



Colac Otway
SHIRE

Economic Development Strategy

Draft | October 2018

Document Control

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Acknowledgment

The Colac Otway Shire proudly acknowledges the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples of the Eastern Maar Nation as the traditional custodians of the Colac Otway Region. We acknowledge that the Colac Otway Economic Development Strategy is based upon the lands of the Gulidjan and Gadubanud people.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their unique cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to their traditional lands, which continue to be important to them today and into the future.

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Colac Otway Economic Snapshot

\$1,196.973 million
The total value-added by the Colac Otway economy

\$2,801.629 million
The total output by the Colac Otway economy



Big Engines

Tourism **5695**
Jobs
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing
Construction **57.8%**
Manufacturing
Health Care & Social Assistance
Shire's Total Output

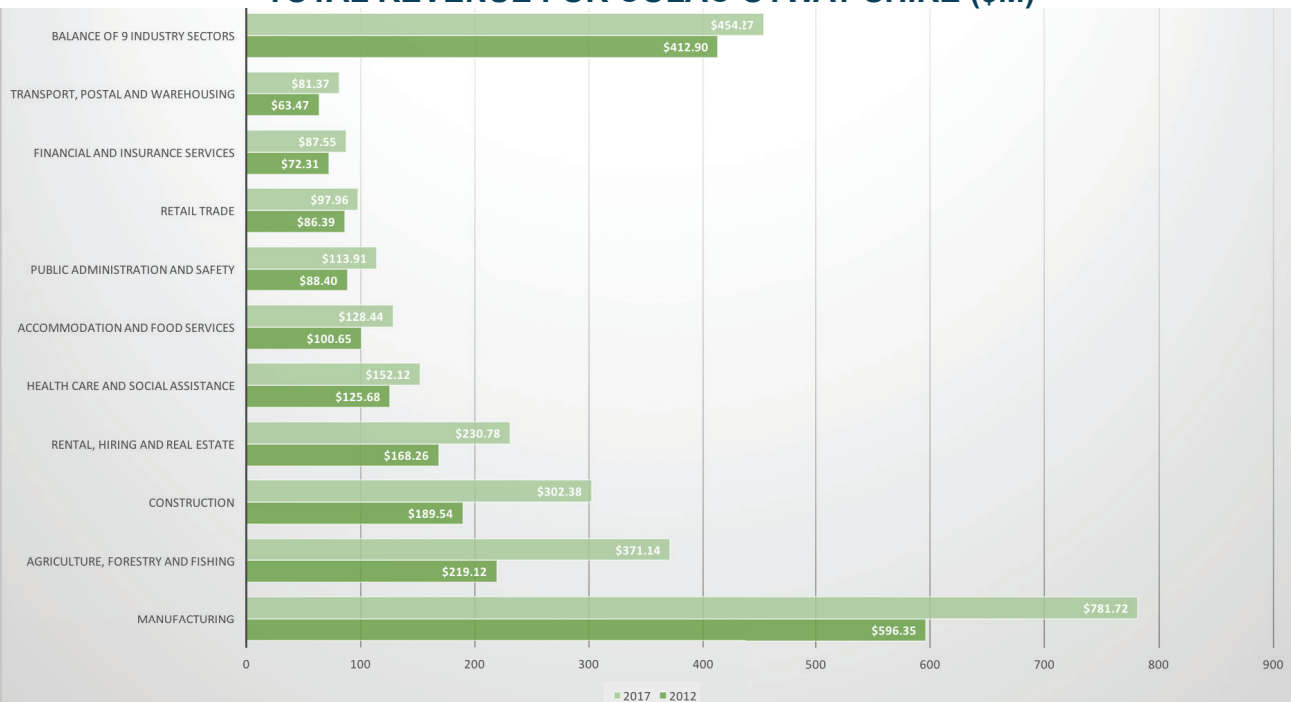
Growth in No of Businesses

2015 -2017

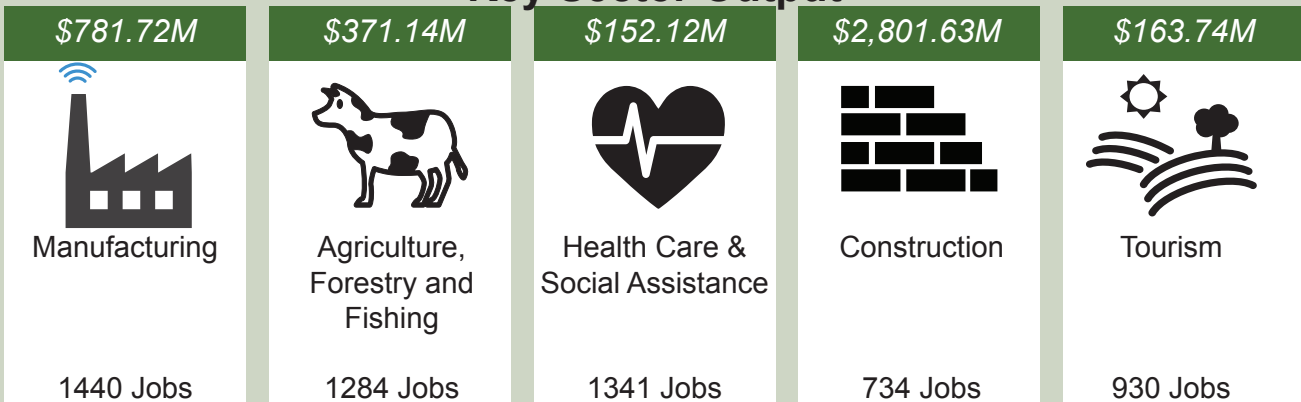
1391 to 1559

+ 168 ↑
12.1%

TOTAL REVENUE FOR COLAC OTWAY SHIRE (\$M)



Key Sector Output



A note from the Mayor

I am pleased to present the Colac Otway Shire's Economic Development Strategy.

The Strategy sets out the direction for how Council can best support economic growth in the Colac Otway Shire. It's about building on our strengths and providing clear direction of how Council will foster local investment and jobs growth. The Colac Otway Shire is part of a region that continues to experience significant growth, often bucking the economic trends experienced elsewhere in the regional Victorian economy.

Central to this Strategy is Council's desire to embrace new opportunities to allow businesses of all sizes in our region to thrive and innovate, and allow our community to share in the region's economic prosperity. We will build on our natural and geographic strengths, and encourage investment in strategic sectors to support economic growth.

I thank all the local businesses and key stakeholders who have shared their time and provided valuable insights into the key challenges and opportunities facing our municipality. By working together, we can foster a vibrant and flourishing local economy that benefits all.



Cr Joe McCracken
Mayor Colac Otway Shire Council

Introduction

The Colac Otway Shire's Economic Development Strategy outlines how Council will support economic development by promoting investment and jobs creation in the Shire. It identifies important local sectors which are significant contributors to the local economy, and identifies specific activities which the Colac Otway Shire can pursue to support the foundations for economic growth in the region.

It establishes a plan that responds to key challenges with actions to promote economic development for the local context, and provides a framework and Action Plan for the delivery of economic development activities.

The Strategy articulates a vision for economic development in the Shire, and provides guidance for the Colac Otway Shire's Economic Development Unit as a core function of Council to work towards the realisation of the vision.

The Strategy will guide Council's activities in supporting business and industry. This support will be visible through the promotion of local tourism, facilitation of new investment attraction into the region, reinvestment in the region, support in the delivery of a range of events across the Shire designed to attract visitors to the region, ongoing efficient saleyards services, and the creation of job

opportunities.

The Colac Otway Shire is experiencing an upward trend of economic development and growth with significant opportunities set to transform accessibility, productivity and liveability. These include the duplication of the Princes Highway, Colac CBD and Entrances Project upgrades, planning scheme amendments to unlock industrial and residential land, and significant growth in the visitor economy particularly associated with the Great Ocean Road, which will continue to grow with the expansion of Avalon Airport into the international market late 2018. This Strategy builds on these investments and initiatives and maps a path forward to facilitate growth and share local prosperity.



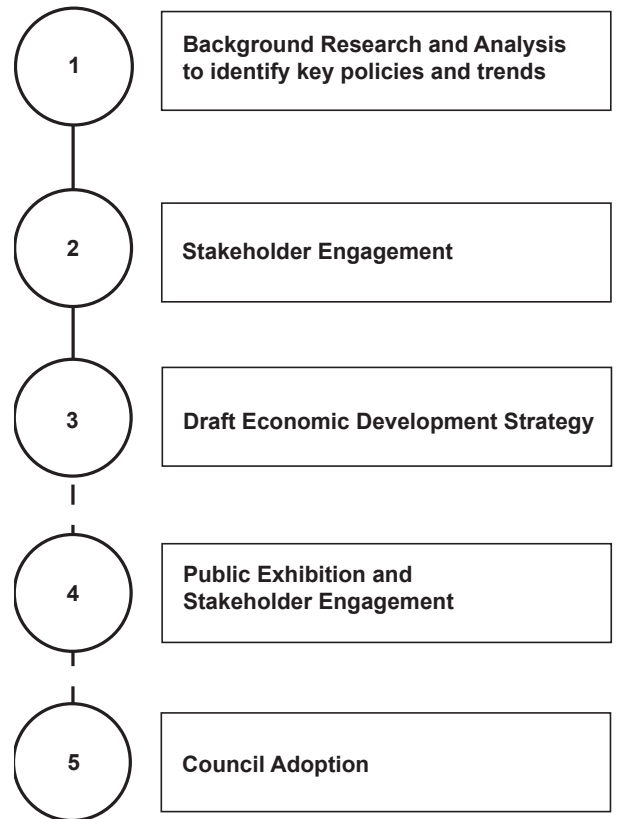
Process

The development of this strategy has involved research, engagement, and analysis to identify economic development priorities, and provide direction for the Shire over the coming years. Research included analysis of key policies and macro-economic trends. Data was collected from activities and reports developed in recent years. A comprehensive report was obtained from Remplan providing up to date Census data including employment statistics, industry outputs, trends and regional opportunities. This report also provided detail on the state of the regional economy and gross regional product analysis.

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken through surveys, workshops, and discussions with key sectors operating within the Shire. Six facilitated industry workshops were conducted in the following sectors:

- Agriculture
- Food and Fibre
- Health
- Manufacturing/ Construction
- Retail and Services
- Tourism

An events workshop was also conducted with Council officers and event organisers. Several one on one meetings were held with key regional stakeholders, and an extensive business survey was developed and promoted across the region resulting in 137 responses.



The Economic Development Vision

The vision for economic development in the Colac Otway Shire is presented below. It describes the desired economic future for our community.

It responds to the Shire's strengths and opportunities, and considers challenges and issues identified as part of the Strategy's development. It articulates the Shire's desired economic future.

The Colac Otway Shire will be a vibrant diverse economy that attracts investment and innovation in key industry sectors to benefit the broader community to prosper and thrive. Businesses will be connected to regional, national and international markets and services with a Whole-of-Council approach that supports sustainable growth.

Role of Council

Council has an important role to play in relation to building economic capacity in the Shire to improve the quality of life for residents. The private sector will remain the primary contributor to business development, investment, and growing the local economy. However, it is recognised that local governments play an important role to facilitate improved conditions for investment within their municipalities. The 2018 Victorian Auditor General's report *Local Government and Economic Development* identified the importance of local governments to economic development through the development of long-term economic strategies as well as creating favourable conditions for economic development. This Strategy therefore plays an important role in establishing the long-term economic development vision for the Shire and how Council can contribute towards achieving suitable conditions for economic development, consistent with Council's broader functions and activities in planning, social, environmental and cultural areas. The key areas where Council can enable economic development include:

- **Civic leadership and vision setting** by developing, communicating and implementing a vision for the future of the Shire
- **Marketing and promotion** by being proactive in marketing the Shire as a desirable place to invest, live, work and play
- **Infrastructure** by delivering a range of enabling infrastructure to improve the Shire's amenity
- **Planning** by facilitating a robust and efficient planning system that encourages investment and employment
- **Business Support** particularly for small to medium enterprises by developing a whole-of Council approach to business support and growth.

Strategic Alignment

The Colac Otway Economic Development Strategy sits within a suite of Council and regional policies and strategies, and it is important that these reinforce a consistent policy and decision making framework.

Whilst it is not the role of this Strategy to repeat those policies and strategies, the following describe the most relevant local, regional, and state strategies.

Colac Otway Shire Council Plan 2017 – 2021

The Colac Otway Shire Council Plan 2017–2021 is the key document which establishes a strategic vision which the Councillors have committed to including planning for growth in business and employment for our towns and settlements. The Plan has four strategic themes including: our prosperity; our places; our community’ and our leadership and management. The theme ‘our prosperity’ relates to the vision for economic growth, thriving industries, partnerships and the Great Ocean Road and states the following:

“Colac Otway Shire has a diverse economy, much of it built on the natural environmental values of the area. The area has enjoyed successful dairy and food processing industries for many decades; supports the timber industry; has a growing tourism industry built on both a striking coastline and the forests of the Otway’s; small, specialist food producers, many forming the Colac Otway food trail; plus, a host of local retail businesses, arts and crafts enterprises; and health and education services.

The Shire has two larger towns of Colac and Apollo Bay, and a number of smaller towns. Each of these has unique attractions and supports local cultures and communities. The Shire is strategically placed halfway between Geelong and Warrnambool which provides

opportunities for economic development and a growing population supported by access to work.”

The endorsement of this Strategy is a key goal for Council, and an action within the Council Plan.

Colac Otway Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021 (2017)

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is an important document which shows how Council will influence better health and wellbeing outcomes for our community. It is particularly important that Council understands and provides advocacy and support for those groups/individuals that experience some form of vulnerability through disadvantage, racism or isolation. Council recognises that it needs to work in partnership with many other health and wellbeing providers to ensure better outcomes for our community, especially supporting families to assist their children to reach their full potential.

Colac Township Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy (2017)

This strategy provides a vision for the economic development of Colac, a set of objectives which support the vision, and an Action Plan identifying specific actions for Council. Several catalyst projects have also been identified for Council to undertake which are anticipated to contribute to positive economic outcomes for Colac and the region. The Strategy is supported by detailed research, analysis and consultation and identifies key implications for commercial and industrial land areas.

Draft Colac 2050 Growth Plan (2018)

The Colac 2050 Growth Plan will guide the way Colac grows towards 2050 by establishing a strategic framework to guide the future planning and development of Colac. Colac 2050 seeks to build on the city's strengths and support population growth, by building on the city's strong sense of community, heritage and its natural and cultural features. The Plan responds to the growth target of 20,000 people by 2050 established by the G21 Regional Growth Plan which reinforces the importance of Colac in the region.

Rural Living Strategy (2011)

The Rural Living Strategy, is a Shire wide settlement strategy which promotes the growth of several towns within the municipality, and reinforces the need to protect farming land for agricultural purposes. Whilst promoting Colac as the largest town in the Shire where the bulk of population growth should be located, several other smaller towns are identified with fewer planning constraints and available services such as Forrest, Birregurra, Beac, Alvie, Cororooke and Gellibrand.

Further planning will be undertaken in the short to medium term in Beac, Alvie, Cororooke and Gellibrand to identify town boundaries.

The G21 Economic Development Strategy (2014)

The Colac Otway Shire sits within the G21 region. The G21 is a formal alliance of Government, business and community organisations working together to improve the lives of people living in the Geelong region. The Strategy builds on the collaborative spirit across the region to embrace and encourage growth. It establishes a regional vision statement and focusses on four strategic focus areas: strategic and integrated transport infrastructure; vibrant and active region; coordinated delivery of critical growth infrastructure; learning and innovation; and investment ready. The Colac Otway Shire Economic Development Strategy reinforces these strategic areas within the municipality's local context and recognising the key sectors relevant for this area.





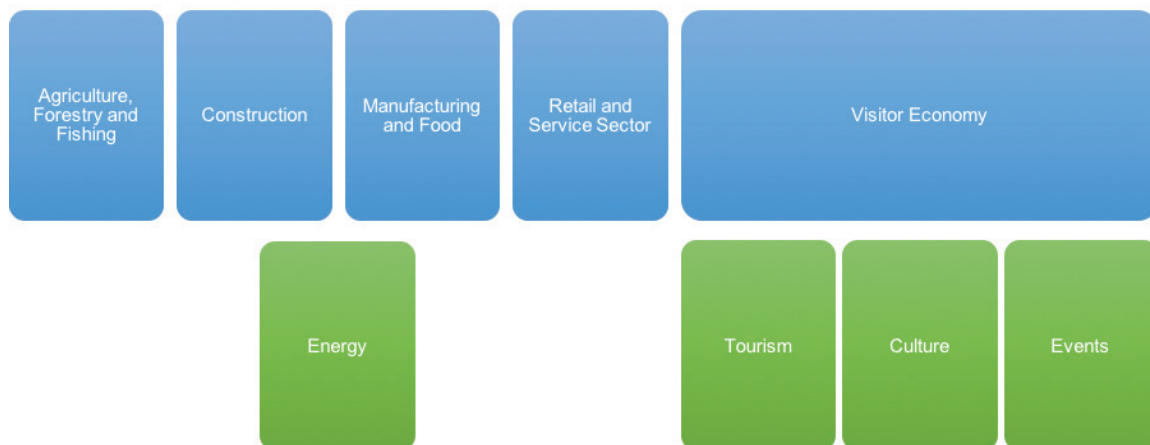
Strategic Framework and Principles

Strategic Framework

This section outlines the strategic framework and principles to guide economic development within the Colac Otway Shire over the coming years. The Strategy is underpinned by the following economic

vision supported by overarching principles. Goals for each priority economic sector are describe the desired outcomes to achieve the vision.

The Colac Otway Shire will be a vibrant diverse economy that attracts investment and innovation in key industry sectors to benefit the broader community to prosper and thrive. Businesses will be connected to regional, national and international markets and services with a Whole-of-Council approach that supports sustainable growth.



Principles

The Strategy's implementation will be guided by the following principles. The principles have been developed regarding the levers available to Council to influence local economic development. The principles will drive a whole-of-Council approach to economic development by being embedded across Council's different departments.

- Support local businesses to grow and succeed in the global market place.
- Build on local competitive advantages.
- Provide a regulatory framework that is consistent and efficient.
- Provide a whole-of-Council approach to business inquiries and investment.
- Respect the natural environment.
- Promote and celebrate sustainable, innovative and creative businesses.
- Facilitate constructive, collaborative working relationships between Government, industry and associations.



Priority Sectors and Actions

This section identifies the major employment sectors in the Colac Otway Shire, highlighting opportunities and actions for each sector, as well as multi-sector opportunities.

Multi-Sector Opportunities and Actions

Business Facilitation and Investment Attraction

Council is committed to providing a “Whole-of-Council” approach to economic development, to facilitate effective economic development activities, new business investment into the region, and business re-investment within the region. We recognise that this investment will strengthen the economy, grow our population, create local job opportunities, and ultimately benefit our local communities to thrive and prosper.

To this end, Council is committed to implementing a “single point of contact” system in Council through the Economic Development Unit, to assist with business enquiries and investment.

How Council assists Business Facilitation and Investment Attraction

- Undertakes business attraction activities by identifying gaps across a range of products and existing services, and facilitates discussions with prospective businesses.
- Develops marketing collateral for promotion purposes.
- Implements various grant programs.

Key Opportunities in Business Facilitation and Investment Attraction

- Facilitate new business investment into the region and business re-investment within the region to strengthen the economy, grow our population and create local job opportunities.
- Promote our community facilities and assets such as: Central Reserve; Apollo Bay Harbour; Bluewater Fitness and Leisure Centre; Colac Otway Performing Arts and Culture Centre; two hospitals and good health services; proximity to Melbourne, Geelong and airports.

Strategic Goal

- Provide a “Whole-of-Council” approach to facilitate effective economic development activities, new business investment into the region, and business re-investment within the region.



Key Objectives

- Facilitate business enquiries and investment through the implementation of a “single point of contact” system in Council through the Economic Development department.
- Implement the “Localised” business to business platform in Colac Otway Shire to enable easier connectivity between local businesses and facilitate stronger local procurement.
- Provide ongoing support to facilitate the retention and development of existing businesses.
- Actively seek new investment opportunities that complement existing businesses in our identified priority sectors.

Business Facilitation and Investment Attraction Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
<p>Continue to develop connections with existing businesses and their relevant representative bodies (eg: Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to ensure that, where possible, new and expanded opportunities are developed to consolidate and expand local business operations and increase their market share.</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>Chambers</p>	Lead	ongoing	<p>Maintain a database of local businesses and key stakeholders</p> <p>Attendance at local business and industry events</p>



Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
<p>Initiate industry round tables with relevant state government departments, G21 Economic Development Pillar and key stakeholders to address specific high priority economic challenges and opportunities within the Shire, already known or as they arise.</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>G21</p> <p>RDV</p> <p>Chambers</p> <p>Key stakeholders</p>	<p>Lead / Advocate</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Establishment of industry round tables on an annual basis</p>
<p>Regularly review Council's Economic Development Strategy and its alignment with investment and business attraction to the Colac township.</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>Business and Industry</p>	<p>Lead</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Review of Strategy every 4 years</p>
<p>Develop a marketing and promotion campaign aimed at attracting new and expanded levels of investment to Colac based on the competitive strengths of the Shire, bringing expansion to local and regional output and jobs.</p> <p>Marketing material should focus on the opportunities to leverage from the existing economic activity in Colac and the industries identified as being key industries for economic development.</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>Industry stakeholders</p>	<p>Lead</p>	<p>Short term</p> <p>ongoing</p>	<p>Presence of relevant business marketing and promotion campaign</p>

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
<p>Prepare and implement a promotional program that highlights Colac's liveability, attractions, community facilities and services and the town's suitability as a place to live, work and invest. Ensure promotional program remains current.</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>G21</p> <p>Key stakeholders</p>	Lead	<p>Short term</p> <p>ongoing</p>	Existence of a current promotional program
<p>Identify future use of Colanda Site.</p> <p><i>(Source: Catalyst Project Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	Council / DHHS	Partner	ongoing	Decision made on future of the site
<p>Progressively implement place making initiatives for Colac identified in Council strategies.</p>	Council - Eco Dev & Planning & Infrastructure	Lead	ongoing	Implementation of place making initiatives identified in Council strategies
<p>Advocate for the Development of a Great Ocean Road Authority.</p>	Council	Advocate	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	The development of the Great Ocean Road Authority
<p>Investigate existing and future opportunities for economic development associated with public assets (eg: Lake Colac, COPACC and other Council and State Government assets).</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	<p>Medium term</p> <p>ongoing</p>	Completion of investigation/ assessment of opportunities associated with public assets
<p>Investigate opportunities and effectiveness of incentives to attract businesses into the region</p>	Council – Eco Dev	Lead	Short to medium term	Completion of an investigation into the effectiveness of incentives
<p>Investigate and report on industry and commercial service and product gaps to help reduce regional leakage and promote economic containment.</p>	Council – Eco Dev	Lead	Short to medium term	Identification of service and product gaps in the local economy

Education and Training

Another business support activity emerging from the engagement process in the development of the Strategy is the facilitation of dialogue between employers and training providers to increase awareness of training needs and training courses on offer. Council can take a role to facilitate workforce development planning.

Employers currently send staff to other areas such as Geelong or Melbourne to undertake training resulting in significant down time and travel. The aim is to establish a coordinated approach with employers working together around staff training and through the provision of adequate numbers, attract providers to deliver training courses in Colac Otway Shire.

Council will also work with training and education providers such as TAFEs, Universities and Regional Training Organisations to facilitate new courses and training programs to be delivered in the region, again saving employers travel and down time. And Council continues to advocate for improved rail services to connect people with Deakin University's campuses in Geelong and Warrnambool.

How Council assists the Education and Training Sector

- Provides Kindergarten facilities and services.
- Facilitates discussions between training providers and businesses.

Key Opportunities in the Education and Training Sector

- Undertake a training needs analysis for the region to facilitate training/education courses for local employees to be conducted in Colac Otway Shire to reduce

travel costs and down time.

- Development of a “Jobs Expo Program” designed to inform young people of the different types of jobs available in all sectors. The aim would be to provide young people with employment options available and increase the chances of retaining them in the region.
- Align with the GROW Program to assist with re-engaging non-job seekers into the workforce and developing an employment ready workforce.
- Investigate the need for extra day care/ after school care services to assist female participation in the workforce in Colac and Apollo Bay

Strategic Goal

- Facilitate an integrated approach to local education, training and skills development opportunities to support local business.

Key Objectives

- Advocate over the short to medium term for the provision of training and skills development opportunities to meet the needs of the local the labour force.
- Support the GROW and Beyond the Bell programs to facilitate job opportunities for young people and the disadvantaged.
- Facilitate increased awareness of education and training opportunities by facilitating a local jobs expo.
- Investigate / advocate for the provision of extra day care/ after school care services to encourage families and women to re-join the workforce in Colac and Apollo Bay



Education and Training Sector Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
<p>Encourage an integrated approach to local skills development, with appropriate links between accredited training providers and local industry, and with a focus on technical training.</p> <p>Implement G21 Region Opportunities for Work and Beyond the Bell projects in Colac.</p> <p><i>(Source: Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Training providers</p> <p>Beyond the Bell</p> <p>GROW</p>	Advocate	ongoing	Increase level of educational attainment by Colac residents (ABS census data)
Expand employment skills development activities in partnership with GROW	<p>Council -Eco Dev</p> <p>GROW</p>	Partner	Short Term	Activities developed in conjunction with GROW staff
Initiate annual meeting with local industry representatives and the Colac Trade Training Centre to ensure local skills gaps are aligned with training courses provided at the Colac Trade Training Centre.	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>Gordon TAFE</p> <p>Trade Training Centre</p> <p>Business representatives</p>	Lead / Partner	Short term	Annual meeting with local industry representatives and the Colac Trade training Centre
Investigate the feasibility of a "Jobs Expo Program" in Colac.	<p>Council -Eco Dev</p> <p>Business stakeholders</p> <p>Education providers</p>	Lead	Long Term	Jobs Expo program developed and delivered

Enabling Infrastructure

Enabling infrastructure is a catchphrase used within government to identify infrastructure priorities which are seen to 'enable' further investment and economic development outcomes in a region. Council's role in some instances is to provide that infrastructure, and in other areas it is to advocate for the provision of the infrastructure by other agencies or departments.

In Colac, for example, the provision of drainage infrastructure will be a key to unlocking land in the Deans Creek Growth corridor as identified by the Colac 2050 Growth Plan. This will allow Colac's population to grow, and stimulate the local economy in construction, as well as servicing local businesses with new workers.

Other enabling infrastructure to stimulate further investment in the region could include:

- An intermodal freight facility in the Colac region (in the medium term).
- Mobile blackspot funding.
- The provision of three-phase power in strategic locations.
- Improved NBN coverage to regional areas.
- Provision of improved wastewater treatment in towns such as Forrest.
- Increased passenger rail services along the Melbourne to Warrnambool rail line to facilitate connections between Colac (and its surrounds) and Geelong and Warrnambool for work, education, leisure and cultural activities.
- Improved leisure trails.

How Council assists Enabling Infrastructure

- Advocates to various Government departments and agencies for enabling infrastructure.
- Provides and maintains local road, stormwater, and trail networks.
- Undertakes further strategic work and detailed design to inform construction of road, drainage, and trail network improvements.
- Facilitates the extension of road, drainage and trail networks as part of planning permissions for local development.

Key Opportunities in Enabling Infrastructure

- Identify and facilitate enabling infrastructure to promote economic development activities in the Shire.

Strategic Goal

- Identify and facilitate enabling infrastructure to promote economic development in the region.

Key Objectives

- Continue to advocate for improved rail services to Colac.
- Implement (or facilitate the implementation of), key place making initiatives in Colac such as streetscape improvements to facilitate the town's future growth.
- Investigate opportunities for an intermodal freight facility to service Colac in the medium term.
- Identify enabling infrastructure for key sites in the Shire to facilitate investment as an ongoing activity.

Enabling Infrastructure Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Advocate for increased commuter rail services and between Colac and Geelong, and Colac and Warrnambool, enabling infrastructure to support this.	Council	Advocate	ongoing	Action being taken to improve services by relevant agencies
Investigate the opportunities and viability for the future development of an intermodal freight facility.	Council	Partner	Dec 2018	Decision made regarding demand and viability of intermodal facility
Progressively implement place making initiatives for Colac such as streetscape improvements identified in Council strategies.	Council - Eco Dev & Planning & Infrastructure	Lead	ongoing	Implementation of place making initiatives
Investigate existing and future opportunities for economic development associated with public assets (eg: Lake Colac, COPACC and other Council and State Government assets).	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Medium term ongoing	Completion of investigation/ assessment of opportunities associated with public assets
Identify enabling infrastructure for key sites/ assets in Colac and funding requirements to ensure existing and future economic development opportunities can be realised.	Council - Eco Dev & Infrastructure & Planning Land owners Consultants	Lead / Advocate	Medium term ongoing	Identification of key sites/assets that require enabling infrastructure
Undertake a study on the railway and public transport service requirements of Colac Otway Shire residents and businesses, and ensure these requirements are highlighted with relevant State Government bodies.	Eco Dev V-Line Public Transport Vic DEDJTR	Partner	Medium term ongoing	Completion of study
Prepare a 'first mile' strategy to investigate the local road network to identify priority improvements to facilitate transport connections to the arterial road network	Council – Eco Dev and Infrastructure VicRoads	Lead in	Medium term	Completion of strategy



Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

The Colac Otway region's rich agricultural history continues to evolve and is still a major driver of the economy. Agriculture, forestry and fishing is one of the region's largest industry sectors by value, and employs approximately 1,284 people with outputs such as sheep, grain, beef, and dairy. In 2017, the sector was worth \$371.138 million or 13.25% of the regional output, an increase from \$200.903 million in 2015. This is equivalent to an annualised growth rate of 35.9% over this period. The sheep, grain, beef and dairy cattle production has grown significantly from \$150.753 million in 2015 to \$247.13 million in 2017, an annualised growth rate of 28% for the period indicating the success of local industry. The success of the Australian Lamb Company attributes a large part of this growth. In 2016, it won a major contract to supply Coles in Australia which saw them increase production significantly.

Forestry alone produced \$63.316 million in outputs in 2017 and has experienced strong growth over the past few years. Forestry and logging has more than quadrupled in output over the same three-year period from \$15.208 million in 2015 to \$63.316 million in 2017: annualised growth rate of 104%. Local timber processor AKD Softwoods underwent major upgrades to increase efficiencies and overall productivity in 2015, with a corresponding surge in investment in that category.

The sheep, grain, beef, dairy cattle sector employs 130 people, an increase of 2.9% since the 2011 census. During this same period, the forestry and fishing area saw an increase of 97 jobs.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector has seen stable growth in the period from 2012 to 2017 and this has delivered an increase of 49.1% in value added product in this time-frame.

The Council owned Colac Regional Saleyards, provides a local outlet for the sale and purchase of cattle, sheep and horses. The sale-

yards are an iconic facility and are a part of the local culture.

Profitable operation of the saleyards is becoming increasingly difficult with a significant drop in cattle throughput numbers over the past twelve months due to a decrease in cattle supply and competition from other regional saleyard facilities.

How Council assists the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Sector

- Manages the Port of Apollo Bay.
- Manages the Colac Regional Saleyards.
- Protects farmland for agricultural uses through strategic land use planning and regulation.
- Advocate for the sector via the G21 Economic Development Pillar and G21 Agribusiness Forum.

Key Opportunities in the Agriculture Forestry and Fishing Sector

- Importation of livestock feed from outside the region is the largest cost incurred by the “Livestock, Grains and Other Agriculture” sector (\$11.21 million). This figure could be decreased through more intensive cropping or more efficient farming methods.
- Reducing the regional import figure for the sector is a key opportunity. Regional imports data represents the value of goods and services imported by businesses from outside the region. For the Shire, this figure is \$743.542 million. The regional import figure for the agriculture, forestry

and fishing sector is \$114.581 million.

- Some intensive farming activities such as poultry and cattle could also be considered in the northern area of the Shire.

Strategic Goal

- Support investment in research and development, access to new technologies, and best practice to support the growth and resilience of the agricultural sector.

Key Objectives

- Advocate in the short term for training and development of new generation farming to support more localised training for the agricultural sectors.
- Advocate in the short term for enabling infrastructure such as access to internet to assist with access and growth in innovative farming practices.
- Provide business support and facilitation over the short to medium term to enable producers to value add and diversify in agricultural products.
- Provide ongoing support to the sector to grow awareness about climate change projections and build resilience in the industry.
- Provide ongoing support to local producers to develop niche markets to enable them to increase the profitability of farms and resilience of farming practices.



Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Sector Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Facilitate awareness of existing networks for young people in agriculture, and women in agriculture networks.	Council - Eco Dev Stakeholders	Lead	Short term	Awareness raised
Facilitate connections between regional stakeholders in the agricultural sector that could lead to more intensive cropping, efficient or ancillary farming methods.	Council - Eco Dev Dept of Ag Regional stakeholders	Partner	Medium Term	Connections facilitated
Facilitate a joint investigation with other relevant Government departments and agencies into the possible expansion of the Livestock, Grains and Other Agriculture Sector through greater efficiencies and activities such as intensive agriculture practices to reduce the importation of goods and services in this sector.	Council - Eco Dev Agricultural stakeholders Dept of Ag	Partner	Long Term	Investigation completed and opportunities identified
Facilitate investment in the Port of Apollo Bay to improve its functioning for the fishing industry.	Council	Lead	Short to medium term	Investment obtained for capital improvements to the Port.



Construction

The construction sector in the Shire contributes \$302.379 million to the regional outputs total. This sector has experienced sound growth over the past few years with the construction services area growing by 68.1% between 2011 and 2016. Residential construction has shown steady growth of 11.7% over the same period.

The construction sector employs 734 people, with 506 of those working in the construction services area, 165 in residential building construction, 39 in non-residential construction and 24 in heavy and civil construction, with an overall increase of 205 jobs between 2011 and 2016 (68.1%).

The sector has seen an annualised growth rate of 24% over the three-year period from 2015 – 2017, from \$196.769 million in 2015 to \$302.379 in 2017. Construction services contributes more than half of the output generated in the sector, and this output has grown from \$83.378 million in 2015 to \$169.297 million in 2017, with an annualised growth rate of 42.5%. Residential construction is the second highest contributor, and has seen steady growth over the same three-year period from \$65.062 million to \$81.177 million in 2017 at an annualised growth rate of 11.7%.

How Council assists the Construction Sector

- Procures services for infrastructure renewal and development in the Shire including road and building maintenance and construction.
- Facilitate development through strategic and statutory planning services and

business facilitation.

- Advocate for priority projects via the G21 Regional Alliance and Government, which flows on to capital works projects in the municipality.
- Participates in the G21 GROW program to support and work with local industry and the disadvantaged to facilitate work placement and service their needs.

Key Opportunities in the Construction Sector

- Reducing the regional import figure for the sector. Regional imports data represents the value of goods and services imported by businesses from outside the region. For the Shire, this figure is \$743.542 million. The regional import figure for the construction sector is \$68.7 million.

Strategic Goal

- Support the construction industry to reduce the regional import figure for the sector.

Key Objectives

- Support local businesses to access semi-skilled labour and trades.
- Identify network of regional qualified tradespersons who are available to support local construction production.
- Identify, target, and facilitate new complementary businesses to locate in the municipality to enhance the supply chain used by the construction sector.



Construction Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Investigate supply chain opportunities in the Construction sector for local investment to reduce the importation of goods and services.	Council - Eco Dev Industry Stakeholders	Partner	Short term Ongoing	External Investment attracted in the construction sector supply chain
Review procurement policy and opportunities for Council to support local construction sector for Council led capital works projects.	Council - Eco Dev and Procurement Stakeholders	Lead	Short term Ongoing	supply of local construction jobs for Council





Energy

The renewable energy technology sector is particularly relevant for Colac and surrounds, having regard for the existing investment in wind energy technology in the region. The region broadly surrounding Colac is becoming a focus for investment in wind farms, with the construction of nearby Mt Gellibrand (Acciona) windfarm, and the Berrybank Wind Farm 50km north of Colac with 99 turbines upon completion. Also, wholesale and retail electricity markets have increasingly demanded electricity that is generated using renewable sources.

Wind farm projects create considerable construction employment during the development phase, while the associated benefits flow to local business operators in a range of sectors, including transport, trade supplies, vehicle maintenance, fuel supplies, accommodation, retail, cafes and restaurants.

The central and norther parts of the Shire are also well-positioned to the location characteristics typically sought for bio-fuel projects from surrounding agricultural waste products.

Key Opportunities in the Energy Sector

- To take advantage of local agricultural waste and geographical attributes for solar and wind for the purposes of renewable energy production.

Strategic Goal

- Support the emergence and growth of a local renewable energy sector in the municipality.

Key Objectives

- Facilitate ongoing discussions with energy manufacturers and local businesses to explore opportunities for incorporation of renewable energy production.
- Investigate an assessment of renewable energy options suitable for the Shire and different sectors eg: waste to energy/heat; solar.
- Assist / facilitate businesses to reduce energy costs.

Energy Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Facilitate investment in renewable energy options.	Council -Eco Dev Energy providers	Partner	Ongoing	Renewable energy option identified
Investigate opportunities to leverage or replicate Barwon Water WEB project for local renewable energy projects	Council – Eco Dev Barwon Water	Lead / Partner	Short to medium term	Renewable energy option identified

Manufacturing and Food

Manufacturing is a broad category which includes food production of different scales. It is an important sector within the Colac Otway Shire for several reasons. It provides employment of 1,440 people. Many of these (1,001) are employed within the food product manufacturing area, which includes the dairy and meat product sub-sector. Major employers include Australian Lamb Company and Bulla Dairy Foods.

Manufacturing also includes a growing niche in boutique food production. This niche industry is drawing on the lifestyle and nature-based characteristics of the Shire, to promote diverse products from beer and cider, through to bread, and flavoured salts, to name a few. There is an opportunity to grow and showcase this growing diverse range of premium food products from the Otways and hinterland, not just as part of the overall tourism offering in the region, but also as leading niche exporters.

During the three-year period from 2015 -2017 the region has seen an increase in overall output in the manufacturing sector from \$626.349 million in 2015 to \$781.716 million in 2017. This is equivalent to an annualised growth rate of 11.7%.

The food product manufacturing area contributes the highest output for the sector, growing significantly from \$405.101 million in 2015 to \$583.835 million in 2017. This represents annualised growth of 20.1% over the three years. The food product manufacturing outputs are led by dairy product manufacturing with a value of \$356.674 million, and meat with a value of \$200.052 million.

Colac

Colac, located centrally in the Shire is the key industrial, commercial and major service centre of the Shire. The bulk of large scale manufacturing occurs here. The Colac Township Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy (2017) was recently developed

to guide economic development activities in the town, and ensure an adequate supply of commercial and industrial land to facilitate continued growth. A direct result of this strategy was the rezoning of a significant parcel of land located in Colac East. This will ensure that Colac and the Shire is well served with future supply of industrial land.

How Council assists the Manufacturing and Food Sector

- Provides land use planning to ensure sufficient supply of industrial and commercial land.
- Facilitates development through strategic and statutory planning services and business facilitation.
- Participates in the G21 GROW program to support and work with local industry and the disadvantaged to facilitate work placement and service their needs.

Key Opportunities in the Manufacturing and Food Sector:

- The food product manufacturing sector contributes 29% of regional imports and primarily imports from the livestock, grains and other agriculture sector. Expansion of the livestock, grains and other agriculture sector is an opportunity and could be achieved through greater efficiency or more intensive agricultural practices.
- An opportunity exists to develop and support Colac Otway's dairy and meat product industries so they grow and sit at a higher level in regional supply chains. The benefit of this could be the development of industry sectors with greater opportunity for value-add generation.
- There is an opportunity to reducing the regional import figure for the sector. Regional imports data represents the value of goods and services imported by businesses from outside the region. For the Shire, this figure is \$743.542 million. The regional import figure for the manufacturing sector is \$308.188 million.

Strategic Goal

- Support the growth and economic sustainability of the manufacturing sector that underpins the bulk of the municipal economy.
- Facilitate expansion of the niche and boutique food sector in the local economy.

Key Objectives

- Identify, target, and facilitate new complementary businesses to locate in the municipality to enhance the supply chain used by the manufacturing sector.
- Market Colac and areas of the municipality to attract a sustainable population to service the manufacturing (and other) sector(s) with workers, to highlight the Shire's key attributes such as open space facilities and network, COPACC, health services, schools, transport connections, and proximity to Melbourne, Geelong and airports.
- Provide ongoing support to facilitate links between different industry sectors to assist with alignment of shared training opportunities.

- Advocate in the short term for enabling infrastructure such as transport infrastructure to support the manufacturing sector to facilitate ease of access to markets.
- Facilitate the provision of development-ready industrial land in Colac.
- Develop a local producers' product outlet – Produce Hub Concept.



Manufacturing and Food Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
<p>Identify opportunities to attract visitors to Colac to stay longer – retail outlet for local produce etc.</p> <p><i>(Source: Catalyst Project Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	Council	Lead	July 2019	“Produce Hub” type centre developed or under development
<p>Support expansion and development of Colac Otway Shire's dairy and meat product industries so they lift their level in regional supply chains, resulting in greater opportunities in the value-add area.</p>	<p>Council - Eco Dev</p> <p>Bulla</p> <p>ALC</p> <p>RDV</p> <p>Austrade</p>	Partner / Advocate	Medium term	Investigation of value add benefits and identification of opportunities
<p>Facilitate the provision of development-ready industrial land in Colac east</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Industrial land owners</p>	Lead	Short to medium term	Provision of development ready industrial land in Colac east





Health Care and Social Assistance

With an aging population, consistent with many regional centres, the health care and social assistance sector has experienced strong growth in the Colac Otway Shire. The region is serviced by two hospitals, Colac Area Health, located in Colac and Otway Health, which is in Apollo Bay. The region is also serviced by various other local clinics and allied health services.

The sector contributes over \$152.119 million in outputs and employs 1,341 people. Opportunities currently exist in this sector for further growth and will be supported soon by the development of a Civic and Health Precinct Plan in Colac to guide the development of the area around the hospital, COPACC and Colac rail station.

There are 764 people working in the health care services area while 577 are employed in the residential care and social assistance services area. The health care services area has seen an increase of 26 jobs in the period from 2011 to the to 2016, an annual-

ised growth rate of 0.7%. Residential care and social assistance has displayed the most rapid growth with an increase of 173 jobs, an overall increase of 42.8% for the same period. Approximately 57.8% of the sector's employment is in Colac.

Health care services output has grown from \$86.811 million in 2015 to \$92.661 million in 2017, an annualised growth of 2.19% for that period.

Residential care and social assistance output has grown from \$39.929 million in 2015 to \$59.458 million in 2017, an annualised growth rate of 14.19%.

Regional export data for the sector shows that \$14.34million of goods and services were exported outside the region for the period from 2015 to 2017. Residential care and social assistance witnessed an average growth of 104.5% over the three-year period, however the health care services area saw an average decrease of 38.7% in goods and services exported.

How Council assists the Health Care and Social Assistance Sector

- Prepares the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Provides a range of services in the areas of home and community support, disability services, family day care, and maternal and child health.
- Supports men's sheds, senior citizen's centres, neighbourhood houses.
- Provides leisure and recreational facilities and services, including promotion and education.

Key Opportunities in the Health Care & Social Assistance Sector

- Prepare a Civic and Health Precinct Plan in Colac.
- Advocate for public sector investment in the health sector to underpin private investment.

- Investigate Council's role in the provision of health services in advance of the full implementation of NDIS and MyAged Care to ensure the ongoing local provision of services.

Strategic Goal

- Ensure the ongoing provision of local health care services in our municipality.

Key Objectives

- Support and facilitate the sustainable growth of the health sector in the municipality through the land use planning of future requirements in Colac and Apollo Bay.

Health Care & Social Assistance Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Collaborate for the development of a Civic and Health Precinct Plan in Colac.	Council - Eco Dev & Planning Colac Area Health	Partner	Short Term	Health and Wellbeing Precinct Plan developed
Investigate Council's role in the provision of health services in advance of the full implementation of NDIS and MyAged Care to ensure the ongoing local provision of services.	Council Colac Area Health Otway Health	Lead / Partner	Short Term	Report to clarify Council's role in the provision of health services in the municipality
Collaborate with Otway Health to prepare a precinct plan for the Otway Health facilities in Apollo Bay as part of the Apollo Bay Community Infrastructure Plan	Council Otway Health	Partner	Short Term	Apollo Bay Integrated Infrastructure Plan
Advocate for public sector investment in the health sector to underpin private investment.	Council - Eco Dev	Advocate	Short Term Ongoing	Public sector investment received

Retail and Service Sector

The retail and service sector consists of the region's retail businesses and those active in the professional services sector such as legal firms, accountants, real estate agents, architectural, and banking services. Although it's difficult to determine accurate employment and output figures, it is estimated the output figure for this sector is near \$540 million and 2,500 people employed in the sector.

The largest employer in the sector is retail, with 936 people employed. This has shown a very small increase of 18 since the previous Census in 2011.

Other areas in this sector such as *Education and Training* and *Professional Scientific & Technical* services have recorded increases in employment since the 2011 Census of 105 and 29 people respectively.

The sector is experiencing difficult trading times, not only in the Colac Otway Shire but many smaller regional areas. Competition from larger regional cities such as Geelong, Warrnambool and Ballarat causes significant leakage of local spending. Online shopping is on the increase adding further pressure on the small retailers.

Other factors which impact on business viability include operating costs (rental,

rates, power, telephone, IT etc), wages and location of the business. Location can create challenges and a good example is Murray Street in Colac. Whilst Murray Street offers significant opportunities with Princes Highway exposure, it also balances 1,500 heavy vehicles passing through Colac per day, a sign of the active manufacturing and transport and logistics sectors in town.

Council has been proactive in finding ways to improve the amenity experience for traders and shoppers along Murray Street. It is supporting the businesses in the main street of Colac with initiatives such as the implementation of the Colac CBD and Entrances Project, with the first section of streetscape improvements. This has been coupled with the recently released Council's Facades Grant Scheme which will assist shop owners to improve the building facades of the many Victorian and Interwar heritage buildings in the street, to revitalise this shopping strip to its former glory.

The CBD and Entrances Project also recognises the opportunity to activate and extend a laneway network in Colac to create niche opportunities for people to congregate and linger. It is blessed with a grid street network with Princes Highway frontage and ability to connect through to the quieter Bromfield Street to the rear. Council will continue to work with developers and the retail sector to extend and revitalise this important area.

Regional output figures are also very difficult



to determine, however it is estimated that output for this sector would be in the vicinity of \$1 billion. The services sector is growing and performing strongly, particularly the rental, hiring and real estate area, with an annual output of \$230.775 million. Public administration and safety area contributes \$113.907 and retail contributes \$97.964.

How Council assists the Retail and Services Sector

- Provides land use planning to ensure sufficient supply of commercial land.
- Facilitates development through strategic and statutory planning services and business facilitation.
- Invests in streetscape maintenance and improvements and public car parking areas.

Key Opportunities in the Retail and Services Sector

- Investment attraction activities targeting larger retail businesses to build on the existing shopping experience in the Shire.
- Investigate bus parking in Colac and Apollo Bay to support/attract tourists travelling to, or returning from, the Great Ocean Road experience, to provide an opportunity for local retailers to capitalise on the visitor numbers.
- Facilitate the retention and expansion of government services in the municipality.
- Facilitate the retail opportunities for the provision of bespoke goods sourced from the region in Colac.

Strategic Goal

- Support the growth and economic sustainability of the retail and services sector to ensure the provision of local products and services.

Key Objectives

- Identify, target, and facilitate new complementary businesses to locate in the municipality to enhance the service and produce offer in the sector.
- Market Colac and areas of the municipality to attract a sustainable population for consumption of local products and services.
- Advocate and invest in the short to medium term for enabling and place-making infrastructure to improve the liveability and amenity of our towns.



Retail and Services Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
<p>Business attraction activities with focus on filling empty large shops in Colac.</p> <p><i>(Source: Catalyst Project Actions: Colac Township Economic Development, and Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy)</i></p>	Council	Lead	ongoing	Business and investment attracted
<p>Focussed investment attraction activities targeting retail businesses to build on the existing shopping experience in Colac.</p>	Council Eco Dev	Lead	Short term Ongoing	Retail business investment achieved.
<p>Explore ways to facilitate undergrounding of power lines along the Princes Highway within Colac and in the CBD to allow street trees to be planted to create a boulevard treatment for the highway and City Centre.</p> <p><i>(Source: Draft Colac 2050 Growth Plan)</i></p>	Council - Eco Dev & Planning & Infrastructure	Advocate	ongoing	Preparation of an implementation plan with funding sources for the undergrounding of power lines
<p>Plan / invest in streetscape upgrades and place making initiatives in Apollo Bay to improve the amenity of the town.</p>	Council Eco Dev & Planning & Infrastructure	Lead	Short to medium term	Place making / streetscape capital works projects identified and funded in Colac and Apollo Bay



The Visitor Economy: Tourism, Culture, and Events

Tourism Overview

Generally, tourism in the Shire is focused around the southern regions visiting the Great Ocean Road, Cape Otway and the Otway National Park. These areas are renowned for their coastal and natural beauty with stunning landscapes and natural features that wow visitors.

This area has an existing tourist market numbering more than 5 million per annum. Apollo Bay is the main centre for tourism in the Shire, and contributes 766 (7.8%) of total jobs in the municipality, and supports 22.2% of the Shire's tourism employment (206).

Tourism is not identified as a separate industry sector in the National Accounts Data. Instead tourism is an amalgam of activities across various industry sectors such as retail, accommodation, cafes and restau-

rants, cultural and recreational services. It is estimated that the total employment figure in tourism in the Colac Otway Shire is around 930.

The large majority of employment in the tourism sector is in accommodation and food services, with 696 jobs (74.8%) followed by the retail trade area with 93 jobs.

Tourism output in the Colac Otway Shire is estimated to be a healthy \$163.739 million. Accommodation and food services account for \$102.045 million (62.3%) of total output.

The tourism sector has experienced rapid growth, which has placed significant pressure on authorities in the provision of infrastructure to cater for the growing tourism market.

The Colac Otway Shire is committed to working collaboratively with our key partners and across agencies and Government to facilitate investment in infrastructure in strategic locations in the Shire. The Colac Otway Shire is demonstrating this commitment and leadership through the preparation of the Colac Otway Shire Tourism Parking and Traffic Strategy. This is being undertaken collaboratively with other relevant Government agencies and departments as well as affected communities, to identify solutions





to transport and parking issues associated with growing tourism numbers in the Shire's coastal towns such as Apollo Bay and Kennett River. It shows the way how Government across levels can work collaboratively and strategically with communities to come up with infrastructure solutions to proactively manage tourism in often environmentally and culturally sensitive environments.

Tourism has the potential to contribute significantly to the economic sustainability of our region for the benefit of all, and the Colac Otway Shire welcomes discussions about new ventures.

The Great Ocean Road and Coastal Towns

The Great Ocean Road is the main contributor to the visitor numbers in the region with over 5.4 million people experiencing it annually. The challenge for Council is to take full advantage of those numbers and facilitate the provision of new attractions and destinations in the area that will alter the current tourist travel patterns.

While Colac Otway Shire has a relaxed regional lifestyle for much of the year, the coastal strip is transformed during the holiday period and summer weekends. Millions of domestic and international tourists each year head for the Great Ocean Road and experience the natural beauty of the area.

The most common route taken is west along the Great Ocean Road, stopping occasionally on the way to look for koalas, parrots or whales, lunch at Apollo Bay, and then on to the Twelve Apostles. After that it's back to the Princes Highway, through Colac possibly for a short stop and then on to Melbourne.

Whilst tourism travel along the Great Ocean Road has been seasonal in the past, with burgeoning international tourism in more recent time, tourism numbers are now significant all year round. Furthermore, the projections for increased tourist numbers along the Great Ocean Road into the foreseeable future offer exceptional opportunities for investment, particularly with Avalon Airport in Geelong transforming into an international airport with direct flights to Asia later in 2018.

The regularity and volume of tourists undertaking this experience provides businesses with significant opportunities to capitalise on the visitor spend in the area. The coastal townships rely on the tourist spend and every effort should be made to facilitate investment into new products which will change this travel pattern and encourage tourists to stay in the region longer than one day.

Investment in new and upgraded attractions is necessary to change the travel patterns

of the tourists throughout the region. Attractions that are strategically located, and offer an experience that will encourage visitors to stay in the area longer, are needed. The Conservation Ecology Centre's proposed Wildlife Wonders attraction in Marengo is one such facility that works with the natural features of the region, that will provide a memorable experience and entice visitors to stay longer in the area.

Apollo Bay Harbour

The Apollo Bay Harbour is a key State owned asset supporting tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, marine safety, and other sporting and recreational marine activities.

The Colac Otway Shire is the designated Port manager through an agreement with State Government. The Shire is currently advocating to Government for significant investment to support the redevelopment of the Port, ensure the viability of the seafood industry currently operating from the Harbour, and preserve and enhance the uniqueness of this tourist destination.

Economic Benefit Analysis reports provided to Council indicate with capital expenditure of \$25.7 million at the Harbour, an expected economic boost of \$41 million per annum

Apollo Bay Harbour (Alan Carmichael)





could be achieved with an increase of 83,300 visitors to the area. The investment would also see the reactivation of the existing fishing industry, an additional 10 fishing boats operating out of the Harbour and an additional \$10 million of product per annum. The added tourist visitation would create accommodation demand for between 120 and 390 rooms in the area.

The Otways Region

The Otways Region also provides tourists with a range of activities to do, and amazing natural assets to experience. The rainforest, waterfalls and the small townships located in the Otways, provide visitors with unforgettable experiences.

Attractions such as the Otway Fly bring thousands of visitors through the Otways annually. The smaller townships scattered through the Otways have their own unique look

and feel and provide places to stop, have something to eat and drink, and just relax for a while. The accommodation available throughout the area continues to grow and provides a range of options to visitors.

The region is famous for locally produced product, with many regional producers coming together to form the Otway Harvest Trail. The group is a collective of local niche producers delivering a range of premium products. There is a clear opportunity for expanded niche food production in this region utilising the high annual rainfalls afforded in the Otways, rich soils, and network of dedicated producers committed to offering unique food experiences for travellers.

Forrest

The township of Forrest is the home of the Forrest mountain bike trails, which attract domestic and international cycling enthusiasts.

The attraction of further funding to complete the implementation of the Forrest Mountain Bike Strategic Plan is a priority, to elevate the facility to a “must do” cycling experience. Once the implementation of the Strategic Plan is completed, the facility will have the capability of attracting significantly more visitors to the region.

The cyclist experienced is enhanced by local eateries and niche accommodation offerings that welcome tourists in this beautiful region.

Council has acted to overcome development expansion constraints in the township of Forrest with the extensive Forrest Wastewater Investigation Project in collaboration with Barwon Water. This project will provide solution options to the existing wastewater issues in the township and support future business expansion.

Colac Otway Shire has also secured economic benefit analysis reports on increased investment in the Forrest mountain bike

facility. For an additional investment of \$1.05 million to complete the implementation of the Strategic Plan, an additional 32 new full time equivalent jobs would be created, an additional 49,500 visitors would be attracted to the area. This would result in an increased annual economic benefit of \$8.4 million, and accommodation demand created for an additional 92 rooms.

Colac and Northern Shire

While tourism is presently focussed around the southern beachside regions along the Great Ocean Road there are untapped opportunities in the northern section of the Shire. Colac is ideally situated to capitalise on these opportunities with large numbers of tourists travelling through the town on the return journey from the Great Ocean Road. Retailers in Colac are well positioned to tap into this market by providing goods and services to these travellers.





View across Lake Beeac (Alan Carmichael)

The development of a Colac Destination Action Plan will support activities aimed at capturing this tourist market. Accepting the idea that Colac is a tourist town may not sit naturally with many local businesses but the market is certainly available. Colac has many existing assets as a regional centre with historic main street, Lake Colac, and Beechy Rail Trail. It is also a stone's throw from small picturesque hamlets of Beeac and Cororooke a little further to the north. Council is exploring ways to connect these places with dedicated bike tracks to enhance the tourist cycling experience which is becoming more and more popular.

The Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism body has launched the promotion of the "Lakes and Volcanic Plains" region in the north of the Shire to attract visitors off the Great Ocean Road and into the inland.

How Council assists the Tourism Sector

- Colac Otway Council supports the visitor economy through two Visitor Information Centres, one located in Apollo Bay and the second located in Colac. These centres provide up to date information about the region and its attractions to more than 450,000 visitors a year. The centres provide visitors with information on activities they can do while in the area, maps to assist with finding areas of interest and a retail shop which stocks gifts and memorabilia.

- Dedicated tourism officer on staff.
- Marketing and promotion of tourism destinations in collaboration with GORRT.

Key Opportunities in the Tourism Sector

- Advocate for the development and implementation of a Great Ocean Road Authority.
- Source appropriate funding for the redevelopment of the Apollo Bay Harbour as a key focus for Apollo Bay and the region.
- Investigate services provided by Visitor Information Centres (VICs) are delivered into the future to maximise the benefit for the visitor. Options could include roaming Visitor Information Centre staff speaking with visitors in the street, and pop-up VICs at events or on special occasions.
- Source funding to complete the implementation of the Forrest Mountain Bike Strategic Plan.
- Develop a Destination Action Plan for Colac.
- Improve "sense of arrival" for towns in the Shire.
- Attract high end accommodation in Colac and Apollo Bay.

- Implement outcomes from the Colac Otway Shire Tourism Traffic Management & Parking Study; Otway Coast Master Plan; Apollo Bay Structure Plan and the Apollo Bay Foreshore Plan.
- Collaborate with Seafood Industry Victoria on future activities involving the Apollo Bay Harbour
- Investigate visitor servicing – how we take services to the visitor and identify tools that allow us to better service – improve Visitor Information Centres to meet visitors’ needs
- Investigate the potential development of low cost accommodation opportunities for workers on the coastal strip.
- Identify strategic areas for tourist accommodation and development in the Shire.
- Promoting the local attractions to the growing international market.

Strategic Goal

- Support the growth and innovation in the tourism and culture sector to promote the provision and diversity of local products and experiences.

Key Objectives

- Identify, target, and facilitate new complementary businesses to locate in the municipality to enhance the product, accommodation range, and service offer in the sector.
- Undertake ongoing marketing campaigns to promote the municipality to attract visitors to experience the local offerings and stay longer.
- Advocate and invest in the short to medium term for enabling and place-making infrastructure to improve the liveability and amenity of our towns.



Tourism Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Advocate appropriate funding for the re-development of the Apollo Bay Harbour Precinct.	Planning/ Eco Dev	Advocate	Short term ongoing	Funding secured for the redevelopment of the Apollo Bay Harbour
Identify funding opportunities for funding of the Forrest Mountain Bike Strategic Plan.	Eco Dev Forrest Mountain Bike Club	Lead	Short term	Funding sourced to implement the Forrest Mountain Bike Strategic Plan
Develop a Destination Action Plan for Colac.	Eco Dev Stakeholders	Lead	Short term	Colac Destination Action plan developed
Implement the actions of the COS Tourism Parking and Traffic Strategy.	Council - Eco Dev, Local Laws, & Planning	Lead	Medium term	Actions implemented from the Implement the actions of the COS Tourism Parking and Traffic Strategy
Collaborate with Seafood Industry Victoria on future activities involving Apollo Bay Harbour.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Medium Term	Activities implemented in conjunction with Fisherman's Coop and Seafood Industry Victoria
Investigate visitor servicing through the Visitor Information Centres which will the provision of better service to visitors	Council - Eco Dev GORRT	Lead	Medium term	The provision of alternative services to visitors
Investigate the potential development of low cost accommodation opportunities for workers on the coastal strip.	Eco Dev Business stakeholders	Lead	Medium Term	Opportunity identified

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Identify opportunities for the development of 4+ star accommodation in Colac.	Council - Eco Dev & Planning	Lead	Short Term Ongoing	Opportunity identified and collaboration with developers commenced
Identify opportunities to encourage the provision of short stay accommodation in Colac to service tourist and visiting workers. <i>(Source: Draft Colac 2050 Growth Plan)</i>	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Short term	Sites identified for the provision of short stay accommodation in Colac
Investigate bus parking options in Colac to capitalise on the tourist numbers travelling through Colac.	Council - Eco Dev Stakeholders	Lead	Long Term	Bus parking option identified in Colac
Promotion of regional assets both natural, built, and services.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead / Advocate	Long Term	Promotional campaign commenced
Investigate options to improve the "sense of arrival" in towns across the region.	Council - Eco Dev Vic Roads	Lead / Collaborate	Long Term	Options for improved "sense of arrival" signs in towns identified
Prepare a strategy which identifies strategic locations in the Shire for tourist accommodation and development	Council Eco Dev and Planning GORT	Lead / Collaborate	Short to medium term	Strategy prepared to identify strategic locations for tourist accommodation and development
Prepare community-led plans for the Shire's small towns to identify tourism and local economic development opportunities	Council – Eco Dev and Planning	Lead	Medium term	Community plans



Culture and Cultural Landscape

The Cultural Economy is increasingly recognised as an important and growing part of local and regional economies. Council has recently completed the Colac Otway Arts and Culture Strategy (2018) to highlight the importance of the sector to the Shire both for community benefit as well as the potential it plays in the wider economy. It notes that: “Arts and cultural services and activities provide direct and indirect benefits to local communities and economies through their impact on the social, cultural, environmental and economic sectors. The broader creative sector plays an essential role in creating resilient and growing local economies.” The Colac Otway Shire recognises its key role in the direct investment and support and arts and culture through the provision of infrastructure, services, programs and staff.

The Colac Otway Shire also sits within an important cultural landscape on Gulidjan and Gadabanud Country in the Eastern Maar Nation. The Shire’s Aboriginal story is less well understood and spans thousands of

years, continuing to this day. There is scope to improve our understanding of this, and promote Aboriginal stories and the prosperity of its People in our region, and share the Shire’s economic prosperity with Aboriginal people in our region.

How Council assists the Culture Sector

- Provides dedicated staff for arts and cultural activities support.
- Offers direct provision of arts and culture programs and facilities such as the Colac Otway Performing Arts and Culture Centre (COPACC).
- Facilitates and support arts organisations and individual artists by using local government expertise, information and resources.
- Supports the funding of artists and community groups to build arts and culture activities and events.
- Manages open spaces and policies that support arts and culture development.



Key Opportunities in the Culture Sector:

- Need to operate, maintain and plan for the provision of relevant cultural facilities and assets.
- Opportunities to integrate art and interpretive elements into public spaces.
- Opportunity to implement programs in a collaborative way and create new opportunities.
- **Need to address barriers to participation.**
- Opportunity to develop the strength of the creative sector.
- Need to acknowledge the role of arts, culture and heritage in placemaking, liveability and cultural economies.
- Opportunity to program cultural works and support organisations that celebrate First Nations culture.
- Need to foster a cross organisational approach to supporting the arts.
- Developing a best practice approach to engagement and cultural heritage management with Traditional Owners and the Registered Aboriginal Party.

Strategic Goal

- Support the growth and innovation in the culture sector to promote the provision and diversity of experiences.

Key Objectives

- Undertake ongoing marketing campaigns to promote the municipality to attract visitors to experience the local cultural activities and stay longer.
- Advocate and invest in the short to medium term for enabling and place-making infrastructure to improve the liveability and amenity of our towns.
- Acknowledge, recognise, protect, and celebrate Aboriginal culture, story, and areas of cultural significance as an ongoing activity by investigating opportunities to celebrate and promote local Aboriginal language, history, and stories in the Shire.

Culture and Cultural Landscape Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Implement the Colac Otway Shire Arts and Culture Strategy (2018).	Council – Arts and Leisure and Economic Development (as required)	Lead	Ongoing	As identified in Strategy
Prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Strategy to identify ways to protect and celebrate Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.	Council In collaboration with the Eastern Maar and Traditional Owners	Lead	Short to medium term	Preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Strategy





Birregurra Festival (Andrew Currie)

Events

The Colac Otway Shire currently hosts a diverse range of events including international, commercial, fundraising, sporting, and civic based events. It plays a critical role in providing grants to events which leverage further investment in the region. For an investment by Council through the Shire’s events grants in 2018/2019 of \$101,497, this leveraged a total of \$1,932,339 of investment either through cash investment by event organisers or in-kind contribution.

Events and festivals have become an important part of our community fabric as they embrace opportunities, learnings, creativity and showcase our community and lifestyle to appeal to a broader audience. There is a clear opportunity in partnership with event organisers, to enable a more vibrant events calendar across the year that contributes to the social and economic and well-being of our community.

Council’s plays an important role in supporting and facilitating major and community events, including:

- Event support, development, and management
- Event attraction and marketing
- Facilitation and information provision
- Approval and regulatory responsibilities
- Funding (grants and sponsorship) programs

- Event impact assessment, research and evaluation
- Facility and infrastructure provision
- Building capacity and capability
- Facilitating partnerships

The type of role which Council plays depends on the scale of the event, and economic and / or community benefit. Council is unable to financially support every event, and must consider events that align more broadly with Council goals and strategies.

The Colac Otway Shire also recognises the major workloads involved for individuals and volunteers required along with the commercial event organisers, and at the same time guide and educate them in safe work practices and compliance issues. We aim to gather a calendar of events that fundraise, promote our local food and wine culture, and support our growing sporting platforms and community events.

Many thousands of visitors come to the region each year to attend events in the Shire, providing huge economic benefit to the region. Events range in size from the smaller farmer’s markets held in the Shire to events such as the Great Ocean Road Running Festival, Apollo Bay Seafood Festival, Winter Wild, Otway Odyssey and Gellibrand Blues & Blueberry Festival to name just a few.

Key Opportunities in the Events Sector

- Clarify a model how Council will allocate resources towards supporting events that deliver major economic and tourism

outcomes and to events delivering community benefits.

- Promote shoulder season events to balance demand across the calendar year.
- Consider ways to provide additional support to assist event organisers focus on strategic planning initiatives, build their capacity, skills and long term sustainability.
- Investigate ways to streamline the regulation of events such as by developing a check list to support event organisers (especially new events), and investigating on-line forms.
- Encourage waste free events – research “waste wise” policy for events.
- Investigate the re-use of applications (eg: risk and traffic management) from previous events with appropriate changes to lessen the paperwork burden for organisers.
- Investigate opportunities for economic benefit surveying of events (Remplan).
- Conduct training in the use of the events trailer for event organisers.
- Encourage business modelling to events – business planning, communication, marketing and succession planning.
- Work with organisers to facilitate the attraction of new events to the region.

Strategic Goal

- Support the growth in number of events to promote diversity of offering, expand the seasonality, and financial sustainability of the sector.

Key Objectives

- Facilitate capacity building for event organisers to improve the running of events and their financial sustainability.
- Provide ongoing support to event organisers to meet compliance requirements.
- Provide ongoing support event organisers with marketing and promotion



Events Actions

Action	Initiating Body	Council's Role	Timeframe	Evaluation Measure
Encourage "waste free" events – research "waste wise" policy for events.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Short Term	Waste free initiatives introduced at regional events
Develop a check list to support event organisers.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Short Term	Check list developed
Investigate the use of on line event application/ permit forms.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Short Term	Implementation of online forms for events
Provide training for event organisers in the use of the events and waste trailers.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Short Term	Training provided
Facilitate the development / attraction of new events to the region.	Council - Eco Dev Event organisers	Lead	Short Term Ongoing	New events delivered in the region
Investigate the re-use of application forms from previous years events – with appropriate changes to ease paperwork burden for organisers.	Council - Eco Dev	Lead	Medium Term	Event forms able to be re0used with appropriate changes
Investigate opportunities for economic benefit surveying of events (Remplan).	Council - Eco Dev Remplan	Lead	Medium Term	Events able to be surveyed and economic benefit analysed

Other Economic Development Considerations

Minerals exploration

With a growing economy with demand for increased infrastructure provision and construction, there is a need to find region sources of rocks, minerals and sand for road making and sand for other infrastructure projects. There may be some potential to explore areas in the northern parts of the Shire including around Ondit for these purposes.

Correctional centres

Other parts of the country have witnessed significant public investment because local governments have shown support for the development of correctional facilities. Whilst any such facility would need to be planned and managed carefully, there may be an opportunity to commence discussions with Government about the appropriateness of areas in the northern parts of Colac Otway Shire for such as use.

Opportunities for other activities include:

- Adult and or juvenile detention centres. A development such as this would provide the Shire with significant bargaining power with the State Government and generate significant employment.
- Extractive industries (mining). Officers from Council's Economic Development Department have established contacts in the Extractive Resources in Victoria Unit of State Government and are kept up to date with information on the mining sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the Colac Otway Economic Development Strategy will be monitored by the Shire's Economic Development Unit. It will use the measures established in the action plan to evaluate progress. It will work with key stakeholders to discuss the progress of the Strategy and consider the extent of how actions are being implemented and meeting their objectives.

A full review of the Strategy will be undertaken with the release of the next census, as much of the economic data is only available in five year cycles as part of the national census.

The implementation of the Strategy will be regularly reported to Council.





Photo by Alan Carmichael

Background

This section identifies the key trends and issues impacting the Colac Otway Shire's local economy.

This includes:

- Geographic overview
- Demographic snapshot
- Strategic partners Key economic profile

Geographic overview

The Colac Otway Shire covers an area of 3,433 square kilometres, and is located 160km west of Melbourne in a natural environment which includes State Forests, National Parks and a significant section of the Great Ocean Road. It's within an hour's commute of Geelong, which has been experiencing steady population and employment growth in recent years. There has also been significant investment in improving transport connections between Geelong and Colac through the duplication of the Princes Highway and increased rail services.

The Shire is rich with beautiful natural assets and diverse landscapes, encompassing the coastal strip with beaches and surf, the Otways featuring waterfalls, rainforest and the Otway National Park, and the northern part of the Shire featuring many Volcanic Lakes and the grassy agricultural area of the Volcanic Plains.

Colac Otway Shire can be divided into geographic regions: the coastal strip in the south; the Otways to the north of the coastal region; the industrial/commercial heart land in Colac; and the agricultural lands in the north.

The coastal region is the main area for tourism with Apollo Bay being the largest town in this region. The area has a thriving tourist economy with the Great Ocean Road attracting 5.4 million visitors annually, *the most visited attraction in Australia*. The region is also likely to benefit significantly from the expansion of Avalon Airport as an international airport with direct flights to Asia to commence in late 2018.

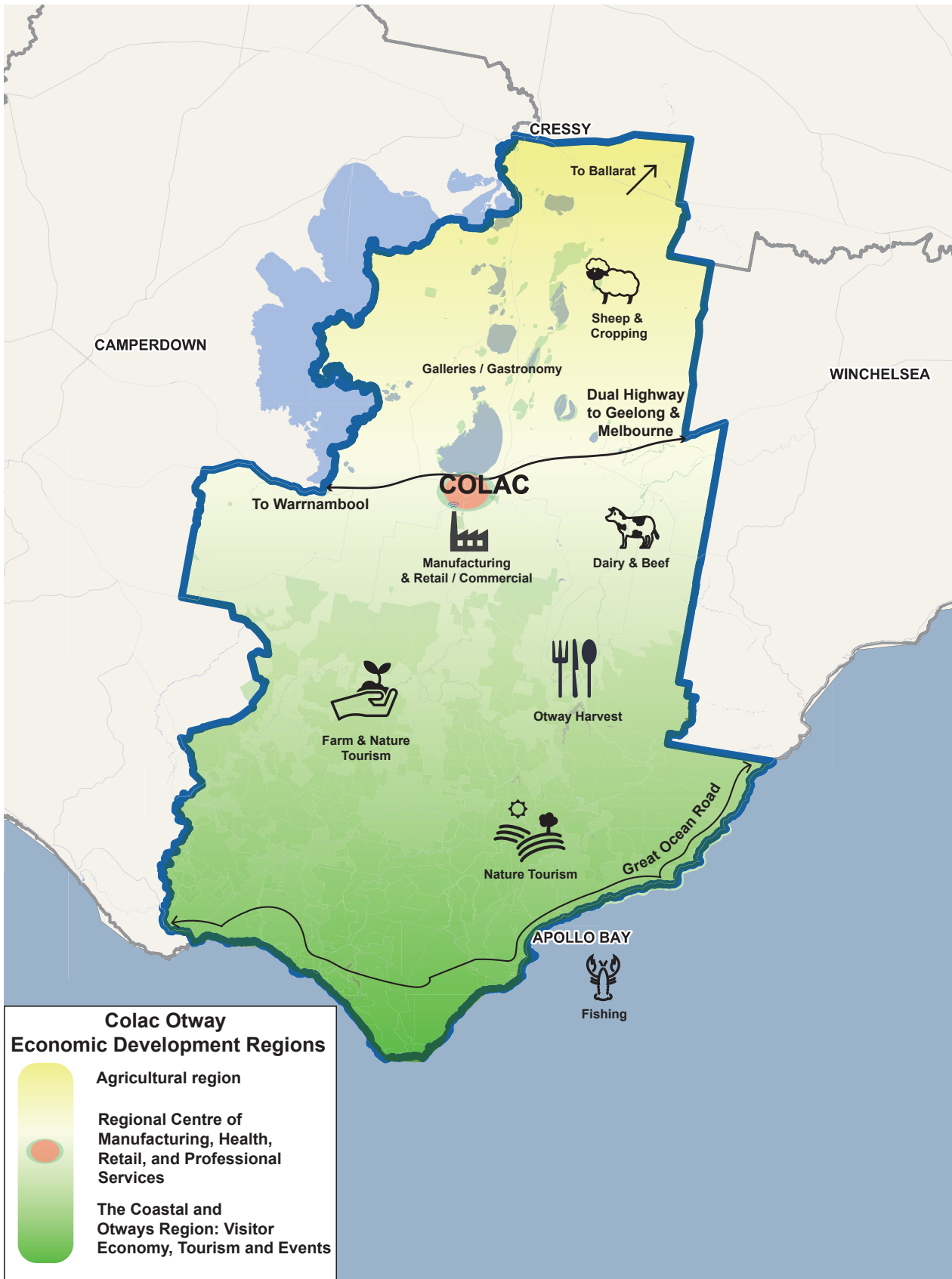
The coastal tourist strip bleeds into the Otway National Park, making use of the nature based walks and experiences, along with growing boutique gastronomy and food production experiences. The township of Forrest is also fast becoming THE destination for mountain bikers with an extensive network of graded trails for all skill levels.

Colac is the main centre for retail, professional, health and social services. It also has a thriving manufacturing sectors with leading names such as Bulla Dairy Foods, Australian Kiln Dried Industries (AKD), and Australian Lamb Company (ALC).

A strong agricultural sector surrounds Colac and extends into the north of the Shire.

Colac Otway Shire boasts some significant facilities for community use. Secondary schools are in Colac and Apollo Bay, and several primary schools are scattered across the Shire providing first class facilities for our children's education. The Colac Otway Performing Arts & Cultural Centre (COPACC) attracts national performers to the region and is home to the regional movie cinema.

Central Reserve is a first-class Australian Rules Football (AFL) venue and recently hosted a pre-season AFL trial game in March 2018. Bluewater Leisure Centre (now open 24/7) is home to an indoor gymnasium, swimming pools and a three-court basketball



stadium. Colac Otway Shire boasts two significant hospitals, one in Apollo Bay and a major regional hospital in Colac.

Our regional townships provide quiet, relaxed surrounds and are attractive to locals and tourists alike. Many events are held in the townships attracting thousands of visitors annually to the area.

Demographic Snapshot

The Shire has both a permanent population and is a tourism destination for holiday makers and international tourists.

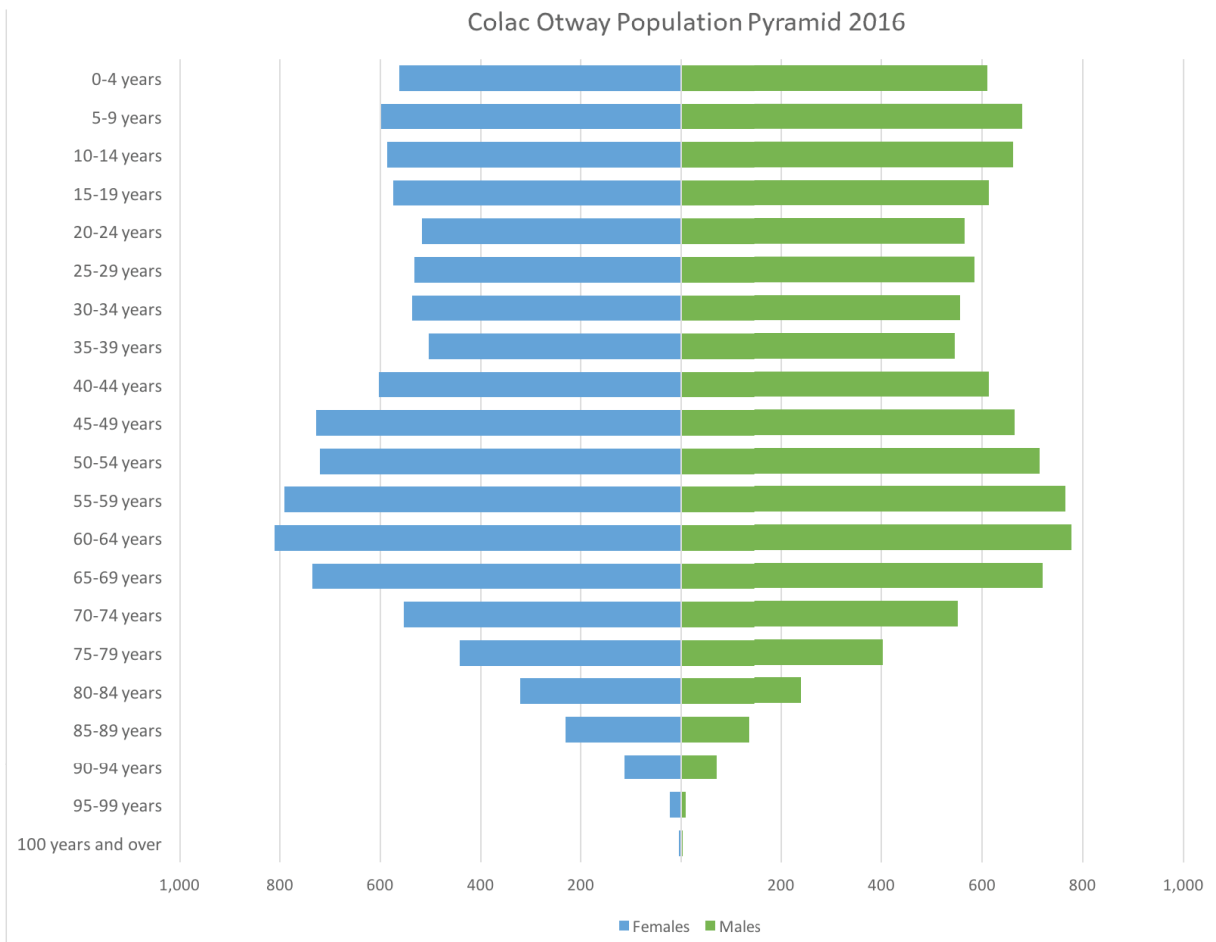
In 2016, the population of Colac Otway Shire

was 21,359, an increase of 745 persons (3.6%) over the last 10 years. The largest growth occurred in the over 55 years' age bracket. Population projections to 2031 indicate continued population growth at a rate of around 0.6% per annum, particularly in the older cohort, consistent with an aging population in Victoria, and many choosing to retire in the Shire. This results in a projected population of 23,865 by 2036 for the Shire.

Meanwhile the under 20 age group continued to decline between 2011 and 2016, many leaving to pursue education and job opportunities. A key aim of the Strategy is to create opportunities to attract back young people after their studies, or to provide opportunities for them to access tertiary education opportunities in nearby Geelong and Warrnambool whilst remaining in the Shire.

Key population statistics for the Colac Otway region include:

- Total estimated resident population of 20,971 people
- 3,696 (17.62%) persons classified as youth (ages between 0-15), slightly higher proportion than the State (18.24%)
- 4,555 (21.72%) seniors who are over the age of 65, which is also higher than the state (15.57%). The high proportion of persons aged 65 and over can be seen in Figure 2-1.



Colac Otway Shire has an older population compared to both the G21 and Barwon South West Regions with 21.7% of the population 65 years and above in contrast to 19.4% for the G21 Region and 18.5% for Barwon Southwest.

The below figure provides a breakdown of the population of the Colac Otway Shire and shows the aging population of the region.

Climate Change

Colac Otway Shire is also located within the Barwon South West region of the State of Victoria, which stretches from the tip of the Queenscliff Heads to the border of South Australia. This region is continuing to get warmer and drier, and the more recent climatic projections for south western Victoria are for a generally drier and hotter climate with higher frequency of extreme weather events. The projections include increased intensity of extreme weather events such as extreme rainfall events and subsequent flooding, and increased bushfire risk and drought. A key aim of the Strategy will be to grow resilience in our economic sectors to respond, adapt and prosper with a changing climate.

Strategic partners

Colac Otway has many trusted and valued strategic partners to facilitate and promote economic development outcomes in the region.

G21 Regional Alliance

Colac Otway Shire's economy is closely linked to the regional economy of the major regional centre of Geelong. Geelong is the largest regional city in the G21 Regional Alliance and Victoria. The G21 alliance includes the Colac Otway Shire, Golden Plains Shire, City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire and the Borough of Queenscliff. The region has a population of over 315,000 which is projected to increase to approximately 500,000 by 2050.

The G21 region is a rural, residential and resort area with significant industrial and commercial

land use. The region covers a total area of around 9,000 square kilometres and includes significant areas of National Parks and State Forest. The region's varied land uses includes farming, grazing, sheep, timber, dairying, cropping, mining and viticulture. Tourism is a major economic driver in the region especially along the southern section of the Bellarine Peninsula and the Great Ocean Road.

Chambers of Commerce

Council proudly works closely with the Colac and District Chambers of Commerce and Apollo Bay Chambers of Commerce to support local business.

RDA - Regional Development Australia

Council works with Regional Development Australia through the RDA Barwon South West Committee in partnership with community, business and all levels of government to support and contribute to strategic regional development across in south western Victoria including the Colac Otway Shire.

The Committee comprises ten representatives from business, industry, government, education and training. Committee members come from various locations throughout the region. Its membership includes cross-representation with other regional organisations such as G21 Geelong Region Alliance, Committee for Geelong, the Committee for Portland and the Great South Coast leadership group to achieve maximum input and consultation.

GROW

Colac Otway Shire is a Compact Member of the GROW Program, which supports disadvantaged, and long term unemployed people in transitioning into the workforce. The GROW program also promotes local procurement options by encouraging businesses to buy locally where possible.

GORRT

Tourism related businesses have the direct support of a dedicated Tourism Officer within the Economic Development Department of Council. Council is a member of the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board (GORRT). GORRT is the regional tourism body which services Councils and communities located along the Great Ocean Road region.

Council works collaboratively with GORRT on projects and activities which are aligned with tourist attraction, product development and regional promotion. Council has established the Otway Tourism Advisory Committee to provide input and advice into the provision of industry support in the region.

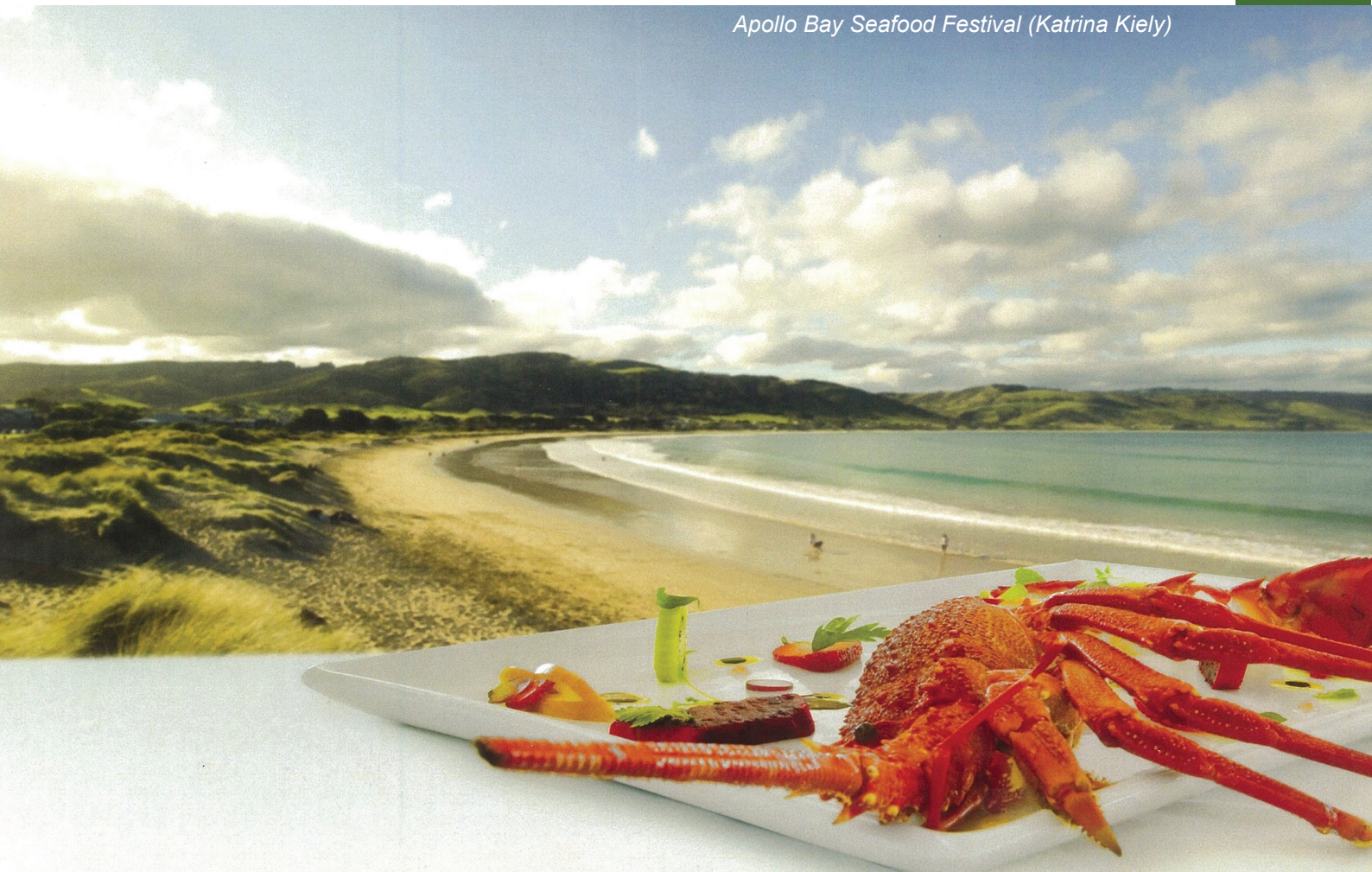
Barwon Regional Partnership

The Colac Otway Shire is part of the Barwon Regional Partnership, established by State Government, in recognition that local communities are best placed to understand regional challenges and opportunities. A key aim of the partnership is to champion regional projects and access to funding, as well as facilitating dialogue between community, stakeholders and government.

Partnerships and Stakeholder Relationships

Colac Otway Shire has strong working relationships with a variety of stakeholders such as Victorian State Government departments and agencies, peak industry bodies, and local businesses and community groups.

Apollo Bay Seafood Festival (Katrina Kiely)



Colac Otway's Economic Profile

Colac Otway Shire's economy has diversified over the years and several industry sectors have expanded and developed into major economic drivers. In addition to a continued strong agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, other sectors which have emerged as major contributors to the local economy include: manufacturing; construction; health care and social assistance; the visitor economy with a strong tourism and events sector; and retail and services.

These sectors collectively contribute \$1.757 billion in output, or 62.7% of the Shire's total output.

Employment is also strong in the Shire. In 2016, the estimated total employment for the Shire was 9,857 jobs, and the unemployment rate of 3.5% is lower than the G21 Region of 5.47% and Barwon South West region of

5.26%. Whilst the unemployment numbers are a real positive, it creates a small pool of people for employers to find employees. Major employers in Colac Otway Shire have raised issues with difficulty in filling vacant positions with suitably qualified and / or engaged employees. Council is working closely with industry and other key stakeholders to find innovative ways to assist with this dilemma.

This low rate is mainly due to the ability of our traditional industry sector employers to support large workforce numbers (i.e.: manufacturing – including food processing; health care and social assistance; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and construction).

Development and Housing Overview

Development in the Colac Otway Shire continues to be strong for a Shire with a relatively small population base. For the last 10 years, Colac Otway dwelling approvals have remained consistent with exceptions of a peak in 2008/2009 of 212 approvals and a low of 90 approvals in 2014/2015. There were 109 new dwellings approved in 2016/2017, a slight decrease (4 dwellings) on the previous year.

The total value of building approvals in Colac Otway Shire during 2016/2017 was \$89.9m comprising \$53.3m in residential approvals and \$36.6m in non-residential approvals.

This means for every \$1.00 approved for residential development, there is \$0.53 cents approved for the development of commercial, industrial, public or other non-residential investment in the Shire. This is a healthy ratio that shows opportunities for economic growth across the region.

Between 2006 and 2016 unit sales averaged 314 per year and made up two-thirds of the total sales. Housing sales averaged 59 per annum or 12.4% of total sales while vacant land made up 21.6% (103 per annum) of sales.

In 2016, there was a significant rise in activity in the property sales area with 704 property



sales recorded in Colac Otway Shire, with a total value of \$257,530,644.

Median dwelling and land prices have experienced gradual increases in Colac Otway Shire between 2011 and 2016. The median house price in the region in 2016 was \$393,500 and for vacant land it was \$135,750. This indicates an average increase in the median house prices of 3.8% since 2001 and an increase of 2.3% for vacant land during the same period.

Colac Otway's weekly median rental price was estimated in 2017 to be \$281. In the 10 years since 2007 rental prices have shown a steady increase of 4.43%. Median weekly rents are more affordable in Colac Otway Shire when compared to the G21 and Barwon South West regions which are \$338 and \$320 respectively. Rental yield for houses in Colac Otway Shire is currently estimated at 4.9% with units estimated at 4.4%.



Appendices

Appendix - Research

Colac Otway Survey Analysis

- 138 responses were received from across the Shire
- The majority of responses (87%) stated that their staffing levels had increased or remained the same over the past twelve months – (30% increasing; 57% staying the same)
- Of the 13% that recorded a decrease only 12% of those said it was through lack of work – 40% of this 13% group stated the decrease was due to their inability to find suitable staff to fill vacancies
- A total of 51.8% of respondents stated they had trouble finding suitable staff. The most common jobs where suitable staff could not be sourced were chefs/hospitality staff and cleaners
- 47.69% of respondents said that their annual turnover had increased over the year with 33.08% staying the same....the remaining 20% recorded a decrease in annual turnover
- 69% of respondents stated they were “fairly to very” confident they will remain profitable in the future. Only 13 respondents stated they were not confident of remaining profitable
- 65% of respondents stated that turnover will either stay the same or increase in the next five years
- A significant 80% stated they would be investing in some form in their business over the next 1-2 years. 20% of those surveyed said they will be investing more than \$100,000, with 7% saying they will be investing more than \$500,000
- Of those surveyed 17.5% said they are planning to hire more staff and a further 22% stated it was possible they would be hiring more staff
- Only 10% of those surveyed said that 100% of their customers would be from within the Colac Otway Shire
- Of the 123 who responded to this question relating to the percentage of their business operations that engages other local business, an average rate of 44% was the result....only 8 businesses answered 100%
- When asked what the number one issue or problem facing their business the most common response was “staff” (18 times) and the second highest was “Council or Council related issues” (6 times) and online sales received 5 mentions
- When asked what industries Council should avoid when attracting new investment or discourage from coming to the Shire, 45% said Council should not discourage any business from coming to the shire; 8 respondents mentioned the proposed Mega Hotel at Apollo Bay; 6 stated any business that would harm the environment; 6 mentioned anything that involved “fracking”
- 28% stated that “Location” was the main strength of doing business in Colac Otway Shire; 18 said being close to the coast and Apollo Bay; 4 respondents said the major businesses (Bulla, AKD and ALC); and a further 4 said “tourism”
- When asked what were the main barriers to doing business in Colac Otway Shire the most common response mentioned “Council”- these ranged from comments about planning, building, Councillors and attitudes of Council staff.....Red Tape was

mentioned 4 times but did not include the word Council in the comment.....6 responses referred to a “lack of support from locals” or going to Geelong and not shopping locally

- When asked what they believed would attract more customers to spend in their business 19 respondents mentioned a “buy local promotion” in their response - 12 stated attracting better businesses or upgrading shop fronts – 9 responses mentioned Lake Colac being more attractive to people coming here and a further 8 mentioned “events or tourism attraction”
- 16 respondents stated that to attract more investment into the Shire that a Council focus should be on “investment attraction”. 10 stated red tape should be reduced and a further 5 mentioned Lake Colac should be improved as an attraction to people
- 78.5% of respondents believe that Council should be in the business of attracting or generating new events.
- When asked which townships should be targeted for new events 27 said Colac; 16 mentioned Apollo Bay and 20 stated “all towns/all areas”
- Regarding what gaps exist in the current event calendar, 17 said none /no idea – 8 suggested winter – 6 said events at Lake Colac – 5 suggested more music events and 3 said more food events
- When asked their preferred method of communication with Council 75.7% mentioned email in their comments with 44.6% also mentioning regular public meetings or forums – 41.7% also mentioned eNewsletter as an alternative
- When asked what were the key training areas Council should focus on, 66.6% mentioned grant applications – attracting and retaining staff was next at 43.7% - customer service was next at 40%

Key Issues

- Perceived lack of support Council provides for business
- More support for business in encouraging

locals to buy local

- Issues for business in finding suitable staff
- A significant number of local businesses utilising goods and services from outside the Shire and not engaging other local businesses.

Key Opportunities

- Develop the “single point of contact” concept within Council to provide more efficient service
- Build on the current investment attraction activity
- Implement the “Localised” business to business program to provide easier access for businesses to other local businesses
- Working closely with municipal partners
- Investigate expansion of current “buy local” activities

Appendix – Stakeholder Comments

Stakeholder Comments – Manufacturing Sector
Difficult to find employment ready job applicants
Need for new day care centre/ after school care program to enable families and women to be attracted into the workforce
Link employers with education providers to ensure school leavers are work ready and have a knowledge of the types of jobs that are available in our major sectors
Further discussions to re-engage non jobseekers into the workforce – utilise the GROW process to assist
Consider the opportunities for lower transport costs by undertaking discussions with freight companies around freight consolidation and/or better freight connections to reduce cost for local business
Promote Colac Otway’s economic advantages – ie: land prices and connectivity etc to attract new investment
Undertake activities to investigate assessment of renewable energy options eg: waste to energy/heat, solar and facilitate private investment
Investigate training/education for employees based in Colac Otway Shire to reduce travel and down time for staff in training
Develop and implement a “jobs expo” style program which will inform young people of the different types of jobs available in all sectors in an effort to retain youth in the region
Attract new business to the region to replace the imported goods and services currently being sourced – research supply chains
Stakeholder Comments – Services / Retail Sector
Council needs to be proactive and move on the issue of heavy traffic in Murray Street Colac
Heavy traffic makes Murray Street very unappealing to visitors and locals to go there
Stop retail north of Murray Street Colac – move retail out of Murray Street and into Bromfield Street
Investigate affordable housing development sites that are ready to go now across the Shire
Facilitate investment in 4+ star accommodation in Colac
Support Barham River Road development near Apollo Bay to provide vital tourist attraction on the Great Ocean Road which will encourage people to stay longer in the region
Investigate how to capitalise on the growing Avalon Airport with regard to tourism
Promote Colac Otway Shire assets both built and natural – promote clean and green nature of the area
Actively promote long term jobs that are available in the Shire – promote outside of the Shire
Investigate bus parking in Colac to support/attract tourists travelling through on the way to or returning from the Great Ocean Road experience

Investigate training/education for employees based in Colac Otway Shire to reduce travel and down time for staff in training
Develop an “Business Retention & Expansion Stakeholder Group” to develop a Grand Plan for Colac
Look at ways to grow an employment ready workforce (GROW)
Council displays no flexibility
Attract new business to the region to replace the imported goods and services currently being sourced – research supply chains
Stakeholder Comments – Events Sector
Develop a checklist for new and existing event organisers
On-line application/permit forms
Reuse previous application forms for events just by updating appropriate sections and dates
Events trailer and waste trailer to be upgraded and resourced adequately
Training for event organisers in the use of these trailers
Encourage Councillor involvement and attendance at events as a celebration of community
Surveying f events – investigate Remplan’s program for economic benefit analysis – develop a standard survey (Survey Monkey)
Update the grant acquittal form – streamline event documentation
Extend the use of social media in event promotion
Promote the use of Council’s VMS advertising boards
Investigate event funding streams
Difficulty working with Council – red tape and paperwork
Encourage use of the notice board in Memorial Square to promote events
Stakeholder Comments – Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Sector
Investigate ways to develop a pool of employment ready people to fill vacancies (GROW)
Usually two perspectives in agriculture “government get out of the way and allow private sector growth” or ensure managed, logical and considered growth
Need action to deliver better capacity - critical of current regulations (planning red tape) – need some relaxation of red tape while still ensuring public, private, social and economic balances
Single point of contact to Council through Eco Dev Unit to assist individual applications
Stronger effort needed on communication with the community to achieve greater understanding in order for community to fully appreciate the efforts of regulatory staff to protect the region
Involve more people in the processes of planning and regulatory matters to assist farmers with diversification
Local producers product outlet (produce hub concept)
Develop a network for young people in agriculture to expand their ideas – could develop into an educational activity
Develop a young women in agriculture network - could develop into an educational activity

Investigate training/education for employees based in Colac Otway Shire to reduce travel and down time for staff in training
Stakeholder Comments – Construction Sector
Investigate ways to develop a pool of employment ready people to fill vacancies (GROW)
Additional investigation into day care / after school care facility to encourage families and women to re-join the workforce
Re-engage non job seekers to the workforce and look at developing a “Jobs Expo” style event to educate young people of the number and variety of jobs on offer
Better promote Colac Otway’s way of life, housing and land affordability and schools to attract qualified people to the region
Attract new business to the region to replace the imported goods and services currently being sourced – research supply chains
Further discuss with construction sector to ensure appropriate skills are developed to maintain sector performance
Investigate training/education for employees based in Colac Otway Shire to reduce travel and down time for staff in training
Stakeholder Comments – Tourism Sector
Investigate ways to develop a pool of employment ready people to fill vacancies (GROW - eg: cooks, chefs, cleaners etc)
Develop a regional “produce hub” to promote and display local produce to locals and tourists
How do we better manage tourism
Leverage off existing tourism product – eg: Great Ocean Walk
Communicate with, and monitor what neighbouring shires are doing
Create partnerships with appropriate agencies in tourism
Visitor servicing – how do we take services to the visitor and how do we create a tool that allows us to service them better
There is a need to change visitor behaviour and journeys. What new product brings the visitor and will influence travel patterns – product that will encourage overnight stay (early morning or evening activities)
Council needs to consider what is coming in the future and plan for it – re new investment – we need to be prepared – neighbouring shires appear to be
Create product for the Asian market – (indigenous food opportunities; iconic art galleries; Dinner en Blank)
Currently there’s a lack of brand differentiation for some destinations in the Shire
Encourage local businesses to highlight authentic cultures, local differences
Reinforce destination positioning and brand
Collaborate with Seafood Industry Victoria on future branding work – Apollo Bay
Improve VIC services to meet current visitor needs – provide accurate and up to date information

Lack of clarity around management responsibilities amongst agencies in charge of public reserves and facilities – needs facilitation/ discussion to clarify roles
Improve integrated planning between agencies
Complete the Tourism Parking & Traffic Management Strategy
Lack of funds to maintain and further develop visitor facilities and infrastructure to manage increasing visitation – Advocate for Investment and formation of a Great Ocean Road Authority
Advocate for funding for the completion of the Forrest Mountain Bike Strategic Plan
Improve “sense of arrival” at township across the shire
Lack of industry and community readiness to meet needs of Asian markets (eg: China) – multi lingual information etc
Existing events need further support to grow/consolidate
Lack of affordable, permanent accommodation for workers in coastal locations
Lack of awareness of the significance of the visitor economy
Promote the area – tell stories of our towns and the region
Protect the natural environment – minimise visitor impact and support the visitor to understand the importance of protecting and caring for the environment
Product development – upgrade Paradise picnic area- open Marriner’s falls, Skenes Creek Discovery trail, harbour Precinct, Shipwreck Coast Master Plan implementation, new product to encourage longer stays, better accommodation in Colac
Visitor facilities management – improved amenities for visitors; parking for busses in Apollo Bay, preserve quality of life in coastal towns for locals, get small things right before launching into large
Hard to work with planning and building in Council – red tape
Partner in regionally significant projects – World Class Signage Study; Work force development study, 100 years of the Great Ocean Road, Visitor Servicing Study
Get China ready
Stakeholder Comments – Food and Fibre Sector
Facilitate investment into 4+ star accommodation
Investigate ways to develop a pool of employment ready people to fill vacancies (GROW)
A function venue/conference centre – COPACC cost is prohibitive
Urgent need for Health Precinct plan to be undertaken in Colac
A lack of suitable workforce accommodation
Advocate through G21 for Colac Otway Shire health services
Council (Mayor, Councillors and CEO) be seen to make statements of true support for the sector – proactive and consistent statements to advocate for health services
Improved cooperation and communication between Council and Health Services and health providers at executive level

Stakeholder Comments – Health Sector
Have development conversations with Council ahead of time and work with Council as a key partner from the pre-planning phase through to implementation of projects
Encourage Council to adopt a “Community First” approach and a one stop shop for planning and other processes by ensuring the internal workforce collaborate across departments
Colac Otway Shire has sound public infrastructure and great central location
Warrnambool health services up by 8% last year; Colac up by 6% and Barwon region up also
Work on early years intervention with some young ones it’s more important than education (eg; hearing, speech, sight)
Need a conference centre
Advocate for investment in the public sector to underpin private
Advocate for improved IT services
Culture of cooperation not competition – develop a “facilitation culture on Council” – work together for long term benefits
Work on shifting workforce from unskilled to skilled
Encourage students to move to the region- eg: support \$2.2 million health professionals accommodation
Progress health and Wellbeing Precinct Plan for Colac
Selling the Shire and the township of Apollo Bay as an attractive place to work, along with access to a strong recreational lifestyle by the sea to create the lifestyle balance youth are looking for.
Encourage people working in the Shire to live in the Shire
Lack of Doctors for the GP service in Apollo Bay
Affordable housing is a high priority in Apollo Bay – becomes a barrier to recruiting and retaining staff -
Currently Colac Area Health meets 45% of demand and the remainder go to Barwon Health due to lack of capacity
Flexibility in zoning – find a way to do it – not just say no
Community have to travel outside Shire for specialist services
Council must not be a handbrake to economic development
Council be more open about top priorities
Make community grants larger to enable things to get done
Great promotion of the facilities we have – eg: Central Reserve, Bluewater, COPACC, Library, Hospitals and health services
Investigate ways to develop a pool of employment ready people to fill vacancies (GROW)
Additional investigation into day care / after school care facility to encourage families and women to re-join the workforce
Investigate training/education for employees based in Colac Otway Shire to reduce travel and down time for staff in training
Close Colac Otway Shire regional saleyards and develop residential land on the site
Reduce event red tape

Stakeholder Comments – One-on-one meetings
Develop fit for purpose bike areas on local roads
Advocate for the provision of better IT services to the region – internet etc
Sort out the by-pass issue – be proactive
Improve both east and west town entrances
Release more build ready residential land in the area
Develop the “produce hub” concept for local producers
Colanda site – possible cemetery use
Expand the Botanic Gardens theme across the Shire
Improve Lake Colac and restore to former glory
Will Eco Dev unit have support from Council to do things - conservative or bold approach
Create a short and long term Economic Business Plan
Need more support and flexibility in Council dealings
Have the hard conversation with Councillors about the implications if we don't get private sector investment, what is the community cost.

Appendix – SWOT Analysis

Research, feedback and survey results are summarised in the following SWOT Analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location – proximity to Melbourne, Geelong, airports • Affordability of housing and land • Great Ocean Road • Range of regional events • Assets –natural and built eg: beaches, rain forests, scenery, volcanic lakes and plains, Central Reserve, Bluewater, COPACC, Hospitals, Apollo Bay Harbour • Duplication of Princes Highway through to Melbourne (due to be completed 2019) • Space and land for growth • Strong industry sectors (eg: Manufacturing, Agriculture, Food, Timber, Health Services, Construction, Tourism, Services) • Numerous job opportunities currently available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited employment ready available workforce • Lack of training/education delivery within the Shire for employees • Lack of 4+ star accommodation in Colac • Need for more infrastructure along Great Ocean Road to cater for visitors (toilets) • Poor telecommunications (NBN) services in parts of the region • Volume of traffic especially heavy transport through the main street of Colac • Spending leakage to Geelong and Melbourne (not shopping local) • Difficult to deal with Council – not supportive or flexible
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Ocean Road Authority • Import replacement (incoming goods and services in several sectors) • Large employers in the region are continuing to expand • Strong economy • Available industrial, commercial and residential land • 4+ star accommodation in Colac • “produce Hub” concept to support local producers • Tourism opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding to build infrastructure needed on Great Ocean Road • Climate change threat to agriculture • Business sustainability • Very low unemployment – no readily available workforce • Available funds to provide for regional growth • Lack of available housing • Competition for Colac Regional Saleyards – long term viability

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Colac Otway
SHIRE