



FERTILE GROUND

HEPBURN SHIRE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

2016.2021

Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL



FERTILE
GROUND

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▶ FROM THE MAYOR

"THE HEPBURN SHIRE IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, HOME TO 15,000 RESIDENTS AND GROWING.

But that is just half of the story.

Hepburn Shire is also home to a diverse range of businesses, from our strong agriculture base to our large hospitality industry. With employment in the health and education sectors, manufacturing, through to retail services trading in our heritage streetscapes - our region enjoys strong local communities whilst still being close to large population centres.

With population growth, our area is also increasingly attracting arts-based businesses including those that are influenced by our history built on gold discovery, mineral springs and forestry and our more recent emergence as a centre of the 'slow food' movement.

Emerging technology and the increasing focus on the creation of sustainable industries are driving other business opportunities. These are being explored by our existing residents and by those seeking the opportunity to relocate to the Hepburn Shire and our villages.

Our events too are playing a significant role in attracting new residents and businesses.

This document, the Hepburn Shire Economic Development Strategy, brings us forward from 2010 when the last strategy was implemented, and is the result of many hours of interviews and consultation with respondents across the Shire.



CR NEIL NEWITT

More than 400 ideas and comments were factored into the strategy.

I thank all who have contributed to this document. This strategy will assist council as it heads toward and into the next decade. It captures not only opportunities for business, but also identifies opportunities that will strengthen our communities - for the benefit of all."

Cr Neil Newitt

"THE HEPBURN SHIRE IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, HOME TO 15,000 RESIDENTS AND GROWING."

▶ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TAKES A DIRECT AND PROACTIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY WITHIN THE SHIRE.

The projects and initiatives outlined in the strategy are the result of extensive research, consultation and innovative thinking. The outcomes will form the basis of the Council economic priorities for the coming five years and have been formulated to have quantifiable economic impacts.

The Hepburn Shire's economy is rich and diverse, made up by many unique small businesses run by residents who choose to live here for the great lifestyle our shire offers. The Shire's attractive lifestyle and convenient location between Melbourne,

businesses are vital contributors to our local economic stability and so have been the impetus for some of the strategic outcomes to be focused on.

While Council can't directly influence business growth, it can remove barriers and make it easier for local business operators to take advantage of growth opportunities as they arise. The previous five years has seen some emerging employment trends that have informed some of the project and initiatives outlined in this strategy. Some of the trends will no doubt continue, such as

"AS A SHIRE SITUATED ON SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST FERTILE AGRICULTURAL LAND... SAFEGUARDING THE VIABILITY OF THIS SECTOR IS A MAJOR PRIORITY FOR OUR COMMUNITIES".

Ballarat, and Bendigo provides business owners with broad opportunities for both customers and labour hire. While we are lucky to have many special and unique businesses based within our Shire, the economy is still based on some foundational sectors. Those being Manufacturing, Agriculture, Tourism and Construction, which together make up around 50% of economic contribution.

Within these major contributing sectors, the Shire has a number of employers with more than 50 staff members. These medium sized

increased employment in Aged Care and Social Assistance, as the Shire has an aging population, much like other regional areas. However, other trends such as decreasing employment in the Agriculture sector is one trend this strategy seeks to combat by directly supporting our local producers.

As a Shire situated on some of Australia's most fertile agricultural land, and given our strong agricultural history, safeguarding the viability of this sector is a major priority for our communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONT...

Within the Agriculture sector we have also seen the emergence of new innovative business models that enable small scale operators to be very successful. By adding value to primary produce within the farm gate, and forming local supply agreements with local food service providers, we have many small scale producers building our Shire's reputation as a paddock to plate food destination. These emerging agricultural business models make entering the sector more viable for younger producers and will be a focus of the Agricultural Sector Development Plan that has been highlighted as a priority in this strategy.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

The development of the strategy has been an extensive process that began with analysis of the key economic data influencing the shire. These statistics coupled with macro economic factors formed the basis of a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks Analysis (SCOR). With this understanding in place, it was determined that five pillars for growth should underpin the strategy outcomes. They are:

PRODUCE TRADE LIVE GROW VISIT

The outcomes detailed in this strategy aim to support existing businesses, residents and visitors so that our Shire continues to be known as a lifestyle destination, and in every instance have a direct impact on one or more of the pillars of growth.

Consultation with our business community was carried out via a series of face to face interviews with local business people and organisations to garner industry specific input. This one-on-one feedback was complemented by an online survey that was promoted throughout the Shire for several months providing every opportunity for those interested to provide input. Local business people were very generous with their time and ideas and provided great insight into what can be achieved. Many of these ideas have directly influenced the outcomes of the strategy.

IN TOTAL THERE WERE
38 FACE TO FACE
CONSULTATIONS AND **148**
RESPONDENTS TO THE
SURVEY THAT GENERATED
MORE THAN **400** IDEAS
AND COMMENTS THAT
WERE TAKEN INTO
CONSIDERATION.

From this information a set of projects and initiatives were established for evaluation. The proposed projects were rigorously evaluated against key criteria to produce a prioritised list. Each project was evaluated

in terms of its effectiveness, probability of success, constraints, risks, short term impact, long term impact, and cost/benefit effectiveness.

The result is a set of projects and initiatives that directly address our pillars for growth and are aimed to encourage business development, employment, tourism and innovation. Each project has a detailed plan that outlines the scope, rationale, and implementation plan that will allow Hepburn Shire to monitor progress.

PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION YEAR	PROJECT	PILLAR
1	Winning Council Business	TRADE
1	Association Effectiveness	TRADE
1	Business Growth Facilitation	GROW
1	Visitor Servicing 2020 and Beyond	VISIT
1	Paddock to Plate Training Initiative	PRODUCE
2	Agricultural Sector Development Plan	PRODUCE
2	Signage and Presentation	LIVE
2	Economic Leaders Forum	GROW
2	Business Growth Planning	GROW
2	Business Mentor Program	GROW
2	Implementation of Streetscape Projects	LIVE
3	Access to the Daylesford Industrial Estates	TRADE
3	Events Attraction and Support	GROW
3	Transport and Movement	LIVE
3	Residential Growth Plan	LIVE
4	Hepburn Springs Revitalisation	VISIT
4	Towards Zero Hepburn	PRODUCE

This Economic Development Strategy is not intended to cover every aspect of economic growth within the Shire. It is intended to have a clear, actionable set of projects and initiatives that are within the influence of local council and can be achieved within the five year program.

Councils renewed focus towards economic development will help foster cohesive relationships and a shared vision with our business community. This shared vision will help deliver strong economic growth and stability.

► PILLARS OF GROWTH



MAKE HEPBURN SHIRE A DESIRABLE LOCATION FOR PEOPLE TO PRODUCE, TRADE, LIVE, GROW AND VISIT.

The economic development plan for Hepburn Shire for 2016 - 2021 is based on a set of guiding principles that will enable our organisation to:

- Form partnerships and work in cooperation with other agencies
- Promote and support entrepreneurship
- Understand what is needed by local businesses and work to facilitate this
- Promote residential growth that is sustainable and well designed
- Understand our contributing sectors and their economic needs

The next 5 years of economic development is captured within five pillars. These pillars of growth describe how each set of projects and initiatives will directly impact our communities.

PRODUCE

Support the value chain from primary producers through to culinary providers and consumers.

Harness emerging trends and sectors existing in the Shire and further develop them to strengthen opportunities and growth into the future.

TRADE

Support local business and encourage opportunities for increased trade.

Provide for trade opportunities via transport, network and communication solutions. Guide business organisations and enable them to operate effectively.

LIVE

Make Hepburn Shire a great place to live. Provide a place that is navigable, safe and with services available to residents in all towns. Plan for growth that is sustainable, well designed and allows diversity to exist in our vibrant communities.

GROW

Provide guidance through government systems so that our businesses can prosper.

Ensure that Hepburn Shire is a cohesive organisation that facilitates business development, attracts investment and provides fertile ground for ideas and entrepreneurship.

By being the catalyst for growth, our economy thrives.

VISIT

Invite the world to experience Hepburn Shire and all it has to offer. Mineral springs, forests and trails, food and wine, events, art and culture; these assets are a part of the unique experience that can be found in the Shire. Ensure the visitor experience is positive by presenting a place that is easy to navigate and attractive.



► STRATEGY BACKGROUND

HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL'S (HSC) PREVIOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WAS PREPARED IN 2010 WITH A FIVE-YEAR TIME HORIZON. AS SUCH, 2016 HAS SEEN THE COUNCIL REVIEW AND UPDATE OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

The aim of this work is to provide a roadmap for Council to work in partnership with stakeholders to develop and enhance the local economy, and ensure Hepburn Shire remains an attractive location for people to Produce, Trade, Live, Grow and Visit. In order to achieve this, HSC organised a cooperative team of practitioners and a project steering committee to develop the Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021 (EDS). The project team with significant input from the Hepburn Shire community undertook a four stage process to complete the EDS. This process is described below.

STEP ONE:

- Review and develop an understanding of current and forecast economic statistics that influence Hepburn Shire using available economic data.
- Review and incorporate considerations of relevant National, State and Local policy, priorities and initiatives.

STEP TWO:

- Interviews with industry and government representatives in the local economy.
- Survey and consult with the broader Hepburn Shire business community and representative groups.
- Meet with internal stakeholders to discuss issues and implications across Hepburn Shire

STEP THREE:

- Create a list of projects and initiatives that address key economic considerations affecting the Shire;
- Develop thematic groupings (Pillars) and begin prioritisation of projects and initiatives based on a systematic review

STEP FOUR:

- Review the draft strategy with industry and government representation
- Prioritise initiatives
- Complete and finalise the EDS 2016 - 2021

STRATEGY BACKGROUND CONT...

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Research into economic trends and demographic factors formed the initial research stage of this strategy. This led to the development of a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks analysis (SCOR). From the SCOR analysis it was determined that any project or initiative should build on our strengths, address challenges, or take advantage of opportunities, while being cognisant of risks. In addition to the SCOR analysis the project team looked closely at our key sectors to determine any gaps and opportunities that should be specifically addressed*.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE WAREHOUSE – CLUNES

Funding for this priority project was secured and the building has been constructed and has been operating since September.

ADVANCING COUNTRY TOWNS

Funding was received to support tourism and economic development in Creswick, Clunes and Talbot (in the central Goldfields Shire). Projects completed as a result of this funding have included a Destination Management Plan for Creswick and Clunes, Residential and Industrial Land Review, Booktown Transformation project and an Empty Spaces shop renewal

in Creswick. Further development and investigation into the Creswick Tracks and Trails project and Daylesford to Macedon Rail Trail are on-going

EVENT SUPPORT

Council has developed an events strategy outlining a process for funding events and entered into Memorandum of Understanding agreements to support key events held in Hepburn Shire.

SUPPORTING TOURISM

Council funds the management and operation of four Visitor Information Centres (VICs) across Hepburn Shire to help increase tourism spend and disperse tourists across the Shire. Additionally, financial support is provided to the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Regional Tourism Board to attract visitation to the region and Hepburn Shire.

HUB PROJECTS

Hub projects across Hepburn Shire aim to improve and increase services and provide better facilities for the community. Each project seeks to address issues specific to each town, and in a way that reflects their unique identity. Each project is designed to consolidate building assets and locations in ways that will enhance the organisations effectiveness while also lowering operating costs.

STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE 2010 STRATEGY INCLUDE – STREETSCAPES, WALKING AND CYCLING TRAILS AND THE HUB PROJECTS.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Council's existing Economic Development Strategy was completed in 2010 with a subsequent review and business plan completed in 2012.

Key achievements as a result of the 2010 strategy include:

STREETSCAPES

Development of Streetscape Plans for Daylesford, Creswick, Clunes, Trentham, Hepburn Springs and Glenlyon.

project in Clunes. In addition streetscape projects were initiated and implemented in the three towns and a marketing brand developed to enable more effective marketing of the three towns. In Creswick, the "Creswick of the Lindsays Arts Trail" has been implemented. The development of a provender store in Talbot is also a result of this funding.

WALKING AND CYCLING TRAILS

Development of a number of walking trails in Hepburn Shire including the Wombat Trail in Trentham, the Domino Trail between Trentham and Lyonville, and a looped walking track around Calembeen Park in Creswick.

*The SCOR analysis, survey summary and sector information can be found with further economic context in Appendix A.



THE WAREHOUSE - CLUNES

PROJECTS SUMMARY

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

IDEAS AND COMMENTS HAVE BEEN RECORDED, COLLATED AND ANALYSED TO FORM 16 PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES THAT ARE POSITIONED TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE HEPBURN SHIRE.

ORGANISED INTO PILLARS OF GROWTH, THESE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES WILL GUIDE US FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.



▶ PRODUCE

SUPPORT THE VALUE CHAIN FROM PRIMARY PRODUCERS THROUGH TO CULINARY PROVIDERS AND CONSUMERS. HARNESS EMERGING TRENDS AND SECTORS EXISTING IN THE SHIRE AND FURTHER DEVELOP THEM TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH INTO THE FUTURE.

RATIONALE

Hepburn Shire has a long history in the primary production and agri-business sectors, as well as food and other general manufacturing. Flagship businesses have helped create, promote and sustain this reputation within the shire. Many of these businesses have a strong ethos of local trade and have been proactive in taking advantage of emerging trends in primary production and healthy living. Hepburn Shire Council recognises this and aims to help create a business environment that will support these innovative, evolving sectors.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

AGRICULTURE. FISHERY. FORESTRY.

Number of Resident Employees	440
Number of Businesses	385
Annual Economic Contribution	\$95m
Economic Multiplier	1.98

The Agriculture sector continues to be the backbone of the Shire with the largest number of businesses of any other sector. Emerging business models have established that make smaller scale operations attractive, and we expect this trend to continue. The importance of this sector has dictated that an Agriculture sector specific strategy will be undertaken.

LINKS TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Sustainable Environment and a Vibrant Economy

- Support and develop existing businesses within the Hepburn Shire and continue to explore opportunities to diversify Hepburn Shire's economic base.
- Develop opportunities for increased renewable energy generation and minimisation of energy consumption within the Hepburn Shire Council in order to reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy generation.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

- RDA Grampians Regional Plan – Regional Priorities
- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan
- Free Trade Agreements
- National Innovation and Science Agenda Report
- Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund
- Regional Statement

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Paddock to Plate Training Initiative	Harness existing education, training and mentoring opportunities provided by our producers, creators and entrepreneurs with the aim of promoting Hepburn Shire as the preeminent place to learn about everything associated with food production and gastronomy.	Year 1 Detail - Page 42
Agricultural Sector Development Plan	A plan that recognises the importance of this sector to the local economy and to the State that will guide development and decision making for future growth. Key action areas include supporting innovative and high value agricultural production, marketing and distribution opportunities for local growers.	Year 2 Project Plan – Page 44
Towards Zero Hepburn	A roadmap that will guide our Municipality to become energy self sufficient and carbon neutral within 15 years.	Year 4 Detail – Page 64



▶ TRADE

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND ENCOURAGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED TRADE. PROVIDE FOR TRADE OPPORTUNITIES VIA TRANSPORT, NETWORK AND COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS. GUIDE BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS AND ENABLE THEM TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY.

RATIONALE

The evolution of the retail sector in Hepburn Shire has been such that it is characterised by independent artisan retailers. This is in line with increasing awareness of the products that can be purchased or consumed with consideration to the integrity of the product, where it was made, and by whom.

There is an evolving trend within Hepburn Shire to trade goods locally between producers and retailers with a clear aspiration to develop stronger local networks.

As a shire that is geographically spread that relies heavily on tourist trade, there is a need to make the shire more connected and accessible. A more connected shire will increase trade opportunities from within and outside the shire, further enhancing our economic stability.

Retail provides crucial support to other sectors such as Tourism and Food Services and so contributes greatly to our economy via its strong multiplier effect.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

RETAIL

Number of Resident Employees	620
Number of Businesses	100
Annual Economic Contribution	\$50m
Economic Multiplier	1.76

LINKS TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Sustainable Environment and a Vibrant Economy

- Support and develop existing businesses within the Hepburn Shire and continue to explore opportunities to diversify Hepburn Shire's economic base.
- Develop opportunities for increased renewable energy generation and minimisation of energy consumption within the Hepburn Shire Council in order to reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy generation.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

- RDA Grampians Regional Plan – Regional Priorities
- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan
- Free Trade Agreements
- National Innovation and Science Agenda Report
- Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund
- Regional Statement

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Winning Council Business	Developing a suite in information aimed at increasing local provider's capacity to gain business from Council, whether by tender process, quotation or becoming a preferred supplier.	Year 1 Detail – Page 34
Association Effectiveness	Work with local business and tourism associations to help them grow their member bases and make them more effective throughout the shire.	Year 2 Detail – Page 36
Access to the Daylesford Industrial Estates	The lowering of East Street in Daylesford at the railway bridge will allow truck access along this route; re-directing heavy vehicles away from residential streets This initiative is vital for continuing trade in the light industrial area of Daylesford.	Year 3 Detail – Page 55



► LIVE

MAKE HEPBURN SHIRE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE. PROVIDE A PLACE THAT IS EASY TO NAVIGATE AND SAFE, WITH SERVICES AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS IN ALL TOWNS. PLAN FOR GROWTH THAT IS SUSTAINABLE, WELL DESIGNED AND ALLOWS DIVERSITY TO EXIST IN OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.

RATIONALE

By making Hepburn Shire a great place to live we are delivering services and experiences to residents that make them happy and healthy. This includes basic services such as health and education, but also lifestyle and amenity factors. Our residents want to feel proud of their towns, and when visitors come they want the shire to be presentable and easy to navigate.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

CONSTRUCTION

Number of Resident Employees	520
Number of Businesses	215
Annual Economic Contribution	\$90m
Economic Multiplier	2.55

LINKS TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Active and Engaged Communities

- Improve and enhance the provision and management of infrastructure and services to support children and families.
- Implement a proactive and planned approach to the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of recreation assets.
- Develop Hepburn's libraries as welcoming, multi-functional spaces

that assist in the provision of integrated Council services and ensuring that vibrant and diverse programs and collections are maintained.

- Provide high quality aged and disability services within the active service framework.

Quality Community Infrastructure

- Effectively deliver the Capital works program to improve community infrastructure and facilities.
- Improve the liveability and amenity of our communities by delivering improved levels of service across all of Hepburn Shire's streetscapes, parks and gardens through the introduction of planned work schedules for areas such as town entrances, park furniture, sporting ovals and public reserves.
- Improve sealed and unsealed roads through the delivery of maintenance and improvement works.

Making Hepburn Shire a great place to live attracts new residents which in turn encourages development. With the construction industry having the greatest economic multiplier of any sector, investment in this area has great impact on the whole community.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

- RDA Grampians Regional Plan – Regional Priorities
- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Signage and Presentation	Signage improvements will contribute to both liveability and the visitor experience in the Shire. Town entrances and local attractions will benefit from better signage that will let residents and visitors know what's on, and how to get around.	Year 2 Detail – Page 46
Implementation of Streetscape Projects	Streetscape improvements aim to augment public activity in order to support and enhance retail activity, tourism activity, safety and amenity to residents. Continuing with this project is necessary to provide much needed upgrades to these towns.	Year 2 Detail – Page 54
Transport and Movement	Undertake a complete public transport analysis throughout the Shire. Identify gaps and opportunities for improvement that will improve liveability, tourism and trade. Develop a prioritised business case that can be used lobby various state government bodies for better transport connections annually.	Year 3 Detail – Page 58
Residential Growth Plan	Working with the Planning department this strategy proposes to plan for growth and residential development in a proactive way. This project will identify the areas where growth is likely to occur and implement planning changes that will encourage development in sustainable ways that fit with desired community outcomes.	Year 4 Detail – Page 60

► GROW

PROVIDE GUIDANCE THROUGH GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS SO THAT OUR BUSINESSES CAN PROSPER.
ENSURE THAT HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL IS A COHESIVE ORGANISATION THAT FACILITATES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, ATTRACTS INVESTMENT AND PROVIDES FERTILE GROUND FOR IDEAS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY BEING THE CATALYST FOR GROWTH, OUR ECONOMY THRIVES.

RATIONALE

Council can be pro-active in how it supports local business growth while remaining connected so that Hepburn Shire is quickly aware of changing business needs. It can provide guidance to businesses through local government systems so that they may better take advantage of growth opportunities. Hepburn Shire can act as a catalyst to growth and champion better cooperation and collaboration.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

PRIVATE SECTOR

Number of Resident Employees **4,760**
Number of Businesses **1,410**
Annual Economic Contribution **\$830m**

Removing the public sectors and utilities companies from the data we can see how important the private sector is to our Shire. Any initiative that works to strengthen our business environment will have positive economic and social implications. This is particularly important in the small to medium sized business segment.

LINKS TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Quality Community Infrastructure

- Effectively deliver the capital works program to improve community infrastructure and facilities

Sustainable Environment and a Vibrant Economy

- Support and develop existing businesses within Hepburn Shire and continue to explore opportunities to diversify Hepburn Shire's economic base.
- Review Council's Compliance and Development functions with a focus on improving safety and legislative compliance, reducing processing times and increasing levels of customer satisfaction.
- Monitor and update Council's Planning Scheme to meet the future needs of the community by providing a range of opportunities across the full suite of zones.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

- RDA Grampians Regional Plan – Regional Priorities
- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan
- Destination Management Plan

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Business Growth Facilitation	Economic Development council staff will work from offices throughout the shire on a pre planned basis giving businesses owner's convenient access to the economic development team to discuss any business issues they might have.	Year 1 Detail – Page 50
Economic Leaders Forum	A meeting of the minds for economic development leaders.	Year 2 Detail – Page 48
Business Growth Planning	Develop improved and accessible information related to the Victorian Planning Scheme and how it applies to business growth in Hepburn. Establish clear pathways for businesses to take advantage of growth opportunities by providing better information up front and removing unnecessary roadblocks.	Year 2 Detail – Page 50
Business Mentor Program	Utilising programs offered by RDV to provide mentoring sessions to existing and prospective business owners through a selective process. The program will also leverage local expertise where available and be open to both young first time business owners to more experienced operators.	Year 2 Detail – Page 52

▶ VISIT

INVITE THE WORLD TO EXPERIENCE HEPBURN SHIRE AND ALL IT HAS TO OFFER. MINERAL SPRINGS, FORESTS, FOOD AND WINE, EVENTS AND CULTURE; THESE ASSETS ARE A PART OF THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE THAT CAN BE FOUND WITHIN THE SHIRE.

ENSURE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IS EXCEPTIONAL BY PROVIDING INNOVATIVE VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES WHILE PRESENTING A PLACE THAT IS ATTRACTIVE AND NAVIGABLE.

RATIONALE

Tourism is effectively the Shire's largest employer when associated industries are aggregated and is crucial to the Shire's economy. Hepburn Shire has exceptional natural and cultural assets that can be better leveraged to promote the Shire as a destination that provides diverse and high quality visitor experiences. As expectations of visitors have evolved to desire experience based holidays, Hepburn Shire is well positioned to take advantage of this shift and promote its varied assets.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

ACCOMMODATION. FOOD SERVICES

Number of Resident Employees	620
Number of Businesses	92
Annual Economic Contribution	\$106m
Economic Multiplier	1.78

Tourism is a key contributor to our economy and also one of our largest employing sectors. Employing over 600 residents across the Shire, with on average 7 employees per business. Tourism is an economic strength that we must continue to develop.

LINKS TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Quality Community Infrastructure

- Implement the Streetscape Revitalisation Planning Projects for Clunes, Creswick, Glenlyon, Hepburn Springs and Trentham.

- Improve sealed and unsealed roads through the delivery of maintenance and improvement works.

Sustainable Environment and a Vibrant Economy

- Support and develop existing businesses within Hepburn Shire and continue to explore opportunities to diversify Hepburn Shire's economic base.
- Develop and implement the Visitor Information Centre volunteer recruitment strategy.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

- RDA Grampians Regional Plan – Regional Priorities
- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan
- Destination Management Plan

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Visitor Services 2020 and Beyond	The development and execution of this project will align Hepburn Shire Council's visitor servicing to current trends and re-establish the important value our VIC's provide. This project will also update and rationalise our marketing assets so that our unique experiences can be better promoted	Year 1 Detail – Page 40
Events Attraction and Support	This initiative will dedicate funds and resource to work with event organisers to make initial event development simple. The Economic Development team will remove barriers and work to attract new events into the Shire.	Year 3 Detail – Page 56
Mineral Springs Revitalisation	Revitalise the Hepburn Springs locality so that the identity of the place is refreshed and re-defined. Improve the experience for visitors to Hepburn Springs Reserve and Lake Daylesford through improved amenity, cultural and historical enhancements, and restore the areas to being the jewels of the Shire	Year 4 Detail – Page 62



POLICY ALIGNMENT

► POLICY ALIGNMENT

THIS STRATEGY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH CURRENT POLICIES THAT WILL INFLUENCE HEPBURN SHIRE'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Decisions made by Federal Government have an impact on Hepburn Shire in regard to investment in regional development, arts, agriculture, infrastructure, innovation and health.

The State Government will also influence the development of Hepburn Shire in a myriad of ways. Infrastructure, public transport, regional development, planning oversight, health, social services, agriculture, the creative sector, and education policy will influence what is possible for Hepburn Shire to achieve and its broader role in the state of Victoria.

At a local government level, the Council Plan and various strategy documents articulate what Hepburn Shire aims to achieve. The opportunities for Hepburn Shire in tourism will be further articulated in the Daylesford Macedon Ranges Destination Management Plan upon its release.

The following table provides a summary of key policy positions and their likely impact on Hepburn Shire.

POLICY POSITION	IMPACT ON HEPBURN SHIRE
RDA Grampians Regional Plan 2013-2016	Industry growth in the Grampian region is forecast in tourism, health, education, advanced manufacturing and professional services which will require a new skills base. Freight logistics are vital for the economic security of the region
Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan	Provides future directions for growth plans for Daylesford, Clunes and Creswick and their roles in the Central Highland region
Free trade agreements	FTAs aim to help Australian exporters access new markets and also expand trade in existing markets. Exporters in the region are generally favoured through trade liberalisation efforts. Trade liberalisation may impact on the cost of inputs for local producers. For example, if local farmers can guarantee a better price for their product overseas local producers may have to pay a higher price for their inputs.

POLICY ALIGNMENT CONT...

National Innovation and Science Agenda Report	A refocus by the Australian government on Innovation and Science to boost economic growth through initiatives that make it easier for businesses to innovate, encourage greater opportunities in STEM education and improves collaboration between universities and business.
Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper	The White Paper outlines the initiatives and commitments by the Australian Government for the agricultural sector in Australia. The vision is to build a more profitable, more resilient and more sustainable agriculture sector to help drive a stronger Australian economy.
Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund	<p>The Victorian Government has identified six high potential and high value sectors to drive Victoria's economic growth of which, the following three are relevant to Hepburn Shire:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food and fibre 2. Professional services 3. New energy technology <p>Through Regional Development Victoria there are three funds of relevance to Hepburn Shire's Economic Development Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional Infrastructure Fund 2. Regional Jobs Fund 3. Stronger Regional Communities Plan
Regional Statement	This document outlines the State Government's plans for economic stimulation in Regional Victoria. Key messages are aimed at regional tourism and events, agriculture and exports, the creative sector and job creation. As well as this, infrastructure opportunities will be identified, renewable energy actions and a new water plan.
Council Plan	<p>There are four strategic objectives of relevance to Hepburn Shire's Economic Development Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and engaged communities • Quality community infrastructure • Sustainable environment and a vibrant economy • High performing organisation

Food and Fibre Sector Strategy	<p>The 2015 Victorian Food and Fibre Strategy highlighted areas of the agriculture sector that are performing well, many of which are relevant to Hepburn Shire.</p> <p>The strategy outlined a set of initiatives that would continue to develop the sector in sustainable ways. The 19 initiatives aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract more ideas and investment • Help businesses innovate and grow • Capture market opportunities • Develop infrastructure • Improve the business environment.
Daylesford Macedon Ranges Regional Tourism Board – Destination Management Plan	The destination management plan identifies projects and initiatives that are considered regionally significant for future growth of the tourism industry. Projects that have been identified as regionally significant will be well positioned to attract state government funding.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

THE FOLLOWING PAGES
DETAIL THE PLANS FOR
EACH PROJECT AND INITIATIVE.



WINNING COUNCIL BUSINESS

DESCRIPTION

Create a suite of information that is relevant to local business to guide them on how to win business with Council, whether it be by tender, quotation, or becoming a preferred supplier. Information will be made available online, in print, and in person via the Economic Development Officer who is available throughout the shire via the Economic Development Officer Rotation program.

RATIONALE

Increasing local trade in goods and services is acknowledged as one way to improve the local economy. One way that Hepburn Shire Council can contribute to this is through increased trade with local business. Helping business to understand these policies will help them tailor their goods and services towards winning council business fairly, by quote, tender, or becoming a preferred supplier.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The goal of this project is to facilitate the award of \$0.5M- \$1.0M annually of contracts that would otherwise be awarded outside the Shire.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$1M INVESTMENT (All Sectors Average Impact)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.48M	\$0.46M	\$1.01M
Effect on Employment	5.4fte	3.4fte	8.9fte*

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.aurin.org.au

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Define the information	Develop the information that will be included as part of the 'Winning Council Business' information packs for the various purchasing processes.
Develop information packs	Develop specific packs of information for the various ways that Council business can be obtained. Develop both online and offline versions of the packs for multi channel promotion.
Distribution Plan	Establish delivery for the information packs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • Print • In person via Economic Development Team
Promotion	Promote via Newsletters, 'The Shire News', Council website and social media as well as through business groups and other contacts.



▶ TRADE ASSOCIATION EFFECTIVENESS

DESCRIPTION

Work with local associations related to business and tourism to help them grow their member base and make them more effective throughout the shire. Gain clarity around their roles and functions to help establish the value they provide so that they may better build the local business communities.

RATIONALE

There are many business and tourism related groups throughout the Shire. Membership is dropping and roles and responsibilities between groups have become unclear.

By helping these groups work effectively within defined roles we are creating additional support at a grassroots level for business and tourism in our local communities. It is anticipated that this will result in:

- More prosperous and cohesive business support systems
- More effective communication channels
- A coordinated approach to economic growth
- Stronger business networks

PROJECT GOAL

This project aims to increase membership to key trade associations by 25% or more and help them solidify their future by clarifying the value each association offers.

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Examine current structures	Evaluation of current Business & Tourism Associations. Identify where organisations overlap. Identify the unique value each organisation offers.
Gap and Opportunity Analysis	Identify key gaps in associations across the shire. Identify opportunities for growth or rationalisation between the groups
Develop Report	Develop a report outlining the key findings with associated recommendations.
Present finding	Present findings/ report to local organisations for comment and discussion.
Implement adopted findings	Based on feedback and acceptance from local associations, work with them to implement changes and grow their member bases.

► BUSINESS GROWTH FACILITATION – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER ROTATION

DESCRIPTION

This initiative involves the Economic Development council staff working from sites in Daylesford, Trentham, Clunes and Creswick on a pre-planned rotation basis. This is to ensure businesses across the Shire have convenient access to the economic development team to discuss any business issues they might have. The rotation will be promoted through various communication channels and meetings can be pre-arranged or undertaken on a walk-in basis.

RATIONALE

This initiative provides a more equitable approach to Council services and makes the economic development team more accessible to the local business community. It will also provide one-on-one opportunities for local businesses to learn how best to win Council business.

This initiative is designed to:

- Make key Council staff available around the Shire
- Take a more proactive approach to addressing local business needs

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAILS
Forecast dates at each location.	Forward plan the rotation locations and dates for a 12-month period. Locations will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clunes, The Warehouse • Creswick, The Creswick Hub • Trentham, Trentham Library
Communicate dates	Communicate and promote via Economic Development Newsletter, local trade associations and through word of mouth as opportunity presents. The information can also be made available through Council website and social media.

► BUSINESS GROWTH FACILITATION – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Develop up to date relevant information that is readily available on the HSC website that provides assistance and helpful leads to those who want to:

- Start a business
- Grow a business
- Move a business

This initiative aims to make the process easier for business owners and potential business owners to find information that is current and relevant in a timely and straightforward manner so that they may be better informed and prepared. This project will be implemented along side the Business Growth Planning project.

RATIONALE

Current information for new and growing businesses is lacking within our Shire. As a Council that wants to promote economic development this information is the first port of call for most people who are interested in starting a business or those wanting to know how to take advantage of growth opportunities they may have.

This initiative aims to make the process easier up front by providing detailed planning and application process information that can guide business owners through any required processes quickly and without unnecessary hold up.

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Review current information	Develop a detailed assessment of what is on the HSC website currently and what other information is available. Identify gaps in information and content and develop all the necessary content.
Content delivery	Determine best communication mediums and channels for information. Upload and distribute the content as appropriate. Communicate improved content internally, Promote improved content publically.
Schedule annual review	Schedule annual review of information and collateral.

▶ VISITOR SERVICING 2020 AND BEYOND

DESCRIPTION

The development and execution of this project will align Hepburn Shire Council's visitor servicing to current trends and re establish the important value our Visitor Information Centres (VIC's) provide. This project will also update and rationalise our marketing assets so that our unique experiences can be better promoted. This project will:

- Review all HSC tourism marketing assets, including tourism associations.
- Review our VIC's value proposition and establish what, if any changes are needed
- Develop a marketing strategy across all assets
- Implement changes to HSC marketing assets
- Implement any identified changes needed at VIC's

RATIONALE

As the visitor economy continues to be a vital contributor to the Hepburn Shire, this project will analyse our tourist servicing assets to determine a future strategy that maximises the opportunities they deliver. At the centre of this strategy is the Visitor Information Centres (VIC) that have direct contact with visitors who also manage multiple marketing assets such as the 'Visit' websites. This project will greatly improve visitor's numbers across the shire impacting our local economies.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

This project aims to improve our visitor servicing to such an extent it encourages increased tourism across the Shire. As we showcase the experience based opportunities our Shire has to offer this project aims to inject a further \$0.5M- \$1.0M annually into our economy via Accommodation, Retail, and Food Services.

Economic Impact of \$1M Investment (Retail Sector)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.58M	\$0.44M	\$1.02M
Effect on Employment	9fte	4fte	13fte
Economic Impact of \$1M Investment (Accommodation & Food Services)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.49M	\$0.37M	\$0.87M
Effect on Employment	8fte	3fte	11fte*

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.aurin.org.au

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Asset Analysis	Carry out an audit and evaluation of all visitor servicing assets available to Hepburn Shire and define value proposition of each.
Market Analysis	Analyse current market trends locally and more broadly to identify future direction and needs.
Gap Analysis	Identify gaps in current visitor servicing Identify areas where existing marketing assets are failing Identify gaps in marketing assets
Define new Strategy	Develop a new strategy for Hepburn Shire VIC's and visitor servicing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated value proposition of VIC's and roadmap for future • Rationalisation of marketing assets • Clear marketing channel objectives • Clearly roles and value proposition of partner organisations
Implement New Strategy	Implementation of new strategy over defined time-frame.



"THE VISITOR ECONOMY CONTINUES TO BE A VITAL CONTRIBUTOR TO THE HEPBURN SHIRE".

► PADDOCK TO PLATE TRAINING INITIATIVE

DESCRIPTION

This initiative will see HSC promote local businesses that currently offer training and experience opportunities in the paddock to plate sectors. Harnessing the existing education, training and mentoring opportunities provided by our producers, creators and entrepreneurs with the aim of promoting Hepburn Shire as the pre eminent place to learn about everything associated with food production and gastronomy.

The project will include branding and content design of the program so that promotion can be done through our VIC's, websites, and other marketing assets.

RATIONALE

Based on information obtained through consultation it is recognised that there are many artisan and agri-businesses within our Shire that provide workshops and training in their field of expertise. This initiative proposes to harness these opportunities and promote them as part of the broader experience based activities that our shire offers.

PROJECT GOAL

This initiative aims to increase participation in these programs by 20% and attract further operators to enter the business segment - further developing the Shire's reputation as an experience based destination.

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Identify existing training opportunities	Compile a list of existing and relevant training opportunities. These will be concentrated in agri-business and hospitality sectors.
Consultation	Consult with existing training providers and gather feedback on branding and marketing ideas to be associated with the program.
Develop branding and promotion	Develop marketing and promotion plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brand name and logo • website and social media content.
Launch Program	Execute marketing and promotion as planned. Consult with training providers to monitor success.
Expand promotion and build reputation	Approach training facilitators that are able to contribute to the brand. Create pathways for them to become local training providers. e.g. University of Melbourne (Creswick), Federation Training, TAFE or other agencies
Review and revise future strategy	Assess progress and future expansion opportunities of the program.



▶ AGRICULTURAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DESCRIPTION

Develop a plan that outlines a roadmap for future development of the agriculture sector in Hepburn Shire. Identify current strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks and develop a plan that will ensure the sector continues to be a major economic contributor to the Shire. The project will draw on work being undertaken by Cultivate, Future Landscapes while also taking a localised approach to what is needed.

RATIONALE

Extensive consultation with those in the agricultural sector has revealed that while this sector is strong and resourceful, there is much that can be done to enhance and build upon this strength. This initiative acknowledges the importance of the sector and the need for a purpose built plan.

Within the sector, business types, models, output and expectation varies greatly, therefore the plan will need to address a

"THE PLAN WILL HELP PRODUCERS OPTIMISE THEIR BUSINESSES".

wide variety of agricultural business models. There are many producers working off small acreage and only trading locally, while there are others working to more established acreage, methods and markets. The agricultural plan will help existing producers optimise their businesses and safeguard them into the future while also provide valuable information and guidance to those looking to start new agriculture ventures.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

With a detailed plan in place that is backed by scientific and economic rationale; we aim to attract \$0.5M annual investment in the sector.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$1M INVESTMENT (Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.4M	\$0.39M	\$0.79M
Effect on Employment	8fte	3fte	11fte*

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Analysis	Establish an understanding of current agricultural issues as well as the nuanced needs of smaller producers within the Shire. Address the various agri-business models and the current State and National policy stances that influence each industry within the sector.
Consultation	Undertake extensive consultation with local agri-businesses as well as governing bodies such as Cultivate and Agriculture Victoria.
Plan Development	Based on input from local business, sector analysis and governing bodies, develop the draft plan.
Stakeholder Review	Circulate the draft plan to stakeholders for review and comment.
Revise and Implement	Revise and finalise Agriculture sector development plan for adoption by Council.

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.aurin.org.au

► SIGNAGE AND PRESENTATION

DESCRIPTION

Signage improvements are needed to enhance the resident and visitors experience in Hepburn Shire. This project should start with town entry signage to ensure navigation to key points of interest, including events, is clear. This project will also review any faded or damaged signage, identify for removal redundant or no longer needed signage and identify additional requirements that are needed. This will include interpretive signage at our tourist attraction locations as part of the development of cultural tourism opportunities.

Signage improvements will contribute to:

- Improved experiences for visitors
- Improved navigation for residents
- Improved presentation of the Shire

RATIONALE

Residents and visitors can both benefit from improved signage throughout the Shire. Consultation with community members highlighted town signage as one of the most pressing presentation issues within in the Shire that requires attention. Hepburn Springs and town entry signage across the shire was identified as the priority that should be addressed so as to improve resident and visitor first impressions when entering towns and villages.

"COMMUNITY MEMBERS HIGHLIGHTED TOWN SIGNAGE AS ONE OF THE MOST PRESSING PRESENTATION ISSUES WITHIN IN THE SHIRE".

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Review of old signage	Conduct a review on existing signage in each town including the whole hierarchy of signage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shire Signage, • Town Entry Signage • Wayfinding/Direction Signage • Interpretive Signage • Street Blade Signage • Regulatory signage (e.g. parking) • Facility and reserves naming signage
Identify Gaps and Areas of Need	Detail the current gaps in signage needs across the Shire. List all signage in need of replacement. Upgrade signage to align with new branding strategy
Prioritise Signage Implementation	Develop implementation pack that includes all relevant information for implementation over an agreed time-frame.
Handover	Develop implementation pack that includes all relevant information for infrastructure team to implement over an agreed time-frame.



▶ ECONOMIC LEADERS FORUM

DESCRIPTION

This initiative is the introduction of an annual economic development forum that is attended by the CEO and other executive members of HSC. The invitation list will include key contributors to the economy and will have a specific industry focus each year. The forum will be a brainstorming session of ideas in a semi structured way that will allow thought leaders to have direct influence over projects, policy, and initiatives in Hepburn Shire.

RATIONALE

Comments through consultation have revealed that there are various levels of desire for more visibility from Council as well as more direct opportunities to liaise with Council on key business issues. This annual event will provide opportunity for organisational cooperation between Council and the private sector as well as various operators within the sector.

This initiative will provide for the fearless and frank exchange of ideas pertaining to Hepburn Shire's economic development. It will facilitate:

- Better communication between industry leaders and HSC
- Greater input from thought leaders existing in the Shire
- Access to Council leadership team for discussion and development of ideas
- Incorporation of current thinking from economic leaders into HSC plans

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Set time and dates	This will be a half day event. As such, forward notice will be needed to ensure availability. Depending on sector theme, the date should tie in with quieter period.
Develop theme and content	Determine the sector theme for the year 1 forum event. Establish key issue facing the sector and draft an agenda that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and discussion of key issues • Adequate open discussion time • Adequate networking time • Defined objectives of the event.
Develop the invitation list	The invitation list should include those relevant to the theme but also economic and thought leaders across the Shire. Information about the theme of the event will be provided in the invitation and thought leaders should be invited to have input into the event topics of discussion.
Provide avenues for feedback.	This will help in determining the successful elements of the event and where improvements can be made in subsequent years.



► BUSINESS GROWTH PLANNING

DESCRIPTION

Develop improved and accessible information related to the Victorian Planning Scheme and how it applies to business growth in Hepburn. Establish a clear pathway for businesses to take advantage of growth opportunities by providing better information up front and removing unnecessary roadblocks.

Information will need to be broad in nature but can be tailored to specific sectors or land uses, such as rural/agricultural land, commercially zoned land and even what is permitted in specific zoned areas. It is intended that the information will be presented in a simple to use format that makes the information clear and easy to understand for all users so that planning applications run more smoothly.

RATIONALE

This initiative aims to provide increased certainty for business by the provision of streamlined planning and process information aimed at growth facilitation. This information will help business people make decisions on their planning applications, or provide them with the help and advice they need for their particular case. Making information more available that details requirements up front coupled with opportunities for pre-planning advice will help reduce frustration over regulatory requirements.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

By working with businesses more closely to take advantage of growth opportunities this project aims to encourage \$0.25M to \$0.5M+ annual investment in business growth.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$1M INVESTMENT (Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.48M	\$0.46M	\$1.01M
Effect on Employment	5.4fte	3.4fte	8.9fte*

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Identify growth types	Identify the various types of business growth and associated regulatory requirements.
Identify planning issues	Create an exhaustive list of common planning application problems faced by local business owners. Include specific examples where possible.
Identify issue that can be avoided	From the list of possible issues and roadblocks, identify those that could be avoided with better information or process.
Prioritise List	Prioritise the list of issues that can be resolved in order of largest to smallest impact.
Implement any planning changes needed	Implement any planning process changes that have been identified as being possible.
Create and publish information	Create and publish information that outlines specific planning needs from Hepburn Shire to facilitate business growth. Promote information through various communication channels.

► BUSINESS MENTOR PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION

The initiative is based on a 12 month mentoring program that is individualised to each participant. The program will fund 10 places in the program with participants being required to formally apply for consideration. The program will take advantage of programs offered by RDV as well as tap into local business expertise where possible.

RATIONALE

Business mentoring has the ability to be tailored to the individual and their business challenges and is seen to be more effective than a one size fits all approach to business training and workshops. This approach has the potential to reach all industries that are in the Shire and make quantifiable results to several business operators. It is anticipated that the results will be more effective than a one size fits all approach such as training provision and workshops as well as being more accessible to those outside of the main towns.

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAILS
Engage with RDV	Meet with RDV to discuss the program to establish what they can provide
Develop program	Develop the program details to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application and selection process• Delivery details including locations, frequency etc• Prospectus for business owners• Marketing materials• Program feedback process
Advertise program	Promote the program through various channels including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic development newsletter• Council website and social media resources• Local B&TAs and LTAs• Local print media
Implementation of Program	Implement program as per scope.
Program Review	Review program success. Develop a lessons learned report with clear recommendations for future changes if needed should the program be deemed valuable to continue.

"...TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND THEIR BUSINESS CHALLENGES".

► IMPLEMENTATION OF STREETSCAPE PROJECTS

DESCRIPTION

Streetscape Planning and Design work has been undertaken across Hepburn Shire. Funding from both Council and the Victorian Government has seen improvements to public space in Clunes and Creswick. In partnership with the Glenlyon Progress Association and with funding support from Regional Development Victoria works will be undertaken to upgrade the Glenlyon Town Hall and surrounding infrastructure. Other works will continue to be rolled out to Hepburn Springs and Trentham.

RATIONALE

Streetscape improvements aim to augment public activity in order to support and enhance retail activity, tourism activity, safety and amenity to residents. Continuing with this project is necessary to provide much needed upgrades to these towns.

PROJECT PLAN

Task	Detail
Program Review	Review Shire wide streetscape program and implementation plan.
Implement Trentham Streetscape Project	Execute project works based on finalised designs
Implement Hepburn Streetscape Project	Produce draft streetscape designs for each town for internal and external review.



► ACCESS TO THE DAYLESFORD INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

DESCRIPTION

The lowering of East St in Daylesford at the railway bridge will allow truck access along this route, re-directing trucks that currently need to drive through the town. This initiative is seen as being vital for continuing trade in the Daylesford light industrial area.

RATIONALE

East St is the designated link road to Daylesford's industrial precinct and the Midland Highway according to the Hepburn Shire Council's Daylesford freight strategy. However, the height of the railway bridge limits heavy vehicle access via this route. Alternative routes are of concern with noise and safety as the Trucks are required to drive through town to access the area. The proposal is to lower the road under the bridge to allow for 4.6 metre minimum overhead clearance, as prescribed by the National Heavy Vehicle Register.

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Secure Funding	Based on detailed design and cost estimate for implementation, secure required necessary funding.
Draft request for tender documentation	Based on scope that has been defined, draft tender documentation for the project to be delivered.
Appoint successful contracting company	By way of an evaluation panel, determine the best tender for the works and award the contract.
Monitor project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor project execution with consideration to: • Public consultation • Time frames • Budget • Quality

EVENTS ATTRACTION AND SUPPORT

DESCRIPTION

This initiative will dedicate funds and resources to work with event organisers to make initial event development simple. The Economic Development department will work with event organisers to remove barriers and assist in administrative needs. Events that will be targeted include:

- Events that are able to be run during periods of low tourism economic activity
- Events that will promote visitation to Trentham, Clunes & Creswick

This project will also look to produce a prospectus for event organisers so that Hepburn Shire can attract the types of events identified as having the best potential impact on our local economy.

RATIONALE

Hosting successful events has a positive economic impact for the host town/area/location, as well as those in adjacent areas.

Events also introduce people to the area that might not otherwise have visited which promotes further visitation at other times. This can then in turn lead to people relocating to the area on a permanent basis.

GOALS AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

This project aims to attract 2 new events that will bring over 500 people to the Shire for one or more days. This project also aims to increase participation in current events by 10%. Events contribute greatly to the economy via Retail, Accommodation, and food services.

Economic Impact of \$1M Investment (Retail Sector)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.58M	\$0.44M	\$1.02M
Effect on Employment	9fte	4fte	13fte
Economic Impact of \$1M Investment (Accommodation & Food Services)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.49M	\$0.37M	\$0.87M
Effect on Employment	8fte	3fte	11fte*

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.aurin.org.au

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Identify growth opportunities	Evaluate our current events calendar; identify areas of growth potential with current event organisers. Identify event opportunities as well as a targeted list of event types that would suit identified gaps. The gap analysis should identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locations • Dates • Events types • Potential event organisers
Develop event organiser prospectus	Design and publish an event prospectus that can be promoted to event organisers with the aim of securing targeted events at targeted times throughout the year.



"EVENTS ALSO
INTRODUCE PEOPLE
TO THE AREA
THAT MIGHT NOT
OTHERWISE HAVE
VISITED"

▶ TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

DESCRIPTION

Undertake a complete public transport analysis throughout the Shire. Identify gaps and opportunities for improvement that will improve liveability, tourism and trade. Develop a prioritised business case that can be used to lobby various State Government bodies for better transport connections annually.

RATIONALE

Public transport options across the Shire is lacking in terms of service availability and regularity. An analysis of current service provision and service needs will inform a business case that can be used annually for advocacy to relevant state bodies.

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Current Service Analysis	Collate all relevant public transport service details and organise in a way so that the information is easily accessible.
Gap analysis of current PT service provision.	Examine current service provision against need and identify key gaps in service provision.
Prioritisation of gaps	Prioritise the transport needs gaps based on a weighted decision making matrix.
Build a business case according to gap analysis for State advocacy	Develop a business case document so as to advocate to relevant authorities for increased provision of services. Business case to be revised annually for continued lobbying.

"PUBLIC TRANSPORT
... IS LACKING IN
TERMS OF SERVICE
AVAILABILITY AND
REGULARITY"



► RESIDENTIAL GROWTH PLAN

DESCRIPTION

Working with the Planning team, this strategy proposes to plan for growth and residential development in a proactive way. This project will identify the areas where growth is likely to occur and implement planning changes that will encourage development in sustainable ways that fit with desired community outcomes. Potential developers will also be consulted to ensure identified areas are attractive to developing companies.

RATIONALE

Population growth has a direct impact on the local economy. The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan has identified Creswick and Clunes as growth areas, Creswick being identified for medium growth and Clunes identified for limited growth. It is also recognised that Trentham is a popular choice for new residents. Future directions detailed in the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan include:

- **Creswick:** Creswick is supported as a key settlement in Ballarat's hinterland. Provide for residential growth through infill development and incremental growth.
- **Clunes:** Support the growth of Clunes as a town on the Ballarat-Maryborough corridor. Infill development is favoured, with a focus on reinforcing the town's natural and heritage values.
- **Trentham:** Settlements such as Trentham may grow considerably as demand increases for housing opportunities within commuting distance to Melbourne.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

By creating the right environment to attract residential development this project aims to attract \$2.0M annually in construction investment.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$1M INVESTMENT (Construction)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.31M	\$0.48M	\$0.79M
Effect on Employment	3fte	4fte	7fte*

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.aurin.org.au

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Current Land Use Assessment	Assess current land use and development opportunities. Identify new areas for possible development as well as in-fill opportunities
Identify Needs	Identify planning changes needed to facilitate development in ways that maintain the individual character of the towns and is aligned with town plans and future land use policy.
Plan Transport and Services	Plan for transport availability, walking and cycling routes to ensure future housing is sustainable and well connected.
Attract Development	Work with potential developers to take advantage of the residential growth planning changes so that growth is undertaken as per this plan.
Attract New Residents	Attract new and diverse population through events and promotion.



▶ HEPBURN MINERAL SPRINGS REVITALISATION

DESCRIPTION

Revitalise the Hepburn Springs locality so that the identity of the place is refreshed and re-defined. Improve the experience for visitors to Hepburn Springs Reserve and Lake Daylesford through improved amenity, cultural and historical enhancements, and restore the areas to being the jewels of the Shire. Improve the Hepburn Springs streetscape to attract and develop business opportunities in the area to further enhance the Hepburn Springs experience.

RATIONALE

Hepburn Springs and the associated reserves hold a wealth of cultural and historical interest from both indigenous and settler perspectives. Improving the area through streetscape work, zoning, and various signage strategies throughout the springs area will enhance the experience for the visitor and provide positive economic outcomes for the Hepburn community.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The goal of this project is to attract investment in the Retail, Accommodation, & Food Services industries. This will be achieved through attracting investment in the Hepburn retail precinct and increased visitation to the Hepburn and Daylesford springs locations.

Economic Impact of \$1M Investment (Retail Sector)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.58M	\$0.44M	\$1.02M
Effect on Employment	9fte	4fte	13fte
Economic Impact of \$1M Investment (Accommodation & Food Services)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.49M	\$0.37M	\$0.87M
Effect on Employment	8fte	3fte	11fte*

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.adelaide.edu.au

PROJECT PLAN

Task	Detail
Rezoning of Hepburn	Analysis of current zoning and rezone where needed to encourage economic activity by way of business investment. Zoning should promote a village atmosphere that is pedestrian focused in accordance with the Hepburn Planning Schemes.
Signage Audit	Signage and Presentation audit of Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve, and Lake Daylesford to ensure consistent branding across all mineral Springs Reserves and the Victorian Mineral Springs Reserves Master Plan. Implement any changes that are identified.
Update Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve Management Plan	Working with the Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan, DELWP, Victorian Mineral Water Committee and other stakeholders update the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve Management Plan to include: Cultural Heritage interpretation Settler Heritage interpretation
Carry out planned works at Lake Daylesford	Implement prioritised recommendations from the Lake Daylesford Principles report at Lake Daylesford.



TOWARDS ZERO HEPBURN

DESCRIPTION

The project will develop a step by step roadmap for how the Municipality can become energy self sufficient and carbon neutral by 2030. The project will tie in with the public sustainability consultation project planned to be implemented in 2016 and build upon current projects under development.

Driving the Hepburn Shire to become a green energy leader would have great economic impact by:

- Creating Jobs
- Attracting Visitors
- Creating Wealth (through savings and energy revenue)
- Attracting residents to live in a shire that is carbon neutral and energy self sufficient

RATIONALE

This initiative recognises the renewable energy sector as being important to the State economy and builds upon a sector where Hepburn Shire has some momentum. (Hepburn Wind, Waste to Energy Initiative, Council Assets PV projects). A clear roadmap will lead to projects and initiatives that will attract funding and provide local employment opportunities in the renewable energy field as we drive towards the zero emissions objective.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

A clear roadmap towards energy self sufficiency and zero emissions will encourage investment from both the private and public sectors. This project aims to encourage \$0.5M to \$1.0M annual investment in this sector.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$1M INVESTMENT (Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste)	DIRECT IMPACT	FLOW-ON	TOTAL
Effect on GRP	\$0.44M	\$0.25M	\$0.70M
Effect on Employment	2fte	2fte	4fte*

Data provided by The University of Adelaide www.eiat.aurin.org.au

PROJECT PLAN

TASK	DETAIL
Energy and GHG Audit	Use Planet Footprint and other data to identify greenhouse gas emissions across the shire. Establish estimates and forecasts of total Shire energy needs and current distribution of energy sources.
Investigate alternate energy sources	Create a list of key initiatives and projects that will replace or reduce GHG intensive energy needs. List will include total potential, cost, and payback periods of investments.
Develop a Roadmap	Develop roadmap that provides a prioritised list of projects and initiatives that move the shire towards being energy self sufficient and carbon neutral. The roadmap will include GHG reduction initiatives as well as renewable green energy projects. Each stage should have quantifiable results and provide the best value/ KWh possible.
Develop business case for first step	Develop the business case to implement the first step of the road map.
Seek funding opportunities	Seek State/Federal funding opportunities for prioritised projects and initiatives outlined as part of the road map.



APPENDIX A

REGIONAL CONTEXT

HEPBURN SHIRE

Hepburn Shire is located in the Central Highlands region of Victoria, about 110 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. With a total land area of 1,470 square kilometres it is bounded by Central Goldfields and Mount Alexander Shires to the north, Macedon ranges to the east, Moorabool Shire to the south and the Pyrenees Shire along with the City of Ballarat to the west. Predominantly rural, the main townships are Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Creswick, Clunes and Trentham. The Shire is served by the Midland Highway and the Ballarat/Maryborough railway line. The links and access to Melbourne mean that Hepburn Shire continues to have appeal to residents, visitors and businesses.

Hepburn Shire has a rich heritage with the Jaara people inhabiting the area prior to European settlement from the late 1830s. The land was mainly used by settlers for grazing and crop growing until gold was discovered in 1851. Hepburn Shire contains 80% of Australia's mineral spring reserves and the townships of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs benefited from tourism during the late 1800s and early 1900s with this attraction. With the creation and maintenance of spa resorts, tourism continues to be an important industry for the Shire.

In the early 1900s the School of Forestry was formed in Creswick. While the grounds and architecture reflect the heritage of the goldfields the School continues to provide world class research and forest science education.

HEPBURN SHIRE HAS A RICH HERITAGE WITH THE JAARA PEOPLE INHABITING THE AREA PRIOR TO EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT FROM THE LATE 1830'S.

Hepburn Shire is home to many natural assets including the Wombat State Forest, the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve and the Central Mineral Springs Reserve as well as many and varied parks and gardens.

While Tourism has a long association with the Shire, agriculture has also played an important part in the local economy with rich volcanic soils to be found across the Shire. Agri-business continues to be central to the Hepburn's economy.

▶ KEY ECONOMIC FACTORS

Hepburn Shire's Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 2014 was estimated to be \$526 million, with a per capita GRP of \$36,642 and a per worker GRP of \$124,626. Hepburn's per capita and per worker GRP is significantly lower than Australia's and Victoria's average .

The Hepburn Shire's Gross Regional Product comprises of consumption by households (59%) and government (16%) capital investment by the private sector (21%) and the public sector (4%) as well as consumption of regional exports less consumption in the region of imports. For perspective, household consumption makes a significantly greater proportion to total expenditure in Hepburn than in Victoria or Australia.

Since 2008 the GRP has been increasing from \$389 million in 2008 to \$507 million in 2014. This represents an overall increase of \$118 million or a compound growth rate of 5.44%

In terms of the Economic Development Strategy these figures indicate that there is room for improvement in terms of Hepburn's per capita and per worker contribution to GRP. Furthermore, some consideration may be given to the composition of regional expenditure from household to government expenditure as well as private and public investment.

STATISTICS SUMMARY

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY

THE MEDIAN AGE HAS INCREASED FROM **43** → **46**

UNEMPLOYMENT HAS DECREASED FROM **6.3%** → **5.6%**



THE NUMBER OF JOBS HAS GONE UP BY **6.3%**



POPULATION HAS INCREASED 5% FROM **13,501** TO **14,130**

PERSONAL INCOME HAS INCREASED FROM **\$358** → **\$454**

THE VALUE OF INVESTMENT HAS INCREASED BY **35%** AND GRP HAS INCREASED BY **5.44%**



OUR LABOUR FORCE HAS INCREASED **10%** FROM 2001 TO 2015

▶ INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION

In 2013 over 50 percent of businesses registered in Hepburn Shire operated in three industry sectors.

- Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing (26%);
- Construction (15%) and Professional scientific and technical services (10%);
- Retail trade (7%) and Accommodation and food services (6%) (Industry categories associated with tourism were respectively the fourth and fifth by number of businesses).

When employment by industry is considered a similar story develops, where in 2013, 65% of all Hepburn Shire residents employed are working in just seven industry categories. That's over 4,000 people.

- Health care and social assistance 13.4%;
- Retail trade (10%);
- Accommodation and food services had (9.9%);
- Education and training (8.7%);
- Manufacturing (8.4%);
- Construction (8.4%);
- Agriculture Fishery and Forestry (7.1%).

Across the period 2001 to 2011 these sectors, Accommodation and Food Services, Health Care and Social Assistance and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services have had a marked increase in the number of residents employed.

The average number of visitors to Hepburn Shire annually is 825,900.

There are 593,100 annual visitor nights and the average stay is 2.3 nights. The total annual spend by tourists in Hepburn Shire is \$148,800,000, with the average spend per trip at \$180.2, average spend per night \$174.1 and average spend (commercial accommodation) per night is \$256.30.

Within the broader economy the tourism sector supports 734 jobs which places tourism as the largest 'employer' in Hepburn Shire. These jobs account for 18% of employment within the Shire which is considerably higher than the Grampians region average of tourism supporting 6.51% employment.

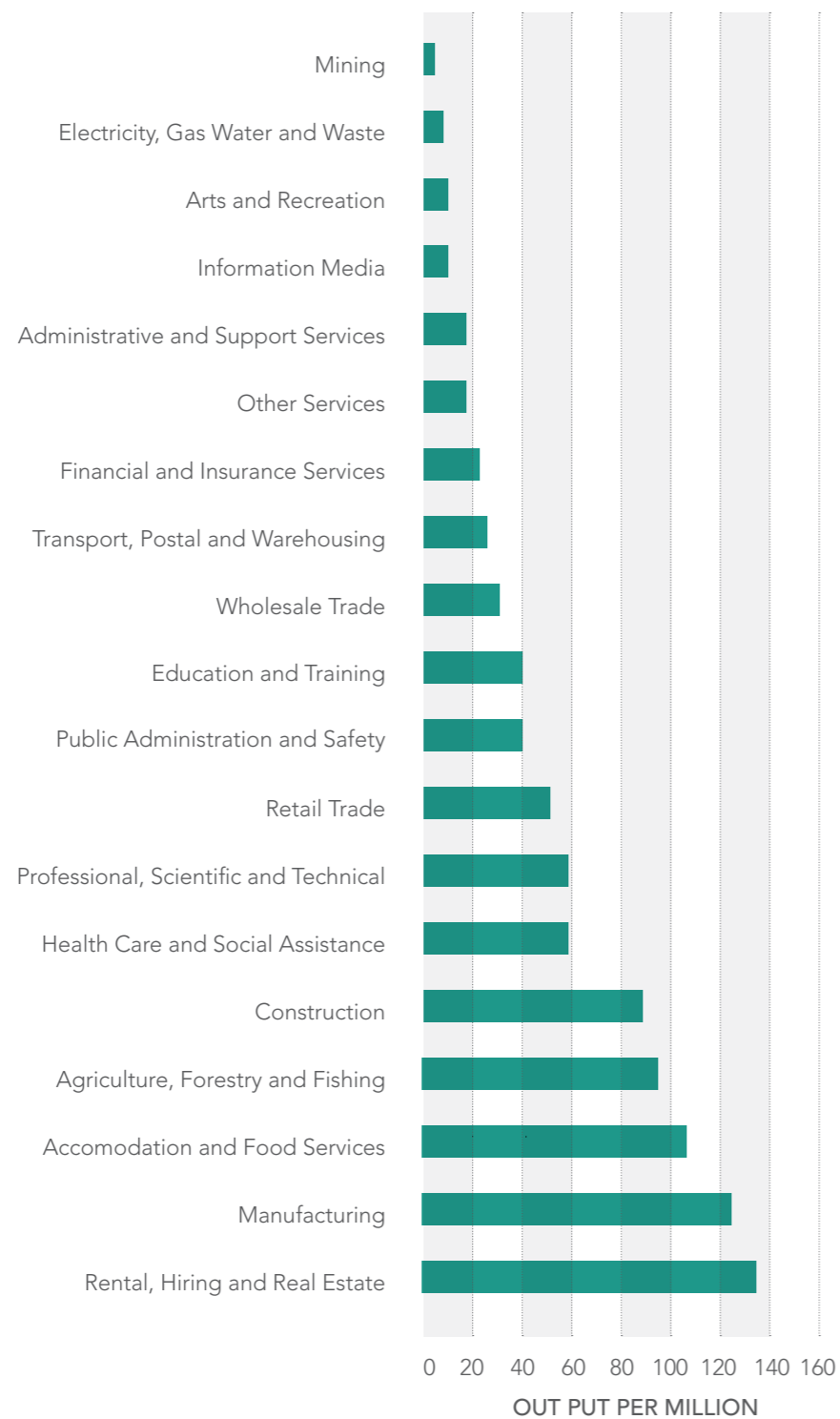
In the Hepburn Shire economy tourism is the second largest industry by economic output (approx \$126 million) just behind manufacturing (approx \$129 million).

In terms of economic development, this business and industry data means that:

- The sectors that contribute the most to the economy include Tourism, Agriculture, Construction, Health, Education and Training and Professional Scientific and Technical Services. These industries must be considered in all major economic decisions so as to ensure they continue to contribute significantly to our economy.
- In terms of employment, tourism, health, and professional and technical services are becoming increasingly important and so any strategy or policy should seek to further strengthen these sectors to encourage more employment opportunities.

► INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION CONT...

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION



POPULATION

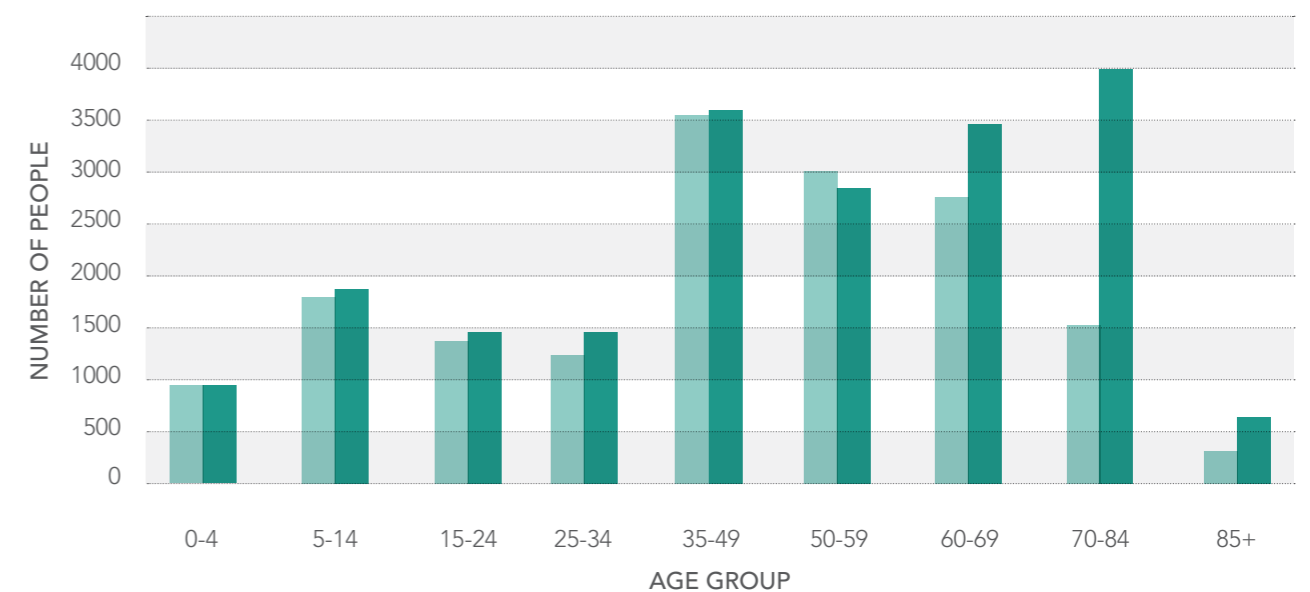
In 2016, Hepburn Shire is forecast to have a population of just over 15,000. Over the past decade the population has grown marginally. Projections for the next 15 years suggest that Hepburn Shire will grow to almost 18,000 people. This growth represents a 1.0% average annual increase; lower than the Victorian average projected growth rate.

Like many regional and rural areas, Hepburn Shire is facing a continued ageing population. By 2031 there is projected to be an additional 2,525 persons aged above 60 years. The table below shows that the forecast growth in population is in the 60+ groups.

These demographic trends have a number of impacts for the economic development strategy and include:

- Population increases below average will not help support a thriving economy and so there will need to be policy to support population growth initiatives.
- The available labour force will be aging significantly and so businesses may want to adopt recruitment practices that include more flexible arrangements.
- The resources required for health and aged care services will need to meet an increasing demand.

POPULATION CHANGE BY TEN-YEAR AGE GROUP, 2011 AND 2031



► INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION CONT...

INCOME

The median weekly household income in Hepburn Shire is \$850 which is significantly lower than the median Victorian average of \$1,216 and ranks Hepburn Shire 62nd out of the 79 LGA's in Victoria. Hepburn Shire also has a relatively high level of individuals with income less than \$400 per week with 45.8% of the population fitting in this category compared with a Victorian average of 39.9%.

WORKFORCE

Within Hepburn Shire 39.5% of residents hold a higher education qualification, compared to a Victorian average of 45.7%. Hepburn Shire has a high percentage of students attending a Government School at 71.6% compared with the Victorian average of 61.6% and 54.2% of residents who did not complete year 12 compared with the Victorian average of 43.7%.

Between 2001 and 2011 there has been a rise from 31.5% to 33.5% in higher skilled employment within the Shire and a subsequent decrease in lower skilled employment, from 32.1% to 30.3%.

The significance of this income and workforce data to the economic development strategy can be read as such:

- A large proportion of the population is reliant on government assistance; limiting discretionary spending.
- Wage rates are lower than other areas of the State meaning attracting and retaining high quality staff may be challenging for businesses.

- With higher skilled employment rising there may be opportunities for the Shire to attract new and emerging industries.

SECTOR ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The following sectors have significance to the economy of Hepburn Shire due to their contribution to employment, Gross Regional Product (GRP), and the reputation of the Shire as a great place to live and work.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Tourism and hospitality have a long standing association with the economy of Hepburn Shire and the importance of these industries cannot be understated. While tourism as an aggregate of several industries is not specified in collected statistics, Accommodation and Food Services employ 10 per cent of the Shire population. Linkages exist between producers and retailers of food and beverage, however, this can be increased and strengthened to further promote Hepburn Shire as a premium tourist destination and to increase the economic viability of these businesses.

ACCOMODATION AND
FOOD SERVICES
EMPLOYS 10% OF THE
POPULATION AND CONTRIBUTES
AROUND 11%
OF THE SHIRE'S GRP.

RETAIL

As a sector retail has importance to the local economy. The towns of Hepburn Shire are characterised by vibrant, main street retail zones that service residents and tourists alike. The retail scene leverages local products and services which is beneficial towards the ongoing promotion of the produce of the Shire. There is, however, a perception from residents that there are not enough retail options for locals with many retail outlets geared towards tourist trade. Along with this, is the fact that while some towns show increasingly prosperous retail sectors, others are slowing and may need bolstering in some way.

RETAIL TRADE
EMPLOYS 10% OF THE
POPULATION AND CONTRIBUTES
AROUND 5%
OF THE SHIRE'S GRP.

AGRICULTURE

The highest proportion of businesses in Hepburn Shire is in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industries. Further breakdown of this provides the following leading sectors:

Hepburn Shire is uniquely advantaged in the agricultural sector due to the quality of the agricultural land on offer and access to markets. Furthermore, growth in various agri-business models is on the increase.

There is an attraction to the area for new and existing residents to incorporate livelihood and lifestyle through primary production in Hepburn Shire and this can be promoted and supported.

AGRICULTURE,
FORESTRY AND FISHING
ACCOUNTS FOR 7%
OF EMPLOYMENT AND
CONTRIBUTES AROUND
10% OF THE SHIRES GRP.

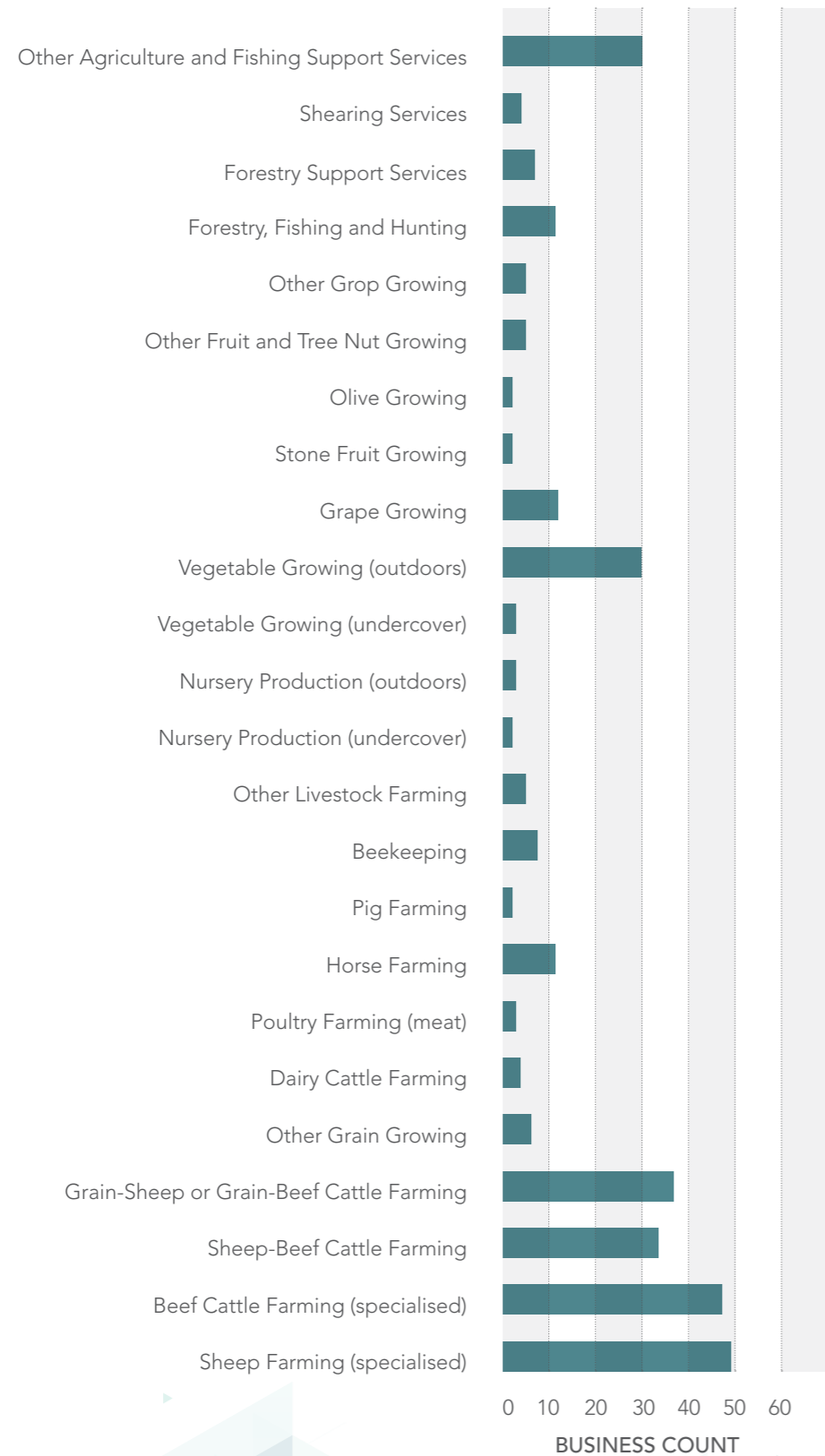
26% OF ALL BUSINESSES IN THE SHIRE
ARE IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR!

Supporting young person's entry into the sector is vital to continued growth as well as overcoming other land use issues such as succession farming issues, urban sprawl and the increasing popularity of rural lifestyle blocks.

Managing and promoting the growing connections between agriculture, tourism, retail and hospitality sectors as well as lifestyle influences will prove beneficial to local primary producers as well as the local economy more generally.

► INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION CONT...

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION



CREATIVE SECTOR

According to Creative Victoria, "creative industries are a broad but interconnected field, spanning arts, culture, screen and design. They encompass disciplines as diverse as games development and graphic design; fashion and film-making; independent theatre and industrial design; comedy and craft. And they include activities that are commercially-driven and community-based; experimental and export ready, and everything in between."

From an economic perspective the creative sector crosses a number of sub-sectors including scientific and technical services, adult and community education, heritage, creative and performing arts, information, media and telecommunications and printing.

Hepburn Shire Council demonstrates strong interaction with the creative sector

through Community Grants and the Public Art Program. In addition to this, support is available through advice and in-kind services. Council can continue to improve on these initiatives by promoting the cultural foundations of the area, the reputation of the creative output and by provision of appropriate infrastructure for creative endeavours.

HEALTH

Hepburn Health has economic significance in the Shire as an employer of around 500 people from the region. Given the increasing importance of health service providers to lifestyle and amenity factors of the Shire and the aging population this sector will continue to have economic influence in the local economy.

THE HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SECTOR
IN HEPBURN ACCOUNTS FOR 14%
 OF EMPLOYMENT AND CONTRIBUTES
6% OF THE SHIRE'S GDP.

► SURVEY SUMMARY

The data gathered from the Economic Development Strategy Survey is mostly representative of locally owned, owner operated business models across the Shire. The data shows that Hospitality and Agriculture continue to be mainstays of the local economy with 5 or less employees. It can also be seen that a great deal of the product sold from these businesses is sold locally in Hepburn Shire and throughout Victoria.

Overall, responses show that business confidence is up and there is enthusiasm for various plans to expand operations in some way in the future. Lack of business confidence in the local economy does not point to one sector or location and was specific to individual businesses. A small number of responses indicate that there is always room for improvement, especially in the way that HSC conducts itself as an organisation. HSC is listed as an inhibitor of business growth; reasons given are economic factors such as rates, or other restrictions such as planning permits. While it can be understood that these factors are often without flexibility, improvement can be made on how the message is delivered.

Infrastructure is another factor where HSC has some influence; this was mentioned in broad terms with occasional reference to parking and street-scaping. Availability of manufacturing sites was also mentioned in some instances; however, more details would be needed in order to comment.

The strong tourism focus in Hepburn Shire is seen as one reason why many businesses thrive in this location in that they are aimed at or built around the tourist

economy. Conversely, the respondents that indicated they are doing less well are those that do not have a tourism focus. This might indicate that HSC needs to be more supportive of business alternatives to tourism or agriculture. Comments suggest that this can be done through marketing and promotion or stronger presence and support from HSC.

Presentation and signage across the Shire was also commonly mentioned as being a clear way Hepburn Shire Council can make positive impacts to both residents and visitors.

In all, businesses ask for understanding and support from Council as well as improvement to infrastructure and liveability factors.

SCOR ANALYSIS

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks (SCOR) Analysis

The following analysis of Hepburn Shire's strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks is intended to provide a snapshot of some of the economic factors that have been considered in the development of the economic development plan. Where possible the plan should:

- Continue to support our strengths
- Seek to take advantage of opportunities
- Develop actions to improve our challenges
- Mitigate the effects of the risks

► STRENGTHS

- Distance from Melbourne, Bendigo and Ballarat
- Rich agricultural land
- Convenient transport corridors
- Strong visitor economy
- Highly integrated and respectful community
- Health services and medical centres
- Affordable housing options in Creswick and Clunes
- Mineral Springs attraction
- Heritage streetscapes
- Native forests and reserves
- Thriving creative and artistic community

► CHALLENGES

- Mobile phone coverage black-spots
- High speed internet availability including (NBN)
- Limited education opportunities
- Lack of public transport
- Skilled workforce shortages
- Low forecast population growth
- Retention of young people in Shire
- Decrease in non residential investment
- Relatively low education levels

► OPPORTUNITIES

- Attraction of more residents to the Shire's liveability
- Leverage innovation and technology to further differentiate the region
- Industry diversification
- Maximising value from heritage streetscapes
- Development of town based 'CBD's'
- Enhancement of the visitor experience to the region
- Improve education opportunities
- Increase value derived from natural assets

► RISKS

- Aging population
- Economic reliance on tourism, manufacturing and agriculture
- Competition from other tourist destinations
- Loss of mineral springs differentiation to Mornington Peninsula





Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL