



**PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL  
TOWARDS 10,000**

**Economic Development Strategy**

**Adopted by Council February 2020**

# Pyrenees Fast Facts

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Population 7,353

Area 3,434 square kilometres

Location Western Central Victoria, approximately two hours' west of Melbourne by car and 30 minutes from Ballarat

Median age 50

Median weekly household income \$876

Gross Regional Product \$305.9

Key Private Sector Industries:

- Sheep, cattle and grain crops
- Wine manufacturing
- Construction
- Tourism

Climate

The climate to the north of the Shire is warm and temperate with hot summers and cool winters. The average temperature for Avoca is approximately 21 degrees in February and 7.5 degrees in July.

The temperatures south of the dividing range tend to be two to three degrees lower with rainfall figures across the Shire ranging between around 480 millimetres per annum in the north and 700 millimetres per annum in the south.

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## Executive Summary

The Pyrenees Shire Council *Towards 10,000* Economic Development Strategy provides a framework for development of the Shire over the next five years.

The Strategy incorporates the following themes:

- Supporting growth in and of the key propulsive sectors of agriculture, wine manufacturing, construction and tourism
- Attracts new investment that complements our industry sectors
- Builds the capacity of existing businesses
- Leverages the lifestyle benefits and affordability of residential housing to attract new residents
- Identifying and implementing projects that continue to enhance the lifestyles of local residents who live in towns and villages across the Shire

Council has identified a number of opportunities and challenges for growth into the future. This Strategy aims to both capitalise on and create new opportunities while addressing those challenges.

## CEO/Mayor Introduction

I am pleased to be able to launch the 2020 Economic Development “Towards 10,000” plan for the Pyrenees Shire. This plan will build on the work Council has undertaken from the 2015-18 Growth Strategy as we set our sights on the Shires population reaching 10,000 residents.

The Development and Environment objective in the Pyrenees Shire Council Plan is that ***“we will undertake forward planning, and facilitate growth in our local economy while protecting key natural and built environmental values”***.

Council’s vision for development and environment is that:

- **Avoca and Beaufort have clear visionary township plans that guide development**
- **Our rural townships and their communities have forward looking plans with their own uniqueness**
- **Our economy is growing sustainably**
- **Innovation is encouraged to identify and deliver environmentally sustainable projects**

Our key objectives from the 2015-19 Growth Strategy for economic development in the Pyrenees Shire are to:

1. **Attract new residents, visitors and investment**
2. **Foster the capability of key economic sectors**
3. **Develop local business and employee capacity**

This Strategy outlines the activities and actions to be undertaken by council to achieve a population of 10,000 people by 2030.

In addition to Council aspirations for population growth come not only the considerations for providing housing and essential services to the community, such as education and health but also those aspects of living in a location that has much to offer in terms of its amenity. The Pyrenees has a broad range of community interests in the arts, sport, its historical background and the numerous natural assets for those interested in bushwalking and cycling. The unique features of the Shire and which establish it as the liveable heart of Victoria, celebrated by both tourists and our communities, include:

- Distinctive landscapes, encompassing flat and open plans and hilly terrain, amongst which Mount Cole stands highest
- The Pyrenees Range, which provides two separate climates to its north and south
- Situated at the heart of the famous Pyrenees Wine Region, hosting countless established vigneron and wineries
- Long and continuing history of gold discovery, reflected in a current bid to add the Victorian Goldfields to the UNESCO World Heritage List
- Heritage precincts across the Shire, particularly in Avoca, Beaufort, Landsborough and Moonambel
- Historic homesteads on the Victorian Heritage Register, including Mawallok, Mount Mitchell, Ercildoun and the Percydale Historic Reserve
- Burgeoning creative sector, exemplified by the Art Trax gallery operating from the tastefully refurbished Beaufort train station
- Strategically located halfway between Ballarat and Ararat on the Western Highway, which connects Melbourne and Adelaide
- Five daily rail connections to Melbourne, Ballarat, and local townships
- Several high profile State Parks, including Mount Buangor, Pyrenees Ranges State Forest, and Ben Major
- Established agricultural industry focussing on wool, meat, hay production, grain, potatoes and nurseries, grapes and forestry
- Two established windfarms and a further two under construction (Stockyard Hill and Crowlands)

Our intention is to build on these foundations and progressively undertake projects that contribute to both the growth and wellbeing of a vibrant and cohesive community.

Council has worked hard to become debt-free recently and has a strong record of allocating its budgets to meet areas of priority to local communities. During the 2019/20 financial year Council will be investing \$8.3M into improving and renewing the road network, culverts and bridges across the Shire. This represents 38% of income from the 2019/20 Council Budget. The \$2.7M Lexton Hub and \$750,000 Activate Avoca projects are two examples of Council's ongoing commitment to improving community assets and the amenity of the Shire's townships. These are but a small representation of Council projects to improve the economic and social wellbeing of the Pyrenees community.

This strategy identifies the key actions Council will pursue to support the resilience and growth of businesses from the key propulsive sectors of agriculture, wine manufacturing and construction, and

to continue to grow the tourism sector which employs a significant percentage of the local workforce.

We know there are a number of local businesses across the Shire planning for growth. Council can play an integral role in this by facilitating an environment that is conducive to investment in the area and capitalising on growth opportunities.

Regulatory issues have been raised as a matter of a concern by members of the business community in the development of this Strategy. We are proud of the fact the Council's planning team has established a high level of performance in processing planning applications. At the time of developing this Strategy, Council is ranked second quickest in the State to approve planning permits.

We are continually seeking ways to develop stronger relationships with our community, which is one of our greatest assets to enable future development.

### *Case Study: Lexton Community Hub*

In recent years Lexton has experienced an increase in population which has had a direct impact on uptake and uses of community facilities within the township. Current community facilities are aged and no longer meet the community's needs or the standards expected to provide universal access for all. The proposed new facility will cater for multiple uses in a modern facility that caters for all members of the local community and will feature:

- Multi-purpose room catering for 120 people
- Commercial kitchen with kiosk and cool room
- Meet the criteria for female-friendly change rooms
- Accessible public toilets
- A multi-purpose room that can be used as a play room for children
- Trainers' room/first aid room accessible by football and netball
- Undercover viewing area
- Outdoor BBQ and viewing area

## Shire Profile and Key Industries

The Pyrenees Shire is located to the west and north of Ballarat and is approximately two hours' drive along the Western Highway from central Melbourne.

The Shire covers an area of 343,457 hectares with an estimated resident population of 7,353 as at 2018.

Council acknowledges the role of the Indigenous community the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, and Djab Wurrung tribes whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire.

Many of the towns throughout the Shire were founded during the gold rush era in the 1850s and there is a cross-regional UNESCO bid involving thirteen councils at present to acknowledge and promote the history of gold.

The economy generates a gross regional product of \$306M, with the key propulsive sectors including agriculture, wine manufacturing, and construction. With 2,001 jobs in the Pyrenees as at the 2016 census, the agriculture sector employs by far the most number of people with 589 jobs. These are predominantly in the areas of sheep, grains and cattle production.

Tourism is another important industry to the Shire. The Shire has a range of natural attributes which lend themselves to outdoor activity such as bushwalking, cycling, and sightseeing with around 20 cellar doors operating, and a variety of wine-related and other events such as the Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally, Pyrenees Art Exhibition and Sale, Pyrenees Unearthed, and the Avoca Races.

Recent expansion to the corrections facility at Langi Kal Kal has resulted in employment numbers increasing in the Public, Administration and Safety sector from 150 in 2013 to 293 in 2017.

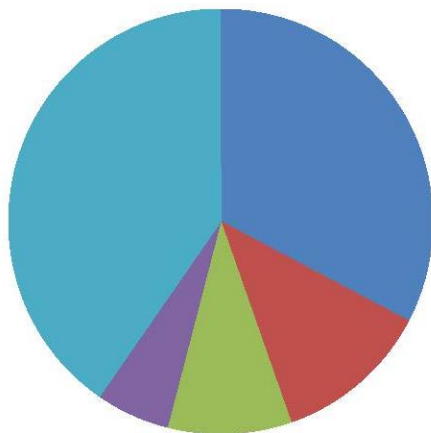
This Strategy identifies the priority areas of economic development focus for Council to support the key industry sectors over the next five years in addition to rising population levels.

The key propulsive sectors are currently making the following contributions to the local economy:

1. The sheep, grains and cattle sector produces \$168M in output, employs 508 staff and creates a value add of \$66M (39% of output)
2. Wine manufacturing produces \$56M in output, employs 131 staff and creates a value add of \$11.5M (20% of output)
3. The construction industry produces \$67M in output, employs 134 staff and creates a value add of \$22M (33% of output)
4. Tourism contributes \$32M in output, employs 141 staff and creates a value add of \$11M (34% of output)

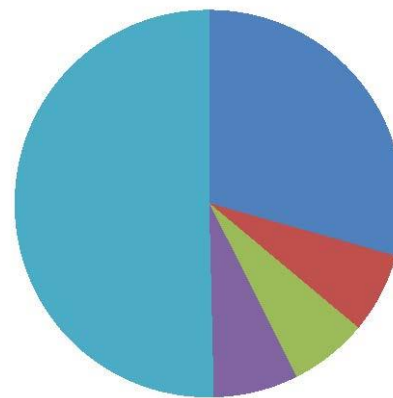
According to the ABS there are 816 businesses registered in the Pyrenees Shire (as at June 2018) of which 478 are a sole operator, 328 with fewer than 20 staff, and 10 with between 20 and 199 staff.

**Output (with separate Tourism Sector)  
Pyrenees (\$) (2018 Release 2)**



Output (\$M)	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	\$184.967
Construction	\$66.967
Manufacturing	\$52.958
Tourism	\$31.609
Balance	\$227.006

**Employment (with separate Tourism Sector)  
Pyrenees (\$) (2018 Release 2)**



Jobs	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	588
Construction	134
Manufacturing	130
Tourism	141
Balance	1008

## Strategic Context

The Victorian Government has identified twelve industry sectors it is supporting to drive Victoria’s economic growth and jobs.

The “Food and Fibre” industry and “Visitor Economy” are two of the 12 industry sectors identified that make the largest contributions locally in the Pyrenees Shire.

The Central Highlands Regional Partnership councils (Ararat Rural City, City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire and Pyrenees Shire) understand the importance of agriculture and agribusiness to the regional economy.

The Agriculture Sector generates \$1.064B in output and employs 3,186 people in the Central Highlands Region.

Manufacturing, Construction and Tourism are also significant contributors to employment in the Central Highlands, some of which has strong linkages to the Agriculture Sector. These include abattoirs, machinery manufacturers, wine manufacturing, and food processing. There is potential, however, for further value adding to the region’s agricultural products locally, as a significant proportion of bulk commodities (grains and livestock, for example) continue to be exported from the region and the Shire for processing.

More recently the Victorian Government’s Artisanal Food Program has been aimed at small, niche producers of quality products which are then linked to the hospitality sector and tourism.



## Agriculture

The sheep, grains and cattle sectors make an 81% contribution to output (gross sales of products) from the overall agricultural industry with wine grape growing also making a contribution under agricultural production.

The Pyrenees area has a diverse climate and topography with generally warmer and drier conditions prevailing in the north and high rainfall zone to the south where crop yields and livestock capabilities per hectare tend to be higher.

The role Council has played to support this sector includes a focus on infrastructure including roads, telecommunications, water and energy supplies.

Around 40% of Council's annual budget is being reinvested back into the roads network to support the movement of large freight vehicles carrying inputs to farms and grain and livestock to markets.

Due to the influence of the climate becoming drier, water infrastructure has become more important to support primary producers and livestock owners. Council has taken a proactive role in supporting projects like the East Grampians Rural Pipeline project and ensuring that Emergency Water Supply Points across the Shire continue to be well-maintained and accessible. Council will continue to play an active role in water supply projects that support the adaptation of the agriculture sector to the impacts of climate change and drought.

Council has also advocated to the Federal Government to invest in improved telecommunications for the benefit of key industries and communities. A number of new towers have consequently been approved under the Mobile Communications Black Spot Program. These include Landsborough, Moonambel, Amphitheatre, Lexton, and Mena Park. More work still needs to be done to improve on telecommunications gaps to allow innovation and technology to be embraced by this and other key industries, including home-based businesses.

Reliable supplies of energy are also necessary to facilitate investment and industry diversification.

### *Case Study: Eurambeen-Streatham Road*

The Eurambeen-Streatham Road is an increasingly important transport link between the Glenelg Highway at Streatham and the Western Freeway to the west of Beaufort. A growing number of large freight vehicles use this road when carrying agricultural supplies and other goods between Western Victoria and Melbourne. Also situated on this road is the Lakaput grain receival site operated by CHS Broadbent. In addition to recent improvements Council has made to this road, a sum of \$980,000 has been allocated in 2019/20 for enhancements to this road (including a bridge upgrade).

## Wine Industry

Wine grape growing and wine manufacturing are predominantly located in the north of the Shire around Moonambel, Avoca and Landsborough, and contribute \$56M or 9.9% to the Shire's total output. The region produces high quality, award-winning beverage products, some of which are ranked by renowned wine writer and critic James Halliday as among the top 10% in Australia.

Similarly to the roads that service the livestock and grains sector Council has taken an active role in infrastructure projects like the Landsborough Valley Water Pipeline and telecommunications towers.

Council also supports the promotion of the wine region through its tourism activities which include:

- Sponsorship and marketing of events
- Collaborative marketing projects
- In-kind support to the Pyrenees Grapegrowers and Winemakers Association Inc. (PGW)
- Leveraging the support of Regional Tourism Boards to promote wine tourism activities
- Active support to implement priority actions in the Grampians Pyrenees Wine and Culinary Masterplan

### *Case Study: Pyrenees Unearthed Wine Festival*

The Pyrenees Unearthed Wine Festival is an initiative of the PGW marketing group. Hosted annually on the Avoca River flats in autumn, the event has grown from humble beginnings in 2014 to attract crowds of around 1,000 patrons each year. The one day event gives the attendees the opportunity to discuss the wines with local winemakers, and includes activities for children, live music, wine masterclasses and a wine auction.

Pyrenees Shire Council has worked with the PGW to grow the event by providing in-kind support and annual sponsorship which has helped gain the support of the Victorian State Government and Regional Tourism organisations.

### **Construction Industry**

The construction industry contributes \$67M representing 11.9% of output to the Shire's economy.

Civil Construction contributes \$31M of this amount and employs 45 people while the construction services sector generates \$22M and employs 63 people.

Council itself continues to contribute to this sector through its engagement of local contractors on Council's road and infrastructure projects, on top of a range of large construction projects such as wind farm construction and highway duplication occurring in recent times.

Council has also contributed to construction in the residential housing sector through the residential subdivision development at Correa Park Beaufort.

Council has facilitated periodic workshops to build the capacity of those in the sector, and to assist local contractors to meet the requirements of becoming a preferred supplier to Council and gain government contracts.

### *Case Study; Correa Park Residential subdivision*

Over the past six years Council has completed three stages of residential subdivision at Correa Park Beaufort comprising 57 blocks of land. According to Council rates records the value of improvements on these blocks amounts to \$11.2M.

Council has allowed a sum of \$993,000 to complete the remainder of 40 blocks in Stages Four and Five during the 2019-20 financial year.

## Tourism

The Shire attracts tourism visitation through its nature-based assets, events, wineries and the unique proposition of the various small towns and villages.

The tourism sector continues to be an area of focus for Council through the following means:

- Employment of a Tourism Officer and Events Officer to facilitate marketing of the Shire's tourism assets and events
- Providing sponsorship for tourism events and in kind support to build the capacity of event organisations
- Allocating funds for promotion and marketing of tourism
- Collaboration with neighbouring Councils, regional tourism organisations and the Victorian Government to leverage strategic planning, marketing and product development support
- Supporting the actions identified in the Grampians Pyrenees Wine and Culinary Masterplan
- Partnering other municipalities in the development of the Grampians Region Cycle Strategy, which includes the scope to develop a range of tracks and trails within the Pyrenees
- Undertaking the actions identified in the 2016-19 Pyrenees Shire Tourism Strategy

### *Case Study: Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally*

The Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally commenced in the 1950s and celebrates the era of steam and heritage agricultural equipment. The Rally occurs during the first weekend of May and November each year and is the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere. It has established an international reputation and generally attracts crowds of 2,000-3,000 people; however, 15,000 people attended the 100<sup>th</sup> Rally in 2012, acknowledging the significant heritage contribution the Rally has made to the region over many decades.

Council supports this event through in-kind assistance, sponsorship and marketing activities.

## Supporting Industry

A number of businesses that were surveyed during the development of this strategy are telling us that they wish to grow. Council can support that growth by:

- Continuing to invest in upgrading assets such as transport routes, water supplies and advocating for improved telecommunications infrastructure;
- Sharing knowledge to key industries on ways to continually improve productivity and capitalise on beneficial innovation;
- Facilitating training for business and employees; and
- Capitalising on the opportunities mentioned later in this Strategy.

## Towns, Villages and Population

During the period 2009 to 2018 the Shire's population has grown from 6,721 to 7,353, representing an average annual population growth of 63 residents per annum or 0.94%.

There are 14 small towns across the Shire with populations ranging from less than 100 to around 1,500 people.

Recreational activities are available in abundance in the region, giving community members and visitors wonderful opportunities for new experiences. Most townships in the Shire have their own sporting facilities, such as football fields and netball courts, and Council will continue to work towards continual improvement of recreational assets such as playgrounds and skate parks.

There is also an emerging arts community, which includes the activation of the former railway station buildings in Avoca and Beaufort as art galleries.

The Shire has an appealing range of visitor experiences focused on wine, natural assets and goldfields heritage including the historic features of its small towns and villages. It also has a strong events calendar attracting over 40,000 visitors a year, including food and wine, arts, heritage, horse-racing, endurance horse-riding, and music.

Council's investment in residential subdivision at Correa Park, Beaufort has proven popular and been an integral project in attracting new residents and housing stock to the Shire. The median house prices at Beaufort have increased during this period and are comparable with larger towns to the west and east of the Shire.

The prospects for growth in the Pyrenees are positive with a rapidly rising population in Melbourne's outer suburbs, on the western fringe of Ballarat and increasing workforce demand that is emerging from a variety of industries in the Grampians Pyrenees Region. With the population of Ballarat's western growth zone being within a thirty minute commute from towns in the Pyrenees there are opportunities to leverage the more affordable housing here as well as promote the lifestyle attributes.

A continuation of annual population increases at around 1% per annum would see the Pyrenees community grow to in excess of 8,000 people by 2025 and potentially reaching 10,000 people by 2040. However, the initiatives outlined in this Strategy are aimed at achieving this growth by 2030.

The median age of the population in the Pyrenees is 50 years old, compared to 42 for Ballarat and 37 for Victoria.

A further objective of this Strategy is to attract young families and professionals by undertaking actions that continue to enhance the liveability of the Shire as a desirable place to live work and invest.

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

There are a range of opportunities that provide a positive foundation for the future of the Shire's economy and communities. These opportunities give rise to a strong degree of optimism for growth, despite potential challenges.

### **Opportunities**

- Maintain a focus on infrastructure projects that support small business, particularly those from the key propulsive sectors:
  - Maintaining investment in Council’s road network to support the primary industry and tourism sectors, and capitalise on funding opportunities from state and federal governments;
  - Partnering with other agencies to identify and implement water projects that facilitate resilience and growth;
  - Innovation in the area of telecommunication and technology; and
  - Identifying gaps where power available for industry may be limiting investment.
- Examine the opportunities for diversifying the primary production sector where reliable sources of water, energy and transport routes exist.
- Capitalise on the increasing global demand for food and fibre by investigating the prospects for value adding to agricultural produce.
- Population growth and the rising demand for residential housing in the Pyrenees in conjunction with the *Pyrenees Futures* project, which will develop township framework plans for nine towns across the Pyrenees.
- Industry and population growth in neighbouring municipalities contributing to housing demand in the Pyrenees.
- Population growth on the western fringe of Ballarat. The State Government’s “Victoria In Future” figures estimate an anticipated 37,000 additional people will settle in Ballarat West by 2040 which will result in further service sector jobs including health, education and retail. There is evidence of an increasing number of residents who choose to live in the Pyrenees and commute to Ballarat for work that emphasise this point.
- Build on partnerships with neighbouring Councils and other agencies to deliver programs that support the region’s crucial industry sectors; e.g. East Grampians Rural Pipeline
- The emergence of the renewable energy sector including but not limited to solar, wind and bioenergy.
- Support the growth of existing events in the Pyrenees to encourage further growth in tourism and to nurture the development of new events.
- The evolution of innovation and new technology that supports increasing levels of productivity.
- Marketing the affordability and lifestyle advantages of living, working and investing in the Pyrenees Shire.
- Capitalise on the Victorian Government’s climate change adaptation initiatives, in particular those to be actioned by Agriculture Victoria.
- Leverage possibilities created through renewable energy and a zero emissions policies by the Victorian Government and the Grampians New Energy Taskforce (GNET).
- Support the key initiatives for the Central Highlands Regional Partnership (CHRP) in collaboration with neighbouring Councils:
  - The Central Highlands Agri-business Leadership Group project which is being auspiced by Pyrenees Shire Council;
  - Implementation of the Grampians Strategic Workforce Plan;
  - Refresh the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan;
  - Develop innovative models to deliver more housing in the Central Highlands;
  - Implement Roadmap to Zero Emissions; and
  - Implement the findings of the “Prevention Lab” to facilitate a healthy community that embraces physical activity and healthy eating.

*Case Study: Straw to Energy Project*

Council has been working with a consortium of nine farmers since 2016 on ways to convert straw into electricity and power. A pilot project for a straw-fuelled boiler system at the Skipton Hospital was funded in early 2019 by the Victorian Government and is expected to be operational by mid-2020.

Opportunities are also being sought for installation of a combined heat and power system fuelled by straw at one of the region's manufacturers to provide proof of concept. A pilot of this type is intended to attract investment to rural areas where grain farmers might become the future source of energy for the manufacturing sector.

## Challenges

- Limited access to internet and telecommunications in various areas throughout the Shire which compromises the ability for small businesses to engage this technology and impede innovation and productivity gains.
- Financial constraints that are common to rural Councils throughout Victoria and the dependence on external sources of funding, particularly from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to maintain road networks and other vital infrastructure; e.g. female friendly change rooms at sporting facilities.
- Access to reliable water sources for small towns and the agriculture sector.
- Climate change is already resulting in higher temperatures, lower rainfall and more intense weather events that impact the primary production sector and challenge the Shires assets:
  - Carting water for livestock is becoming more common and dry seasons and frosts are expected to become more prevalent;
  - Natural disasters place demands on Council staff during the response and recovery phase to events such as droughts, bushfires and floods, and there is considerable investment of officer time to facilitate community recovery and repair damaged infrastructure. As an example the flood events experienced during 2016 and 2017 resulted in damage repairs amounting to \$13M to rectify in excess of 6,000 incidents, including fallen trees, damaged roads, bridges and culverts.
- While not yet funded, a highway bypass of Beaufort is anticipated and will impact the town's business sector. There is a need to examine the economic impacts of a bypass in more detail.
- Regulatory constraints (red tape) that act as a deterrent to entrepreneurialism.
- Meeting the current and future demand for educational and health facilities to meet the needs of a growing population

## What Council is Currently Doing

Council has maintained a focus on creating key enabling infrastructure across the Shire, which is integral to the success of the key economic sectors and to improve the amenity of local residents.

These include:

- Investing approximately 40 % of the annual Council budget on improving and maintaining the road network. The 2019-20 budget allows for \$8.3M to be spent on roads, out of a total budget of \$22M.
- Effectively advocating to the Federal government through the Mobile Black Spot Program for new mobile towers to be installed at Moonambel, Landsborough, Lexton and Amphitheatre.

- Completing a range of studies culminating in a business case for the Moonambel town water supply, which Council is now advocating to have funded.
- Advocating to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments for funding of the \$85M East Grampians Rural Pipeline project, which has now been fully funded with construction due to commence in 2020.
- Working in partnership with other agencies involved in the Central Highlands Integrated Water Management Forum for key infrastructure projects that will improve the amenity of towns. As an example, Council has been working together with Central Highlands Water to complete a detailed design of the Beaufort Closed Loop Recycled Water Project. The aim of this project is for treated water from the Beaufort waste water treatment plant to be used to water sports fields and green spaces throughout Beaufort.
- Working with the Streatham Straw Alliance (a consortium of nine farmers) to establish pilot projects for bioenergy systems that use wheat straw as the primary fuel source to generate heat and power. A heat system has been funded for the Skipton Hospital and other project possibilities for combined heat and power systems in the manufacturing sector are being investigated. These systems can produce base load energy and have the potential to be replicated throughout Australia.
- Working in partnership with neighbouring Councils, wine associations and regional tourism organisations to develop and deliver the key actions of the Grampians Pyrenees Wine and Culinary Tourism Masterplan to promote wine tourism and attract people to the region.

## What Council Plans To Do

The measures of support required to facilitate the productivity and growth of the key propulsive sectors are outlined as follows:

### *Agriculture*

- Continue to invest sufficient funds from Council's annual budget (including access to funds from other levels of government) to improve and maintain the road network to facilitate safe and efficient freight of goods to and from farms.
- Maintain a focus on key infrastructure projects including reliable water and energy supplies for this industry and communities in general.
- Explore opportunities for improved telecommunications to support the adoption of innovation in agriculture, tourism, and to meet community needs.

### *Construction*

- Complete the Correa Park residential subdivision.
- Complete and implement a Residential Housing Strategy to cater for residential housing demand and a changing demographic across the Shire. This Strategy will consider the impacts of the rapidly growing populations in Melbourne's outer suburbs and those of Ballarat
- Periodically provide training and support to contractors in the construction industry to assist them build their capacity to respond to tenders and submissions for works projects

### *Wine Manufacturing*

- Undertake a review of Council's Industrial Land Strategy.
- Develop a Strategy for resilience and growth of home-based businesses, based on the large percentage of sole proprietor businesses in the Shire.
- Support the wine industry through tourism and events initiatives

### *Tourism*

In addition to initiatives already mentioned above, Council will:

- Develop and implement a Tourism Marketing Strategy which is to include an assessment of Council's alignment to regional tourism organisations.
- Update the 2016-19 Tourism Strategy to capitalise on opportunities in the visitor economy:
  - Develop and promote nature-based assets including Mount Cole, Mount Buangor State Park and the Pyrenees Ranges
  - The Pyrenees is situated between the Grampians Tourism Region and Ballarat. There is an opportunity to leverage the growing level of tourism activity occurring in these regions.
  - Action the recommendations of the Grampians Pyrenees Wine and Culinary Masterplan
  - Progress the proposed Pyrenees cycle trails identified in the Grampians Region Cycle Strategy
  - Leverage support to build on the nature based experiences that exist across the Shire in places including Mt Cole, Mount Buangor State Park and the Pyrenees Ranges
  - Actively participate in the UNESCO bid for the Goldfields Heritage Region
  - Work collaboratively with neighbouring Councils, in particular the City of Ballarat, as well as regional tourism organisations and government agencies to develop tourism products, marketing and promotional campaigns
  - Nurture and promote an emerging arts and culture sector across the Shire. Examples include but are not limited to Arts Trax Gallery in Beaufort and Gallery 127 at Avoca
  - Develop and promote tourism experiences to attract new residents
- To enhance Lake Beaufort and examine methods to sustain water levels for the amenity of the local community who highly value this as a recreational asset and to attract tourists and new residents

### *Other Initiatives*

- Connect with the health and education sectors to ensure these services are given the support they need to meet the demands of a growing population.
- Work with neighbouring Councils and other agencies to develop and implement a regional workforce strategy.
- Work with neighbouring Councils, State and Federal Government and other agencies to implement initiatives that support the growth and resilience of the private sectors. For example Council is a partner in the Opportunities Pyrenees Ararat and Northern Grampians



(OPAN) Project. OPAN is a three-year project to directly address the existing and future shortage of skilled and unskilled workers across the Pyrenees, Ararat and Northern Grampians local government areas by focusing on workforce planning, migration, housing and transport.

- Maintain relationships with business associations and organisations that can nurture and support the resilience and growth of small business through networking and knowledge-sharing.
- Leverage the rapid population growth of the Melbourne metropolitan area as an opportunity for growth in the Pyrenees Shire.
- Develop and implement plans that support small businesses in managing regulatory requirements.
- Through Council's Planning Department, continue the Pyrenees Futures Project and commence work on a Strategic Review of planning controls throughout the Shire.
- Promote the desirability of the Shire as a place to live work and invest.

## Measuring Success

Council will be able to measure success of its efforts when:

- Trends illustrate increasing levels of gross regional product and employment over the long term;
- There is an increasing amount of building approvals;
- Council has completed and commenced implementation of a Residential Housing Strategy by the end of 2023;
- Council has implemented the priority actions identified in this Strategy;
- There are improvements to transport and telecommunications infrastructure and greater access to reliable water supplies that support small business resilience;
- Council's Planning Scheme ensures the protection of agricultural land and supports appropriate use and development in our townships;
- There is a continued trend of growth in population that is facilitated through projects that may target young families thereby decreasing the average age profile of the Shire;
- There is evidence of increasing levels of tourism activity measured by growth in output and jobs;
- The towns of the Pyrenees are seen to benefit from improved amenity through projects such as the Lexton Hub, Pyrenees Futures, and Integrated Water Management projects. For example, the Beaufort Closed Loop Water Recycle project aims to provide treated waste water for irrigation of green spaces in Beaufort, including the golf and bowls clubs, football oval, school oval, and croquet club;
- There are improved ratings in Council's Community Satisfaction Survey.

Some of the data and insights in this document were provided by Remplan (2019).