AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

To be held Swan Hill Town Hall
McCallum Street, Swan Hill
Commencing at 2pm

COUNCIL:

Cr B Moar – Mayor

Cr A Young
Cr LT McPhee
Cr J Benham
Cr C Jeffery
Cr L Johnson
Cr N McKay

SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- **Open**

- **Acknowledgement of Country**

- **Prayer**

- **Apologies**

- **Confirmation of Minutes**

  1) Ordinary Meeting held on 23 June 2020
  2) Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 7 July 2020
  3) Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 14 July 2020

- **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

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

- **Public Question Time**

SECTION B – REPORTS

B.20.42   ADOPTION OF 2020/21 BUDGET

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-06-11
Attachments: Nil.

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

Summary

Following the statutory advertising period, the 2020/21 Budget is ready for adoption. The Budget is the primary source of financial control across Council operations, and expresses the nature and level of Council's service and infrastructure provision in financial terms for the 2020/21 financial year.

Due to the full impact of Councils response to the COVID-19 Pandemic being undeterminable at this stage the Budget has been prepared based on the best available information at the time which primarily reflects a Business As Usual position. A revised budget may be required to be prepared later in the year if significant and material variations occur.

Discussion

At the close of the statutory advertising period six submissions were received. The submissions were formally received and heard at the Special Council Meeting on 7 July 2020. A response to points raised in the submissions was provided at a Special Council meeting on 14 July 2020. Council formally considered the submissions at that meeting. The points raised in the submissions do not require the Budget to be amended. Council is now in a position to adopt the Budget.

Councillors have been involved in the preparation of the Budget and are well informed as to its content however, highlights and significant issues are as follows:

1.   Rating Strategy
The 2020/21 budget proposes an average increase on the annualized 2019/20 rates of 1.86%. A 1% early payment discount will apply if rates installments are paid in full by 30 September 2020.

The proposed average rate rise is below the State Government's Rate Cap of 2%. As a result of new Valuation that will be applied from 1st July 2020 the Dry Land Farmers Differential Rate discount on the General Rate has been increased from 20% to 27.5%. In addition, and in response to the impact the State Government COVID-19 response restrictions have had on the Commercial sector, the 30%

premium differential rate applied to Commercial business in Swan Hill and Robinvale has been reduced to 12.5% for the 2020/21 financial year.

This will result in a more even distribution of the rate rise due to the new valuations.

2.   *Waste Management*
The budget reflects increased Waste Management charges at landfill sites in line with State Government policy changes and the increased cost of processing Recyclable materials and general cost increases. The fee for a 120 litre garbage bin will be $335 and a 240 litre bin will be $508. The optional green waste service charge will be unchanged at $95.

3.   *Operations*
The budget maintains the current level of operational services except where Government Policy changes are occurring or a service can be better provided by the private sector. $40.6 million (excluding depreciation) will be spent on these services primarily on Infrastructure maintenance and provision, Family, Youth and Aged services, Recreational facilities, Economic and Community Development, Tourism, Waste Management and Municipal administration costs.

4.   *Capital Works*
The Budget proposes $23.6 million capital works program focusing on infrastructure replacement. This is dependent on receiving $7.8 million in external funding. Some of the major works to be undertaken include $5.9 million for road works, $4.3 million to continue the implementation of the Our Region Our Rivers Project, $0.9 million towards construction of the Robinvale town levee, $1 million to upgrade the netball courts in Robinvale, $2.3 million for upgrades to the Swan Hill Aerodrome, $1.1 million for major maintenance to community buildings, $0.5 million to implement Community Plans including the Vibrant Villages Project and $0.4 million for an upgrade to drainage in Pritchard Street, Swan Hill.

5.   *Asset Management*
The Budget is clearly focused on asset management issues and the need to fund infrastructure replacement. $11.3 million (subject to external funding) will be spent replacing Councils assets, primarily roads, footpaths and drains.

6.   *Financial Management*
The Budget predicts an operating surplus of $7.9 million and a rates surplus of $0.06 million. Net debt will decrease by $0.8 million. Net assets are budgeted to increase by $8.2 million due mainly to asset revaluations and capital expenditure. Cash and investments will reduce slightly to $19.5 million as surplus cash is used to fund a back log of capital works. Current assets will exceed current liabilities at 30 June 2020 by $8.2 million.

Consultation

The Draft Budget was presented at an online information session on 2 June 2020.

A formal advertising and submission process has taken place. Six submissions were received. Suggestions for projects and programs from the community were received throughout the year and considered as part of the Budget preparation process.

Financial Implications

Adoption of the 2020/21 Budget authorises Council officers to expend Council funds and raise revenue to implement the budgeted programs and projects.

Due to the as yet undetermined full impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic it may be necessary to prepare a revised budget later in the financial year if significant and material variations to budget are identified.

Social Implications

Council's budget covers all aspects of Council operations and therefore impacts economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Economic Implications

As above.

Environmental Implications

As above.

Risk Management Implications

Setting a budget is a vital control that enables the organisation to track financial performance.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

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

Options
1.   Adopt the 2020/21 Budget as advertised.
2.   Adopt the 2020/21 Budget with minor amendments.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. **Having considered the six submissions, adopt the budget as advertised.**

2. **Declare that $25,060,200 be raised in rates for the 2020/21 financial year.**

3. **Declare a Differential Rate of 0.656440 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for rateable Commercial properties within Residential 1, Business or Industrial zones of the Swan Hill Planning Scheme in the townships of Swan Hill and Robinvale.**

4. **Declare a Differential Rate of 0.606844 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for rateable Residential and Industrial properties within the drainage districts Swan Hill and Robinvale townships.**

5. **Declare a Differential Rate of 1.213686 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for rateable Vacant Residential land within the townships of Swan Hill and Robinvale that has remained as vacant land for a minimum of 5 years since it was last zoned as residential land or 3 years after its sale as a residential allotment, whichever is the latter.**

6. **Declare a Differential Rate of 0.423039 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for rateable farming properties without access to irrigation water infrastructure and which are primarily used for broad acre grain/sheep production and are allocated an Australian Valuation Property Classification Code of 510, 520, 523, 524 or 530.**

7. **Declare a Differential Rate of 0.583502 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for all other rateable land within the municipality.**

8. **Declare a Garbage Service Charge of $335 for a 120 litre bin service and $508 for a 240 litre bin service for residential properties within the declared garbage service areas of the Municipality, for the year commencing 1 July 2020.**

9. **Declare an optional Green Waste Garbage Service Charge of $95 for a 240 litre bin service for Residential properties within the declared garbage service area of Swan Hill City (collection area number 20) for the year commencing 1 July 2020.**

10. **Authorise borrowings of up to $500,000 for capital works in 2020/21.**

11. **Provide a payment equivalent to 50% of the applicable rates for Not-For-Profit recreational properties which would have been previously entitled to the lower Recreational Differential Rate.**

12. **Provide a payment equivalent to 50% of the difference between the**

Commercial Rate and Urban Rate in Swan Hill and Robinvale for Commercial properties in Common Occupancy with a residence.

B.20.43   AUDIT COMMITTEE

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-28-01
Attachments: 1   Confidential Minutes 11-06-20

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 11 June 2020 and this report summarises the items that were discussed at the meeting.

Discussion

The Audit Committee met on 11 June 2020 and as well as the usual procedural items the agenda items included:

1.   The Interim Management Letter was discussed with no new findings from the Interim Audit visit. Carried over items will be addressed before the end of this financial year.
2.   New Accounting Standards were discussed noting that Council has developed Policies and Procedures to ensure compliance.
3.   A Risk Management update was given to the Committee with no questions from the Committee being asked.
4.   The Related Parties Procedure was discussed and the Committee agreed to this coming back at a later date with some minor changes to the procedure form.
5.   A report of Quarterly Review of Financial Performance and Position to 31 March 2020 was presented noting that due to the impact of COVID-19 the end of financial year result is $6,000 worse than budget at this stage.
6.   Pandemic Planning and Response update was given to the Committee noting that working from home was still in place for staff which we are trying to work around. Council services were progressively being reopened as Government Restrictions ease.
7.   A Report on any significant Legislative changes affecting Council was given by the CEO noting that the Local Government Act 2020 will have significant changes to the way we do business.
8.   There was nothing to report on Suspected and Actual Frauds, Theft & Breaches of Law by Management which is very pleasing.
9.   A survey for the members of Audit Committee to complete has been developed and agreed upon.

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 Councils Budget.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

The Audit Committee helps to oversee Councils 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
  11 June 2020

B.20.44   COVID-19 ECONOMIC RESPONSE, RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S13-03-05
Attachments: 1   Recovery Plan Economy Business

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

Summary

This report seeks to inform Council of the response and relief activities undertaken across the municipality by Council to support business and the economy during the COVID-19 adverse event which in March 2020 saw a change in how business was conducted in some sectors.

The report also provides Council with an understanding of the business and economic recovery framework developed in partnership with Swan Hill Inc. and the Robinvale and Euston Business Association (REBA).

Discussion

The Corona virus pandemic has disrupted life around the world and added a new set of challenges for government, businesses, families and the entire community. In response the Swan Hill Rural City Council has approved a raft of response and relief measures.

A staged approach to recovery is proposed to match the staged reduction of restrictions and Council will continue to implement further initiatives as needed. These announcements will focus on continuing to support business and continuing with capital works projects and other programs specifically designed to inject money into the local economy.

Since the impact of the Corona virus was realised during March 2020, the Council with Swan Hill Inc. and individual businesses has undertaken a range of actions to respond to closures and other business impacts. As a result of the response and relief phases, a planned recover process is now proposed to hasten recovery and ensure our business community can thrive, diversify and reopen.

The recovery framework has been established to position Council, Swan Hill Inc. and REBA to transition their efforts from response and relief to a recovery approach. Recovery has been strategically planned to assist and provide support for businesses as they transfer from the COVID-19 conditions and reposition into a post COVID-19 business environment.

Actions identified within the recovery framework are through business support, advocacy and communication, infrastructure and local procurement and marketing

and promotion. The COVID-19 Response, Relief and Recovery Action Plan clearly identifies objectives, key stakeholders, responsibilities and actions required.

Consultation

The development of the COVID-19 Response, Relief and Recovery Action Plan has been in consultation with Swan Hill Inc. and REBA.

Financial Implications

Future reports on the COVID-19 will provide Council with more accurate measures of the financial implications for Council and our business economy.

Social Implications

Future reports on the COVID-19 will provide Council with more accurate measures of the social implications for Council and our business economy.

Economic Implications

Future reports on the COVID-19 will provide Council with more accurate measures of the economic implications for Council and our business economy.

Environmental Implications

Nil

Risk Management Implications

Appropriate support to the economy in a timely fashion will reduce the risk to the business community.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective advocacy and strategic planning.

Options

That Council:

1. Acknowledges the COVID-19 Response, Relief and Recovery Action Plan and endorsee its implementation.

2. Does not acknowledge the COVID-19 Response, Relief and Recovery Action Plan and endorsee its implementation.

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Recommendation

That Council endorse the COVID-19 Economic Response, Relief and Recovery Action Plan.

Covid-19 Response, relief and recovery

The Corona virus pandemic has disrupted life around the world and added a new set of challenges for government, businesses, families and the entire community. In response the Swan Hill Rural City Council has approved a raft of response and relief measures. The package is aiding many of our community to keep businesses operating and assisting families to make ends meet.

A staged approach to recovery is proposed to match the staged reduction of implements restrictions and Council will continue to implement further initiatives as needed. These announcements will focus on continuing to support business and continuing with capital works projects and other programs specifically designed to inject money into the local economy.

1. Business and economy

Since the impact of the Corona virus was realised during March 2020, the Council with Swan Hill Inc. and individual businesses has undertaken a range of actions to respond to closures and other business impacts. As a result of the response and relief phases, a planned recover process is now proposed to hasten recovery and ensure our business community can thrive, diversify and reopen.

Summary of actions during the response, relief and recovery stages:

Response	
	• Business Support – access to the latest reliable information – Federal and State Governments, Murray River Tourism webinars, Business Vic and online meetings to provide advice. Newsletters, phone calls
	• Tourism Marketing – adjusted social media and all advertising to a "We're ready when you're ready" theme
	• Give Back Campaign – joint advertising campaign that encourages customers to keep shopping locally and educate customers on how to engage with businesses in lockdown
	• Provided multi-lingual resources for business use advising of health information
	• Initial in-person visits to ensure adherence to new trading regulations
	• Assisting businesses to manage public space where people congregate
	• Swan Hill Region Information Centre first to publish and promote businesses immediately impacted (hospitality sector)
Relief	• Rates – defer payment of rates for commercial properties, interest free, until 30 September 2020
	• Rates – simplify the financial hardship application process for all ratepayers
	• Animal registration – late fee for registration will not be charged until June 10 instead of April 10, providing two extra months for registration to be paid
	• Rent relief – provide a rent package for small business that occupy Council-owned properties that is consistent with the Mandatory Code of Practice will be offered
	• Footpath trading – if the annual fee has already been paid and extension for a further 12 months will be provided at no cost. If fee has not been paid then no fee will be required.
	• Car parking – Provide free parking from 30 March to 30 June 2020 (time limits still apply and may be enforced by Council officers)
	• Debt recovery – formal debt collection activity has been deferred until after 30 June 2020
	• Refund of booking fees – booking fees have either been changed for a future date or refunded
	• Payment terms – payments to local Council supplies are being made weekly rather than monthly to assist local suppliers with their cash flow
	• Impartial mediation services available from Victorian Small Business Commission

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Recovery	• Plan recovery under a framework of Business Support, Advocacy, Communication and Marketing/Promotion • Regular assessment of the business environment using a combination of anecdotal and evidence based models • Return to delivering economic development activities within the annual implementation plan • Return to delivering Marketing activities within the Swan Hill Inc. Marketing Plan and Budget

2. Recovery framework

The recovery framework has been established to position Council and Swan Hill Inc. to transition from response and relief to a recovery mode. Recovery has been strategically planned to assist and provide support for businesses as they transfer from the Covid-19 conditions and reposition into a new business environment.

Summary of actions identified within the recovery framework are through business support, advocacy and communication, infrastructure and local procurement and marketing and promotion.

Business Support	**Advocacy and Communication**
• Information and advice • Access to financial support • Provide opportunities for skill and business development training Better Approvals process	• Seek evidence of impact of Covid-19 • Development of an Investment Attraction action plan • High level meetings with industry sector representatives and property owners • Transition to video/ visual resources to for greater access and distribution
Infrastructure and Local Procurement	**Marketing and Promotion**
• Infrastructure projects to help local businesses • Renewal of aging infrastructure such as tourism signage	• Continue with Dream Swan Hill Campaign to capitalise of recruitment opportunities • Continue profiling local businesses across other marketing platforms – Business Snapshot profiles beyond the newsletter • Promote region as an accessible and safe tourism destination • Develop and manage a visitor Customer Relationship Management (CRM) • Assist businesses to message using customer databases • Undertake activities to continue engagement across digital platforms

Business Support

Impact	Objectives	Key Stakeholders	Actions	Responsible
Information sharing	Ensure relevant grants, support and information is available	• Council • Swan Hill Inc • REBA • Individual business	• Continue to provide information directly to businesses. • Provide direct contact to officers for personalised help. • Use new video resource to show specialist advice	Economic Development
Council grants	Small grants to stimulate economy	• Council	• Offer a small grant <$1000 to spend as business best see fit, training, help with bills, help with online presence, marketing, recruiting, mentoring, etc	Economic Development
Tourism revival	Obtain share of the tourism market	• Council • MRTB • Operators	• Promote the region for tourism as a safe and accessible destination. • Encourage operators to offer packages for Council to promote through Information Centre and Swan Hill Inc.(Welcome back weekend specials) • Assist operators with a small grant to promote their business. • Assist businesses to list on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) after lobbying for free listings • Support industry and skill development by promoting webinars	Swan Hill Incorporated REBA Swan Hill Incorporated & Swan Hill Region Information Centre Economic Development Swan Hill Incorporated & Swan Hill Region Information Centre
Events	Create events geared at the visitation market	• Council • Government grants	• Access and promote event related grants.	Economic Development

Business development		• Swan Hill Inc.	• Prioritise external visitation events when approving Council Events grants. • Ensure 2021 events are listed on the ATDW now	Swan Hill Incorporated & Swan Hill Region Information Centre
Business development	Encourage business expansion and new businesses	• Council • Individual businesses	• Ensure businesses are able to start or expand quickly. • Use Better Approvals Process • Advise industry professionals of the process	Economic Development
Business development	Implement Better Approvals Process	• Council	• Ensure rapid response • Provide a triage service and one point of contact • Be proactive in helping businesses achieve quick turnaround. • Assist business achieve all required permits.	Economic Development
Business development	Save businesses time and money	• Council • Government departments	• Provide businesses with the help necessary to achieve approvals limiting the need to pay for external consultants. • Council to provide incentives to assist with planning and building fees.	Economic Development & Planning Departments

Advocacy and Communication

Impact	Objectives	Key Stakeholders	Actions	Responsible
Effective help	Simplify transactions	• Council • Government agencies	• Source appropriate contacts and link businesses with the right person to help. • Advice of external and independent business support i.e. Victorian Small Business Commission and Industry Associations • Encourage membership of business organisations Swan Hill Inc. and REBA	Economic Development Swan Hill Inc. REBA
Navigate the maze	Cut through the red tape	• Council • Government agencies	• Advocate on behalf of business to receive answers that are pertinent to their needs. • Provide a dedicated officer to follow through their queries. • Explain "government speak" and ensure queries are being followed through advocacy.	Economic Development
Cooperation	Investment lead revival	• Council • Industry leaders and property owners	• Conduct a range of high level meetings to gain an understanding of priorities • Generate local investment into the community • Upgrade of poor quality properties	Economic Development
Effective communication	Better distribution of created content	• Council • Swan Hill Inc. • REBA	• Transition from static to interactive digital communication methods • Sharing of content support • Engaging with the external support	Economic Development

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Job creation	Investment	• Creation of an Investment Attraction action plan focused on a small number of key projects	Economic Development
		• Creation of Tourism Advocacy document	Economic Development
Effective financial support	Investment into Tourism products	• Governmewnts • MRT • Tourism Victoria	

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Infrastructure and Local Procurement

Impact	Objectives	Key Stakeholders	Actions	Responsible
Liveability infrastructure	Create better infrastructure to entice new residents to the SHRCC municipality	• Council • Government departments • Individual businesses	• Implement infrastructure grants from various sources. • Prepare "shovel ready" projects for future grants.	Community Development
Business ready infrastructure	Provide infrastructure to make for easier business expansion	• Council • Government departments	• Pursue transport corridor improvements. • Enable better telecommunications networks. • Ensure airport upgrades.	Economic Development Engineering Department
Support strong industries	Manufacture expansion of agriculture support	• Council • Business peak bodies • Whole of Government	• Facilitate recruitment. • Promote the SHRCC as investment ready. • Ensure industry voices are heard and their concerns acted upon • Develop a culture of enabling rather than blocking	Economic Development
Support local business	Ensure local businesses are involved	• Council	• Improve procurement policy that advantages local businesses. • Target local businesses when new developments occur by contacting them directly when a tender comes out.	Procurement Better Approvals Team
Housing	Provide housing stock to respond to demand	• Council • Private developers • Industry	• Encourage local investment in housing stock. • Source external funding through government grants. • Lead by example and continue Council investment in housing	Economic Development

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Infrastructure renewal	Replacement of tired signage	• Council	• Develop a housing investment strategy to offer investors an incentive to consider SHRCC stock. • Rolling program of tourism signage renewal to replace UV and damaged signs

Marketing and Promotion

Impact	Objectives	Key Stakeholders	Actions	Responsible
Tourism Visitation	Engage to translate to bookings	• Swan Hill Inc • Council	• Develop a VFR campaign • Initiate Swan Hill Inc. marketing • MRT- Spring Campaign	Swan Hill Inc. Marketing Committee
	Highlighting case studies		• Development of business profiles • Broadening the use and sharing of content across platforms	Swan Hill Region Information Centre & Swan Hill Inc.
			• Development of a Customer relation management (CRM) by the Swan Hill Region Information Centre • More activation online – engagement by staff at the VIC – FB, Trip Advisor etc • Highlighting of attractions and content – 360 photos	Swan Hill Region Information Centre & Swan Hill Inc.
			• Updated region information to tour operators	Swan Hill Region Information Centre & Swan Hill Inc.
Support Industry	Increased awareness of local manufacturing beyond our local and regional boundaries Local markets enhanced	Economic Development Swan Hill Inc. REBA	• Development of information which can be used across marketing platforms. Build on Dream Swan Hill and Connect U champagnes	Economic Development Swan Hill Inc.

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B.20.45   COVID EVENTS PROPOSAL

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S17-01-04-07
Attachments: Nil

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

Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to utilise some of the former New Year's Eve funds ($30,000) to hold COVID-friendly events in our regional towns and a major event in Swan Hill as part of the region's COVID recovery.

Discussion

The Economic and Community Development Unit (ECDU) has been working to assist local communities by planning event opportunities to stimulate local economies and revive and reactivate the region.

COVID-friendly regional events
Discussions have been underway with Showbiz Cinemas to bring a Pop-up Drive in Cinema to Robinvale and Manangatang, as short-term, COVID-friendly means of re-activating some of our regional towns. Robinvale and Manangatang were chosen because they have not benefitted from a Drive in event previously and have the potential to attract a wide geographical audience.

The one-off events in each township, would be held over a single weekend, and would present an opportunity for local clubs or community groups to fundraise through ticket sales and the sale of food and beverages.

A proposal has been provided by Showbiz Cinemas which outlines the costs involved in providing the screening equipment, movie license and staff to coordinate the event.

Council would be required to manage the overall event, including:
• Contracting Showbiz Cinemas to host the event at the chosen locations
• Arranging suitable venues (possibly Robinvale Rec Reserve/rugby field or Trotting Track and Manangatang Racecourse/Rec Reserve)
• Provide appropriate power supply (generator from local hire company)
• Cleaning and waste management
• Working with local community groups or clubs that wish be involved - for food/beverage sales and setting up online ticket sales through Eventbrite
• Potentially providing staff or arranging two local volunteers to assist with each event

- Assist local groups with promotion through Council social media channels

The community will be consulted on the best location following Council's approval of the event.

Based on this proposal, approximate costs to Council would be:

- 2 x single screenings in regional towns (including movie licence fee) $5,500
- Generator (Swan Hill Hire) $440 + fuel
- Cleaning of venues $200
- Waste Management $500
- **TOTAL $7,000 (includes $300 contingency)**

Swan Hill Major Event

Over the past three months, officers have been meeting regularly with Pioneer Settlement, Art Gallery, Library, Swan Hill Town Hall PACC, Swan Hill Region Information Centre and Swan Hill Incorporated as part of the Tourism Experiences team.

The team's core goal at present is to plan an event for Swan Hill as a means of recovery for our region's economy, in particular the tourism, arts and cultural industries.

Currently, the team is exploring ideas to hold a long weekend of events/workshops/performances to attract visitors to Swan Hill (and potentially other towns within the municipality) during the January School Holidays in 2021 (subject to COVID-19 restrictions). This event could include a multicultural and indigenous component, such as multicultural food stalls, indigenous arts and dances.

The event is in early planning stages, with current discussions focused on activating each of Council's existing cultural facilities, as well as encouraging other local event organisers, business owners and community groups to be involved. Each department has been asked to contribute a budget and resources to the event to ensure its success.

The funds will be used to pay for marketing, artists, workshop costs and sundries relevant to the organisation of the event. The organising committee will communicate with Council to propose ideas and formats in the near future.

It is requested that up to **$5,000** of the former New Year's Eve budget to assist with the delivery of this major event, as part of the COVID recovery plan for our region.

Consultation

- Community Planning groups
- Showbiz cinemas

- Robinvale Works Manager
- Tourism Experiences team

Informal consultations have been undertaken with Manangatang Improvement Group and members of the Robinvale Community who are very supportive of the concept. Consultations and brainstorming for effective fundraising are planned with community and sporting clubs as soon as approval to run the event is secured. Clubs have mentioned the difficulty of fundraising in this climate and it is expected that the initiative will be well received.

Financial Implications

The cost to Council would be approximately $7,000 to offer a single screening at two regional towns within the municipality and $5,000 to assist in the delivery of a major event in Swan Hill as part of COVID recovery for our region.

It is proposed that funds formerly allocated to New Year's Eve are redirected to offer this opportunity to provide a much-needed boost for local groups and businesses.

Social Implications

The Drive-In Cinema events will assist in re-activating the towns across our municipality with a COVID-safe event that can bring people together in a time of need. While local sporting clubs have been inactive, these events would lift the spirits of these smaller regional communities, giving them something to look forward to in an otherwise quiet period.

The major event planned for January will also provide a much-needed morale boost for the people and businesses of Swan Hill, and encourage visitation to return from outside the municipality.

Economic Implications

Funds raised through gate takings and food and beverage sales at the Drive In cinema will be directed to local community groups or clubs who wish to partake in the event.

The Swan Hill event will also encourage economic stimulus for local businesses as visitors return to the region to take part in the weekend's various offerings.

Environmental Implications

Council officers and relevant community groups will ensure minimal environmental impacts from vehicles attending the Drive-in Cinema events.

Risk Management Implications

Council will work with the contractor, businesses and community groups providing goods to ensure all procedures are in place to minimise risks, including adhering to strict social distancing guidelines and following COVID-safe procedures, where necessary.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Community enrichment - Provide services and support initiatives that create a Healthy and Safe Community.

Options

Nil

Recommendations

That Council:

1. **Approve the use of $7,000 of funds (formally allocated to New Year's Eve) to help local community groups and clubs host a COVID-safe Pop-Up Drive In Cinema event in Robinvale and Manangatang.**

2. Approve the use of **$5,000 of funds (formally allocated to New Year's Eve) to develop a major event in Swan Hill as a means of post-COVID recovery for the region.**

B.20.46 PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF THE LAND FOR A CONTRACTORS DEPOT

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: 2019/75
Attachments: Nil.

Declarations of Interest:

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

Summary

The application is for the use of the land for a Contractors Depot in the Township Zone and Farming Zone, located at 106-108 Murray Street and 21 Church Street, Piangil. This report seeks a Council resolution to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit.

Discussion

Location and existing conditions

The subject sites are located on the north side of Murray Street consisting of two contiguous allotments both obtaining access by the existing crossover from Murray Street.

The first site is Lot 1 TP 234952, 106-108 Murray Street, Piangil located in the Township Zone. The site is irregular in shape with an overall area of approximately 1011m^2 and contains two shipping containers and various visible materials associated with the current business. The lot has frontage to Murray Street.

The second site is Lot 2 PS 539424, 21 Church Street, Piangil located in the Farming Zone. The site is irregular in shape with an overall area of 8.37 ha with some scattered native vegetation present and is vacant of any buildings. The current use is to store trucks and conduct minor maintenance.

Figure 1. Site frontage Murray Street, Piangil

Figure 2. Farming Zone subject site
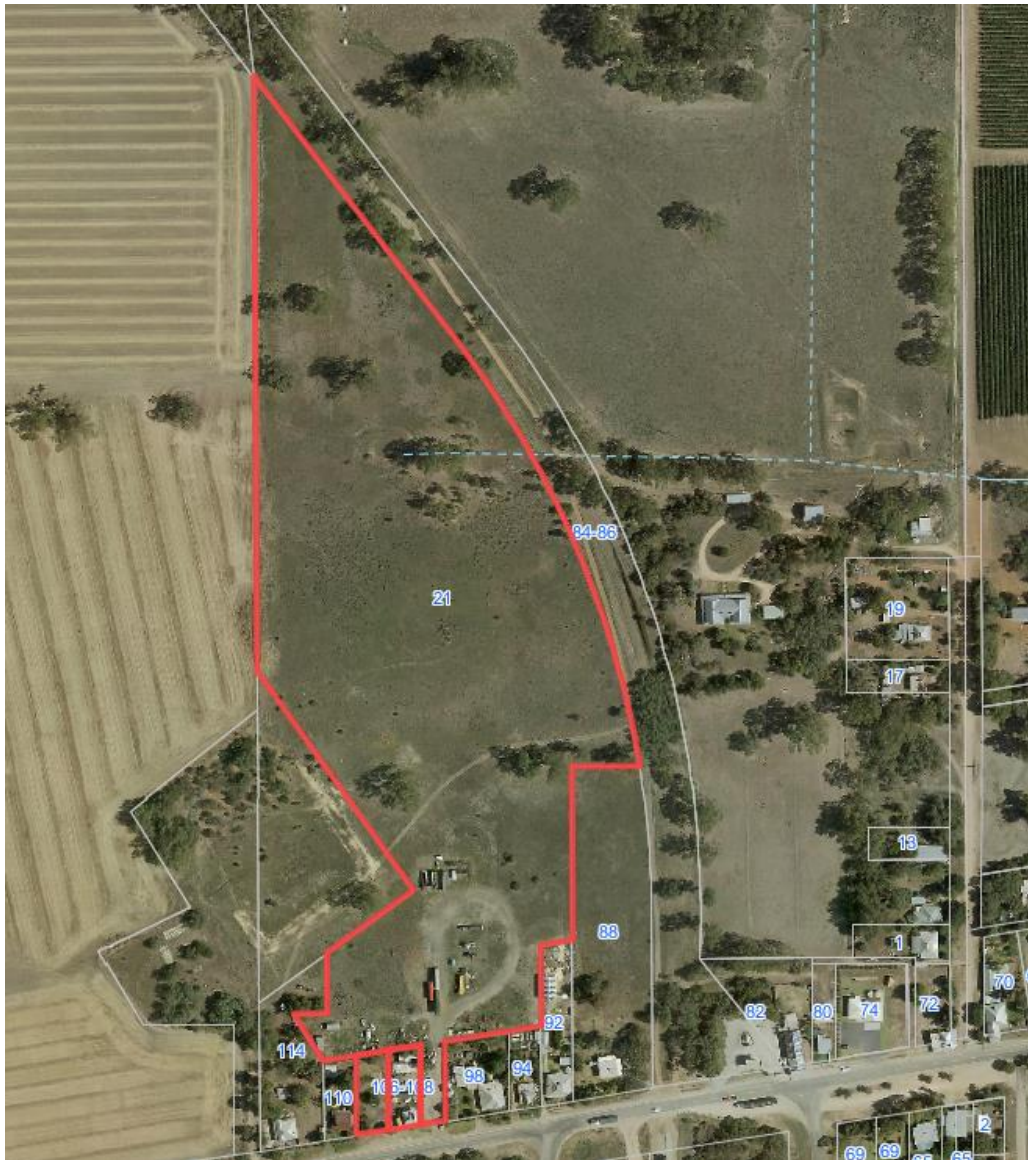
Figure 3. Aerial image of subject sites and surrounds
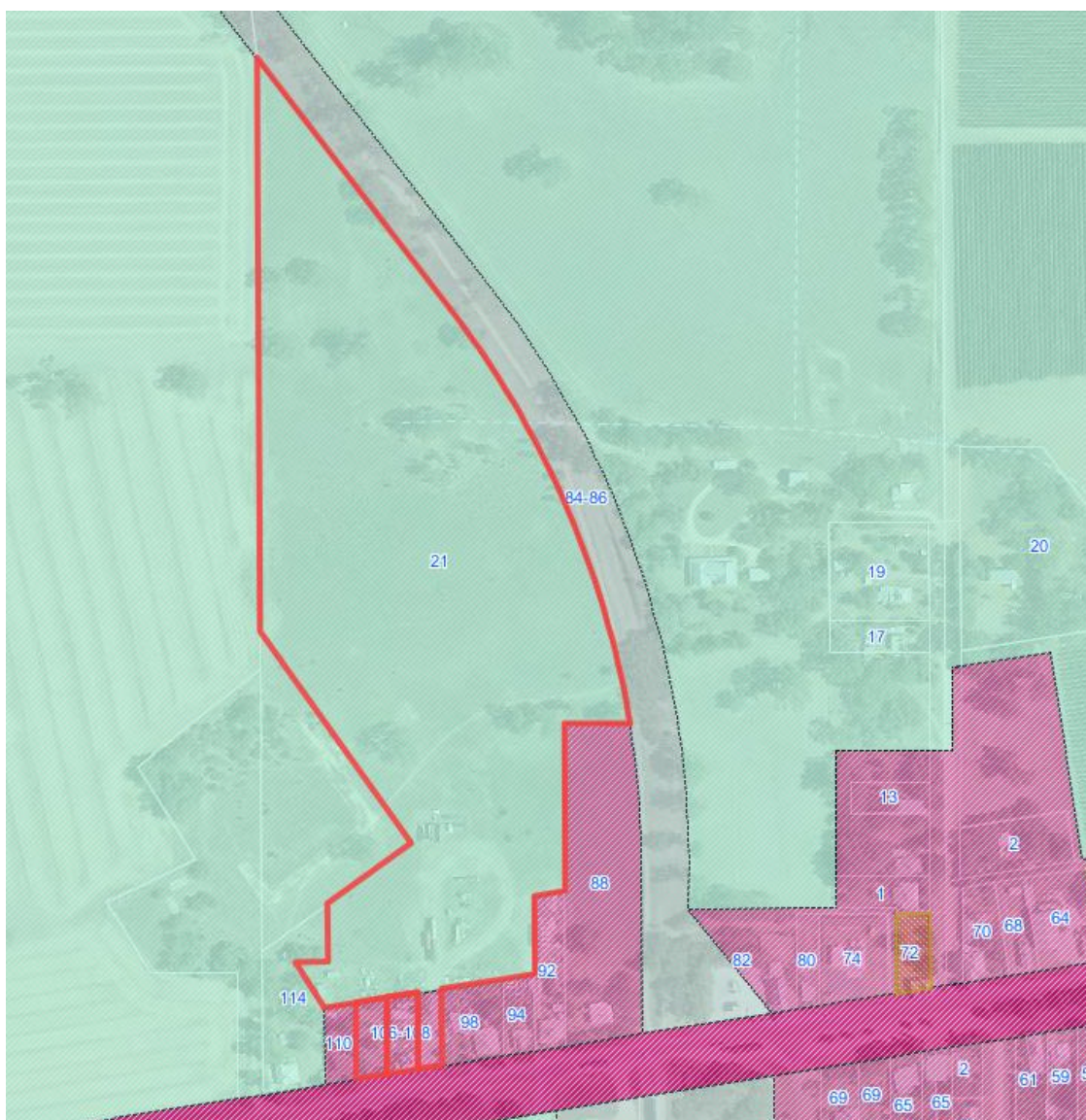
Figure 4. Zones and Overlays of subject sites and surrounds

Proposal

The application seeks a retrospective approval for the use of the land for the purpose of a contractors depot.

The proposal includes the following activities:

Activities conducted onsite:

- There will only be minor maintenance conducted on site such as tyre changing and pre start vehicle checks, the maintenance area is located closer to the rear boundary of the farm land site away from the neighbouring residence.

Activities conducted off site:

- No vehicle washing will be conducted on site. This will be conducted off site at appropriate commercial wash vehicle facilities located in larger regional areas.

- Any advance maintenance will be conducted off site by mechanical professionals.

Proposed business hours are between 7:00am and 6:00pm, Monday to Sunday. Emergency breakdown hours are requested in the event of late arrival/departure at the site. This will be considered anytime after 6pm.

Figure 5. Site plan 'Contractors Depot'

Assessment

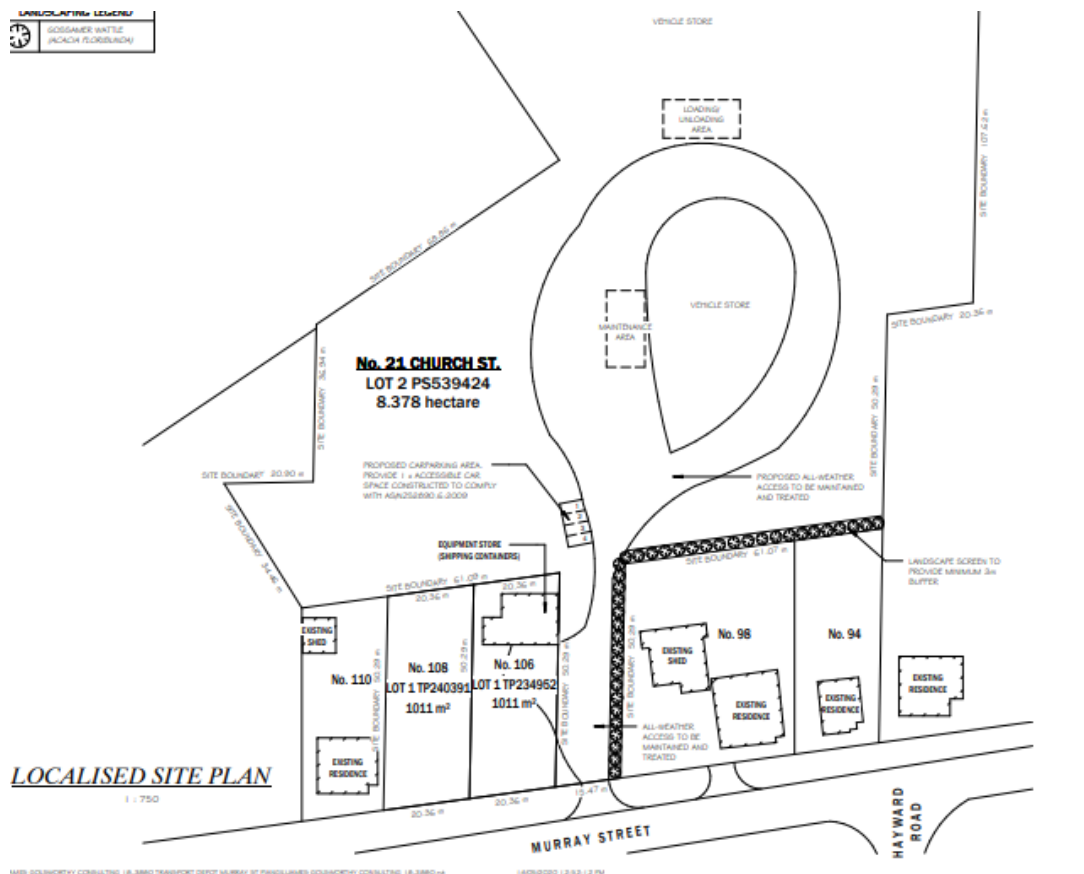The primary planning considerations regarding the proposal is whether the contractors depot meets the purpose of the zones and is in accordance with State and local planning policy.

The Objectives of Planning in Victoria

Planning Schemes in Victoria must seek to achieve the objectives of planning in Victoria as set out in Section 4(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The relevant objective to the proposal is:

- To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land.

The proposal will enhance the economic development by providing job opportunities and, therefore, it coincides with the above objective.

Farming Zone

The purpose of the Farming Zone is to provide for the use of land for agriculture, to encourage the retention of productive agricultural land and to ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.

The land use "contractors depot" is not defined in the planning scheme and is, therefore, considered an undefined use that requires a planning permit.

The decision guidelines specified in Clause 35.07-6 of the planning scheme require consideration of general land capability and compatibility issues, impacts on agricultural use and potential, impacts on environmental resources and design and siting.

The proposal in this case is for the use only and, therefore, the compatibility with adjoining and nearby land uses has to be assessed on the basis that this is a farming zone, where rural activities are to be accommodated and tolerated.

It is considered that the impact on the natural physical features and resources of the area and in particular any impact caused by the proposal on soil and water quality, and by the emission of noise, dust and odours should be minimal, as the applicant has provided significant measures to mitigate any perceived amenity impacts as shown on the proposed plan. The proposal is further unlikely to impact on the flora, fauna and landscape features of the locality. It is also considered that the proposal would have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Township Zone

The purpose of the zone is to provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses in small towns. It also aims to encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area, and to allow educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs in appropriate locations.

The proposed contractors depot is permitted by the zone (subject to approval) and is consistent with the purpose of the zone and by approving it will not cause additional detriment to adjoining properties, as the use is already operational. The application

was advertised and Council has received one objection that is discussed later in this report.

On this basis, it is considered the proposal should not have any adverse impact on the values identified for the Township Zone and should not have any additional adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding properties. It is considered that amenity impacts may be improved by the conditions to be imposed on the applicant.

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

The site is covered by a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. The purpose of the overlay is to identify land in a flood storage or flood fringe area affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other area determined by the floodplain management authority and to ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.

The application has been referred to the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA). MCMA has commented that information available to them indicated that in the event of a 1% AEP flood event, it is likely that the property may be subject to inundation from Murray River. They have confirmed they do not object to the proposal subject to a condition.

Planning Policy Framework

Clause 17.01-1 Business

The policy has the following relevant objective to the proposal:

- *To encourage development which meet the communities' needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services and provides net community benefit in relation to accessibility, efficient infrastructure use and the aggregation and sustainability of commercial facilities.*

The proposal will provide a commercial service to the Swan Hill and surrounding communities. It will also provide an economic and employment benefit to the region. The proposal will result in net community benefit in relation to providing services associated with the rural sector that is a main contributor to the economy of the region.

Clause 18.01-2 Transport system:

The policy has following relevant objective to the proposal:

- *To coordinate development of all transport modes to provide a comprehensive transport system.*

Relevant strategies are:

- *Ensure careful selection of sites for freight generating facilities to minimise associated operational and transport impacts to other urban development and transport networks.*

The proposal contributes to the existing transport system and freight facilities and will continue to contribute to economic growth, by providing employment opportunities and services within the region.

Local Planning Policy Framework (including the Municipal Strategic Statement)

Clause 21.08-1 Business

The policy has the following relevant objective to the proposal:

- *To provide for the growth of business and commerce.*

The proposal will continue to contribute to economic growth within the Swan Hill Municipality and surrounding communities.

Conclusion

The use is already operating on site and the applicant has applied for a retrospective permit to bring the use in compliance with the Swan Hill Planning Scheme. However, it is considered that whilst the use has been in operation for some time it has contributed to some concerns for residents adjoining the subject land, within the Township Zone.

These concerns are to be addressed through conditions on the planning permit, which will help facilitate an appropriate use to be conducted upon the land. The applicant on behalf of the proponent has also taken the concerns into consideration and proposed significant measures to mitigate any amenity impacts that may have been of concern, and is shown in detail on the submitted plan to be endorsed.

It is considered that the proposal to use the land for a contractors depot is an appropriate use and consistent with the purpose of the zones, and produces acceptable outcomes in terms of the State and local policy framework, which seek to encourage economic development within the municipality.

Consultation

Notice of the application

The application was advertised pursuant to Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, via letters sent to adjoining and neighbouring

owner/occupiers and a public notice displayed on the frontage of the site. Notification was completed in a satisfactory manner with Council receiving 1 objection.

The objection can be summarised as follows:

- Noise emanating from the site;
- Dust from the movement of trucks in the area;
- Road is not suitable for such heavy traffic;
- Odour emissions
- Reversing the trucks on the road is causing a safety hazard for the road users;
- Amenity impacts on surrounding properties within the township zone.
- Privacy concerns

The applicant and objector were invited to attend the Council assembly and put forward their relevant views. The objector expressed the above mentioned issues and the impacts that these have. Significant measures have been provided by the applicant to mitigate these concerns, such as the following, and can also be maintained through the conditions imposed on the planning permit.

- Access ways will be conditioned to be constructed with crushed rock base and bitumen spray seal using 2 coat spray seal 14/7 stone to eliminate dust impacts.
- Operating hours for weekend movements will be conditioned to commence 8:00am and cease at 5:00pm to alleviate noise amenity.
- Landscaping that has been provided around the boundary fence to address privacy concerns will be conditioned to be maintained. The species are Gossamer Wattle (Acacia Floribunda) with a 3metre growth width providing a buffer and growth height of 6 metres to eliminate dust, noise and privacy concerns.
- Routine minor maintenance will be completed to the rear of the site.
- Any loading and unloading will take place at the rear of the site as indicated on the site plan.

Referrals

The application was referred under Section 52 of the Act to Mallee Catchment Management Authority and Section 55 of the Act to the Roads Authority (VicRoads) and no objections have been raised by the authorities subject to conditions and notes.

The application was also referred internally to the Health, Building and Engineering Departments who also approved the proposal subject to conditions.

Financial Implications

Nil

Social Implications

The proposal may impact adjoining and surrounding residences through the continued impact of dust, odour emissions, noise and visual amenity.

Economic Implications

Granting this permit will enable an existing business to continue to operate.

Environmental Implications

The proposal may impact adjoining and surrounding residences through the continued impact of dust, odour emissions, noise and visual amenity.

Risk Management Implications

Compliance with any permit granted may still require enforcement.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Provide land use planning that is responsive and which proactively encourages appropriate development.

Options

Council generally has two options when considering an application.

These being:

1. Issue a Notice of Refusal for the use of the land for a contractors depot at 106-108 Murray Street, Piangil.

   Or

2. Issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for the use of the land for a contractors depot at 106-108 Murray Street, Piangil subject to conditions and in accordance with the endorsed plan.

Recommendations

That Council issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for the use of the land for a contractors depot at 106-108 Murray Street, Piangil, subject to the following conditions:

1. The layout of the use on the endorsed plans must not be altered without the prior

written consent of the Responsible Authority.

2. The use hereby permitted must be managed so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected, through the:

    a) Processes carried out on the land which is to include;

    - the parking and/or starting of any vehicles within 100 metres of objector's dwelling;

    - Minor maintenance is only to occur on site and will be completed in the location as shown on the endorsed plan ;

    - Loading and unloading is to be conducted to the rear boundary of the subject site;

    - No vehicle washing will be conducted on site

    b) Transport of materials, good or commodities to or from the land

    c) Landscaping to be planted around the boundary fence to address privacy concerns will also be maintained. Providing a 3metre buffer and appropriate height to eliminate dust, noise and privacy concerns.

    to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

3. Unless with the prior written consent from the Responsible Authority, the use hereby permitted may only operate between the following hours:

    - Monday to Friday 7:00am to 6:00pm

    - Saturday and Sunday : 8:00am to 5:00pm

4. No more than four prime movers and trailers connected with the business are to be kept on the land at any one time. No vehicle larger than this configuration can access the land.

5. Noise levels emanating from the premises must not exceed those required to be met under State Environment Protection Policy (Control of Noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade) No. N-1, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

6. All accessways must be maintained to avoid dust nuisance to any neighbouring residential land, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

7. The subject land must be kept clean and tidy at all times and must not adversely affect the amenity of the area, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

8. The landscaping shown on the endorsed plan and clearly shown as Gossamer Wattle with a growth width of 3metres and growth height of 6 metres must be planted and maintained to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. Any dead diseased or damaged trees must be replaced to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Engineering

9. All car parking spaces must be designed to allow all vehicles to enter and exit the land in a forward direction.

10. Prior to the commencement of the use, all internal access ways must be constructed of crushed rock base and bitumen spray seal, using 2 coat spray seal 14/7 stone, to minimise dust to adjacent home owners, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

11. That storm water runoff from all buildings, tanks and paved areas must be dissipated as normal un-concentrated overland flow clear of all buildings and property boundaries.

Department of Transport

12. Prior to the commencement of use, the existing crossover to Murray Street must be upgraded (and sealed) in accordance with VicRoads Standard Drawing SD 2064 – Truck Access to Rural Properties Type A, to the satisfaction of and at no cost to VicRoads*.*

Mallee Catchment Management Authority

13. A flood safe plan must be developed and submitted to the Responsible Authority that includes, but is not limited to;

   - Predicted Murray River flows which trigger when the depot should be cleared;
   - Indentifies flood free land where item*s* from the depot will be stored during a flood event; and

   - Time required for completing the above is 3 months from the time the permit is issued.

Expiry

14. This permit will expire if the use hereby permitted is not commenced within two (2) years of the date of this permit. The Responsible Authority may extend the periods referred to if a request is made in writing before the permit expires, or

within three months afterwards.

If a request is made outside of the above time, the responsible authority cannot consider the request and the holder of this permit cannot apply to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a review of this matter.

Note:

Department of Transport

VicRoads also requires the following notation be placed on any planning permit to issue:

*S*eparate consent for 'works within the road reserve' and the specifications of these works may be required under the Road Management Act 2004. For the purposes of this application the works will include provision of:

- o   Removal of a crossover; and
- o   Any other works in the arterial road reserve

Please forward details to: nr.mailbox@roads.vic.gov.au

Further information regarding VicRoads' consent to work within the road reserve can be found on the VicRoads Website:

https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/business-and-industry/design-andmanagement-within-the-road-reserve or by telephoning (03) 5434 5078.

B.20.47   ROBINVALE HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S-12-27-13
Attachments: 1   Action Plan Robinvale Housing Strategy

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

Summary

This report summarises the proposed actions to respond to the findings of the Robinvale Housing Strategy and seeks Council's input and endorsement of the Action Plan.

Discussion

Robinvale Housing Strategy Action Plan:

The Robinvale Housing Strategy highlighted the issues encountered in the Robinvale area as:

- Shortage of low-cost accommodation
- Shortage of high-quality short-term accommodation suitable for professionals (other than motels)
- Shortage of temporary accommodation to suit transient workforce populations
- Styles of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of diverse groups
- Accommodation for specific industry workforce

The attached action plan details the actions recommended for implementing the Robinvale Housing Strategy.

Cooperation with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Council worked with Dr Anne Webster MP and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to secure resources to assist in increasing housing and accommodation in the Robinvale region. As it is well documented and outlined in the Robinvale Housing Strategy, a significant proportion of the housing shortages in the region is due to the lack of suitable housing for seasonal horticulture workers.

The preferred solution for the Federal Government to solve the horticultural labour shortages is to engage Pacific workers. Under the direction of DFAT, the Pacific Labour Facility facilitates seasonal and longer-term work opportunities for Pacific workers to Australia through the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). The PLS offers low-skilled and semi-skilled workers the opportunity to be employed for up to three years and covers all sectors in rural and regional Australia. The Seasonal Workers

Program (SWP) is for unskilled and low-skilled workers to be employed for up to nine months in the Agriculture sector.

The provision of suitable accommodation at a cost that is acceptable to workers has proven a major obstacle in the recruitment and retention of workers.

In order to address the issues in the Sunraysia/Mallee region, the Federal Government through DFAT commissioned the Palladium Group to develop solutions to accommodation issues.

The Palladium Group approached Council to identify possible partners to deliver the program and Council agreed to second Council's Economic Development Coordinator to design and implement the project on a two days a week basis for a period of six months. It is advantageous for Council to utilise the resources of DFAT to assist in solving the accommodation problem identified in Robinvale and the region.

Although the Federal Government is focusing on accommodation of the Pacific Islanders' workforce, it also considers the larger accommodation issues.

In response to the issues identified, the Pacific Labour Facility accommodation brokers' team brings together Government (Federal, State and Local), and private, not-for-profit and community sector stakeholders.

Specifically, the project will seek to:

- Determine the extent of accommodation shortages and existing demand and supply.
- Identify barriers to increasing the supply of accommodation, including regulatory and financial constraints that deter investors from investing in accommodation.
- Design and commence focused activities that lead to greater investment in provision of accommodation by the private sector/ not for profits, to ultimately enhance greater participation in the schemes.

Council Specific Actions

- Development of eight houses in Ronald Street: Council is planning to construct dwellings on recently subdivided land in Ronald Street and has applied for a $500,000 contribution from the State Government to match Council's contribution for the development of eight 2-3 bedroom houses. The initial stage will see four houses constructed with the sale proceeds funding the construction of the final four houses. It is hoped that the tender for the housing construction may encourage the permanent expansion of an existing building firm or bring a new builder to the town leading to an increase in the supply of building services available that would progress other developments within Robinvale.

- "Better Approvals" process for streamlining and improving the permit process: This approach has already proven successful in a number of projects, in particular the submission and assessment of a rooming house development in Nyah West which will provide a new accommodation option for eight people in the first instance with an extra 40 beds planned.

- Residential strategy that will lead to a Planning Scheme amendment to rezone land for alternative larger lot residential development.

- Advocacy to the Robinvale College and the Education Department to redevelop accommodation belonging to the Department of Education, Employment and Housing.

- Provision of Investment Incentive when appropriate – The Investment Incentive Strategy is a Council Policy to grant the developer an amount in cash or kind equivalent to 25% to 75% of additional rates, depending on a series of criteria that will occur due to the increase of Capital Value thanks to the development.

- Facilitate supply and demand – work with the horticultural industry to determine housing needs and put a proposal to land and housing developers/investors to seek investment.

Consultation

Significant consultation has been carried out throughout the development of the Housing Strategy with relevant community and industry organisations.

The consultation process has been initiated and will be continued, to refine the needs and aspiration of the community and stakeholders.

Council is also working with the State Government in identifying issues and solutions for accommodation in Robinvale. The Victorian Government has requested RDV to prepare a report on accommodation "hot spots" in Victoria including Robinvale.

Financial Implications

Allocation of funding from the Investment Incentive budget if a developer qualifies for an Investment Incentive payment.

Council has allocated funds for the development of the Ronald Street Housing development.

Social Implications

Working towards a solution or improvements in the quality and quantity of housing in Robinvale will be of enormous benefit for the community and will allow some current residents to have much improved living conditions.

Economic Implications

Lack of accommodation and housing has been identified as a major impediment for the Robinvale economy and prosperity. Council's actions are intended to kick-start private development and demonstrate the viability of investing in real estate in the Robinvale area.

Environmental Implications

Some identified properties may have development obstacles – native vegetation, cultural heritage.

Risk Management Implications

Council will take on the role of developer which can carry a financial risk.
Not taking action will be detrimental to Council's reputation.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

Options

1. That Council adopt the proposed action plan for Robinvale Housing Strategy.

2. That Council modify and adopt the proposed action plan for Robinvale Housing Strategy.

3. That Council does not adopt the proposed action plan for Robinvale Housing Strategy.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the action plan (as attached) for the implementation of the Robinvale Housing Strategy.

Activity	Responsibility	Outcome	Timeline
Identify and engage stakeholders	ECDD	Database of engaged and relevant stakeholders	June 2020
Meeting with regulatory bodies: - **Planning and Building** - **Public Health** - **VicRoads** - **Engineering**	ECDD	Awareness of the project and willingness to participate Regulations and impediments to development identified and documented	July 2020
Ensure the Better Approval model is adhered to	EDU Planning Building Public Health and reg services Engineering	Seamless process for the applicant and improve Council's reputation	Ongoing
Develop four "case studies" to use as examples of successful housing strategy investment	ECDD DFAT	To be used for encouraging investment and to include in the investment prospectus	August 2020
Develop a housing investment prospectus for the region	DFAT	The prospectus will be designed and produced through the DFAT program and will incorporate the Swan Hill and Mildura municipalities	August 2020
Run workshops to inform wider audiences of investment opportunities (i.e. showcase different housing models)	ECDD DFAT	Attract new investors	August 2020

Activity	Responsibility	Outcome	Timeline
Participate in Expos, Field Days and events organised by other groups	ECDD Councillors Planning Staff	Attract new investors and inform stakeholders and relevant parties	August 2020
Construction of eight residential properties located at Ronald Street, Robinvale	Project Management	Sale of four properties to finance future construction	TBA
Assessment of deterrents to investment in housing such as: - Infrastructure costs - Return on investment - Capital growth - Planning restrictions	ECDD	Better understanding of impediments to formulate timely solutions	August 2020
Clear definition of what the term 'on farm' accommodation means and its applications	Planning DELWP	Certainty of what 'on farm' accommodation is possible for Primary Producers Improved Council reputation	September 2020
Relevant planning scheme amendments to rezone land for residential development	Planning	Identify more opportunities for housing development in particular for larger lots	ongoing
Advocacy to the Robinvale College and Education Department to redevelop obsolete accommodation	ECDD	Unlock further housing opportunities for professionals and teachers	TBA

B.20.48   SWAN HILL MOTORPLEX MASTER PLAN REVIEW

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S11-27-05
Attachments: 1   Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan

Declarations of Interest:

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

Summary

This report is to inform Council that Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc. (CRC Inc.) has reviewed the Chisholm Reserve Complex Development Master Plan 2019-2021 and developed the Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan – Review Report and Implementation Plan 2019-2021.

Discussion

CRC Inc. was created to oversee the everyday management of the Chisholm Reserve Complex and is comprised of representatives from Council and each of the motorsport groups that use Chisholm Reserve.

The Chisholm Reserve Complex Development Master Plan 2019-2021 is a Council document completed in July 2016 that details 33 proposed development projects for the Chisholm Reserve site and ranks them in order of priority.

CRC Inc. participated in a workshop on 22 October 2019, which allowed the committee members to review the Master Plan and re-prioritise the unfinished projects in order of high, medium or low priority.

The participants were also asked to raise any additional developments that had not been included in the original Master Plan. This resulted in five new developments being identified and again these were ranked in order of high, medium or low priority.

High:
- Boundary fence between Swan Hill Motor Club and Swan Hill Kart Club (new boundary)
- Establishing events which include all clubs; such as a *Come Try Event*
- Working with all clubs to ensure building compliance
- Fencing as per approved boundaries
- Collectively improve all tracks

Participants then discussed what developments would benefit all the motor sporting clubs of which six areas were identified and later categorised as their top priorities:

1. Water and drainage

2. Power
3. Fencing
4. Establishing events which include all clubs
5. Working with clubs to ensure building compliance
6. Collectively improve all tracks

Each club was required to select three key priorities and select one as their club's overall top priority (refer attachment for full list of clubs' priorities).

From these findings, an implementation plan has been developed. The document has been titled the Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan, as a request to rename Chisholm Reserve to Swan Hill Motorplex was approved and gazetted 23 January 2020.

This plan will provide a focus for CRC Inc. and Council in regards to improving the amenities and assets within the reserve. It will also inform the Ten Year Major Projects Plan, as well as providing a guideline for external grant opportunities with the prospect of reducing the financial impact on Council's budget.

Through Council, CRC Inc. has been encouraged to complete long term planning which has resulted in them engaging a consultant to create a development overlay which encompasses buildings, fences and boundaries. The Ten Year Major Projects Plan allocation has enabled the development of this overlay which will assist in the scoping and costing of improvements to the whole complex and inform future funding opportunities. As a result of this work, compliance issues have been identified and are in the process of being rectified, such as electrical leads and fire extinguishers tested and tagged annually. The Development Overlay will be presented to Council when completed.

Consultation

The consultation process was completed with the Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc. at the conclusion of their October 2019 meeting. Five of the six motor sport clubs attended this workshop and further consultation was undertaken with the club unable to participate at that date.

CRC Inc. meets monthly and Council is represented by a Councillor and Council officer. This arrangement provides a transparent line of communication between Council and the user groups.

Financial Implications

Currently the projects identified in the implementation plan are not listed on the Ten Year Major Projects Plan which impacts on the delivery.

The implementation plan has been developed to better position CRC Inc. to apply for external funding opportunities. These funding opportunities will be strengthened by the possibility of matching funds from Council.

Social Implications

The development of the implementation plan will:
- Improve recreational opportunities for the region
- Create a wider variety of recreational motor sport spaces for the community and visitors
- Increase community pride

Economic Implications

Improving facilities and the function of Chisholm Reserve will increase opportunities to attract and host future motor sport events that will support growth and development for local businesses.

Environmental Implications

Future work or clearing of land may impact on the native vegetation on the reserve.

Risk Management Implications

The implementation plan will guide and prioritise compliance matters.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

Options
That Council:

1. Adopt the Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan Review Report and Implementation Plan 2019-2021.

2. Does not adopt the Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan Review Report and Implementation Plan 2019-2021.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. Adopt the Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan Review Report and Implementation Plan 2019-2021.

2.   Refer the Swan Hill Motorplex Master Plan Review Report and Implementation Plan 2019-2021 priority projects to the next review of the Ten Year Major Project Plan.

Swan Hill MotorPlex Master Plan
Review Report and Implementation Plan 2019-2021

The Swan Hill MotorPlex Master Plan – Review and Implementation Plan 2019-2021

Preface

The objectives of this document is to provide feedback to the Motorsports clubs who participated in the Swan Hill MotorPlex Reserve Master Plan review held on Tuesday, 22 October 2019 at the Swan Hill Region Information Centre.

It is also designed to provide information to the motor sporting and broader communities, including Council.

The report provides an implementation plan 2019-2021 and will provide a focus for the Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc. in improving the amenities and assets within the reserve in the short, medium and long terms.

Content

1. The Swan Hill MotorPlex

Motor sport is a well-established and popular leisure pursuit in Swan Hill. The Swan Hill Motor Sport Club was inaugurated in 1959 to cater to local interest in motor racing. The Chisholm Reserve Motorsport Complex (CRMC) was developed in 1991 to meet the needs of local residents and visiting motor sport enthusiasts. Today, motor sport continues to be popular with six local motor sport clubs with specialty interests located at the CRMC. The motor sports clubs include:

- Swan Hill Motor Racing Club
- Swan Hill Kart Club
- Swan Hill Sporting Car club
- Swan Hill Drag Club
- Swan Hill Motorcycle Club
- Swan Hill 4WD Club

2. MotorPlex Review and Implementation Plan 2019-2021

The MotorPlex Review and Implementation Plan 2019-2021 has been developed through a collaborative process undertaken in partnership with the Swan Hill Rural City Council and the motor sporting clubs who use the MotorPlex reserve.

Council initiated the review process to generate collaboration and broad discussion in regards to the progress and implementation of the developments outlined in the Master Plan, previously presented to the clubs in 2016.

1

The information outlined throughout this report has been collected from, and prioritised by, motor sporting clubs representatives through a series of meetings, including a facilitated workshop.

This provided the opportunity for representatives to identify and prioritise initiatives to be considered in the Implementation Plan 2019-2021.

The workshop held on the 22 October 2019 was attended by five of the six motor sporting clubs. Overall there were 12 participants made up of representatives from Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc. and individual motor sporting groups.

Further consultation with the club unable to participate in the review workshop has gained that club's endorsement of this review.

3. MotorPlex Reserve Workshop

Methodology

The workshop consisted of seven steps and began with the facilitator explaining the importance of reviewing the master plan and identifying short, medium and long term priorities for the overall development and management of the MotorPlex reserve.

4. Outcomes of the Workshop

Step One

The participants were asked to categorise the 33 proposed developments, as listed in the Swan Hill Chisholm Reserve Master Plan 2016. *Ref to Appendix 1.*

The four categories were

1. Completed
2. High Priority
3. Medium Priority
4. Low priority

The task provided the participants with an overview of what is currently in the Master Plan 2016. It also provided an understanding of how familiar participants were with the content of the master plan.

This task was beneficial in the sense that it identified that participants were aware of their own club's priorities, however they knew little about the other clubs' priorities. This was clearly demonstrated when participants discussed the tasks identified as completed and discovered that there were nine projects marked as completed that actually were only partly completed.

2

The table below displays project priority ratings by individual participants.
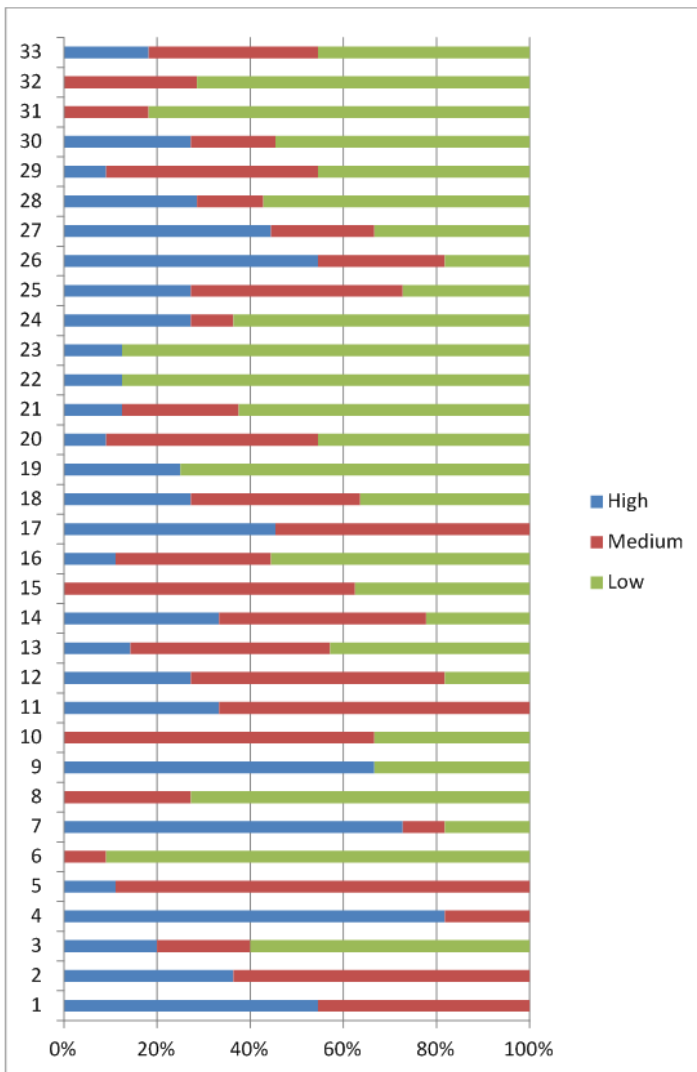
Each club representative rated the proposed developments with differing levels of importance, relevant to their individual club's needs and wants, allowing the projects to be prioritised based on individual opinions.

As displayed in the graph above, the projects that were rated as high priority by 50 per cent or more of clubs were the proposed developments numbered 1, 4, 7, 9 and 26.

Similarly, those regarded as medium priority by 50 per cent or more of clubs were the proposed developments numbered 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 25, and 29.

3

The proposals deemed as low priority by 50 per cent or more of the clubs were those numbered 3, 6, 8, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 30, 31 and 32.

The remaining projects not listed above were regarded as high, medium or low by less than 50 per cent of the clubs; such as proposal 18, which was equally categorised as medium and low by four votes, then regarded as high by the remaining three votes.

A vast majority of proposals were deemed medium or low priority by most clubs, in comparison to high. Further in the report these findings are ratified with the overall view of the motor sporting clubs.

Step Two

The next step sought any additional developments from the clubs that had not been identified but were seen to be important to include for prioritisation. This resulted in five new developments being identified.

1. Tower Rebuild/dangerous steps (too steep).

2. Boundary fence between Swan Hill Motor Club and Swan Hill Kart Club (new boundary).

3. Establishing events which include all clubs; such as a *Come Try Event.*

4. Working with all clubs to ensure building compliance.

5. Fencing as per approved boundaries.

6. Collectively improve all tracks.

Step Three

The participants were asked to identify whether the new developments were a high, medium or low priority. Results are listed below.

High:

- Boundary fence between Swan Hill Motor Club and Swan Hill Kart Club (new boundary)
- Establishing events which include all clubs; such as a *Come Try Event*
- Working with all clubs to ensure building compliance
- Fencing as per approved boundaries
- Collectively improve all tracks

Medium:

- Tower rebuild/dangerous steps (too steep)

4

Step Four

Step four involved a participant discussion to identify developments that would benefit all the motor sporting clubs. There were six key areas selected from the developments identified above. These were:

- Water and drainage
- Power
- Fencing as per approved boundaries
- Establishing events which include all clubs; such as a *Come Try Event*
- Working with all clubs to ensure building compliance
- Collectively improve all tracks

On completion of step four the participants agreed to make the developments which benefit all the motorsports clubs the *Top Priorities* within the Implementation Plan 2019-2021.

Step Five

Step five required each club to select 3 key priorities. The results are as follows for each motor sporting club:

Motorcycle Club:

1. Power.
2. Water.
3. Arena X. Track.

Sporting Car Club:

1. Road Entrance.
2. Multi-clubrooms.
3. New 4WD precinct.

Drag Club:

1. Road entrance.
2. Multi-clubrooms.
3. Enhance shared club facilities.

Motor-Racing Club:

1. Enhanced lighting on track and pits.
2. Address surface/water drainage issue.
3. Upgrade water supply.

5

Kart Club:

1. Kart track re-alignment and resurfacing.
2. Pit upgrade to hard standing.
3. Modify fencing speedway.

<u>Step Six</u>

Step six required each club to cast one vote to select the club's overall priority from the developments listed in step five. The results for each of the motor sports clubs are as follows:

Motorcycle Club: Arena X. Track and lighting.

Sporting Car Club: Multi-club rooms.

Drag Club: Road entrance.

Motor-Racing Club: Enhanced lighting to track and pits.

Kart Club: Kart track realignment.

<u>Step Seven</u>

Step seven provided a summary of the overall results.

5. Conclusion

The information provided at the workshop has resulted in the following priorities being identified that will inform the Swan Hill MotorPlex Implementation Plan 2019-2021. The Chisholm Complex Inc. will use the implementation plan as a guide to further develop the Swan Hill MotorPlex as a *state of the art* motor sporting facility.

Top priorities:

- Water and drainage (upgrade water supply, surface area).
- Power.
- Fencing as per approved boundaries.
- Establishing Events which include all clubs; such as a *Come Try Event.*
- Working with all clubs to ensure building compliance.
- Collectively improve all tracks.

High priority:

- Arena X track and lighting.
- Multi-club room.
- Road entrance.
- Enhanced lighting to track and pits.
- Kart track re-alignment.

6

Medium priority:

- New 4WD precinct entrance.
- Enhance shared camp facilities.
- Kart Club Pit upgrade to hard standing.
- Modify fencing speedway.

Low priority:

All remaining projects are prioritised as low, excluding those already completed by the various clubs.

Completed:

- New entrance/gateway feature & highway access upgrade (potential slip-line/road widening).
- Replace water tanks (Speedway).
- Enhanced lighting to track and pits (Speedway).
- New permanent control tower (Drag Racing).
- Develop a secure enclosure- 2m high chainmesh with barbed wire.
- Security fencing adjacent Bryan Road (approx. 400m).
- Kart clubroom upgrades and expansion.

Developments listed as a top priority have been included in the implementation plan and will become the key focus for Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc. over the next three years to work toward achieving. It is noted that some of these projects will need major sponsorship or government funding to come to fruition. As such the incorporation will work towards completing project scopes and business cases to enable funding in the future to be sought.

In the interim the incorporation will advocate and apply for funding to support the designing and scoping of these projects.

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Swan Hill MotorPlex Implementation Plan 2019-2021

Listed below are the top priorities as identified at the Swan Hill MotorPlex Master Plan Review workshop.

Top Priorities

1. Water and Drainage

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Desired Outcome
	Water and Drainage					
1	Upgrade water supply infrastructure	• Need to improve mains access to water at site for user groups. • Current capacity is limited. • Water is used extensively to manage dust, prepare track surfaces, supply club facilities & irrigate vegetation. • Currently only domestic supply is provided on the site. • Only one meter provided and costs allocated amongst user groups. • Opportunity to connect mains water supply in collaboration with Lower Murray Water.	Develop an Irrigation and Drainage development overlay with a 25 year implementation plan By Tender	CRC Inc.	December 2021	The overlay provides the direction for future works in regards to water and drainage on site. All water and drainage issues are resolved

9	Address surface water/drainage issues (across the site)	• Localised flooding occurs during heavy rain events within parts of the site specifically within Sporting Car Club and Motorcycle Club areas. • Causes erosion and damage to club areas. • Consideration also needs to be given to upgrading sewerage management at the Reserve. The unexpected increases in usage and facilities at the site will require an upgrade to the sewage system.			
10	Replace water tanks (Speedway)	• Safety and risk management requirement. • Current tanks are fibreglass and due to their age have become brittle. • Improved amenity for drivers, spectators and pit crew.			
19	Expand dam (Drag Racing)	• Specific water supply for Drag Racing to irrigate spectator mounds and grounds. • Provide additional water supply to existing mains supply. • Capture stormwater run-off. • Mitigate localised flooding risk.			

9

2. Power

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Desired Outcome
2	Upgrade power supply infrastructure	• Additional water consumption associated with new drag facility and planned upgrades (track lighting, new clubrooms etc.) • Current capacity is limited. • Only one meter provided and costs allocated amongst users.	Develop a Power development overlay with a 25 year implementation plan By Tender	CRC Inc.	December 2021	The Overlay provides the direction for future works in regards to power All power issues are resolved
11	Enhanced lighting to track and pits (Speedway)	• Safety and risk management requirement.				
17	Surveillance lighting and CCTV	• Improve security and safety of the site. • Reduce vandalism and theft. • Improve site circulation at night time. • Safety and risk management requirement.				

3. Fencing as per approved boundaries

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Desired Outcome
	Fencing as per approved boundaries		Develop a Fencing and Boundaries development overlay with a hierarchy implementation plan By Tender	CRC Inc.	December 2021	The overlay provides the direction for future works in regards to construction of fencing All fencing issues are resolved

10

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational
33	Boundary fence between Motorcycle Club and Kart Club: new boundary	
28	Security fencing adjacent Bryan Road (approx. 400m)	• Restricts access to the drag strip facility from the southern part of the site. • Safety and risk management requirement. • Lighting upgrade for kart track. • Desire to upgrade to host night meets and racing. • Potential to attract additional events.
12	Modify existing fencing (Speedway)	• Need to control access to speedway. • Increased revenue generation opportunities. • Delineate responsibility areas e.g. Speedway, Drag Racing, Motorcycling
	Fencing as per approved boundaries	

4. Establishing events which include all clubs: such as come try events:

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Desired Outcome
	Establishing events which include all clubs: such as come try events		Events Outlook report	CRC Inc. supported by the Economic Development and Events Officer	December 2021	There is a full calendar of events planned every year.

No.	Item	Rationale
24	New shared use clubrooms/workshops - two storey, commercial grade, GFA clubroom 1,200m² + workshop 450m²	• Provide a clubroom facility for the site user groups in particular the Drag Racing Club, Sporting Car Club and 4WD Club. • Provide a meeting and function space for all user groups and external hirers. • Increased revenue generation opportunities (facility hire, workshop use, etc). • Provide amenities and administrative facilities for user groups at the southern part of the site.
	Establishing events which include all clubs; such as a 'Come Try Event'	• Improved amenities for campers (e.g. shade/shelter, camp kitchen, delineated sites, and communal areas). • Increased revenue generation opportunities
8	Enhanced, shared campground facilities	
14	Relocated ticket booth/access control point.	• Joint/shared facility to be used by both Speedway and Drag Racing Clubs. • Need to control access to venues. • Revenue generation requirement.

12

5. Working with all clubs to establish building compliance:

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Desired Outcome
	Working with all clubs to establish building compliance		Develop a Building Compliance development overlay with a hierarchy implementation plan By Tender			The overlay provides the direction for future works in regards to building compliance on site. All building issues are resolved
31	Kart clubroom upgrades and expansion	• Desire to improve clubroom facilities for patrons.				
27	Develop a secure enclosure- 2m high chainmesh with barbed wire	• The secure enclosure is required to store activity and maintenance equipment, tools and materials. • Assist in preventing theft and vandalism. • Provides a central storage location for the clubs located at the southern end of the site.				
29	Shade structure installed over grid	• Heat and inclement weather protection. • All-weather access.				
30	Install viewing platform/area at the finish line of the Kart track	• Improved surveillance of the track for race officials.				
13	Upgrade existing toilets (Speedway)	• Well used by patrons. • Ageing and dysfunctional facility. • Needs to be brought up to contemporary standards.				

13

15	New permanent control tower (Drag Racing)	• Requirement to manage and operate drag races and events. • Administration area for Drag Racing Club. • Safety and risk management requirement.
16	New scrutineers shed (Drag Racing)	• Requirement to manage and operate drag races and events. • Safety and risk management requirement.
18	Amenities block (toilets) and space for food stalls (Speedway/Drag Racing)	• Provide amenities block (toilets) for patrons • Provide a designated area for catering requirements for drag racing events. • Provide area for additional ablutions required for major events.
	Working with all clubs to ensure building compliance.	• Develop additional spectator mound for arena cross. • Improve spectator viewing/comfort of upgraded arena cross track. • Arena cross is a popular spectator activity. • Safety and risk management requirement.
	Tower rebuild/dangerous steps (too steep)	

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6. Collectively improve all tracks:

ref no.	Proposed Development	Rational	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Desired Outcome
			Develop a Motor Sports Track development overlay with a 25 year implementation plan	CRC Inc.		The overlay provides the direction for future works in regards to motor sport tracks on site.
			By Tender			All motor sport tracks are correct to racing requirements.
3	New entrance/gateway feature & highway access upgrade (potential slip lane/road widening)	• Visual presence for the site. • Assists with promotion and marketing of the site. • Delineates the main site entrance. • Manages traffic movement into the site and along the Sea Lake-Swan Hill Road. • Reduces traffic backup along Sea lake-Swan Hill Road.				
4	Kart track re-alignment and resurface	• Ageing track surface with substantial cracking and pot holing (presents safety issue). • Complexities in resurfacing track berm due to slope. • Need to extend track length from 890m to 1km to meet VKA requirements.				

15

5	Upgrade/modify Arena Cross Track - re-align and improve lighting	• General upgrade and re-alignment required to improve track rideability. • Track lighting will permit evening training opportunities during winter season and night events to increase revenue generation opportunities. • Arena cross is increasing in popularity as a discipline of motocross.			
25	Sporting Car Club proposed track developments/re-alignment	• Plans to develop a series of track re-alignments and additional track to allow side-by-side racing. • Autocross is an entry level motorsport activity that is increasing in popularity. • Opportunity to develop a rally cross track which would be the only rally cross facility in Victoria (emerging community level motorsport).			
26	New 4WD precinct developments including training course for CFA (light truck driver training)	• Provide a compatible facility for the precinct. • Need for designated off-road venue to reduce illegitimate use of environmental areas. • Need for training area including for essential services and education facilities. • Increased revenue generation opportunities.			

20	Pits upgrade to hard-standing (Drag Racing)	• Requirement to attract, manage and operate drag races and events. • Clean and dust free environment required for high spec. Vehicles. • Safety and risk management requirement.
23	New sealed main access road with adjacent fencing to control access/circulation	• Increased usage and associated traffic volumes predicted with new drag strip, four-wheel drive facility and other improved club facilities identified in the master plan. • Heavy vehicle access required. • Dust is currently an issue when large volumes of traffic use the access road. • Safety and risk management required
21	Junior dragster area (bitumen area for parking/preparation/scrutineering)	• Junior development opportunity. • Create a family friendly environment.
23	New sealed car park adjoining club rooms	• Parking area for clubrooms and workshop area.
	Collectively improve all tracks	

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Chisholm Reserve Complex Incorporation representatives

Swan Hill Motor Racing Club

Name: SCOT BULL

Signature:

Date: 9 / 7 / 2020

Name: ESTHER THOMSON

Signature: Esther Thomson

Date: 9 / 7 / 2020

Swan Hill Kart Club

Name: PETER HAYES

Signature:

Date: 15 / 6 / 2020

Name: Paul Bell

Signature: Paul Bell

Date: 15 / 6 / 2020

Swan Hill Sporting Car Club

Name: Chris Gibson

Signature:

Date: 7 / 7 / 20

Name: TED PAYNTER

Signature:

Date: 3 / 7 / 20

Swan Hill Drag Club

Name: GARY ROMERE

Signature:

Date: 18 / 6 / 20

Name: Travis McNinn

Signature:

Date: 18 / 6 / 20

Swan Hill Motorcycle Club

Name: DEAN BENNETT

Signature:

Date: 9 / 7 / 2020

Name: Monk Hare

Signature:

Date: 7 / 9 / 20

Swan Hill 4WD Club

Name: Darah Connall

Signature:

Date: 7 / 7 / 2020

Name: Gary Dunstone

Signature:

Date: 1 / 7 / 2020

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Appendix 1

1. Upgrade water supply infrastructure. **High**
   - Need to improve mains access to water at site for user groups.
   - Current capacity is limited.
   - Water is used extensively to manage dust, prepare track surfaces, supply club facilities & irrigate vegetation.
   - Currently only domestic supply is provided on the site.
   - Only one meter provided and costs allocated amongst user groups.
   - Opportunity to connect mains water supply in collaboration with Lower Murray Water.
2. Upgrade power supply infrastructure. **High**
   - Additional water consumption associated with new drag facility and planned upgrades (track lighting, new clubrooms etc.)
   - Current capacity is limited.
   - Only one meter provided and costs allocated amongst users.
3. New entrance/gateway feature & highway access upgrade (potential slip lane/road widening). **Medium**
   - Visual presence for the site.
   - Assists with promotion and marketing of the site.
   - Delineates the main site entrance.
   - Manages traffic movement into the site and along the Sea Lake-Swan Hill road.
   - Reduces traffic backup along Sea lake-Swan Hill road.
4. Kart track re-alignment and resurface. **Medium**
   - Ageing track surface with substantial cracking and pot holing (presents safety issue).
   - Complexities in resurfacing track berm due to slope.
   - Need to extend track length from 890m to 1km to meet VKA requirements.
5. Upgrade/modify Arena Cross Track- re-align and improve lighting. **Medium**
   - General upgrade and re-alignment required to improve track ridability.
   - Track lighting will permit evening training opportunities during winter season and night events to increase revenue generation opportunities.
   - Arena cross is increasing in popularity as a discipline of motocross.
6. Develop additional spectator mound for arena cross.
   - Improve spectator viewing/comfort of upgraded arena cross track.
   - Arena cross is a popular spectator activity.
7. New sealed main access road with adjacent fencing to control access/circulation. **High**

19

- Increased usage and associated traffic volumes predicted with new drag strip, four-wheel drive facility and other improved club facilities identified in the master plan.
- Heavy vehicle access required.
- Dust is currently an issue when large volumes of traffic use the access road.
- Safety and risk management required.

8. Enhanced, shared campground facilities. **Lower**
    - Improved amenities for campers (e.g. shade/shelter, camp kitchen, delineated sites, and communal areas).
    - Increased revenue generation opportunities.

9. Address surface water/drainage issues (across the site). **High**
    - Localised flooding occurs during heavy rain events within parts of the site specifically within sporting car club and motorcycle club areas.
    - Causes erosion and damage to club areas.
    - Consideration also needs to be given to upgrading sewerage management at the Reserve. The unexpected increases in usage and facilities at the site will require an upgrade to the sewage system.

10. Replace water tanks (speedway). **Lower**
    - Safety and risk management requirement.
    - Current tanks are fibreglass and due to their age have become brittle.

11. Enhanced lighting to track and pits (speedway). **Lower**
    - Safety and risk management requirement.
    - Improved amenity for drivers, spectators and pit crew.

12. Modify existing fencing (speedway). **Lower**
    - Need to control access to speedway.
    - Increased revenue generation opportunities.
    - Delineate responsibility areas (e.g. speedway, drag racing, motorcycling).
    - Safety and risk management requirement.

13. Upgrade existing toilets (speedway). **Medium**
    - Well used by patrons.
    - Ageing and dysfunctional facility.
    - Needs to be brought up to contemporary standards.

14. Relocated ticket booth/access control point. **Lower**
    - Joint/shared facility to be used by both speedway and drag racing.
    - Need to control access to venues.
    - Revenue generation requirement.

15. New permanent control tower (drag racing). **Lower**
    - Requirement to manage and operate drag races and events.
    - Administration area for drag racing club.
    - Safety and risk management requirement.

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16. New scrutineers shed (drag racing). **Lower**
    - Requirement to manage and operate drag races and events.
    - Safety and risk management requirement.
17. Surveillance lighting and CCTV. **Lower**
    - Improve security and safety of the site.
    - Reduce vandalism and theft.
    - Improve site circulation at night time.
    - Safety and risk management requirement.
18. Amenities block (toilets) and space for food stalls (speedway/drag racing). **Lower**
    - Provide amenities block (toilets) for patrons (speedway/drag racing).
    - Provide a designated area for catering requirements for drag racing events.
    - Provide area for additional ablutions required for major events.
19. Expand dam (drag racing). Potential to implement in conjunction with project 9. **Lower**
    - Specific water supply for drag racing to irrigate spectator mounds and grounds.
    - Provide additional water supply to existing mains supply.
    - Capture stormwater run-off.
    - Mitigate localised flooding risk.
20. Pits upgrade to hard-standing (drag racing). **Medium**
    - Requirement to attract, manage and operate drag races and events.
    - Clean and dust free environment required for high spec. Vehicles.
    - Safety and risk management requirement.
21. Junior dragster area (bitumen area for parking/preparation/scrutineering). **Lower**
    - Junior development opportunity.
    - Create a family friendly environment.
22. Extend internal access road to proposed clubrooms. **Lower**
    - Need to extend access road to proposed clubroom facility location.
23. New sealed car park adjoining club rooms. **Lower**
    - Parking area for clubrooms and workshop area.
24. New shared use clubrooms/workshops (two storeys, commercial grade, GFA clubroom $1,200m^2$ + workshop $450m^2$. **Lower**
    - Provide a clubroom facility for the site user groups in particular the drag racing club, sporting car club and four wheel drive club.
    - Provide a meeting and function space for all user groups and external hirers.
    - Increased revenue generation opportunities (facility hire, workshop use, etc).

21

- Provide amenities and administrative facilities for user groups at the southern part of the site.
25. Sporting car club proposed track developments/re-alignment. **Medium**
    - Plans to develop a series of track re-alignments and additional track to allow side-by-side racing.
    - Autocross is an entry level motorsport activity that is increasing in popularity.
    - Opportunity to develop a rally cross track which would be the only rally cross facility in Victoria (emerging community level motorsport).
26. New 4WD precinct developments including training course for CFA (light truck driver training). **Medium**
    - Provide a compatible facility for the precinct.
    - Need for designated off-road venue to reduce illegitimate use of environmental areas.
    - Need for training area including for essential services and education facilities.
    - Increased revenue generation opportunities.
27. Develop a secure enclosure- 2m high chainmesh with barbed wire. **Lower**
    - The secure enclosure is required to store activity and maintenance equipment, tools and materials.
    - Assist in preventing theft and vandalism.
    - Provides a central storage location for the clubs located at the southern end of the site.
28. Security fencing adjacent Bryan Road (approx. 400m). **High**
    - Restricts access to the drag strip facility from the southern part of the site.
    - Safety and risk management requirement.
    - Lighting upgrade for kart track.
    - Desire to upgrade to host night meets and racing.
    - Potential to attract additional events.
29. Shade structure installed over grid. **Lower**
    - Heat and inclement weather protection.
    - All-weather access.
30. Install viewing platform/area at the finish line of the Kart track. **Lower**
    - Improved surveillance of the track for race officials.
31. Kart clubroom upgrades and expansion. **Lower**
    - Desire to improve clubroom facilities for patrons.
32. Track lighting (drag racing). **Lower**
    - Desire to upgrade to host night meets and racing.
    - Potential to attract additional events.
33. Boundary fence between Motorcycle club and Kart club; new boundary. **lower**

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B.20.49   TOURISM ADVOCACY REPORT

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S12-22-18
Attachments: 1   Tourism Advocacy document
                                2   Regional Tourism Review
                                3   Murray Regional Tourism Submission Final
                                4   Submission to Tourism Victoria

Declarations of Interest:

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

Summary

Council is presented with the Tourism Advocacy document developed in response to a direction from the October 2019 Council Meeting.

Discussion

Following the release of the Regional Tourism Discussion Paper July 2019, Murray Regional Tourism made a submission to the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Review on behalf of the Councils they support, which included Swan Hill Rural City Council (attachment 3). Council also took the opportunity to submit two other submissions more specific to our municipality (refer attachments 4 & 5).

From these three submissions and initial publication, a Tourism Advocacy document has been developed to assist Council in identifying opportunities that could improve and increase our region's Tourism offerings and experiences.

The main themes are:

1.   Strengthening our tourism offering through making the most of our natural and cultural sites, improving and increasing our accommodation offering, catering for diversity, encouraging regional and local business events and supporting our boutique producers and cross-sector partnerships.
2.   Making the most of our marketing spending by working towards common goals
3.   Supporting industry by facilitating investment in our region, improving planning and approval processes, securing labour and skills and supporting the tourism industry to harness technology.
4.   Enhancing regional tourism boards that pay a powerful role in harnessing and coordinating local effort around regional tourism.
5.   Better coordinating effort at both a local and regional level to ensure an ever evolving and progressive approach to tourism.

These themes support the Council projects that are planned being:

1.   Activating Swan Hill Riverfront
2.   Vibrant Villages
3.   Robinvale Centenary Park
4.   Robinvale Riverfront Masterplan
5.   Our Region Our Rivers projects
6.   Our Place

The Advocacy document has also identified where further support for tourism projects needs to be focused:

1.   Swan Hill to Lake Boga Active Trail
2.   Swan Hill Serviced Apartments / high end Boutique Waterfront Accommodation
3.   New Storyline for Laser Light Show
4.   Our Place High Tech Model Visitor Experience

Consultation

Consultation with Murray River Tourism and Swan Hill Inc. has occurred.

Financial Implications

The advocacy document is designed to assist Council in identifying projects that support tourism locally and within the region and to optimise opportunities to gain external funding

Social Implications

Increased Tourism activity supports social outcomes for the community.

Economic Implications

The development of the Tourism Advocacy document will:
•   Assist Council to identify and gather support for tourism projects
•   Improve our region's tourism offerings both through expansion and the creation of new businesses
•   Lead to an increase in employment opportunities
•   Stimulate business activity and attract investment contributing to improved social outcomes for the community.

Environmental Implications

Nil

Risk Management Implications

A strategic approach to advocacy improves the effectiveness of Council's advocacy efforts and reduces the risk of poorly targeted investments.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

Options
That Council:

1.   Endorse the Tourism Advocacy document to promote the development of tourism within the region and the municipality

2.   Not endorse the Tourism Advocacy document to promote the development of tourism within the region and the municipality

Recommendation

That Council endorse the Tourism Advocacy document (as attached) to promote the development of tourism within the region and the municipality.

SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL
Tourism Advocacy Document

The Tourism Advocacy Document evolved from the Regional Tourism Review Discussion Paper July 2019, which analysed factors vital to improving tourism both at a regional and local level and identified five key themes:

1. Strengthening our tourism offering
2. Making the most of our marketing and spending
3. Supporting industry
4. Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards
5. Better coordinating effort

Workshops were held across the Murray Region to discuss these topics with the information collected identifying current and future tourism opportunities in the municipality. Specific references were made in regards to the local Aboriginal culture and the creation of the 'Our Place' Interpretive Centre.

Following these workshops, Council contributed to and supported Murray Regional Tourism's (MRT) submission to the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Review 2019.

What does this mean for our region?

While the submission highlighted the need to acknowledge any barriers impeding the regional visitor economy, it also advocated the need to review the five key themes identified in the discussion paper in a local context.

Theme One: Strengthening our tourism offering

Regions that offer engaging tourism products are adept at attracting visitors and encouraging them to stay longer as well as spend money locally. While there is the opportunity for a variety of experiences the main priorities to consider should include:

Making the most of our natural and cultural sites - The Swan Hill region's most significant natural drawcard is the Murray River which offers a variety of experiences for visitors to engage in. Emerging cultural sites, such as the Silo Art Trail, provide opportunities for smaller rural townships in the municipality to capitalise on the tourism market while boosting their local economy.

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council

However, Aboriginal experiences are the most consistently sought after by visitors. Opportunities should be found to facilitate and strengthen Traditional Owners' and local Aboriginal communities' ambitions to use tourism as a tool for economic development and inclusion, as well as providing unique experiences.

Improving and increasing our accommodation offering - The availability of suitable accommodation is a major consideration for many visitors when planning a holiday and the Swan Hill region offers a variety of family friendly and mid-range accommodation options. Facilitating the development of more up market/boutique style accommodation would provide alternate options and the possibility of attracting an altogether new niche visitor market. With diverse and increased accommodation options available, we increase the benefits of tourism to both our local community and economy.

Catering for diversity - Recognising and accommodating the diverse personal circumstances of our visitors is important so providing tourism experiences that can cater to various cultural and language needs is crucial. By ensuring our region and businesses are inclusive we set ourselves up to be a preferred destination or experience for a broader range of people.

Encouraging regional and local business events - Events can be the main reason for why people visit our region, and the opportunity to encourage repeat visitation outside of such events should not be overlooked. Business events such as conferences, trade shows, field days or corporate retreats can also attract a large number of visitors to our region.

Supporting our boutique producers and cross-sector partnerships – Swan Hill and Regional Victoria have an ever increasing range of boutique producers such as craft beer, wine, spirits and food. We should investigate future opportunities to grow these areas and encourage partnerships between organisations in these and other sectors which could help to strengthen tourism through agricultural experiences.

Cross-sector partnerships are also important to maximise educational visitation. Visitors who are here for educational purposes tend to spend longer in the region than other international groups and have greater potential for repeat or increased visitation.

Theme Two: Making the most of our marketing spending

Visitor marketing works best when partners are working together towards common goals. Whilst Council is more focused on increasing visitor spend in their area, funding is highly variable and largely dependent on circumstances and priorities. Council supports and works with MRT to deliver region wide marketing together with industry support, strategy and engagement.

The aim needs to be ensuring our marketing activity is aligned across the region to make certain the message that reaches potential visitors is not diminished by the need to target different markets as well as a shared priority for measuring outcomes, whether they be increased visitor numbers, spend or yields.

Theme Three: Supporting Industry

Industry and private investment play a vital role in regional tourism growth and job creation. Regional businesses and investors are always looking for opportunities to grow, but often face regulatory barriers that impede the development of new products or projects.

Facilitating investment in our region - To fully realise the benefits of tourism in our region, we need to promote more private investment in improved attractions, experiences and accommodation. We can address this by supporting new investors to better understand the approval systems in place and removing disincentives to encourage investment in regional projects.

Council should proactively engage with industry and domestic and international investors to attract new projects to our region which could help fill gaps in existing tourism offerings including upmarket accommodation and visitor experience projects.

Improving planning and approval processes - Tourism businesses and potential developers/investors can encounter difficulties when scoping new projects, most commonly in relation to navigating the approvals process and knowing which area of Council to contact.

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council

There is the potential to improve how we support individuals to establish tourism businesses and create new products by improving the efficiency and ease of working with Council. By implementing innovative programs such as the "Better Approvals project", an initiative of the Victorian Government to assist Councils cutting red tape and making permit approvals faster and more streamlined, we are able to save small businesses time, money and stress when establishing or expanding

Securing labour and skills - Labour and workforce planning is important in any business, and this is also true for tourism. Regional tourism businesses need to attract suitably skilled local employees and up-skill them for tourism rather than attract workers from elsewhere. This includes engaging employees with cultural and language competencies to cater to local or international markets.

Supporting the tourism industry to harness technology - Most visitors to our region use online sites to research accommodation, transport and activity options and user generated social media content is widely seen as a great influence on choice rather than traditional advertising. Social media platforms, such as Trip Advisor and Facebook, can be used in conjunction with other emerging technology to review visitor feedback and ensure our region stays competitive.

Theme Four: Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards (RTB)

Boards can play a powerful role in harnessing and coordinating local effort around regional tourism. MRT is a cross-border regional tourism board that was created to enable two state governments and 13 local governments to work together collaboratively to grow the visitor economy in the region.

Council supports the continuation of RTBs who are accountable for providing leadership, advocacy and facilitating when required, and ensuring a consistent message and equity across the region.

Theme Five: Better coordinating effort

Many groups contribute to the success of regional tourism, which can range from those directly involved in tourism and events, Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities and even organisations that manage public and private land and waterways. Ensuring our efforts are better coordinated at both a local and regional level can be a complex task but is the best way to get the most out of our shared investment and effort.

Building on work and lessons from the past can ensure an ever evolving and progressive approach to regional tourism. Through learning from the past we can gain a better understanding of what investment can be used for and where efforts could be coordinated and maximising resources already allocated can improve efficiency and reduce costs.

What can we do?

We're looking to the future, partnering with the private sector, government bodies and the community to identify and plan projects, to advocate for funding and to build improved facilities to support tourism in our region.

In order to grow a sustainable and resilient tourism industry, it is necessary to ensure adequate resourcing of peak bodies such as RTBs to enable strong and effective regional marketing.

Tourism is an important sector of our economy and our social life, bringing external dollars to the region but also cultural and educational experiences. It is therefore critical to encourage and support a whole of community approach in embracing tourism opportunities to benefit the region

It is vital to ensure that the sector benefits from an equitable tourism funding for regional Victoria, commensurate with visitation numbers so that new events and destinations can be developed to present a fresh and varied tourism palette to encourage repeat visitation

No industry can succeed in isolation and ensuring cross pollination with other complementary sectors will enable tourism ventures to prosper and evolve.

Tourists don't have boundaries or borders – cross-border alliances are vital for tourism growth in our region.

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council

What's planned?

Our Place – Aboriginal Interpretive Centre - new facility to be constructed by 2022 located on the Little Murray River. This facility will accommodate the Regional Art Gallery, Information Centre, Pioneer Settlement Front of House and include an Aboriginal Interpretive Centre. In 2019 Council was successful with a Commonwealth Grant which will provide 50 per cent of the funds required to build the Our Place facility with Council contributing the other 50 per cent.

Activating Swan Hill Riverfront - In June 2018, Council was successful in obtaining funding from Building Better Region Fund (BBR) and Regional Development Victoria (RDV) to construct a new active play precinct and skate park in Riverside Park (Stage 1) and to design and construct a new pedestrian connection linking Curlewis Street and Monash Drive (Stage 2), at a total cost of $3.98M.

Vibrant Villages – project involving nine rural communities focusing on four key areas: beautification, public infrastructure, recreation and public art. A total of $750,000 to be spent on community upgrades with the State Government contributing $500,000 and Council contributing $250,000.

Robinvale Centenary Park - Centenary Park needs upgrading and will engage a consultant to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management plan to determine what is possible. Council has allocated up $75,000 in its 2019/20 budget.

Robinvale Riverfront Masterplan - Council is committed to developing the Robinvale riverfront precinct - which includes the community centre, Robin Street and Centenary Park and has committed $25,000 to review and update the Robinvale Riverfront Masterplan.

Our Region, Our Rivers projects - While we update the Riverfront Masterplan, we are working on a number of projects. Council received funding as part of the successful Our Region, Our Rivers funding application for the Robinvale virtual walking trail, an artwork on the Community Centre and a pop-up café.

Where do we need your support?

Swan Hill to Lake Boga Active Trail - Construction of a 12.6 km sealed walking and bike riding shared pathway that links the city of Swan Hill to Lake Boga. The trail is an essential piece of infrastructure to adapt to needs of the developing family market providing a safe alternative for travel between the towns and generating commercial opportunities such as bike hire and expanded retail facilities.

Swan Hill Serviced Apartments/ high end Boutique Waterfront Accommodation - The Swan Hill Region Riverfront Commercial Development Strategy 2017 undertook an analysis of potential sites to address waterfront locations. Attracting private investment poses some challenges in the current economic climate and Council is seeking to support to develop a business case that will enable partner identification to occur.

New Storyline for Laser Light Show - In 2015 the $3.5M Heartbeat of the Murray laser light show was created to reinvigorate visitation to the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement and offer a quality night time product. A new storyline is essential, as the show has screened for 5 years, and would cover new creative concepts with a bonus FX component that would attract new and repeat visitation.

Our Place High Tech Model Visitor Experience - The project aims to transform the delivery of visitor services and experience from within the new co-located Visitor Information Centre to use state of the art tools, digital platforms and interactive mechanisms. The high tech model would initiate a centre of best practice with interactive walls, floors and screens with audio visual and augmented reality experiences to best showcase the region and maximise engagement.

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council

REGIONAL TOURISM REVIEW

Discussion Paper | July 2019

VICTORIA
State
Government

Jobs,
Precincts
and Regions

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Message from the Ministers

**The Hon
Martin Pakula MP**
Minister for Tourism,
Sport and Major Events

**The Hon
Jaclyn Symes MP**
Minister for Regional
Development

Tourism is a cornerstone of the economy in regional Victoria. It provides one in ten jobs, showcases our natural, cultural and food and wine attractions, and helps make regional Victoria a great place to visit, work and live.

We want regional Victoria to remain a strong contender in an increasingly competitive tourism market – and your involvement in the Regional Tourism Review will help ensure that tourism in regional Victoria not only remains strong but continues to grow.

The review will take a broad look at regional tourism in Victoria with a range of key goals to help build on what has already been established by the businesses and communities of Victoria's local towns.

The review will guide our work towards supporting visitors to have a wonderful and sustainable experience in Victoria as well as help find new ways to grow tourism in regional Victoria, enhance private investment and create more regional jobs.

With a comprehensive list of aims, the State Government needs your help in maximising the benefits of the Regional Tourism Review to benefit every regional community in our state.

We are calling on industry, Traditional Owners, local councils, licensed tour operators and locals from across regional Victoria to tell us firsthand about the opportunities and challenges you are facing.

We encourage everyone with an interest in regional tourism to join the discussion and help ensure the review provides the insights and experience we need in developing a new way forward for regional tourism in Victoria.

Message from the Special Adviser

**Mary-Anne
Thomas MP**
Cabinet Secretary
and Special Adviser,
Regional Tourism Review

I want the Regional Tourism Review to find ways to ensure that our regions are given the best support and opportunities available to grow visitation, support local businesses and improve liveability for regional communities.

This review is a collaborative effort. Over the past few months I've spoken to people across regional Victoria to understand how we deliver real outcomes for our regions. I've seen the strong sense of pride regional Victorians have in their communities and regions.

This discussion paper is a continuation of those conversations.

We now need your feedback to identify and explore the actions government can take to benefit regional tourism. I look forward to hearing your insights and to continuing these valuable discussions as we work with communities to grow regional tourism across the state.

INTRODUCTION

A new way forward for regional tourism in Victoria

The State Government is looking to find new ways to grow tourism and support regional Victoria, through a review into regional tourism.

The Regional Tourism Review is using this discussion paper to invite feedback and ideas from regional communities — tourism and other businesses, local councils, Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities, community groups, sporting organisations and government agencies.

The review was announced in March by Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula and Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes to ensure our regions are being offered the best support and opportunities to grow in the competitive tourism market.

The Regional Tourism Review is being led by Special Adviser Mary-Anne Thomas MP, who will lead consultation in regional communities and oversee the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions' work in delivering the review.

Input from across regional Victoria is being called for as the review aims to maximise the potential of investment and boost international visitation and other key market segments.

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Your feedback

Through early engagement and analysis, we have identified five key themes that are important for success.

1. Strengthening our tourism offering – building the capacity, capability and attractions of different regions across Victoria to ensure they keep pace with visitor needs and expectations.

2. Making the most of our marketing spending – better coordinating investment and priority setting in regional marketing to ensure partners are supported to work together towards common goals.

3. Supporting industry – better facilitating regional tourism investment and supporting industry to create excellent tourism products.

4. Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards – making sure all Regional Tourism Boards have the right governance, scale, cross-sector buy-in and remit to drive tourism for the regions.

5. Better coordinating effort – delivering a more coordinated approach to regional tourism planning and strategy to reduce duplication and maximise our efforts.

This discussion paper is seeking the views of communities, governments and industry on future directions in regional tourism. The paper provides further detail on the five key challenges and opportunities, and asks questions to guide consultation and public submissions.

The Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy includes a focus on growing regional tourism and sets goals to increase private sector investment, diversify our product offering, and secure more events and visitors. The Regional Tourism Review builds on past work by looking at issues specific to regional tourism and exploring practical solutions and emerging opportunities.

International visitation is a major opportunity for growth. Only 1 per cent of visitors to the regions are international, compared to 9 per cent in Melbourne. International expenditure and overnight visitation in our regions has grown by 3.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent respectively over the year to March 2019.

The Regional Tourism Review is inviting discussion on opportunities to boost overnight stays and expenditure from Melbourne visitors to the regions.

We will also look at opportunities to better support tourism in the regions, enhance private investment and create more regional jobs.

In investigating the untapped potential of regional Victoria, the Regional Tourism Review will find new ways to develop and promote the unique experiences regional Victoria has to offer. There will be consultation with key stakeholders throughout Victoria in July and August.

Submissions can be made at **www.engage.vic.gov.au/regional-tourism-review** and are welcomed until 30 August 2019. The government will provide a public response to consultations and submissions.

01

Setting the scene

We want visitors to travel further, stay longer and spend more in regional Victoria. Visitors from Melbourne, neighbouring regions, interstate and overseas all present opportunities to grow regional tourism. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach to regional tourism won't work. Our regions have different strengths and attributes, and regional performance is diverse. Understanding the visitor market and our current performance is key to growing regional tourism sustainably.

To set the framework for our discussion, this section outlines what we mean by regional tourism, why it's important to regional Victoria, who is visiting, where and why, and the case for doing things differently.

VISITOR NIGHTS

54.1m

Grown by average of 5.8% from 2013 to 2018.
52.3 million visitors to regional Victoria in 2018.

VISITOR NIGHTS ('000S)
YEAR ENDING 2018

■ Domestic
■ International
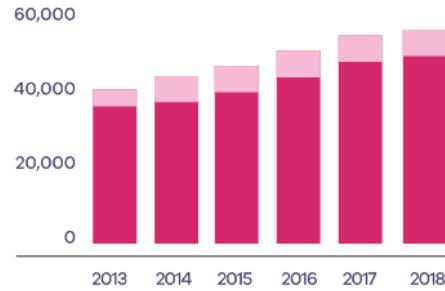
GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA)

$6.6b

Grew 11% in the year to 2016-17, made up of $3.4 billion in direct GVA. 32% of State output is from regional Victoria.

For every $1 spent by visitors to regional Victoria, an additional 92 cents is created through supporting sectors - like small businesses in regional towns.

JOBS

85,600

Grew 9% in 2016-17 to 85,600 jobs. Of these, 64,700 were directly created in tourism. The remaining jobs are indirectly created in other sectors, but resulting from tourism activities.

1 job is indirectly created for every 3 jobs directly created in the tourism sector in regional Victoria.

TOURISM BUSINESSES

23,400

13,900 of these businesses employ staff of which over 90% have 1-19 employees. 30% of Victoria's tourism businesses are in regional Victoria.

63% of tourism businesses operate in the food services, retail and accommodation sectors.

Figure 1: Tourism's economic contribution to regional Victoria.

What we mean by regional tourism

Regional Victoria, for the purposes of tourism, refers to the areas covered by Victoria's tourism regions outside Melbourne. The area includes parts of the local government areas of Frankston and Mornington Peninsula and Cardinia, Nillumbik and Yarra Ranges[1].

Question

Do you agree with the definition of regional Victoria for tourism purposes?

A visitor is someone away from home for the purposes of leisure, business, education, employment or other personal reasons. The main focus of the Regional Tourism Review is leisure tourism, but it will also touch on business tourism. Tourism is a component of the visitor economy - any direct or indirect economic activity generated by visitors. This includes visitors who are away from home for a holiday and visiting friends and/or relatives.

We have chosen to focus on the leisure visitor group because they account for the majority of visitors and expenditure in regional Victoria.

Why tourism is important to regional Victoria

Tourism is an important industry for regional Victoria. Contributing $6.6 billion in Gross Value Added to the regional Victorian economy in 2016-17, tourism accounted for almost 10 per cent of regional jobs. Regions such as Phillip Island (39 per cent of jobs) and the High Country (21 per cent of jobs) depend on the success of tourism. It also offers other regions an opportunity to further build and diversify their economies.

As well as creating jobs and economic growth, tourism can provide broader benefits to regional communities and improve economic resilience. This can include resources for environmental conservation and investment in transport and other infrastructure that can be used by visitors and locals alike. Tourism can also provide resources to preserve and promote cultural history and heritage sites. A great place to visit is a great place to live.

1   These boundaries are set in consultation with Tourism Research Australia, and there is an opportunity to review them annually.

ENVIRONMENT

Tourism can provide additional resources for environmental conservation and education about environmental stewardship (e.g. eco-tourism). Community participation in planning and management can help ensure tourism is sustainable and the environment is protected.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Tourism can attract transport and other infrastructure investments (roads, galleries etc.) that can be used by local residents as well. Careful planning is needed to avoid infrastructure being placed under stress (e.g. congested roads).

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Tourism can provide resources to preserve and promote Aboriginal cultural histories and heritage sites. Community participation in planning and management can ensure tourism is sustainable, and cultural and heritage sites are protected.

CASE STUDY
ACTIVATING NATURE-BASED TOURISM IN FORREST

Forrest relied on timber and sawmilling for over a century. However, by the end of the 20th century forestry activity declined as reserves diminished.

In response, the region turned to emerging visitor opportunities. Some 30 kilometres of mountain bike tracks were created and private investments were made in the township.

The result has been a significant increase in visitors to Forrest and it is now known as a cycling destination. Annual mountain bike events bring thousands of visitors who support new cafes, shops and updated accommodation.

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Who is visiting, where and why?

International and interstate tourism are important for the Victorian economy, but tourism from within Victoria is integral to regional economic success. To frame our discussion about challenges and opportunities, it is important to have a clear understanding of who is visiting regional Victoria, which markets present the easiest and greatest opportunity for growth, and how visitors are currently dispersed across regions.

Most visitors to regional Victoria are from Melbourne or neighbouring regions

Victorians account for around 80 per cent of tourism spending in regional Victoria in total dollar terms. Daytrip and overnight visitors from within Victoria spend six times more than interstate overnight visitors, and 14 times more than international overnight visitors. Figure 1 below shows the different patterns of visitation across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Some of the main drivers influencing Victorians to travel regionally are the abundance of nature based experiences, the ability to take a short break and a desire to spend time and visit with friends and family. Price and time are key considerations in the decision to travel to regional Victoria.

MELBOURNE
33m visitors $18b visitor spend

REGIONAL VICTORIA
53m visitors $10b visitor spend

Legend:
- Daytrips
- Intrastate
- Interstate
- International

Melbourne – Visitors: 59%, 12%, 20%, 9%
Melbourne – Expenditure: 11%, 15%, 31%, 43%
Regional Victoria – Visitors: 67%, 27%, 5%, 1%
Regional Victoria – Expenditure: 31%, 49%, 14%, 6%
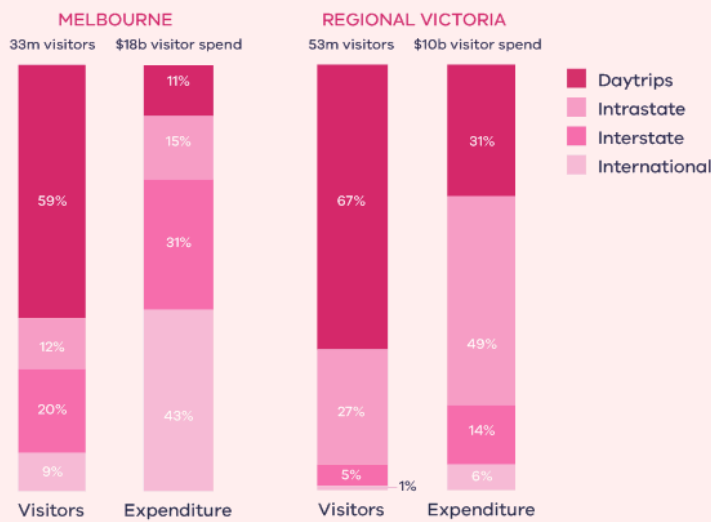
Figure 2: Patterns of visitation across Melbourne and Regional Victoria, sourced from National Visitor Survey, International Visitor Survey, year ending December 2018, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra.

International and interstate visitors are harder to attract but spend more

International and interstate visitors generally stay near Melbourne. They are less likely to stay overnight and spend money in regional Victoria. However, when these visitors *do* travel to regional Victoria, they tend to spend more on a per visitor basis.

Interstate visitors and Victorian visitors to regional Victoria are influenced by similar factors. These include nature-based, food and wine and aquatic and coastal experiences, as well as the desire to spend time and visit with friends and family.

International travellers are highly dependent on direct international flights to Victoria. Increasing direct flights to Melbourne and Avalon Airports also provides increased opportunities to attract these visitors to regional Victoria.

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People are more likely to visit and to spend more in regional Victoria when it's for leisure

Visitors to regional Victoria are more likely to be travelling for a holiday than visitors to Melbourne. Leisure visitors spent more in regional Victoria ($6.2 billion) than in Melbourne ($5.6 billion) in 2018. Leisure visitors are a significant opportunity for regional Victoria. Generally, these visitors have the freedom to choose where to travel and what activities to spend their time and money on. Other trips are less changeable but present significant opportunities, such as encouraging business visitors to hold conferences in regional Victoria.

Our regions attract different types of visitors

Visitation to each of Victoria's regions is varied. There are regions that receive a larger proportion of international visitors, such as the Great Ocean Road and Phillip Island, while some regions are largely visited by the domestic market, such as the High Country and the Murray.

There are also regions that receive a larger proportion of overnight visitors than other regions, such as the Grampians and the High Country. Other regions have a greater proportion of daytrip visitors, such as the Yarra Valley, Dandenong Ranges and the Mornington Peninsula.

DAYLESFORD AND MACEDON RANGES — 70% | 28% | 1% | 1%

GREATER GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE — 69.5% | 25.5% | 1% | 4%

GIPPSLAND — 63% | 35.5% | 1.5%

GOLDFIELDS — 71% | 26% | .5% | 2.5%

GRAMPIANS — 51% | 47% | 2%

GREAT OCEAN ROAD — 48.5% | 35% | 4% | 12.5%

MORNINGTON PENINSULA — 74% | 23% | 1% | 2%

MURRAY — 56% | 43% | 1%

PHILLIP ISLAND — 46% | 34% | 2.5% | 17.5%

VICTORIA'S HIGH COUNTRY — 51% | 48% | 1%

YARRA VALLEY AND DANDENONG RANGES — 76% | 14% | 1% | 9%

Legend:
- International Daytrip visitors
- International Overnight visitors
- Domestic Overnight visitors
- Domestic Daytrip visitors

Figure 3: Patterns of visitation across Victorian regions sourced from National Visitor Survey, International Visitor Survey, year ending December 2018, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra.

Note: International daytrip estimates are based on a non-exhaustive set of destinations/attractions visited overnight or on a daytrip, and therefore do not include all destinations across Victoria. Differences between the total number of visitors and overnight visitors to the destination are assumed to be due to daytrips.

Figures for the Grampians include Wimmera Mallee Tourism.

Doing things differently

Recent growth in regional tourism has been promising but there are opportunities for further growth across all visitor types and private investment remains below potential.

INVESTMENT

In Victoria, 14% of accommodation projects under development are in regional Victoria. Across Australia, the proportion of regional accommodation developments is 24%.

VISITATION

25% of Victorians have travelled over the past 12 months, but not in Victoria.

International visitors make up 1% of total visitors to regional Victoria compared to 9% of visitors in Melbourne.

SPENDING

In Victoria, 36 cents in each visitor dollar is spent in the regions. This is compared to the average across Australia of 43 cents in each visitor dollar spent regionally.

One simple metric can help us visualise success. Visitors to and within Victoria spend an average 36 cents in the dollar in our regions. This is below the national average for regional visitor spend, which is 43 cents in the dollar. Figure 3 shows that Victoria lags behind all other states and territories, except the Australian Capital Territory (which does not have regions).

If this gap was closed through growth, assuming Melbourne spending remains the same, visitors would have spent $3.8 billion more in regional Victoria in 2018. Getting more visitors to regional Victoria has the potential to deliver substantial economic benefits, however closing the gap will require effort. Getting the visitors we already have to spend more will also deliver benefits.

Victorians are the biggest market for regional Victoria and there is potential for more growth. We know that 53 per cent of Victorians did not travel to regional Victoria and stay overnight over the past 12 months but half of this group would consider travelling in regional Victoria. Persuading some of these Victorians to take even a short break would make a big difference.

A relatively low number of interstate visitors travel in regional Victoria compared to other states and territories. Melbourne attracts interstate visitors mainly for short breaks but there are many regional experiences that can complement a visit or attract visitors as the primary destination. This is particularly the case for repeat and longer stay visitors.

International visitors make up the smallest share of visitors to regional Victoria but they spend the most per person. It is important to consider the yield of individual visitors, which means that more than just increasing visitors to a region, we also want them to spend more on a per visitor basis. Encouraging international visitors to travel further or stay overnight is a significant opportunity for some regions. For example, more than 75 per cent of international visitors to the Great Ocean Road are on daytrips. Converting even a small portion of that number to overnight stays could bring big returns.

Question

In your region, is it more important to you to increase yield, visitor numbers, or both? How else should we measure success?

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA (AVERAGE) — 43%

REGIONAL VIC — 36%

REGIONAL SA — 42%

REGIONAL WA — 43%

REGIONAL NSW — 46%

REGIONAL TAS — 46%

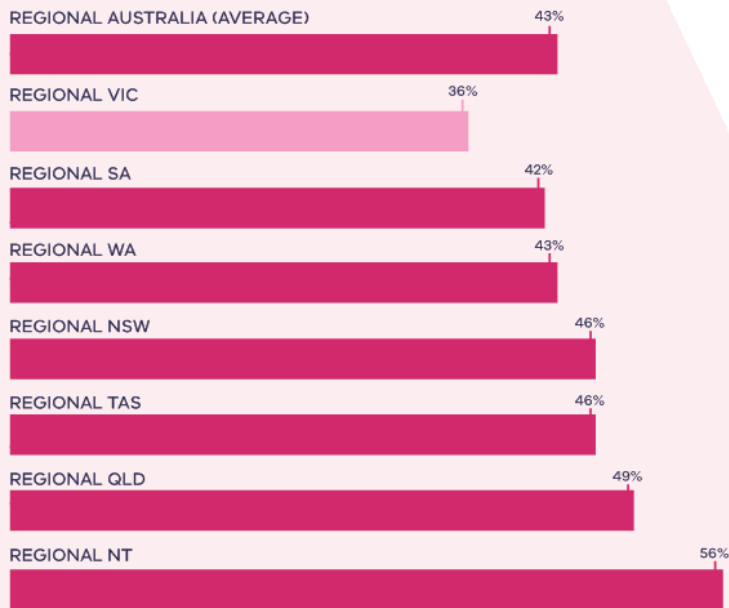REGIONAL QLD — 49%

REGIONAL NT — 56%

Figure 4: Regional visitor expenditure (percentage proportion per dollar) sourced from National Visitor Survey, International Visitor Survey, December 2018, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra.

Working with community

Local community buy-in and support is critical to the success of regional tourism. We know that there can sometimes be community concerns about increasing numbers of visitors. We also know that regional Victorians value their town or place and have a strong sense of community pride and visitors want to share this experience. Many people volunteer to give back to visitors as well as their communities at higher rates than Melburnians – often at Visitor Information Centres, regional events and other tourism activities.

Improving regional tourism outcomes can also provide broad benefits to locals. Places that are great to visit are more likely to have good infrastructure and services, can support more local businesses and locals can enjoy the attractions as well. A town that appeals to visitors can also attract new residents – which brings important economic and social benefits through arresting population decline or increasing population growth.

02

Challenges and opportunities
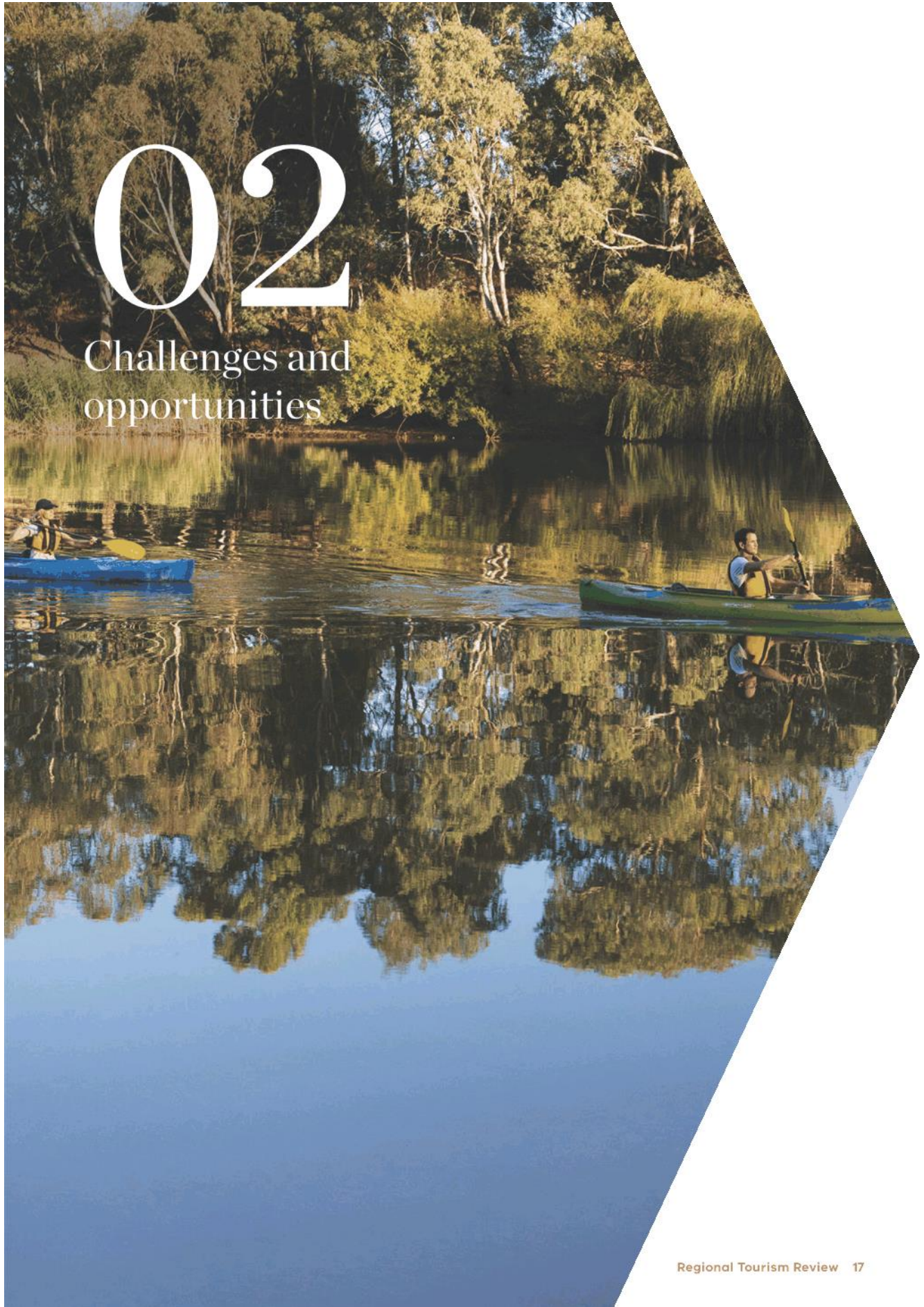
THEME ONE

Strengthening our tourism offering

Regions with compelling tourism products can attract visitors and encourage them to stay longer and to spend money locally. Regional Victoria has well-known attractions that are ranked among Australia's top destinations, but there are further development opportunities for some tourism products like accommodation and touring routes.

This section looks at opportunities to build the capacity, capability and attractions of different regions across Victoria to ensure they keep pace with visitor needs and expectations. While there are many diverse products and experiences on offer, early consultations have most consistently identified the following as priorities:

- Making the most of our natural and cultural sites

- Improving and increasing our accommodation offering

- Catering for diversity

- Encouraging regional and business events

- Supporting our boutique producers and cross-sector partnerships.

Making the most of our natural and cultural sites

Regional Victoria has unique and varied natural and cultural sites – but we could draw on Aboriginal and local knowledge to better leverage these. Our national park network and other natural attractions are big draw cards for visitors. Some regions have had great success in attracting visitors to natural sites, such as North West Victoria's Lake Tyrrell and Daylesford's and the Macedon Ranges' natural mineral springs. Recreational boating is a significant drawcard for the Murray River region and Victoria's coastal areas. Fishing, camping and cycling are all popular pursuits for visitors to natural sites. Emerging cultural sites, like the Silo Art Trail, also provide opportunities for local towns to capitalise on growing visitor numbers.

There are opportunities to improve our tourism offering around more of our regional attractions. This has significant potential for remote communities where the positive impact for local businesses and economic resilience can be significant. It's also important that growth is sustainable – we want to facilitate tourism growth but ensure sites are respected and maintained well into the future.

Aboriginal experiences are most consistently sought after by international visitors. There are opportunities to facilitate and strengthen Traditional Owners' and contemporary Aboriginal communities' ambitions to use tourism as a tool for economic development and inclusion, as well as providing a unique experience for local and international visitors alike. This holistic approach can support communities to identify their priorities and gain the skills and support to deliver tourism products.

CASE STUDY
BUDJ BIM –
LEVERAGING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in south west Victoria is 30,000 years old and a significant cultural site for Gunditjmara people who witnessed Budj Bim's eruption. It is part of Australia's National Heritage List and has one of the world's largest and oldest aquaculture systems. Gunditjmara people manipulated the hydrological systems of the lava flow to trap and farm eels and the aquaculture system is at least 6,600 years old, preceding the Egyptian Pyramids and Stonehenge. A traditional eel aquaculture interpretation centre is being constructed to support local eel product manufacturing and sales. As of July 2019, Budj Bim is a World Heritage site with special protection under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's World Heritage Convention.

Question

How can regions and communities leverage their natural assets? Where are the opportunities to partner with, and support, Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities to develop tourism products? For existing partnerships and partnerships that have already occurred, what could have been improved?

Improving and increasing our accommodation offering

The availability of suitable accommodation is a key consideration for many visitors when planning a holiday. Regional Victoria offers a range of family-friendly and mid-range accommodation and other options, like camping, glamping and caravanning. Some regions also have a smaller selection of high-end or boutique accommodation.

There are opportunities to facilitate the development of more high-end and boutique accommodation in some areas of regional Victoria. As we increase accommodation options for different types of visitors in regional Victoria, we increase the benefits of tourism to regional communities and economies. Other regional areas, such as in Tasmania and South Australia, have increased visitation and spend by developing boutique nature-based accommodation that showcases the region's environment. We also need to look at the impact and role of share accommodation.

Question

Should the state prioritise facilitating boutique and high-end accommodation, and any other types of accommodation? What role can share accommodation (such as Airbnb) play in regional communities?

Making it easy for visitors with touring routes and joined up itineraries

Regional Victoria is full of wonderful small towns and businesses, each with specific products and experiences on offer. These towns and businesses may face difficulty in attracting visitors for a stand-alone holiday to their destination, but they are an attractive proposition as part of a broader journey through regional Victoria.

There is potential for regional areas and businesses to work together to create touring routes and itineraries through regional Victoria across local and regional boundaries. This can offer visitors a range of experiences and increase visitation to less frequented regional areas. Understanding how long visitors would be prepared to tour across regions is key to working out how to attract them and enable smaller towns and businesses to gain economic benefits.

Question

What are the key journey experiences for Victoria or your area that will drive visitors to come and stay?

CASE STUDY
MELBOURNE TO SYDNEY COASTAL DRIVE

The Melbourne to Sydney Coastal Touring Route is a prominent example of the success that can result from working cooperatively.

Jointly supported by New South Wales and Victorian marketing bodies, the route provides a highly desirable multi-day experience of Australia for independent travellers. The route also provides an alternative for interstate or international travellers flying or taking a more direct route between the two cities.

Regions such as Gippsland strongly benefit from the route, reaching visitors who may otherwise overlook its national parks and extensive public land network.

Encouraging regional and business events

Events can be a compelling reason for people to visit regions, including places further away from Melbourne. The Grampians Grape Escape attracts thousands of visitors and locals over a month to the region, while showcasing local produce.

Major events such as the Rip Curl Pro or the Phillip Island MotoGP can also deliver significant visitor numbers and spend. Regional areas can leverage major events held in Melbourne, either by securing satellite activities (hosting specific games as part of a broader sports carnival), or by encouraging attendees to consider a regional trip as part of their holiday.

Similarly, business events can attract high yielding visitors to regional cities and towns. Events can range from smaller conferences and trade shows to corporate planning retreats.

We know there is a strong appetite from local areas and businesses to further leverage event opportunities, particularly in off season months where these events can help offset seasonal variations in visitation.

Question:

What can we do together to support greater event visitation?

CASE STUDY
MURRAY FARM GATE TRAIL – AGRITOURISM

The Murray Farm Gate Trail is a collection of working farms along the Murray in Victoria and New South Wales and is part of the Murray Regional Tourism Board geographic area. Established in 2017, the initiative advertises farm gates in the area and encourages visitors to sample produce and learn more about each working farm. Suggested itineraries and driving times to each farm are provided to visitors and are available online. Participating businesses report good sales and suggest the initiative be expanded.

Supporting our boutique producers and cross-sector partnerships

Regional Victoria has a growing range of boutique producers, including craft beer, wine, spirits and food. Many of these producers already provide strong tourism offerings. However, there are opportunities to grow these areas. Encouraging partnerships between organisations in these and other sectors, for example, could strengthen our agritourism experiences. We want to leverage the boutique producers that we already have, to further grow our offering and encourage more visitors to regional Victoria.

Cross-sector partnerships are also important to maximise education visitation. Visitors who are here for education purposes spend longer in Victoria than other international groups and have great potential for increased regional visitation. This market is also linked to the visiting friends and relatives market. In the Goldfields region, including Ballarat and Bendigo, 40 per cent of overnight visitors come from this category.

We have seen examples of great cross-sector partnerships between tourism and other sectors such as agriculture, and there is potential to do more.

Question

How can we facilitate cross-sector partnerships?

Catering for diversity

Recognising and accommodating the diverse personal circumstances of visitors is important. For example, almost one in five people has a disability and nearly 90 per cent of this group take a holiday each year.

Visitors to Victoria are increasingly from a range of cultural backgrounds and growth in international tourism expenditure is largely being driven by Asian markets. Providing tourism offerings that accommodate the cultural and language needs of these visitors will enable regional Victoria to attract more visitors from this rising market.

Regions and businesses that ensure they are inclusive will set themselves up to be preferred destinations or experiences for a broad range of people.

Question

How can regions and businesses better cater to diverse visitor needs? What are the key accessibility challenges?

CASE STUDY
ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN GREATER GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE

The Greater Geelong and Bellarine regions want to lead in accessible tourism and partnered with the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations in 2018. Under the partnership, local businesses receive tailored information, training sessions or one-to-one mentoring to help them change their business practices and provide a better visitor experience. In addition, 70 people with a disability will be assisted into employment. The first year of the partnership has been enthusiastically taken up by local businesses. Once training is complete, Greater Geelong and the Bellarine will launch a campaign to make visitors with a disability aware of what the region can offer and make it front of mind for these travellers.

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Meeting changing visitor information expectations

The way visitors access information is changing. Visitors increasingly use internet research and social media to plan holidays and gather visitor information.

Regional Victoria invests heavily in visitor servicing, largely through funding for Visitor Information Centres. Around 1 in 11 overnight visitors to regional Victoria use Visitor Information Centres. There is evidence these visits result in local spending.

Investments in visitor servicing are most effective when they respond to visitor needs and expectations. Some Visitor Information Centres are increasingly using technology to deliver visitor information, such as rolling out digital kiosks in the Yarra Valley, but we can do more across regional Victoria. Creating immersive experiences within Visitor Information Centres is key to ensuring they are relevant to changing visitor needs.

Question

How can we improve visitor servicing?

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THEME TWO

Making the most of our marketing spending

Visitor marketing works best when partners are working together towards common goals. There are many effective partnerships across Victoria's regions and areas where cooperation could be improved. This section looks at activity, investment and priority setting in regional marketing.

There are multiple levels of investment in regional marketing

The key actors in regional tourism marketing are Visit Victoria and Regional Tourism Boards (boards). Local councils also support marketing at a local level.

Visit Victoria's primary objective is to increase visitation and spend to the state through marketing, and through business and major events attraction. Local councils are focused on increasing visitor spend in their area, including through local tourism organisations and visitor servicing. Council funding is highly variable depending on circumstances and priorities.

Boards are supported by Visit Victoria, local councils and industry contributions to deliver region wide marketing and strategy and industry support and engagement.

Question

How can we better leverage marketing spend to promote regional visitation?

Working together on shared priorities

While many local councils are supportive of Visit Victoria, we hear that some local councils and businesses would like to be more connected. The focus on whole-of-state outcomes can mean activity appears misaligned with local priority markets for some regions, for example Melburnians. There are also concerns of insufficient coordination across government to address supply side constraints that affect regional and local tourism, such as visitor congestion.

Local councils and businesses do not always recognise the value proposition of boards (discussed in more detail in Theme Four) instead preferencing local activity. If local councils are not persuaded of the benefits to their constituents, they will place a lower priority on this work. This is heightened where they do not consider existing regional branding or strategy as relevant to their area.

Question

How can Visit Victoria, other areas of government, boards and local councils work more closely on agreed priorities?

Making sure our marketing activity is aligned

Regional tourism activities are not always aligned. Marketing can focus on different target markets and branding at a local level, which can dilute the messaging that reaches potential visitors. This can extend to differing priorities for measuring outcomes, such as whether to focus on visitor numbers, spend, yield or all three.

There can also be overlapping marketing activity across actors – particularly boards, local tourism organisations and local councils. Tourism businesses can find it confusing to work out who they need to engage with.

Question

How can we ensure marketing activity is better aligned and that effort is not duplicated?

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THEME THREE

Supporting industry

Industry and private investment are critical enablers to regional tourism growth and regional jobs creation. Regional businesses and investors are looking for opportunities to grow, but often face regulatory barriers that impede the development of new products and projects. There are ways to make it easier and more efficient for industry to work with government to encourage tourism and create regional jobs.

This section discusses opportunities to better facilitate regional tourism investment and support industry.

Facilitating investment in our regions

To realise the benefits of tourism for regional communities, we need more private investment in improved attractions, experiences and accommodation. A raft of development and investment attraction activities are taking place across regional Victoria, such as through Regional Development Victoria, but activity is below the national average.

Regional Victoria accounts for a small proportion of total regional investment in Australia. Regional Victoria's share of tourism investment is less than metropolitan Melbourne across most segments.

We understand that investors are more likely to undertake projects in regional Victoria when they have existing or previous experience with regional developments. This suggests there are real differences between gaining approvals in regions and in Melbourne which deter potential new investors. There may be potential to address this by supporting new investors to better understand the approvals system.

127 projects   35 projects

■ Capital cities
■ Regional

AUS   VIC

Figure 5: Regional Victorian investment levels and activities for stand-alone accommodation, compared with regional Australia sourced from Australian Tourism Investment Monitor 2017-18, Tourism Research Australia

There are opportunities to facilitate more private investment by removing disincentives for investors and developers to choose regional projects. Local community support is also important. There may be a role for local and State Government to more proactively engage with industry and domestic and international investors to attract new projects to regional Victoria. This could help fill key gaps in existing regional tourism offerings, including high-end accommodation and visitor experience projects.

CASE STUDY
**SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA
– FACILITATING INVESTMENT**

*The Southern Ocean Lodge project is widely accepted as a high
standard for government investment facilitation that could be
used to assist in increasing tourism investment in Victoria. The
Lodge is a luxury resort located on South Australia's Kangaroo
Island. It is ranked among the top 100 hotels in the world.*

*The South Australian Government invited a developer to
Kangaroo Island and showed potential sites for the Lodge.
The South Australian Tourism Commission assisted with
development applications, convened interdepartmental
meetings to consider the proposal and engaged with the
developer prior to lodging the application to resolve issues.
A grant of $1 million was provided for supporting infrastructure.
This project was the catalyst for other investment in Kangaroo
Island which created more local jobs.*

Improving planning and approval processes

Tourism businesses and potential developers and investors can encounter difficulties when scoping new projects. We understand that the issues most commonly encountered are navigating approvals and knowing which area or level of government to contact.

In Victoria, planning permit applicants must navigate requirements from local councils and referral agencies across government to gain approval for development proposals. This process includes determining and understanding local community needs and environmental issues – both important considerations.

There is potential to improve how we support individuals to establish tourism businesses and create new tourism products by improving the efficiency and ease of working with government.

Question

What are the barriers to investing in regional Victoria? How could the system be improved?

Securing labour and skills

Labour and workforce planning are a core part of running any business, however we have heard that tourism businesses are disproportionately affected by issues such as seasonality and high levels of casual employment. There are perceptions of limited opportunities for job advancement. There is also anecdotal evidence that prospective staff cannot afford to live in popular tourism areas to take up job opportunities, due to high house prices and rent.

These barriers impact the ability of regional tourism businesses to attract suitably skilled local employees and can impede the delivery of excellent tourism services. It is important that businesses are able to employ local people and upskill them for tourism, rather than attract workers from elsewhere. This includes engaging employees with cultural and language competencies to cater to priority international markets.

There may be an opportunity to address staffing challenges through improved support and collaboration across government and industry. A Tourism Employment Plan developed for the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island, is an example of how collaboration can be supported.

Question

How can we use education and training, including Tafe, to address barriers impacting staffing of regional businesses?

Supporting the tourism industry to harness technology

Most regional visitors now use online sites to research transport, accommodation and activity options. User-generated content on social media is widely seen as a greater influence on visitor choices than traditional advertising. Accessing clear data on how many people visit a region based on a social media post from an influencer would be useful to determine the impact of these activities.

Sharing economy platforms like Uber and Airbnb have impacted the provision of tourism activities, transport and accommodation. The tourism industry can use these platforms and other emerging technology to stay competitive. It is important that regional businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises, are not left behind in the wake of technological advancements. There may be opportunities for government and industry to work collaboratively to empower and prepare regional tourism businesses to respond to technology changes, and harness the benefits of change such as the availability of new data sources.

Question

What support does industry require to address the challenges and opportunities that technology and disruptors present?
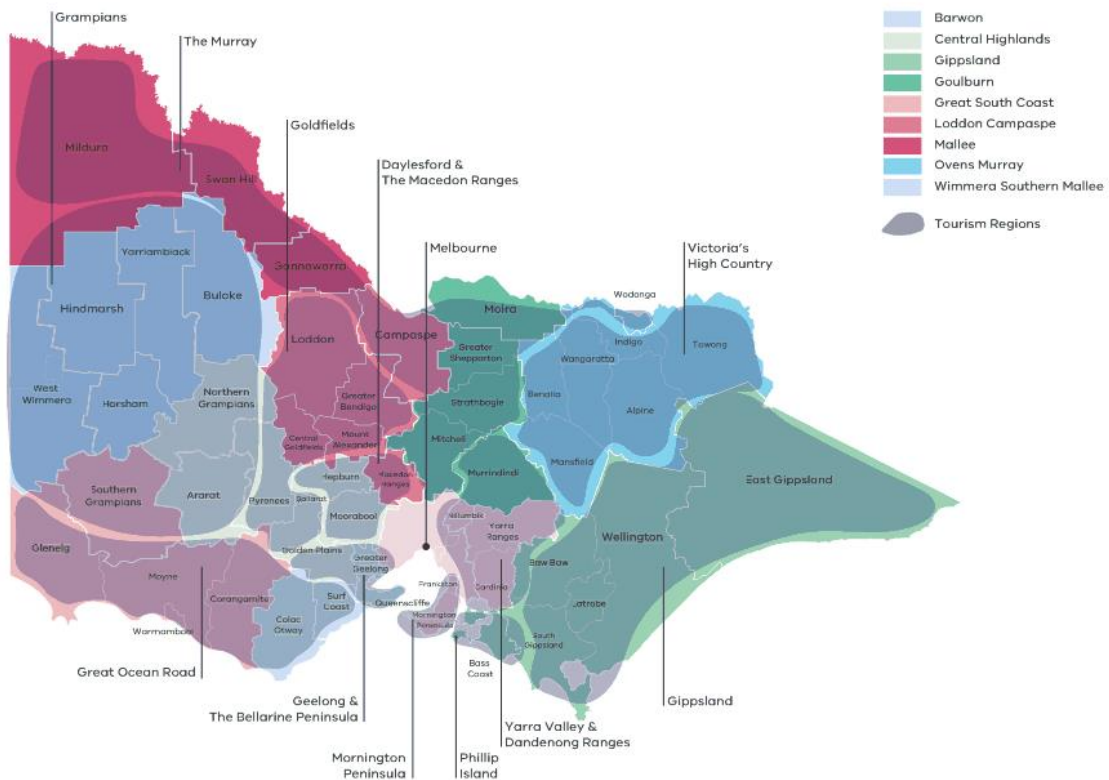
Figure 6: Victoria's eleven official Regional Tourism Board boundaries overlaid on Victoria's nine regional partnerships and regional local government areas.
Note: not all local councils in these areas participate in the Regional Tourism Board.

THEME FOUR

Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards

Boards can play a powerful role in harnessing and coordinating local effort around regional tourism. There are common ingredients to the success of boards, including the right governance, enough scale to leverage effort and investment, cross-sector buy-in and a clear remit.

This section outlines the current governance, funding and boundary arrangements for boards and explores some opportunities for locally-agreed change.

Boards have a common purpose but varied governance arrangements

Boards were first established in 2008 with 11 now operating across Victoria. They set regional strategic direction and work with industry, local councils and the State Government to drive regional tourism. Boards use different governance structures. Some have representatives from every local government, others have skills-based appointments and the size of boards ranges from two members to 17.

Question

Which governance structures are the most effective for boards to achieve outcomes for regional tourism?

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Funding models and levels differ

Boards operate with funding from a range of sources. They may receive funding from the Victorian Government through Visit Victoria, local councils, other government sources and industry contributions. This means that boards need to consider and address the priorities of a range of stakeholders.

Boards also have different funding structures, such as contributions based on visitor numbers for each council or minimum funding amounts with additional charges for specific activities. There is significant variation in funding levels and not all boards receive funding from every type of stakeholder.

Local support and buy-in matters

Local councils set their own priorities. These guide decisions around funding and support for different sectors and organisations. Councils are required to set priorities as part of council planning processes set out in the *Local Government Act 1989*. Some local councils prioritise tourism more highly than others, depending on the area's primary industries and perceived benefits from tourism, but all councils fund tourism to some extent. (A review of the *Local Government Act 1989* is currently underway with a new bill proposed for 2019).

The prioritisation of tourism significantly impacts local council contributions to boards and how regional tourism is supported more broadly. In some areas, councils set up their own regional tourism associations rather than contribute to a board. Boards work most effectively when they have local support and can leverage investment. There are opportunities to explore how we leverage funding from a range of sources to benefit regional tourism.

Question

How can we best help different sized councils (such as regional cities and small rural councils) to leverage tourism as part of their broader development goals?

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Boundaries and scale are important for success

Victoria's tourism regions are geographically laid out around large attractions or themes. While boards have been set up to cover all of Victoria, there is significant variation in how they operate, the size of the region they support and the specific challenges they face. Some local councils have chosen not to engage with relevant boards.

There may be opportunities to consider the existing regional tourism boundaries to increase economies of scale and promote more cooperative partnerships between councils to better manage resources and address constraints. Some boards have a limited number of stakeholders while others span multiple local governments and industry stakeholders, providing substantial support bases and economies of scale.

Question

Are there changes we can make to boards (geographic or otherwise) that would increase local government and industry buy-in?

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THEME FIVE

Better coordinating effort

Many people across government, industry and the community contribute to the success of regional tourism. This ranges from those directly involved in tourism and events, to local and state planners, Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities and those managing public and private land and waterways. Ensuring local and state priorities are well coordinated is a complex but important task, so that we can get the most out of our shared investment and effort.

This section outlines the current strategic environment. It also discusses the benefits of a more coordinated approach to reduce duplication and enable us to maximise our efforts to grow regional tourism.

Building on work and lessons from the past

Regional tourism is a priority for the State Government and there have been many reviews and plans for regional tourism over the years. Following a review in 2015, the government released the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy and introduced some significant changes in how it supports regional tourism.

Visit Victoria was created to be a more agile marketing body for the state. Regional Development Victoria has taken a more active role in supporting tourism investors and has supported industry through the government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund. Regional Partnerships have been established to support a community voice in regional priorities.

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Many actors have a role to play

Regional tourism is supported by many government agencies and government funded entities. Priority setting, investment attraction, visitor servicing and multiple other activities occur across a range of areas. This results in dispersed support and complex governance.

Multiple areas within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions contribute to regional tourism, such as Regional Partnerships, Regional Development Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria and Aboriginal Economic Inclusion. Visit Victoria is the government's marketing and events body, delivering marketing campaigns for regional Victoria and working with Regional Tourism Boards.

Other areas of government including the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Invest Victoria and Parks Victoria have roles in regional tourism, as do local councils. There are multiple portfolios concerned with regional tourism, often relating to different geographic areas.

The Commonwealth Government also has a role, investing in some regional product and international marketing through Tourism Australia and Regional Development Australia.

Question

How do we best coordinate the work of different actors across regional tourism? What are the most important points of collaboration?

Better leveraging our shared investment

Investment in tourism is dispersed across many areas and funded by a range of organisations. Visit Victoria undertakes state-wide marketing and funding for regional events. Boards invest in activities to drive local tourism, such as tactical marketing, industry and product development.

Local councils spread tourism funding across multiple organisations including boards, Visitor Information Centres, regional tourism associations and chambers of commerce. Across government, at least seven different entities administer funding and grants.

Understanding exactly what all regional tourism investment is used for, and where efforts could be coordinated and more efficient, is key to maximising resources already allocated to regional tourism. Duplication means we may be missing out on some of the advantages that regional tourism can provide, like economic development and diversification.

Question

Are we allocating resources efficiently? Could we better coordinate investment in regional tourism?

Aligning state and regional strategies

Multiple government and government funded entities undertake planning and deliver strategies to grow regional visitation and expenditure.

The Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy sets priorities for regional tourism with actions devolved to a range of entities. Boards receive funding from Visit Victoria in part to develop annual plans. There are also multiple strategies and sub-strategies, such as boards' Destination Management Plans and longer-term strategies, or regional tourism association strategies. Additionally, there are industry strategies like the Victorian Wine Industry Strategy.

Regional Partnerships can select tourism as a key priority. However, partnership boundaries don't match board boundaries. These organisations have different roles which demonstrates the issue of multiple dispersed roles and responsibilities. This is particularly the case in larger tourism regions which have as many as four regional partnerships in their areas.

Question

How could a state-wide strategy or Destination Management Plan best connect to and leverage local strengths and priorities?

03

Your opportunity to have a say

Now is the opportunity for you to have your say. Feedback on this discussion paper will support consideration of future directions through the Regional Tourism Review.

Questions we would like you to consider are outlined through the document and listed here:

- Do you agree with the definition of regional Victoria for tourism purposes?

- In your region, is it more important to you to increase yield, visitor numbers, or both? How else should we measure success?

- How can regions and communities leverage their natural assets? Where are the opportunities to partner with and support Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities to develop tourism products? For existing partnerships and partnerships that have already occurred, what could have been improved?

- Where should the state prioritise facilitating boutique and high-end accommodation and any other types of accommodation? What role can share accommodation (such as Airbnb) play in regional communities?

- What are the key journey experiences for Victoria or your area that will drive visitors to come and stay?

- What can we do together to support greater event visitation?

- How can we facilitate cross-sector partnerships?

- How can regions and businesses better cater to diverse visitor needs? What are the key accessibility challenges?

- How can we improve visitor servicing?

- How can we better leverage marketing spend to promote regional visitation?

- How can Visit Victoria, other areas of government, boards and local councils work more closely on agreed priorities?

- How can we ensure marketing activity is better aligned and that effort is not duplicated?

- What are the barriers to investing in regional Victoria? How could the system be improved?

- How can we use education and training, including TAFE, to address barriers impacting staffing of regional businesses?

- What support does industry require to address the challenges and opportunities that technology and disruptors present?

- Which governance structures are the most effective for boards to achieve outcomes for regional tourism?

- How can we best help different sized councils (such as regional cities and small rural councils) to leverage tourism as part of their broader development goals?

- Are there changes we can make to boards (geographic or otherwise) that would increase local government and industry buy-in?

- How do we best coordinate the work of different actors across regional tourism? What are the most important points of collaboration?

- Are we allocating resources efficiently? Could we better coordinate investment in regional tourism?

- How could a state-wide strategy or Destination Management Plan best connect to and leverage local strengths and priorities?

There will be consultation with key stakeholders throughout regional Victoria in July and August 2019.

All Victorians and interested parties are encouraged to contribute by making a submission. While we have listed suggested questions in this paper, there is no obligation to answer them all – and you may wish to advise us of other important issues for regional tourism.

Submissions can be made at www.engage.vic.gov.au/regional-tourism-review and are welcomed until 30 August 2019. Government will provide a public response to consultations and submissions.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues and we look forward to your contribution.

References

Tourism data and statistics referenced through the discussion paper were sourced from the following:

- Australian Tourism Investment Monitor 2017-18, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra

- Holiday Tracking Survey, Roy Morgan Research, sourced from Visit Victoria

- National Tourism Satellite Account 2017-18, Tourism Research Australia

- National Visitor Survey, International Visitor Survey, December 2018, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra

- Tourism Businesses, June 2017, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra

- Understanding the opportunity for Australia in Accessible Tourism, January 2018, MyTravelResearch.com.

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DJPR 12328_0719

Regional Tourism Review
August 2019

Submission from

Murray Regional Tourism

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) commends the Andrews Labor Government's review program which aims to enable improved outcomes for tourism and regional communities along with seeking to find new ways to grow tourism and support regional Victoria.

MRT welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Review 2019 and we believe the real opportunity to grow Victoria's visitor economy will be through growing the regional tourism contribution given the opportunity for growth in Melbourne is limited by capacity constraints.

As a prelude to addressing the specific themes and recommendations of the review, we would make the following points:

1.   **As referenced in the Discussion Paper, regional tourism spend in Victoria is currently less than competitor states and has potential to grow.**

Victoria **36 cents** of every tourism dollar is spent in regional areas	**Competitor States** **43 cents** of every tourism dollar is spent in regional areas

If Victoria could increase from 36 cents to 43 cents it would generate an **additional $3.8 billion dollars** in Regional Victoria based on 2018 expenditure.

2.   **25% of Victoria's population live in Regional Victoria yet Regional Victoria receives proportionately less funding. This must change if there is to be a significant change in tourism.**

3.   **The Regional Tourism Board model works in the Murray Region.**

Tourism in the Murray **2000 to 2010 (Pre RTB)** **- 11.5%** Decline in total visitation to region Limited investment in product or experiences	Tourism in the Murray **2011 to 2019 (Post MRT)** **+ 42%** Growth in total visitation to region Over $370 million invested in product and experiences

MRT was established in 2011 under a new approach to regional tourism and has delivered a well-coordinated strategic approach including strong long-term plans and growth targets resulting in the following:

* **Reversal of a 10-year decline in visitation which existed prior to the establishment of MRT and the cross-border model**
* **Increased total visitation by 42 per cent since inception, from 4.5 million visitors to 6.4 million visitors**
* **Increased total nights by 31.5 per cent since inception, from 7.6 million to 9.6 million**
* **Increased total direct expenditure by 86 per cent, from $1 billion to $1.9 billion**
* **Increased direct and indirect expenditure by 26% from $2.43 billion to $3 billion**
* **Generated an additional $372 million in expenditure on tourism-related projects between 2012-2017, which enhance visitor experience and appeal**
* **Added an additional 4,569 tourism related jobs (direct and indirect) across the region with the visitor economy now accounting for 1 in every 5 jobs within the Murray region.**
* **Record visitation to the Murray region across all measures, Domestic Overnight, Domestic Day Visitors and International as evident from Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS reports 2019 (see Tables 1 and 2 in the report).**

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As evidenced from these results, the visitor economy is a vital component of the region's economy, and a key driver for growth. However, there is still latent capacity within the region and we need to increase both visitor numbers and yield, across the region and throughout the calendar year. With enhanced resourcing of MRT, the Murray's visitor economy would deliver even greater benefits to the state's economy.

MRT urges the government to adopt the following critical priority recommendations in order to deliver on the plan to improve regional tourism and ensure Victoria remains competitive within the Australian economic context.

MRT Recommendations

1. **Retain the Regional Tourism Board (RTB) structure of MRT**

2. **Provide security of tenure, and an increase in long term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards**
   Our closest competitor in NSW invests over $1 million directly into each of their Destination Networks (equivalent to Victoria's RTB organisations) per annum with long term agreements in place.

3. **With 36 per cent of Victorian tourism dollars spent in the regions and 25 per cent of Victoria's population living in regional Victoria we recommend, from a whole of government perspective, the dedication of 25 per cent of all government expenditure and resourcing to regional Victoria.**
   We believe this collective approach would deliver significant advantage to the regional economy and ensure the state's broader objectives are delivered upon.

4. **The state government invests in the <u>total cost</u> of regional structures such as RTBs and strategic tourism development initiatives.**
   In order to achieve the desired outcome by the state for greater collaboration and increased investment by local government, we recommend the state fund the cost of the RTBs. The local government investment would then be directed for example towards implementation of projects and campaigns which provide greater localised benefit. This would simplify the current complex structure and increase the likelihood of increased long-term investment by local government.

5. **Develop a dedicated, 5-year regional tourism plan and funding for regional Victoria, which aligns whole of government regional and state priorities; is adequately resourced; and contains clear measurements and targets for the government and industry to collectively aspire.**

6. **Allocation of quarantined event funding for regions. The distribution of these funds locally is managed by the board structure.**

These six key strategic recommendations, if adopted by government, will fundamentally change the regional visitor economy and provide the positive shift required to ensure the desired contribution to states economy is achieved.

In addition to these six primary recommendations, through our extensive consultation with Local Government and Industry on the review, MRT has identified a series of additional more detailed measures addressing the specific questions in Regional Tourism Review Discussion Paper July 2019.

We are pleased to provide the following submission which outlines the key findings and further expands and strengthens the proposed recommended approach.

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Background

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) is a cross-border regional tourism board servicing a wide tourism region covering both sides of the Murray River, which forms the majority of the Victorian-NSW border (Fig. 1 below). It provides an overarching strategic plan, destination management plan and marketing plan for the visitor economy in the region, with the aim of making the Murray a must-visit destination for domestic and international visitors alike.

MRT was established in November 2010, creating for the first time an organisational structure which enabled two state governments and 13 local governments to work collaboratively to grow the visitor economy in a holistic manner, with funding from both levels of government.

The cross-border nature of MRT and its funding arrangements are both complex and unique.

The Murray region covers the following Local Government areas (LGAs):

NSW LGAs	Victorian LGAs
Albury	Wodonga
Greater Hume	Moira
Federation	Campaspe
Berrigan	Gannawarra
Edward River	Swan Hill
Murray River	Mildura
Wentworth	

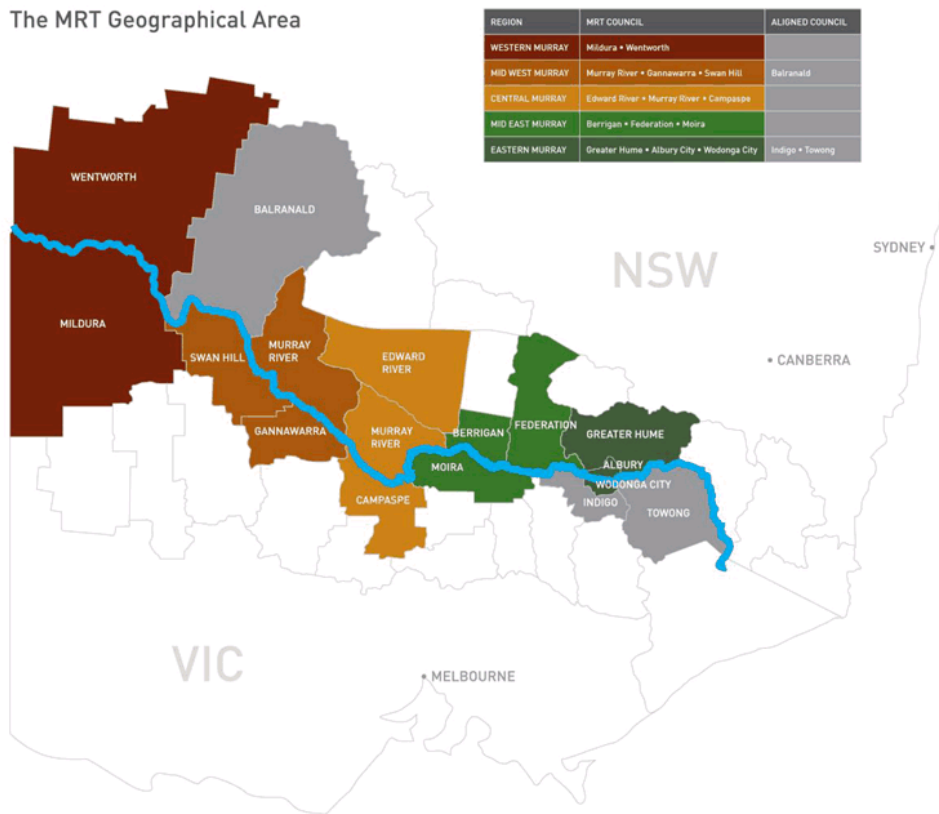*Table 1: Local Government Areas within the Murray Regional Tourism area*

Figure 1: Map of the region covered and serviced by Murray Regional Tourism

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The organisation's operational structure is a company limited by guarantee, a requirement of the dual state operating environment. This necessarily increases the governance and compliance burden of MRT. Despite the administrative complexities MRT has not only been able to arrest an alarming decline in visitation; it has also achieved remarkable success in growing visitation and economic contribution across the region. This has been done through energetic, cohesive leadership and collaboration, and by improving the supply and quality of tourism experiences, and increasing awareness of destinations, products, experiences and events within the region.

Despite the strong results shown in Tables 1 and 2 below, there is still plenty of untapped potential across the Murray region's visitor economy. A better resourced MRT could build on the current model to address major strategic issues, investment attraction opportunities, and industry capacity through skills development and product development to meet key supply and demand gaps.

Measure	YE Dec 2000	YE Dec 2010	% Change
Total visitation to Murray Region	5.2 million	4.6 million	-11.5%
Overnight Visitors	2.7 million	2.3 million	-15%
Daytrip Visitors	2.4 million	2.3 million	-4%
International Visitors	62,000	46,000	-26%

Source: Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey

Table 2: Visitation Tracking Data for the Murray Region prior to formation of Murray Regional Tourism, 2000-2010

Measure	YE Dec 11	YE March 19	% Change
Total visitation to Murray Region	4.5 million	6.4 million	+42%
Total Nights	7.6 million	10 million	+31.5%
Total Expenditure	$1.02 billion	$1.9 billion	+86%
Domestic Overnight Visitors	2.1 million	2.9 million	+38%
Domestic Overnight Nights	6.5 million	8.5 million	+30%
Domestic Overnight Expenditure	$750 million	$1.3 billion	+73%
Domestic Daytrip Visitors	2.4 million	3.5 million	+46%
Domestic Daytrip Expenditure	$252 million	$537 million	+113%
International Visitors	50,200	69,000	+39%
International Nights	1.1 million	1.5 million	+36%

Source: Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS December 2011 and March 2019

Table 3: Visitation Tracking Data for the Murray Region since the formation of Murray Regional Tourism, 2011-2019

Realising the region's potential will also require investment in both infrastructure and marketing; policy and regulatory reform; and structural change in the industry that allows for greater flexibility to enable greater industry participation.

This review presents an excellent opportunity to build on MRT's strong track record as a successful and accomplished destination manager and industry leader. MRT believes that structural improvements to the management of Victoria's regional tourism (on both supply and demand sides) will lead to continued growth and strengthening of the visitor economy for the Murray region as a whole.

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Acknowledgements

In preparing this submission MRT has consulted with over 110 individual industry and local government stakeholders across our region, from both Victoria and New South Wales. We would like to acknowledge and thank the diverse organisations for their contribution and participation and through the valuable insights a range of recommendations have been developed

At a high level the following key issues were identified as areas of focus if the Victorian government is to truly address the barriers impeding the regional visitor economy and ensure the sector can continue to be one of the top performing industries for regional Victoria.

The barriers which need to be addressed include:

1.   Inadequate supply and quality of tourism experiences due to limited long term investment by both the public and private sector
2.   Limited range and quality of the regions accommodation offer
3.   Skills and capacity of our tourism industry
4.   Limited awareness and appeal of our tourism experiences and destination
5.   Fragmented investment by the tourism industry in the region
6.   Lack of long term strategic focus and vision at all levels of government
7.   Significant gaps in telecommunication infrastructure, both black spot and capacity in the region
8.   Insufficient financial and human resources
9.   Red tape across all levels of government
10.   River Management and water reliability
11.   Current awards and penalty rate structure
12.   Community education on value and importance of tourism as a key driver of the economy

To further expand on the above, the following section of the submission provides further detail and recommended actions which could be implemented to address the barriers and opportunities identified.

Theme One: Strengthening our tourism offering

The long-term economic health of the Murray Region needs both vision and commitment that's longer than the four year cycle of state politics, for big infrastructure projects, employment generation, investment in education and skills building, and enhanced economic opportunities.

In particular, we will need to address the regions considerable supply side issues. The Victorian Government has a significant role to play from both a leadership and investment perspective. Our LGA stakeholder's consistently report an inability to secure investment in enabling infrastructure projects which drive both industry confidence in the region and often lead to private sector investment. Investment which is critical to growing the region's visitor economy.

To overcome these barriers we would ask the committee consider:
- Review current framework for Investment by government in key enabling infrastructure within the region aligned to our Destination Management Plan (DMP)
- Continue to provide funding opportunities to encourage private sector investment in regional areas
- Establish an investment team within the Victorian government for RTB's and investors to work with to connect investment with opportunities identified in regions DMP's
- Simplify the planning framework in Victoria to reduce time delays and associated barriers for investors
- Review of rate capping practice in Victoria which severely impacts our partners ability to raise capital for both new and recurrent funding of critical infrastructure projects

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We believe the revised future strategy needs to create opportunities for further infrastructure investment and be expanded to fund feasibility studies which are critical to achieving funding for enabling key projects.

How can regions and communities leverage their natural assets?

Many businesses, services and products throughout the Murray region (whether these be in tourism, agriculture, or other sectors) are based around the region's largest natural asset – the iconic Murray River, which draws together a community of interest. The issue here is not a lack of leverage, but rather poor management and maintenance of the asset.

The health of the Murray River is critical not only to the natural environment and a broader system of waterways, but also to the operating environment of businesses across a wide range of industries.

The detrimental impacts of poor water policy and management are evident in the River itself, and keenly felt by tourism and event operators, who require reliable water levels in the Murray River in order to deliver their service or event.

We know from our annual industry survey conducted to assist us understand the health of the industry, water issues impact over half of the businesses within the region. These impacts relate to algae, drought, river heights and negative media publicity relating to water levels.

For example, a multi-day water-skiing event can only take place if the River height is at a certain level, and can confidently be predicted to remain at that level for the duration of the event.

In Yarrawonga, stakeholders noted that consistency in the water and river levels has direct impact on the visitor numbers of Lake Mulwala. If the river levels are low, visitors are forced to seek alternative activities.

Case Study: PS Pyap at Pioneer Settlement

The Pioneer Settlement in Swan Hill can host weddings, utilising its historic chapel and offering a unique experience of holding the reception on the paddlesteamer. At the moment the business cannot take wedding bookings because operating requires a certain water level, as does increased passenger capacity. Currently, water levels cannot be predicted due to continual changes in water flows and hence this severely impacts on the business.

Poor water management practices also jeopardise the feasibility of future products and services that are based on using the Murray River (such as the Murray River Adventure Trail), and will deter much needed investment.

While the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is clearly out of scope of this review, MRT urges the Victorian government, as part of the work of the recently announced independent expert panel to examine the deliverability of water in the Murray Darling Basin and consider the impacts of the current water management practices on tourism businesses in the Murray region.

Land management and access issues are a common theme throughout the Murray region, which covers numerous national parks, state forests, and riverside reserves, managed by a variety of land managers. Industry consultations revealed extensive red tape issues related to running an event on crown land. Tour operator licensing systems also differ between Victoria and New South Wales.

The inability to leverage natural assets such as national parks, due to restrictions on private development on public lands, is well-known and well-documented through other reviews, for example, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's 2010 study "Unlocking the Potential of Regional Tourism". Also well-documented is Tasmania's success at leveraging its national parks for tourism purposes, thanks to favourable policy settings led by the Tasmanian government.

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In addition to the restrictions relating to development in parks, a further critical issue evident in the Murray region is the lack of resources and investment to maintain or enhance existing assets. There are many examples of tracks which are unsuitable for use due to lack of maintenance budgets, poor and aging infrastructure which does not provide a satisfactory visitor experience or provide encouragement for tour operators to develop product on park. This is a critical area which must be addressed if we are to leverage the natural assets within the region.

Case Study: Cohuna Caravan Park
This caravan park owner's plans to expand operations has been hindered due to a lack of power for additional caravan sites. The caravan park's energy supplier is unable to perform the necessary upgrades to its infrastructure, which is located on crown land, access to which has been unavailable due to red tape and bureaucracy. In the meantime, the caravan park operator has brought in their power generators to provide adequate power during peak times, at their own expense. Clearly, this is not a sustainable, long-term solution.

Where are the opportunities to partner with and support Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities to develop tourism products?
Although Tourism Victoria produced *"Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism: Development Strategy 2013-2023"*, Victoria is lacking in Indigenous tourism product. While this is also true of the Murray region, we have considerable potential to develop our Indigenous tourism offerings, thanks to the numerous Aboriginal communities located along the Murray. Indigenous tourism is particularly appealing to international markets, and the development of culturally sensitive and engaging Indigenous products and attractions would help to boost international visitation to the Murray region.

Industry consultations indicated a recognition of the lack of, and potential for, Indigenous product development in the region. They also highlighted the need to strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities and leaders, and the fact that as well as facing the same red tape challenges that the broader tourism sector experiences, Indigenous tourism operators and proponents may also face a form of "cultural red tape", if elders hold differing, or less supportive, views on tourism. Often the impediment to Aboriginal tourism development comes from within the community and elders who while understanding the opportunities tourism could generate are also conflicted or have higher priorities such as health, education which take precedent from a prioritization perspective.

We would also refer the review team to the Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail strategy work we completed in partnership Tourism North East /Regional Development Victoria /Regional Development Australia which highlights challenges and opportunities in developing Aboriginal Tourism experiences in the Hume region.

Case Study: Dhanya Centre Barmah National Park
The Dhanya Centre in Barmah National Park is a real example of the challenges and barriers to the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences and product. The Dhanya Centre has sat idle for many years while government works through lease and management agreements for the Yorta Yorta to develop a tourism experience. We have worked with Yorta over several years to identify potential opportunities for Aboriginal tourism experiences on park and obtaining the lease on the Dhanya centre is pivotal to the development of these. Based on our understanding there has been two business cases developed for this project and as yet it has still not been resolved.

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What role can share accommodation (such as Airbnb) play in regional communities?
Accommodation supply is an issue across most of regional Victoria. Existing accommodation stock tends to be old; renovations and refurbishments are costly, and reduce the number of rooms available for a given period; and attracting investment to build new accommodation is difficult, due to low and/or slow return-on-investment, and planning red tape.

For these reasons, the proliferation of AirBnB properties in regional areas tends to be viewed positively, by consumers and by non-accommodation operators, i.e. event organisers, attractions, tour operators, and hospitality businesses. Regional events and festivals in particular can attract more attendees if there is more accommodation available, beyond the traditional options of hotels, motels, caravans and campsites.

AirBnB and short-stay properties can be great for families, which are an important market for the Murray region. Short-stay operators who offer hosted accommodation also provide the opportunity to meet locals, which adds a different dimension to the visitor experience.

However, the presence of AirBnB in a regional destination may also be another deterrent to investment in new accommodation. There is also the risk of AirBnB properties being used as a "party houses", and the potential for short-stay accommodation to impact long-term rental and overall residential housing supply.

In Victoria, there is currently a lack of policy guidance in relation to AirBnB. The Murray tourism region takes in 13 local governments across two states. While not necessarily advocating greater regulation, what industry does want to avoid is a patchwork of differing regulatory approaches to short-stay accommodation, particularly at local government level. As a cross-border region, establishing how short-stay accommodation is treated from a policy or regulatory perspective is just one example of where greater clarity, and parity, is required to ensure an equitable operating environment for all stakeholders.

MRT emphasises that a regulatory approach to AirBnB that is appropriate for Melbourne's CBD is unlikely to be suitable for regional destinations where, as noted above, short-stay accommodation can play an important role in boosting accommodation supply and diversification, especially during peak periods.

We would actively encourage the government to develop a policy in relation to AirBnB to assist formalise the contribution to the industry and in doing so seek to ensure the policy in development creates a consistent approach with our state neighbours so we do not create more confusion for operators in the border regions.

Where should the state prioritise facilitating boutique and high-end accommodation and any other types of accommodation?
Some operators expressed concern at the prioritization of boutique accommodation over other types of accommodation:

> *"If the state is focused on supporting the development of high-end accommodation, and AirBnB continues to encroach on the market share of mid- to lower-range accommodation, where does that leave small operators, particularly those offering hosted accommodation?"*

Rather than focusing solely on high-end accommodation, greater consideration must be given to the overall product mix of a destination. A critical mass of excellent restaurants, cafés, museums, galleries, and retail offerings, as well as a range of accommodation styles, is essential for the success of a destination.

We believe it is not simply the investment in the infrastructure alone, it is critical to have the marketing investment and programs in place to generate a suitable return on investment.

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What are the key journey experiences for Victoria or your area that will drive visitors to come and stay?

Well-structured and promoted touring routes encourage longer trips and higher yield, taking visitors beyond main destinations and inspiring a sense of discovery. While the geography of the Murray region can be challenging, it also provides ample scope for multi-day touring, both on land and water. Canoe trails, bike trails, 4WD trails and hiking trails – all can be experienced in one region, either all in one trip, or as distinct experiences over repeat visits.

As well as river-based activities such as water sports (motorised and non-motorised), house boating, and paddle steamer cruises, the Murray region offers other nature-based activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, and camping.

Signature events in the region include Riverboats Music Festival in Echuca-Moama, the Massive Murray Paddle, Club Marine Southern 80, Top of the Murray Classic Golf Tournament, Winter Blues Festival, and the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival. These event along with a large array of other events are a key driver for a distant region such as the Murray region and assist in overcoming some of the known barriers such as distance and lack of awareness of available experiences.

What can we do together to support greater event visitation?

Successful event delivery requires long-term planning and coordination, promotion, and smart allocation of typically limited resources. Reducing the red tape related to the planning and delivery of events is key to reducing delays and expenses. Savings can be directed to marketing efforts; to event infrastructure and facilities, or to training staff and volunteers, to ensure a better visitor experience.

Better coordination of events calendars at local, regional and state levels is also critical to ensuring that one event does not cannibalise the audience of another. It is also important for workforce planning, availability of equipment hire, and availability of resources such as St John's Ambulance, SES, and police services.

Given the high volume of events delivered in regional Victoria are generated from volunteer organisations, dedicated industry training, marketing support and resourcing would be of assistance in order to generate increased event visitation.

How can we facilitate cross-sector partnerships?

It is our experience that cross-sector partnerships tend to happen informally and in an ad hoc fashion, with some sectors more than others (e.g. business events, farming, etc.).

A whole-of government approach that recognises the importance of the visitor economy would help facilitate cross-sector and cross-portfolio engagement, and identify key opportunities for tourism businesses to connect to different sectors.

Developing thematic strategies such as Aboriginal Tourism would also assist in activating cross sector partnerships. The opportunities for sector growth will require collaboration from many agencies and parts of industry to deliver a high-quality visitor experience.

How can regions and businesses better cater to diverse visitor needs? What are the key accessibility challenges?

Addressing accessibility can be particularly challenging in a region as widespread as the Murray, and where the key attraction is a long body of water. As one example, NSW Parks and Wildlife Services have taken the initiative to create accessible canoeing experiences along the Murray. However, more needs to be done, especially as there is the growing number of retirees relocating to the Murray region, who make regular use of the tourism facilities and leisure activities available.

To inform any investment in accessible infrastructure we need to undertake further research to identify specific needs of visitors and locals alike, to ensure that the facilities, treatments and measures put in place are appropriate to consumer needs.

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How can we improve visitor servicing?

First, reliable mobile connectivity, as well as fast and consistent broadband internet, are essential services that visitors have come to expect, regardless of their destination.

Second, rather than focusing on the in-person services available in a visitor center, visitor servicing should also be considered as part of the broader visitor journey mapping, particularly in the journey planning phase of a visitor's decision-making process. Visitor servicing needs to be reimagined to be customer centric and deliver on customer needs.

Third, visitor servicing in not solely the responsibility of visitor centre staff, or front-of-house personnel. It is incumbent on workers across the gamut of the visitor economy to take visitor servicing seriously and understand the role they play in contributing to a positive visitor experience.

Suggested measures to strengthen our tourism offering

1.1 Encourage the independent expert panel appointed to examine the deliverability of water in the Murray Darling Basin to also consider the impacts of the current water management practices on tourism businesses in the Murray region.

1.2 Encourage the Victorian government to review its policy regarding development of public lands and consider planning reforms that would facilitate access to crown land for the staging of approved events, and for the purposes of maintaining essential infrastructure; and that would allow for appropriate and environmentally-sensitive tourism developments adjacent to national parks.

1.3 Review status of *"Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism: Development Strategy 2013-2023"* and develop and implement an updated strategy that aligns with *Victoria's Visitor Economy Strategy.*

1.4 Connect agencies such as Aboriginal Victoria, and the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Board, Visit Victoria, the Tourism, Events & Visitor Economy division and Regional Tourism Boards to help facilitate engagement and business and tourism product development in regional areas.

1.5 In identifying locations for boutique and high-end accommodation, the state should consider carefully the visitor profile of the destination and the surrounding region, as well as the overall strength of the destination's tourism offering. Existing accommodation business should be encouraged to reinvest and not be adversely affected by the introduction of new supply.

1.6 Government develop a policy (considering cross border implications) in relation to AirBnB to ensure the sector complies with other commercial operators and creates an equal playing field.

1.7 Task Victoria's Red Tape Commissioner with investigating opportunities to reduce tourism red tape, with a focus on regional events. Areas for investigation should include land management and access; liquor licensing; and a range of local government permits associated with staging an event.

1.8. Ensure dedicated funding for regional events, which are a key driver of visitation to the Murray region.

1.9 Support research to identify accessibility infrastructure needs across the Murray.

1.10 Based on research and gap analysis, apply dedicated funding for the installation of Changing Places facilities at key attractions in regional Victoria.

1.11 Ensure continued funding of the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Program to progressively eliminate black spots across regional Victoria.

1.12 Develop a statewide visitor servicing strategy and invest in regional pilot programs which enhance current visitor servicing approaches.

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Theme Two: Making the most of our marketing spending

- *How can we better leverage marketing spend to promote regional visitation?*
- *How can Visit Victoria, other areas of government, boards and local councils work more closely on agreed priorities?*
- *How can we ensure marketing activity is better aligned and that effort is not duplicated?*

Securing long-term funding for Visit Victoria is critical from several perspectives. It is very difficult to convince investors to invest in a region when there is no long-term marketing investment or strategy. One-year funding also severely limits the agency's ability to create long-term campaigns. The recent drip feed of regional marketing campaigns such as *Wander* and *Happy Place*, while well-executed, does not provide the consumer with consistency of message that reinforces regional destinations as the next place to visit or provide industry with time to react and leverage from these programs.

In addition to long-term marketing funding, dedicated and quarantined funds for regional tourism marketing are essential to achieving a strong, consistent and targeted promotion of regional Victoria.

Case Study: DNSW Regional Cooperative Tourism Marketing Program
DNSW through dedicated quarantined funding have a Regional Cooperative Marketing program. MRT has been able to apply to this program for the delivery and implementation of destination marketing initiatives. The funding is matched dollar for dollar and requires a minimum of $100,000 investment by the partner which provides the solid foundation for a quality campaign. DNSW in addition to the direct financial contribution, provide access to internal resources and expertise to develop, manage and review the performance of the campaign. This type of investment provides RTB's with the ability to implement high quality campaigns which deliver on the objectives of the marketing strategy along with providing direction and amplification opportunities for the industry.

If the current budget for Visit Victoria remains unchanged in the short- to medium-term, consideration must be given to how existing funds are distributed. Regional Victoria needs consistent strategy and execution with tangible measures if we are to achieve greater leverage. Greater efficiencies could be achieved by having dedicated regional specialists within Visit Victoria who RTB's could access and work more closely on programs which will activate our industry and local government.

In addition to regional campaigns, promotional activity based around experience and product, rather than geography, would enable greater buy-in from across the state, and encourage cross-regional travel.

Case Study: Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy
The current Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy which focusses on this pillar is a good example of a thematic based regional approach. Through this strategy it is enabling three different regions (and RTB's) of Victoria to partner with Visit Victoria to raise the profile of golf and drive visitation.

This strategic approach will provide the opportunity to align investment across State, RTB and local levels which provides economy of scale and delivers consistency of message and brand to the consumer.

Within the Murray region, and the same would apply for much of regional Victoria, the biggest challenge is lack of awareness by consumers.

To overcome the challenge of awareness and appeal, we would like to highlight the following items for consideration:

- Increase investment in research and consumer trends at both macro and micro levels
- Develop a structured program of sharing key insights across all levels of the industry to influence investment
- Increase the focus on understanding both current and future visitor needs
- Invest in infrastructure projects both enabling and product specific by the public and private sector

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- Continue to invest in content creation and diversification to meet needs of current and future channels
- Encourage greater alignment of hero experiences or key attributes to consumer audience targets
- Invest in both brand and tactical messaging over a sustained period of time
- Increased investment and diversification of existing programs for events beyond marketing activation
- Invest in training to address customer expectations particularly value of service
- Stronger focus of resources on packaging and bundling experiences and regions
- Greater emphasis on development of touring itineraries and opportunities
- Further development of sector programs including international for regions

<u>*Suggested measures to make the most of our marketing spending*</u>

2.1 Provide dedicated and quarantined funds for regional tourism marketing.

2.2 Establish dedicated regional specialists within Visit Victoria, working closely with industry, RTBs, and local government, to improve alignment of marketing activities, and reduce duplication of effort.

2.3 Provide quarantined event funding for RTB's to better leverage events and or distribute locally to assist events deliver enhanced and more coordinated marketing programs.

Theme Three: Supporting industry

What are the barriers to investing in regional Victoria? How could the system be improved?

There are numerous barriers to investment in regional tourism. These include:

1. Inadequate supply and quality of tourism experiences due to limited long term investment by both the public and private sector
2. Limited range and quality of the regions accommodation offer
3. Fragmented investment by the tourism industry in the region
4. Lack of long term strategic focus and vision at all levels of government
5. Significant gaps in telecommunication infrastructure, both black spot and capacity in the region
6. Red tape across all levels of government

The dismantling of Tourism Victoria led to a disconnect between the demand side agency (Visit Victoria) and the supply side group within the Department (TEVE). From an industry perspective, Tourism Victoria provided a "one-stop shop" for queries about tourism product development and investment facilitation. Under the divided structure and with the advent of Visit Victoria, and its mandate to focus on demand, this important function no longer exists.

At a local government level, planning and building permits are a source of frustration and delays for tourism businesses and potential investors in tourism infrastructure. At a state level, some planning zones and schemes restrict the ability of land and business owners to diversify their activities.

Greater understanding, across both state and local governments, of the planning requirements and the economic significance of tourism infrastructure investment would help expedite the approvals process for tourism investors and developers, significantly reducing delays and associated financial imposts.

In order to highlight the regulatory and fragmented approach within government, the following case study is provided:

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Case Study: Mildura Riverfront Redevelopment

The Mildura Riverfront redevelopment is a game changing public and private sector partnership which will revitalize the riverfront and create a key activation precinct. To date across all levels of government there has been significant public infrastructure investment in stage 1 which the government should be commended. However in order to realise the vision and take advantage of this investment there is a need to unlock unrequired land for commercial development. While identified by all parties, this remains untapped while internal departments of government (Victrack and Regional Development Victoria) endeavor to resolve by who and how this land will be developed. As we understand Victrack wish to develop this as a commercial project and are requesting funding from Regional Development Victoria to fund site rehabilitation. This is a clear example of the need for government to take a whole of government approach to achieving the intended outcome for the project and facilitate investment.

A second key example which highlights the need for a more streamlined and concierge investment service is a significant tourism development adjoining the Barmah National park known as Yielima Station.

The current lack of both financial assistance programs and or access to a centralised investment unit within government who could project manage these types of developments would remove the barriers currently hindering these types of developments.

Case Study: Yielima Station Resort Development estimated $50 -$80 million depending on final development

The Yielima Station resort development is a vision of three local land owners to create a resort precinct consisting of various accommodation styles and standards, education / interpretative experience, Aboriginal experience, retail and food and beverage opportunities. The land adjoins the Barmah National park and would provide an ideal link and access for visitors to take advantage of the natural environment. The vision was developed with the intent to create local employment and economic opportunities to assist with the decline in the dairy industry.

The landowners while having some experience in commercial development, have not previously developed tourism experiences. They are clear with their intent which is to have a tourism planning overlay secured on the land so they can then seek joint venture or private investment opportunities to develop the precinct. The local government is supportive of the concept and it is identified in the Murray Destination Management Plan. Based on current estimates it will cost over $300,000 to go through the zoning process which is not guaranteed to be successful, the majority of costs are reported to be liaison with various government departments and authorities which the matter would need to be referred.

A further recommendation to assist remove barriers to investment is the implementation of a dedicated tourism development funding program. Based on the success of similar programs in other states we would strongly urge the government to establish a grant program to unlock private sector investment.

We believe a grant program assists in both removing a level of risk for proponents along with fast tracking potential developments resulting in a more sustainable industry and better visitor experience.

By way of example, DNSW have consistently invested in the Regional Tourism Product Development Program which provides grants matched dollar for dollar to business currently up to $150,000.

We have experienced the benefit of this program within the Murray region with several businesses being the recipients of this grant. Having the grant on offer stimulated a number of investments which would not otherwise have occurred, even when the applicant was not successful in securing a grant. The scheme was an incentive for the planning work to be undertaken (which would not have occurred without a grant) and enabled operators to secure investment through financial institutions to implement projects. For those who secured grant funding, in most instances it resulted in additional investment being made in projects.

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The grant funding needs to be flexible to ensure it can contribute towards for example accommodation upgrades and refurbishment as this remains a critical issue for operators to fund and as a result often results in a very long drawn out process with 1-2 rooms being upgraded per year. A small grant can see this work completed quickly and increase viability of operators who then reinvest in the future.

Case Study

Case Study: Cadell on the Murray
Cadell on the Murray was a typical 26 room leased motel operating with aging infrastructure, limited opportunities for growth and challenges on retaining average room rates. In working with the leasee, it was clear the rooms required refurbishment just to retain room rates and occupancy levels let alone grow the business. The leasee at best planned to implement an upgrade program which could see all rooms upgraded over 10 year period and would not necessarily improve the sustainability of the business.
Through the DNSW Regional Tourism Product Development grant this enabled exploration into how they could grow the business along with achieving refurbishment. They identified an opportunity with new markets through the development of a small meeting room and secured the grant to assist deliver this. As a result of the grant, the leasee also secured co investment from the owners of the motel along with access to finance from a commercial lender. The property has grown significantly with 1-2 meetings a week, increased occupancy over the slow winter period along achieving an increase in room rates.

How can we use education and training, including TAFE, to address barriers impacting staffing of regional businesses?

Tourism employment now accounts for 20 per cent of all jobs in the Murray region (approx. 25,000 FTE equivalent)[1]. But despite the economic significance of tourism to the state and to the region, there is still a lack of value placed on tourism as a career of choice. There is also a long-standing need to better align TAFE education and qualifications with industry needs.

In a competitive and highly mobile labour market, and with record low unemployment in regional areas, retaining skilled, high quality workers is difficult and expensive. Today's visitor economy is also a much broader church than the tourism sector of 30 years ago, when tourism based courses and qualifications began to emerge. Skills in the areas of digital marketing, media and communications, business, and accounting, are all in-demand within the visitor economy; along with people skills such as customer service, and stakeholder engagement. A greater focus on transferable skills and qualifications, taught within the context of the visitor economy, would provide students with a wider skill set and broader range of career and job opportunities within the tourism industry.

We believe there are a number of opportunities to further enhance the current training framework which include:

- Invest in a business program for start-up enterprises
- Develop business mentoring programs to assist in addressing the skills gaps and realise unfilled potential
- Create an environment which foster innovation and entrepreneurial spirit
- Focus on building leadership capabilities and human capital
- Investigate the opportunity to increase the level of coordination across government agencies to develop a centralised training calendar
- Review the funding criteria currently in place in tourism and business related formal training programs across government
- Consider linking minimum training levels and benchmarks to potential government funding or access to programs
- Develop stronger partnerships between industry and educational institutions to ensure training meets industry needs

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[1] Source: Murray Region Destination Management Plan.

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What support does industry require to address the challenges and opportunities that technology and disruptors present?

Online travel agencies (OTAs) and disruptors such as AirBnB and AirBnB Experiences place increasing commercial pressures on the tourism industry. In the face of such competition, having business basics firmly in place (e.g. website that is search engine optimised and has seamless booking functionality) and executing core activities well (delivering memorable visitor experiences, and offering excellent customer service) is imperative.

In order for this to occur, we recommend their needs to be flexible training and education delivery systems in place to meet industry requirements. We would also like to see greater leadership from the State in relation to research and strategy which will make it easier to communicate the benefits to industry and actively encourage upskilling and or adoption of programs to take advantage of the opportunities.

A simple example for tourism businesses in the Murray region, there is a lack of parity for access to basic marketing resources such as the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), the national platform for digital tourism information on Australia, which enables businesses to increase their digital distribution and online exposure. In New South Wales, tourism operators are able to list on ATDW for free as this is subsidised by Destination NSW. This is not the case in Victoria or most other states. As a result, Victoria's tourism business listings are under-represented on this national database, and business not listed are at a disadvantage, as listing on the Visit Victoria consumer website along with the Visit the Murray sites are drawn from ATDW listings. This issue severely impedes operators ability to leverage marketing opportunities MRT delivers as we also draw from ATDW as do our cooperative campaigns with DNSW.

<u>*Suggested measures to support industry*</u>

> **3.1** Re-establish a tourism investment advisory and facilitation function as a single point of contact for industry, and to coordinate between relevant government agencies and departments, such as Visit Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, Invest Victoria and Global Victoria.
>
> **3.2** As part of the Red Tape Commissioner's Investigation into Tourism Red Tape (see Measure 1.6), and in support of Measure 1.2, include a review on planning and building approvals for tourism infrastructure.
>
> **3.3** Establish a dedicated long-term Regional Tourism Product Development funding program to stimulate private sector investment in product development and or renewal.
>
> **3.4** Provide funding support (full subsidy) for ATDW listings for Victorian tourism businesses.
>
> **3.5** Undertake review of existing investment in training and mentoring services to identify opportunities for better utilisation and provision of flexible training delivery.
>
> **3.6** Provision of dedicated funding to the RTB's for training would enable specialist trainers to be in region working directly with operators to build skills and capacity.

Theme Four: Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards

- *Which governance structures are the most effective for boards to achieve outcomes for regional tourism?*
- *How can we best help different sized councils (such as regional cities and small rural councils) to leverage tourism as part of their broader development goals?*
- *Are there changes we can make to boards (geographic or otherwise) that would increase local government and industry buy-in?*

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As a cross-border region covering a large geographic area, MRT has arguably the most complex governance structure and operating environment of any RTB. MRT benefits from a cohesive and supportive board, and strong local government collaboration, and continues to perform strongly, making the most of its limited resources.

MRT demonstrates that a fit for purpose approach to regional tourism boards, rather than a universal, one-size fits-all approach, can deliver better outcomes. While this may be borne out of necessity, with the cross-border circumstances of the Murray region, the river itself is the strong and unifying brand; and this may well provide a clue to the question of what differentiates the strong performing RTBs from those that perform less well.

Further effort could be gained through even modest increases in funding, to support organisational initiatives such as centralising functions (e.g. digital marketing support) that are replicated across LGAs/LTOs throughout the region, and which could be delivered independent of location.

Nevertheless, the best way to ensure long-term success is to provide security of tenure, and an increase in long-term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards.

If the Murray Region is to maximise its contribution to the State Governments long term objective of growing overnight visitor expenditure then the dollars and resources which already exist throughout the Region will need to be more efficiently and effectively coordinated.

For example, in the Murray Region (both sides of the river), our LGAs invest around $7 million in tourism every year. We have also estimated, conservatively, that tourism businesses in the region invest a further $5 million in to marketing activities (2,500 tourism businesses spending $2,000 each).

$12 million more efficiently and effectively coordinated would have a significant impact on addressing at least some of the barriers preventing the region from achieving greater tourism success.

However, before more efficient and effective coordination of regional dollars and resources can take place the people who hold the 'purse strings' in region - LGAs and industry - need to be convinced there is a better way for them to invest their dollars and resources. That requires leadership, which in turn requires resources.

Resources to:
- secure investment for the development of quality tourism experiences and infrastructure
- increase awareness and appeal of destinations, products, experiences and events
- enhance skills and capacity of tourism industry participants
- facilitate and coordinate tourism activities within the region

In short, the right level of resources to not just identify where change is needed but why change is needed and how change can benefit both individual stakeholders and the region as a whole is required.

In the case of the MRT, we believe we have a strong corporate governance structure. We also believe our organisation has demonstrated strong leadership which is evidenced by the positive relationships we have with the regions operators, tourism associations and local government. Through the research we have undertaken and our DMP, we have a depth of understanding of the region's supply and demand issues. And through our industry training programs we have begun to address some of the supply side issues which exist and are critical to the growth of our industry.

What we do not have are sufficient resources to take our level of leadership and regional collaboration to a higher level without further investment.

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A better resourced MRT could build on the current model to address major strategic issues, investment attraction opportunities industry capacity through skills development and product development to meet key supply and demand gaps.

MRT would suggest that the other critical consideration in determining the ideal enhanced RTB structure for Victoria is dependent on two key fundamental areas. These we believe are, clearly defining a RTBs role and responsibilities and secondly have this agreed taking into account the expectations of all relevant stakeholders – RTB itself, State Government, State Tourism Organisations, Local Government, Local Tourism Association, and industry operators.

By way of example, below is the current overview of expectations of an RTB by many:
- Management of RTB membership ranging from Local Government and Local Tourism Organisations /Associations to industry associations and tourism operators
- Development and implementation of Destination Management Plans
- Development of destination and regional marketing plans
- Development of industry development strategies
- Development of the RTBs business plan
- Stakeholder communication and reporting including the State Tourism Organisation
- Tourism industry engagement workshops and networking functions
- Communication and partnerships with other RTBs
- Visitor information services, which in some cases includes managing the operations of Visitor Information Centre's (VIC)
- Product, Experience and Event development projects
- Whole of Government consultation
- Assistance in accessing and/or managing Federal and State government funding programs
- Public Relations development and management
- Hosting famils to their region
- Tourism research analysis
- Keeping abreast of relevant technology developments
- Review whole of state and specific region visitation and visitor expenditure trends and communicate to regional stakeholders
- Manage natural disaster response strategies

With the breadth of expectations listed above, it is little wonder there is performance issues across the state of RTB's. At this point in time, we are not sufficiently resourced to deliver all of these responsibilities, or would we consider some of the items to fall in the remit of MRT. Until this is agreed at state level the region is not in a position to fulfil the full potential of our role to help maximize the performance of tourism in the Murray Region.

4.1 Retain the Regional Tourism Board Structure of MRT

4.2 Provide security of tenure and an increase in long term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards

4.3 State government invest in the total cost of regional structures such as Regional Tourism Boards along with strategic development initiatives

4.4 Clearly define the role and responsibilities of Regional Tourism Boards and the various components of the industry more broadly, ensure this is clearly communicated within all areas of Government and the industry.

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Theme Five: Better coordinating effort

- *How do we best coordinate the work of different actors across regional tourism? What are the most important points of collaboration?*
- *Are we allocating resources efficiently? Could we better coordinate investment in regional tourism?*
- *How could a state-wide strategy or Destination Management Plan best connect to and leverage local strengths and priorities?*

A state-wide Destination Management Plan, which builds on Regional Destination Management Plans, would help identify product and infrastructure gaps. It should be the product of a collaboration between Visit Victoria, TEVE, Parks Victoria, RTBs, and industry.

To ensure a whole-of-government approach, a state-wide DMP should also be shared widely, within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions; and also with the Department of Transport; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; and the Department of Treasury and Finance; the Department of Economic Development; and with agencies, such as the Victorian Planning Authority.

In the same way that the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy galvanised the government's efforts to work with industry to achieve the targets of visitor expenditure of $36.5 billion and sector employment of 320,700 jobs, a state-wide Destination Management Plan that included regional targets for visitation and spend, would help concentrate industry efforts, government resources, and provide a basis for more transparent accountability.

Industry development is a key area which could be delivered far more efficiently than is currently the case. Each RTB delivers an industry development program that typically covers topics such as SEO, social media marketing, customer service, yield management, or dealing with OTAs. This function could be centralised through an industry body such as the Victoria Tourism Industry Council and rolled out to all regions (following the QTIC model). This would free up RTB resources to focus on regional marketing activities.

Additionally, if we are to galvanise the industry and local government, it will be a requirement to provide long term funding agreements to Visit Victoria. The current situation of annualised funding does not allow for clear strategies to be developed and these to be filtered down to industry throughout regional Victoria. This is a clear impediment within the current structure and one which we would advocate for change.

There should also be a state-wide Industry Development Plan to address skills gaps, ensure that training and education offerings are aligned with industry requirements, and provide more coordinated delivery of industry programs such as the Quality Tourism Framework, the Victorian Tourism Awards, and ATDW training.

A more ambitious initiative would be to establish a Regional Tourism Centre of Excellence, bringing together multi-disciplinary education providers to deliver a coordinated and holistic training program that meets the needs of the modern visitor economy.

The Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) group in the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is under-utilised. The research and data collated and analysed by the team is highly valuable to industry. The TEVE team should be encouraged and empowered to conduct more stakeholder engagement activities, such as regional seminars and webinars, to better communicate this information to industry.

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From our perspective, the review needs to explore the whole of government approach and consideration of investment which distinctly falls in two streams being, the government has a responsibility to invest in growing the Victorian visitor economy (government obligations) and the second being, the investment of Victorian government to achieve the best return on investment (commercial and measurable).

If we look in the first instance at the idea of government obligation, then we would suggest an allocation of funding and adequate resourcing be made to assist in growing the visitor economy and could include such areas of:

- Funding operations of RTB's
- Research and market intelligence
- Whole of state destination appeal and awareness campaign framework and funding for regional campaigns
- Event development and procurement
- Investment attraction
- Workforce planning and development
- Strategic planning
- Further enhance the transition of the delivery model from a centralised model via Visit Victoria to a collaborative joint model with the RTB's working across whole of government framework. An example is the opportunity for private businesses to access government grant assistance for infrastructure upgrades which may not be facilitated via Visit Victoria
- Sharing of information and research in key areas where MRT has 'knowledge' gaps but has limited capacity to acquire this 'knowledge' on its own. Touring /Drive Tourism is one such example which is impeding investment.
- In the area of product development, information and insights on global and national trends to assist with genuine advancement of world-class experiences for the current and future visitor.
- Grow capacity of a dedicated government area to focus on providing strategic advice and guidance required to make informed decisions, and implement in partnership, plans to achieve the strategic goals. Visit Victoria will continue to be critical to growing the visitor economy through demand activities, however strong leadership is needed to continue to ensure Victoria strengthens our national position.
- Investment in strategic planning and development projects which often are not considered in the current funding program
- Industry training programs, within the Victorian government lies a great deal of expertise which through a collaborative program could be integrated into existing training programs in regions
- Investment which enables infrastructure to provide the opportunity to create and or refresh product offering in the region.
- Continue to invest in the development of sector plans. As an example, the work Visit Victoria has done in the Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy is to be commended.
- Continue to provide investment in regional projects and services which encourage regional collaboration and or joint resourcing of programs.
- Instigate a review into the constraints of current awards and penalty rate structure
- Develop a whole of state approach to increasing the community understanding of the value and importance of Tourism to the state of Victoria

All of the above is an investment in the long-term growth of the visitor economy and falls within the remit of government.

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Suggested measures to better coordinate efforts

5.1 Develop a state-wide Destination Management Plan, based on industry and government collaboration; ensure whole-of-government understanding and cooperation in the implementation of the DMP.

5.2 Establish long term funding commitments for Visit Victoria to ensure the objectives of the Destination Management Plan, particular Regional strategic objectives are achieved in collaboration with industry.

5.3 Develop and implement a state-wide Industry Development Plan, in conjunction with industry, TAFEs and tertiary institutes.

5.4 Establish an exploratory committee of tourism industry leaders and tourism education specialists to investigate the feasibility of, and options for, establishing a Regional Tourism Centre of Excellence.

5.5 Provide greater support and resourcing for TEVE to make better use of the valuable research and data analysis undertaken by this team.

Concluding comments

Through participating in the Regional Tourism Review, and having conducted our own extensive consultations to inform this submission, it is clear that the government has a sound understanding of the deficiencies and challenges in the current government and industry structures.

It is also clear that while budget may currently be limited, there are other methods for tackling many of the problems that have been identified, through organisational re-structure; greater engagement and communication between industry and government; and policy and regulatory reform. Importantly, the prompt implementation of any recommendations and reforms must deliver on the intent of growing and supporting regional tourism in Victoria.

MRT appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important process for the future of regional tourism in Victoria and look forward to the outcomes of the Review.

For further information regarding this submission, please contact Mark Francis, CEO, Murray Regional Tourism via email ceo@mrtb.com.au or mobile 0429 509 455.

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Swan Hill Rural City Council participated in the Victoria Regional Tourism Review session held in Mildura and the MRT workshop held in Swan Hill. Please be advised that Council fully support the submission from Murray Regional Tourism.

The information in this submission is also fully supported by Swan Hill Rural City Council.

1. What can be done to strengthen Victoria's Regional Tourism Offering?

- Development of the regional tourism brands. The Murray, Australia's greatest river, is overshadowed by negative media – Murray Darling Basin Plan. We would like to see restoration of the Murray brand as a National icon.

- Support for existing operators to develop with capital funding to renew dated assets.

- Assist to facilitate new investment.

- There needs to be a greater engagement, awareness and presence in region from the State of regional destinations - walk the talk.

- Swan Hill, as a regional destination, attracts a high percentage of visitors from NSW and South Australia. It is well positioned to attract interstate expenditure into Victoria. We currently receive over 1 million visitors per annum.

- Support to capture and develop our regions unique and authentic local stories.

2. What would improve Victoria's regional tourism marketing efforts?

- We would like increase the recognition of regional Victoria particularly, Murray region, as we have a lot to offer in regional Victoria's tourism market.

- Equity in the allocation of resources to Regional Tourism Organisations

- Improve Victorian product listing on Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

3. How can Regional Tourism Boards best work to achieve outcomes for Victoria regional tourism?

Council support the continuation of RTBs, which have representation from each local area on the Board. Board members are accountable for providing leadership, advocacy and facilitating when required. This will ensure consistency of messages and equity across the region of resources. Representatives must have a high level of knowledge and connection within the tourism networks, for who they are representing.

Equity and allocation of resources to the RTBs. This is to reinforce the branding of Murray Regional Tourism.

In the Murray region a cooperative partnership with NSW and SA should exist to the exposure of the region, whilst ensuring the best use of Victorian, NSW and SA State funding. This could be achieved by engaging with the State Cross Boarder commissioners.

4. How can we better co-ordinate regional tourism planning and strategy across government, industry and the community?

A five year funding commitment, to allow for strategy development.

There needs to be a mechanism for ongoing grassroots contribution, to the development of high level planning.

There needs to be representatives in regions affiliated with a variety of agencies, such as Regional Development Victoria. The Regional Development Australia facilitates assemblies with communities in their regions, to ensure a grassroots approach.

State Departments such as Parks, are under resourced and this impacts on our perceptions and real experiences in our region e.g. signage, track maintenance and waste disposal, etc.

To undertake infrastructure development there is a significant additional cost such as CHMP and native vegetation removal, in comparison to other regions. This is exampled by the Activating Swan Hill Riverfront project which is aiming to connect the CBD to the Murray River, Swan Hill Milloo Street boat ramp / Boundary Bend walking track. There is always a need for additional permits and licenses when working on or near the Murray River and in the Mallee region.

It is our experience that cross-sector partnerships tend to happen informally and in an ad hoc fashion, with some sectors more than others (e.g. business events, farming, etc.).

The Our Region Our Rivers was lead by the Swan Hill City Rural Council and engaged two States (Vic and NSW), seven Councils in a project that when delivered will transform the region, creating new tourism products and experiences. In total a $34 million, $17 million in Commonwealth funding and $17 million in matching funds from State Governments and individual Councils. This project will provide even more reasons for people to visit the region and stay longer. It is important that moving forward, Tourism Victoria and RTBs support more of this type of collaboration between multiple partners.

A whole-of government approach that recognises the importance of the visitor economy would help facilitate cross-sector and cross-portfolio engagement, and identify key opportunities for tourism businesses to connect with different sectors.

5. How can we work together to make sure that regional communities benefit from tourism?

- RTBs to facilitate, develop tourism routes, via clustering experiences across the region i.e paddle steamers, silos, Skate Park competitions. State to fund initial development.

- Regions are provided with opportunities and access to resources and funding, to enable the development and marketing for communities of all sizes. Communities such as Robinvale and their Mallee Almond Blossom Festival or Woorinen's Winter Festival need to be able to access funding to grow into significant State events.

- Swan Hill is a host to the Victoria Tennis Country Week event. This event draws a large number of visitors and participants. Sporting events like this need to be supported to continue to be held in our region. Our region, particularly Swan Hill and Robinvale have amazing sporting facilities, which have the capacity to be improved to allow further growth of major sporting events.

- In Swan Hill and Robinvale there is a shortage of high-end accommodation on offer. This is an area which need to be addressed to support visitors to the areas and encourage longer stays in the region. There is potential for increasing the number of senior travellers to the areas who like all the comforts of home and more (our new target) and in particular, with increased international visitors to the region.

- Improved telecommunications across the whole region

- River management and water reliability, particular during the peak tourism times; i.e Easter and school holidays.

- Support and resources to up skill tourism attraction, hospitality and accommodation providers.

- Community education on value and importance of tourism, as a key driver of the economy.

- For further information regarding this submission, please contact Fiona Gormann Economic and Community Development Manager Swan Hill Rural City Council on 0429 138 309 or email fgormann@swanhill.vic.gov.au.

B.20.50   REVIEW OF THE MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure
File Number: S13-24-01
Attachments: 1   Final Draft MEMP Plan

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

Summary

This report seeks a Council resolution to adopt the recently reviewed Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) that was endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) at its last committee meeting held 19 June 2020.

Discussion

The Emergency Management Act 1986, Part 4, Section 20 (1), requires municipal Councils to prepare and maintain a MEMP.

The plan addresses the prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies within the Swan Hill municipality. Council accepts responsibility for management of municipal resources and coordination of community support to counter the effects of an emergency during the response, and recovery from, emergencies. This includes the management of:

- The provision of emergency relief to persons affected by or responding to an emergency,
- Municipal assistance to agencies during the response to and recovery from emergencies; and
- Recovery activities within the municipality, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) contains policy and planning documents for emergency management in Victoria, and provides details about the roles different organisations play in the emergency management arrangements.

The specific responsibilities of Council's Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) are detailed in the MEMP and a full list of responsibilities can be found in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/policies/emmv (Part 6 Appendix 3)

The Emergency Management Act 1986, Part 4, Section 20 (4), states the function of a MEMPC is to prepare a draft MEMP for consideration by the municipal council.

The MEMP (Version5) was last presented to Council 17 October 2017.

The Emergency Management Act 1986, Part 4, Section 21A (1), requires that at least once every three years, an audit of the MEMP is undertaken by the Chief Officer Operations, of the Victoria State Emergency Service to assess whether the plan complies with the guidelines issued by the Minister.

The plan has undergone major changes in readiness for the upcoming Audit scheduled for October 2020.

Consultation

All members of the MEMPC have been provided with the opportunity to contribute to the changes to the MEMP. A number of agencies have provided input and comment at both meetings and via email. The MEMP version 6 was adopted by the MEMPC on 19 June 2020.

Financial Implications

Nil

Social Implications

The economic and social effects of emergencies may include loss of life, destruction of property, and dislocation of communities. The plan helps the community to better manage these risks.

Economic Implications

The plan aims to reduce the negative impact of emergency events by providing a framework for an efficient and effective response.

Environmental Implications

Natural resource management issues are included in the MEMP.

Risk Management Implications

The purpose of Councils MEMP is to assist in managing the risks to our community posed by emergencies.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Community enrichment - Provide services and support initiatives that create a Healthy and Safe Community.

Options
   1. Adopt the recently reviewed MEMP.

2. To not adopt the recently reviewed MEMP and make further changes

Recommendation

That Council adopt the amended Municipal Emergency Management Plan, version 6.

Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council

Acknowledgement

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

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Foreword

The economic and social effects of emergencies including loss of life, destruction of property, and dislocation of communities are inevitable.

Coping with hazards gives our reason and focus for planning. Hazards exist within all communities whether they are recognised or not.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council Municipal Emergency Management Plan has been produced pursuant to Section 20(1) of the Emergency Management Act 1986.

This Plan addresses the prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies within the Swan Hill Rural City Council and is the result of the co-operative efforts of the Emergency Management Planning Committee and assistance from Victoria State Emergency Service North West Regional Headquarters, and recognises the previous planning activities of the Municipal area.

Document Release Information

Document Title	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
Version no	6.0
Date of Release	July 2020
Responsible Officer	Dallas Free

Version Control

Issue No	Date	Amendment Details	Council Adoption Date
1	2010	Plan adopted	November 2010
2	Nov 2013	Minor changes to contacts	
3	Jan 2015	Major changes following SES Audit	April 2015
4	Feb 2017	New Emergency Response and Support tables – Part 5	
5	July 2017	New plan style. All sections aligned with EMMV template. Part 6 re-written.	October 2017
6	May 2020	Update to reflect recommendations of Audit. New style	July 2020

Municipal Endorsement

This Plan has been produced by and with the authority of the Swan Hill Rural City Council pursuant to Section 20(1) of the Emergency Management Act 1986.

Swan Hill Rural City Council understands and accepts its roles and responsibilities as described in Part 4 of the Emergency Management Act 1986.

This Plan is a result of the cooperative efforts of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee after consultation with those agencies and organisations identified therein.

Dated this ………………………….Day of ……………………………….2020

Signed: …………………………………….

John McLinden

Chief Executive Officer

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   The Role of Local Government in Emergency Management

The Emergency Management Act 1986 and the Emergency Management Act 2013 create the legislative framework for the multi-agency emergency response arrangements.

Councils have emergency management responsibilities because they are the closest level of government to their communities and because they have access to specialised local knowledge about the social, environmental and demographic features of their districts.

People also naturally seek help from their local Council during emergencies and to assist them in recovery.

The roles allocated to local government in the Emergency Management Act 1986, and in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria, were arrived at with close regard to the real concerns and normal functions of local government. Experience indicates that these constitute what the community expects of Council during an emergency.

1.2   Responsibilities of Local Government

Local Government is responsible for:

- Local implementation of state-wide preventative strategies – planning and building codes, flood planning (in conjunction with Catchment Management Authorities), health planning and fire management planning in conjunction with Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP);
- Local risk management and emergency planning;
- Management of community participation in planning and service delivery before, during and after emergencies;
- Provision of community education and awareness;
- Incorporation into local safety programs of risk reduction strategies;
- Service delivery to support people in particular need;
- Resource support to response agencies, and
- Management and support of community recovery programs, policies and strategies.

1.3   Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

This Committee is formed pursuant to Section 21 (3) and (4) of the Emergency Management Act 1986, to formulate a plan for the Council's consideration in relation to the prevention of, response to and the recovery from emergencies within the Swan Hill municipality.

MEMPC	Representative Organisation / Position
Chairperson	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Councillor
Municipal Emergency Resource Officer	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Works Manager
Municipal Emergency Resource Officer	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Senior Technical Officer – Works
Municipal Emergency Resource Officer	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Technical Officer – Works
Municipal Recovery Manager	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Economic and Community Development Manager
Deputy Municipal Recovery Manager	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Community Care Services (CCS) Manager
Deputy Municipal Recovery Manager	Swan Hill Rural City Council - CCS Assessment Team Leader
MEMPC Executive Officer	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Engineering Administrative Officer
Municipal Fire Prevention Officer	Swan Hill Rural City Council – Senior Authorised Officer

Emergency Management Project Officer	Swan Hill Rural City Council - Emergency Management Project Officer
Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator	Police Officer appointed by Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police
Ambulance Service	Ambulance Victoria
Regional VICSES	Victorian State Emergency Service - Regional Officer Emergency Management
Fire Service	Country Fire Authority Operations Manager
Fire Service – Public Land	Department Environment Land Water and Planning – Forest Fire Management Victoria. - Team Leader Fire Training and Capability
Fire Service – Public Land	Parks Victoria Ranger Team Leader Fire and Emergency I Northern Murray Grasslands
Relief and Recovery	Department Health and Human Services - Senior Emergency Management Coordinator, Loddon Mallee Region
Relief and Recovery	Australian Red Cross
Relief and Recovery	Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministries
Health Services	Emergency Department Swan Hill District Health Services - Nurse Unit Manager
Health Services	Robinvale District Health Services - Maintenance Officer
Water Authority	Lower Murray Water - Executive Manager Southern Region
Water Authority	Goulburn Murray Water - Customer Service Manager
Water Authority	Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water - Area Manager
Regional Road Authority	Regional Roads Victoria - Team Leader Asset Delivery
Agriculture	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - Agriculture Victoria - Land Management Extension officer and Senior Officer Relief and Recovery Coordination - Biosecurity and Agriculture Services

1.4   Municipal Emergency Planning Committee Contact List

The MEMPC contact list can be found as Appendix A. This list is not for public distribution therefore will not be part of the MEMP public document.

In order to maintain an up to date contact list, it shall be an ongoing agenda item at MEMPC meetings. Agencies are also encouraged to contact the MEMPC Executive Officer with any changes to the contact directory.

When changes are required to be made to the contact list, the Executive Officer will ensure that the updated list is communicated to all MEMPC members, and inserted into the original MEMP held by council.

1.5   Municipal Emergency Management Plan Endorsement and Distribution Plan

At the completion of an update to the plan, the amended plan, with a notice of the amended sections is to be distributed to MEMPC members for comment and consideration.

Following the comment and consideration process, the MEMPC will seek endorsement from all MEMPC agencies and organisations with roles and responsibilities listed in the plan before its presentation to council for consideration and adoption.

Upon adoption by Council:

• A copy of the plan shall be distributed to all members of the MEMPC;

A copy shall be provided to stakeholders and organisations mentioned in the plan:

• A public copy shall be available on the council website for public viewing; and

• A public copy shall be lodged as legal deposit with the State Library of Victoria within two months of council adoption.

The Municipal Emergency Resource Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with the endorsement and distribution process.

Note: Only members of the MEMPC shall receive a full copy of the MEMP containing the MEMPC contact list. All other public copies including the lodgement with the State Library of Victoria shall not contain any contact lists.

1.6   Statement of Audit

This Plan has been audited in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and a report detailing the results of the audit has been forwarded to the Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council).

The Plan is required to be submitted for further audit within three years from the date on the current certificate of Audit.

Certificate of
Audit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE
MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN OF

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Has been audited in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the
Minister and has been assessed as

"Complying with the Guidelines"

Tim Wiebusch   1 December 2017

Deputy Chief Officer – Readiness   Date

On behalf of
Trevor White
Chief Officer, Operations

1.7   Aim

The aim of this Plan is to detail the agreed arrangements for the prevention of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur in the Swan Hill Rural City as identified in Part 4 of the Emergency Management Act, 1986.

As custodian of the plan, Council acknowledges the linkages between it and other plans and strategies, including:

- Municipal Flood Emergency Plan;
- Municipal Fire Management Plan;
- Municipal Heatwave Plan;
- Municipal Influenza Pandemic Plan;
- CERA Risk Assessment Process;
- Council Strategic and Community Plans; and
- Other plans developed from time to time in relation to events and works.

1.8   Objectives

The broad objectives of this Plan are to:

- Implement measures to prevent or reduce the causes or effects of emergencies.
- Manage arrangements for the utilisation and implementation of Municipal resources in response to emergencies.
- Manage support that may be provided to or from adjoining Municipalities.
- Assist the affected community to recover following an emergency.
- Complement other local, regional and state planning arrangements.
- Strategies to assist affected communities to recover following an emergency.
- Identify hazards and risk that may impact on the municipality.

1.9   Municipal Emergency Management Functions and Responsibilities

Swan Hill Rural City Council (SHRCC) accepts responsibility for the management of municipal resources and the coordination of community support to counter the effects of an emergency, both during the response to and recovery from emergencies.

This includes the management of:

- The provision of emergency relief to persons affected by an emergency;
- Municipal assistance to agencies during the response to and recovery from emergencies;
- Assessment of the suitability of CFA approved Community Information Guides (CIGs) and Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort (NSP) sites;
- The assessment of the impact of the emergency; and
- Recovery activities within the municipality, in consultation with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

In order to carry out these functions the SHRCC may form a Municipal Emergency Management Team (MEMT). This group will consist of

Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO)
Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)
Chief Executive Officer
Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
Others co-opted as required

1.10   Risk Assessment process

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) has conducted a Risk Assessment of all perceived emergency hazards within the municipality. The MEMPC has utilised the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) model (facilitated by VICSES) to identify and analyse these emergency hazards. A summary of the assessment outcomes is included in Part 4.3 of this Plan.

2   Area Description

2.1   Municipality

Located on the Murray River in North West Victoria, 3.5 hours from Melbourne, the Swan Hill Rural City is one of Australia's most diverse and productive agricultural regions.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council was established in 1995 following the amalgamation of the former City of Swan Hill, Shire of Swan Hill and parts of the Shire of Kerang. The Municipality borders the Victorian municipalities of Mildura, Buloke and Gannawarra The north and east boundaries of the municipality run along the Murray River bordering New South Wales municipalities of Balranald Murray River to the North and East and the municipalities of and covers 6100 square kilometres.

2.2   Municipality Map
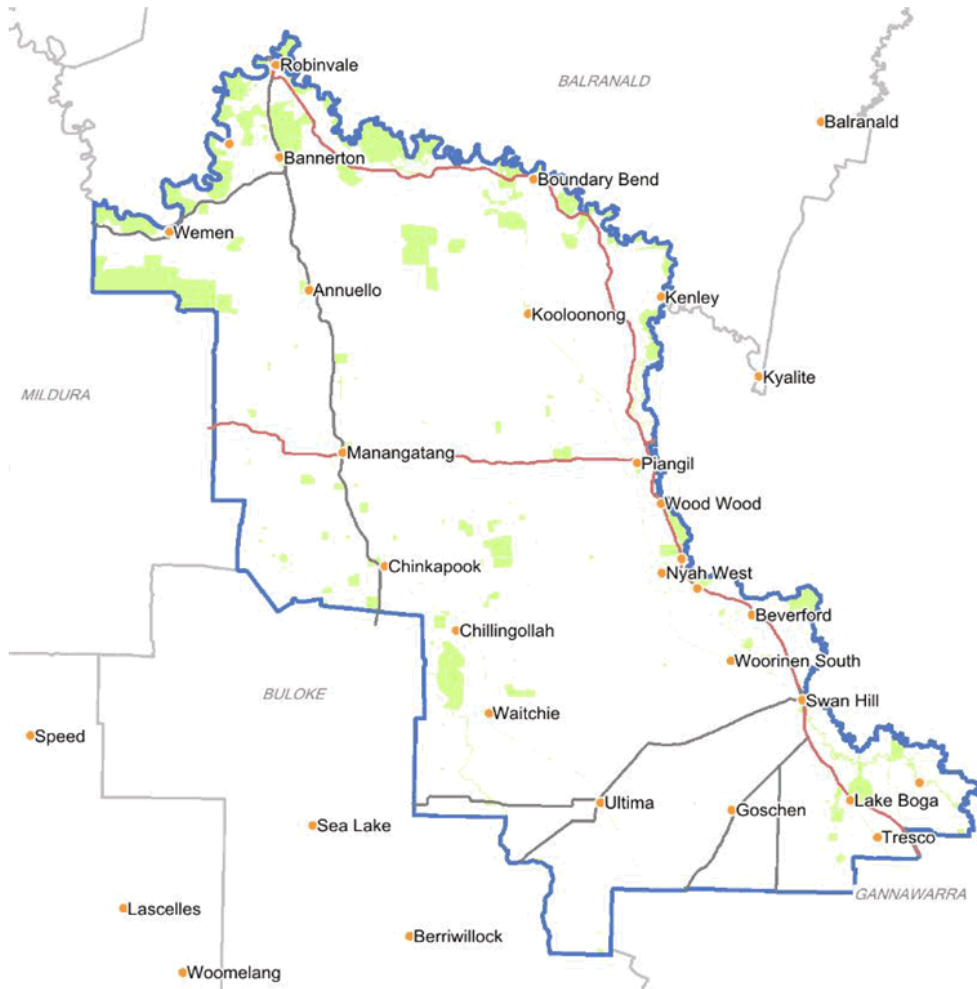
2.3   Area Characteristics

2.3.1   Topography

The Swan Hill Rural City Council Municipality is situated along 400 Kms of the Murray River in the Northwest of Victoria and covers 6100 square kilometres. Consisting of a majority of flat agricultural land combined with river flats and a number of bushland reserves and State Parks.

The average rainfall, being relatively low is in the range of 300mm to 350 mm with hot summers and mild winters.

The two principal urban centres in the region are Swan Hill and Robinvale. Most of the region's remaining population is found within the irrigation districts surrounding these centres (Lake Boga, Manangatang, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Woorinen South and Ultima).

2.3.2   Demography

Swan Hill Rural City Council's population is 20584 (2016 Census) the largest concentration of population is within the Swan Hill City area with 1095 residents. This is followed by the Robinvale district area with 3313 residents. The remainder of the municipality's population is spread across the smaller rural townships of:

Beverford, Lake Boga, Manangatang, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Ultima, Wood Wood and Woorinen South.

A further break down of the population is detailed below.

Of the 20,584 people living in the municipality 50.4% are male and 49.6% are female. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 4% of the population.

Of the total population:

- 13% (2,681) are 0-9 years of age
- 12.3% (2,532) are 10-19 years of age
- 23.6% (4,865) are 20-39 years of age
- 25.9% (5,312) are 40-59 years of age
- 19.9% (4,087) are 60-79 years of age
- 5.3% (1,103) are 80+ years of age

In the municipality, 76.4% of people only spoke English at home. Other languages spoken at home included:

- Italian 1.9%
- Tongan 1.2%
- Vietnamese 1.1%
- Mandarin 0.9%
- Punjabi 0.8%

Emergency Services should be aware of the potential difficulty in communicating with some of these groups.

2.3.3   Vulnerable Persons and Facilities

2.3.3.1   Vulnerable Persons Register

A list of vulnerable people in an emergency is available on the State "Vulnerable Persons Register" (VPR). This list is directly available to Police, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and identified municipal staff and is validated every six months by the responsible agency.

The VPR is a register of people who are receiving support from an agency and who have been assessed as requiring assistance when there is an emergency. They will usually have complex needs and be without support to assist them to plan and respond to an emergency.

Agencies are responsible for adding eligible clients to the register and keeping information up to date and have a responsibility to encourage and where necessary support those vulnerable clients to undertake planning for emergencies. The Swan Hill Rural City Council oversees the maintenance of the register locally. Agencies are not expected to be part of a client's plan for an emergency where this is outside their current practice.

2.3.3.2   Vulnerable Facilities

Swan Hill Rural City Council maintains a database of "Vulnerable Facilities" such as, schools, child care facilities, hospitals, and aged care homes.

This is available to emergency service organisations through the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) and the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

2.3.4   Road Network

The area is served by a good network of roads, with the Murray Valley Highway being the main North South link adjacent to the Murray River and the Mallee Highway being the main East West link through Manangatang and Piangil. This is also a major transport link between South Australia and Sturt Highway at Balranald NSW.

- The Murray Valley Highway, runs North and South on the Eastern half of the Municipality. It is the major link between Robinvale and Swan Hill.

- The Mallee Highway crosses the Municipality from East to West from Piangil towards Ouyen. It is part of a direct link between Adelaide and the Eastern half of New South Wales.

- The Sea Lake – Swan Hill Road crosses the Southern part of the Municipality from Swan Hill to the Municipal boundary (approximately 20 kms East of Sea Lake).

- The Robinvale – Sea Lake Road enters from the South (near the township of Chinkapook) and proceeds North to Robinvale.

- The Hattah – Robinvale Road crosses the Northern part of the Municipality from Lake Powell (Murray Valley Highway) to Hattah (Calder Highway).

Bridges for the main Murray River crossings are located at Swan Hill, Nyah, Piangil (Tooleybuc) and Robinvale.

2.3.5   Rail

Two rail lines serve the municipality. A passenger line runs from Swan Hill to Melbourne. The same line transports grain staring at Piangil and finishing at The Port of Melbourne.

A second line runs from Robinvale in the Municipality's North to Melbourne via Bendigo. This is a freight only line. Swan Hill is the only freight management station within the municipality.

2.3.6   Industry

Industry and economy within the municipality revolves around the primary production which includes wool, wheat and other cereal crops. Along with Australia's largest concentration of almond farms the municipality has large areas of fresh stone, table grapes and pistachios nut production. Wine grapes also feature with the municipality being the second largest producer of wine grapes in Victoria.
The agricultural industry supports a large industrial engineering and sales market within the municipality which in turn supports many families.
Tourism has some effect on the economy and a high standard of professional business and service organisations operate within the municipality. These businesses and organisations not only service the municipality but a wider area taking in NSW and adjoining municipalities.

2.3.7   Climate

Agriculture and tourism are assisted by a climate, which is warm and sunny. On most days of the year the municipality features as the area recording the highest temperature in the state. The average temperature in the winter months is 15.7 ° c and 32 ° c in the summer.

2.3.8   Critical Infrastructure

Local Infrastructure that is critical to the continuity of supply of essential services (transport, fuel, power, water, sewerage, and telecommunications) in the region includes:

- Natural gas pipeline
- LPG depots
- Bulk fuel depots
- Electricity zone substations
- Water treatment plants
- Waste water treatment plans
- Telecommunications towers and exchanges

There are two registered aerodromes being at Swan Hill and Robinvale.

2.3.9   Health and Education

Swan Hill municipality features two public hospitals being Swan Hill and Robinvale and several smaller health services, including 4 aged care facilities.

Swan Hill municipality features 26 schools (primary, secondary and pre-schools) and 5 childcare centres.

There are over 70 reserves, sporting grounds, parks and gardens throughout the municipality including 4 swimming pools.

2.3.10   Municipal Location Maps

Maps of the Municipality are not attached to this document.

Agencies that require municipal maps can obtain them by contacting the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer.

Public copies of maps of the municipality are available at:

https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/discover/maps/

See Appendix F for further details on Maps

2.3.11   History of Emergencies

Over the years the municipality has experienced a relatively low number of emergencies of consequence. Those with the most widespread impact have been either wind/hail storms or flood. That impact has primarily involved property damage and not loss of life.

Since the Second World War "major flood levels" have been experienced in the region in the following years:-

1956, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1981, 1983, 1989, 1993, 2011

Generally, stock and crop losses were experienced, but minimal threats to residences and human life.

March 2008 -   A chemical spill caused a fire in a production shed at a local factory

January 2014 -   Pental Island fire

November 2016 -   Parsons Road Swan Hill fire

December 2016 -   Ultima fire

January 2019 -   Goat Island Fire

January 2020 -   COVD 19 Pandemic

3   Planning

3.1   Authority and Background

The *Emergency Management Act 1986* Part 4 sets out the responsibilities of a municipal Council. Within this part, Section 21, sets out the requirements in relation to coordination and planning. This includes the appointment of to the Municipal Emergency Planning Committee, and the development of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

Part 6 of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria provides the guidelines and arrangements for Councils and Planning Committees. Planning involves the, prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies within the municipality in line and coordination with Regional and State plans.

Swan Hill rural City Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the legislation and commits to provide administrative and management support to the MEMPC along with careful and respectful consideration of its recommendations.

The development of the plan by the MEMPC was supported with information and assistance from member agencies of the Swan Hill Rural City Council, Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

3.2   Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

This committee is formed under the legislation of the *Emergency Management Act 1986,* section 21 (3), to draft a plan under section 21 (4) for the consideration of the Swan Hill Rural City Council in relation to the prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies in the Swan Hill municipality.

See section 1.3 for MEMPC agency members.

3.2.1   Role of the MEMPC

The role of the MEMPC is to assess and review hazards facing the municipality using the "Community Emergency Risk Assessment" (CERA) process and prepare the Municipal Emergency Management Plan which documents preparedness, response and recovery operational arrangements.

The ongoing role of the committee is to:

- Develop and maintain the MEMP for consideration by Council;
- Assist in analysing and evaluating emergency related risks;
- Ensure the needs of vulnerable people such as children, young people, people living with disability and older residents are considered in emergency management planning;
- Help develop risk treatment strategies, and
- Prepare risk specific response and recovery plans for the municipality.

3.2.2   Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson is responsible for making sure that each meeting is conducted according to the "Terms of Reference" and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner. The Chairperson carries the authority to keep order and maintain progress in line with the agenda.

The Chairperson must make the most of all committee members and 'lead the team'. This also involves regularly reviewing the Committee's performance and identifying and managing the process for renewal of the Committee through recruitment of new members.

The MERO or another committee member will fill the role of Chairperson in the event of a casual absence.

3.2.3   Quorum

Not yet determined.

3.2.4   Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet a minimum of three times per year with specific dates set at the final ordinary meeting for the calendar year.

3.2.5   Agendas and Minutes

Calls for items for the MEMPC agenda will be circulated two weeks prior to the meetings. Members are to provide a written report to the Executive Officer at Swan Hill Rural City Council, outlining any agency specific emergency management actions and issues of interest to the MEMP Committee not less than 10 days prior to the meeting.

Meeting minutes will be circulated to the MEMPC membership not later than seven days after the meeting.

Reports to Council will be made where specific issues require a Council determination based on the recommendation of the MEMPC. Responsibilities and actions will be identified and where appropriate, subject to time lines in the minutes.

Minutes of all meetings must be taken and a copy sent to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator and the Regional Recovery Manager, Department Health and Human Services.

3.2.6   Administrative Support

Administrative support will be provided by the MEMPC Executive Officer

3.2.7   MEMPC Terms of Reference

Not yet determined

3.3   Sub Committees and Work Groups

To assist with the activities of MEMPC, sub-committees or work groups may be established to examine various issues or topics in more detail and/or to review and update the MEMP or any sub-plans of the MEMP.

Sub-committees or work groups will consist of members of the MEMPC and if required, invited community members or agencies with specialist knowledge or direct influence in an area.

Sub-committees, if formed, will meet at least once per year to review and amend their arrangements where necessary.

Sub-committees and work groups must report back to the MEMPC on progress and completion of agenda items.

3.4   Emergency Management Functions and Roles

3.4.1   Delegations, Appointments and Contacts

In accepting its responsibility in the response to and recovery from emergencies, Council has appointed a number of Council Officers with appropriate delegations to these positions

These positions are:

- Municipal Emergency Resource Officers X 3
- Municipal Recovery Manager
- Deputy Municipal Recovery Managers x2
- Municipal Fire Prevention Officer

The roles and responsibilities of these officers are contained in sections 3.4.2 to 3.4.4

The contact details for these positions is available in Appendix A

3.4.2   Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO)

Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO)

Pursuant to section 21(1) of the *Emergency Management Act 1986,* Swan Hill Rural City Council has appointed three Municipal Emergency Resource Officers (MERO's)

- Works Manager

- Senior Technical Officer Works

- Technical Officer works

Municipal Authority

The MERO has full delegated powers to deploy and manage Council's resources during emergencies. Council staff and resources may be deployed as per their normal operations or tasked solely to the event based on operational circumstances.

This delegation also includes responsibility for managing financial expenditure in accordance with Council's financial management policies.

The role of the MERO is to:

- Ensure the MEMP is effective and current;
- Keep the Municipal Operation Centres(s) prepared to ensure prompt activation if needed;
- Maintain an effective contact base so municipal resources can be accessed on a twenty-four hour basis;
- Coordinate a range of risk reduction activities to ensure maximum efficiency and synergy is obtained and track the progress of risk treatment programs;
- Ensure that municipal resources are utilised effectively in a community emergency, for response and recovery activities;
- Coordinate the Municipal Emergency Management Team as appropriate during an emergency;
- Maintain effective liaison with all regional, State or Commonwealth emergency related agencies servicing the municipal district;
- Ensure that contractual arrangements with contractors are in place to provide response or recovery support during an emergency;
- Ensure that appropriate operating procedures and processes are developed, documented and tested by those required to use them during an emergency, and that suitable training takes place;
- Ensure that applications for expenditures eligible for assistance from State sources are submitted to appropriate agencies;
- Keep the Council and Chief Executive Officer informed on emergency management activities, including the presentation of an annual report on activities that includes expenditure incurred by the council during the previous 12 months.
- Ensure that debriefing sessions are held
- Partake as a member of the Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) at incidents;
- Coordinate municipal resources in emergency response;
- Provide council resources when requested by emergency services or police during response activities;
- Maintain effective liaison with emergency agencies within or servicing the municipal district;
- Liaise with the MRM on the best use of municipal resources;
- Organise a response debrief if requested by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) and;
- Participate in the process of Relief to Recovery.

3.4.3 Municipal Emergency Recovery Manager

Swan Hill Rural City Council has appointed a Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

Economic and Community Development Manager

Municipal Authority

In consultation with the MERO the MRM has full delegated powers to deploy council and community resources to assist with recovery. This delegation also includes responsibility for managing financial expenditure in accordance with Council's financial management policies.

The role of the MRM is to:

- Assist in planning and preparing for emergency relief and recovery in partnership with the MERO
- Coordinate municipal and community resources and activities
- Coordinate and establish Community Recovery Committees where appropriate (see 6.9)
- Establish priorities for the restoration of community services and needs;
- Establish and coordinate Emergency Relief Centres as required;
- Coordinate the secondary and post impact assessments;
- Establish Information and Coordination Centres when required;

- Liaise, consult and negotiate on behalf of the affected area with recovery agencies and the municipality;
- Escalate relief and recovery coordination to a regional level if the needs for provisions exceed the capability of Council;
- Ensure communication and community engagement activities are established and coordinated.
- Liaise with the Regional Recovery Committee and the Department of Health and Human Services; and
- Undertake other specific recovery activities as determined by the municipality;

The MRM may delegate duties to provide for effective management of the recovery functions.

This includes the management of:

- The provision of emergency relief to persons affected by or responding to an emergency;
- Municipal assistance to agencies during the response to and recovery from emergencies; and
- Recovery activities within the municipality, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services.

3.4.4   Municipal Fire Prevention Officer

Council has appointed the Senior Authorised Officer to fulfil the function of Municipal Fire Prevention Officer, as required by the Country Fire Authority Act 1958.

The role of the MFPO is to:

- Manage the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee (MFPC) as Chairperson and Executive Officer
- Undertake and regularly review Council's fire prevention planning and plans (together with the MFPC)
- Liaise with Fire Services, Brigades, other Authorities and Councils regarding fire prevention planning and implementation
- Advise and assist the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee on Fire Prevention and related matters
- Ensure the MEMP contains reference to the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan
- Report to Council on fire prevention and related matters
- Carry out statutory tasks related to fire prevention notices and infringement notices
- Investigate and act on complaints regarding potential fire hazards
- Advise, assist and make recommendations to the general public on fire prevention and related matters
- Issue Permits to Burn (under Section 38 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1985) and
- Facilitate community fire safety education programs and support Community Fireguard groups in fire prone areas.

3.4.5   Municipal Emergency Management Executive Officer

Council has appointed the Engineering Administrative Officer to fulfil the function of Municipal Emergency Management Executive Officer.

The role of the Executive Officer is to manage the process of the MEMPC meetings. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Proposing meeting dates to the Chair
- Sending out invitations/reminders to the Committee
- Preparing Agendas
- Arranging Minute taking at meetings.
- Following up action items to ensure those made responsible have actioned them.
- Act as the Plan caretaker and custodian of the planning process.
- Actioning planning amendments identified during the planning process and Committee meetings.
- Managing the process of Plan amendment distribution.
- Confirming regular updates of contact lists and other sections of the Plan
- Recording outcomes of the Risk Management process and subsequent reviews.

Other MEMP duties as determined by the Committee or MERO.

3.4.6   Emergency Management Liaison Officer

The Emergency Management Liaison Officer is a representative of council that is typically located at the Incident Control Centre (ICC) as part of the Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT).

The role of the EMLO is to provide a communication link that enables the MERO or MRM and the ICC to exchange information. The EMLO actively seeks situational awareness and intelligence to inform relief and recovery requirements, community information, council operations and secondary impact assessments.

The EMLO has no financial delegation or authority to deploy resources. The EMLO is in most circumstances contacted by the MERO to undertake a role.

3.5   Audit and Maintenance

3.5.1   Audit

Swan Hill Rural City Council, pursuant to section 21 A of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, shall submit its Municipal Emergency Management Plan for audit every three years. This audit will assess whether the plan complies with guidelines issued by the Minister.

3.5.2   Maintenance

The MEMP is to be reviewed annually to ensure its compliance with relevant legislation, directions and guidelines along with accuracy its regards to the information it contains.

The plan may also be reviewed in an out of session meeting following an emergency which utilised part of this plan or a new or risk has been identified.

Following changes to the plan, a draft copy along with a list of amendments will be provided to members of the MEMPC for their approval prior to it being tabled at a MEMPC general meeting or a special meeting convened for the purpose of the review.

Following acceptance by the MEMPC the updated plan with a list of amendments is to be submitted to Council for endorsement. Following council endorsement, a copy is to be provided to the State Library, as per S49 of the *Libraries Act 1988.*

Organisations delegated with responsibilities in this Plan are required to notify the MEMPC Executive Officer of any changes of detail (e.g. contact information), as they occur. Amendments will be produced and distributed by the Executive Officer as required. Refer to Appendix A for MEMPC contact list.

3.5.3   Sub Plans

Sub-plans to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan as listed in Appendix C shall undergo a review every three years or as defined in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria or the *Emergency Management Act 1986.*

Following a review the sub-plan it shall be presented to the MEMPC for consideration and adoption.

3.5.4   Testing

Upon completion of development of this Plan, and thereafter on an annual basis, arrangements pertaining to this plan should be tested. This will be done in a form determined by the MEMPC. Any procedural anomalies or short falls encountered during these exercises, or ensuing operations, must be addressed and rectified at the earliest opportunity.

4   Prevention / Mitigation Arrangements

4.1   Introduction

Council recognises it has a key role in prevention and mitigation activities to reduce the risk, or minimise the effects of emergencies that may occur in the municipal area. Council's enforcement and continued reviewing of existing policies in land use, building codes and regulations, and urban planning, along with the various agencies responsible for prevention activities throughout the community, combine to ensure that all measures possible are addressed to reduce the likelihood of emergency.

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee also plays a role in prevention by undertaking a Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process. This process combines hazard information and intelligence from a number of sources to gain a clear understanding of what defines the risk in a specific area.

4.2   Hazard / Exposure / Vulnerability / Resilience

4.2.1   Hazard

The definition of a hazard can be defined as a human activity, substance, condition or phenomenon that may cause injury, loss of life, property damage , social and economic disruption, health impacts, loss of livelihood or environmental damage. Hazards may be of natural origin and related environmental factors such as rain flood and fire events or technological sources and at times in combination.

Hazards are usually described in quantitatively by the likely frequency of occurrence and intensities for different settings. This is determined by historical data and / or scientific data.

4.2.2   Exposure

Exposure refers to systems, people, property or other elements present in hazard zones that may be subject to potential losses.

Extent of exposure is required when determining risk, however it is possible to be exposed but not vulnerable. However to be vulnerable to an extreme event it is necessary to be exposed to it.

4.2.3   Vulnerability

Vulnerability refers to the circumstances and or characteristics of an asset community or system that makes is susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

These may include, poor design and construction, inadequate protection, lack of information and awareness or inadequate protection.

Vulnerability will vary between communities and over time.

4.2.4   Resilience

Resilience can be defined as the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

4.3   Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA)

To complement the emergency management process and as a means of minimising or eliminating risks within the municipality, the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee is responsible for carrying out an initial assessment and subsequent reviews to identify existing and potential risks.

The process used, titled Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) and based on the ISO 31000, was facilitated by VICSES. It addressed context, community profile, and vulnerable elements, risk identification, analysis and rating, culminating with a range of suggested treatment options for each risk. The process was fully documented and the recommended treatment options were presented to Council for consideration and action.

For more detailed information on this process and its outcomes refer to the Swan Hill Rural City Council Community Emergency Risk Assessment tool held by Council in its Record Management System.

4.3.1   Summary of Identified Risks

Swan Hill Rural City Council			
5 December 2019			
Code	Risk	Ratings Confidence	Residual Risk Rating
FL2	Flood - Major	High	Medium
B-O1	Water Contamination	High	Medium
N-O1	Grass/Crop Fire	High	Medium
F-R	Fire - Residential	High	High
T-RDL	Road Transport Incident- Large Commercial	High	High
HM-T	Hazardous Material Release – In Transit	High	Low
ST	Storm	High	Medium
EQ	Earthquake	High	Low
ET-HW	Extreme Temperatures – Heatwave	High	Medium
HE	Human Epidemic / Pandemic	High	Medium
IP	Insect / Pest Incursion/ Fruit Fly	High	Medium

4.3.2   CERA Heat Map

Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) Heat Map
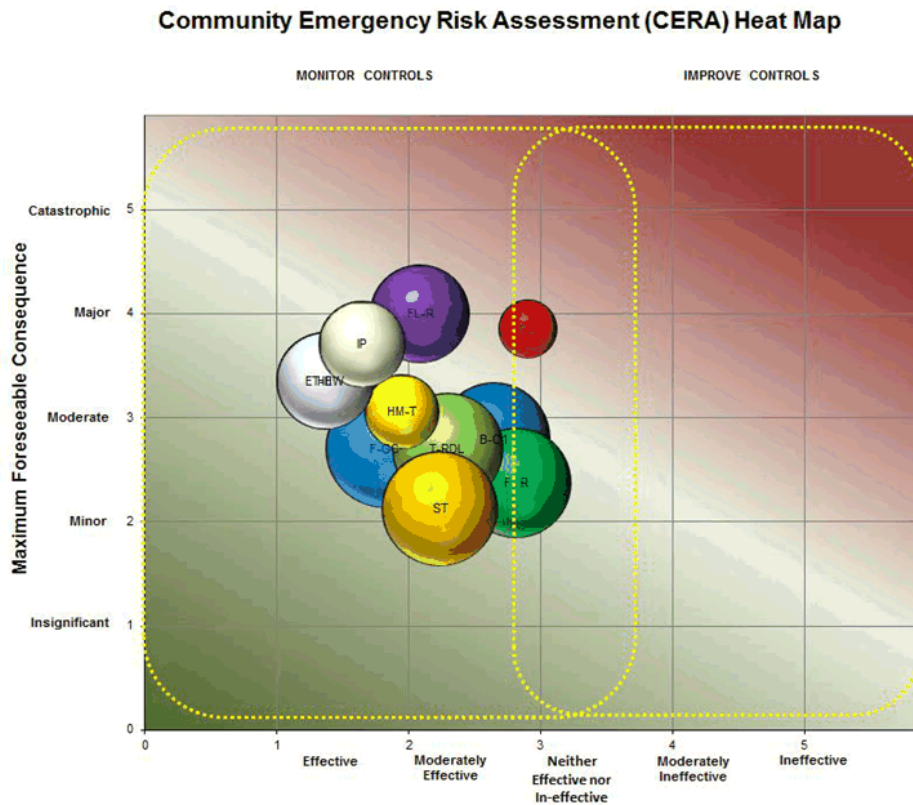
4.4   Sub Plans

Sub Plans are based on the outcome of the CERA risk process. Sub plans are based on developing and undertaking mitigation or treatment works to reduce or mitigate the risk of a particular hazard.

Current sub-plans to are;

- Municipal Fire Management Plan
- Township Bush Fire Mitigation Plans
- Municipal Flood Plan
- Heat Health Plan
- Influenza Pandemic Plan

Details of these plans are listed in Appendix C.

4.5   Monitoring and Review

Risk assessment is a continuous process. The MEMPC will continue to assess identified risks and existing controls, and will assess new and emerging risks as necessary.

Sub –plans that form a part of the MEMP will be reviewed prior to their expiry by a working group of the MEMPC.

Sub plans should be reviewed annually to ensure they are relevant to current legislation and / or guidelines. Sub-plans should be fully reviewed every three years or as otherwise determined by the *Emergency Management Act 1986* or the EMMV.

The progress of implemented treatment options is monitored by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

4.5   Community Awareness and Education

The ability of the community to respond to an emergency situation and in turn recover from the effects of an emergency will depend on the attitude of the people affected. Obtaining the preferred response from people during emergencies will require community education and awareness programs to be implemented for this purpose. The Council and the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee will support and promote appropriate prevention and awareness programs within the municipality.

Swan Hill Rural City Council provides information about emergencies at www.swanhill.vic.gov.au

There are also regular updates on the Council Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SwanHillCouncil

Emergency Service Organisations undertake a range of community education and multimedia programs to inform and assist the community to prepare for emergencies these information can be found at;

VicEmergency: www.emergency.vic.gov.au

This is a "one-stop shop" for Victorians to source information regarding preparedness, incidents and warnings, and recovery for all types of emergencies.

Country Fire Authority: www.cfa.vic.gov.au

The Country Fire Authority Website has a range of information specific to bush, grass and other fires: There is also information and resources specific to children and young people for teachers and parents.

State Emergency Service: www.ses.vic.gov.au

The SES has information and initiatives including 'Storm Safe, 'Flood Safe' and 'Quake Safe'. Games and information are provided for primary and secondary school children and teacher lessen plans.

Better Health Channel: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Provides a range of community information and links to other resources about health related emergencies (pandemic, heat, smoke etc.).

Australian Red Cross: www.redcross.org.au

The Red Cross Emergency REDiPLAN is a community information program to help people better prepare for, respond to and recovery from emergencies. The Red Cross can provide speakers for community gatherings to talk about Preparedness and introduce REDiPLAN.   REDiPLAN can be downloaded free form http://www.redcross.org.au

The Red Cross has produced a number of written publications to complement their "on ground" Recovery Services. The Red Cross recovery resources can be accessed via the Australian Red Cross website, where there are descriptions of each publication, and an order form.

5   Response Arrangements

5.1   Introduction

Emergency response is the action taken immediately before, during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effect and consequences of emergencies on people, their livelihoods and wellbeing, property and the environment and to meet basic human needs.

Emergency relief and recovery activities should be integrated with emergency response activities and commence as soon as the effect and consequences of the emergency are anticipated. (EMMV Part 3)

Swan Hill Rural City Council is responsible for the provision, management and coordination of municipal resources in support of the response to, and recovery from, emergencies and disasters. Municipal resources include those owned by the Swan Hill Rural City Council, and those under its control (including contracted resources).

Council response activities may include:

- Establishing staging areas, Municipal Operations Centre and Relief Centres
- Facilitating the provision of information
- Coordinating and ensuring effective transport

- Providing and coordinating equipment

Swan Hill Rural City Council is also responsible for the coordination of community resources in response to, and recovery from, emergencies and disasters.

5.2   State Emergency Management Priorities

The priorities provide clear direction on the factors that are required to be considered and actioned during response to any emergency. The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery as early as practicable". Each of the priorities under-pins the planning and operational decisions made when managing the response to emergencies.

The State Emergency Management Priorities are:
- Protection and preservation of life is paramount. This includes
  - Safety of emergency services personnel; and
  - Safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area
- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members make informed decisions about their safety
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that supports community resilience
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that supports individual and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, biodiversity and social values of the environment.

For more information, refer to:

https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/StatestrategicControlPriorities

5.3   Control, Command and Coordination,

Victoria bases its emergency response arrangements on the guidelines within the State Emergency Response Plan (Part 3 EMMV). The State Emergency Response Plan identifies Victoria's organisational arrangements for managing the response to emergencies. These guidelines are based around the management functions of control, command and coordination.

Additionally, in order to meet the objectives of emergency management in Victoria, those performing the control, command and coordination functions need to ensure:

- The consequences of the emergency are managed; and
- There is communication that meets the information needs of communities, government, agencies and business.
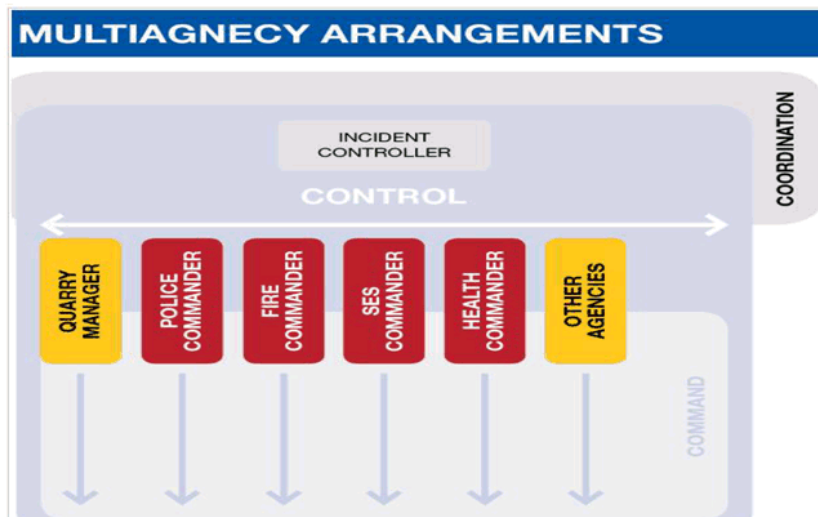
5.3.1   Control

Control is the overall direction of response activities in an emergency; operating horizontally across agencies. Authority for control is established in legislation and within the State Emergency Response Plan (SERP) and the details are listed in Part 7 of the EMMV.

Additionally, in order to meet the objectives of Emergency Management in Victoria, those performing the control, command and coordination functions need to ensure:

- The consequences of the emergency are managed and,
- There is communication that meets the information needs of communities, government, agencies and business.

The line of control refers to the line of supervision for those appointed to perform the control function.

The Incident Control Centres (ICC) are located at:

- Level 3 – DELWP Bendigo (Cnr Midland Hwy and Taylor St Epsom)
- DELWP Irymple (308-390 Koorlong Avenue Irymple)
- Level 2 – SES (Rutherford Street Swan Hill)

The Regional Control Centre that is responsible for the Swan Hill municipality is situated Lockwood Road, Kangaroo Flat VIC.

5.3.2   Command

The internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency operating vertically within an agency. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement within an agency.

For more information regarding Command, including:

- Chain of command,
- Principles of support agency command,
- Roles of support agency commanders, and
- Functional Command.

For further information refer to the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (Section 3).

5.3.3   Coordination

The bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies.
The main functions of emergency response coordination are to:

- Ensure effective control has been established and maintained in response to an emergency.
- Ensure effective information sharing.
- Systematically acquire and allocate resources in accordance with the requirements imposed by emergencies.

Emergency response coordination operates throughout the management of response, including during the provision of immediate relief, and during the transition to recovery.

Emergency Response Coordination at the municipal (incident) level is performed by a Victoria Police IERC or MERC and undertaken at the regional level by the RERC.

5.4   Control Agencies

The control agency responsible for responding to and controlling specified incidents are identified in the table below. The control agency may change as the emergency progresses or is clarified.

Where an emergency type is not listed or where there is uncertainty in identifying a control agency, the Emergency Management Commissioner or relevant emergency response coordinator will determine the control agency.

Emergency (Emergency Management Act 2013)	Form of Emergency	Control Agency (agency with the primary responsibility for responding to the emergency	Class of Major Emergency
An earthquake, flood, wind-storm or other natural event	Earthquake	VICSES	1
	Flood	VICSES	1
	Heat	EMC	2
	Storm	VICSES	1
	Tsunami	VICSES	1
	Landslide	VICSES	1
Fire and explosion	Aircraft	CFA	1
	Boilers and Pressure Vessels	CFA	1
	Explosion	CFA	1
	Explosive Device	Victoria Police	3
	Fire	CFA / DELWP	1
Road accident or any other accident	Aircraft	Victoria Police	2
	Biological materials (including leaks and spills)	DHHS	2
	Gas Leakage	CFA	1
	Hazardous materials, high consequence dangerous goods or dangerous goods (including leaks and spills)	CFA	1
	Lifts, cranes or scaffolding and amusement structures	CFA	1
	Building Collapse	CFA / VICSES	1
	Dam Safety	DEWLP	2
	Military aircraft and ships	Defence Force	2
	Radioactive materials (including leaks and spills)	DHHS	2
	Rail and tram	Victoria Police	2
	Road	Victoria Police	2
	Aircraft – in-flight emergency	Airservices Australia	2

Plague or an epidemic or contamination	Chemical contamination or livestock or agricultural produce (agricultural or veterinary)	DJPR	2
	Exotic animal disease (includes bees and aquaculture)	DJPR	2
	Plant pest or disease	DJPR	2
	Vertebrate pest / plagues	DJPR	2
	Retail food contamination	DHHS	2
	Food / Drinking water contamination	DHHS	2
	Human disease	DHHS	2
	Blue-green algae	DELWP	2
	Non hazardous pollution of inland waters	DEWLP	2
A warlike act or act of terrorism, hijack, siege or riot	A warlike act or act of terrorism, hijack, siege or riot.	Victoria Police	3
	Other threats against persons, property or environment.	Victoria Police	2
A disruption to essential service	Food supply, critical infrastructure damage or disruption.	Victoria Police	2
	Electricity	DELWP	2
	Natural gas	DELWP	2
	Petroleum and liquid fuels	DELWP	2
	Roads/bridges/tunnels	DoT	2
	Drinking water and sewerage	DELWP	2
	Public Transport	DoT	2
	Cyber security	DPC	2
Rescue (note – not listed in the EM Act 2013 and potentially a support service)	Building, structure	CFA/VICSES	1
	Cave	Victoria Police	2
	Land	Victoria Police	2
	Lift, crane, scaffolding or amusement structure	CFA	1
	Mine / quarry	Victoria Police	2
	Rail, aircraft and industrial	CFA/VICSES	1
	Road	VICSES	1
	Trench or tunnel	CFA	1
	Water	Victoria Police	2
Search (as above)	Land	Victoria Police	2
	Water	Victoria Police/AMSA	2
	Overdue aircraft	AMSA	2

5.5   Support Services for Response

In addition to the list of control agencies, there are a range of functional support services for response. All agencies listed in the EMMV (part 7) may potentially be support agencies in the event of an emergency, where they have the skills, expertise or resources to contribute to the management of an emergency.

Functional Support Area	Lead Agency (State)
Agriculture	DJPR
Animal Welfare (livestock and companion animals)	DJPR
Animal Welfare (wildlife)	DELWP
Ambulance / first aid	AV
Business and industry	DJPR
Coronial services	Coroner's Court of Victoria
Courts, corrections and consumer affairs	DJCS
Deceased person identification	Victoria Police
Earth resources (mines)	DJPR
Education	DET
Emergency services telecommunications	ESTA
Energy (including electricity, gas and liquid fuels)	DELWP
Environmental impact (air, land and water quality)	EPA
Health and human services	DHHS
Health command	AV
Local government	DEWLP
Media / communications	EMV
Public land	DELWP
Public transport	DoT
Responder agencies	CFA, , DELWP, VICSES
Roads	DoT
Spatial data	DELWP
Specific facilities (including secure facilities)	Owner or manager
State Government	DPC
Telecommunications	DJPR
Tourism	DJPR
Transport (including airports and ports)	DoT
Water and sewerage	DELWP
Weather	BOM
Worksafe	Victorian WorkSafe Authority

5.6 State, Regional Collaboration and Incident Tiers

The people and agencies with roles and responsibility for responding to emergencies work together in teams at the state, regional and incident tiers to ensure a collaborative and coordinated whole of government approach to the management of emergencies at each tier. Note that not all tiers are active for all emergencies.

The team structure Primary function supported by the team

		Primary function supported by the team		
	Control	**Response coordination**		**Relief and recovery coordination**
		Communications	**Consequence management**	
State tier	State Coordination Team			
	State Control Team	Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee	State Emergency Management Team	State Relief and Recovery Team
Regional tier	Regional Control Team	Regional Emergency Management Team		Regional Recovery Committee or equivalent *
Incident tier	Incident Management Team (major emergencies)	Incident Emergency Management Team (major emergencies)		Municipal Recovery Planning Committee or equivalent *
	Incident Emergency Management Team (non-major emergencies)			

5.7 Municipal Response Activation

The Swan Hill Rural City Council has provided contact details for the Duty MERO to response agencies in the municipal area. The MERO can also be contact by calling the SHRCC afterhours emergency number and advising of the requirement for the MERO to be contacted.

5.8 Emergency Management Roles – Incident level

5.8.1 Incident Emergency Response Coordinator (IERC)

The Incident Emergency Response Coordinator is usually the senior member of Victoria Police at the initial scene of an emergency or at the place where control is being exercised at incident level. This role usually relates to the first response to an emergency, and the person fulfilling the role may change in seniority as the emergency escalates or de-escalates.

The role of the IERC is to:

- Maintain a presence at the place where control is being exercised and represent the MERC in their absence;
- Ensure effective control is established and maintained;
- Ensure that the appropriate control and support agencies are in attendance – or have been notified by the controller and are responding to an emergency;
- In the event of uncertainty, determine which agency is to perform its statutory response role, where more than one agency is empowered to perform that role;
- Ensure the Incident Controller has formed and is chairing an Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) ensuring effective information sharing;
- Arrange for the provision and allocation of resources requested by control and support agencies and escalate unfulfilled requests to the MERC or RERC.
- Ensure timely warnings and information are provided to the community and support agencies by the control agency;
- Ensure the Incident Controller has developed and issued an incident action plan (including objectives and strategies for managing the incident);
- Consider the need for declaration of an emergency area; and

- Provide the MERC or RERC with information or advice on issues relating to co-ordination, control and command and of the emergency response, including issues relating to consequence management, the provision of relief and the transition to recovery.

5.8.2 Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)

The member of Victoria Police appointed as an emergency response coordinator for each municipal district is known as a Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator (MERC). The MERC sits on the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee. The MERC will communicate with the Emergency Management Commissioner, through the RERC (and subsequently the Senior Police Liaison Officer).

The role of the MERC is to:

- Ensure that the appropriate control and support agencies are in attendance - or have been notified by the controller and are responding to an emergency;
- In the event of uncertainty, determine which agency is to perform its statutory response role, where more than one agency is empowered to perform that role;
- Ensure the Incident Controller has formed and is chairing an Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) or, if the Incident Controller is unable to attend or there are several disparate emergencies within the municipality, form and chair an IEMT;
- Arrange for the provision of resources requested by control and support agencies and escalate unfulfilled requests to the RERC;
- Advise the RERC of emergencies that have the potential to require supplementary resources from outside the municipal district;
- Ensure timely warnings and information are provided to the community and support agencies by the control agency;
- Ensure the Incident Controller has developed and issued an incident action plan (including objectives and strategies for managing the incident);
- Ensure the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer is advised of the emergency, is available to provide access to municipal resources if required and is receiving information as appropriate;
- Attend, or arrange a delegate to attend the Municipal Emergency Operations Centre, if activated;
- Consider registration of persons evacuated or otherwise affected across the municipality;
- Consider the provision of relief to evacuees and agency personnel where necessary, and advise the Municipal Recovery Manager of requirements;
- Consider the need for declaration of an emergency area;
- Ensure the Municipal Recovery Manager has been notified by the incident controller of the emergency; and
- Provide the RERC with information or advice on issues relating to the coordination, control and command of the emergency response, including issues relating to consequence management, the provision of relief and the transition to recovery.

5.8.3 Regional Emergency Response Coordinator

The member of Victoria Police appointed as an emergency response coordinator for each Victorian Government region is known as a Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC). The RERC or their representative may chair the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee. Details of this committee are set out in Part 5 of this Manual. The RERC will communicate with the Emergency Management Commissioner, through the Senior Police Liaison Officer.

The role of the RERC is to:

- Monitor control arrangements for emergencies across the region to ensure they are effective;
- Where necessary, ensure the Regional Controller has formed and is chairing the Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT) or, where there are multiple disparate emergencies in the Region, form and chair the REMT;
- Source resources and services requested by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinators and escalate requests unable to be fulfilled by the region to the Emergency Management Commissioner through the Senior Police Liaison Officer;
- In the event of uncertainty, determine which agency is to perform its statutory response role within a region, where more than one agency is empowered to perform that role;

- Ensure the Regional Controller is developing a regional strategic plan for the management of the emergencies within the region;
- Ensure the Regional Recovery Coordinator has been notified of the emergency;
- Monitor the provision of warnings and information to affected communities;
- Consider registration of persons evacuated or otherwise affected across the region;
- Monitor the provision of relief across the region;
- Monitor the need to declare an emergency area; and
- Provide the Senior Police Liaison Officer with information or advice on issues relating the coordination, control and command of the emergency response, including issues relating to consequence management, the provision of relief and the transition to recovery.

5.8.4   Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO)

See section 3.4.2

5.8.5   Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

See section 3.4.3

5.8.6   Emergency Management Liaison Officer (EMLO)

See section 3.4.6

5.8.7   Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT)

The function of the Incident Emergency Management Team is to support the Incident Controller in determining and implementing appropriate Incident Management strategies for the emergency. If an emergency requires a response by more than one agency, the Incident Controller should form and chair an Incident Emergency Management Team. If the Incident Controller is unable to attend or there are several disparate emergencies within the municipality, the MERC (or representative) should form and chair the IEMT.

The Incident Emergency Management Team usually comprises:

- Incident Controller;
- Support Agency Commanders (or their representatives);
- Health Commander (functional commander of supporting health agencies);
- Municipal Recovery Manager:
- Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (or representative):
- Other specialist persons as required; and

For detailed information in relation to roles and responsibilities of the Incident Emergency Management Team see EMMV Section 3 (see https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/policies/emmv/)

5.8.8   Municipal Emergency Management Team

See section 1.9

5.9   Municipal Operations Centre (MOC)

SHRCC may establish a MOC if the size and complexity of the incident dictates a requirement. The MOC provides a central and coordinated space for the MEMT and may be established at the most appropriate location.

The MERO and MRM have the authority to establish an MOC.

5.10   Resource Coordination

5.10.1   Introduction

A supplementary resource, is a resource required by a response agency for operation that is neither owned nor effectively controlled by that agency. Supplementary resources include but are not limited to:

- Equipment (e.g. plant, vehicles)
- Personnel (e.g. agency support, industry technicians)
- Services (e.g. phone lines, expert technical advice)

- Open areas (e.g. staging areas)

The concept of accessing supplementary emergency response resources is that the response agency requires the resource to complete a task that would otherwise be beyond its capacity or capability.

A four-tiered framework (Local, Regional, State and Commonwealth) exists for implementing response to emergencies.

1. Initially with the efficient use of local and / or adjoining municipalities.

2. Escalation to a regional level

3. Escalation to a state level; and then

4. Escalation to commonwealth/international level

For further information refer to the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria, section 6.

5.10.2   Resource Database

The SHRCC has a database of all Council owned assets and resources that can be utilised in an emergency. There are also formal and informal arrangements with local businesses and community groups as well as a list of contractors that Council has access to for resources should this be required.

This data base is maintained by Council and available through the MERO.

5.10.3   Procedure for Requesting Resources

The two areas where resource supplementation may be required in an emergency or disaster situation. These are;
- Where a resource is required as a matter of priority due to an unfolding event, and
- Where resources are required for a planned response to an emergency or disaster.

Where a situation arises that require a priority response of resources and an IEMT has not been established or the IERC / MERC / RERC is not available, resources may be requested from the Officer in Charge of the response agency to the MERO.
Where an IEMT has been established, requests for supplementary resources should be directed to the MERO via the IERC / MERC / RERC.

The MERO will determine whether the resources requested are available from municipal resources (owned or under the direct control of the municipal council) and if available, arrange for their provision.

Where the Swan Hill Rural City Council is unable to fulfil the request for a resource, via their own or controlled resources, the MERO may assist the IERC / MERC / RERC in locating a resource.
In all instances where a request for a resource or service is requested the MERO under their authorisation may advice that the requesting agency make arrangements for delivery of the resource and that a cost will or will not be charged.

5.10.3.1   Resource Supplementation Flow Chart
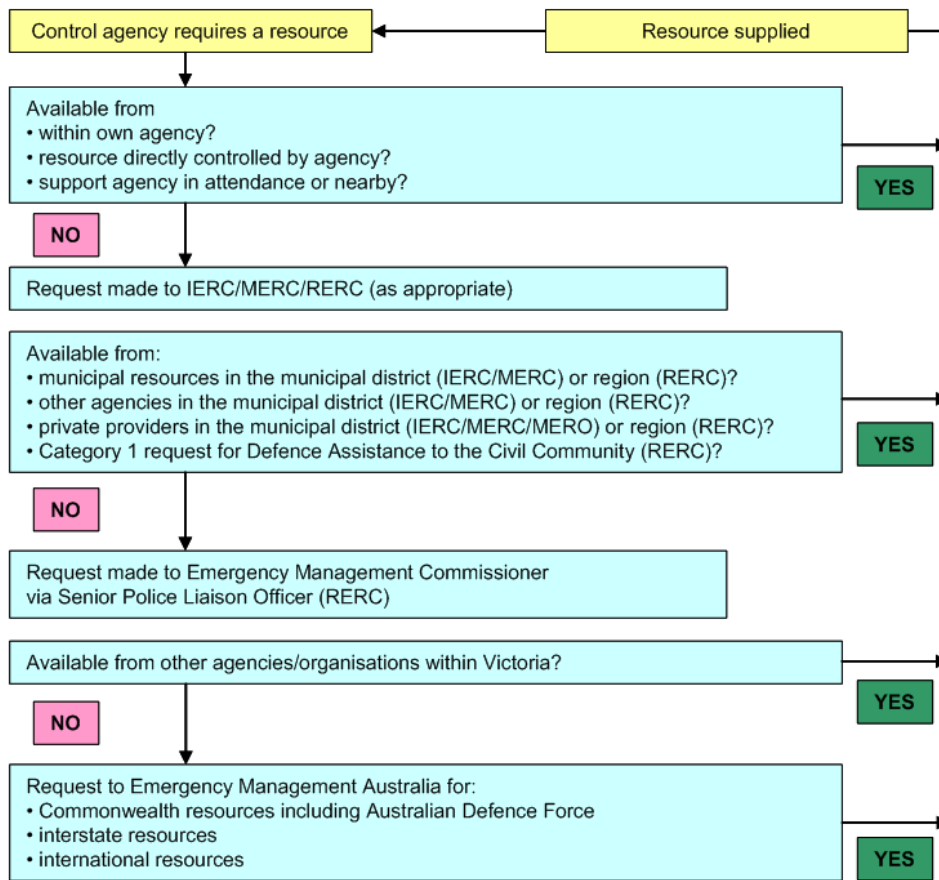
5.10.4   Resource Sharing`

Swan Hill Rural City Council confirmed its commitment in 2016, to the Municipal Association of Victoria Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing (see Appendix H).

5.10.5   Resource Supplementation Financial Considerations

Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges its responsibility to provide resources under its control at no cost to the control agency for emergency operations. Municipal resources are those used to perform municipal functions, even if the resources are privately owned (contracted to Council).

However, some resources may be subject to limits and/or constraints, (e.g. the use of some equipment may be limited to a timeframe due to the expense of operation). Such limits and/or constraints should be reasonable and commensurate to the Council's capacity to provide such resources.

When a control agency requests services and supplies (for example catering) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the control agency will be responsible for any costs incurred.

Financial accounting for municipal resources utilised in emergencies must be authorised by the MERO or the MRM and shall be in accordance with the normal financial arrangements of Council.

Depending on the magnitude of the emergency some Government financial assistance may be available for prevention, response and recovery activities.

5.11   Impact Assessments

5.11.1   Introduction

The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for ensuring the collecting and reporting of information on the impact of emergencies in order to inform priorities in consequence management and the provision of relief and recovery services.

There are three stages of the impact assessment process:

5.11.2   Initial Impact Assessment (IIA)

Initial impact assessment is a preliminary assessment (visual inspection and quantifiable data) and is undertaken by the response agency. This assessment provides early information of the impact of the emergency to assist in the prioritisation or immediate needs of individuals and the community and to inform the early stages of recovery.

5.11.3   Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA)

Secondary impact assessment is the subsequent assessment of the impact of the emergency on the natural, built, social, economic and agricultural environments and is managed by MRM at the local level. Where more than one municipality is involved the Regional Recovery Coordinator will manage the overall process or the State Relief and Recovery Manager where more than region is impacted.

A more holistic and comprehensive assessment is required about the impact of the emergency to inform recovery planning.

5.11.4   Post Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA)

PENA is longer, more thorough estimate of the effects and consequences of the emergency on the health and wellbeing of the community, property, the economy and the environment. This is undertaken by MRM's Regional coordinators and State Managers as required.

PENA's assist in informing State and Federal Governments in relation to financial assistance, impact mitigation projects and recovery support. If the impact of an emergency or disaster should cover more than one municipality the PENA's may be merged together.

5.12   Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort)

Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort (NSP) are intended to provide sanctuary for people from the immediate life threatening effects of a bushfire. They are places or buildings designated and signposted by the Municipal Council, and that meet guidelines issued by the Country Fire Authority.

Neighbourhood Safer Places within the municipality are located at:

- Swan Hill Showgrounds
- Robinvale Recreation Reserve.

5.13   Planning for Cross Boundary Events

The Swan Hill Rural City Council is located on the Murray River in Victoria, sharing a state border with New South Wales. The neighbouring NSW municipality is Balranald Shire Council and Murray River Council. Council maintains liaison with these councils as required.

5.14   Community Awareness, Public Information and Warnings

5.14.1   Warnings

It is the responsibility of the Control Agency to issue warnings to the potentially affected communities and other agencies. Council may be asked to assist with the dissemination of this information. During response, warnings and release of other public information should be authorised by the Incident Controller prior to dissemination.

The "Standard Emergency Warning Signal" may be used to assist in the delivery of public warnings and messages for major emergencies. The use of SEWS must be authorised by the Incident Controller.

5.14.2   Information Management

During emergency response activities, information is needed by all participating agencies, persons affected and the wider community. The following list summarises the principles which should be kept in mind by those responsible for managing the flow of information:

- Get information to the people who need it.
- Get the right information to the right people.
- Ensure it is consistent, timely, user-friendly, accurate, compatible and useful.

All agencies involved in the response to the incident have a responsibility to collect, analyse, and disseminate relevant information received regarding the incident, as appropriate. Further information regarding warnings and information is contained within the EMMV (Part 3).

Any information released to the public on behalf of Council, will be to educate and assist the community to prepare for emergencies.

5.14.3   Dissemination of Information

All methods of dissemination should be considered including:

- Radio
- Television
- Social media
- Agency information lines (Vic Emergency Information Line)
- Vehicle mounted public address
- Door knocks

Face to face at relief centres, council physical locations, (libraries, Visitor information centres, customer service centres)

5.14.4   Information Centre

If so required a public information centre will be established and Council appoint a Media Liaison Officer. All public and media releases will be issued from this centre.

5.15   Debriefing / After Action Review (AAR)

A debrief or an After Action review should take place soon after an emergency. The Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator may arrange a debrief for all agencies and or all persons who were involved. An AAR or debrief may take the form of assessing the plan and / or separately providing people with an opportunity to understand what may have occurred and provide feedback or information.

Such meetings should be chaired by the Chairperson of the MEMPC.

It may also be appropriate to conduct a separate recovery debrief or AAR to address recovery issues. This should be convened and chaired by the Municipal Recovery Manager.

5.16   Evacuation

Evacuation is a risk management strategy which may be used as a means of mitigating the effects of an emergency or disaster on a community. It involves the movement of people to a safer location. However, to be effective it must be correctly planned and executed. The process of evacuation must include the return of the affected community.

A recommendation to evacuate should only be made when it is expected to offer a higher level of protection for members of the public than other options, and can be achieved without endangering response agency personnel.

Evacuation is a scalable activity in that it may be applied to individuals, a house, a street, a large facility (i.e. school or hospital), a suburb, a town or a large area of the State.

Victoria Police are the agency that will manage the evacuation process and will be supported by other agencies including the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

This may include;

- Door knocking
- Road closures
- Relief centres

Joint Standard Operating Procedure JSOP 03.12 Evacuation for Major Emergencies provides the procedure for evacuations. JSOP 03.12 is available from:

https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/JSOP/EMV-JSOP.htm

See Appendix G

5.16.1   Evacuation Responsibilities Flow Chart
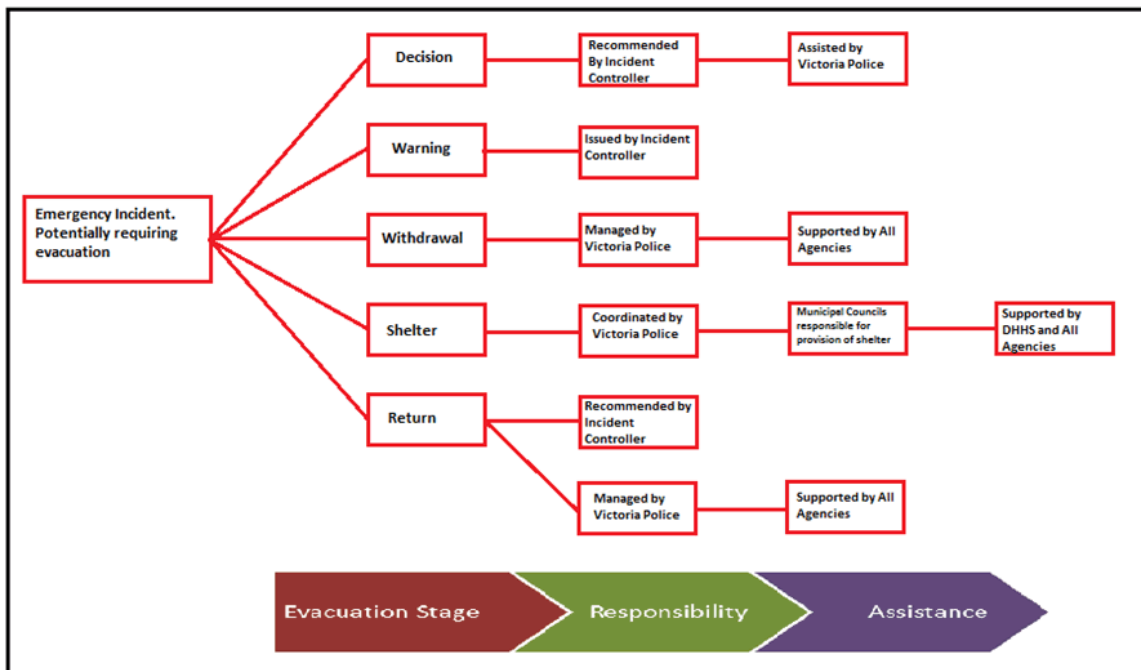
5.16.2   Warning Systems for Evacuation

The method of alerting people to the need for evacuation will depend on a number of factors. Consideration should be given to:

- The type of emergency
- The number of people affected
- The ethnic origins of the affected people
- The requirements of special needs groups

5.17   Response / Recovery Transition

The Incident Controller, Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator, Municipal Emergency Resource Coordinator and Recovery Manager should start planning for the transition to recovery as soon as possible following the initial impact of an emergency.

The Incident Emergency Management Team plays a key role in transition discussions relevant to planning, timing and expectations for the transition to recovery.

Transition decisions will be impacted by considerations that include:

- The nature of the emergency and whether a recurring threat is likely

- The extent of the impact on communities, as this may determine the length of the transition period

- The level of known loss and damage and the extent to which this has been validated

- The extent to which the community needs emergency relief

- The resources required for the activation of recovery arrangements

A transition agreement should be developed between the Incident Controller, Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Victoria Police), Regional Recovery Coordinator (DHHS) and the municipality (MRM and MERO) detailing transition activities and tasks, information management, communication and signatories. It is the responsibility of the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Victoria Police) to advise all agencies involved in the emergency, of the time which the formal 'response activities' terminate.

Resources acquired for the response, which are not required for recovery, remain under the control of the requesting response agency, who is also responsible for their return or disposal.

Although the termination of response activities implies the cessation of the responsibilities of Emergency Response Coordinators (Victoria Police), both they and the emergency response agencies may continue to operate in recovery through a previously agreed role.

6   Relief and Recovery Arrangements

6.1   Introduction

Emergency Relief and Recovery is a multi-agency responsibility that needs to be planned for and managed in a structured manner. The needs of the community created by an emergency will be met through a range of services and provided by both government and non-government agencies, community organisations and the private sector.

The aim of relief and recovery management is to coordinate the provision of emergency relief and recovery functions and services to affected residents, or those involved in the management of an emergency.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council has the responsibility for the coordination and delivery of relief and recovery at a local level. Relief and recovery planning should align with the "State Emergency relief and Recovery Plan"

6.2   Overview

Relief and recovery commences at the onset of an emergency. Often there will be an immediate requirement for emergency relief, which will evolve into the delivery of recovery services. Throughout the response activities there should be a steady effort to move toward recovery. At an agreed point there will be a formal transition from response to recovery between the IC, MERC, MERO, MRM and any recovery agencies.

In the initial stages of the event access to assistance will be provided through the Relief Centre. This will include meeting the essential needs of the affected community such as food, shelter, material aid and some basic financial assistance.

The Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) or a person delegated by them is to initiate relief and recovery activities as soon as possible after an emergency occurs.

Agencies with agreed relief and recovery roles and responsibilities (refer to EMMV Part 7- Emergency Management Agency Roles) need to develop and maintain their own internal operational plans that detail their capacity and strategies for undertaking these roles and responsibilities. They should develop these in consultation with communities, and regularly test them.

Developing an understanding of local, regional and state capability (which includes capacity) is critical as it enables relief and recovery coordinators to request assistance before being overwhelmed and being unable to deliver the required services.

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6.3   Relief and Recovery Escalation Process

When the requirement for relief and recovery services is beyond the capacity that can be resourced and managed at the local level the MRM may escalate this to the Regional Recovery Manager, who may in turn escalate to the State level.

Escalation builds on existing local arrangements, rather than replacing them. If assistance is required because capacity is exceeded, responsibility is retained but aided by additional support.

6.3.1 Relief and Recovery Escalation Process
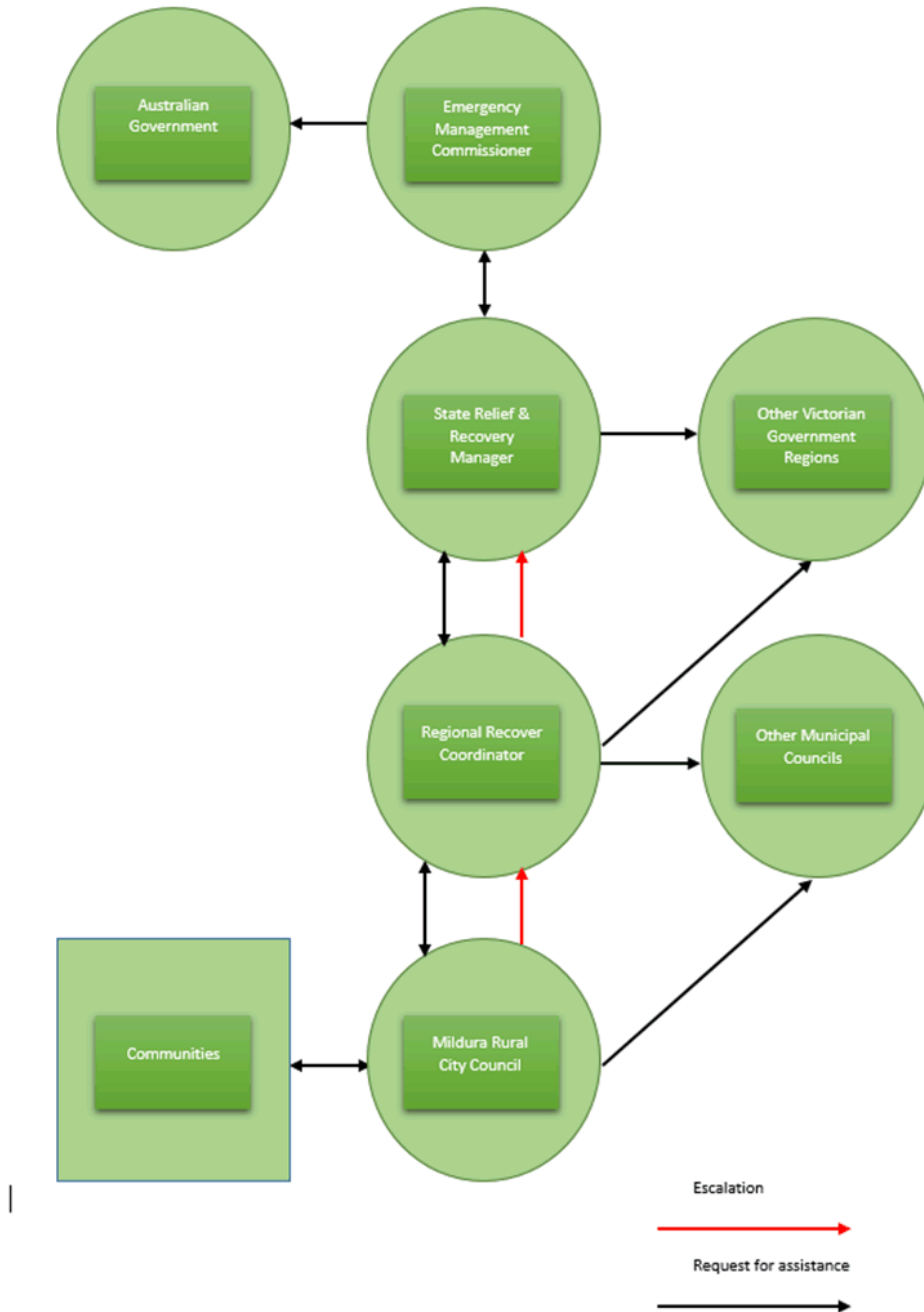
6.4   Emergency Relief

Emergency relief is a component of emergency response and is the provision of essential and urgent assistance to individuals, families and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

The principles for the coordination and delivery of relief in Victoria are:
- Emergency-affected communities receive essential support to meet their basic and immediate needs
- Relief assistance is delivered in a timely manner, in response to emergencies
- Relief promotes community safety and minimises further physical and psychological harm.
- Relief and response agencies communicate clear, relevant, timely and tailored information and advice to communities about relief services, through multiple appropriate channels
- Relief services recognise community diversity
- Relief is adaptive, based on continuing assessment of needs
- Relief supports community responsibility and resilience
- Relief is well coordinated, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Relief services are integrated into emergency management arrangements
- Emergency relief consists of a number of activities including:
- Shelter
- Community Information
- Psychosocial Support
- Health
- Reconnecting families and friends (Register-Find-Reunite)
- Food and Water
- Accommodation
- Non-Food Items (material aid)
- Emergency Financial Assistance
- Animal Welfare

State, Regional and Municipal coordination responsibilities are as follows. At State level, Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) on behalf of the Emergency Management Commissioner and at Regional level, it is the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services, at both of these levels support is provided by Red Cross. At municipal level, it is the responsibility of the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

6.4.1   Emergency Relief Activation and Deactivation – Major Incidents

It is the role of the Incident Controller to activate relief services for Major Incidents through the Municipal Recovery Manager.

It is the role of the Victoria Police IERC / MERC to ensure that the MRM has been notified by the incident controller of the emergency, to ensure relief and recovery measures and in place.

Deactivation of relief services and/or the transition from relief to recovery is a decision of the IEMT and the MRM.

6.4.2   Non-Major Emergencies, Emergency Relief (Single Incident)

Activation of relief following non-major emergencies (single incidents) is the responsibility of the Incident Controller. Swan Hill Rural City Council provides a 24/7 on call response for non-major emergency relief.

Non major emergencies relief consists of coordination of relief services such as overnight accommodation and referrals to appropriate agencies and DHHS.

Contact details for this response are provided to response agencies.

6.4.3   Emergency Relief Centres (ERC's)

SHRCC designates appropriate facilities within the municipality for the delivery of emergency relief, known as Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs). An ERC is a safe place away from the emergency where people can receive supports outlined above.

Council is responsible to ensure that identified venues are available (or can be made available at short notice) and resourced to operate as ERCs. This includes having arrangements in place to access venues, having regularly audited and updated ERC Resource Kits stored at the primary ERCs and having an up to date list of ERC Management Teams who are available to be deployed.

The locations of ERCs are listed in Appendix D

6.4.4   Support Services for Relief

The following services or information may be available at ERC's dependent on the size and complexity of the emergency.

- Health and First Aid Services;
- Register. Fine. Reunite (VicPol via Red Cross)
- Psychological Support
- Animal Welfare Services
- Emergency Financial Assistance or Information
- Information and assistance with;
  - Emergency shelter
  - Food and water
  - Material Aid (non-food items)

If municipal resources are overwhelmed, refer to *Relief and Recovery Escalation Process (see 6.3.6.1).*

6.4.4.1   Registration

Victoria Police is the responsible agency for the coordination and control of the *Register, Find, Reunite,* service of emergency affected people. The Australian Red Cross is tasked with managing and operating the service.

Register, Find, Reunite, commences during the response phase of an emergency and continues throughout relief efforts and assists to inform recovery.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council provides a registration process at ERC's for all persons who attend. This process is separate from the Victoria Police / Red Cross, *Register, Find, reunite* process.

The Council registration process will commence immediately as the relief centre is open or at an area where relief services may be provided. The data collected will allow for follow up services through relief and recovery. Information from Council relief registration shall provide data for Secondary Impact assessments and Post Emergency Needs Assessments, and funding from regional and state bodies.

6.4.4.2   Food and Water

The Australian Red Cross (ARC) is responsible for undertaking the lead role in the provision of providing food and water to relief centres. The ARC has limited capacity to respond in the Swan Hill municipality, therefore initially the SHRCC will be required to provide this support relief centres. Contact should be with the Australian Red Cross, Regional or State Duty Officer who will activate the required support and supplies from neighbouring areas.

Consultation with the IEMT should occur to ascertain the possible duration of the event as a matter of priority to assist in food and water relief.

Locally water authorities are responsible for the provision of drinking water to households and are supported by SHRCC

In circumstances where food and grocery supply logistics are required for the provision of food to the wider community, DEDJTR is the responsible agency.

Appendix I lists a number services and providers that may be available to assist with the supply of food and water. (Not contained in MEMP public copy)

6.4.4.3   Provision of Material Aid (non-food items)

Appendix J provides a list of agencies and contact details that may be able to assist with material needs. Regional coordination and support is the responsibility of the Red Cross. (Not contained in MEMP public copy)

6.4.4.4   Emergency Financial Assistance

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for the assessment, distribution of emergency financial assistance. Emergency relief payments and personal hardship grants needs assessed and are part of the financial assistance program.

This service may be available locally at a relief centre or from DHHS offices.

6.4.4.5   Animal Welfare

DEDJTR is the lead agency in relation to animal welfare. DEDJTR is supported by the RSPCA and the AVA.

The SHRCC is responsible for the housing of displaced, lost and stray animals.

6.4.4.6   Community Information

Providing information to the community in relation to relief services is the responsibility of the MRM.

6.4.4.7   Personal Support

Personal support at relief centres and through community outreach may be offered by a range of providers including SHRCC, Red Cross and Victorian Council of Churches, and is supported regionally by DHHS.

6.4.4.8   Temporary Accommodation

Council is able to provide a limited amount of emergency accommodation via a number of local accommodation providers. If requirement is beyond that capacity of the SHRCC, the MRM will escalate requirements to DHHS. (see 6.3)

The MRM will arrange for representatives from DHHS to provide this service if required.

6.5   Recovery

Recovery from emergencies is a process of assisting individuals and communities to manage the re-establishment of those elements of society necessary for their wellbeing and to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.

The process involves cooperation between all levels of government, non-government organisations, community agencies and the private sector in consideration of:

- The emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical wellbeing of individuals and communities
- The restoration of essential and community infrastructure
- The rehabilitation of the environment
- The revitalisation of the economy of the community to ensure as far as possible that the wellbeing of a community is increased.

During recovery, the Swan Hill Rural City Council will work cooperatively with the local community, local community agencies businesses and government and non-government agencies to assist affected individuals and communities to move towards a healthy, safe and functioning environment.

6.5.1   Recovery Principals

The nationally recognised disaster recovery principles that are fundamental for successful recovery involve:

- Understanding the context
- Focusing on the consequences of the emergency
- Recognising complexity
- Being community focused
- Using community-led approaches
- Ensuring coordination of all activities
- Employing effective communication
- Acknowledging and building capacity

When delivering of recovery services and in line with the above principles, it is essential to have an understanding of the following:

- Resilience of individuals and communities is respected
  - Recovery services and programs must acknowledge the inherent resilience that affected individuals and communities display. Individuals, when possessing information about the situation and available services, are able to make informed choices about their recovery. Communities, when supported with information and resources, are able to support and manage their own recovery.
- Levels of recovery operations
  - Recovery operates at multiple levels in the Victorian arrangements. In order to ensure the success of the Arrangements, it is vital that all agencies and organisations involved in management, coordination or service delivery undertake these activities in a cooperative and collaborative manner, within the agreed framework. Coordination and communication both at and between the various levels of operation will assist in ensuring the success of recovery activities for the affected community.
- Response/Recovery Interface
  - Recovery should begin as soon as possible when an emergency occurs. It is therefore essential to ensure high levels of understanding and cooperation between response coordinators and recovery coordinators at each of the levels of operation. In many instances there will be a 'handover' of coordination responsibility from the response coordinator to the recovery coordinator. Appropriate arrangements must be negotiated and documented between coordinators at the levels of operations to ensure this occurs.
- Gender
  - Men and women recover differently after an emergency, so different approaches may be needed to achieve desired outcomes.

It must also be recognised that recovery activities often occur naturally within the affected community. The emergency recovery planning and coordination activities undertaken at state, regional and municipal level are intended to provide structure for what would otherwise be ad hoc assistance to people affected by emergencies.

6.5.2   Recovery Environments

There are four key recovery environments that require a coordinated approach as part of the recovery process:

- Social environment
- Economic environment
- Natural environment
- Built environment

It should be acknowledged that each of these environments overlaps considerably, further highlighting the need for a coordinated approach.

The following outlines the objectives of aligning recovery activities along each of the environments, and the associated functional areas:

6.5.2.1   Social

Ensure people have access to the support, services and resources they need to address the impacts of the disaster, prevent the escalation of needs and minimise any long-term negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

The social recovery environment considers the impact an event may have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. This environment is primarily concerned with safety, security and shelter, health and psychosocial wellbeing.

The functional areas addressed in the social recovery environment are:

- Housing and accommodation
- Individual and household financial assistance
- Psychosocial support

- Health and medical assistance
- Community development

6.5.2.2   Economic

The objective of economic recovery is to address the economic impact of an emergency, including impacts on individuals and households, small and large businesses, industries, primary producers, tourism and the broader economy.

The economic impacts range from the immediate and intense, such as loss of personal income or damage to business premises, to long-term and chronic, such as loss of workforce due to displacement, loss of productive land or reluctance of tourists to travel to hazard-prone areas.

The functional areas addressed in the built recovery environment are local economies, businesses and agriculture.

6.5.2.3   Natural

The objective of natural environment recovery is to return the impacted areas to the pre-disturbance state.

The natural environment considers the impact that an event may have on a healthy and functioning environment, which underpins the economy and society. Components of the natural environment include: air and water quality; land degradation and contamination; plant and wildlife damage/loss; national parks; and cultural and heritage sites.

6.5.2.4   Built

To coordinate recovery information and process in order to prioritise the needs of the community in relation to essential physical infrastructure, including essential services, commercial and industrial facilities, public buildings and assets and housing.

The built recovery environment considers the impacts that an event may have on energy services, telecommunications, water and wastewater, transport, building and assets.

6.5.3   Activation of Recovery

The activation of recovery activities will, in most cases be a decision out of the IEMT. Should the MRM not be part of that team at the time, it is the responsibility of the MERO to inform the MRM of the need or potential need for recovery services.

Where the incident is within the municipality, the MRM will initiate recovery activities as required. The MRM shall convene a meeting of the Municipal Emergency Recovery Committee as soon as is practical where the emergency is of a magnitude that requires their involvement.

It is important to understand the continuum that extends from *response*, immediate relief, relief, early *recovery* to recovery and how this affects the overarching services (and the necessary *coordination* between services) to achieve the best outcomes for impacted communities. As soon as response to an *emergency* has commenced, the relief and recovery phases need to be considered and/or mobilised.

(See 5.17 Response / Recovery Transition)

6.5.4   Roles and Responsibilities

Municipal Councils are required by the *Emergency Management Act 1986* to prepare a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). This plan details the local arrangements for the management of recovery activities.

The Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) is responsible for the coordination of municipal resources in recovering from emergencies, and has full delegated powers to deploy and manage Council's resources during emergencies.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council has agreed to undertake the following functions during recovery, either by statutory obligation or voluntary actions for the wellbeing of the community:

- Restoration of services normally provided by the Municipality;
- Restoration of Municipal drains, road and bridges;
- Assessments of dwellings and buildings to ascertain a level of safety for approved use;

- Monitoring of public health matters;
- Providing local knowledge to the other recovery agencies; and
- In conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services and Community Agencies, provide services, information and facilities to assist the community in recovery from an event. This could involve the establishment of a coordination centre.

Some of these functions will have begun before recovery officially begins.

6.5.5   Local Recovery Management Principals

Management and service provision will be devolved as much as possible to the local level. State and Regional recovery strategies, services and resources will supplement and complement the municipality's initiatives rather than replace local endeavours.

Emphasis will be given to supporting and maintaining the identity, dignity and autonomy of affected individuals, families and the community. Management of recovery will occur in the context of clear and agreed arrangements, and involve processes of consultation and cooperation through established communication channels.

Wherever possible, the normal municipal management and administrative structures and practices will be used, ensuring that these structures and practices will be responsive to the special needs and circumstances of the affected community. Recovery information and recovery services need to be readily accessible to affected individuals, families and communities and responsive to their needs and expectations.

6.5.6   Municipal Emergency Recovery Committee

The Municipal Emergency Recovery Committee comprises representation of key organisations/agencies involved in the recovery process. The composition of the committee will vary depending on the type of emergency and the affected area. The membership of the committee could include community leaders and representatives of:

- Councillors
- Government agencies
- Community groups
- Affected persons
- Health Services
- Non-government agencies
- Business

6.5.7   Community Recovery Committee

Where the magnitude of the event requires community input into the recovery process a Community Recovery Committees may be established within the affected area(s).

Swan Hill Rural City Council via the MRM may offer to establish and support a Community Recovery Committees following emergencies or disasters. Council's role is to assist the community to establish a balanced and effective community recover committee.

Council's role can include:
- Convening initial interest groups and inviting relevant organisations or community leaders;
- Suggesting models that include representatives of groups from the population;
- Suggesting an independent chair; and
- Providing assistance with terms of reference and processes.

 The Committee should comprise of;
- Council representatives
- Government agencies
- Community groups
- Affected persons
- Health Services
- Non-government agencies
- Business

Functions include:
- Monitor the overall progress of the recovery process in the affected community
- Identify community needs and the resource requirements and make recommendations to appropriate recovery agencies, municipal councils and the State's recovery management structure
- Liaise, consult and negotiate, on behalf of affected communities, with recovery agencies, government departments and municipal councils.
- Liaise DHHS as Coordinator through the designated DHHS Regional Director or delegate
- Undertake specific recovery activities as determined by the circumstances and the Committee
- Consider social principles e.g. gender, children.

6.5.8   Role of DHHS in Recovery

DHHS is responsible for coordinating relief and recovery at the regional level. DHHS is supported by Red Cross in regional relief coordination.

Regional relief and recovery responsibilities to be coordinated include:

- Review and maintain regional relief and recovery plans, and lead relief and recovery planning processes – including regional planning committees.
- Develop regional post-incident relief and recovery plans and lead regional post-incident relief and recovery processes – including operational committees
- Lead regional transition from response to recovery
- Coordinate existing regional resources and activities across the relief and recovery sector
- Facilitate the regional relief and recovery sector's capability assessment, readiness and preparedness
- Coordinate regional relief and recovery sector public information and messaging
- Assess regional situation, impacts, risks, progress and resources
- Monitor local situation, impacts, risks progress and resources
- Collate and analyse information on loss and damage and resulting consequence
- Coordinate regional relief and recovery intelligence to EMV
- Provide advice to municipal councils to enable them to appropriately manage relief and recovery consequences of local level events.

The department coordinates and distributes regional level relief and recovery information for the public, through outlets including:

- Victorian Emergency Recovery Information Line (1300 799 232)
- Victoria Emergency website under the Relief and Recovery tab emergency.vic.gov.au/relief

6.5.9   Supply of Goods and Services

The municipality and other recovery agencies shall obtain and pay for goods/services through their own supply systems.

The MRM with the assistance of DHHS will co-ordinate the acquisition and supply of goods and services which cannot be provided by the municipality or participating agencies. When goods can only be obtained in such a manner, approval for payment from Department of Health and Human Services is required prior to the goods being obtained.

The MRM is responsible for the coordination and management of donated goods and monies

6.5.10   Counselling, Financial Assistance and Temporary Accommodation

Council will coordinate these services at the municipal level. However if these functions are outside the capabilities or resourcing of Council, the responsible agency is the DHHS.

6.5.11   Agencies Assisting in Recovery

Many local and regional community organisations / groups / clubs have resources that can be of use in an emergency. Many of these have been agreed to by these Community organisations / groups clubs.

It is the responsibility of the Swan Hill Rural City Council to provide the management system to co-ordinate offers of assistance from these organisations.

6.5.12   Communication / Engagement with the Community

Emergencies and disasters are highly stressful and disruptive events for those effected. Effective communication and engagement can increase the community and the individual's ability to influence their recovery and builds social cohesion.   Communities that are engaged and well informed will recover sooner and become stronger following an emergency event.

Successful engagement and communication recognise that communication with a community should be two-way, and that input and feedback should be sought and considered over an extended time.

Swan Hill Rural City Council will lead the process of community information, this should include briefings and community meetings. Single points of contact should be established and the community encouraged to obtain information that will support their recovery.

Conduits for information should be considered to reinforce recovery information and support, examples of these are:

- Churches, Pastors or Ministers;
- Police and other emergency services;
- General store and post offices;
- Local media;
- Doctors or health care providers;
- Sports coaches; or
- Community leaders

7   Ancillary Arrangements

7.1   Telecommunication Systems

DEDJTR are the lead agency for the telecommunications function in terms of restoration and recovery (EMMV Part 7). Telecommunication carriers are the supporting agency.

https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/EMMV-Part-7.pdf

7.1.1   Telephone Communications

During an emergency there is a possibility that the mobile networks could fail. Landline networks should be planned as the primary means of telecommunication during an emergency event, when available, and should be utilised to capacity.

When identifying locations for use as MOCs, Assembly Areas and Emergency Relief Centres, consideration should be given to the telecommunication facilities already in place at those locations.

Additional telephones can be provided by Telstra, upon request to the MERC, who will, in turn, submit such requests to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) for action. All costs, related to such installations are the responsibility of the requesting organisation

7.1.2   General

All agencies are responsible for the provision of their own telecommunication systems during emergencies, however any agency requiring telecommunication support should put their request to the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC).

Victoria Police being the lead agency for access to telecommunication resources.

7.2   Medical Health

Major emergencies may involve mass casualties, fatalities and patients with complex trauma. They can also lead to public health issues that could have an impact on the health of a community.

The State Health Emergency Response Plan (SHERP) outlines the arrangements for managing the pre-hospital and hospital response to emergencies that go beyond day-to-day business arrangements, ensuring that health and medical emergency responses are coordinated and appropriate.

The SHERP also focuses on the needs of children in emergencies and on psychological support to prevent long-term health effects.

The aim of these arrangements is to identify the health and medical facilities available within the Swan Hill Rural City Council Municipality.

Due to the dual nature of these arrangements, it will be divided into two components; each being addressed accordingly. These components will be **Health** and **Medical.**

7.2.1   Health

The SHCC Environmental Health Coordinator is responsible for all public health matters in the municipality.

These responsibilities in an emergency include:
- Advice on water supply;
- Ensuring hygienic food handling - safe production, storage and distribution;
- Refuse removal;
- Pest control;
- Control of infectious diseases (immunisation); and
- Assist DEDJTR with disposal of dead animals.

The Environmental Health Coordinator may also undertake inspection of food safety at Emergency Relief Centres and staging areas where there are concerns.

7.2.2   Medical

Implementation of the medical arrangements will be automatic where people are injured or require medical assistance. This automatic response will be by Ambulance Victoria and hospitals within the municipality.

Ambulance Victoria will be responsible for contacting additional first aid support when required (e.g. St. John Ambulance).

7.2.3   Medical Response Management

Medical response management at an emergency scene will be carried out by the Health Commander (an experienced Ambulance Victoria Manager) and may be delegated to a Field Emergency Medical Officer (FEMO).

The role of the Health Commander at the scene of an emergency is to:

- Arrange resources required;
- Provide triage, (prioritise patients for treatment);
- Coordinate transport of patients; and
- Determine destination of patients.

7.3   Access to Affected Areas

Victoria Police are responsible for managing access to emergency affected areas through Traffic Management Regional Emergency management (TMPs). The decision to implement and remove TMPs is done in conjunction with the Incident Controller (IC). Before access can be allowed, safety assessments of the road network must be undertaken.

Swan Hill Rural City Council is responsible for road infrastructure and hazardous tree inspections on local roads. VicRoads undertakes these assessments on VicRoads managed roads.

7.3.1   Requesting Procedure

All requests for resources to undertake road assessments should be directed to the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), who will request them through the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO).

7.4   Waste Management

Emergencies and disasters can generate significant amounts of waste and recovery materials. Disaster waste is often hazardous and unable to be recycled therefore good preplanning is required to ensure that waste facilities and landfills can either cope with a surge in waste or have a contingency plan in place to redirect waste.

Council acknowledges section 4.2.1 contingency planning of the Ministerial Guideline: making, amending and integrating the State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan and Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plans, and aims to meet the requirements.

Appendix A – MEMPC Contact List

Position	Name	Phone	AH Phone	Email
Chairperson	Cr Les McPhee SHRCC, Councillor	5036 2511	0427 319 394	ltmcphee@swanhill.vic.gov.au
MERO	Dallas Free SHRCC, Works Manager		0419 754 181 5036 2379 -24 hr	dfree@swanhill.vic.gov.au
MERO	Simon Burge (SHRCC, Senior Technical Officer, Works)	5036 2510	0429 931 305 5036 2379 -24 hr	sburge@swanhill.vic.gov.au
MERO	Ben Hawthorn (SHRCC Technical Officer, Works)	5036 2515	0400 989 243	bhawthorn@swanhill.vic.gov.au
MRM	Fiona Gormann (SHRCC, Economic Community Development Manager)	5036 2392	0429 138 309	fgormann@swanhill.vic.gov.au
Deputy MRM	Trish Barry (SHRCC, Community Care Services Coordinator)	5036 4714	0439 643 658	tbarry@swanhill.vic.gov.au
Deputy MRM	Rod EWART (SHRCC, Transition and Assessment Coordinator)	0439 643 658	0439 643 658	ewart@swanhill.vic.gov.au
MEMPC Executive Officer	Robyn Paroissien			
MFPO	Harold Rovere			hrovere@swanhill.vic.gov.au
EMPO	Peter I'Anson	5018 8186	0419 590 025	peter.ianson@mildura.vic.gov.au
MERC	Senior Sergeant Brad Bennet	5036 1600		
Ambulance Victoria Representative	Geoff Astall (Senior Team Manager)	5032 1392	0407 099 587	geoff.astall@ambulance.vic.gov.au
VICSES Regional	Peter Patterson	9256 9550	0417 334 750	peter.patterson@ses.vic.gov.au

Organisation	Contact	Phone	Phone (mobile)	Email
CFA District 18	Vacant	5036 2800		
Department of Health and Human services	Robert Bakes (Senior Emergency Management Coordinator, Loddon Mallee Region)	5434 5514	0447 312 545	robert.bakes@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Australian Red Cross	To be advised			
Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministries	Father Matthew Thomas		0409 965 243	matthew.thomas@ballarat.catholic.o rg.au
Swan Hill District Health Services	Trish Oxley (Nurse Unit Manager – Emergency Department)	5036 2800	0418 446 428	toxley@shdh.org.au
Robinvale District Health Services	Joshua Loy (Maintenance Officer)	5051 8111	0427 846 352	jloy@rdhs.com.au
Lower Murray Water	David Girdwood (Executive Manager Southern Region)	5036 2150	0437 851 564	David.Girdwood@lmw.vic.gov.au
Goulburn Murray Water	Ross Stanton (Customer Service Manager)	54 505 357	0417 515 769	ross.stanton@gmwater.com.au
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water	Brenten Hogan (Area Manager – Mallee Region)		0429 944 534	brentenhogan@gwmwater.org.au
Regional Roads Victoria	Jeff Blackie (Team Leader Asset Delivery)	5434 5094		jeff.blackie@roads.vic.gov.au
Department Environment Land Water and Planning – Forest Fire Management Victoria.	Travis Storer (Team Leader Fire Training and Capability)		0429 050 869	Travis.Storer@delwp.vic.gov.au
Parks Victoria	Dahle Jobling (Ranger Team Leader Fire and Emergency I Northern Murray Grasslands)		0408 383 761	dahle.jobling@parks.vic.gov.au
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - Agriculture Victoria	Darryl Pearl (Land Management Extension officer and Senior Officer Relief and Recovery Coordination Biosecurity and Agriculture Services)	5036 4831	0417432711	darryl.pearl@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Appendix B – MEMP Distribution List

Electronic copies are the preferred manner of distribution.   Hard copies can be provided if requested

Distribution

Master Copy – held by Municipal Emergency Resource Officer

MEMPC Members

All members of the MEMPC

Adjoining Municipalities

Mildura Rural City Council
Buloke Shire Council
Gannawarra Shire Council
Balranald Shire Council
Murray River Council

Victoria Police

Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator – Swan Hill Rural City Council
Regional Emergency Response Coordinator
Swan Hill Police Station
Robinvale Police Station
Manangatang Police Station
Piangil Police Station
Nyah Police Station
Lake Boga Police Station

Country Fire Authority

District 18 Head Quarters, Swan Hill
District 18 Operations Manager, Swan Hill
Swan Hill Fire Brigade

State Emergency Service

Regional Operations Manager
Regional Operations Officer
Swan Hill Unit

Department Health and Human Services

DHHS Swan Hill Office Manager
Senior Emergency Management Coordinator, Loddon Mallee Region

Other Agencies

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - Agriculture Victoria
Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning, Irymple, Swan Hill
Forrest Fire Management, Irymple, Swan Hill
Parks Victoria, Swan Hill
Ambulance Victoria, Swan hill
Swan Hill Health Services
Robinvale Health Services
Lower Murray Water - Swan Hill
Goulburn Murray Water – Kerang
Grampian Wimmera Mallee Water – Swan Hill

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Municipal Emergency Resource Officers
Municipal Recovery Manager
Municipal Fire Prevention Officer
Environmental Health Coordinator

Appendix C – Plans and Guidelines

Municipal Fire Management Plan

The Municipal Fire Prevention Officer is responsible for the maintenance and amendment of this plan. The Plan is amended and re-confirmed in November each year. Copies are held by Council's MFPO and CFA Regional Headquarters and are also available from Council's website:
(http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/plans-and-strategies/municipal-fire-management-plan/)

Township Bushfire Mitigation Plan

The Township Bushfire Mitigation Plan has been prepared with the aim to mitigate the risk of bushfire to six townships within the Swan Hill Municipality. Townships detailed within the plan are considered the municipalities most at risk to a bushfire. The plan is available on Council's website:
https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/plans-and-strategies/emergency-management/

Municipal Flood Emergency Plan

A Flood Response Plan for the Municipality has been prepared with the aim of providing a framework for the prevention of, response to, and recovery from any flood emergency within the Rural City of Swan Hill. Flood Sub Committee members hold copies of these plans, and are available on VICSES website (www.ses.vic.gov.au) and Council's website:
https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/plans-and-strategies/emergency-management/

Heat Health Plan

The Heat Health Plan has been developed as part of Council's Emergency Management planning. The aim of the heat Health Plan is to prepare for, and respond to, the occurrence of a heat health events and heat waves in Swan Hill Rural City Council. By doing so, reducing the impact on the community and particularly those deemed more vulnerable to heat health events. The Public Health and Regulatory Services Coordinator is responsible for the maintenance and amendment of this plan. The plan is reviewed annually. Copies are available for download on Council's website:
https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/plans-and-strategies/emergency-management/

Influenza Pandemic Plan

Council, as part of its emergency management planning, has put into place an Influenza Pandemic Plan. Whilst the likelihood of an influenza pandemic is low, the effects on the organisation in such an event could be devastating. The Public Health and Regulatory Services Coordinator is responsible for the maintenance and amendment of this plan. The plan is reviewed annually. Copies are available from the Public Health Department of the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Hazardous Materials Sub-Plan

The Hazardous Materials sub-plan has been developed as part of Council's Emergency Management planning. The aim of the sub-plan is to consider the threats of hazardous materials incidents occurring at specific facilities or on roads within the municipality. The plan is reviewed annually or following a significant incident. Copies are available for download on Council's website:
https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/plans-and-strategies/emergency-management/

Appendix D - Emergency Relief Centres

The following Emergency Relief Centres have been assessed and found to be potentially suitable for use in times of an emergency. Careful consideration must be given to the prevailing circumstances and the number of people needing assistance when selecting a site or sites.

Swan Hill	Swan Hill Race Course and Basketball Stadium
	Swan Hill Showgrounds Leisure Centre
	Ken Harrison reserve Complex
Robinvale	Robinvale Community Centre
	Riverside Park / Leisure Centre
Lake Boga	Lake Boga Community Centre
Nyah / Nyah West	Nyah Community Centre
Manangatang	Manangatang community Centre

Locations should be:
• Safe from threat.
• Planned evacuation routes should the threat change.
• Adequate facilities (see below).
• Adequate parking and access. The possibility of evacuees being disabled or frail, need to be taken into account.
• Available for the perceived duration of the emergency.
• In accordance with Municipal Planning.

Management:
• A municipal person in charge, present at all times and be identifiable.
• Necessary Relief Centre personnel rostered.
• Ongoing contact with liaison personnel from other organisations.
• Planned system for providing information to the public and other agencies.
• Security of people and possessions.

Other Organisations:
Members of other organisations may be represented at an Emergency Relief Centre, e.g:
• Red Cross
• Salvation Army
• DHHS
• Ambulance Services / First Aid
• Community Groups
• Insurance Industry
• Legal Representatives
• VCC Emergencies Ministry

Facilities:
• Separate areas for particular groups. For example, play area for children.
• Tables and chairs for all Centre function personnel (registration etc.).
• Telephones for Centre personnel.
• Telephones for evacuees.
• Toilets.
• Personal hygiene facilities
• Eating facilities
• Notice Board.
• Tea and coffee making.
• First Aid.

Appendix E – Terms and Abbreviations

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Act	N/A	Either the *Emergency Management Act 1986* or *Emergency Management Act 2013* or both.
Affected Area	N/A	An affected area for the purposes of managing response and recovery is the entire geographic area affected in any significant way by an emergency.
Agency	N/A	A Government agency or a non-Government agency.
Ambulance Victoria	AV	Statutory provider of pre-hospital emergency care and ambulance services in Victoria.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority	AMSA	Provide the infrastructure for safety of navigation in Australian waters, and maintain a national search and rescue service for the maritime and aviation sectors.
Bureau of Meteorology	BOM	Agency of the Australian Government responsible for providing weather services to Australia and surrounding areas.
Catchment Management Authority	CMA	CMA's primary responsibility is to ensure that natural resources in the region are managed in an integrated and ecologically sustainable way.
Community Emergency Risk Assessment	CERA	A framework for considering and improving the safety and resilience of their community from hazards and emergencies.
Command	N/A	The direction of members and resources of an agency in the performance of the organisation's roles and tasks. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement within an agency. Command relates to agencies and operates vertically within an agency.
Control	N/A	The overall direction of response activities in an emergency situation. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency response plan, and causes with it the responsibility for tasking and co-ordinating other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across agencies.
Control Agency	N/A	The agency identified in State Emergency Response Plan which is primarily responsible for responding to a specified emergency.
Co-ordination	N/A	The bringing together of agencies and elements to ensure effective response to emergencies and is primarily concerned with the systematic acquisition and application of resources (agency, labour and equipment) in accordance with the requirements imposed by the emergency or emergencies.
Counselling	N/A	The provision of psychological support and advice to persons affected by an emergency.
Country Fire Authority	CFA	Volunteer and career fire service that provides firefighting and emergency services to rural areas and regional towns in Victoria, and to portions of the outer suburban areas of Melbourne.

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Agriculture Victoria	DJPR Ag Vic	The department works closely with Emergency Management Victoria, Government, Industry and the Community to help ensure Victoria has the resilience to survive, adapt and grow in the face of shocks and stresses it may experience. This includes delivering before, during and after activities for emergency management and working with critical infrastructure.
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	DELWP	State government department responsible for protecting the environment, management of natural resources, managing water resources, planning, local government, fire and emergency management and property and land titles.
Department of Health and Human Services	DHHS	Government department responsible for health, ambulance services, families and children, youth affairs, public housing, disability, ageing, mental health and sport policy.
Emergency	N/A	Emergency means an emergency due to the actual or imminent occurrence of an event which in any way endangers or threatens to endanger the safety or health of any person in Victoria or which destroys or damages, or threatens to destroy or damage any property in Victoria, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing: an earthquake, flood, windstorm or other natural event; a fire; an explosion; a road accident or any other accident; a plague or an epidemic; a warlike act, whether directed at Victoria or a part of Victoria or at any other State or Territory of the Commonwealth; or a hijack, siege or riot.
Emergency Accommodation	N/A	Accommodation provided for individuals or families affected by an emergency. It is separate to emergency shelter. This accommodation includes caravans and suchlike, and will normally be arranged by the recovery agency.
Emergency Area	N/A	Means an emergency area declared under Section 36A of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*.
Emergency Management	EM	Organisation and management of the resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies (preparedness, response and recovery)
Emergency Relief	N/A	Emergency Relief is defined as 'the provision of essential needs to individuals, families and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency'.
Emergency Relief Centre	ERC	Centres established to provide groups of persons with any or all of the services, of the functional areas of emergency relief.

Emergency Management Liaison Officer	EMLO	An Officer designated by his agency to represent it and who provides a communication link with his agency to the ICC.
Emergency Shelter	N/A	An emergency shelter is a place for people to live temporarily when they cannot live in their previous residence.
Evacuation	N/A	The planned relocation of persons from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas and eventual return. The decision to evacuate rests with the Control Agency in conjunction with police and available expert advice.
Financial Assistance	N/A	Payments made to people affected by emergencies by various agencies.
Functional Areas	N/A	The categorisation of services required for Emergency Relief for the purposes of allocating responsibility to nominated agencies. These are: Catering Community Organisations Emergency Accommodation Emergency Grants, Counselling and Temporary Accommodation Material Needs Registration (Register, Find, Reunite –(RFR))
Government Agencies	N/A	Agencies may be either Victorian Public Service or Victorian Public Entities
Incident Controller	IC	An officer appointed by the control authority responsible for the resolution of an emergency.
Incident Emergency Response Coordinator	IERC	The Incident Emergency Response Coordinator (IERC) is usually the senior member of Victoria Police at the initial scene of an emergency or at the place where control is being exercised at incident level.
Material needs	N/A	The provision of clothing, bedding and personal requisites, during "Emergency Relief".
Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator	MERC	The member of Victoria Police appointed as an emergency response coordinator for each municipal district is known as a MERC. The MERC is responsible for bringing together agencies and resources within a municipal district to support the response to emergencies.
Municipal Emergency Management Plan	MEMP	Municipal plan for prevention of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur in the Swan Hill Rural City Council municipality.
Municipal Emergency Planning Committee	MEMPC	The Committee, at municipal level, is responsible for the formation and maintenance of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).
Municipal Emergency Management Team	MEMT	The Municipal Emergency Management Team is a key municipal decision making group that includes the MERC, MERO and MRM and performs a leadership role in the MOC. There is a constant information flow and regular consultation between these positions.

Municipal Operations Centre	MOC	A centre or area established for the functions of the Municipal Emergency Management Team (MEMT)
Municipal Emergency Resource Officer	MERO	The person appointed by the Municipality responsible to council for the co-ordination of municipal owned or controlled resources in emergencies.
Municipal Recovery Manager	MRM	The person appointed by the Municipality responsible to council for the co-ordination of municipal recovery activities after emergencies.
Municipality	N/A	The area contained within the defined boundaries of local Government responsibility.
Register Find Reunite	RFR	The recording of emergency victims for satisfying inquiries regarding the whereabouts of persons so affected. Instigated by Victoria Police, undertaken by Australian Red Cross
Non-government Organisation	NGO	Any agency group or business that is not a government run organisation.
Personal Hardship Grants	N/A	A term given to a series of payments comprising emergency grants. Temporary Living Expense Grant and Re-establishment Grants. Emergency grants are payable for natural emergencies, fires, floods etc. The other grants are only payable after large-scale emergencies when approved by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.
Recovery	N/A	The process by which affected persons and communities are assisted to recover to a proper level of functioning. It commences as soon as practicable after the impact of an emergency, and usually continues long after cessation of response activities. Refer also to the State Disaster Recovery Plan.
Recovery Agency	N/A	An agency that assists individuals, families and communities to attain a proper level of functioning, Providing information, specialist services and resources, and may include Commonwealth, State and local government and non-government agencies.
Region	N/A	A geographic area comprising a number of municipal districts.
Relief Centres	N/A	See Emergency Relief Centres.
Response	N/A	Response involves the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue services to those affected.
Staging Area	SA	A location designated and used during emergencies for the assembly of control or support personnel prior to deployment.
Resource Supplementation	N/A	Those resources requested under emergency supply unable to be obtained by control or support agencies.
Support Agency	N/A	A government or non-government agency which provides essential services, personnel, or material to support or assist a control agency or affected persons.

Appendix F – Maps

Public Copies

Maps are available to download on Council's website www.swanhill.vic.gov.au free of charge.

Hard copies also are available from the following locations for a prescribed fee.

Swan Hill Business Centre	Robinvale Resource Centre
45 Splatt Street Swan Hill 3585	72 Herbert Street Robinvale 3549
Phone: 5036 2333 Fax: 5036 2340	Phone: 5051 8000 Fax: 5051 8010
Monday to Friday	Monday to Friday
8:30am to 5pm	8:30am to 5pm
Email: council@swanhill.vic.gov.au	Email: council@swanhill.vic.gov.au

Emergency Response Activity

Maps can be provided for emergency response activities via the MERO

Appendix G - Joint Standard Operative Procedure SOP-J03.12

EMV EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VICTORIA

Joint Standard Operating Procedure

S O P

J03.12

JOINT SOP	
Title	Evacuation for major emergencies
Purpose	To standardise procedures for the withdrawal and eventual return of persons impacted by Major Emergencies.
Scope	This Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) relates to the responsibilities of applicable agencies, through the five stages of evacuation; decision, warning, withdrawal, shelter and return, and applies to Incident Controllers and agencies who are required to perform tasks in the event of an evacuation. This JSOP applies to major emergencies requiring evacuation of community members from an incident area. The principles of the JSOP may applied for evacuation during non-major emergencies This JSOP is limited to emergencies that require the movement of people to a safer place. Emergencies that provide no alternative but to 'shelter in indoors' need to be considered outside or in addition to this JSOP. The role of Evacuation Manager is the responsibility of Victoria Police. Any reference to Evacuation managers in this JSOP is to be read in conjunction with Victoria Police policy and protocols.
Applicable Agencies	This procedure applies to the following agency personnel; • CFA • DELWP (FFMVic) • MFB • VICSES **Note**: Victoria Police discharge their responsibilities for evacuation as per their agency policies and procedures.
Content	The procedural contents of this JSOP are: • Step 1: Decision to evacuate • Step 2: Warning • Step 3: Withdrawal • Step 4: Shelter • Step 5: Return • Schedule 1: Consideration of Evacuation during an Emergency • Schedule 2: Recommendation to Evacuate • Schedule 3: Consideration for Return of Evacuees after an Evacuation • Schedule 4: Recommendation- Safe to Return • Schedule 5: Evacuation Responsibilities Flow Chart

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S O P

J03.12

Responsibilities	Incident Controller, Evacuation Manager, Victoria Police, Incident Health Commander, Municipal Council, DHHS.
Definitions	The following definitions apply to this procedure:

Evacuation
The planned relocation of persons from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas and eventual return. The purpose of an evacuation is to use distance to separate the people from the danger created by the emergency.

Major Emergency

(a) A large or complex emergency (however caused) which:

  a. Has the potential to cause or is causing loss of life and extensive damage to property, infrastructure or the environment; or

  b. Has the potential to have or is having significant adverse consequences for the Victorian community or part of the Victorian community; or

  c. Requires the involvement of 2 or more agencies to respond to the emergency; or

(b) A Class 1 emergency; or

(c) A Class 2 emergency

Shelter in Indoors
The process by which members of the public are asked to taking shelter indoors to provide a level of protection from the impact or consequences of an emergency.

PROCEDURE

1. **Decision to Evacuate**

    1.1. A recommendation to evacuate should only be made when this is expected to offer a higher level of protection for members of the public than other options, and can be achieved without endangering response agency personnel.

    1.2. Any consideration of a recommendation to evacuate should be made in accordance with the State Emergency Response Plan, any local emergency management and evacuation plans in place and this JSOP.

    1.3. In making the decision on recommending to evacuate an area, the Incident Controller shall:

        1.3.1. Give consideration to the points identified in Schedule 1; and

        1.3.2. Record the final decision in their log book, as a minimum, and where practicable the key considerations for or against a recommendation to evacuate on the proforma in Schedule 1.

    1.4. In urgent circumstances requiring evacuation the Incident controller will immediately disseminate the recommendation to evacuate, irrespective of whether or not they have contacted Victoria Police and completed the Recommendation to Evacuate form, in Schedule 2.

1.5. Where the Incident Controller decides to recommend that people should evacuate, the IC is urgently required to communicate this decision to:

    1.5.1. Victoria Police representative present, (in accordance with Schedule 2);

    1.5.2. Incident Management Team (IMT);

    1.5.3. Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT);

    1.5.4. Up the Line of Control and/or the agency chain of command; and

    1.5.5. Incident personnel via the responsible IMT functional leaders.

1.6. Victoria Police members may use VP Form 682 and other policies to guide their actions in the evacuation stages. These documents are aligned to this JSOP and schedules.

1.7. The Incident Controller may, depending on the circumstances, delegate the function of the management of an evacuation to a Deputy Incident Controller, or an Evacuation Manager, however the decision to recommend an evacuation remains with the Incident Controller.

    1.7.1. The appointment of a Deputy Incident Controller should consistent with JSOP 3.08 Appointment of Regional and Level 3 Incident Controllers.

1.8. The IMT shall give consideration to the impact of a decision to recommend evacuation on the management of the emergency.

1.9. In some urgent life threatening circumstances, and in an effort to preserve life, the decision to recommend evacuation may be made by any agency representative. In this circumstance, the Incident Controller is required to be notified of the decision as soon as possible.

1.10. If an evacuation is recommended, the Incident Controller should give consideration to the duration of the evacuation and document in Schedule 1.

2. Warning

2.1. If the Incident Controller recommends evacuation of a given area, the Incident Controller is required to:

    2.1.1. Give priority to communicating the recommendation to evacuate to the public, in consultation with Victoria Police, where required;

    2.1.2. Issue the recommendation to evacuate using appropriate tools and/or methods;

    2.1.3. Ensure that all recommendations to evacuate refer, where appropriate, to any other 'emergency warnings' issued for the area recommended to be evacuated; and

    2.1.4. Ensure that all information releases regarding a recommendation to evacuate include an estimated time, beyond which it may be too dangerous to evacuate.

2.2. Where authorisation of the Incident Controller is not practicable and an extreme and imminent threat to life may exist, an evacuation message can be issued by any agency personnel.

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3. Withdrawal

   3.1. On receipt of a recommendation to evacuate by the Incident Controller, Victoria Police will ensure an Evacuation Manager is appointed. This role may already be nominated or in place in anticipation of an emergency that may require evacuation.

   3.2. The Evacuation Manager will:

     3.2.1. Ensure that they have ascertained all necessary information from the Incident Controller;

     3.2.2. Record all relevant information and ensure resources required to effect evacuation are available;

     3.2.3. Sectorise and prioritise the affected area and consider assembly areas if required;

     3.2.4. Identify transport options;

     3.2.5. Develop and communicate a traffic management plan (in consultation with the Traffic Management Manager) ensuring egress routes are clearly identified and consider welfare/ first aid options on route;

     3.2.6. Ascertain a list of vulnerable people/ facilities in the area and consider their relocation in consultation with the Health Commander;

     3.2.7. Identify relief options and determine the most appropriate form of relief in consultation with the Incident Controller and the IEMT; and

     3.2.8. Activate a registration system for relocated people.

   3.3. During the withdrawal stage the Evacuation Manager should consult with the Health Commander in relation to:

     3.3.1. Managing the withdrawal of identified vulnerable persons from health and aged care facilities;

     3.3.2. Support the withdrawal of identified vulnerable people who have health related needs; and

     3.3.3. Support the health needs of the community once evacuated.

   3.4. The Evacuation Manager should communicate withdrawal decisions and maintain ongoing communications with the Incident Controller, Health Commander, IEMT, Municipal Council(s) and support agencies. This includes reporting progress and completion of withdrawal actions.

4. Shelter

   4.1. Emergency shelter options should be provided following an evacuation for as long as it is required until other accommodation arrangements are made.

   4.2. Emergency shelter may include:

     4.2.1. Assembly areas and/or safer locations; and/or

     4.2.2. Emergency Relief (including emergency relief centres).

   4.3. The decision of shelter options should be made in consultation with the Incident Controller, Victoria Police and the relevant municipal council.

4.4.   General Considerations for shelter should include:

    4.4.1. Registrations;

    4.4.2. Public information;

    4.4.3. Basic needs (water, food) including sanitation.

    4.4.4. Contingency arrangements;

    4.4.5. Animal welfare;

    4.4.6. Health and safety including security;

    4.4.7. Exit strategies; and

    4.4.8. Link to recovery information.

4.5.   The Evacuation Manager will communicate shelter decisions and maintain ongoing communications with the Incident Controller, Health Commander, Municipal Council(s) and support agencies.

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5. Return

5.1.   In making the decision for or against allowing members of the public to return to the area, the Incident Controller, in consultation with the Evacuation Manager is required to complete schedule 4

5.2.   The Incident Controller or Evacuation Manager shall:

    5.2.1. Give consideration to the points identified in Schedule 3; and

    5.2.2. Record the final decision in their log book, as a minimum, and where practicable the key considerations for or against a recommendation of safe to return on the proforma in Schedule 3.

    5.2.3. Victoria Police members may use VP Form 682, 682A and other policies to guide their actions in the evacuation stages. These documents are aligned to this JSOP and schedules

5.3.   Where the Incident Controller or Evacuation Manager decides to allow people to return to the area, the Incident Controller or Evacuation Manager is required to immediately communicate this decision to:

    5.3.1. Victoria Police representative present, (in accordance with Schedule 4);

    5.3.2. Incident Management Team (IMT);

    5.3.3. Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT);

    5.3.4. Up the Line of Control and/or the agency chain of command;

    5.3.5. Incident personnel via the responsible IMT functional leaders.

5.4.   The Evacuation Manager is responsible for planning and managing the return of evacuated people with the assistance of other agencies where required.

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SAFETY

Protection and preservation of life is paramount. This includes:
    • Safety of emergency response personnel
    • Safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists
 	
In the application of this JSOP the following safety considerations apply:
 	
    • Recommendation to evacuation need to consider is the evacuation process can be achieved without endangering response agency personnel.

REFERENCE

Related Documents	State Emergency Response Plan (EMMV Part 3) AIDR Evacuation Planning – Handbook 4 (2013) Evacuation Guidelines (EMMV Part 8- Appendix 9) SOP J03.08 Appointment of Regional and Level 3 Incident Controllers. SOP J03.10 Traffic Management Victoria Police Manual – Emergency Response Victoria Police Evacuation Guidance Card. VP Form 682 and VP Form 682A
Environment	Nil

REVIEW	
Date Issue	4 September 2017
Date Effective	1 October 2017
Date to be Reviewed	September 2020
Date to Cease	N/A

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AUTHORITY		

The Emergency Management Commissioner has issued this SOP under section 50 of the Emergency Management Act 2013.

Approved	Signature	Date
Craig Lapsley Emergency Management Commissioner		

Endorsed	Signature	Date
Steve Warrington Chief Officer, CFA		
Stephanie Rotarangi Chief Fire Officer, DELWP (FFMVic)		
Greg Leach Acting Chief Officer, MFB		
David Baker Acting Chief Officer Operations VICSES		

Schedule 1

Consideration of Evacuation during an Emergency	
Incident Controller's considerations	
The Incident Controller should actively assess the following issues, when considering whether to recommend that members of the public evacuate a given area:	

	Issue	Incident Controller's Comments
Impact	What community is likely to be impacted by the emergency? (Whole, part, or single sites? Attach map if appropriate)	
	What is the current and expected threat to the community, what are the trigger points and what is the time to impact?	
	How confident are you that you have the resources you need or are likely to need to successfully suppress/mitigate the risk?	
	Is there time for an evacuation to be implemented?	
	What is the expected duration of the event?	
	Would the time to impact on the community require immediate evacuation or is there time prepare the community to evacuate?	
Community preparedness	How well prepared is the community you are considering for a recommendation for evacuation? Is there a plan to assist with evacuation?	
	Are there any identified vulnerable facilities or individuals that need to be considered?	
	Has consideration been given to self-evacuees? (people who have already left the area) Do communications plans and registration of evacuee need to consider for these people?	
	Has consideration been given to people who will choose not to evacuate or are left behind?	
	Are there any events and/or activities that have brought travellers into the area? Are there Emergency Management Plans or similar in place for the event, to assist with evacuation?	
Resourcing	Does the control agency have adequate resources to help Victoria Police in managing the evacuation?	
	Does the control agency and support agencies have adequate resources to protect evacuees during and after the evacuation?	
	Does the IMT and/or Incident Controller have the resources to liaise with Victoria Police on evacuation?	
	Is there an adequate location(s) for the community to evacuate to?	
	Is there a safe route for evacuation?	
	Have you consulted with the members of the IEMT and the Evacuation Manager or Emergency Response Coordinator and Health Commander?	

Recommend evacuation of _____ (specify area)	Yes	No

Incident Controller's name: Signature: Date/Time:

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Schedule 2

Recommendation to Evacuate	
Incident Name:	
Date / Time:	
Incident Controller:	
Advice to Victoria Police:	It is recommended that all members of the public located in the following area: (attach map if needed) .... due to the threat posed by the ....incident be advised to: ☐ – Prepare to Evacuate from ....hrs ....date And/or ☐ – Evacuate from ....hrs ....date and seek shelter at: ....
Preferred route of travel to the place of shelter:	Evacuees should travel via: ....
Community Advice: The following methods have been used to advise the community to Prepare to Evacuate and/or Evacuate Now:	Public Information Warning Platform ☐ Emergency Alert ☐ Other .... Other .... Other ....
This advice is current to:	.... hrs. .... date. **Evacuation after this time is considered life threatening due to the potential impact of the emergency in the area nominated above.**
Signed:	..../.......... **Incident Controller** (Date/Time)
Received:	..../.......... Victoria Police/ Evacuation Manager (Date/Time)

Next to the "Advice to Victoria Police" section:

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Schedule 3

Considerations for Return of Evacuees after an Evacuation		
Incident Controller's considerations The Incident Controller should actively assess the following issues, when considering whether to recommend that members of the public can return to a given area:		
	Issue	**Incident Controller's Comments**
Impacted Area	How safe is the area (e.g. presence of hazardous conditions, possibility of the threat re-occurring, structural safety.)?	
	Does there need to be consideration of crime scene preservation in the area?	
	Where deaths have occurred, or suspected to have occurred, in the evacuated area, consideration need to be given to potential restrictions to access by the Coroner or Chief Commissioner of Police.	
	What services and utilities are available to the area e.g. electricity, gas, water, sewerage, telecommunications?	
	Does a staged approach to return need to be considered?	
Community preparedness	Are there risks to the mental state and physical health of the evacuees if they return and for people who chose not to evacuate or where left behind?	
	Are there any identified vulnerable facilities or individuals that need to be considered?	
	Will goods and services be available for return of evacuees?	
	Are there risks to the economy and livelihood of the community if evacuees are unable to return?	
	What are there alternative options to immediate return for the community?	
	Has consideration been given to potential self-evacuees? (people who left the area prior to the recommendation to evacuate) Ensure that communications plans and notification to evacuees consider these people.	
	Are community recovery processes in place to assist the community?	
Resourcing	Are there adequate health and welfare resources and support mechanisms to support the public to return?	
	Have members of the EMT, IEMT and the Evacuation Manager or Emergency Response Coordinator and Health Commander been consulted as part of the process?	
	Have key recovery agencies currently managing evacuees (eg relief centres and recovery coordination centres) been notified / consulted on potential return decision?	
	Do the control agency and/or Victoria Police and support agencies have adequate resources to assist with the return of evacuees?	
Recommend safe to return _____ (specify area)	**YES**	**NO**
Incident Controller's name: Signature: Date/Time:		

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Schedule 4

Recommendation - Safe to Return	
Incident Name:	-
Date / Time:	
Incident Controller:	
Advice to Victoria Police:	It is recommended that all members of the public relocated from the following area: (attach map if needed) ………………………………………………………………… can safely return to this area.

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The following roads are now safe to travel on by: (Attach additional form/ Map if needed)	Road Name	Road Location (suburb/ area)	Direction (e.g. North Bound)	Access Level (No Entry, B, C, D or Open)	Confirmed by	Agency
Please Refer to following access level: • **No Entry** - Emergency Services Only Access • **Restricted Access B** - Essential Services Assessment • **Restricted Access C** - Residents, Media, Recovery Services, B Access • **Restricted Access D** – C Access, Others Authorised (e.g. employees) • **Open**						

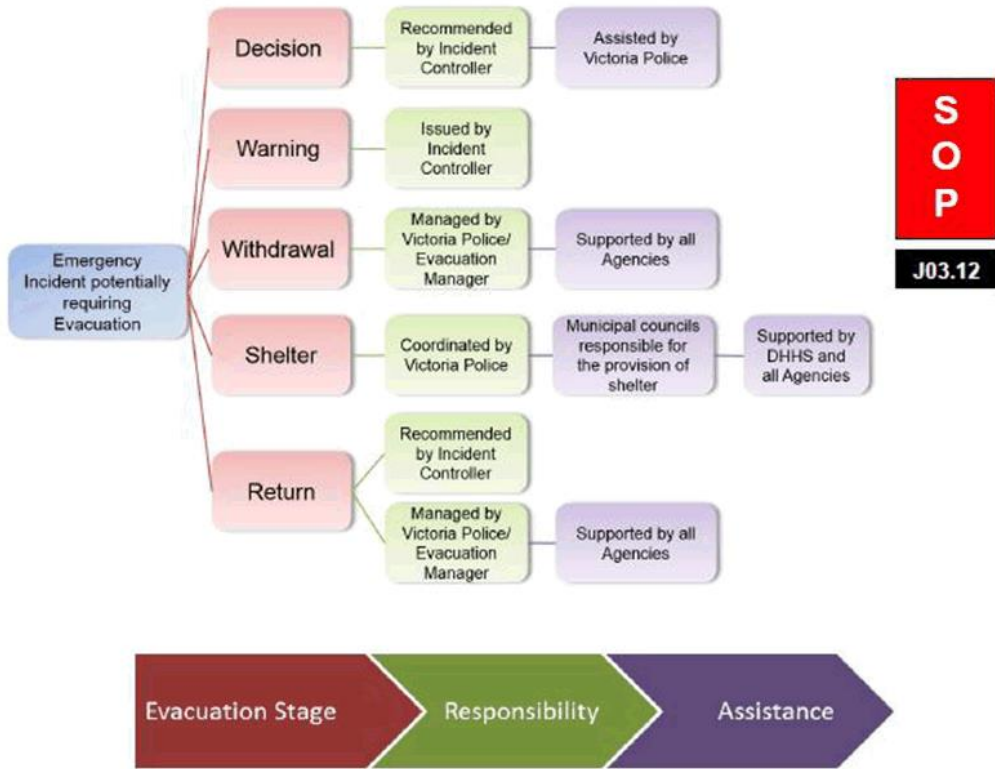| The following essential services have been maintained or restored to an acceptable level for safe return of evacuees:	Gas & Electricity ☐ Confirmed by:_____ *(Contact Name, title & Company)* Access to potable water ☐ Confirmed by:_____ *(Contact Name, title & Company)* Telecommunications ☐ Confirmed by:_____ *(Contact Name, title & Company)* Other ☐ Confirmed by:_____ *(Contact Name, title & Company)*

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The following road closures and disruptions to essential services remain in place and should be highlighted in return plans and community advice:

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Road Closures:

....

....

Estimated Restoration: ..../..............
(Date/Time)
Confirmed by:_____
(Contact Name, title & Company)

Disrupted Services:

....

....

Estimated Restoration: ..../..............
(Date/Time)
Confirmed by:_____
(Contact Name and title)

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	The following areas have been declared a crime scene:	Declared Crime Scene Area ....
	Community Advice: The following methods have been used to advise the community of the Recommendation of safe return: *(Ensure that communication methods consider evacuees remote from the area).*	Public Information Warning System ☐ Emergency Alert (if suitable) ☐ Other ....
	This advice is current to:	........./............ *(Date/Time)*
	Signed:	..../.......... **Incident Controller** (Date/Time)
	Received:	..../.......... Victoria Police/ Evacuation Manager (Date/Time)

Schedule 5

Evacuation Responsibilities Flow Chart

Evacuation Stage	Responsibility	Assistance
Emergency Incident potentially requiring Evacuation		
Decision	Recommended by Incident Controller	Assisted by Victoria Police
Warning	Issued by Incident Controller	
Withdrawal	Managed by Victoria Police/ Evacuation Manager	Supported by all Agencies
Shelter	Coordinated by Victoria Police	Municipal councils responsible for the provision of shelter — Supported by DHHS and all Agencies
Return	Recommended by Incident Controller	
	Managed by Victoria Police/ Evacuation Manager	Supported by all Agencies

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| **Evacuation Stage** | **Responsibility** | **Assistance** |

Appendix H - Extract Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESOURCE SHARING

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

Municipal
Emergency
Management
Enhancement
Group

PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

Acronyms and Definitions

Reference	Description
AFAC	Australasian Fire Authorities Council
Assisting Council	Council providing resources under this protocol
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
RERC	Regional Emergency Response Coordinator
EMA	Emergency Management Australia
EMMV	Emergency Management Manual Victoria
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MECC	Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre
MEMEG	Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Police)
MERO	Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
Receiving Council	Council that requests and receives resources under this protocol

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

1. Introduction / Background

Emergencies sometimes require councils to source additional resources to ensure that the affected community is restored to normal functioning as efficiently as possible. Some emergency response agencies have agreements for mutual aid with kindred organisations that allows them to plan appropriately for responding to large scale or complex emergencies, and this protocol is intended to provide a similar agreement for local councils.

Council emergency management resources are generally sourced from within the municipal boundaries where the emergency occurs, which can impact significantly on the resources of the responsible council, particularly for larger or more complex emergencies. The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG) have identified a need to determine an agreed position between councils regarding the provision of council resources to assist other councils with response and recovery tasks during emergencies.

The EMA Guidelines for Interstate Disaster Assistance and the AFAC Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing Guidelines were recognised as having similar requirements to this inter-council resource sharing protocol. As such, some of the key concepts and policies detailed in these documents have been applied to this protocol.

This protocol is not intended to inhibit, or diminish the effectiveness, of any existing inter-council resource sharing arrangement. Councils should however review any such existing arrangements to ensure that issues identified in this protocol are addressed.

It is recognised that local government personnel who perform duties at another council in relation to an emergency event will gain valuable skills and experience. This knowledge will provide an opportunity for the council that provided personnel to refine their MEMP and enhance performance for future emergency events.

In order to be effective this protocol will require the support and commitment of council executive staff.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to provide an agreed position between councils for the provision of inter-council assistance for response and recovery activities during an emergency. This protocol details the process for initiating requests for resources from another council and identifies associated operational and administrative requirements.

The application of this protocol is expected to enhance the capability of councils to provide the best possible outcomes for emergency management and to support the step up arrangements as detailed in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV).

The co-ordination of responding agencies involves the systematic acquisition and application of resources (personnel, equipment and facilities) in accordance with the requirements of the emergency. This protocol will facilitate appropriate timely mustering of resources ready to discharge municipal functions.

3. Emergency Management Legislation and Policy

This protocol is consistent with the concepts and policy guidelines articulated in the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria (EMMV).

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

4. Scope of Activities

This protocol applies to requests for human resources, equipment and/or facilities in relation to response or recovery activities associated with an emergency.

Duties undertaken by council staff seconded to another council for assisting with response and recovery operations should be within the scope of councils' emergency management responsibilities as set out in Part 6 of the EMMV (extract included as Appendix 2).

5. Memorandum of Understanding

Some councils may prefer to enter memoranda of understanding with neighbouring councils to formalise resource sharing arrangements, although this is not considered to be a requirement. There is an existing memorandum of understanding template included in the Municipal Public Health Emergency Management Guidelines. This memorandum of understanding was developed for the purpose of supporting partnerships between council environmental health departments, however it could be easily adapted for resource sharing in relation to emergency management. The Municipal Public Health Emergency Management Planning Guidelines are available from the Australian Institute of Environmental Health – Victorian Branch.

6. Commencement Date

Arrangements based on this protocol will commence operation immediately following the endorsement and agreement to operate within its framework by more than one council.

7. Requests for Assistance

Resources can be requested at any time during an emergency including the recovery stages. Requests for assistance may be initiated by the CEO (or person acting in this role) or by any person nominated by the CEO at the receiving council. Requests should be directed to the CEO, or any person nominated by the CEO, at the assisting council. It is noted that in many cases the person nominated by the CEO will be the MERO at both the assisting and receiving council.

Such requests may be oral or in writing, however oral requests must be confirmed in writing as soon as is practicable and in most cases will be logged at the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC).

Requests for assistance should include the following information:
- A description of the emergency for which assistance is needed;
- The number and type of personnel, equipment and/or facilities (resources) required;
- An estimate of time as to how long the resources will be required; and
- The location and time for the staging of the resources and a point of
- contact at that location.

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

The Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) or Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) should be contacted before the resources are moved. Requests for resources should be logged in the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC).

It is anticipated that a requesting council will initially seek assistance from surrounding councils. This will reduce travel times and expenses for assisting councils to respond and return.

Limitations

A council that has committed to this protocol and is requested to provide assistance should endeavour to provide the resources requested unless such resources are required for that council's own purposes.

A council that provides resources that are later required for that council's own purposes may request such resources to be returned prior to the agreed time-frame the receiving council will release those resources as soon as possible.

8. Operation

Command and Co-ordination

The council receiving assistance will be responsible for the command and management of council functions for the emergency response and recovery activities, and specifically for the management of resources made available.

The control agency will manage municipal resources assigned to response activities.

The council receiving assistance will endeavour to afford the same powers, duties, rights and privileges to staff from the assisting council as its own staff performing equivalent roles or functions.

Authority to Perform Duties

Where staff from an assisting council are requested to perform duties in specific roles, those staff must be appropriately authorised to undertake the role prior to commencement.

Induction / Occupational Health & Safety

The statutory and common law obligations which require the receiving council to provide for the health and safety of its own employees apply equally in relation to those personnel deployed from an assisting council.

The control agency will be responsible for the occupational health and safety (OH&S) of all council personnel deployed in emergency response roles.

Prior to personnel from assisting councils being deployed to assist with the emergency, the council receiving assistance will make arrangements for such personnel to be registered and appropriately briefed and debriefed. The briefing must include details of hazards and safety requirements and any measures required to respond to these, an overview of the emergency, the tasks/activities to be performed and reporting lines including the process for reporting OH&S concerns or incidents. A representative from the control agency should participate in the induction briefing sessions and it should be recorded that this induction took place.

The receiving council will be diligent in assigning appropriate roles to the personnel from an assisting council. The performance of some duties may require personnel to

PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

possess specific qualifications or accreditation. Personnel from an assisting council will not be assigned to a role if uncertainty exists regarding the competency of the person to perform those duties. Personnel from an assisting council may be reassigned to alternative duties or stood down at any time.

The receiving council will assume an employer's normal responsibilities for the wellbeing of personnel from the assisting council/s. This responsibility covers issues such as rostering, fatigue, psychological well-being, and all occupational health and safety requirements.

The assisting Council will be responsible for the payment of workers compensation premiums for their own staff and for the payment of any accident compensation payments to their own staff. The assisting council is responsible for ongoing staff support and should ensure that any notifiable workplace incidents under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (2004) that may have occurred during the emergency event are reported to Worksafe and recorded in an incident register for investigation follow up as per OH&S regulations. The assisting council should ensure that debriefing opportunities and support services are available for their staff as necessary.

Payment of Expenses

The council receiving assistance will be responsible for the reimbursement, or payment, of all expenses incurred by the assisting council, including salaries, overtime, penalties, travel and accommodation expenses and consumables utilised in conjunction with the resources provided.

The assisting council will calculate expenses and provide a detailed account for all reasonable costs incurred by the seconded staff. Salaries, overtime and penalty rates will be calculated at rates applicable to the assisting council. The assisting council may at its absolute discretion waive any part of these costs.

Claims for Reimbursement of Expenditure from the State

Claims for reimbursement of eligible municipal expenditure on defined natural disasters from the State Government may include the expenses paid to the assisting council.

Liability for Loss or Injury

It is agreed and understood that each individual council (assisting/receiving council) will be responsible for its own potential liabilities in respect to any losses arising out of activities associated with "Resource Sharing" under this protocol on the assumption that common law will prevail.

It is further agreed and understood that each council's CMP Liability Insurance Policy is extended to indemnify those councils providing the resource service/equipment (principal/assisting council) in respect of any claim able to be indemnified under the policy brought in respect of personal injury or damage to property caused by an occurrence, or for breach of professional duty arising directly and solely out of the negligent acts, errors or omissions of those councils receiving the resource service/equipment. This extension does not extend to any negligent acts, errors or omissions of the principal council, its staff or agents themselves.

Withdrawal from Protocol

A participating council may withdraw from the arrangements based on this protocol at anytime by providing written notice to the MAV.

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESOURCE SHARING

Participating Councils

A list of participating councils will be maintained by the MAV and will be available on the MAV website. The MAV will notify all councils of any changes to the protocol membership. Membership will be reviewed and confirmed on a three yearly basis by the MAV.

Councils are requested to formally committ to this protocol by signing and returning the attached letter template for this purpose.

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

(Insert Council Letterhead)

[Name]

Policy Advisor

Municipal Association Victoria

GPO Box 4326,

Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear [salutation],

Re: Protocol for Inter-council Emergency Management Resource Sharing

The _____ Council confirms its commitment to this protocol.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide an agreed position between councils
for the provision of inter-council assistance for response and recovery
activities during an emergency. This protocol details the process for initiating
requests for resources from another council and identifies associated
operational and administrative requirements.

The application of this protocol is expected to enhance the capability of
councils to provide the best possible outcomes for emergency management
and to support the step up arrangements as detailed in the Emergency
Management Manual Victoria (EMMV).

The co-ordination of responding agencies involves the systematic acquisition
and application of resources (personnel, equipment and facilities) in
accordance with the requirements of the emergency. This protocol will
facilitate appropriate timely mustering of resources ready to discharge
municipal functions.

Signed CEO or Delegated Officer.

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

Appendix 1 – Checklist

Requesting Assistance or Resources from Another Council

Action to Complete	Yes/No
CEO (or person acting in this role) or person nominated by the CEO at the receiving council to direct request for resources to the CEO at the assisting council either verbal or in writing.	
Request for resources must be confirmed in writing and should include: A description of the emergency; The number and type of personnel, equipment and/or facilities required; An estimate of how long resources will be required; and The location and time for the staging of the resources and a point of contact at that location.	
The Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) or Divisional Emergency Response Coordinator (DERC) should be contacted before resources are moved.	
Control agency to manage municipal resources assigned to response activities. Receiving council to endeavour to afford the same powers, duties, rights and privileges to staff from the assisting council as its own staff performing equivalent roles or functions.	
Staff from an assisting council must be appropriately authorised to undertake roles prior to commencement.	
Personnel from assisting council should be registered and appropriately briefed prior to being deployed. Any briefing should include: Details of hazard and safety requirements; An overview of the emergency; The tasks/activities to be performed; and Reporting lines including for OH&S incidents. A representative of the control agency should participate in this briefing.	
Receiving council should reimburse, or directly pay, for all expenses incurred by the assisting council including salaries, overtime, penalties, travel and accommodation expenses and consumables utilised in conjunction with the resources provided as outlined by the assisting council. The assisting council will calculate expenses and provide a detailed account for all reasonable costs incurred.	
Assisting council should ensure that appropriate debriefing and support services are available for their staff. The assisting council should also ensure that any workplace incidents that may have occurred during the emergency event are recorded and that WorkSafe is advised	

PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

Appendix 2 - Extract from Part 6 of the EMMV

Operational role statement for municipal councils

The operational role statement identifies the resources or services councils should provide within Victoria's emergency management arrangements, and sets out key operational management requirements.

The council is responsible for managing and coordinating municipal resources for responding to, and recovering from emergencies. *Municipal resources* include those owned by the council and those under its control if sourced from other agencies. Local and regional planning ensures that agencies' expectations of council services are based on a realistic assessment of council capability.

Councils may obtain part or all of these services or resources from outside contractors. In such cases, the council is responsible for providing the agreed resources on time, and paying the costs incurred.

Response

Response activities

A council's response activities include:

- **Establishing and operating centres and facilities** such as:
  - a municipal emergency coordination centre (MECC);
  - emergency relief centres; and
  - emergency services staging areas.

- **Providing and coordinating emergency catering:**
  - in conjunction with Red Cross and other providers;
  - for response agency personnel; and
  - for affected members of the community.

- **Facilitating the provision of information:**
  - as warnings to the community in consultation with other agencies; and
  - as information to public and media in consultation with

    control agencies.
- **Coordinating and ensuring effective transport** in the area by:
  - providing transport for those at risk;
  - clearing impassable roads, including removing trees;
  - unblocking drains; and
  - assisting with resources to partially or completely close roads and determining alternative routes.

- **Providing and coordinating equipment** for response support:
  - equipment for traffic or crowd diversion (e.g. barricades, traffic signs);
  - material to absorb spilt fluids;
  - levee or damming materials; and
  - heavy equipment for tasks such as: earth moving; clearing large material or debris; transporting large or heavy materials, water or personnel; lifting materials or personnel; and pumping water.

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PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
RESOURCE SHARING

Recovery

Recovery activities

Activities required at a local level may include, and should be documented in the MEMPlan:

Coordinating and managing:

- municipal resources through the Municipal Recovery Manager;
- the provision of material needs to affected persons;
- environmental health such as food, water, sanitation, and vector control;
- volunteer helpers; and
- public appeals.

Providing:

- community development services;

- personal support services (e.g. counselling, advocacy); and
- emergency and/or temporary accommodation.

Gathering and processing information:

- for post-impact assessments; through survey and

  determination of occupancy of damaged buildings; and by monitoring the progress of recovery.

Providing information and advice:

- through provision and staffing of recovery/information centre(s);

  information services to the affected community such as public meetings, newsletters, and advertising; and to recovery agencies and the State Government.

Organising clean-up and repair activities:

- removing debris, clearing blocks (hazard removal);
- disposing of dead, maimed or diseased stock;
- repairing/restoring infrastructure such as roads, bridges, sporting facilities, and public amenities;
- supervising and inspecting rebuilding and redevelopment; and
- providing heavy equipment for earth moving; clearing large

  material or debris; transporting large and/or heavy materials, water or personnel; and lifting materials or personnel.

Sponsorship and advocacy:

- of community recovery committees;

- of the interests of the affected community.

Councils will need to identify and negotiate with local agencies that are able to provide these services. Some services may be internally provided, others may be local agencies, State or Australian government agencies. Agencies are responsible for funding the provision of these services themselves, as these services are existing services that they already provide to the community.   Page 12 of 12

Appendix I – Food and Water Contacts
Not yet completed

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Appendix I – Food and Water Contacts
Not yet completed

Appendix J – Assistance With Material Needs
Not yet completed

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Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council

B.20.51   IRRIGATED CROPS IN THE SWAN HILL LGA 1997 TO 2018

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S12-05-02
Attachments: 1   Irrigated Crops in The Swan Hill LGA 1997 To
                                     2018 Report

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

Summary

The attached document was prepared for Swan Hill Rural City Council to provide accurate information on the status of irrigated horticulture in the Swan Hill LGA from 1997 to 2018 and provide an estimate of the value of irrigation production in 2018.

A similar document has been commissioned for broadacre crops and should be available towards the end of the year.

It is requested that Council endorses the document and agrees for the document to be made public.

Discussion

Consistent and accurate mapping of irrigated areas from 1997 to 2018 provides information on changes and trends over twenty-one years, through a wine grape boom, millennium drought, unprecedented expansion with almond plantings, a global financial crisis and, more recently, renewed investment on the back of strengthening export markets.

The SunRISE crop mapping for 2018 (representing the 2017/18 season) was also used to estimate the gross value of irrigation production in the Swan Hill LGA, based on SunRISE hectares, estimates of yield (tonnes per hectare) and price ($ per tonne) for the main irrigated crop types.

This report highlights the importance and growth of horticulture for the municipality.

 The 2018 gross value of production for irrigated crops in the Swan Hill LGA was estimated at $1.18 billion.

In 2018, in the Swan Hill LGA:

•   Permanent plantings accounted for 80% of the gross value of production for irrigated crops and seasonal crops (field crops and vegetables) accounted for 20% of the gross value

- Almond and table grape plantings accounted for 63% of the gross value for irrigated crops
- The following crop types accounted for 94% of the gross value for irrigated crops:
  - Almonds (42%)
  - Table grapes (21%)
  - Vegetables including potatoes and carrots (17%)
  - Stone fruit (8%)
  - Field crops (3%)
  - Olives (3%).

From 1997 to 2018, permanent plantings increased by 25,460 ha (+ 291%), seasonal cropping decreased by 2,260 ha (- 10%) and vacant, not irrigated, areas increased by 8,510 ha (+ 219%). The net result was an increase in the irrigated area of 23,200 ha (+ 74%) and an increase in the irrigable area of 31,710 ha (+ 90%)

This report will be used to assist Council to formulate accurate and long term strategic directions to support the development of the agricultural sector. In particular it gives Council a better understanding of labour growth and therefore indicates the present and future needs for infrastructure and housing.

This report will also be a useful tool to attract external investment to the municipality, as it demonstrates that the region is in a growth mode for housing or commercial developers.

The documented growth of permanent plantings especially in the almond and table grapes sector will guide planning decisions. Fragmentation of farming land is not desirable when taking into account the upward trend of permanent plantings and the investment involved. Being able to quantify the economic benefits from the expansion of horticulture will assist Council to assess and evaluate proposed developments and their impact on agriculture. It will be important to ensure the report is regularly updated. Council will need to budget for regular updates to ensure information is always relevant.

This report upon Council's endorsement will be published on Council's website but will also be sent to a targeted audience including State and Federal MPs, relevant Ministers, Murray Darling Basin Authority and Regional Development Victoria.

Consultation

This document was commissioned to respond to requests from the horticulture industry and the Agribusiness Advisory Committee.

Financial Implications

The document will be used to support funding applications and to provide general information about the region.

Social Implications

The report gives a snapshot of the direction of horticulture in the region. Changes in the traditional farm structure translate in population changes and in new demand for skilled positions.

Economic Implications

Horticulture is the main industry of the Swan Hill municipality and the report clearly demonstrates that the sector is buoyant and in expansion mode. With an estimated gross value of production for irrigated crops in the Swan Hill area estimated at $1.18 billion, the powerhouse effect of such an industry cannot be underestimated and judicious distribution of these findings are likely to bring in external investments to the region, multiplying the economic repercussions for the region.

Environmental Implications

Increase in irrigated crops may mean excessive demand on water resources. New plantations may mean reduction of native vegetation.

Risk Management Implications

Nil

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Assist existing businesses to expand and increase their efficiency.

Options

1.   That Council receives the document and releases it for community information.

2.   That Council does not receive the document

Recommendation

That Council receives the document and releases it for community information.

Irrigated crops in the Swan Hill LGA 1997 to 2018

31st March 2020

SunRISE

mapping & research

(formerly SunRISE 21 Inc.)

An enterprise of Sunraysia Rural Counselling Service Inc.

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SunRCS

Acknowledgements

Disclaimer

Contents

List of figures

1.   Introduction

This report was prepared for Swan Hill Rural City Council to provide accurate information on the status of irrigated horticulture in the Swan Hill LGA from 1997 to 2018 and provide an estimate of the value of irrigation production in 2018.

SunRISE Mapping and Research – mapping of irrigated crops

SunRISE Mapping and Research (SunRISE) is an enterprise of the Sunraysia Rural Counselling Service (SunRCS); a community based, not-for-profit organisation.

SunRISE has been mapping irrigated horticulture in the Lower Murray-Darling region since 1997. The crop mapping is undertaken in collaboration with irrigators, industry bodies and land and water managers.

Crops are mapped to the individual patch or variety level using scale accurate, high-resolution aerial imagery. Accurate irrigated crop areas are mapped from the imagery and crop details such as variety, year planted and irrigation method are input for property maps or interpreted from the imagery. Property maps assist farm businesses with planning and development, such as irrigation design, redevelopment, Freshcare quality assurance, spray diary records, export registration, organic certification and environmental management.

Details are also collected in collaboration with regional industry bodies for planning and management.

The privacy of individual property details is maintained and only aggregated information is published.

Analysis of the SunRISE crop mapping forms the basis of information in this report. Consistent and accurate mapping of irrigated areas from 1997 to 2018 provides information on changes and trends over twenty-one years, through a wine grape boom, millennium drought, unprecedented expansion with almond plantings, a global financial crisis and, more recently, renewed investment on the back of strengthening export markets.

The SunRISE crop mapping for 2018 (representing the 2017/18 season) was also used to estimate the gross value of irrigation production in the Swan Hill LGA, based on SunRISE hectares, estimates of yield (tonnes per hectare) and price ($ per tonne) for the main irrigated crop types.

1.1   Study area

The report covers crop areas within the Swan Hill Local Government Area (LGA) that are irrigated from the Murray River (Figure 1). These areas covered 66,960 hectares in 2018, extending along the Murray River from Lake Boga to Wemen.
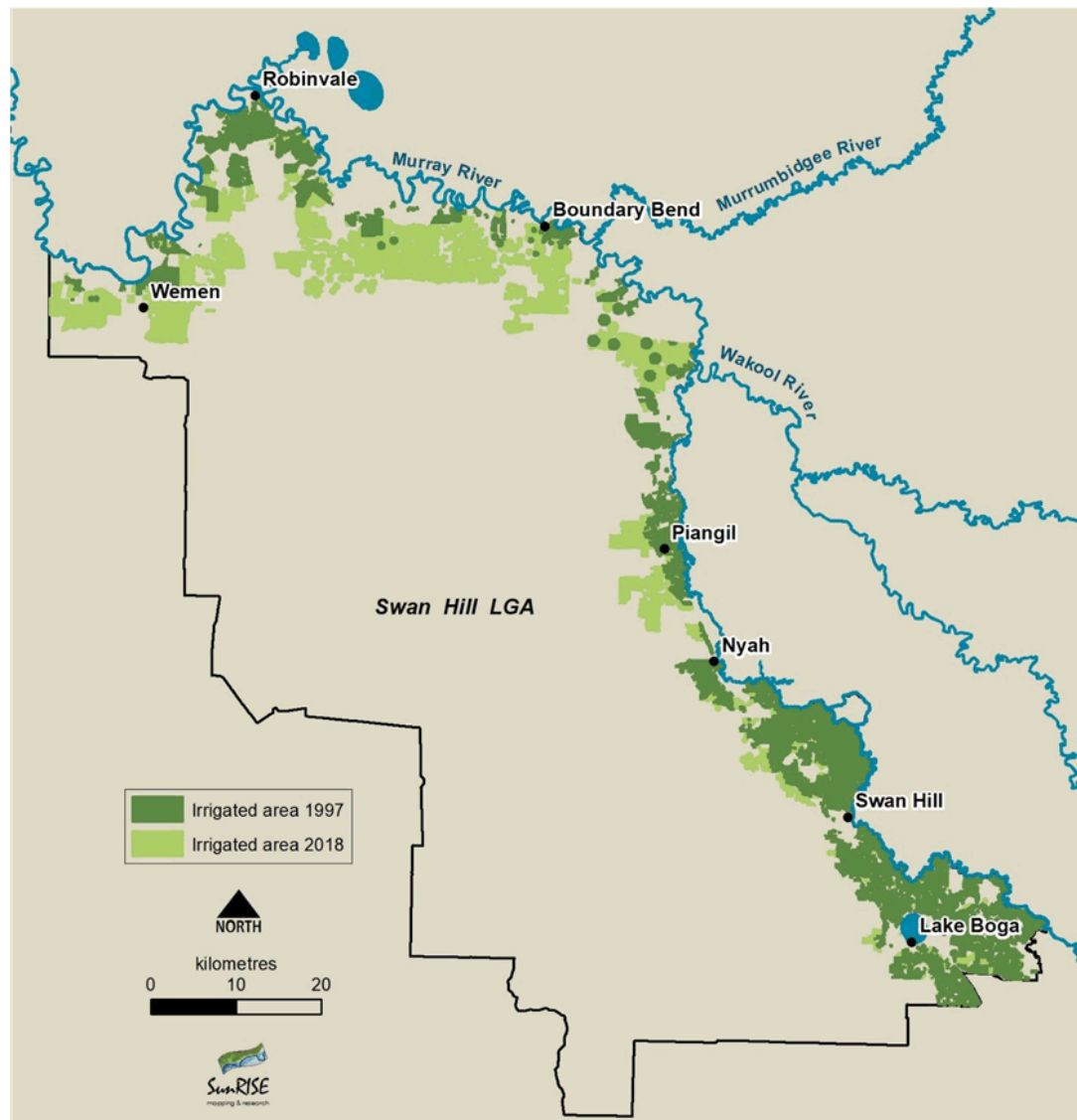
Figure 1:   Map of irrigated areas in the Swan Hill LGA

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1.2   Method

Aerial imagery

SunRISE crop mapping is based on aerial imagery that has been updated every three years since 1997 (Figure 2). The imagery is generally processed to sub-metre positional accuracy and the crop mapping has been captured at a scale of 1:2,000 or better from the imagery.

The 2018 crop mapping is based on aerial imagery acquired in February 2018 by the Coordinated Imagery Program, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Figure 2:   **Three-yearly aerial imagery used by SunRISE to map irrigated horticulture**

Information presented in this report is for the years: 1997, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018. The imagery used for each of these years was captured at the start of the year. Hence the information represents the 1996-97, 2002-03, 2005-06, 2008-09, 2011-12, 2014-15 and 2017-18 irrigation seasons respectively.

1.3   Definitions and limitations

The following definitions apply in this report.

Irrigable area

Irrigable area is the irrigated area and vacant, not irrigated, areas that were irrigated and could still be irrigated. Some vacant areas may eventually be retired or they may be in redevelopment. An increase in irrigable area can arise from new 'greenfield' development as well as expansion on existing irrigation properties; including redevelopment to more efficient planting layouts following the removal of furrow irrigation, drying racks etc.

Retired

Areas 'retired' from irrigation have undergone a change in land use that precludes them from being irrigated. SunRISE generally relies on updated aerial imagery, or digital cadastre for evidence of land use change such as residential development, buildings, sheds and dams. Areas set aside for conservation purposes are also 'retired' from the crop mapping.

Vacant

The crop mapping includes a crop type of 'vacant'. Vacant areas were irrigated, but not in the season that the crop mapping refers to. Where the vacant area was previously a permanent planting, it is termed **Vacant P**. Where the vacant area was previously a seasonal planting, such as pasture or vegetables, it is termed **Vacant S**.

Vacant areas could be in redevelopment, temporarily out of production, or dried-off indefinitely.

Limitation of areas for seasonal crops

Hectares for seasonal crops of vegetables and field crops (such as pasture) have a lesser reliability than for permanent plantings as the imagery provides only one snapshot of the season, making it difficult to determine irrigation activity in a given year. Broad-acre field crops and vegetables cover large areas and misinterpretation of a single planting can have a significant impact on accuracy of the information. Information for seasonal cropping should be treated as indicative only.

Hectare totals were rounded to the nearest five hectares. Rounding of hectares and percentages in tables may lead to small discrepancies in totals.

2.   2018 irrigated crops and gross value of production

2.1   Irrigated crop types in 2018

Figure 3 shows the main crop types irrigated in the Swan Hill LGA in 2018. The irrigable area was 66,960 ha comprising 34,200 ha (51%) of permanent plantings, 20,395 ha (31%) of seasonal crops and 12,365 ha (18%) of vacant, not irrigated areas.

The ten most dominant crop types were:

1.   almonds; 19,615 ha (29% of the irrigable area);
2.   field crops; 14,550 ha (22% of the irrigable area);
3.   table grapes; 4,410 ha (7% of the irrigable area);
4.   olives; 2,970 ha (4% of the irrigable area);
5.   stone fruit; 2,845 ha (4% of the irrigable area);
6.   vegetables other than carrots and potatoes; 2,345 ha (4% of the irrigable area);
7.   wine grapes; 2,170 ha (3% of the irrigable area);
8.   potatoes; 1,800 ha (3% of the irrigable area);
9.   carrots; 1,700 ha (3% of the irrigable area); and
10.   avocados; 560 ha (1% of the irrigable area).

	Crop type	2018 (ha)	2018 %	Description
Permanent plantings	Grape Dried	260	<1%	
	Grape Table	4,410	7%	
	Grape Wine	2,170	3%	Includes a very small proportion of juiced grapes
	Citrus	510	1%	Grapefruit, lemon, lime, mandarin, navel, other orange, pumelo, tangelo, valencia
	Fruit Avocado	560	1%	
	Fruit Olive	2,970	4%	
	Fruit Stone fruit	2,845	4%	Apricot, nectarine, peach, plum
	Fruit Other	60	<1%	Date palm, fig, mango, persimmon, pome fruit, pomegranate
	Nut Almond	19,615	29%	
	Nut Other	405	1%	Pistachio (385 ha), walnut (20 ha)
	Miscellaneous	395	1%	Aquaculture, berry, fresh flowers, nursery, passionfruit, tree plantation
		34,200	51%	
Seasonal crops	Field Crop	14,550	22%	Includes canola, cereal, cotton, cover crop, lucerne, lupin, maize, pasture
	Veg. Carrot	1,700	3%	Includes juicing and fresh carrots
	Veg. Potato	1,800	3%	Includes processed and fresh potatoes
	Veg. Other	2,345	4%	Asparagus, bean, beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, capsicum, cauliflower, chili, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, lettuce, melon, onion, pea, pumpkin, salad greens, sweet corn, tomato, zucchini
		20,395	31%	
	Vacant P	2,555	4%	Vacant (not irrigated), previously an irrigated permanent crop
	Vacant S	9,810	14%	Vacant (not irrigated), previously an irrigated seasonal crop
	Total	66,960	100%	

Figure 3:   **Irrigated crop types in the Swan Hill LGA in 2018**

2.2   Gross value of production in 2018: method

Gross value of production is the income to the producer without deduction of any costs of production. It was calculated from the area of bearing crops irrigated in 2018 sourced from the SunRISE crop mapping and average income per hectare ($/ha) derived from a range of sources (Figure 6).

Crop yields and prices vary widely for different varieties within each crop type and within a given season; yields, prices and crop values are estimated annual averages.

Bearing and non-bearing crops

Crop values were only applied to bearing crops; 29,810 ha of permanent plantings and 20,395 ha of seasonal crops (a total of 50,205 ha). Non-bearing permanent plantings were excluded from the analysis based on their age as listed in Figure 5. There were 4,390 ha of 'non-bearing' plantings in 2018, 13% of permanent plantings.

Plantings can have light crops for several years before coming into full production, in particular avocadoes and nut trees, so the allocation of 'non-bearing' is not definitive.

Crop type in 2018		Age of non-bearing plantings	Non-bearing ha	% of crop type non-bearing	Bearing ha
Permanent plantings	Grape Dried	< 3 years	40	15%	220
	Grape Table	< 3 years	700	16%	3,710
	Grape Wine	< 3 years	140	6%	2,030
	Citrus	< 5 years	95	19%	415
	Fruit Avocado	< 4 years	165	29%	395
	Fruit Olive	< 4 years	615	21%	2,355
	Fruit Stone fruit	< 4 years	500	18%	2,345
	Fruit Other	< 4 years	15	25%	45
	Nut Almond	< 5 years	1,925	10%	17,690
	Nut Other	< 7 years	185	46%	220
	Miscellaneous	< 2 years	10	3%	385
			4,390	13%	29,810

Figure 4:   Bearing and non-bearing permanent plantings in the Swan Hill LGA in 2018

Dual cropping and organic produce

There were over 1,300 ha of broad-acre areas with sub-surface drip irrigation in 2018. These areas can have a summer and winter crop; however only 400 ha of dual crops were known and factored into the value of production. If there was dual cropping across the other 900 ha, it would add $1.8 million to the value of production at a conservative $2,000 per ha.

The crop values are for conventional crops, the value of organic produce is not factored into the estimates.

Extrapolation of crop types

The SunRISE mapping did not have exact areas for all of the crops listed in Figure 6, but for permanent plantings there was at least 75% recorded in the databases, sufficient to extrapolate and arrive at weighted averages. For instance, the proportion of red and white grapes for 75% of wine grapes was known. Figures were extrapolated for the remaining 25% so that the different prices for red and white grapes ($474/ha and $344/ha respectively) could be proportionally applied.

2.3   Gross value of production for irrigated crops in 2018

Figure 5 shows an estimated gross value of production for bearing crops irrigated in the Swan Hill LGA in 2018. The value of production was calculated from bearing areas (hectares) sourced from SunRISE crop mapping and an average price ($/ha) as listed in Figure 6.

The 2018 gross value of production for irrigated crops in the Swan Hill LGA was estimated at $1.18 billion.

In 2018, in the Swan Hill LGA:

- Permanent plantings accounted for 80% of the gross value of production for irrigated crops and seasonal crops (field crops and vegetables) accounted for 20% of the gross value.
- Almond and table grape plantings accounted for 63% of the gross value for irrigated crops.
- The following crop types accounted for 94% of the gross value for irrigated crops:
    - Almonds (42%);
    - Table grapes (21%);
    - Vegetables including potatoes and carrots (17%);
    - Stone fruit (8%);
    - Field crops (3%); and
    - Olives (3%).

Crop type in 2018		Bearing ha	Value of production $ million	% of total Value	
Permanent	Grape Dried	220	$2.4	<1%	Permanent plantings $941.0 m 80%
	Grape Table	3,710	$252.1	21%	
	Grape Wine	2,030	$21.3	2%	
	Citrus	415	$9.6	1%	
	Fruit Avocado	395	$25.1	2%	
	Fruit Olive	2,355	$32.8	3%	
	Fruit Stone fruit	2,345	$91.4	8%	
	Fruit Other	45	$1.3	<1%	
	Nut Almond	17,690	$495.3	42%	
	Nut Other	220	$7.3	1%	
	Miscellaneous	385	$2.5	<1%	
Seasonal	Field Crop	14,550	$38.4[1]	3%	Seasonal crops $238.5 m 20%
	Veg. Carrot	1,700	$66.5	6%	
	Veg. Potato	1,800	$38.7	3%	
	Veg. Other	2,345	$94.9	8%	
	Total	50,205	$1,179.5	100%	

Figure 5:   Estimated gross value of production for irrigated crops in the Swan Hill LGA in 2018

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[1] Includes value for 415 ha of dual (summer and winter) cropping

2.4   Data sources for crop values in 2018

Figure 6 lists the main data sources used to estimate a gross value for crops irrigated in 2018. Where the source isn't noted, it is an estimate based on yields and prices for similar crops or information from industry websites, prices received at the Melbourne Market and people involved in the industry.

		National Value $ million	National tonnes	Average $/tonne[2]	Average yield tonnes/ha	Average $/ha
Permanent plantings	Grape Dried	$30.6	16,953	$1,805	(dried) 6.0[3]	$10,830
	Grape Table	$543.7	177,416	$3,065	22.2[4]	$67,963
	Grape Wine Red	Source: 2018 MV Utilisation Survey		$474	25.0	$11,850
	Grape Wine White			$344	25.0	$8,600
	Citrus Mandarin	Source: citrus production managers		$1,000	35.0	$35,000
	Citrus Navel			$800	30.0	$24,000
	Citrus Other			$400	30.0	$12,000
	Fruit Avocado	$543.0	77,032	$7,049	9.0[5]	$63,441
	Fruit Olive	Source: local olive oil producers		$5,350	(oil) 2.6	$13,910
	Fruit Stone fruit	$397.8	153,148	$2,597	15.0	$38,962
	Fruit Other	$5,015.4	2,657,597	$1,887	15.0	$28,308
	Nut Almond	Source: local almond producers		$8,000	(kernel) 3.5	$28,000
	Nut Pistachio	$35.4	3,200	$11,063	3.0[6]	$33,188
	Misc. Nursery	Estimate				$25,000
	Misc. Woodlot	No value assigned as predominantly non-commercial areas				$0
	Misc. Other	Estimate				$25,000
Seasonal crops	Field Cotton	Source: AgEcon 2017-18 Cotton Industry Gross Margins				$5,951
	Field Canola	Source: Irrigated Cropping Council		$580	3.0	$1,740
	Field Cereal hay			$300	10.0	$3,000
	Field Cereal grain			$370	6.0	$2,220
	Field Lucerne			$550	10.0	$5,500
	Field Maize			$400	14.0	$5,600
	Field Pasture	Source: Farm Gross Margin & Planning Guide, Rural Solutions SA				$630
	Field Other/Unknown	Estimate				$1,800
	Veg. Asparagus	$61.0	7,576	$8,052	5.0	$40,259
	Veg. Carrot	$215.7	330,655	$652	60.0	$39,140
	Veg. Melons	$124.2	215,519	$576	30.0	$17,288
	Veg. Potato	$745.9	1,388,968	$537	40.0[7]	$21,481
	Veg. Pumpkin	$68.8	119,546	$576	30.0	$17,265
	Veg. Salad Greens	$147.1	138,485	$1,062	20.0	$21,244
	Veg. Tomato	$609.9	484,073	$1,260	90.0	$113,394
	Veg. Other	$4,345.7	3,695,345	$1,176	30.0	$35,280

Figure 6:   Data sources and assumptions used to estimate the value of irrigation production in 2018

Figures shaded in grey were sourced from *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2017/18, Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited.*

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[2] Calculated from National Value / National tonnes unless otherwise stated
[3] Source: Dried Fruits Australia Database Project 2018, SunRISE Mapping and Research
[4] Based on 20 kg per vine and 1,200 vines/ha
[5] Based on Australian industry average of 9 t/ha in 2017, AgriFutures Australia
[6] Source: Pistachio Growers' Association website
[7] Based on 39 t/ha in 2017, Agricultural Statistics Australia, Potato Pro website

3.   Irrigation development from 1997 to 2018

3.1   Planting trends: permanent, seasonal & vacant areas

Figure 7 summarises planting trends in the Swan Hill LGA with respect to the proportion of permanent plantings, seasonal crops and vacant, not irrigated, areas.

From 1997 to 2018, permanent plantings increased by 25,460 ha (+ 291%), seasonal cropping decreased by 2,260 ha (- 10%) and vacant, not irrigated, areas increased by 8,510 ha (+ 219%).

The net result was an increase in the irrigated area of 23,200 ha (+ 74%) and an increase in the irrigable[8] area of 31,710 ha (+ 90%).

Permanent planting trends

Permanent plantings were on an upward trend from 1997 to 2009 with a net increase of 23,500 ha, an average of 1,958 ha per year over the twelve-year period. Expansion was largely driven by wine grape plantings in the late 1990's, almond plantings from 2001 to 2008 and olive plantings from 2005 to 2008.

This level of development ceased around 2009 with the impact of the millennium drought, 2008 global financial crisis and collapse of managed investment schemes. Relatively little development occurred from 2009 to 2015; on average permanent plantings increased by 78 ha per year over the six-year period. This trend changed from 2015 to 2018 with renewed investment and activity in irrigated horticulture. Permanent plantings increased by 1,490 ha (an average of 497 ha/year), mainly the net result of a 1,185 ha decrease in wine grape plantings, a 1,495 ha increase in almonds and a 675 ha increase in table grape plantings.

Vacant areas that were previously irrigated permanent plantings increased from 235 ha in 1997 to 2,850 ha by 2015, again, largely due to impacts of the millennium drought and 2008 global financial crisis. A reverse of the upward trend finally occurred between 2015 and 2018 when areas out of production finally decreased, from 2,850 ha to 2,555 ha.

Seasonal planting trends

Irrigated seasonal cropping was also impacted by the millennium drought. Areas declined from 22,655 ha in 1997 to 5,480 ha by 2009 when water allocations were particularly low and prices high. Once the drought broke, irrigated seasonal cropping increased to around 15,000 ha from 2012 to 2015, then trended upward again from 2015 to 2018 with a 3,125 ha increase in irrigated field crops and a 1,285 ha increase in vegetable crops.

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[8] Irrigable area is the irrigated area plus vacant areas

In summary for planting trends in the Swan Hill LGA

In 2018, the irrigable area of 66,960 ha comprised:

- – 51% (34,200 ha) irrigated permanent plantings;
- – 31% (20,395 ha) irrigated seasonal crops;
- – 4% (2,555 ha) vacant, previously irrigated permanent plantings; and
- – 14% (9,810 ha) vacant, previously irrigated seasonal crops.

The proportion of permanent plantings, seasonal cropping and vacant areas changed from:

- – 25% permanent, 64% seasonal and 11% vacant in 1997; to
- – 51% permanent, 31% seasonal and 18% vacant in 2018.

From 1997 to 2018:

- – irrigated permanent crops increased by 25,460 ha, a 291% increase;
- – irrigated seasonal crops decreased by 2,260 ha, a 10% decrease;
- – vacant, not irrigated permanent planting areas increased by 2,320 ha, a 987% increase; and
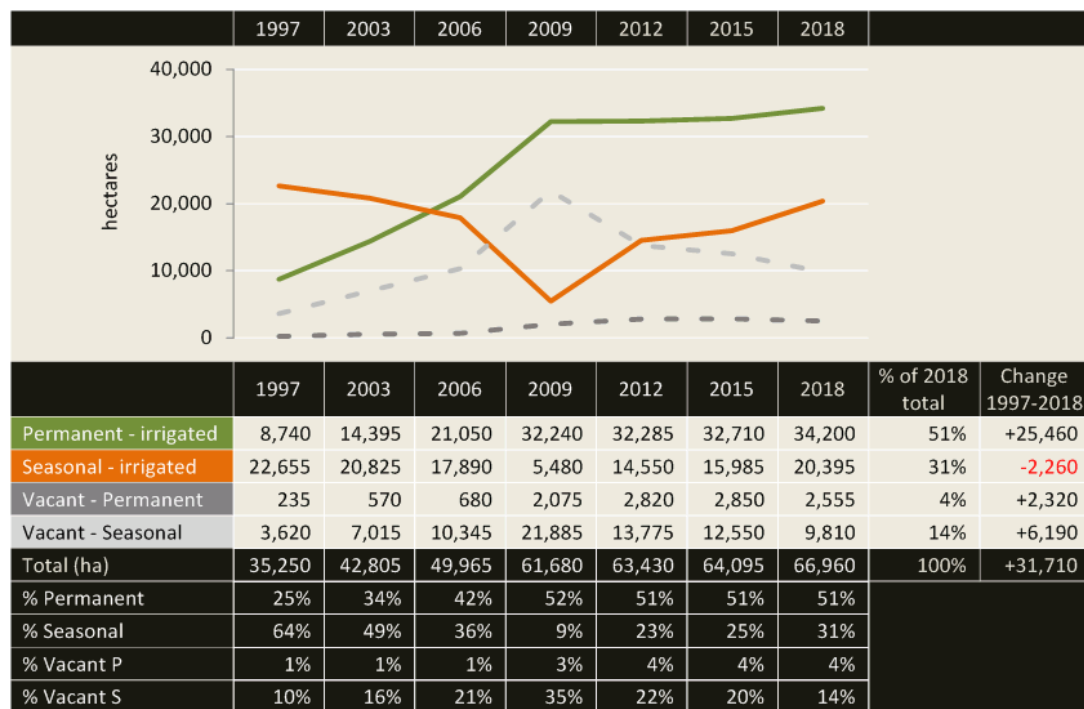- – vacant, not irrigated seasonal cropping areas increased by 6,190 ha, a 219% increase.

	1997	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	% of 2018 total	Change 1997-2018
Permanent - irrigated	8,740	14,395	21,050	32,240	32,285	32,710	34,200	51%	+25,460
Seasonal - irrigated	22,655	20,825	17,890	5,480	14,550	15,985	20,395	31%	-2,260
Vacant - Permanent	235	570	680	2,075	2,820	2,850	2,555	4%	+2,320
Vacant - Seasonal	3,620	7,015	10,345	21,885	13,775	12,550	9,810	14%	+6,190
Total (ha)	35,250	42,805	49,965	61,680	63,430	64,095	66,960	100%	+31,710
% Permanent	25%	34%	42%	52%	51%	51%	51%		
% Seasonal	64%	49%	36%	9%	23%	25%	31%		
% Vacant P	1%	1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	4%		
% Vacant S	10%	16%	21%	35%	22%	20%	14%		

Figure 7:   Planting trends in the Swan Hill LGA from 1997 to 2018

3.2   Change in crop types from 1997 to 2018

Figure 8 summarises the change in irrigated crop types from 1997 to 2018 in the Swan Hill LGA.

Irrigated field crops, such as pasture and lucerne, were the dominant crop type from 1997 to 2006, whereas almond plantings were dominant from 2009 to 2018. The main changes from 1997 to 2018 were:

- Almond tree plantings increased by 18,815 ha, a 2,352% increase from 800 ha to 19,615 ha;
- Field crops decreased by 4,330 ha, a 23% decrease from 18,880 ha to 14,550 ha;
- Olive tree plantings increased by 2,870 ha, a 2,870% increase from 100 ha to 2,970 ha;
- Table grape plantings increased by 1,935 ha, a 78% increase from 2,475 ha to 4,410 ha;
- Wine grape plantings increased by 210 ha, an 11% increase; the net result of a 2,925 ha increase from 1997 to 2006 followed by a 2,715 ha decrease from 2006 to 2018;
- Stone fruit plantings increased by 1,305 ha, an 85% increase from 1,540 ha to 2,845 ha; and
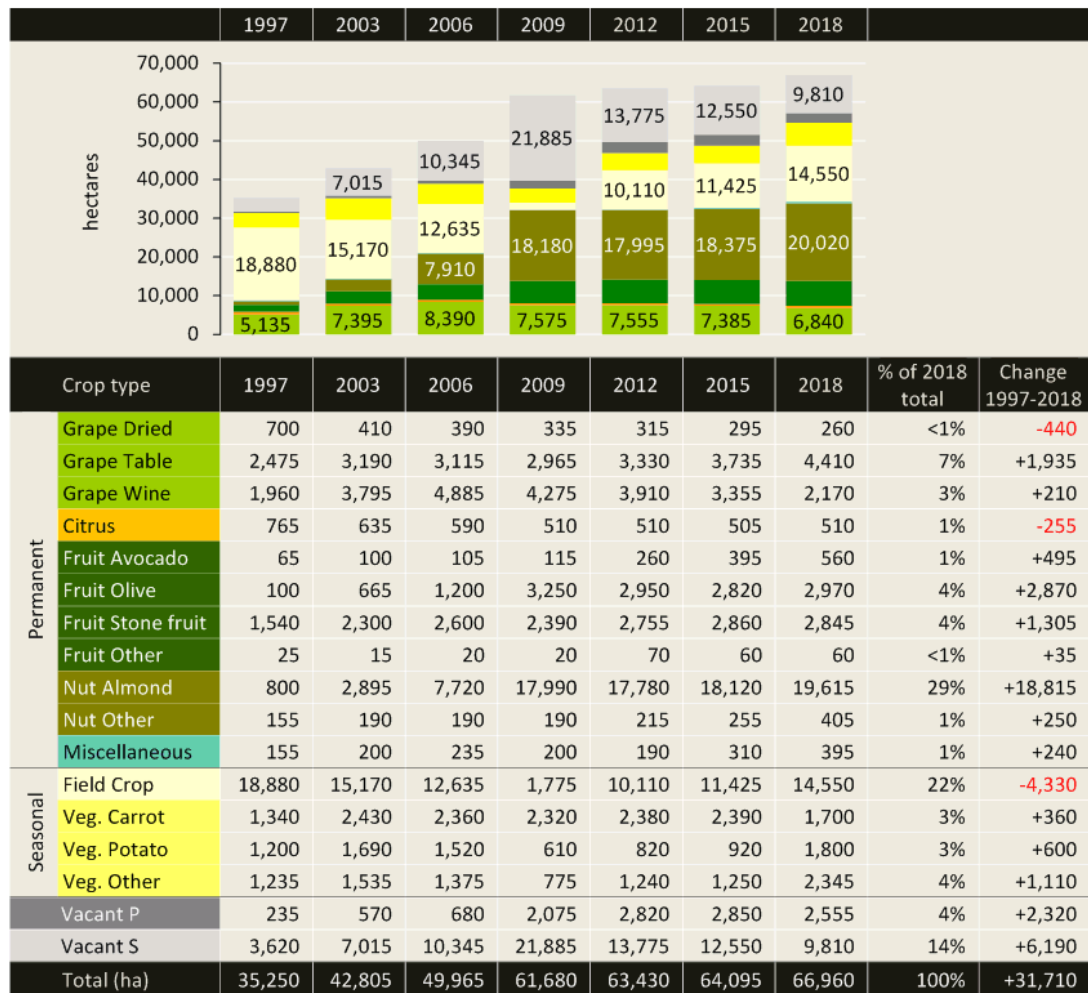- Vegetables, including potatoes and carrots, increased by 2,070 ha, a 55% increase from 3,775 ha to 5,845 ha.

	Crop type	1997	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	% of 2018 total	Change 1997-2018
Permanent	Grape Dried	700	410	390	335	315	295	260	<1%	-440
	Grape Table	2,475	3,190	3,115	2,965	3,330	3,735	4,410	7%	+1,935
	Grape Wine	1,960	3,795	4,885	4,275	3,910	3,355	2,170	3%	+210
	Citrus	765	635	590	510	510	505	510	1%	-255
	Fruit Avocado	65	100	105	115	260	395	560	1%	+495
	Fruit Olive	100	665	1,200	3,250	2,950	2,820	2,970	4%	+2,870
	Fruit Stone fruit	1,540	2,300	2,600	2,390	2,755	2,860	2,845	4%	+1,305
	Fruit Other	25	15	20	20	70	60	60	<1%	+35
	Nut Almond	800	2,895	7,720	17,990	17,780	18,120	19,615	29%	+18,815
	Nut Other	155	190	190	190	215	255	405	1%	+250
	Miscellaneous	155	200	235	200	190	310	395	1%	+240
Seasonal	Field Crop	18,880	15,170	12,635	1,775	10,110	11,425	14,550	22%	-4,330
	Veg. Carrot	1,340	2,430	2,360	2,320	2,380	2,390	1,700	3%	+360
	Veg. Potato	1,200	1,690	1,520	610	820	920	1,800	3%	+600
	Veg. Other	1,235	1,535	1,375	775	1,240	1,250	2,345	4%	+1,110
	Vacant P	235	570	680	2,075	2,820	2,850	2,555	4%	+2,320
	Vacant S	3,620	7,015	10,345	21,885	13,775	12,550	9,810	14%	+6,190
	Total (ha)	35,250	42,805	49,965	61,680	63,430	64,095	66,960	100%	+31,710

Figure 8:   Change in irrigated crop types in the Swan Hill LGA from 1997 to 2018

3.3   Irrigation expansion and retired areas

Figure 9 summarises irrigation development with respect to new areas (expansion) and areas retired from irrigation in the Swan Hill LGA.

From 1997 to 2018, the irrigable area increased by 31,710 ha, a 90% increase from 35,250 ha to 66,960 ha. The net increase of 31,710 ha was the balance of 32,280 ha expansion and 570 ha retired from irrigation. Expansion predominantly occurred from Piangil to Wemen with almond and olive plantings. Retired areas were predominantly for housing development and farm infrastructure such as sheds and dams.

	Hectares			% of 1997
Irrigable area in 1997 (1996-97 season)	35,250			
Retired between 1997 and 2018		-570		-2%
Expansion between 1997 and 2018		+32,280		+92%
Irrigable area in 2018 (2017-18 season)			66,960	
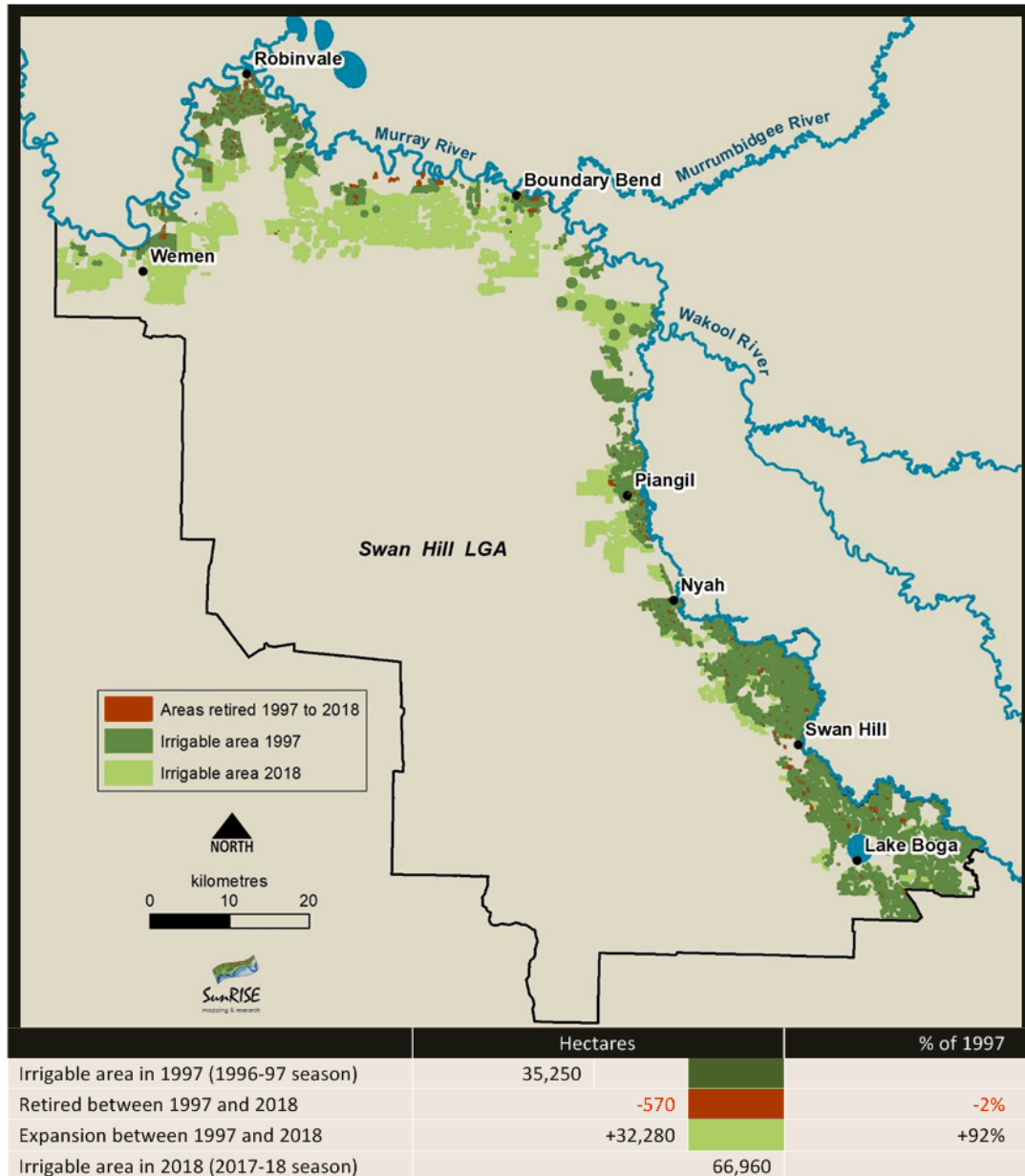
Figure 9:   **Irrigation expansion and retired areas in the Swan Hill LGA from 1997 to 2018**

SECTION C – DECISIONS WHICH NEED ACTION/RATIFICATION

C.20.11   COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES - RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA ITEMS

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

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
9 June 2020 at 1pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS
- Councillor only session
- Our Place
- Two intersections Gray Campbell and Murlong McCallum
- The Commonwealth Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
- The Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) What Works and Issues
- Community Sports Infrastructure Stimulus Program Projects
- Vibrant Village
- Tower Hill Estate Development of stages 13, 14, and 15.
- Robinvale Housing Action Plan
- CEO and Councillors only session

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED
- Nil

ATTENDANCE
Councillors
- Cr Chris Jeffery
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Lea Johnson
- Cr Jade Benham
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Ann Young

  Apologies
- Nil

OFFICERS
- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Svetla Petkova, Director Infrastructure
- Candis Fraser, Project Manager, Our Place
- Nazrul Islam, Engineering and Capital Projects Manager
- Nathan Keighran, Liveability and Project Development Coordinator
- Felicity O'Rourke, Community Planning Officer
- Muriel Scholz, Senior Economic Development Officer

Other
- Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
- Nil

COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
16 June 2020 at 1pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS
- CEO review
- Our Place
- COVID-19 Recovery Plan – Peter Walsh letter
- COVID-19 Response, Relief and Recovery
- Small Business Grants

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED
- Councillor Only Session – Bromley Road and Tower Hill

ATTENDANCE
Councillors
- Cr Chris Jeffery (attended via GoTo Meeting)
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Lea Johnson
- Cr Jade Benham
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Ann Young

  Apologies
- Nil

OFFICERS
- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Svetla Petkova, Director Infrastructure
- Candis Fraser, Project Manager, Our Place
- Dione Heppell, Construction Project Manager Regional Livestock Exchange Redevelopment
- Fiona Gormann, Economic and Community Development Manager

Other
- Our Place Architect Gerard Brandrick

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
- Cr Lea Johnson declared an indirect conflict of interest - due to conflicting duties as she is a real estate agent in item 6 Tower Hill.

COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
30 June 2020 at 1pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS
- GrainCorp Purchase Update
- Swan Hill Airport up-grade projects
- GMID – resilience strategy (virtual GoToMeeting)
- Tourism Strategy Review
- COVID-19 Economic Impact Estimates
- Present the new residents guide
- Tourism Advocacy Document
- Our Place

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED
- Nil

ATTENDANCE
Councillors
- Cr Lea Johnson
- Cr Jade Benham
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Ann Young

Apologies
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Chris Jeffery

OFFICERS
- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Nazrul Islam, Engineering and Capital Projects Manager
- Kerry Young, Engineer Assistant
- Teresa Lever, Economic Development Officer
- Fiona Gormann, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Amanda Smith, Economic Development and Events Officer
- Candis Fraser, Project Manager, Our Place

Other
- Carl Walters, Claire Flanagan-Smith and Tim Russell (GMID)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
- Nil

COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
7 July 2020 at 2.30pm, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS
- Economic Development Strategy Implementation Plan 2019/2020

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED
- Nil

ATTENDANCE
Councillors
- Cr Lea Johnson
- Cr Jade Benham
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Ann Young
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Chris Jeffery

Apologies
- Cr Nicole McKay

OFFICERS
- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Muriel Scholz, Senior Economic Development Officer
- Fiona Gormann, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Teresa Lever, Economic Development Officer
- Amanda Smith, Economic Development and Events Officer
- Rebecca Lyons, Visitors Services & Bookings Officer

Other
- Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
- Nil

C.20.12   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.

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

No.	Document Type	Document Description	Date signed/ sealed
990	Deed of Variation of Lease 66 Yana Street, Ken Harrison Sporting Complex Swan Hill	Between SHRCC and P.M. Camera Pty Ltd	23/6/20
991	Deed of Variation of Sub Agreement – 58 Yana Street, Ken Harrison Sporting Complex	Between SHRCC and The Scouts Association of Australia – Victorian Branch and Swan Hill City & District Band Incorporated	23/6/20
992	Deed of Variation of Lease – 15 Dillion Street, Ultima	Between SHRCC and Ultima Lions Club Incorporated	30/6/20
993	Deed of Variation of Lease Public Hall – 3570 Hattah Robinvale	Between SHRCC and Wemen Progress Association Incorporated	30/6/20
994	Section 173 with Adairs Pipeline Tyntynder Central Road	Between TP Adair and RJ Adair and SHRCC	7/7/20

995	Deed of Variation of Lease	Between SHRCC and Lake Boga Bowling Club Incorporated	7/7/20
996	Deed of Variation of Lease	Between SHRCC and Southern Cross Business Advisers	7/7/20
997	Deed of Variation of Lease	Between SHRCC and Speewa Heritage Collectors Club.	7/7/20

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.

SECTION D – NOTICES OF MOTION

D.20.4   RESCISSION OF MOTION B20.40 OUR PLACE PROJECT - SITE LOCATION

Having given due notice, **Councillor Nicole McKay MOVES that:**
Council rescind its motion number B20.40 at the Special Council Meeting 7 July 2020.

B20.40 Motion

Moved Cr Benham

That Council:

1   Adopt site option 1 as the future site for the new "Our Place" building. Site Option 1 is located inside the Pioneer Settlement 'proper' and to the North of the Gem, and revisit the amount of space allocated for the Aboriginal Cultural Space.

2.   Require that the "Our Place" project be built within the budgeted allocated funds of $10,946,040. Unequivocally no overspend.

3.   Require that the train and the windmill be retained within the Pioneer Settlement grounds and the Pental Island Bridge scoped for repair.

4.   Require that the community consultation period for the relocation of the train and the windmill be completed within 4–6 weeks and bought back to Council at a Special Meeting of Council in August 2020 or the August 2020 Ordinary meeting.

Seconded Cr Young

The Motion was Put and Carried

Resolved in response to report B20.40 OUR PLACE PROJECT SITE LOCATION at the Special Council meeting of 7 July 2020.

Preamble

Once again, commendation to our Council Executive for their initiative in leading this project across several municipalities to achieve the funding for the "Our Rivers-Our Region" project, of which "Our Place" is one. The "Our Place" project has the potential to become an economically and socially beneficial community and visitor resource.

As Councillors we have an important role as conduit between residents of the municipality and the executive. I believe we have the ability to guide this project to enable it to reach its full potential.

A decision on the location and concept design of the "Our Place" project was made without open community consultation. Discussions were held with 'stakeholder groups'. Time constraints may have contributed to this limited consultation. Once this decision was publicised community uproar resulted.

Much of the criticism of the project was focussed on concern that the building will interrupt, and reduce, the function and wholeness of Swan Hill's two major visitor and hospitality centres: the Pioneer Settlement and Spoons. There were persistent concerns that the attempt to combine all components: the Aboriginal Cultural Hub; the Art Gallery; and the Pioneer Settlement, would reduce and dilute all elements.

The "2017 Murray River Interpretative Centre Feasibility Study" backs up the criticism. It advised that "It would not be advisable to co-locate the Pioneer Settlement with the MRIC which needs to have a much wider focus beyond history".

Another strong line of criticism has been that the lack of a prominent location would impact its long term success as a tourist, and community facility. Any business person understands the absolute and continued advantage that a prominent site provides. It could be argued that both the Pioneer Settlement and the Swan Hill Art Gallery have experienced reduced custom due to their location. "Out of sight, out of mind"

Both of these concerns expressed by community have a practical and reasoned basis.

Large numbers attended community consultation during the early part of the year, in good faith with the expectation that a successful outcome would be achieved, and their concerns listened to.

During February, SHRCC, by vote, decided to return to consultation and to reconsider sites limiting consideration to the Spoons/Pioneer Settlement/Art Gallery precinct.

COVID-19 regulations have restricted and limited free community participation in consultation. SHRCC decided, rather than to pause consultation, to proceed using online methods. It could be argued that the online survey and concept designs were intrinsically biased. The questions also failed to provide numerical results as to exact preferred location. For a respondent to ensure that their preferred site was understood it was necessary to type in further comments. Many of the public have only their phones for internet access. To input text is laborious and time consuming, and therefore a deterrent. These flaws and biases warrant further investigation.

However, through the comments provided, it has been possible for Councillors to understand that there are strong numbers whose preference was not to build within the Pioneer Settlement. There is also strong feeling against demolition and rebuilding of Spoons.

In regard to the consultation with the Aboriginal community, councillors have generally not been provided with the detail of the consultation, and have had to request this from staff. It is essential that genuine, open conversation and consultation around all aspects of the project is able to continue. At this stage, it is fair to say that in addition to supportive statements from the Aboriginal community, there has also been concern and mixed feelings expressed about the project.

Councillors were faced with a difficult choice between two sites with long, and short term practical and strategic problems.

Additionally, COVID-19 has thrown the economy and in particular the visitor economy into disarray. Swan Hill has not been a strong international tourist destination. It is more consistently a domestic tourist destination. Domestic tourism is predicted to grow substantially in the coming years. International travel will be severely restricted.

As a council we should be responsive to the changing world scene, and be willing to incorporate this into our planning. These are not normal times. The Pioneer Settlement and Spoons are our most popular visitor attractions. To commence major building at either site will negatively impact on visitor experiences at a time when we should be doing everything we can to grow this market. The time is now. Future employment growth must be maximised, not jeopardised.

It is also important that we continue with the project a substantial investment for the region.

Our feasibility studies have demonstrated the weaknesses in plans for Option 1 and potentially Option 2. Community concerns have not had a meaningful response or result. It is understandable that the community feels frustrated.

We need to identify the best plan for our region, for now and into the future.

For this reason, I encourage Councillors to rescind the decision of July 7th.

B.20.40   OUR PLACE PROJECT - SITE LOCATION

Responsible Officer:	Director Development and Planning
File Number:	S11-27-19-10578
Attachments:	1 Site Option 1 - Elevations 1
	2 Site Option 1 - Elevations 2
	3 Site Option 1 - Ground Floor Plan
	4 Site Option 1 First Floor Plan
	5 Site Option 2 - Elevations 1
	6 Site Option 2 - Elevations 2
	7 Site Option 2 - First Floor
	8 Site Option 2 - Ground Floor
	9 On line Survey Results
	10 Site Options
	11 Site Considerations
	12 Key Stakeholder Feedback

Declarations of Interest:

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

Summary

Following significant feasibility assessment over many years, Council resolved in December 2018 to proceed with a new development to host the entry to the Pioneer Settlement, the Art Gallery, Aboriginal Cultural Experience and Visitor Services, on a site north of the Gem in the Pioneer Settlement. The feasibility study indicated that this site offered the optimal level of economic, social and financial benefit.

After successfully being granted matched funding for the project via the Our Region Our Rivers – 7 Councils, 2 states, one vision project, the project officially commenced in June 2019.

Council received and considered two petitions requesting that the development not occur on the Pioneer Settlement site, at its Special Meeting in February this year. Council resolved to carry out further community engagement on Our Place and to investigate an alternative site for the development.

Subsequently, broad community engagement was completed in February 2020.

Design feasibility of the two site options was completed by the architect in April 2020, with two concept designs being identified as feasible designs for further consideration, one design for each site.

A second round of community consultation was completed throughout May 2020 – this consultation specifically sought feedback about the two site options and associated designs.

This report provides a summary of the site considerations, including cost and investment considerations associated with each of the sites being considered, details of the consultation feedback received to date; and a summary of opinions of key experts in tourism, open air museums and visitor services.

Discussion

1. Background - Our Place Site Considerations

Following feasibility assessment of many sites along the river, Council resolved in December 2018 to proceed with the development of the Our Place project (a new development to host the entry to the Pioneer Settlement, the Art Gallery, Aboriginal Cultural Experience and Visitor Services) on a site north of the Gem in the Pioneer Settlement. The feasibility study indicated that this site offered the optimal level of economic, social and financial benefit. The project commenced with preparation of conceptual designs in June 2019.

Council, at its special meeting in February 2020, received two petitions in relation to the development of Our Place. 1,672 signatures were captured by the online petition and 1,437 on the written petition. Whilst the preamble to both petitions differed, the intent was to advocate against Our Place being built in the Pioneer Settlement grounds; and the possibility of the locomotive being removed from the site.

In response to these petitions, Council resolved to carry out further community engagement with regards to the location of Our Place; and to investigate an alternative site for the development.

During February broad community consultation was carried out and a total of 208 people attended one or more of these sessions (this is the number of people who signed the attendance sheet). A total of 23 comments and 18 questions were received in the have your say section of the web page; and a total of 20 letters or emails were received and responded to about the project – this correspondence represented views both supporting and against the site proposed for the building.

Feedback from this consultation was presented to Council at its March meeting.

Design feasibility in collaboration with Brandrick Architects was carried out between February and April 2020 and two concept designs were identified for further consideration, one design for each site.

Community consultation in May 2020 shared details of the two sites being considered, including details of site considerations specific to each of the two sites; and concept designs – one design for each site. The consultation sought feedback specifically about the two site options and associated designs being considered. Attachment 1 (Concept Design Elevations and Floor Plans) includes concept elevation and floor plans for site option 1 (within the Pioneer Settlement 'proper') and site option 2 (outside the Pioneer Settlement, in the vicinity of Spoons Riverside Restaurant).

2.   Community Consultation

Throughout February 2020, Council carried out a community engagement program that included;
- Public Information and Feedback sessions
- Face to face meetings with Key Stakeholder groups - including Friends of the Pioneer Settlement, Wandarrah Action Committee and other members of the Aboriginal Community, Council staff, Spoons Riverside management, the CEO of Murray River Tourism and the Novo Youth Council.
- Coffee with a Councillor
- Online feedback and question forms
- Face to face meeting with 'Scrap Our Place Plan' group representatives

Letters and emails were also received and responded to in relation to the project, throughout this engagement period. Councillors were provided with copies of community input and feedback from these sources, including media coverage related to the project.

Engagements associated with the February consultation are summarised below;
- 208 people attended one or more of these sessions (this number is interpreted by the number of people who signed the attendance sheet – actual attendance may have been higher)
- 20 letters/emails received and responded to
- 23 online feedback forms submitted
- 18 online questions forms submitted and responded to

Key concerns highlighted within this engagement were;
- the loss of the heritage value of the Pioneer Settlement precinct
- that the Pioneer Settlement should not be developed in any way
- that the visitor services would jeopardise tourism engagement should it be located away from the main thoroughfare through the town

Feedback from these community engagement sessions was presented to Council at its Meeting in March 2020.

Throughout May 2020, further community consultation was carried out - this included;

- providing details about the two site options being considered
- providing considerations associated with each site option
- providing the concept design options for each site
- Opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions online and over the phone
- inviting the community to complete an online survey that sought feedback about the two site and design options being considered

This consultation period commenced on Wednesday 6 May and concluded on Monday 1 June.

In consideration of restrictions enforced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic during the consultation period, community engagement and consultation was hosted online and over the phone. Promotion of the consultation is summarised below;

- information shared on the Our Place web page
- email to community members who had previously requested to be kept updated about Our Place
- email to local community groups inviting them to share details of the consultation with their network
- via local media, including the Guardian newspaper and 3SH and Mixx FM radio stations
- online social media via Facebook and Instagram, including posts being boosted and targeted

All Councillors have been provided with copies of all community input from all sources for the most recent consultation – letters, emails, feedback and questions (received online and over the phone), online survey feedback.

A summary of the engagements throughout the May 2020 consultation period is shared below;

- 470 online surveys commenced – 68% (320) completed the entire survey
- 2217 unique page views of the Our Place web page
- 7 phone enquiries, including discussing feedback and addressing questions about the project
- 31 online feedback forms submitted
- 1 meeting in person to share and explain site and design options
- 4 letters/emails submitted to Council
- 9 online questions forms submitted and responded to

Some insights from the online survey are summarised as follows;
Just over 45% of respondents were aged 55 years and over, 33% of respondents were aged 35-54; and 21% aged 35 years and under.

74% of respondents identified as living in Swan Hill. The 'Other' response indicated that many respondents, who did not live in Swan Hill, lived in nearby towns within proximity to Swan Hill.

75% of respondent said that they felt strongly or very strongly about the location of Our Place. Just over 11% of respondents indicated that they did not want the building to be built at all; and 5% indicated that they did not care about the location of Our Place and that they just wanted to see the building get built.
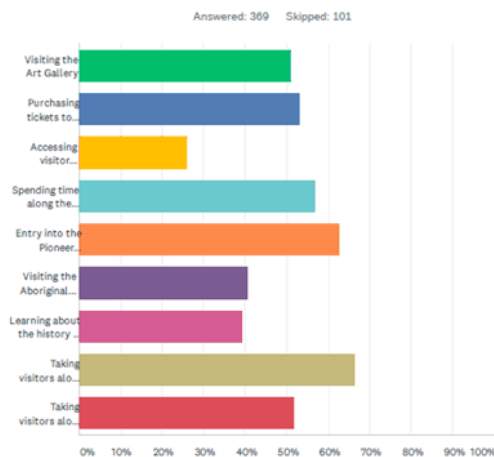
When asked to consider features that were liked about design and **site option 1**, 37% of respondents indicated that they liked the shape of the building and 32% of respondents indicated that they like the public access to the river front offered by the site. 45% or 169 respondents to this question selected the 'Other (please specify)' option – the majority of these 'Other' responses indicated that they were not in favour of or did not like option 1, that they did not agree with the location proposed for site option 1 or that they found option 1 to have a negative impact on the Pioneer Settlement to some degree, including that a modern building was not suitable on this site. Over 28% of respondents indicated that they liked the amount of public outdoor space around the building.

When asked to consider features that were liked about design and **site option 2**, 30% of respondents indicated that they liked the shape of the building and again, 32% of respondents indicated that they like the public access to the river front offered by the site. Close to 55% of respondents indicated that they liked that site option 2 had minimal impact to the current Pioneer Settlement site.

35% or 132 respondents, when asked what they liked about design and site option 2 selected the 'Other (please specify)' option – similarly to the previous question, a large number of 'Other' responses indicated that they were not in favour of or did not like option 2. 29% of respondents indicated that they liked the amount of public outdoor space around the building.

75% of respondents shared that landscaping around the building was either very important or extremely important, as was public seating areas around the building.

The below image indicates the various ways in which respondents said that they expect to interact with Our Place.

Q15 How do you think you will interact with Our Place? (choose as many as you like)

Answered: 369   Skipped: 101

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Visiting the Art Gallery	50.95%	188
Purchasing tickets to local events	52.85%	195
Accessing visitor services information	26.02%	96
Spending time along the riverfront	56.64%	209
Entry into the Pioneer Settlement	62.60%	231
Visiting the Aboriginal Cultural experience	40.65%	150
Learning about the history of Swan Hill	39.30%	145
Taking visitors along to see some of our local attractions	66.40%	245
Taking visitors along to learn about the history of Swan Hill	51.76%	191
Total Respondents: 369		

Ideas with regards to design and experience opportunities were shared as part of the survey – these will be considered as the project progresses to the detailed design.

An extract of feedback shared in the survey asking participants for '*Do you have any other feedback or comments that you would like to share with us about the Our Place project at this time?*' is shared below;

"*I think option 2 covers everything without taking any of the pioneer settlement away and makes the most of the river.*"

"*I think the modernisation of the facility will benefit the area providing the natural surrounds are taken into consideration when building and furnishing the facility.*"

"*Prefer Site option 2.*"

"*Design 1 inspiring and will surely attract attention.*"

"*How dare u consider taking spoons, or put this monstrosity of a building in the pioneer settlement. It is so wrong!*"

"I prefer option 1, however I think option 2 could work, but might be more expensive for a smaller space."

Note: these extracts were selected to represent the <u>diversity</u> of comment presented in response to this question only. It would be required to review all comments and feedback in order to form an opinion of the sentiment shared by respondents to the survey.

A summary of the online survey responses is included in Attachment 2 – Online Survey Results Summary Extract. All individual responses to the online survey have been shared with Councillors for review and consideration.

In reviewing feedback and comments, the intention of the May 2020 consultation was specific in seeking feedback about the two site and design options being considered for the project. Some feedback and comments provided offer the opinion that neither site/design is suitable for the project, that the precinct is generally not suitable for the project; or provides commentary that does not relate to the decision about the site option and designs being considered.

Throughout the community consultation, community stakeholder representative bodies also shared feedback about the project – the below shares a summary of this feedback;

The Swan Hill Incorporated Board shared that it supports the project and its contribution to the ongoing development of Swan Hill as a city. The Board views the project as critical to improving the experience for locals and visitors, whilst offering diverse cultural experiences. The Swan Hill Incorporated Board is focused on the economic impacts that can be achieved with the new development and the significant positive impacts on local businesses as well as encouraging the establishment of new businesses.

The 'Scrap Our Place Plan' community group expressed that they are explicitly opposed to the development progressing in the Pioneer Settlement 'proper' (site option 1) and representatives of this group have also expressed that the precinct is not necessarily suitable for the project development at all (ie. neither site option 1 nor site option 2 are suitable options).

The Friends of the Pioneer Settlement are active supporters of the Settlement operations, contributing many thousands of dollars to the Pioneer Settlement each year, both financially and in kind. The Friends of the Pioneer Settlement Committee support the project development on site option 1, as do a significant majority of their members.

The Swan Hill Art Gallery Advisory Committee has expressed that either site option is acceptable in achieving the desired result of a new gallery. However the Committee expressly conveyed the following views - site option 1 presented a more welcoming location than site option 2; and the design for site option 1 is a more beautiful building that looks like an art gallery and connects with its environment. The

Committee believes that collaboration is essential in getting Our Place right. Specifically, the Gallery is taking steps to further develop relationships with local First Nations artists and communities.

In a recent communication to Councillors, Mark Francis, CEO of Murray River Tourism, reiterated a point he had made previously that the Our Place projects' strategic opportunity is to create additional [tourism] 'product' for Swan Hill that would incentivise visitors to stay in the region for longer. Murray River Tourism views this project as a 'game changing project', creating a hub to bring visitor services together with the key attraction [Pioneer Settlement]. The project needs to be within the Pioneer Settlement – Spoons Riverside is a product in its own right and to merge this would mean losing a product; and this would be detrimental to the region. Murray River Tourism will continue to support this project as it progresses.

3.   Site Feasibility

Design feasibility of the two site options (refer Attachment 3 – Site Options) was completed by the architect in April, with two concept designs being identified as feasible designs for further consideration, one design for each site.

It should be noted that due to limitations in resources (specifically budget and time), the information presented as part of the site feasibility does not contain comprehensive detail in all aspects of consideration – specifically, designs that have been presented for each site represent high-level conceptual design perspectives.

The sites and design option summaries are as follows;
Site 1 – **inside the Pioneer Settlement 'proper'** and to the north of the Gem (original proposed site): a design that demonstrated a freer flowing shaped building, including curves. This design was included specifically for the purpose of addressing feedback from some of the community that a box shaped building was not necessarily desired. While some of the community had expressed a desire to have a heritage style building within the settlement grounds, factors including the inclusion of the Aboriginal cultural experience as a service within the building and the strategic opportunity for the project presents for the project to develop its own identity, dictated that the architect was provided with a brief to deliver a style of architecture that was sympathetic to both the Pioneer Settlement and the natural setting of the site.

Site 2 - **current art gallery, spoons and associated car parking** area (alternative proposed site): a **two story design** that requires the demolition of the current Spoons building – a **new restaurant** would be designed as part of the new building. This design can achieve the inclusion of all aspects associated with the project brief.

It was identified to include the Spoons building within the design on this site to:
- facilitate access to the prime riverfront location occupied by the existing restaurant building
- upgrade the ageing restaurant building (which calls for investment for building maintenance upgrades)

- maintain maximum car parking space in the immediate vicinity
- maintain access to the lodge's site

A site plan indicating the location of each site, as well as concept design elevations and floor plans for each of the site option are attached for reference.

A preliminary Cost Plan has been prepared for each of the concept designs and shows that the both designs exceed budget. As the designs are still in the concept phase, significant assumptions have been applied to ensure that the figures are a conservative representation. The detailed design phase will see the architect working in collaboration with a building contractor to firm up the details of the design and materials, apply value management to the project and reduce the unknown factors associated with the cost assumptions.

Consultation with the Architect and builder in regards to the Cost Plan indicates that the delivery of both options within the budget can be achieved, as the detailed design is developed.

4. Site Considerations

A Site Consideration proposal, addressing potential opportunities and required compromises with regards to the services and feasibility for each of the two sites, has been prepared - refer Attachment 4 – Site Considerations. A summary of these considerations is included below;
Site Option 1 – Inside the Pioneer Settlement

- Opens up riverfront location to free access by the general public
- Large site accommodates landscaping aspirations that can be optimised for both outdoor casual usage and events
- Open and clear riverfront views
- Impact on native vegetation minimal – several planted trees required to be removed
- Reduced area of Pioneer Settlement 'proper'
- Locomotive and windmill required to be relocated
- Rotunda and rose garden will be removed
- New entry point to Pioneer Settlement – closer to main attractions (Pyap, Heartbeat of the Murray and Main Street)
- Separates PS Gem from Pioneer Settlement attractions – will require security of PS Gem to be addressed
- Opportunity for PS Gem to be a 'free' attraction
- Aesthetics of a modern building will contrast PS Gem
- Site disruption to Pioneer Settlement operations during construction in close proximity to attractions - solution for PS Gem access during construction will need to be determined.
- Street front access to building from Monash Drive
- Street parking to service building – development of street parking has committed funding

- Spoons Riverside building retained – collaborative precinct development opportunity
- Larger site provides future extension opportunity
- No cafe restaurant in building – provides opportunity for Spoons Riverside and greater opportunity for budget allocation to the four key services
- Creates a juxtaposition of architecture between the Pioneer Settlement (Colonial, Victorian and Federation eras) to the modern era of 2020's – community members express both concern and support to this concept

Site Option 2 – Outside the Pioneer Settlement

- Great vistas – close to riverfront
- Restricted landscaping opportunity due to close proximity of the building to the river – may impact ability for casual use and outdoor events
- Vegetation offsets required to open up riverfront view – will facilitate excellent views from the building
- Several native trees required to be removed
- Minimal direct impact on existing Pioneer Settlement artifacts and architecture, including locomotive, windmill, rose garden and rotunda
- Pioneer Settlement entry location at a significantly greater distance to main attractions (Pyap, Heartbeat of the Murray and Main Street)
- Proposed Pioneer Settlement entry point will require investment to develop activations at entry
- Retains current route for vintage vehicle and horse and cart
- Access to Pental Island required via Pioneer Settlement site
- PS Gem remains an attraction within the Pioneer Settlement
- Incorporates new cafe/restaurant
- Inclusion of cafe/restaurant may compromise development opportunities, including opportunities for the four key services originally the focus of the project
- Impressive visual impact opportunity as vehicles approach from Murray Valley Hwy
- Access to current Art Gallery and lodges will need to be managed during construction of the new building
- Access to car parking areas will be restricted during construction
- Defined off-street car parking will be available for new building, with limited capacity
- Main carparking area will be on Monash Drive – a greater distance to get to the building
- Budget allocation required to seal/formalise parking area at the rear of the current gallery/spoons site
- Future precinct development, including the lodges may be impacted with regards to density of development on this site location
- Car parking and drop off zone for long vehicles and buses not optimal with regards to access and turn around movement

- Additional contingency consideration needed due to close proximity of building to the river levee

5. Key Stakeholder Feedback

Representatives of the key stakeholder group, including Director of the Art Gallery, Manager of Pioneer Settlement, Tourism Economic Development Officer and the Visitor Services Officer all recommend Option 1 as being the most advantageous site to achieve an optimal visitor experience.

In facilitating representation of the Aboriginal community, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer indicated that there is mixed views about the preferred site option from the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal members who participated in the Our Place site visits identified with the opportunities that site 1 offered. The preference from the home visits as to whether site option 1 or site option 2 was the preferred site was inconclusive and votes were evenly spread against the two sites.

In their role as industry professionals, these representatives are collectively across shifting visitor trends, changes in acquisition strategies and demographic and psychographic shifts, some of which have been significant along the river in the past ten years alone. Attachment 5 (Key Stakeholder Feedback) shares the views of each of these key stakeholder representatives.

Consultation

Significant community consultation has been carried out and has been documented in previous reports and throughout this report. Community consultation will be required to be ongoing throughout the development of the project.

Financial Implications

Acquittal for this project is due in May 2022, requiring build completion by March 2022. To ensure compliance with the restrictions of the grant and the strict timeline, the construction phase of the project must commence by late 2020. Active project management throughout the project will be essential to ensure that it is delivered on budget. Compromises will be required to achieve this, regardless of the site. A cost commitment of approximately $450,000 to $500,000 to incorporate a new cafe/restaurant as part of design option 2 will require a reduction in floor area to other components/services of the project; or additional funding commitment.

Social Implications

The development of a multipurpose building on the Swan Hill riverfront will aid the maturity of the city and region and provide substantial community benefit by opening up and further activating this riverfront location.

Community members have expressed diverse views about the design and site proposed for the project, including some divisive opinions. Ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholder groups, including the community, will be required as the project progresses.

Economic Implications

The development of a multipurpose building incorporating – Art Gallery, entrance to Pioneer Settlement, Visitor Information services and an Aboriginal Space will help drive visitation and encourage private sector investment in Swan Hill and region.

Environmental Implications

Being close to the Murray River will require careful planning to ensure both cultural and environmental issues are addressed.

Risk Management Implications

That the project runs over budget or is not completed within the timeframe defined by the grant conditions specified by the Federal Government funding body.

Ongoing community concern about the project (no matter the location) will require ongoing information sharing and consultation.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

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

Conclusion

Council has carried out a significant amount of research and planning to arrive at this stage in determining a site for this major development. This report and previous reports outline the significant views of the community and of experts in the tourism and arts fields. The executive of Council have reviewed all relevant material and agree that site option 1 - on the Pioneer Settlement site, is the best location to achieve the aims of the project.

Options

1. Site **Option 1** as the future site for the new Our Place building. Site Option 1 is located **inside the Pioneer Settlement 'proper'** and to the north of the Gem (original proposed site)

2.   Site **Option 2** as the future site for the new Our Place building. Site Option 2 is
      locate**d is located in the precinct near the current art gallery, spoons and
      associated car parking** area

3.   Council may abandon the project.

Recommendation

**That Council proceed with detailed design development and construction of
the Our Place building on site option 1, inside the Pioneer Settlement and to
the north of the PS Gem.**

66/20 Motion

MOVED Cr Benham

That Council:

1   **Adopt site option 1 as the future site for the new "Our Place" building.
      Site Option 1 is located inside the Pioneer Settlement 'proper' and to the
      North of the Gem, and revisit the amount of space allocated for the
      Aboriginal Cultural Space.**

2.   **Require that the "Our Place" project be built within the budgeted
      allocated funds of $10,946,040. Unequivocally no overspend.**

3.   **Require that the train and the windmill be retained within the Pioneer
      Settlement grounds and the Pental Island Bridge scoped for repair.**

4.   **Require that the community consultation period for the relocation of the
      train and the windmill be completed within 4–6 weeks and bought back to
      Council at a Special Meeting of Council in August 2020 or the August
      2020 Ordinary meeting.**

SECONDED Cr Young

                                        The Motion was put and CARRIED

Call for a division

For: **Crs** Benham, Johnson, Moar and Young

Against: **Crs** McKay, McPhee and Jeffery

Attachment 1

Site Option 1 - Elevations 1
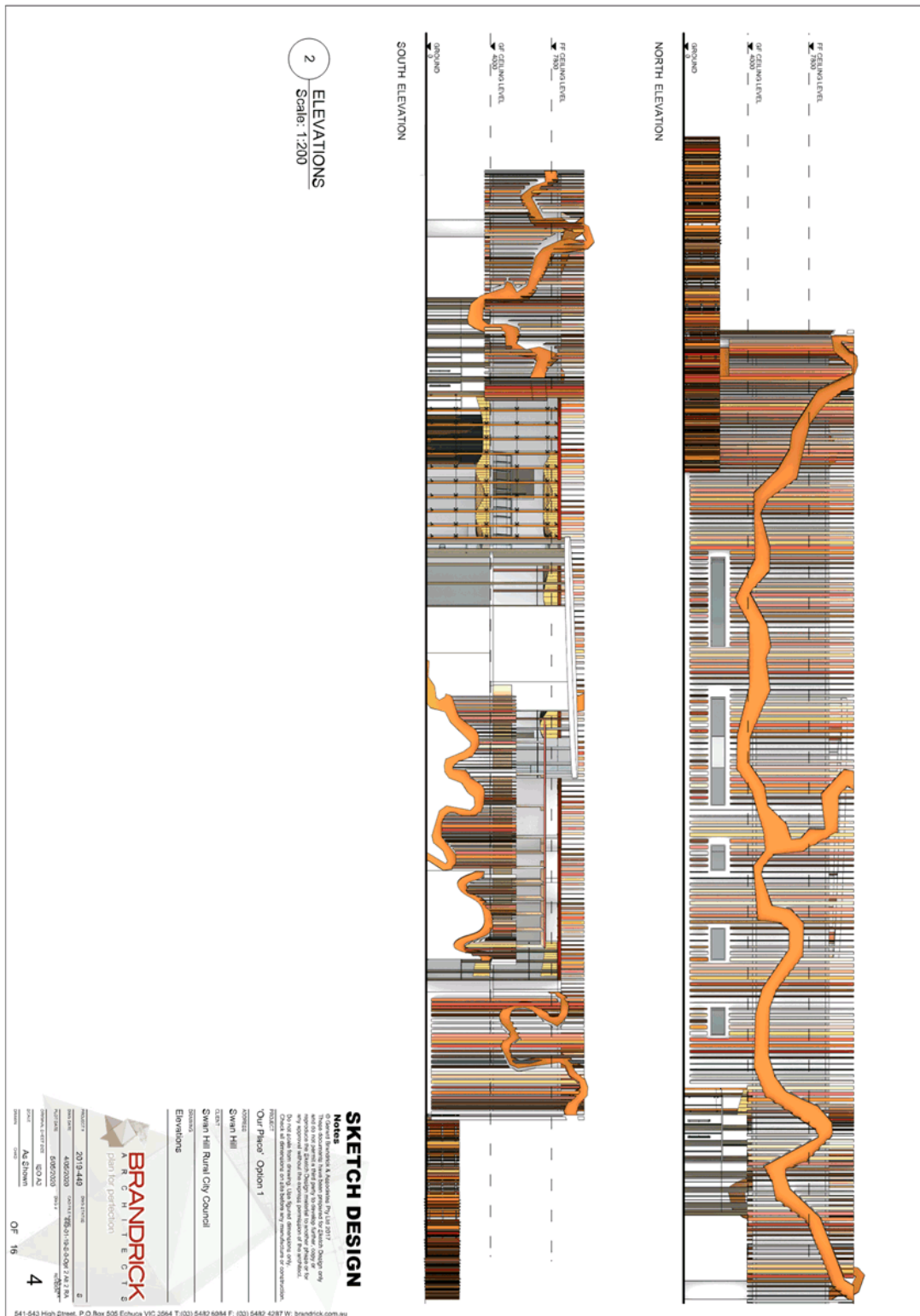
Attachment 2

Site Option 1 - Elevations 2

Attachment 3   *Site Option 1 - Ground Floor Plan*
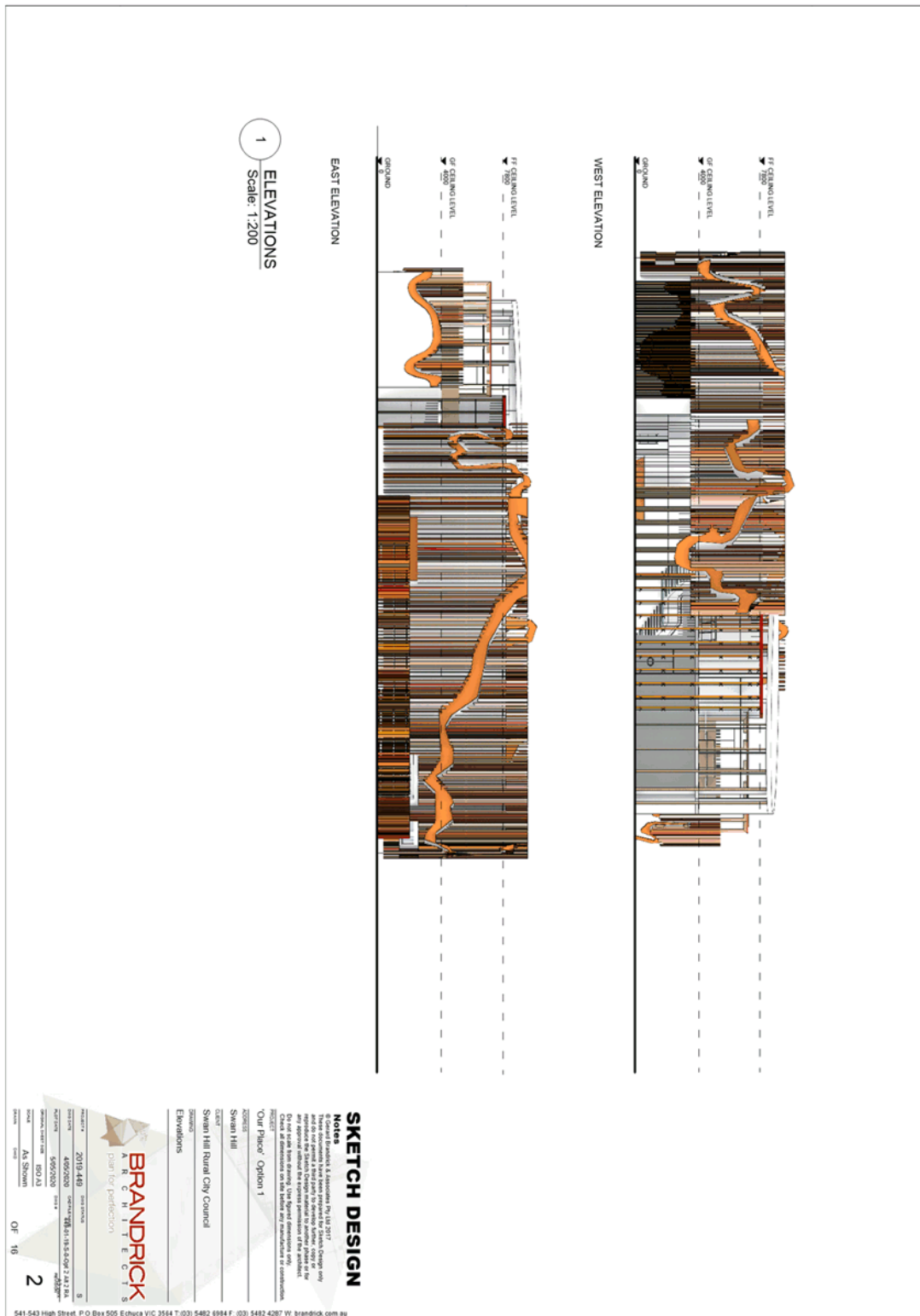
Ground Floor Plan
Scale: 1:200
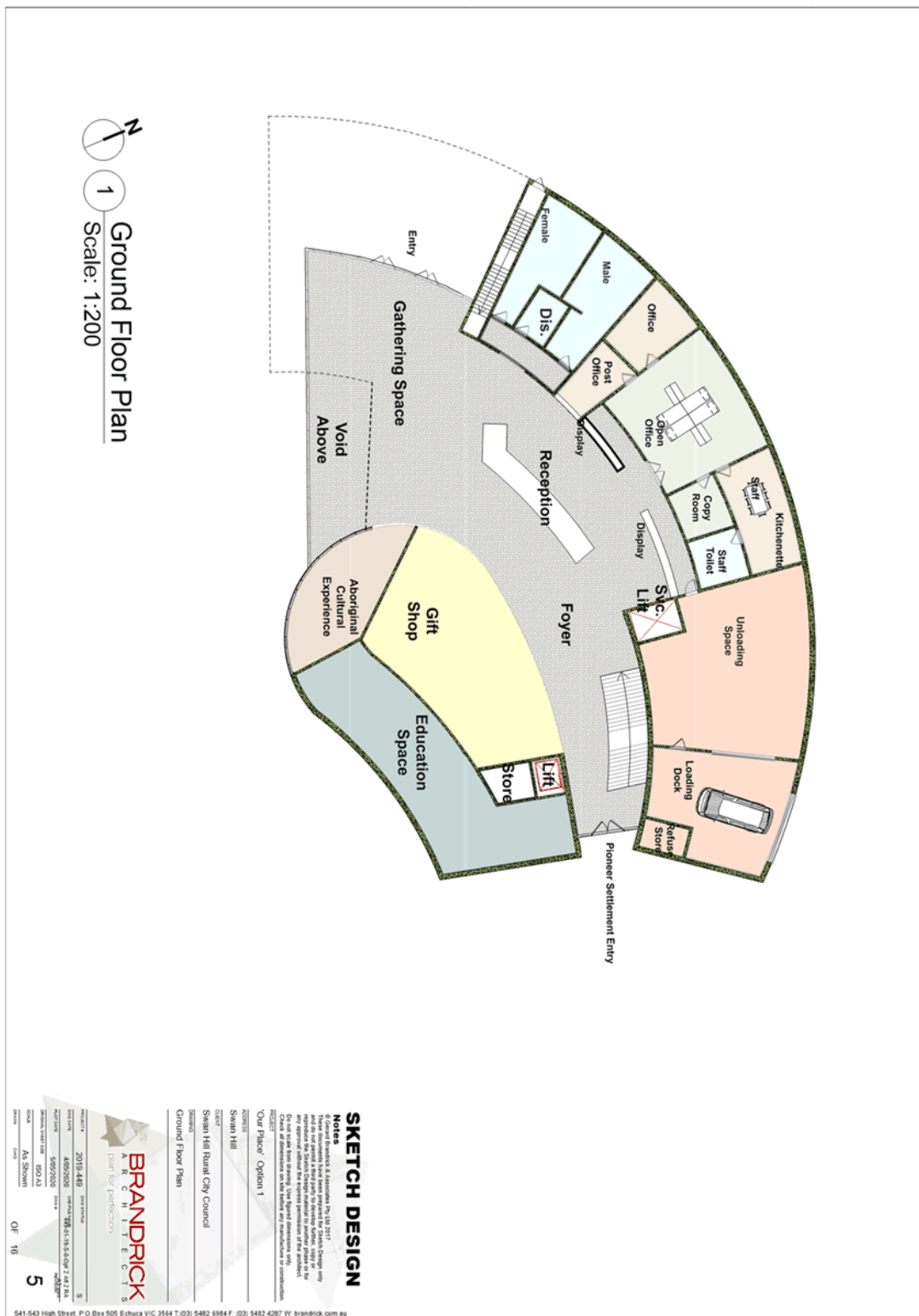
Attachment 4

Site Option 1 First Floor Plan

First Floor Plan
Scale: 1:200

Permanent Exhibition

Temporary Exhibition

Temporary Exhibition

Void

Foyer

Pavilion

Svc Lift

Kitchen

Roof Garden

Storage

Lift

SKETCH DESIGN

BRANDRICK
ARCHITECTS

- 111 -
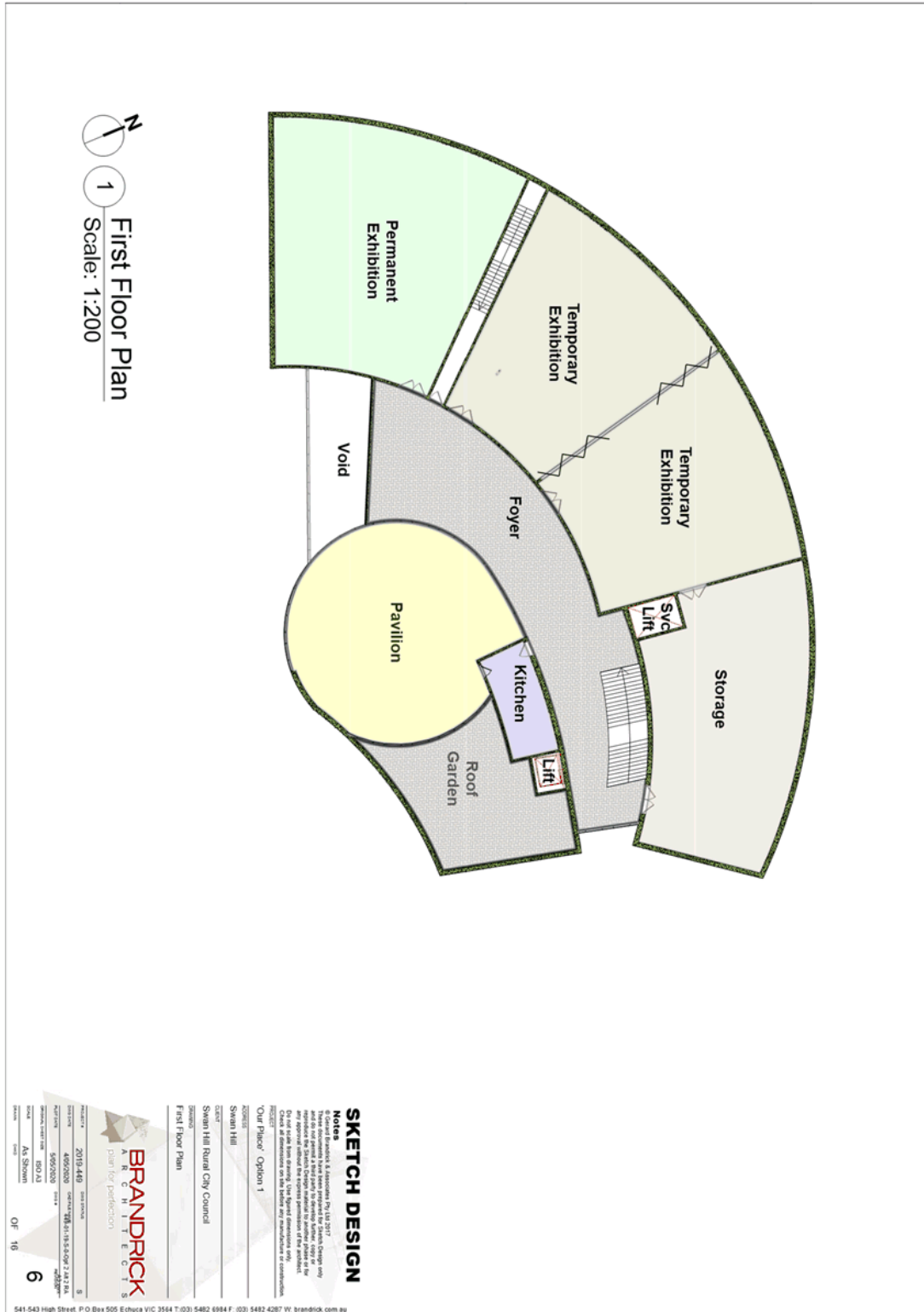
Attachment 5   *Site Option 2 - Elevations 1*
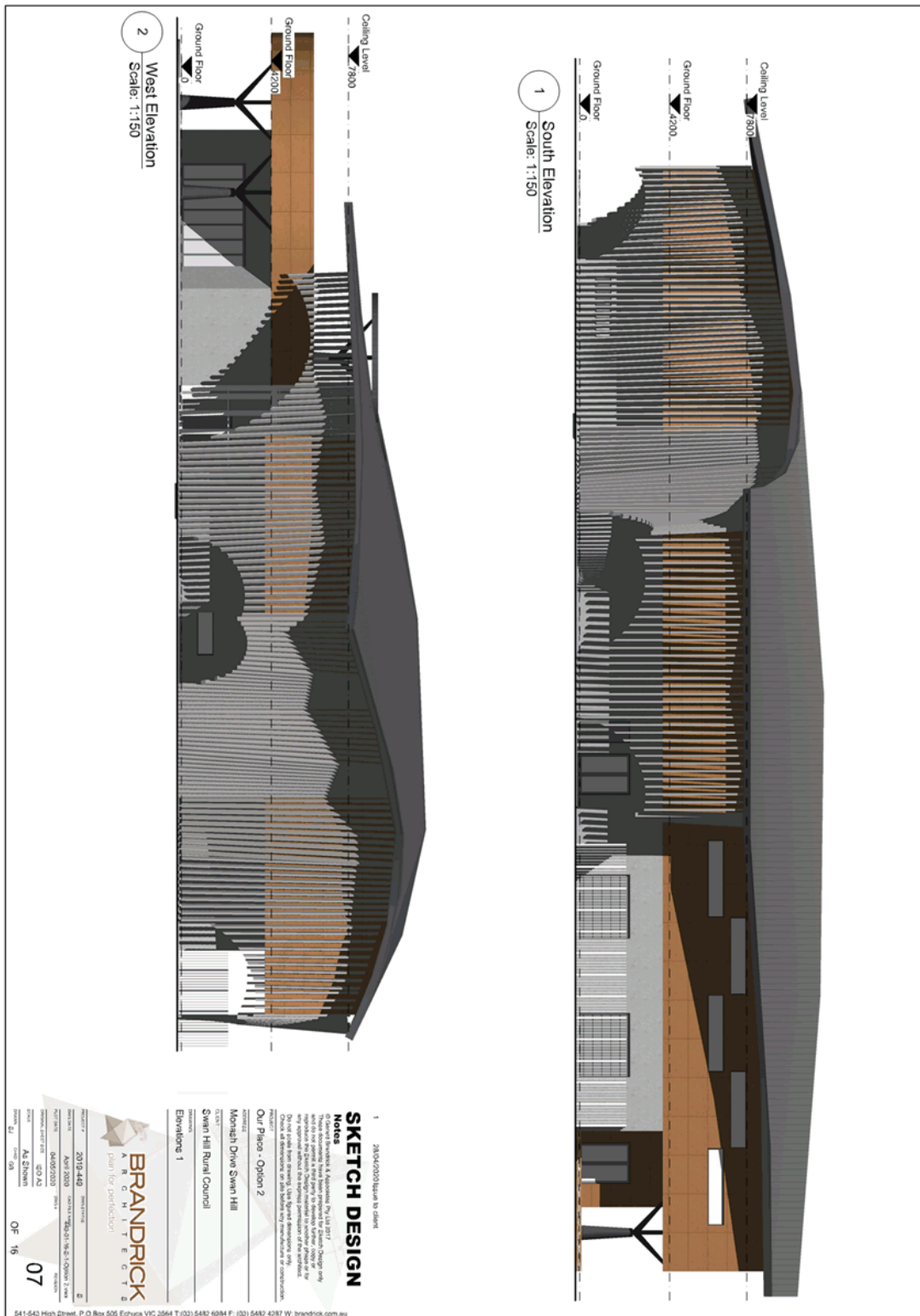
Attachment 6

Site Option 2 - Elevations 2
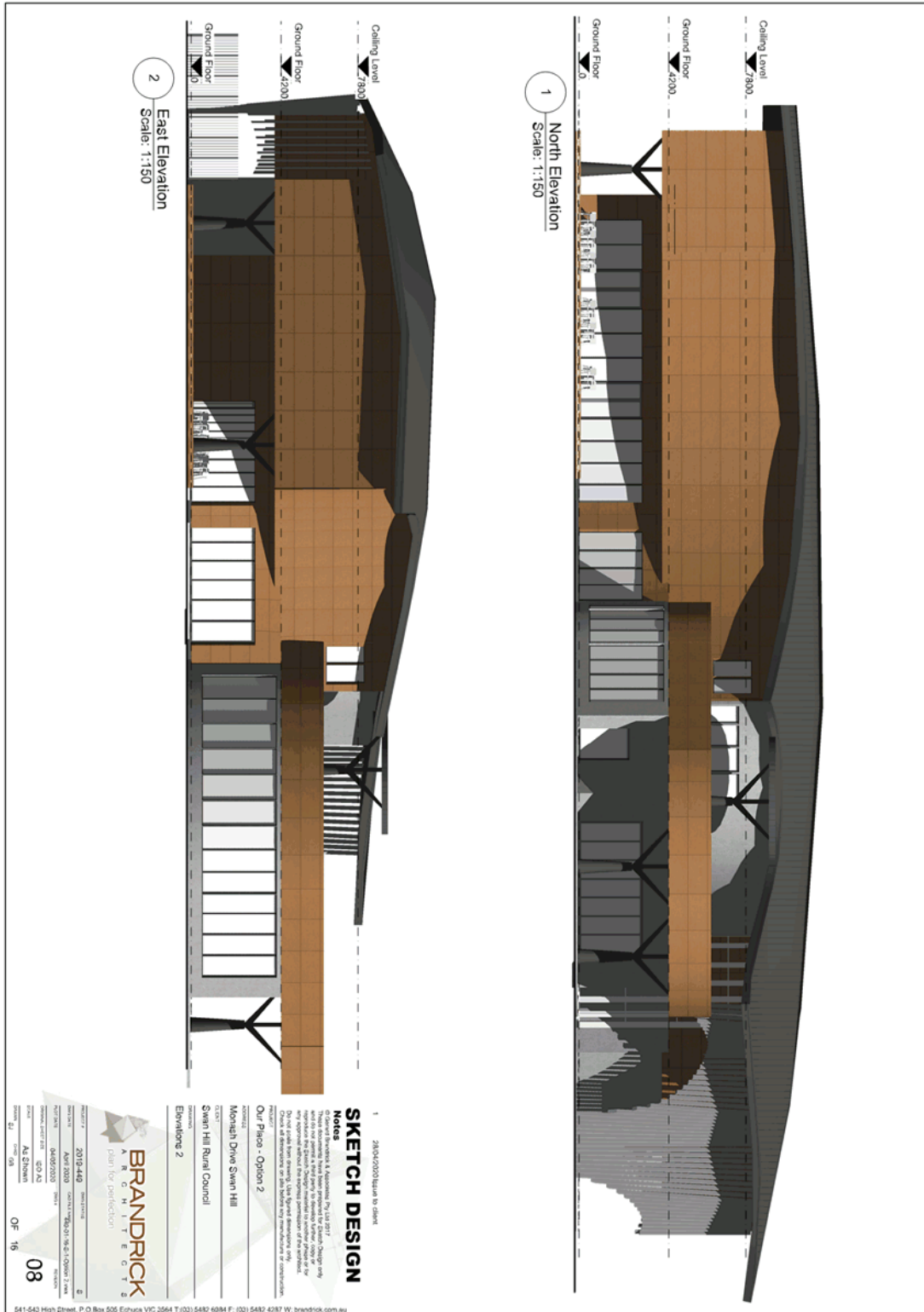
Attachment 7

Site Option 2 - First Floor
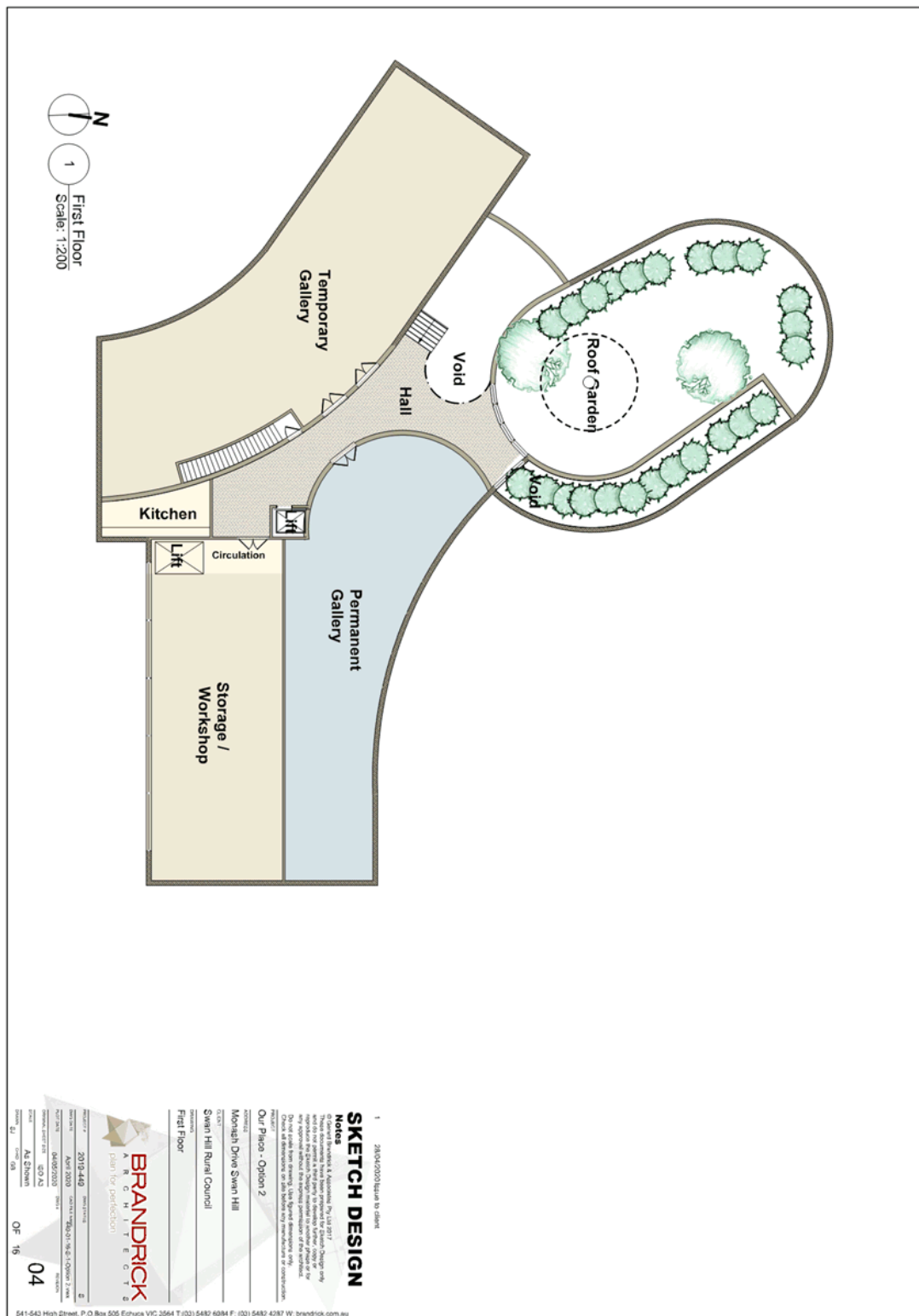
Attachment 8

Site Option 2 - Ground Floor
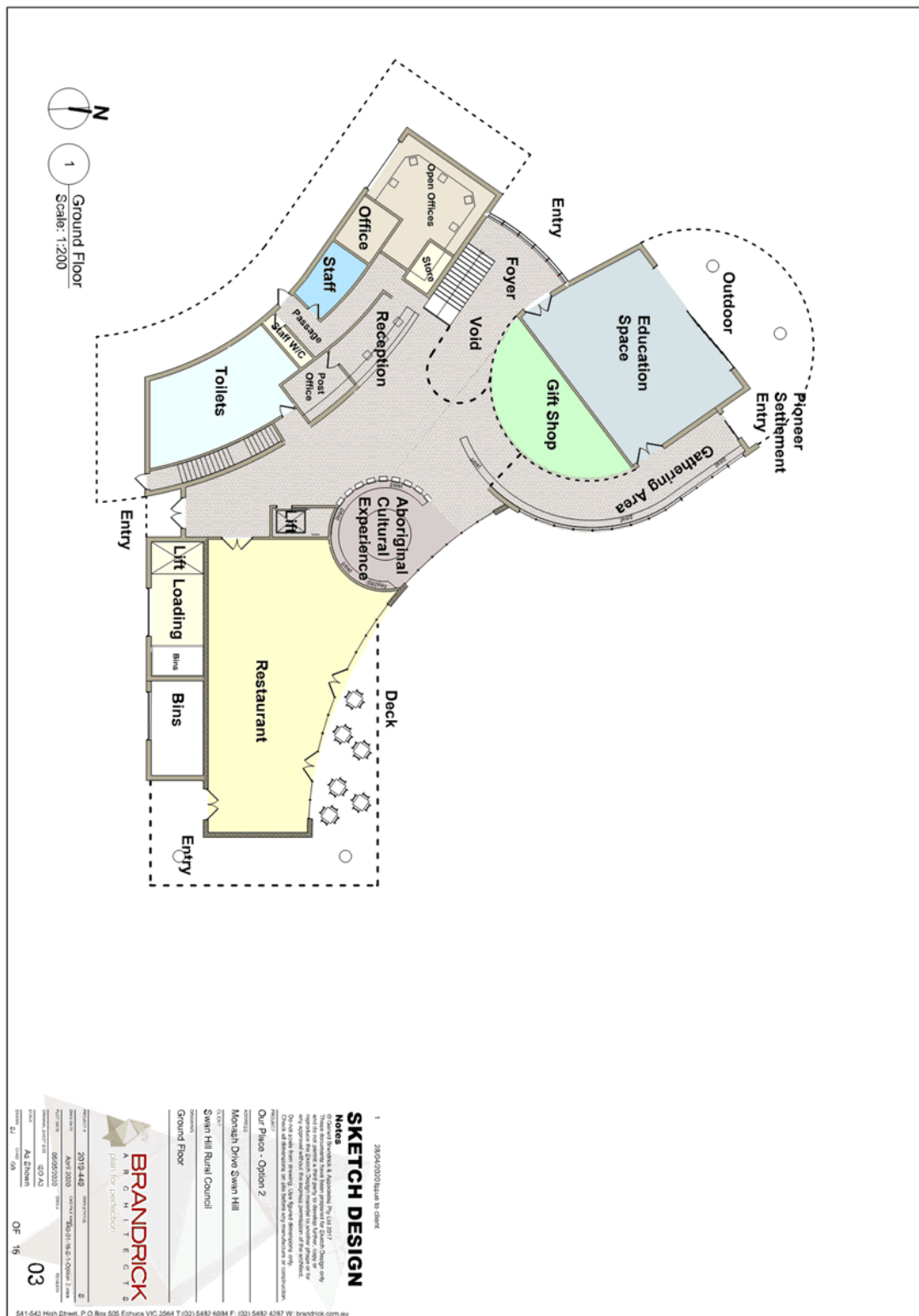
Attachment 9

On line Survey Results

Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q1 Have you viewed the Our Place site options, concept design options and site considerations? If not, click here to view this information in a separate browser.

Answered: 470   Skipped: 0
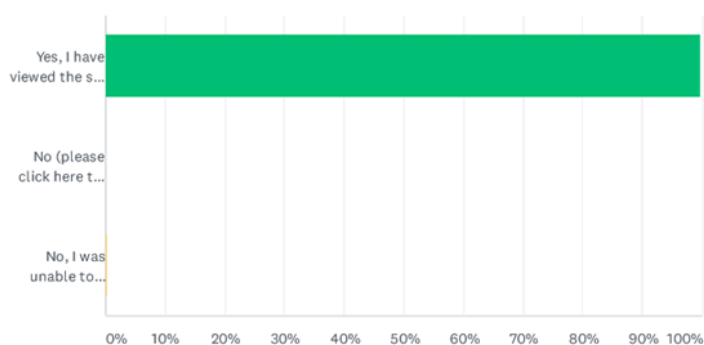
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I have viewed the site options, concept design options and site considerations	99.79%	469
No (please click here to view the site options, concept design options and site considerations)	0.00%	0
No, I was unable to access the information	0.21%	1
TOTAL		470

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Attachment 9

On line Survey Results

Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q2 What is your full name?
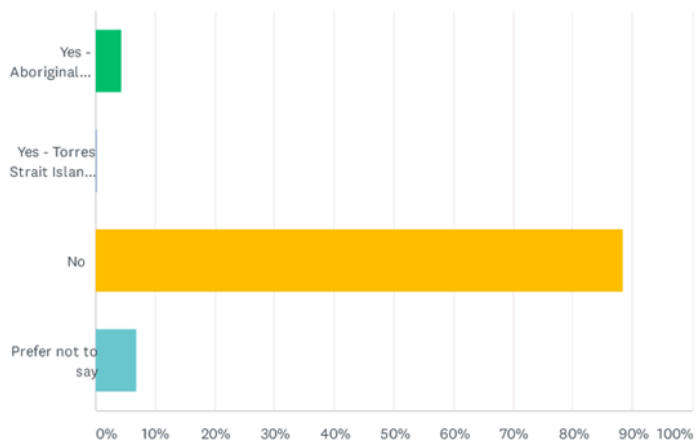
Answered: 409   Skipped: 61

*Attachment 9*   *On line Survey Results*

Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q3 What is your age?

Answered: 409   Skipped: 61
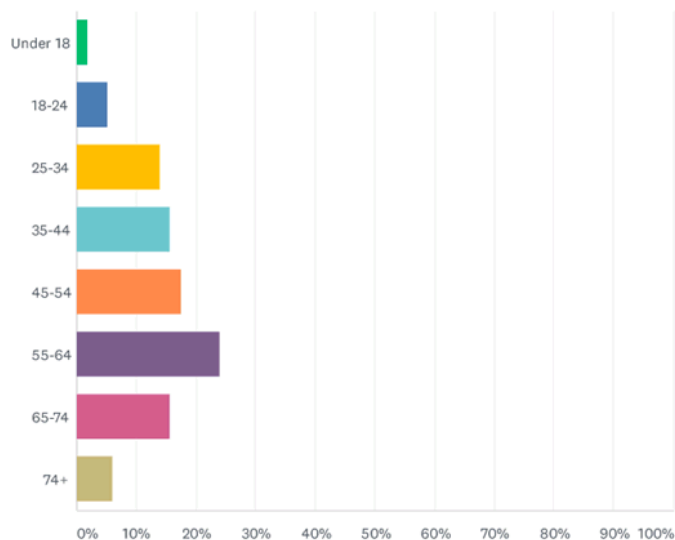
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	1.96%	8
18-24	5.13%	21
25-34	13.94%	57
35-44	15.65%	64
45-54	17.60%	72
55-64	23.96%	98
65-74	15.65%	64
74+	6.11%	25
TOTAL		409

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Attachment 9

On line Survey Results

Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q4 What is your current residential postcode?

Answered: 409   Skipped: 61

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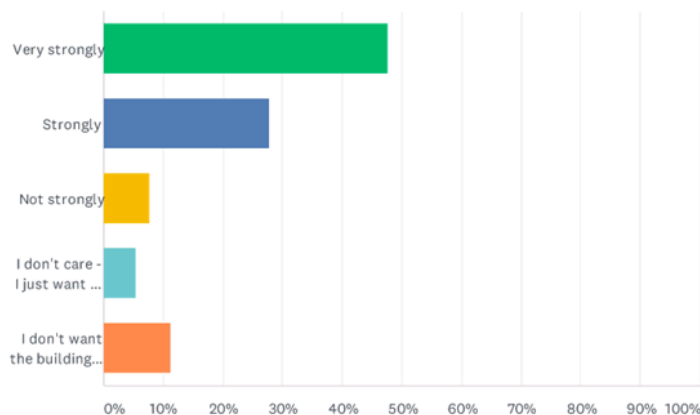*Attachment 9*   *On line Survey Results*

Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q5 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent?

Answered: 409   Skipped: 61

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes - Aboriginal decent	4.40%	18
Yes - Torres Strait Islander decent	0.24%	1
No	88.51%	362
Prefer not to say	6.85%	28
TOTAL		409

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Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q6 What is your connection to Swan Hill? (you can select more than one option, as applicable)

Answered: 409   Skipped: 61
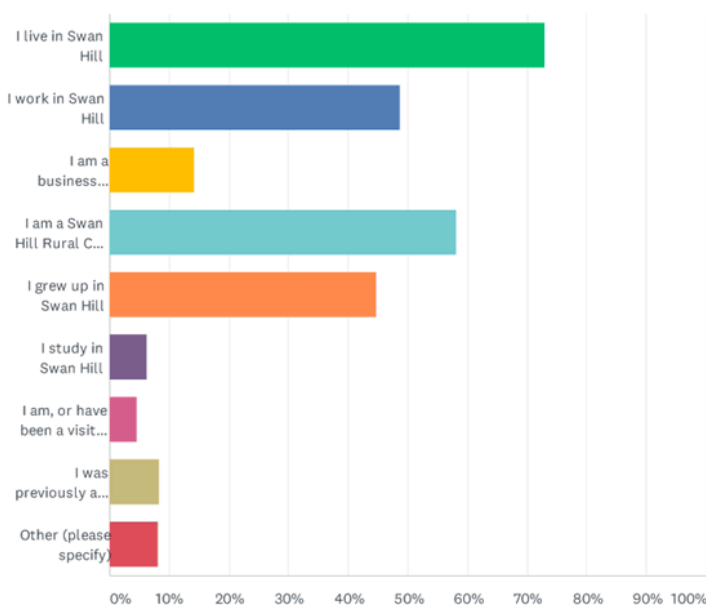
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in Swan Hill	73.11%	299
I work in Swan Hill	48.66%	199
I am a business owner/operator in Swan Hill	14.18%	58
I am a Swan Hill Rural City Council rate payer	58.19%	238
I grew up in Swan Hill	44.74%	183
I study in Swan Hill	6.36%	26
I am, or have been a visitor to Swan Hill	4.65%	19
I was previously a resident in Swan Hill	8.31%	34
Other (please specify)	8.07%	33
Total Respondents: 409		

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Attachment 9 _____ **On line Survey Results**

Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q7 How strongly do you feel about the location of Our Place?

Answered: 409   Skipped: 61

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very strongly	47.68%	195
Strongly	27.87%	114
Not strongly	7.82%	32
I don't care - I just want to make sure it gets built	5.38%	22
I don't want the building built at all	11.25%	46
TOTAL		409

7 / 20

Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q8 Thinking about Design option 1 ONLY (inside the Pioneer Settlement), what features do you LIKE about the design and location? (select as many options as you like)

Answered: 375   Skipped: 95
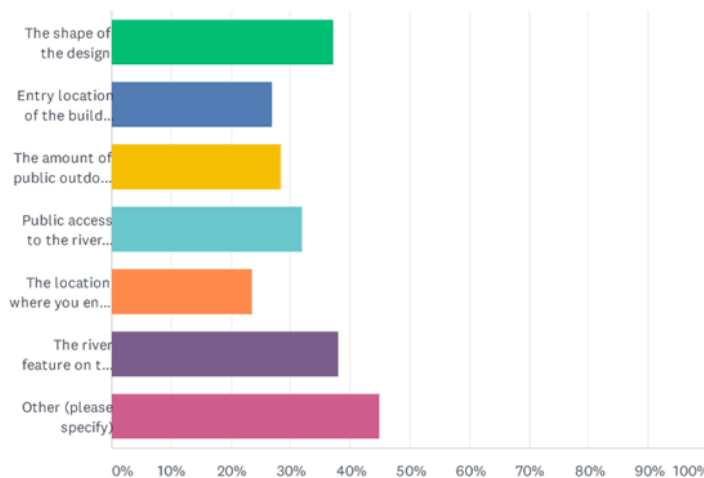
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The shape of the design	37.33%	140
Entry location of the building from Monash Drive	26.93%	101
The amount of public outdoor space around the building	28.53%	107
Public access to the river front offered by this site	32.00%	120
The location where you enter into the Pioneer Settlement	23.73%	89
The river feature on the exterior of the building	38.13%	143
Other (please specify)	45.07%	169
Total Respondents: 375		

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Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q9 Thinking about Design option 2 ONLY (outside the Pioneer Settlement), what features do you LIKE about the design and location? (select as many options as you like)

Answered: 375   Skipped: 95
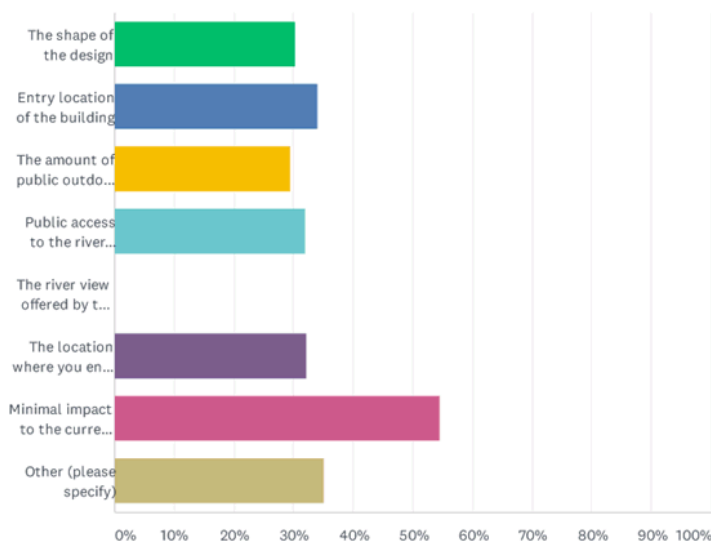
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The shape of the design	30.40%	114
Entry location of the building	34.13%	128
The amount of public outdoor space around the building	29.60%	111
Public access to the river front offered by this site	32.00%	120
The river view offered by this site - click here for river view offered at site Option 2 INSERT PIC??	0.00%	0
The location where you enter into the Pioneer Settlement	32.27%	121
Minimal impact to the current Pioneer Settlement site	54.67%	205
Other (please specify)	35.20%	132
Total Respondents: 375		

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Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q10 Think about the materials that you would expect to see included in the design of this building, regardless of its location. Please select the material palettes/combinations that you like best (select as many as you like).

Answered: 375   Skipped: 95
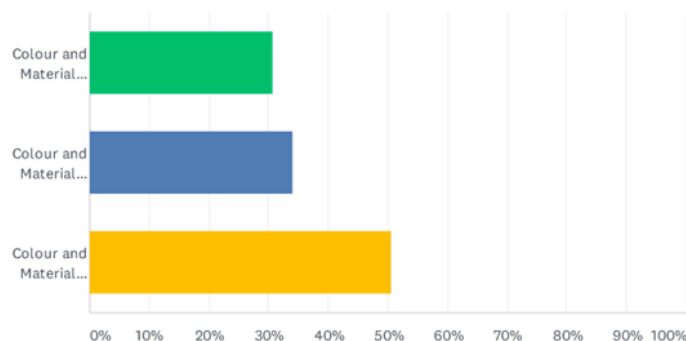
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Colour and Material Palette 1	30.67%	115
Colour and Material Palette 2	34.13%	128
Colour and Material Palette 3	50.67%	190
Total Respondents: 375		

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Attachment 9   *On line Survey Results*

Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q11 Landscaping around the building (ie. garden and vegetated areas that visitors can spend time in).

Answered: 372   Skipped: 98
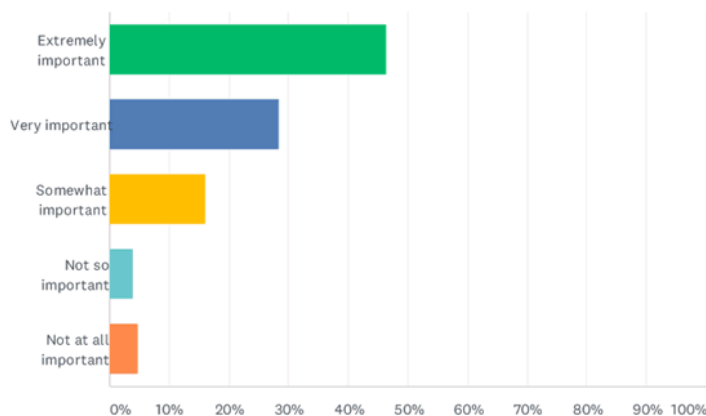
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	46.51%	173
Very important	28.49%	106
Somewhat important	16.13%	60
Not so important	4.03%	15
Not at all important	4.84%	18
TOTAL		372

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Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q12 Being able to get a coffee in the building.

Answered: 372   Skipped: 98
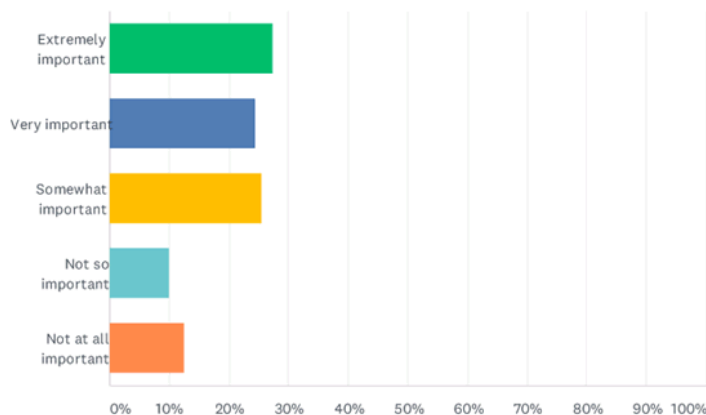
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	27.42%	102
Very important	24.46%	91
Somewhat important	25.54%	95
Not so important	9.95%	37
Not at all important	12.63%	47
TOTAL		372

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Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q13 Outdoor public seating areas around the building.

Answered: 372   Skipped: 98
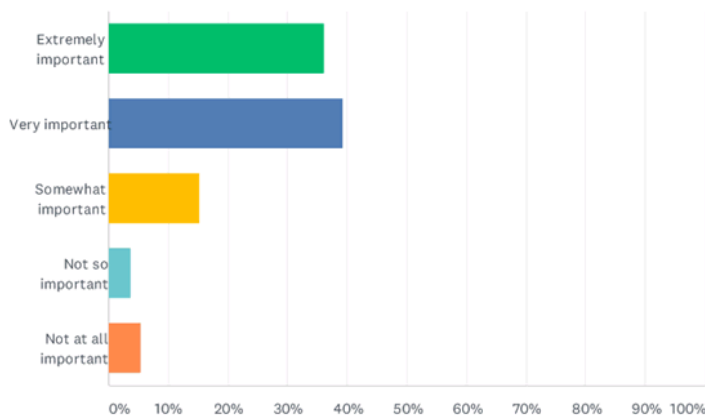
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	36.29%	135
Very important	39.25%	146
Somewhat important	15.32%	57
Not so important	3.76%	14
Not at all important	5.38%	20
TOTAL		372

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Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q14 Seated areas inside the building that the public can spend time in.

Answered: 372   Skipped: 98
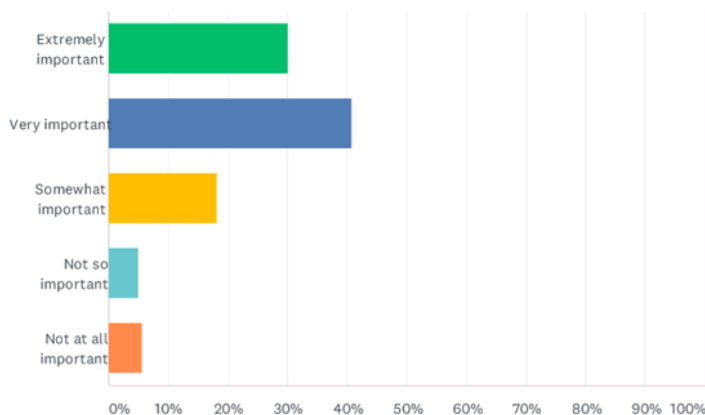
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	30.11%	112
Very important	40.86%	152
Somewhat important	18.28%	68
Not so important	5.11%	19
Not at all important	5.65%	21
TOTAL		372

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Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q15 How do you think you will interact with Our Place? (choose as many as you like)

Answered: 369   Skipped: 101

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Visiting the Art Gallery	50.95%	188
Purchasing tickets to local events	52.85%	195
Accessing visitor services information	26.02%	96
Spending time along the riverfront	56.64%	209
Entry into the Pioneer Settlement	62.60%	231
Visiting the Aboriginal Cultural experience	40.65%	150
Learning about the history of Swan Hill	39.30%	145
Taking visitors along to see some of our local attractions	66.40%	245
Taking visitors along to learn about the history of Swan Hill	51.76%	191
Total Respondents: 369		

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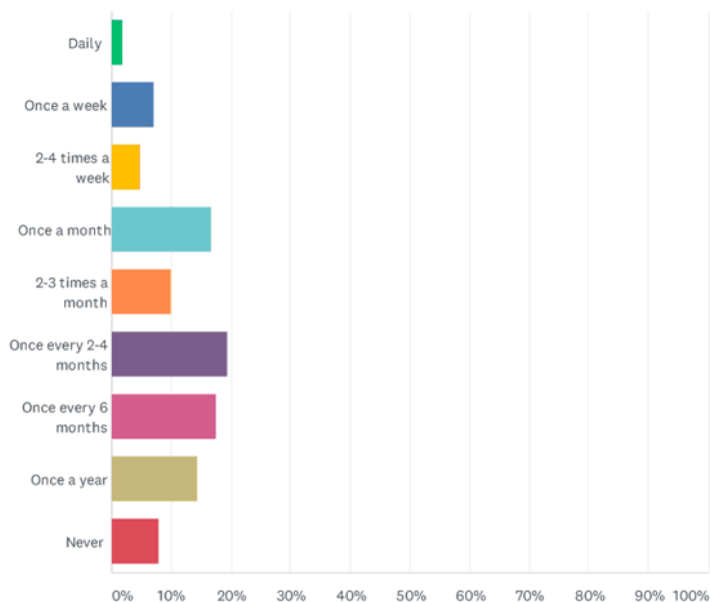
Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q16 How often would you expect to visit Our Place?

Answered: 369   Skipped: 101

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	1.90%	7
Once a week	7.05%	26
2-4 times a week	4.88%	18
Once a month	16.80%	62
2-3 times a month	10.03%	37
Once every 2-4 months	19.51%	72
Once every 6 months	17.62%	65
Once a year	14.36%	53
Never	7.86%	29
TOTAL		369

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Attachment 9

On line Survey Results

Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q17 If you could share one idea for something that you would like to see included in the DESIGN of this new building, what would that be?

Answered: 224   Skipped: 246

17 / 20

Attachment 9   *On line Survey Results*

Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q18 If you could share one idea for something that you would like to see
included in the EXPERIENCE offered from this new building, what would
that be?

Answered: 202   Skipped: 268

18 / 20

Attachment 9   *On line Survey Results*

Our Place - Site location and design   SurveyMonkey

Q19 Do you have any other feedback or comments that you would like to share with us about the Our Place project at this time?

Answered: 247   Skipped: 223

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Attachment 9

On line Survey Results

Our Place - Site location and design

SurveyMonkey

Q20 Would you like to receive email updates about Our Place?If yes, please provide your details below.If no, or if you are already receiving Our Place email updates, please click 'Next'

Answered: 74   Skipped: 396

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full Name	93.24%	69
Email	100.00%	74

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Attachment 10

Site Options

Option 2

Option 1

Attachment 11   *Site Considerations*

Our Place
Site and design considerations - June 2020

Riverfront access, views and landscaping

Site option 1 Inside the Pioneer Settlement	Site option 2 Outside the Pioneer Settlement
• This site provides access to a riverfront location that is currently only accessible via ticketed entry into the Pioneer Settlement. This provides the opportunity to make the area more accessible for visitors and the local community. • The view to the river is clear and open. • This site offers sufficient space to incorporate landscaped outdoor public space that takes advantage of the river frontage.	• Riverfront access may be limited due to the position of the levee bank and steepness of the bank. • The area that can be landscaped on this site is limited due to the levee bank and proximity to the existing car parks. • A majority of direct river frontage might require an amount of 'hard landscaping', including decking, to facilitate access. • The view from this site is not as clear because vegetation is denser. Refer to the 'Impact on vegetation' section for additional considerations related to this point. • There will be costs associated with providing the offsets required for some vegetation clearing on this site.

Impact on vegetation

Both sites will require some clearing of vegetation. Impact on vegetation will be minimised wherever possible and in particular, impact on native vegetation.

Site option 1 Inside the Pioneer Settlement	Site option 2 Outside the Pioneer Settlement
• Impact on native vegetation is expected to be minimal for this site. • Several 'planted' trees will need to be required to be removed to accommodate the new building. This includes the rose garden and a number of non-native species.	• Several native trees will need to be removed. • The proposed design for this site has worked around two established trees (one outside the existing Art Gallery and another in the rear carpark area behind Spoons Riverside), in order to minimise impact and removal of vegetation • To open up the view to the river from the ground level, we will consider thinning the smaller growth of native vegetation.

Pioneer Settlement heritage artifacts and architecture

Site option 1 Inside the Pioneer Settlement	Site option 2 Outside the Pioneer Settlement
• Building on this site will mean that the Pioneer Settlement will no longer have exclusive access and control of this space. Since the development of the Lower Murray Inn, the proposed site area has been less activated with regards to weddings and functions than it was before Lower Murray Inn was developed. • The old hospital gates will be required to be removed, but will be retained by the Settlement and possibly re-erected in another location. • The locomotive and windmill will be relocated from this site. • The rotunda will need to be removed. • The rose garden will need to be removed.	• Building on this site will have limited direct impact on Pioneer Settlement artifacts and architecture. Refer to the 'Pioneer Settlement entry' section for additional considerations related to this point

Pioneer Settlement entry – and proximity to key activations and attractions

Site option 1 Inside the Pioneer Settlement	Site option 2 Outside the Pioneer Settlement
• Building on this site will require a new entry point into the Pioneer Settlement, being in the proximity of the old church and the coach houses. • The new entry point for this site will be in comparable proximity to key Settlement attractions (the main street and Heartbeat of the Murray) as the current Settlement entry location.	• Building on this site will require a new entry point into the Pioneer Settlement, being at the current exit point to Spoons Riverside and alongside the PS Gem. • The new entry location required for this site will mean that the entry point is a significantly greater distance from key Settlement attractions (the main street and Heartbeat of the Murray), as compared to the current entry location. • This proposed entry position is not currently activated as a key area of the Settlement and will require investment to develop activations in this location. • Alternate solutions might be required to transport less able-bodied visitors attending Heartbeat of the Murray from the new entry point to the Heartbeat location.

PS Gem

Site option 1 Inside the Pioneer Settlement	Site option 2 Outside the Pioneer Settlement
• Building on this site offers an opportunity for the PS Gem to be a 'free' attraction, allowing more people to visit, learn about and appreciate this unique historical artifact. • It is not expected that the PS Gem will continue to be an attraction incorporated in the general entry Pioneer Settlement ticket price. However, the PS Gem might remain an attraction for ticketed guided tours conducted as part of the Pioneer Settlement offering. • Any design for this site will need to be respectful in its incorporation of, and impact on, the PS Gem as an established key historical attraction. • Viable solutions will be required to ensure that the security of the PS Gem is not compromised. •	• The PS Gem will remain an attraction within the Pioneer Settlement, available exclusively to Pioneer Settlement ticket holders. • Any design for this site will also need to be respectful in its incorporation of, and impact on, the PS Gem as an established key historical attraction.

Site disruptions during construction – Spoons Riverside, PS Gem, Art Gallery, Pioneer Settlement

Site option 1 Inside the Pioneer Settlement	Site option 2 Outside the Pioneer Settlement
• Access to the southern end of the Pioneer Settlement will be restricted during construction. At completion, there will be a new entry location to the Pioneer Settlement. Refer to the 'Pioneer Settlement entry' section for additional considerations related to this point. • Access to the Pyap will continue to be made available. • It is expected that access to the PS Gem will continue to be made available, although access may be restricted at times due to construction. Disruption will be minimised wherever possible.	• Demolition of the existing Spoons Riverside building will be required to construct the new building. • Spoons Riverside will be closed to the public for the period of construction – Council is working with the management of Spoons Riverside to communicate details of this possibility. It will be the responsibility of Spoons Riverside management to facilitate alternate business arrangements during the shutdown period. • The current Art Gallery will continue to operate, however access may be restricted at times due to construction requirements. Disruption will be minimised wherever possible. • Existing car park access on this site will be limited due to construction. • Access to the Pioneer Settlement Lodges will continue to be made available; however access may be restricted at times due to construction requirements. Disruption will be minimised wherever possible.

Carparking

Site option 1 **Inside the Pioneer Settlement**	Site option 2 **Outside the Pioneer Settlement**
• Main carparking area servicing the building will be street parking.	• Defined, off street car parking area to service building. • Defined, off street parking area will have limited capacity – this will be backed up • Will require budget allocation to seal/formalise carpark area at the rear of the current art gallery/spoons site. • May require consideration of redeveloping Art Gallery parking area in order to optimise car parking in the precinct – this may be able to be delivered by a staged approach.

Future development of lodges site

Site option 1 **Inside the Pioneer Settlement**	Site option 2 **Outside the Pioneer Settlement**
• May require future interpretive connection between the two locations.	• Future precinct development may be impacted with regards to density of development on this site location.

Pental Island access from building

Site option 1 **Inside the Pioneer Settlement**	Site option 2 **Outside the Pioneer Settlement**
• Direct access to Pental Island footbridge may benefit future engagement with island for Aboriginal community and potential tourism product/engagement opportunities with the island (interpretive walk, etc.) • Footbridge will require investment in upgrade to facilitate public access	• Will require access via the Pioneer Settlement proper.

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Attachment 11

Site Considerations

Attachment 12   ***Key Stakeholder Feedback***

Key Stakeholder Feedback
Our Place

The Key Stakeholder group comprises representatives from each of the key services that will operate from the new building – the Art Gallery, the Aboriginal community, Visitor Services and the Pioneer Settlement. Each of the members are experts in their fields.

The group wish to draw attention to research and studies that have shown the range of opportunities presented by the Pioneer Settlement site (site option 1). Specifically, supporting documents and professional opinion for this site include;

- Feasibility Reports – Murray River Interpretive Centre Feasibility Study and Murray River Interpretive Centre Design Feasibility Report
- Mark Francis, MRT, CEO
- The current architects
- Art Gallery Advisory Committee
- Friends of Pioneer Settlement (vast majority of over 60 volunteers)
- Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) - Visitor Servicing Toolkit 2019
- Murray Region Visitor Engagement Strategy 2019

In consideration of the sites proposed, the Pioneer Settlement, Visitor Services and Art Gallery have expressly stated that site option 1 provides the most optimised strategic opportunities for the delivery of the respective services.

The Pioneer Settlement has expressed a preference for site option 1. The Settlement supports a Modern Entry into a heritage precinct (various examples around the world support this practice). The Settlement has concern for loss of budget allocation and floor space to out-of-scope and unplanned restaurant inclusion - to see a diluting of the investment into the four stakeholder services to benefit a commercial business would be disappointing for the community.

The Visitor Services team believes that site option 1 is the most opportunistic locality, allowing the greatest opportunity to deliver a competitive destination offering and maximise investment. Increasing overnight visitation and expenditure is a key focus for Swan Hill tourism. One of the greatest challenges Swan Hill tourism faces is how to improve its product offering - the more on offer, the longer people will stay. Research shows that the most popular activity for domestic visitors to Swan Hill is dining out. By developing option two, one of the key tourism products of this region, Spoons Riverside, becomes compromised.

The proximity of site option 1 also facilitates easy access to Pental Island for the development of future tourism product(s) – partnership with the Aboriginal community has the potential to support the development of such products. Additionally, site option 1 facilitates Visitor Services to literally be on site with the major attractions that it promotes every single day.

The Art Gallery, as a key stakeholder of Our Place, is fully aligned with the position of the Art Gallery Advisory Committee, presented earlier in this report. The Gallery supports site option

D.20.5 OUR PLACE - SITE LOCATION

Having given due notice, **Councillor Nicole McKay MOVES that Council:**

1. **Commence planning to build a substantial new entrance building for the Pioneer Settlement and Visitor Information Services at the site of the Rose Garden that is less intrusive to the Pioneer Settlement.**

2. **Provide for offices and meeting space for the Aboriginal business hub, within the new building that will be significantly larger than that planned for within Option 1 or Option 2, enabling meaningful use.**

3. **Apply for a generous extension to project timelines because COVID-19 has had a negative impact on all types of community consultation. This has meant that meaningful consultation on the project has been difficult to achieve.**

4. **Scope the repairs to the walking bridge to Pental Island to enable the First Nations community members to access the area for cultural and educational purposes.**

5. **Engage in meaningful, substantive consultation with the local Aboriginal Community to co-design and collaborate to develop a plan for a Cultural/Interpretative Centre and co-located Swan Hill Art Gallery.**

6. **Take into greater consideration the community feedback from the online consultations and meetings with the wider Swan Hill Community.**

Preamble

This is a time for leadership. As Councillors at Swan Hill Rural City it is necessary for us to work together to negotiate, and identify a workable and successful solution to this issue.

We welcome the "Our Place" project. It holds great promise and can become an economically rewarding and much loved community resource.

COVID-19 has thrown into disarray many of plans for the future. It is an uncertain time. However, it is predicted is that domestic tourism will grow in the coming years. International tourism has not traditionally made up a large part of visitation numbers at Swan Hill LGA. We have just experienced an exceptionally busy holiday period.

It is necessary for us as Councillors to consider the potential negative impacts on tourism that turning our two most popular attractions into building sites for the next 2 years at a time when we could be growing our share of the market. We can now

consider a workable solution that would improve visitor welcome and experience at the Pioneer Settlement, establish the Aboriginal Business Hub, and provide cost savings to Council, through combining of the Visitor Information Services and Pioneer Settlement Reception.

The final step is to continue investigations to identify sites and design for the establishment of a co-located Aboriginal Interpretative-Cultural Centre/Swan Hill Art Gallery as advised as being a suitable project in the 2017 Murray River Interpretive Centre feasibility study. This would involve co-design and collaboration with the First Nations communities of the Swan Hill Region.

The residents of our municipality hope, that, as Councillors, we can negotiate and co-operate to pursue the best long-term outcome for our region. We have it in us to achieve this. This project has thrown considerable challenges our way. Let us co-operate and respond to our community's valid concerns. Let us work towards a workable, practical, and viable solution. We can achieve commencement of necessary works at the Pioneer Settlement: an impressive, new entrance and visitor information services. We can commence development of the Aboriginal Business Hub within this building and maintain SHRCC commitment to this. We can continue to engage in meaningful consultation and investigations to establish a new co-located Art Gallery and Aboriginal Cultural-Interpretative Centre.

SECTION E – URGENT ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN AGENDA

SECTION F – TO CONSIDER & ORDER ON COUNCILLOR REPORTS

SECTION G – IN CAMERA ITEMS

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Recommendation

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

B.20.52   IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT