

2017-21



NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL
COUNCIL PLAN
2017-2021



LIVE-WORK-INVEST- VISIT



CONTENTS

- **YOUR COUNCIL** 3
- **OUR SHIRE AT A GLANCE** 4
- **MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR** 5
- **COUNCIL PLAN OBJECTIVES** 6
- **STRATEGIES & INDICATORS** 7-10

YOUR COUNCIL

KARA KARA WARD



Cr Tony Driscoll



Cr Merrilee Reid

SOUTH WEST WARD



Cr Jason Hosemans

CENTRAL WARD



Cr Kevin Erwin

STAWELL WARD



Cr Murray Emerson



Cr Karen Hyslop



Cr Rob Haswell

OUR SHIRE AT A GLANCE

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021



Possessing some of the world's most spectacular natural scenery and a rich golden heritage, the Northern Grampians Shire has established an exceptional reputation as an ideal place to live, work, invest and visit.

Location: Located in the picturesque Grampians region of Victoria, the shire covers almost 6,000 square kilometres and services the major towns and villages of Stawell, St Arnaud, Great Western, Halls Gap, Navarre, Glenorchy, Marnoo and Stuart Mill.

National Parks: The Grampians National Park is one of Victoria's most iconic holiday destinations, attracting more than 1.5 million visitors each year. Renowned for its breathtaking views and unspoilt nature, the area is a noted rock climbing destination, popular among campers and bushwalkers. Declared in 1884, the 168,000 hectare park is rich in Aboriginal culture, European heritage and stunning wildflower displays. It is also home to almost a third of the state's plant species and an abundance of wildlife. The Kara Kara National Park spans 13,900 hectares of predominantly steep terrain and allows visitors to experience what the forests were like before the gold rushes. The park has one of the largest intact areas of Box-Ironbark vegetation and encompasses the former Kara Kara State Park and much

of the St Arnaud Range State Forest.

Industry: The shire's economy is based on manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and wine production. The two main centres of Stawell and St Arnaud supply and service agricultural machinery and are home to industries including brick, steel fabrication and meat production.

QUICK STATS

Area - Approximately 5,918 square kilometres

Population - 11,471 (Estimated Resident Population June 2016)

Road Length - 3,408km of local roads

Rateable Properties - 9,273

Rates and Charges Revenue - \$16.8 million

Total Revenue (inc flood restoration grants) - \$40.7 million

Industry - There are more than 700 businesses operating in the shire, with major activity based in the thriving tourism, manufacturing and agricultural industries.

Major Attractions - Stawell Easter Gift Festival, Grampians Grape Escape, Festival of St Arnaud, St Arnaud Country Music Festival, Great Western Rodeo, Stawell Gold Cup, St Arnaud Cup, Great Western Cup, Halls Gap Cup, Run the Gap, St Arnaud Rodeo, Grampians Music Festival, Stawell Gift Hall of Fame

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Northern Grampians Shire Council is pleased to present the 2017-2021 Council Plan to its communities. This plan is a roadmap for the future direction of our Council, and will be used to lay the foundations for what Council hopes is a sustainable and prosperous future for our region.

Councillors have identified and analysed four key factors which they believe are integral to the ongoing progression of the Shire, along with accompanying indicators which will assist in determining that future. However, Council acknowledges that it must make some crucial decisions within this timeframe in order to address issues which confront many small rural shires around the state.

In 2015/16, Northern Grampians Shire Council was one of 19 small shires identified as being unsustainable in the Victorian Auditor General's Office audit of Local Government. This is a significant issue for our Shire, and one which Council is committed to confronting head-on. Already, plans are in place to advocate for increased funding from both State and Federal Government, to continue playing a crucial role in boosting local productivity and to present a compelling case for the establishment of new businesses and the relocation of existing economic prospects.

With increased investment in our region comes new jobs, new residents and an increased rate base, which will alleviate the financial pressure placed upon us all by the introduction of the State Government's rate capping measures and the freezing of Federal Government funding. This will be achieved by the implementation of our carefully structured economic development plan, the success of which is already apparent in the establishment of projects such as the Nectar Farms Hydroponic project and the Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory.

Most importantly, however, Council wants to hear from you, the people who live in our shire, and who form the community which Council represents. During the next few years, Council is committed to engaging with the local community in order to help shape the future of this region, via increased opportunities for the public to assist in and determine the manner in which we progress. We are a unified, resilient community, and I have no doubt that with your input, the path we are on will lead to a brighter, more sustainable future for the Northern Grampians Shire.

*Cr Tony Driscoll
Mayor, 2016/17*

BY 2021, COUNCIL AIMS TO...

**ENHANCE LIFESTYLES AND
COMMUNITY**



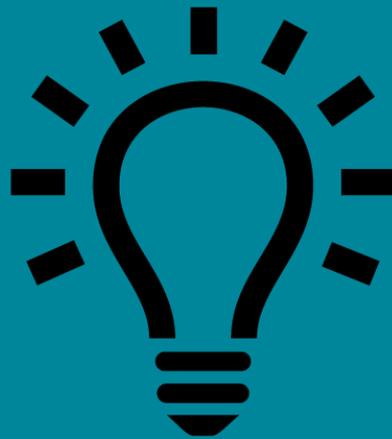
BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH



**PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE
INFRASTRUCTURE**



**IMPROVE ORGANISATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS**



COUNCIL PLAN OBJECTIVES

ENHANCE LIFESTYLE AND COMMUNITY

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING

- BUILDING COMMUNITY PRIDE BY ENGAGING RESIDENTS IN OUR TOWNS TO PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL BUILD A SENSE OF PRIDE.
- CREATING HAPPY, HEALTHY, VIBRANT AND SAFE COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES AND ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN HEALTHY ACTIVITIES.
- ADVOCACY FOR INCREASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.
- WORK WITH AGENCIES TO PROMOTE THE BENEFITS AND VALUE OF RECREATIONAL WATER.

INDICATORS

- IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY PLANS.
- ENDORSEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MUNICIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN.
- INCREASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.
- POSITIVE PROMOTION OF THE VALUE OF RECREATIONAL WATER FOR OUR COMMUNITY
- DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTIONS IN LINE WITH THE COMMUNITIES OF RESPECT AND EQUALITY PLAN 2016-2020.

BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING

- INCREASE NEW INVESTMENT INTO THE SHIRE.
- PROVIDE SUPPORT TO EXISTING BUSINESSES TO ENSURE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY.
- WORKFORCE AND INVESTMENT ATTRACTION.
- ADVOCACY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

INDICATORS

- IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTOR PLANS AND OTHER SUPPORTING STRATEGIES.
- PROVIDE WORKSHOPS AND OTHER TOOLS TO SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES.
- CREATE A WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION PLAN TO SUPPORT NEW INVESTMENT.
- ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND FUNDING PROVIDED FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING

- ENHANCE THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO IMPROVE LIFESTYLES AND VISITATION.
- ADVOCATING FOR BETTER TELECOMMUNICATION FOR THE REGION.
- ADVOCATE FOR BETTER TRANSPORT LINKS FOR THE REGION.
- ADVOCACY FOR NEW AND EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE.

INDICATORS

- MORE THAN 90% OF BUDGETED CAPITAL WORKS DELIVERED.
- BETTER TELECOMMUNICATION FOR THE REGION.
- BETTER TRANSPORT LINKS FOR THE REGION.
- ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED.

IMPROVE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

- STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING**
- **STREAMLINE PROCESSES BY REVIEWING INTERNAL PROCESSES TO REDUCE RED TAPE AND INCREASE EFFICIENCY**
 - **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY BY DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR IMPROVED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.**
 - **BE MORE CUSTOMER-FOCUSED BY DEVELOPING A PLAN TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS WITH COUNCIL.**
 - **ORGANISATION VIABILITY BY REVIEWING ALL SERVICES OVER THREE YEARS.**

INDICATORS

- **IMPLEMENT THE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- **SERVICE REVIEWED AS PER THE SCHEDULE**
- **IMPLEMENT THE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- **SERVICE REVIEWED AS PER THE SCHEDULE**

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

2017-2021

STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN



STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN

STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2017-2021



The Strategic Resource Plan (SRP) outlines the resources, both financial and non-financial, required to enable the Council Plan. The purpose of the SRP is to maintain Council's financial viability over the medium and long term by:

- establishing and reviewing a long term financial plan,
- providing key strategic directions to inform Council's financial decisions, and
- establishing sound financial management principles

GENERAL FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES

SUSTAINABLE BUDGETING PRINCIPLE

Council will implement a sustainable financial strategy that:

- caters for short and long term
- factors in community expectations

- is linked to the Council Plan
- is committed to achieving an annual surplus to contribute to capital projects.

CASH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE

Council will manage cash to ensure sufficient levels to meet its requirements and will:

- aim to maintain a minimum cash balance of 20% above the sum of current deposits and current interest bearing liabilities, plus the amount of reserve funds as determined appropriate
- maintain sufficient cash to avoid overdraft interest.

REVENUE PRINCIPLES

RATES AND CHARGES REVENUE PRINCIPLE

Council will:

- review rates annually following the announcement of the rate cap set by the Minister
- consider making an application for a higher cap should there not be sufficient income to fund the:
- Council Plan
- Long Term Financial Plan
- to meet current expenditure commitments.

Differential rating should be applied as equitably as is practical and will comply with the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating.

Where it is possible to identify the direct benefit of a service, charges should reflect the cost of the service to help reduce rates subsidies.

Council will consider pricing and contracts to deliver waste services that:

- reduce waste to landfill
- increase reuse of resources through recycling and avoidance initiatives
- encourage community understanding of waste management
- are in line with legislative requirements and best practices
- are cost neutral through appropriate fees and charges and rating strategies.

USER FEES PRINCIPLE

Council will set fees and charges having regard for:

- pricing principles (profit, break even, subsidy)
- marketplace competition
- users capacity to pay
- equity between services
- community service benefit
- benchmarking of similar services.

Costs will include:

- overheads
- identification of service subsidy.

Council will:

- increase fees based on cost increases
- consider pricing to encourage behaviour changes
- advocate for statutory fees not governed by Council to be increased appropriately.

GRANT REVENUE PRINCIPLE

- Council supports funding from other levels of government and will seek to maximise all appropriate external funding opportunities.
- Council opposes cost shifting, and where cost shifting occurs Council will communicate to its community the impact of these cost impositions.
- Council will only accept external funding if consistent with the Council Plan.
- Council will avoid distortion of priorities due to the availability of external funding.
- Funds received from other levels of government would be expected to meet full direct and indirect costs.
- Where Council chooses to subsidise a funded service the contribution should not outweigh the community benefit.

BORROWING PRINCIPLE

- Borrowing will not be used to fund ongoing operations.
-
- Where possible debt will be increased only to the extent that: the costs savings are realised from investment in capital debt servicing costs are funded from future revenue streams.
- Borrowings are appropriate for funding large capital works where the benefits are provided to future generations.
- Council will maintain its debt at levels which are sustainable, with: indebtedness <60% of rate and charges revenue debt servicing cost <5% of total revenue (excluding capital revenue).

ASSET MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Council will acquire and dispose of assets in the best interests of the community.

ASSET RATIONALISATION PRINCIPLE

When disposals occur Council will ensure that:

- there is clear Council or community need
- a thorough community and financial assessment is undertaken sales of property will not be used to fund operational expenditure.

Council will ensure that regular review of asset rationalisation is conducted.

ASSET RENEWAL PRINCIPLE

Council will provide well maintained community assets that are:

fit for purpose

provide best possible community benefit within the financial capacity of the Council.

Council will provide for ongoing asset maintenance and renewal for existing assets by:

basing maintenance and renewal on condition rating and interventions set by asset management strategies
anticipating and managing risks of asset failure
committing to increasing expenditure on renewal to sustainably manage assets
ensuring appropriate expenditure is provided for compliance and safety regulations.

NEW ASSET PRINCIPLE

Council will ensure that community has access to infrastructure that meets its needs with regards to current and future needs.

Construction and acquisition of new assets must:

- remain within the limitation of Council's financial and resource capabilities
- provide clear tangible benefits
- consider both current and future generations
- consider asset substitution as a source of funding new assets
- consider consolidation of services where appropriate
- undertake financial analysis with regard to resultant additional operational maintenance and renewal costs.



SERVICE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES EXPENDITURE REVIEW PRINCIPLE

Council will review levels of expenditure.

Ongoing service reviews will assess service in accordance with:

- a demonstrated community need
- stakeholder views
- access, equity of need and benefit to the community
- community expectation of service level and quality
- legislative imperatives
- identification of alternative providers, both public and private

Council's capacity to provide the service availability of Victorian or Australian Government funding other budget priorities.