

Strathbogie
Shire Council

Advocacy Strategy

2021 - 2025

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

Acknowledgment of Country

Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we strive, the peoples of the rivers and the hills of the Strathbogie Shire region who walked these lands for generations.

We pay our respects to the elders of the past, and the speakers of the first words, who lived in harmony with this country.

We acknowledge the elders of the present, who seek to regain their culture, and to teach the elders of the future their law, their history and their language.

We pay our respects to them and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

We honour their spirit – and the memory, culture, art and science of the world's oldest living culture through 60,000 years.

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Overview

Our region is fast becoming the destination for people to invest, live, visit and play.

We are seeing strong development in Nagambie and Euroa, and this is matched by demand as people look to relocate to our beautiful region.

For those who are lucky to live in Strathbogie Shire we know how special our region is.

However, what was once our secret is now well-and-truly out.

To ensure we can support this growth – both business and residential – Strathbogie Shire Council will advocate to State and Federal governments for funding support.

Strathbogie Shire embraces more than 1,550 businesses over 20 industry sectors who support over 10,000 residents who call the area their home.

Our people together with the natural attractions of the region sustain over \$56.1 million in tourism income each year.

For more than 150 years, the agricultural sector and the businesses that support and depend on those farms, form the backbone of the local economy.

This document guides the advocacy work and direction of Council both individually, and as a collective member of Local Government associations, industry groups, partnerships and collaborations in a planned, coordinated and resourced approach to facilitate action and results.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of influencing others to create change.

It is often aimed at decision makers to make positive changes to public policy or resourcing for a community.

Advocacy can be undertaken through a series of smaller actions or a larger, partnership approach.

Strong relationships are critical to our Council's advocacy activities.

Our Advocacy Strategy sets out how we identify and develop projects and undertake activities towards achieving identified priorities.

It will also encourage and facilitate a stronger, more strategic and collaborative approach to existing advocacy activities undertaken across Council's services and within departments as well as with our communities.

Successful advocacy activities rely on working closely with the community to identify the problem or need, research relevant issues, plan a set of activities, undertake actions and evaluate the results.

Councillors, as elected representatives of the community, play a major role in directing Council's actions in this space.



1.
Engage.
Create.
Unite.

2.
Live.
Access.
Connect.

3.
Protect.
Enhance.
Adapt.

4.
Inclusive.
Productive.
Balanced.

5.
Strong.
Healthy.
Safe.

6.
Accountable.
Transparent.
Responsible.

**Community
Vision**

Definitions

Advocacy	To obtain support for a particular cause, project, initiative or policy with the objective to influence decisions within political, economic, social, technological, legal or environmental outcomes and benefits.
Advocacy work	Refers to the planned and coordinated administration to achieve the desired objectives and outcomes for the community.
Strategic	Identifying long-term aims and objectives as well as how you plan to achieve them.
Strategic advocacy	Focused on achieving the longer term and substantial outcomes Council seeks on behalf of the community.
Campaign	An organised course of action to achieve a goal.
Shire / Municipality	A legislated area of land in a rural setting that is overseen by a Local Government authority.
Local Government / Council	The administration and governing body of a region, with elected representatives who formally adopt reports and recommendations made by employed Officers.
Mayor	The mayor is the principal spokesperson, meeting chairperson and ambassador of a specific Local Government area, and they are nominated and elected by their fellow Councillors to lead for a term of one, or two years, as determined at the discretion of Council at the time. There are numerous other duties outlined in the Local Government Act 2020.
Councillors / Elected members	Are elected representatives of the community who are democratically voted to represent their ward, which is a specific geographic area of people, places, industry, and environment.
Stakeholder/s	A person, group, organisation, private business, authority, or Government body who has an interest, concern, passion or specific need relating to a specific service, project, facility or issue.
Partnership	Formal agreements between Council and other levels of Government or organisations who collaborate to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes, projects and initiatives.
Deliver	The services, projects, and initiatives which Council have direct responsibility and accountability to implement on behalf of the community.

Advocacy principles

All advocacy activities will be guided by the following principles:

Community based and community driven: We will keep our community informed of our advocacy priorities, listen to their needs, and work together.

Evidence Based: Our priority projects will have rational and sound research and data to support their merits.

Partnerships: We will partner with our community, along with State and Federal Governments and other organisations to address issues and deliver great outcomes.

Solution oriented: Our approach will incorporate solutions, not just issues.

People and place in focus: We are always advocating for projects that enhance inclusivity and environmental sustainability.

Council's Advocacy Priorities

As identified in Strategic Focus Areas 1,2,3,4,5 and 6 of our 2021/25 Council's advocacy priorities are as follows:

1.1.4	Adopt and implement an Advocacy strategy to outline the approach, principles and focus of Council's advocacy activities.
2.1.4	Lobby State and Federal Governments to fund improved digital and telecommunications infrastructure.
2.1.6	Support the work being undertaken by the Euroa Mountain Bike Club for the development of a mountain bike track at Balmattum Hill through advocacy with Parks Victoria and relevant government departments.
2.4	Advocate to the State Government to deliver expanded public transport options to connect the community to local services and facilities.
3.1.8	Advocate to Federal and State Government for investment in reliable power supply infrastructure with a focus on renewable energy.
3.5	Investigate, in partnership with Goulburn Valley Water, opportunities to green open spaces in towns with recycled water from the towns' wastewater treatment plant.
4.1.4	Continue to seek funding to support local business in adapting and responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
4.1.5	Continue to advocate for the development of the Mangalore Airport as a freight intermodal and transport/ industrial hub.
4.1.6	Continue to seek funding options for the upgrade of the Euroa Railway Precinct as part of the Euroa Structure Plan's implementation.
4.1.7	Continue to advocate to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) for a community led outcome for the redesign of railway infrastructure in Euroa.
5.6	Continue to advocate to Department of Transport around improving road safety and aligning speed limits with community expectations.
5.7	Explore options for the development of a local law around smoking in Council owned public places.

Strategic relationships

Over the next four years, Councillors and Officers will focus on developing and strengthening mutually beneficial relationships with decision makers and key influencers – making them aware of joint opportunities for project delivery, community projects or initiatives and collaboration opportunities.

When possible, the Mayor and Councillors with administrative support from Officers will connect community leaders and organisations, groups and service providers to achieve effective and mutually beneficial outcomes.



Council's role is one of leadership and support at all levels, which are interconnected.

Local level advocacy

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020 is that the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

The formation of the 2021-2025 Council Plan included extensive community consultation, and through continued communications and engagement practices that are applied to every project, service and initiative, Council will maintain consistently active, in-touch, knowledgeable and up to date with community needs, wants and demands.

Regional level advocacy

Strathbogrie Shire Council is a member and active participant of regional bodies that consist of neighbouring councils, regional authorities and industry experts who collaboratively are able to create a louder and more influential advocacy voice state-wide.

Regional advocacy is an effective advocacy method to adopt for circumstances such as when legislation, policies or projects impact on a large number of Councils and communities, who seek the same outcomes using a united and collective voice.

Examples of regional body memberships include:

- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA)

- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
- Australian Women in Local Government Association (AWLGA)
- Rail Freight Association (RFA)
- Regional Development Association Hume Committee (RDA Hume)
- Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)
- Hume Region Local Government Network (HRLGN)
- Regional Australia Institute (RAI)

State and Federal levels of advocacy

Council advocates on behalf of its community to State and Federal Government Members of Parliament and bureaucrats on matters of policy, areas of concern, to obtain support or to obtain grant funding and investment.

Local Government is legislated to work together with the upper tiers of Government. It is important for Council to establish, maintain and strengthen strong relationships with all our State and Federal representatives, including Members of Parliament (MP's), Members of Legislative Council, Senators and Ministers and key personnel at relevant departments. All of these roles have the power to influence decision-making on policy, provide advice of grant opportunities and assist Council to deliver the best outcomes on behalf of the community through funding streams.

Issue based advocacy

Issue based advocacy is undertaken on an as needs basis rather than as part of planned, considered and resourced organisational advocacy strategy. The effectiveness of this type of advocacy is varied but may be warranted based on evidence-based community need and support.

Synergy between advocacy levels

Council's advocacy role across all levels is one of leadership and support. All levels of government are interconnected, and often local issues are likely to have synergies at a regional, state and federal level. Taking this into account, each advocacy campaign requires a varying level of resourcing and coordination from across the organisation. In many cases this resourcing is not formally recognised through the budget process but instead is expected to be added on to existing branch programs, services and activities. As is the nature with advocacy, often the more successful a campaign is within the community, the more Council focus and resource it demands.

Roles and Responsibilities

The table below provides an overview of each of the important roles and responsibilities in supporting the delivery of the Advocacy Strategy:

Role	Responsibility
Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principal community and area representative ▪ Principal spokesperson via media channels ▪ Review and approve all incoming and outgoing advocacy correspondence ▪ Create and strengthen stakeholder relationships ▪ Attend advocacy meetings with key decision-makers, representatives, and community groups
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decision making (i.e. agree to Advocacy Strategy and priorities) ▪ Receive updates on forward planning of advocacy opportunities. ▪ Participation to drive key advocacy priorities ▪ Proactive strategic relationship management ▪ Drive key messages and promote Council work towards the desired goal
Executive Officers and Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drive Advocacy Strategy delivery ▪ Create and strengthen stakeholder relationships ▪ Strategic and tactical decision-making ▪ Budget allocations ▪ Receive quarterly updates on forward planning of advocacy opportunities ▪ Manage internal and external stakeholders
Senior Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal stakeholder meetings and collaboration ▪ Create and strengthen stakeholder relationships ▪ Coordinate work outputs aligned to the advocacy strategy priorities ▪ Provide advice and support to divisions in implementing advocacy projects ▪ Inform internal and external stakeholders
Communications and Engagement Team (C + E Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create and strengthen stakeholder relationships ▪ Build capacity in advocacy toolkits and strategies ▪ Develop key messages ▪ Industry monitoring of policy launches, local government sector meetings, policy reviews, state/federal budgets, pilot proposals ▪ Conduct research and analysis ▪ Key stakeholders and partnerships ▪ Key messages ▪ Manage Advocacy page on the Council website and Share Strathbogie engagement portal ▪ Inform internal and external stakeholders ▪ Manage media and publications ▪ Manage digital media / social media ▪ Organise delegations and meetings ▪ Provide consultation and information ▪ Provide quarterly and yearly evaluation

<p>Council Officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build their internal advocacy capacity to ensure they are aware of Council's Advocacy strategy ▪ Need to provide clear objectives and goals when planning any form of advocacy ▪ Knowing the priorities of the government of the day ▪ Ensuring there is captured quantitative and qualitative evidence to support Council's position and business case ▪ Drive internal collaboration to achieve results ▪ Monitor the political climate and policy-cycle, budget-cycle and legislation and policy ▪ Work with advocates within the community-who are the champions of the issues, who will help support Council's work. ▪ Lodge service requests via the C + E Shop
<p>External stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide advice and supporting information to Council on strategic advocacy project/s ▪ Proactive strategic relationship management ▪ Gain an understanding of Council objectives and goals ▪ Collaborate and work together with Council

Strategic Advocacy Objectives

#	Objective	How we will achieve it
1	Formal endorsement of Council advocacy priorities	Advocacy priority projects can be sourced from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and policies (planned and budgeted approach) • Council resolutions as they arise (require full scoping and costing) • Issues of the day as they arise (not planned and may require resourcing.) • Government budget and policy cycles, policy announcements, election cycles.
2	Influence decision and policy makers	Through carefully planned and resourced advocacy campaigns/actions (as outlined in the organisational advocacy agenda) which could include for example, correspondence, delegations, council resolutions, strategic partnerships, marketing and promotion etc
3	Attract and secure funding and resources to Strathbogie Shire for major projects	Through research and political climate monitoring and the identification of available funding sources, open grant applications or resources. Advocacy may take the form of correspondence, delegations, council resolutions, strategic partnerships, marketing and promotion, and more.
4	Build upon our strategic partnerships	Through shared understandings, connections, agreements and formal alliances with people, organisations, peak bodies, councils and government that have the willingness and capability to support Council's advocacy and influence policy and decision makers.
5	Share the Strathbogie Shire story	By telling the Strathbogie Shire story to government and the community and having consistent messaging that adopts Strathbogie Shire's values, priorities, leadership, actions and successes. Advocacy would focus on education and awareness of key issues, informing stakeholders about opportunities and challenges faced by Strathbogie Shire.
6	Build the advocacy capacity of Council and the community	By promoting a culture of advocacy, encouraging and enabling participation, building the community's ability to advocate on its own behalf, sharing skills, knowledge and expertise, mobilising of resources and reducing duplication of effort and information.
7	Strengthen our position as a leading local government and experts in our field	Through strategic partnerships, strong positions on policy that aligns with Strathbogie Shire's values and principles, innovation, marketing and communication, awards etc

Strategic Advocacy Agenda Matrix

All advocacy issues are important, but it is not possible to advocate at an equal level for all the issues on Council's agenda. Strathbogie Shire's advocacy agenda should be realistic and achievable. Too many advocacy priorities of organisational significance can dilute the quality of advocacy provided and impact Council's budget and resources.

This Strategy establishes an advocacy agenda with three levels so Council can maximise effort, resources and political capital.

Tier	Type / Descriptor	Context	Project lead and resources
Tier 1 Maximum priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Major municipal issue of broad strategic organisational priority ▪ Key issue subject to Council resolution ▪ Advocacy priority in the Council Plan ▪ Longstanding reputational issue ▪ A timely issue that requires immediate resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A broad community issue that results in a specialized focus and /or whole of organization coordination. ▪ Council may be concerned about issues addressed through the standard channels of government engagement. ▪ An initiative or policy change requiring extensive media, communications and/or stakeholder management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director/ Executive Manager ▪ Project Manager ▪ C + E Team ▪ Budget may be required for priority projects.
Tier 2 Medium priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council seeking a particular outcome such as decision /funding /support etc ▪ Localised advocacy priority listed in Council Plan ▪ Issue of the day that requires short term approach to advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An issue that relates to a particular Council service, activity or challenge that requires some advocacy generated from the local branch. ▪ An issue that may affect a moderate portion of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director/ Executive Manager ▪ Project Manager ▪ C + E Team ▪ Budget may be required for priority projects.
Tier 3 Minimum priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peak body or sector-wide advocacy project which Strathbogie Shire supports and contributes to ▪ Advocacy priority listed in Council Plan that is not time specific in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An issues that aligns with Council Plan priority areas and the community vision ▪ An issue requiring external political and/or policy decisions ▪ Council will seek to provide opportunities to demonstrate leadership and share expertise for a desired outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director/ Executive Manager ▪ Project Manager ▪ C + E Team ▪ Budget may be required for priority projects.

Advocacy Plan

Each priority project is listed below using the Advocacy Agenda Matrix

Advocacy action 2.1.4	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Equitable digital and telecommunications infrastructure</p> <p>Strategic focus area #2 Live. Access. Connect.</p> <p>Medium term (0>5yrs)</p>	Tier 1	<p>The struggle for internet speed, reliability and phone coverage in Strathbogie Shire's municipality is unacceptable. Slow speeds, dropouts, congestion at peak usage times and no mobile signal are causing dissatisfaction and disparity.</p> <p>Businesses and farms are not served well by fixed wireless internet connections and often face restraints from satellite services. The need to meet the policy objectives of a universally available NBN in our rural community is urgent.</p>	<p>We believe telecommunications infrastructure is just as important as road, waste and utility services and the lack of this infrastructure and service providers makes rural districts uncompetitive in attracting commercial and residential investment, and at a disadvantage.</p> <p>For local retailers, the EFTPOS machine internet reception wavers and peak internet usage times by school students cause slow and unreliable service. Major event organisers of GoFish Nagambie Tournament, the Violet Town Market and the Euroa Music Festival face phone and internet congestion challenges which reduce participant satisfaction and the likelihood of them returning or providing positive feedback.</p> <p>Without this, we will be left out of the digital race and miss out on economic development opportunities.</p>	<p>Improved infrastructure and service delivery through secured funding to meet community service expectations and needs that metropolitan-based residents enjoy as a right. Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build mobile phone towers in Mitchelton and Boho South 2. Provide fibre connections to the towns of Avenel and Violet Town as a Stage 1 response of a comprehensive roll out across the Shire 3. Eliminate mobile black spots in Strathbogie Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian Government ▪ NBNCO ▪ Telecommunication retailers ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Business owners ▪ Residents and ratepayers ▪ Media ▪ Community

Advocacy action 3.1.8	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Reliable power supply infrastructure</p> <p>Strategic focus area # 3 Protect. Enhance. Adapt.</p> <p>Medium term (0>10yrs)</p>	<p>Tier 1</p>	<p>Power failures during peak demand periods is a common occurrence throughout Strathbogie Shire. In January 2019, Nagambie, Avenel, Longwood, Euroa and surrounds experienced an extended power outage lasting up to three days.</p> <p>The reason: A single Ausnet electricity supply connecting Benalla to Euroa via Violet Town is the only infrastructure to service the surrounding localities.</p> <p>The electricity source connecting Nagambie from Seymour is also struggling.</p> <p>The lack of energy security is one of the most significant barriers to attracting new small to medium businesses to Strathbogie Shire.</p>	<p>With a moderate climate and proximity to Melbourne and major regional areas, Strathbogie Shire is well located to provide renewable energy generation import into the grid.</p> <p>However, the lack of a secure and stable grid system prevents investment in large scale renewable energy in the region.</p> <p>Council is keen to work with our communities with the view to implementing micro-grids (with battery storage and generator backup) as a sustainable means for energy security.</p> <p>This will ensure residents and businesses have independence and island-able capacity.</p> <p>This project provides for future renewables integration for the town and as AusNet advises, increases the potential for new small-medium businesses to connect to the grid that have previously been restricted due to this micro grid providing additional band width.</p>	<p>1. We ask the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) takes into consideration rural community populations and land mass in an equitable measure to densely populated areas, when applying the Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution (RIT-D) process to determine upgrade approvals.</p> <p>2. That the Victorian Government continues to support renewable energy programs to deliver microgrids and stand-alone power systems in the regions that will ensure energy security and emergency resilience.</p> <p>3. That the Australian Government supports renewable energy programs for our rural communities along the Seymour to Nagambie line and Benalla to Euroa line to support sustainable solutions such as microgrids and stand-alone energy systems.</p> <p>4. We urge that the Australian Energy Regulator reviews an Ausnet line upgrade from Seymour to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian Government ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Australian Energy Regulator ▪ DELWP ▪ Local industry ▪ Euroa Energy Group ▪ Mondo ▪ Euroa Connect ▪ Business owners ▪ Education and training providers ▪ Residents and ratepayers ▪ Community

Advocacy priority	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>2026 Commonwealth Games: Lake Nagambie Rowing venue bid</p> <p>Strategic focus area #2 Live. Access, Connect.</p> <p># 5 Strong. Health. Safe.</p> <p>Short term (0 >1 yr)</p>	<p>Tier 1</p>	<p>In February 2022 the Victorian Government announced it had made a submission to the Commonwealth Games Federation to host the 2026 international event in Victoria with a regional priority for event venues to be planned state-wide.</p> <p>This is a valuable opportunity for Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre to enhance its potential to be the only Victorian international venue of choice for a Commonwealth Games 2026 rowing course and for future regattas for years to follow.</p>	<p>This idyllic location is favoured by competitors and spectators alike for the course layout, water quality and reliability.</p> <p>Lake Nagambie was proud to host the Australian Olympic Rowing Team in 2021 to train and prepare for the Tokyo Olympics and boasts many local connections to rowing champions including Lucy Stephan, Pat McNamara Neville Howell OAM and Neil Lodding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2km rowing course ▪ Location ▪ Infrastructure ▪ Water quality ▪ Athlete transport access ▪ Athlete accommodation ▪ Media access points <p>Hospitality outlets.</p>	<p>Benalla in the vicinity of \$20 Million, in line with current development increases in Nagambie and Avenel, particularly if renewable funding is not provided.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Victorian Government commitment for the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre to be the host rowing venue for the 2026 Commonwealth Games 2. Funding investments of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$4.1 million for the Rowing course deepening ▪ \$1.7 million to upgrade the Regatta Centre (including competitor amenities, IT, toilets and storage) ▪ \$1.6 million for the Regatta Centre Peninsula Extension ▪ \$1.5 million to complete the boardwalk project ▪ \$250,000 to seal access roads and car park facilities ▪ \$250,000 to upgrade the peninsula toilet block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian Government ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Rowing Australia ▪ Rowing Victoria ▪ Rowing SA ▪ Rowing TAS ▪ Rowing WA ▪ Rowing NSW ▪ Rowing Queens ▪ Rowing NT ▪ Nagambie Rowing Club ▪ Local business ▪ Tourism industry ▪ Media ▪ Community

Advocacy action 3.1.3	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Greening Euroa Project funding Stage 3.</p> <p>Strategic focus area # 3 Protect. Enhance. Adapt.</p> <p>Short-term (0>1yr)</p>	<p>Tier 1</p>	<p>The Greening Euroa Project is an innovative community driven project taking place in Strathbogie Shire.</p> <p>It is being driven by a committee of passionate locals who came together to find a way to lessen the impacts of chronic water shortages in a rapidly warming climate.</p> <p>Adaptation to drought is important to provide a sustainable future for rural townships, communities and facilities. This plan taps into the available excess water from the Euroa Wastewater Treatment Plant. More than this, this proposal is the first of its kind in Victoria.</p>	<p>With the support of our local water authority, Goulburn Valley Water, this wastewater would be safely upgraded from Class C to Class B, before being piped underground to storage tanks throughout the Euroa Township.</p> <p>Once the pipe is laid, water will be available to irrigate the many public ovals and sports grounds, that pride this community.</p> <p>More than ever, community health and wellbeing are a priority for our region and by maintaining our green open spaces during prolonged dry periods, members of the public opportunities to get out and participate in community life through exercise and sporting activities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To secure \$3.8 million from State and or Federal Government grants in water infrastructure and innovation sectors, or the equivalent in a co-contribution agreement. 2. To obtain representative support and raise awareness of this leading innovation and stakeholder collaboration. 3. To enable the standpipe and pipeline to provide recycled water to service several parks and recreation reserves across the Euroa township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian Government ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Departments ▪ Statutory agencies, Industry/business associations ▪ Goulburn Valley Water ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Euroa Secondary College ▪ Euroa Primary School ▪ John's Primary School ▪ Euroa Arboretum ▪ Friendlies Oval ▪ Euroa Cricket Club ▪ Memorial Oval ▪ Euroa Football/. Netball Club ▪ Euroa Hockey Club ▪ Euroa Lawn Tennis Club ▪ Local business ▪ Tourism industry ▪ Community

Advocacy priority	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Nature Based Play Space</p> <p>Strategic focus area #2 Live. Access. Connect</p> <p>#5 Strong. Health. Safe.</p> <p>Short-term (0-1yr)</p>	<p>Tier 1</p>	<p>Strathbogie Shire Council and the Euroa community has a vision. We want to develop an intergenerational destination nature-based play space in our town that is suitable for all ages and abilities. Modern life has removed the traditional nature play many of today's adults experienced as children.</p> <p>A destination playground would create a place for families wanting a genuine child and youth friendly place to stop with a unique offering. This community supported project will offer improved liveability and help strengthen Euroa and our Shire's reputation as a destination.</p> <p>Increasing economic development with an estimated linger time of about 20 to 60 minutes providing local</p>	<p>Research indicates that, when children play and learn in nature, they do so with more energy, engagement, imagination, and cooperation than in wholly artificial environments.</p> <p>Sensory stimulation derived from interacting with natural environments allows children to learn with sight, smell, touch and sound.</p> <p>Creating natural environments supports children to become environmentally engaged and show respect for the environment, and it is well known that physical activity is greatly beneficial for children's cognitive development, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>From a sensory garden to explore, the possibilities to interact with nature and the environment are endless.</p> <p>It is proposed the all-abilities play space will be designed with the people who will use it most. This means extensive consultation with children, young people,</p>	<p>Council invites the Victorian Government to commit \$1.5 million to design and deliver a nature-based playground in Euroa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Tourism industry ▪ Business owners ▪ Visitors ▪ Community

Advocacy priority 4.1.5	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Mangalore Freight Intermodal and Transport Hub</p> <p>Strategic focus area # 4 Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.</p> <p>Short term (0-2yrs)</p>	<p>Tier 2</p>	<p>The establishment of a Freight intermodal at Mangalore Airport in central Victoria allowing the efficient transfer of freight to road, rail and air as required.</p> <p>The provisions of a freight intermodal at this site will allow servicing of freight services to Melbourne in particular the Northern suburbs industrial and freight hubs. It will also provide freight transfer services to the Shepparton and the wider Goulburn valley along with sections of southern NSW and North-western Victoria.</p>	<p>The Australian transport and land freight industry is expected to grow by 75per cent between 2021 and 2031 and that over three quarters of Australia’s non-bulk freight in carried on roads between Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide.</p> <p>The establishment of a Freight intermodal will connect the <i>Inland Rail Project</i> with two freeways and the Goulburn Valley rail line at a point 128km north of Melbourne permitting the efficient transfer of freight at a location that would reduce truck and rail congestion in Metro Melbourne and facilitate connection to the inland rail with rail corridors extending into North Central Victoria and southern NSW.</p>	<p>It is believed that a comprehensive feasibility study is necessary to fully scope and quantify the opportunities available and constraint that would be removed presented by locating a freight intermodal at Mangalore and the efficiencies to be obtained over the life of the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mangalore Airport Pty Ltd ▪ Kestral Aviation ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Greater Shepparton City Council ▪ Mitchell Shire Council ▪ Campaspe Shire Council ▪ City of Greater Bendigo ▪ Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Infrastructure Victoria ▪ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Services ▪ ARTC ▪ Inland Rail ▪ VicTrack ▪ Port Rail Shuttle Network ▪ Department of Transport: Freight Victoria ▪ Australian Government Department of Defence ▪ Rail Freight Alliance

Advocacy priority 4.1.7	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Continue to advocate to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) for a community led outcome for the redesign of railway infrastructure in Euroa.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #4. Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.</p> <p>Short term (0-1yr)</p>	<p>Tier 2</p>	<p>The Inland Rail Project is being facilitated by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and in accordance with the Australian Government Ministerial portfolio for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. Connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, this 1,700km rail project will complete our national freight network—better connecting producers to markets and creating new opportunities for businesses, industries and regional communities.</p> <p>In Euroa, the Anderson Street overpass must be replaced. There are two options: 1) it will either become a higher and wider bridge, or 2) an underpass.</p>	<p>The current Anderson Street bridge that connects East Euroa to West is a clunky and unfriendly piece of infrastructure for vehicles to cross over the passenger and freight North-East railway line.</p> <p>The ARTC Inland Rail Project has provided the Euroa community, freight trucks and visitors to have a say on the future design of a very important precinct within the township setting.</p> <p>The current structure is not supported or liked, with many residents and ratepayers supporting an alternative design to open the railway precinct up and to remove the bridge that divides the township currently.</p> <p>This project presents the opportunity to plan for the future of the Euroa township with the residents, ratepayers, business owners and visitors who live, visit and play there.</p>	<p>That ARTC, Inland Rail Officers and the Victorian Government Department of Transport listen to the community and deliver a project design that meets the expectations of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Design Euroa ▪ ARTC ▪ Inland Rail Project ▪ Victorian Government Department of Transport ▪ Euroa and surrounding community ▪ Regional Roads Victoria ▪ VicTrack

Advocacy priority 4.1.6	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Continue to seek funding options for the upgrade of the Euroa Railway Precinct as part of the Euroa Structure Plan’s implementation.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #4 Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.</p> <p>Short term (0-1yr)</p>	<p>Tier 2</p>	<p>As the result of the ARTC Inland Rail Project, requiring the construction of new infrastructure to replace the current Anderson Street bridge over the North-East railway line; the surrounding precinct will need to be upgraded, accordingly.</p> <p>This in anticipated to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deletion of the Railway Street ramp from the current overpass • Pedestrian access • Disability access • Bus stop amenity • Car parking amenity • New connectivity from Railway Street to Hinton Street • Public space with vegetation/ park features to complement the township as an entryway from city V/Line travellers. 	<p>The Euroa Township and surrounding areas in Strathbogie Shire are currently facing a development boom due to affordable house and land prices, a migration of city residents due to pandemic</p> <p>Development of the <i>Euroa Railway Precinct Structure Plan</i> to inform a coordinated and staged development to enhance, activate and beautify this area and ensure maximum participation, connectivity and community benefits.</p>	<p>A funding investment of \$100,000 for a Euroa Railway Precinct Structure Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Design Euroa ▪ ARTC ▪ Inland Rail Project ▪ Victorian Government Department of Transport ▪ Euroa and surrounding community ▪ Regional Roads Victoria ▪ VicTrack

Advocacy priority 2.4	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Advocate to the State Government to deliver expanded public transport options to connect the community to local services and facilities.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #2 Live. Access. Connect.</p> <p>Medium term (0-5yrs)</p>	<p>Tier 2</p>	<p>Residents and visitors to Strathbogie Shire are constantly limited in their plans due to access constraints from a lack of public transport services and times.</p> <p>Currently bus services run North-South along the North-East Railway line, but there is little to no East-West connectivity from the Strathbogie Ranges and Ruffy Tablelands to Avenel, Nagambie, Graytown or further afield.</p> <p>The services that do run, often host one North-bound and one South-bound service a day and do not provide opportunity for single-day trips for the elderly, disabled or youth of the region to access education, work or shops and amenities.</p>	<p>Increased public transport options would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase access issues ▪ Reduce carbon emissions from private vehicle use ▪ Reduce local, state and federal road maintenance costs ▪ Increase transport safety and reduce the number of accidents from private vehicle use ▪ Increase equity for lower socio-economic households ▪ Foster social cohesion and community connections ▪ Enhance small township development opportunities ▪ Increase expenditure at local business and shops <p>And more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased number of daily V/Line Melbourne to Albury train services ▪ Increased bus timetable of existing service ▪ A new bus transport service connecting East to West townships and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Victorian Government Department of Transport ▪ V/Line Corporation ▪ Department for Economic Development ▪ Victorian Tourism Industry Council

Advocacy priority 4.1.4	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Continue to seek funding to support local businesses in adapting and responding to the Covid 19 pandemic.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #4 Inclusive. Productive. Balanced.</p> <p>Short term (0-2yrs)</p>	<p>Tier 2</p>	<p>Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Strathbogie Shire Council has worked to support its business community continue to employ, earn and operate their businesses through lockdowns, restrictions, QR code check-ins, vaccination only access and social distancing measures.</p> <p>Council continues to support the Euroa Chamber of Business and Commerce, Go Nagambie and the greater Strathbogie Shire business community through a weekly business newsletter which shares information about Government grants and subsidies, support services, workshops and training opportunities, industry news and initiatives.</p> <p>This has been positively received by the community and therefore requires</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information sharing in an ever-changing environment ▪ Providing industry news that is reliable and direct from the source ▪ Providing information and access to grants and subsidies that are hard to find otherwise ▪ Supporting economic continuity for local business, employers and employees through uncertain times ▪ Supporting growth and sustainability ▪ Reducing isolation, hardship, and business closures through timely and regular information updates ▪ Supporting the community Council represents ▪ Maximising opportunity ▪ Building trust and a good rapport with the business community ▪ Building and maintaining a large business network in Strathbogie Shire ▪ Helping small business owners to navigate the pandemic. 	<p>Funding investment from the Victorian Government to enable Council resources to maintain the current support services in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Victorian Government ▪ GoNagambie ▪ Euroa Chamber of Business and Commerce ▪ Business owners, staff and customers ▪ Residents and ratepayers

		additional resources for continuity and continued effectiveness.			
Advocacy priority 5.7	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>Development of local law around smoking in Council owned public places.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #5 Strong. Healthy. Safe.</p> <p>Short term (0-2yrs)</p>	Tier 3	<p>Under Victoria’s Tobacco Act 1987 (the Tobacco Act), smoking is prohibited in all enclosed workplaces and certain public spaces where members of the public gather and may be exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke.</p> <p>Council has the opportunity to extend this to all Council owned buildings.</p> <p>This helps us achieve our community’s goal of happy and healthy people.</p>	<p>Smoke-free areas are important as they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect the community from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke • make smoking in the community less acceptable - the less people see smoking in public places the less they will tend to think it is okay, rather than harmful • support people who have quit or are trying to quit smoking. 	<p>That Council Officers plan community consultation and engagement and administrative practices to support to implementation of a new local law around smoking in council owner public places.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victorian Government ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Community

Advocacy priority	Tier type	The opportunity	The benefits	The ask	Key Stakeholders
<p>2.1.6</p> <p>Support the work being undertaken by the Euroa Mountain Bike Club for the development of a mountain bike track at Balmattum Hill through advocacy with Parks Victoria and relevant government departments.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #2 Live. Access. Connect.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #5 Strong. Healthy. Safe.</p> <p>Medium term (0-5yrs)</p>	Tier 3	<p>This project will be delivered in partnership with the community, and will involve creating a detailed plan for the development of a Mountain Bike Track on Balmattum Hill.</p> <p>Designs of the trails would include support facilities that add value to the visitor experience.</p> <p>It will generate overnight, or longer stays, and significant tourism and economic outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased sport tourism and visitation to Euroa and surrounds ▪ Enhanced opportunity for affordable participation in mountain bike riding ▪ Increasing community health ▪ Increasing mental health ▪ Reducing stress and increasing participant concentration spans 	<p>\$250,000 funding for a detailed plan for development of a Mountain Bike track at Balmattum Hill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning ▪ Euroa Mountain Bike Club ▪ Parks Victoria ▪ Euroa community ▪ Victorian Mountain Bike Riding cohort
<p>Advocacy priority 5.6</p> <p>Continue to advocate to Department of Transport around improving road safety and aligning speed limits with community expectations.</p> <p>Strategic focus area #5 Strong. Healthy. Safe.</p> <p>Short term (0-3yrs)</p>	Tier 3	<p>To listen to our community and hear their concerns around road safety.</p> <p>To create a safe environment for all people living in Strathbogie Shire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced accidents, injuries and deaths of pedestrian, cyclist, motorbike and vehicle road users ▪ Improve business and retailer road safety ▪ Increase community confidence in speed limits and governance ▪ Reduce road maintenance costs ▪ Adapt specific measures based on community need and location. 	<p>Victorian Government funding to improve road safety at specific locations across Strathbogie Shire including St John's Primary School in Anderson Street in Euroa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victorian Government Department of Transport ▪ Strathbogie Shire Council ▪ Community

Evaluation

Each advocacy priority will have unique campaign objectives, which are often long-term and big picture items of funding or project collaboration and service delivery that is far beyond the budget of Council. It is important to note that timeframes for delivery are not always measurable. Successful outcomes are based on many contributing factors that are ever-changing in the political environment, however there are many other ways to measure progress, including:

- Community engagement reports and statistics
- Evidence-based support i.e. Petition
- Funding contributions
- Formalised partnerships, committees or working groups
- Frequency of media coverage
- Register of correspondence and more.

Evaluation of the Strathbogie Shire Council Advocacy Strategy will be formally reported on an annual basis with reference to the 2021-2025 Council Plan, which identifies each key area that the community needs Council to make change.

Further evaluation of the strategy and effectiveness is measured in the Local Government mandated Annual Customer Satisfaction Service survey, conducted by independent market researchers, as one of six indicators:

1. Overall performance
2. Responsibility to the environment
3. Community consultation
4. Advocacy
5. Responding to local needs
6. Maintaining trust and confidence

The results of this independent market research are usually finalised and distributed in April/ May which allows for an end of financial year evaluation.

Conclusion

Strathbogie Shire Council is committed to advocate on behalf of the community and to plan for the future of our region. Successful advocacy outcomes rely on considered planning and resourcing, managing and monitoring of strategic relationships and collaborations with partners to achieve positive community change.

This advocacy strategy identifies the advocacy projects and priorities to guide the organisation in achieving its advocacy objectives. Through the implementation of this plan, it is anticipated that an evidence-based and resourced approach to advocacy will maximise outcomes going forward.

This strategy aims to establish a strong sense of advocacy understanding and implementation across Council by identifying how people can be a part of the plan and how officers and the community can contribute. Stakeholder relationship management is an important component in influencing decision making at any level.

Community aspirations and needs are key pillars of the 2021-2025 Council Plan on which this strategy is based and Council will continue to work closely with the community to realise these outcomes in the short, medium and longer term.

For further information on Strathbogie Shire Council's advocacy program, contact 1800 665 993 or via info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au.

Appendix

Relevant legislation

Local Government Act 2020

The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 stipulates that Councils have an important role in advocating for the needs of their communities and municipal area. Specific notations of the act which are relevant to Strathbogie Shire Council's advocacy work is as follows:

Part 2, Division 1, Role and powers of a Council

Section 8. Role of a Council

The role of a Council is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

Section 9. Overarching governance principles

A Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles.

(2) The following are the overarching governance principles-

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;*
- (b) priority to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;*
- (c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;*
- (d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;*
- (e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;*
- (f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;*
- (g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;*
- (h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;*
- (i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.*

...

(3) In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles-

- (a) the community engagement principles;*
- (b) the public transparency principles;*
- (c) the strategic planning principles;*
- (d) the financial management principles;*
- (e) the service performance principles.*

Part 2, Division 3 The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor

Section 18. Role of the Mayor

(1) The role of the Mayor is to-

- (a) chair Council meetings; and*
- (b) be the principal spokesperson for the Council; and*
- (c) lead engagement with the municipal community on the development of the Council Plan; and*
- (d) report to the community, at least once each year, on the implementation of the Council Plan;*
- (f) assist Councillor to understand their role;*