on Council's website and the information brochures in the reception area. Council adheres to its obligations under that Act when making or considering policy development. Staff members are aware of their obligations and ensure the charter is considered and implemented in their day to day dealings with the community as a whole.



GOVERNANCE

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month in the Community Hub, 48 Burns Street Maryborough at 5.30 pm.

Special meetings are called as required and are advertised in the local newspapers and on Council's website.

Councillor remuneration

The Mayoral Allowance of \$53,684 and Councillor Allowance of \$17,969 are within the maximum allowable amounts set by the State Government for shires the size of Central Goldfields. Council set remuneration levels for the term of the Council during the adoption of the 2013/14 budget.

Code of conduct

Section 76c of the Local Government Act 1989 requires each Council to adopt a Code of Conduct for Councillors. The code commits councillors to work effectively together and provides for effective participation and accountability to the community.

Council adopted a Code of Conduct on 28 October 2009. Review of the code is carried out, as is required under the Act within 12 months of a Council election.

Council Plan

Section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989 requires Council to prepare and approve a Council Plan within the period of six months after each general election or by the next 30 June, whichever is later. A Council Plan must include:

1. The strategic objective of Council
2. Strategies for achieving the objectives for at least the next four years
3. Strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives
4. A Strategic Resource Plan containing the matters specified in Section 126
5. Any other matter prescribed by the regulator.

Council developed and adopted the Council Plan for the period 2013 – 2017 at a Special Meeting on 23 April, 2013, with annual reviews thereafter.

Citizenship ceremonies

Council conducts citizenship ceremonies on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. The Mayor conducts these ceremonies at a private ceremony or a formal ceremony prior to an Ordinary Council Meeting.

Carer's Recognition Act 2012

Council has taken all practicable measures to comply with its responsibilities outlined in the Carers Recognition Act 2012. Council has promoted the principles on the Act, to people in care relationships who receive council services; to people in care relationships, and to the wider community by:

- distributing printed materials through relevant Council services
- displaying posters at Council community venues
- providing links to State Government resource materials on Council's website
- providing information to organisations represented in Council/community networks.

Council has taken all practicable measures to ensure staff, Council agents and volunteers working for Council are informed about the principles and obligations of the Act by including information on the care relationship in:

- Council induction and training programs for staff working in HACC and disability services
- Council induction and training programs for staff working in front line positions in the general community
- Induction and training programs for volunteers working directly in the community.

Council has taken all practicable measures to review and modify policies, procedures and supports to include recognition of the carer relationship and has provided the following additional activities and resources to recognise the care relationship:

- Providing access to carer's leave
- Supporting staff through family friendly initiatives
- Information provided in induction programs
- Information link on website.

Protected Disclosure Act 2012

Council's procedure

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 requires a public body, other than an investigating entity, that is required under another Act to provide an Annual Report for a financial year must include in that report;

- a) Information about how to access the procedures established by the public body under Part 9; and
- b) In the case of a public body that can receive disclosures made in accordance with Part 2 – the number of disclosures notified to the IBAC under section 21(2) during the financial year.

Council has adopted guidelines and appointed an officer to the Protected Disclosure Coordinator role. The guidelines are available for viewing by members of the public by contacting Council's Protected Disclosure Coordinator (Manager Governance).

During the 2012/13 year Council received no protected disclosures.

Documents held by Council

Council maintains a variety of documents as part of its day-to-day operations. Both property and subject based files are held

to assist in the coordination of documents and correspondence relating to its areas of responsibility. Property files relate to the location, street name and number. Subject files cater for matters of a more general nature and cover a range of areas such as Council administration and community services.

Other technical material held includes: road construction; infrastructure plans; planning and building records; and statutory information Council is required to keep such as food premises registrations and dog and cat registrations.

Publicly available documents

The following information is available for inspection as Council offices, 22 Nolan Street, Maryborough. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, inspection can be arranged on request. Fees may apply.

1. Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors under Section 74 and 74A of the Local Government Act.
2. Details of senior officers' total salary packages for the current financial year and previous financial year including gross salary, the amount of the Council or employer contribution to superannuation, the value of any motor vehicle provided by Council, and the total value of any other benefits and allowances provided by Council.
3. Details of overseas or interstate travel (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months, including the names of the Councillors or members of Council staff and the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the overseas or interstate travel.
4. Names of Council officers who were required to submit a return of interest during the financial year and the dates these returns were submitted.
5. Names of Councillors who submitted returns of interest during the financial year and the dates these returns were submitted.
6. Agendas and minutes for ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months kept under Section 93 of the Act except where minutes relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of the Act.
7. A list of all special committees established by the Council and the purpose for which each committee was established.
8. A list of all special committees established by the Council which were abolished or ceased to function during the financial year.
9. Minutes of meetings of special committees established under Section 86 of the Act except where minutes relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of the Act.
10. Applications for enrolment on the voters' roll under Sections 12 and 13 of the Act for the immediate past roll and next roll being prepared.
11. Register of Delegations kept under section 87, 88 and 98 of the Act.
12. Submissions received under section 223 of the Act during the previous 12 months.
13. Agreements to establish regional libraries under Section 196 of the Act.
14. Details of all property, finance and operating leases involving land, buildings, plant, computer equipment and vehicles entered into by the Council as lessor or lessee, including the name of the other party to the lease and the terms and the value of the lease.
15. Register of authorised officers appointed under Section 224 of the Act.
16. List of donations and grants made by the Council during the financial year, including the names of persons or bodies which have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.
17. List of the names of organisations which the Council was a member during the financial year and details of all membership fees and other amounts and services provided during that year to each organisation by the Council.
18. List of contracts valued at \$100,000 or more which the Council entered into during the financial year without first engaging in a competitive process and which are not contracts referred to in Section 186(5) of the Act.

Freedom of Information Act 1982

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 1982 requires Council to make available information and documentation where such information is not exempted by legislation.

The FOI Act embodies the following basic principles:

1. That members of the public have a legally enforceable right of access to government information;
2. That government departments and agencies are required to publish information concerning the documents they hold;
3. That people may ask for inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading information to their personal records to be amended; and
4. That people may appeal against a decision by a government body not to give access to the information or not to amend a personal record.

The FOI Act provides the opportunity for public access to certain Council documents and Council fully supports these principles and makes a wide range of information available to the public.

The initial point of contact relating to FOI is the Manager Governance, who is Council's FOI Officer. Advice will be provided on the documents that may be accessed without the need to make a formal FOI request. For example, many of Council's documents are open for public inspection.

No requests for information were lodged in 2012/13.

National Competition Policy and Compliance

Central Goldfields Shire Council has complied with the requirements of the National Competition Policy (NCP) for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, in accordance with the requirements outlined in National Competition Policy and Local Government – *A Revised Statement of Victorian Government Policy, December 2008 (2008 Statement)* as set out below:

<p>A. Trade Practices Compliance</p> <p><i>State whether the Council is compliant or non-compliant. If non-compliant, justify or cite actions to redress.</i></p>	Compliant
<p>B. Local Laws Compliance</p> <p><i>State whether the Council is compliant or non-compliant. List all local laws made or remade during 2008-09 which impose a restriction on competition:</i></p> <p>– No local laws made or remade during 2012-2013</p>	Compliant
<p>C. Competitive Neutrality Compliance</p> <p><i>State whether the Council is compliant or non-compliant for all significant businesses. List any significant businesses that are non-compliant:</i></p> <p>– Nil</p>	Compliant

COUNCIL CONTACTS

Administration Office

Street address: 22 Nolan Street
Maryborough VIC 3465

Postal address: PO Box 194
Maryborough VIC 3465

Phone: 03 5461 0610
Fax: 03 5461 0666
International: 0011 61 3 5461 0610
Email: mail@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au
Website: www.centralgoldfields.com.au

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm
Cashier hours: Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 4pm
Except public holidays

Central Goldfields Art Gallery

Street Address: Neill Street
Maryborough VIC 3465

Phone: 03 5460 4588
Email: cgsc-art@bigpond.com

Open hours: Thursday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm

Maryborough Resource and Visitor Information Centre

Street Address: Corner of Nolan and Alma Streets
Maryborough VIC 3465

Phone: 03 5460 4511
Email: visitorinfo@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au
Website: www.visitmaryborough.com.au

Open hours: 9am to 5pm daily
Except Good Friday and Christmas Day

Maryborough Library Services

Street Address: Corner of Nolan and Alma Streets
Maryborough VIC 3465

Phone: 03 5460 4511
Email: cgsc.library@bigpond.com

Open hours: Monday to Friday, 10am to 5 pm
Saturday, 9.30am to 12 noon



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