



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2020

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Report statement

The 'Economic Development Strategy 2015 - 2020' has been prepared specifically for Hindmarsh Shire Council as the client. The 'Economic Development Strategy 2015 - 2020' and its contents are the property of Hindmarsh Shire Council, but we would love you to spread the word, quote it, share it around and use it in your own endeavours. The information contained in this document has been gained from anecdotal evidence and research. It has been prepared in good faith and in conjunction with Hindmarsh Shire Council. Neither SED, nor its servants, consultants, agents or staff shall be responsible in any way whatsoever to any person in respect to the report, including errors or omission therein, however caused.

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Executive summary

The Hindmarsh Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020 (EDS) presents the investment, business and community development agenda for industry, business, communities and regional partners.

It details the strengths of the region and its communities and the opportunities for fostering sustainable development to support investment attraction, job creation and new business activity.

The EDS has been developed from a program of community consultation, inputs from a range of businesses and industry and extensive background research and analysis of the trends and issues that directly affect local, regional and community prosperity.

Context

Hindmarsh Shire lies within the agricultural region of the Wimmera Southern Mallee in the north west of Victoria. Home to over 5,700 residents, Hindmarsh makes a significant contribution to the prosperity of Victoria through raw and processed agricultural product. Covering over 7,500 km² the region is one of the primary grain producing areas in Victoria.

Strategically located midway between Melbourne and Adelaide on the Western Highway, Hindmarsh has competitive economic advantages including road and rail freight networks, access to major distribution hubs servicing regional, national and international markets, land capacity to attract new business and a highly regarded agricultural production.

Manufacturing including agriproducts and food processing make high value contributions to the economy and employment opportunities. Health, education and small business are also major drivers of the economy and towns. Settlements and the unique natural environment provide for new opportunities that build on the resilience and commitment of the community.

Hindmarsh is not without challenges. Like many rural communities there is a trend of population decline and an ageing profile of its residents. The impacts of climate and weather on agricultural production and an ongoing shift in the nature of farming from a number of landholders to fewer, larger land holdings has changed the economic and social profile of the community.

Hindmarsh has however, shown positive and at times highly innovative approach to meeting its challenges and for cultivating opportunities for business and residents.

The successful attraction, settlement and integration of the Karen migrant community to support local industry, strong advocacy for major economic infrastructure like the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline and the partnerships of Council and communities provides a strong and positive basis upon which to build economic activity.

With a high level of export activity (exports represent 45% of the region's total economic output chiefly in food, agri-manufacturing and agricultural production) the EDS has a high focus on the opportunities associated with food and beverage. Together with regional health services, small business, active communities and new opportunities in tourism, the EDS has targeted resources to these key areas of development.

Opportunities and actions

The EDS presents six key strategic opportunities or themes as the focus for fostering economic opportunity, community and settlement prosperity and for sustainable investment in assets, services and business development.

These opportunities closely link to the built, natural, social and human capital of Hindmarsh and provide for incremental but effective means of achieving sustainable growth and investment attraction.

1: Enhancing food and beverage capacity

- ▶ Develop the export and market opportunities and profile of the food production and processing capabilities of the region including farming, niche food and beverage, specialised value-add and the regional brand.
- ▶ Leverage land, water, freight and environmental assets to target and support investment particularly in the intensive livestock and fodder industries.
- ▶ Support the development of niche food and beverage product and business that will also support tourism and community opportunities.
- ▶ Identify and develop industries that add value to current food and fodder production or which can take advantage of agricultural by-products for new business opportunities.
- ▶ Investigate establishment of specialised research and development in the areas of dryland soil sciences and production capacity.

2: Strengthening health and community services

- ▶ Plan for the future service, facility and workforce needs of the health and community services sector and the health and wellbeing needs of all residents.
- ▶ Advocate for services and assets that will support the continued provision of high quality health services including technology and skilled professionals.
- ▶ Foster partnerships with universities and training organisations to support the training of local residents including young people and promote the career and employment opportunities in health services.

3: Fostering business and community prosperity

- ▶ Support the development of towns and settlements through business, tourism, facility renewal and community projects that support small business, visitor attraction and enhance the economic and lifestyle attributes of communities.
- ▶ Investigate opportunities for fostering small business growth through start-up incubators and land release particularly in business services, creative enterprises, trades and social enterprise.
- ▶ Enhance the unique role and function of towns and communities building on location, features, natural and built assets to support resident and visitor attraction.
- ▶ Continue to actively market the liveability aspects of Hindmarsh with a focus on regional communities, business and residents.
- ▶ Ensure that land use and local planning policy enable and support sustainable community growth and development including industry, business and residential.

4: Supporting the development of tourism and events

- ▶ Support the development of tourism activity through increased yield from current and potential visitors including short stays, packaging of attraction and facilities and raising awareness of the unique features of the natural environment.
- ▶ Work with tourism and associated businesses to develop an understanding of the important contribution tourism can make to the local economy and to ensure a high value visitor experience.
- ▶ Support the development of tourism businesses and facilities in communities including retail, food, heritage, recreation and attractions.
- ▶ Identify opportunities to grow existing events including the skills and capabilities of event organisers to ensure that events maximise visitor potential, deliver quality experiences and promote the region as a place to visit.
- ▶ Identify new events that the shire/community can successfully host including recreation, art and culture events that take advantage of the natural attributes and features of the region.

5: Building sustainable local administration

- ▶ Continue to build the partnerships with neighbouring councils on the progression of service efficiencies through resource sharing, regional planning and advocacy for important local and regional projects.
- ▶ Identify opportunities to build on partnerships with other agencies and service providers to help meet the needs of a diverse and dispersed population and deliver high level service in a cost efficient way.
- ▶ Retain and build on the strong partnership and profile of the WDA as a lead agency for regional development and policy setting.

6: Economic infrastructure and assets

- ▶ Continue to advocate for the road, rail and transport assets that directly support economic and industry activity including logistics, access to markets and regional services.
- ▶ Identify the critical assets and infrastructure for potential investors in agricultural production and value-add industries and ensure that planning and development policy supports effective and competitive investment attraction.
- ▶ Working with local land holders and producers, identify where local roads could possibly be divested and returned to agricultural production and/or barriers to production and issues of local access can be addressed.
- ▶ Investigate and pursue funding and investment models that will encourage refurbishment of existing and/or construction of new housing stock to support resident attraction and retention.

Summary

The EDS and its success will require the continued partnership of government, business, community and regional organisations. The investment and development opportunities that exist or can be fostered for Hindmarsh will need to be strategically marketed and supported by the community and its business representatives.

The EDS provides opportunities for Hindmarsh to continue to realise its potential as an important contributor to the regional and wider economy and to harness the networks, assets and advantages that exist for sustainable growth and development both during and beyond the life of the strategy.

01



Introduction

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1. Introduction

Hindmarsh Shire is located in the north west of Victoria, some 350km from Melbourne and has a proud history as one of the nation’s primary grains and agricultural production districts. The Hindmarsh Shire Council (HSC) was created in January 1995 as part of a state-wide local government reform program. Hindmarsh Shire consists of the former Shire of Dimboola (created 1885) and the Shire of Lowan (created 1875). Forming part of the wider Wimmera Southern Mallee (WSM) region, the shire covers an area of over 7,500km² and is home to an estimated 5,800 residents.

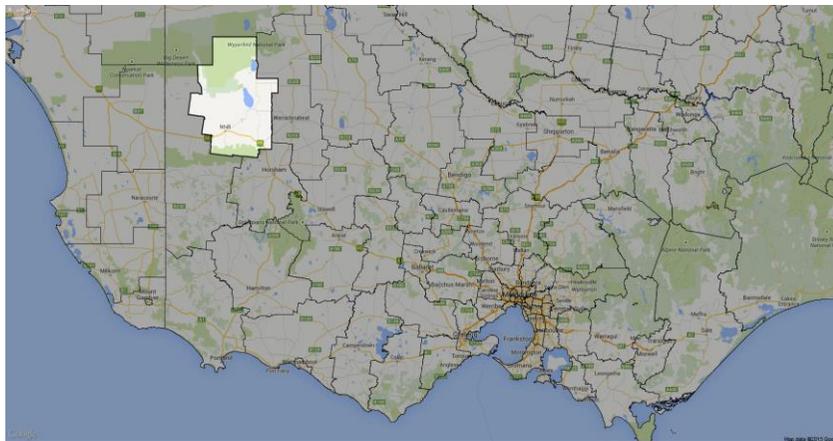


Figure 1 - Hindmarsh Shire locality map (Source: REMPlan Map Builder)

The shire is bordered by the municipalities of West Wimmera, Yarriambiack, Rural City of Horsham (the main regional centre for the WSM) and Mildura Rural City (Figure 2). Situated on the Western Highway equidistant between Melbourne and Adelaide, the shire’s semi-arid climate supports a range of cereal, legume and oilseed cropping, areas of livestock grazing and intensive livestock production, value-add and food processing industries.

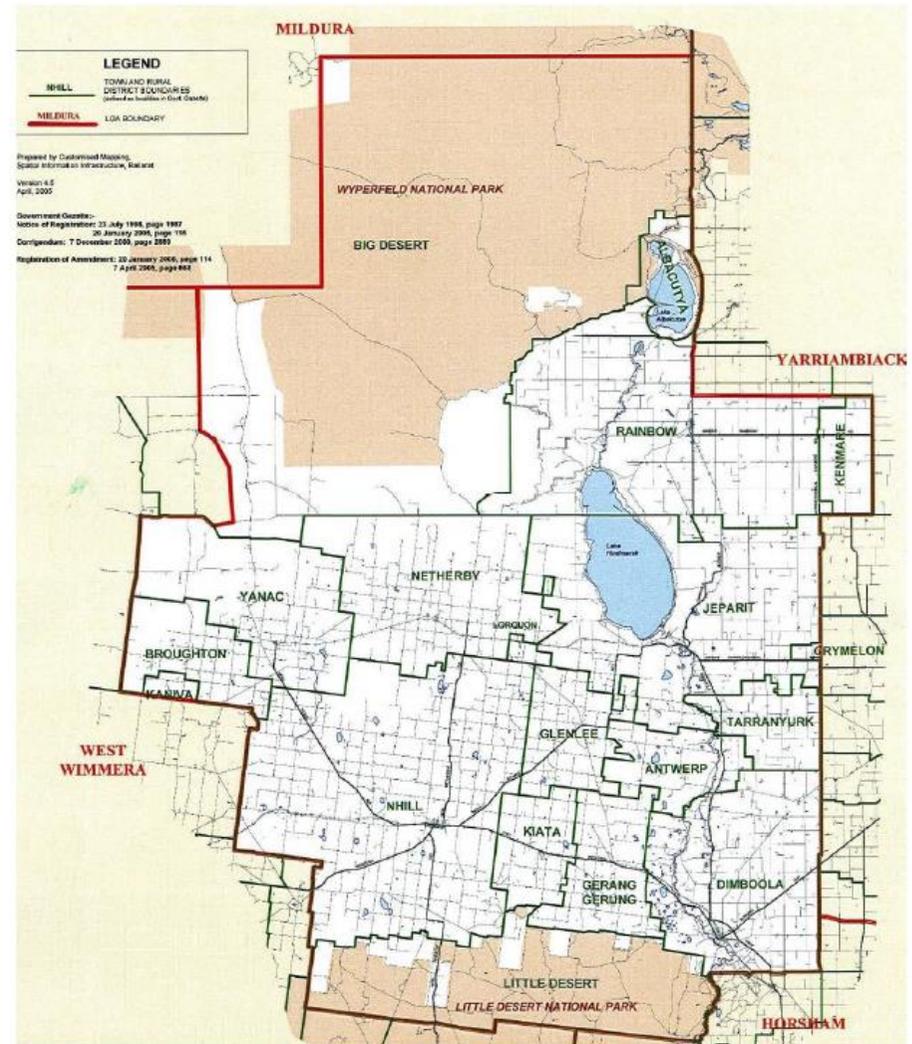


Figure 2 - Hindmarsh Shire map (Source: HSC)

1.1 Structure of this report

This report is supported by a Background, Evidence and Analysis Report that contains much of the supporting information referred to in this Economic Development Strategy. The EDS is structured as follows:

1. Introduction – Purpose, context and outline methodology;
2. Economic Development Strategy – High level strategy, priority actions and specific recommendations;
3. Appendices – Background Analysis including important concepts, approach and analysis and Reference Materials.

While this document is stand alone, it has been informed by the Background, Evidence and Analysis Report. Further information on project methodology, policy alignment and processes used for development of the EDS are provided in Appendix 1: Background analysis.

1.2 Economic snapshot



Figure 3 - Hindmarsh economic snapshot

1.3 Communities

The four main settlements of Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill and Rainbow are home to 72 per cent of the population and provide a range of sub-regional and local employment, business, community and recreation services. Horsham, which is within a 30 to 60 minute commute for the majority of Hindmarsh residents, provides extended services to the wider region.

There are also a number of rural settlement areas containing small populations, as well as the dispersed farming and rural community. Settlements are linked by a network of primary, secondary and rural roads, as well as a rail freight network that primarily services the grains sector.

1.4 Natural assets

The region contains a range of natural assets and environmental features and encompasses a variety of land uses and ecosystems, including rivers and wetlands, agricultural plains, desert and mountain environments. These natural assets include national and regional parks and large tracts of other public and privately owned land and assets. Due to the region’s geographic expanse, climatic conditions vary from temperate in the south to semi-arid in the north. The region can be subject to prolonged periods of low rainfall and drought conditions but also experience periodic flood events.

These natural assets attract visitors to the area, particularly in relation to outdoor recreation such as bushwalking, 4WD, bird watching, fishing and other water-based pursuits. Assets that attract visitors to Hindmarsh include the Little Desert and the Wyperfeld National Parks, Lake Hindmarsh, Lake Albacutya and the Wimmera River.

1.5 Challenge and opportunity

Like many regional and rural communities, Hindmarsh is experiencing economic and social transition. This includes population and demographic changes, restructuring within the agricultural sector, changes in community needs and demands as well as to infrastructure and services as the historical role and nature of settlements and townships evolves.

These social and economic adjustments have served to demonstrate the high levels of resilience and positive economic and social aspirations of the communities and businesses of Hindmarsh. Residents are proud of their history and heritage and work together to achieve prosperity and economic opportunity. Business and industry continue to create economic opportunities and to develop products and services to meet a diverse and competitive marketplace.

In partnership with business and residents, HSC is committed to building economic opportunities. It commissioned the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) to provide the framework for building upon local and regional strengths and address and mitigate factors that may impact on the region’s economic sustainability over the next decade and beyond.

1.6 Definition of economic development

Hindmarsh Shire has defined economic development as being:

“A process through which the implementation and facilitation of policies, infrastructure and actions generate sustainable and innovative economic health. It provides critical infrastructure and identifies opportunities for businesses, residents and visitors to enjoy high community liveability, social wellbeing and economic benefits.

Economic development will also provide a framework to attract new participants to the local economy”.

Although the terms “economic development” and “economic growth” can be interchangeable, there are key differences between them. Economic development is generally the policy or strategy set by governments and communities to enhance economic and social prosperity. Economic growth is the measure of economic activity such as output, productivity, employment and community prosperity. Therefore, economic development is the process by which a community or region can achieve economic growth. The Economic Development Strategy sets the framework by which this can be achieved.

Economic development is not the sole responsibility of government. It also requires the participation and support of businesses, agencies, community members and interest groups. The EDS for Hindmarsh has been developed with this collaboration in mind by setting out strategies that encourage co-operation and participation, as well as recognising the need for local and regional leadership and advocacy.

1.7 How the EDS was developed

Figure 4 highlights the process used to develop the EDS.

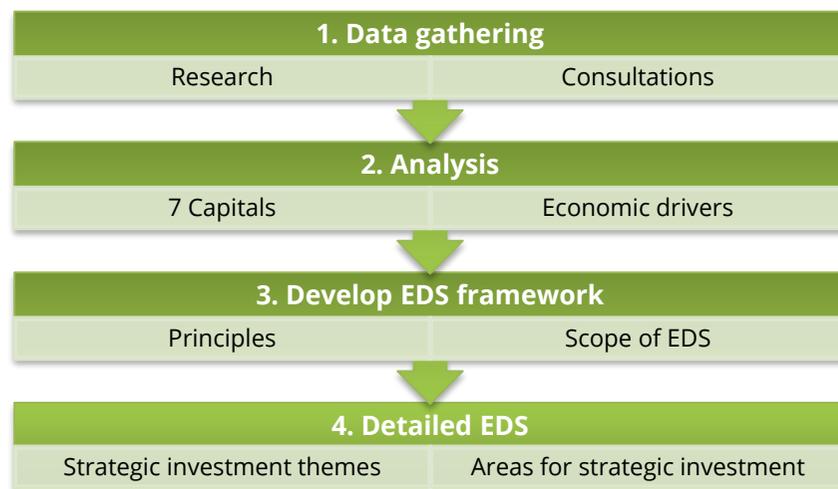


Figure 4 - EDS development framework

The EDS is built upon consultation and background analysis; this then provides a range of learnings and implications. These are further analysed, developed and tested and used to inform the purpose, direction and objectives of the EDS. More detail on the primary methodologies and processes used is provided in Appendix 1: Background analysis.

1.8 Consultations

A program of stakeholder consultation and engagement was undertaken in late 2014. This consultation fostered discussion around the issues and opportunities for business and industry in the Hindmarsh region and identified the key constraints and barriers to economic growth and opportunity. The consultation program included 1:1 meetings, telephone interviews, community workshops and project meetings with the EDS Advisory Committee.

The consultations provided valuable insights on a range of business and community issues and perceptions related to economic development. These issues have been grouped under a set of preliminary strategic goals that informed the EDS. The key themes to stem from the consultation included:

- ▶ Creation of a supportive investment environment through de-risking investment via strategic planning and promotion of the local and regional investment business case;
- ▶ Building upon the key infrastructure and supporting assets and services to foster growth and development including water, productive land, competitive value-add and regional freight assets;
- ▶ Promotion of the opportunities for investment and business development to drive economic prosperity;
- ▶ Attraction and retention of new residents to stabilise population trends and support the provision of a sustainable workforce for business; and
- ▶ Enhancing the social and economic characteristics of communities and settlements to support opportunities for small business, tourism and maximising community and government resources in areas that will create the most benefit.

The consultation process enabled a wide cross-section of the community to be engaged in the development of key actions and strategies.

Information about engagement activities including discussion summaries is provided in the separate Background, Evidence and Analysis Report that accompanies the EDS.

02



Economic Development Strategy

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2. Economic Development Strategy

The EDS is the result of an extensive program of research, consultation and identification of primary areas for economic and social development and opportunity. The competitive and comparative strengths of the region and the Hindmarsh community have been closely considered to help ensure practical and achievable outcomes that build on the objectives of a sustainable, vibrant and more diversified economic environment.

Given the region's competitive and natural advantages, the EDS gives particular focus to the opportunities associated with agriculture and food-based value-add.

The EDS recognises the importance of partnerships and aims to foster a collaborative approach to implementation and participation by a range of stakeholders. It recognises the available resources and expertise that are resident in various organisations and the wider community and proposes a focussed approach be adopted in specific areas of strategic importance. This approach will provide incremental and sustainable economic and social development within a municipality and regional context.

2.1 What do we want to achieve?

Increasing or improving productivity and the value of the economy is the primary outcome of this EDS. Increasing productivity is not about working harder or necessarily investing in new projects and initiatives. For rural communities, improving productivity is increasingly being based upon maximising the existing assets and features of an economy and community as well as building specialisations and economies of scale. It is central to modern economic growth.

Identifying the gaps in local and regional assets and resources or value-adding to assets that will support economic growth and scale, inform where investment should be targeted. Improvements in productivity can be fostered in a number of ways. These include:

- ▶ Maximising existing strengths, assets and characteristics of an economy or community;
- ▶ Bridging the gaps in assets and services that are seen as critically constraining productivity growth. For example in Hindmarsh this includes the provision of high quality telecommunications services, freight efficiencies and improving access to markets;
- ▶ Strategic planning that identifies the locations and/or requirements that will deliver productivity and growth outcomes;
- ▶ Aligning to global market opportunities that can provide tangible channels for business growth;
- ▶ Garnering the input and participation of local and regional businesses in assessing and collaborating on economic development activities; and
- ▶ Building economies of scale in targeted areas of economic activity.

By applying productivity and economic output improvements as the major objectives, planning and economic resources can be focussed in areas that drive the economy and that can make the greatest contribution to longer prosperity. These drivers for Hindmarsh include:

- ▶ Innovation, including Research and Development, technologies, products and processes;
- ▶ Strengthening local and regional industry structures and value chains;
- ▶ Capacity to participate within export markets by being competitive, entrepreneurial and an attractive investment location;
- ▶ Enhancing existing assets to improve return and encourage investment;
- ▶ Supporting the health and wellbeing of communities and residents;
- ▶ Developing and attracting the right skills within the working population;
- ▶ Fostering entrepreneurial activity such as business start-ups and the successful pursuit of new business opportunities by existing and start-up companies; and
- ▶ Appropriately targeting investment in assets and infrastructure that affect economic activity.

The EDS places economic output and productivity growth at its centre and ultimate outcome. Delivering these improvements requires the recognition of the region’s assets and making strategic investments that align, link and leverage them.

Why is this important for Hindmarsh? Over the long term the standards of living of residents within a region (in this case Hindmarsh) can only be improved through increasing the value of the economy and associated productivity.

2.2 EDS purpose and direction

The EDS, together with other key government, business and community strategic planning and development initiatives, will help inform decision making, resource allocation and set strategic priorities that support economic and community prosperity and investment opportunities over the next five to 10 years. The EDS supports the vision for Hindmarsh as presented in the Council Plan namely:

‘A caring, active community enhanced by its liveability, environment and economy’

The purpose of the EDS is to provide a development and investment framework that responds to key economic and social challenges and opportunities for Hindmarsh Shire and the wider region. The Strategy focusses on existing strengths to drive economic opportunities. It sets high level strategy to inform local and regional initiatives and project opportunities. The EDS supports investment and business development that enables local prosperity, regional partnerships and global thinking.

The Strategy will help to stimulate business and investment activity and provide a clear plan of action that responds to the current and future needs of the Hindmarsh community. The EDS focuses on six strategic priority areas that build on the region’s competitive advantages and are integrated with existing strategic assets. These strategic priorities are:

1. Enhancing food and beverage capacity
2. Strengthening health and community services
3. Fostering small business and community prosperity
4. Supporting the development of tourism and events;
5. Building sustainable local administration
6. Economic infrastructure and assets

The strategic priorities are responsive to current conditions and environments and set a tangible direction that aims to improve productivity and create opportunities for a wide range of current and future businesses and residents.

These priorities seek to maximise the current value of existing infrastructure, assets, skills and expertise and through advocacy and other actions create the environment for strategic investment in the region’s assets and services.

2.3 EDS principles

Establishing a set of principles for the EDS helps to ensure that the strategic intent of the document is maintained for the life of the Strategy. They differ from a Vision, which presents a preferred future or outcome. Rather, the principles describe the rules that inform how the EDS will be applied and implemented and against which outcomes can be measured and evaluated.

The following are the principles that have been set for the EDS:

- ▶ Competitive advantages will be fostered through an economic environment that supports business development, innovation and market growth.
- ▶ Existing strategic assets including people, infrastructure, services and the natural environment, will be the primary basis for supporting economic opportunity and growth.
- ▶ Business and community will be key to supporting and promoting our community as a place to live and work and will be valued partners in the implementation of the EDS.

- ▶ The health and wellbeing of all community members through planning, advocacy and provision of appropriate services and facilities will also be a priority.
- ▶ Good governance will be applied to decisions that affect economic development and strategic growth planning to ensure sound, sustainable and equitable outcomes are delivered.

2.4 Roles and responsibilities

A key success factor for the management and implementation of the EDS is an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. It is not envisaged that this responsibility sits solely with HSC, although it does have a significant part to play.

Rather, the document recognises that the resources, skills and expertise of governments, business, communities and agencies all have an opportunity under the EDS to support economic and social change and be part of a collaborative and flexible effort.

2.5 Action plans

Each strategic priority is supported by an action plan which outlines the primary objectives, actions, roles, partners and alignment to regional and local development policy.

The action plan also lists the priority and timeframes for actions as follows:

- ▶ Priority: H (High). M (Medium). L (Low).
- ▶ Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years)

03



Enhancing food and
beverage capacity

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3. Enhancing food and beverage capacity

Food and beverage production is a key strength of Hindmarsh. Since early settlement, it has a proven history of providing many of the necessary ingredients required for food and beverage production. Deriving from the agriculture industry, the food and beverage industry is divided into two major segments. Those two segments are production and distribution of edible goods. This extends from agricultural production to food processing and distribution to markets and consumers.

'Food and beverage' production – as opposed to 'agricultural' production – has been chosen not simply as a rebranding or rebadging exercise; rather, it clarifies the understanding and recognition of the industry parameters that characterise most of the production from within Hindmarsh, while allowing focus on a broader range of opportunities. To illustrate the point, the national value of farm production was nearly \$54 billion in 2013-14, whereas the value of the food and beverage sector in 2012-13 was \$88 billion.¹

In order to identify such opportunities in the food and beverage sector, it is first necessary to understand the factors that affect production and the assets and strengths that Hindmarsh already possesses. Success is more likely to be achieved through leveraging competitive advantage than 'parachuting' in production from unrelated environments. A summary of the factors that are driving this demand can be found in Appendix 1: Background analysis.

3.1 Current production - A Hindmarsh perspective

The food industry is not only of immense strategic importance to the local Hindmarsh economy, but to the national economy as a whole. Food production is the main source of GDP and output in Hindmarsh.

At the national level, the food industry is the second most important source of export earnings in Australia. Food and beverage processing is also the nation's largest manufacturing industry. In this context, Hindmarsh makes a disproportionately large contribution to the wealth of the nation.

Hindmarsh is generally accepted as being a relatively reliable producer of quality grain. This, along with its strategic location to developed rail infrastructure allowing multiport destinations, means that regional production is regarded as being 'highly contestable'.

When viewing economic activity within the shire broadacre cropping is one of its most obvious and important economic contributors. While agriculture generally accounts for two per cent of national employment, in regional and remote communities it can account for 10–15 per cent.² In Hindmarsh it employs 26% of residents. The multiplier effect into other areas of economic activity (retail, services etc.) of the shire and region adds further significance.

The recent Federal Government Green Paper on Agricultural Competitiveness highlights a number of issues salient to farming within the shire, including the disconnect between risk and reward, that is reflected in growers' rate of return and declining terms of trade. It provides graphic comparison of the returns received by farmers who have to deal with both significant seasonal (production) and price (market) risk and the axiom accepted by financial markets where *'the greater the risk, the greater the reward'*.

As noted in the green paper, the national average return from broadacre farming over 20 years until 2012-13 was 4.2 per cent; however, if capital appreciation was excluded, this figure declines to just 1.1 per cent. This compares to an average return of around 6 per cent from the 10-year Commonwealth Government Bond considered by financial markets to be a low risk or safe investment.

¹ Commonwealth of Australia 2014, Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper, Canberra

² Commonwealth of Australia 2014, Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper, Canberra,

Another relevant observation made in the Green Paper is the disparity in returns between the top 25 percentile of farmers, who are responsible for 54 per cent of total broadacre output by value for the 3-year period leading up to 2011-13³, and are faring considerably better than the rest.

One of the most effective methods to become a more efficient primary producer, for those with sufficient financial resources, is by increasing economies of scale through expansion:

Top performing farms tended to be larger (although some medium and a few smaller scale farms perform well). Between 2007-08 and 2011-12 top performing broadacre farms were on average around 2.1 times larger than middle performing farms in terms of scale of operation and 2.9 times larger in terms of total cash receipts. Generally, larger farms generate higher receipts and have lower costs relative to the amount invested. Larger farms may be better able to capture productivity gains.⁴

This economic reality is not lost on the local Hindmarsh farming community, who from consultations and anecdotal evidence appear to lead by example:

'In 2000 we (Grainflow) received 1,174 NGR (individual grower) cards. In 2013 there were only 463, about a third, and the tonnage of grain was roughly the same.'⁵

In this respect Hindmarsh has, to a degree, become a victim of its own success. The trend to larger farms has been increasing pace over the last 30 years, leading to population decline in small settlements and towns of the area. The business case for the initial establishment of these settlements, to service the farming sector, is largely broken. As one industry professional put it 'I tell farmers a measure of their success is when the local footy team disbands'.

³ ABARES Agricultural commodities December Quarter 2013, Canberra

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia 2014, Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper, Canberra, Appendix C, p.115.

⁵ Ough, K. (8/12/2014), Site Manager, AWB Grainflow (Cargill), Dimboola

This is largely as a result of the supply chain methodology or commodity production model adopted within cereal grain production and reflects the fact that as farmers' terms of trade have declined over time, power has moved away from production assets to more dominant players further down the supply chain. As a result, the only option for primary producers is to become a low-cost supplier. Although important, by nature it only addresses one side of the equation and can have limited effect, particularly when seasonal conditions largely determine quality and quantity.

If what is produced is easily stored, has a long shelf-life, is homogenous by nature, sold by grade as opposed to specification and remains undifferentiated from the next door neighbour, the next door district, region or country, then it becomes harder to extract a premium for the hard work and investment that usually goes into producing it. In effect, when we are looking to differentiate what is produced, the ability to do so is often lost in the grain pool. This is not to say that the model isn't valid or sustainable; many successful broadacre farmers understand and embrace the commercial environment they operate in.

The drive for efficiency and increased scale of production is accompanied by other 'megatrends' that also impact local service industries. For example:

- ▶ Sourcing inputs such as chemical shuttles directly from capital city manufacturers/suppliers;
- ▶ Employing larger capacity machinery with associated larger price tags;
- ▶ Delivering grain to fewer larger 'megacentre' grain receival sites; and
- ▶ The rationalisation and centralisation of service and sales agents for major farm equipment manufacturers.

While these trends lead towards more efficient production, they can have a negative impact on the economic value that the shire derives from broadacre farming. The ability to recycle receipts and allow investment to wash through the municipality can be lost as the length of the supply chain, or level of activity performed within the municipality contracts, as inputs are sourced from outside the shire and the economic benefit of production is often largely lost once grain is delivered to the receival site.

Beyond primary production, most current private commercial manufacturing undertaken within Hindmarsh is related to or associated with food and beverage production covering a number of specific industry sectors; poultry and fodder production, grain storage, logistics and milling, feedlotting, metal fabrication for silos and grain handling equipment and gypsum production.

These companies are the principal private employers within the shire and have made significant capital and skills investment in the production and export capability of the shire. They comprise multinational, national, regional and local companies that operate within the shire, many in grain accumulation.

A 'snapshot' of the principal participants is as follows:

- ▶ **Luv-a-Duck:** An integrated producer of duck products with breeding, growing and processing operations based around Nhill and marketing and administration functions located at the head office in Port Melbourne. Luv-a-Duck is the principal supplier of duck products to the domestic market along with Pepe's Ducks, based in Windsor (Sydney), with a similar processing capacity of around 140,000 ducks per week.

Luv-a-Duck's is the largest private sector business in the shire with a multi-million dollar turnover, directly employing around 240 FTE's (full-time equivalent workers) and provides income for a further 80 or so contract growers within the shire.

- ▶ **Ahrens:** A family owned business, with a 100-year plus history that provides engineering services to the mining, construction and agricultural sectors nationally.

Ahrens purchased the Sherwell silo business in 2003 and then Jaeschke silos in 2011. It is intended to centralise silo and field bin fabrication at Tarranyurk, while the Nhill site is likely to be used for other component manufacture.

Ahrens has a staff of around 50 - 60 employees across the two sites.

- ▶ **Blue Lake Milling:** A niche miller of oat and alternate grain products and a major supplier of cereal based products to the domestic and export markets.

Blue Lake Milling's marketing strategy of 'our brand is your brand' sees the business being a major supplier to Coles, Woolworths, Aldi and Metcash, as well as exporting to many Asian countries.

Blue Lake Milling runs three shifts, employing around 30 FTE's at their Dimboola site (within the shire), as well as another 110 regionally.

- ▶ **Johnsons TMR:** A joint-venture company involved in fodder (hay) production, processing and exporting. Johnsons TMR has a turnover of several million and employs around 14 FTE's.
- ▶ **West Wimmera Baling:** Contract hay baling covering an area of operation from Hopetoun, north of the shire, to Beaufort in the south, from October through to January. West Wimmera Baling employs around 14 staff mainly on an FTE basis.
- ▶ **Campbell's Silos:** Manufacturer of silos and field bins in Nhill employing around 10 people.
- ▶ **GrainRite Augers:** Manufacturers of grain augers and conveyancing equipment employing eight staff.
- ▶ **AWB Grainflow:** Owned by Cargill, the business operates a grain accumulation, storage and logistics business at Dimboola. AWB Grainflow receives, stores and dispatches around 200,000 tonnes in a 'normal' year and has the capacity to load 40+ wagon train sets. The business employs 100 - 110 during their six week season and five to 10 out of season all on a casual basis except for two FTE's.
- ▶ **GrainCorp:** The principal grain handler down the east coast of the country. Graincorp owns many legacy sites throughout the shire constructed in the 1930's that have outlived their useful lives and present operational efficiency issues.

Through their 'Project Regeneration', GrainCorp is looking to upgrade Nhill and Rainbow as their principal receival sites within the shire.

- ▶ **Deckert Group:** Grain accumulation, storage, logistics and transport with a capacity to store up to 50,000 tonnes of grain at its Netherby site. The group employs between 9 - 30 (peak periods) staff between its Netherby and Horsham sites
- ▶ **Nhill Bulk Handling:** Another local grain accumulation and storage operation that has historically played a major role in the shire. The business is currently being restructured following the collapse of a related entity.
- ▶ **Gypsum Production:** Three main operators extract, crush and screen gypsum from adjacent sites west of Albacutya.

Operations are seasonal (November-April), and supply Victoria and south-east South Australia. Turnover for the industry is estimated at \$1 million and employees estimated at six casual positions.

3.2 Benefits of a differentiated food and beverage strategy

In understanding the background, forces and influences at play in the food and beverage sector that are important to success, and building a strategy for Hindmarsh, it is important to recognise the industry dynamics of each sector and build from these differential strengths.

As outlined, broadacre farming is the traditional strength of the region; however, as grain production has become more efficient, the associated benefit to the shire has lessened, as margins have become tighter and the level of economic 'churn' through local businesses has diminished. It is accepted that this is a global industry subject to global trends and pressures, generally beyond the control of local producers, councils and even governments, state and federal.

While there continues to be ongoing investment in downstream supply chain infrastructure, including rail, the issue for farmers and the Shire remains; who will reap the efficiency dividend from such investment? Obviously the

parties that provide the capital will look for a return from their investment. The case that the benefit of such investment will automatically flow to the producer is less certain, as it often flows to those who have market power in the supply chain and/or, in commodity production, a lower end price.

Competitive advantage in these circumstances is more likely to be achieved incrementally by leveraging current production efficiencies through either marginally altering the type of production, or creating new export markets for existing production while maintaining as much of the process as possible within the municipality.

To achieve this, it is suggested that a differential approach to production and marketing is developed by the region. By definition this means that the place, origin, provenance, even '*terroir*' in the case of artisan production, play a large and important role in positioning of product from the region.

So what would an increase in agricultural export, value add and therefore output look like for the shire and region?

If the value of exports and value-add within agriculture were to increase by 2%, this would lead to the creation of an estimated 17 new jobs and an additional \$3.71m in overall output.

If exports and value added were to increase by 5% on current values, this would equate to 44 new jobs and \$9.21m in output.

This demonstrates the impact that modest increases in the economic value of key indicators can have on jobs and revenues for industry.

So this differentiation is important as, if done well, it allows certain quality and other defined characteristics to be associated with the product that will provide recognition and appeal to the customer and/or end consumer and therefore create additional economic value in a region or industry.

Should a consumer or customers have an initial positive experience, then they are more likely to look to source similar product in future. In effect, building a brand. This can range from targeted individual product strategies to regional brands where semi-processed production consistently meets an accepted standard that sets it apart from production from other areas.

3.2.1 The value chain

By shifting emphasis from production to the customer/consumer, it changes the dynamic of production from supply chain to what is termed “value chain” production. It does not necessarily entail vertical integration or large amounts of capital expenditure; rather it is based on different entities coming together in the production process to satisfy the wants and needs of the end customer/consumer. Each respective entity is responsible for the part of the process or chain where it has some form of competitive advantage either due to efficiency, knowledge, expertise, innovation or intellectual property. That is, a particular entity is the most competent to perform that process or service in that part of the chain.

In order for it to function effectively, a robust value-chain requires different and sometimes unrelated businesses to become reliant on, as well as responsible to, other businesses involved in other parts of the chain for the mutual benefit of all.

Concentrating on efficiencies of processes within a specific discipline provides an opportunity to innovate and specialise to a greater extent than would otherwise be possible under normal supply chain methodology.

As identified in the Federal Government Green Paper, as a relatively small producer in a global context, we need to maximise the value of production.

This model provides the best opportunity for doing so while growing and retaining as much of the economic activity associated with food and beverage production within the shire/region.

3.2.2 Globalisation or ‘Glocalisation’

It has been commonplace for economic strategies to identify 'globalisation' as a central challenge facing industry and local economic growth. Such strategies emphasise the importance of new bilateral free trade arrangements, the further development of global communications technology, the deregulation of currencies, the growing influence of international corporations and the need for local companies to secure their place in global production systems.

These strategies take little account of another trend, one that is having an impact on the food industry in particular. This involves the regionalisation or localisation of food production, food branding and food trade.

Increasingly, food is being sourced, branded and traded by reference to its place of origin. This has long been the case in the wine industry. But the regionalisation and localisation of other food and beverage products is assuming greater importance as well.

Canadian political scientist, Tom Courchene, coined the term 'glocalisation' to describe a sociological process he observed that is linking the 'global' with the 'local'. It is this trend towards 'glocalisation', not 'globalisation' that will drive much that occurs of an economic and social nature in the Hindmarsh region into the future. Regional food branding is an example of this concept in action.

3.3 Hindmarsh differential advantage

As indicated, the reason for focussing on food and beverage production is relatively simple; there is a demonstrable increasing global food demand for the foreseeable future and the shire possesses comparative advantage in certain areas of associated production.

This includes scale, quality, and regional expertise in grain production and areas of food and beverage value add. These advantages can be used to develop a regional brand and further build on the current range food and beverage production. This will contribute to the differential advantage of the region and marketing positioning.

In effect, it aims to build regional recognition based on the quality and standard of product emanating from the region.

On this point we need to be clear; we accept we do not have perfect knowledge, nor can we pretend to foresee all future events or innovations that may affect commercial development within the shire.

It is not the intention or objective, and nor should it be Council's, to pick 'winners'. A 'weather eye' should be kept on all sustainable investment and development, it should be welcomed and encouraged equally by merit. It is, however, important when framing an economic development strategy that it demonstrates focus, provides direction for the most efficient use of resources, is contestable and any success is measurable, otherwise by nature it will become an ineffective document.

Areas where differential opportunities could complement natural comparative advantage within the shire are summarised in the following sections.

3.3.1

3.3.2 Greater development of the pulse / legume container trade

While there has been significant development of particularly the lentil trade around Horsham, from consultation with both grain accumulation companies and growers, further development of the industry appears a priority. Examples used are the semi-processed faba bean market to Egypt and the volume of the container trade to China.

The container trade is used where traded quantities are less or there are infrastructure constraints in the end-market. Moreover, it is easier to maintain a quality standard over 50 tonnes than 50,000.

Such conditions provide the possibility of building regional product recognition. The trade could provide a significant alternative revenue stream to growers as well as a nitrogen fixing break crop in a region well-suited to production.

A large proportion of current production occurs across the border in SA, where container infrastructure is less developed/serviced, the cost is higher and may become more prone to container shortages.

The municipality is well placed logistically on the edge of the catchment area of the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal that would also increase utilisation and security of an important regional infrastructure asset.

3.3.3 Intensive livestock production

Luv-a-Duck provides 'proof-of-concept' with regard to poultry production in the area and the suitability of the area is generally recognised in the industry. Similarly, pork production also has production potential in the shire.

In addition, there are a number of important physical attributes of the shire that can support intensive livestock production, with the four main advantages being:

- ▶ A dry, breezy climate with low humidity assists with disease control;
- ▶ Space and plenty of it. It provides biosecurity assurance and allows a choice of production system; shed based, free range, organic etc. without the prospect of urban or industrial development impinging on buffer zones or set-backs and the conflict often associated with such development; and
- ▶ The proximity to the source of feed, the major single expense of most intensive production operations (see: Feed / fodder production section);
- ▶ Water security and quality through the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

Significant information on the different types and forms of intensive animal production systems and the suitability of the different production systems to the region is contained in the report "Wimmera Southern-Mallee; Intensive Livestock Mapping Project",⁶ recently commissioned by the WDA.

While there are always challenges, such as those outlined in the report (broiler farms need to be situated within 100 kilometres of processing plants, the pork and pig production sector is currently on a declining phase of the industry cycle, and the game bird industry is nascent and the breeding technologies for some species require further development), there certainly appears scope to increase industry participation within the shire.

⁶ Street Ryan (2014) *Wimmera Southern-Mallee; Intensive Livestock Mapping Project*

'The area is perfect for broiler (poultry) production and an ideal greenfield site'.⁷

When viewing opportunities in intensive livestock production, it is important to ensure that developments are scoped and on a scale that can be matched to the resources at hand. As an example, Luv-a-Duck processes around 140,000 birds per week. Baiada Poultry Pty. Ltd. processes 1.5 million broilers and Inghams around 2.3 million per week. Hazeldene's, a regional producer, processes 560,000 per week, employs 700 and is the Bendigo region's largest private employer.

3.3.4 Feed / fodder production

There is an extensive and well-established feed and fodder capability and capacity in the region, but economic benefit may not be fully recognised.

Farmer consultations have highlighted that the relative location of the shire to domestic dairy industry participants is one of the main strengths of the farming in the area. Furthermore, export trade potential is extensive as already demonstrated by Johnson Asahi, based in Horsham, and Johnsons TMR, based within the shire. Both markets provide lucrative alternate end-uses for hay and grain produced within the municipality.

What could significantly improve the depth and breadth of current demand would be the establishment of a feed mill within Hindmarsh. The irony of current production patterns is that while suitable raw materials are produced in abundance locally, formulated feed is currently imported into the shire from St. Arnaud. This is currently a missed opportunity.

Further investment and development of intensive livestock activity in Hindmarsh would likely provide the necessary security to gain the interest and investment required to establish a local feed mill.

⁷ Lawson, Carl (25/20/2015) Farm Manager, Hazeldene's Chicken Farms Pty Ltd.

3.3.5 Composting

Similarly, should the poultry industry expand further, this may provide the scale required to leverage commercial opportunity for composting the manure generated for use as a fertiliser (as a nitrogen source) and soil conditioner (organic matter). There is already interest from local and regional industry participants in developing different markets for such product.

Both the feed mill and composting examples demonstrate how differential advantage (see section 3.3) can be leveraged through increasing the scale of production within the shire.

3.3.6 Related research and development

Opportunities requiring further consideration, evaluation and, in some instances, local government and science community support:

- ▶ An internationally recognised centre for the study of dryland soil retention and health. Australia is recognised as the oldest continent, with some of the poorest and most degraded soils on earth and an often challenging climate, yet we are still one of the most efficient farming nations in the world.
- ▶ The literature surrounding the threat of global soil loss and degradation and what it means to future global standards of living is both substantial and disturbing. Much of this is happening in the developing world, with similar challenges to Australian conditions not unlike those experienced in Hindmarsh.

A global centre for research and development of appropriate farming systems for such environments could be a centre for excellence to provide better soil conservation techniques and best-practice learning to the world.

Such a project could have significant economic impact. The formation of such a centre would need support of national and international scientific institutions, organisations, and governments if it was to proceed.

3.3.7 Establishment of a 'Hindmarsh Food Artisans' group

While small-scale food producers may have a relatively limited economic effect within the municipality, they often play a disproportionate role in assisting to market regional production, defining regional branding and recognition as well as bringing people into the Shire, in turn creating other, predominately tourism related economic opportunities.

Most producers of such products are passionate about what they do and there is often an accompanying story that assists with individual marketing campaigns. If one or more is successful, or there is sufficient scale of production, there may be scope to generate a profile in consumers' minds from which further advantage may be leveraged (*see section 4*).

Often these possibilities require 'creative spirits' and can be counter-intuitive. For example, the Hindmarsh climate may preclude wine as a category leader, a microbrewery extolling local malting barley may have possibilities.

3.4 Potential growth firms

While there is a tendency in economic development documents to look to possible new and exciting investment to generate increased economic activity within the region, often it is those businesses that already have an established base that will achieve this via the expansion of existing operations. Hindmarsh should not be viewed as any different in this respect.

There are a number of established companies involved in food and beverage production based within the shire that have an innate understanding of the type of differential opportunities that Hindmarsh has to offer;

Luv-a-Duck: The Luv-a-Duck story is an iconic one; a successfully integrated production model that in many respects has been the pioneer of intensive regional poultry production and processing. It has utilised the advantages the municipality has had to offer and provided an economic dividend that has assisted to redress population decline in and around Nhill.

It is embarking on a \$20 million dollar expansion that will provide further capability and capacity and increasing business by a further 50 per cent through organic growth over the next five-year period, similar to the previous period.

If successful, a similar expansion in contracted growing capacity will also be required.

Blue Lake Milling: developed an international profile as a quality miller of oat and alternate grain retail and bulk products. Through recent expansion in their hulling, rolling and milling capacity, Blue Lake Milling has identified further opportunities for specialisation into niche market production. The business generates around 20,000 tonnes of product annually, of which around 70 per cent is exported internationally.

Blue Lake Milling has submitted an application for funding under the Commonwealth Next Generation Manufacturing Program to commission a \$2 million decortication line at its Dimboola site.

Furthermore, all export production from both the Bordertown and Dimboola sites is containerised at the Dimboola site and delivered to port via the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal.

Johnsons TMR: Apart from its significant farming operations, including growing 2,000 tonnes of oaten hay each year, Johnsons TMR has developed a semi-fermented hay product that is produced according to a predetermined specification. Johnsons TMR achieve this through the utilisation of regional agricultural by-products such as grape mark, almond husk, citrus peel and carrot waste, along with chopped barley straw.

The business has produced 30,000 silage bales of product over the last two to three years for the domestic and export markets. It exported 15 - 20 x 40' containers a month last year through the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal, principally to Taiwan and Korea for use in the dairy industry.

Further innovation has seen Johnsons TMR recently commission packaging equipment, one of only two similar machines in Australia that allows the business to produce a 22 kilogram bale or block encased in a plastic, water resistant heat-sealed film. The new format is easily stacked onto pallets and provides better utilisation of container space configuration, as well as reducing the requirement for handling equipment and simplifying distribution in foreign markets.

Further trials have also been undertaken to use the equipment to package chaff for use in the live cattle trade from as far north as Darwin. Compressing the product has overcome the issue of it 'voluming out' when transported, and has similarly reduced the space on board required by a factor of nearly half as well as the difficulty handling product during loading operations.

3.5 Implementation

The EDS has identified opportunities to sustain and further expand the 'exporting capacity' of the food and beverage industry from the shire. These opportunities go beyond increasing the efficiency of the on-farm production of grain and other commodities and include expanding the export capacity of local firms in the poultry, processing, fodder production and milling industries.

Enhancing the exporting capability of food and food-industry related firms in Hindmarsh will improve the competitiveness of local industry, add significant value to local production, and assist in attracting more investment to the area as well as increase jobs and domestic output.

It will also provide local industry with an effective way of taking advantage of the rising national and global demand for staple food products and the trend towards 'glocalisation' of food production discussed earlier in this report.

Of all the aspects of an EDS, implementation relating to private commercial investment is often the most problematic.

While the EDS will contain observations and recommended courses of action that represent the most efficient use of resources, and are in the interest of the community, ultimately it will be up to individual and corporate decision makers as to whether they see opportunity, benefit and profit from investing in the shire.

While the primary responsibility for taking local export development initiatives in the food and beverage industry does and should sit with the local farming and processing producers involved, local government can play an important facilitation role in two key areas:

3.5.1 An export facilitation role

This role relates to the gathering of information about exporting market opportunities relevant to local producers and in building relationships between local producers and prospective national and international buyers.

Indeed, where export development relates to markets in economies which are highly regulated by government, such as China or parts of the Middle East, local government is often better placed than private producers to 'open doors' and navigate complex diplomatic and regulatory arrangements associated with the early stages of exporting to such economies.

One example of how local government can effectively facilitate local export development is the Changchun project initiated by the Warrnambool City Council. This project builds on Warrnambool's 'Sister City' relationship for the purpose of creating mutually beneficial relationships between businesses, industry and local government in the Changchun region of north east China and south west Victoria. The initiative includes information

exchange visits between producers, traders and investors, in both regions, for the purpose of enhancing bilateral trading relationships.

The project, which is supported by the Victorian Government, includes the placement of a full-time Changchun expert in Warrnambool for the purposes of identifying and enhancing inter-regional trading opportunities between the two centres.

While the Warrnambool-Changchun relationship is possibly one of the more developed, there are similar efforts currently afoot to develop their Chinese Sister City relationships by both Adelaide and Mount Gambier as an effective method to initiate relationships and develop trade.

These relationships take time and resources to develop. However, it is suggested that under the auspice of the WDA, the councils of the region look to enhance existing or develop a trade-related overseas relationship under an expanded sister city model.

Given the contrasting production capabilities of the regions, Hindmarsh could play an important facilitative role by bringing together interested local firms in the poultry processing, fodder production and milling industry, as well as farmers and others currently involved in food export, for the purposes of seeking support from the WDA and the Victorian Government for the joint preparation of a Wimmera Export and Trade Development Plan. This could in part be based on and perhaps strategically connected with the Warrnambool – Changchun model.

3.5.2 An investment facilitation role

The other crucial role HSC can play is to facilitate investment within the shire, either organically from within or from new external investment, perhaps even foreign investment. It is HSC's role to put the policy and planning framework around the adopted EDS initiatives and recommendations to potential investors, where possible, meet and alleviate likely concerns and build a case as to why they should invest within the municipality. This should include the resources that can be provided to support that investment.

HSC should use its 'business case' to market the opportunity by targeting participants in identified industries. The EDS should form a major part of the business case.

"Ten years ago no Victorian Council was interested in broiler farms, hence the major expansions in South Australia and Queensland, they were proactive".⁸

Modelling shows that creation or attraction of 60 new jobs across the agricultural and food processing sectors would equate to a further 57 new jobs in the Shire overall and an additional \$66.8m in output.

While expectations around external investment are often held up as the potential solution to addressing economic and population decline, it needs to be recognised that organic growth from within is just as likely and in all probability will be a more significant creator of economic opportunity in the short to medium term. Local investment will need to be commensurate to current operations and future development needs to be scoped and planned to available resources for it to be sustainable.

To achieve this, it is important that HSC and other stakeholders build the necessary relationships and, where appropriate, partner with all those in industry to facilitate such investment and expansion of capacity.

As a case in point, it is unlikely when Art Shoppee came back from Melbourne 40 odd years ago with 20 ducklings that anyone foresaw what Luv-a-Duck would provide in the way of economic benefits to the Hindmarsh community as it does today.

⁸ Scott Lewis, Manager Farming (2015) Ingham Enterprises Pty Ltd., Somerville.

3.6 Action plan

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

1. Enhancing food and beverage capacity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and Timing	Stakeholders	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
1.1 Enhance export market opportunities for growers and producers and look to retain higher economic returns within the local economy.	Working closely with private enterprise and government agencies both within and external to the region develop a Regional Export Development Strategy including an audit of regional export production capability, capacity, services and infrastructure to identify current activities, opportunities, gaps and constraints. Align the audit with the findings and outcomes from the Wimmera Southern Mallee Freight Supply Chain Study to ensure an informed, integrated and sustainable approach and outcomes.	H S	HSC WDA Wimmera Councils Regional growers and producers Government agencies	WDA Wimmera Councils	1: Strengthen the farming sector's capacity to prosper in a changing climate 3: Facilitating industry clusters and building on regional strengths	10.3 Agriculture 13.3 Transport networks	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	Develop strategies on how to address issues and options for facilitating 'regional food recognition' (brand) as a method to increase the value and marketability of regional produce and product. This should build on and reinforce current Wimmera branding and marketing. This will require different strategies for semi-processed from finished product as well as a recognition and understanding by producers on how such strategies would benefit their businesses through co-operation.	H M	HSC WDA Wimmera Councils Regional growers and producers Government agencies	WDA Wimmera Councils	3: Facilitating industry clusters and building on regional strengths	10.3 Agriculture	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	On completion of the supply chain gap audit, develop marketing strategies to maximise any infrastructure or specialisations identified including the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal at Dooen. Ensure consideration of the Terminal is included in the proposed Regional Export Development Strategy.	H S-M	HSC WDA Terminal operators Wimmera Councils Regional growers and producers	WDA Terminal operators	6: Transport infrastructure supports the needs of the region's industries and communities	10.3 Agriculture 13.3 Transport networks	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

1. Enhancing food and beverage capacity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and Timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
1.1 Enhance export market opportunities for growers and producers and look to retain higher economic returns within the local economy.	To help attract business and investment, prepare the investment 'business case' which also addresses planning assessments such as land use, zoning and environmental protections. It should provide detailed information regarding available resources, assets and potential locations suitable for development within the shire which will be of particular importance to the attraction of investment within the intensive livestock industry, food processing and associated value-add and service businesses. This should be viewed as a competitive process that addresses the investment issues from the perspective of both HSC (what do we want?) and the potential investor (what do they need?).	H S-M	HSC WDA Land and property owners Government agencies Business and community	HSC Government agencies	3: Facilitating industry clusters and building on regional strengths Regional settlement and land use planning	10.2 Rural land use 10.3 Agriculture 10.4 Industry	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
1.2 Support the growth and diversification of the food and beverage economy including small and niche businesses to help support new investment and employment opportunities	Facilitate the establishment of a 'Hindmarsh Food Artisans' group for small-scale food producers which can be expanded to include other niche and small producers across the wider region. This could help market and support the establishment of small-scale food production and farm gate opportunities within the shire while providing regional recognition to food and beverage production more widely. Providing food and beverage 'experiences' and places of interest would also assist in leveraging higher yield tourism to the area and associated business investment – refer also to supporting action 4.3	M S	HSC Local and Wimmera growers and producers WDA Other regional Councils Tourism associations	HSC WDA	3: Facilitating industry clusters and building on regional strengths	10.3 Agriculture 10.7 Tourism 10.8 Commercial activity	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

1. Enhancing food and beverage capacity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and Timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
1.2 Support the growth and diversification of the food and beverage economy including small and niche businesses to help support new investment and employment opportunities	As further intensive livestock production be attracted to Hindmarsh, work with local producers and processors to identify opportunities to support the development of a feedmill that would not only reduce the importation of feed from outside the shire but also provide greater value-add within the shire to existing raw materials currently being produced. This would include assessment of the market volumes needed locally and regionally that would prove sufficient for investment in such a facility.	H S-M	HSC Local and Wimmera growers and producers WDA Government agencies	HSC Local and Wimmera businesses	3: Facilitating industry clusters and building on regional strengths	10.3 Agriculture 10.4 Industry	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	In partnership with local poultry and livestock businesses, support opportunities for developing poultry manure-based composting initiatives.	H S-M	HSC Local and regional producers WDA Government agencies	HSC Local and Wimmera businesses	3: Facilitating industry clusters and building on regional strengths	10.3 Agriculture 10.4 Industry	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
1.2 Support the growth and diversification of the food and beverage economy including small and niche businesses to help support new investment and employment opportunities	Given the importance of food and beverage to the local economy and emphasis given to it in the EDS, identify a lead business co-ordination role within HSC with the specific purpose of working with the food and beverage sector to provide businesses and agencies with a consistent contact within the organisation. Such a role would be responsible for identifying market and investment opportunities, actively marketing the Hindmarsh 'business case' and supporting and co-ordinating the needs and responses of local businesses.	H S	HSC Local growers and producers Business and community Government agencies	HSC		15 Implementation	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

1. Enhancing food and beverage capacity

Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and Timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
1.3 Building on current expertise and institutions in the region, position the Wimmera region as research hub for agronomy.	<p>Investigate the opportunities, partners and feasibility of establishing a research centre in Hindmarsh with a specific focus on dryland soil sciences and production capacity.</p> <p>A decision as to the practicality, scope and scale of such an institution should be taken following consultation with the relevant State and Federal government authorities such as DEPI, the Victorian Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Federal Department of Agriculture including the hon Michael Jeffery, AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd), as the national Advocate for Soil Health, CSIRO, universities and other like bodies.</p>	M M-L	HSC WDA Government agencies Local and regional growers and producers	WDA HSC	1: Strengthen the farming sector's capacity to prosper in a changing climate	10.3 Agriculture 10.4 Industry	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

04

Strengthening health
and community services

alive with opportunity

4. Strengthening health and community services

The delivery of health and community services is a major component of the local economy. The sector not only delivers vital services to the Hindmarsh community, but it is also an important source of professional, skilled and unskilled employment opportunities. The maintenance and delivery of quality health and community services will continue to play a significant role in sustaining rural communities.

4.1 Delivering services in rural areas

Given the size of rural populations, coupled with the need to maintain the provision of a range of services across significant geographical regions, the current health delivery model tends to be highly integrated with multi-services provided under co-location structures. This allows for providers to develop some 'scale' while providing patients with some ease of access benefits.

The size of the patient base in many rural locations can be challenging for health providers in terms of the range of services that need to be provided versus the scale of demand. This dilemma has led to some highly innovative approaches to multidisciplinary care. This includes the use of technology, telehealth and eHealth systems to support health care professionals, clinicians and the health outcomes for patients.

Although technology-based health care provision holds much promise and opportunity for regional communities, the lack of technology infrastructure and capacity in areas such as Hindmarsh (and Nhill in particular), is a critical factor constraining greater uptake and application and, therefore, it potentially widens the health care access gaps for residents and professional support for health personnel in rural areas.

Whilst it is acknowledged that some health care services will need to be delivered from major regional centres, given the costs of service provision and the professional skills needed, the integration of health care and the

closer links between the networks of providers in rural centres can provide for a more cohesive and, in many cases, more immediate response to community health issues.

The development of rural and regional care models therefore needs to recognise that health care planning and delivery in rural settings are very different to regional or large city health service models.

The service factors which need to be considered in rural communities include:

- ▶ The availability of a skilled workforce;
- ▶ How residents can access services given remoteness from services;
- ▶ Provision of adequate and highly flexible facilities and infrastructure;
- ▶ The higher likelihood that the public health system is the default health provider, including aged care and highly specialised services in the absence of private sector options; and
- ▶ The nature and scale of services that should and can be delivered.

The development of health policy and strategy for rural and regional areas has been a continuing challenge for governments over many years. A key issue has been the implementation of outcomes from policy initiatives. Although well-meaning in intent, the anticipated interventions and benefits may not have been realised by or delivered to regional and rural communities.

For example, training schemes developed to support the dispersal of health care professionals into regional communities have not seen significant take up of rural health care positions by graduates.

To aid in overcoming some of these shortcomings the approaches for appropriate rural health service planning need to consider the individual profile and diversity of rural communities and develop local responses based on local need.

4.2 Caring for our residents

The provision of more home-based health and aged care services has been successfully adopted in communities like Hindmarsh which have dispersed and ageing populations.

Although the nature of aged related care is not anticipated to dramatically change within the next 10-20 years, the need for forward planning in terms of demand, facilities and development planning is now becoming a high priority. This priority is being driven by the ageing profile of the population and forecast increased longevity. The level and quality of aged care in Hindmarsh is regarded as being first class and can continue to develop as a major strength of the regional health system.

4.3 A professional and supported workforce

An important issue for communities such as Hindmarsh is the continued attraction and retention of health care professionals from a workforce pool that is chiefly resident outside of the region. These professionals may be required as part of the permanent workforce, together with specialist professionals who provide contracted services based on specific but locally unserved health needs of residents. Major barriers to attracting rural health professionals include the negative perceptions of:

- ▶ Living and working in a rural setting;
- ▶ Career path development (including access to training);
- ▶ Lifestyle attributes and settlement;
- ▶ Appropriate housing, and educational access for children; and
- ▶ Spousal/partner employment.

The attraction of overseas-trained health professionals and ancillary workers into the region, including Hindmarsh, is seen as being highly successful in terms of settlement, integration and acceptance. This migrant-based workforce attraction may, therefore, hold future opportunities to fill current and future health care workforce gaps.

4.4 Sustainability of funding and resources

For the most part, the ongoing delivery of health and community services in the municipality is heavily dependent on the maintenance of public sector funding at current levels.

The recently released '2015 Intergenerational Report: Australia in 2055' makes it clear that the current levels of health and welfare funding are unsustainable. In this context, it is likely that the provision of health and community services in Hindmarsh will be challenged by a degree of rationalisation, as be elsewhere in Victoria and Australia. The timing of any such challenge is unknown, however it would be prudent to commence working with stakeholders to plan for a lower funding environment into the future.

What will be particularly challenging for Hindmarsh will be the securing of future infrastructure and health investment funding given the level of investment in health facilities in Hindmarsh over the past decade or so. This may place Hindmarsh in the 'not your turn' category over the medium term.

Although the way in which each hospital and aged care service in Hindmarsh should respond to these challenges is primarily the responsibility of each provider and its board, the local socio-economic impact of reduced funding for health and community services is such that the EDS must take account of how best the sector can be sustained.

4.5 Planning for the future

Local leaders and stakeholders can play a very constructive role in encouraging the development of a broadly-based collective and proactive response to reduced funding for health and community services facilitating the formation of a Hindmarsh Health and Community Services 2020 Planning Committee. This would comprise the chairs and CEOs of each service provider in the shire.

It is envisaged that the Committee's main purpose would be to identify opportunities for increased resource sharing between service providers as well as greater specialisation, as distinct from rationalisation, in the delivery of services. An outcome might be for one or two providers to specialise in the provision of acute care while other providers in the shire focus on improving the provision of age care or nursing home services.

The development of eHealth and telemedicine technology lends itself to innovation and improvement in the delivery of health and community services in rural communities. The opportunity eHealth provides to greatly improve the delivery of medical services in small rural towns like Nhill, Jeparit, Rainbow or Dimboola by electronically linking them to the specialist capabilities of a major regional or metropolitan hospital, can help local communities to access specialist services within their community.

The region's relatively developed health and e-health capabilities mean West Wimmera Health Service in partnership with other providers and agencies, is well placed to take a leadership position in relation to the economic development of this issue over the short to medium term.

Establishing Hindmarsh as a leader in this industry (which is already established and developing in the Shire), through further planning, investment and partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders would establish a pathway for the future development of an industry which could uniquely position the region over the medium to longer term.

4.6 Action plan

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

2. Strengthening health and community services							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders	Lead agency/agencies	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
2.1 Continue to support the role and collaboration of community leaders to address local health challenges.	<p>Harness local skills, expertise and knowledge through the facilitation of a Hindmarsh Health and Community Services 2020 Planning Committee. This Committee would also contribute to the development and review of the Hindmarsh Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.</p> <p>The Committee would comprise local and regional stakeholders which have a direct interest and responsibility for planning and providing health and community care services within the Hindmarsh community.</p>	H S	<p>Health and community service providers</p> <p>HSC</p> <p>Wimmera Councils</p> <p>Government agencies</p> <p>Not for profit providers</p>	Health and community service providers	14: Health and community services delivery responds to population change	<p>12.5 District towns</p> <p>13.4 Social infrastructure</p>	<p>Community liveability</p> <p>1.2 A range of effective and accessible services to support the health and wellbeing of our community</p>
2.2 Identify the land demand and housing needs of the sector and its workforce to ensure that services can continue to meet the requirements of the regional population.	<p>Ensure there is sufficient and appropriate land identified within local planning policy for future development and expansion of health care facilities that provides for integrated service provision that is accessible by residents and encourages the retention of residents in their communities over their lifetime.</p> <p>This should include incorporation of health facility planning in local Precinct and community development plans</p>	H M	<p>Health and community service providers</p> <p>HSC</p> <p>Wimmera Councils</p> <p>Government agencies</p> <p>Not for profit providers</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Community</p>	<p>Health and community service providers</p> <p>HSC</p>	<p>14: Health and community services delivery responds to population change</p> <p>Regional settlement and land use planning</p>	<p>12.5 District towns</p> <p>10.4 industry</p> <p>12.2 Regional settlement strategy</p> <p>12.3 Housing diversity and affordability</p> <p>12.5 District towns</p> <p>12.8 Rural settlement</p> <p>13.4 Social infrastructure</p>	<p>Community liveability</p> <p>1.2 A range of effective and accessible services to support the health and wellbeing of our community</p> <p>Competitive and Innovative Economy</p> <p>3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns</p>

2. Strengthening health and community services							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders	Lead agency/agencies	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
2.2 Identify the land demand and housing needs of the sector and its workforce to ensure that services can continue to meet the requirements of the regional population.	Identify opportunities to work with the private sector on the provision of housing or accommodation where possible market failure has created a lack of housing availability, choice or flexibility. This may include provision of student units and short term accommodation for casual and temporary personnel that could service the wider region.	M M	See previous page	See previous page	See previous page	See previous page	See previous page
2.3 Foster regional specialisations to help to drive continuous improvement of rural health care provision for the community and region.	<p>The presence of health based tertiary and other education agencies in the Wimmera and south west Victoria present opportunities for the region to develop innovative and sustainable health service models, particularly in the areas of aged, acute and disability services.</p> <p>Work with universities and training organisations on the development of locally-based graduate programs, including partnerships with other regionally-based health organisations to develop a pool of local, skilled health professionals. This can include the expansion of existing scholarships, placements, and bonded scholarship programs.</p> <p>Partnerships with training providers should be fostered to work with rural health services on in-house training and distance learning programs to reduce access barriers to learning by students.</p>	H M	Health and community service providers HSC Health providers Education providers	Health and community service providers	8: increase locally accessible post secondary education and training opportunities 14: Health and community services delivery responds to population change	13.4 Social infrastructure	

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

2. Strengthening health and community services							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders	Lead agency/agencies	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
2.4 Support the continued uptake of ehealth and telemedicine services that can reduce the tyranny of distance to services for health professionals and residents.	Continue to vigorously advocate for rapid and accelerated upgrades to regional ICT capacity and infrastructure, given the significant opportunities and health benefits that can be provided by eHealth and telehealth which are currently critically constrained by inadequate and unreliable services and which would add significant value to the existing GRAHNET technology and communication system being utilised in the region.	H S	WDA Hindmarsh Shire Business and organisations	WDA HSC	5: Broadband and mobile phone coverage standards enable the whole region to be competitive and liveable	13 Regional Infrastructure	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.3 Modern and affordable information and communication technology throughout the municipality
	Continue to work with regional partners on the development and implementation of a Grampians-wide eHealth Business Plan that meets the needs of Hindmarsh health providers and residents.	Ongoing					
2.5 Identify workforce and skills gaps and partner on attraction and mitigation programs.	Build upon the success of the region's migrant-based workforce attraction within the health and care sector, including the attraction of overseas graduates under rural health migrant-workforce attraction programs.	M M	Health and community service providers HSC Government agencies	Health and community service providers HSC	9: Attract and retain workers to meet immediate workforce needs	10.4 Industry 13.4 Social infrastructure	Community Liveability 1.1 An actively engaged community
	Advocate for government subsidy and funding support to alleviate costs of 'fly-in fly out' (FIFO) and 'drive in drive out' (DIDO) health professionals who face significant servicing barriers due to the tyranny of distance	M M					
	Investigate opportunities to develop a regionally-based FIFO/DIDO program that could be administered from Nhill as a strategic, central location to service the wider region						

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

05



Fostering business
and community prosperity

alive with opportunity

5. Fostering business and community prosperity

There are common and distinct characteristics to the communities in Hindmarsh Shire that are both historical and locational in nature. These characteristics are further reinforced by the role these settlements play within the local and regional context and the nature of services and businesses that reside there. Hindmarsh has a range of economic, social and environmental attributes that contribute to its business and community development capacity. These include strategic location, strength of community partnerships, natural and built environment and capacity for development.

5.1 Sustainable communities

These community features are commonalities that comprise successful communities and can be leveraged through:

- ▶ Provision of appropriate and serviceable social and economic infrastructure that can support liveable and cohesive communities;
- ▶ Being responsive to changing demographic profiles within communities by future planning and future proofing services and assets that meet the needs of residents;
- ▶ Fostering an environment that supports local business and services that fulfil local and wider regional and external needs; and
- ▶ Providing pragmatic opportunities for residents to access services including health, education and recreation, given that some populations will be small and/or widely dispersed.

Sustainable communities are built around a longer-term approach to broad based well-being, which include aspects of economic, social and environmental strategies.

This includes maintaining a quality of life by responding to internal and external factors that impact on communities, such as demographic or economic change. Community sustainability builds upon the strengths and characteristics of a community or settlement given its location, services, participation rates in community life and its external connections.

5.2 Local businesses and services

The presence of a strong agricultural sector and community infrastructure lend themselves to enhancing resident, tourism and visitor services and experiences. This includes an internal and external demand for quality, locally-produced products and services and accessibility to markets beyond the boundaries of communities and the region.

The structure of the Hindmarsh economy, with a predominance of micro and small business and this latent demand for locally based services, trades and cultural choice, presents opportunities for facilitating and supporting the growth of local entrepreneurs and business people through start-up incubation projects.

These can be fostered based on the local need of residents (linking local demand with business opportunities), the profile of specific communities and residents and the participation of and support for the local business population.

Modelling shows that:

- ▶ Creating 10 jobs in construction results in a further eight new positions, and grows output by around \$7m; and
- ▶ Creating 10 jobs in professional and business services results in a further four positions, and increases output by \$4m

There are a number of fledgling and established enterprising small businesses in the Hindmarsh region, from retail to business services, tourism, food production and agribusiness. Many of the companies are demonstrating innovation in terms of product, marketing, business process and strategic planning and could provide avenues for further employment creation.

It is therefore proposed that business incubation development should have a focus on professional and creative small business, trades and services that are needed and valued by communities.

This would build the important service demand to business opportunity and enhance small business expertise in meeting market and consumer expectations and needs.

5.3 Supporting entrepreneurship

The EDS consultation highlighted an opportunity to not only increase the awareness and appreciation of these business within local communities and the wider region, but also to support them with strategic business development. This can be achieved through:

- ▶ Strengthening the business network throughout the region;
- ▶ Providing business development services;
- ▶ The provision of timely information to help them be more informed about the economic environment; and
- ▶ Celebrating good business practice and entrepreneurship.

The development and retention of skilled business operators and a skilled workforce are critical to the achievement of longer term economic sustainability. Skills can be imported through migration and sourcing of expertise from outside organisations to supplement local supply or service needs of a community.

However, developing local skills capabilities will represent a longer term solution and deliver workforce stability that is very important to business development. This can include:

- ▶ The provision of skills and career pathways particularly for young people in the shire;
- ▶ The development of entrepreneurial capabilities of business owners and operators and their understanding of the benefits of workforce development; and
- ▶ Identifying the primary skill needs of local industry and business and, in partnership with the education and training sector, develop workplace based skills programs for the existing workforce.

5.4 Migration and settlement

Given the trend of population decline within other rural communities and an apparent shift to relatively lower decline in population numbers in most Hindmarsh settlements, there may be opportunities to improve the economic and sufficiency fortunes of communities in Hindmarsh through targeted migrant workforce and business and social enterprise projects and initiatives that will help to build prosperous local business communities.

A headline success factor for Hindmarsh has been the settlement of the Karen community which, it would appear, is beginning to drive some economic and cultural change, particularly in Nhill.

This migration success is based on a number of factors, including employment opportunity, a welcoming community and sustained co-operation and collaboration between the Karen community and local and regional agencies and organisations. It augers well for future migration and settlement and for supporting culturally-based economic and social projects.

5.5 Marketing and economic capture

Identifying and reinforcing the role of settlements in the region can help underpin strategies that foster local business development. Assessment of the current nature and characteristics of individual communities can go some way to determining the nature and type of business that could be supported and the facilities and services they could provide to meet a market demand or opportunity.

This process also includes developing community 'brands' that would help reinforce these strategic directions and provide a focus of investment activities.

A significant economic asset for the Shire that should be developed, and has been recognised as a specific area for action under this strategy is the flow of people and products through the region.

VicRoads Annual Average Daily Traffic counts from July 2014 show that there are approximately 4,000 vehicle movements (east and west bound) through Nhill of which 35% are classed as commercial vehicles⁹. Although the VicRoads data presented does not distinguish between local or 'external traffic', this movement of people (and freight) represents a major economic opportunity if approached in a strategic and cohesive way.

For example, through providing people with greater information about the Shire, its assets, opportunities and potential when they stop, so they leave with information as well as a product and / or service.

In many ways, the movement of people through the Shire represents one of its best economic, marketing and investment opportunities.

⁹ Commercial vehicles includes includes all vehicles from towing (e.g. car + caravan) and small trucks (4.5 tonnes GVM) to the largest trucks (that is, Austroads vehicle class 2 and higher); it does not include single light vehicles such as cars and vans. Source: Traffic Volume Data for Victoria, July 2014. VicRoads.

Some indicative analysis of this opportunity is instructive:

- ▶ Capturing an additional 10% of the cars, spending \$50 per car, would increase Hindmarsh's output by \$7.3m per annum, or 1.5%. This equates to around 34 direct employment positions;
- ▶ If the average car holds 2 people, then on average 2.9m people are travelling through Hindmarsh per annum. Attracting 1% of this market for a return trip, spending \$250, would increase output by \$7.3m, or 1.5%. This equates to around 34 employment positions; and
- ▶ To attract 50 people the Shire would require less than 1% of 1% of those traveling through to be converted to residents. Every 50 people coming into the Shire increase output by around \$4.4m (0.9%) and will create around 19 new positions.

5.6 Summary

A primary consideration for the EDS is what can realistically be achieved or delivered in areas of entrenched economic-based market 'failure' or social structural gaps. These factors include the preparedness of local property and asset owners to invest, given a low return on investment, the demand for and supply of property (outside of agricultural land), goods and services, and the nature, or more accurately, the drivers of population growth and migration.

It is not possible for the EDS and those who will implement it to address all of these structural issues; however, what can be done is to facilitate and create the environment that supports and encourages economic, employment and social development through continued partnerships between communities, business and government.

5.7 Action plan

3. Fostering business and community prosperity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
3.1 Continue to provide support and guidance to local business and communities and foster local leadership.	Continue with the facilitation of the EDS Advisory Committee to support the implementation and review of the Strategy and to increase knowledge sharing and collaboration between business and communities.	H S	Community and business HSC Government agencies	HSC Community and business	13: Strengthening local communities	10.8 Commercial activity	Community liveability 1.2 A range of effective and accessible services to support the health and wellbeing of our community.
	Develop strategic plans for each of the four town committees and ensure inclusion of economic development actions for local business that support the growth of existing small to medium sized enterprises and associated employment creation.	H S		Community and business HSC			Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

3. Fostering business and community prosperity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
3.2 Support the development of small business and the creation of new employment for residents including young people.	Through the development of a feasibility study, identify opportunities and models for the development of business and social enterprise incubators in each of the four settlements under a Creative and Small Business Incubation Plan. The incubators should be modelled on the latent business activity in the area, the service needs of communities and the function of each settlement. These incubators can be office or trades based, or both, and include the adaptation of existing buildings and the development of small, light industrial trade premises and/or precincts in appropriate locations in townships.	H S	Community and business HSC Government agencies	HSC Community and business	3: Facilitating industry cluster and building on regional strengths 13: Strengthening local communities	10.8 Commercial activity	Community liveability 1.2 A range of effective and accessible services to support the health and wellbeing of our community.
	Continue the partnerships between the local education sector and business on developing education, work and employment opportunities for young people in Hindmarsh. This should include the development of school-based industry and business participation projects, such as the successful Mindshop Excellence program (www.mindshopexcellence.com), advocating for increased uptake of work experience, traineeships and apprenticeship by local businesses and supporting schools with programs to enhance attainment and retention rates in the region.	H M	Community and business HSC Education providers Government agencies	Community and business Education providers	7: Provide access to a comprehensive range of learning programs from K-12 regardless of location 8: Increase accessible post secondary education and training opportunities	13.4 Social infrastructure	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

3. Fostering business and community prosperity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
3.2 Support the development of small business and the creation of new employment for residents including young people.	Develop a program of business development and/or mentoring within particular areas of business operations in order to drive value to businesses and contribute to longer-term economic outcomes for Hindmarsh. Focus should be given to businesses that have growth capacity or innovation capabilities.	M M	Community and business HSC Government agencies	HSC Community and business			Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
3.3 Enhance the role and function of settlements to support sustainable economic, population and social outcomes.	In partnership with communities, take a 'place based' approach to community-based economic development by establishing a broad based identity (brand) for the four settlements, based on strengths, location, function and community attributes. This not only draws on the capital and assets within communities, but helps to focus investment and development programs and create subtle but important points of difference for communities based on strategic opportunities. This would also support the ensuing EDS strategy for developing tourism and events and capitalising on the flow through of traffic and travellers.	H M	Community and business HSC Government agencies	Community and business HSC	13: Strengthening local communities Regional settlement and land use planning	See next page	See next page

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

3. Fostering business and community prosperity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
3.3 Enhance the role and function of settlements to support sustainable economic, population and social outcomes.	<p>For example as a guide the following place based themes could be developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dimboola - Lifestyle and tourism: built and natural assets including the river precinct and township centre streetscapes, proximity to Horsham, tourism and visitor features. ▶ Jeparit – History and environment: historical assets and features, rural location, proximity to natural assets and features. ▶ Nhill - Regional service and cultural centre: strategic location, administration centre, business and services. ▶ Rainbow – Local service and rural lifestyle: rural services, visitor services and rural lifestyle. <p>A success factor of place based economic development is the fostering of local and regional institutions that are able to assess and develop local economic assets and for communities to be proactively engaged to shape local policy and priorities.</p> <p>It is, therefore, critical that local community committees are engaged in the branding process through workshops and consultation activities. Further support from communities can be provided through town committees, community development plans and through integrating these with the proposed committee strategic plans</p>	H M	Community and business HSC Government agencies	Community and business HSC	13: Strengthening local communities Regional settlement and land use planning	10.4 Industry 10.8 Commercial activity 12.2 Regional Settlement Strategy 12.5 District towns 12.6 Other key towns 12.7 Small settlements 12.8 Rural settlement 13.4 Social infrastructure	Community Liveability 2.1 Well maintained physical assets and infrastructure to meet community and organisational needs Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural community and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

3. Fostering business and community prosperity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Investment Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
3.3 Enhance the role and function of settlements to support sustainable economic, population and social outcomes.	To support the development of the role, function and services of settlements described above, develop a Hindmarsh Economic and Liveable marketing strategy that consolidates the primary economic messages and brand of the region and the individual settlements under the existing 'Alive with Opportunity' branding strategy. This should include hard collateral and material, including township signage, HSC and other corporate and organisational material and soft copy materials including websites, social media and tourism marketing.	M L	Community and business HSC Government agencies	Community and business HSC	13: Strengthening local communities	12.2 Regional Settlement Strategy 12.5 District towns 12.6 Other key towns 12.7 Small settlements 12.8 Rural settlement	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	A regional market opportunity for Hindmarsh is the existing catchment population, and in particular the centre of Horsham, that represent a currently under-exposed market for business and expenditure into Hindmarsh and for business and resident attraction initiatives. Local media promotion of Hindmarsh, events, settlements and lifestyle opportunities should form part of the Alive with Opportunity strategy.	M M					

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

3. Fostering business and community prosperity							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
3.3 Enhance the role and function of settlements to support sustainable economic, population and social outcomes	<p>Reviews and updates of local planning policy should be completed to help ensure that communities and stakeholders can appropriately respond to economic and community opportunities. It will also assist business and investors with effective development planning. It is recognised that Precinct Plans for Nhill and Dimboola are currently underway and will directly inform local planning policy. This process should be extended to the townships of Jeparit and Rainbow. Key aspects of land use planning and development that are supported by the EDS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identification of appropriate land and sites for industrial activity in Nhill to support growth of existing business and encourage the attraction of new investment. The identification of an anchor or establishment 'tenant(s)' will significantly enhance the likelihood of development funding and the longer sustainability of the industrial precinct. ▶ Support the progression of the proposed new industrial land development in Dimboola. ▶ Identification of future growth and development for integrated health and community care services and facilities in all four settlements; ▶ Identification of future residential land that enhances the liveability attributes of the community, provides for a diversity of development in location(s), particularly in Nhill and Dimboola. ▶ Identification of premises and facilities that can support the Creative and Small Business Incubator initiative. 	H M	Community and business HSC Government agencies	HSC Community and business	13: Strengthening local communities Regional settlement and land use planning	10.4 Industry 10.8 Commercial activity 12.2 Regional Settlement Strategy 12.5 District towns 12.6 Other key towns 12.7 Small settlements 12.8 Rural settlement 13.4 Social infrastructure	Community Liveability 2.1 Well maintained physical assets and infrastructure to meet community and organisational needs Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural community and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

06



Supporting the development
of tourism and events

alive with opportunity

6. Supporting the development of tourism and events

Tourism and events are an untapped opportunity for Hindmarsh. The range of natural and built features and assets, its strategic location on a major transport route and proximity to regional destination centres, including the Grampians National Park, Mt Arapiles and the Murray River, provide a basis upon which to grow this economic sector.

6.1 Tourism overview

According to Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data, between 2012-13 140,000 domestic visitors came to the Wimmera region (not including Horsham), staying 317,000 domestic visitor nights. The average length of stay of these visitors was two nights. TRA data also shows that for the region six establishments have accommodation provision of 15 or more rooms.

Tourism and events provide a range of economic, social and cultural benefits to communities and regions which include:

- ▶ Encouraging business diversification and investment;
- ▶ Enhancing the cultural diversity of communities and providing unique opportunities for residents to engage in cultural activities;
- ▶ Supporting enhancements to the natural environment; and
- ▶ Acting as draw card for new residents and new business.

Tourism and events should be seen as a means to enhance existing local and regional assets and features of the region. Over time such development can increase the level of diversification of local economies.

Activities that bring visitors into the region include 4WD, trail bike riding, bird watching, bush walking, camping and short stays. These draw visitors from across Victoria and South Australia, as well as travellers on the

Western Highway. These visitors are generally self-sufficient and independent. Anecdotal and local evidence provided by Parks Victoria suggests they are already visiting the area in decent numbers.

For example, Parks Victoria estimates that between 60,000 and 80,000 people visit the Wyperfeld National Park each year and just one camping area (Wonga Camp) had 340 visitors over the Easter 2014 long weekend.

REMPan data for the region suggests that 3.7 per cent of Hindmarsh employment is related to tourism (79 jobs), contributing an estimated \$14m to the local economy directly as well as indirectly benefiting local business and communities. As a percentage of each dollar spent, the beneficiaries are primarily accommodation and food services (46%), transport and logistics (16%) and retail (13%). Hindmarsh has the lowest percentage regional spend in the dollar in the area of arts and recreation (0.7%) compared to West Wimmera (4%), Yarriambiack (3.1%), Horsham (4%) and Buloke (1.4%).

Hindmarsh and the region have a number of opportunities to build economic returns from the development of packages, product and co-ordinated marketing of the attributes and attractions in the region. Therefore, the primary focus should be on the consolidation of existing product and assets and the development of targeted areas of tourism opportunity.

Hindmarsh has a number of challenges (areas to address) and strengths (areas to build on) in relation to tourism development. The region's tourism and destination strengths include:

- ▶ Good accessibility via the Western Highway and other arterial highways linking the region to markets, with significant volumes of through traffic and travellers;
- ▶ Major markets accessible to the East and West;

- ▶ High degree of environmental-based assets that already attract visitors including parks, lakes/lake environments, the Wimmera River and native flora fauna;
- ▶ Townships with heritage, history and natural features and attributes;
- ▶ A number of existing and emerging local and regional events, including:
 - ▶ The Dimboola Rowing Regatta;
 - ▶ The Nhill Air Show;
 - ▶ The Jeparit Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum Vintage Rally; and
 - ▶ A number of regional sporting and recreation events.
- ▶ Appointment of a tourism officer by HSC to help support tourism strategic planning and development activities; and
- ▶ Strong local and regional commitment to develop and grow tourism.

6.2 Brand and destination

The development of tourism product and the establishment of a destination takes time, commitment and collaboration. The tourism market in Australia is highly competitive, given the number of quality tourism products in well-established regions with significant brand profile both domestically and overseas. For rural communities which are in the early stages of tourism development, the focus on incremental destination and product build within regional market segments tends to represent the most logical and sustainable approach.

However, the development of a strong regional brand and the consolidation of product (the destination) also represent areas where the Hindmarsh region can make inroads in the development of a more significant and substantial tourism market.

6.3 Target markets

A key tourism strategy principle is the identification of the target markets or market segments that should form the basis of marketing and product development.

Given the infancy of the tourism product in Hindmarsh, the primary market will be domestic visitors within regional markets. Building international visitation will be a long-term process and outcome and does not at this time represent a tangible opportunity for the region.

The overarching marketing strategy and product development should link to the needs and expectations of users and target segments should align to the tourism product and services on offer.

Using the well-established Roy Morgan Values Segments, the following have been identified as the primary market segments for Hindmarsh:¹⁰

A Fairer Deal

This segment takes fewer holidays than average. They were more likely to stay with friends and relatives, go camping, or use cabin accommodation. This segment was more likely to use buses and trains on holidays. They like nature-based holidays, going to pubs and nightlife along with visiting friends or relatives.

¹⁰ Source: Tourism Victoria: Understanding Visitor Needs and Expectations

Traditional Family Life

People from the Traditional Family Life segment are keen holiday tourers, which is reflected in the high use of caravans and campervans. A planned itinerary is a priority, hence the greater use of package tours and bookings through tour operators. They tend to stay in comfortable but good value accommodation, such as standard hotels and motels.

Sightseeing is an important aspect of their holiday experience, with a greater tendency to visit museums, art galleries, historical places, and wineries. Visiting friends or relatives is also an important aspect of their holiday experience.

Conventional family life

This segment takes fewer holidays than average and tends to travel intrastate in order to meet the family budget. They stay in rented accommodation with the family, and generally use the family car while on holidays. This segment participates in outdoor holiday activities, such as fishing, swimming and surfing, bike riding and horse riding. In keeping with the family theme, they are also more likely to visit entertainment and theme parks.

However, these segments are not the only target opportunities for Hindmarsh. As mentioned previously, there a number of groups and visitors that already come to the region that represent markets that can be capitalised upon. These include 4WD groups, trail bike riders and other groups that enjoy and appreciate the natural environment, flora and fauna.

Parks Victoria is a major stakeholder within these markets given its responsibility for the management of significant tracts of natural assets in the region. Discussions with Parks Victoria highlighted a willingness and support for the development of sustainable tourism activities in the region that would form a partnership approach to opportunities.

6.4 Challenges and opportunities

Key challenges for the region include:

- ▶ A degree of seasonality in visitation due to climatic and weather features, as well as strong competition from established destinations particularly in coastal, food and wine and higher populated centres;
- ▶ A previous lack of focus on the development of niche tourism sectors and strategic tourism product;
- ▶ Under-capitalisation of assets and attractions, although it is noted that HSC has been planning and investing in its caravan and camping assets and has taken over the important management role of these assets in the shire;
- ▶ Product weaknesses and gaps, including the range and quality of accommodation and food options;
- ▶ Ensuring that good quality data and information is captured regarding visitation patterns, experiences and expectations to help with sector planning and development (a tourism management system); and
- ▶ Lack of cohesion or mobilisation of businesses around tourism opportunities, including ensuring the supporting retail and hospitality services are 'open for business'.

Hindmarsh has a number of attributes that can and will contribute to its tourism potential but there needs to be a more concerted focus on building and managing compelling visitor experiences. Given the relatively low base from which tourism and events will be built in Hindmarsh, partners with an interest in developing tourism and events should take a medium to longer term view and build opportunity through incremental and strategic steps.

The current shortage of supporting product and services (choice and capacity) in areas such as accommodation, hospitality and cultural assets will take some time to address. Therefore, it is proposed that the approach focusses on:

- ▶ Increasing the yield (spend) from current visitors and capturing more of passing trade and traffic on the Western Highway;
- ▶ Building visitation from regional markets, including dispersal from other 'neighbouring' centres;
- ▶ Identifying product that leverages off competitive assets and features and build 'packages' of tourism product;
- ▶ Supporting and enhancing existing events and identifying events that can be attracted to the region; and
- ▶ Developing local tourism capacity and understanding of good industry practice.

6.5 Business development

Looking beyond the existing assets of the region, there are opportunities to foster small and niche businesses that would provide both visitor and resident services and products. As mentioned in the food and beverage strategy, the development of artisan and boutique foods and retailing based upon the agricultural characteristics of the region may be attractive to existing and new businesses in food production and retailing. The proposed Hindmarsh Food Artisans Group could play a strategic role in working with stakeholders on the development of these opportunities.

As with the small business and community prosperity strategy, the role of settlements in tourism should also form a development pillar.

This would recognise both their existing strengths and features and provide a platform from which tourism activity can be harnessed within those communities. The EDS is not seeking to be prescriptive about these locational opportunities, as some development may be applicable to most or all communities. Rather, it seeks to provide a development approach that helps to build the destination of Hindmarsh and through doing so, encourage and foster the economic and service capacity and capability of the region over the medium to longer term.

6.6 Events

The development of events in the region is also an important feature of both tourism and broader community liveability. Events not only act as draw cards for visitors but can be important catalysts for community participation, strategic investment and maintenance and utilisation of assets and facilities.

Like the development of tourism product, events should build on the strengths and features of a region or community.

Hindmarsh is home to a number of small to larger scale events but will need to enhance resources and capabilities in the areas of existing event management and build partnerships and networks within the wider events industry to enable the region to attract events. This should include:

- ▶ Optimising existing events, including consolidation of the vision for events, supporting event organisers with improved planning and delivery expertise and enhancing the visitor experience;
- ▶ Developing events and regional leverage through active participation in event and tourism networks to support the development of assets in the region, including heritage and natural assets that can form important components to events-based activities;
- ▶ Ensuring HSC has a robust event policy and processes to provide clarity around decision making and optimise the resources available from HSC and other sources to support successful and compliant event delivery and management by organisers and responsible groups; and

Linking the attraction of investment and assets across tourism and events to ensure that investment is maximised and the development of product and destination across the two is symbiotic.

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

6.7 Action plan

4. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.1 Develop tourism opportunities through increased yield from existing and potential visitors based on the key destination assets of the region.	The development of Hindmarsh as a tourism destination will be an incremental process. This will include building capability, capacity and assets around three key areas that contribute to the experience of visitors, namely product, value and choice, and the key assets of the region which are the natural environment, history and heritage, and outdoor pursuits. Work with existing operators and ancillary sectors on the development of high quality services and encourage understanding of the importance and opportunities that tourism and visitors can provide to the region and communities. Promote an “open for business” approach amongst business operators.	H S	Business and community HSC	HSC Business and community	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry	10.7 Tourism 11.2 Environment and heritage assets	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry
	The development of a 'Discover Hidden Hindmarsh' trail that would act as an important mechanism to bind and integrate existing products, destinations and features of the region and enhance the retention and yield from current day-trip and overnight visitors to the area.	H S	HSC Tourism associations Business and community	HSC			
	A primary motivator for visitors to stop and explore an area once they have arrived is good signage and visitor information. There are opportunities to improve destination, arrival and promotional signage within the vicinity of towns and attractions.	H M	HSC Tourism Associations VicRoads	HSC VicRoads			

4. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.2 Support the development of local destinations based upon the features and attributes of towns and settlements.	<p>Following a similar approach to that described within the small business and community prosperity strategy, develop place-based brand and product for the four settlements in the shire based on features and attributes of those communities. For example, the following place based themes could be developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dimboola – history, environment, food, recreation and events – yield opportunity to be built on regional day visitors, families and short stay. This would include the encouragement of food and niche businesses, provision of interpreted cycle, walking and heritage trails, indigenous heritage and culture, bicycle and kayak hire from the caravanpark and development of the caravan park as a family-oriented, short stay destination. ▶ Jeparit – living history, environment and recreation – yield opportunity to be built on day trips, families, outdoor recreation and events such as the inclusion of Jeparit and surrounds in the Hidden Hindmarsh Trail, development and promotion of the Menzies community park and support for the development and promotion of the Wimmera-Mallee Pioneer Museum and Museum Rally events. ▶ Nhill – central, retail and traveller services, events, rest and relax – yield opportunity to be built on day and overnight visitors. This could include increasing activities and events using the central ‘Village Green’, development of social and cultural enterprise and events in partnership with the Karen community, development of the Discover Hidden Hindmarsh Trail, starting and culminating in Nhill, and investment in and development of the caravan park. 	H M	HSC Business and community Tourism associations	HSC Business and community	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry 13: Strengthening local communities Regional settlement and land use planning	10.7 Tourism 11.2 Environment and heritage assets 12.5 District Towns 12.6 Other key towns 12.7 Small settlements	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

5. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.2 Support the development of local destinations based upon the features and attributes of towns and settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainbow – rural escape, environment and recreation – yield opportunity to be built on overnight, outdoor recreation and development of innovative local event(s). This could include a Rainbow ‘Booktown’ event, development of a Lake Hindmarsh to Albacutya cycling event (such as enduro or time trial) or a Rainbow Opera or Music Under the Stars event. 	H M	HSC Business and community Tourism associations State and regional sporting and cultural organisations	HSC Business and community	2: Build the region’s nature-based and outback tourism industry 13: Strengthening local communities Regional settlement and land use planning	10.7 Tourism 11.2 Environment and heritage assets 12.5 District Towns 12.6 Other key towns 12.7 Small settlements	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry
	The volume of travellers using the Western Highway and other arterial highways present major expenditure and visitor capture. For example, over the coming AFL season, the Adelaide-based teams will be playing in Victoria (Melbourne and Geelong) on 10 occasions. HSC, together with the Nihil business and sporting community, could approach the AFL and particular AFL clubs for assistance in programming, six “stop over” events, for interstate travellers passing through Nhill during the 2015 AFL season, with a view to increasing the safety of football travellers on the highway and boosting small business and sporting clubs in the town.	H S	HSC Business and community State and regional sporting associations Tourism associations	HSC State and regional sporting associations	2: Build the region’s nature-based and outback tourism industry 13: Strengthening local communities	10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

4. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.3 Facilitate and advocate for the development of tourism product and new business opportunities to provide a diversity of attractions and activities for visitors.	<p>Advocate for the development of a Hindmarsh Tourism and Destination Management Plan to provide the necessary framework for ensuring that tourism not only adds value to the economic and social fabric but supports private and public sector investment in tourism assets and product.</p> <p>A destination management approach is the preferred government and industry framework that helps ensure objectives are planned and managed to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities of interest and the particular characteristics and tourism features unique to each destination.</p>	H S-M	HSC Local and regional Tourism Associations Local and Wimmera businesses	HSC Hindmarsh Tourism Association	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry 13: Strengthening local communities Regional settlement and land use planning	10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry
	Facilitating the formation of a Hindmarsh Food Artisans Group of interested growers producers and retailers. Given the size of this cohort in Hindmarsh, consideration should be given of expanding the membership to include other like businesses from the Wimmera region.	H S	HSC Local and Wimmera businesses WDA Other regional Councils Tourism associations	HSC WDA	3: Facilitate industry clusters and building on regional strengths	10.3 Agriculture 10.7 Tourism 10.8 Commercial activity	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

5. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.3 Facilitate and advocate for the development of tourism product and new business opportunities to provide a diversity of attractions and activities for visitors.	<p>Working with local and regional businesses, look to promote food and beverage business opportunities that link to the strengths of current product within the region and would provide a product 'point of difference' for visitors. This could include attracting investment for the establishment of a first class Peking Duck restaurant, the establishment of an Artisan Bakery and Bar and/or artisan brewery in perhaps Dimboola which sell particular products made from special grains grown in the shire.</p> <p>London's Bread Ahead bakery and the Wilkadene Woolshed Brewery near Renmark would both be great starting points for investigation in this respect. These could be established as either commercial or social enterprises such as a Karen cultural centre in Nhill. http://www.breadahead.com http://www.aboverenmark.com.au/micro_brewery.php</p>	H M	HSC Local and Wimmera businesses WDA Tourism associations	HSC WDA	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry 3: Facilitate industry clusters and building on regional strengths 13: Strengthening local communities	10.3 Agriculture 10.7 Tourism 10.8 Commercial activity	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry
4.3 Facilitate and advocate for the development of tourism product and new business opportunities to provide a diversity of attractions and activities for visitors.	In addition to the proposed drive or cycle Hidden Hindmarsh Trail, continue with the development of the Wimmera River Heritage Trail project, Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum Master Plan and the interpretation and understanding of indigenous history and culture through the proposed Indigenous Keeping Place in Dimboola. Continue to implement a network of walking and cycling infrastructure to improve connectivity and bring enhanced visitation and the visitor experience to settlements and attractions.	H M	HSC Tourism associations Community and business Government agencies	HSC Community and business	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry 13: Strengthening local communities	10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

4. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.3 Facilitate and advocate for the development of tourism product and new business opportunities to provide a diversity of attractions and activities for visitors.	<p>Continue to foster the partnerships with Parks Victoria on the sustainable and appropriate development of outdoor recreation activities associated with the parks and lakes in the region. This could include improvements to camping and other facilities, integration into the Hidden Hindmarsh Trail, partnership promotion of the area to target groups such as 4WD, cycling, bird watching and bush walking, or other growing areas of outdoor pursuits.</p> <p>For example, over the Easter long weekend, a large group of geocache enthusiasts visits the Lakes region for a 'Navrun' weekend where participants (mainly families) enjoy an outdoor 'treasure hunt' using GPS or other navigational techniques to hide and seek 'caches'.</p>	M M	HSC Parks Victoria Tourism associations Community and business Local and regional sporting and recreation organisations	HSC Parks Victoria	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry	10.7 Tourism 11.2 Environment and heritage assets	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns 3.2 A thriving tourism industry
4.3 Facilitate and advocate for the development of tourism product and new business opportunities to provide a diversity of attractions and activities for visitors.	Investigate opportunities to develop niche, farm stay accommodation, including self-contained cabins and B&B facilities and continue to upgrade existing accommodation options, in particular caravan and camping facilities. This could include a booklet, forum or workshop that describes the opportunities, requirements and benefits. This should be supported through appropriate provisions and references within the local planning scheme.	M M-L	HSC Property and land holders Tourism associations	HSC Property and land holders	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry	10.2 Rural land use 10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

4. Supporting the development of tourism and events

Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.4 Support the professional development of existing events and the attraction of new events to enhance the visitor experience and provide for increased visitation and investment attraction to the region.	Develop a guide to planning and managing events to support best practice event delivery, improve compliance, reduce risks and improve efficient uses of HSC and community resources. The guide could also contain event planning and reporting templates (business plan, budget and finances, risk planning, permits and marketing strategies and sources of and contacts for further information and advice).	H M	HSC Event managers and organisers	HSC	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry	10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.2 A thriving tourism industry
	Opportunities and mechanisms to develop inclusive packages around events could also be pursued with the local events, hospitality and related sectors. This will assist with increasing the visitor yield from events, foster greater co-operation and partnerships, and potentially identify local service or product gaps that could be filled by local businesses or could attract new investment. This will also help to put local focus on the customer and their overall Hindmarsh event and tourism experience and the benefits that can be derived through increased yield and return visitation.	M M	HSC Event managers and organisers Businesses Tourism associations	HSC Event managers and organisers	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry	10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

4. Supporting the development of tourism and events							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
4.4 Support the professional development of existing events and the attraction of new events to enhance the visitor experience and provide for increased visitation and investment attraction to the region.	<p>Support the development and attraction of two new events to Hindmarsh. These can be established events that may be attracted to Hindmarsh as the host community, the development of an event initiative that could be taken to market for external management and delivery, or development of an event by HSC and partners.</p> <p>An important consideration for HSC will be the availability of skills, resources, finances and the possible financial risk a self-managed event can represent and, therefore, it is proposed that Hindmarsh looks to either attract an existing event or to outsource event management and delivery.</p>	M M-L	HSC Tourism associations WDA Business and community Regional and state cultural and sporting organisations	HSC Tourism associations	2: Build the region's nature-based and outback tourism industry	10.7 Tourism	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.2 A thriving tourism industry

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+

07



Building sustainable
local administration

alive with opportunity

7. Building sustainable local administration

The more remotely located a community, the more important it is to have a strong and sustainable local government authority. The challenges faced by local government in rural areas differ somewhat from metropolitan local government areas, particularly in maintaining vital assets such as major roads, bridges and ports.

7.1 The challenges

Federal and state funded metropolitan freeways and port facilities provide metropolitan businesses with ready access to domestic and international markets, whereas more remotely located rural and regional businesses are heavily dependent on the maintenance of vast lengths of local roads and bridges (some restricted by load limits) to gain access to markets.

Ensuring that the voice of remotely located small population centres like Nhill, Dimboola, Jeparit and Rainbow is heard in the nation's main centres of decision making power in Canberra and Melbourne, also presupposes strong and sustainable local administration – ensuring local government continues with effective advocacy, leadership capacity and the ability to partner with other stakeholders in resolving community issues and promoting the development of the local economy.

As one of the largest employers in the area, the maintenance of a strong and sustainable local government authority in Hindmarsh is also critical to the economic and social well-being of the area. However, the Hindmarsh Shire is one of 18 rural councils in Victoria that are encountering substantial challenges as a consequence of declining populations and other kinds of demographic change. The neighbouring municipalities of Yarriambiack and West Wimmera are experiencing similar challenges.

Demographic change in this sub-region is a critical issue that influences the capacity of local government to plan for and adapt to change. As population levels decline, so eventually will local government's capacity to raise rates, in turn creating a greater reliance on state or federal government grant income to maintain balance sheets, assets and operations. Policy positions of the recently elected state government to cap council rates will further limit councils' ability to raise non-grant income.

The recent annual report of the Victorian Auditor General's Office highlights the risk associated with increased dependence on government grants as distinct from "own-source revenue", particularly in circumstances where additional borrowing is required to cover contingencies such as defined benefit superannuation or natural disaster funding.

7.2 Strategic resource sharing

Hindmarsh, like neighbouring Yarriambiack and West Wimmera and other municipalities in the north-west, has a proud history of collaboration. The WDA is one testimony to this. Hindmarsh Shire has a proven record of working with neighbouring shires and regional bodies such as WDA to reduce costs and increase capacity. As revenue and resource streams are likely to become even more constricted, it is imperative that this collaborative spirit be redoubled through initiating the preparation of a new regional resource sharing plan. This should not just have a focus on local government services, but will also require strategic partnerships beyond local government to include health, aged care, education and other services

Rising administrative and delivery cost pressures, combined with the need to renew and replace assets, will require a significant increase in the level of shared service delivery across these three municipalities if local government in the area is to remain sustainable. As the Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack and West Wimmera councils have similar functions and common activities, the sharing of services is a way of achieving greater efficiency in service delivery while improving service quality to residents and ratepayers.

7.3 Assets and infrastructure

The Hindmarsh Shire is one of the smallest local government authorities in Victoria. But it has responsibility for one of the largest geographic areas in the state. The Shire's capacity to maintain local infrastructure, including the local road and bridge network, is fiscally and resource limited and this will be further constrained by foreshadowed reductions in federal and state government grant assistance and the new state government rates capping policy.

Nevertheless, the need to address ongoing deficiencies in the provision of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure, which impede the growth of the local economy, requires strong local advocacy.

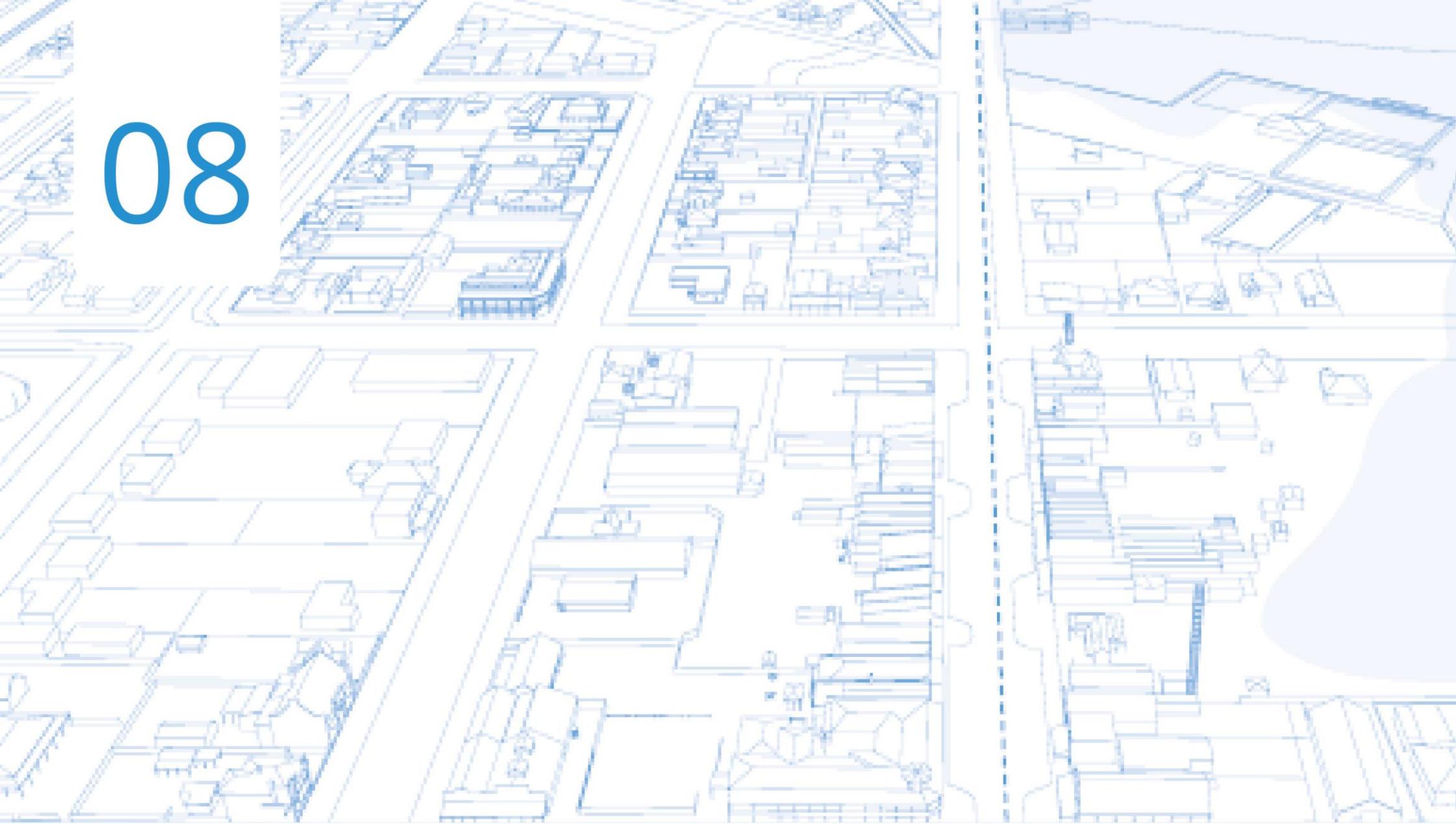
7.4 Action plan

5. Building sustainable local administration							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
5.1 Reduce the cost and resource burden to regional councils in operational and service areas that can be provided through a sustainable shared services model.	It is recommended that HSC initiates discussion with neighbouring councils on the feasibility of extending their tradition and current practices of working together to share costs and resources in delivering local government services, as well as in the provision of “back office” functions such as rate collection, human resource and payroll management and the procurement of goods and services. This approach is being supported through Rural Councils Victoria’s 2014 Rural Councils Sustainability Project which will provide a framework and approach to guide and inform these initiatives. HSC should therefore continue to play a significant role in this project and recommendations.	H S	Rural Councils Victoria Wimmera Councils WDA Government agencies	Rural Councils Victoria Wimmera Councils	13: Strengthening local communities	15 Implementation	Our People Our Processes 4.1 Long term financial sustainability
	In addition to working with neighbouring municipalities and regional bodies such as the WDA to reduce costs and increase capacity it is imperative that this collaborative spirit be redoubled through initiating the preparation of a regional resource sharing plans with other non-local government agencies and service providers. These partnerships beyond local government should include health, aged care, education, recreation, tourism and other services.	H M	Wimmera Councils WDA Government and non-government agencies Rural Councils Victoria	Wimmera Councils Government and non-government agencies	13: Strengthening local communities	15 Implementation	Our People Our Processes 4.1 Long term financial sustainability

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

5. Building sustainable local administration							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
5.2 Continue to build regional capabilities and skills through partnerships with lead development organisations that advocate for the needs and opportunities of the region.	The WDA continues to play an increasingly important role in the area of regional development, research, policy advice and regional investment. The partnership between the WDA and members should continue to be strengthened by ensuring mutual opportunities to participate and advocate on projects and investments that are important to the region and to identify where and how the WDA can support HSC on the realisation of its economic and social objectives as described in the EDS.	Ongoing	HSC WDA	HAS WDA		15 Implementation	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+)

The background of the slide is a detailed architectural floor plan of a building complex, rendered in light blue lines on a white background. The plan shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements. A large, semi-transparent blue shape is overlaid on the right side of the plan.

08

Economic infrastructure
and assets

alive with opportunity

8. Economic infrastructure and assets

The community of HSC is well served with economic and social infrastructure and assets. Given its strategic location between Melbourne and Adelaide on major road and rail corridors, the role of freight for the inward and outward movement of goods and products and transport networks to service residents and visitors is of vital importance.

8.1 Primary freight and transport infrastructure

The Western Highway is a significant transport corridor that crosses through Hindmarsh Shire, providing a vital transport route between the markets and distribution centres of Melbourne and Adelaide. The highway also connects to the Henty and Wimmera highways, thereby providing access to the Port of Portland for the export of bulk commodities and connecting with the tourism region of south west Victoria.

A major duplication of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell is currently underway, with progression of duplication works either completed, under construction or in the planning phase. This will increase road freight efficiencies and improve travel times and road safety for highway users.

Upgrade works to the highway between Stawell and the South Australian border (including new overtaking lanes, rest area improvements, bridge upgrades and planning for a Horsham bypass) are also under consideration and development. This major piece of freight and travel infrastructure is a significant part of the economic assets of western Victoria including Hindmarsh.

Rail services provide strategic freight links across the region connecting to intrastate and interstate gateways and provide for the transportation of goods to the respective Portland, Geelong and Melbourne ports for domestic and international markets.

Rail haulage in the region primarily consists of grain and mineral sands and is critical to getting products to market and reducing the impact on the region's road network.

Graincorp under their 'Project Regeneration' initiative has committed to spending \$56 million alongside government to upgrading rail infrastructure in the Wimmera-Mallee. From a municipal perspective, this includes upgrading the Dimboola to Yaapeet branch line to Rainbow from 19 to 21 tonne axle weights and providing best-practice load sites; 40 wagon trains loaded in less than 4 hours, at Rainbow and Nhill. AWB Grainflow at Dimboola already has this capability.

The role of transport is integral to the region's economic opportunity. Given the nature of the economy, the need to quickly and efficiently transport primary produce is a major driver and influence of local economic structures. Investment in road assets provides a greater degree of flexibility for users but can present longer term renewal and upkeep issues for responsible authorities. The carrying capacity of rail, the cost efficiencies and the environmental benefits this mode of freight represents provide the region with some positive economic outcomes.

However, there is a need to ensure that rail-based assets and service provision are able to provide economic benefits to users through strategic investments and ensure efficient access to destination ports and markets.

8.2 The roads network

Roads provide the principal means for people to commute throughout the municipality and elsewhere; they are the first and primary thoroughfares for the delivery of goods and services and form the major transport corridors for them to transition in and out of the shire. As such, they are integral to the level of efficiency that economic activity is carried out within Hindmarsh.

It has to be recognised that Hindmarsh is faced with challenges common to many rural municipalities. It is charged with the responsibility for road infrastructure development and maintenance over very large expanses of land with comparatively minimal or nominal populations. This creates a major recurrent call on Council resources.

The cost and level of road maintenance is also further exacerbated by the relative number and frequency of heavy vehicle movements across the shire, as well as associated expenditures, such as weed and pest control of roadside reserves. It is a constant and ongoing challenge for rural councils, particularly when the level of funding is often uncertain and subject to the decisions and expenditure priorities of higher levels of government.

Consultations highlighted that Hindmarsh is not immune from such monetary and resource pressures, particularly from those who need to move grain and other commodities away from major arterial corridors. This expectation and demand regarding provision of road infrastructure is by no means simply an issue for HSC, but also for VicRoads and the roads they are responsible for. Within the local road hierarchy, it is understood that HSC is looking to identify where roads could be strategically closed.

In order to make the best use of resources available to HSC and provide the most efficient and effective road system under such constraints, it is necessary to understand principal traffic flows and usage patterns within and across Hindmarsh.

While there is a roads hierarchy, there appears to be little information on actual traffic usage or the nature of that usage. Understanding this usage and supporting need or demand should be a priority in order to provide an informed decision making process when addressing future road planning and development.

Once this work has been undertaken, there is an opportunity to have an open discussion with landholders in the more remote locations of the shire, where many minor and low-use roads exist, on how future management may more effectively be achieved.

There is certainly evidence of community understanding of HSC's difficulties in this respect and that landholders are open to discuss alternatives, including the resumption of minor roads into their properties to either be maintained for their private use or incorporated into farming operations. While such arrangements would require a consensus among neighbours and specific road users, there appears to be genuine willingness to address the matter in partnership with HSC.

Systematically addressing road closures would reduce maintenance related costs to HSC, but also increase the amount of land available for alternative use, principally agricultural production. Moreover, such reductions would present opportunities for increased scale to existing properties, potentially increasing delivering productivity benefits to producers.

8.3 Supporting economic infrastructure

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline represents a significant investment that secures water supply to towns and rural areas and presents opportunities for intensive agriculture through improved water security. The Pipeline replaced 17,500km of open channel with nearly 10,000km of pressurised pipeline and associated structures. Areas adjacent to the Pipeline have potential for agricultural diversification. Its location near to regional and local transport routes, settlements and productive agricultural land, makes this an important strategic asset that can be leveraged for economic development. This would primarily include the Pipeline 'corridors' between Dimboola and Nhill and north through Jeparit, Rainbow and to Yaapeet.

The Pipeline represents a significant investment attraction asset for the region. GMMWater holds allocations of water for growth and development that provide the region with a competitive edge in terms of supply and security. Continued identification of what and where industries can benefit, including the attraction of new industries and the diversification or increased efficiencies for existing industries will represent tangible economic development for the region.

This will have to be supported by the integration of land use assessment and planning around potential uses and outcomes of increased uptake of this water infrastructure.

The West Wimmera Ground Water Management Strategy also clearly addresses where future development and associated uptake of ground water supplies will be supported and should be used as a further planning and investment reference resource. With groundwater being the only reliable water source in the region it is imperative that supply and quality is protected for high value uses including irrigated and intensive livestock systems and urban and domestic uses.

The majority of possible agribusiness development land within Hindmarsh falls within the Northern Groundwater Zone which the Strategy describes as follows:

The Northern Zone includes all the area between the Little Desert and Big Desert zones. This area is considered to have consistent hydrogeology, and stable groundwater levels. A small area in the southwest of this zone has been identified as a distinct subzone within the Northern Zone to avoid the potential for increased entitlements within this sub-zone, which might lead to regionally-declining groundwater levels. The annual average use (2003-10) for the Northern Zone is 8,550 ML.¹¹

Development and industry that would be users of groundwater supply would have to work closely with GMMWater in relation to activity location, entitlement licenses or trading of existing licenses under existing or revised levels of permissible consumptive volumes for the Northern Zone and other groundwater strategies and usage rules.

Although the implementation and rollout of the National Broadband Network continues across the region, there are still significant connectivity and capacity issues for business and communities.

Across all industry sectors the reliability, distribution quality and access to telecommunication services is seen as a critical issue that is constraining business and organisational efficiencies, productivity and development. Access to high quality telecommunications is of strategic importance to regional and rural areas in order to enable the tyranny of distance from markets, suppliers and customers to be overcome.

Nhill Aerodrome is located about 2km northwest of Nhill and consists of a single paved and a single grass runway. The Aerodrome fulfils a variety of purposes, from emergency medical, fire and rescue services, servicing agricultural requirements and tourism activities, including the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre and Air Show.

The Aerodrome through its Master Plan has identified capacity to support new business opportunities which can include industrial and businesses related not only to aviation but also other uses that support the implementation of the EDS.

¹¹ GMM (2014). West Wimmera Groundwater Management Strategy (table 5.1. Pg. 24)

Availability of appropriately zoned and serviced land for industrial, commercial and residential purposes is a major enabler of local development activity. An audit of industrial land in HSC undertaken as part of background research for the WSM Growth Plan shows the following total land supply:

- ▶ Total hectares: 33
- ▶ Occupied hectares: 21
- ▶ Vacant hectares: 12
- ▶ Vacancy rate/total area: 37%
- ▶ Occupancy rate/total area: 63%

What will need to be understood more clearly is where this land is located within settlements, appropriateness for use and what would constrain uptake by business and industry. Having land zoned “industrial” may not necessarily mean that it is usable or development ready for economic activity. This and planning for industrial and other economic land use is primarily addressed in the small business and community prosperity strategy.

Consultation across most communities, but particularly for the settlements of Nhill and Dimboola, highlighted the issues of housing availability, housing choice and the need to encourage investment in housing stock for permanent and rental living. This is felt to be having negative effects on the capacity and ability of the region and community to attract and retain the much needed skilled and professional workforce.

One of the constraints for this housing-based investment is the low rate of return on capital over the medium or even longer term. For these housing related issues to be overcome and for housing to become more of an enabler of economic activity, rather than a constraint to it innovative interventions or investment strategies will need to be formulated.

Existing models are not producing the necessary housing and investment outcomes needed. A fresh approach should be considered, with HSC taking a leadership role.

Strategic economic and population growth will be constrained unless appropriate planning for the future infrastructure and service needs of the community is fully understood. The most effective and efficient approach to supporting economic and related social benefit is to maximise the assets already available, whilst planning for the assets that will be by future businesses and residents.

8.4 Action plan

6. Economic infrastructure and assets							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
6.1 Create a highly responsive and development ready environment that provides an investment competitive advantage for HSC.	<p>Work with regional stakeholders on the development of investment attraction plans within the agricultural and value-add industries that integrate with or inform local planning policy. This should include intensive livestock production, food and beverage processing and support businesses.</p> <p>Identify investment and development areas that maximise existing assets such as the Pipeline, groundwater reserves, transport infrastructure and supporting industry assets. This would provide a level of surety and confidence in potential investors and clearly establish Hindmarsh as investment ready.</p> <p>Possible locations for further investigation would include the northern parts of the Shire given the location of the assets described and the benefits that could accrue to the communities of Jeparit and Rainbow.</p>	H S-M	HSC WDA Government agencies Business and community	HSC Government agencies	1: Strengthen the farming sector's capacity to prosper in a changing climate 3: Facilitate industry clusters and building on regional strengths Regional settlement and land use planning	10.2 Rural land use 10.3 Agriculture 10.4 Industry 10.6 Earth resources 11.2 Environment and heritage assets	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

6. Economic infrastructure and assets							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Strategic Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
6.1 Continue with strong regional advocacy activities for investment in infrastructure that supports sustainable economic and social outcomes	In partnership with regional stakeholders, continue to advocate for road, rail and utilities investment and infrastructure that support local and regional economic development and the productivity gains desired by the region. This should include advocacy for priority projects contained in the Regional Investment Plan and other key freight and transport projects. Specific local projects should be progressed through the development of business cases and cost:benefit analysis.	Ongoing	HSC WDA Wimmera Councils Government agencies	WDA HSC	6: Transport infrastructure supports the needs of the region's industries and communities	10.4 Industry 13.2 Water, energy and utilities 13.3 Transport networks	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	In partnership with neighbouring councils, prepare a regionally-focussed local roads "hierarchy" based on classifying the importance of each local road to the local and regional economy and using this to guide the allocation of scarce local government funding for local roads. As part of the above process and in partnership with landholders and communities of interest, identify local roads that can be closed so that adjacent farmland can be better utilised for agricultural production and efficiencies.	H M	HSC Wimmera Councils Land owners and communities	HSC Landowners and communities	6: Transport infrastructure supports the needs of the region's industries and communities	10.4 Industry 13.3 Transport networks	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns Our People Our Processes 4.1 Long term financial sustainability

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

6. Economic infrastructure and assets							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Investment Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
6.2 Continue with strong regional advocacy activities for investment in infrastructure that supports sustainable economic and social outcomes	Integrate planning for the future development of Nhill Aerodrome as a regional transport and industry asset in line with the industrial, commercial and residential land use planning actions for settlements detailed in the small business and community prosperity strategy and integrate these land use development plans with the Nhill Precinct Plan.	Ongoing	HSC WDA Government agencies	HSC Government agencies	6: Transport infrastructure supports the needs of the region's industries and communities	10.4 Industry 13.3 Transport networks	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	In line with the imperative of supporting the economic and health benefits that can accrue from ICT capacity and services, continue to vigorously advocate for rapid and accelerated upgrades to regional ICT infrastructure that is vital to economic efficiencies, productivity, innovation and market access.	Ongoing	HSC WDA Business and industry Regional organisations	WDA HSC	5: Broadband and mobile phone coverage standards enable the whole region to be competitive and liveable	13 Regional Infrastructure	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.3 Modern and affordable ICT throughout the municipality

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

6. Economic infrastructure and assets							
Strategy	Proposed action (how)	Priority and timing	Stakeholders (who)	Lead agency/agencies (whom)	Regional Investment Plan	Regional Growth Plan	HSC Council Plan
6.2 Continue with strong regional advocacy activities for investment in infrastructure that supports sustainable economic and social outcomes	Through strategic partnerships with private, public and institutional bodies, investigate opportunities and mechanisms for supporting and encouraging investment in housing stock in the main population centres. For example, a Housing Improvement Program could be instigated through local/regional institutional funding support provided to existing or potential investors / property owners and the associated establishment or growth of a small business.	M M	HSC WDA Institutional investors and developers	HSC Government agencies	9: Attract and retrain workers to meet immediate workforce needs 13: Strengthen local communities	10.4 Industry 13.3 Transport networks	Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns
	Continue with advocacy for the establishment of a weather radar system in the region which will provide improved weather data to support improved planning and management in agriculture, aviation and emergency management.	Ongoing	WDA Wimmera Councils	WDA	1: Strengthen the farming sector's capacity to prosper in a changing climate		Competitive and Innovative Economy 3.1 A strong rural economy and thriving towns

Key: Priority: H (High). M (medium). L (low). Timing: S (Short 1-2 years). M (Medium 2-5 years). L (Long 5+ years).

Appendix 1: Background analysis

A range of data, statistics and literature were used to provide a profile of the past, current and future economic and social trends and the existing policy and strategy frameworks. Datasets included ABS Census, ABS Data by Region and REMPlan 2014, Economic Profile Hindmarsh Shire (REMPlan 2014), Victoria in the Future 2014 (VIF 2104), Department of Employment (Dept Emp) and a range of other sources.

This process helps to establish the economic, social and environmental profile for a region or community and highlights issues, challenges and opportunities. These profiles provided the qualitative and quantitative information upon which EDS strategies and actions were developed. The data analysis is provided in the accompanying Background, Evidence and Analysis Report.

The policy context

Communities and local government need to operate within an environment where the linking of regional strategy and policy to local action, has become an imperative for successful regional planning and investment. Significant work has been completed over the past few years on setting the strategic development and growth agenda for regional Victoria. This includes the development of regional strategies and growth plans by governments, agencies and organisations. Local development planning and actions including the EDS need to align and respond to these policy frameworks.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Strategic Plan and Regional Growth Plan are key guiding documents that have been developed from extensive assessment and collation of evidence and strategic reports relating to the region and the wider economic and social environment.

The plans acknowledge the importance of agriculture to the region and building the capacity and opportunities that reside within this sector.

This includes the diversification of the economy through development of existing industry and development of value-adding activities that build on regional strengths as well as appropriate land use planning and policy that support agriculture and associated industries, enhancing export opportunities and ensuring that regional infrastructure meets the efficiencies and productivity needs of industry.

Transport and connections are seen as key drivers of economic and social opportunity within the local, regional and state and interstate context. The importance of freight networks to support economic activity and the provision of local connecting infrastructure for settlements and communities have a particular focus given the geographical distance of the region from markets and the geographical spread of communities within the region.

The regional plans highlight the need and imperative of understanding the relationships and linkages between product source, handling and destination, and ensuring that constraints or barriers to efficient flow and distribution of goods and product are mitigated and the costs to business reduced through investment and improvement.

The linkages between agriculture and transports and logistics are well documented within regional plans and policy. They are further supported by the Victorian Government's Freight and Logistics Strategy that clearly connects regional agricultural production with export opportunities and the need to ensure regions are physically linked to dispersed export and market assets. The Victorian Freight and Logistics Strategy established the strategy to improve freight efficiency, grow productivity and better connect Victorian businesses to markets, local, national and international.

This EDS dovetails into state government strategy related to the Asia market which seeks to significantly grow agricultural production, value adding and research and development within the agricultural industry and related supply chain industries to take advantages of the growth in demand for Victorian produce in Asia.

Note is also taken of the ongoing development and implementation of the Federal Government's Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda.

The Agenda aims to boost Australia's competitiveness through developing a supportive economic and business environment, a skilled workforce, investment in strategic economic infrastructure and encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship.

A suite of complementary industry sector development plans is currently being developed with a focus on food and agribusiness, mining technologies and services, medical technologies, energy and resources and advanced manufacturing. The food and agriculture stream has particular relevance to Hindmarsh. The final agricultural industry strategy currently under development (as white paper stage) is important to the Shire.

The role of settlements and localities, including the protection and enrichment of the specific and unique community and environmental characteristics, features strongly and is seen as being an important factor in the development of highly liveable communities that support a range of business and economic activity. This clearly sets out that the development of communities and settlements needs to have a place-based approach. That is, using the existing attributes and assets of a community to create sustainable opportunities. This includes the development of tourism, services and facilities that support local responses to specific and connected challenges.

Key policies or strategies that relate to the key strategic themes and directions of the EDS are referenced within the particular strategy sections.

A list of reference materials that were accessed for the EDS is also provided in Appendix 2: Reference materials and information sources.

Key implications for the EDS

- ▶ Funding from State and Federal Governments is likely to become increasingly constricted over the life of this EDS. To ensure this strategy and projects have the best chance of success, the EDS should align to State and Federal Government policy.
- ▶ Regional strategic and growth plans represent significant policy positions. They consider and present the priority issues and responses for the region, incorporating funding, land use and regional development policy and carry significant weight for government.
- ▶ Developing economic capability within the agricultural and value-chain industries and services is becoming a pre-eminent economic focus of governments. The EDS will need to acknowledge this focus.
- ▶ The importance of agriculture to the local and regional economy presents very real opportunities for related businesses in Hindmarsh to tap this development agenda by being outward looking, proactive and fostering regional collaboration and value-chain networks.
- ▶ Improvements to regional transport and freight infrastructure are seen as central to enhancing regional competitiveness and industry productivity. For Hindmarsh this is of particular importance given the current and predominant bulk nature of products emanating from the region.
- ▶ Given its rural settlement profile, the importance of enhancing communities through strengthening their role and function will underpin a number of strategic directions for the EDS. The role of settlements using a place-based approach to economic opportunity is a key premise for the EDS.

The 7 Capitals

The consultations and research identified a number of challenges and opportunities for fostering economic prosperity in Hindmarsh. A variety of processes can be used to distil the range and scope of the information gathered to bring together the key research-based issues for the EDS.

A model called the '7 Capitals' was employed; this collates the information under seven key resources or assets that exist within regions or communities as shown in Figure 5. Assets represent the critical and strategic properties, resources and characteristics of a region.

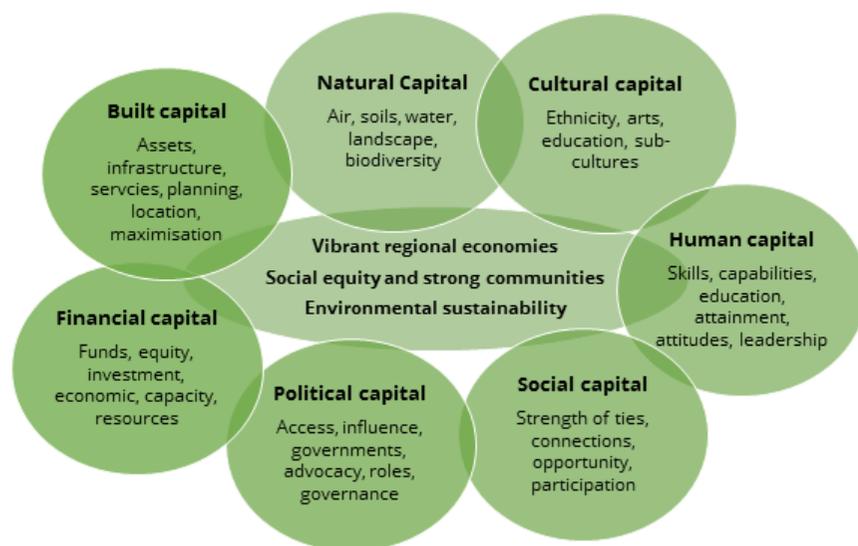


Figure 5 - the 7 Capitals model

By applying the information and knowledge accumulated against the seven themes, the model allows for the information assessment that provides the:

- ▶ **Context:** Pre-existing conditions and structure;
- ▶ **Process:** Actions, investment and intervention; and
- ▶ **Outputs:** Results of actions.

A detailed assessment of the assets and capital for Hindmarsh is provided in the accompanying Background, Evidence and Analysis Report. Based on this analysis Hindmarsh has a range of significant assets, the most important of which include:

- ▶ Expansive land, high quality soils, weather patterns and abundant natural resources conducive to numerous forms of agricultural production and other forms of economic activity;
- ▶ Water resources, including the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline and naturally recharging groundwater storages;
- ▶ Hindmarsh's location being equidistant from Adelaide and Melbourne;
- ▶ The resilience and creativeness of its communities; and
- ▶ Well-developed infrastructures, such as health and education

Factors driving demand for food and beverage production

A global context

There has been renewed interest in agricultural investment in recent years, mainly as a result of a predicted shortfall of food production capacity to meet demand from rapidly increasing global population growth. This is also linked to an anticipated change in diet as a result of increased affluence over coming years within economically growing regions and countries.

Issues relating to food security have concentrated the minds of governments, sovereign wealth, private investment and pension funds, which not necessarily for the same reasons are looking to be advantageously positioned in the advent of a constrained supply environment.

A 2012 OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook report¹² indicates the following trends.

- ▶ The growing demand for food, feed, fuel and fibre is well documented. The United Nations estimates that world population will reach 9.1 billion by 2050, an increase of 2.3 billion (or ↑34%) from today;
- ▶ The FAO estimates that agricultural production will need to rise by 60 per cent globally (and nearly ↑77% in developing countries) by 2050 to cope with a larger, more urban and wealthier population;
- ▶ Accelerating rural migration will lead to a majority of the population living in urban areas (compared with about 50% today), and which will be more dependent on purchased rather than home-produced food;
- ▶ With higher incomes, the shift to western-style diets, including more protein-rich food (such as meat and fish consumption), has major implications for the environment, as well as the composition of the food basket; and
- ▶ These estimates do not include additional demands coming from the growing biofuel sector.

While geopolitical instability or 'flash points', such as recent developments in the Ukraine, will likely continue to impact global and national markets, it is often the internal economic forces that focus many governments' attention. The potential for social dislocation and upheaval created as a result of increasing demand for basic commodities and differential generational aspirations are keenly understood by most governments, particularly those with developing economies.

The Asia market

While recognising that meeting forecast global demand for food in a resource constrained environment will present opportunities and

¹² OECD/FAO (2012), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2012, OECD Publishing.

challenges, we also need to understand where and in which markets Australia is likely to have long-term competitive advantage.

One of Australia's main advantages is its geographical position to Asia. Whether by design or default, the significance and location of relative economies should not be underestimated:

"The Tyranny of Distance' made so famous by Geoffrey Blainey in the 1960s, has become 'The Power of Proximity'".¹³

Currently, ABARES figures indicate that 64 per cent of our agricultural exports are destined for Asian markets.¹⁴ Furthermore, as OECD research highlights:

"Globally, the size of the middle class could increase from 1.8 billion people to 3.2 billion by 2020 and to 4.9 billion by 2030. Almost all of this growth (85 per cent) comes from Asia."¹⁵

These interrelationships are particularly important in establishing the type and degree of current and future demand for food and beverage production. While it is estimated that we feed around 60 million people, or over twice our population, on a global scale we only create around one per cent of total agricultural production¹⁶.

This would indicate that if Australia and the region are to leverage opportunities, they need to be competitive at the premium end of the market.

¹³ Harcourt T. (2011), *From the Tyranny of Distance to the Power of Proximity: Can Australian workers trade up in the Lucky Country?* Stan Kelly Lecture, Economic Society of Australia.

¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia 2014, Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper, Canberra,

¹⁵ Kharas H. (2010), *'The Emerging Middle Class in Emerging Countries'* OECD Development Centre Working paper No. 285, p.27.

¹⁶ Commonwealth of Australia 2014, Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper, Canberra,

The fact that there is a present and burgeoning middle class in the Asia region indicates that the level of affluence required to drive discretionary spending on premium food is in place and complements Australia's reputation as a producer of clean, green, biosecure food and beverage product that is in stark contrast to foreign production in a number of recent and well-publicised food scandals. The potential of agriculture / food production in the current global climate is illustrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6 -Australia's current, next and future waves of growth¹⁷

Figure 6 clearly shows that Australia has both competitive advantage and opportunity in the development of agribusiness in all the industries presented and is positioned in the top three for global growth opportunity. Given the strength of agriculture in the region, Hindmarsh is in a unique position to capitalise on this global opportunity.

Tradeable sectors and industry clusters

Importance of tradeable sectors

Traded sector companies are those that sell goods and services outside Hindmarsh, bringing in fresh dollars to support local business and government services – essentially these are companies that export to outside regions, states and internationally.

These companies create new wealth within Hindmarsh rather than just recirculating the wealth that is already here.

All businesses add to Hindmarsh's well-being. Local businesses that sell goods and services exclusively or primarily to local customers and who face little direct competition from outside Hindmarsh add to the local quality of life, provide entrepreneurial opportunities for citizens and are the spring-board to help launch / grow into tradeable companies / sectors.

Traded sector companies tend to cluster because they draw competitive advantage (or some basis for it) from their location – from natural advantages such as soil, climatic conditions and open space to specialised workforce and suppliers and a shared base of sophisticated knowledge about their industry.

Most jobs are not in the tradeable sector – they are local services and suppliers, however as the tradeable sector brings in outside dollars, focus should be towards the growth and development of these sectors as through growing these sectors, the other elements of the economy will grow. This relationship is shown in Figure 7.

¹⁷ Deloitte (2014), *Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the next wave*. Building the Lucky Country, Business Imperatives #3

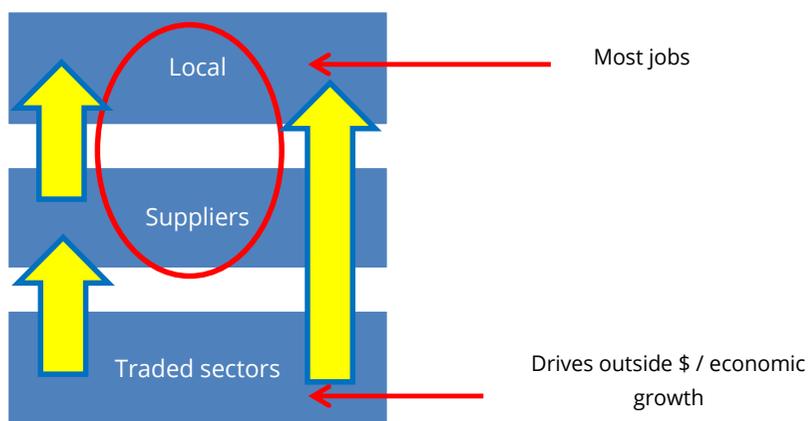


Figure 7 - Tradeable sector model

Hindmarsh's tradeable performance

In 2014, Hindmarsh exported \$230m or 45% of goods and services produced in the Shire. Manufacturing (\$94m) and agriculture (\$83m) are the primary export sectors in the economy contributing over 76% of total export value. Transport and logistics and health contribute a further 16%.

For Hindmarsh's economy to continue to grow, the supported growth of these tradeable sectors will be critical. Without this development occurring the economy will not create significant additional value for its residents.

Hindmarsh currently imports \$167m of products and services including manufacturing (\$58m), agriculture (\$40m), transport and logistics (\$12m) and construction (11m). This represents a tangible opportunity to identify the nature of type of imports and where these could be provided locally by existing or new suppliers.

Implications for Hindmarsh Economic Strategy

- ▶ The significance and dependence of manufacturing and agriculture as creators of economic value for the shire as a result of its exporting activities is highlighted through this analysis;
- ▶ The need to grow industries and sectors that are capable of providing goods and services to outside markets (tradeable sectors) is also identified; and
- ▶ Opportunities to continue import replacement across all sectors should be actively pursued.

Regional assets (alignment, leverage and link)

To achieve economic outcomes it is necessary to ensure actions and investments are consistent, focussed and coordinated over short and longer terms. Regional leadership must act in unison and have a shared understanding of the economic direction. Two concepts are critical:

1. **Alignment** – leaders and community must have a common understanding and act and work cooperatively and collaboratively to address the competitive challenges and opportunities within Hindmarsh; and
2. **Linking and leveraging** - ensures investments are coordinated, work together and maximise economic outcomes and opportunities. Linking through partnerships and leveraging assets requires making investment commitments that mutually reinforce each other. Such investments have the potential to generate higher economic returns than investments made in an uncoordinated fashion.

Therefore, in order to maximise economic outcomes for Hindmarsh:

- ▶ Focus on the assets and capital that Hindmarsh has at its disposal to deliver economic outcomes as a priority; and
- ▶ Ensure investment is made in these asset and capital classes to ensure there is alignment, leveraging and linking of and between them.

Hindmarsh’s competitive and comparative advantages

Hindmarsh has demonstrable capabilities and assets that underpin its competitiveness. The key sources of these advantages are outlined in Table 1 and should form the basis on which the economic strategy for the shire develops.

Table 1 – Source of Hindmarsh’s competitiveness

Source	Nature
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Central location of key transport and freight networks including the Western Highway linking the key markets of Melbourne and Adelaide ▶ High value agricultural area that has demonstrable scale, capacity and productivity ▶ Access to services within local communities and the regional centre of Horsham
Settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Natural and built features that provide for a range of services, lifestyle, recreation and development opportunities ▶ Committed and active community members
Business sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Evidence of innovation and entrepreneurship particularly within agriculture, food and associated value adding ▶ Small business sector that provides an opportunity to grow the economy and employment opportunities
Community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Highly regarded health, education and community services sectors ▶ Good provision of services within communities and region
Natural and built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Major natural assets that attract visitors and contribute to liveability ▶ History and heritage assets that provide for attractive townscapes
Economic and social assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Water supply and security for agriculture and value adding activities ▶ Transport and freight networks and support facilities and services

Source	Nature
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Room for planned development for industry, business and residents
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Proactive local government ▶ Strong regional advocacy by well networked organisations

Strengths Challenges, Opportunities, Risks (SCOR) Analysis

Table 2 outlines the results of a SCOR analysis (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks) which has been conducted using results from the analysis phase of the economic strategies development. This analysis has been used to identify the strengths, challenges (capacity constraints), opportunities and risks to Hindmarsh.

Table 2 – SCOR Analysis

SCOR Analysis	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Location including major transport and freight corridors ▶ Strength and scale of the agricultural sector ▶ Rural liveability / lifestyle choices ▶ Agricultural based value-add industries ▶ Water security and supply ▶ Capacity to accommodate growth ▶ Community resilience ▶ Multi-cultural settlement ▶ Natural environment and environmental assets ▶ History and cultural assets ▶ Housing affordability ▶ Council relationship with industry / engagement 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Population decline ▶ Ageing demographic ▶ Attraction and retention of skills ▶ Sustaining agricultural competitiveness ▶ Farming enterprise consolidation ▶ Adequate planned provision of industrial, commercial and residential land ▶ Investment in assets and private owned property ▶ Shortage of professional skills ▶ Provision of services and assets in rural communities ▶ Adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure ▶ Quality of housing stock ▶ Costs of ‘maintaining’ large

SCOR Analysis	
geographical area	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Build on the reputation and capabilities of the agricultural sectors ▶ Further development and support for export related opportunities ▶ Build entrepreneurial base ▶ Development of small business ▶ Settlement planning ▶ Innovative investment models ▶ Incremental development of tourism utilising natural and built features ▶ Population growth through multi-cultural migration ▶ Increasing tradeable sectors ▶ Continual and ongoing development of transport assets and connections 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased international competitiveness in key sectors such as agriculture and food value add ▶ Continued population decline ▶ Meeting the service needs of a dispersed and ageing population ▶ Constrained investment by business, governments and private sector in assets and property ▶ Infrastructure finance / funding not accessible impacting liveability ▶ Degradation of the natural environment ▶ Constrained funding environment

Scope of Economic Development within Hindmarsh

To achieve the best possible outcomes, an EDS must be focussed. The scope of economic development within a region must be defined and reflected in the strategic areas identified for action and subsequent investment. Successful economic development investments take on many forms.

One of the most common mistakes made is to define economic development too widely, making investment in assets unfocussed and unwieldy and thereby reducing outcomes for residents.

Establishing a framework that defines the nature of economic development within the shire will increase the prospects that resources are appropriately allocated and investments are made that align to established objectives.

The framework can also be used as a reporting and management tool for priority actions. The recommended strategy planning model is presented in Figure 8.

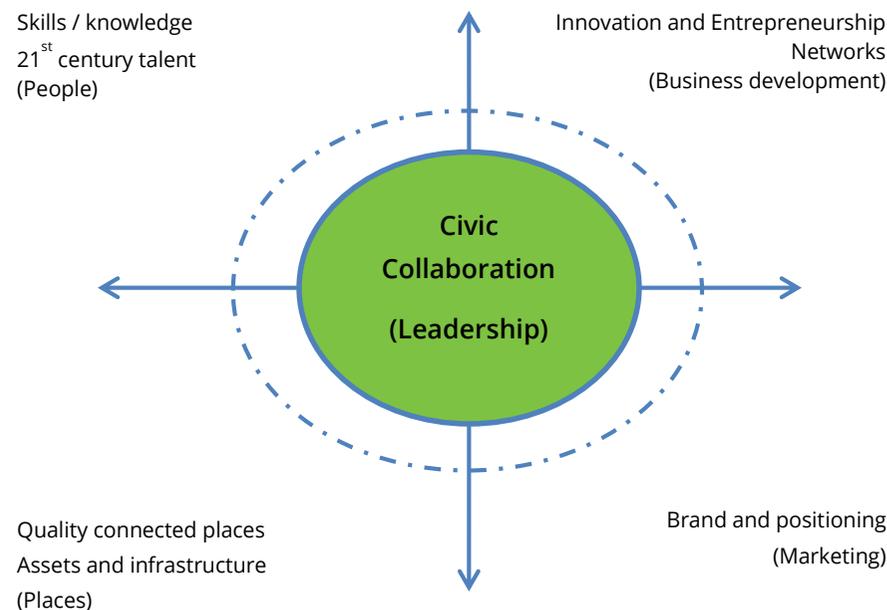


Figure 8 -Strategy planning model

The five recommended strategic focus areas for economic outcomes which should be supported by the EDS are:

1. Skills and knowledge (investments in people);
2. Entrepreneur and innovation networks (investments in business development);
3. Quality, connected places (investments in places);
4. Effective branding (investments in marketing); and
5. Civic collaboration (investments in leadership).

Establishing the scope of economic development

- ▶ Sets the environment for the adoption and implementation of the Strategy;
- ▶ States the intent of the EDS, where and how it will be used and applied;
- ▶ Provides an understanding of the function of the Strategy (what it is and isn't); and
- ▶ Aids in the management of stakeholder expectations in terms of what the strategy will and can deliver.

Actions that fall outside these areas should not be within the remit of economic development. Priority actions should be expected to impact across all 5 identified areas.

Appendix 2: Reference materials and information sources

Business, industry and services	Year	Author	Source
2014-15 Statement of Priorities: Agreement between Secretary for Health and West Wimmera Health Service	2014	Department of Health	Victorian State Government
A New Era in Healthcare: Strategic Directions 2012-2015	2012	West Wimmera Health Service	West Wimmera Health Service
Agricultural Competitiveness Issues Paper	April 2014	Wimmera Development Association	Wimmera Development Association
Central Coast Telemarketing Strategy 2014-2020	2014	Regional Development Australia Central Coast (RDACC)	NWS State Government
Creative Industries in Rural Victoria: Economic Analysis	July 2013	Essential Economics	Rural Councils Victoria
Food to Asia Action Plan: Putting Victorian Food and Beverages on Asian Tables	March 2014	Department of Environment and Primary Industries	Victorian State Government
Intensive Lamb Production: A Commercial Perspective	August 2012	RMCG	RDA Grampians and Wimmera Development Association
National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health	2012	Standing Council of Health	Commonwealth of Australia
Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the next wave.	2014	Deloitte	Deloitte
Remote Data Use in Agriculture	March 2013	ORM Pty Ltd	Wimmera Development Association
Retailing in Rural Municipalities in Victoria	May 2013	Essential Economics	Rural Councils Victoria
Rural Communities Supporting Creative Industries: Opportunities Paper	March 2014	Rural Councils Victoria	Rural Councils Victoria
Understanding Investment in Agriculture	August 2012	RMCG	RDA Grampians and Wimmera Development Association
Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016	December 2013	Tourism Victoria	Tourism Victoria
Wimmera Southern Mallee: Intensive Livestock Mapping Project	July 2014	Street Ryan	Wimmera Development Association
Economic Development	Year	Author	Source
Economic Development Activities and Capacity Audit	February 2012	Rural Councils Victoria	Rural Councils Victoria
Emerging Principles in State and Local Economic Development: A Benchmarking Tool	July 1995	Munich et al	Hubert H. Humphrey Inst of Public Affairs, Uni of Minnesota
Inquiry into Local Economic Development Initiatives in Victoria	July 2013	Economic Development and Infrastructure	Victorian State Government

Business, industry and services	Year	Author	Source
		Committee (EDIC)	
Inquiry into the Opportunities for Increasing Exports of Goods and Services from Regional Victoria		Wimmera Development Association	Wimmera Development Association
Regional Economic Profile: Wimmera Southern Mallee	July 2013	Regional Development Victoria	Victorian State Government
Securing Victoria's Future Prosperity: A Reform Agenda. Inquiry into a State-based Reform Agenda	November 2011	Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission	Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission
Housing			
Housing Investment Opportunities in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region: Information Memorandum	August 2013	Ernst and Young Pty Ltd	Wimmera Development Association
Local and Regional Strategy and Policy			
Accelerating Regional City Growth: Evidence and Policy Approaches (Working Paper 20)	August 2013	Regional Development Victoria	Regional Development Victoria
Culture and Heritage Tourism: Understanding the Issues and Success Factors	2008	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
Destination Plan and Investment Roadmap	May 2014	AEC Group	Grampians Tourism
Hindmarsh Recreation Strategy	July 2005	Garry Hen shall & Associates Pty Ltd	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Council Heatwave Plan	2011-2015	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Council Municipal Emergency Management Plan	2013	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Council Plan 2013-2017	Rev: June 2014	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Council Road Management Plan	2009 (Issue 7)	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Environmental Strategy	2010-2013	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan	2012-2015	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Planning Scheme		Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Karen Community Plan: Improving Support and Opportunities for Karen People in Hindmarsh	2014	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Lake Albacutya Ramseur Site: Strategic Management Plan	2003	Department of Sustainability and Environment	Department of Sustainability and Environment
Positive Ageing and Inclusion in Hindmarsh Shire 2013-2018	2013	Dorothy McLaren Consulting	Hindmarsh Shire Council
RCV Tomorrow: Strategic Plan 2014-16	June 2014	Rural Councils Victoria	Rural Councils Victoria
Regional Growth Plan: Wimmera Southern Mallee	2014	Department of Planning and Community	Wimmera Southern Mallee

Business, industry and services	Year	Author	Source
		Development	Regional Councils
Regional Snapshot: Regional Profiles	August 2014	Sustainability Victoria	Victorian State Government
Towards Sustainability in the Wimmera Southern Mallee: Sustainability White Paper	2011-14	Wimmera Mallee Sustainability Alliance	Wimmera Mallee Sustainability Alliance
Wimmera Mallee Tourism Strategic Plan 2013-2015	2013	Wimmera Mallee Tourism	Wimmera Mallee Tourism
Wimmera Mallee Tourism Marketing Plan	2013-2015	Wimmera Mallee Tourism	Wimmera Mallee Tourism
Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan Background Report	March 2014	Victorian State Government	Victorian State Government
Population and communities			
2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055	March 2015	Commonwealth of Australia	Commonwealth of Australia
Assisting Communities Develop Heritage Tourism Opportunities	2007	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre	Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
Dimboola Community Plan 2013-2015	September 2012	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Financial Costs of Settlement Patterns in Rural Victoria	June 2013	Rural Councils Victoria	Rural Councils Victoria
Nhill Community Plan 2013-2015	September 2012	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Nhill Urban Design Framework	February 2002	Michael Smith Landscape Architect and Urban Design	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Population Dynamics in Regional Australia	January 2015	Regional Australia Institute	Regional Australia Institute
Rural Migration Trends and Drivers	December 2012	Rural Councils Victoria	Rural Councils Victoria
Transport and infrastructure			
Nhill Aerodrome Master Plan	2012	Kevin Joy Architects	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Regional Freight Transport Issues	May 2012	Driscoll Engineering Services Pty Ltd	The Wimmera Regional Transport Group
Response to the Final Report of the Inquiry by the Rural and Regional Committee of Parliament into Positioning the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Region to Capitalise on New Economic Development Opportunities	March 2011	Victorian State Government	Victorian State Government
Victoria the Freight State: The Victorian Freight and Logistics Plan	August 2013	Victorian State Government	Victorian State Government
West Wimmera Groundwater Management Strategy	June 2011	GWMWater	GWMWater
Wimmera Southern Mallee ICT Study	2011	Centre for eCommerce and Communications and Lateral Plains	Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Councils

Business, industry and services	Year	Author	Source
Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Strategy	August 2014	GHD	Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Councils
Workforce and skills			
National Rural and Remote Health Workforce Innovation and Reform Strategy	May 2013	Health Workforce Australia	Commonwealth of Australia
Rural Recruitment and Retention Pilot Project 5.3	April 2013	Rural Councils Victoria	Rural Councils Victoria
Workforce Development in the Grampians Region	April 2012	Centre for Regional Innovation & Competitiveness University of Ballarat	Regional Development Australia (RDA) Grampians Committee

Online resources

Australian Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure: <http://www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/>

Hindmarsh Shire Council: <http://www.hindmarsh.vic.gov.au/>

Parks Victoria: <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/>

Regional Development Australia Grampians: <http://www.economicprofile.com.au/grampiansregion>

Rural Councils Victoria: <http://www.ruralcouncilsvictoria.org.au/>

Tourism Victoria: <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/>

West Wimmera Health Service: <http://www.wwhs.net.au/>

Wimmera Development Association: <http://www.wda.org.au/>

Wimmera Mallee Tourism: <http://www.wimmeramalleetourism.com.au/>



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