



NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2021-31



Version	Date	Author (on behalf of the steering committee)	Reviewer	Rationale
0.1	January 2021	Justine Kingan, NGSC	Nick Byrne, Remplan	Draft for PSC review
0.2	February 2021	Justine Kingan, NGSC	Steering Committee	Draft for community engagement
0.3	April 2021	Justine Kingan, NGSC	Steering Committee	Amended in response to submissions
0.4	May 2021	Justine Kingan, NGSC	Northern Grampians Shire Council	Council decision

Abbreviations

AV	Aboriginal Victoria
BB	Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperative
BGLC	Barengi Gadjin Land Council
GCH	Grampians Community Health
GG	Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative
GPT	Grampians Peaks Trail
GRP	Gross Regional Product
GT	Grampians Tourism
GWM	GWM Water
LEN	Learning Alliance Networks
LQ	Location quotient analysis
MPHWP	Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
NGS	Northern Grampians Shire
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PV	Parks Victoria
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
SRH	Stawell Regional Health
SRV	Sport and Recreation Victoria
SUPL	Stawell Underground Physics Lab
TO	Traditional Owner
WCMA	Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
WDA	Wimmera Development Association
WSM	Wimmera Southern Mallee
WSMRP	Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership
WUH	Wimmera Uniting Health
VPA	Victorian Planning Authority

Acknowledgements:

The Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31 Steering Committee and Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC) acknowledge Traditional Owners; Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we discuss in this report. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to our other Aboriginal clan groups.

The steering committee would like to acknowledge and thank all individuals who gave their time to be interviewed as part of the targeted stakeholder engagement process for Council's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31.

We, the undersigned, are committed to ensuring the ongoing development of Northern Grampians, by working with council to deliver a long-term Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

Cr Tony Driscoll, Committee Chair

Liana Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, NGSC

Jane Hosking, Executive Officer, North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NCLLEN)

Troy Cole, General Manager, Stawell Gold Mine

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Chair's forward

In late 2020 and early 2021 council worked closely with the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31 Steering Committee. Made up of key industry sector representatives, the committee worked together to deliver a ten-year plan to uplift the economic well-being and quality of life of the community. Council selected steering committee representatives with expertise and knowledge from the largest industry sectors in our shire, as well as from sectors that have been heavily impacted by COVID-19, the education and health and human services sectors.

The Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31 Steering Committee recognised that if we do not plan, Northern Grampians faces the risk of missing opportunities, losing business and continuing to lose people to other regions. The committee recognised that it is critical that we orientate ourselves towards our future, make the most of our assets and competitive advantages and that we do this in partnership with the community and other key stakeholders.

While COVID-19 has presented unprecedented challenges, the committee believes that council has a window of opportunity to think differently and reset the way council and wider community participate in economic development. As a community, we need to make sure that when we come out of the other side of the pandemic, we are primed to recover and prosper.

The strategy gives priority to achieving the best outcomes for the community, based on evidence and community engagement.

Key project milestones:

- August 2020, the project steering committee met for the first time.
- September 2020, the committee released 'PART 1 Our Compass: A guide for preparing the strategy' and 'Our ECONOMY AND PEOPLE: What We've Learned So Far', the findings of data analysis and a strategic document review.
- 23 September - 20 October 2020, targeted industry engagement was undertaken involving 42 structured interviews from 17 key industry sectors.
- 8 January 2020, the findings of industry engagement were released - 'What we Heard, Engagement Report'.

Background research identified:

- Our industry mix and what industries were driving our economy prior to COVID-19.
- The role our economy played prior to COVID-19.
- National and local industry trends.
- How our economy has been impacted by COVID-19 so far.
- The makeup of our community including who is staying, who is going, and the skills that exist within our community.
- Our unique assets, opportunities, challenges and issues.

The strategy positions Northern Grampians to be one of Victoria's most thriving, safe and accessible rural regions. We have the potential to build on our strengths and be renowned for being proud, diverse and resilient - from our economy to our communities, heritage and landscapes. The strategy recognises that creativity and innovation will support a productive and sustainable future for Northern Grampians.

Cr Tony Driscoll
Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Driscoll', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Our story

In 2009 Northern Grampians' economy was worth \$819 million dollars and its population was over 12,000. Its agribusiness and mining heritage gave Northern Grampians and its communities many distinctive features, including strong resilience and connected communities.

During the last decade, the diversity and health of the Northern Grampians' natural environments continued to set the region apart. Along with its unique indigenous cultural heritage and wine and gold history, the region began to emerge as the gateway to the Wimmera silo art trail via St. Arnaud. The single most unique development to emerge was the Stawell Underground Physics Lab (SUPL). Created within the active Stawell Gold Mine, SUPL put Northern Grampians on the world research stage, set to tackle some of science's biggest challenges - dark matter and the big bang hypothesis. The project was evidence of the region's capacity to adapt and evolve in an ever-changing world. Sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, mining, arts and recreation, health care and hospitality grew. These sectors became proportionally more concentrated in Northern Grampians compared to the rest of Victoria. During that period, Northern Grampians' economy continued to shift. Service-related industries focussing on businesses and other organisations, as well as individuals, made up around half of all jobs in Northern Grampians. Proud and strong, the community could see the great potential and opportunity including adding value to the agricultural sector, developing iconic destinations that would grow our visitor economy and being known for world leading research in dark matter.

However, despite many positive gains, three key challenges have persisted:

1. Workforce and skills shortages
2. Vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events
3. Investment preparedness, signalling priorities and ensuring investment competitiveness.






By 2019 the population had declined, and the overall size of the economy was 10% smaller than it was in 2009. On top of this, Northern Grampians had become one of the most disadvantaged Local Government areas in Victoria.

On 14 March 2020 Australia recorded its 100th case of COVID-19, as the pandemic swept over the world. The economic shock of COVID-19 represented the most significant economic challenge to Australia's economy since the Second World War. By December 2020, the median fall in value-added to Northern Grampians' economy was 7.4% and median job losses was 2.4%. The greatest impacts were felt by the accommodation and food services and the retail sector. This major world event made council and other community leaders realise that it was time to revisit how economic development is tackled in Northern Grampians. It reaffirmed to council that it needed to be laser focused in addressing Northern Grampians' biggest challenges to releasing positive economic and social change.

In late 2020 and early 2021, Northern Grampians Shire Council worked with a Project Steering Committee (the committee), made up of driving industry sector representatives to deliver the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31 (the strategy). The Committee analysed data to inform an understanding of the past, present and future. The Committee worked with the community to identify how they want the economy to be characterised, and what needs to be done to get there.

Snapshot

The strategy tells the story of:

-  Our unique strengths and opportunities.
-  Our overarching aim.
-  Our biggest challenges and the benefit of addressing them.
-  What investment we need to make to realise the benefits.
-  How we will know if we have been successful (KPIs).

The strategy addresses our three biggest challenges:

- 1** Population decline and growing social and economic disadvantage, causing workforce and skills shortages that are restraining our economy.
- 2** Vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events, undermining consistent economic growth.
- 3** Investment preparedness, signalling priorities and ensuring investment competitiveness.

The strategy describes the benefits of tackling our three biggest challenges, these are our long-term objectives:



The strategy identifies how by 2031 council together with the community will act to achieve:

KPI 1: Population growth, from 11,400 to 14,400, by 2031.

KPI 2: Reduce the median age to equal the State (from 48 yrs. to 37 yrs.).

KPI 3: Reduce youth disengaged in work or study by 5% (from 13% to 8% of youth disengaged, being equal to the State).

KPI 4: Reduce the percentage of developmentally vulnerable children by 2.5% (equal to the State.)

KPI 5: Grow GRP year on year from a \$730M economy to \$920M (26% growth, equal to the State).

KPI 6: Reduce carbon emissions.

KPI 7: Increase (private and government) capital investment.

The strategy pursues five, ten-year strategic directions:

1. To be the rural region of choice.
2. To grow the economic capacity and engagement of our own people.
3. To develop iconic destinations and healthy environments.
4. To be a magnet for innovation and investment.
5. To attract investment in enabling infrastructure.

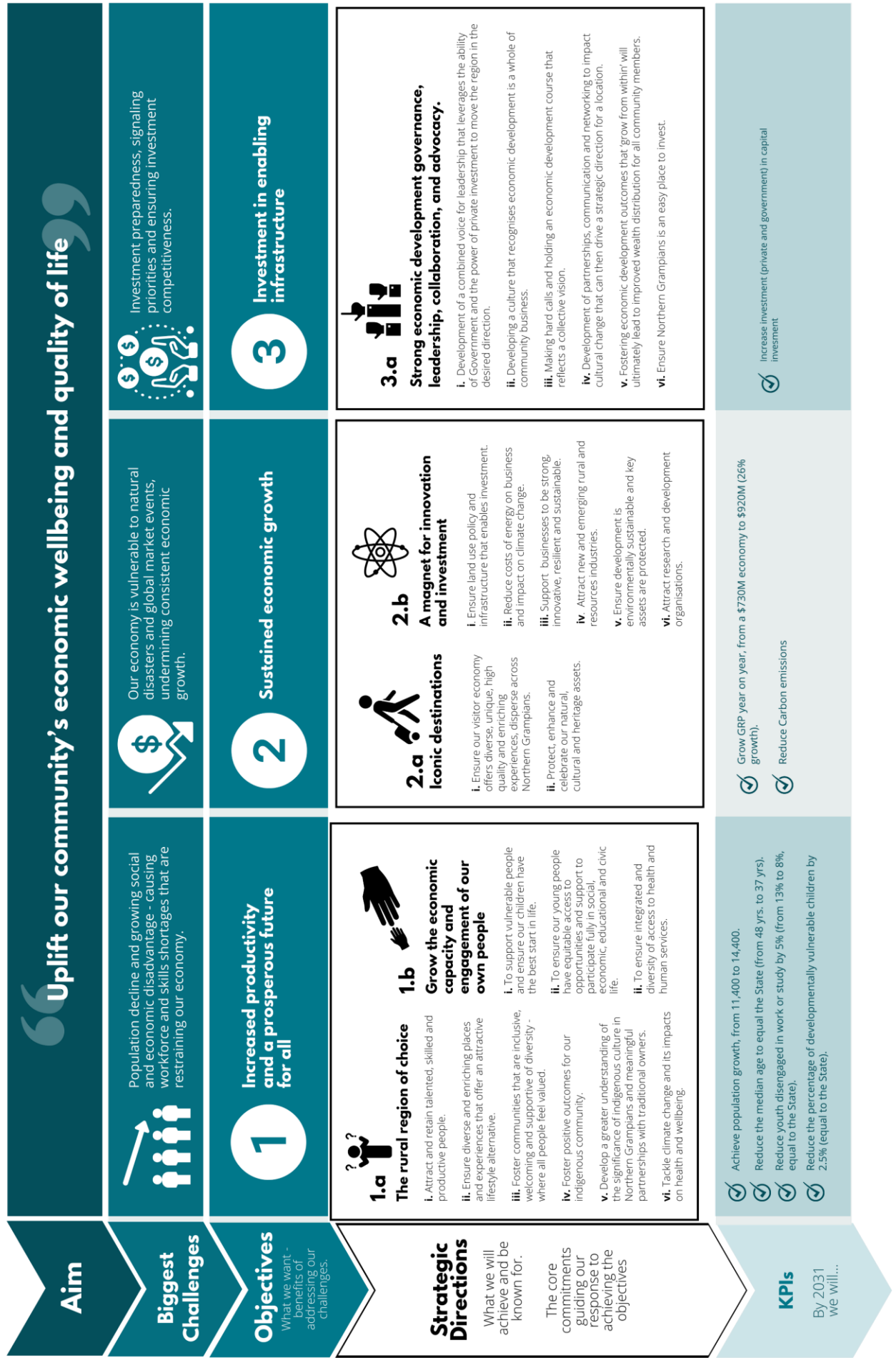
The action and implementation plan show what we will do to pursue the long-term strategic directions.

Timeframes identify the order of implementation, based on priority sub-challenges and opportunities. To respond to changing conditions and opportunities, actions will be updated annually, in line with the council budget process. Action will also be reviewed to ensure we are staying true to our ten-year strategy.



Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy

On a page



1



Increased productivity and a prosperous future for all

What is it about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring our businesses have access to people with the skill and talent they need to reach their full potential. Ensuring we have the people required to 'get things done' - the social glue that helps communities thrive. Helping our people to reach their full potential.
Why is it important?	<p>Human capital</p> <p>Our population is declining and aging, and social and economic disadvantage is growing.</p> <p>This is creating workforce and skills shortages, restraining our economy and threatening the sustainability of our businesses and organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From November 2019 (pre COVID) to November 2020 job vacancies in the Wimmera and Western Victoria grew by 20%, the second largest growth in job vacancies across Victoria. Our population is declining at a rate of 0.7% each year. Over the past ten years our population has shrunk by 71 people each year (on average). <p>High levels of disadvantage are causing social and economic disparity and labour force shortages, with a high percentage of disengaged people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Grampians is the 4th most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria. Only 44% of the population (over 15 years) participate in work, 2% lower than the Grampians Region and nearly 5% lower than Victoria. 37% of our community over 15 years are welfare dependent. 14% of our community (15-24 years) disengaged (not working or studying), nearly 3% higher than the Grampians region and 5.3% higher than Victoria.
What would be the benefits of responding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlock the potential that exists within our existing businesses and enable them to be sustainable and grow. \$35 million dollars in additional value-added, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects (estimated) from existing businesses (based on 2020 industry engagement). Increase skills and workforce participation, creating a strong labour market. Build our community's capacity to be productive, innovating and more able to respond to shifts in the economy. Increased productivity, because of higher-level skills and employment base. Improvements in health outcomes, through preventative health initiatives that result from a higher standard of education. Engaged community members for volunteerism and social capital.
What would happen if we did nothing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established business will not be able to meet demand for their goods and services – so they will scale-down, relocate or close. We will lose momentum in growing industries – value-added to the economy by manufacturing, agriculture and hospitality will remain the same or decline.

2 Sustained economic growth

What is it about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring our economy is resilient and development is environmentally sustainable. Ensuring our economy is buffered from natural disasters and global pricing swings.
Why is it important?	<p>Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our economy is vulnerable to natural disasters and global pricing swings, undermining economic growth Northern Grampians' economy was \$89M (-10.6%) smaller in 2019 compared to 2009. Northern Grampians experienced nine natural disasters in six years (between 2010- 2006), all of which were followed by significant drops in GRP. Victoria's GRP has grown consistently and was \$92.7B (26.4%) larger in 2019 compared to 2009. Primary sectors make up nearly 25% of our economy and are closely connected to environmental conditions. 30% of our businesses are made up of service sectors, of which many are based on agribusiness supply chains and services to farming communities. Victorian cropping productivity lowered by 7.7% on average since 2001 due to climate change. Average annual temperatures increase of 2.4°C by 2050 under a high emissions scenario.
What would be the benefits of responding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls in GRP will become less severe following natural disasters and global market events. We will lead the way in reducing carbon missions. We will see growth in GRP over time.
What would happen if we did nothing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls in GRP following natural disasters will become more severe and more frequent as climate variability increases. Businesses will be unable to absorb the impact of growing losses and will close or relocate. Business confidence will decline, new investment will not occur, and industry diversity will narrow.

3



Investment in enabling infrastructure

What is it about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centring economic development as a whole of community business. • Demonstrating leadership through advocacy, transparent governance. • Increasing partnerships with business and government to support investment in infrastructure (transport, cultural, social etc.) that will support our economic vision. • Fostering a culture of customer service and facilitation. • Strong economic development governance, leadership, collaboration and advocacy.
Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a highly competitive regional funding environment, investment preparedness is critical, particularly when competing with regions and towns with growing populations. • Providing clear signals to private and public investors on our economic development priorities and capturing our aspirations is essential to achieve our long -term goal.
What would be the benefits of responding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership that fosters a shared vision for the Grampians regions can effectively target industry issues and leverage outcomes through a collective voice.
What would happen if we did nothing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining (private and government) capital investment in infrastructure that unlocks economic growth opportunities.

Two scenarios for Northern Grampians:

What might the experience of people in our community be in scenario number one?



Option 1:

We do not commit to the strategy



In 2031 Northern Grampians' economy and population will be unsustainably low

"I've had to move my business, because I haven't been able to get enough staff to keep operating. It is just not sustainable anymore. The qualified staff I have will be moving their family to our new location to continue working in the business." (James, Small Business Owner)

"I can't wait to leave and can't see myself ever coming back. There isn't anything here for me. I've never really felt like I belonged here." (Beth, Teenager)

"I can't afford to feed my kids some days, let alone get the internet connected, or get my kids involved in stuff" (Sally, Long term unemployed)

"The Grampians isn't my first choice when it comes to a weekend in rural Victoria. The infrastructure is old, and there really is not a whole lot to do. When I go on holidays, I'm looking for high quality food, and authentic experiences." (Ursula, Visitor from Melbourne)

Two scenarios for Northern Grampians:

What might the experience of people in our community be in scenario number two?



Option 2: We commit to the strategy



In 2031 Northern Grampians will be one of Victoria's most flourishing rural areas.

"Ten years ago, I was really struggling to attract staff. These days, we don't have trouble getting qualified staff, and I've been able to grow the business. New staff are able to find quality rental accommodation to suit their family and have also been attracted by the great services and range of things for families." (James, Small Business Owner)

"Growing up here has been amazing. I've always had loads of opportunities. I feel really proud of where I'm from. I feel excited about the future and I can see a future for myself here." (Beth, Teenager)

"My teenager has just finished as an apprentice and has a full-time job here in our town. He's the first one in our family to get a qualification." (Sally, Long term unemployed)

"We are about to move to the Grampians, we love it. After years of visiting, we have decided to relocate. The towns, the local coffee, and service are amazing. I can work from home, and now everything that is so special to us, and world class about the Grampians, is virtually in my backyard. " (Ursula, Visitor from Melbourne)

Our focus area

Northern Grampians Shire is in the state of Victoria's central west; 110 kilometres west of Ballarat and 220 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. It is also at the south-east of Victoria's Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

Northern Grampians is bounded by Buloke Shire in the north, Loddon Shire and Central Goldfields Shire in the east, Pyrenees Shire, Ararat Rural City and Southern Grampians Shire in the south, and Horsham Rural City and Yarriambiack Shire in the west.

Northern Grampians' major towns are Stawell in the south and St Arnaud in the north, both service centres for their surrounding rural communities. Smaller townships include Great Western, Halls Gap, Glenorchy, Navarre, Marnoo and Stuart Mill.





Economic Development defined

At the highest level, the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31 (the Strategy) is about identifying what we can, and must do, to uplift our community's economic wellbeing and quality of life.

No one organisation or level of Government is responsible for economic development - it is a collective effort. However, Local Government plays a critical role being best placed to provide leadership through working in partnership with the community and other key stakeholders through:

- **Advocacy**
promotion of regional interests to other levels of Government and decision makers.
- **Facilitation**
providing information, marketing, or incentives; fostering partnerships; and establishing local regulation.
- **Investment attraction**
creating an environment that catalyses investor interest.
- **Investigation**
completing due diligence, feasibilities, and de-risking for future investment.
- **Planning**
aligning vision to local and regional plans; land use planning.
- **Service provision**
traditional or new services to support economic development.

Research of local and regional economies around the world tells us that conventional approaches to economic development, such as focusing on growth alone, have largely proven to be ineffective in achieving prosperity for all.

What is evident is that economic development must be framed in a holistic way. The Committee therefore embraces the widely held view that economic development, at the highest level, is about delivering programs or activities that aim to improve the economic wellbeing and quality of life for the community.

The wellbeing of rural people and places depends upon many things, including:

- the availability of good-paying jobs
- access to critical services, including health care and education
- strong communities (social capital)
- a healthy natural environment

With this as the foundation, the Strategy is based on economic development being defined as aiming to:

Effect the evolution of our regions through programs or activities that create stronger conditions for environmental sustainability and the uplift of our community's economic wellbeing and quality of life.

The overarching goal of economic development is:

To put the economy on a path of higher growth that increases the productivity (growth) of our businesses and workers (prosperity) and raises standards of living for all (inclusion), achieving deep prosperity - growth that is robust, shared and enduring.





The Strategy is guided by 3 principles

1. **Growth from within** by focusing on our existing regional strengths, protecting and enhancing our comparative advantages, building on existing investment and momentum and focusing on the innovation potential of mature sectors and competitive areas..
2. **Focusing on what attracts people** by creating places where people thrive, want to live and visit.
3. **Being strategic by:**
 - Ensuring strong civics, data driven decision, strong leadership and a high capacity for stakeholder engagement and implementation.
 - Being tactical and strategic - broad, long-term strategies that set the overarching direction/objectives for economic development. Identify short-term, tactical actions that address specific barriers or challenges to attaining the longer-term vision, direction/objectives. Update these regularly to reflect changing conditions and opportunities
 - Being focused - target areas that are both big enough to offer opportunities and small enough to be tangible, visible improvements to spur investment. Over time, small focus areas can be expanded to build on successes.

Economic development
is about delivering
**projects, programs or
activities** that create
stronger conditions to...

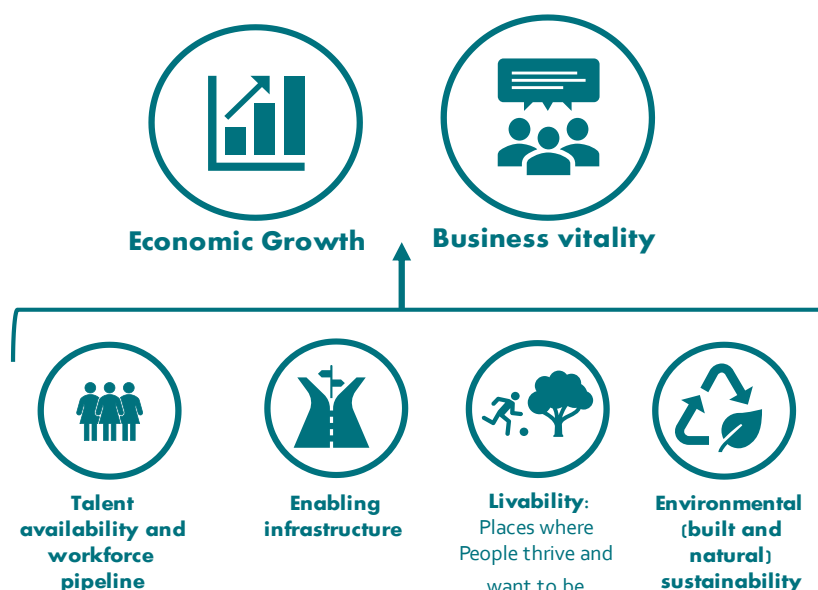


“Improve our
community’s
economic well-
being and
quality of life.”



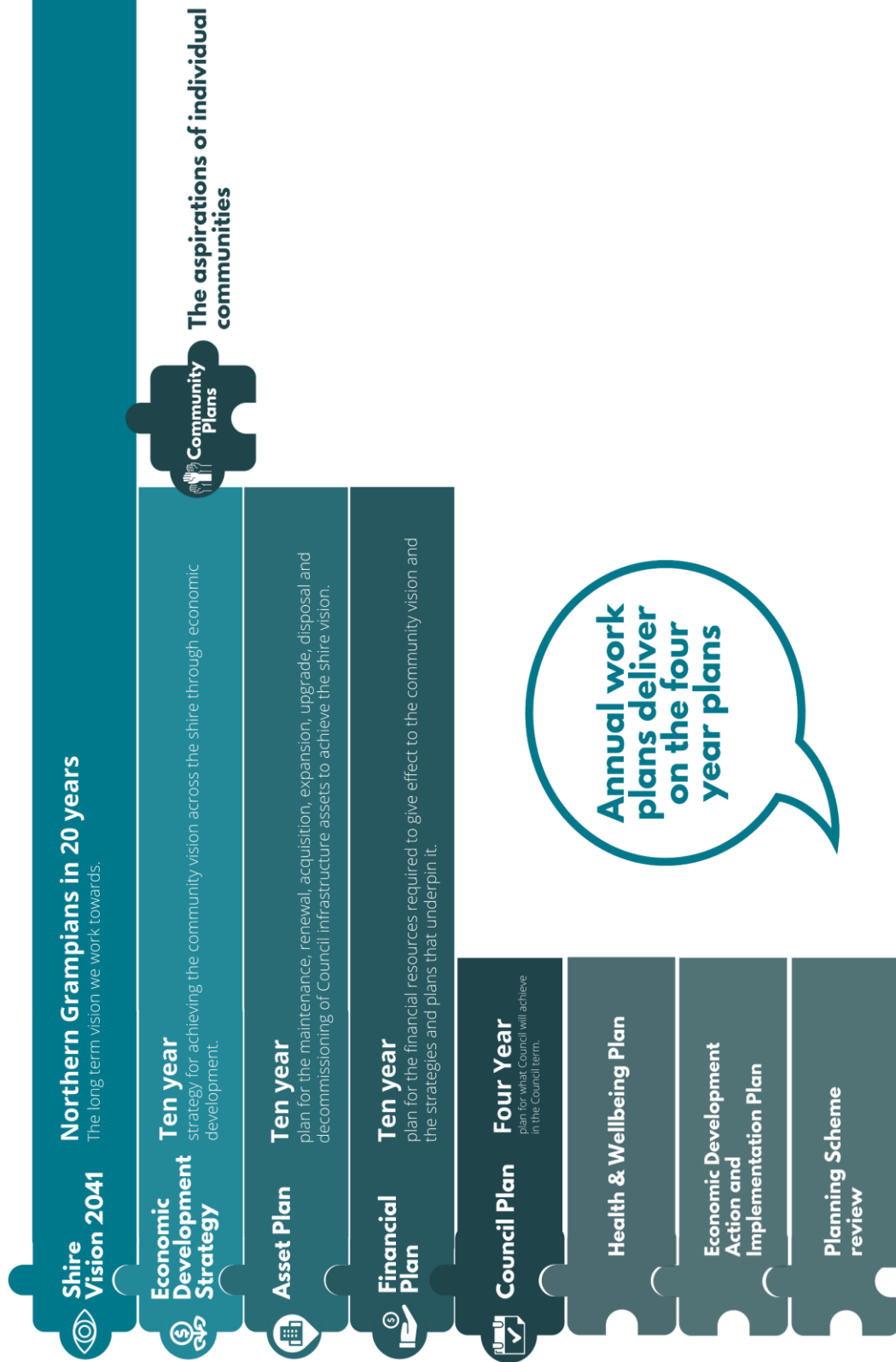
Outcomes and indicators of economic development

Outcomes of economic development are connected, and the success of economic development is often reliant upon action that targets multiple outcomes.



Economic development outcome	Indicators
Economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross regional product (GRP) Value of exports Job numbers
Business vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business survival/retention rate (ESTABLISHMENTS SURVIVING 5 YEARS OR MORE) Average weekly wage Per cent of businesses that 'feel satisfied with council business support services' Per cent of businesses that are 'aware of council business support services'
Talent availability and workforce pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population 25+ with bachelor's degree or higher Net migration of 23–34 year-olds Youth engagement levels Year 12 attainment rates Early years outcomes
Enabling infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per cent of the population that has access to advertised broadband speeds Travel times
Livability	Per cent of the population who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are obese Meet physical activity guideline 'Feel welcome here' 'Feel part of the community' Have high or very high levels of psychological distress.
Environmental (built and natural) sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability and biodiversity indicators Renewable energy use and production Levels of heritage and cultural asset protection

Council documents: how they fit together




Northern Grampians stand out strengths

Background research found that as a region, Northern Grampians has four stand out strengths that help drive regional competitiveness and set Northern Grampians apart from others. These strengths emerged as some of the region’s greatest opportunities for growth. The following section provides a summary.


Northern Grampians is:

- 1. Rich in natural resources, cultural and heritage assets, including highly productive agricultural land and vast mineral resources.
- 2. Strategically located, with access to key transport routes, a diverse range of raw commodities and agricultural products.
- 3. Has emerging innovation and research capacity.
- 4. Has industry diversity and a strong economic base.


Stand out strengths




Rich in natural, cultural and heritage assets



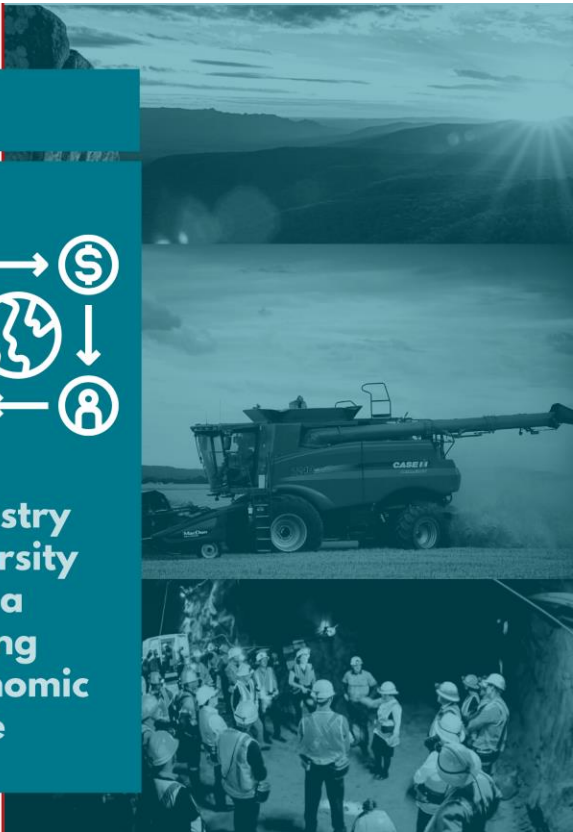
Strategically located, with access to key transport routes and a diverse range of raw commodities and agricultural products



Emerging innovation and research capacity



Industry diversity and a strong economic base



Rich in natural resources, cultural and heritage assets

Along with rich agriculture land and mineral resources, Northern Grampians holds 45% of the Grampians National Park - the 4th most visited National Park (the Park) in Victoria. The Park is heritage-listed for its animal and plant life, Aboriginal heritage and stunning natural beauty. Virtually all the Park's hero destinations are located within Northern Grampians Shire, including Pinnacle Lookout, MacKenzie Falls, Reed Lookout and the Balconies. Acting as the key service centre, the township of Halls Gap provides direct access to the 167,000 Ha National Park, being the only township located within the heart of the Park. Of the 2.5 million visitors that came to the Grampians Region in 2019, 80% accessed the Park via Halls Gap. With over 100 years of ongoing tourism brand awareness, Halls Gap is a major tourist destination in the wider Grampians region.

The richness of indigenous cultural heritage within Northern Grampians also sets the region apart. Between 80-90% of Victoria's Aboriginal rock art is located within the Grampians. Bunjil Shelter in the Black Range Scenic Reserve near Stawell is the only known rock art painting of Bunjil, and widely regarded as one of the most significant cultural sites in south eastern Australia.

Brambuk, the National Park and Cultural Centre, an iconic award-winning park information and cultural centre celebrates the region's rich indigenous cultural heritage.

Known for shiraz and sparkling wines, the Grampians has been a quality wine-producing region for more than 150 years. Northern Grampians' gold and wine growing history is regarded as being nationally significant and the longest wine producing region in Victoria. Great Western is home to the world's oldest Pinot Meunier vines at Best's. The famed Nursery Block at Best's Wines in Great Western is believed to hold the most extensive collection of pre-phyllloxera plantings in Australia – and possibly the world. Great Western is also home to the longest underground drives in the southern hemisphere at Seppelt, with strong links to Victoria's gold rush era.





Rich agricultural land and mineral resources

Background research also identified rich agricultural land and mineral resources within Northern Grampians as being key strategic advantages. Northern Grampians is at the southern end of Victoria's grain production heartland and has partnered in the innovations and practices which have propelled Australia's dryland production systems to become the most efficient in the world. Varied soil types, favourable climatic condition, and the advantages of space are reflected in the region's agricultural sector through the diversity and volume of crops and livestock produced in Northern Grampians.

In addition to productive agriculture land, Northern Grampians is rich in mineral resources including mineral sands and gold. The Stawell Corridor is a significant geological setting for gold, with substantial potential for further exploration. There may be almost as much gold still to be uncovered as has been mined, with estimates that there could be up to 75 million ounces of gold still to be found in parts of the central and western Victorian gold zones. Within the Murray Darling Basin, Northern Grampians encompasses part of the largest mineral sands deposits in the world and holds some of the largest and cleanest sources of rare earths in the state (in the mineral sands). The Donald Mineral Sands project is one of the largest known zircon and titanium resources in the world, with St Arnaud being the closest service centre to the project.



Infrastructure, land accessibility and health care and social assistance

Northern Grampians is located centrally within Victoria, with direct access to key national transport routes including the Western Sunraysia Highway which links Melbourne to the Mallee and Wimmera regions, and South Australia. This creates direct access to a range of raw commodities, as well as interstate and international markets. Future infrastructure upgrades, including the duplication of the Western Highway, and future proofing roads and bridges will further increase efficiencies for transport operators. The two major towns, Stawell and St Arnaud, are within proximity to the major regional centres: Ballarat, Bendigo and Horsham. Both Stawell and St Arnaud are less than three hours' drive to Melbourne.

Businesses located in Northern Grampians report that infrastructure and transport assets contributed to creating a competitive advantage for the location of their business in terms of supply and distribution cost savings.

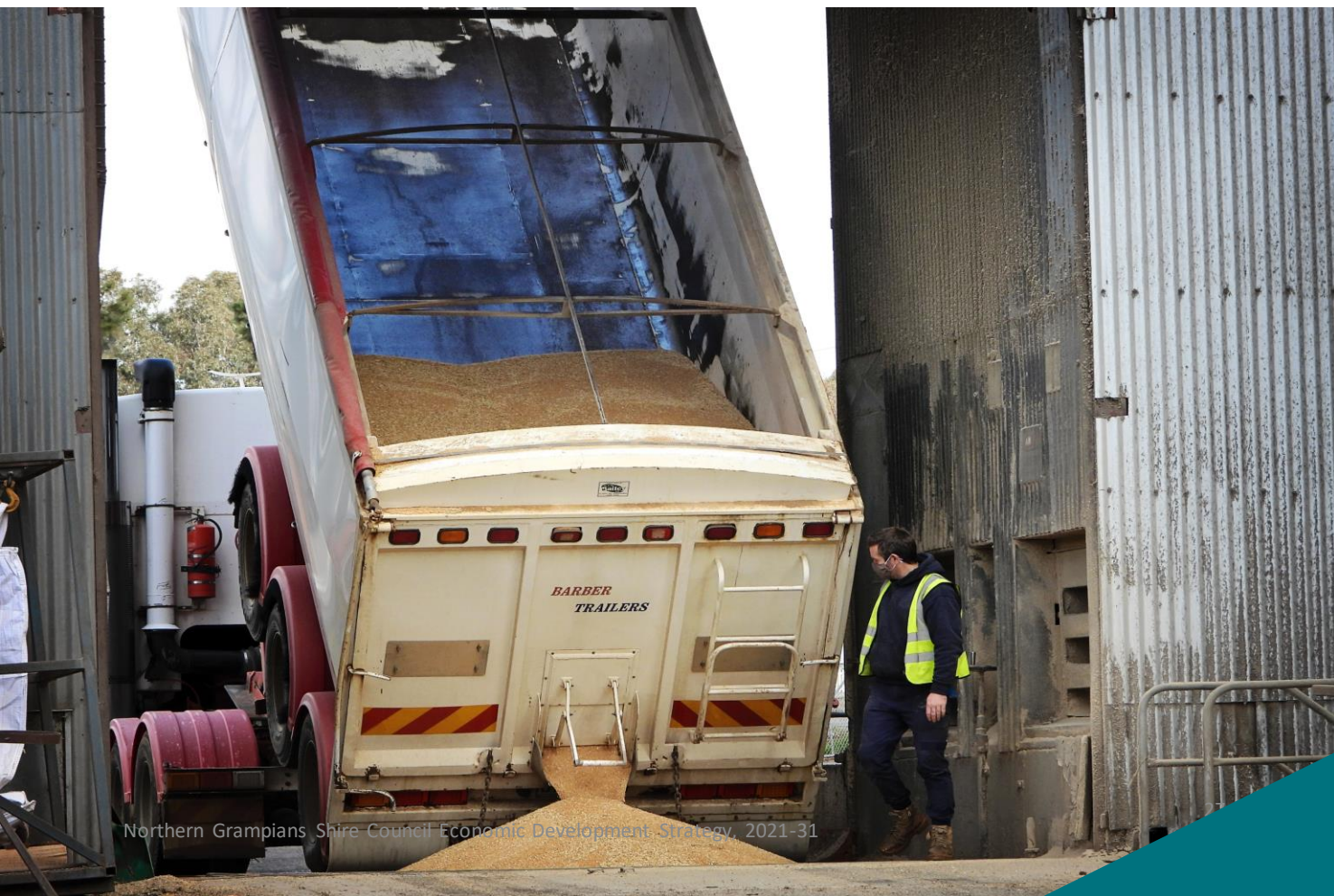
"We can run rings around some of our competitors on price due to our direct proximity to our supply chain. What we pay in freight is much lower and that puts us on a much more viable basis and can do it a lot cheaper than others who are not as well positioned on a direct supply chain route from Melbourne - the cost of that in our supply chain makes us highly competitive'.

(Northern Grampians Business Owner, I2)

Enhanced water quality and security created by the Wimmera Mallee and South West Loddon Pipeline has raised the productivity of our agricultural sector, as well as increased recreation opportunities. The pipeline has also supported new manufacturing and will help secure future mineral resources projects.

In addition to the strategic location of St Arnaud and Stawell, the cost of land for industrial, commercial and residential development is below metropolitan and regional city averages.

In addition to infrastructure to support industry, Northern Grampians has strong health care and social assistance. Northern Grampians provides stronger social support and welfare services than other comparable regional and rural towns in Western and Northern Victoria and comparable to large regional centres. Northern Grampians' providers are leading the way in Victoria for contemporary aged care in Stawell, where there are modern facilities and a strong commitment to keeping people in and connected to their own community.





Emerging innovation and research capacity


Created within the active Stawell Gold Mine, the Stawell Underground Physics Lab (SUPL) is the single most unique recent development in Northern Grampians. SUPL will be the only underground lab in the Southern Hemisphere and will join a network of underground facilities in the US, Europe, UK, China and South Korea. SUPL is one kilometre underground and research undertaken there will seek to detect dark matter which will show how the universe was formed after the Big Bang and the gravitational pull that keeps our galaxy the Milky Way together. This is said to be the biggest yet most relevant challenge facing science today.

SUPL is a collaboration between domestic tertiary institutions (the universities of Melbourne, Swinburne, Adelaide, Western Australia and Australian National University); the Australian National Nuclear Research and Development Organisation; and international stakeholders Princeton University and the Italian Institute for Nuclear Physics.

Stawell will be the epicentre for dark matter research in the Southern Hemisphere and will enable Australia to lead the world's attempts to understand what the universe is made of. SUPL will not only create advanced physics and engineering research capacity in Stawell, but it also has the potential to host basic cancer research. SUPL will attract research and development organisations to Northern Grampians, through championing innovation in Australian Industry and will in turn increase the percentage of the population qualified in science, technology and engineering.

Evolving industry and economic base

Background research also found that Northern Grampians has a diverse industry and economic base relative to other rural regions. Like the rest of Australia, the make-up of Northern Grampians' economy is changing from one that is dominated by the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors to one that is as equally reliant on sectors related to technical and lifestyle services (Table 1). Until the COVID-19 pandemic, more wealth (GDP) was being created from tourism (domestic and international) in Australia than agriculture, based on 2016 census data. The data tells us that Northern Grampians' economy is shifting in the same direction. This is a trend we expect will continue and the shift provides an opportunity to build on the resilience that exists in our growth orientated business.



Sector	Industry examples	National	Northern Grampians
Primary This sector generates products from the earth's natural resources	Agriculture, fishing, forestry and mining industries	39.4% of all jobs	39.4% of all jobs
Secondary This sector transforms and adds value to natural resource products	Manufacturing, construction, electricity, gas, water and waste		
Tertiary This sector provides services which deliver products to consumers	Retail trade, wholesale trade, transport, postal and warehousing		
Quaternary This sector delivers services targeted largely to businesses, and other organisations.	Finance, real estate, information/media, professional/technical/scientific, administrative, and education services	61% of all jobs	51% of all jobs
Quinary	Health, accommodation and food services, art and recreation, other personal services		

Our greatest opportunities

Northern Grampians' stand out strengths give rise to opportunities to uplift our community's economic wellbeing and quality of life. Background research including data analysis and local industry engagement identified several opportunities based on leveraging our strengths.

Natural resources, cultural and heritage:

- Growing visitor spend in all our townships
- Growing intensive agriculture
- Growing mineral sands and gold projects
- Native Bush Food Industry

Innovation and business sophistication:

- Attracting knowledge intensive professions associated with SUPL
- Growing local business innovation
- Value-adding to agriculture
- Exporting residential care

Skills and capabilities of our people:

- Increase early years and educational outcomes
- Regional and rural migration

Infrastructure and essential services:

- Renewable energy
- Diversify healthcare delivery and export residential care
- Waste and recycling services

Our biggest challenges

Acknowledging our challenges is as equally important as celebrating our strengths and exploring our opportunities. Tackling them as part of our long-term strategy will give us the best possible chance of achieving our overall goal.

The scale of Northern Grampians' challenges, both pre and post COVID-19 are not insurmountable and include:

1. Workforce and skills shortages due to a declining, aging population, and growing levels of social and economic disadvantage
2. Vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events
3. Competition for regional funding

1. Workforce and skills

Northern Grampians' population has been shrinking and we have not attracted and retained the number of people required to meet demand for our goods and services. More people in the productive age groups have been moving out, than in.

Adding to the pressure of population decline and aging is growing social and economic disadvantage. High levels of social and economic disparity have resulted in a low workforce participation rate and a growing number of young people being disengaged in the workforce, study or community life.

Our population is declining & aging

BS 2019 ESTIMATED RESIDENTIAL POPULATION

11,402

Northern Grampians

250,959

6,596,039

Grampians Region

Victoria

ANNUALISED POPULATION GROWTH RATE (2011-2016)

-0.7%

Northern Grampians

1.4%

Grampians Region

2.1%

Victoria

MEDIAN AGE

48 years

Northern Grampians

42 years
Grampians Region

37 years
Victoria



LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

44.77%

Northern Grampians

46.75%
Grampians Region

49.43%
Victoria



- We are competing for skills and labour with large centers
- Nearly 20% of people that moved out of Northern Grampians went to Ballarat.
- Forty percent of people in the 18-24 years age group moved to Ballarat, along with 34% of the 25-34 years age group.

Our population has been declining at an annual rate of -0.7%. Over the past ten years, on average our population has shrunk by 71 people annually.

In 2016 the median age of our community was 48 years. This is six years above the wider Grampians median age, and 11 years above the State. Our largest age group is 60-64 years, older than regional Victoria and Victorian averages and forecasted to become more pronounced over the next twenty years. Most of the age gains are forecasted to come from the existing population ageing in place, along with retirement inward migration. This is putting pressure on our labour force, with people aged over 55 having significantly lower labour force participation rates.

We are competing for skills and labour

We are competing for skills and labour with larger centres like Ballarat. Nearly 20% of people that moved out of Northern Grampians went to Ballarat. Forty per cent of people in the 18-24 years age group moved to Ballarat, along with 34% of the 25-34 years age group.

Growing social and economic disadvantage

Many within our community suffer from high levels of social and economic disadvantage and Northern Grampians is now the fourth most disadvantaged LGAs in Victoria. This means that as a region, we lag behind the majority of Victoria in overall levels of income, education, internet access, professional occupations and housing type.

High levels of social and economic disadvantage means that we have a high percentage of our community of working age, not engaged in paid work, study or community life. At 44%, our workforce participation rate is 2% lower than the Grampians Region and nearly 5% lower than Victoria. More importantly, it means that it is challenging for many people in our community to access the things they need to thrive.

Generational poverty has resulted in:

- 37% of our community over 15 years being welfare dependent (Social Health Atlas, Public Information Dev. Unit)
- 30% of families being at or below the poverty line.
- 4.8% of our community being long term unemployed, compared to Horsham at 4%, Ararat at 5.20% and Ballarat at 4.9%.
- 9% of our children (0-5 years) being developmentally vulnerable in language skills, which is 2% higher than Victoria.
- 13% of children having emotional symptoms compared to 7% in Victoria.
- Only 33% of kids completing year 12 compared to 41% in the wider Grampians Region and 54% across Victoria.
- 14% of our people between 15-24 years being disengaged (not working or studying), nearly 3% higher than the Grampians region and 5.3% higher than Victoria.

Growing disadvantage & disengagement

4TH MOST DISADVANTAGED LGA IN VICTORIA

30% of families live below the poverty line



DISENGAGED YOUTH

(15-24 yr olds unemployed or not enrolled in education)

13.5%

Northern Grampians

10.77%
Grampians Region

18.18%
Victoria

CHILDREN DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE

(Children's interest in language skills)

8.7%

Northern Grampians

10.77%
Grampians Region

18.18%
Victoria

YEAR 12 COMPLETION

33%

Northern Grampians

41%
Grampians Region

54%
Victoria

- 37% of our community over 15 years are welfare dependent
- 4.8% of our community are long term unemployed, compared to Horsham at 4%, Ararat at 5.20% and Ballarat at 4.9%
- 13% of children having emotional symptoms compared to 7% in Victoria.

2. Vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events

Victoria's climate has changed over recent decades, becoming hotter and drier, and these trends are projected to continue. Local data tells us that natural disasters including floods, landslides and fires and global pricing swings have directly impacted Northern Grampians' economy. Northern Grampians has experienced nine natural disasters in six years between 2009-2019. All of these major events were followed by significant drops in GRP. Storms, floods and flash flooding in 2010 and 2011 followed -16.65% GRP. Bushfires in 2013 and early 2014 followed -7.99% GRP (2014). Storms and flooding in 2015 and 2016 followed -11.53% GRP.

While gains have been made, they have been severely undermined by the impact of these events. Significant falls in GRP over this period have resulted in the Northern Grampians' economy being \$89M (-10.6%) smaller in 2019 compared to 2009. By contrast Victoria's GRP has grown consistently and is \$92.7B (26.4%) larger in 2019 compared to 2009.

Our economy is vulnerable

“Northern Grampians has experienced nine natural disasters in six years, all of which were followed by significant drops in GRP.”

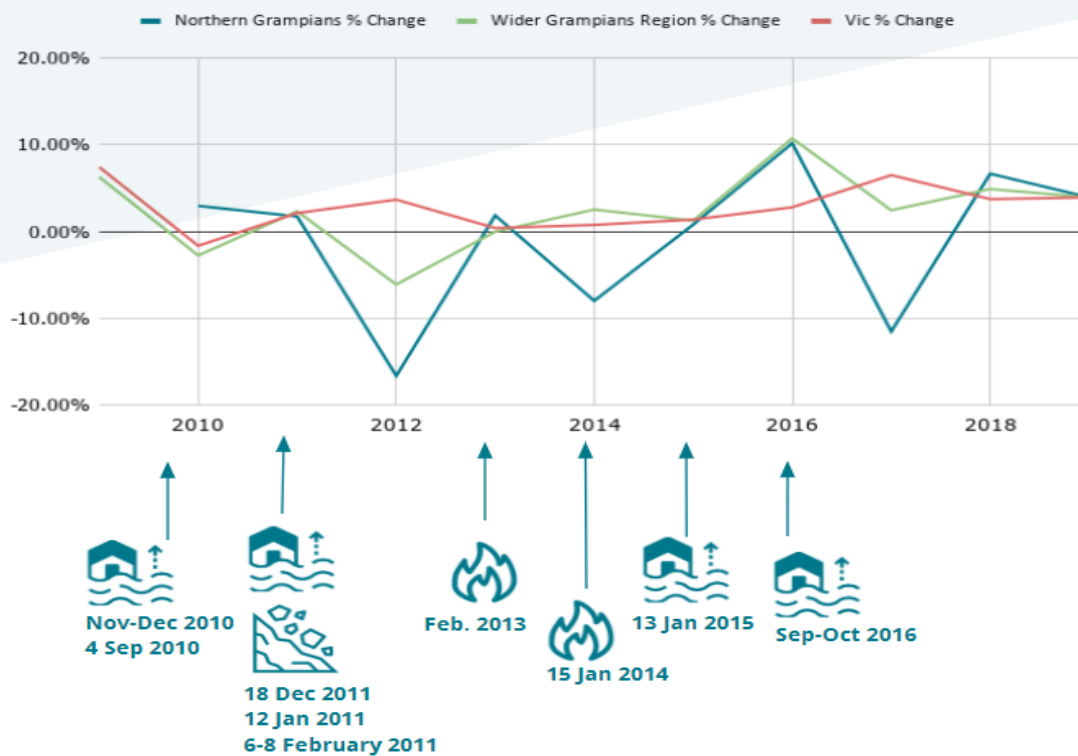
NG ECONOMY IS
-10.6% IN 2019
COMPARED TO
2009



\$89M

Victoria's GRP has grown consistently and is \$92.7B (26.4%) larger in 2019 compared to 2009

Percentage change in wealth over time



3. Competition for regional funding

There has been a shift in funding for regions. Once only the remit of Government – the emergence of regional partnerships and 'deals' now actively involves multiple stakeholders to generate regional development outcomes that drive prosperity.

While the funding models that can accrue from a 'joined-up' approach from regions are often based around stronger evidence, partnerships and commitment for in-kind or matching support they have generated a regional funding environment that is based on two forms: competition and collaboration. Competition is an efficient instrument for government to allocate support to regions, where councils actively pursue a limited funding pool through the development of clear priorities, often de-risked and ready for construction or activation, backed by ground business cases.

Collaborative approaches to government are often more complex and multi layered but inherently look to include industry involvement that leverages entrepreneurial and investment approaches to ensure commercial returns. These collaborative mechanisms have been linked to City and Regional Deals and require local leadership, collaborative governance models and shared responsibility across parties to achieve 'place-based' outcomes. Notably, collaborative approaches have leveraged significant public and private investment outcomes that overshadow opportunities provided through competitive funding rounds.

Regardless of the funding mechanism, the need to demonstrate a commitment to an agreed strategic direction and hold the course as a region has been demonstrated through funding outcomes for places time and time again. Longstanding multi stakeholder agreed priorities are often required to achieve outcomes that can take a decade to come to realisation.

COVID-19

Whilst the outbreak of COVID-19 is primarily a public health issue, it is widely understood that it is having a major impact on our economy. The economic shock of COVID-19 represents the most significant economic challenge to Australia's economy since the Second World War and the contraction is the biggest since the Great Depression.

Official national accounts data, results from the Australian Business Economic Impact Survey (ABEIS), academic publications, and modelling paint a picture of how COVID-19 has changed Australia's economy.

At a local level, there are important observations and questions. Every region's economy is unique. Not only does every region's economy have its own unique composition of employment across industries, but there are also unique combinations of occupations within industries, unique industry supply chains, and patterns of household consumption.

Across Australia, the median fall in employment was 0.7%, since COVID-19 and the introduction of social lockdown measures to manage the pandemic and December 2020. Over that period (April–December 2020) the median number of jobs lost in Northern Grampians was 2.4%, equalling a median loss of 121 jobs. The hardest hit sectors over that period in Northern Grampians has been the accommodation and food services sector and retail.

One of the key outcomes of economic development is growth, and value-added is a key economic measure of growth. Value-added tells us how much wealth each business, and collectively the region, is generating at any point in time. It is different from income or turnover, which includes the cost of inputs. Northern Grampians' economy has experienced a median fall in value added of 7.4% (-\$52M) since COVID-19 (April - December 2020), 6% higher than the Australia wide median.



COVID-19 Impact: April - December 2020

MEDIAN FALL IN JOBS

Northern Grampians

-121
-2.4%

Victoria
-2.9%

Australia
-0.7%



MEDIAN FALL IN VALUE-ADDED

Northern Grampians

-\$52M
-7.4%

Victoria
-7.3%

Australia
-1.4%



INDUSTRIES HIT HARDEST

Northern Grampians

Jobs & Value-added



Accommodation &
Food Services



Retail



Monitoring and understanding the economic impact of the pandemic, using quantitative data is key to:

- determining and prioritising resources to support the survival of business whilst restriction are in place
- predicting likely potential longer-term impacts to the businesses and our workforce
- positioning council to make strong decisions that will spur long-term recovery
- building an evidence base for the actions to implement the Strategy; and
- providing a compelling argument for external funding.

Having a clear picture of what our economy looked like prior to the pandemic is as equally important as understanding the economic impact of COVID-19. This understanding will contribute not only to spurring recovery, but uplift.

Strategic framework

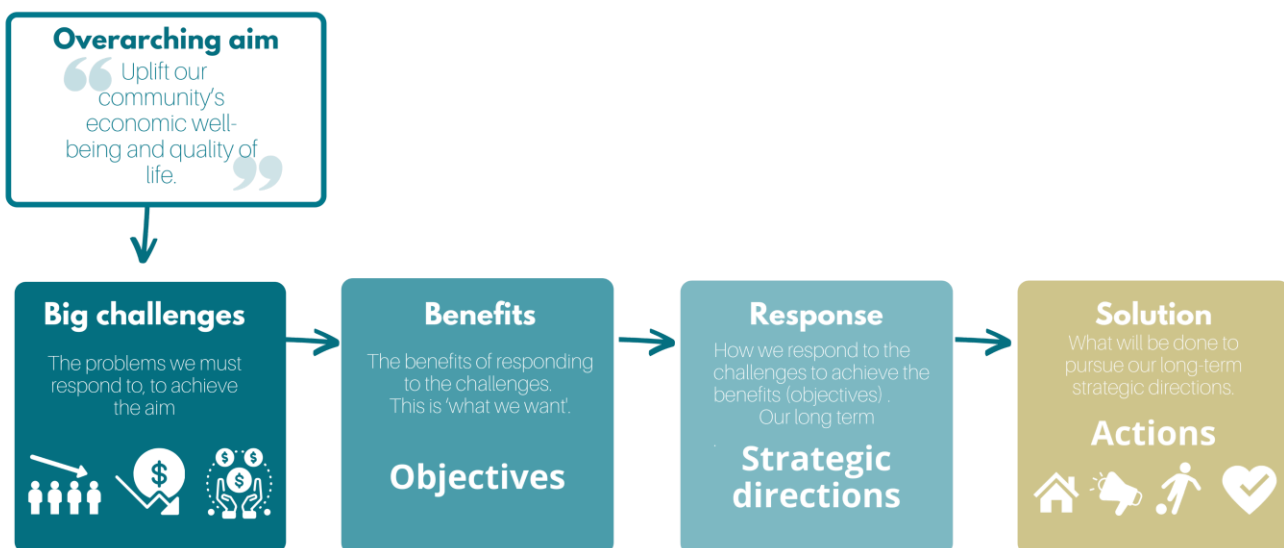
Method

The Strategy is based on data and engagement with the community. The investment logic mapping process (ILM) was used to apply data and community engagement findings to identify the investment (strategy) that provided the most benefit of the community. The ILM process provides logic behind investment decisions to make sure we are focusing on the real need (what is challenging us or a problem) or the nett benefits for local communities in Northern Grampians.

The strategy consists of:

1. **Objectives** that describe what we want – the benefits of addressing our biggest challenges. The Strategy is underpinned by three objectives that describe the benefits of solving our biggest challenges.
2. **Strategic directions** are our core commitments over the next ten years to achieve our objectives. The strategic objectives represent our responses to the challenge and what we will achieve and be known for. The strategic directions will guide our tactical action.
3. **Actions** are what we will do to pursue the long-term strategic directions. Tactical actions may address the reasons why the challenge exists or to realise our greatest opportunities. Actions are the investment we will make to implement the long-term objectives and associated strategic directions. Actions will be reviewed and monitored regularly, either annually or biannually. Actions will be updated to respond to changing conditions and opportunities.

Investment Logic Mapping (ILM)





Objective 1:

Increased productivity and a prosperous future for all

This is about:

- Ensuring our businesses have access to people with the skill and talent they need to operate at full capacity and reach their growth potential
- Ensuring we have the people required to 'get things done' - the social glue that helps communities thrive
- Helping our people to reach their full potential and increase workforce participation.

Why is it important?

Our population has been declining and aging and social and economic disadvantage has been growing. This has created workforce and skills shortages, restraining our economy and threatening the sustainability of our business and organisations. Targeted industry engagement revealed that many of our businesses are struggling to access the people they need to unlock existing economic growth potential. Data tells the same story.

Increased productivity and a prosperous future for all represents the benefits of tackling this challenge.

"We need to attract new people to come to the region to fill the jobs - we have lots of jobs, but don't have the skilled people to fill them." (I16)

Several of our established businesses have been unable to operate at the level required to meet existing demand and access new markets. This means that real and existing potential for established business to deliver economic value to the Northern Grampians' economy is being lost.

It is estimated that current job vacancies in the manufacturing, agriculture and food industries are impacting Northern Grampians' economy to the tune of \$36 million in lost total value-added, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects.

To address the issues some of our employers have sought to supplement their workforce with short term, temporary or 'drive in, drive out' workers. However, the impact of not having the workforce embedded in the community affects both the business itself, the local community and economy. Impacts that come with a workforce not settling in the community include business inefficiencies, lost economic flow on effects through salaries and wages not being spent locally and lost community benefits generated through larger networks of social relationships in the community, including stronger clubs and community groups.

Should this scenario continue, it is likely that businesses will be forced to relocate to larger centres to access skills and labour. The loss of business would create a flow-on supply-chain effect in terms of local purchases of goods and services.

The challenge extends to our capacity to attract new industry investment that leverages off our stand-out strengths. Access to skills and labour will be essential to the realisation of Northern Grampians' greatest opportunities for new industry investment, including:

- Rural industry that adds value to agriculture
- Growing the tourism offer required to grow visitor spend
- Growing and diversifying the health and human services sector
- Growing the mineral resources sector.

We must attract and retain the skills and people we need now and into the future to meet existing demand and enable scale-ups and pipeline projects.

Our capacity to attract new investment opportunities and further grow our economy also hinges on having skilled and talented people.

To allow our existing industries to keep up with demand, and to satisfy pipeline projects, we will need to grow our workforce by approximately 1,500 people over the coming decade. This equates to an annual population growth rate of approximately 2%. The Victoria in Futures (VIF) projections forecasted an average population decline of 0.6% per year between 2019 and 2036, with a total decline of 1,220 residents over that period and resulting in a total population of 10,210 residents.

We need to attract skilled and talented people, alongside supporting a pipeline of people with the skills that we will need - focusing on our young people.

This challenge is not unique to us

Workforce shortages are being felt across most parts of regional Australia and have been made worse by COVID-19. The impacts on the size and distribution of future population growth in Australia are significant. Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 have had a huge effect on migration, a main driver of population growth. It has been forecasted that due to COVID-19, Australia will have close to 900,000 fewer residents than we previously forecast. Australia's resident population will depend on health outcomes overseas and therefore overseas migration.

Whilst the pandemic exacerbated the issue, it is not new

In the Wimmera and Western Victoria job vacancies have grown over the past five years, particularly in professional jobs, as well as technical and trades workers.

Between November 2019 (pre COVID) to November 2020 total job vacancies in the Wimmera and Western Victoria grew by 20%, the second largest growth in job vacancies across all Victorian regions, second to Bendigo and the High Country. Demand across the Wimmera and Western Victoria for labourers, community and personal service workers and technical and trades workers has grown significantly since the pandemic. By contrast, job vacancies in Geelong and the Surf Coast fell by 7% and 23% in Melbourne.

Background research found that key industries identified that Northern Grampians has the capacity for 125 extra workers in the hospitality, manufacturing, agriculture and food industries alone. Having these extra people would boost our economy by an estimated \$36 million dollars.

The following sectors represent the greatest source of opportunity for economic growth:

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Health care and social assistance
- Sectors associated with tourism

Over the last decade these industries displayed a combination of growth over time, substantial influence on economic growth (high value-added and employment for example) and level of specialisation. Focusing on growing from within and building on existing momentum is the most likely approach to achieving success.

What is the consequence of doing nothing?

- Established business will not be able to meet demand for their goods and services, therefore will scale-down, relocate or close.
- We will lose momentum in growing industries and value-added to the economy by manufacturing, agriculture and hospitality will remain the same or decline.

Objective 1: Strategic directions

<p>1.a</p> <p>The rural region of choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Attract and retain talented, skilled and productive people. ii. Ensure diverse and enriching places and experiences that offer an attractive rural lifestyle alternative. iii. Foster communities that are inclusive, welcoming and supportive of diversity - where all people feel valued. iv. Foster positive outcomes for our indigenous community v. Develop a greater understanding of the significance of indigenous culture in Northern Grampians and meaningful partnerships with traditional owners. vi. Tackle climate change and its impacts on health and wellbeing.
<p>1.b.</p> <p>Grow the economic capacity and engagement of our own people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Support vulnerable people and ensure our children have the best start in life. ii. Ensure our young people have equitable access to opportunities and support to participate fully in the social, economic, educational and civic life. iii. Ensure a diversity of access to health and human services.

1a: The rural region of choice

Strategic directions

- i. Attract and retain talented, skilled and productive people
- ii. Ensure diverse and enriching places and experiences that offer an attractive rural lifestyle alternative
- iii. Foster communities that are inclusive, welcoming and supportive of diversity - where all people feel valued
- iv. Foster positive outcomes for our indigenous community
- v. Develop a greater understanding of the significance of indigenous culture in Northern Grampians and meaningful partnerships with traditional owners
- vi. Tackle climate change and its impacts on health and wellbeing.

Becoming the region of choice for our target audience is a key response to workforce and skills shortages.

The Grampians New Resident and Workforce Attraction Strategy and Action Plan (May 2020) identified the following priority groups:

- Metropolitan Residents
- Regional Victoria Residents (selected locations)
- Tourists (converting visitors to residents)
- Migrants
- Creators (business owners)

COVID-19 has made this even more critical as several sectors reported a heavy reliance on migrant workers skills and labour to keep their business sustainable.

Benefits of pursuing this strategic direction include:

- Unlocking our existing economic growth potential by approximately \$35 million dollars in additional value-added, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects (estimated) from existing businesses (based on 2020 industry engagement)

The challenge is that more people in the productive age groups are moving out of Northern Grampians than in, as we compete for skills and talent from larger regional centres.

To attract and retain the people we need certain conditions to be met. Pursuing this direction will require tactical action to address the reason behind why we are losing our productive age groups and why we are struggling to attract our target audience.

Key issues to be addressed in the action and implementation plan:

1. Housing and land issues

We need to ensure we have housing quality and variety that suits the market. Whilst housing has traditionally been affordable to purchase by comparison to larger regional centres, rental accommodation has been in short supply. Our employers told us that the greatest challenge to attracting and securing the people they need is associated with housing. At 0.17% our vacancy rates are extremely low, compared to 0.29% in Hamilton, 0.57% in Ararat region, and .45% in Horsham.

Many employees want to 'try before they buy' and finding a house that is suitable of a certain standard is a real challenge. In addition, we have a shortage of rental accommodation, both in number, type and quality.

Whilst we have unique and beautiful landscape characteristics and rural lifestyle benefits, we lack a 'rural land product' that is suitable or ready for the market. This means that whilst the potential is there, it is not being realised.

2. Resident and workforce attraction

COVID-19 presented an opportunity to capitalise regional and rural migration. Opportunities to promote Northern Grampians for remote working, space, lifestyle reset, affordability and job opportunities exist, including converting visitors to residence.

Whilst we have jobs, relative land and housing affordability, we have very low regional awareness in metropolitan Melbourne. The Grampians New Resident and Workforce Attraction Strategy and Action Plan (May 2020) found that COVID-19 may provide a unique moment in time to demonstrate that a permanent change to a simpler life is a possibility.

In addition to filling local jobs, the project identified entrepreneurs and the remote workforce as one of the markets to target in promotion. With social distancing rules in place, many Australians have been working from home. While flexibility has long been touted by businesses, the health crisis has been a forced test of it and there has been a realisation that employees do not have to be in the office to be productive. Living regionally while still being able to hold down a city job may have been a long-held dream for many Australians, and the COVID-19 pandemic may have highlighted the possibility of making that dream a reality.

"COVID-19 has made metro people realise that jobs can still be done from rural areas". (139)

"We can see the rural migration playing out and the data is telling us that people are not just coming from Melbourne, there is significant interest in our area from rural cities." (134)

3. Integrated and diversify of access to healthcare and social assistance

Being able to provide health care options to all cohorts of the community is critical in attracting and enabling new residents to the shire. We have an opportunity to diversify how healthcare is delivered to facilitate greater in-home care, whilst not compounding social isolation. Opportunities including blending virtual and face to face consultations methods that go beyond tele-health and facilitate stronger connections with other agencies. Policy changes have the potential to create challenges with larger service catchment areas. Alliances and stronger working relationships with service providers from a wider geographical area will continue to be important.

The availability of Government funding for aged care services was also reported as being a challenge to keeping ahead of demand.

"Our LGBTIQ regional communities currently need to travel to Melbourne, there is an opportunity to have these communities supported locally with access to specialists via Tele-health".

"COVID-19 has demonstrated that there is a sweet spot through blending online consultation (Tele-health) with on-site consultation - combining face-to-face with video consultation we've been able to expedite the wait lists. We have also found there is a greater potential to attract a skilled workforce that has a blend of local and offsite presence" (18)

4. **Social and community infrastructure**

We heard that primary, secondary and further education opportunities have a big influence on people's decisions to stay or relocate. Access to quality sport, recreation and open space is also an important factor. Access to high-speed internet is also a critical factor in attracting a remote workforce looking for a lifestyle rest.

5. **Access to a diversity of offering, including arts, culture, entertainment, food and beverage**

Along with community infrastructure, we know that metropolitan people (our single largest geographical market in Victoria) have ready access to the arts, culture, entertainment, quality food and beverage. We need to work hard to provide diverse and enriching places and experiences that offer an attractive rural lifestyle alternative.





6. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health

Climate change is both the greatest threat to public health of the 21st century and the greatest global health opportunity (World Health Organization. Climate change and human health: WHO; 2015 [Available from: <https://www.who.int/globalchange/global-campaign/cop21/en/>]).

The *Climate Change Act 2017* recognises that Victoria's climate is changing and requires certain decision-makers to have regard to climate change and to consider its potential impacts and contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. Local Government is identified as a decision-maker that must consider climate change when preparing a municipal public health and wellbeing plan (MPHWP). Both mitigation and adaptation-focused activities can create conditions for health co-benefits to be realised.

Tackling climate change and its impacts on health is also a focus area of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023 and, under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, councils are required to have regard to the state plan when preparing a MPHWP (Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan). It seeks to encourage and embed action to tackle climate change and its impacts on health in municipal public health and wellbeing planning. To assist meet legislative obligations council will need to prepare the MPHWP in line with 'Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing planning: guidance for local government, 2020' (Victorian State Government).

7. Acknowledgement of the significance of indigenous culture in Northern Grampians

Engagement with the community and key stakeholders identified that there needs to be a greater understanding of the significance of indigenous culture in Northern Grampians. There was also a sense that there needs to be greater acknowledgment of our traditional owners and opportunity to 'bring our traditional owners home'.

"Our people were the first group in Southern Australia to get positive determination...Benefits of indigenous tourism need to be shared equally. When we talk about opportunities to grow tourism through indigenous cultural heritage assets, we need to start by developing an authentic acknowledgment of indigenous people and cultural heritage." (I39)

Opportunities to take steps to form meaningful partnerships with traditional owners include:

- Flying the Aboriginal flag.
- Recognise significant days and events (e.g., Reconciliation Day, NAIDOC Week).
- Aboriginal acknowledgment in council's opening prayers and in council documents.
- Cultural heritage awareness training.
- Creating opportunities for open and transparent conversations at high levels.
- Policy on local providers and weighting local providers in tender assessments.
- Support for new business owned and operated by Traditional Owners.
- Protection and management of significant sites on public and council land.

8. Career opportunities - wages and salaries

53.8% or 4,940 local employment are supported by the Health Care and Social Assistance; Agriculture; Manufacturing and Retail. The lowest representation of industries supporting jobs includes Wholesale Trade; Financial and Insurance Services; Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services; Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; and Information Media and Telecommunications that support only 3.6% (178) of all jobs locally.



Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Public Administration and Mining represent 51.7% or \$332.155 million in wages and salaries paid locally on an annual basis.

11.3% of workers earn \$1,500 or more a week. These 556 highly paid workers are most strongly concentrated in Mining, Health Care, Public Administration and Safety, Agriculture and Education industries who support 78% of these high earning local jobs.

Conversely, 1,016 (20.6%) of local jobs earn less than \$500 a week. Retail, Accommodation and Food Services, Agriculture and Health Care & Social Assistance represent 74.7% of these service-related jobs which often include higher levels of part-time roles and casualisation.

1.b: Grow the economic capacity and engagement of our own people

Strategic directions

- i. To support vulnerable people and ensure our children have the best start in life
- ii. To ensure our young people have equitable access to opportunities and support to participate fully in the social, economic, educational and civic life
- iii. To ensure integrated and diversity of access to health and human services.

The skills, health and education of our workforce are fundamental to our region's competitiveness. In addition to becoming 'the region of choice' we must commit to solving the challenge of growing social and economic disadvantage.

The benefits of addressing our community's social and economic disadvantage are directly related to uplifting economic wellbeing and quality of life.

"We need to understand the impact of the disparity between the well-off and not well off - housing education, strong early life experience, transport and the flow on effect to the economy. "(129)

Benefits of pursuing this strategic direction include:

- **A more productive economy** by increasing the percentage of our community participating in work, reducing long term unemployment and welfare dependency. Currently, 44% of the population participate in work (of people over 15 years), 2% lower than the Grampians Region and nearly 5% lower than Victoria and 37% of our community over 15 years are welfare dependent.
- **A competitive workforce pipeline** that benefits employers, students, and the wider community (creating a higher-level skills and employment base). Currently 14% of our people between 15-24 years are disengaged (not working or studying), nearly 3% higher than the Grampians region and 5.3% higher than Victoria.
- **Improving health outcomes**, through preventative health initiatives that result from a higher standard of education.
- **Ensuring volunteerism** and the 'glue' that is needed to 'get things done' (2011 26.9% of People Volunteered. 2016 28.4% volunteered) and
- **Strengthening businesses vitality** - ability to diversify and respond to competitive pressure by having access to people with skills and capacity for innovation.

Key issues to be addressed in the action and implementation plan:

Generational poverty and low workforce participation

- 30% of families are at or below the poverty line.
- Poor early years outcomes and youth disengagement - 9% of our children (0-5 years) are developmentally vulnerable in language skills, 2% higher than Victoria and 13% of children have emotional symptoms compared to 7% in Victoria.

14% of our people between 15-24 years being disengaged (not working or studying), nearly 3% higher than the Grampians region and 5.3% higher than Victoria. Only 33% of young people completing year 12 compared to 41% across the Grampians Region, and 54% across the State.

Data analysis and stakeholder engagement tells us that we need to focus on children in their early years and youth. Key stakeholders involved in supporting our young people, work towards the vision of every young person in our community having every opportunity to fulfil their dreams and potential.

Pursuing this direction will require action to embrace our young and vulnerable families to:

- thrive in education, including through opportunities to leverage off SUPL to grow outcomes in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in our schools
- become part of competitive workforce pipeline into skilled jobs, including training in the trades as part of school's program that benefits employers, students, and the wider community.
- participate in civic life (public participation)
- build resilience and raise their aspirations
- form respectful relationships
- enhance school readiness and transitions of our children
- enhance social connectedness

- Low workforce participation - 37% of our community over 15 years being welfare dependent (Social health Atlas, Public Information Dev. Unit). 4.8% of our community being long term unemployment of, compared to Horsham at 4%, Ararat at 5.20% and Ballarat at 4.9%.

- **Stawell Undergrown Physics Lab (SUPL)**

SUPL presents a unique opportunity to generate significant local and regional educational benefits in primary and secondary schools in maths and sciences. The equivalent dark matter research laboratory in Rome attracts up to 8000 school students each year.

"For Australian students, this lab will undoubtedly inspire them to study physics in school and university. And it also means that if they want to be part of a leading global scientific experiment, they can do that in Stawell." (Swinburne University Professor Alan Duffy, by Georgina Jerums, 3 Feb 2020, The Victorian Connection.)

"We have an opportunity to make stronger connections with schools to make sure there are pathways for students to take up local jobs and fill local job shortages. We need to make sure schools are encouraging our kids to stay or return and make sure there are programs that create pathways to careers in agriculture for example and the trades - VCAL" (I11).

Objective 2:

Sustained economic growth

This is about:

- Ensuring our economy is resilient and development is environmentally sustainable
- Ensuring our economy is buffered from natural disasters and global pricing swings

Why is it important?

Alongside our population challenges, vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events have undermined our community's economic wellbeing.

Sustained economic growth represents the benefit of tackling this issue.

Between 2009 and 2019 Northern Grampians experienced nine natural disasters. All these major events were followed by significant drops in GRP. These falls in GRP resulted in the Northern Grampians' economy being 10.6% smaller (-\$89M) in 2019 compared to 2009. By contrast Victoria's GRP grew consistently over that period and by 2019, had grown by 26.4%.

Northern Grampians' economy has traditionally been closely linked to environmental conditions. Primary sectors make up nearly 25% of total wealth generated in Northern Grampians. Jobs in agriculture are around four times greater in Northern Grampians than the national average; a reflection of our productive agricultural landscape. In addition, a large percentage of our visitor economy is very reliant on the Grampians National Park being open to visitors. So, while gains have been made by these driving sectors over the past decade they have been severely eroded by the impact of natural disasters.

Background research found that, like the rest of Australia, the make-up of Northern Grampians' economy is changing from one that is dominated by the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors to one that is as equally reliant on sectors related to technical and lifestyle services. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, more wealth (GDP) was being created from tourism (domestic and international) in Australia than agriculture, based on 2016 census data. The data tells us that Northern Grampians' economy is shifting in the same direction. The Strategy recognises that this is a trend we expect will continue and we must create the conditions required to facilitate greater diversity and resilience in our economy.

The transformation that is needed is already well under way.

New farming practices are steadily being adopted and/or introduced by growers. No-till, reduced chemical application, soil organic matter build up, carbon farming, and remote sensing are all being 'selectively' implemented. The newest technologies in farming are not only focused on automation and efficiency but also on sustainability and this is attracting renewed interest in both large-scale (broadacre and intensive) and niche/artisanal production.

"Most growers are pretty good at adapting to subtle changes in environmental conditions and while it's a threat it also presents opportunities. I don't know of anyone doing the same thing as they were 20 years ago, we're all moving with the years and the climate and I think the industry is managing it pretty well as a whole." (1)

In addition to our agriculture sector becoming more innovative and sustainable, Northern Grampians has become one of the most diverse economy and workforce in the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

Already, the shire's 'business and organisation services' (quaternary sectors) and 'personal services' (quinary sectors inc. health, sport and recreation, culture and accommodation and food service) contribute 51% of all jobs and 49% of total wealth (value-added)

Although this trend and progressive shift towards a service economy will be temporarily impacted by COVID- 19, the Strategy will drive continued diversification.

Greater economic resilience, environmental sustainability and climate action aims to reduce the impact of natural disasters and global market events on our GRP.

What is the consequence of doing nothing?

- Falls in GRP following natural disasters will become greater and more frequent as climate variability increases.
- Businesses will be unable to absorb the impact of growing losses and will close or relocate.
- Business confidence will decline, new investment will not occur, and our industry base will narrow.

Economic resilience and sustained economic growth would be the benefit of remedying our vulnerability.

KPI 5: Grow GRP year on year from a \$730M economy to \$920M (26% growth, equal to the State).?

KPI 6: Reduce carbon emissions

Objective 2: Strategic directions

<p>2.a</p> <p>Iconic destinations</p>	<p>i. Ensure our visitor economy offers diverse, unique, high quality and enriching experiences, disperse across Northern Grampians that play to, our standout strengths</p> <p>ii. Protect, enhance and celebrate our natural, cultural and heritage assets - so they are healthy and able to contribute to the lives of future generations.</p>
<p>2.b</p> <p>A magnet for innovation and investment</p>	<p>i. Ensure land use policy and infrastructure that enables investment</p> <p>ii. Reduce costs of energy on business and impact on climate change</p> <p>iii. Support businesses to be strong, innovative, resilient and sustainable</p> <p>iv. Attract new and emerging rural and resources industries</p> <p>v. Ensure development is environmentally sustainable and key assets are protected</p> <p>vi. Attract research and development organisations.</p>

2.a: Iconic destinations

i. Strategic directions

- i. Ensure our visitor economy offers diverse, unique, high quality and enriching experiences, disperse across Northern Grampians that play to, our standout strengths.
- ii. Protect, enhance and celebrate our natural, cultural and heritage assets - so they are healthy and able to contribute to the lives of future generations.

Delivering iconic destinations and ensuring our environment is healthy is a key response to our economic vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events.

Benefits include:

- A more resilient visitor economy, able to sustain growth following natural disasters and other major events.

The Strategy recognises the importance of dispersing our visitors offering across the municipality, to reduce the impact of National Park closures caused by natural disasters. This requires developing experiences and destinations that are fit for the market and capable of being strongly promoted. The Strategy also recognises that our towns and businesses are not competing, but as a region, we are competing with other regions across Victoria and Australia for high yield visitors.

Australia's tourism industry is projected to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and expand over the next five years. Tourism businesses are expected to heavily rely on domestic leisure travellers.

Alongside continued destination marketing to increase front of mind awareness (particularly in Metropolitan Melbourne), opportunities exist to enhance the visitor experience and build a compelling reputation. Offering more in terms of quality and diversity will increase the length of time and amount of money visitors spend in the region. Particularly with respect to the high yield 'lifestyle leader' market.

Key issues to be addressed in the action and implementation plan:

1. Visitor offering

Opportunities to develop visitor experiences and attractions that leverage uniqueness including:

- Developing St Arnaud as the gateway to the silo arts trail, historical and cultural hub.
- Building on Great Western as a wine and food village.
- Developing Stawell as the 'Gateway to the Grampians' and leveraging off a UNESCO World Heritage listing as the birthplace of the 1850s Victorian gold rush and emerging dark matter hub.
- Develop Indigenous Cultural Heritage products in the Grampians National Park, Brambuk the National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap, Bunjil Shelter and Sisters Rocks out of Stawell, and leveraging of world heritage listed 6,600-year-old Indigenous aquaculture region Budj Bim.
- Attracting private sector investment associated with GPT, including the development of five-star accommodation in Halls Gap or surrounds.
- Developing outdoor adventure products, including lakes and waterways for both active and passive recreation.

- Increasing the diversity and quality in culinary and retail offering and experience and build a strong reputation which supports 'lifestyle' leaders.
- Developing regional cycling and trail infrastructure.
- Investment enabling public realm infrastructure (e.g., Heath Street Bridge and other public realm works that builds market confidence, visitor perception and attracts quality private investment).
- Building on the calendar of regional events.
- Creating an omnichannel for visitor information to enhance the experience, visitor dispersal and free up funding for destination marketing).

"We could become the flagship destination in the country for indigenous tourism. We have the basis of something great and something no other region has. Visitor numbers are expected to double; however, the visitor experience is likely to diminish as accommodation and park infrastructure becomes saturated." (I14)

Challenges to realising increased visitor offering including:

- Limited investment in infrastructure to diversity natural, cultural and historical assets for tourism (both in GNP and other assets).
 - Aboriginal cultural heritage and traditional owner acknowledgement locally.
 - Demands on traditional owners and capacity to deliver indigenous cultural heritage experiences.
 - A range of Public Land management objectives and management bodies across Crown Land, reserves and waterways in Northern Grampians and in the township of Halls Gap.
 - Digital connectivity shortfalls.
 - Business and community acceptance of new technology.
 - Lack of feasibility and business cases to support industry investment attraction.
 - Planning policy, including land use and development constraints.
 - Planning approval processing.
- "Aboriginal people are compelled to want to connect back to their lands...the great thing is, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage isn't going anywhere. We have an opportunity to increase visitor stay by having Aboriginal led tourism...Knowledge is shared by the collective not by the individual." (I39)*

2. Management of natural, cultural and heritage assets

Part of the response must be to protect, enhance and celebrate our natural, cultural and heritage assets. After all, these are the unique assets that have the potential to draw people to our region and yield more from our visitor economy. This includes ensuring assets managed by council and other agencies are done so in a way that supports diverse, unique, high quality and enriching experiences, disperse across Northern Grampians that play to, our standout strengths.

2.b: A magnet for innovation and investment

i. Strategic directions

- i. Ensure land use policy and infrastructure that enables investment
- ii. Reduce costs of energy on business and impact on climate change
- iii. Support businesses to be strong, innovative, resilient and sustainable
- iv. Attract new and emerging rural and resources industries
- v. Ensure development is environmentally sustainable and key assets are protected
- vi. Attract research and development organisations.

Growing innovation and attracting new investment will be a key response to buffering our economy against vulnerability to natural disasters and global market events.

Benefits include: A more resilient and diverse economic base, able to sustain growth following natural disasters and other major events.

Key issues to be addressed in the action and implementation plan:

A lack of high-speed digital connectivity emerged as a persistent challenge. 16.4% % of premises in Northern Grampians do not have internet access, compared to 11.68% across the Grampians Region and 8.37% across Victoria.

Northern Grampians is significantly disadvantaged compared to nearby Ballarat and Horsham through poor quality and consistency of broadband access, lack of availability of mobile internet, employment in technology-related industries and employment in ICT.

1. Strategic land use planning and policy

We must continue to invest in strategic land use planning to ensure we have adequate strategic justification to maintain the Planning Scheme and ensure policy facilitates our vision.

Background research found that the Planning Scheme has not kept pace with community aspirations, creating issues such as:

- Land availability and security for industrial uses in Stawell and St Arnaud
- Lack of 'premium' rural living fit for the market
- Threats to landscape characteristics environmental and heritage assets
- The fragmentation and protection of arable agricultural land and industrial areas through development including rural living and mining.

2. Energy security and affordability through renewable energy

Industry engagement found that St Arnaud's high energy use industries noted the absence of natural gas. This together with brownouts leads to a move to renewable energy sources to drive costs down.

Northern Grampians is well placed to become a hub for renewable energy, based on favourable environmental conditions, space and strategic location. Along with reducing impacts on climate change, the opportunity would tackle energy security, capacity and affordability shortfalls to support rural industry, particularly in the St Arnaud area.

3. **Hub for world leading scientific research**

The SUPL is an important catalyst in establishing Stawell, Victoria and Australia at the forefront of a range of international scientific experimentation including particle and astrophysics research and experimentation and other areas of ground-breaking research in geosciences, biology and engineering. Stawell will be the epicentre for dark matter research in the Southern Hemisphere and will enable Australia to lead the world's attempts to understand what the universe is made of. This unique global project will create significant economic opportunity, spawn new industry and knowledge creation and further cement Australia's global research and development credentials.

SUPL will attract research and development organisations to Northern Grampians, through championing innovation in Australian Industry and will in turn increase the percentage of the population qualified in science, technology, and engineering.



Objective 3:

Investment in enabling infrastructure

This is about:

- Centring economic development as a whole of community business
- Demonstrating leadership through advocacy, transparent governance
- Increasing partnerships with business and government to support investment in infrastructure (transport, cultural, social etc.) that will support our economic vision.
- Fostering a culture of customer service and facilitation
- Strong economic development governance, leadership, collaboration and advocacy

Benefits include:

- Leadership that fosters a shared vision for the Grampians regions can effectively target industry issues and leverage outcomes through a collective voice.

KPI 7: Increasing (private and government) capital investment.

Objective 3: Strategic directions

3.a

Strong economic development governance, leadership, collaboration, and advocacy

- i. Develop a combined voice for leadership that leverages the ability of Government and the power of private investment to move the region in the desired direction.
- ii. Develop a culture that recognises economic development is a whole of community business.
- iii. Making hard calls and holding an economic development course that reflects a collective vision.
- iv. Development of partnerships, communication and networking to impact cultural change that can then drive a strategic direction for a location.
- v. Fostering economic development outcomes that 'grow from within' will ultimately lead to improved wealth distribution for all community members.
- iv. Ensure Northern Grampians is an easy place to invest.

Key issues to be addressed in the action and implementation plan:

1. **Development of a clear succinct priority investment prospectus**

A succinct list of key priority advocacy activities is important for concentrating limited council resources. Previously identified capital, programming and pilot initiatives should guide a list that is supported by council and local industry to support advocacy across other levels of government.

2. **Permit approval – rolling out the red carpet, not red tape**

Engagement with our businesses found that the community want more support through the planning and building permit application process. Businesses also found that the process itself needs improving, based on the time taken to process applications compared to similar sized councils.

3. **Industry networks (local and external)**

Background research identified a lack of business/industry networks across several sectors including agriculture, hospitality, manufacturing and retail. A lack of business/industry networks was identified as having potentially challenged the region's capacity to create a stronger culture of innovation, creativity and best practice, to grow exports and jobs.

Fostering sector focussed business networks often drives innovation. Council and the industry group can develop Memorandums of Understanding that recognise the interdependence and independence of each party but also strengthen opportunities for collective regional advocacy to address investment shortfalls or leverage outcomes. Key areas where success has been realised by industry groups includes skills development, local career pathways, research and development partnerships and advocacy for investment in infrastructure or waste management outcomes that support economic development.

The readiness of our community to accept and adopt new technology in business, healthcare and education settings was identified as a posing a challenge to key opportunities.

4. **Growth in local business innovation**

We have an opportunity to build on the resilience that exists in our growth orientated business by supporting a culture of innovation and best practice, to grow exports and jobs in existing businesses.

“Support, collaborate, partner with the innovative cohort, with local industry to facilitate promoting new ideas and challenging new ideas and push the boundaries. Get the younger generation of farmers talking and networking. Build on the ‘State Merino Field days.’ (I9)

5. **Investment attraction**

The coordination of external funding for businesses cases, preparation of investment prospectuses and targeted investment attraction activity have been a barrier to attracting new investment.

Despite regional competitive advantages in agriculture, water security, strategic location and transport infrastructure and the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd) and the GPT the community have not seen the level of private sector investment expected in opportunities including:

- investment associated with GPT and five-star nature-based and eco-accommodation in Halls Gap, and
- rural industry associated with value-add to agriculture.

“Without having business cases it is very difficult to secure funding - we need solid data and evidence to support investment attraction activities.” (I26)

Potential opportunities to enhance or attract new investment included:

Value-add to agriculture

- Digital Agriculture which utilises digital tools such as wireless communication, IoT platforms, and mobile apps, as well as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and robotics to influence the agri-food value chain to achieve "sustainable production" and "increase profit". Digital-Ag is a combination of modern solutions to "sustainable food future"
- Protein plant (using locally grown pulses)
- Rose growing and oil production.
- Oil seed crushing for biodiesel or oil (using locally grown Canola)
- Wool scouring and lanolin production
- Biochar (made from material such as animal manure, broiler litter and green waste)
- Pellet mill for feed and grain
- Soybean growing and processing.
- Controlled cropping, including medicinal marijuana.
- Packaging and storage
- Fertiliser production (converting animal and organic waste into a usable product)
- Value-added through branding, packaging and marketing locally grown products.

- **Value-add to intensive agriculture**

New rural investment opportunities include intensive agriculture. Background research found that national poultry trends together with our competitive advantages point to potential opportunities in that sector.

- **Rural industry**

Agribusiness equipment, technologies and packaging materials (once a strength of Wimmera Southern Mallee towns) which have been dominated by imports in recent decades could return to local manufacturing.

- **Niche and artisanal producers - 'other agriculture'**

Background research found that other agriculture formed a small part of our Agricultural sector, value added was 482% greater in 2019 compared to 2010 - the largest positive difference in 2019 compared to 2010 across all 114 sectors. 'Other Agriculture' was the only sector in the Agriculture industry that grew consistently for ten years from 2009-2019. National trends show that the health benefits of organic produce have driven strong demand for industry goods and supported strong downstream demand from retailers. High profit margins will likely encourage more farmers to enter the industry.

- **Waste and recycling services**

The recent recycling disruptions have the potential catalysed opportunities for greater local waste management services, made possible due to existing regional strengths.

- **Mineral sands and gold mining**

The Donald Mineral Sands has a long-anticipated project life, with the potential to offer long-term employment opportunities.

The growth provides the potential for mineral sand mining companies to diversify into agriculture or partner with existing producers. Increases in mineral sand mining creates the opportunity to attract other industries through leveraging off power and water infrastructure delivered by new mineral sands projects. High wages and salaries may attract new residents and help retain young people locally with agriculture being transferable to the mining sector.

There are several explorers active in the area (including Navarre) which may lead to a mine/s in future in mineral sands, gold and base metals like copper.

The future of gold mining in Northern Grampians is very strong for reasons including:

- Buoyancy (high gold prices) in the state of Victoria in settings where gold mines are running
- The capital investment interest to advance projects
- A mature gold mining asset in Stawell
- The launch of a new company in a public sector environment (North Stawell Minerals) and funds for advancement and capital sector investment interest.

Mineral resources projects also have the potential to support stronger education outcomes through strengthening the foundation by investing into it:

- Increased apprenticeship programs
- VCAL programs from traditional trades to STEM - increasing sciences in local schools, inspiring local students to transition into local professions
- Invest into the community led projects.

- **Opportunities to develop a Native Bush Food Industry**

The Native Bush Food Industry is estimated to be worth \$50M a year. This is expected to grow to \$250M (five times that amount) in the coming decade.

- **Northern Grampians, Stawell Aerodrome**

The Stawell Aerodrome is a valuable regional asset, economically, and as a major emergency response base, as the aerodrome is strategically located and is the key regional fire-fighting base for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in Western Victoria. The airport caters for the general aviation needs of the region and is home to many aviation-related businesses, such as fire bombing, aircraft maintenance and restoration, crop-spraying, flying instruction, charter and recreational flight services. Initiatives in the Action and Implementation Plan must seek to improve transport and emergency services within the wider Grampians region, along site growing opportunities for aviation related businesses.

“We should be promoting and celebrating the huge contribution made by the agriculture sector. The sector is embracing technology and advancements. Our agriculture sector is leading the world and taking up new approaches to meeting market needs.

Need to promote our region for what it brings to the world from an agricultural perspective.”

(I11)





NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
2021-31



Action and Implementation Plan

Version	Date	Author (on behalf of the steering committee)	Reviewer	Rationale
0.1	April 2021	Justine Kingan, NGSC	Project Steering Committee	Adopted by Council xx

Action and Implementation Plan

Initiatives represent the solutions to our biggest challenges and identify what we need to do next to implement the strategic directions. Tactical actions address the reasons why challenges exist or identify how opportunities will be pursued.

The action and implementation plan is the operational response to implementing the ten-year Strategy.

- Initiatives identified in the action and implementation plan (table 8) have been scored using the matrix shown in tables 4, 5 and 6
- Sub-challenges have been weighted based on the order of priority shown in table 3
- The order of priority reflects how critical it is to act on the sub-challenges. The order of priority is also influenced by the drivers of change identified in table 2.

Monitor, review and report

1. The action and implementation plan will be reviewed and monitored in line with council's annual budget process
2. The review process will involve a stakeholder engagement and communication process
3. A dashboard of economic development outcomes and indicators will be delivered annually to track change.

Initiatives will be monitored and reviewed to:

- reflect changing conditions and opportunities
- ensure we are staying true to our long-term strategic directions
- ensure initiatives are effective in achieving the long term KPIs.



The intended outcomes of the economic development initiative are shown in table 8, and economic indicators used to monitor progress are shown below.

Economic development outcome	Indicators
	<p>Economic growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross regional product (grp) • Value of exports • Job numbers
	<p>Business vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business survival/retention rate • Average weekly wage • Per cent of businesses that 'feel satisfied with Council business support services'. • Per cent of businesses that are 'aware of Council business support services'
	<p>Talent availability and workforce pipeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population 25+ with bachelor's degree or higher • Youth engagement levels • Net migration of 23–34-year-olds • Year 12 attainment rates • Early years outcomes
	<p>Enabling infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per cent of the population that has access to advertised broadband speeds • Travel times
	<p>Liveability</p> <p>Per cent of the population who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are obese • Meet physical activity guideline • 'Feel welcome here' • 'Feel part of the community' • Have high or very high levels of psychologic distress
	<p>Environmental (built and natural) sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability and biodiversity indicators • Renewable energy use and production • Levels of heritage and cultural asset protection

Table 2: Drivers of economic change

Seven drivers of change affect economic change today, and action identified to implement strategic directions have been influenced by these.

Change drivers	Description
1. Consumer demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing customer expectations for high quality food and beverage offerings, comparable to metropolitan areas. A high and increasing desire to learn about indigenous cultures from both domestic and international visitors. Consumers are concerned about environmental sustainability which will continue to drive change in the agricultural sector, including via environmental and animal welfare policy. Changing expectations in the future aging population around standard of living and care, and more people may want to stay in their own home than go into residential care. Lifestyle and liveability factors. Increased numbers of domestic and (eventually, a return of) international tourists seeking visitor experiences which involve nature, outdoor health and wellbeing options, Indigenous interpretation, and regional culinary products.
2. Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancements in technology will drive opportunities for greater, renewable energy technology, digital agriculture and advanced manufacturing. Increased expectation that all industries will embrace innovation and creativity to grow their business. Increasing access to big data enabling data driven business decision Increased access to online education, resources, and systems. Increased agricultural productivity, larger farms, new technologies, and automation reducing demand for workers.
3. Increase in visitor numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing visitor numbers will drive interest in investment to keep up with demand. Managing the impact on natural assets because of increased visitation.
4. Land ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As land ownership changes over time new opportunities will open through injections of fresh ideas. The rise of the middle class and development in overseas markets is unleashing significant financial capital that will continue to drive interest in Australian property ownership.
5. Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change will lead to changes in what and how commodities are grown and produced. Global food demand provides opportunities for food producing areas that can successfully adapt to climate change and other factors impacting on agriculture, through sustainable practices and higher value niche and artisanal products. Managing higher impact, higher frequency natural events due to climate change requires infrastructure planning and strategies for investment that are future proofed.
6. Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resetting expectations of the Victorian economy in the next 3-5 years with reduced population growth, higher unemployment, and business restructuring. Rapid adoption of working from home workforce policies present opportunity for increased inward migration but will drive demand for increased service levels across community, housing, communication and transport infrastructure. Increasing expectations of staff to align with businesses that are keeping up with industry standards.
7. Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town centre revitalisation and masterplan implementation (Stawell, St Arnaud, Halls Gap and Great Western).

Table 3: Sub-challenges in order of priority

Priority	Sub-challenges	Economic outcome
1	Housing shortages (inc. market ready land)	Economic growth
2	Lack of resident and workforce attraction (promotion)	Economic growth
3	Development of a clear succinct priority investment prospectus	All
4	Strategic land use planning and policy	Economic growth
5	Visitor offering	Economic growth
6	Permit approval – rolling out the red carpet, not red tape	Economic growth and Business vitality
7	Growth in local business innovation	Economic growth and Business vitality
8	Industry networks (local and external)	Economic Growth and Business vitality
9	Industry investment attraction	Economic growth
10	Energy security and affordability through renewable energy	Enabling infrastructure
11	Digital connectivity	Enabling infrastructure
12	Generational poverty and low workforce participation	Talent availability and workforce pipeline
13	Acknowledgement of indigenous cultural heritage	Talent availability and workforce pipeline
14	Management of natural, cultural and heritage assets	Environmental (built and natural) sustainability
15	Integrated and diversity of access to healthcare and social assistance	Liveability
16	Provision of social and community infrastructure	Liveability
17	Access to a diversity of experiences	Liveability
18	Tackling climate change and its impacts on health	Liveability
19	Hub for world leading scientific research	Economic growth, Talent availability and workforce pipeline

Matrix scoring

Table 4: Action area matrix scoring

Score	Description
1-3	Low likelihood/level of confidence that the initiative will address the issue or unlock the opportunity
4-6	Reasonably confident that the initiatives will address the issue or unlock the opportunity
7-10	High level of confidence that the initiatives will address the issue or unlock the opportunity

Table 5: Capacity/ability to implement matrix scoring

Score	Description
1-3	The initiative has not commenced at any stage of development and resources (human or funding) have not been secured to deliver the initiative
4-6	The initiative has not commenced but and resources (human or funding) have been secured or identified to deliver the initiative
7-10	The initiative has commenced, and development and resources (human or funding) have been secured to deliver the initiative

Table 6: Risk factors matrix scoring

Score	Description
1-3	There is a high level of complexity and high level of risk that an initiative will be more difficult than expected or have complications
4-6	There is a moderate level of complexity and manageable level of risk that an initiative will be more difficult than expected or have complications
7-10	There is a low level of complexity and low level of risk that an initiative will be more difficult than expected or have complications

Table 7: Initiative’s stage and Council’s role

Stage	Role	Description
1. Groundwork The groundwork required to justify council investment and resources.	Investigation	Completing due diligence, feasibilities, and de-risking for future investment.
	Planning	Aligning vision to local and regional plans; land use planning.
2. Advocacy	Advocacy	Promotion of regional interests to other levels of government and decision makers.
3. Delivery Delivery of work that is justified based on investigation and planning, ensuring efforts are directly aimed at achieving the greatest benefit.	Investment attraction	Creating an environment that catalyses investor interest.
	Facilitation	Providing information, marketing, or incentives; fostering partnerships; and establishing local regulation.
	Services	Traditional or new services to support economic development.
	Capital works	Delivering physical infrastructure and assets identified in strategies and plans.



Initiatives by economic outcome





Economic growth

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6-10
4	Develop and deliver the Planning and Building Harmonisation project to streamline the provision of information and services to enable effective and efficient process and customer experience and foster a culture in council of 'rolling out the red' carpet for permit approvals.	Services	DEWLP (Planning)			
16	Support the Victoria's Goldfields to be given UNESCO World Heritage status.	Advocacy	GT, Partner Councils			
2	Work closely with local, regional, State and private partners to identify emerging opportunities to address housing and workforce challenges restraining existing local economic growth potential.	Investigation	RDV			
3	Deliver OPAN - Opportunities Pyrenees, Ararat and Northern Grampians.	Investigation	RDV			
12	Maintain regular engagement with the SUPL Co. and ARC Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics to catalyse opportunities identified in the SUPL, Stage 2 (National Laboratory) Business Case.	Advocacy	SUPL Co., ARC Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics, Stawell Gold Mines			
27	Deliver township framework plans for Stawell, St Arnaud, Great Western and Halls Gap to enable township land use and development strategic planning and policy that aligns with business and community aspirations.	Investigation	RDV, VPA, Regional Roads Victoria, VicRoads, GT.			
18	Develop Tourism Plans for Stawell, St. Arnaud and Great Western, including collateral to support implementation (heritage and culture, people and places).	Planning	GT, RDV			
15	Deliver St Arnaud Streetscape Master Plan.	Capital works	RDV			
5	Residential development at Sloane Street, Stawell.	Facilitation	RDV			



Economic Growth

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6+
13	Continue to implement the Great Western Futures Plan.	Capital works	GW Futures Committee, RRV, GT, RDV			
14	Support and strengthen our calendar of events.	Investigation	GT, Partner Councils			
10	Continue to implement the Halls Gap Master plan for Commercial Investment and Halls Gap Master plan.	Capital works. Facilitation.	Heritage Victoria, GT, RDV, DELWP (Planning)			
6	Participate in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Taskforce.	Investigation	WDA, WSM Councils.			
20	Deliver an accommodation demand and needs assessment of Halls Gap and surrounds and off Park High end accommodation feasibility and business case, including identification of suitable land options.	Investigation	GT, RDV			
42	Collaborate and partner with agricultural sector organisations and other key stakeholders to coordinate external funding to determine the feasibility of intensive agriculture, value-added and rural industry opportunities.	Investigation. Investment attraction.	Wool Corp, Oil seed Federation, Grains Australia, RDV			
46	Engage with emerging mineral resources projects to enhance community engagement, community outcomes and the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural assets.	Advocacy	Mineral Council of Australia, Mineral resources sector			
37	Deliver a Rural Land Use Strategy to identify: * Areas of most productive agricultural land * Areas to promote development of renewable energy facilities including an analysis of the capacity of the grid * Areas to promote intensive animal industries * Areas to encourage/discourage rural industries * Areas of optimal rural living.	Investigation	VPA, RDV, DELWP			
39	Identify priority project for NGS identified in Grampians RDV Region Cycling and Trails Infrastructure Business and Master plan, 2018	Investigation	GT, Partner Councils			



Business vitality

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6-10
7	Identify mechanisms to support growth-focused entrepreneur (businesses that demonstrate they are responding to change and building competitiveness) to embrace innovation, best practice, grow exports and jobs.	Facilitation	Business Victoria, WDA, GT			
1	Support existing and new business and industry networks to enhance business innovation, creativity, best practice, collaborations and partnerships.	Facilitation	Business Victoria, WDA, GT			
11	Implement recommendations in the Northern Grampians Retail Gap Analysis (Retail Doctor Group), 2018.	Facilitation	Business Victoria			
19	Identify mechanisms to support businesses to be strong, innovative and sustainable, including the potential to continue the 'Growing Ideas Festival' and increase the use of Digital Agriculture. Connect farming businesses with innovation and coaching services, business planning, decision-making, financial literacy and wellbeing outreach.	Services.	WDA, VFF, Business Victoria			
31	Identify opportunities to support the expansion of niche and artisanal producers and the native bush food industry.	Facilitation	BGLC			
45	Investigate omni-channel visitor servicing options.	Investigation	GT, Visit Victoria, Partner Councils			



Talent availability and workforce pipeline

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6-10
9	Implement Grampians New Resident and Workforce Attraction Strategy and Action plan, review and determine future funding.	Facilitation	GT, RDV			
44	Develop a Youth Strategy in collaboration with our youth and in partnership with other key stakeholders.	Planning	LENS, GCG, WUH, School Principals, GCH, Sporting Club, Special interest groups			
36	Develop a multi-agency early years Strategy.	Planning	LENS, GCG, WUH, School Principals, GCH, Sporting Club, Special interest groups			
43	Develop a framework to build a strong relationship with our Aboriginal community and traditional owners, promote reconciliation and engage Aboriginal people in planning, decision-making, employment and services.	Planning	BGLC, BB, GG, AV.			



Enabling infrastructure

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6-10
8	Develop a clear and succinct priority investment prospectus, supported by Investigation and planning.	Advocacy	RDV, Federal Government			
29	Establish networks that will foster renewable energy community hubs and investigate opportunities for community owned, decentralised, renewable energy models for commercial front of meter renewable energy generators in Northern Grampians townships.	Investigation	RDV, Universities			
32	Work with key partners to deliver digital opportunities and solutions identified in the Regional Digital Plan Wimmera Southern Mallee.	Advocacy	WDA, RDV, Wimmera Southern Mallee Reginal Partnership, Service Providers.			
40	Implement the NGSC Waste Management Strategy, 2020-30.	Services. Investment attraction	Regional Waste Management Group			
33	Ensure key transport routes (roads and bridges) support current and future vehicles to market.	Advocacy	VPA, RDV			
51	'Review Northern Grampians Shire Council Stawell Aerodrome Master plan, 2014'	Investigation	RDV, Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)			



Liveability

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6-10
22	Ensure integration and diversification of healthcare delivery, alliances and stronger working relationships with health and human service providers.	Advocacy	SRH, GCH, GG, BB.			
23	Deliver Great Western Recreation Reserve Master plan, 2018.	Capital works	SRV			
24	Deliver Stawell Parks Precinct Plan (Central Park, Cato and Maud St. dams), 2019.	Capital works	SRV			
25	Deliver North Park, Stawell Precinct Plan, 2011	Capital Works	SRV			
26	Deliver Lord Nelson Park Precinct Plan St Arnaud, 2015	Capital Works	SRV			
28	Finalise the Stawell Sports & Aquatic Centre (SSAC) Feasibility Study recommendations.	Investigation	SRV			
30	Deliver an Arts and Culture Strategy, 2020.	Planning	RDV, Creative Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, GT.			
38	Deliver the 'Age-friendly communities' project.	Facilitation	SRH, GCH, providers			
41	Public Open Space Strategy, to ensure we deliver high quality and accessible active and passive open space in our townships.	Planning	RDA, RDV, SRV			
48	Navarre Recreation Reserve Master plan.	Planning	SRV			
49	Implement Activate 2020-2030, a regional active participation strategy that engages the whole community in participation outcome and data collection and analysis.	Facilitation	SRV			



Environmental (built and natural) sustainability

Ref.	Initiative	Council's role	Key partners	Delivery (years)		
				1-2	3-5	6-10
17	Review and implement the Northern Grampians Heritage Study.	Planning	Heritage Victoria, GT, RDV, DELWP (Planning)			
47	Deliver a strategy to further activate our lakes and waterways to enhance visitor services, water sports and activities around water.	Investigation	Parks Victoria, CMAs, GWM Water, DELWP, BGLC, Dja Dja Wurrung			
34	Deliver Natural Resource Management Plans for reserves and natural areas managed by council to ensure our natural resources provide environmental, economic and social benefits to communities now and in the future, through managed for a range of uses.	Investigation	Parks Victoria, CMAs, GWM Water, DELWP, BGLC, Dja Dja Wurrung			
35	Audit nature and cultural assets to identify management priorities.	Investigation	Parks Victoria, CMAs, GWM Water, DELWP, BGLC, Dja Dja Wurrung			
50	Take local and collaborative action identified in 'Roadmap to Zero Emissions by 2050 for the Grampians Region' (R2Z) .	Facilitation	The Grampians New Energy Taskforce (GNET)			

Table 8: Prioritised initiatives

Table 8 shows how the initiative have been prioritised against the matrix scoring in tables 4, 5 and 6.

Background documents

- Our Compass: A guide for preparing the strategy, Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-31 Steering Committee, September 2021.
- Our Economy and people: What we've learned so far. Data Analysis and document review summary, September 2021.
- What we heard: Engagement Report for Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-31 Northern Grampians Shire Council , January 2021.
- Socioeconomic data analysis, Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-31 , Northern Grampians Shire Council , September 2021
- Strategic document review and discussion paper, , Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-31 , Northern Grampians Shire Council , September 2021

		1a. Be the rural region of choice	1b. Grow the economic capacity and engagement of our own people	2a. Iconic Destinations	2b. A magnet for innovation and investment	3a. Strong economic development governance, leadership and advocacy.	Capacity/ Risk	Action areas/priority challenges												Total Weighted Score (Action area + effort)				years		Council's role/levers & stage of initiative.		Partner Agencies	
Action Ref. no	Implementation initiatives	1. Housing shortages (inc. market ready land.	2. Lack of Resident and workforce attraction (promotion)	3. Integrated and diversity of access to healthcare and social assistance	4. Provision of Social/comm. infrastructure	5. Access to a diversity of experiences	6. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health	7. Acknowledgement of indigenous cultural heritage	1. Generational poverty and low workforce participation.	1. Visitor offering	2. Management of natural, cultural and heritage assets	1. Digital connectivity	2. Strategic land use planning and policy	3. Energy security and affordability through renewable energy	4. Hub for world leading scientific research	1. Development of a clear succinct priority investment prospectus	2. Permit approval – rolling out the red carpet, not red tape	3. Industry networks (local and external)	4. Growth in local business innovation	5. Industry investment attraction	Capacity/ability to implement	Risk Factor	years		Council's role/levers & stage of initiative.		Partner Agencies		
		10%	9%	3%	2%	2%	1.00%	4.00%	4%	8%	3%	5%	8%	5%	1%	9%	7%	6%	7%	6%	40%	10%	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	
		0														10				10	10	8			Advocacy	RDV, Federal Government			
4	Develop and deliver the Planning and Building Harmonisation project to streamline the provision of information and services to enable effective and efficient process and customer experience and fostering a culture in council of 'rolling out the red' carpet for permit approvals.																10		10	10	6	6.6			Services	DEWLP (Planning)			
7	Identify mechanisms to support growth focused entrepreneur (businesses that demonstrate they are responding to change and building competitiveness) to embrace innovation, best practice, grow exports and jobs.																	10	10		10	10	6.3			Facilitation	Business Victoria, WDA, GT		
1	Support existing and new business and industry networks to enhance business innovation, creativity, best practice, collaborations and partnerships									10								10	10		9	5	6.2			Facilitation	Business Victoria, WDA, GT		
16	Support the Victoria's Goldfields to be given UNESCO World Heritage status.					5				10	9										10	9	6.07			Advocacy	GT, Partner Councils		
2	Work closely with local, regional, State and private partners to identify emerging opportunities to address Housing and workforce challenges restraining existing local economic growth potential.	10																			10	9	5.9			Investigation	RDV		
3	Deliver OPAN - Opportunities Pyrenees, Ararat and Northern Grampians.	10																			10	9	5.9			Investigation	RDV		
11	Implement recommendations in the Northern Grampians Retail Gap Analysis (Retail Doctor Group), 2018	0				9				10											10	9	5.88			Facilitation	Business Victoria		
12	Maintain regular engagement with the SUPL Co. and ARC Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics to catalyse opportunities identified in the SUPL, Stage 2 (National Laboratory) Business Case.														10			10	10	10	7	10	5.8			Advocacy	SUPL Co., ARC Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics, Stawell Gold Mines		
27	Deliver township framework plans for Stawell, St Arnaud, Great Western and Halls Gap to enable township land use and development strategic planning and policy that aligns with business and community aspirations.	8			5	5															10	8	5.8			Investigation	RDV, VPA, Regional Roads Victoria, VicRoads, GT.		
18	Develop Tourism Plans for Stawell, St. Arnaud and Great Western, including collateral to support implementation (heritage and culture, people and places.)					7				10	5										10	6	5.69			Planning	GT, RDV		
21	Ensure the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan aligns with the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-31.			8	8		8	8	8		8					10				11	4	11	5.62			Planning			
9	Implement Grampians New Resident and Workforce Attraction Strategy and Action plan, review and determine future funding.		10																		10	7	5.6			Facilitation	GT, RDV		
15	Deliver St Arnaud Streetscape Master Plan					10				6									5		9	10	5.58			Capital works			
5	Residential development at Sloane Street, Stawell.	10																			10	5	5.5			Facilitation	RDV		
13	Continue to implement the Great Western Futures Plan.					7				10	5										9	8	5.49			Capital works	GW Futures Committee, RRV, GT, RDV		
14	Support and strengthen our calendar of events.					7				10	0										9	9	5.44			Investigation	GT, Partner Councils		
10	Continue to implement the Halls Gap Master plan for Commercial Investment and Halls Gap Master plan.					7				10									8		8	8	5.42			Capital works. Facilitation.	Heritage Victoria, GT, RDV, DELWP (Planning)		
29	Establish networks that will foster renewable energy community hubs and investigate opportunities for community owned, decentralised, renewable energy models for commercial front of meter renewable energy generators in Northern Grampians townships.													10				6	10		7	10	5.32			Investigation	RDV, Universities		
22	Ensure integration and diversification of healthcare delivery, alliances and stronger working relationships with health and human service providers.			10																	10	10	5.3			Advocacy	SRH, GCH, GG, BB.		
19	Identify mechanisms support our businesses to be strong, innovative and sustainable, including the potential to continue to 'Growing Ideas Festival' increase the use of Digital Agriculture. Connect farming businesses with innovation and coaching services, business planning, decision-making, financial literacy and wellbeing outreach.																	10	10		8	8	5.3			Services.	WDA, VFF, Business Victoria		
23	Deliver Great Western Recreation Reserve Master Plan, 2018				7	5															10	9	5.14			Capital Works	SRV		
6	Participate in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Taskforce.	10																			8	9	5.1			Investigation	WDA, WSM Councils.		
24	Deliver Stawell Parks Precinct Plan (Central Park, Cato and Maude St. dams), 2019				9																10	9	5.08			Capital works	SRV		
25	Deliver North Park, Stawell Precinct Plan, 2011				9																10	9	5.08			Capital Works	SRV		
26	Deliver Lord Nelson Park Precinct Plan St Arnaud, 2015				9																10	9	5.08			Capital Works	SRV		

		1a. Be the rural region of choice								1b. Grow the economic capacity and engagement of our own people	2a. Iconic Destinations		2b. A magnet for innovation and investment				3a. Strong economic development governance, leadership and advocacy.						Capacity/ Risk		Total Weighted Score (action area + effort)	years 1-3	years 4-6	years 7-9	Council's role/levers & stage of initiative.		Partner Agencies						
		Action areas/priority challenges																																			
		1. Housing shortages (inc. market ready land.	2. Lack of resident and workforce attraction (promotion)	3. Integrated and diversity of access to healthcare and social assistance	4. Provision of Social/comm. infrastructure	5. Access to a diversity of experiences	6. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health	7. Acknowledgement of indigenous cultural heritage	1. Generational poverty and low workforce participation.	1. Visitor offering	2. Management of natural, cultural and heritage assets	1. Digital connectivity	2. Strategic land use planning and policy	3. Energy security and affordability through renewable energy	4. Hub for world leading scientific research	1. Development of a clear succinct priority investment prospectus	2. Permit approval – rolling out the red carpet, not red tape	3. Industry networks (local and external)	4. Growth in local business innovation	5. Industry investment attraction	Risk Factor		years 1-3	years 4-6								years 7-9					
Action Ref. no	Implementation initiatives																				40%	10%															
17	Review and implement the Northern Grampians Heritage Study.									5	10										9	7	5			Planning	Heritage Victoria, GT, RDV, DELWP (Planning)										
44	Develop a Youth Strategy in collaboration with our youth and in partnership with other key stakeholders.								10												10	6	5			Planning	LENS, GCG, WUJ, School Principals, GCH, Sporting Club, Special interest groups										
28	Finalise the Stawell Sports & Aquatic Centre (SSAC) Feasibility Study recommendations.				7																10	8	4.94			Investigation	SRV										
20	Deliver an accommodation demand and needs assessment of Halls Gap and surrounds and off Park High end accommodation feasibility and Business case, including identification of suitable land options.									10										10	7	6	4.8			Investigation	GT, RDV										
30	Deliver an Arts and Culture Strategy, 2020					9															10	6	4.78			Planning	RDV, Creative Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, GT.										
32	Work with key partners to deliver digital opportunities and solutions identified in the Regional Digital Plan Wimmera Southern Mallee.											10									8	7	4.4			Advocacy	WDA, RDV, Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership, Service Providers.										
40	Implement the NGSC Waste Management Strategy, 2020-30.																			10	6	6	3.6			Services. Investment attraction	Regional Waste Management Group										
36	Develop a multi-agency early years Strategy								10												6	8	3.6			Planning	LENS, GCG, WUJ, School Principals, GCH, Sporting Club, Special interest groups										
38	Deliver the 'Age-friendly communities' project	0	0	8	3																6	7	3.4			Facilitation											
42	Collaborate and partner with agricultural sector organisations and other key stakeholders to coordinate external funding to determine the feasibility of intensive agriculture, value-add and rural industry opportunities.															10				10	3	6	3.3			Investigation. Investment attraction	Wool Corp, Oil seed Federation, Grains Australia, RDV										
51	'Review Northern Grampians Shire Council Stawell Aerodrome Masterplan, 2014'																			10	5	7	3.3			Investigation	RDV, Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)										
33	Ensure key transport routes (roads and bridges) support current and future vehicles to market.												9								6	1	3.22			Advocacy	VPA, RDV										
31	Identify opportunities to support the expansion of niche and artisanal producers and the native bush food industry.									6									10		4	4	3.18			Facilitation	BGLC										
46	Engage with emerging mineral resources projects to enhance community engagement, community outcomes and the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural assets.																			10	3	10	2.8			Advocacy	Mineral Council of Australia, Mineral resources sector										
37	Deliver a Rural Land Use Strategy to identify: * Areas of most productive agricultural land. * Areas to promote development of renewable energy facilities including an analysis of the capacity of the grid. * Areas to promote intensive animal industries. * Areas to encourage/discourage rural industries. * Areas of optimal rural living.												10								3	6	2.6			Investigation	VPA, RDV, DELWP										
47	Deliver a strategy to further activate our lakes and waterways to enhance visitor services, water sports and activities around water.					7				10											3	4	2.54			Investigation	Parks Victoria, CMAs, GWM Water, DELWP, BGLC, Dja Dja Wurrung										
41	Public Open Space Strategy, to ensure we deliver high quality and accessible active and passive open space in our townships.	0	0	3	9	8															3	9	2.53			Planning	RDA, RDV, SRV										
43	Develop a framework to build a strong relationship with our Aboriginal community and traditional owners, promote reconciliation and engage Aboriginal people in planning, decision-making, employment and services.					10		8													3	8	2.52			Planning	BGLC, BB, GG, AV.										
34	Deliver Natural Resource Management Plans for reserves and natural areas managed by council to ensure our natural resources provide environmental, economic and social benefits to communities now and in the future, through managed for a range of uses.					7				8	10										1	9	2.38			Investigation	Parks Victoria, CMAs, GWM Water, DELWP, BGLC, Dja Dja Wurrung										
35	Audit Nature and cultural assets to identify management priorities.					7				8	10										1	9	2.38			Investigation	Parks Victoria, CMAs, GWM Water, DELWP, BGLC, Dja Dja Wurrung										

		1-5 years		3-5 years		4-10 years			

Action Ref. no	Implementation initiatives
48	Navarre Recreation Reserve Masterplan
39	Identify priority project for NGS identified in Grampians RDr Region Cycling and Trails Infrastructure Business and Master plan, 2018.
49	Implement Activate 2020-2030, a regional active participation strategy that engages the whole community in participation outcome and data collection and analysis.
45	Investigate omni-channel visitor servicing options.