

AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 16 October 2018

To be held Swan Hill Town Hall,
meeting room 1 (Chambers)
McCallum Street, Swan Hill
Commencing at 4:00 PM

COUNCIL:

Cr LT McPhee – Mayor

Cr JN Katis

Cr GW Norton

Cr C Jeffery

Cr L Johnson

Cr B Moar

Cr A Young

SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS	3
SECTION B – REPORTS.....	4
B.18.76 CREATIVE STRATEGY 2018 - 2022	4
B.18.77 SWAN HILL INCORPORATED ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2018/19.....	34
B.18.78 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES.....	55
B.18.79 GILLESPIE STREET SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME.....	67
B.18.80 CENTRAL MURRAY REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2018.....	70
B.18.81 COUNCIL BORROWINGS	128
B.18.82 AUDIT COMMITTEE	131
B.18.83 REAPPOINTMENT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE.....	134
B.18.84 PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018	136
B.18.85 MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT.....	139
SECTION C – DECISIONS WHICH NEED ACTION/RATIFICATION	146
C.18.17 SIGN & SEAL REPORT	146
C.18.18 COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES - RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA ITEMS	149
SECTION D – NOTICES OF MOTION.....	153
SECTION E – URGENT ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN AGENDA.....	153
SECTION F – TO CONSIDER & ORDER ON COUNCILLOR REPORTS	153
SECTION G – IN CAMERA ITEMS	154
B.18.86 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT	154
B.18.87 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT	154

SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- **Open**

- **Acknowledgement to Country**

- **Prayer**

- **Apologies**

- **Confirmation of Minutes**
 - 1) Ordinary Meeting held on 18 September 2018
 - 2) Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 25 September 2018

- **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

- **Receptions and Reading of Petitions, Memorials, Joint Letters and Deputations**

- **Public Question Time**

SECTION B – REPORTS

B.18.76 CREATIVE STRATEGY 2018 - 2022

Responsible Officer: Director Community & Cultural Services
File Number: S04-24-03
Attachments: 1 Creative Strategy

Declarations of Interest:

Bruce Myers - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The draft Creative Strategy 2018 - 2022 is presented to Councillors following a period of consultation with stakeholders for endorsement.

Discussion

Council determined through the Council Plan to develop a „cultural plan“ to articulate the community’s aspirations towards arts and culture, and to assist and provide direction for Council’s Cultural Services programs.

In late 2017, funding was allocated for the engagement of external consultants to engage with the community, and work with officers to identify the aspirations and outcomes and translate them into actions in the short, medium and long term.

The five key goals informing the Strategy are:

1. Nurturing a dynamic creative region
2. Fostering a connected creative community
3. Bolstering libraries as hubs in the community
4. Supporting community participatory arts
5. Establishing the Council as a custodian, producer and connector in arts practice and programming.

Strong themes from the community engagement included opportunities for capturing and building on the creative activities already happening, helping to remove the Swan Hill-centric perception in the community, celebrating cultural diversity including indigenous community, development of Fairfax Youth Initiative, public art, and options for under-utilised facilities such as Robinvale Community Arts Centre.

Consultation

Consultants (Bryce Ives and Merryn Tinkler) worked closely with arts practitioners, community groups, Council departments and representative groups during mid-2018, with more than 130 individual contacts.

The draft Strategy was reviewed by Council's Cultural Services managers and Executive Leadership Team, in preparation for Councillor feedback and a further engagement with stakeholders.

Feedback was sought externally and internally on the document between 19 August and 13 September, which was then discussed with the Cultural Services managers and consultants.

Twelve written submissions were received, along with five additional annotated copies of the draft Strategy, and verbal feedback. Officers were encouraged by the feedback, and the comments received and questions asked - all of which re-affirmed the document's direction, while clarifying some wording.

The key changes to the document were the moving of some items to other more relevant sections, and more defining of the difference between venues and programming of activities. Another key point highlighted in the feedback was the importance of avoiding a Swan Hill-centric approach to cultural activities, and recognition of all areas outside the main city. The Cultural Services team is conscious of the fact that all major services are „based“ in Swan Hill, but deliver outwards, and should improve delivery to Robinvale and all other townships in the municipality.

It was also noted that the document did not preclude each internal program developing its own annual work plan, in addition to the aim of working together with all programs of Council. This second point was highlighted in internal feedback, and there is an opportunity to provide better outcomes with events, major projects and community support by Council teams improving the way they work together.

The overall direction of the Creative Strategy 2018-2022 was supported, and some changes were made.

Financial Implications

All initiatives not already included in operational and Major Project budgets will be referred for consideration in future budgets.

Social Implications

VicHealth prioritises the social dimension of arts participation through a focus on health and wellbeing impacts.

Local communities have highlighted the importance of cultural activities towards the strengthening of community resilience and opportunities for social interaction.

Economic Implications

The Creative Victoria Act acknowledges the economic value of creative industries, making up 8% of the economy, and generating 200,000 jobs.

The Commonwealth Government recognises the importance of innovation for all sectors of the economy.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable to this report.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable to this report.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Community enrichment - Develop a community with a sense of pride and responsibility/ownership that strives to achieve its aspirations.

Options

1. Council may endorse the Creative Strategy 2018 – 2022.
2. Council may suggest further changes to the Creative Strategy 2018 – 2022.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Adopt the Creative Strategy 2018 – 2022 as presented.**
2. **Request a report providing a detailed implementation plan by February 2019.**



Creative Strategy

2018-2022



Acknowledgement

Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.

Through consultation, we have heard, and we understand the need to incorporate and acknowledge aboriginal people - that by putting the voice of aboriginal artists and community members front and centre, as a community we have the potential to do something extraordinary together.



Contents

Background4

Our Creative Vision7

Aspiration 1
Nurturing a dynamic creative region8

Aspiration 2
A connected creative community13

Aspiration 3
Libraries as hubs in the community 16

Aspiration 4
Community participatory arts is key18

Aspiration 5
Council is a custodian, producer and connector of cultural development and programming25



Background

Extensive community engagement has informed the development of this creative strategy.

We asked community members to define what creativity means in this region and to envision a prosperous, creative community through a series of community consultations, public events, online feedback sessions, and meetings.

Our deliberations have included conversations with children, with young people, with members of the Aboriginal community, the multicultural community, senior citizens and retirees, councillors and council staff, and business owners.

Workshops happened at the Robinvale P-12, Robinvale Community Arts Centre, the Library, the Swan Hill Town Hall Performing Arts and Conference Centre (PACC), the Lake Boga Catalina Museum, Nyah Community Hall, and the Manangatang Pub.

The invigorating and collaborative process involved face-to-face consultation and community discussion with over 140 community members.

The consultation was further enhanced and informed through workshop discussions with the cultural services and economic development teams at Swan Hill Rural City Council, Youth Inc., the Robinvale Resource Centre, and the Pioneer Settlement.

This plan takes into account and is in alignment with other council strategies and plans including the Aboriginal Community Partnership Strategy, individual Community Plans, Community Access and Inclusion Plan, Swan Hill Region Economic Development Strategy, Youth Strategic Plan, and the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

What's already happening

Our creative vision - *The Swan Hill region is culturally strong and artistically ambitious* - has a strong foundation.

Council is the custodian of the community's exceptional cultural facilities including the Swan Hill Town Hall (PACC), the Regional Library and the Regional Art Gallery.

Council's Cultural Services Team is comprised of the management and staff of the Library, Regional Art Gallery, and Performing Arts program.

Our library and gallery manage extensive and well-maintained collections to which successive generations of our community have contributed.

We support long-running programs such as the Fairfax Youth Initiative, partnerships with local service agencies, educational and early childhood services, library outreach activities, and school holiday programs.

Our Town Hall PACC houses world-class equipment and is capable of hosting international artists.

We provide additional creative programming to offer community members extensive opportunities for self-expression.

Our cultural spaces host large-scale concerts, visiting artists, workshops, and other community events. The library doubles as a youth music venue and the gallery as an outdoor events venue.

The ACRE (Australia's Creative Rural Economy) project works with schools and artists in small agricultural towns.

Our wide-ranging service delivery is an example of our all-embracing community engagement.

Our region is home to creative practitioners - artists, writers, photographers, musicians, dancers, designers and actors - who love living here. We have a strong and growing community arts sector along with an excellent base of volunteer-driven community groups.

Our towns have halls and other surprising facilities, ready to be ignited with new creativity.

The Cultural Services Team contributes to the whole community, from the tangible economic impact of events and tourism drivers to the social impact of community connectedness and cohesiveness.

Council also provides a range of cultural experiences through the Pioneer Settlement, youth program, event support, tourism and community development.

"Over the past 30 years the changes in Swan Hill as a cultural and creative centre have been excellent. It's been a breathtaking transformation."

- Community member





The economic and social value of a Creative Strategy

Fostering a vibrant creative practice within a region will do more than just support artists in their practice.

Creativity must be central when considering how a region will sustain and grow local economies.

The impact of cultural and creative investment is about much more than programming and engagement.

The impact can be measured in terms of innovation, ingenuity, and entrepreneurialism.

Community-based arts practice can set a regional agenda for development and provide all of the benefits traditionally associated with fine arts, such as the economic benefits of tourism, alongside the social and cultural benefits.

We note:

- The Creative Victoria Act acknowledges the economic value of the creative industries, which currently make up eight per cent of the economy, contributing \$23 billion a year to gross state product (GSP) and generating around 220,000 jobs (Creative Victoria, 2017).

- The Commonwealth Government has come to recognise the importance of innovation for ‘all sectors of the economy, from ICT to healthcare, education to agriculture and defence to transport’ (Australian Government, 2018).
- VicHealth prioritises the social dimension of arts participation through a focus on health and wellbeing impacts.

This plan is the first step in Swan Hill Rural City Council embracing the cultural and creative industries as a legitimate economic driver for the Swan Hill region.

“The Victorian arts and culture sector generates widespread economic benefits as well as other benefits, such as contributing to liveability, helping to foster knowledge and skills transfers, contributing to education outcomes, tourism, destination branding, image, and promoting innovation and creativity.”





What we have heard through community consultation

- This plan must reach out to our smaller towns and become less Swan Hill-centric.
- Cultural diversity, the natural environment, and our people are strengths.
- Future creative projects can be visionary to activate the Murray River and our region.
- Our community needs accessible venues to create and connect.
- There is a lot happening already that we can build on. It needs to be more visible.
- Young people deserve opportunities and Fairfax Youth Initiative must be grown into the future.
- Council continues to facilitate the Town Hall PACC as a civic, community and cultural centre.

This is a plan for everyone

Over the next four years, we will become strong and steadfast in our commitment to creativity.

This is a plan for everyone in our community. Council's goals will support a whole-community approach.

This plan says to the community that Council is inspired by the work that is already taking place and hopes to see even more creativity in the future.

This is a plan for the Council, the Cultural Services team, and for people who already identify as being creative, but it's also a plan and an agenda for the community more broadly.

This plan is about articulating the Council and community's aspirations for the region to reach its potential.



Our Creative Vision

The Swan Hill region is culturally strong and artistically ambitious.

We have five key aspirations for realising this creative vision:

1. Nurturing a dynamic creative region.
2. Fostering a connected creative community.
3. Bolstering libraries as hubs in the community.
4. Supporting community participatory arts.
5. Establishing the Council as a custodian, producer and connector in arts practice and programming.

For our vision to succeed, the Cultural Services Team of Swan Hill Rural City Council will:

- Celebrate the story of our region.
- Connect with our community.
- Enable the potential of every town and community.
- Develop the new and emerging cultural leaders in our region.
- Promote a vision for the future - to further develop and build upon each success.
- Foster and grow our creative community.



Aspiration 1

Nurturing a dynamic creative region

Ambition 1.1

A dynamic multi-purpose Community Arts Hub in the region that provides accessible spaces for workshops, events and exhibitions.

Long term outcome: A vibrant and centralised community arts hub where everyone comes together to explore arts and creativity.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Council-owned community spaces with affordable or subsidised fees and charges. Council will explore other Council-owned assets with 'extra space' for community and creative use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will investigate a purpose-built (or purposefully re-imagined) space for the centre of creativity in the region. Permanent places for local artists and crafters to display and sell their arts and crafts. Council will ensure each venue has a publicly-articulated and clear agenda to support community arts practice.
<p>Long term action 5+ years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will investigate a purpose-built (or purposefully re-imagined) space for the centre of creativity in Swan Hill. Located in a central position, accessible to the town and to the riverfront, community workshop spaces, community access exhibition spaces, meeting rooms, makers' spaces, community kitchen facilities, and outdoor spaces, while also providing linkages to the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery. Any developments will ensure child and family friendly aspects in design.

"We need a multipurpose space for the community. Not as religious as the Grain Shed, not as formal as the Town Hall. Every weekend there is something different, every weeknight there is something exciting."

"There is so much art out there where the art gets done at home. We need an arts and cultural centre. A place where we can share knowledge and experience."



Ambition 1.2

A reinvigorated Robinvale Community Arts Centre, connected to and managed by the community of Robinvale.

Long term outcome: A self-actualised arts and creative community in Robinvale which has an impact across the region with tangible health and economic benefits for the community.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to existing models for community-managed assets. • Become proactive in enabling the creation of a community-led Incorporated Association to manage the centre. • Program more performing arts into the Robinvale Community Arts Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council budget to include maintenance and building management support. • Council to maintain the physical building and return all spaces back to an operational standard suitable for regular programming.
<p>Long term action 5+ years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staged process to hand the management of Robinvale Community Arts Centre to a community group- Incorporated Association



“A cultural precinct which includes all cultures, our arts, our youth, our seniors, our performers, visual artists, families, language, and literature, and the people living here in Robinvale and the tourists.”

“We want to be known around Victoria and Australia as the best multicultural community in Australia.”

“It would be managed by a local management group, which represents local groups. Not so much separated into the groups. Places where children can come and learn.”



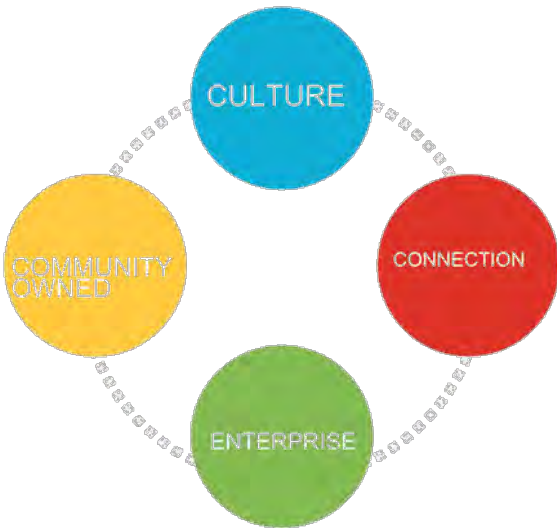
Ambition 1.3

A gathering place to celebrate culture and support the development of aboriginal self-determined arts.

This ambition acknowledges Council’s work in the investigation of a Murray River Interpretive Centre. This gathering place (or similar) aims to be complementary to any future interpretive centre. An interpretive centre is where culture and heritage is discussed, displayed and celebrated for tourism. A gathering place is a place where culture is reclaimed, re-learned, and re-established by members of the community.

In alignment with the Aboriginal Community Partnership Strategy, this ambition supports the building of leadership and self-determination within the Indigenous communities.

Long term outcome: Local aboriginal people have a space and a place where they can come together to share and celebrate. An Indigenous owned and operated business enterprise where local arts and other products are sold, and culture is explored and passed on.



“We need to get culture back into our community. A place where we can come together, to teach our kids. A culturally safe space.”

“Councils are well-placed to work with the local Aboriginal community to develop a vibrant Aboriginal arts and culture sector within an inclusive strategy. The strategy could drive positive change throughout the region such as employment and economic development.”





Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Council in embracing the importance of aboriginal culture and history in this region and acknowledge the significance of First Nations places. • Support the community to explore funding options for an Indigenous gathering place. • Provide Indigenous time allocation within established community arts spaces. • Create a quota for inclusion of indigenous creative works into programming by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the process to establish an Indigenous Corporation or other registered association (as per Aboriginal Partnership Strategy). • Assist with the identification of a place and building that could house the gathering place - in alignment with the investigation of an interpretive centre. • Support the Robinvale community to identify a space for the teaching of languages.



Ambition 1.4

A strong supported network of creativity in small towns utilising built and natural environments.

This ambition aims to support small towns and individuals in rural areas in an understanding that creativity can happen anywhere.

Long term outcome: Our small towns and outlying residents are engaged in creative practise in their towns and localities.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support small towns and creative leaders to access community funding available for projects. • Cultural Services Team engaged with Community Planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council-led creative projects are delivered in outlying areas.

“Our natural environment is obviously something which can be utilised. Sculpture along the river in our many river towns could explore this environment. In our Mallee towns the history of agriculture utilising recycled sculpture. Our irrigation areas provide many products that could also be used as a theme for sculptural works.”



Aspiration 2 A connected creative community

Given the geographical challenges of the region, with the two main towns being one-and-a-half hours drive from each other, and the smaller towns being dispersed, a recognisable brand that connects all arts and creativity across the region will assist to lessen the tyranny of distance.

The region needs leadership from Council to provide those linkages and to support the active development of arts and creativity.

Ambition 2.1

A united brand for creativity in the region, used on all promotion and on each facility.

Long term outcome: A community that is connected through arts and creativity. All of the community are aware of all events and opportunities across the region.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new and identifiable brand for all arts and creative activities in the region. • Re-brand the Cultural Services Team to sit underneath this new encompassing brand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All community facilities and community events are branded to link venues, activities and events. • Produce an annual 'State of Creativity' report card (develop a set of evaluation measures based on the Creative Strategy to measure impact and engagement. Focus on both quantitative and qualitative feedback). • Identify and implement one ticketing system shared and operated across various venues.
<p>Long term action 5+ years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the community perception of Council being Swan Hill-centric.





Ambition 2.2

Maintain the relationship with Regional Arts Victoria and build on the capacity for Council staff to connect our artists across our region and be part of a statewide network.

Long term outcome: A community that is connected through arts and creativity.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and develop the partnership with Regional Arts Victoria for the provision of a Creative Arts Facilitator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Services to continue to support and encourage the development of arts and creativity within the region.

“We need a location and a person that is the hub for creativity in the region. Someone who has details about facilities, who the people are that can perform or create.”



Ambition 2.3

A joint communication strategy, ensuring all events and opportunities are jointly promoted, including all related events across the region.

Long term outcomes:

- All of the community are aware of all events and opportunities across the region.
- All tourists arriving in the region have ways of connecting with all events and activities.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an accessible process where all events and opportunities across the region are collated and shared in one repository, via existing databases and weekly circulars. • Explore the potential of promotion of events and opportunities in other areas, such as the digital screen at sporting events, in sports programs and tourism publications. • Arts and creativity events and opportunities are included in all Council community promotions such as wider community newsletters, and town or district-specific promotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital screens in the main facilities and the main shopping areas (including Robinvale) promoting all events and opportunities across the region. • Town Hall PACC, Performing Arts, Art Gallery and Library present a shared annual season launch event. • Town Hall PACC, Performing Arts, Art Gallery and Library present a shared calendar.



Aspiration 3

Libraries as hubs in the community

Ambition 3.1

Urgent need to finalise and establish the Robinvale Library.

Long term outcome: A shared community asset that can provide a safe meeting space and resource for all community members.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct community consultation for joint use library in Robinvale. • Complete planning for the new Robinvale Library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of a library in Robinvale.

Ambition 3.2

The Swan Hill Library will be ambitious in its future and be located in a visionary, energetic, central hub.

Long term outcome: Swan Hill has a central hub that provides the town with a creative, active and vibrant focus.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for relocation or remodelling of the Swan Hill library to a location that is accessible for the whole community, and be incorporated into a new community hub. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The confirmation of Library relocation or remodelling including incorporation into a broader community hub. • Investigate designs for the future Library.
Long term action 5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relocation or remodelling of the Library into a Community Hub.

“My passion is reading, and exposing young people as well as people from every background and age to books. I have deep regret that a community our size does not have a library that is permanent. I appreciate the book vehicle coming, but it’s transient. The library is the hub of Swan Hill, with great activities. We need something similar for access to activities.”





Ambition 3.3

Ensure everyone in the Swan Hill region can access library services.

Long term outcome: All small towns feel connected to the library services and therefore to the broader community.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives to the current Mobile Library to be explored with the understanding of the value that is placed on the service by the community. • Ongoing development of library resources, programs and activities to meet the changing needs of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new model for the delivery of library services to all outlying areas is implemented.



Aspiration 4 Community participatory arts is key

Ambition 4.1

Fairfax Youth Initiative is renowned as the leading youth community arts event in regional Australia.

Fairfax Youth Initiative is a unique and valued experience for young people in the region. For some, it is their only opportunity to experience performing arts and can be life changing. Fairfax Youth Initiative provides the opportunity to model great community arts development practise to the world.

Long term outcome: All young people in the region have opportunities to participate in arts and creativity.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to facilitate a business plan for the continuing future of Fairfax Youth Initiative, which includes the broader development of arts genres and extension of the program. • External funding options be explored through consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Fairfax Youth Initiative model is expanded and funded in alignment with the new business plan.

“Fairfax is a community bonding experience - that unites young people from across the region. Friendships are made. When we get together, we unite. Fairfax is awesome and we’re so lucky to have it.”

“We have platforms here that could be used as the base. The river, the earth, the parks, the Art Gallery, the town halls both in Swan Hill and around our community. How about murals on our community halls, that depict their surrounds i.e.: wheat at Natya, the river and fishing at Speewa, or sculptures at our community halls that contribute to an art drive/tour in our region”





Ambition 4.2

Explore, solidify and strengthen community arts engagement in the region.

Long term outcome: A community that has opportunities for creative expression and engagement through arts and culture.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore other opportunities for the delivery of exemplary community arts engagement across the region. • Ensure the ongoing use of the soundshell on the Swan Hill riverfront for events. • Ensure continued linkages with other arts and cultural groups in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a variety of community arts activities across the region annually. • Create arts committees made up of community members to assist in decision making regarding creative programming by Council.



Ambition 4.3

Flagship venues and Council programs engage every town and every community in our region.

Long term outcome: Socially cultural events happen in small communities. Exhibitions and performances in small halls. There are regular visits to schools and community groups by all types of artists.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPIs established for all Cultural Services Team members to ensure stronger engagement and more focus outside of Swan Hill. • A percentage of community grants targeted to community arts projects in outlying towns and communities. • Assist with reviews of hall and community facility hire rates to encourage community members and community arts activation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing Arts programs a number of shows each year in collaboration with Robinvale community. • Art Gallery to explore opportunities for exhibitions and events in other towns. • Increase opportunities for outlying area creative arts workshops.

“Small towns have hidden human and physical assets that could be tapped into to create unique experiences for visitors and locals. By embracing creativity, we may potentially uncover hidden talents and encourage inclusiveness.”





Ambition 4.4

A culturally diverse community as an asset to strengthen and celebrate.

Harmony Day is loved and looked forward to by the community. There is opportunity to support and assist in the development of festivals and events that celebrate the cultural diversity of the region.

Long term outcome: All communities in the region feel celebrated, safe and supported to express their unique culture. The whole community comes together regularly to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity that connects them.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as an incubator for local leaders and groups to identify and develop events and projects. • Publicise resources available to community for their events and projects. • Support the development of Indigenous cultural events and programs. • Work in partnership with Council's Events Support Officer to maximise benefits. • Define Harmony Day as a flagship Council event, with co-ordinated events in both Robinvale and Swan Hill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a schedule of events across the region that celebrate diverse cultures.

"We have cultural diversity in spades. It needs to be celebrated more than once a year."



Ambition 4.5

Research and production of contemporary art and cultural development work in rural communities.

Long term outcome:

- Rural communities are exposed to and engaged in contemporary art.
- This region is recognised nationally and internationally for the research and production of contemporary art in rural settings.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to be proactive in the development a strategic plan that supports the continuation and development of the Australia’s Creative Rural Economy (ACRE) project • Council to assist in the establishment of an artist residency program in rural communities. • Council to assist in securing ongoing funding to support ACRE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to actively explore partnerships with agricultural business, universities and national/ international arts organisations.

“There is an element of the arts, culture and creativity that resonates with everyone - including agricultural and industrial beauty. With our large agricultural industry, art can be born.”



Ambition 4.6

Extend the arts and education experience for youth and schools.

Long term outcome: Young people are recognised as the future and are supported in all arts and creative endeavours.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively link programming for exhibitions, workshops, performances and opportunities for participation to engage youth and teachers, aligning with curriculum delivery. Revisit the community access use of Harrison Hall. Support Youth Inc. and other agencies that work with youth in the presentation of youth-led arts activities across the region. Ensure all Council programming is engaging with youth and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with schools to ensure they are supported in the delivery of arts and creativity in the curriculum. Identify the young creative leaders and develop a program to support youth arts (e.g. internships).

“It provides an opportunity to be open to the possibility of big visions. i.e.: who would have thought painting silos was going to create international hype? Who'd have thought painted cows were going to be iconic to a region? I think it will give people who live regionally the platform to express ideas, desires and pipe dreams that have long been oppressed. In every community there is someone with an amazing idea. They just need the launching pad to get it off the ground. The Creative Strategy could help to foster those opportunities.”





Ambition 4.7

Programming for whole of life participation in the arts across all cultures, abilities and ages.

Long term outcome: Arts literacy and appreciation is established from early years.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Services maintain programming for ages and abilities, from early years to seniors. • Consider the diversity of communities in all Council programming. • Develop an Audience Development Strategy . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement methods to ensure community input into programming and to identify future community trends. • Programming takes into account an Audience Development Strategy that allows for all cultures, all abilities and all ages to engage.



Aspiration 5 Council is a custodian, producer and connector of cultural development and programming

Council is custodian of facilities and programs.

As custodian of the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery collection, Council must maintain this important cultural asset and look to the future.

As custodian of the Swan Hill Town Hall PACC, Council has a legacy that must be built upon in the region. The Town Hall PACC is a cherished community cultural space.

As custodian of the Swan Hill Regional Library collection, Council must ensure ongoing access and resourcing.

A producer of programs, the performing arts centre and the art gallery must manage to think locally and genuinely engage the local community well, and to also bring work to the region that is visionary, challenging and will have significant audience impact. There was strong belief that the region should be able to see and experience excellent art in this region without needing to travel somewhere else.

In the future, the Cultural Services Team has an important role to play as a **connector** between artists, arts organisations, communities and new ideas. It is not solely responsible for delivering this vision and plan, but it can be a powerful partner and will actively seek external funding and partnership opportunities to support cultural development and projects.





Ambition 5.1

Our performing arts program is sustainable in its delivery, ambitious in its programming and our entire region.

Long term outcome: Performing arts programming is integral to the connectivity of the community and is celebrated across the region.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing Arts program to invest and develop local talent; and connect important and critical works and artists to our region. • Establish a Performing Arts reference group to support staff in long-term decision-making and community buy in. This group to include local schools. • Establish ticketing schemes that broaden community access to programmed events. • Partner with organisations and agencies to continue to deliver programs of excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Performing Arts program increases audiences, community engagement and development. • Performing arts programming is regularly extended to other towns.



Ambition 5.2

Our art gallery becomes a place where people want to be, energised by visionary curation and an invitation to everyone in the community to participate.

Long term outcome: The Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery is celebrated across the region and the state as exemplary in community engagement and curation.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest and develop local talent; and connect important and critical works and artists to our region. Explore opportunities for extended physical space that is connected and central. Galleries and exhibitions in surprising locations. Continue to deliver exhibitions of national and international significance. Partner with arts organisations to continue to deliver programs of excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Art Gallery increases audience attendance and community engagement and development. The Art Gallery floor space is increased and includes spaces for workshops and community access. The Art Gallery permanent collection is exhibited in the region regularly.

Ambition 5.3

Our community is enriched through public art that is inspiring, playful and reflective of our diverse community.

Council will champion, advocate and support local artists, designers, creatives and storytellers.

Long term outcome: Art is central to the built environment of the Swan Hill region.

Short term actions 1 - 2 years	Medium term actions 2 - 4 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will ensure the Public Art Policy is adhered to with all new development. The Cultural Team in partnership with other Council programs is consulted and involved in the commissioning of new public art. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community public art programs are explored, funded and supported. Ensure there is contingency for signage, maintenance and a decommissioning plan.



B.18.77 SWAN HILL INCORPORATED ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2018/19

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S12-24-05
Attachments: 1 Marketing Plan

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report recommends Council adopt the Swan Hill Incorporated Annual Marketing Plan and Budget for the 2018-2019 financial year.

Discussion

As per the agreement between Swan Hill Incorporated (Swan Hill Inc) and the Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council), in order for Swan Hill Inc to receive the funds collected through the Special Rate for its marketing programs, Council must first approve Swan Hill Inc's Annual Marketing Plan and Budget.

The annual marketing plan is built around four strategies:

1. Visitation to the Region
2. Shopping in the Region
3. Advocacy
4. Business Support

Highlights of the Marketing Plan include building on the success of the "tell em Swanny sent ya" campaign and the dedication of funds for digital marketing. In addition the plan includes the continuation of popular events such as Market Day and the Swan Hill Region Food and Wine Festival. There will also be a continued focus on engaging and supporting Swan Hill businesses through a strong advocacy and business support program.

The 2018/19 Swan Hill Inc annual budget is made up of the following:

- Income – Total income of \$538,813. This includes a carry-forward amount of \$56,554, Special Rate income of \$366,278 and income from various promotions/events
- Expenses – Total expenses are \$538,813. This includes Administration expense of \$84,771 Business Support and Advocacy expense of \$16,500, Marketing expense of \$362,542, Promotion expense of \$12,000 and Traders expense of \$63,000.

Consultation

Swan Hill Incorporated has consulted with their members in the development of the Marketing Plan and Annual Budget.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for Council as the activities outlined in the plan are funded through the Special Rate.

Social Implications

It is anticipated that the successful implementation of the Marketing Plan and Annual Budget will result in increased visitation to the region.

Economic Implications

It is anticipated that the activities to be carried out under the Marketing Plan and Annual Budget will assist the local economy by increasing visitor numbers and in turn support additional employment, residents and business development.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Encourage and attract new business to our region.

Options

Council can choose to approve the Annual Marketing Plan and Budget or not. By not approving the Annual Marketing Plan and Budget Swan Hill Inc would be unable to deliver the outcomes sought by adopting the Special Rate.

Recommendation

That Council approves the Swan Hill Incorporated Annual Marketing Plan and Budget for 2018/2019.



Swan Hill Incorporated
Marketing
Plan 2018-2019



Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Contents

KEY PARTNERS.....	3
Swan Hill Rural City Council.....	3
Business Community.....	3
Regional, State and Federal Tourism, Development and Government Organisations.....	3
The Community.....	3
ECONOMIC BENEFITS	3
ABOUT SWAN HILL INCORPORATED.....	4
Our Purpose:.....	4
Our Vision:.....	4
Our Strategies:	4
OUR STRUCTURE	4
Swan Hill Inc. Board Members.....	5
Marketing Committee	5
Traders Committee.....	5
Business Support Committee	5
Business Advocacy Committee	5
HOW HAVE WE PROMOTED THE REGION SINCE 2014 - 2018	6
HOW HAVE WE PROMOTED SHOPPING IN OUR REGION?.....	7
OUR KEY BRAND MESSAGE	9
Strategy One - Visitation to the Region.....	10
Increase visitation by specifically marketing the Swan Hill region as a place to visit and enjoy.....	10
Committee: Marketing.....	10
Digital Component	10
Targeted Mainstream Media.....	13
Other Marketing Opportunities	13
Strategy Two – Shopping in the region.....	14
Promote the Swan Hill region as a place to shop.....	14
Committee: Traders	14
Strategy Three – Advocacy	15
Engage with and advocate on behalf of members	15
Strategy Four – Business Support.....	16

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Provide business support and direction to members and encourage the provision of quality service.
..... 16

Swan Hill Incorporated – Annual Budget 2017 - 2018..... 17

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



INTRODUCTION

Swan Hill Incorporated has developed this annual marketing plan and budget to deliver a comprehensive set of priorities and actions for the organisation over the next 12 months. The function of the marketing plan is to deliver outcomes from the strategies documented in the strategic plan. It includes a tactical plan outlining the key initiatives, activities and timings.

KEY PARTNERS

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Swan Hill Incorporated will work directly and collaboratively with the Swan Hill Rural City Council to ensure the success of the plan.

Business Community

Swan Hill Incorporated will represent the best interests of its members by providing leadership to, and engaging with, the business community through strong communication.

Regional, State and Federal Tourism, Development and Government Organisations

Swan Hill Incorporated will work collaboratively with State and Federal Government and relevant industry organisations including the Murray Regional Tourism Board, Tourism Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, Destination New South Wales and Regional Development Australia. Each of these agencies will provide Swan Hill Incorporated with a range of opportunities not the least of which will be for additional funding for projects or events.

The Community

Swan Hill Incorporated will engage with the local community to promote the benefits of supporting local businesses and championing their own region.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The promotion of our Region is focused on bringing visitors to Swan Hill and the surrounding region. Results from Tourism Research Australia for the year 31 December 2017 showed that the Swan Hill Region experienced 412 000 domestic and international overnight visitors in that time. This equated to a 22% increase on the previous year.

Fact sheets produced by Tourism Victoria Research Unit in December 2017 show the average expenditure in the Murray region to be \$171 per night.

The visitor economy results in many businesses, not directly related to tourism, benefiting significantly from the proceeds of visitors to the region.

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



ABOUT SWAN HILL INCORPORATED

Swan Hill Incorporated has operated under the Special Rate for the past 16 years and been very successful in the promotion of Swan Hill and the region.

Our Purpose:

To market and promote the Swan Hill Region.

Our Vision:

We will be the relevant organisation supporting business in the marketing and promotion of our region.

Our Strategies:

Visitation to the Region

Increase visitation by specifically marketing the Swan Hill region as a place to visit and enjoy.

Shopping in the Region

Specifically market the Swan Hill region as a place to shop and encourage the provision of quality service.

Promote and educate the importance of shopping locally.

Advocacy

Engage with and advocate on behalf of members.

Business Support

Provide support and direction to members.

OUR STRUCTURE

Swan hill Inc. has a Board of Directors and four sub-committees to cover:

- Marketing
- Traders
- Business Advocacy
- Business Support

In total we currently have 22 volunteers that make up our main board and the sub committees. Each of these people give their time voluntarily and a number of them have done so since Swan Hill Inc.'s inception.

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Swan Hill Inc. Board Members

Murray Ray - Chairman

Greg Roberts - Vice Chairman - Murray Downs Golf & Country Club, Spoons Riverside & Swan Hill Club

Sebastian Parseghian - Swan Hill Toyota and Kia

Colin McAlpine - Sew Graphics

Claire Billing - Swan Hill Disposals

Paul Dillon - Mallee Rising

Stuart King - Swan Hill Hire & Nifty's Car Hire

Brian Richardson - Jane Eliza Motor Inn

Chris Jeffrey - Swan Hill Rural City Council

Marketing Committee

Janelle Earle - Chairlady - Pioneer Settlement

Greg Roberts - Vice Chairman - Murray Downs Golf & Country Club, Spoons Riverside & Swan Hill Club

Brian Richardson - Jane Eliza Motor Inn

Jessica Warburton - Pioneer Settlement

Ainsley O' Bryan - Swan Hill Big4 Riverside

Lauren Schmidt - Murray Downs Golf & Country Club, Spoons Riverside & Swan Hill Club

Traders Committee

Colin McAlpine - Chairman - Sew Graphics

Paul Dillon - Mallee Rising

Terry Jennings - Northern Shoe Store

Carolyn Willox - Ultimate Fashion

Renee McCaig - Ultimate Fashion

Colin Hayward - Stihl Shop Swan Hill

Paul McKee - Homes Hardware

Stephen Colombo - Colombo's Pasta Bar & Café

Rob Duffield - The Guardian

Business Support Committee

Sebastian Parseghian - Swan Hill Toyota and Kia

Claire Billing - Swan Hill Disposals

Business Advocacy Committee

Paul Dillon - Mallee Rising

Stuart King - Swan Hill Hire & Nifty's Car Hire

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



All Swan Hill Inc. members are encouraged to attend the committee meetings monthly to be able to hear what is proposed and are welcome to put forward ideas for the expenditure of available funds.

HOW HAVE WE PROMOTED THE REGION SINCE 2014 - 2018

The Swan Hill Inc. Marketing Committee have annually developed and executed a marketing plan to promote the Swan Hill region through the following key activities:

- **Mainstream Marketing**
Regional TV advertising together with Press advertising in Metro newspapers. Our current campaign is Dane Swan promoting Swan Hill.
- **Digital Marketing**
 - Targeted digital marketing on Facebook, Instagram and You Tube have formed the basis of our digital marketing campaigns.
 - New consumer website which forms part of the Murray River Tourism digital platform - Visit Swan Hill was launched in 2016
- **Partnered with Murray Regional Tourism Board**
We partnered with the Murray Regional Tourism Board which allows us to access programs at a subsidised rate. We participated in a number of promotions like What's Up Down Under, Master Chef, consumer shows such as Masters Golf, Melbourne Show and Caravan & Camping.
- **Food and Wine Festival**
We have successfully presented an annual Food and Wine weekend which attracts visitors from far and wide to our region. Visitor numbers through the gate has increased by 115% for the past 4 years in comparison to the previous 4 years.
- **Official Visitor Guide and Touring Guides**
We have also promoted our region with the production of 2 visitor guides which are distributed state wide in visitor information centres.
- **Partnered with Swan Hill Rural City Council**
We partnered with SHRCC on the Discover More Project, The Good Day Show & Master Chef.

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



HOW HAVE WE PROMOTED SHOPPING IN OUR REGION?

The Swan Hill Inc. Traders Committee have every year developed and executed a marketing plan that has promoted shopping locally through the following key activities:

- **Mother's Day Promotion**
This competition is run for 2 weeks from the beginning of May till Mother's Day. Locals are encouraged to shop locally and take part in the competition. 1 Lucky winner wins a \$500 pamper hamper.
- **EOFY Campaign**
A new campaign that started in 2017 to encourage shopping in a June which is a quieter time of the year for traders. The campaign begins mid-June with all businesses providing a loss leader product which is advertised on radio and appears every week in the Guardian from the beginning of the promotion. The campaign culminates on the last Friday of June with an outside broadcast.
- **Buy Local Campaign**
In 2016 The Swan Hill Traders Committee in partnership with The Guardian ran a buy local campaign consisting of a 286 page booklet filled with discount coupons from local businesses in the region. Locals were encouraged to purchase the book for \$20 with thousands of dollars' worth of in savings. The campaign culminated with a lucky winner winning a car and 8 follow-up prizes of 1000 Swan Hill Inc. dollars.
- **Buy Swan Hill / Local Loop Campaign**
Swan Hill Inc. partnered with Ace Radio every year to run the local loop, which is now known as 'The Buy Swan Hill' campaign. Local businesses receive an allocated number of 30 second slots on the radio for the duration of the year. The message in every advert conveyed the importance of supporting shopping locally.
- **Market Day**
An annual event held in October. A portion of Campbell Street is closed off and is filled with stalls and entertainment for young and old, whilst the Traders bring their wares out onto the foot paths. The event has consistently proven to be very popular amongst locals as well as visitors in town.
- **Christmas Decorations & Christmas Shopping Campaign**
Every year Swan Hill Inc. ensures that the greater CBD area is adorned with colourful Christmas decorations to create a festive atmosphere in town.

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



From mid-November till Mid December our Christmas Shopping competition is held. By shopping locally ever customer received 1 entry for every purchase made. 3 lucky winners stand a chance to win 1 of 3 giant Christmas stockings filled with donations from local businesses and 8 winners stand a chance to win 1000 Swan Hill Dollars each.

SUPPORTING LOCAL EVENTS

- **Funded Community Projects**

Swan Hill Inc. provides funding and marketing assistance to numerous community projects. Since 1 July 2015 we have provided support to the following festivals, events & projects totalling \$84 000:

Festival of Motorsports, Bowls Victoria, CBD Street Flags, Lake Boga Easter Regatta, Farmers Market, George Fairfax Festival, Heartbeat of the Murray Laser Light Show, Jazz Convention, Lake Boga Brochures, Nyah Harness Racing Sponsorship, Da Vinci Exhibition, Harmony Day, Country Week Tennis, Swan Hill Show, Swan Hill Show & Shine.

BUSINESS FORUMS

- **Advocacy - To engage with and advocate on behalf of our members.**

- Bi-annual advocacy forums have been held to provide our members & stakeholders with a platform to engage with Swan Hill Inc. and to raise issues that the Swan Hill Inc. Board can advocate for on their behalf.
- Swan Hill Inc. has conducted regular reviews annually with Councillors and the Council Executive team to provide updates on key achievements aligned with the annual Marketing Plan.
- Monthly meetings are held with the CEO and senior staff of Council to raise issues and share information.

- **Business Support – Provide business support and direction to members and encourage the provision of quality service.**

We have hosted 2 forums per year which included motivational /educational speakers and provided a platform for networking. Over the past 4 years the guest speakers have been: Max Walker, Chris Helder, Dave Staughton and Paul Lyons.

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



OUR KEY BRAND MESSAGE

“Swan Hill region – Heart of the Murray” will continue as the key theme, brand, as it provides the region with both a location identifier and a sense of “community and liveability”.

Other key messages will be:

- Escape the city to an authentic country location with a variety of activities.
- The Murray River in Swan Hill is the natural part of the river, it allows for leisurely activities such as fishing and camping.
- The region is not commercialised – it has a good mix of boutique and regular shops. Something for the whole family.

Swan Hill’s point of difference is its slower pace, natural surroundings and because of the low key water sport activities allowed on the river, the region has a sense of serenity.

Unique selling points:

- Authenticity
- Murray River
- History - Pioneer Settlement, Heartbeat of the Murray, Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum
- Golf - quality of experience
- Fishing - Cod
- Lake Boga
- Nyah Forest - Trails, Biking & Waking
- Events - Regional events

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Strategy One - Visitation to the Region

Increase visitation by specifically marketing the Swan Hill region as a place to visit and enjoy.

Committee: Marketing

The Marketing Committee has outsourced the digital component of the marketing plan to Cracking Media and the targeted mainstream component will be outsourced to Alchemy Media.

Digital Component Strategy

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Management, Communication & Documentation 	<p>Management of the overall strategy including the modules, stakeholders, timelines and budgets.</p> <p>Capture the marketing activities and deliverables to ensure up to date information. This includes project forms, meeting minutes, capturing information relevant to the region or marketing to share with stakeholders.</p>	Monthly	\$5 900
Total			\$5 900

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Digital Media

This module captures the digital media activities associated with marketing the Swan Hill Region to increase duration and frequency of tourist visitations to the region.

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ Website/SEO	Develop articles to use throughout the year.	August - Nov 18 & Jan - April 19	\$6 500
▪ Distribution of Content	Distribute the articles using both paid and unpaid channels including traditional media, online websites, blogs, social media and remarketing tools such as Outbrain.	Throughout the year	\$2 000
Total			\$8 500

Social Media

This module captures the social media tasks and activities required to assist Swan Hill Incorporated in meeting their objectives of increasing the duration and frequency of tourist visitations to the region.

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ Instagram content	Develop and document content for the @visitswanhill Instagram account every month.	Monthly	\$14 000
▪ Facebook content	Develop and document content for the Visit Swan Hill Facebook page every month.	Monthly	\$6 000
▪ Listing Site Management	Create, update and maintain listings for the Swan Hill region across various sites.	September 18, November 18 & March 19	\$1 900
▪ Facebook & Instagram Campaigns	Boost relevant Facebook and Instagram posts. 1 campaign per month (boost post, competition, etc)	Monthly	\$8 200
Total			\$30 100

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Public Relations

This document captures the public relations tasks and activities required to assist Swan Hill Incorporated in meeting their objectives of increasing the duration and frequency of tourist visitations to the region.

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ Media releases	Prepare and distribute four media releases throughout the year.	Seasonal	\$3 000
▪ Community Education	Community Education: 1 business tutorial about Google Business & Maps tutorial (2018), 1 other newsletter or blogger outreach TBC (2019)	October 18 & March 19	\$2 000
Total			\$5 000

Campaign & Education

The module of "Campaigns and Education" will focus on e-newsletter to Visit Swan Hill subscriber base.

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ E-Newsletters	Create & distribute 4 newsletters to Visit Swan Hill subscribers seasonally.	Seasonally	\$2 000
Total			\$2 000

Evaluation & Reporting

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ Metrics Report	A monthly metrics report to capture the marketing activities.	Monthly	\$5 000
Total			\$ 5 000

Total Digital Component	\$56 500
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Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Targeted Mainstream Media

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ TV	Promote Dane Swan campaign on regional TV.	Monthly	\$52 000
▪ Digital & Social Media Strategy- Geo Targeting	Target specific data segments	Monthly	\$28 800
Total			\$80 000

Other Marketing Opportunities

Initiative	Description	Timing	Annual Budget
▪ Marketing Opportunities with Murray River Tourism	• Opportunities that arise with MRT	Adhoc	\$17 050
▪ Photography	• Update photo library with seasonal photos.	Seasonal	\$8 000
▪ Opportunistic Promotions	• This allows Swan Hill Inc. to take part in campaigns or opportunities that arise during the year.	Ongoing	\$ 3 089
	• Promote liveability video undertaken by SHRCC	Ongoing	\$10 000
	• Editorial & advertising in the Spring edition of Caravanning Australia - feature on the Murray River	September/Oct 18	\$2 318
▪ Swan Hill Region Food & Wine Festival	One of Swan Hill's premier events. The festival attracts visitors from inter and intrastate.	March	\$60 000
▪ Visit Swan Hill Website - Maintenance agreement with MRT		Annually	\$7 050
▪ Official Visitor Guide Distribution	Distribute visitor guides to Information Centres.		\$6 000
Total			\$113 506

Total Strategy 1: Visitation to the region

\$250 007

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Strategy Two – Shopping in the region

Promote the Swan Hill region as a place to shop.

Committee: Traders

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and educate the importance of shopping locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Ace Radio 'Buy Swan Hill' Promotion. 	Monthly	\$2 000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a targeted annual calendar of promotions to strengthen trade within the Swan Hill Region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct specific shopping promotions including Market Day, Christmas Stocking Promotion and other promotion(s) throughout the year. 	October to June	\$44 000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christmas Decorations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decorate the CBD with Christmas decorations 	November to January	\$7 000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Engagement Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project to understand the buying habits of young people. Develop insights to share with local businesses to develop skills and adapt their behaviour to attract young people to shop local. Influence & educate the community about the importance of buying local versus spending their money outside of the region. 	Throughout the year	\$9 000
Total			\$62 000

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Strategy Three – Advocacy

Engage with and advocate on behalf of members

Committee: Board & Advocacy Committee

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a leadership role by engaging with local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to communicate regularly and effectively with members and stakeholders using preferred methods of communication such as radio, social media, e-mails, telephone calls, visits, corporate website etc. 	Ongoing	\$6 000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with government agencies and relevant organisations to advocate on behalf of members and the region. 	As needed	Nil
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule two networking forums for the year providing members with the opportunity to attend, raise issues and network with other members. 	October & May	\$ 700
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strong and mutually supportive relationship with Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct three (2) reviews annually with Councillors to provide updates on key achievements aligned with the Annual Marketing Plan. 	October & May	Nil
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to hold monthly briefings with the Council CEO and senior staff to raise issues and share information. 	Ongoing	Nil

Total Strategy 3: Advocacy

\$ 6 700

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Strategy Four – Business Support

Provide business support and direction to members and encourage the provision of quality service.

Committee: Board & Business Support Committee

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide members with opportunities to grow their business through educational and motivational events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host Business Support Forum which includes motivational speakers / educational and networking events designed to appeal to members. 	August	\$6 300

Total Strategy 4: Business Support

\$6 300

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget



Swan Hill Incorporated – Annual Budget 2018 - 2019

Income

Carried Forward from 2017	22 486
Bank Interest	800
Membership SHI (Voluntary)	8,300
Special Rate Income	362 065
Swan Hill Region Food and Wine	60,000
Total INCOME	453 650

Expenses

Administration

Audit	2,400
Bank Fees	60
Incorporation Fees	115
Insurances	3,000
Other Office Expenses	1,800
Payroll Expenses	64,171
Printer Lease	1 620
Postage	800
Printing	500
Reckon Financial Software	550
Staff Training	1,500
Stationary	350
Superannuation Payment	6,096
Special Rate Costs	1,600
Telephone/Mobile	1,900
VTIC Membership	660
Wages	1,500
Workers Compensation	700
Total Administration	89 322

Swan Hill Incorporated 2018-2019 Budget

**Business Support & Advocacy**

Business Forums	7,000
Corporate Website	4,000
Ace Radio - Swan Hill Inc. Live	2,500
Total Business Support & Advocacy	13,000

Marketing

Crackling Media	
Strategy & Project Management & Communication	5,900
Digital Media	8,500
Social Media	30,100
Public Relations	5,000
Campaign & Education	2,000
Evaluation & Reporting	5,000
Digital Platform	7,050
Targeted Mainstream Campaign	
Regional TV	52,000
Digital Strategy - Programmatic Video Campaign	20,000
Social Media - FB & Instagram	8,000
Murray Regional Tourism Board	17,050
Photography	8,000
Visitor Guide Distribution	6,000
Opportunistic Promotions	15,407
SH Food & Wine Festival	60,000
Total Marketing	250,007

Promotions

Easter Regatta	500
Opportunistic Promotions	1,000
Swan Hill Show	1,000
Total Promotions	2,500

Traders

Retail Promotions	10,000
Ace Radio Buy Swan Hill	2,000
Christmas Decorations	7,000
Christmas Promotion	15,000
Market Day	19,000
Youth Engagement Project	9,000
Total Traders	62,000
Total Expenses	416,829

Net Surplus	36,821
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B.18.78 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure
File Number: S33-22-07
Attachments: 1 MOU Waste and Recycling Services

Declarations of Interest:

Svetla Petkova- as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement by six Councils and Greater City of Bendigo as the lead Council to collaborate in a Joint Tender process for the supply of Waste and Recycling Services facilitated by the Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group (LMWRRG).

Discussion

The Councils have agreed to enter into this MOU with the intention of encouraging resource sharing and to support best value principles. The Councils recognise that the market they operate within for Waste and Recycling Collection is limited in scope due to its population, geographic size and location. In this context, the Councils have agreed to enter into this MOU and prepare a Joint Tender to encourage competition from a broader spectrum of potential contractors.

The City of Greater Bendigo will act as the Lead Council. It is the intention of the Councils that the Joint Tender be advertised in November 2018 for a commencement date after June 2019.

Swan Hill Rural City Council is not obliged to accept or award any tenders.

Consultation

The Tender process will be followed as per the attachment to this report.

Financial Implications

LMWRRG has secured \$65,000 in funding to run this project. Swan Hill Rural City Council will only contribute proportionally (equal split) if the cost exceeds the available funding.

Social Implications

Nil

Economic Implications

Expected savings are due to the economy of scale and an opportunity for commercial competition along with savings from administrative costs.

Environmental Implications

Unknown at this stage however should encourage local recycling.

Risk Management Implications

There is a risk that this may not attract tenders for all required services therefore Council may elect not to award tenders following the tender process resulting in a new process being initialised.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

Options

Nil

Recommendations

That Council note the contents of this report and authorise the signing and sealing of this joint Memorandum of Understanding for Waste and Recycling Services with Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Waste and Recycling Services

Greater Bendigo City Council – ABN 74 149 638 164

Buloke Shire Council - ABN 89 297 793 980

Gannawarra Shire Council - ABN 98 993 182 937

Loddon Shire Council - ABN 90 925 450 534

Mildura Rural City Council – ABN 42 498 937 037

Swan Hill Rural City Council – ABN 97 435 620 016

Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group – ABN 91 646 029 563

DATE

PARTIES

City of Greater Bendigo	Greater Bendigo City Council ABN 74 149 638 164 195 Lyttleton Terrace, Bendigo, VIC 3550
Buloke Shire	Buloke Shire Council ABN 89 297 793 980 367 Broadway, Wycheproof, VIC 3527
Gannawarra Shire	Gannawarra Shire Council ABN 98 993 182 937 Patchell Plaza, 47 Victoria Street, Kerang VIC 3527
Loddon Shire	Loddon Shire Council ABN 90 925 450 534 37-41 High Street, Wedderburn, VIC 3518
Mildura Rural City	Mildura Rural City Council 76 Deakin Avenue, Mildura, VIC 3502
Swan Hill Rural City	Swan Hill Rural City Council 45 Splat Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585
Loddon Mallee WRRG	Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group ABN 91 646 029 563 125 High Street, Wedderburn, VIC 3518

BACKGROUND

- A. The Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**) is an agreement by the Councils to collaborate in a Joint Tender process for the supply of Waste and Recycling Services facilitated by the Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group. The City of Greater Bendigo will act as the Lead Council. It is the intention of the Councils that the Joint Tender be advertised in November 2018 for a commencement date after June 2019.
- B. The Waste and Recycling Services to be incorporated in the Request for Tender include the following:
- Domestic and/or Commercial Kerbside Waste Collection to include: Public Place Bins both Waste / recyclables – collection, acceptance, sorting or processing, maintenance, replacement and cleaning
 - Domestic and/or Commercial Kerbside bin replacement and maintenance.
 - Domestic and/or Commercial Kerbside Recyclables Collection
 - Domestic and/or Commercial Kerbside Recyclables Acceptance Sorting and/or transportation
 - Domestic and/or Commercial Kerbside Green waste/Food/Organic Waste Collection
 - Domestic and/or Commercial Kerbside Green waste/Food/Organic Waste Acceptance and Processing
 - Provision of stillages, collection, transport and treatment of e-waste
 - Supply and Collection of Bulk Bins and Skips to Transfer Stations / Collection Points
 - Manage landfills and transfer stations (Swan Hill Rural City Council)
- C. The Councils have agreed to enter into this MOU with the intention of encouraging resource sharing and to support best value principles. The Councils recognise that the market they operate within for Waste and Recycling Collection is limited in scope due to its population, geographic size and location. In this context, the Councils have agreed to enter into this MOU and prepare a Joint Tender to encourage competition from a broader spectrum of potential contractors.
- D. The MOU provides certainty for each Council involved in the Tender that their specific needs will be addressed and where practicable incorporated in the Request for Tender.
- E. The MOU also establishes agreed principles for the sharing of costs and the respective obligations of the Councils and Loddon Mallee WRRG to evaluate the Tender responses.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS**1. Interpretation**

1.1 In this document, except where the context otherwise requires:

- (a) the singular includes the plural and vice versa, and a gender includes other genders;
- (b) another grammatical form of a defined word or expression has a corresponding meaning;
- (c) a reference to a clause, paragraph, schedule or annexure is to a clause or paragraph of, or schedule or annexure to, this agreement, and a reference to this agreement includes any schedule or annexure;
- (d) a reference to a document or instrument includes the document or instrument as novated, altered, supplemented or replaced from time to time;
- (e) a reference to A\$, \$A, dollar, or \$ is to Australian currency;
- (f) a reference to time is to Victoria, Australia time;
- (g) a reference to a party is to a party to this agreement, and a reference to a party to a document includes the party's executors, administrators, successors and permitted assigns and substitutes;
- (h) a reference to a person includes a natural person, partnership, body corporate, body politic, association, governmental or local authority or agency or other entity;
- (i) a reference to a statute, ordinance, code or other law includes regulations and other instruments under it and consolidations, amendments, re-enactments or replacements of any of them;
- (j) the meaning of general words is not limited by specific examples introduced by including, for example or similar expressions;
- (k) any agreement, representation, warranty or indemnity by two or more parties (including where two or more persons are included in the same defined term) binds them jointly and severally; and
- (l) any agreement, representation, warranty or indemnity in favour of two or more parties (including where two or more persons are included in the same defined term) is for the benefit of them jointly and severally).

1.2 Construction

A rule of construction does not apply to the disadvantage of a party because the party was responsible for the preparation of this agreement or any part of

it.

1.3 Business Day

If a day on or by which an obligation must be performed or an event must occur is not a Business Day, the obligation must be performed or the event must occur on or by the next Business Day.

1.4 Headings

Headings are for ease of reference only and do not affect interpretation.

2. Request for Tender

2.1 The Tender is to be a Joint Tender.

2.2 The Request for Tender will clearly enunciate the specific service needs and constraints for each participating Council including expected contract commencement date.

2.3 The Request for Tender will provide for flexible bid requirements including the option for each prospective contractor to tender for:

- (a) the provision of services to all five Councils;
- (b) the provision of services to a single Council;
- (c) the provision of services to a cluster of Councils determined by geographic proximity, volume or any other relevant factors.

2.4 The Councils have a preference for the appointment of a single contractor to service all Councils in anticipation that economies of scale will produce best value for all Councils. However, all Councils are open to consideration of single Council bids and cluster Council bids in order to assess the benefit to their respective Councils. The option will exist for each prospective contractor to determine if they wish to submit Tender responses for one or all alternative bid options set out in clause 2.3.

3. Tender Development

3.1 The Request for Tender will be developed by a Working Group comprised of one nominated representative of each Council, Loddon Mallee WRRG and the consultant chosen to be the Tender Coordinator.

3.2 The nominated Tender Coordinator from the City of Greater Bendigo will prepare the documentation associated with the Request for Tender and will act as the primary contact for all administrative aspects of the Tender.

3.3 The Working Group will in its absolute discretion seek legal advice as required to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. It is the responsibility of each Council to seek legal advice independently on their respective positions.

4. Tender Advertising

- 4.1 The Request for Tender will be advertised by the Tender Coordinator and Loddon Mallee WRRG for and on behalf of all Councils.
- 4.2 Receipt of Tender responses will be co-ordinated by the Tender Coordinator in accordance with the Victorian legislative requirements, adopted principals and the Local Government Act.

5. Tender Evaluation

- 5.1 The initial Tender evaluation will be undertaken by the Working Group.
- 5.2 The Working Group will evaluate the Tender responses in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the Request for Tender.
- 5.3 The Working Group will assess all Tender responses submitted for the preferred option of a single contractor for all five Councils.
- 5.4 In the event of any Tender responses being submitted for a cluster of Councils (more than one, but less than five), then representatives of the Councils included in the cluster and Loddon Mallee WRRG will be responsible for evaluating those Tender responses only.
- 5.5 Any Tender responses for individual Councils will be assessed by the respective Council.
- 5.6 The Working Group will prepare a Joint Report. It will be at the discretion of the respective Councils as to whether they carry out any additional evaluation or prepare individual reports for presentation to their respective Councils.
- 5.7 The Joint Report prepared by the Working Group will not be binding on any Council.

6. Tender Acceptance

- 6.1 The Loddon Mallee WRRG has been granted authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for Joint Tender processes until December 2029.
- 6.2 Each Council will be required to separately resolve to accept or decline any Tender following the evaluation of the Joint Report of the Working Group and any additional report prepared by their respective Council Officers.
- 6.3 No participating Council is obliged to accept a Tender and enter into a contract with the preferred contractor selected by the Working Group.
- 6.4 A Council can withdraw from the Joint Tender process following consideration of the Joint Report prepared by the Working Group. In the event that any Council fails to pass a resolution in favour of the recommendation of the Working Group, it is that Council's responsibility to inform the Working Group as soon as practical.

7. Contract Management

- 7.1 The Joint Tender is to be configured so that individual Councils control and manage their own components of the contract. Each Council will enter into a separate and individual contract with the appointed contractor or contractors.
- 7.2 In the event of the appointment of a contractor by a cluster of Councils, it is open to the Councils in the respective clusters to consult with one another and determine whether they wish to control and manage their own contract, or alternatively, form a Project Management Group consisting of representatives from each of the participating Councils within the cluster to manage the contract.

8. Cost of Administration of the Joint Tender

- 8.1 The Loddon Mallee WRRG will provide in-kind support and has funding of \$65,000 to cover the costs of legal, probity, advertising, specification development and tender analysis. The Loddon Mallee WRRG will on behalf of the Councils apply for funding to defray costs of a Tender Coordinator. Participating Councils in the Joint Tender agree to contribute towards any costs above the funding available.
- 8.2 Any legal fees pertaining to the tender process and subsequent contract documentation are to be evenly distributed between the participating Councils.

9. Probity Issues

- 9.1 Each Council and the Loddon Mallee WRRG, its employees and Councillors, are bound by their individual Code of Conduct obligations including, but not limited to, acting honestly, appropriately handling conflicts of interest and behaving ethically.
- 9.2 Participating Councils and Loddon Mallee WRRG cannot negotiate independently with possible contractors for the supply of Waste and Recycling Collection Services whilst the Joint Tender process is ongoing.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1 The Councils and Loddon Mallee WRRG must not disclose any Confidential Information to any persons except:
- (a) to relevant employees, lawyers or other consultants of each party to the extent necessary to further the negotiations of the parties;
 - (b) with the consent of the party who supplied the information;
 - (c) if required by law; or
 - (d) if the information is generally and publicly available other than as a result of a breach of confidence by the person receiving the information.

- 10.2 “Confidential Information” means information relating to the:
- (i) negotiation and terms of this document and other documents entered into between the parties, including all Tender documentation; and
 - (ii) operations, business dealings or financial affairs of each party.
- 10.3 A party must not make, cause or allow any public announcement, press release or public statement of any kind to be made about this document or the Joint Tender without the prior consent of the Working Group.

11. Good faith

The Councils and Loddon Mallee WRRG agree to act honestly and in good faith with each other in pursuing the objectives of this MOU and in the proposed Joint Tender.

12. Miscellaneous

12.1 Further assurance

Each party must execute and do all acts and things necessary or desirable to implement and give full effect to the provisions and purpose of this document.

12.2 Survival

Any obligation of confidence under this document is independent and survives termination of this document. Any other term by its nature intended to survive termination of this document survives termination of this document.

12.3 Fettering of Discretion

Nothing in this document should be construed in any way to fetter the discretion of each Council and Loddon Mallee WRRG to carry out its statutory obligations.

12.4 Execution and Counterparts

This document may be executed in any number of counterparts which together will form one and the same document.

12.5 Governing law and jurisdiction

This document is governed by the law of Victoria and each party irrevocably and unconditionally submits to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Victoria.

EXECUTED BY THE PARTIES

Greater Bendigo City Council)
ABN 74 149 638 164 Chief Executive Officer on)
the day of)
2018:)

x
Craig Niemann
Chief Executive Officer

THE SEAL of Buloke Shire Council)
ABN 89 293 793 980 was affixed by the Mayor)
and Chief Executive Officer on the day of)
2018 in the presence of:)

x
David Pollard
Mayor

x
Anthony Judd
Chief Executive Officer

THE SEAL of Gannawarra Shire Council)
ABN 98 993 182 937 was affixed by the Mayor)
and Chief Executive Officer on the day of)
2018 in the presence of:)

x
Brian Gibson
Mayor

x
Tom O'Reilly
Chief Executive Officer

THE SEAL of Loddon Shire Council)
ABN 90 925 450 534 was affixed by the Mayor)
and Chief Executive Officer on the day of)
2018 in the presence of:)

x
Cheryl McKinnon
Mayor

x
Phil Pinyon
Chief Executive Officer

THE SEAL of Mildura Rural City Council)
ABN 42 498 937 037 was affixed by the Mayor)
and Chief Executive Officer on the day of)
2018 in the presence of:)

x
Mark Eckel
Mayor

x
Gerard Jose
Chief Executive Officer

THE SEAL of Swan Hill Rural City Council)
ABN 97 435 620 016 was affixed by the Mayor)
and Chief Executive Officer on the day of)
2018 in the presence of:)

x
Les McPhee
Mayor

x
John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

Bill Moar
Councillor

THE SEAL of Loddon Mallee Waste and)
Resource Recovery Group)
ABN 91 646 029 563 was affixed by the Chair and)
Executive Officer on the day of)
2018 in the presence of:)

x
Jennifer Anderson
Chair

x
Karen Fazzani
Executive Officer

B.18.79 GILLESPIE STREET SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure
File Number: S32-02-01
Attachments: Nil

Declarations of Interest:

Svetla Petkova - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report seeks Council's endorsement to proceed with a Special Charge Scheme for the sealing of the section of Gillespie Street to the North of Bryan Street in Swan Hill.

Discussion

The section of Gillespie Street to the North of Bryan Street in Swan Hill is an unsurfaced road that gives primary access to 8 residences and secondary access to 2 more residences all on the West side of the street. The East side of the street is VicTrack land leased by Council as public parkland. The land around the street was first subdivided into house lots in the 1940's but the street has never been constructed or sealed.

Over the years Council staff, acting on requests from residents, has many times attempted to initiate a Special Charge Scheme to finance the construction and sealing of the street. The attempts have always failed due to lack of support from the residents required to pay. Some like the street the way it is, as dirt road winding through the trees, others simply can't afford the cost or don't want to pay.

Recently Council officers have again received a request to seal the street from one of the residents. Preliminary estimates were prepared for a number of options of differing construction standards and costs. From the options presented the residents chose Option 2 which consists of a 7.5m seal (2 way traffic plus a parallel parking lane) with one way cross fall towards a kerb on the West side (the house side), a gravel shoulder on the East side (railway side), drainage on the West side and no footpath for a total estimated cost of \$161,200. This estimate includes survey and design costs and administration of the scheme as well as the construction costs.

It was proposed to divide the total cost into 8½ shares, 8 full shares for the 8 houses with primary access from Gillespie and ¼ shares from each of the 2 houses that have secondary access from Gillespie Street. This calculates to \$18,964.71 per full share.

The majority of residents thought this was too expensive and they would not support the scheme at this cost. Many suggested that Council should pay part or even the full cost.

Officers conducted a final survey of residents to determine how much they were willing to pay. From this survey it has been determined that 6 out of 10 residents would support the scheme if council contributed 50% of the cost. It is now for Council to decide if they wish to subsidise 50% of the cost.

Because there are houses on only one side of the street, the other side being VicTrack land, the cost per house is approximately double what it would be if there were houses on both sides. It would therefore seem reasonable for Council to pay 50% of the total cost.

If Council wishes to proceed with the scheme the process will be as follows:

1. Engage a consultant to prepare a detailed design and cost estimate for the works.
2. Council staff to prepare an apportionment of costs among those required to pay including 50% allocation of cost to Council as land manager of the railway land.
3. Report these cost estimates to Council seeking a resolution to proceed.
4. Send a notice of intention to levy a special charge to all participants including a description of the works, estimated total cost and the portion the participant will be expected to pay and an invitation to make a submission under section 223 of the Local Government Act. Participants have 28 days in which to make a written submission and may also request a meeting with councillors.
5. A council meeting to consider written submissions and hear any verbal submissions and make a formal resolution to proceed or not. Note that Council cannot proceed if it receives objections from more than 50% of participants
6. Notice of Levy to each participant detailing the amount, timing and method of payment.
7. 28 day period during which participants may appeal to VCAT against council's decision
8. Invoices sent out to each participant
9. Construction works tendered and carried out
10. Actual costs of works determined and adjustments made to invoices with partial refunds if appropriate.

Consultation

During the past year, Council officers met with residents on 3 occasions to explain the Special Charge Scheme process and to discuss options and cost apportionment. Residents also received a number of letters and survey forms from council.

Financial Implications

If the scheme proceeds as outlined Council's contribution will be approximately \$80,600.

Social Implications

A sealed road will increase the amenity for Gillespie Street residents.

Economic Implications

Nil

Environmental Implications

The street will be designed so as to retain as many of the existing trees as possible.

Risk Management Implications

There is a risk that once the design is completed and the estimate updated, residents may not support the scheme. Council would then be committed to pay for the design regardless.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

Options

- 1. Abandon the Scheme and not seal the road.**
- 2. Initiate a Special Charge Scheme and contribute 50% to the total cost.**
- 3. Seal the road at full cost to Council.**

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1. Resolve to engage a consultant to prepare detailed designs and cost estimates for the construction and sealing of the section of Gillespie Street north of Bryan Street**
- 2. Implement a Special Charge Scheme in accordance with Local Government Act legislation and regulations to finance the construction of the above design noting that as land manager of the land on the eastern side of the street Council will be required to pay 50% of the total cost.**

B.18.80 CENTRAL MURRAY REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2018

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure
File Number: S12-24-01
Attachments: 1 Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy
2018

Declarations of Interest: Officer
Svetla Petkova - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The Central Murray Regional Transport Steering Committee engaged the services of Kava Konsulting to update the 2014 Draft Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy.

This document is to provide evidence based framework for ensuring a „fit for purpose“ transport network for the region, now and into the future.

Discussion

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum is made up of seven member Councils comprising Balranald, Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Murray River, Swan Hill and Wentworth, located along the Murray River in western New South Wales and Victoria.

Consultation

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with all member council"s along with NSW Roads and Maritime Services, VicRoads, Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and Transport for Victoria.

During the consultation process this document highlighted fifteen priorities within the region. Central Murray Regional Transport Forum will continue to advocate jointly for major transport infrastructure project and service delivery improvements and seek funding for infrastructure projects and additional studies.

Financial Implications

Funding would be sought from Government with the advocacy of this document.

Social Implications

Improvements to access, connectivity, mobility, safety, active transport, and improvement of life experiences.

Economic Implications

To ensuring safety, aid the freight industry, tourism enhancement, asset condition improvement, last mile access, cost benefit ratio and impact on travel for commuters.

Environmental Implications

Noise reduction, air and water quality, solution builds in environmental protection, heritage impacts, indigenous site protection, protection of flora and fauna.

Risk Management Implications

Annual updates will mitigate the risk of new priorities not being recognised in the Strategy.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

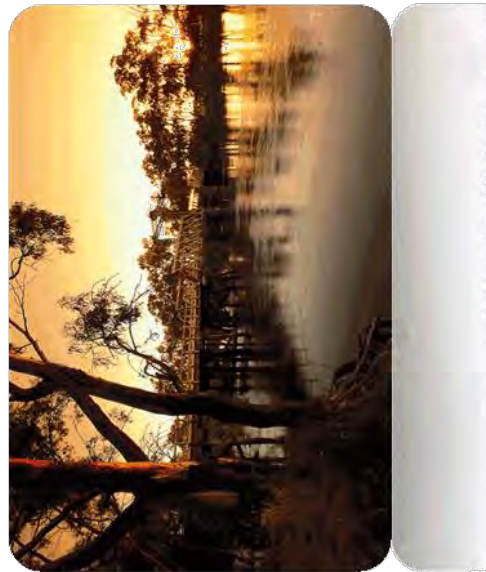
Options

Nil

Recommendation

That Council endorse the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2018 for the purpose of future advocacy within our region.

CENTRAL MURRAY REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2018



Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2018

September 2018

Prepared by:

Kava Consulting in association with Engineering Management Styles

Prepared for:

Central Murray Regional Transport Forum

- Balranald Shire
- Buloke Shire
- Gannawarra Shire
- Mildura Rural City
- Murray River Shire
- Swan Hill Rural City
- Wentworth Shire

Acknowledgement of Country:

The Councils of the Central Murray Region acknowledge the Elders both past and present and the tribes whose traditional lands form the municipalities in which we live.

Contents

Executive summary.....	iii
Why a Regional Transport Strategy?.....	1
Regional overview.....	3
Freight transport and emerging trends.....	9
Transport Network Overview.....	15
Project assessment and prioritisation.....	18
Top 15 priorities.....	20
Appendix A: Strategies and Actions.....	25
Appendix B: CMR Assessment Tool for other priority projects.....	41
Appendix C: List of organisations consulted.....	44
Appendix D: List of documents reviewed.....	45

- The region sits at the crossroads of national transport routes such as Sydney to Adelaide and Perth as well as the north-south routes from NSW to Melbourne and southern ports.
- There is a strong interface between the economies of the adjoining South West NSW and Victorian communities in terms of bridge and road links, heavy vehicle routes and public transport connections needed to support these towns.
- The transport and logistics needs of industry for increased B-double trucks and higher productivity vehicle access from farm gate to port or market is a challenge for the current transport network (road, rail and bridges) and requires additional investment.
- While some centres, particularly Mildura, are growing in population, most townships are generally experiencing population decline and ageing.
- Smaller towns continue to experience difficulty in efficiently accessing larger centres and services for education, health, employment and leisure opportunities while still residing in their communities.

Goals

The following six goals underpin the strategy:

1. Promote and facilitate the development of transport systems that support regional economic development and population growth.
2. Support efficient and sustainable transport of products between producers, markets and nodes within the region and connecting to other destinations, domestic and international.
3. Improve the capacity and function of the transport network, and integrate it with Federal and State strategies, and with land use.
4. Manage the transport system so that it is maintained to a safe and affordable level of service.
5. Improve the transport connectivity of large and small communities to enhance access to services.
6. Support improved community health and environmental outcomes.

Executive summary

The strategy has been developed by and for the Central Murray Regional Forum Councils - comprising Bairnald, Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Murray River, Swan Hill and Wentworth - located along the Murray River in western New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy updates the 2014 Draft Transport Plan¹ for the region and has drawn on existing studies from local to State level and consultation across the region. It seeks to provide an evidence-based framework for ensuring a 'fit for purpose' transport network for the region, now and into the future.

The assessment methodology utilised to compare and prioritise actions, draws on those developed for the Loddon Campaspe² and Wimmera Southern Mallee Transport Strategies³ in Victoria. This strategy is also informed by existing State, regional and local plans and strategies. It has been prepared with the assistance of NSW Roads and Maritime Services, VicRoads, the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and Transport for Victoria.

Challenges and future trends

This strategy takes a common approach to transport infrastructure planning and services for the region. Some of the key regional challenges and trends include the following:

- The region has a dynamic and expanding agriculture and horticulture sector, characterised by increasing production and food processing. It requires fit for purpose transport infrastructure to deliver product to ports and markets efficiently.
- Land use continues to change from broad acre to irrigated and more intensive farming, including major plantings of almonds, nuts, olives and grapes on both sides of the Murray River.

¹ Central Murray Regional Transport Study (Victoria-New South Wales) 2014 Update Report, W. Russell 2014

² Loddon Campaspe Integrated Transport Strategy, InfraPlan and Geoff Anson Consulting, Dec 2015

³ Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Strategy, GHD (Oct 2014)

Top 15 priorities

The Top 15 priorities (listed in no particular order) were identified following a consultation process with the seven partner Councils, industry, community and relevant Victorian and NSW State departments and agencies, and an examination of relevant reports and documentation.

The priorities below draw on current regional challenges, trends and goals for the transport network. The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum will continue to advocate jointly for major transport infrastructure projects and service delivery improvements, seek funding for infrastructure projects and additional studies and will collaborate to further refine priorities (see also project assessment and prioritisation section (p 18)).

Priorities	Description
<p>1. Murray Crossings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Swan Hill Bridge ➤ Tooleybuc Bridge 	<p>There are currently no B-Double Higher Mass Limit (HML) crossings between Tocumwal and Euston-Robinvale to allow heavy freight vehicles to cross between NSW and Victoria. The Swan Hill and Tooleybuc Bridges have been assessed as the first two short-term priorities to be addressed under the 'Murray River Crossings Investment Priority Assessment', 2018. Strong support for creating two lane crossings at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc that are capable of handling oversize and over mass vehicles was given by industry, Councils and community members. Such construction would permit crossing by High Performance Freight Vehicles (HPFVs) and improve safety for road users and pedestrians.</p>
<p>2. Murray Basin Rail Project</p>	<p>The strategy recognises the over-riding priority of completing the Murray Basin Rail Project. The Victorian Government recently announced that work on the standardisation and upgrade of the Mangatang and Kulwin lines, due to be undertaken in 2018, will be deferred until 2020. It is vital that these remaining components are completed to facilitate additional freight movement by rail.</p>
<p>3. Freight route priorities (first/last mile roads)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hattah Robinvale Road upgrade 	<p>The region currently does not have a clearly defined HPFV freight road network, from farm gate to processing plant or market. A region wide priority road network for freight that links across council boundaries and with the Victorian and NSW arterial road networks is identified as a key priority. It includes first mile/last mile roads to enable investment in upgrading the road network to an appropriate standard to support safe and efficient movement of people and of freight (including HPFVs) to the Ports of Melbourne and Geelong. The strategy proposes a study to identify and prioritise roads (including local roads) for upgrading to cater for HPFVs. To support the HPFV network once identified, it is proposed that an ongoing, dedicated fund be created for rural and regional councils to upgrade and renew key freight routes and first mile/last mile connections.</p> <p>An immediate priority is to widen the Hattah Robinvale Road and upgrading the Collins Road intersection to meet safety and efficiency concerns resulting from horticulture industry expansion along its length and the need for HPFV access.</p>
<p>4. Calder Highway Corridor</p>	<p>The Calder corridor has the region's highest volume of traffic. Increased freight traffic carrying agricultural and horticultural product has resulted in more truck movements and increasing demand for larger vehicles to handle freight. This corridor requires duplication of lanes, extra passing lanes, rest stops, intersection treatments, e.g. at Marong, and upgrade of the Keilor and the Bridgewater bridges. This will allow the efficient movement of HPFVs, increase safety and better management of car/truck/caravan conflicts.</p>

Priorities	Description
<p>5. East-west highway corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sturt Highway ➤ Murray Valley Highway 	<p>The Sturt and Murray Valley Highways service freight traffic in the region, connecting major cities and towns and eventually reaching the ports of Melbourne and Geelong. Both Highways also support regional tourism, with the Murray Valley Highway forming the spine of the tourist route along the Murray River from which various tourist loops and trails are linked.</p> <p>Lack of passing lanes and rest stops on both corridors and some intersection treatments need to be addressed to reduce conflicts between freight/buses/caravans and cars to improve safety and travel time and allow HPFVs to travel along these corridors and onto local roads. Similar upgrading of the Loddon Valley Highway, which carries significant freight and tourist traffic to and from the region, is also required</p>
<p>6. Mildura truck bypass</p>	<p>The freight industry has given high priority to redesign and upgrade the current truck bypass coming off the George Chaffey Bridge via Seventh Avenue onto Benetook Avenue to reduce the heavy traffic through central Mildura. Proposed improvements include: create left turning priority for trucks coming off the bridge; redesign and alterations of Benetook Avenue roundabouts; and widening of Red Cliffs Meringur Road (C254).</p>
<p>7. Tourist routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lake Mungo ➤ Lake Tyrell ➤ Silo Art Trail 	<p>Mungo National Park is a key destination for tourists who must travel through Wentworth or Balranald Shires on roads that are not passable in wet weather. The sealing of Arumpo Road (Wentworth Shire has detailed study) and of Marma Box Creek Road (Balranald Shire) will permit all weather access to this important site from Mildura Rural City/Wentworth and Balranald Shires.</p> <p>The recent boost in popularity of Lake Tyrell as a destination for international tourists and evolving tourist interest in an art trail of silos in or near the region has created the need to assess improvements to ensure tourist routes and loops to these destinations are improved to a safe and appropriate standard.</p>
<p>8. Supply chain study of new intensive horticulture developments in the region – intermodal opportunities</p>	<p>The predicted increase in production for the region should be facilitated by getting freight onto rail as soon as possible. To support this, a supply chain study of new horticulture developments in the region is to be undertaken. The project would provide an evidence base to assist government, business and the transport and logistics sector in determining the most efficient routes to support horticulture developments, including increased use of HPFVs from farm gate to market or intermodal facility. The scope of the study must also include access to local roads, rest stops, overtaking lanes and opportunities to transport goods via rail.</p>
<p>9. Swan Hill passenger rail line and service</p>	<p>To meet community demands for increased passenger rail services for tourism, business, health, education and social visits to Bendigo and Melbourne, investment in capacity improvements on the Swan Hill passenger rail line is needed. A study to quantify upgrades and rolling stock needed to increase the Swan Hill & Echuca passenger services to five return services, five days per week is recommended.</p>
<p>10. Passenger rail service for Mildura</p>	<p>Mildura is the only regional city in Victoria without a passenger rail service. The standardisation and upgrade of the Mildura line for freight was completed in 2018. An investigation is required into a passenger service from Mildura to Melbourne, by the most efficient and timely route. The region requires access to low-cost rail travel for those members of the community needing to access health, education and other facilities in Melbourne or to bring visitors to Mildura.</p>

Priorities	Description
<p>11. Upgrade bridges and culverts</p>	<p>Identify strategic local bridge and culvert structures to accommodate HPFVs in irrigated primary production areas. Define priority routes from farm gate to market including key freight routes to the Ports of Melbourne and Geelong and progressively upgrade bridges and culverts along these routes, building on a study already done by Loddon Campaspe Transport Working Group on the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID). This study included Swan Hill Rural City and Gannawarra Shires.</p>
<p>12. Tracks and trails</p>	<p>Tourism is a growing and important contributor to the regional economy. Active transport options including the development of tracks and trails and recreational bike networks assist in attracting tourists and improving the health and wellbeing of the local community. The regional priorities for investment based around the Murray River Adventure Trail include the Kerang-Koondrook Rail Trail, Koondrook to Cohuna Forest Trail, Koondrook to Torrumbarry Trail and the Swan Hill to Lake Boga Active Trail.</p>
<p>13. Transport connections</p>	<p>The region seeks to improve the frequency and timing of public transport connections to enhanced Swan-Hill and Echuca train services and of the bus connections between the larger centres such as Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca, Ballarat, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, and stops at the smaller towns along these routes.</p> <p>People living in small communities in the region have limited access to services to meet their health, education and social needs. There is a need to better connect transport planning, community planning and health. This project will examine improved coordination and awareness of public and community transport services and consider the need for additional flexible and private transport options.</p>
<p>14. Investigate second bridge crossing at Mildura and Rail Connection from Mildura to Transcontinental Railway</p>	<p>Growing traffic including HPFVs on the George Chaffey Bridge, delays and disruptions on the bridge, and lack of through freight routes bypassing Mildura city have prompted calls to commence planning for a second Murray River crossing near Mildura. Similarly, the concept of a standard gauge railway line from Mildura to the Transcontinental Railway (e.g. to Broken Hill or Menindee), which would allow direct access by rail to Darwin, Perth and Sydney from the region has been identified for further investigation. A first step would be a comprehensive feasibility study building on the Murray Basin Rail Project analysis.</p> <p>The strategy supports the investigation of a second bridge crossing as part of a wider study that would include any new truck bypass, additional intermodal freight terminal capacity needs and possible interstate rail connection from Mildura to 'Transcontinental' in the longer term.</p>
<p>15. Implement Cross-border Commissioner for Victoria</p>	<p>During consultations on this strategy there were strong calls for implementation of a Cross Border Commissioner for Victoria to assist councils, industry and the community with the harmonisation of areas such as heavy vehicle rules on allowable weights (eg consider equal weight carrying limits for heavy vehicles between states) and configurations of vehicles and drivers' licenses. It is understood that this approach has now been agreed and the CMR Transport Forum urges the timely introduction of this mechanism.</p>

Why a Regional Transport Strategy?

The strategy is based on member councils working together as a region in association with their communities and industries to identify the needs and challenges of this composite region. It has been developed taking into account the relevant strategic, growth and regional plans in NSW and Victoria. Clarity regarding the region's transport infrastructure needs will better position the region for the next stages of economic growth and social development.

The objectives are to:

- Understand and map transport flows for the region.
- Identify strategies that create an integrated approach to manage the freight task across all modes of transport.
- Provide a shared view for advocacy on priorities for joint action or support in relation to transport infrastructure needs to meet the growing transport demands across all modes.
- Identify needs for improved levels of service in public and community transport available within and between townships in the region.
- Develop a consistent, structured approach to the assessment and prioritisation of transport infrastructure, maintenance and program needs within the region.
- Highlight anomalies that exist for transport operators managing the freight task across state borders.

The strategy is based on information provided by the seven municipalities, industry and other community members in relation to the transport task, including all modes of transport available in the region (road, rail and air):

- types of services (freight, passenger and recreation needs)

- transport corridor restrictions including bridges
- needs of agriculture, horticulture, mining and tourism.

State road, rail and transport agencies have also been consulted in deciding where the region's transport effort should be focused.

The strategy highlights the need for an ongoing regional governance framework to ensure that regionally significant projects are identified and supported, and that key projects eligible for Federal or State funding are 'investment ready'.

Council advocacy for projects and programs will have a key role to play, but will be strengthened by evidence-based priorities identified with the aid of a robust assessment tool.

The methodology included:

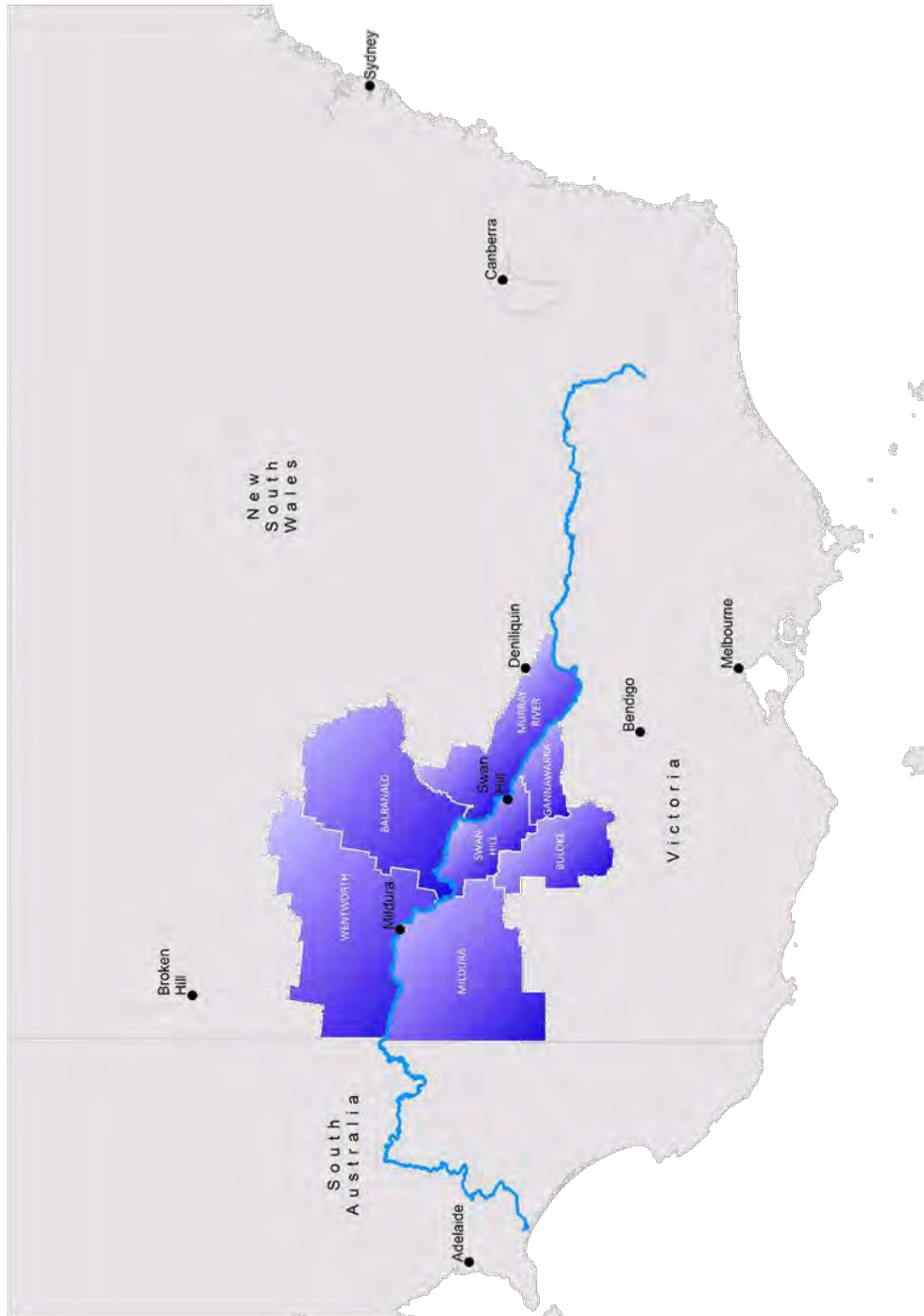
- a review of relevant State, regional and local economic development and transport strategies (see list at Appendix D)
- consultation with participating councils, industry (including transport operators) and community on issues and priorities for action
- assessment of priorities by technical committee of participating councils
- review of proposed priorities with State agencies
- preparation and circulation of draft strategy
- finalisation of strategy with Central Murray Transport Steering Committee member councils in consultation with State agencies.

This strategy identifies the top 15 transport priorities for Central Murray region. It also identifies next step action to progress the goals and objectives.

In total there are 52 actions outlined to investigate, assess against agreed criteria and implement. These actions are listed in Appendix A (Strategies and Actions) and are referenced in the main body of this strategy where analysis and further action is required.

The assessment of additional proposed projects, outside the top 15, is summarised in Appendix B (Summary of Other Priority Projects).

Figure 1: The Central Murray Region study area



Regional overview

Situated in the western corner of Victoria and NSW, the Central Murray Region straddles the Murray River and has direct economic and social links with NSW, Victoria and South Australia. It lies at the cross-roads of the east-west transport corridor from Sydney to Adelaide and Perth, and the main north-south route to Melbourne in the west of these states. The region incorporates the municipalities of Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Buloke in Victoria and Wentworth, Balranald and Murray River in NSW (see Figure 1).

The region has a Mediterranean climate, comprises large amounts of public land and contains areas of environmental and cultural significance including Ramsar wetlands, forests, highly significant Aboriginal heritage areas and places of historical significance in terms of river trade and innovative irrigation schemes

As shown in Table 1, the largest populations are located in Mildura and Swan Hill in Victoria followed by the Murray River Council in NSW and Gannawarra Shire in Victoria.

Overall population growth in the region has been modest with increases in Mildura, Swan Hill and Murray River while other shires have experienced a decrease in population. The regional city of Mildura and the regional centre of Swan Hill provide higher level services to the surrounding catchments in Victoria and NSW, while Mildura also services parts of South Australia.

In Victoria, the Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan⁴ showed that Mildura and Swan Hill have younger than average age structures and relatively high levels of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and high Aboriginal populations. Buloke and Gannawarra have an older age profile. In general terms, however, the region has diminishing youth numbers and an expanding retiree population. This report also highlights an expected increase in the Loddon Mallee North region population of 13% between 2012 and 2041 but notes that this will occur in the urban areas eg Mildura, with declining populations in the rural areas.

Table 1: Municipal population of the Central Murray Region⁵

Municipality	Population (2017)
Balranald	2,318
Buloke	6,151
Gannawarra	10,563
Mildura	55,071
Murray River	11,960
Swan Hill	20,849
Wentworth	6,955
TOTAL	113,867

The region's economy⁶ is substantially based on agriculture, contributing 18.4% (\$2.35 billion) of the Central Murray Region's \$12.761 billion total output. After agriculture, the main industry sectors are manufacturing (15.8%), particularly in relation to food processing, then construction (10.9%) and service provision. Mildura Rural City contributes nearly half (46.9%) of the region's output, followed by Swan Hill Rural City (19.9%) and Murray River Council (10.4%). While manufacturing and other industries are concentrated in Mildura and Swan Hill, other towns such as Moama, Kerang, Cohuna, Wentworth, Balranald, Mathoura and Donald also act as employment/service hubs for the nearby rural areas.

⁵ REMPLAN, Central Murray Transport Plan Economic Data Report, Economic Data Report, May 2018 p4.

⁶ REMPLAN, *Ibid*, p7-9

⁴ Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Background Report, 2014, pp46-50

Table 2: Central Murray Region economic indicators (2017)

Municipality	Agriculture Regional Exports (\$m)	Manufacturing Regional Exports (\$m)	TOTAL Regional Exports (\$m)	Tourism Output (\$m)	TOTAL Regional Employed	Unemployment Rate (2017) (%)
Balranald	66	7	105	15	761	3.2
Buloke	184	20	251	18	2,493	4.2
Gannawarra	253	56	440	37	4,051	3.9
Mildura	532	612	1,817	307	22,368	6.7
Murray River	268	126	562	143	4,666	3.5
Swan Hill	379	301	873	102	9,126	4.5
Wentworth	199	184	589	48	2,837	9.0
CENTRAL MURRAY REGION				\$670m	46,102	5.7

As shown in Table 2, the total value of tourism output for the region is \$670 million (5.2% of total output). Again, Mildura is largest in terms of share of the tourism value, with Murray River Council second with 21.4% of the tourism value and Swan Hill (15.3%) reflecting the infrastructure and services available at these locations.

Travel to the region has increased with more domestic and international visitors coming to the region to visit the iconic Murray River and nearby lakes and forests. National parks, including Lake Mungo, attract an estimated 30,000 visitors pa. Lake Tyrrell has recently become a major drawcard for visitors from China and a Silo Art Trail has opened up in and around the Buloke Shire, following the innovative decoration of grain silos no longer in use.

The sum of all **exports⁷** from each of Central Murray LGAs is \$4.67 billion. As seen in Table 2, the region is a major exporter of agricultural commodities. This includes broadacre crops, fruit and nuts, vegetables and livestock (see more detailed information in Figure 2 below).

Extractive industries are expected to have an important role to play in future. The region is home to significant sand and stone resources, including mineral sands, salt and gypsum. Mineral sands deposits in north Balranald are extensive and once mining commences, transport of product will require access to adequate bridge, road and rail infrastructure to get product to processing plant or port.

⁷ Regional exports data is the value (\$) of goods exported outside the defined region that have been generated by businesses inside the region. It includes a portion of exports traded between Central Murray LGAs.

The region's climate and hours of sunshine are also encouraging investment in renewable energy, particularly solar generation of electricity. Projects are underway or identified in Mildura, Swan Hill, and several locations around Kerang.

The existing transport system underpins economic and social activities.

Ongoing investment in transport infrastructure is needed to further support a growing regional economy, noting that such investment needs to be affordable in terms of the ongoing maintenance costs of existing assets including roads and bridges.

This strategy is designed to contribute to the objectives of the Victorian and NSW Regional and other Plans that include:

- Improve movement of freight ⁸ (LCRSP)
- Enhance road and rail freight links (Riverina Murray Regional Plan⁹ (RMRP))
- Identify and protect future transport corridors¹⁰ (RMRP)
- Improve public and community transport services (Far West RP¹¹)
- Improve public and private transport connectivity (LCRSP)¹²
- Secure investment in regional airport and aerodrome infrastructure (LCRSP)¹³
- Resolve cross-border issues and promote leadership and collaboration across our region (LCRSP)¹⁴
- Create a connected and competitive environment for cross-border communities (RMRP)¹⁵
- Better use of our rail freight assets¹⁶, including improving the efficiency and reducing the cost of rail access to the Port of Melbourne

⁸ Loddon Campaspe Regional Strategic Plan 2015-18, p9

⁹ Riverina Murray Regional Plan (RMRP) 2036, p42

¹⁰ RMRP, *ibid*, p46

¹¹ Far West Regional Plan (FWRP) 2036, p63

¹² LCRSP, *ibid* p9

¹³ LCRSP, *ibid*, p9

¹⁴ LCRSP, *ibid* p9

¹⁵ RMRP, *ibid*, p51

¹⁶ Victorian Freight Plan 2018-50, 2018, p42

The Central Murray Region continues to attract new investment linked to agriculture, mining and renewable energy and a diverse range of jobs, a diversifying economy, capitalising on competitive advantages.

The strategy will create the enabling actions and initiatives linked to transport networks and infrastructure to help maximise the benefit to the region and each state.

Distribution of population and economic growth

The Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan¹⁷ describes growth across the region as uneven, with modest growth projected for areas in and around the major centres and throughout the Murray River corridor, but with decreasing population projected for the dryland areas. This pattern is mirrored in the NSW component of the region.

According to the 2016 Census Journey to Work data, agriculture, forestry and fishing are the biggest employers in the region employing 17.6% of the workforce.

Mildura Rural City contributes nearly half the total workforce (48%) followed by Swan Hill Rural City (19.8%) and Murray River Council (9.7%). This is consistent with population patterns for the region. Some parts of the population are highly mobile – particularly seasonal workers in the horticulture industry and transient workers in mining and other industries.

According to the Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan¹⁸, most people in the Victorian municipalities of the region live and work within their Local Government Area boundaries (Mildura 94%, Swan Hill 93%, Gannawarra 89% and Buloke 88%). Patterns in Balranald would be similar. Murray River and Wentworth Shires would be expected to have reasonable numbers of people working in the neighbouring large city centres of Echuca and Mildura respectively.

Transport linkages and corridors influence development in the region. Areas of high value horticulture and other irrigated agricultural land, major tourist destinations, mining and opportunities for new technologies such as solar energy generation influence the economy and investment.

¹⁷ Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan, May 2014, p9

¹⁸ *ibid* p68

Agricultural and horticultural overview

The economy of the region is dominated by a sector defined as 'agriculture, fisheries and forestry'.

Based on the 2017 figures provided in the REMPLAN report¹⁹, of the \$2.35 billion of agriculture, fisheries and forestry output of the Central Murray Region:

- The largest sub-sector is 'Other Agriculture' at a value of \$1.1 billion. This sector comprises a wide range of agricultural commodities including the growing of grapes, olives, stone fruit, citrus fruit, other fruit and nut trees, vegetables, cotton, sugar cane, kiwi, berry fruit, floriculture, nursery production and others.
 - Mildura Rural City, with \$482 million, followed by Swan Hill Rural City (\$344 million) municipalities produce the majority of 'Other Agriculture'.
- 'Sheep, grains, beef and dairy cattle' are close behind with a contribution of \$1.0 billion toward total output for the Region.
 - For this sector, the majority is produced in Gannawarra Shire (\$242 million), closely followed by Murray River Shire (\$241 million).

Looking at data for agricultural exports and imports shows

- Exports from each Central Murray LGA is \$1.9 billion. Of this, Mildura generates \$530 million, Swan Hill \$377 million followed by Murray River \$267m and Gannawarra with \$252 million.
- Imports from each Central Murray LGA total \$0.6 billion

To examine the agricultural commodities produced in the Central Murray Region, the REMPLAN Report used the *ABS Agricultural Census 2015 to 2016* and due to the unavailability of agricultural commodity data for LGA geographies, Statistical Areas 2 data was used to approximate the Central Murray Region and its LGAs.

On this basis, the region produced²⁰

- 1.7m tonnes of broadacre crops with wheat making up 57% of the total and barley 31%.
 - 512,000 tonnes of hay and silage.
- 711,000 tonnes of fruit and nuts were produced, of which
- wine grapes comprise 48%
 - other grapes were 18%.
 - oranges were also significant at 13%
 - almonds, at only 8% are expected to increase markedly over future years when the massive new almond tree plantings come into production

122,000 tonnes of vegetables were produced including -

- potatoes (35%)
- carrots (27%)
- melons (17%)

Livestock numbers for the region include -

- 2.3 million sheep/lambs
- 243,000 cattle of which 60% is destined for meat production and the remainder are for dairy.
- Around 7.2 million dozen eggs were produced 94.3% of which were free range

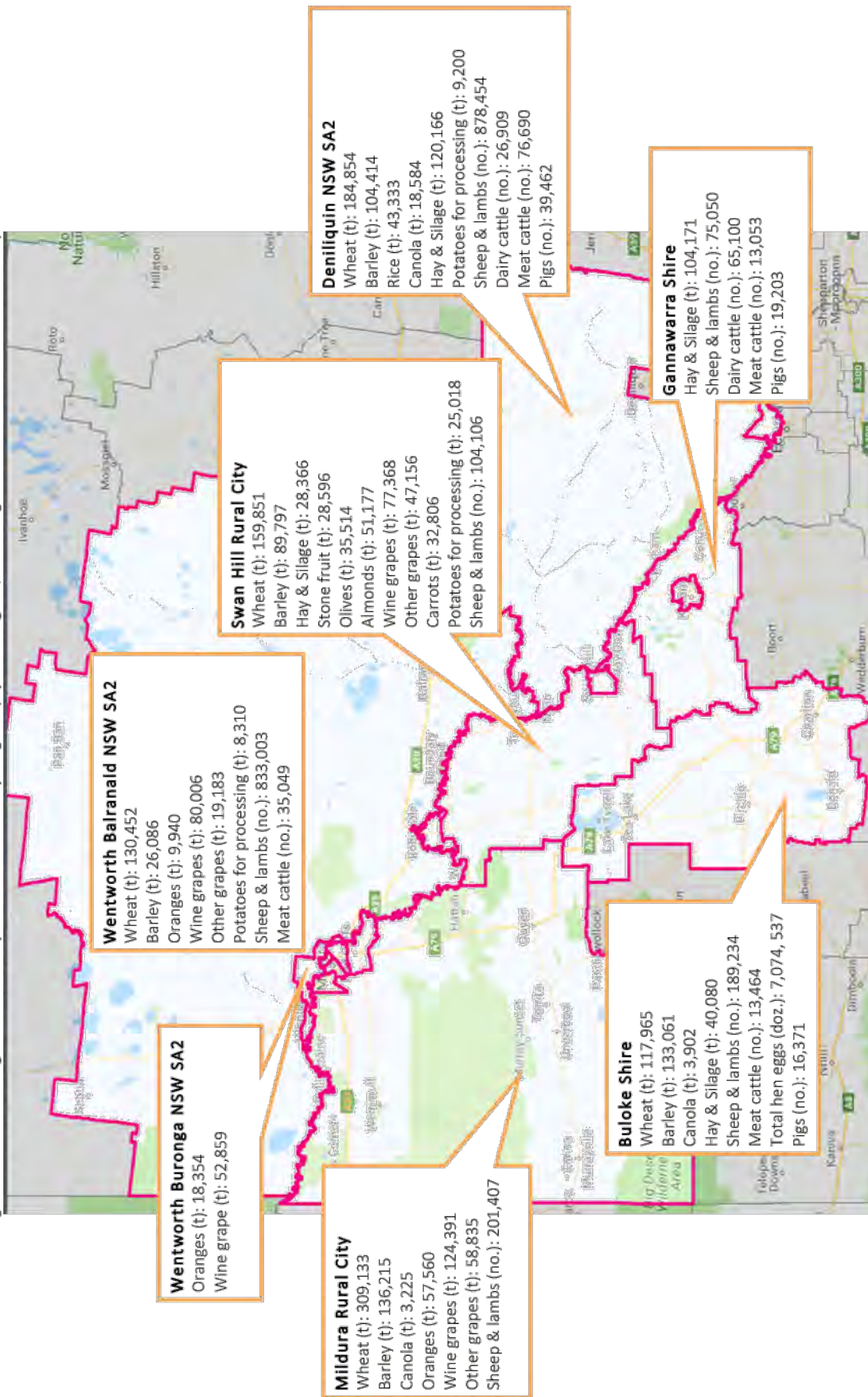
Figure 2²¹ shows the distribution of these products across the Central Murray Region.

²⁰ REMPLAN *Ibid*, p10-17

²¹ *Ibid*, p10-17

¹⁹ REMPLAN *Ibid*, p10-11

Figure 2: 2015-16 Agricultural output Central Murray Region (by SA2 region, showing correlation of LGA boundaries)



Hay production is also significant, with much of it sold to third parties. New facilities for storage and transport of hay by container have also been established, most recently at Ultima on the Manangatang rail line where Mallee Hay has located its facility ready for the shift to standard gauge in 2018. New manufacturing activities in the region related to food processing underway or planned include: expansion of abattoirs at Swan Hill and Mildura, application for a new \$40m almond cracking plant at Wemen, further expansion at the Lamattina Carrots, an \$80m investment in a Mildura Winery (Wellong Wines) and the construction of an almond processing and co-generation power plant by Select Harvest at Carina West.

Mining

Iuka Resources Limited (Iuka) has proposed to develop a mineral sands mine in south-western NSW, known as the Bairanald Mineral Sands Project. In its January 2016 Environmental Impact Statement, Iuka stated that the heavy mineral concentrate (HMC) would be transported by road to Victoria for processing at Hamilton and ilmenite would be transported by road to a proposed rail loading facility in Manangatang, and then railed to Victorian ports. This would require a large number of heavy truck movements. The project is still under consideration and has not proceeded as quickly as previously envisaged.

The Cristal mine 80km north of Bairanald is also under development and consists of six million tonnes of heavy material to be concentrated and processed. Cristal has a mineral separation plant at Broken Hill, so truck movements of product are in a northerly direction. However, anecdotally many of the workers live in Mildura and travel to the mine each week, over roads that are not all weather proof.

Quarries are also located across the Central Murray Region including Morello Gypsum and Organic Manures at Buronga, Hanson Quarries at Mildura, Lipps Fertilisers at Kerang, Mawsons quarries at Lake Boga, Lake Cooper, Mildura, Broken Hill, Berrigan and Buronga (sand). There is also a gypsum mine operating 12 km north of Bairanald.

Solar power generation

The region's climate and many hours of sunshine make it well suited to solar energy generation. In terms of large scale projects, new solar farm developments are under construction near Kerang, at Swan Hill, Bannerton and Merbein. There is also a proposal for the Sunraysia Solar Farm at Kyalite.

The Victorian Skills Commissioner²² has described horticulture as the 'cornerstone of the Region's economy and is forecast to double over the next decade'. New plantings²³ have been approved or are underway for an estimated 15,000 ha of almonds, 3,000 ha of olives, 1,000 ha of table grapes, 1,500 ha of other commodities such as citrus, dried fruit, other nuts and stone fruit combined. Much of this activity is centred around Robinvale and Euston and along the Murray River on both sides of the border in either direction. Gofarm is also a new major investor in almond plantings in NSW and Victoria and has established its own nursery to propagate almond trees. Between Swan Hill and Kerang, new crops are being introduced, eg Kilter Rural now grows tomatoes (trucked to Echuca for processing) and cotton. Intensive farming ventures including pigs and chickens in Gannawarra Shire, chicken in Buloke and a beef cattle feedlot in Mildura are estimated to provide an extra 60 jobs or more in the region.

The Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange continues to conduct cattle and sheep sales on alternate fortnights drawing on a large regional catchment that extends well into NSW. Many of the cattle are now brought from NSW in HPFVs that must cross the Murray River at Robinvale due to restrictions on the Swan Hill Bridge. Other saleyards serving the areas include Wycheproof, Ouyen, Kerang, Echuca, Bendigo and Deniliquin. Bendigo is the largest market for sheep while Echuca is the largest market for cattle.

In the dryland areas, wheat and barley continue to be produced in significant quantities along with oilseeds and legumes.

The deregulation of the wheat industry and the Murray Basin rail upgrade has provided the impetus for upgrade of some of the grain receipt points from which product is railed to port in bulk and the rationalisation of others. Graincorp has announced plans to upgrade sites at Quambatook, Donald, Manangatang and Yelta.

It has also led to the practice of storing of grain on farm in 'sausages' whereby the grain is held and marketed at a more favourable time and transported by truck (often a Higher Mass Load B-Double) to a receipt point or direct to port.

Heavy vehicles are playing an increasing role in the wheat supply chain. Rice continues to be grown only in the Murray River Council.

²² Victorian Skills Commissioner 2017 Report, p31

²³ VSC Contact, Glenn Stewart, private communication

Freight transport and emerging trends

The main freight routes for the Central Murray Region are shown below in Figure 3.

The emerging transport issues from the consultation and research undertaken can be summarised as follows:

- Increasing pressure for Higher Productivity Freight Vehicles from farm gate to processing facility/market/port with consequences for local and State roads.
- A-triple road train vehicles have been introduced in southern NSW and in northern Victoria (currently restricted to north of Ouyen) to cater for industry demands (eg carrots, tomatoes, livestock etc). Extension of this to the ports of Melbourne and Geelong should be examined.
- The \$440m Murray Basin Rail project, currently underway to convert freight lines in Western Victoria to standard gauge, is designed to increase delivery of grain and other products to port by rail, therefore reducing heavy truck numbers on the roads. The completion of this project in full is a high priority.
- Increasing number of freight movements as agricultural land use changes and productivity increases, with associated increased transport demand.
- Pinch points on the main north-south road corridor, the Calder Highway, which carries freight originating from southern NSW and northern Victoria through the region to Melbourne, affect supply chain costs.
- Lack of suitable bridge crossings between Robinvale and Tocumwal to meet Higher Mass Load (HML) freight transport needs.
- East-west road network needs to support more efficient freight movements to processing facilities as well as a safe route for increasing tourist and passenger traffic.

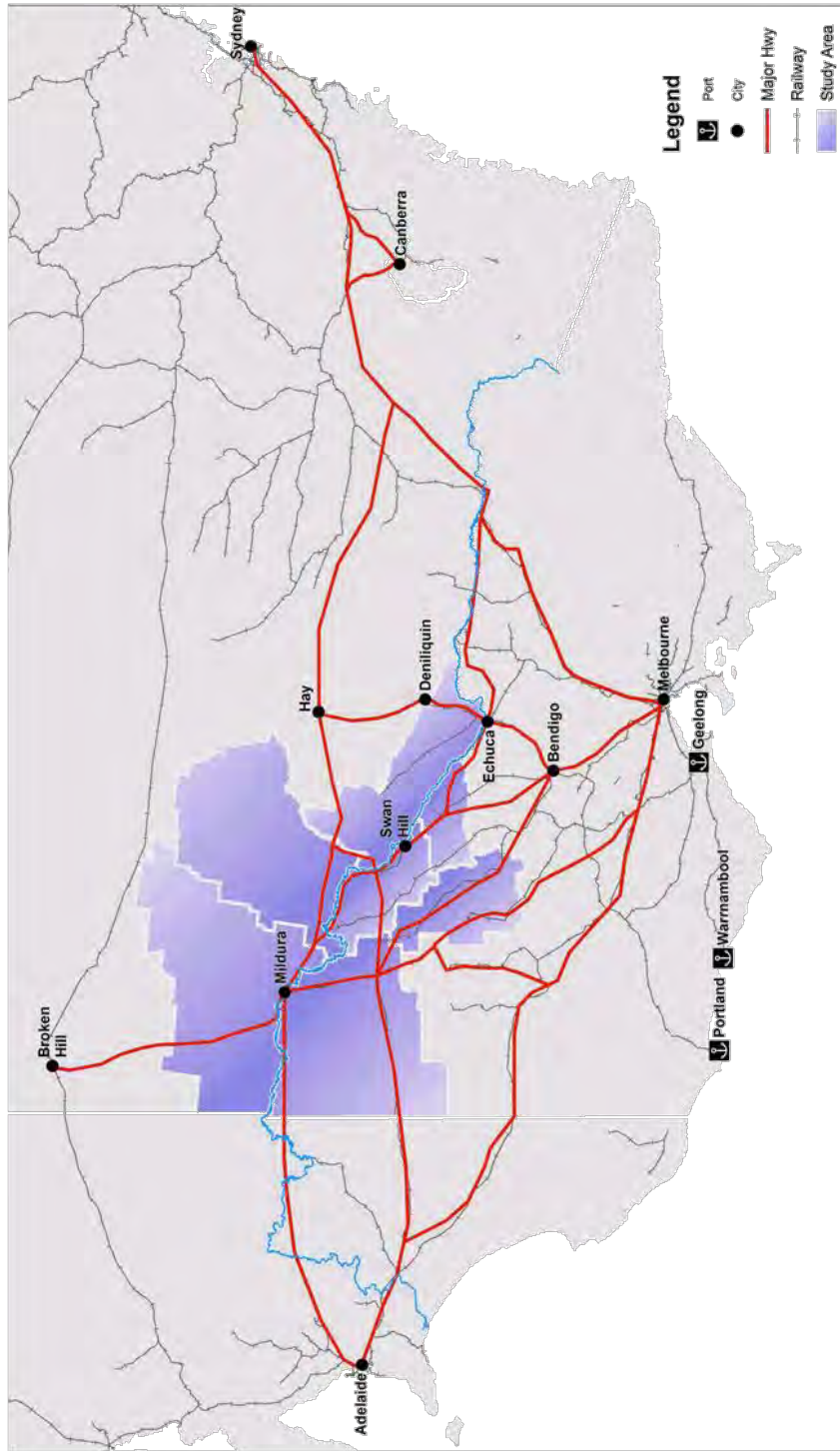
- Maintenance funding and road design standards need to cater to higher productivity freight vehicles and increased traffic on key freight routes.
- Improved supply chain costs will allow local producers to remain internationally competitive.
- Ongoing government and industry investment in rail and in freight hubs and opportunities for more efficient access to the ports.
- Increased complexity and demand for transport infrastructure network improvements in and around Mildura have highlighted the need for an Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy for Mildura.
- Commence planning for possible connection to the Transcontinental Rail to provide access for freight to Darwin, Sydney and Adelaide ports.

Agriculture and horticulture industries continue to diversify and shift across the region and processing plants, abattoirs and storage facilities have been and continue to be built in close proximity to the respective industry centres to maximise efficiency in freight and logistics.

Internal movements between farms and storage or processing facilities tend to be over shorter distances but may occur in more compressed time frames to coincide with harvest periods, leading to significant numbers of heavy vehicles accessing a small area over a short period, such as grain trucks accessing silos. Increasingly, farmers are storing grains on farm and transporting by HPPV truck to port or silo when market prices are favourable, with adverse consequences to local roads, particularly in wet conditions.

In the longer term, there was support by industry and Councils for an investigation of the feasibility of a rail link from Mildura to the Intercontinental Rail line, combined with an additional bridge crossing, intermodal facility and truck bypass, to connect to port opportunities in the north, east and west.

Figure 3: Major road and rail transport routes in the Central Murray Region.



The improvements are expected to allow increased train speeds thus reducing cycle times and increasing rail exports to the three Victorian ports of Melbourne, Geelong and Portland. 20,000 fewer truck trips to these ports was an identified benefit of this project.

These rail improvements were a major focus of the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum and were included in the top priorities for the 2014 Draft Transport Plan for the region.

Future work on the rail lines, as identified by the freight industry, focused on additional upgrades to the lines including more passing loops to allow for longer trains (moving from 48 to at least 60 unit trains) and improved signalling and scheduling to allow more services per day.

Improved Murray River crossings

At this time there are no crossings over the Murray River between Euston-Robinvale and Tocumwal rated to take HML freight vehicles. A second bridge is under construction at Echuca/Moama that will have this capability when completed in 2021-22. Trends for increasing use of HML vehicles for efficient freight transport is being constrained at the crossings in the centre of the region because of the need to break down loads at these crossings or to travel much greater distances to cross elsewhere. The extra time required impacts on supply chain costs for the region. The width restriction on the Swan Hill Bridge has also created barriers to the movement of oversize agricultural equipment.

The next bridges for renewal on the Murray are the Swan Hill Bridge (almost 120 years' old, single lane, current width restriction of 3.1m and in rapidly deteriorating condition) and the Tooleybuc Bridge. These bridges have been identified as the top short term priorities under the *Murray River Crossings Investment Priority Assessment, 2018* and by the Murray River Group of Councils as well as by each municipality – Swan Hill, Bairnald and Murray River Councils. Some studies have been completed on both sites to examine suitable locations for a new or enhanced bridge. While the Tooleybuc proposed alignment has been generally supported, there is still debate on the proposed location for Swan Hill.

The Barham Koondrook Bridge is also undergoing a major refurbishment in 2018 but will not be Higher Mass Limit rated. While local freight transporters have sought an increase in the rating of the Nyah Bridge to HML status, NSW Roads and Maritime Services has indicated the bridge design does not cater for this higher level of loading.

Importance of Calder and Sturt Corridors and regional highways

The two key freight routes for the region identified nationally are the Calder and the Sturt Highways with the Mallee and Silver City Highways recognised as secondary cross border road connections. The Murray Valley Highway in the north of Victoria is also important in enabling efficient freight movement and is the key tourism spine for the region. The Sunraysia Highway running north-south in the west of Victoria and the Cobb Highway from Hay to Echuca/Moama are also significant.

The Calder Highway is the region's most important single transport link between Mildura and Melbourne, carrying produce from NSW and north western Victoria to domestic markets in Melbourne and to Ports of Melbourne, Portland and Geelong. Identified improvements needed along this corridor include: duplication and additional passing lanes at northern end; intersection improvements at the turn onto the Calder Alternative at Marong and at 'Y' intersections (dangerous for larger freight vehicles); and an upgrade of the bridges at Keilor and at Bridgewater to handle Higher Mass Limit (HML) vehicles of at least 72 tonnes. The Calder Alternative between Ravenswood and Marong also requires improvement to cater safely for growing HPEV demands.

Similarly, the Sturt Highway is the major east-west corridor for traffic from Sydney to Adelaide and regions such as the Barossa and Riverland. The route is used extensively by freight transporters and tourists. Issues identified during consultation include need for passing lanes in NSW (eg between Euston and Gol Gol) and in Victoria, the need for more rest stops, and difficult heavy vehicle movements at the Euston roundabout and at the 90 degree turn from the Sturt Highway northward through Ivanhoe in middle of Bairnald Township.

Upgrade of the rail freight network

The Central Murray Region is fortunate that freight can be transported to processing and market via rail as well as road. The \$440m Murray Basin Rail project is currently under construction, converting freight lines in western Victoria from broad to standard gauge and upgrading the axle loadings from 19 to 21 tonnes, for all except the Murrayville line. Also planned is the re-opening and upgrade of the existing unused standard gauge connection between Maryborough and Ararat, which will allow connection by rail from the north to the port of Portland.

the region. A small intermodal also operates at Donald which adds a number of wagons to the Mildura train.

While works on the Mildura rail line were being undertaken, an intermodal facility was set up in Manangatang by Wakefields. This facility will continue to be available for five years to anyone wanting to access it. Mallee Hay/Entegra in association with Qube has also established a hay processing site at Ultima and plans to rail hay and other product by container on the new standard gauge line.

A previous study in Victoria of possible intermodal locations²⁴ identified possible locations at Ouyen on the Mildura line, Sea Lake and Dumosa on the Kulwin line and Manangatang, Ultima and Quambatook on the Manangatang line. The freight industry in Mildura has also spoken of other possible sites on the Mildura line.

Improved rail freight lines and more intermodal sites will also assist in downsizing loads from road trains to continue the journey to ports. It is recognised that any decision on a new or expanded intermodal service will be driven by private sector investors who see a good business case. To assist in planning and informing potential investors, it is proposed that a supply chain study be undertaken of intensive horticulture in the region that includes all the new almond, olive, carrot, etc. plantations, planned increase in processing facilities.

Identifying strategic HPFV routes from farm gate to processing or market (first mile/last mile upgrades)

There is an increasing trend for farmers to use more efficient freight vehicles to reduce supply chain costs. This means using higher productivity or higher mass limit vehicles – often via a contracted transporter. There are differences across municipalities in the way each has identified and issued permits for HPFV routes, particularly on minor local roads where HPFV trucks are increasingly being used to transport grain from on farm storage to either ports or receipt points. Changes to legislation, placing responsibility on the farmer for the actions of the transporter, has placed this issue high on the agenda, particularly in the Swan Hill municipality.

The region currently does not have a clearly defined high productivity freight vehicle network, from farm gate to processing plant, port or market that encompasses the whole of the region. Developing a network for HPFV vehicles that links across council boundaries and with the Victorian and NSW arterial road networks is identified as a key priority for this strategy. The creation of a dedicated fund to upgrade these roads, once identified, is strongly supported.

Freight transporters operating around Mildura and Wentworth, supported by their local councils, have emphasised the need to plan for a second Murray crossing at or near Mildura to cope with the growing population and conflict between urban passenger traffic and large-scale freight traffic movement on the Sturt Highway. Further investigation is required to assess this need and to look at suitable locations including a possible crossing at Karadoc to the east or at Coomealla to the west.

Mildura – Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy

Mildura is by far the region's largest centre with a population of around 55,000 when including Irymple, Red Cliffs and Merbein) which has been projected by the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure to increase to 60,000 by 2030. It also has an expanding agricultural sector and manufacturing growth to support it as well as an extensive service sector. It is a major freight hub for the region. Mildura is the only regional city without a passenger rail service which this strategy has identified this as a high priority to be addressed. Mildura's airport and aerodrome have recently been upgraded substantially, creating the possibility of international passenger and freight flights in the future, if appropriate volumes are available in both directions.

To plan for Mildura's expanded needs, it is proposed that an Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy be developed for Mildura that will address current needs including strengthening transport routes and links within Mildura and to other centres, identifying locations for future needs such as a second crossing of the Murray and links to truck bypass, rail and intermodal facilities. Once identified, consideration should be given to reserving these sites for future investment. There has also been interest shown in the longer term of a rail link from Mildura to the intercontinental Rail Line at Broken Hill or Menindee.

Potential for enhanced intermodal facilities

Completion of the Murray Basin Rail project together with the ongoing expansion of agricultural and horticultural products in the region, would provide the opportunity for increased rail transport of freight and enhanced services from existing and/or new intermodal terminals. The enhanced use of an improved and efficient rail freight system is strongly supported.

Currently, the Merbein Intermodal Terminal, operated by Wakefields, runs a train to Melbourne three days a week and is the main service provider in

²⁴ Central Murray Region: Intermodal Opportunities Draft Report, 2014, Opus in ass'n with SGS.

A high-level freight network has been developed as part of this strategy. However, further work is required to refine this network. The CMR Transport Forum and Technical Committee will continue working with industry to identify the physical, regulatory and other barriers to improved freight operations and opportunities to improve regional freight efficiency. Efforts will be made to harmonise standards for freight routes, mindful of the cross-border nature of the region and the challenges that brings.

Heavy vehicle access to irrigated farms over culverts and bridges

The bridge structures/culverts in the irrigated parts of the region provide a significant challenge for freight planning, route selection and 'freight from farm gate'. There is a lack of data in some areas on the ability of irrigation channel bridges and culverts to carry HPPVs. This restricts the ability of councils to open up additional B-double routes. Already identified as a priority under the Loddon Campaspe Integrated Transport Strategy, a study of this has been undertaken for the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) in Victoria, including the municipalities of Swan Hill Rural City and Gannawarra. The opportunity exists to extend this work to Mildura and the three NSW Shires of Wentworth, Balranald and Murray Bridge to gain similar information for their Shires.

Maintenance

The gaps in maintenance or replacement of aging infrastructure pose a challenge to the region for State and local government roads. Councils, particularly the smaller shires, are struggling to fund the maintenance required to maintain all of their roads at an appropriate standard. Assessment of ongoing and shifting need is being undertaken.

Similarly, this study has highlighted problems on a number of State roads that need to be addressed and prioritised in terms of utilising the resources available. Stressed pavements across the network are rapidly losing strength and more investment in rebuilding existing pavements is needed. Increased funding for C-class Victorian roads has been identified as a key gap.

The further identification and prioritisation of key freight routes and problem areas on these routes will assist with in allocating resources to best possible use.

Air services

There is a well developed commercial **passenger air service** operating from Mildura only. A recent \$50m investment in capital improvements to the runway and terminal have made Mildura suitable to land larger planes, including 737s and A320s. Further suggestions raised included scoping the possible introduction of international flights, eg from New Zealand, although the requirement to ensure payload certainty (140 passengers each way) was regarded as limiting at this time. The need for improvements or upgrades to small aerodromes in Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Buloke, Balranald and Murray River Shires was also identified as priorities by the respective Councils.

There is currently very limited movement of freight by air from the region, with a few flights making special deliveries of early season perishable products mainly from Mildura. The planes used for current passenger services to the Mildura are not configured to take large loads of freight so dedicated freight services would be the most likely feasible option.

To develop and maintain a **viable air freight service** - whether to domestic or international destination(s) - the region would need to be able to provide sufficient volumes of high value product on a regular basis to make air freighting out of the region economic and a payload for travel into the region would also be required. Mildura airport would be the most suitable for the air freight task.

Ongoing monitoring of demand and future investigation of options is recommended at this stage.



Possible link to Transcontinental

The standardisation of the Mildura line provides the opportunity for an eventual interstate connection from Mildura to the ‘Transcontinental’ Rail Line. The Murray Basin Project (Aug 2015) Study explored such a possible link in the context of minerals deposits in south western NSW and also as a possible alternative through route between Melbourne and Perth. As envisaged at that time, construction of the line could have involved a deviation from Red Cliffs, south of the town of Mildura, which would eliminate many level crossings. The concept was not further investigated due to long-term nature of perceived future needs and uncertainty around the volumes of freight.

Further consideration of this long term project, should demand growth increase to required levels, would require agreements between NSW and Victoria, further detailed alignment planning, and the development of a concept design.

Other freight issues

In NSW a number of the towns such as Wentworth and Balranald have issues with freight traffic travelling through towns. At Balranald, a poorly executed 90 degree turn in the centre of town could be relocated to the edge of town to improve safety and reduce truck traffic. Similarly the roundabout at Euston needs to be improved for freight traffic.

Population movements across the region

Mildura, and to a lesser extent, Swan Hill, are experiencing population growth. However, many of the region’s rural communities and those more remote to transport choices are experiencing declining populations.

The reasons for population decline are not unique to the region and revolve around increased scale of farming equipment, fewer workers needed on farm, rationalisation of services into larger centres, increased personal mobility allowing people to access goods and services further away, and increased preference for an urban lifestyle including improved access to education and health facilities.

Consequently, population is leaking from the smaller rural centres to the large centres and to the cities. Additional support is needed to ensure those people in smaller communities have access to the services they require to have a sustainable economy and lifestyle in the region.

While ultimately market forces will determine where growth and investment occurs, policy interventions that promote equity and prosperity across the region (e.g. with regard to transport), play an important role in ensuring ongoing access to employment, education and services from dispersed settlements. ‘Improving public transport services for smaller communities through flexible and responsive non private travel options’ (this is proposed to be further developed and is identified in strategy 5.1, Appendix A) and providing a highly efficient road system between communities will be important.



Transport Network Overview

The road transport network is underpinned by the two National transport corridors – the Calder and the Sturt highways.

The Calder road and rail corridor runs north south from Mildura to Melbourne and is the main transport corridor for the region. Upgrades to the Calder Freeway in the south and current work on the Mildura rail line, which runs close to the Calder, help support growth in the movement of freight and people along this important transport corridor. Further enhancements are underway and more are needed in the north of the corridor in particular.

The Sturt Highway provides a similar key role as the east-west spine across the top of the region from NSW into Victoria and then into South Australia.

Other key road links include the Murray Valley Highway, the main tourist corridor for the region and the Sunraysia Highway, which links to as Ballarat. To the north, the Silver City Highway links to the region Broken Hill and the Cobb Highway links the region to Deniliquin, Hay and connects to Sydney.

The Mallee Highway provides an alternate route to Adelaide and links to the Tooleybuc Bridge, which this strategy has identified as a priority for replacement, along with the Swan Hill Bridge.

Freight volumes on the network more than double during harvest seasons and mixing large numbers of trucks with commuter and tourist traffic is a safety concern, particularly on narrow country roads.

In the east of the region, improvements to the Bendigo passenger rail line have resulted in strong growth in patronage to and from Melbourne. Much needed upgrades of the Echuca and Swan Hill lines to Bendigo hub would support business, education, health, tourist and social needs for resident and visiting passengers.

This strategy seeks to help ensure that the transport network supports positive changes to the regional economy and encourages population growth or at least maintenance in the smaller centres.

Trends in transport network management

Regional transport groups are looking at developing whole-of-network supply chain mapping and functional classifications of networks for the main user groups: freight, commuter and tourist. This strategy proposes the region commence by looking at the functional classification of freight routes.

This process defines the priority network routes and operating standards for those routes and then enables identification of gaps in the network for prioritised investment to meet the agreed operating standard. This work supports business case and funding proposals for targeted investment on the transport network.

Once extended to tourism and community network functional classification, this whole-of-network classification would include road, rail, public and active transport networks. For example the journey from home to work could include cycling on a defined bike path to the train station, having good bike storage facilities at the station, taking the train to town and then walking on accessible and legible footpaths to get to work.

Functional classification and mapping

Development of the strategy has identified that the region progress development of a functional network classification and mapping for freight routes. The CMR Transport Forum Technical Committee would need to work with VicRoads and Roads and Maritime Services to progress this vital piece of work.

As a starting point and based on consultations with industry, tourist and community stakeholders and input from local council and the transport portfolios, draft Access Maps have been developed for freight and tourist access (see Figures 4 and 5)

These maps are a starting point to further refine and progress operating standards, gaps in the network and prioritised investment and supporting land use actions.

Opportunities to increase mode shift, (such as freight from road to rail, commuting by public and active transport rather than private car) are important should be explored as part of this project.

Figure 4: Freight Network

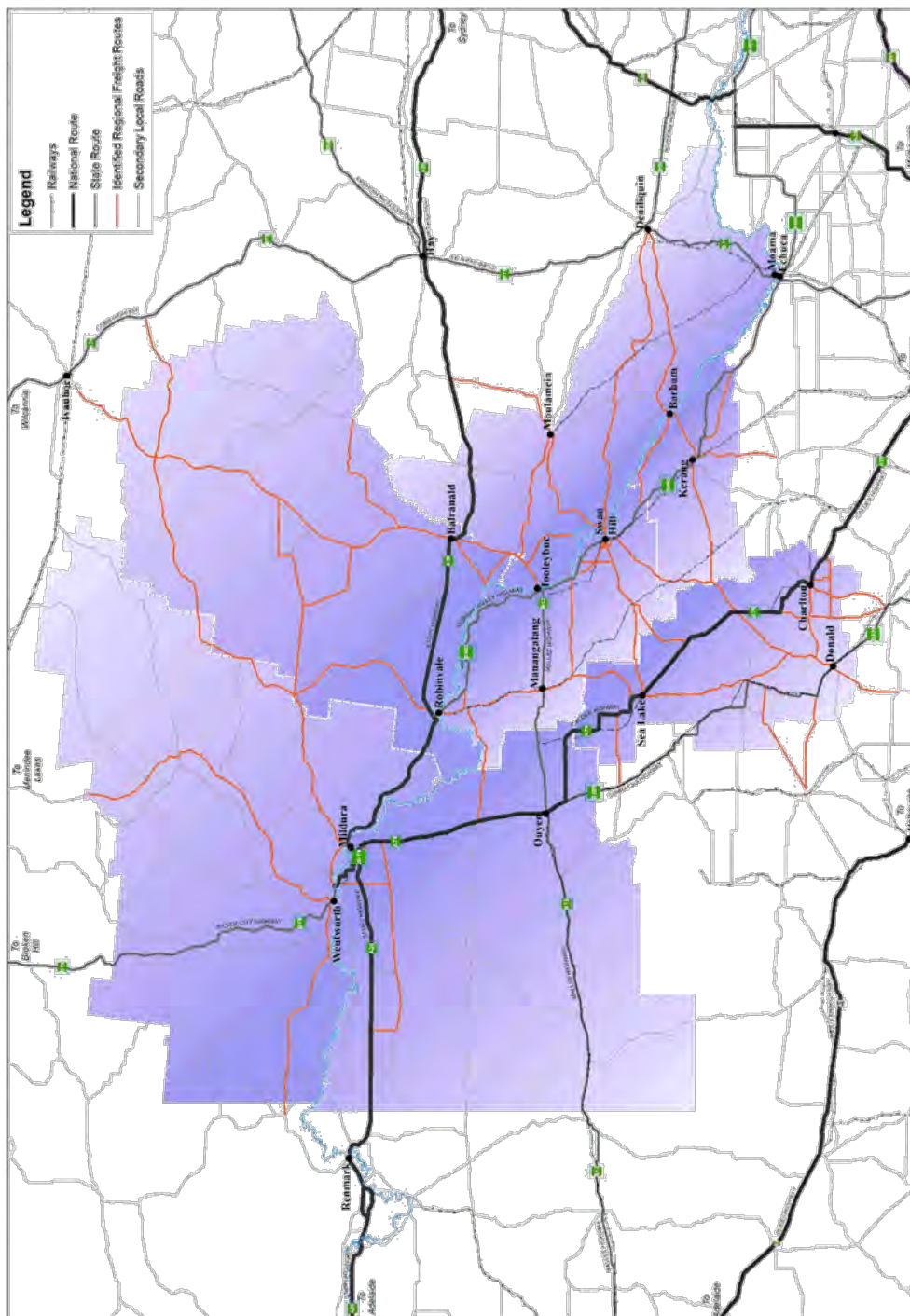
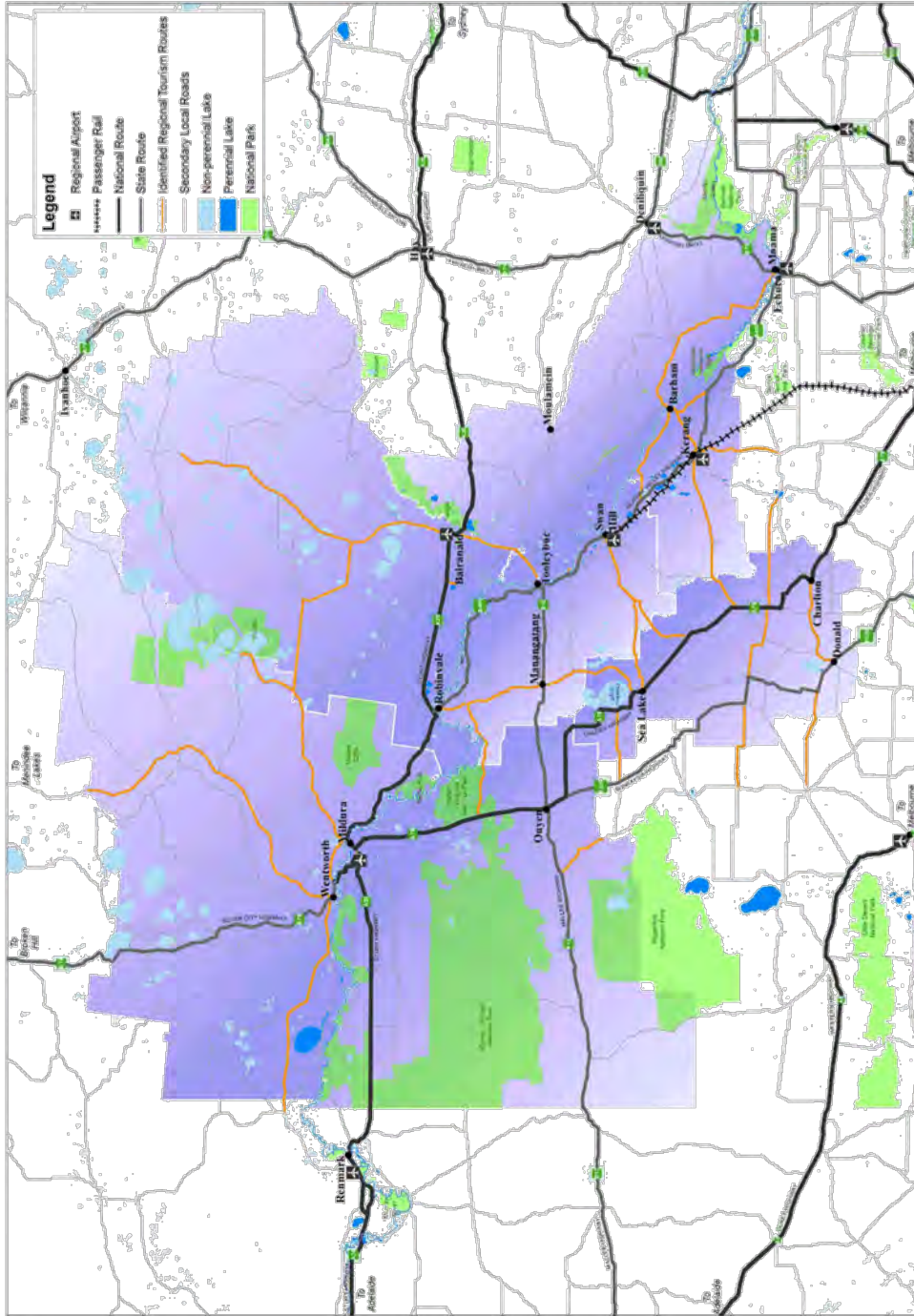


Figure 5: Tourist/Touring Network.



Project assessment and prioritisation

The development of this strategy has identified a range of potential projects, investigations and initiatives for consideration and further investigation.

A methodology has been established to assess and prioritise potential projects. The approach developed is an amalgam of two models – the Wimmera Mallee model and the Loddon-Campaspe ‘Infraplan’ model. The Central Murray Region Assessment Tool is to be used by the CMR Transport Forum and its Technical Committee to regularly review and progress this strategy and issues and opportunities that arise.

The CMR Assessment Tool contains criteria for scoring the following features:

- **Economic benefits** such as safety; freight industry aid; tourism enhancement; asset condition improvement; last mile access; cost benefit ratio; impact on travel etc.
- **Social benefits** such as access/connectivity; mobility; safety; active transport; improving life experiences.
- **Environmental benefits** such as noise impacts; air and water quality; solution builds in environmental protection; heritage impacts; indigenous site protection; protection of flora and fauna etc.
- **Other benefits** including links to regional and higher level strategies and plans; level of support; project readiness; strategy goals met and corridor benefit etc.

A matrix has been developed to assist in consistency of scoring. The remaining projects for prioritisation are being divided into:

- Bridges
- Roads
- Tourism
- Public or local transport
- Tracks, trails, air

- Rail and
- Investigations.

The tool will be used to apply an evidence-based approach to strengthen the competitiveness and ability of projects and initiatives to be investment ready. Projects can be put forward by councils, individually or collectively, for funding via State and Federal government programs.

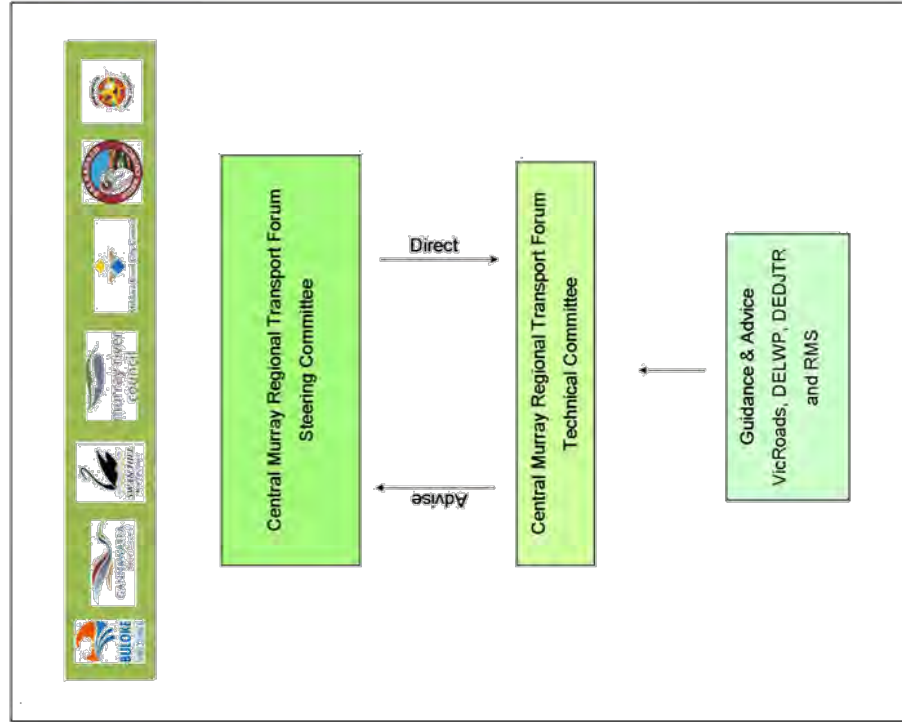
The CMR Assessment Tool has been used at a high level to determine the Top 15 Priorities for the region and at a more detailed level to assess other projects across the region. Some of the Top 15 Priorities have already undergone some level of investigation and prioritisation (such as the Swan Hill and Tooleybuc Bridges) and others are still at concept stage and require feasibility studies; while a few are close to shovel ready.

The CMR Assessment Tool (see Appendix B) will help ensure that funding proposals, whether for construction projects or studies, are highly competitive. Councils are encouraged to use the Assessment Tool at a council level to assist with prioritisation of local projects.



- Assess regional and other priority projects using the CMR assessment tool using the methodology at Appendix B

Figure 6: Governance of Central Murray Region Transport Forum



Governance

In 2010 the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum Steering Committee was established comprising high level representatives of the seven member Councils, assisted by Victorian and NSW State transport organisations, to identify and advocate for the transport needs of the region, such as the freight rail needs covered in the Murray Basin Rail project. The forum has recently strengthened its capacity by creating a Technical Committee of senior officers to undertake more detailed analysis and to commission and oversight reports to identify, articulate and provide supporting evidence on the regional transport priorities.

It is proposed that the existing governance structure (see Figure 6) be retained and regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Opportunities exist, however, for improved collaboration and possibly joint projects with neighbouring regional transport bodies, particularly where common issues have been identified.

The ongoing successful implementation of the 2018 Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy will depend largely on leadership by the Transport Forum and the Technical Committee it has established.

The governance structure needs to ensure:

- commitment to a regional perspective and priorities continues
- regional decision-makers understand the objectives and priorities of the strategy, and collectively advocate these as a single region
- there is close alignment between this strategy and regional plans, with each influencing the other
- Strategy is reviewed and updated regularly so that it remains relevant to regional needs and to ensure ongoing commitment.

It is recommended that the forum:

- Annually review and update the strategy
- Meet annually with at least two key stakeholder groups (freight /business/community) to identify issues from a user perspective.
- Identify any new or additional regional priority projects and actions based on above process

Top 15 priorities

On the basis of consultation, assessment and links with existing regional and state priorities and strategies, the top 15 priorities (in no particular order) for the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy have been developed and are listed below.

1. Murray Crossings - Swan Hill and Tooleybuc

Upgrading the current level of service provided by single lane bridges in poor and deteriorating condition at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc with 2 lane bridges capable of carrying higher mass load freight vehicles and oversize machinery between the two states is a high regional priority. Many freight vehicles are currently forced to use a longer route, or to drop a trailer and make multiple crossings or switch to a less efficient older-style truck to transfer product across these bridges.

The Swan Hill Bridge is almost 120 years old, it carries increasing levels of freight, as well as tourist and local traffic and has no pedestrian access. The Tooleybuc Bridge is 93 years old, is a strategic freight route from Sydney to Adelaide, connecting to the Mallee Highway in Victoria.

Construction of bridges providing the required level of service at Swan Hill Bridge and Tooleybuc Bridge will deliver improved efficiency and reliability for freight transport, including modern freight vehicles, and will improve safety, convenience and connectivity for all road users and pedestrians.

This Committee endorses the identification, in the *2018 Murray River Crossings Investment Priority Assessment* (by RMS and VicRoads), of the Swan Hill and Tooleybuc Bridges as the first two short-term priorities for investment in Murray River Crossings, particularly now that the new Echuca-Moama Bridge is under construction and the Barham/Koondrook Bridge is under repair.

2. Murray Basin Rail Project Completion

Underpinning this Transport Strategy and a key priority is the full completion of the Murray Basin Rail project to standardise and upgrade the entire Murray Basin freight rail network.

According to the business case, the increase in axle loading will allow higher volumes of product to be freighted by rail. This will allow trains to carry up to 500,000 more tonnes of grain each year and will capture approximately 20,000 journeys currently undertaken by trucks.

This strategy emphasises the importance of completing the Mildura and Murrayville lines to the standards specified and of undertaking the outstanding components of the project – the standardisation and upgrade of the Managatang and Kulwin lines to 21 tonnes axle loading - scheduled for 2018 but now deferred by the Victorian Government until 2020.

3. Freight route priorities (first/last mile)

Identify freight networks and priority routes, including last mile/first mile roads that require upgrading to Higher Productivity Freight Vehicle (HPFV) standard and provide a funding stream to upgrade these roads to the required standard.

For example, the growth of almond farms and other horticulture developments in the Robinvale area require a fit-for-purpose collector road to be constructed at Hattah Robinvale Road, which sits across both Mildura and Swan Hill municipalities.

Improved access and design for HPFVs including an increase in width and intersection treatment at Collins Road will allow safe and efficient freight movement between large developments and Highway connections. This project is a specific example of a first mile/last mile freight route priority.

4. Calder Highway corridor

The Calder Highway is the key transport corridor in the region and carries the highest traffic load from the north-west to Melbourne, including an increasing freight load to port and processing sites. Increased freight traffic carrying agricultural and horticultural product has resulted in more truck movements and increasing demand for larger vehicles to handle movement of inputs and products.

Consultations with the freight industry, councils and community members across the region highlighted that the Calder corridor requires duplication of lanes, more passing lanes, additional rest stops, intersection treatments (e.g. turning on to the Calder Alternative at Marong and 'Y' intersections), and an upgrade of the Keilor bridge to take higher mass vehicles. Prioritisation of the individual improvements may require a detailed analysis. Addressing the priorities on this critical corridor would allow the efficient movement of higher mass freight vehicles, thereby improving freight productivity and cycle times as well as increased safety and better management of car/truck/caravan conflicts on this route.

5. East West Highway connections

The Sturt Highway runs from the Hume Highway east of Wagga Wagga to the NSW/Victorian Border at Buronga. It is the major east-west link for all traffic travelling to/from Adelaide, providing a key port link for fruit growers in Sunraysia and the Riverland area of South Australia. It is also an alternate road route for export grain and livestock from western NSW and north west Victoria to Port Adelaide. Consultation and existing reports (eg RAMROC Regional Freight Transport Plan) identified priorities for upgrading including more passing lanes and the provision of rest stops (in NSW and Victoria) as well as road alignments at Euston roundabout and the 90 degree intersection in centre of Balranald.

The Murray Valley Highway (MVH) provides the road transport corridor along the river connecting towns in the east such as Wodonga, Yarrawonga and Echuca with the regional towns along the Victorian side of the Murray as far as Robinvale and then to Mildura via the Sturt Highway. It also closely links to the NSW riverside towns of Moama and Euston. It is used to freight viticulture and horticulture products, across and through the region to warehouses and distribution points in State capitals or across to Wodonga.

The MVH is also the main tourism spine for the Central Murray Region and the connecting point for a range of tourism loops for the region offering recreational, nature-based, cultural, eco and agri-tourism and heritage attractions which are receiving increasing levels of visitation including international visitors. The key improvements identified include pavement widening and shoulder sealing, more passing lanes (particularly north of Nyah), improved intersections and additional rest stops to allow truck and tourist traffic to pull off the road. These priorities would help reduce conflicts between freight/buses/caravans and cars to improve safety and travel time.

6. Mildura truck bypass

To allow the efficient movement of freight including higher mass freight vehicles in and around Mildura, the region, strongly supported by the freight industry, gives high priority to redesign and upgrade of the Mildura truck bypass.

Proposed improvements include to create left turning priority for trucks coming off the bridge; redesign Benetook Avenue roundabouts; and widening of Red Cliffs Meringur Rd (C254).

7. Tourist route development

Tourism is a growing contributor to the regional economy with a changing visitor market including an upsurge of young families coming to the region. Cars with boats, trailers caravans are now on the road year around. Almost 98% of visitors are travelling by private vehicle. The increased level of interest in the region is also being reflected in extra investment in caravan park facilities along the Murray River, including special facilities for children.

There is a keen interest from regional tourism bodies in making the 'Murray River Road' (i.e. the MVH) into an iconic route equal to the Great Ocean Road or Route 66 in the USA. Improvements needed to the Murray Valley Highway are listed above.

The tourism routes for the region are shown in Figure 7. Further refinement of the changing tourist needs and prioritisation of tourist routes for upgrading needs to be investigated. Priorities already identified include Mungo National Park, a key destination for tourists who must travel on roads that are not passable in wet weather. The sealing of Arumpo Road (detailed study already undertaken by Wentworth Shire) and of Marma Box Creek Road (Balranald Shire) will permit all weather access to this important site from both Mildura/Wentworth and Balranald Shires.

Emerging priorities for further consideration, as part of a regional assessment of priority tourist roads include the route to Lake Tyrell, now a favourite destination for international visitors from China, and the silo art trail in and around Buloke Shire. Sealing of the touring loop from Moama to Barham (Pericoota Road) has also been raised in consultations with tourists.

8. Supply chain study of horticulture developments

Consultations have identified the potential for more intermodal freight hubs to be developed to enable efficient freight movements utilising the upgraded rail lines to be developed under the Murray Basin Rail Project. To ascertain the details of the land use changes such as the new horticultural developments in the region and their transport needs, a supply chain study is proposed.

Such a study is estimated at around \$100,000 for a whole of transport supply chain including roads fit for purpose during peak harvest.

channel bridges and culverts to carry higher productivity vehicles is needed to support councils' ability to open up additional higher productivity vehicle routes. This project would build on a similar study by the Loddon Campaspe Transport Group of the bridges and culvert in the GMID (which included Swan Hill and Gannawarra) by the Loddon Campaspe Transport Group.

12. Tracks and trails – Murray River Adventure Trail

With tourism an important contributor to the regional economy, there is a need to develop and implement a strategic tracks and trails program across the region and link with other facilities or activities and public transport nodes to create an integrated, safe and accessible system for all road users. This priority includes aligning local council and transport portfolio activities to support access to transport hubs, e.g. through improved walking and cycling paths. The program includes improving pedestrian, bike and bus access networks, improved wayfinding, lighting and amenity to improve the health of the community by encouraging active transport.

Priority walking and recreational bike networks for investment include Murray River Adventure Trail with priority projects such as Kerang Koondrook Rail Trail, Koondrook to Cohuna Forest Trail, Koondrook to Torrumbarry Trail and the Swan Hill to Lake Boga Active Trail.

13. Transport connections

The objective here is to ensure that people living in the region continue to have access to transport services and opportunities that meet their health and social needs whilst enabling living in place. The region seeks to investigate an increase in the frequency and scheduling of coach services connecting across the region to larger destinations such as Adelaide, Mildura, Sydney and Melbourne and stops at the smaller regional towns along these routes.

The strategy also identified the need to develop small towns' connectivity plans that improve coordination between transport planning, community planning and health. This includes improved access to and coordination of public and community transport and considers flexible and private transport options. The project also includes encouraging the use of active and accessible transport within small towns and builds on the Mallee Local Transport Options Paper (2017) which identified a baseline of current transport services.

9. Swan Hill and Echuca passenger rail services

To meet economic, tourist and community demands, investment in capacity improvements on the Swan Hill and Echuca rail lines is needed in addition to upgrades on the Bendigo/Melbourne line.

Increased return passenger services daily (preferably four rail services per day) are necessary to support regional communities to access health education and legal services and employment opportunities. As a first step, an investigation to scope the works and costs required for the capacity improvements on the Swan Hill and Echuca lines is proposed

Actions include: upgrade signalling, upgrade level and pedestrian crossings, upgrade track works, additional crossing loops and increased number of services.

10. Passenger rail service for Mildura

The lack of a passenger rail service to Mildura has been identified as a major gap in services to the regional city of Mildura. The only rail services to Mildura are currently provided via a V/Line service to Swan Hill with a connecting coach service to Robinvale and Mildura. The other option is a via a bus service from Mildura to Ballarat and then connecting with a V/Line service to Melbourne.

The north-west part of the region seeks access to transport options for small communities and disadvantaged community members to access health, education, employment, business and recreation opportunities at reasonable cost and convenience.

A feasibility study on options for the re-introduction of a passenger rail service to Mildura and the north-west is proposed. It would include an assessment of needs, identification of options and estimated costs of new passenger services that would improve connections between Melbourne and the north-west area, including Mildura.

11. Upgrade bridges and culverts, higher mass limit access study

This project is to review bridge and culvert load limits in the irrigation districts in the region (outside the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID)) with a view to prioritising those structures needed for primary producers to access processing facilities. Information on the carrying capacity of some irrigation

14. Second bridge crossing for Mildura and Rail connection from Mildura to Transcontinental railway.

This strategy supports an investigation of a second bridge crossing near Mildura, possibly at Karadoc, to better connect agriculture, horticulture and mining in New South with southern markets and processing plants, to cater for growing urban populations in Buronga and Gol Gol, and to address increasing demand for transporting product using High Performance Freight Vehicles.

Interest was also expressed in the possibility of an interstate connection from Mildura to the 'intercontinental' rail line at Menindee or Broken Hill. Such a link would provide opportunities for freight connections to Darwin, an additional route to Adelaide from the region and connection to Sydney-Perth corridor. Future investment in such a project may be contingent on mining and other development opportunities in the region.

Ongoing monitoring and consideration of a second bridge and a new rail link to the 'intercontinental' in the longer term is proposed as part of the strategic transport planning for this region.

Initially, this matter would take the form of an investigation into the feasibility and location of a second bridge in or around Mildura and related truck routes, intermodal facilities and new rail connections to the north.

15. Cross border advocacy

The strategy discussions highlighted frustrations by industry, councils and community members regarding inconsistencies in cross-border requirements. In a region where movement of heavy vehicles and machinery across the Murray River is a daily necessity, the differences in the heavy vehicle regulations particularly in relation to different truck weight allowances and configurations of high performance freight vehicles on each side of the border is impacting on the ease and efficiency of freight movement. Differences in driver's license fees and conditions (e.g. age of driver) were also highlighted by the freight industry.

The strategy seeks the prompt implementation of the appointment of a Victorian Cross Border Commissioner to work with his/her NSW counterpart and the State Jurisdictions to reduce inconsistencies and harmonise regulations across the border.



- End of Document -

Appendix A: Strategies and Actions

The goals, strategies and actions for this document were developed from priorities identified in consultation with the Central Murray Region Transport Forum, and through consultations across the region and desktop research, and also drawing from those identified in the Loddon Campaspe Integrated Transport Strategy.

The following goals were determined to underpin the strategy:

1. Promote and facilitate a transport network that supports regional economic development and population growth.
2. Support efficient and sustainable transport of products between producers, markets and nodes within the region and connecting to other destinations, domestic and international.
3. Improve the capacity and function of the transport network, and integrate it with Federal and State strategies, and with land use.
4. Manage the transport system so that it is maintained to a safe and affordable level of service.
5. Improve the transport connectivity of large and small communities to enhance access to services.
6. Support improved community health and environmental outcomes.

The strategy process has led to the above six goals, 18 strategies and 52 actions; 15 of which have been identified as high priority projects. Related council projects are being assessed against the CMR assessment tool described in Appendix B.

A priority list of projects, including investigations, will be developed by the Technical Committee using this methodology. This work was partially completed at the time of writing.

The roles of the seven councils, relevant NSW and Victorian State agencies and other bodies across the region in implementing or advocating for the various initiatives have been identified in an effort to assist in future resourcing and coordination.

Goal 1. Promote and facilitate a transport network that supports regional economic development and population growth.

The transport network is an enabler of regional growth and of sustaining the smaller communities. Transport constraints and opportunities must be considered if the region is to grow over time. Predictions of future population growth are centred mainly on Mildura with potential for modest growth in Swan Hill. An important objective of this strategy is to extend that future growth to some of the smaller towns and settlements.

The eastern parts of the region are more closely connected to the neighbouring regional city of Bendigo and to Moama's twin town, Echuca.

Improvements to the key highway corridors – the Calder, Sturt and Murray Valley highways – will help encourage investment and growth in locations with ease of access to these corridors.

Good transport connections of all forms together with an efficient freight network are critical to support growth across the region. In areas away from and connecting to these corridors, it is essential that transport systems are tailored to local needs to maintain the viability of rural businesses and small towns.

What are the strategic transport challenges in the region?

- A continuing expansion and changing of horticultural and agricultural production and processing businesses is occurring in irrigated areas along both sides of the Murray, e.g. at Robinvale and Euston and surrounds. Improving access from farms to processing areas and to key road and rail transport corridors and ports will improve business efficiency, reducing the cost of freight operations.
- The expansion and planned expansion of mineral sands mining in southern NSW with a need to access processing facilities in Victoria and South Australia and possibly elsewhere.

- The Murray crossings at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc are acting as pinch points obstructing free flowing HPFV freight and oversize farm equipment transport across the centre of the region. Replacement of these bridges to a standard able to accommodate Higher Mass Loads has been identified as a priority for the region.
- Other bridge structures/culverts in irrigated parts of the region provide a challenge for freight planning, route selection and 'freight from farm gate'. This restricts councils' ability to open up additional HML B-double routes.
- NSW and Victorian municipalities have issues, to varying degrees, with movement of freight traffic through towns.
- Many bridges in the region are in urgent need of repair and require State Governments' support to cover or supplement a generous portion of the cost.
- Passenger rail services to the region are not adequate. The Swan Hill rail service is popular but does not meet the needs of the catchment population who wish to utilise a more frequent, faster service. There is no passenger rail service to Mildura, the only regional city in Victoria to lack this service.
- Funds for sufficient investment in maintenance and management of existing road pavements.

What are the strategic regional opportunities developed through this strategy?

- The improvement of regional strategic transport links, particularly key road and rail corridors, will encourage and stimulate economic growth and encourage further investment by the transport sector in new automotive technology. Similarly, agriculture, food processing, tourism, mining and evolving new developments will have the support network they need to confidently invest in the region.
- Agreed prioritisation of strategic freight routes, mindful of changing agricultural and manufacturing investment patterns that will allow appropriate direction of scarce public funds to projects addressing the highest priority needs.
- The Murray Basin Rail project is currently converting rail lines in north-western Victoria to standard gauge and upgrading the lines to higher axle loadings for freight which will improve connectivity across the State and allow access to other competitors operating standard-gauge rolling stock.

- Mildura is the region's largest and most important centre and requires an overall strategic transport plan to articulate its transport infrastructure needs in detail such as truck bypasses, intermodal freight terminal expansion, future bridge crossings, public transport needs, passenger rail service, etc. There could also be opportunities to be realised from Mildura's upgraded air services in terms of additional freight and (possibly international) passenger services.
- The standardisation of the Mildura line also provides the opportunity for an eventual interstate freight connection from Mildura to the 'Transcontinental' Rail Line. While not pursued as part of the current Murray Basin Rail project due to cost and lack of identified demand, this possible long-term project could provide freight rail connections to Sydney, Darwin and an additional link to Perth if sufficient demand for movement of mining and or agricultural product occurred. Such a project, were it to proceed, would require agreements between NSW and Victoria, further detailed alignment planning, and the development of a concept design.
- Links to Bendigo, both road and rail, will continue to be important for the eastern part of the region given the massive infrastructure investment in Bendigo recently (in health, education and arts facilities). The Calder, Murray Valley and Loddon Valley highways and the Swan Hill and Echuca train services provide important strategic links to this key regional centre.

Goal 1	Desired strategy (10 year horizon)	Actions (5 year)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
5.1.1	Develop and maintain an efficient freight network that meets regional business needs through identifying and removing barriers, addressing last mile needs and protecting networks in the longer term.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with industry to identify physical, regulatory and other barriers to improved freight operations across all modes and opportunities to improve regional freight efficiency. Identify, prioritise and implement region-wide and multi-jurisdictional B-double and HPFV routes to support regional businesses, including connecting 'first mile/last mile' roads. Investigate development and use of an agreed functional classification for freight and other types of roads to apply consistent standards across Council boundaries. Undertake a supply chain analysis of new horticulture, mining and other major developments across the region to provide evidence for potential future road and rail freight hubs and access networks Undertake a systematic review of bridge and culvert load limits in the non-GMID irrigation areas to identify bridge and culvert upgrade priorities that will improve freight access between farms and processing plants or markets. Develop and implement a priority program of bridge upgrades on local roads across the region based on high productivity, community safety and access considerations, inclusive of first and last mile needs, eg upgrade of Gee Gee Bridge, Noorong Road Advocate for continuation of the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme to remove extra mode transfer costs at Melbourne port 	<p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Councils VicRoads VicTrack</p> <p>Councils VicRoads RMS</p> <p>Councils VicRoads RMS</p> <p>Councils, Industry, DEDJIR, NSW Depts.</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>VicRoads, RMS, Councils</p> <p>Victorian Government</p>	<p>Facilitate Advocate</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Facilitate</p> <p>Facilitate Advocate</p> <p>Advocate</p> <p>Advocate</p>

Goal 1	Desired strategy (10 year horizon)	Actions (5 year)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
S1.2	Upgrade the rail network to meet increasing freight and passenger demand across the region and reduce load on the road network	<p>8. Support the full implementation of the Murray Basin Plan to standardise the rail freight network in western Victoria – including the standardisation and upgrade of Managatang and Kulwin lines - and advocate for further enhancements to improve safety and cycle times including additional crossing loops, improved signalling, etc.</p> <p>9. Investigate and implement capacity improvements on the Swan Hill and Echuca passenger rail lines and increase the number of services to meet regional needs.</p>	High	PTV, DEDTJR and VLine	Advocate facilitate
S1.3	Maintain transport assets at a fit for purpose standard by tailoring maintenance actions to cost effectively meet user needs.	<p>9. Identify and implement upgrades and maintenance of council roads of regional or wide significance, based on use of the CMR assessment tool developed for regional application.</p> <p>10. Advocate that rail maintenance be adequate to operate freight and passenger trains at appropriate speeds and safety at all times of the year.</p>	High	Councils	Lead
S1.4	Develop and maintain major inter-regional links to link the region with markets and social networks.	<p>11. Implement improvements to the Calder corridor as the key transport corridor in the region, including duplication, passing lanes, rest stops, bridge and intersection treatments.</p> <p>12. Improve the Sturt and Murray Valley highways as key east-west transport corridors carrying freight, tourism and general traffic across the region.</p> <p>13. Improve the capacity and safety of remaining highways and inter-regional roads that link the region's major centres and joins the region to the rest of Australia.</p> <p>14. Reinstate the Mildura to Melbourne passenger rail service.</p>	Low-Medium	VicTrack	Advocate
			High	VicRoads	Advocate
			Medium	VicRoads, RMS Councils	Advocate
			High	VicRoads, RMS Councils	Advocate Lead
			Medium	PTV, DEDTJR, VLine	Advocate

Goal 2: Support efficient and sustainable transport of products between producers, markets and nodes within the region and connecting to other destinations, domestic and international.

The horticulture industry has become the region’s largest growth sectors and is expected to continue to grow significantly over the next decade, with the Victorian Skills Commissioner predicting that it will double over that period in the four Victorian municipalities in the Central Murray Region.

Mining of mineral sands, although not proceeding at its predicted rate, is still a strong prospect for the regional economy with potential to impact on the transport network – on bridges, road and rail.

Maintaining a current understanding of transport supply chains for new and emerging developments and transport node needs are important to assist both business and government to plan ahead in moving product to processing and market destinations, domestic and international.

Barriers to smooth and efficient freight movements need to be addressed, including river crossings across the region. Key transport corridors within the region – such as the Calder, Sturt and Murray Valley highways – need to be upgraded to ensure the region has good connections not only with Melbourne, but also with other parts of the two states and with interstate needs.

What are the strategic transport challenges in the region?

- Growth in regional production is increasing load on the freight network and corridors.
- There is increasing shift to the use of high productivity freight vehicles (HPFVs), e.g. A-Triples, AB-Triples to improve productivity of operations.

- Changing agricultural practices, for example, rise in ‘on farm’ storage of grain and consolidation of activities on farm has led to a tension between aspirations of producers to have higher mass limit vehicles pick up product on farm and the asset of local and state roads.
- B-doubles are using narrow sealed and unsealed roads with insufficient shoulders and sharing with commuter and tourist traffic.
- Lack of continuity of freight vehicle permit classifications across council and State borders.
- Bridge capacity limits HPFV access at major crossings on the Murray and on bridges and culverts within the region. Many low capacity bridges are on local roads and impact on ‘last mile’ efficiency, councils have limited funds for upgrading.
- Local amenity of town centres can be compromised by freight and other movements through the centres of towns (e.g. Balranald).
- Interstate freight travel is made inefficient as different states have different rules/costs. Currently there is a requirement to break up loads on State borders due to different rules re truck configurations, weights or load restrictions on bridges.
- Impact of national shortage of truck drivers, increasing regulatory requirements and possible future changes to basis for truck registrations are likely to increase cost of road transport putting additional pressure on the shift to more efficient higher mass vehicles.

What are the strategic regional opportunities developed through this strategy?

- The potential of rail freight improvements, currently being implemented under the Murray Basin Rail project to be a viable alternative to road freight, needs to be harnessed through further rail upgrades, improved intermodal facilities and improved access roads to intermodal sites.
- Provision of access for higher productivity vehicles to farms and industry at a local road level will improve operational productivity across the region. This could be through a combination of timely asset renewal, upgrades of unsealed roads, intersection improvements and bridge/culvert widening/strengthening, overtaking opportunities and rest areas.
- Facilitation of new vehicle technologies in the region by council actions can improve the efficiency of supply chain logistics, and support development of a transport network that is responsive to industry needs.
- Changes in agriculture, horticulture and manufacturing practices have seen greater concentration of activities in particular parts of the region, such as almond production and processing on both sides of the Murray, and wine grapes around Robinvale and Euston. An examination of the logistics chains of the new developments will assist in identifying opportunities for more use of rail for freight delivery via possible enhanced or additional intermodal facilities to complement road transport options.

Goal 2	Desired strategy (10 year)	Actions (5 year)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
S2.1	Ensure the region has effective and efficient regional freight links within the region and to external markets.	<p>15. Replace Swan Hill Bridge to improve freight efficiency and access.</p> <p>16. Replace Tooleybuc Bridge to improve freight efficiency and access.</p> <p>17. Investigate adopting a consistent regional wide freight network and hierarchy.</p> <p>18. Upgrade Mildura Truck bypass to reduce volume of higher mass and general freight from city centre by improving bypass route from bridge and along Benetook Avenue and on to Meridian Road.</p> <p>19. Advocate for a Cross Border Commissioner for Victoria to facilitate harmonisation of those regulations that cause inefficiencies in freight movement between the States.</p> <p>20. Identify the impact of changing vehicle and fleet characteristics and regulations on rural roads (to determine if local roads are fit for purpose for increasingly larger vehicles).</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>RMS, VicRoads Councils</p> <p>RMS, VicRoads Councils</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>VicRoads, Council</p> <p>Councils, freight operators</p> <p>VicRoads, RMS, DEDJTR, Industry, Councils, freight operators</p> <p>Council</p> <p>VicRoads, Council, freight operators</p> <p>Councils, freight, business operators, VicRoads</p>	<p>Advocate Facilitate</p> <p>Advocate Facilitate</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Facilitate</p> <p>Advocacy</p> <p>Advocate, Facilitate</p> <p>Lead Facilitate</p> <p>Advocate, Facilitate</p> <p>Facilitate</p>
S2.2	Encourage and develop integrated logistics chains that serve regional business needs.	<p>21. Based on a supply chain study of major new developments, identify high potential future rail/road intermodal sites and consider need to protect these sites.</p> <p>22. Use opportunities offered by heavy vehicle regulatory reform initiatives to better position the region to facilitate the efficient movement of freight.</p> <p>23. Share knowledge between Councils, DEDJTR, VicRoads and industry to improve freight transport decision making.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Low</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>VicRoads, Council, freight operators</p> <p>Councils, freight, business operators, VicRoads</p>	<p>Lead Facilitate</p> <p>Advocate, Facilitate</p> <p>Facilitate</p>

Goal 3: Improve the capacity and function of the transport network, and integrate it with Federal and State strategies, and land use.

To support sustainable growth, land use planning must be undertaken alongside transport planning to increase opportunities for choice in transport modes. There are a number of options to improve the capacity and functioning of the transport network as development occurs in key areas. It is important to ensure the operation of major state and regional infrastructure, including highways, railways, airports, communication networks, is not adversely affected by development.

What are the strategic transport challenges in the region?

- Bus services do not necessarily align with current needs in terms of availability, frequency and timing.
- Limited train passenger services from Swan Hill to Bendigo and Melbourne, and no passenger rail service from Mildura to Melbourne. There are no NSW passenger rail services available in the region.
- Land use planning decisions can build in future land use/transport conflicts that will cost the community economically and socially, and build in unnecessary challenges.
- There is likely to be increasing conflict between increasing and larger scale freight traffic volumes passing through towns, parking and pedestrian movements that will lead to safety and amenity concerns.

What are the strategic regional opportunities developed through this strategy?

- Development of land use plans alongside transport plans will support sustainable growth, improve the quality of life in the region and increase choice in transport modes. There are options to improve the capacity and functioning of the transport network as development occurs in key areas including the regional city of Mildura and along the Murray corridor.
- The operation of major state and regional infrastructure, including highways, railways, airports, communication networks, will not be adversely affected by urban development. In planning for the future, land use and planning opportunities would account for transport needs such as additional bridge crossings, rail lines, truck bypasses and road widening.
- Build in network resilience and risk management in areas that are subject to major risks, such as flooding.
- Public transport services will better match travel needs.
- The amenity, safety and attractiveness of smaller towns can be improved through sensitive management of through routes, selective use of town bypasses and urban design. This can benefit both residents and tourists visiting the area.
- Transport services responding to emerging needs:
 - To support the potential for higher rail line speeds between Swan Hill and Bendigo, land that may be required for future track realignments or passing loops would need to be protected.
 - In the longer term, identify and reserve land in NSW that may be required for the interstate connection from Mildura to the 'intercontinental' rail line.

Goal 3	Desired strategy (10 year)	Actions (5 year)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
S3.1	Manage the interface between land use and transport so that both systems operate effectively	<p>24. Identify opportunities for improving the amenity and safety of main streets of towns with major through traffic routes or significant tourism parking.</p> <p>25. Develop access management strategies or bypass strategies for town access routes linked to road function and land use.</p> <p>26. Design industrial areas and their transport networks so that they are integrated within other land uses and transport activities.</p> <p>27. Develop principles and designs for the improved management of through traffic in small towns.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Councils, VicRoads RMS</p> <p>Councils, VicRoads, RMS</p> <p>Councils.</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Lead</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Lead</p>
S3.2	Improve public transport services to better meet market needs by improving service standards and supporting sustainable transport alternatives.	<p>28. Implement the Railway Station Access Improvement Program to meet DDA compliance.</p> <p>29. Review rural bus routes to ensure that they match current and emerging passenger needs and connections</p> <p>30. Improve physical and timetabling integration between rail stations and bus hubs to improve to the efficiency and comfort of interchanges.</p> <p>31. In urban areas, develop station precincts to maximise activity and integrate with other forms of travel such as bikes.</p> <p>32. Call for Victorian Cross Border Commissioner to help address cross-border inconsistencies that create inefficiencies for the region, particularly in the areas of heavy vehicle rules (weights and configurations of freight vehicles) and driver's licenses.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>PTV Councils.</p> <p>PTV Councils</p> <p>PTV Councils</p> <p>Councils PTV</p>	<p>Advocate</p> <p>Advocate</p> <p>Advocate</p> <p>Facilitate</p>

Goal 4: Manage the transport system so that it is maintained to a safe and affordable level of service.

The Central Murray transport network provides an essential link for communities to operate their businesses, access services, and engage in recreation and tourism activities as well as providing a path for through freight and tourism traffic. Given the distances involved and the volumes of freight traffic which use it, the network must be well constructed and maintained in a safe and useable condition.

It is now critical to ensure that funds are spent where they will do the most good. This can be facilitated by putting greater focus on the identification of priority routes that should be improved and matching road standards with the role of each road. This will allow resources to be focused on areas where the best returns will occur.

What are the strategic transport challenges in the region?

- Completing the Murray Basin Rail project and realising the benefits that were identified in the business case, such as increased speed to 80kmph and 20,000 fewer truck movements per annum. The standard gauge Mildura line has been constructed but trains remain restricted in number and speed, until the new rail line work settles in. The Manangatang and Kulwin rail lines are due to be upgraded in 2018.
- Councils do not have the authority to police load limits but they carry the cost of damage from overloaded vehicles.
- Chain of responsibility laws will come into effect on 1 July 2018 that will put the onus on farmers to ensure that freight movements from their farm comply with regulations.
- Safety is a concern on highways and on local roads, particularly where there is a mix of users – pavement width, pavement strength and rideability, speed limits, the quality of shoulders, overtaking opportunities and rest facilities all impact on driver safety.

- Speed limits do not necessarily consider the conditions of gravel roads adequately, and many routes have higher speed limits that can be excessive for gravel roads.
- Council budgets in Victoria are now subject to rate capping, similar to the practice in NSW where councils have been rate pegged for many years. This creates more pressure on optimum use of limited funds. Cost pressures may mean that some councils look at converting some low volume sealed roads back to gravel, and low volume gravel roads to formations only. However, most farmers and freight operators are looking for an upgrade in these local road conditions.

What are the strategic regional opportunities developed through this strategy?

- The strategy includes actions that will ensure that the road network is maintained to a safe, affordable and appropriate standard for its use. The network needs to support a growing regional agricultural economy and to allow access to tourism products and opportunities.
- Putting greater focus on the identification of priority routes will allow resources to be focused on areas where the best returns will occur.
- Improving the freight rail lines further, e.g. by the introduction of additional crossing loops and improved signalling, will help industries stay competitive by making rail freight more cost-effective, supporting primary producers and businesses across northern Victoria.
- Transport implementation actions can deliver safer, more reliable and resilient networks. Actions include maintenance of rail and road networks, contingency plans for major disruptions (such as those due to flood or bushfire), increased track capacity to improve reliability and reduce delays and identify and promote safety improvements.

Goal 4	Desired strategy (10 year)	Actions (5 year)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
S4.1	Develop and maintain a regional road network that is fit for purpose and affordable, now and in the future.	<p>33. Identify and implement a Functional Road Classification System for freight and tourist routes.</p> <p>34. Audit roads to test appropriate and sustainable level of service/standards.</p> <p>35. Prepare an Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy for Mildura</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Councils VicRoads</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Transport for Victoria VicRoads Council</p>	<p>Lead</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Facilitate or Lead</p>
S4.2	Advocate for additional improvements to the freight rail network	<p>36. Improve the safety and efficiency of travel on freight rail lines as part of or on completion of the Murray Basin Rail project by introducing more crossing loops and better signalling.</p>	<p>Low-Medium</p>	<p>Vline</p>	<p>Advocate</p>
S4.3	Improve safety for all road users on regional roads.	<p>37. Review the location and standard of truck rest areas and overtaking lanes on major inter-regional routes.</p> <p>38. Consider incorporating design for bicycle lanes into road projects where a route could become part of a bicycle network, e.g. in town centres, to tourist destinations, between twin towns over the Murray (such as Robinvale/Euston).</p> <p>39. Identify and develop a prioritised list of local roads to improve the safety of unsealed roads, including the setting of speed limits.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Low-Medium</p>	<p>VicRoads</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Advocate</p> <p>Lead</p>
			<p>Medium</p>	<p>Council and/or VicRoads</p>	<p>Facilitate or lead</p>

Goal 5: Provide equitable community access and connectivity for large and small communities.

Services, such as health, education and legal services, are increasingly being focused on larger centres, so access to these centres is essential for rural and semi-rural communities. In addition, the ageing population across the region requires increasing levels of public, informal and community transport to ensure access to these services and social networks.

What are the strategic transport challenges in the region?

- Growth is likely to be patchy, with increases occurring mainly in the larger centres of Mildura and Swan Hill with some towns and areas continuing to face population decline.
- Services such as health, education and legal, are increasingly provided from larger centres such as Swan Hill, Echuca, Mildura, Bendigo and even Melbourne, so adequate access to these centres is important for communities.
- Ageing population requires increasing levels of public, informal and community transport to ensure access to services and social networks. Small towns can have high percentages of elderly people who require access to services that are located in the major centres.
- Access to coach services in east-west direction through the region is limited and not well timed to meet passenger needs. Changeover points are poorly scheduled, leaving patrons waiting for hours for their connecting service, e.g. two-hour wait at Manangatang.
- NSW communities in the region are constrained by very limited public transport, except in the settlements near Mildura. Therefore accessing the train route Swan Hill/Bendigo/Melbourne requires travel by private vehicle to a suitable pick up point for train or connecting bus service from Mildura.

- Regional linkages across the region have different city centre focus. For example around Mildura, Wentworth, Robinvale, parts of Buloke and Balranald, there is a strong Mildura focus, while Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Murray River councils have stronger ties with Echuca and Bendigo.

- Lower income families are being drawn away from the cities and large centres into towns with fewer transport options and further from services, such as Quambatook.

What are the strategic regional opportunities developed through this strategy?

- A fast efficient, reliable and frequent public transport system would benefit the diverse employment patterns and tourism opportunities. Connecting public transport services, including better funding for community services to assist in facilitating local access, and more capacity for park and ride at stations will improve social accessibility. Cycling networks and the taxi industry can meet the needs of particular groups and help fill the gaps.
- As route based public transport services will not be viable for many small communities, alternative means of non-private car travel will become increasingly important (community/volunteer based). Local businesses have demonstrated intermittent as well as regular support for travel. Funding subsidies by government for such services should be considered.
- For those at the western part of the region, Mildura has an excellent airport and passenger service following completion of upgrades to the terminal and runway. In the absence of a passenger rail service, consideration could be given to subsidised air travel to Melbourne for low socio-economic people who need to attend, e.g. medical appointments.
- Bendigo also provides a concentration of higher order services and facilities to the eastern part of the region. For example, recent upgrades to Bendigo Hospital may result in more people travelling to Bendigo instead of Melbourne to access healthcare services. Therefore, accessible and appropriate transport throughout the region and beyond will allow people from across the region to access these services.

Goal 5	Desired strategy (10 year)	Actions (5 year)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
S5.1	Improve public transport services for smaller communities through flexible and responsive non-private travel options.	40. Improve timetabling for public transport by collating all current timetables, investigating gaps and identifying and introducing new services required.	High	Council, PTV service providers	Lead, Facilitate
		41. Review needs and demand for community transport and taxi services in towns, and develop programs to improve access to community services.	High	Council	Lead, Facilitate
S5.2	Improve non-motorised networks and facilities within small towns to support active travel.	42. Develop and implement infrastructure plans to facilitate active transport opportunities for small towns.	Medium	Council	Lead
		43. Develop bicycle, mobility scooter and walking plans for small towns to provide an alternative to private car travel.	Medium	Council	Lead
S5.3	Better align public transport services with user needs, including increasing the role of community transport where public transport services are not available.	44. Review regional and local bus operations to ensure they match current and emerging needs and travel patterns.	High	Council PTV	Advocate
		45. Improve commuter facilities at railway stations as patronage grows	Medium	Council PTV	Facilitate
		46. Share knowledge between councils, communities and PTV to improve accessibility decision making that will assist communities	Medium	Councils, service providers, PTV	Lead

Goal 6: Support improved community health and environmental outcomes.

Providing community members with access to good tracks and trails allows them to benefit from enjoying active transport options such as walking and cycling as part of their daily lives or while on holiday. Access to these opportunities is now considered as indicators of a community's liveability, a factor that has a strong impact on attracting businesses and workers, as well as tourists keen to enjoy the environment. In towns where people can regularly be seen out walking and cycling, there is a palpable sense that these are safe and friendly places to live and visit.

Infrastructure is an important aspect of encouraging people to consider walking and cycling as a viable and legitimate transport option, as are travel behaviour change programs. Active transport can also play an important role in connecting people to the places they need to access such as shops, residential areas, public transport and other services.

What are the strategic transport challenges in the region?

- The region has high levels of obesity and poor health outcomes. There are low levels of physical activity and of time spent outdoors. Transport and lifestyle decisions often correlate to produce health related problems.
- Increasing conflict between large scale freight traffic passing through towns, parking and pedestrian movements will lead to safety and amenity concerns.
- Health services becoming more centralised. Efficient transport pathways are vital to access services and maintain good health outcomes.
- There is strong competition between regions for recreational travel (by car, cycling and public transport).
- The region has excellent natural and cultural attractions but limited integrated tourism networks that should be expanded to offer a greater range of experiences to visitors.

What are the strategic regional opportunities developed through this strategy?

- Increased uptake of active transport will lead to improved health and wellbeing outcomes across the region. This is needed in both the large centres and the smaller towns.
- The region has access to a wide range of attractive natural assets – rivers, lakes, forests as well as historical and cultural opportunities that are attracting increasing numbers of domestic and international travellers.
- Greater provision of non-motorised options, along with public transport services. This will increase the range of travel alternatives for people with limited access to motor vehicles, and in turn increase their opportunities for employment, education and recreation.
- Interest in rail trails and cycling tourism is growing and townscape designs increasingly include traffic calming and attractive features that reflect shifting community lifestyle choices. This should link with public transport nodes to create an integrated, safe and accessible system for all road users.
- Walking and cycling holidays are becoming increasingly popular and have spin off benefits to local communities. Tourism trails provide great opportunities for walking, cycling and paddling tourism, particularly along the Murray River. These opportunities can be used by local residents and tourists alike.
- Integrate bicycle touring with public transport to increase the range of options for visitors.

Goal 6	Desired strategy (10 year)	Actions (5 years)	Priority	Major contributors	Council's role
S6.1	Progress a plan to link the region's active transport opportunities, along the major River systems.	47. Investigate and implement the Murray River Adventure Trail to incorporate a wide range of active transport options – walking, cycling and kayaking/canoeing along the Murray River and looks at similar opportunities on the Murrumbidgee River.	High	State Government, Councils	Lead
S6.2	Encourage bicycle and walking travel to improve health and reduce environmental impacts.	48. Develop maps or plans for small towns that encourage active transport and improve accessibility to services. 49. Councils and businesses to take a leadership role in the use of more sustainable modes for work activities by developing plans and providing facilities to encourage staff to engage in active transport in travelling to work.	High Medium	Councils Councils, service providers, businesses and industry	Lead Lead
S6.3	Promote emergency access information and mitigating plan.	50. Clearly identify to the community (through several information providing techniques) the emergency access/egress to better equip residents of the region in event of an emergency. 51. Maintain and manage routes that offer the best safety, access and egress.	Medium	Councils, State Government	Lead
S6.4	Develop the region as a recreational cycling hub to support tourism and local travel.	52. Link the region's key rail trails and other recreational/tourism bicycle networks to form a network of routes and access to centres and public transport services.	High	Councils	Lead

Appendix B: CMR Assessment Tool for other priority projects

The following CMR Assessment Tool Matrix was developed by the Technical Committee with the assistance of Engineering Management Styles, drawing on the Assessment Tools used for the Loddon Campaspe and Wimmera Regional Transport Strategies. It is being used to consider other projects identified for assessment by the Technical Committee, on the basis of suggestions made through the consultation process. This work was still in progress at the time of writing.

The remaining projects for prioritisation are being divided into the following categories: Bridges; Roads; Tourism, Public or Local transport; Tracks, trails, air; Rail; and Investigations.

Criteria & sub-weighting	Score						Overall Weight
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Economic	Cost & benefits (e.g. smoother roads, maintain speed, increase tourist numbers by x%, etc.)	Reduction	No benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (i.e. effecting a township) or minor reduction of maintenance costs (less than 25%)	Minor regional benefit or significant reduction of maintenance costs (less than 50%)	Major regional benefit or major reduction of maintenance costs (greater than 50%)
	Travel time (where applicable)	Reduction	No benefit	Minor decrease of travel time for some road users (i.e. HML)	Minor decrease of travel time for all road users	Reduction of travel time on detour routes (i.e. when a crash occurs there is detour on local roads)	Major decrease of travel time for some road users (i.e. HML)
	Safety (e.g. crashes, reduction of travel risks, serious injury/fatality, etc.)	Reduction	No benefit	Removal/change of conditions that could cause accidents/incidents	Removal/change of conditions that have caused near misses	Removal/change of conditions that have caused minor incidents/injuries	Removal or change of conditions that have caused major incidents/injuries
	Freight industry aid (where applicable) (e.g. access to/from farms, agribusiness, industry)	Reduction	No benefit	Improved access for single farm or business	Improved access for multiple farms or businesses	Improved access for multiple farms or businesses	Improvement of local freight facilities/roads
	Tourism Enhancement (where applicable)	Reduction	No benefit	Practically no benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (i.e. effecting a township)	Minor regional benefit (i.e. a corridor)
	Asset Condition Improvement/re-use/relief/burden on Authority/maintenance reduction/increase	Reduction	No benefit	Practically no benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (i.e. effecting a township)	Minor regional benefit (i.e. a corridor)
	Last Mile access to key economic businesses (e.g. farms, wineries, etc.)	Reduction	No benefit	Improved access for single farm or business	Improved access for multiple farms or businesses	Improved links to local roads	Improved links to local freight facilities
Social	Access/Connectivity (e.g. private transport enhancement, public transport enhancement, commuter needs enhancement)	Reduction	No benefit	Very little benefit	Major localised benefit (e.g. affecting a township)	Minor regional benefit	20%

Criteria & sub-weighting	Score					Overall Weight	
	0	1	2	3	4		5
	Criterion						
	Mobility	Reduction	No benefit	Very little benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (e.g. affecting a township)	Minor regional benefit
20%	Safety	Reduction	No benefit	Removal/change of conditions that public perceives could cause accidents/incidents	Removal/change of conditions that public perceives could cause minor incidents/injuries	Removal/change of conditions that public perceives could cause major incidents/injuries	Removal/change of conditions that public perceives could cause major incidents/injuries
20%	Active Transport (where applicable) (e.g. cycling/walking by commuters, e.g. cycling, walking for recreation, etc.)	Reduction	No Benefit	Very little benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (e.g. affecting a township)	Minor regional benefit
10%	Improving life experiences (where applicable)	Reduction	No benefit	Very little benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (e.g. affecting a township)	Minor regional benefit
20%	Noise attenuation/reduction/increase	Significant increase	Major increase	Minor increase	No benefit	Minor decrease	Major decrease
20%	Air, water quality (e.g. protection, improvement or loss)	Significant decrease	Major decrease	Minor decrease	No benefit	Minor increase	Major increase
20%	Solution builds in environmental protection	Significant damage	Major damage	Minor damage	No benefit	Minor protection	Major protection
20%	Historical sites /structures protected (where applicable)	Significant damage	Major damage	Minor damage	No benefit	Minor protection	Major protection
20%	Sites of indigenous significance protected (where applicable)	Significant damage	Major damage	Minor damage	No benefit	Minor protection	Major protection
20%	Protecting flora, fauna at sites (where applicable)	Significant damage	Major damage	Minor damage	No benefit	Minor protection	Major protection
25%	Specific link benefit of proposal to Regional and/or Council Strategic Plans (nominate specific strategic documents and briefly outline degree of support)	Significantly against strategies	Against strategies	No link	Minor link to council or regional strategies	Major link to council strategies	Major link to Council and regional strategies
	Environmental						15%
	Other Criteria						25%

Criteria & sub-weighting	Score						Overall Weight
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
15% Level of support, commitment, funds made available or likely	No support	Very little support	Project a component of longer term strategy or MasterPlan	Indication from funding source about possible funding opportunities	Submissions for funding have been lodged	Partial or full funding of project	
10% Project Readiness (e.g. designs, surveys, specifications complete, permits obtained, services have been relocated, etc.) (e.g. ready within 1-2 years, or <5 years, or > 5 years)	No stage of the project has been started	Investigation timelrames set	Construction projects: Investigation stage Investigation projects: Formation of working group to kick start project	Construction projects: Design stage Investigation projects: Key investigation criteria selected	Construction projects: Planning stage Investigation projects: Brief created	Construction projects: Contract stage Investigation projects: Brief tendered out	
25% Goals set for Strategy met. (link the project with specific goals 1-6 – refer to page 1 for list of goals)	0 goals met	1 goal met	2 goals met	3 goals met	4 goals met	5 goals met	
25% Transport Corridor benefit	Significant reduction	Reduction	No benefit	Minor localised benefit (i.e. section of road only)	Major localised benefit (e.g. affecting a township)	Minor or Major regional benefit	

Appendix C: List of organisations consulted

Balranald Discovery Centre	Murray River Council
Balranald Shire Council	Murray River Organics, Buronga
Buloke Shire Council	Murray River Shire Council
BusLink Mildura	Murray-Goulburn Water
Caravan Park Association, Mildura	Olams
Entergra (Mallee Hay)	Ouyen Inc
Freight Ports & Intermodal Network Planning	Pearsons Grain, Swan Hill
Gannawarra Shire Council	Phillips Transport
Glenn Stewart, Office of Victorian Skills Commissioner	Pickering Transport, Mildura
Go Farm	Pickerings Transport, Swan Hill
GrainCorp	Rail Freight Alliance, Victoria
GTS Freight	Road and Maritime Services, Wagga Wagga, NSW
Iron Horse Intermodal/ Wakefields Transport, Mildura	Sunraysia Bicycle Users Group
Kilter Rural	Sunrise Ag, Swan Hill
Landmark, Swan Hill	Swan Hill Livestock Exchange
Lipps Transport and Bulk Super Supplier	Swan Hill Rural City Council
Mallee Regional Partnerships	Transport for Victoria, DETJR
Mathers & Sons Transport, Kerang	Victorian Farmers Federation
Mawsons Concrete and Quarries	VicRoads – Head Office and Regional Office staff
Mildura Airport Corporation	Wentworth Shire Council
Mildura Houseboats	
Mildura Regional Development Board	
Mildura Rural City Council	
Murray House Aged Care, Wentworth	
Murray Regional Tourism Board	

Appendix D: List of documents reviewed

Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd. (November 2014)	"National Competition Policy Review (NCP) ARTC Submission" (Internal document)
Aecom Australia (May 2011)	"Central Highlands Regional Transport Strategy" AECOM, Level 9, 8 Exhibition St. Melbourne 3000 Vic
AURECON Australasia Pty Ltd, prepared for Wentworth Shire Council (March 2015)	"Arumpo Road Preliminary Engineering Study" AURECON Australasia Pty Ltd, 97 Pine Avenue, Mildura 3502, March 2015
Australian Government (November 2016)	"The Australian Government's response to Infrastructure Australia's Australian Infrastructure Plan" Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601. publishing@infrastructure.gov.au ISBN 978-1-925531-06-0 November 2016/INFRA3097
Buloke Shire Council (Undated -possibly 2017)	"Council Plan 2017-2021" Buloke Shire Council' Wycheproof, Victoria
Buloke Shire Council (Undated -possibly 2016)	"Strategic Resource Plan 2016-2020" Buloke Shire Council' Wycheproof, Victoria
Connect Insights for Business (2015)	"Road Freight Transport Industry Report" http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/au/
Connell Wagner Pty Ltd (August 1995)	"Mildura Freight Operations Relocation and Redevelopment Study Final Report" Connell Wagner Pty Ltd in association with Chris Dane Land Design Pty Ltd prepared for the Rural City of Mildura
Driscoll Engineering Services P/L (Nov 2013)	"Sunraysia Highway – B220 Improvement Strategy Ballarat to south of Ouyen" Revised by Driscoll Engineering Services P/L on behalf of the Sunraysia Highway Improvement Committee
Engineers Australia (Dec 2003)	"Australian Historic Engineering Plaquing Program Nomination of the Swan Hill- Murray River Road Bridge for an Award of an Historic Engineering Markers" Prepared by Engineering Heritage Australia (Canberra) for The Engineering Heritage Committee, Sydney Dec 2003

EMM on behalf of Iluka Resources Ltd (Jan 2016)	"Bairnald Mineral Sands Project Draft Commonwealth Environmental Impact Statement"
GHD Pty Ltd (2014)	"Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Strategy" GHD, 2014
GHD Pty Ltd (June 2017)	"Gee Gee Bridge replacement Review of environmental factors" Suite 3 Level 1, 161-189 Baylis St Wagga Wagga NSW 2650 RMS publication 17.316 ISBN: 978-1-925659-41-2
GHD Pty Ltd on behalf of Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure	"Murray Basin Region Freight Demand & Infrastructure Study Project Report," GHD on behalf of Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure, July 2014
GHD Pty Ltd for Hume Regional Development Australia Committee (2013)	"Freight Direction in the Hume Region Detailed Report" Prepared by GHD (180 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000) for Hume Regional Development Australia Committee, 2013
Government of South Australia Department of Planning and Local Government (January 2011)	"Murray and Mallee Region Plan. A volume of the South Australian Planning Strategy" Department of Planning and Local Government Adelaide South Australia
Hume Regional Management Forum (July 2010)	"The Hume Strategy for sustainable communities 2010-2020" Internal document
Infraplan and Geoff Anson Consulting (December 2015)	"Loddon Campaspe Integrated Transport Strategy for Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources" Infraplan: Suite 606, St Kilda Road Towers, 1 Queens Road, Melbourne Vic 3004
Infrastructure Australia (2017)	"Transport Reform: The National Opportunity in Front of Us" Roads Australia Summit 2017
John Hearsch Consulting Pty Ltd (Mar 2017)	"Grampians and Barwon West Region Passenger Services Cost and Feasibility Study Final Report"
Lower Murray Water (May 2014)	"Mallee Region Investment Guide 2015/16" Lower Murray Water, 741-759 Fourteenth Street, Mildura 3500

Murray Regional Tourism (2016)	<i>"Travel to the Murray Region"</i> Year ended June 2016. Quarterly tracking of selected measures. Internal document
Murray Regional Tourism (Undated -possibly 2015)	<i>"Strategic Plan 2015-2020"</i> Internal document.
National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (September 2014)	<i>"Classes of Heavy Vehicles in the Heavy Vehicle National Law"</i> www.nhvr.gov.au
North West Rail Alliance (undated, possibly 2016)	<i>"The Case for the Reinstatement of Passenger Train Service to Mildura in Response to Infrastructure Victoria's 2016 30 year draft strategy"</i>
NSW Act 22 November 2012	<i>"Road Transport (General) Act 2005"</i> <i>"Ministerial Direction (Livestock Loading Scheme) Order 2012"</i>
NSW Planning and Environment (August 2017)	<i>"Far West Regional Plan 2036"</i> GPO Box 58, Dubbo NSW 2836
NSW Planning and Environment (2017)	<i>"Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036"</i> GPO Box 58, Dubbo NSW 2836
NSW Transport Roads and Maritime Services (June 2013)	<i>"Replacement Murray River Bridge Crossing at Swan Hill"</i> Environmental Investigations Submission Report RTA/Pub. 13.327 ISBN 978-1-92245-55-7 Prepared by Manidis Roberts Level 9, 7 York St, Sydney NSW 2000
NSW Transport Roads and Maritime Services(May 2016)	<i>"Barham Koonrook Bridge – Truss and Victorian Approach Span Restoration Submissions Report"</i> Prepared by NGH Environmental for NSW Transport Road and Maritime Services.
NSW Transport Roads and Maritime Services(January 2018)	<i>"Murray River Crossings Investment Priority Assessment"</i> NSW RMS and VicRoads
NSW Transport NSW Trains (undated – possibly 2017)	<i>"Corporate Plan 2017-18"</i> Internal document
OPUS in Association with SGS (March 2014)	<i>"Central Murray Region: Intermodal Opportunities – A discussion of issues to help inform decision making process – Draft Report, OPUS in Association with SGS, March 2014"</i>

Pitt and Sherry (April 2018)	"Structure and Higher Mass Limits Access with the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District" Pitt & Sherry for Campaspe Shire Council, April 2018
Rail Freight Alliance (2018)	"Rail Freight Alliance Policy Statement 2018"
RAMROC (undated – possibly 2014)	"RAMROC Regional Freight Transport Plan" Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC)
Regional Development Australia Loddon Mallee, and Regional Development Victoria (2015)	Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2018" Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources 1 Spring Street Melbourne Vic 3000
Regional Development Australia and Regional Development Victoria (2013)	"Hume Regional Development Australia Committee Freight Directions in the Hume region Detailed Report" GHD, 180 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
Regional Management Group, June 2015	"VicRoads – Northern Region Rest Area Strategy"
REMPPLAN, prepared for Swan Hill Rural City Council	Central Murray Transport Plan Economic Data Report, REMPLAN, 67 Willis Street Bendigo, VIC 3550, May 2018
Roads and Maritime Services (July 2017)	"Barham-Koondrook Bridge" (Internal document)
Roads and Maritime Services (2017)	"Replacement of Gee Gee Bridge" (Internal document?)
Roads and Maritime Services (May 2016)	"Tooleybuc Bridge Update" (Internal document)
Russell, E.W. and Associates (2014)	"Central Murray Regional Transport Study (Victoria-New South Wales) 2014 Update Report" E.W. Russell & Associates Pty Ltd P.O. Box 1257 Carlton Vic. 3053
Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd Sept 2015)	"VicRoads Murray Valley Highway Route Safety Strategy – Towards a Safe System" Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd for VicRoads Northern and North Eastern Regions, Sept 2015
SKM and Meyrick & Associates (February 2006) Steve Manders	"Twice the Task A review of Australia's freight transport tasks" C/- Jacobs Australia 11/452 Flinders Street Melbourne Vic 3000

State Government of Victoria (May 2016)	<i>"Connecting Regional Victoria"</i> Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources 1 Spring Street Melbourne Vic 3000
State Government of Victoria (July 2014)	<i>"Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan"</i> Government of Victoria 1 Treasury Place Melbourne Vic 3000 www.dtp.vic.gov.au/regionalgrowthplans
State Government of Victoria (March 2014)	<i>"Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan – Background Report"</i> Government of Victoria 1 Treasury Place Melbourne Vic 3000 www.dtp.vic.gov.au/regionalgrowthplans
State Government of Victoria (August 2013)	<i>"Victoria – The Freight State"</i> Government of Victoria 1 Treasury Place Melbourne Vic 3000
State Government of Victoria (2012)	<i>"Transport and the Triple Bottom Line"</i> Government of Victoria 121 Exhibition Street Melbourne Vic 3000
State Government of Victoria (2008)	<i>"Your Say. Community feedback on Victoria's transport challenges"</i> Victorian Department of Transport Melbourne Vic
State Government of Victoria (2008)	<i>"The Victorian Transport Plan"</i> Overview Government of Victoria 121 Exhibition Street Melbourne Vic 3000
State Government of Victoria (2008)	<i>"Switchpoint: Victorian Rail Freight Review"</i> Chair: Tim Fischer Government of Victoria 121 Exhibition Street Melbourne Vic 3000
State Government of Victoria (July 2018)	<i>"Delivering the Goods, Creating Victorian Jobs, Victorian Freight Plan 2018-50"</i> Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne Vic 3000.
Sunassist Volunteer Helpers Inc (July 2017)	<i>"Mallee Local Transport Options Paper – Stage 1 Baseline of Current Transport Services"</i> Sunassist Volunteer Helpers Inc on behalf of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (July 2017)
Swan Hill Rural City Council (2014) Tonkin Consulting (2015)	<i>"Active Transport Strategy 2014-2034"</i> Swan Hill Rural City Council (2014) <i>Buronga to Monak Interface Study Investigations Report Wentworth Shire Council</i> , Tonkin Consulting 2015

<p>Victorian Skills Commissioner (2017)</p>	<p><i>"2017 Regional Skills Demand Profile, The Mallee" Victorian Skills Commissioner Level 1, 2.1 Degraives Street, Melbourne VIC 3000</i></p>
<p>VicRoads (undated possibly 2017)</p>	<p><i>"Country Roads Your Insights, our actions – Connecting our Communities' VicRoads</i></p>
<p>Victorian Act</p>	<p><i>"Transport Integration Act 2010 Part 2 – Victorian statement, objectives, principles, and statement of policy principles"</i></p>

B.18.81 COUNCIL BORROWINGS

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-26-01
Attachments: Nil.

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

In April 2018 Council authorised participation in the Local Government Financing Vehicle (LGFV) Bond issuance co-ordinated through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for the purposes of borrowing \$1,300,000. The Bond issuance did not proceed and the Motion has therefore lapsed.

The MAV is unable to confirm if or when the Bond issue will occur. This report therefore seeks authorisation to borrow funds directly from the market if the LGFV does not proceed by the end of November 2018.

Discussion

The LGFV was set-up to secure long term debt finance for participating Victorian Councils on competitive terms. Council has participated in the two previous Bond issuances in 2014/15 and 2015/16 however the MAV has been unsuccessful in securing sufficient support for any further issuances. This includes the proposed 2016/17 and 2017/18 Council borrowing requirements. At present the MAV cannot confirm when or if there will be another Bond issuance.

While Council holds significant cash reserves, these are required for working capital purposes to fund specific current and future major projects and to provide a contingency against unexpected or sudden expenditure increases due to such events as unfunded superannuation calls. It is important, therefore, that budgeted borrowings are taken up reasonably close to the financial year in which they were scheduled. Currently the 2016/17 borrowings of \$500,000 and the 2017/18 borrowings of \$800,000 are yet to be taken up. The 2018/19 budget includes a further \$500,000 which now also appear may not be able to be borrowed through the LGFV.

Council officers have been advised anecdotally by colleagues from several Councils that their Councils have been successful in obtaining debt finance directly from the market at equivalent or better overall terms than the LGFV. It also appears that interest rates could start to increase soon. The risks of securing finance directly from the market compared to through the LGFV therefore appear to be outweighed by the risks of the LGFV not proceeding at all.

It is therefore recommended that in the event the LGFV does not proceed by the end of November 2018 that Council officers proceed directly to market for the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 budgeted borrowings.

Consultation

Consultation occurred as part of the budget processes for each of the years. The MAV has been contacted several times to confirm the timing of the next Bond issuance. To date no timing has been confirmed.

Financial Implications

The cost of repaying and financing the borrowings has been budgeted for. The difference between borrowing through the LGFV or directly from the market is expected to be small especially as interest rates may rise before the next Bond issue (if any) occurs.

Social Implications

The borrowings help to fund important projects that would otherwise have to wait longer to be commenced. Borrowings help to spread the cost of project over a number of years meaning that the ratepayers that benefit from the project help to repay the cost. Borrowings are usually matched by grant income which may not otherwise be able to be obtained.

Economic Implications

Local contractors usually benefit from the additional works that can be undertaken.

Environmental Implications

These will vary depending on the specific projects that are funded from the borrowings.

Risk Management Implications

Not borrowing would lead to a depletion of working capital, a deferral of major projects or reduction in cash contingencies required to cover events such as unfunded superannuation calls.

The option not waiting until a future LGFV Bond issue will reduce the risk from potential interest rate rises.

If a direct market approach is taken this will involve a competitive quotation process from the major banks.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Option

Council can choose to wait until mid-May to see if the LGFV issuance has occurred however interest rates may change prior to that time.

Recommendation

That Council authorise officers to source the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 budgeted borrowings, totaling \$1,800,000 utilising the Local Government Funding Vehicle Bond unless the Bond has not been issued prior to the 30 November 2018 in which case Council authorises officers to source the funds directly from the banking sector via a quotation process.

B.18.82 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-28-01
Attachments: 1 Confidential Minutes 20-09-18

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

Council's Audit Committee met on 20 September, 2018 and this report summarises the items that were discussed at the meeting.

Discussion

The Audit Committee met on 20 September 2018 and as well as the usual procedural items the agenda items included:

1. A report on the current status of the drag strip repairs noting still some work to finish in relation to the drainage aspects.
2. RSM Internal Auditors presented the Draft Internal Audit Program.
3. The VAGO Closing Report FY2018 was presented by external auditors Crowe Horwath with a very pleasing result achieved by Council.
4. The VAGO Final Management Letter was presented by Crowe Horwath noting all previous items were closed off and only one new item relating to the amount of outstanding annual leave was identified.
5. 2017/18 Asset Revaluations – Fair Value Report was discussed noting the report.
6. Annual Financial Reports FY2018 was discussed noting a good strong result overall for Council.
7. Performance Statement FY2018 was accepted by the committee to adopt „in-principle“ the Financial Report and Performance Statements at a Special meeting of Council held on 25 September 2018.
8. Audit Committee was updated on the progression of the Legislative Changes concerning the Draft Local Government Act.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Financial Implications

The sitting fees paid to independent members on the Audit Committee is adjusted annually by CPI. Sitting fees are included in Council's Budget.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

The Audit Committee helps to oversee Council's risk management practices. Internal and other audits are routinely done to reduce the risk to Council.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Options

Not applicable.

Recommendation

That Council note the contents of this report.

Attachment

- Audit Committee Confidential Minutes
20 September 2018

B.18.83 REAPPOINTMENT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-28-01
Attachments: Nil.

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The term of appointment for the Independent Member Mr Rodney Saville expires on 18 November 2018.

Council needs to consider whether to reappoint Mr Saville for a further three year term which would expire on 18 November 2021.

Discussion

Council has an Audit Committee consisting of five members, two Councillors and three Independent Members. The external members are chosen for their business, financial and project management acumen, to aid Council in its role to oversee the operations and risk management of the organisation.

The term of Mr Rodney Saville expires on 18 November 2018 and he has expressed an interest in being reappointed to the Committee.

Mr Saville's qualification and experience as an Accountant and member of various governing Boards means he is well placed to continue to provide valuable input to the Audit Committee.

Consultation

Mr Rodney Saville has been approached and confirmed his desire to be reappointed to the Audit Committee.

Financial Implications

The Audit Committee members currently receive a meeting allowance of \$394.25 per meeting plus travel per kilometre based on Australian Taxation office rates. These costs are included in Council's budget.

The Audit Committee receives administration support from Council staff. To not re-appoint Mr Saville will require advertising the vacancy and additional resources to select candidates (if any).

Social Implications

Not applicable

Economic Implications

Not applicable

Environmental Implications

Not applicable

Risk Management Implications

Council's Audit Committee oversees the management of risks within Council.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Effective and efficient utilisation of resources. - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Options

Council could choose to advertise for a new Independent Member of the Audit Committee or reappoint Mr Saville for a shorter term.

Recommendation

That Council reappoint Mr Rodney Saville as Independent Member to the Audit Committee for a further term of 3 years effective from 18 November 2018.

B.18.84 PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-28-09
Attachments: Nil.

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

Council's Annual Report incorporating the Financial and Performance Statements and the Audit Opinions, were completed and delivered to the Minister on 26 September 2018.

Following the expiry of the statutory advertising period, the Annual Report is now presented for Council's consideration and endorsement.

Discussion

Following the completion of all statutory requirements, Swan Hill Rural City Council's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2018 is presented for consideration and endorsement by Council. The format of the Annual Report is consistent with the model recommended by Local Government Victoria.

Some of the highlights of the 2017/18 year were:

- Received \$500,000 towards PS Gem conservation and successfully completed the project.
- Completed the construction of Lake Boga Catalina Museum café.
- Completed \$2million upgrade of Nyah Road Swan Hill.
- Secured external funding towards the construction of Robinvale Township Levee.
- Installed 30kw battery storage system to solar panels at Splatt Street office.
- Private developers completed the construction of a Solar Farm on former Council land at Blackwire Road, Swan Hill.
- Lodged a detailed submission to the Local Government Act Review.
- Improved the Community Grants program with access to additional funding and an online application portal.
- Adopted the Recreation Reserve Masterplan.
- Hosted the internationally significant Da Vinci Machines exhibition.
- Commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the battle of Villiers Bretonneux.
- Installed electronic ear scanning equipment at the Regional Livestock exchange.
- Installed new "pump track" at Ultima.

It is pleasing that all of Council's Financial Accountability Statements again received clear audit opinions.

Council remains in a good financial position, achieving an Accounting Surplus of \$5.8 million for the year. This is the ninth successive annual surplus. Council needs to continue to achieve operational surpluses to ensure sufficient cash is available to fund future capital works like the replacement of roads and other community assets. The adjusted rates determination surplus was \$439,000 better than budget.

The Statement of Financial position continues to indicate Council's good financial base. Current assets exceed current liabilities by \$19 million. \$1,001,099 was repaid to lending institutions during the year. The budgeted new borrowings were not taken up and have been deferred until 2018/19.

I take this opportunity to formally thank the Finance Department, the Leadership Team, Councillors and Council auditors for all contributing to a successful year and completion of the annual reporting process for the 2017/18 financial year.

Consultation

The availability of the Annual Report for inspection has been advertised in accordance with the Local Government Act.

The Annual Report is a key element of Council's communication with the community.

Financial Implications

Council remains in a good financial position.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

It is important that Council continue to generate an operational surplus in order to help ensure ongoing financial sustainability including the ability to replace assets when necessary.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Effective and efficient utilisation of resources. - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Options

Not applicable.

Recommendation

That Council consider and endorse the 2017/18 Annual Report of Swan Hill Rural City Council as presented.

B.18.85 MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
File Number:	S12-23-01-V2
Attachments:	1 B.18.45 Murray Basin Rail Project - 26 June 2018 Ordinary Council Meeting report
	2 Letter to Minister Allan
	3 Letter of response from Minister Allan

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

A report brought to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 26 June 2018 item B.18.45 Murray Basin Rails Project - alerting Council to suspected delays in the delivery of the Murray Basin Rail Project where Council resolved that:

- 1. Write to the Minister for Public Transport, the honourable Jacinta Allan seeking an urgent briefing on the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project and inform the Minister of the importance of the successful delivery of this project to the greater Swan Hill economy.**

Council has received a response from Minister Allan (attached).

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective advocacy and strategic planning.

Recommendation

That Council notes the correspondence from the Minister for Public Transport, the honourable Jacinta Allan.

B.18.45 MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer
File Number: S12-23-01-V2
Attachments: 1 Murray Basin Rail Project Summary Brochure

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report alerts Council to suspected delays in the delivery of the Murray Basin Rail Project.

The Murray Basin Rail Project will deliver important upgrades to the rail network throughout northern Victoria. The project is estimated to cost \$440 million and will see the standardisation of the Mildura and Manangatang lines, as well as a number of rail line augmentations south of this region ensuring that freight from the Mallee can be transported by rail to Portland, Geelong or Melbourne ports.

Discussion

The Murray Basin Rail Project is part of an overall rail freight transport strategy for Victoria that sees freight being moved from broad gauge to standard gauge and it also see significant investment into the rail network, ensuring that a freight network throughout Victoria runs on standard gauge lines.

Recently, rumours have abounded that the \$440 million Murray Basin Rail Project is in some difficulties. This is indeed concerning, as a number of significant investments have been established within the Swan Hill Rural City Council or are being considered for establishment on the back of the standardisation of the Manangatang rail line.

The Mallee hay facility at Ultima has been strategically located adjacent to the Manangatang rail line and there have also been significant investments by other corporate entities, either established or slated for development along the Manangatang line and particularly at Manangatang.

Any delay in the delivery of a standard gauge rail service to Manangatang will have a impact on this municipalities economy and on the bottom line of a number of enterprises that have either invested or are proposing to invest and also to the primary industries that rely on these service providers.

In short, any delay in the delivery of a standard gauge rail freight service on the Manangatang line will impact the Swan Hill Rural City Council economy in a negative way.

Recent media coverage suggests that there are some contractual issues plaguing the initial stages of this project. The early stages see the standardisation of the Mildura line and it was the intention of the State Government to complete the Mildura line and whilst these works were being undertaken that freight would be carried on the Manangatang line. It was then intended that upon the completion of the Mildura line that freight would swing over onto the Mildura line whilst the Manangatang line was upgraded.

Council officers have made a number of approaches to V/Line but are still waiting on a response and briefing on the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project. It is suggested that Council may wish to write to the Minister for Transport, the honourable Jacinta Allan seeking an urgent briefing on the status of this project. In this correspondence Council should remind the Minister of the importance of this project and in particular the standardisation of the Manangatang line to this municipalities economy.

Clarification from the Ministers office will assist Council in informing the greater Swan Hill community of the future of this project.

Councillor McPhee is also attending the Rail Freight Alliance conference on Wednesday the 27th of June, Council may wish to consider requesting that Councillor McPhee use his attendance at this conference to ask questions of the Minister and also the deputy leader of the opposition, both of whom will be in attendance at the conference.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective advocacy and strategic planning.

Options

1. Seek clarification on the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project.
2. Take no action.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. **Write to the Minister for Public Transport, the honourable Jacinta Allan seeking an urgent briefing on the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project and inform the Minister of the importance of the successful delivery of this project to the greater Swan Hill economy.**
2. **Request that Councillor McPhee during his attendance at the Rail Freight Alliance conference on 27 June make representations to all members of Parliament present on the importance of this project and seek clarification on the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project.**

75/18 Motion

MOVED Cr Katis

That Council:

- 1. Write to the Minister for Public Transport, the honourable Jacinta Allan seeking an urgent briefing on the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project and inform the Minister of the importance of the successful delivery of this project to the greater Swan Hill economy.**

SECONDED Cr Young

The Motion was put and CARRIED

REF: 1811/18/
JM/SKL

27 June 2018

The Hon. Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Public Transport
Level 20, 1 Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000



Dear Minister Allan

MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT

I write to seek clarification around the status of the Murray Basin Rail Project as it relates to the communities in the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

In recent times, rumours have been circulating that the project is experiencing some difficulties and delays. This is an important project and the Swan Hill Rural City Council has been extremely complimentary of the government's endeavours to improve rail freight through North West Victoria. It is deeply concerning if there is any threats to the delivery of the Murray Basin Rail Project.

Council has made a number of approaches to V/Line to seek clarification but, at this stage none has been forthcoming, and meanwhile Council is left to ponder what the future of this project may be.

I would greatly appreciate a briefing from your department on the difficulties currently being experienced in the delivery of this project and in particular any plans to get the project back on track.

Council would be particularly interested to know when we can expect the completion of the Manangatang rail line and all other works south of this municipality that are necessary to allow 80 km/h freight trains with a 21 ton axle loading to operate between Manangatang and the ports of Portland, Geelong and Melbourne.

Once again I reiterate that Council is very supportive of this project and of the Government's efforts in improving the viability and efficiency of freight in North West Victoria.

I look forward to your response and in the meantime, should you require any further information please contact me on (03) 5036 2348.

Yours sincerely



John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

45 Splatt Street SWAN HILL VIC 3585
PO Box 488 SWAN HILL VIC 3585
DX30166 Swan Hill
Telephone: (03) 5036 2333 Fax: (03) 5036 2340
Email: council@swanhill.vic.gov.au
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Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Minister for Public Transport,
Minister for Major Projects

Flinders Street
Parliament, Victoria 3000 Australia
Telephone +61 3 8392 3000
FX 210292

Ref: CMIN004003R

Mr John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer
Swan Hill Rural City Council
PO Box 488
SWAN HILL VIC 3585

11 SEP 2018		S32-22-10	
CEO			
REF: 2018-153055589206			

Dear Mr McLinden

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2018 about Murray Basin Rail Project. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Murray Basin Rail Project is a critical project for our freight industry and communities in Victoria's north west region.

The Victorian Government is committed to delivering the Murray Basin Rail Project and it is essential that we get it right. This includes ensuring our rail freight and farming industries are consulted and their input is taken into consideration.

Stage 2 of the Murray Basin Rail Project is largely complete, with freight trains running between Yelta and Maryborough, and between Maryborough and Ararat on the standard gauge line, enabling more trains to carry more produce to ports.

The Freight-Passenger Rail Separation Project will untangle the central Ballarat rail network, delivering a number of track and signalling improvements which were not included in the Murray Basin Rail Project.

These works will provide faster and more reliable freight paths from the Murray Basin region through central Ballarat to ports, enable future increases in passenger rail to Maryborough and Ararat.

We have been consulting with rail freight and farming industry representatives who have expressed strong support for both projects, with an emphasis from industry to prioritise delivery of the Freight-Passenger Rail Separation Project to ensure this is complete before finalising the standardisation and upgrade works on the Sea Lake, Manangatang and Gheringhap to Warrenheip lines, being the remaining stages of the Murray Basin Rail Project.



Industry have told us these projects need to be delivered during timeframes that avoid the harvest and haulage periods to ensure Victorian farm products can continue to be transported to ports by rail.

Industry have also supported a targeted 2020 delivery timeline for the Freight-Passenger Rail Separation Project and the future stages of the Murray Basin Rail Project. This allows industry time to plan and manage disruption due to the delivery of both projects and continue to get Victorian farm products to ports by rail.

This feedback is helping to inform the Rail Projects Victoria project delivery strategy which will be finalised over the coming months, with further consultation with industry to occur throughout project delivery.

I understand that Garry Button, Chief Executive, Freight Victoria, will be briefing you further on these projects and other freight initiatives, including the recently released Victorian Freight Plan, as part of the Murray River Group of Councils meeting on 6 September 2018 in Kerang.

If you require further information, please contact Garry Button, Chief Executive, Freight Victoria on telephone; (03) 8392 6196 or mobile 0417 209 651.

I trust this information is of use. Thank you again for writing to me about this important project.

Yours sincerely



Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Member for Bendigo East
Minister for Public Transport

SECTION C – DECISIONS WHICH NEED ACTION/RATIFICATION

C.18.17 SIGN & SEAL REPORT

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil.

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The following documents and agreements have been signed and sealed by the Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer on the respective dates. Those actions require the ratification of the Council.

Discussion

During the course of any month Council is required to sign and seal a range of documents arising from decisions made on a previous occasion(s). Examples include sale of land, entering into funding arrangements for Council programs etc.

As the decision to enter into these agreements has already been made, these documents are signed and sealed when received, with Council ratifying the signing and sealing at the next Council meeting.

Consultation

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Not applicable

Social Implications

Not applicable

Economic Implications

Not applicable

Environmental Implications

Not applicable

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable

Background

During the course of any month Council is required to sign and seal a range of documents arising from decisions made on a previous occasion(s). Examples include sale of land, entering into funding arrangements for Council programs etc.

As the decision to enter into these agreements has already been made, these documents are signed and sealed when received, with Council ratifying the signing and sealing at the next Council meeting.

Issues

The following documents were signed and sealed since the last Council meeting:

No.	Document Type	Document Description	Date signed/ sealed
895	Variation of Lease	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and the Lions Club of Lake Boga Inc	18-9-18
896	Proof of Debt and Proxy Form for Creditors meeting CPED CO-OPERATIVE	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and Rodgers Reidy (Liquidators)	25-9-18
897	Lease of General Store at Pioneer Settlement Amended document	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and C.S.Roberts	25-9-18
898	Licence for works to be conducted on the Boat Ramp on the Bank of the Murray River opposite lot2 DP 1066177	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and the Minister Administering the Crown Lands Act 1989	25-9-18
899	Instrument of Delegation to the Swan Hill Indoor Sport and Recreation Centre Special Committee	Swan Hill Rural City Council to the Swan Hill Indoor Sport and Recreation Centre Special Committee	25-9-18
900	Lease – for the premises known as the Robinswood Homestead	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and Robinswood Homestead Association Inc	25-9-18

Conclusion

Council authorise the signing and sealing of the above documents.

Recommendation

That Council notes the actions of signing and sealing the documents under delegation as scheduled.

C.18.18 COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES - RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA ITEMS

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer
File Number: S15-05-06
Attachments: 1 Councillor Attendance at Assemblies

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The Local Government Act 1989 requires that the details of Councillor Assemblies be reported to Council meetings on a monthly basis.

Discussion

The State Government has amended the Local Government Act 1989 which requires Council to report on Councillor Assemblies.

Whilst Minutes do not have to be recorded, Agenda items and those in attendance must be, and a report presented to Council.

An assembly of Councillors is defined as a meeting that is planned or scheduled at which at least half of the Council and one Officer are in attendance, and where the matters being considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

No formal decisions can be made at an assembly but rather direction can be given that is likely to lead to a formal decision of Council.

Details of the most recent assemblies of Council are attached.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Financial Implications

Not applicable.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective advocacy and strategic planning.

Options

Council must comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1989.

Recommendation

That Council note the contents of the report.

COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA

25 September 2018 at 1.00pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS

- Haydn Downes – Swan Hill Police
- Councillor Only Session
- Swan Hill Inc. Budget and Marketing Plan (Janelle Earle)
- Draft Shared Path and Yamagata Japanese Garden conceptual designs
- Nyah Road Line-Marking
- Rooming Houses
- Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy PPT
- North Central Catchment Partnership agreement
- Community solar bulk buy program
- Mallee Sun

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Nil

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Ann Young
- Cr John Katis
- Cr Chris Jeffery
- Cr Gary Norton

Apologies

- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Lea Johnson

OFFICERS

- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Svetla Petkova, Director Infrastructure
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services

Other

- Haydn Downs, Swan Hill Police
- Murray Ray and Colin McAlpine, Swan Hill Inc.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Nil

COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
25 September 2018 at 1.00pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS

- GWM Water Annual visit - Subjects are:
 - Connections Projects
 - Seasonal Outlook
 - Future of dairying
- Creative Strategy
- Libraries Change Lives Campaign
- Statutory Meeting
- Commercial Development 71 & 77 Bromley Road Robinvale
- Rural Living Discussion on what issues Council would like to raise with DELWP officers on their visit later this year

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Nil

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Ann Young
- Cr John Katis
- Cr Gary Norton
- Cr Les McPhee

Apologies

- Cr Chris Jeffery
- Cr Lea Johnson

OFFICERS

- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Svetla Petkova, Director Infrastructure
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Camille Cullinan, Manager Cultural Development & Libraries
- Ian Tully, Art Gallery Director
- Kim Bennett, Regional Arts Development Officer
- Muriel Scholz, Senior Economic Development Officer

Other

- Mark Williams and Peter Vogel, GWM Water

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Nil

SECTION D – NOTICES OF MOTION

SECTION E – URGENT ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN AGENDA

SECTION F – TO CONSIDER & ORDER ON COUNCILLOR REPORTS

SECTION G – IN CAMERA ITEMS

Recommendation

That Council close the meeting to the public on the grounds that the following report(s) include contractual matters.

- B.18.86 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**
- B.18.87 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**