

MITCHELL SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2016-2021

DRAFT

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

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AUTHORS

Mike Ruzzene

Kurt Ainsaar

URBAN ENTERPRISE URBAN PLANNING LAND ECONOMICS TOURISM PLANNING INDUSTRY SOFTWARE

389 ST GEORGES RD, FITZROY NORTH, VIC 3068 | PH: (03) 9482 3888

www.urbanenterprise.com.au

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Urban Enterprise was appointed by Mitchell Shire Council to prepare the Mitchell Shire Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021. The Strategy document draws on extensive research and consultation which is summarised in the Background Discussion Paper.

The aim of the Mitchell Shire Economic Development Strategy is to:

- Grow Mitchell's economy, with a focus on job generation and sustainable economic growth;
- Build on Mitchell's competitive advantages;
- Promote upskilling & innovation and strengthen engagement, relationships and communication with businesses;
- Investigate the sub-regional economy variances in Mitchell Shire; and
- Identify projects and initiatives that will lead to significant economic benefit for the region.

The Economic Development Strategy provides a five-year plan for Council's economic development unit to strengthen Mitchell Shire's economy in conjunction with other private sector and public partners.

1.2. PROJECT APPROACH

The following methodology was undertaken in the formulation of this strategy.

- Background information review;
- Economic profile and industry analysis;
- Economic Development benchmarking analysis;
- Mitchell Shire competitive analysis;
- Industry survey and creation of a business database;
- Community survey;
- Stakeholder consultation (Equine, Wallan, Broadford, Seymour and internal workshops + 12 one-on-one meetings with industry and stakeholders);
- Discussion paper;
- Economic Development Strategy Framework; and
- Strategy preparation.

1.3. ECONOMY CONTEXT

Mitchell Shire has a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$1.43 billion and an estimated total economic output of \$2.37 billion. The major industry contributors of total economic output are Manufacturing, Construction and Public administration and safety.

In 2011, there were a total of 9,484 jobs in Mitchell Shire. This number fell by 0.24% from 2011 to 2015, with 9,393 jobs identified in Mitchell Shire in 2015.

Public administration and safety is the highest employing industry within the Shire (15.8%), followed by Health care and Social Assistance (12.3%) and Retail Trade (11.7%).

Some of the key employers in the region include Puckapunyal Army Barracks, Hospitals in Seymour and Kilmore, Nexus Health, Primary and Secondary Schools, Supermarkets, Mitchell Shire Council, Ralphs Meats and Nestle.

The agricultural sector provides a comparatively low level of employment given the size of Mitchell Shire. This is due to much of the rural land being constrained by factors including land topography and soil quality.

Niche industries in Mitchell Shire that are not adequately included in census definitions are Equine and Tourism. Anecdotally the Equine industry is significant, with two racecourses (Kilmore and Seymour), many thoroughbred trainers and breeders, harness racing (Kilmore only) and a strong recreational equine sector. Initial estimates suggest that the equine sector provides more than \$100 million in output in the region, significantly higher than the Agriculture sector, which is estimated at around \$25 million.

Data from the Goulburn River Valley Tourism Destination Management Plan (2013) identifies that the Tourism sector for Mitchell Shire attracts 560,000 people, provides a total output to the Shire of approximately \$97 million and support 660 jobs.

1.4. KEY PROPULSIVE AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

The key propulsive industries in Mitchell Shire include:

- Public Administration and Safety (Defence – Puckapunyal Army base);
- Manufacturing (Sugar and Confectionary - Nestle); and
- Construction.

These sectors are important for the existing economic activity in the Shire in terms of economic output, employment and value added to the local economy.

Emerging industries in Mitchell Shire include Health care, Transport and Construction, Equine and Food processing. Growth industries are Education and Training as well as Accommodation and Food Services. Mitchell Shire Council has the opportunity to further attract these industries to the Shire and facilitate economic growth by accommodating their business needs and diversifying the economy.

1.5. MITCHELL SHIRE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

Mitchell Shire competes with peri-urban and growth area Council's to Melbourne's north for resident and industry attraction.

Whilst currently most investment is being funnelled into the growth areas of Hume and Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire over time will play an expanded role in absorbing population and industry growth.

Surrounding peri-urban Councils such as Macedon Ranges and Murrindindi have larger concentrations of high amenity landscapes, forest and undulating topography that are less suited to cater for larger industry.

Mitchell Shire has a strong competitive advantage over its neighbouring peri-urban areas with respect to its ability to capture larger industry, with strong transport links, land availability and proximity to Melbourne's wholesale market and the Goulburn Valley.

Mitchell Shire's competitive strengths for business and resident attraction include:

- Proximity to transport infrastructure – Hume Freeway, Goulburn Valley Highway, Northern Highway Corridor, Melbourne Airport, Port of Melbourne and Rail line;
- Proximity to Melbourne (commutability);
- Strong population and housing growth (Mitchell South);
- Land availability and affordability;
- Lifestyle –rural setting (Seymour) and lifestyle villages (Kilmore, Broadford, Wandong, Heathcote Junction);
- Nature-based assets – Goulburn River, Tallarook Ranges, Trawool Valley, Greater Dividing Range;
- Well-serviced for social and community infrastructure (quality secondary schools and hospitals);
- Strong retail base in Wallan, Kilmore and Seymour;
- Thoroughbred and recreational equine industry;
- Tourism strengths (Mitchell North); and
- Sport and recreation assets.

1.6. REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Figure 1 highlights the regional economic context for Mitchell Shire and importantly its opportunity to leverage off the following assets and infrastructure:

- Location and access to the Hume Freeway, Goulburn Valley Highway and the Northern Highway;
- Proximity to the Melbourne wholesale market;
- Extensive population growth in the north of Melbourne;
- Mangalore Airport near Seymour;
- Proximity to Tullamarine Airport;
- Proximity to Victoria's food bowl and north east areas.



1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

1.1. OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

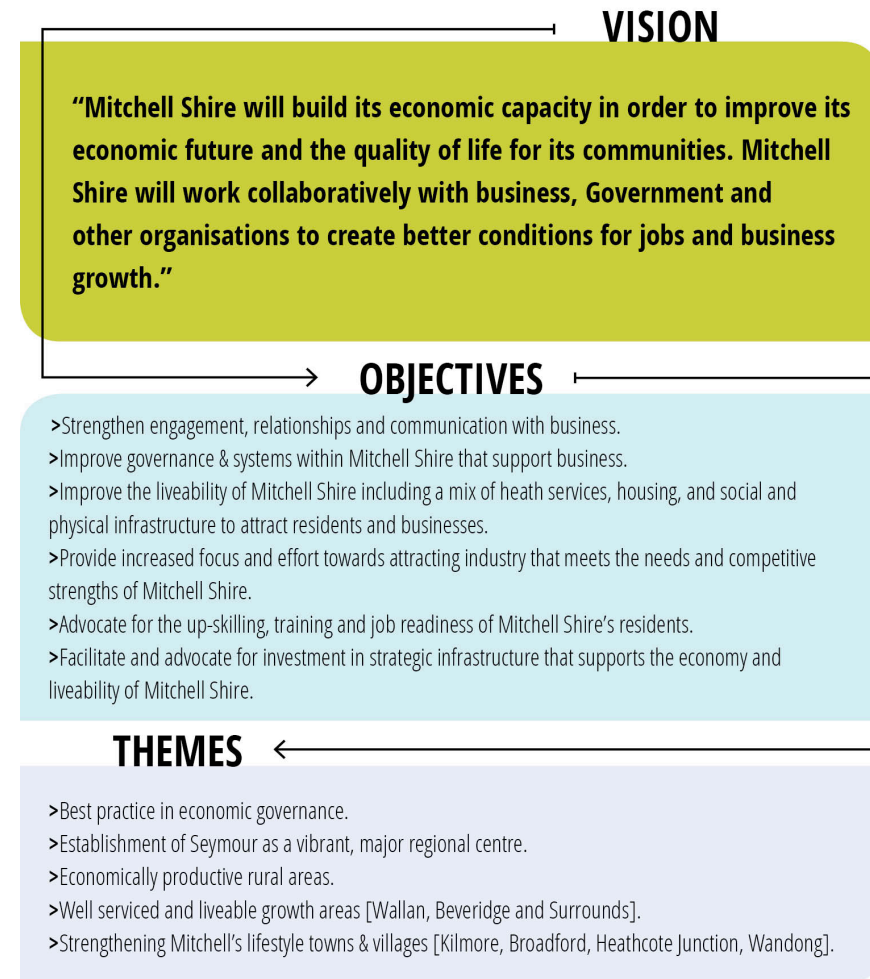
Figure 2 shows the economic development framework for Mitchell Shire. It includes a vision, objectives and themes.

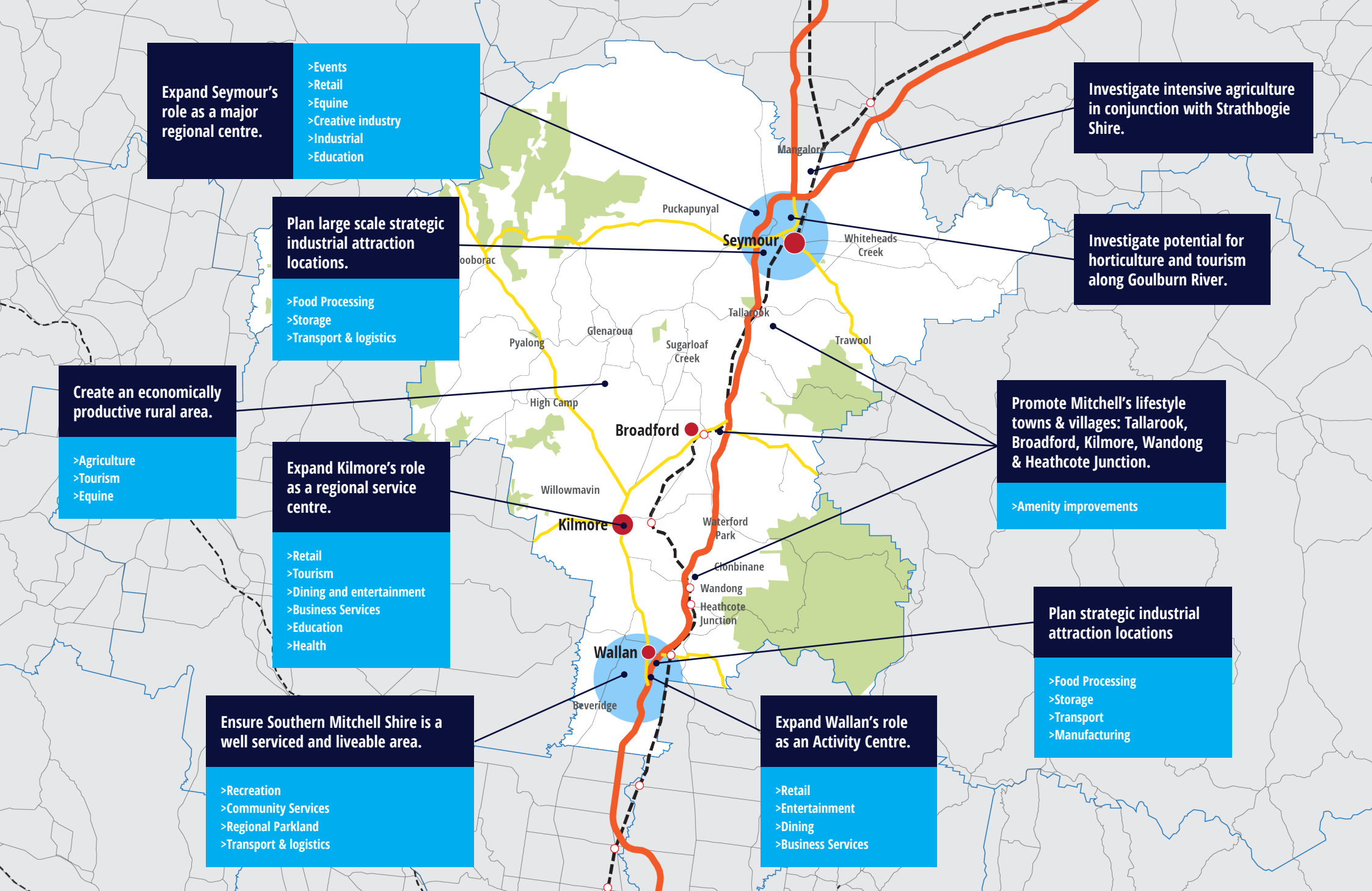
The themes identified in this section are specific strategies and actions for each area of focus. As specified in Figure 2, the themes for economic development include:

- Best Practice in economic governance: focusing on improving governance and industry engagement.
- Establishment of Seymour as a vibrant, major regional centre: acknowledging that Seymour has the opportunity to become one of the Hume Regions key service and industry towns.
- Economically productive rural areas: focusing on providing a planning framework which supports various rural industry opportunities.
- Well serviced and liveable growth areas: ensuring that jobs and quality services are a key feature of Mitchell's growth area.
- Strengthening Mitchell's lifestyle towns and villages: builds on the amenity landscapes of Mitchell's central towns and opportunity for lifestyle attraction.

In addition to specific themes there are a number of key economic development initiatives that should be a focus for Mitchell Shire in the next five years. These key economic development initiatives are shown in Figure 3 on the following page.

FIGURE 2 MITCHELL SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK





2. BEST PRACTICE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.1. OVERVIEW

Economic Development Australia, a leading industry body highlights the following as overarching delivery objectives for local economic development:

- Objective 1: Supporting the existing business base
- Objective 2: Attracting new businesses and jobs
- Objective 3: Improving liveability

Focusing on delivering best practice in local economic development will assist Mitchell Shire in growing existing businesses, attracting new business and investment and development of local jobs.

Engaging with existing businesses, providing focused business support and improving Council processes will assist greatly in achieving the objectives of the strategy.

2.2. AREAS OF FOCUS

- Engaging with business
- Information for businesses
- Supporting small business
- Attracting new investment and industry
- Improvement of economic development governance

2.3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2.3.1. NETWORKING EVENTS, BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION PROVISION

Greater efforts are required to ensure stronger links between businesses and Council in order to ensure that businesses are supported and informed.

Mitchell Shire should continue to develop a quality business database in order to maintain effective relationships and communications with businesses.

Mitchell Shire Council should facilitate networking events to engage with businesses as well as providing an avenue for other businesses in the Shire to communicate and build relationships.

STRATEGY 1 Continue to develop and maintain a business database

ACTION 1.1 *Develop and maintain a business database which includes the following fields:*

- *Business name*
- *Address*
- *Industry classification*
- *Business size (estimated number of jobs)*
- *History of Council contact with the business*

ACTION 1.2 *Ensure that an economic development staff member has responsibility for maintaining the database*

- STRATEGY 2** **Establish a program of networking and educational events**
- ACTION 2.1** *Use information from the business survey conducted around business availability to develop a program of networking events targeted at industry. This may include:*
- *Seminars on topics of interest: NBN, social media, digital marketing*
 - *Localised networking opportunities across the key townships*
 - *Workshops with specific industry on topic*
- ACTION 2.2** *Continue to implement Council's current training initiatives such as:*
- *The small business bus;*
 - *Small business mentoring sessions;*
 - *Business workshops.*
- STRATEGY 3** **Utilise email and a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System to communicate with businesses**
- ACTION 3.1** *Develop a quarterly email newsletter to go to businesses on the business database, promoting Council projects, networking opportunities and grants programs.*
- ACTION 3.2** *Explore options for Customer Relationship Management Systems*

2.3.2. BUSINESS HUBS

There are a high proportion of home based and start-up small businesses in Mitchell Shire that require resources that help support their operations. There is also a gap in office accommodation for business across the towns of Mitchell Shire. There is an opportunity to develop multiple business hubs in select townships in Mitchell Shire.

- STRATEGY 4** **Investigate opportunities for the establishment of business hubs in Mitchell Shire, specifically:**

- Creative industry incubator in Seymour (Similar to Castlemaine);
- Knowledge industry business hubs in Kilmore, Wallan and Seymour.

- ACTION 4.1** *Establish working groups in Wallan, Seymour and Kilmore to investigate the establishment of business hubs.*
- ACTION 4.2** *Develop a business plan and concept plan for each of the business hubs. This will identify the following:*
- *Key markets*
 - *Demand*
 - *Location*
 - *Typology and facility offer*
 - *Linkages with industry and education facilities*
 - *Funding and resourcing*

2.3.3. PLANNING SUPPORT

Businesses in Mitchell Shire generally have difficulties in understanding the complex nature of the Local Planning Scheme. Planning processes can be a major deterrent for new businesses. Mitchell Shire Council should provide facilitative services to new and existing businesses in the Shire to help them overcome planning barriers such as planning approvals and compliances.

- STRATEGY 5** **Improve planning processes for businesses**
- ACTION 5.1** *Identify an experienced statutory planner in Council to who will take responsibility for all business applications*
- ACTION 5.2** *Establish a shorter target for the turnaround of planning applications for business*
- ACTION 5.3** *Establish a priority project planning process for larger investments and larger business including utilising economic development staff to assist with the planning process.*

STRATEGY 6 Promote a facilitative culture in Council with regard to permits and compliance.

ACTION 6.1 Undertake a series of training programs for Council staff focusing on the importance of facilitative services in planning and compliance.

ACTION 6.2 Provide case studies of other Councils who have implemented measures to improve service provision in planning and compliance and the benefits for the entire community.

2.3.4. LINKING WITH HUME, WHITTLESEA AND STRATHBOGIE COUNCILS

There is opportunity for Mitchell Shire to partner with Hume City Council, the City of Whittlesea and also Strathbogie Shire to provide business services and networking events to businesses. Hume City Council in particular has well developed programs which Mitchell Shire can leverage from.

STRATEGY 7 Strengthen relationships with surrounding Councils

ACTION 7.1 Meet surrounding Council economic development teams on a quarterly basis

ACTION 7.2 Develop a program of joint projects with surrounding Councils that can facilitate, e.g.:

- Employment node in Beveridge
- Employment node, intensive agricultural area near Mangalore
- Joint training programs for businesses

2.3.5. SUCCESSION OF STAFF

Mitchell Shire Council generally has a high turnover of Council staff, thus it is important that the relationships between businesses and Council is upheld. Processes should be implemented within Council that ensure the continuation of local business relationships when staff leave.

STRATEGY 8 Ensure that staff pass on adequate information and knowledge transfer occurs with turnover of staff

ACTION 8.1 Develop processes to assist with staff transition. This includes:

- Clear guidance around economic development strategy and actions required
- Maintenance of the business database with information on past contact with businesses
- Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of staff members

2.3.6. PRIORITY INVESTMENT PROJECTS

It is critical that Council has agreement on investment projects that are important to attract industry and improve liveability of residents. This prioritised list of projects should be assessed against agreed criteria and promoted to funding agencies. This will ensure that when funding pools are announced, Mitchell Shire is ready to enter in grant processes.

STRATEGY 9 Ensure that Council has an updated list of priority projects and initiatives which it can take to funding agencies.

ACTION 9.1 Establish a promotional document that identifies and quantifies Council's key investment projects. Key economic development projects for consideration include:

- Industrial precinct in Seymour and Wallan
- Rural Activity Strategy
- Puckapunyal Tank Museum
- Unlocking Wallan's Economic Potential
- Business Hubs
- Seymour Riverfront improvements
- Seymour Community and Business Hub
- Seymour Equine and Events Centre
- Implementation of Kilmore Town Centre Plan

- *Implementation of Wallan Urban Design Framework*

2.3.7. INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Mitchell Shire needs to direct resources to attracting new industries and businesses in order to grow the number of local jobs, increase and maintain job containment and improve the attractiveness of Mitchell Shire as a residential destination.

STRATEGY 10 **Focus resources towards investment attraction as a priority for economic development.**

ACTION 10.1 *Develop an industry attraction strategy for key opportunities in Mitchell Shire. This includes:*

- *Prospectus material*
- *List of industry targets*
- *Meetings with industry groups*
- *Targeted cold calls*

ACTION 10.2 *Investigate options for attracting new large industry such as rate concessions*

ACTION 10.3 *Undertake a Shire wide analysis of retail opportunities building on the work undertaken in each of the Structure Plans to prepare a retail prospectus for major retailer attraction*

ACTION 10.4 *Investigate options for attracting new small business such as small business grants.*

STRATEGY 11 **Ensure the planning framework and infrastructure supports industry attraction.**

ACTION 11.1 *Implement the actions within Council's strategic planning strategies.*

2.3.8. STRENGTHEN BUSINESS SERVICES

Strengthen the business services sector within the growth area by encouraging existing businesses to use local supplier's business goods and services.

Facilitate the development of professional services in the growth areas to service the increasing proportion of home-based and start-up businesses.

STRATEGY 12 **Establish a Mitchell Shire wide business network**

ACTION 12.1 *Seek business interest in the establishment of a Mitchell Shire Chamber of Commerce*

2.3.9. RESEARCH

It is critical that ongoing research is undertaken to track industry performance. This will assist in measuring the success of the Economic Development Strategy.

In addition to this, Council should undertake performance reporting of the economic development unit, which has been outlined in a paper prepared by EDA Victoria State Practitioners Study "Annual Performance Measures of Local Economic Development".

STRATEGY 13 **Undertake Ongoing Research of Industry Performance**

ACTION 13.1 *Undertake an annual survey of industry, building on the survey completed for the economic development strategy to measure industry performance and growth.*

ACTION 13.2 *Continue to subscribe to Remplan and ensure that Remplan economic data is made available across Council and business*

STRATEGY 14 **Implement annual performance reporting of local economic development in line with EDA performance measures paper.**

ACTION 14.1 *Establish a reporting procedure to collect relevant measures as specified in the Economic Development Performance Measures Paper.*

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF SEYMOUR AS A VIBRANT, MAJOR REGIONAL CENTRE

3.1. OVERVIEW

Seymour is strategically located at the intersection of the Hume Freeway and Goulburn Valley Highway and has excellent rail services, retail and community services.

Seymour is located central to areas of high amenity including the Goulburn River corridor, Tallarook and Strathbogie Ranges. The tourist towns of Nagambie and Avenal are also in close proximity.

Seymour is well placed to attract new residents to the area with a number of favourable factors such as strong transport links and services.

Mitchell Shire should make a concerted effort to attract industry and improve the liveability aspects of Seymour in order to make Seymour a more attractive place to live.

A recent survey of market perceptions of Seymour highlight that the lack of jobs and poor quality housing stock are a key barrier to attracting residents to Seymour.

Seymour is strategically located to attract large food processors, storage and transport companies. In addition, there is opportunity to improve the towns tourism, food, retail and arts and cultural base.

3.2. AREAS OF FOCUS

- Industry attraction:
 - Education
 - Health and aged care
 - Food processing, storage and transport
 - Retail
 - Tourism
 - Creative industry
- Improving amenity and tourism uses
- Providing jobs and housing to support resident attraction
- Supporting the equine sector

3.3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

3.3.1. RESIDENT ATTRACTION

There is a need for Mitchell Shire Council to dedicate resources to attract new residents to Seymour.

STRATEGY 15 Promote Seymour as an attractive place to live through improved perceptions and infrastructure investment and upgrades.

ACTION 15.1 *Ensure the preparation of the Seymour Structure Plan addresses the need to provide a more diverse and quality housing stock.*

ACTION 15.2 *Ensure the preparation of the Seymour Structure Plan delivers on identifying amenity, streetscape and infrastructure improvements.*

ACTION 15.3 *Council to commit to projects that enhance Civic Pride*

ACTION 15.4 *Deliver the Seymour levee bank*

ACTION 15.5 *Develop a Seymour resident attraction portal, highlighting the benefits and opportunities of living in Seymour including rail commute to work.*

3.3.2. TOURISM

There are a number of tourism opportunities that may be developed in Seymour. In addition to attracting visitors, these initiatives will also make Seymour a more attractive place to live.

STRATEGY 16 Investigate the potential to develop a Riverside precinct along the Goulburn River

ACTION 16.1 *Ensure the preparation of the Seymour Structure Plan delivers a staged proposal to make the Riverside Precinct a key destination for visitors and residents. This includes consideration of the following potential opportunities:*

- *Commercial dining opportunities*
- *Destination food and beverage: microbrewery/distillery*
- *Children's Splash Park and playground*
- *New and improved existing trail and path linkages*
- *Accommodation*
- *Function Centre*

STRATEGY 17 Promote tourism investment opportunities

ACTION 17.1 *Undertake strategic marketing of tourism investment opportunities, specifically including:*

- *New holiday leisure tourist park*
- *Destination dining, food and beverage offer*
- *Eco-resort*
- *Quality conference centre in the hinterland*
- *Agri-tourism opportunities.*

STRATEGY 18 Support existing events and develop new tourism events

ACTION 18.1 *Continue to develop a calendar of events for Seymour. Events include:*

- *Fishing events*
- *Food and beverage events*
- *Agricultural events*
- *Music events*
- *Arts and Culture*
- *Sporting events.*

ACTION 18.2 *Seek opportunities to better capitalise on existing events and integrate more directly with Seymour businesses and community*

ACTION 18.3 *Explore the opportunity to develop a strategic grants program for events that bring visitors to Seymour.*

STRATEGY 19 Promote Seymour as a stopover to Melbourne

ACTION 19.1 *Implement branding, and marketing initiatives include:*

- *Improve wayfinding signage*
- *Improve physical appearance of entrance off the Hume Freeway*
- *Align targeted interstate marketing with Melbourne events program*

STRATEGY 20 Lobby for the Army Tank Museum

ACTION 20.1 *Council to actively lobby for investment in a new Tank Museum at Puckapunyal*

STRATEGY 21 Develop Arts and Culture product

ACTION 21.1 *Investigate the opportunity to establish an artist hub/incubator to attract artisans to Seymour. (See Strategy 4 and related actions)*

3.3.3. EQUINE

Seymour is a hub for thoroughbred racing and training. There is an opportunity to further develop and support the thoroughbred and recreational equine industry in Seymour.

STRATEGY 22 Strengthen the Equestrian Hub of Seymour

ACTION 22.1 *Undertake a branding, marketing and signage implementation to delineate Seymour's equine precinct and promote it to the wider Thoroughbred community and trainers in Victoria.*

STRATEGY 23 Grow the recreational equine sector

ACTION 23.1 *Undertake a feasibility study and concept plan for the establishment of a regional equine and events centre in Seymour in proximity to the equine precinct. This will include an indoor arena and cross country course.*

ACTION 23.2 *Investigate the expansion of the Rural Living Zone in the equine precinct to accommodate medium to long term opportunity for medium sized trainers from Melbourne.*

3.3.4. IDENTIFICATION AND PROVISION OF INDUSTRIAL LOTS

There is a current gap in purpose built industrial buildings in Seymour. The provision of attractive and useable industrial floor space such as warehouses, factories and distribution centres would help attract new businesses into Seymour.

STRATEGY 24 Improve the amenity and usability of existing industrial areas

ACTION 24.1 *Develop a works program to improve amenity in Seymour's existing industrial areas*

ACTION 24.2 *Encourage land owners of industrial land to develop smaller warehouse shells to support small service industrial growth*

STRATEGY 25 Provide industrial super lots for large industry

ACTION 25.1 *Undertake planning for the establishment of large super lots in proximity to the freeway to attract larger food processing, storage and transport businesses*

3.3.5. BUSINESS SERVICES ATTRACTION

There is a shortfall in business services in Seymour. Further attraction of professional service industries is required in Seymour to cater to existing and new business needs.

STRATEGY 26 Attract and develop business and knowledge services in Seymour

ACTION 26.1 *Establish a working group to oversee the development of a new commercial business hub in Seymour. This should provide a range of office and hot desk opportunities. This may be developed in conjunction with a potential community facility that may be identified in the emerging Structure Plan.*

3.3.6. EDUCATION

There is an opportunity to grow the education and training sector in Seymour and encourage a relationship between finishing secondary and tertiary education and entering the workforce.

There is a major opportunity in Seymour to utilise the township's existing infrastructure, advantageous geographical location and proximity to environmentally significant areas and nature based assets for education purposes.

STRATEGY 27 Encourage a greater and improved presence in the education sector in Seymour

ACTION 27.1 *Continue dialogue with secondary schools in relation to:*

- *Investment and improvements to the Seymour Secondary College*
- *Fostering pathways between secondary and tertiary education*

3.3.7. RETIREMENT HOUSING AND AGED CARE

A high proportion of Seymour's resident population is ageing, with this trend projected to continue over the next 15 years. There is an opportunity to grow the Health care and social assistance industry and provide retirement housing and aged care to service the existing population.

STRATEGY 28 Seek investment in the retirement housing aged care sector

ACTION 28.1 *Undertake discussions with aged care operators in the Hume Region to secure investment in this sector in Seymour in the medium term*

ACTION 28.2 *Investigate opportunities through the preparation of the Structure Plan to support housing diversity in Seymour.*

4. ECONOMICALLY PRODUCTIVE RURAL AREAS

4.1. OVERVIEW

Mitchell Shire is a large regional Shire with an extensive amount of rural land. The economic output of the rural areas is quite low when benchmarked against other rural Councils due to limited rural tourism industry and limited high value agriculture such as horticulture and dairy.

Anecdotally the Equine industry is one of the largest contributors to the rural economy, however further work is required to understand the scale of this sector.

There is opportunity to promote greater productivity in the rural areas of Mitchell Shire.

4.2. AREAS OF FOCUS

- Investigation of higher value agricultural uses such as horticulture, intensive agriculture;
- Rural residential uses in designated areas;
- Expansion of equine uses;
- Agri-tourism and nature based tourism.

4.3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

4.3.1. RURAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

A review of rural land uses in Mitchell Shire would help understand existing agricultural uses and identify agriculturally productive areas in the Shire. A study is required to understand how to utilise Mitchell Shire's rural areas more productively including suitable locations for agriculture, equine and tourism

STRATEGY 29 Undertake a Rural Activity Strategy

ACTION 29.1 *Undertake a rural activity strategy which looks at developing greater productivity in the rural areas including:*

- *Equine uses*
- *Horticulture and intensive agriculture*
- *Agri tourism and nature based tourism opportunities.*

4.3.2. GOULBURN RIVER HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Goulburn River flats are significantly productive areas and could be utilised for horticultural uses.

STRATEGY 30 Further utilise the Goulburn River flats for alternative uses

ACTION 30.1 *Investigate opportunities for horticulture along the Goulburn River and promote these opportunities to land owners.*

ACTION 30.2 *Undertake an assessment of the horticultural uses that can be accommodated along the Goulburn River.*

ACTION 30.3 *Engage with landowners to discuss barriers and opportunities for horticulture in this area.*

4.3.3. AGRI-TOURISM

Developing agri-tourism in rural areas would provide a more economically productive use of land and will further diversify the tourism offer in Mitchell Shire. This also assists with 'off farm' income to support agricultural farming families.

STRATEGY 31 Promote rural tourism uses in Mitchell Shire

ACTION 31.1 *Identify and promote nature based and agri tourism opportunities in Mitchell Shire including:*

- *Boutique value adding*
- *Farm gate sales*
- *Nature based accommodation and activities next to natural attractions/assets*
- *Agri tourism opportunities such as farm stays and destination wineries.*

4.3.4. REGIONAL AGRICULTURE FOCUS AND BRAND – GOULBURN VALLEY

There is opportunity to work closely with Greater Shepparton and other Councils in the Goulburn Valley to establish a Goulburn Valley regional agricultural group and brand.

This may provide Mitchell Shire producers with the opportunity to link with other larger operators in the broader region.

STRATEGY 32 Engage in Goulburn Valley Region Agricultural Initiatives

ACTION 32.1 *Undertake discussions with RDV, as well as Greater Shepparton, Moira, Strathbogie and Campaspe Councils to identify a strategic regional approach to agricultural production, branding and water use.*

4.3.5. EQUINE

Mitchell Shire has a strong equine presence. There are synergies that can be leveraged off, particularly with the Kilmore and Seymour Racecourses and the historical significance of thoroughbred breeding and training in the Shire and the broader region.

Mitchell Shire Council should continue to support the growth in thoroughbred equine and recreational equine sector within the region through supporting equine events and the potential growth in equine infrastructure.

STRATEGY 33 Undertake an equine strategy for Mitchell Shire

ACTION 33.1 *Seek funding for an equine strategy which investigates the following:*

- *Establishment of an equine reference group*
- *Primary research program to quantify the size, strengths and economic value of the equine industry in Mitchell Shire*
- *Establishment of an online portal for Mitchell Shire Equine Sector*
- *The opportunity to establish an equine sales event in Mitchell Shire*
- *The opportunity to establish an equine festival in Mitchell Shire*
- *The feasibility to establish a new indoor equestrian centre in Mitchell Shire*
- *Opportunities for equine uses complimentary to the Seymour and Kilmore racecourses*

5. WELL SERVICED AND LIVEABLE GROWTH AREA [WALLAN, BEVERIDGE AND SURROUNDS]

5.1. OVERVIEW

The Beveridge-Wallan Corridor is one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria. The Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) is implementing a program of preparing structure plans for the area which will see this growth continue.

One of the key issues for economic development in the Mitchell growth area is ensuring liveability is maintained through the provision of recreation, community, entertainment, retail services and jobs.

The timely provision of infrastructure is also a key consideration for this area.

The Wallan Structure Plan provides a guiding document for Wallan's township growth. Initiatives in the Structure Plan will have a long term impact on the town's economy.

5.2. AREAS OF FOCUS

- Ensure there is adequate supply of industrial land to support industry attraction
- Ensure there is adequate supply of office space to support attraction of service business and the knowledge sector
- Ensure Wallan township adequately provides art, cultural and recreational facilities for the growing population
- Strengthen and diversify the retail and entertainment offer.

5.3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

5.3.1. COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

The land availability and affordability within Mitchell South make it well placed to attract industries including Transport, storage and distribution, Service industrial, Retail trade, Construction and Professional and advanced business services.

STRATEGY 34 Investigate the establishment of a Business Hub in Wallan

ACTION 34.1 See Strategy 4 and related actions

STRATEGY 35 Identify location and undertake planning to support the establishment of large purpose built industrial estate

ACTION 35.1 Undertake a planning study which identifies suitable location for industrial land in Mitchell South to accommodate large scale manufacturing, storage and transport businesses.

5.3.2. TOWNSHIP LINKAGES

There is a need to create local pedestrian, bicycle, car and public transport linkages between Wallan, Wallan East and Beveridge. These links would provide a commutable environment and create transport linkages for residents.

STRATEGY 36 Establish improved cycle and trail linkages in Mitchell South between towns

ACTION 36.1 *Ensure trail linkages are incorporated into Precinct Structure Plans (PSP) and Development Plans*

STRATEGY 37 **Review the commuter network to ensure appropriate public transport is provided to link Wallan with outlying settlements.**

ACTION 37.1 *Continue to hold ongoing discussions with Public Transport Victoria and local bus lines to determine the opportunity to improve transport links*

ACTION 37.2 *Advocate for the establishment of a train station in Beveridge.*

ACTION 40.2 *Implement revitalisation works and programs (e.g. unlocking Wallan's Economic Potential)*

ACTION 40.3 *Promote development opportunities (commercial office/retail) along Wellington Street*

ACTION 40.4 *Explore the role for a place maker to be shared across Wallan, Kilmore, Broadford and Seymour*

ACTION 40.5 *Establish a place making strategy for each of the townships drawing on planning to date. The strategy will identify opportunities for activation, branding, overseeing township improvements and liaising with the local communities.*

5.3.3. REGIONAL PARK

Advocate for a regional park in Wallan that services the resident and visitor population. This is seen by residents as a key part of liveability in the growth areas.

STRATEGY 38 **Advocate for a regional park**

ACTION 38.1 *Undertake a study to identify the size, location and establishment of a regional park near Wallan*

ACTION 38.2 *Collaborate with Parks Victoria and the Merri Creek Management Committee regarding the process of establishing the park and responsibilities for ongoing management.*

5.3.4. RETAIL AND ENTERTAINMENT

STRATEGY 39 **Promote the retail gaps in Wallan to landowners and prospective investors**

STRATEGY 40 **Continue to develop Wallan and Beveridge's entertainment offer to create an attractive and vibrant location for residents.**

ACTION 40.1 *Implement Wallan Urban Design Framework (UDF)*

6. STRENGTHENING MITCHELL'S LIFESTYLE TOWNS & VILLAGES [KILMORE, BROADFORD, HEATHCOTE JUNCTION, WANDONG]

6.1. OVERVIEW

Kilmore, Broadford, Heathcote Junction and Wandong are located in central Mitchell Shire along the Great Dividing Range. These townships have the potential to strengthen as lifestyle residential locations leveraging off their amenity and proximity to Melbourne.

Kilmore has the potential to further develop as a regional service centre leveraging from growth in Retail, Health services and Education. Its education facilities and hospital provide a strong framework for attracting new residents and jobs to the region.

6.2. AREAS OF FOCUS

- Revitalisation of Kilmore Town Centre
- Improvement to township linkages
- Attraction of business and knowledge sector to Kilmore
- Leveraging from key assets such as the Broadford Motorcycle Complex and The Kilmore Racecourse
- Ensure there is adequate supply of commercial office space to support attraction of service business and the knowledge sector.

6.3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

6.3.1. RESIDENT ATTRACTION

Kilmore, Broadford, Heathcote Junction and Wandong are well placed to attract tree change residents by strengthening the townships identity as lifestyle towns and villages.

STRATEGY 41 Promote the sub-regional townships as lifestyle towns and villages

ACTION 41.1 *Develop a targeted marketing program to improve the awareness of Kilmore and Broadford as lifestyle residential locations.*

STRATEGY 42 Continue to develop Kilmore and Wallan's retail, tourism and entertainment offer to create an attractive and vibrant location for residents and visitors.

ACTION 42.1 *Explore the role for a place maker to be shared across Wallan, Kilmore, Broadford and Seymour*

ACTION 42.2 *Establish a place making strategy for each of the townships drawing on planning to date. The strategy will identify opportunities for activation, branding, overseeing township improvements and liaising with the local communities.*

6.3.2. RETAIL AND OFFICE GROWTH AND ATTRACTION

Kilmore and Broadford have opportunity to expand their retail offer targeted to the needs of residents and passing trade. Residential growth in the region will support a growing retail mix in these townships.

Kilmore has the potential to develop further as a regional service hub with a greater supply of business services.

Both towns have the opportunity to improve the quality of their town centre amenity and in particular target passing trade better through a quality dining and retail offer, similar to that of the towns along the Calder corridor: Woodend, Kyneton and Castlemaine.

STRATEGY 43 Support the growth of retail in Kilmore and Broadford

ACTION 43.1 *Implement the Kilmore Structure Plan*

ACTION 43.2 *Undertake a retail assessment for Kilmore and Broadford which identifies the residential catchment and retail opportunities which can be promoted for each township.*

STRATEGY 44 Revitalise the Kilmore town centre, notably along Sydney Street to encourage an increase in commercial office and retail tenancies and encourage an increase in pedestrian activity.

ACTION 44.1 *Streetscape improvements along Sydney Street*

ACTION 44.2 *Implement the actions from Kilmore Revitalisation Plan*

ACTION 44.3 *Identify clear guidelines for the potential commercial tenancy of heritage buildings*

STRATEGY 45 Kilmore and Broadford business improvement program

ACTION 45.1 *Invite an expert in the operation and management of retail and food and beverage premises to meet with shop owners to share ideas of how to improve business performance and how to attract passing trade better.*

6.3.3. TOWNSHIP LINKAGES

There is an opportunity to more efficiently integrate the townships through the development of pedestrian and bicycle links, as well as redirecting local traffic networks.

STRATEGY 46 Explore opportunities for improved cycle and trail linkages between Broadford and Kilmore

STRATEGY 47 Review the commuter network and advocate for appropriate public transport to link Kilmore with outlying settlements and surrounding townships (e.g. Kilmore and Broadford)

ACTION 47.1 *Advocate for an increase in the frequency of bus services from Kilmore town centre to Kilmore train station (Kilmore East).*

ACTION 47.2 *Advocate for the long-term development of the Kilmore-Wallan bypass*

6.3.4. BUSINESS HUB

The provision of a business hub/incubator would service the high number for home-based and start-up businesses in the Kilmore/Broadford region.

STRATEGY 48 Investigate opportunity for the establishment of a business hub in Kilmore/Broadford.

ACTION 48.1 *See Strategy 4 and relevant actions.*

6.3.5. BROADFORD MOTORCYCLE COMPLEX

The Broadford township can further leverage from the operations at the Broadford State Motorcycle Complex.

STRATEGY 49 **Undertake initiatives to leverage from the Broadford Motorcycle Complex**

ACTION 49.1 *Implement a number of initiatives to leverage more trade from the Broadford Motorcycle Complex. Initiatives include:*

- *Developing businesses to meet the motorcycle market needs*
- *Development of self-contained group accommodation in town*
- *Provision of visitor information at the Broadford Motorcycle Complex, promoting the region*
- *Improving way finding signage*
- *Targeted marketing of Broadford businesses in motorcycle media*

