
Strathbogie Shire Council

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY &
ACTION PLAN
2023-2027

June 2023

Acknowledgement 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.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Executive summary | 6 |
| 1. Introduction | 10 |
| 1.1. Overview | 10 |
| 1.2. Local government’s role in economic development | 12 |
| 1.3. Local insights | 13 |
| 2. Strategic context | 14 |
| 2.1. Strathbogie Shire | 16 |
| 2.2. Policy context | 18 |
| 2.3. Macroeconomic context | 20 |
| 3. Population and demographics | 22 |
| 3.1. Overview | 23 |
| 3.2. Key findings | 24 |
| 4. The Strathbogie Shire economy | 26 |
| 4.1. Key findings | 27 |
| 5. Strategic considerations | 30 |
| 5.1. Strengths | 31 |
| 5.2. Challenges | 34 |
| 6. Economic development themes | 36 |
| Theme 1: An activated and ‘investment-ready’ shire | 40 |
| Theme 2: An innovative and sustainable business base | 42 |
| Theme 3: A supported community and labour force | 44 |
| Theme 4: A thriving visitor economy | 46 |
| 7. Action plan | 50 |

The Strathbogie Shire Economic Development Strategy was prepared with the assistance of Urban Enterprise. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of stakeholders in the preparation of this Strategy, including local businesses, chambers, State Government departments, industry leaders, Council officers and Councillors.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Economic Output

Represents the gross revenue generated by businesses in each of the industry sectors in a defined region. Gross revenue is also referred to as total sales or total income.

Regional Exports

Represents the value of goods and services exported outside of the defined region that have been generated by businesses / organisations in each of the industry sectors within the region.

Employment

Employment data represents the number of people employed by businesses/ organisations in each of the industry sectors in a defined region. Employment data presented in this report is destination of work data. That is, no inference is made as to where people in a defined region reside.

Daytrip Visitor

Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.

Overnight Visitor

People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.

International Visitor

A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia for less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

SEIFA

Developed by the ABS, this measures the relative level of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage for a defined area. The index score is based on a weighted combination of census variables that reflect disadvantage (e.g. income, education, employment, etc.), which is then standardised around the national average score of 1,000. Therefore, a score above 1,000 indicates a lower level of disadvantage relative to the national average, while a score below 1,000 indicates a higher level of disadvantage relative to the national average.

Small to Medium Enterprise

The ABS defines a business entity employing less than 20 employees as a Small to Medium Enterprise

Non-Employing Business

A type of that does not have employees. This may include a range of entity types, such as non-employing sole traders or any other businesses without employees

Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2)

SA2s are medium-sized, general-purpose, geographical areas. Their purpose is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically. Data from the ABS is available at an SA2 level, noting that the SA2 is the smallest area for the release of data.

Acronyms

AAGR

Annual Average Growth Rate

ABR

Australian Business Register

EDS

Economic Development Strategy

LGA

Local Government Area

PA

Per Annum

SA2

Statistical Area Level 2

SEIFA

Socio-Economic Index for Areas

SME

Small to Medium Enterprise

TRA

Tourism Research Australia



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strathbogie Shire Economic Development Strategy outlines the key directions and priorities for Strathbogie Shire Council to support economic development and sustained growth for the local economy.

Strathbogie Shire is a rural municipality located in Central Victoria and home to around 11,400 residents. The municipality possesses many strategic, economic and environmental attributes that can support economic development and help respond to challenges impacting the local economy.

This Strategy includes key actions and recommendations designed to leverage the Shire's competitive advantages, and help support a more prosperous economy, to benefit the community, workers and local businesses.

As a small Shire with limited resources there is a heavy reliance on external funding for economic development projects such as infrastructure and social housing. Whilst almost any project that the Shire may undertake could be considered as "Economic Development" the Shire's limited resources mean there is a need to prioritise those projects that are achievable within the time parameters set in the strategy and recognise that many laudable projects need to be considered as "aspirational" as implementation is either beyond Council resources or outside of Council control, i.e. reliant on the work of private industry or other levels of government for which Council can advocate but cannot deliver the project.

The strategy is to be reviewed every 12 months over its five-year life and as the Shire seeks to remain agile in its approach. It is likely that some aspirational project can be given a higher priority either at the point of review or in the event is recognised any time during the life of the strategy that an aspirational project becomes achievable.

Vision

Our region is fast becoming the destination for people to invest, live, visit and play. The delivery of this strategy will continue to put Strathbogie Shire on the map.

Key Actions and Recommendations

Strategic Considerations:

- **Capitalise on recent population growth** and increases in demand to support residential development, infrastructure investment, jobs growth and business attraction.
- **Leverage the Shire's strategic location and connectivity** to labour, export and consumption markets in nearby urban centres to attract businesses and workers.
- **Help realise the economic potential of nature-based assets** and support development and infrastructure investment to encourage tourism growth and provide resident amenity.
- **Support a high-value and high-tech agricultural sector** and encourage flow-on economic opportunities for supporting industries, including downstream processing, equine development, agritourism and distribution.
- **Support the existing industry representation** (inc. Go Nagambie and Euroa Chamber of Commerce) to provide business engagement and development activities that assists industry.
- **Reduce the impacts of an ageing population** through targeting younger working-age residents to provide a more sustainable population base that supports industry development.

- **Advocate for quality public and community services and facilities** to support the community from various providers.
- **Support the development of a reliable and secure energy source**, including traditional energy as well as the development of more sustainable renewables.
- **Provide adequate supply of zoned and serviced land** to facilitate growth, stimulate business investment and residential development opportunities.
- **Encourage the provision of affordable and diverse housing**, which will support the attraction and retention of residents and workers.
- **Encourage a more diverse industry base**, including new and emerging industries suited to the Shire, to enhance the sustainability of the local economy and grow employment opportunities.
- **Build industry resilience** to support local business response to external economic and environmental shocks.



1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of local economic development is to “Build the economic capacity of a locality to improve its economic future and the quality of life of its citizens. In this process, public, business and community sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and job creation.”¹

¹ World Bank, 2016

1.1 Overview

The Strathbogie Shire Economic Development Strategy (Strategy) outlines the key directions and priorities for Strathbogie Shire Council (Council) to support economic development and sustained growth for the local economy.

This is a five-year Strategy (to be reviewed annually) that identifies relevant actions for Council to support economic growth and provide ongoing benefits to the community, workers and local businesses.

The information in this Strategy is informed by independent research and analysis, as well as consultation with industry representatives, residents, local businesses, Council and Government stakeholders.

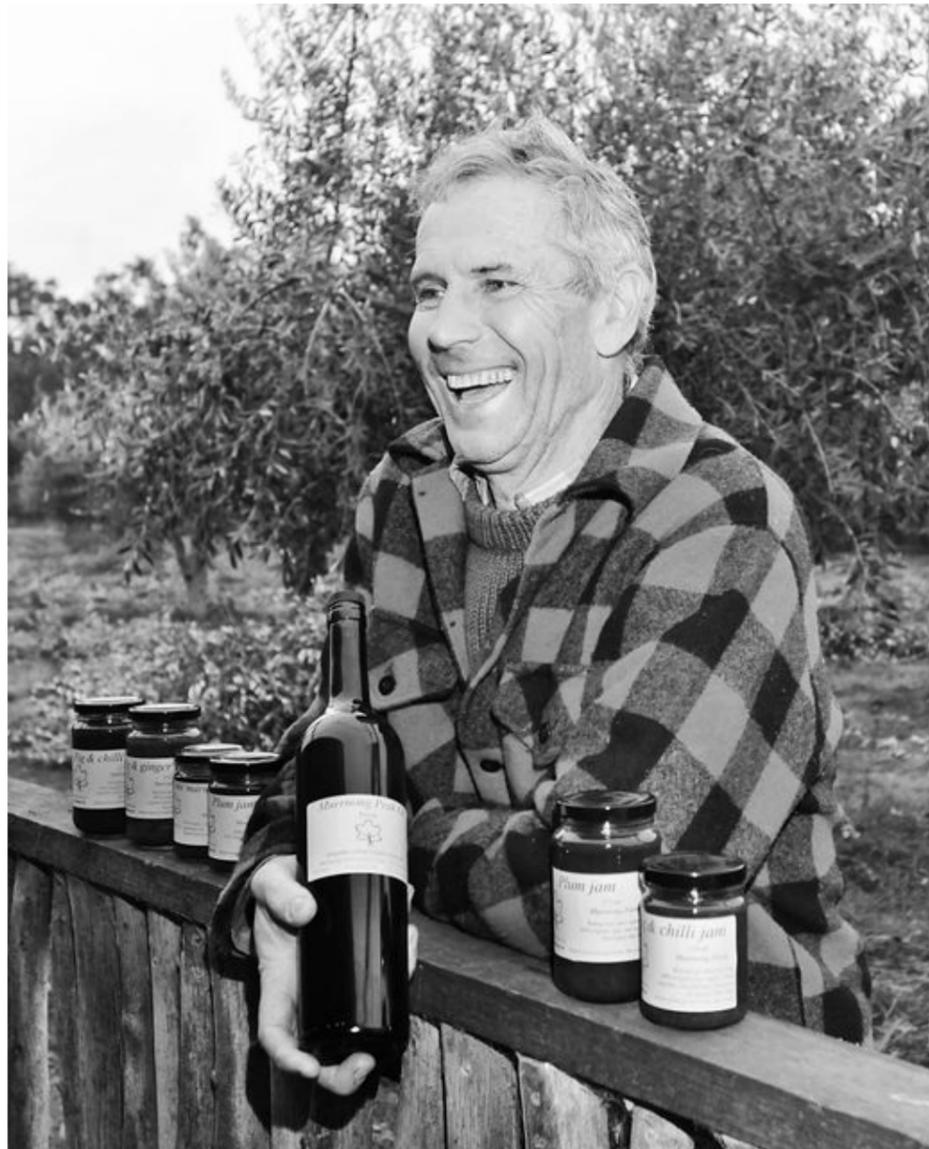


1.2 Local government's role in economic development

Local Government plays an important role in supporting and facilitating economic growth within their municipalities. Typically, local Government's role in economic development includes the following core functions:

- Supporting the development of the business base;
- Attracting new businesses and jobs;
- Growing the visitor economy;
- Promoting liveable communities; and
- Undertaking advocacy efforts to attract infrastructure funding.

Economic development requires an integrated, whole of government approach that can be achieved through an Economic Development Strategy with clear objectives and measurable actions aligned with Council's other strategies, policies and activities.



1.3 Local insights

The Strategy was prepared in close consultation with Council, community and industry, to reflect local values and identify the unique challenges and opportunities for Strathbogie Shire.

The consultation undertaken to support this Strategy is summarised in Table T1 below.

Results from the community and business survey and industry workshops can be found in appendices A and B.

Table T1. Consultation Summary

| Engagement Activity | Description | Participants |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Industry and community survey | An online survey for members of the community and local operators, distributed by Council. | 49 |
| Industry workshops | 5 workshops with representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euroa business community • Nagambie business community • Euroa Chamber of Business and Commerce • Go Nagambie • Local Investors | 51 |
| Council | 1 workshop with Council staff | 4 |

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strathbogie Shire is a large rural municipality situated in central Victoria, encompassing an area of 3,300 square kilometres and home to 11,455 residents. Around 80% of total land is used for agricultural and farming purposes, which is the primary driver of the local economy.



The large tracts of farming land support broadacre and cattle farming, as well as specialist rural industry, including equine and viticulture.

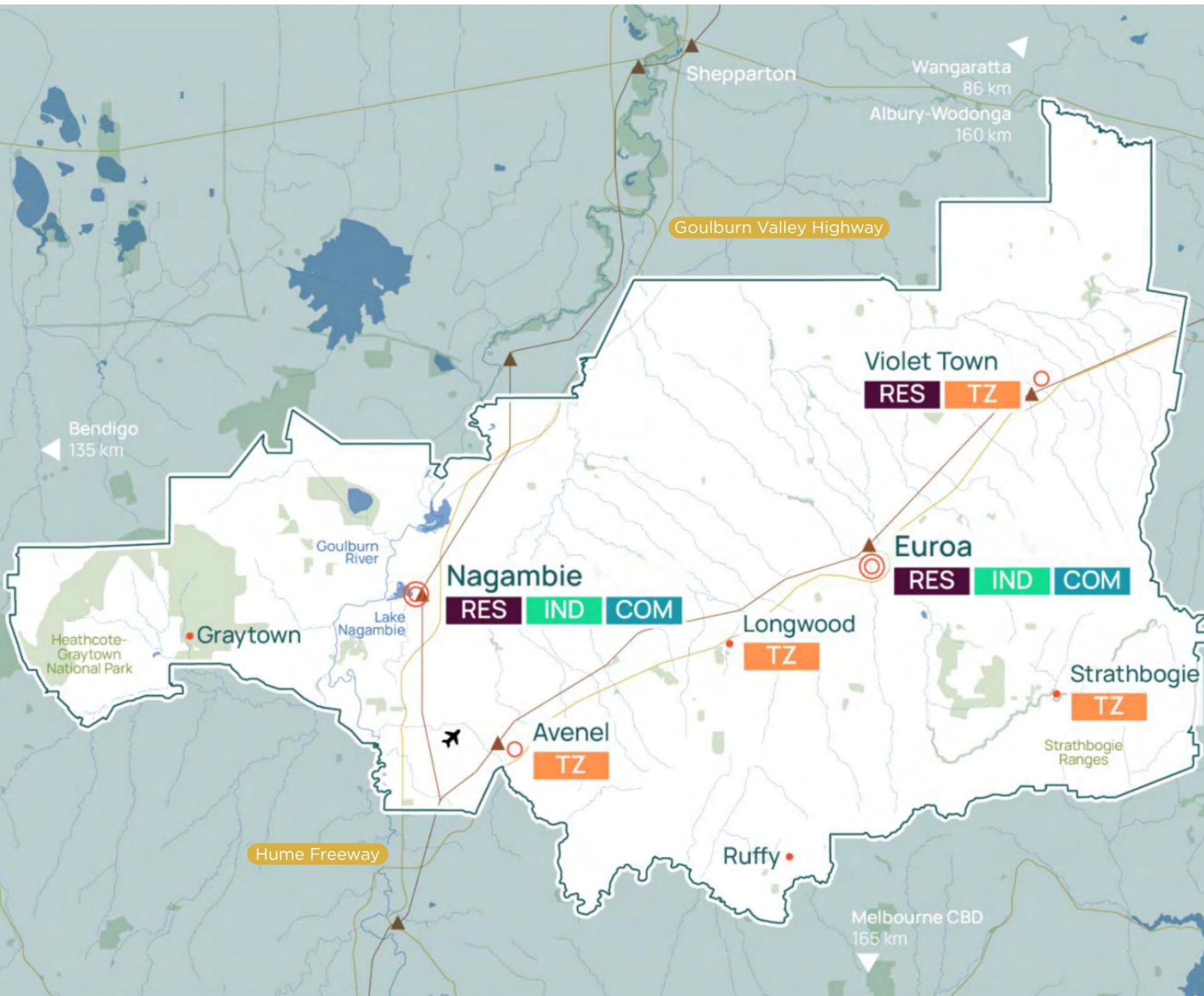
The Shire is strategically located approx. 125 kilometres north of Melbourne's CBD and is surrounded by the key regional centres of Bendigo, Shepparton, Seymour and Wangaratta, which provide access to employment, services and amenity for its residents. Accessibility is provided via major transport routes, including the Hume Freeway and Goulburn Valley Freeway, in addition to rail transport and Mangalore Regional Airport, which is an advantage for industry and the community.

In addition, there are also key townships spread across the Shire that support residents, visitors and businesses, including Euroa and Nagambie. These are complemented by several smaller communities that support community and rural industry, including Avenel, Violet Town and Strathbogie.

The municipality provides a diverse range of natural assets that contribute to resident and visitor amenity, including the Strathbogie Ranges to the east and the Goulburn River to the west, which includes Lake Nagambie and its surrounding amenities. These assets support nature-based and outdoor recreation including cycling, walking, water sports and fishing.



2.1 Strathbogie Shire



Key economic areas:

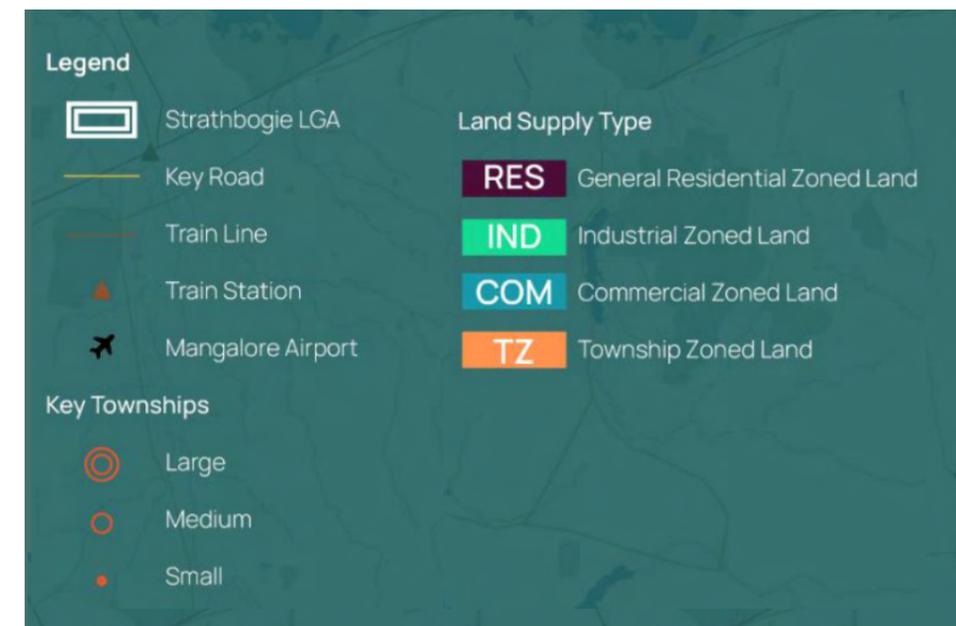
Although the Shire's economic base is predominantly rural and agricultural purposes, there are key economic areas that drive local consumption, employment, business and resident activity. This includes:

- **Employment land** (i.e. commercial and industrial zones) in Euroa and Nagambie that supports business investment across primary trade and production sectors, as well as consumer-facing services. This includes a total of three industrial precincts, as well as dedicated commercial zoned land within the town centres.
- **Township zone** across the towns of Avenel, Violet Town, Longwood and Strathbogie.

The Township Zone is a dynamic and flexible zone that can accommodate both employment and residential uses. However, existing residential character is prioritised over employment uses.

With low vacancy rates for industrial and commercial land, the future supply of this land is critical to support the population and drive economic growth outcomes.

In addition, there is dedicated zoned residential land across Nagambie, Euroa and Violet Town. It is important that there is a sufficient supply of residential land to provide sufficient housing and accommodate population growth.



2.2 Policy Context

Economic development in Strathbogrie Shire will support the broader policy and strategic environment as outlined in relevant local, regional and state-wide documents. Key documents are summarised below.

State level:

Plan Melbourne is the State Government's long-term plan to accommodate Melbourne's future growth. The Plan includes directions to invest in regional Victoria to support housing and economic growth and improve connections between cities and regions in Victoria.

Regional level:

At a regional level, the *Goulburn Regional Economic Development Strategy* sets out the medium-to-long term strategic directions for driving economic growth and development across the Goulburn region².

This includes a focus on the agriculture, visitor economy and renewable energy industries.

Local level:

The *Strathbogrie Shire Council Plan 2021-25* is the key policy document that informs the priorities for Strathbogrie Shire, which is underpinned by the following community vision:

The Strathbogrie Shire is a region of natural beauty with vibrant communities who are respectful, optimistic and inclusive.

We have a strong sense of belonging and of our collective history. We care deeply for Country and First Nations people.

We are bold. We embrace opportunities. We welcome you.

This vision helps frame future economic development in the Shire, with a focus on growth to align with economic, community and environmental outcomes.

At a local level, township growth and development strategies set out the long-term planning, design and community vision for the towns of Euroa, Nagambie, Violet Town and Avenel, and provide Council with a strategic framework to manage and guide future development through to 2040.

The following documents relevant to economic development were reviewed and assessed, helping to identify strategic directions that will influence future economic development and capitalise on existing work to achieve growth outcomes.

Table T2. Policy Documents

National Documents

- Regions at the Ready: Investing in Australia's Future (2018)

State-wide Documents

- Plan Melbourne (2017-2050)
- Infrastructure Victoria 30-year Strategy (2021-2051)
- Strong, Innovative, Sustainable: A new Strategy for Agriculture in Victoria (2021)

Regional Documents

- Hume Regional Priorities (2019-2021)
- Hume Regional Growth Plan (2019)
- Hume Regional Tracks and Trails Strategy (2015-2018)
- Goulburn Regional Economic Development Strategy (2022)
- Goulburn Regional Partnership Roadmap (2018-19)

Shire-Wide Documents

- Council Plan (2021-2025)
- Arts and Culture Strategy (2019-2023)
- Sustainable Strathbogrie 2030 (2018-2022)
- Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (2022)
- Economic Development Masterplan (2013-2017)
- Industrial Land Study (2008)

Local Documents

- Euroa Township Strategy (2020)
- Nagambie Growth Management Strategy (2020)
- Violet Town and District Strategic Development Plan (2010)
- Avenel 2030 Strategy (2008)

² This is a Regional Partnership within Regional Development Victoria that includes the municipalities of Moira, Shepparton, Strathbogrie, Mitchell and Murrindindi.

2.3 Macroeconomic Context

The following external economic influences will require Council consideration as it will have significant implications for economic development in Strathbogie Shire.

Business Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a significant impact on the global and national economy. Industries that are consumer facing and rely on population movements (i.e. retail, food and hospitality) have been more significantly impacted in terms of revenue reductions and job loss. While other industries have had to transition to more innovative business practices in response to shifting consumer trends.

The recent wide spread flooding across Australia has and will continue to have substantial impact on the national economy particularly in the regions not only to structures but also causing substantial losses to crops and livestock. In addition there will be ongoing secondary economic impacts as a result of these losses which will affect a wide variety of businesses including retail and hospitality.

The floods have heavily impacted some sections of the Strathbogie Shire and although structural losses were not high, the secondary impacts are expected to be substantial particularly in the Nagambie district. The result of the damage to the Discovery Caravan Park has seen a loss of a large amount of accommodation over the 2022/2023 summer season.

Rise of remote and flexible working arrangements

The rise in remote working (which accelerated with the onset of the pandemic) will provide an opportunity for residents to be more flexible in choosing a place of residence.

Workforce shortages in key service sectors

Skills shortages in key industries such as hospitality, construction, childcare, community and aged care sectors will impact business operations and service provision for residents.

Global economic uncertainty

Global supply side shortages and commodity price volatility have been exacerbated by the external economic and environmental shocks.

The trajectory and duration of these events remain unpredictable, leading to global economic uncertainty in the short term, impacting consumer and business confidence.

Climate resilience and environmental sustainability

Given the recent government commitments to reducing emissions, environmental sustainability is playing an increasing role within local government and influencing business and consumer decisions. As a result, there is increased demand for investment in new, clean energy technologies to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions, as well as transition to more sustainable circular economy practices.

Growing demand for health care

As the population ages, demand for health care will increase and significantly grow healthcare related spending, demand for public health facilities and workforce requirements to meet demand.



3. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Strathbogie Shire's growing population and shifting demographic profile generates opportunities and challenges for economic growth, as summarised below

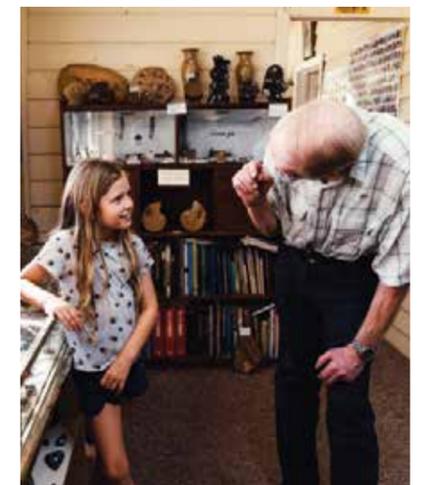


3.1 Overview

This section provides a demographic profile of Strathbogie Shire, including key population, housing and socio-economic indicators that have implications for future economic growth opportunities.

Where relevant, localised information for the *Nagambie and surrounds* and *Euroa and surrounds* sub-regions has been provided. This helps to identify specific areas of growth, which will have implications for future resident demand, business investment and service provision.

The data included in this section has been compiled by Urban Enterprise from a combination of sources, including: Profile ID, ABS Census data and the Victorian Valuer-General.



3.2 Key findings

Population Growth

Over the past five years (between the 2016 and 2021 census period), Strathbogie Shire experienced higher than forecast population growth, increasing by 1,007 residents at 1.9% p.a. (compared to previously forecast growth rates of 0.7% p.a.) If growth continues at historic rates, the population is expected to increase to 15,011 residents by 2036 (+3,647).

Growth will be driven by the increasing population in both the Euroa and Nagambie sub-regions. While Euroa has a larger population base, Nagambie is growing at a faster rate given the recent development activity (inc.

in Avenel) and proximity to Melbourne attracting commuting residents.

The projected rate of population growth in the Shire is higher than the regional Victoria average (1.5% p.a.) and will impact the level of demand for local services and community infrastructure (including social and physical infrastructure).

Age Profile

Strathbogie Shire's population is relatively old, with a median age of 53, compared to the Regional Victorian average of 43. This suggests both an inflow of retiree lifestyle residents to the Shire and general ageing of the population.

Future population growth will be driven by older-aged cohorts, including seniors (70-84 years) and empty nesters and retirees (60-69 years). As such, the largest proportion of households in the Shire are adult couples (34%) and lone person (33%), whilst the proportion of family households (30%) is lower than the Victorian average (44%).

An ageing population has implications for economic growth, as this reflects a low supply of local labour and high demand for health care and aged care services. Therefore, an area of focus should be on attracting families and working age residents to help sustain the economy.



Housing Indicators

This rate of population growth will have a direct impact on housing demand, which is forecast to increase by 1,698 dwellings (+1.7% p.a.) through 2036, with faster growth expected in the Nagambie region (+2.1% p.a.).

It is critical that there is an adequate supply of zoned land and infrastructure in strategic locations to support housing growth and accommodate a growing population in Strathbogie Shire.

Given the increasing demand, there has been significant growth in the local property market. The median price for houses, units and vacant blocks have all grown significantly over the past five years (2017-2021).

This could be attributed to a combination of demand and limited supply of developable land. Despite this growth, property prices in Strathbogie Shire are still relatively more affordable than regional Victorian averages, which is a key attractor for new residents, particularly those affected by high property prices in urban centres.

Advocacy for affordable housing, which is critical to supporting residents and workers, should remain a focus for Council.

Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic profile of residents is typically measured by the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), which is based on key variables that reflect disadvantage, notably income, education and

employment. Strathbogie Shire's SEIFA score is 974, which is below the national average of 1,000, indicated a relatively higher level of disadvantage in the municipality. This ranks Strathbogie Shire as the 24th most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria (out of 79 Victorian LGAs).

Socio-economic improvements should be a priority for Council to reduce the level of disadvantage in the Shire. This could be supported through improved education and training access, as well as improved employment outcomes for residents (which will drive wages and local consumption). As such, improving resident liveability will influence the rate of economic growth in the Shire.



4. THE STRATHBOGIE SHIRE ECONOMY

The following details the economic, employment and industry drivers for Strathbogie Shire, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for future economic growth and development

The data included in this section has been compiled by Urban Enterprise from a combination of sources, including REMPLAN, ABS Census data, Australian Business Register and Tourism Research Australia.



4.1 Key Findings

Industry Specialisations

An analysis of the economic, employment and business drivers has identified the following industry specialisations for Strathbogie Shire: Primary Industries and Trade, Population Driven Industries, Knowledge and Public Sector. This highlights the areas of strength of the economy and potential areas of focus for future economic growth.



4.1 Key Findings

| Industry Specialisation | Key Sectors | Economic Contribution: | | |
|--|---|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Primary Industries and Trade Rural and industrial businesses that produce raw materials, as well as the processing and distribution of tradable goods. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Manufacturing Transport, Postal and Warehousing | Output 48% | Exports 83% | Local Jobs 36% |

Agriculture is the largest contributor to the Shire's total output, employment and regional export value. The region's agricultural industry is driven by traditional broadacre farming (dairy, sheep, cattle and grains).

Strathbogie Shire also has strengths in the equine and wine manufacturing sectors, which contribute to output, employment and exports. These are unique strengths which could be leveraged to drive future economic growth.

The role of agriculture is critical to Strathbogie Shire as it supports transport and distribution of production to export markets, as well as the manufacturing of raw materials (particularly wine production).

| | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Population Driven Industries Local businesses that are directly impacted by resident (and visitor) demand and relies on local consumption. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property (construction and real estate) Retail trade Accommodation and food services | Output 28% | Exports 6% | Local Jobs 22% |
|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|

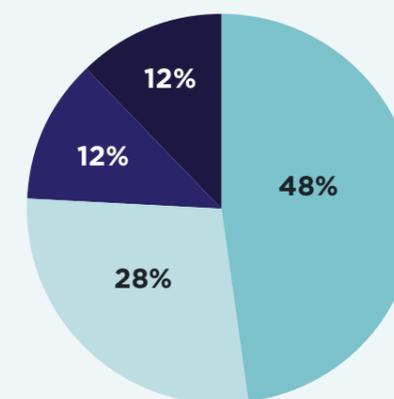
Strathbogie Shire's construction and rental, hiring and real estate industries are key drivers of output in the Shire. These sectors are driven by ongoing residential development (particularly across the Nagambie and Avenel growth areas) and recent population growth.

A large proportion of the municipality's employment is concentrated in service sectors, such as retail trade and hospitality (16% combined). These sectors, which provide important amenity to residents, represents town centre trading, generates local consumption and also represent key pillars of the Shire's visitor economy offering.

| | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Knowledge and Public Sector Provide key services that promote community health, education, wellbeing and engagement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Care and Social Assistance Education and Training Public Administration and Safety | Output 12% | Exports 3% | Local Jobs 22% |
|--|---|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|

The health, social assistance and education sectors support many jobs in the Shire and provide essential services to the population, supporting liveability and community wellbeing.

As population growth leads to increased demand for these services, local employment and training opportunities will be crucial to service future demand.



Economic Contribution Output According to Industry Specialisation



Other implications of key economic and employment indicators are summarised below:

Employment

Strathbogie Shire has a relatively low unemployment rate of 2.4%, which is lower than the regional Victorian average of 3.6%. Whilst this typically indicates positive economic growth, this could also be the result of slow employment growth.

Employment growth within industries represent areas of strength for the local economy. Between 2016 and 2021, an additional 524 jobs were created in Strathbogie Shire, driven by growth in agriculture (+101 jobs), public administration and safety (+73), health care (+66) and accommodation and food services (+60).

It is critical that sufficient infrastructure, including affordable housing, is provided to support workforce attraction across all industries.

Job Containment

Job containment indicates the proportion of residents that both live and work within the Shire, compared to residents that travel outside the municipality for employment. This is a key indicator of employment, as high rates of job

containment can indicate there are sufficient and suitable jobs available locally to support the local skills and qualifications of the labour force.

Strathbogie Shire has a relatively low job containment rate of 60%, compared to neighbouring municipalities of Greater Shepparton (87%), Greater Bendigo (84%), with majority of job leakage escaping to Greater Shepparton (11%) and Mitchell (9%).

Growth in local jobs will support the local workforce and help establish a stronger employment and industry base within Strathbogie Shire, reducing the rate of employees commuting outside the municipality.

In addition, around 18% (897) of residents work from home, which represents an increase of 383 over the past five years. This reflects the rise in remote and flexible working (i.e. residents working from home) following the impacts of the pandemic.

Business Profile

Almost all registered businesses in the Shire are non-employed (67%) or small (31%), which affects the supply of local jobs available to the workforce.

Supporting business growth and investment, as well as the attraction of large employing businesses, will help generate job opportunities in Strathbogie Shire.

Visitor Economy

Strathbogie Shire has a developing visitor economy, which contributes to 4.3% of total output and 5% of local jobs. It is primarily a day-trip destination, given the proximity to Melbourne and regional centres, driven by visiting friends and relatives, naturebased tourism, as well as history and heritage (i.e. gold rush, Ned Kelly). Lake Nagambie, in particular, is a driver of visitation through water-based activities, as well as sporting events.

The value of the visitor economy is currently constrained by a lack of commercial accommodation, as well as limited activation of key assets and commissionable products and experiences.

A high-yielding and thriving visitor economy will support economic growth, as it stimulates business investment, generates direct local expenditure and supports new local jobs. There is strong potential to capitalise on the existing strengths of the Shire to increase the contribution of the visitor economy.

5. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

The following outlines the strengths of Strathbogie Shire, including the competitive advantages, (such as population growth, location, accessibility, natural amenity and agriculture), that could be leveraged to achieve economic growth.



5.1 Strengths

Population and Workforce Growth

The Shire has experienced above average growth in recent years, particularly across the Nagambie region, in line with overall migration trends to Regional Victoria. The municipality should capitalise on recent resident (and workforce) growth to increase local consumption, support business activity and foster community engagement.

Economic Opportunities

- Enhance the role of larger towns as regional service centres to support the growing population and workforce.
- Attract population-driven businesses (e.g. retail, personal services, service-industrial) to support the increasing population and capture local consumption.
- Stimulate investment in community facilities and amenity, which can support lifestyle outcomes for new and existing residents.
- Leveraging the increasing supply of labour to support local businesses.

Strategic Location and Connectivity

Strathbogie Shire's proximity to large urban centres, (Shepparton, Wangaratta and Bendigo), as well as metropolitan Melbourne, provides many advantages for businesses, employees and residents. This includes access to labour export and consumption markets in surrounding centres, which supports business activity and investment. There are also lifestyle benefits associated with the location, through access to key services and amenity (e.g. health, retail, etc.), as well as access to employment opportunities.



Economic Opportunities

- Enhance the role of Nagambie, Avenel, Violet Town and Euroa as commuter destinations and hubs providing hybrid work flexibility.
- Attract residents seeking rural lifestyle benefits in smaller townships.
- Stimulate business investment in these town with linkages to other markets.

5.1 Strengths



Transport and Accessibility

The municipality is well-connected to Melbourne and surrounding regional centres via road, rail and air, including:

- Major road transport routes (Hume Freeway and Goulburn Valley Freeway);
- V/Line stations in Nagambie, Avenel, Euroa and Violet Town; and
- A regional airport in Mangalore.
- The construction of the inland Rail project which will pass through Strathbogie shire but will have little if any economic impact without an intermodal facility at Mangalore

These assets are critical to economic development and can be leveraged to support businesses, residents, workers and visitors. In particular, the Hume Freeway and V/line provides connectivity between Melbourne and Sydney (and surrounding regional centres), which can stimulate business investment in transport, freight and distribution sectors.

Economic Opportunities

- Leverage the Shire's connectivity and transport assets to develop a transport and freight hub.
- Enhance Mangalore Airport's role as a key economic asset.

- Attraction of transport, freight and distribution sectors.
- Resident and worker attraction, including hybrid work flexibility that can access surrounding regions.
- Attract visitors (as well as passing commuters) to generate local expenditure in the Shire.

Natural Amenity

The provision of quality and unique nature-based assets provides significant community and economic benefits to Strathbogie Shire. This includes the Strathbogie Ranges, Heathcote Graytown National Park, as well as water-based assets in Lake Nagambie and the Goulburn River.

These amenity benefits could be leveraged to support residents, visitors and workers, as well as stimulate investment in recreation.

Economic Opportunities

- Nature-based assets (e.g. events, supporting infrastructure, etc.).
- Support growth in nature-based tourism and increase visitor yield.
- Resident attraction through recreational and lifestyle experiences (e.g. cycling, walking trails, etc.).

Agriculture

Agriculture is central to the Shire's economy, employment and community identity and is a key competitive advantage. The majority of land is used for agricultural purposes, with the townships providing crucial support to rural industry and employees.

The main agricultural activities in Strathbogie Shire are livestock grazing and broadacre. There is growing worldwide demand for protein and cereals resulting in rising prices for these commodities which places producers in a strong position for future growth. There is also opportunity for other agricultural specialties such as equine industry, poultry and viticulture are a competitive advantage for the Shire and can contribute to further economic growth.

Economic Opportunities

- Flow-on economic opportunities for supporting industries, including:
 - Warehousing, transport and distribution of raw and refined materials.
 - Development of agritourism product.
 - Investment in value-adding industries, including processing of raw materials produced in the Shire (e.g. wine manufacturing, beef and dairy manufacturing).
- Enhance Strathbogie Shire's status as an equine destination.



Active Industry Representation

Some business sectors within Strathbogie Shire are well-represented by industry bodies, including Go Nagambie and the Euroa Chamber of Business and Commerce, which support local businesses. There is also an active Strathbogie wine association with a membership of approximately 15 wineries

Industry bodies are particularly important for the small business base, which requires ongoing support to capitalise on growth opportunities and overcome external shocks. Therefore, these organisations should be supported to help meet the needs and interests of businesses. Given the importance of Agriculture. in the Strathbogie Shire, there are a number of representative groups across many facets of the agriculture sector.



Regional Development Victoria also have a role to play as the leading State representative body for economic development. Representatives from this organisation were spoken to during the course of the preparation of the strategy and the following general points were made:

- Strategy implementation requires buy-in and support from all stakeholders
- There is a need to identify the blue-sky (transformative) projects versus what is achievable or business as usual and that Council needs to focus on what is achievable with the resources available.
- It has been their experience that is difficult to influence the agricultural sector, government can only guide and encourage development in the sector
- They believe that the agricultural sector should be aware that Climate change could catalyse future agricultural diversification and innovation

In the visitor economy field Department representatives offer the following points for discussion

- Projects included in the document need to focus on developing new tourism products and experiences
- There should be a focus on 1-2 iconic experiences/attractions, including alignment to the Victorian Government visitor economy pillars (food and beverage, Indigenous tourism, etc.)
- They identified cycling and trail tourism as developing industries and that Council should seek to identify and develop attractions in this fields were.

Economic Opportunities

Support Council efforts to engage with and grow the business community, via networking, business events and professional development.

5.2 Challenges

The following economic development challenges require Council consideration and response to realise identified economic opportunities.

Ageing Population

With a high median age of 53, the population is expected to age over time. An increasing number of older-aged cohorts, including retirees and elderly residents, is difficult to sustain. This is likely to increase demand for health and aged-care services, which places pressure on costs and subsequent demand for relevant labour to support residents. In addition, it diminishes the pool of local labour supply, which impacts industry growth and development.

Economic Opportunities

- Target population attraction strategies at younger working-age profiles to provide a more sustainable population base.
- Advocate for the provision of adequate public health services, including acute hospital care and aged care, to support all members of the community.

Provision of zoned and serviced land

To ensure land use planning fosters business investment and resident attraction, it is critical that there is a sufficient supply of zoned and serviced employment precincts (i.e. commercial and industrial) and residential land. There is currently a limited quantity of zoned employment land in the Shire, due to low vacancy rates of the industrial and commercial land in Euroa and Nagambie.

In addition, there is a lack of servicing across the municipality, which further diminishes land supply and constrains industrial, commercial and residential developments. As such, Council, community and industry stakeholders identified the need to provide development infrastructure and utilities (e.g. water, sewerage, energy, gas) to activate and facilitate the release of zoned land.

Economic Opportunities

Increase zoned employment and residential land across the municipality to support growth and enhance its role as population and service centres for the Shire.

Strategically planning for development infrastructure to facilitate good quality development is a must. This will help ensure land is 'investment-ready' and provide a conducive environment for residential development and business investment.

Provide strategic planning policy to provide relevant land supply and catalyse future investment and development in the Shire.

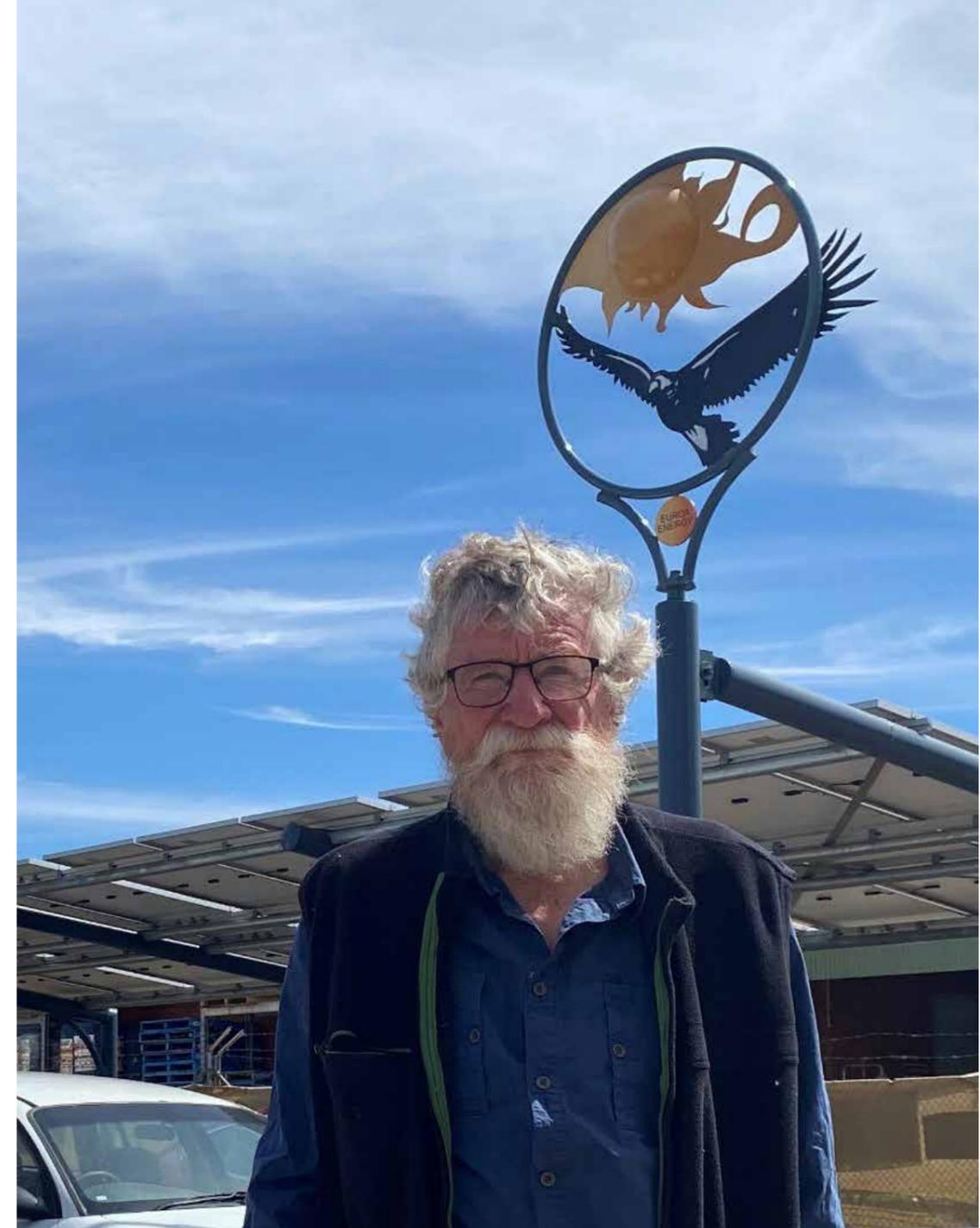
Energy Security and Reliability

The lack of energy security and reliability was identified by industry stakeholders as a constraint to economic development, as it impacts the following:

- Future investment, particularly for industrial businesses, as it poses risks for business operations; and
- Liveability, as many residents are at risk of losing power during adverse or extreme weather.

Economic Opportunities

Funding and development of more secure energy sources, including additional transmission lines, as well as increased use and investment in renewable energy.



Telecommunications and Digital Connectivity

The lack of sufficient telecommunications and digital infrastructure is inhibiting the economic growth of Strathbogrie Shire. Advocacy for greater connectivity and capacity should remain a key strategy for council

Economic Opportunities

The provision of adequate digital connectivity and capacity across the shire will enhance the attraction of residential and commercial development in the region. This will include flexible working arrangements (ie.hybrid model) and learning as well as larger scale commercial activity that is currently being restrained due to a lack of capacity in this area.



6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THEMES

The following economic development framework includes the key themes and strategic directions for the Strathbogie Shire economy. These align with the objectives and vision for the economy and include relevant project priorities and other opportunities for Council, which are explored throughout this section.

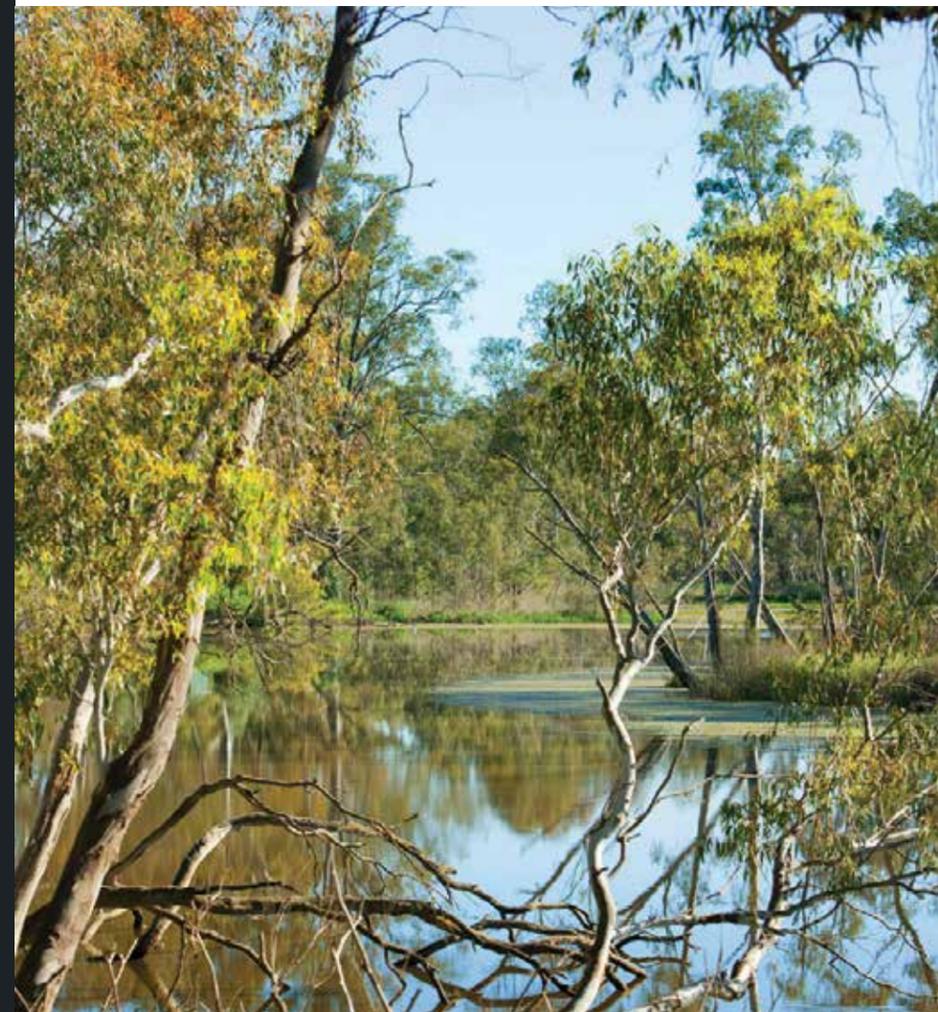


Economic development framework

The key themes in the economic development framework are:

- 1. An Activated and 'Investment-Ready' Shire**
- 2. An Innovative and Sustainable Business Base**
- 3. A Supported Community and Labour Force**
- 4. A Thriving Visitor Economy**

Council's role in delivery and implementation of the framework and the proposed projects (which can range from deliver, partner, and advocate), is detailed in the Action Plan.



Economic development framework

Table T3. Economic Development Framework

| Theme and Description | Strategic Directions |
|---|---|
| <p>Theme 1: An Activated and 'Investment-Ready' Shire</p> <p><i>Stimulate investment across the Shire and promote efficient uses of land to foster local economic growth.</i></p> | <p>1.1 Deliver a strategic and supportive a planning environment</p> <p>1.2 Facilitate strategic infrastructure investments</p> |
| <p>Theme 2: An Innovative and Sustainable Business Base</p> <p><i>Develop a vibrant business community from a diverse range of industry sectors that capitalises on Strathbogie Shire's competitive advantages.</i></p> | <p>2.1 Support an engaged, well-informed and resilient business community</p> <p>2.2 Support business investment and diversification</p> <p>2.3 Support a thriving and productive agricultural sector</p> <p>2.4 Support emerging industries including mining and renewable power generation</p> |
| <p>Theme 3: A Supported Community and Labour Force</p> <p><i>Support residents and workers to be engaged, productive and contribute to business and economic activity.</i></p> | <p>3.1 Support population attraction and workforce growth</p> |
| <p>Theme 4: A Thriving Visitor Economy</p> <p><i>Establish Strathbogie Shire as a desirable and high-value visitor destination that drives year-round visitation and generates economic benefits for the region.</i></p> | <p>4.1 Strengthen the destination brand and tourism governance</p> <p>4.2 Support industry in delivering a high-quality visitor experience</p> <p>4.3 Deliver a successful and diverse events calendar</p> <p>4.4 Consider and explore the option of the relocation of the Euroa Visitor Information Centre to the Travellers Rest Precinct</p> |

The following sections describes these themes and strategic directions in greater detail and identifies the project priorities to be considered by Council to achieve the identified outcomes. The key tasks and responsibilities for the delivery of the projects are detailed in the Action Plan document.



Theme 1: An Activated and 'Investment-Ready' Shire

Stimulate investment across the Shire and promote efficient uses of land to foster local economic growth.

Investment attraction and development are both critical to future economic development, supporting resident growth, business activity and job creation. Strathbogie Shire is experiencing population and workforce growth, which is subsequently increasing demand for infrastructure, housing and services, particularly in the key service centres of Nagambie and Euroa.

The overarching policy focus should be on facilitating good orderly development that increases zoned land supply in strategic locations with appropriate and applicable infrastructure requirements (e.g. water, sewerage, roads).

Strategic Directions

1.1: Deliver a strategic and supportive planning environment

Establish a conducive environment that encourages investment and business attraction across the Shire to support businesses, workers and residents.

Enabling growth and investment in Strathbogie Shire will be facilitated through strategic planning policy that increases the supply of suitably zoned land and mitigates land constraints to catalyse development. This should focus on achieving the policy goals set out in the

Planning and Environment Act 1987, Strathbogie Planning Scheme, regional and local planning policy (e.g. Plan Melbourne and the Hume Regional Growth Plan), as well as identifying new planning opportunities to stimulate investment and development in response to economic conditions.

Provision of serviced and developed zoned land is critical for economic development, as it will stimulate commercial and residential investment in the Shire. This is particularly important for the Shire, as it faces significant land constraints in the face of increasing population growth and demand. Therefore, ensuring zoned residential and employment land is activated and ready for investment – through appropriate infrastructure and services – will support resident growth and business investment.

Settlement Strategy

Prepare a Settlement Strategy to provide strategic planning policy support for residential, employment and agricultural land uses across the municipality to meet current and future demand. This Strategy will direct future planning on a shire wide bases, by directing land use outcomes to ensure the needs of residents and businesses are met, focusing on:

- The role of key townships in the Shire, including Nagambie and Euroa, as well as the supporting role of smaller townships (e.g. to cater to residents and rural industry);
- Directing development staging across the municipality by using updated structure/ growth plans to promote urban renewal (including commercial and industrial uses) and residential development in strategic growth locations;
- Ensure there is sufficient capacity in townships to accommodate growth – including new housing – and identify land constraints that require policy support;
- Consider the role of farming and the interface with residential and industrial activity;
- Look at servicing requirements across the municipality and the need for development infrastructure to release and activate zoned land;
- Prepare businesses cases to support funding and implementation of development infrastructure as required; and advocate at state and federal level for the desired outcomes.
- Embed the recommendations of the Settlement Strategy into local planning policy and use outcomes to advocate for funding as required.



Mangalore Airport Freight and Logistics Precinct

Advocate for the development of a freight intermodal and logistics precinct at Mangalore Airport, which is located near the Hume / Goulburn Valley Freeway transport corridors and also possesses railway frontage on the Goulburn Valley broad gauge line

This project is supported by the Hume Regional Growth, Strathbogie Council Plan and aims to drive an agglomeration of warehousing, distribution, logistics and related industries in the municipality, delivering investment and employment benefits to the region.

This could be an important economic hub for supply chains that need to distribute goods regionally and interstate, with intermodal access (road, rail, air) to Melbourne and Sydney. This could also support the proposed inland rail project which will cut through the Shire.



Lake Nagambie Events Precinct

Continue to build the profile of the Regatta Centre as a water based sports and events precinct. This was also identified by industry stakeholders to better leverage the underutilised Regatta Centre and deliver more water-based events and competitions to both the lake and Goulburn River. This will encourage activation of the area, drive visitation and increase visitor spend.

Streamline Planning Processes

In partnership with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Improve and streamline regulatory processes (e.g. Better Approvals Process) to help businesses overcome regulatory barriers, improve the efficiency of planning permits and support investment.

1.2: Facilitate strategic infrastructure investments

Achieve economic development through strategic investments that supports industry, residents and workers.

Ongoing infrastructure development is critical to achieve sustained economic growth through construction stimulus, attracting business growth and generating employment opportunities. Council should continue to identify priority infrastructure and development opportunities to support economic development and help meet the growing needs of the community and industry.



Theme 2: An Innovative and Sustainable Business Base

Develop a vibrant business community from a diverse range of industry sectors that capitalises on Strathbogie Shire's competitive overview

A core function of economic development is supporting new and existing businesses in the Shire, as well as promoting business development and growth. This is intended to generate investment and employment outcomes, as well as provide services to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

Strategic Directions

2.2: Support business investment and diversification

Identify and promote opportunities to attract innovative and diverse business investment that capitalises on industry strengths and emerging sectors.

Strathbogie Shire heavily relies on agriculture for economic and employment outcomes, as well as business activity.

However, the municipality is well placed to diversify its business base, given its strategic location near Melbourne and regional centres, as well as its recent population growth.

A more diverse business base will also create a more sustainable economy that is less susceptible to economic shocks and increase the attractiveness of the Shire to a broader range of workers.

Council should, therefore, where practicable support business growth and investment in diverse industries best suited to the needs and strengths of municipality. Based on the Shire's attributes and challenges, this could include a focus on:

- **Tourism**, including accommodation providers and tourism operators.

- **Food manufacturing**, capitalising on the strength of agriculture through processing raw materials processed in the Shire.
- **'Green economy'**, including clean technology, renewable energy, carbon renewal and other circular economy practices.
- **Renewable industry investment**, including wind and solar farms, capitalising on the large tracts of farming land.
- **Population-driven industries**, including retail, hospitality, personal services and service-industrial to help meet the needs of current and future residents, workers and visitors.
- **Professional services**, including home-based businesses and start-ups, leveraging the growing population and rise in flexible working arrangements.



Co-working Space Investigation

Investigate the potential to develop co-working facilities and supporting infrastructure in towns with large commuter populations (e.g. Nagambie and Euroa) to support small businesses, including home-based businesses and start-ups, as well as the growing remote working population in the Shire.

This could include provision of existing Council-owned facilities in strategic locations and/or advocating for private investment in dedicated spaces.

2.3: Maintain a thriving and productive agricultural sector

Identify opportunities to grow the value of agriculture, equine and viticulture, increase productivity and ensure the sector remains a key economic pillar for the Shire.

Agriculture is the key economic driver for the Shire in terms of generating output (28% of total), creating jobs (24%) and producing exports (53%). With 45% of all businesses within agriculture and the highest volume of jobs growth in the last five years (+101), ensuring a high-performing agricultural sector will achieve economic development outcomes for the municipality.

The future of agriculture in the Shire should align with the vision of the Agriculture Victoria Strategy to "ensure that the Victorian agriculture sector is strong, innovative and sustainable for many years to come."

The growth of agriculture should also consider the specific issues relevant to Strathbogie Shire as well as the external challenges facing the industry. This includes adopting more innovative and technological practices, increasing the value of the industry, responding to shifts in consumer trends and futureproofing against extreme weather events.



Theme 3: A Supported Community and Labour Force

Support residents and workers to be engaged, productive and contribute to business and economic activity.

Overview

Population and workforce growth is critical to economic development, particularly in rural municipalities, as it drives overall demand and contributes to the following:

- Business investment in population-driven industries to provide resident services and amenity;
- Residential development and housing to accommodate new residents;
- Increases the local labour force to meet industry needs;
- Local consumption and increases in economic activity; and
- Investment in supporting and enabling public infrastructure (e.g. roads, community facilities, etc.).

The following priorities are designed to capitalise on recent population and workforce growth and encourage greater attraction and retention of residents, through sustainable and supportive measures.

Strategic Directions

3.1: Support population attraction and workforce growth

Create liveable communities that meets the needs of residents and workers

Targeting population attraction towards working-aged cohorts and families will help to increase community engagement, grow the local workforce and stimulate local spend.

Project Priorities:

Deliver Township Streetscape Plans

Finalise and implement the Streetscape Plans for the townships of Nagambie, Euroa, Strathbogie, Longwood, Violet Town and Avenel, which will help achieve economic development through increased local consumption, investment, employment and community engagement.

These plans will provide amenity improvements and help activate the main streets of the townships, which will encourage visitation, increase dwell time, promote local consumption and encourage

business investment. This should include improvements to public realm and open space, enhancing permeability and accessibility (i.e. pedestrianisation), as well as preserving the unique role and character of towns.

3.2: Create a 'job-ready' and skilled labour force

Support industry initiatives to ensure that labour needs are met through increased participation, skills development and training.

The development of an engaged and skilled local labour force will support business growth and operations, which will enable the provision of business services to residents and visitors. Supporting businesses initiatives to have access to a skilled labour force is therefore critical to future economic development.



However, local businesses – including consumer-facing and primary industries – have identified issues with workforce shortages and challenges in staff recruitment as major constraints to business investment and development. This is attributed to several external factors, including:

- Competition for employment in metropolitan Melbourne and surrounding regional centres, in response to population growth;
- The diminishing supply of retail and hospitality workers, due to employees transitioning away from less-reliable casual work and the border closures which have decreased the local migrant workforce; and
- Lack of skills and qualifications for other professions (e.g. manufacturing). Council could help support this through collaboration with industry and employment providers to identify workforce shortages and encourage workforce attraction to meet industry needs.



Theme 4: A Thriving Visitor Economy

Establish Strathbogie Shire as a desirable and high-value visitor destination that drives year-round visitation and generates economic benefits for the region.

Overview

Strathbogie Shire possesses many competitive advantages that can be leveraged to grow the visitor economy and increase the value of tourism, including:

- Proximity to population centres in Melbourne and surrounding regional centres;
- Accessibility via the Hume Freeway and Goulburn Valley freeway to capture visitors from other municipalities, as well as passing commuters along the Melbourne to Sydney and Melbourne to Shepparton Rail lines;
- Quality nature-based attractions, including Lake Nagambie, the Goulburn River, Heathcote-Graytown National Park and the Strathbogie Ranges;
- History and heritage, particular Indigenous history, gold rush and Ned Kelly; and
- Sports events, including water-based competitions in Lake Nagambie.

To fully realise the potential of the visitor economy, additional investment is required to activate the Shire's assets and attract visitation (and yield). Increasing the value and volume of tourism is important for economic

development as it promotes industry diversification. In addition, the benefits of tourism (via visitor spend) flows through the economy and impacts numerous industries, including retail, service sectors, hospitality and transport (amongst others).

Strategic Directions

Regional Tourism Body

In order to properly realise the benefits of state and federal funding for tourism Strathbogie Shire has been working with neighbouring councils to establish a formally recognised peak tourism body for the region. In the past there have been attempts to align Strathbogie Shire with regions that were not within close proximity of Strathbogie Shire. This has prevented clear brand recognition and the provision of funding for tourism initiatives. Neighbouring local government areas have also suffered similar disadvantage.

With the recent provision of State government funding a working partnership has been formed with Mitchell Shire and the City of Greater Shepparton to develop a regional tourism body that is fit for purpose and relevant to the region's geography and brand recognition.

Project Priorities:

Regional Tourism Governance Support

Council has received State Government funding to establish a new joint tourism body – the *Goulburn Regional Tourism Partnership* – incorporating the Strathbogie, Mitchell and Shepparton municipalities. This is short-term funding to develop a model for consideration that will provide regional representation

Strathbogie Shire will support the development of a business model, in conjunction with partner Councils, to provide ongoing representation to support tourism promotion, funding opportunities, industry and product development on a permanent basis.

Destination Management Plan

The development of a Destination Management Plan (DMP) is being undertaken by the interim regional tourism body, which will provide strategic direction for the visitor economy.

Key product and investment potential to consider in the DMP includes cycle tourism, agritourism, heritage and cultural tourism and nature-based tourism.



Theme 4: A Thriving Visitor Economy (continued)

Establish Strathbogie Shire as a desirable and high-value visitor destination that drives year-round visitation and generates economic benefits for the region.

4.2: Deliver a high-quality visitor experience

Leverage the Shire's product strengths and provide supporting infrastructure and amenity to enhance the visitor experience and stimulate visitation.

Strathbogie Shire has significant product strengths that are a drawcard for visitors, including nature-based assets, heritage, wineries and outdoor recreation. However, activation of these assets – through supporting investment and infrastructure – will not only attract visitors (through an improved visitor experience) but also generate more yield and increase the value of the visitor economy.

These actions will require significant private investment, as well as Council support, to create step-change improvements, including the following elements:

- Contemporary dining experiences;
- Provision of high-quality and diverse accommodation stock;
- Boutique (independent) retail;
- Tour operators;
- Interpretation of culturally and environmentally important assets; and

- Additional visitor services (e.g. toilets, signage).
- Consider and explore the option of relocation of the Euroa Visitor Information Centre to the Traveler's Rest Precinct

Activating key tourism assets will help create 'must-do' experiences and 'hero' activities that are of significance to our region.

Project Priorities:

Track and Trails Strategy Update

An opportunity to update the Track and Trails Strategy to identify new investment opportunities for trail infrastructure to provide recreation options for visitors, as well as residents aims to leverage the Shire's existing offering.

The Strategy should identify gaps in existing product as well as opportunities for improvements and supporting infrastructure. This should capitalise on existing nature-based assets, focusing on:

Cycle tourism – including rail trails, mountain biking and road cycling (capitalising on growth in cycle tourism across Regional Victoria);

Bushwalking – including at Strathbogie Ranges and other nature reserves

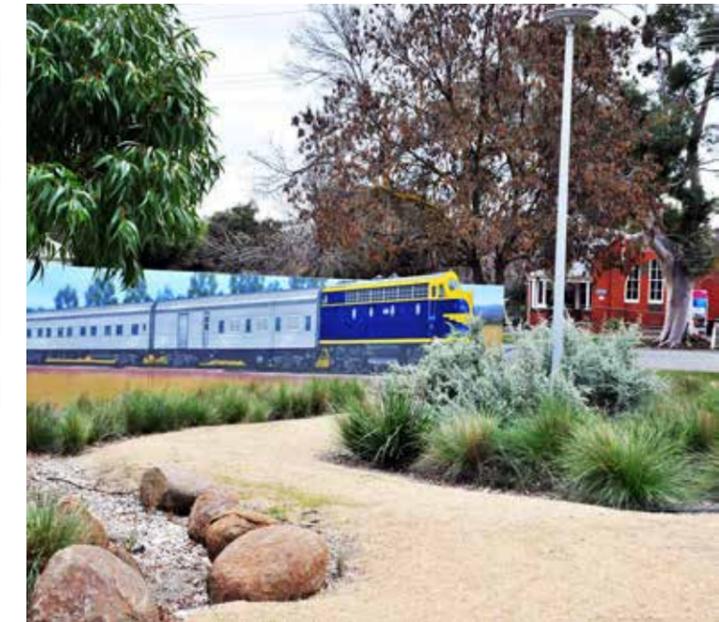
Equine trails – leveraging the horse industry in the Shire.

Arts and Culture Investment Program

Continue to deliver Community Grants – arts and culture and deliver the Arts and Cultural Strategy Capitalising on the history and heritage of the Shire, enhance existing and invest in new arts and cultural product in order to attract a broader range of target markets to the municipality.

Key considerations for investment include:

- Indigenous cultural experiences, focusing on the connection to the environment and history of the land;
- Lighting projections across natural assets;
- Providing public art and art installations (aligning with Council's Public Art Policy) and
- Audit underutilised heritage buildings and develop a prospectus for commercial use.



4.3: Deliver a successful and diverse events calendar

Showcase Strathbogie Shire's attributes and generate flow-on economic benefits through the events sector.

Tourism events are a vital part of the Strathbogie Shire's visitor economy and provide a range of economic and social benefits, including:

- Showcasing the region's assets;
- Attracting visitors to the area;
- Generating local consumption; and
- Promoting community engagement for locals;

Strathbogie Shire has potential to leverage its assets and product strengths to expand the events calendar in order to drive economic growth. In particular, capitalising on Lake Nagambie to attract state and nationally significant rowing competitions.

Project Priorities:

Events Strategy

Continue to support a comprehensive calendar of events in Strathbogie: Attracting visitors during off-peak periods and in other destinations to encourage dispersal;

- Identifying gaps in the events calendar, by location, type and size;

- Supporting the development of signature tourism events which have the potential to promote the Shire's competitive strengths and grow awareness;
- Developing ongoing markets and small-scale events to attract short-stay visitors and promote community engagement;
- Infrastructure requirements and facility/venue needs to grow the events sector; and
- Strengthen the Shire's status as a destination for water-sport events, leveraging Lake Nagambie and Goulburn River.

7. ACTION PLAN

The Economic Development Strategy Action Plan provides a guide for the delivery of the projects identified in the framework above. It includes relevant actions, responsible stakeholders, priority status (high/medium/low¹) and indicative timeframes.

Timeframes are categorised as follows:

- **Short-term (1 year);**
- **Medium-term (2-3 years);**
- **Long-term (4-5 years); and**
- **Ongoing.**

Strategy delivery is expected to occur over the next five years, from 2023-2027, through Council (overseen by the Economic Development Unit) and relevant government, industry and community stakeholders.

Council's role in delivery and implementation of these projects will depend on many factors, such as resource requirements, intended outcomes and target stakeholders. As such, the potential role of Council for identified projects could range as follows (note: these roles align with the Council Plan 2021-2025):

- **Delivery.** The services, projects and initiatives for which Council has direct responsibility and accountability for (the performance indicators are measures of Council's own success).
- **Partner.** Those projects Council can help shape through partnerships with the community, other levels of government and organisations (the performance indicators are measures of these combined efforts).
- **Advocate.** Relates to issues that impact the community and affect how Council operates but over which Council has no role in delivering services or facilities, so we can only advocate for others to take action; the performance indicators are measures of broad trends affecting the Shire.

Implementation of the Strategy should be monitored on an ongoing basis using the key performance measures and monitoring tools outlined throughout the Action Plan.

Theme 1: An Activated and 'Investment-Ready' Shire

| Project and Action/s | Stakeholders: Lead and Partner | Priority Status | Time Frame |
|---|--|-----------------|-------------|
| Settlement Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the objectives and requirements of a Settlement Strategy, focusing on strategic and policy directions for future residential, employment and agricultural land uses across the municipality to meet current and future demand. Support the funding and preparation of the strategy, in collaboration with key government and industry stakeholders. Implement and deliver the recommendations of the strategy. | Lead Planning and Investment Partner Asset Planning Economic Development | High | Medium-term |
| Mangalore Airport Freight and Logistics Precinct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the development of the freight and logistics hub at Mangalore Airport. | Lead Economic Development Partner Planning and Investment | High | Ongoing |
| Lake Nagambie Events Precinct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build the profile and improve the infrastructure at the Nagambie events precinct | Lead Economic Development Partner Asset Planning | High | Ongoing |
| Streamline Planning Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the 'Better Approvals' process undertaken by Council, in collaboration with government and industry, to streamline planning permit applications, help businesses overcome regulatory barriers and support business investment. | Lead Economic Development Partner Planning and Investment | Medium | Short-term |
| Deliver the Nagambie Employment Precinct Masterplan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the delivery of the masterplan and implement the recommendations outlined in the report, focusing on priorities to achieve business investment and employment growth. | Lead Planning and Investment Partner Asset Planning Economic Development | High | Short-term |

| Project and Action/s | Stakeholders: Lead and Partner/s | Priority Status | Time Frame |
|---|--|-----------------|-------------|
| Infrastructure Investment Prospectus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prioritise major capital projects that require additional government and/or private contributions. Prepare an advocacy plan and pitch document to promote investment and funding requirements, focusing on Shire needs, as well as economic and social benefits to be realised. | Lead Economic Development | High | Medium-term |
| Digital Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for digital investment funding from relevant government authorities and telecommunication providers to enhance digital infrastructure in the Shire. | Lead Economic Development Partners State Government Federal Government Telco providers NBN | High | Ongoing |

Theme 1. Progress Measures and Monitoring Tools

| Measure | Monitor | Frequency |
|--|--|-----------|
| Increase in supply of zoned land (residential, commercial and industrial). | Council's Property Rates Database and Building Permit Data | Annually |
| Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits relating to residential, commercial and industrial properties. | Council databases | Annually |
| Increase in infrastructure funding received from the public sector. | Council databases | Annually |
| Reduce the average time taken to provide a planning permit decision. | Local Government performance reporting framework | Annually |

Theme 2: An Innovative and Sustainable Business Base

| Project and Action/s | Stakeholders: Lead and Partner | Priority Status | Time Frame |
|---|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>Co-working Space Investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a feasibility study for the establishment of a co-working space in strategic location/s in the Shire (including preferred management model and potential economic and employment benefits). This study should consider the provision of Council-owned facilities or advocating for private investment, as well as supporting infrastructure requirements. | <p>Lead Economic Development</p> <p>Partner Planning and Investment Community</p> | Low | Medium-term |
| <p>Agricultural Diversification Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support agricultural businesses to diversify income, including options for agritourism and renewable energy investment. This requires collaboration with industry, as well as community members, to examine the potential impacts and benefits to the sector and economy. | <p>Lead Economic Development</p> <p>Partner Agricultural businesses</p> | Low | Long-term |
| <p>Business Diversification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Business growth and investment in diverse industries best suited to the needs and strengths of the municipality. | <p>Lead Economic Development</p> <p>Partner Planning and Investment</p> | High | Ongoing |
| <p>Support Emerging Industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the sustainable development of industries such as mining and renewable power generation in Strathbogie Shire. | <p>Lead Economic Development</p> <p>Partner Planning and Investment</p> | High | Ongoing |
| <p>Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the impact of short term accommodation in regards to industry growth. | <p>Lead Economic Development</p> | High | Short-term |

Theme 2. Progress Measures and Monitoring Tools

| Measure | Monitor | Frequency |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Growth in agricultural output, export value and job creation. | Economic databases (e.g. Economy ID, REMPLAN) and every four years via ABS census data. | Annually and every four years |
| Increases in agricultural businesses. | Economic databases (e.g. Economy ID, REMPLAN), CRM software and/or the ABR database 'Counts of Australian Businesses (by Local Government Area)'. | Annually |
| Increase the number and frequency of business engagements. | Council and industry peak bodies tracking and recording events | Annually |
| Increases in business investment (i.e. number of businesses within Strathbogie Shire). | Economic databases (e.g. Economy ID), a CRM system and/or the ABR database. | Annually |
| Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits. | Council databases and/or CRM software (inc. recording the investment enquiries by business type and industry) | Annually |
| Increase in diversification of business within the shire including renewable/ Green energy projects | Council's existing databases | Annually |
| An increase in the number of co-working spaces and facilities. | Council's Property Rates Database and Building Permit Data | Annually |

Theme 3: A Supported Community and Labour Force

| Project and Action/s | Stakeholders: Lead and Partner | Priority Status | Time Frame |
|--|---|-----------------|------------|
| <p>Deliver Township Streetscape Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the streetscape plans delivered for the townships of Nagambie, Euroa, Strathbogie, Longwood, Violet Town and Avenel. Deliver recommendations to promote activation of the main streets and improve amenity, including placemaking initiatives, public art installations, public realm improvements, etc. | <p>Lead</p> <p>Project Delivery</p> <p>Partner</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>Planning and Investment</p> | High | Short-term |

Theme 3. Progress Measures and Monitoring Tools

| Measure | Monitor | Frequency |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Increases in number of local jobs and/or job containment levels. | Economic databases (e.g. Economy ID, REMPLAN) and every four years via ABS census data | Annually and every four years |
| Increases in resident satisfaction. | Community surveys | Every two years |
| Increases in number of local tertiary qualifications and training apprenticeships. | Population databases (e.g. Profile ID) and every four years via ABS census data. | Annually and every four years |

Theme 4: A Thriving Visitor Economy

| Project and Action/s | Stakeholders: Lead and Partner | Priority Status | Time Frame |
|--|--|-----------------|-------------|
| <p>Regional Tourism Governance Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the operation of the new <i>Goulburn Regional Tourism Partnership</i> business model. Support the development of the regional DMP, to be undertaken by the <i>Goulburn Regional Tourism Partnership</i>. Support the delivery and implementations of recommendations relevant to the Shire. | <p>Lead</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>Partner</p> <p>Corporate Operations</p> | High | Short-term |
| <p>Branding and Marketing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the preparation of a Branding and Marketing Strategy for Strathbogie Shire, in collaboration with <i>Goulburn Regional Tourism Partnership</i>, to promote the key destinations and increase awareness of its assets and product strengths. | <p>Lead</p> <p>Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Partner</p> <p>Goulburn Regional Tourism Partnership</p> <p>Economic Development</p> | High | Short-term |
| <p>Track and Trails Strategy Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare an update to the Track and Trails Strategy to identify gaps in products and experiences, as well as investment opportunities to attract visitors, focusing on cycle tourism, bushwalking and equine trails. | <p>Lead</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>Partner</p> <p>Planning and Investment</p> | Medium | Medium-term |
| <p>Nature-based Visitation Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the activation and enhancement of nature-based assets in the Shire, including the development of supporting infrastructure and amenity. Focus on opportunities, in collaboration with public and private investors, that will increase the role of nature-based tourism to drive visitation and yield for the region. This campaign program could be supported by activation strategies and plans (via external funding) to identify investment opportunities and infrastructure requirements to improve amenity and enhance utilisation of significant nature-based assets. | <p>Lead</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>Partner</p> <p>Planning and Investment</p> | High | Medium-term |

Theme 4: A Thriving Visitor Economy (continued)

| Project and Action/s | Stakeholders: Lead and Partner | Priority Status | Time Frame |
|---|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>Arts and Culture Investment Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an audit of key arts and culture products and experiences, including Indigenous product to identify gaps in product and experiences. Identify opportunities to activate existing, and develop new, products and experiences to grow arts and culture tourism. | <p>Lead Community and Culture</p> | Low | Long-term |
| <p>Events Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the preparation of a Shire-wide Events Strategy, focusing on the creation of a successful and diverse events sector to support visitor economy growth. The focus of this project should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of current events schedule, by type, visitation and location, to identify gaps in the calendar; Opportunities for event enhancement and attraction – including signature one-off events and ongoing weekly events; Collaboration with industry and event operators to identify the infrastructure requirements and facilities/venues needed to grow the events sector. | <p>Lead Events Team</p> <p>Partner Economic Development Communications and Engagement</p> | High | Medium-term |

Theme 4. Progress Measures and Monitoring Tools

| Measure | Monitor | Frequency |
|---|--|------------------|
| Increases in visitation (inc. daytrip, overnight and international visitors). | Tourism Research Australia data and other economic databases (e.g, Economy ID) | Annually |
| Broadening the range of target visitor markets (by visitor type and activity undertaken). | Tourism Research Australia data (by activity type undertaken and purpose of visit) | Annually |
| Increases in direct visitor expenditure. | Tourism Research Australia data and other economic databases (e.g, REMPLAN) | Annually |
| Increases in the number and frequency of community and tourism events. | Council's events database | Annually |
| Increase in investment enquiries, planning and building permits (for accommodation). | Council databases and/or CRM software | Annually |
| Growth in direct tourism jobs (i.e. accommodation, hospitality). | Economic databases (e.g. REMPLAN) | Annually |
| Increased visitor satisfaction with the tourism offerings. | Visitor intercept surveys | Annually |

