



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

The Heart of Gippsland

Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2016-2018

Wellington Economic Development Strategy Year 1 & 2 Action Plan

Strategic Objective	Action	Role	Stakeholders	Rationale
Economic Diversity	1. Develop a Digital Strategy to address all aspects of digital economy opportunities.	Control and Influence	Council, local businesses, residents	There are significant economic opportunities for new and existing businesses and operations in relation to the digital economy. This includes Council service provision. A prioritised strategy will ensure resources are allocated appropriately.
	2. Seek funding to develop a strategy that focuses on the potential economic and social benefits from aviation related activities at RAAF Base East Sale and population increases, particularly with expansion as a result of Defence Project AIR 5428.	Control and Influence	Council, local businesses, RAAF	Stakeholders have already demonstrated a willingness to help maximise the benefits to Wellington from the Base. Further potential from both social and economic opportunities will have flow on effects to broader community.
	3. Continue to investigate the options for developing aviation related activity at the West Sale Airport.	Control and Influence	Council, local businesses, current users	West Sale represents a significant asset that has yet to reach its potential.
	4. Continue to investigate the emerging opportunities in the 'silver economy.' This includes support for the RV market in Wellington. Refer Action 20.	Control and influence	Council, local businesses	Already recognised as an emerging opportunity in Gippsland, Wellington can leverage from its existing quality of life to encourage investment in aged care, recreation and other services to older residents. It extends to attracting (ideally repeat) visitation from the 'grey nomads'.
	5. Continue to investigate the potential for biomass and other renewable energy production in Wellington, including for servicing Council's own energy needs.	Control and influence	Council, local businesses	The timber industry is already considering energy self-sufficiency through biomass energy generation. To keep ahead of the requirement to shift to renewable energy and improve Wellington's reputation as a clean, green environment, all forms of practical renewable energy should be investigated. Council can showcase the potential by being a leader in consuming renewable energy.
	6. Continue to support opportunities to expand the capacity of SORF to service Victoria's soil and organic recycling needs.	Control and Influence	Council, Gippsland Water	The SORF is already a major regional facility, creating a local competitive advantage. Market growth in envirotech sectors such as this is expected to be strong.

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Economic Diversity	7. Work with partner member, Invest Gippsland, and other stakeholders, including Regional Development Victoria to identify opportunities for, and ways to support growth in additional activity in food and fibre. In the first instance, consult with local industry and peak bodies to identify priority actions.	Control and Influence	Council, Invest Gippsland, RDV, producers	There are recognised market opportunities and potential in Wellington for, amongst other sectors, poultry, dairy, niche markets such as horticulture and timber products. These need further investigation in order to prepare a priority list for action.
	8. Encourage the establishment of higher end, environmentally sustainable accommodation in outstanding locations close to existing villages (with particular focus on the Gippsland Lakes area). Upmarket cabins could also form part of the mix in camp sites managed by Parks Victoria.	Influence	Council, WRT, Parks Victoria, Destination Gippsland	Lack of high end or iconic accommodation is recognised as a gap in Wellington's offer. Operators may need assistance securing staff and infrastructure.
	9. Advocate for the sealing of tourist roads to create circular touring routes from Melbourne.	Influence	Council, WRT, Destination Gippsland, tourism operators	The generation of increased visitor traffic through the municipality will induce investment, as well as improving access for local communities.
	10. Prepare a program of events to launch the Port of Sale redevelopment.	Control	Council, WRT, Destination Gippsland, tourism operators	As with many Wellington assets, the Port of Sale needs more market awareness. There are opportunities in arts and culture to fit with the Port of Sale cultural hub and also local food and produce. An events calendar including the new Port of Sale would have a State-wide as well as regional draw. This could be a test for employment of a dedicated Events Promotion Officer with a brief to organise hallmark and major events and to maximise the economic value of events in Wellington. Events should also promote Wellington's natural assets and other features in alignment with local branding efforts and the objectives of the GRPP and Wellington 2030.

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	11. Continue to work with the agricultural community via the Agricultural Industry Group and update Council's Position Paper through direct surveying or community consultation.	Control, Influence and Monitor	Council; Food and Fibre Group, Agricultural Industry Group, agricultural enterprises	Agricultural opportunities and challenges are dynamic and require regular monitoring. The sector is critical to Wellington's wellbeing and there are significant opportunities across food and fibre.
Amenity and Infrastructure	12. Work with VLine, PTV and local stakeholders to identify options for, and then advocate for improvements and changes to the schedule for the passenger train service to Sale and Bairnsdale and connections to Traralgon.	Influence	Council, residents	Short-haul train services to regional Victoria have a strong and positive impact on population growth and business investment. It will also help address the poor connectivity to services in Traralgon and provide more services and better connection into Melbourne for Wellington residents.
	13. Work with local Business and Tourism Associations and invite Renew Australia to discuss opportunities for small business development in main streets of Sale, Maffra, Heyfield, Yarram, Stratford and Rosedale.	Influence	Council, local businesses and tourism associations, Renew Australia	These towns add to both the infrastructure support for local economic activity and the residential amenity that can attract and retain new residents and other investors. May also raise awareness of Wellington as somewhere looking to encourage entrepreneurialism.
	14. Continue to identify opportunities for improving access to HSB in Wellington both for residential amenity and for business support.	Control and influence	Council, local businesses	HSB is increasingly an essential infrastructure asset for all growth industry sectors. There are examples of local governments working with NBN Co to support an accelerated rollout of HSB.
	15. Identify opportunities for introducing accessible boardwalks (similar to those around Lake Guthridge and Sale Common) elsewhere in Wellington and improve connections for whole of Gippsland Lakes.	Control and Influence	Council, WRT, Destination Gippsland, tourism operators, Parks Victoria, East Gippsland Shire Council, Wellington Access, Inclusion Group	This will improve amenity for disabled and elderly residents, encourage visitor stopovers leveraging from local the natural assets of the region and target the niche tourism market of people with disabilities and their carers.

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Amenity and Infrastructure	16. Work with partners to extend the Great Southern Rail Trail from Welshpool (South Gippsland) to Alberton.	Control and Influence	Council, WRT, Destination Gippsland, tourism operators, South Gippsland Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Great Southern Rail Trail C'tee, DELWP	The Great Southern Rail Trail has proved popular with visitors and regional residents and has already stimulated investment in new hospitality enterprises in villages such as Cowwarr. The extension would provide a continuous trail between Yarram and Leongatha which could be marketed beyond the region.
	17. Consider roll out of public Wi-Fi in key meeting places around Wellington.	Control	Council, local businesses	Wi-Fi is becoming more available and expected. It can be relatively low cost to install Wi-Fi equipment for localised areas. It may help create meeting places that are important for social capital building in local business communities.
	18. Continue to advocate for the infrastructure priorities in the Gippsland Regional Plan.	Influence	Council, local businesses	The GRP represents a shared vision for Gippsland and has identified the key investments necessary to stimulate growth and development in Wellington. Funding is yet to be secured for some elements.
	19. Prepare an industrial land strategy for West Sale and Wurruk.	Control	Council, local businesses	While adequate in aggregate terms, there is insufficient industrial land of the right size, location and level of service provision to support industry need. It is important that any policy to address this is based on a holistic assessment of supply and demand and a long-term strategy.
	20. Prepare an RV Strategy for Wellington Shire. Refer Action 4.	Control	Council, WRT, local businesses	This will provide a document that articulates Council's policy and information on provision of amenity and infrastructure for growing RV market and support to local commercial caravan parks and tourism operators.
	21. Ensure the roll out of key boating infrastructure is continued, focusing on priorities such as pump-out and refuelling facilities at Loch Sport.	Influence	Council, Gippsland Ports, local businesses	The Gippsland Lakes are a key part of Wellington's tourist and residential amenity. More facilities are needed both to attract more use and manage the impact on the sensitive natural environment.

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Leadership and Governance	22. Continue to work with all major regional stakeholders in identifying, prioritising and implementing economic development opportunities, including those identified in this document, the Regional Growth Plan and Wellington 2030.	Influence and Monitor	Council, regional stakeholders	There are a range of bodies already working towards improving economic outcomes in Gippsland and Wellington. This includes other parts of Council, the Business and Tourism Associations, Destination Gippsland, Regional Development Victoria, neighbouring councils and other bodies. Relationships are currently productive but will always need to be monitored and maintained.
	23. Continue to ensure communication channels with local businesses are effective, including with major employers. This may include the establishment of multi-industry/enterprise business networks, regular forums and other opportunities for collaboration.	Control	Council, local businesses	Council and staff have developed a good reputation for being available to local business operators. It is essential to maintain this and continue to find ways to improve how information is shared.
	24. Develop and implement an advocacy and communication template that can be used to support Wellington Shire Council's major infrastructure projects.	Control	Council	Strong, clear messages articulated in a template form will ensure strength in advocacy communications with State and Federal Governments.
	25. Establish a formal inter-Council project team to assist with major projects on an 'as required' basis.	Control	Council, other Gippsland Councils	Major projects generally have an impact across multiple areas of Council jurisdiction. These impacts are often large scale and with peak periods (e.g. construction phases) that represent both opportunities and challenges.
	26. Continue to advocate to State and Federal Government to address telecommunication blackspots in Wellington, with a focus on those that will help stimulate economic development activity.	Influence	Council, local businesses	Although there is a strong case for removing telecommunication blackspots for reasons of equity, quality of life and safety, for the purposes of this Strategy, the focus is on addressing those that impede economic activity, including in or near the region's national parks.
	27. Consider facilitating a regional food and fibre business forum to provide information to councils on emerging opportunities and needs.	Control and Influence	Regional councils via Invest Gippsland, local businesses	The Future Industries Fund will be a critical, but highly competitive, funding source. Cooperation and input from the agribusiness sector will help to identify opportunities for growth and raise awareness in State and Federal arenas of the investment potential in the region.

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	28. Continue the implementation of the new Visitor Information Centre improvements	Control	Council, WRT	The new VIC format is more forward looking and will improve the effectiveness of visitor services in Wellington.
Leadership and Governance	29. Work with WRT to ensure its governance structures support broader input from the tourism community.	Influence	Council, WRT, tourism operators	Enabling a more diverse membership base would encourage greater business support and ideas.
	30. Consider revising the responsibilities for tourism development to best reflect stakeholder expertise and resources.	Influence	Council, WRT	It is important to ensure cost effectiveness of all activity and remove as much duplication as possible.
	31. Continue liaising with the respective Business & Tourism Associations.	Control and Influence	Council, BTAs	As the key representative stakeholders in the Shire, the BTAs are important bodies for sharing information and concerns, particularly as they relate to SMEs and specific parts of the Shire.
	32. Continue to work with local Indigenous stakeholders on developing economic opportunities	Control	Council, GLaWAC, local stakeholders	There are opportunities, particularly, but not exclusively, in cultural tourism that warrant collaboration.
	33. In early 2018, prepare a progress report on the implementation of the Strategy.	Control	Council	To identify achievements to date, work still to be done and the actions necessary to continue the development process for years 3-4 of the Strategy and beyond.
	34. Continue to monitor economic indicators, such as working age population replenishment rates; new business start-ups; business longevity; and commercial/industrial vacancy rates.	Monitor	Council	While it is very difficult to measure the direct relationship between performance indicators and economic development interventions, it is useful to have appropriate benchmarks that are regularly monitored to assist in identifying emerging trends.

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	35. Run a biennial industrial and commercial land use audit of Sale, Maffra and Yarram, to document and compare, over time, new businesses or emerging issues, such as building vacancies.	Control	Council	Keeping accurate and up-to-date accounts of business activity ensures Council and its stakeholders get early indicators of emerging business clusters or building/land vacancies. This can replace using anecdotal evidence for industry strengths and weaknesses.
	36. Continue to ensure the Council's Wood Encouragement Policy is applied.	Control	Council	Council undertakes a significant amount of construction and fit out in its buildings and can use this to showcase the products of an important local industry. It will also help to create a brand for Wellington in the style of local buildings.
Skills and Education	37. Work with Federation Training, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify the specific needs for new in-town facilities in Sale.	Influence	Council, Federation Training, industry sectors (e.g. oil and gas, manufacturing).	Engagement will need to consider potential changes to learning systems and local industry demand.
	38. Prepare a 'skills barometer' to commence monitoring the skills gaps in the Shire, to identify potential changes in industry demand.	Control, Influence then Monitor	Council, businesses	This will assist any local training providers to respond to rapidly emerging industry needs and skills shortfalls.
	39. Work with local businesses to review the potential need or feasibility of a local 'experimental' business accelerator in Sale.	Control	Council and willing participants	While there is no significant shortage of commercial premises available for start-ups and SMEs, an accelerator can be a relatively affordable investment in identifying new businesses that can be assisted with often challenging start-up costs. Assistance with business development skills can form part of this when done in partnership with training providers.
Branding	40. Manage an Events Calendar	Control	Council, WRT, Destination Gippsland, tourism operators	An events calendar (including the new Port of Sale) would have a State-wide as well as regional draw with a brief to organise hallmark and major events and to maximise the economic value of events in Wellington. Events should also promote Wellington's natural assets and other features in alignment with local branding efforts and the objectives of the GRP and Wellington 2030.

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	41. Prepare a marketing strategy for Wellington that presents a clear message about Wellington and a consistent brand that highlights local assets. It must encompass the entire economy.	Control and Influence	Council, local businesses, WRT, Destination Gippsland	There is a need for a strategic and consistent approach to branding Wellington: for tourism, residents, and new business investors; and to showcase the contribution of Wellington's economy to the State (including to the State and Commonwealth Government).
Branding	42. If aligned with the marketing strategy, promote the 'clean, green' environment in Wellington and consider the opportunities for 'local provenance' as part of the new Wellington brand.	Control	Council, local businesses, WRT, Destination Gippsland	Clean, green and local are all highly desirable assets, particularly in relation to food and wine production, but also liveability. It can complement Wellington's natural landscape, as well as some of its industry innovations (e.g. the efficiency improvements in the Macalister Irrigation District and the Radial Timber project).
	43. If aligned with the marketing strategy, prepare a business investment prospectus that highlights the key economic indicators and opportunities in the Shire.	Control	Council	As part of raising awareness, and if aligned with the marketing strategy, a concise, evidence-based prospectus is an ideal format for providing information to prospective business investors. Both an online and hard copy version should be prepared.
	44. Continue to promote the opportunities arising from the MID to prospective investors	Control	Council, Invest Gippsland, RDV, existing producers, industry peak bodies	Given the ongoing investment in the MID, Council has a role in helping to promote it as a valuable asset underpinning land productivity in the region.
	45. Promote the Council's economic development team within Council and across the Shire.	Control	Council	As the primary (but not only) Council team for economic development, there is value in raising the team's profile to local businesses, as well as beyond. This will ensure potential investors can easily find who is available to assist in planning for local business investment.



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