



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGY

2022-2032

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Peoples. Council acknowledges them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians and pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging. Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Golden Plains Shire Council has prepared an Economic Development Strategy for its community. There were two primary outputs from this strategy process.

The first is an overarching Economic Development, Tourism and Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2032 (the Strategy). This reflects the Shire's economic drivers, both current and prospective, and aims to co-ordinate the economic development efforts of a range of stakeholders inside and outside of Council. This product takes a relatively long-term perspective of 10 years.

The second is a four-year action plan with a sharper focus on Council's investment, planning, facilitation and marketing activities. This is a separate document accompanying the EDTIA Strategy.

What is Economic Development?

Economic development typically refers to growing a local economy. This means growth in economic activity such as increased exports of local produce or manufactured products, or more visitors spending money on tourist accommodation. Growth, in turn, allows businesses to invest in new equipment, hire more people and pay higher wages. Greater economic activity also means higher government revenues and more money to spend on better quality services for the community. Economic development enables a higher standard of living for people in Golden Plains Shire.

For a rural area like Golden Plains where agriculture has historically been the dominant sector, value-adding initiatives and diversification are important. This will ensure that traditional local practices of 'making and growing things' can continue to make significant contributions to the region's product as population growth and broader trends spread the local economy across a more broad portfolio of service-based industries.

Understanding how well a local economy functions also goes beyond growth measures and the number of jobs. Growth requires a well-functioning economy and must include a just distribution of wealth and opportunity, the provision of life's essentials (such as housing, education, healthcare, a political voice), and must stay within environmental boundaries to allow for a stable climate and healthy ecosystems. Climate change and environmental degradation pose significant risks to ongoing economic prosperity.

Economic prosperity is also closely linked to the liveability of an area. Supporting local markets, community events, and access to high quality infrastructure and services not only enables a strong economy, it makes for a nice place to live.

Approach to the Strategy

SGS Economics and Planning worked with Council to develop the Economic Development, Tourism and Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2032 (the Strategy). A much more nuanced understanding of local economic development was required beyond the so-called ‘tried and true’ models of the past decade. Economic development in Golden Plains can, and should, be about attracting new firms and investment, and supporting the agricultural sector, but it also has to be inclusive and cross-sectoral. It must build and sustain grassroots business strength and develop strong local supply chains locking wealth into the Shire.

At the core of the project was a spine of stakeholder involvement. This included interviews with key economic stakeholders and leaders in the community (as identified by Council), a workshop held with Councillors and Senior Management Team, and a community survey to prioritise and understand the focus of this Strategy. Other inputs in drafting this strategy include SGS’s background economic analysis on the state of the economy, global and national trends and the drivers, enablers and sustainers of economic development.

The Strategy that emerged from this process has the hallmarks of rigorous economic analysis but also carries the insights of the local community. The aim was to generate a strategy and action plan that are both innovative and practical and deliver priorities for the short, medium and long-term that are targeted, realistic and achievable.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGY

The pyramid figure outlines how the strategy is structured and linked together, from the high-level vision and aims down to the strategies and partnerships that will deliver action to create an economy that meets the vision, aims and targets by 2032.



I 1.3 THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Modest Economic Growth

Over recent years, the economic growth rate for Golden Plains Shire has been slow relative to the Victorian economy more broadly. The economy has also been growing at rates slower than population growth, showing a declining performance from a GRP (Gross Regional Product) per capita perspective. Across the municipality spatially, Bannockburn is the only area that has seen positive economic growth since 2013, resulting from recent residential development and the growth of household servicing industries such as construction and retail.

- The Golden Plains has 1,474 locally registered businesses with a turnover of more than \$50,000 per annum, and another 543 with a turnover of less than \$50,000. The vast majority (99%) are small businesses (defined as having turnover less than \$2 million).
- The economy experiences high rates of economic leakage as residents work and spend money in neighbouring municipalities. More than 70% of residents travel outside of the Shire to work and local services and retail are limited.

It's important that more expenditure is captured locally to grow the economy and local economic opportunities. The health of local businesses and their ability to grow, employ people and develop products is of critical importance to economic development.

Industries with Potential

The economy of the Golden Plains is currently driven by specialisations in agriculture (including food product manufacturing), and by population growth.

- Key export products come from traditional industry sectors like mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. Representing 'new' money for the Shire, exports are a major player in economic performance and prosperity. Income injected into the local economy creates a multiplier effect as exporting firms draw on local suppliers and workers to meet the demand from external customers.
- There are new investments flowing into the economy as well, most notably in renewable energy, but also transport, retail and waste infrastructure.
- Driver industries which show potential for development include agriculture and food product manufacturing, health and aged care, population serving sectors like retail, and tourism and events.
- A key asset for the Shire is its supply of land. Golden Plains Shire covers an area of approximately 2,700 square kilometres. Most of this land is cleared agricultural land which has been used for broadacre cropping and livestock grazing. There are opportunities to increase the productivity of agricultural land through new technology, biosecurity measures, new crops, water management and farming techniques, plus non-agricultural uses like carbon farming and renewable energy.

Moving towards Equity

- There are pockets of disadvantage across the Shire, with unemployment in disadvantaged groups and young people a concern.
- Population growth is strong in Golden Plains, with Bannockburn expected to double in population in the coming years. Population growth will grow the size of the local workforce, so the main issues may not lie with a lack of workers, but a lack of local employment opportunities. There is a need to grow local jobs and local wealth creation, and not simply be a dormitory for the major centres nearby.
- There is a real lack of opportunity for young people who want to stay local. Social isolation and mental health present as challenges as well.
- There also needs to be improved outcomes for Traditional Owners, the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar. Golden Plains Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 states a commitment to engaging with local indigenous heritage and the culture of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar peoples. Council will acknowledge and preserve Aboriginal values and culture through partnerships, land management practices and education. Treaty and reconciliation are critical to rectifying and acknowledging that the new local economy is built upon the dispossession of aboriginal land and ongoing structural inequality. Power, opportunity, skills and prosperity need to be shared with traditional custodians of the land and incorporated in day-to-day business and industry practices for a just economy to be developed and sustained.

Macro Trends, Local Implications

- Digital disruption, technology adaptation, hybrid work that combines time in the office with remote work, climate change, casualisation of the workforce, stagnating wages, and many more macro trends will continue to provide challenges and opportunities to the local economy, necessitating adaptation and adjustment to these future movements in a flexible and dynamic manner. While the economy's structure is grounded in the dominant industries of the mid-20th century, notably primary production, it is important that planning for the next phase and build towards opportunities that breathe life into these industries and the economy.
- Casualisation of the workforce, low-income growth and underemployment are dominant trends nationally that are contributing to low levels of household wealth creation.
- Emergence of these trends requires new thinking and consideration of digital technology, the arts and creativity, the impact of climate change and renewed economic models, including community wealth building and circular economy. Such a paradigm shift requires embedding social compacts and environmental stewardship at the core of economic value.



I 1.4 COMMUNITY INPUT

The Golden Plains Shire community and businesses (big and small) are the heart and soul of the local economy. Community and businesses provided valuable input into developing this strategy through around 10 face-to-face interviews, a workshop with Councillors, a workshop with community coordinators representing different organisations and townships, and an online and print survey. The Draft Strategy was exhibited publicly, with residents able to read the Draft Strategy and provide feedback during the public exhibition period.

Stakeholder Feedback

A broad approach to consider how an economy can be developed was discussed with stakeholders. Growing an economy requires identifying and supporting growth industries. Still, a host of other factors are critical to enabling economic development and sustaining it for ongoing prosperity and an inclusive economy that meets the needs of local residents. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of identifying what makes each town unique and identifying strategies and actions that build on these strengths.

Survey and Public Exhibition Feedback

The online survey was open for a four-week period in May and June 2022 on Council's website, with print copies of the survey at Council's Customer Hubs in Bannockburn and Smythesdale. The survey was also advertised on social media and in local publications. Residents and businesses were invited to share ideas and priorities to be incorporated to the Draft Strategy; 19 responses were received.

Survey respondents see many opportunities for economic development in Golden Plains Shire. As the largest township, Bannockburn likely enjoys the strongest position to accommodate this growth and development. According to respondents, the key opportunities for the Shire are in tourism, particularly ecotourism and agrotourism, and in the investment and attraction of local retail and services. Capitalising on these opportunities will require overcoming the principal challenges of ageing/poor quality infrastructure, a lack of innovation, and financial constraints.

The exhibition of the Draft Strategy between 25 August and 22 September 2022 attracted two submissions. Both submissions championed further initiatives for inclusion. These suggestions have been included in the Strategy or passed on to the responsible Council unit for further consideration.

2. VISION AND AIM

2.1 VISION AND AIM

The Strategy was developed on the heels of the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040 (the Vision 2040). Adopted by Council in 2020, the Vision 2040 includes a pillar of Prosperity with the following commitment:

- We want to learn, develop and progress with access to quality care, education and training.
- We want local shopping, goods and services including retail, hospitality, tourism and event options.
- We want access to a range employment opportunities and pathways.
- We want to promote and improve the regional economy through partnerships, innovation and support for local producers, agriculture and businesses.
- We want to maintain and strengthen advocacy and relationships with Government, regional development boards and business groups.

This commitment to Prosperity supports the localisation of economic flows to create local opportunities for employment and business, skill development and care, the development of local businesses, and support for the agriculture and tourism sector, partnerships and innovation. The Vision 2040 clearly calls for an economy that is resilient and provides benefits for local people.

Therefore, growing the Golden Plains Shire economy will go beyond simply trying to achieve better numbers in measures such as gross domestic product growth and the number of jobs. A commitment to inclusive economic outcomes means attention not only to the quantity of economic growth and its impact on average living standards, but also to the distribution of that growth among residents.

The Vision 2040 also calls for a proud, safe and inclusive community, great liveability and sustainability including a clean and green future. The Vision has guided the drafting of the Strategy.



COMMUNITY

- Proud
- Safe
- Inclusive
- Connected
- Engaged
- Resilient
- Supported
- Contributing



LIVEABILITY

- Health and Wellbeing
- Rural and Urban Living
- Country Feel
- Active and Passive Recreation
- Services, Facilities and Activities
- Connected Transport



SUSTAINABILITY

- Environmental Stewardship
- Value and Preserve Ecosystems, Nature and Cultural Heritage
- Responsible Attitudes and Behaviours
- Clean and Green Future



PROSPERITY

- Learning, Education and Training
- Shopping, Goods and Services
- Employment Opportunities and Pathways
- Supporting Local Producers and Business
- Advocacy and Partnerships



The Strategy aims to guide economic development so Golden Plains Shire has a productive and exciting decade, with development that meets the Vision 2040.

Economic development, therefore, must focus on the importance of place, community connection and support; be inclusive; ready to take advantage of new ideas and opportunities; be clean and green; localise spending, wealth, and opportunity; build partnerships; and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.

Partnerships for Delivery

For inclusive, sustainable and strong economic development to occur, key stakeholders that influence the region's ability to deliver strategies need to have commitment and understanding of the Strategy and their organisation's role in driving it. Maintaining and expanding cross-sector relationships for investment, business development and jobs growth is central to this.

The Strategy aims to provide a document to focus and align effort by being a communications tool and providing strategic guidance on regional priorities to stakeholders in Golden Plains Shires economic future. In focus areas, stakeholders can lead deeper strategic work to pursue additional strategies and actions with the additional knowledge gained over time.

Economic development is a long-term process, not a one-time project. It is critically essential for core organisations to continuously communicate and progress efforts. Embedding economic development efforts into the region's DNA is an exercise in civic muscle-building over time.

Under each focus area, a list of partners for delivery has been identified. This list will need to evolve over time as new opportunities for partnership arise. The development process of this Strategy is only the beginning of partnerships for economic development.

3. AREAS OF FOCUS AND STRATEGIES

I 3.1 FOUR FOCUS AREAS

There are many things Council and the Golden Plains community could do to pursue economic development. But spreading the effort too thin can weaken the overall outcome. The areas of focus are deemed to be of most influence in meeting the aim of the Strategy.

A mixed approach was used to identify the priority areas of focus. One workstream provided an evidence-driven list of action areas based on statistical research, policy review and best-practice economic thought. A second stream included stakeholder interviews, a community survey and a community review process.

The areas of focus are:

1. Small Towns and Enterprise, with a focus on increasing business skills, networks and capacity to innovate, and improving the unique characteristics, liveability and vibrancy of local centres to support sustainable population growth, tourism, retail and hospitality.
2. Productive, Sustainable Landscapes, with a focus on landscape management and value-adding processing to increase sustainable agriculture output and pursue opportunities that align with the principals of a low-carbon, circular economy.
3. Escape the City, which will see a focus on the development of a tourism brand, businesses, attractions and events to drive domestic visitation from those seeking food, cultural and natural experiences a short drive from the nearby cities.
4. Shire-Based Health and Education, with the aim to attract and support investment in health and education infrastructure and services to contain expenditure, support a growing population and create local jobs.

I 3.2 A THREE HORIZONS APPROACH TO ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Realising the ambitions of the Golden Plains community requires a framework to simultaneously inform both short-term planning and the realisation of long-term aspiration. The Three Horizons framework provides this structure. The Three Horizons framework has been adapted to guide economic development action planning.

The Three Horizons model identifies three key stages (horizons) of economic maturation:

- Consolidate – Where stakeholders in the economy protect and build existing core business and functions.
- Enhance – Where an economy leverages existing core functions to diversify into related functions, supply chains or aligned businesses. These improvements can be thought of as ‘organic innovations’, building on existing strengths.
- Transform – Where stakeholders contemplate new opportunities not currently present but draw on the place’s advantages. The third horizon is where a place seeks to ‘reinvent itself’.

It is essential to be active across all three horizons simultaneously while recognising that the scale and timing of benefits will vary. An exclusive focus on consolidation projects will quickly disappoint many stakeholders as not being visionary enough. Equally, a strategy with its 'head in the clouds' can also be expected to rapidly lose support and momentum. Applying the Three Horizons framework to the Golden Plains Shire economy provides structure to the continual process of evolution towards transformative change. The timeline is not necessarily a starting date but instead an outlook of when success can be achieved.

FIGURE 2 Three horizons economic transformation framework



3.3 STRATEGY STRUCTURE

The following pages detail an approach to economic development according to each of the four focus areas. Under each area, the transformational ambition is laid out, as is the economic logic as to why the area of focus is important and advantageous to pursue. The ambitions and strategies are to be pursued by all stakeholders in the Golden Plains economy to collectively work towards achieving the community vision and strategic aim of a prosperous Shire. They are not intended to provide a complete and detailed future program of works.

Instead, they are intended to signpost what should be prioritised if Golden Plains is to move towards the transformation of the economy. How Council will lead the implementation is captured in the separate four-year action plan that corresponds with the strategies under the Consolidate and Enhance horizons.

FOCUS AREA ONE: SMALL TOWNS AND ENTERPRISE

Transformational Ambition

Golden Plains Shire is a great place to live for existing residents and attractive for new residents and businesses on the back of community, the liveability offer associated with its distinct small towns, good mobility, access to Melbourne and Geelong, and housing choice; it has a business environment that fosters diversity, growth and innovation. Public transport improvements are a critical requirement.

Economic Logic

The Golden Plains' business community almost entirely comprises small businesses. There are also six larger businesses registered in Golden Plains Shire who act as vital economic anchors with local supply chains. The health of these businesses and their ability to grow, employ people and develop products is of critical importance to Council's economic development aspirations and are a key focus for economic development actions.

Economic development depends upon the skills of these local business owners and entrepreneurs across the Shire. Therefore, the health of businesses and their ability to grow, employ people, and develop products is of critical importance to the Shire's economic development aspirations. Much of the desired economic growth can come from positive change in current firms already in the Shire. These businesses can become larger, more innovative, productive or export into new markets.

The emergence of new local firms is also critical. New firms include businesses moving to Golden Plains Shire (aided by business attraction and facilitation), start-ups and new entries borne locally through entrepreneurship, plus social enterprises and community projects. It is also valuable to assist and reduce the loss of existing firms that may not be financially sustainable in their current state.

A focus on local business development – including enterprises reflecting the needs and character of the Shire's distinctive array of small towns – is warranted to build an inclusive economy, support local employment, develop local supply chains, and trap wealth in the Shire. A broad array of businesses should be supported on their growth journey, from large agricultural producers, high street retailers or a local bakery, to the solo entrepreneurs building a business from home, community organisations and creative industries. There is a role for all stakeholders in Golden Plains Shire's economic future to support local businesses with the skills, knowledge and networks to grow and expand their local operations.

To attract and keep skilled workers and high-quality businesses, a range of economic enablers are needed to support local liveability. These include transport connections, digital infrastructure, vibrant local townships, good health and education services and housing.

Strategies for the Golden Plains Shire Economy

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below. Businesses must be first supported through the challenging economic times experienced whilst simultaneously looking at ways to enhance the business environment in Golden Plains Shire. In the third horizon, a business environment is in place that fosters diversity, growth and innovation.

Horizon 1: Consolidate

Golden Plains Shire is a network of unique townships where businesses are supported in their recovery from COVID-19; anchor institutions continue to play a key role, and export potential is further explored.

- Expand targeted and innovative initiatives that strengthen and promote business growth and build on the strengths of each township.
- Create the conditions where investment and employment growth in Golden Plains is straightforward and supported by government.

Horizon 2: Enhance

Golden Plains Shire businesses expand their workforce, move into new markets and diversify, driving a revitalisation of the townships and a decrease in economic leakages.

- Leverage the delivery of the Gheringhap Employment Precinct to create a thriving new centre for economic activity in the Shire.
- Enhance business networks and foster a culture of collaboration, mentoring and support in the business community and with government.
- Develop distinct economic visions for the Shire's townships.
- Strengthen the network of services and infrastructure to effectively connect people and jobs.

Horizon 3: Transform

Golden Plains Shire is a great place to live for existing residents and attractive for new residents and businesses on the back of community, liveability, good mobility, access to Melbourne and Geelong, and housing choice; it has a business environment that fosters growth, diversity and innovation.

Existing Projects

Delivery of the following ongoing/upcoming projects can help catalyse progress in this focus area:

1. NBN rollout (FTTP in Teesdale)
2. Expansion of the Bannockburn Industrial Estate
3. Completion of the construction of the new supermarket in Bannockburn
4. Proposed expansion of a supermarket in Smythesdale
5. Proposed construction of a supermarket in Meredith
6. Three Trails upgrade project
7. Road upgrades
8. Gheringhap Employment Precinct
9. Community Enhancement Funds/Community Benefit Funds from windfarm projects
10. Projects and initiatives identified in the township Community Plans (for example, Lethbridge Station Building re-use, Rokewood and Corindhap community business initiatives – op shop, bartering/trading, repair/fix it café days, art exhibitions)
11. The actions of Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-2026, including the development of creative industries (Strategy 4)

Partners for Delivery

- Victorian and Australian Government business and economic development authorities: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), Regional Development Victoria (RDV), Business Victoria, AusIndustry, AusTrade, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), etc.
- Regional organisations – including G21, Chambers of Commerce, industry bodies and associations
- Traditional Owner groups
- Infrastructure authorities: NBN Co, VicRoads, Department of Transport (DOT)
- Community Coordinators
- Local innovation leaders, business leaders, anchor institutions and entrepreneurs

FOCUS AREA TWO: PRODUCTIVE, SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Transformational Ambition

The Shire exports renewable energy and high-quality food and fibre products generating income and employment through industries that are innovative, diverse, regenerative and climate-adaptive.

Economic Logic

Golden Plains Shire has a major asset in its abundant land supply which can be leveraged for economic development, whether agriculture, tourism or energy generation. With 19,000ha of land designated National Park and State Forest, there is also 120ha of land in Council reserves for passive recreation. Much of the remaining land is degraded from years of cropping and grazing which presents opportunities for carbon sequestration and landscape restoration.

Encouraging more regenerative agricultural practices within the Shire would benefit the environment but could also provide employment and education opportunities. Engaging Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar people to protect/restore native vegetation, remove invasive species and manage the land is another opportunity.

The Golden Plains Shire economy is dominated by agriculture with more than 10 times the Victorian average share of jobs in this sector. Locally, agriculture accounts for around 25% of output and 20% of employment within the Shire. The Shire is seeing strong growth in intensive agriculture, particularly poultry, pigs, beef and goat dairy.

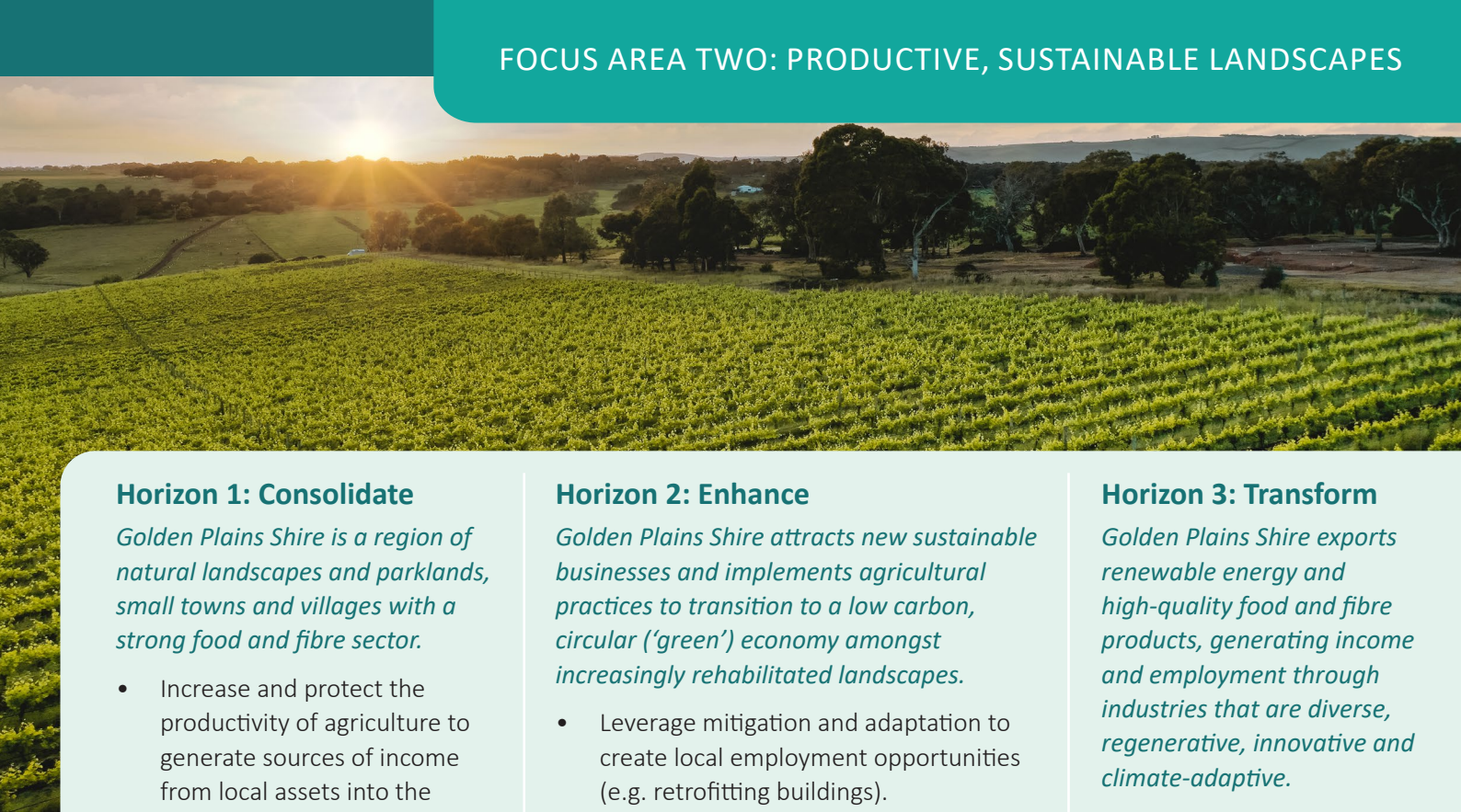
The monthly Golden Plains Farmers' Market is a key asset. The development of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is another opportunity, as is marketing Golden Plains as a premium food and wine region and leveraging the agriculture industry through tourism (for example, farm stays, tours).

The food and fibre sector is built on the region's natural assets. There are opportunities to increase productivity and generate even more value from the same natural resources using technology, improved farming practices like regenerative farming and improved bio-security measures, plus non-agricultural uses like carbon farming where effective and renewable energy. New food and fibre industries need to be nurtured to develop new products, whilst mature industries can continue innovating and developing ideas or markets. A critical issue for food and fibre is that these industries rely on the earth's natural systems at direct risk from climate change. But the transition to a low-carbon economy also presents opportunities.

The agriculture sector has driven the Golden Plains Shire economy for decades. Innovation, growth and new industry opportunities that preserve these strong natural assets can be harnessed to drive the economy for decades to come.

Strategies for the Golden Plains Economy

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below. The assets that support the sector must be consolidated, including the region's land and water supply, whilst simultaneously looking at ways to enhance the sector. In the third horizon, the Shire exports high-quality food and fibre products generating income and employment through an innovative, diverse, regenerative and climate-adaptive industry. This focus area links directly to the directions and targets of the Golden Plains Shire Environment Strategy 2019-2027.



Horizon 1: Consolidate

Golden Plains Shire is a region of natural landscapes and parklands, small towns and villages with a strong food and fibre sector.

- Increase and protect the productivity of agriculture to generate sources of income from local assets into the future (land, soil, water, energy, etc.).
- Build awareness of implications and opportunities of a low carbon, circular economy.

Horizon 2: Enhance

Golden Plains Shire attracts new sustainable businesses and implements agricultural practices to transition to a low carbon, circular ('green') economy amongst increasingly rehabilitated landscapes.

- Leverage mitigation and adaptation to create local employment opportunities (e.g. retrofitting buildings).
- Implement circular economy, carbon reduction and regenerative methods in production.
- Facilitate expansion and innovation in the food sector and support 'food entrepreneurship'.
- Develop a reputation as a Shire leading in clean energy investment and production and land restoration.

Horizon 3: Transform

Golden Plains Shire exports renewable energy and high-quality food and fibre products, generating income and employment through industries that are diverse, regenerative, innovative and climate-adaptive.

Existing Projects

Delivery of the following ongoing/upcoming projects and initiatives can help catalyse progress in this focus area:

1. The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct
2. Golden Plains Wind Farm (WestWind Energy)
3. Barwon Water Regional Renewable Organics Network at Black Rock
4. Sustainability Victoria grants and funding
5. Investigation into electric vehicle charging points across the Shire

Partners for Delivery

- Victorian and Australian Government: Agriculture Victoria, Global Victoria, Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Sustainability Victoria, etc.
- Traditional Owner groups
- Golden Plains Farmers' Market stall holders, local producers, restaurants
- Regional authorities and bodies: Barwon Water, G21, etc.
- WestWind Energy
- Golden Plains Food Production Precinct Investment Taskforce

FOCUS AREA THREE: ESCAPE THE CITY

Transformational Ambition

A high-quality food, natural and experiential tourism offer that attracts sustainable visitation

Economic Logic

Tourism and events currently play a moderate role in the economy but are often identified as a growth opportunity by residents. The attraction of tourists generates income for businesses across many sectors, including accommodation, hospitality, retail and transport, but also agricultural producers (who may have on-farm accommodation or cellar doors). The creative industry also plays a role in the tourism industry by increasing the attractiveness within an area and increasing visitation.

Golden Plains has existing and potential tourism assets, including natural assets and landscapes, major festivals (Golden Plains and Meredith music festivals), rail trails in the north, the Moorabool Valley wine region, historic townships and buildings, local food producers, smaller local events (for example, Inverleigh Dachshund Derby, Shelford Duck Race) and regional sports facilities.

Golden Plains Shire Council is part of a regional tourist marketing effort and alliance with Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine. The Three Trails project is being developed which will improve current trail infrastructure for walkers, hikers, cyclists and horse-riders, enjoying the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail, Rainbow Bird Trail and Kuruc a Ruc Trail. In addition, Council is looking to develop a Tourism Reference Group to drive growth in tourism within the Shire.

Opportunities to capitalise on include the World Heritage bid for Goldfields, nature-based tourism/eco-tourism, culinary/agro-tourism, boosting local tourism from visiting friends and relatives, working in partnership with local Aboriginal groups to develop authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences and developing tourism packages to showcase different parts of the region (including accommodation, transport, food, wine, etc.). Council's existing efforts to create a sense of place and identity by developing and preserving history will also attract greater tourism activity.

Community stakeholders talked of the potential to grow Golden Plains' tourism industry by leveraging existing assets such as the state forests, Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary and the Shire's interesting history, among others. It was noted that smaller towns within the Shire have various existing and potential tourist offerings but require more support. Connecting towns and attractions via bike and foot paths was also noted as being important infrastructure for tourism and livability, and to provide opportunities for transport beyond driving.

There are also changing consumer demands and trends that need to be incorporated into tourism businesses. One example is Golden Plains Shire's tourism operators need to see their offering as a suite of high quality, reinforcing experiences and relationships. Consumers increasingly expect a unique set of experiences, where price and quality no longer differentiate products apart. Technology has played a hand at this, as consumers have become more readily educated and can search, validate and communicate their preferences online. There is a need to enhance the tourism product and increase brand awareness to grow visitation.

Strategies for the Golden Plains Economy

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below. Existing strengths need to be consolidated whilst simultaneously looking at ways to enhance the sector, including developing the product, developing the supporting infrastructure and sharing the Golden Plains brand. In the third horizon, a high-quality food, natural and experiential tourism offer is in place that attracts a sustainable supply of visitors who experience all that Golden Plains has to offer.



Horizon 1: Consolidate

The Golden Plains brand communicates the unique environmental, cultural, and historical selling points of the Shire.

- In partnership with industry leaders and the community, bring together and promote the selling points of the Golden Plains brand.
- Develop and preserve Golden Plains' historical and heritage assets.

Horizon 2: Enhance

Golden Plains has solidified its position as a key destination in Victoria for those seeking cultural and ecotourism experiences, and is an emerging destination for culinary/agro-tourism.

- Enhance and develop the Golden Plains brand by fostering tourism industry entrepreneurs.
- Develop public tourist infrastructure (both physical and digital) to enable a high-quality visitor experience.
- Accelerate the development of visitor itineraries in an authentic visitor package.

Horizon 3: Transform

Golden Plains is a high-quality food, natural environment, and experiential tourism offer that attracts a sustainable supply of visitors.

Existing Projects

Delivery of the following ongoing/upcoming projects can help catalyse progress in this focus area:

1. Three Trails project
2. Goldfields World Heritage listing bid

Partners for Delivery

- Victorian Government: Parks Victoria, Creative Victoria, Visit Victoria, etc.
- Local and regional bodies: Visit Golden Plains, Brand Geelong, etc.
- Local tourism providers: business leaders, artists, restaurants and wineries, accommodation providers
- Event organisers: Meredith Music Festival, Golden Plains Music Festival, etc.
- UNESCO and local heritage organisations

FOCUS AREA FOUR: SHIRE-BASED HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Transformational Ambition

Health and education services in the Shire have graduated to ‘tertiary level’ and provide local jobs and enable a high quality of life, wellbeing, and personal development for Golden Plains Shire residents.

Economic Logic

Education and training play a crucial role in preparing local job seekers for current and future employment opportunities within Golden Plains Shire. Schools, universities, vocational education centres and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) provide the necessary skill sets, qualifications and training pathways to respond to employer needs.

Notably, Golden Plains Shire has no universities, nor a TAFE. This means all higher education opportunities need to be pursued outside of the Shire presenting a significant barrier to young people and workers looking to train.

Similarly, healthcare and social services are essential to the people of Golden Plains Shire. These services help people to lead the life they want, regardless of age, language barriers or disability. They also provide significant employment opportunities. Health care and social assistance was the largest employing industry for the shire in 2016, with 18 allied health services in the Shire. By 2041, 16% of Golden Plains’ residents are projected to be over 65 years, generating ongoing demand for health and support services.

Barriers to provision include that it can be difficult to attract services to locate in Golden Plains Shire due to its proximity to Geelong and Ballarat. There is no hospital or 24-hour health clinic in the Shire, and the ratio of general practitioners, allied health providers and dental services per person is lower than state average, representing a level of under-service- which also presents an opportunity to further grow employment.

Opportunities for growth within the health care industry exist due to projected population growth as well as population ageing. The roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the use of health information technology (tele-health) and the informatics field will generate opportunities for services in Golden Plains Shire. The redevelopment of numerous civic and community spaces also creates opportunity for the location of new health and education services.

At present, Council connects with schools and young residents to promote career options within Council. Another initiative is the Golden Plains Youth Hub in Bannockburn, which provides support for local young people through programs and services relating to health, social, education and employability outcomes. Council is also very active in the health and wellbeing space, currently developing a health and wellbeing strategy and providing a range of services and programs to support older people and those with a disability in the community (for example, home care, planned activity groups, and Meals on Wheels).

Community and stakeholder feedback underscores the importance of health care and education to support the local population and create local jobs.

Strategies for the Golden Plains Economy

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below. Gaps should first be identified before they can be addressed, and services enhanced, in the second horizon. In the third horizon, the Shire supports a good quality of life for its residents at all life stages. This focus area links directly to the strategies and actions of the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2021-2025 as well as township Community Plans.



Horizon 1: Consolidate

Golden Plains health services providers are supported to expand into additional levels of care; health and education providers with potential to locate new services in the Shire are identified.

- Understand health and education/training/skills gaps that exist in the Shire and identify opportunities to address these gaps.
- Reinforce Bannockburn and Smythesdale as the service hubs of the Shire and support local community spaces and services in smaller townships

Horizon 2: Enhance

Golden Plains Shire residents can meet their day-to-day health needs and access primary, secondary, and tertiary education and training opportunities locally.

- Develop the local health care sector through investment in infrastructure and partnerships with service providers.
- Develop locally relevant and exciting education opportunities at all life stages to prepare individuals with requisite education and training to find/retain good and promising jobs in the industries of the future or be an entrepreneur.

Horizon 3: Transform

A hospital and associated services health and a tertiary education provider in the Shire provide local jobs, and enable a high quality of life, wellbeing, and personal development at all life stages for Golden Plains Shire residents.

Existing Projects

Delivery of the following ongoing/upcoming projects can help catalyse progress in this focus area:

1. Golden Plains Community and Civic Centre (GPCC)
2. Bannockburn Heart Precinct
3. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
4. Community Enhancement Funds/Community Benefit Funds from wind farm projects

Partners for Delivery

- Victorian and Australian Government service providers: Department of Education and Training, Department of Health, TAFE, NDIS, etc.
- Universities and vocational training providers
- Local school leaders and youth service providers
- Local and regional health service providers: Bannockburn Medical Centre, HESSE Health, Golden Plains Social Support Services, Barwon Health, Ballarat Health Services, etc.

COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Golden Plains Economic Development, Tourism and Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2032 (the Strategy) is a document that provides guidance to the broad Golden Plains community including government, business and community stakeholders on the future strategy endeavours and opportunities for the Shire.

The Action Plan captures achievable and targeted actions that will be pursued by Council in its internal efforts to pursue transformation.

How actions were developed

The engagement process and background analysis led to the development of four focus areas, each with a series of strategies. While the strategies establish overarching directions to progress towards transformation aspirations (10 years), it is unlikely they will all be achieved within the lifetime of the Strategy.

For transformative change, it's important to start with a goal and take a long-term view. The focus of the Strategy is to start the journey via interconnecting consolidatory and enhancement efforts, while the action plan sets out the short-term and medium-term steps for Council to lead its implementation.

Some align directly with directions, actions and projects identified in other Council documents, including:

- Council Plan & Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2021-2025
- Environment Strategy 2019-2027
- Township Community Plans
- Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-2026
- Reconciliation Action Plan

The action plan is detailed on pages 20 to 31.

The role of Council in Economic Development

Given the nature of the challenges and opportunities facing the economy, it is important to be clear about Council's agency and the impact it can make. A summary of the different roles Council takes, drawn from its Council Plan 2021-2025, is contained in Table 1.

Firstly, Council advocates on behalf of the community for funding for the delivery of services and infrastructure that are not the direct responsibility of Council. Council can also advocate for behaviours and actions from the community and businesses to better outcomes (for example, 'buy local' campaigns). This is the primary role of Golden Plains Shire Council.

Council also provides a range of services directly to local business ratepayers to promote district or neighbourhood economies and simply meet the standard expectations of support held by the business community. These services include business support and advice, training and skills development for business owners/managers, other capacity-building initiatives, promotion campaigns and the staging of local events.

Council has had a necessary focus on COVID-19 recovery in recent years, providing direct support alongside regular services.

In 2020, according to the Council Plan 2021-2025, 79 business owners/operators took part in business training and mentoring sessions and 445 new local businesses were registered in Golden Plains Shire.

Other direct services include the provision of commercial and industrial zoned land, infrastructure services (local roads, drainage, etc.), streetscape improvements, investment attraction and business site brokerage, street cleansing and waste management, administration of statutory services, and the provision and management of economic assets including the airport, livestock exchange, visitor centres, library and art centres.

Council also often facilitates outcomes for its community through building partnerships, changing regulations, promoting opportunities, and building the capacity of community members and organisations.

The Strategy will be a tool for provision, advocacy and facilitation. Opportunities for Council to provide direct support and services will be identified as provisioning actions. Areas outside of direct control (such as the behaviour of businesses or State Government policy decisions) will also be included in the Action Plan, but Council will have an advocator or facilitator role working with the relevant partners.

TABLE 1: COUNCIL'S ROLES

Role	Responsibilities (per Council Plan 2021-2025)
Provider	Council funds and delivers services and infrastructure (often shared between Council and other agencies) and develops local policy and strategy.
Statutory Authority	According to its legislated responsibility under Victorian law, Council administers statutory services such as planning and building permits, and ensures compliance.
Facilitator	Council facilitates outcomes for its community through building partnerships, changing regulations, promoting opportunities, and building the capacity of community members and organisations.
Advocate	Council advocates on behalf of the community to other tiers of government to achieve strategies and deliver infrastructure.

TABLE 2: ACTION PLAN TIMEFRAMES

Timeframe	
Short-term (S)	Immediate actions to occur in the next 1 to 2 years
Medium-term (M)	Actions to occur over the next 2 to 4 years
Ongoing	Actions to be implemented on a continuous basis

1.2 ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA ONE: SMALL TOWNS AND ENTERPRISE

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Expand targeted and innovative initiatives that strengthen and promote business growth and build on the strengths of each township.	Refresh Council's investment attraction and business support service offer to shift to COVID-19 recovery, including the Be Kind to Business Golden Plains webpage, continue to raise local awareness and use of state and federal assistance available for industry and small business.	Facilitator	Economic Development; Communications & Engagement	G21, Central Highlands, State Government	S
	Directly approach local businesses who have a globally competitive service or product to discuss export potential and offer support if required. (Recognising exporting includes providing goods and services to all areas outside Golden Plains Shire)	Facilitator	Economic Development		S
	Encourage anchor institutions (major employers based in Golden Plains including Council) to develop a growth mindset and procurement strategies to prioritise the sourcing of goods and services locally to develop local business capabilities.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Anchor institutions (for example, Meredith Dairy)	Ongoing
	Liaise with local entrepreneurs and promote the establishment of co-operatives for retail, agricultural, tourism and other ventures.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Local	Ongoing
	Liaise with community coordinators to facilitate the delivery of projects included in Community Plans which support local business and industry (for example, the Rokewood & Corindhap community business initiatives – op shop, bartering/trading, repair/fix it café days, art exhibitions) and ensure a coordinated approach to economic development.	Facilitator/ Provider	Economic Development; Community Development	Community Coordinators	Ongoing

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
	Develop creative industries through support and partnership building, and through the procurement of local creatives.	Facilitator/ Provider	Community Development		Ongoing
Create the conditions where investment and employment growth in Golden Plains is straightforward and supported by government.	Undertake a review of employment lands and determine their capacity to accommodate growth; if required, prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment that will provide additional employment areas.	Stat. Authority/ Provider	Economic Development, Planning		M
	In conjunction with the review of employment lands, undertake a review of the infrastructure network to determine its capacity to support growth in identified employment growth areas.	Stat. Authority/ Provider	Economic Development, Planning		M
	Facilitate residential growth in Bannockburn to attract/support additional supermarket and retail in the town.	Stat. Authority/ Facilitator	Planning	Landowners	Ongoing
	Implement the State Government's Better Approvals planning reforms to streamline the planning approval processes.	Stat. Authority	Planning	Victorian Department of	S
	Develop a process to identify, monitor and promote investment opportunities in the shire.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development		S
Leverage the delivery of the Gheringhap Employment Precinct to create a thriving new centre for economic activity in the Shire.	Liaise with landowners in the Precinct to guide an appropriate mix of industries and developments.	Facilitator	Economic Development, Planning	Landowners	Ongoing
	Engage with State Government to explore potential to upgrade/ expand Lethbridge Airport as a flight training facility/ aviation hub and tourism-based air travel.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development	Airport owners, State Government	S
	Advocate for Midland Highway upgrades between Geelong and Bannockburn.	Advocate	Economic Development	VicRoads, Department of Transport (DOT)	Ongoing

1.2 ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA ONE: SMALL TOWNS AND ENTERPRISE

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Enhance business networks and foster a culture of collaboration, mentoring and support in the business community and with government.	When engaging with businesses, encourage them to work with and support other local businesses where possible.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Local businesses	Ongoing
	Develop a business register for businesses to identify and use local products and services and increase the awareness of local contract opportunities.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development	Local businesses	S
	Liaise with Traditional Owner groups to support the development and implementation of their own economic development strategy.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	Ongoing
Develop distinct economic visions for the Shire's townships.	Engage with Community Coordinators to develop an economic vision for each township to leverages existing strengths (for example, activating vacant spaces through pop-ups, adaptive re-use of heritage buildings) and develop a list of projects/initiatives for each township in alignment with its vision.	Facilitator	Economic Development, Community Development	Community Coordinators	S
	Liaise with the Community Development team to include the list of projects/initiatives for each township in future Community Plans.	Facilitator/ Provider	Economic Development, Community Development	Community Coordinators	Ongoing

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Strengthen the network of services and infrastructure, including public transport, to effectively connect people and support economic activity.	Advocate for increased connectivity to and within Golden Plains, including improved and efficient highways and public transport services via rail or bus to connect to Geelong and Melbourne.	Advocate		State Government	Ongoing
	Advocate for greater digital connectivity in Golden Plains Shire, including improved mobile phone reception, the rollout of NBN to Teesdale, and effective broadband service delivery.	Advocate		NBN Co, State Government, Telstra	Ongoing
	Leverage the Community Enhancement Funds/Community Benefit Funds from windfarm projects to fund improvements to local roads and other projects identified in the Community Plans.	Facilitator/ Provider	Economic Development	Wind energy companies, Community Coordinators	Ongoing
	Deliver an additional digital hub for local businesses and the community in Bannockburn.	Provider	Economic Development		M
	Consider the Golden Plains Transport Connections Study, including the potential to provide the community bus service, trialled in 2021, on an ongoing basis to connect residents to jobs and other services in the various townships of the Shire.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development		S

1.2 ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA TWO: PRODUCTIVE, SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Increase and protect the productivity of agriculture to generate sources of income from local assets into the future (land, soil, water, energy, etc.)	As part of the Golden Plains Settlement Strategy project, review and update the directions of the 2008 Rural Land Use Strategy to ensure the environment and economy of agricultural/natural lands are protected.	Provider/ Stat. Authority	Economic Development, Planning, Environment		S
	Ensure waterways are protected through land use planning processes (including the Golden Plains Settlement Strategy project) and infrastructure delivery, and water sensitive urban design (WSUD) projects.	Provider/ Facilitator/ Stat. Authority	Economic Development, Planning, Environment		Ongoing
	Support the implementation of the Invasive Species Program to reduce the potential of these invasive species to negatively impact agricultural production.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Environment		Ongoing
	Engage with industry leaders to explore productivity boosting opportunities and position the Shire as leaders in sustainable, high-value agriculture practices.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Agriculture industry leaders	Ongoing
Build awareness of implications and opportunities of a low-carbon, circular economy.	Investigate opportunities for circular economy process for local economic and industry benefit.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Environment	Sustainability Victoria	S
	Educate Council staff and other key stakeholders on the economic and environmental benefits of a low-carbon, circular economy.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Environment		S

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Leverage mitigation and adaptation to support businesses to be more energy efficient and create local employment opportunities (for example, retrofitting buildings).	Revise Council's procurement policies to support businesses with aligned environmental sustainability aspirations.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Environment		M
	Implement an Environmental Upgrade Financing Scheme to enable business to undertake upgrades to improve the performance of their buildings.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Environment	Sustainability Victoria	M
	Establish an environmental scorecard for business to assess their performance and incentivise those that adopt sustainable practices and technologies.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Environment	Sustainability Victoria	M
	Promote the availability of relevant Sustainability Victoria grants and funding (for example, Victorian Energy Upgrades, Solar for Business Program).	Facilitator	Economic Development	Sustainability Victoria	Ongoing
Implement circular economy, carbon reduction and regenerative methods in production.	Incentivise businesses that adopt circular economy practices.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development		Ongoing
	Engage with Traditional Owner groups to identify opportunities for regenerative farming practices.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development	Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation,	S
	Provide advice to landowners and neighbours of windfarms on how to invest financial incentives from windfarm projects to boost production and regeneration.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development	Wind energy companies	Ongoing
	Encourage participation in the Barwon Water Regional Renewable Organics Network (pending delivery of the facility at Black Rock).	Facilitator	Economic Development	Barwon Water	Ongoing

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Facilitate expansion and innovation in the food sector and support 'food entrepreneurship'.	Identify complementary secondary production/sub-sector opportunities (for example, expansion of viticulture in the Moorabool Valley) in partnership with Agriculture Victoria, G21 and local sector leaders.	Facilitator	Economic Development	G21, State Government, industry leaders	S
	Building on the business register, foster partnership and entrepreneurship between local businesses to increase direct-to-consumer opportunities in the food sector (for example, farmgate and farm-to-table).	Facilitator	Economic Development		Ongoing
	Collaborate with potential Golden Plains Food Production Precinct via the Investment Taskforce to guide its development as an innovative intensive farming precinct and ensure a strong local supply chain is in place from its establishment.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Golden Plains Food Production Precinct Investment Taskforce	Ongoing
	Expand the Golden Plains Farmers' Market to include additional local vendors at the new Bannockburn Heart Precinct site and build on the market program (for example, additional Twilight Market sessions).	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development, Community Development	Market stall holders, organisers	Ongoing
Develop a reputation as a Shire leading in clean energy investment and production.	Leverage the delivery of the WestWind wind farm in a campaign that positions the Shire as an emerging hub for clean energy investment.	Facilitator	Economic Development, Communications & Engagement		M
	Include climate leadership as a parameter for investment attraction efforts.	Facilitator	Economic Development		S

1.2 ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA THREE: ESCAPE THE CITY

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
In partnership with industry leaders and the community, bring together and promote the selling points of the Golden Plains brand.	Establish a Tourism Reference Group with representation from state, regional and local bodies (for example, Visit Victoria, Brand Geelong) and industry leaders from different tourism sectors.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Regional tourism bodies, State Government, industry leaders	S
	Refresh branding and marketing around townships, food and wine, nature and recreation, heritage, arts and crafts, and events/festivals, including an updated Visit Golden Plains website.	Provider	Economic Development, Communications & Engagement	Tourism providers	S
	Support the staging of local events (for example, Meredith Music Festival and the Golden Plains Farmers' Market) that champion local providers and products.	Facilitator	Economic Development, Community Development	Event organisers	S
Enhance and develop the Golden Plains brand by fostering tourism industry entrepreneurs.	Support Aboriginal tourism products and experiences developed through the Greater Geelong and the Bellarine Our Country; Our Plan- Aboriginal Product Development Strategy.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Aboriginal Corporations	S
	Promote the availability of relevant state government funds and grants (for example, from Business Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, Visit Victoria, Invest Victoria)	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development	State Government	Ongoing
	If successful, leverage the Victorian Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage listing to create a world-class heritage destination by supporting the implementation of the roadmap developed for the bid.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development	Central Goldfields World Heritage listing bid partnership	M

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Develop public tourist infrastructure (both physical and digital) to enable a high-quality visitor experience.	Create a short promotional video for each township to be featured on the Visit Golden Plains website.	Provider	Economic Development, Communications & Engagement	Community Development and the 'Golden Plains Stories' project with RMIT	S
	Advocate for State and Commonwealth investment for upgrades to historical sites and parks/reserves.	Advocate	Economic Development	State and Australian Governments	S
	Prepare a tourism wayfinding and signage strategy to facilitate successful road travel between townships/destinations and enhance the visitors and their connection with the people, the place and the stories of Golden Plains.	Provider	Economic Development, Planning	State Government	M
	Establish a welcome hub/ tourist kiosk in each township with brochures, signage and other information for visitors.	Provider	Economic Development, Planning		M
	Explore the feasibility of free WiFi at key tourist destinations and town centres.	Provider	Economic Development		S
Accelerate the development of visitor itineraries in an authentic visitor package.	Facilitate partnerships between tourism sectors to create experiential tourism packages (for example, accommodation, wine tasting and farmgate experience).	Facilitator		Tourism providers	Ongoing
	Expand the database of locally-owned accommodation on the Visit Golden Plains website.	Provider	Economic Development, Communications & Engagement	Accommodation providers	Ongoing
	Develop a set of high-quality digital and print maps/ brochures for different tourism sectors and experiences (for example, Moorabool Valley Taste Trail/ wineries, the Three Trails).	Provider	Economic Development, Communications & Engagement		S

1.2 ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA FOUR: SHIRE-BASED HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Understand health and education/training/skills gaps that exist in the Shire and identify opportunities to address these gaps.	Undertake a community needs analysis to determine the health and education service gaps that exist in Golden Plains Shire.	Provider	Economic Development, Community Services		S
	Engage with existing local and regional providers to identify opportunities to deliver expand/additional services.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development, Community Services	Bannockburn Medical Centre, Golden Plains Social Support Services, Barwon Health, Ballarat Health Services, NDIS, Smythesdale Medical Clinic	S
	Measure the volume of current and future labour gaps by sector that without intervention would prevent businesses from sourcing local talent and growing.	Provider/ Facilitator	Economic Development		S
	Engage with education and training providers (for example, Deakin University, Federation University, TAFE, and specialist providers) to identify potential opportunities for services in Golden Plains, including online courses, transport and new service locations in the Shire.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development	Education and training providers	M
	Facilitate partnerships between local schools, Bannockburn Youth Hub, education and vocational training providers, and employers.	Facilitator	Economic Development, Community Services		Ongoing

1.2 ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA FOUR: SHIRE-BASED HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Reinforce Bannockburn and Smythesdale as the service hubs of the Shire and support local community spaces and services in smaller townships.	As part of the Golden Plains Settlement Strategy project, identify potential areas for community land uses (for health, education and other services) in proximity to residential growth and development in Bannockburn and Smythesdale.	Provider	Economic Development, Community Services, Planning		S
	Encourage new health and education and training service providers to locate in Bannockburn and Smythesdale.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development, Community Services, Planning	Health and education and training service providers	Ongoing
	Explore the feasibility of a pool or aquatic leisure facility in Bannockburn.	Facilitator	Economic Development, Community Services, Planning	State government	M
	Leverage the Community Enhancement Funds/ Community Benefit Funds from windfarm projects to fund upgrades and additions to local community spaces identified in future Community Plans.	Facilitator	Economic Development Community Services	Community Coordinators	Ongoing
Develop the local health care sector through investment in infrastructure and partnerships with service providers.	Increase the ratio of general, dental, and allied health services to residents of Golden Plains through engagement and partnerships with providers.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development, Community Services	Health service providers	Ongoing
	Explore the potential for tertiary (hospital) care and health precinct in Bannockburn in partnership with state government and private providers.	Facilitator/ Advocate	Economic Development, Community Services	Health service providers, State Government	M

Strategy	Council action	Council role	Department(s) responsible	Partners	Timeframe
Develop locally relevant and exciting education opportunities at all life stages to prepare individuals with requisite education and training to find/retain good and promising jobs in the industries of the future or be an entrepreneur.	Advocate for adequate school infrastructure and school program funding, including new schools to support population growth.	Advocate	Economic Development, Community Services	State Government	Ongoing
	Create spaces for additional service provision at redeveloped Council sites and buildings (for example, Golden Plains Civic Centre).	Provider/Facilitator	Economic Development, Community Services	Community Services Team	Ongoing
	Support the development of business initiatives that are committed to providing employment and training for young people in Golden Plains.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Anchor institutions	Ongoing
	Leverage windfarm projects to provide training and upskilling in renewable energy to local residents and workers.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Wind energy companies	Ongoing
	Facilitate the delivery of a range of tertiary and vocational education programs and courses in Golden Plains.	Facilitator	Economic Development	Education and training providers	Ongoing



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CUSTOMER HUB HOURS

Golden Plains Civic Centre, Bannockburn
8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

The Well, Smythesdale
8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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