

Attachment B – Qualitative Summary of Issues

The following opportunities have been identified ...

- the ongoing importance of the **broadacre agricultural sector**. Recent favourable seasons together with soil and climate advantages underpin local confidence. Resources to further invest, train and accommodate the needs of farmers exist with training and educational leaders such as Rural Industries Skills Centre (RIST) and the National Centre for Farmers Health. These are points of difference are competitive advantages;
- scope to better connect **intensive agricultural production to water resource management**, in particular sustainable ground water licensing within the Limestone Aquifer. The Food and Fibre Council estimate that a 10% increase in productive water use would increase agricultural value to the economy by \$54M p.a. Pilot projects in SW Victoria¹, likely within this Shire or in neighbouring areas could be delivered within the next 12 months. A progressive shift in interest and regulatory effort to focus more closely on groundwater harvesting is likely. How this information (the science) is shared, how licenses are transferred, where agriculture or forestry should be avoided (for instance wetlands) are all hot topics;
- overarching strategies on **sustainable water management** including licensing regulation and the information sharing will need to evolve as the use of water becomes more contested. Beyond the push for pilot horticulture projects, there will demands for cultural flows for First Nations within the landscape. A more sophisticated approach to catchment management strategies via Glenelg Hopkins CMA are signals of this renewed debate;
- a growing awareness that **increased tourism** is a significant economic pillar linked to the wider region - Grampians National Park, Budj Bim and the volcanic landscapes and Great Ocean Road. The Shire is ideally placed to benefit as a key land bridge running east-west to the Limestone Coast as well as the Great Southern Touring Route (including Budj Bim). Experiences will need to be immersive and compelling, whether it be the accommodation, activities or sites visited. The experiences delivered by Airbnb operations is also relevant. A hierarchy of natural assets will allow Council to focus more clearly on how it partners with other stakeholders and deliver to visitor needs (signage, trails, parking etc);
- the role of **digital infrastructure** not only to connect individuals as part of a community but enable timely sharing of information and conduct of business. Council is a leader in SW Victoria and has worked closely with partner councils to promote use of technology and digital infrastructure to better collect data (weather conditions, spending pattern analytics, parking usage, permits, other). Enhanced digital connectivity will aid tourism and agriculture as well as education and business. The next economic development strategy will need to more closely reflect upon this digital world;
- adapting to new economic opportunities in the **renewable energy sector**. Net zero carbon emissions for Victoria by 2050 will likely bring more renewable projects into the Shire, approved by State Government. How this occurs and how communities

¹ Linked to the work done by Deakin Uni on Economic Futures (2019) for Great South Coast

can be effectively engaged in terms of community grants, training opportunities² and still limit adverse impacts will need to be further considered;

- how we **adapt, mitigate and respond to climate change**. Many see climate change as a generational concern³. Adaptation is already occurring in forestry and agriculture, whether it be trees capable of withstanding drier conditions and heat or stocking and cropping regimes to rotate paddocks and manage soils. But wider impacts will occur with lower stream flows, more heat stress and changing land use patterns. Mining for essential resources (including copper used in electric cars) will be an indirect land use response as active moves to de-carbonise the economy accelerate. The whole community needs to respond and how Council responds will be discussed in the final phase of CVF 2041 (possibly green fleets, advocate for charging infrastructure, procurement, solar installs on roofs, street landscaping);
- achieving **effective environmental stewardship** within the natural environment. Since European colonisation (1836), disruptions have occurred in several waves from land clearing to plantation forestry more recently (1995). At a local level stewardship may be concerned with how agencies work together, such as at Grange Burn. But the debate extends further. Road reserves are often the only significant vegetation in some districts due to landscape scale clearing. Challenges also exist with Crown land management. Protecting redgums and roadside reserves and major Crown reserves (Lake Linlithgow, Mount Napier, Byaduk Caves, Nigretta Falls) will flag our success in retaining biodiversity across the Shire;
- **transport links and networks** are core community issues. With respect to freight, a subsidy scheme (Mode Shift Incentive Scheme) exists for incentivising rail freight. Some suggest it is difficult to build a business model using the funds available. Within industry there is a push for a-double trucks for road freight tasks but many roads aren't built for those loadings. Passenger rail and advocacy has been discussed within the Shire since 1981. Increased production in agriculture and forestry rotations will accelerate conversations on optimal networks and transport modes. For DoT the challenge appears to be demonstration that patronage will grow for rail. How to provide sufficient data (and what data) beyond the business case prepared will need further consideration. If, based on current investment by State Government in rail in SW Victoria there is no additional funding for passenger rail the focus will need to be consideration of better regionally connected bus services.
- viewed through the lense of **education**, the Shire has significant opportunities in making its community job ready. Baimbridge College, the State school (yr 7-12) has recently undergone a \$9M upgrade of its campus. Further investment is likely needed. A host of primary schools provide important local education offerings across the Shire.

SW TAFE provides VCAL and an education pathway, delivering presently to 220 students at its Ballarat Road campus. Nursing and courses in aged care support are key courses⁴.

² Golden Plains windfarm, Rokewood is the largest in southern hemisphere and is working with Fed Uni on setting up courses for maintenance of windfarms – a template that could be followed in Southern Grampians Shire.

³ A concern also expressed by Insurance Council of Australia. Large superannuation companies including Rest have had to settle out of court in 2020 with a young litigant on duty of care for the environment and to modify its investment portfolio away from carbon generating activities – a likely sign of things to come. Blackrock, the world's largest investment manager announced also in 2020 that it would withdraw support from investments in thermal coal.

⁴ With respect to training a number of institutions have partnerships with other entities to deliver certificate through diploma and bachelors degrees. SW TAFE partners with Deakin. WDHS partners with CQU for instance.

Rural Industries Skills Training (RIST) has approximately 245 students at the Mt Napier Road campus delivering a range of courses from certificate 11 in agriculture to bachelor degrees. They also have a virtual campus enabling students to access the programs from anywhere via virtual reality software. This enables over 1000 students across Australia to use the facility.

South Grampians Adult Education has some 50 students at its Hamilton facility and works closely with Hamilton Parklands Special School⁵, Mulleraterong Centre and Southern Stay. The focus on NDIS support of its student cohort is a notable feature of its offering.

Also, an extensive private/independent school system is provided. Within the Shire are several notable school facilities⁶, some of which have boarding capacity, as summarised in the following table:

School	Location	Denomination status	Student No.	Full time Staffing (teachers)
Monivae College*	Hamilton	catholic	529	51
Hamilton and Alexandra College*	Hamilton	independent	469	61
Good Shepherd College (prep-yr 12)	Hamilton	Lutheran	198	23
Tarrington Lutheran School (foundation to yr 6)	Tarrington	Lutheran	141	13 ⁷
Balmoral K-12 Community College	Balmoral	independent	107	22 ⁸
OneSchool Global ⁹ (yr2-12)	Hamilton	Plymouth Bretheren Christian	42	NS

*Boarding offered. NS – Not specified

Table A-1 Independent School Offering

These schools provide a wide range of facilities including performing arts centres, indoor pools, music facilities, regional level cricket facilities (Monivae College) and other student support services. A number deliver students from as far as Portland into Hamilton and boarding components bring international students to the area. The investment made in educational facilities is a competitive advantage which should be at the core of how population attraction is marketed, cultural arts is delivered and lifetime learning promoted¹⁰;

- a more sustainable community is more effective at **waste management**. Federal government bans on material exports means we need to do more processing

⁵ Based in Kerr Street Hamilton. Delivers education to students with intellectual disabilities aged 5-15. Approx 30 students.

⁶ <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school>

⁷ 2019 annual report

⁸ Full time and part time teachers – 2019 data.

⁹ Formerly known as Glenvale School – 90 Hamilton Chatsworth Road Hamilton.

¹⁰ Also within the education sector reference should be made to Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN. The LLEN funded by State Government, operates across Glenelg and Southern Grampians and its core role is improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people 10 – 19 years of age. The LLEN brokers partnerships between education and training providers, business and industry, community organisations, parents and families and young people. Notwithstanding the facilities to deliver education in the region, esp Southern Grampians, LLEN note rural and regional disadvantage, high levels of disengagement esp in Glenelg and generally lower University takeups. See <https://qsllen.org.au/>

onshore before it's exported (eg plastics). Better quality materials will assist with secondary processing to avoid contamination. Pulling out glass, metals separation early will be key. Understanding the scale of technology and services and what micro setups can be set up in a region. Keeping materials in region is key for the circular economy. Impacts of waste charges on business, especially in the tourism sector were noted by a number of operators;

- **cultural arts** within the Shire comprise library, art gallery and PAC. Foot traffic into the library (around 100,000 p.a) far exceeds the other two units, but the gallery and to a lesser degree PAC deliver regional events and exhibitions. How these units collaborate is worthy of further exploration. Looking into the future, a new gallery brings new opportunities and will enhance liveability and the Council focus on population attraction and tourism. Some expressed a view as to location (identifying CBD specifically), whilst others did not indicate a preferred location. Dunkeld has a tourist brand as southern gateway to the Grampians National Park but the brand of Hamilton could be strengthened through cultural tourism investment.
- ensuring key agencies that deliver services making the Shire a great place to live are recognised and supported by Council advocacy for **core fit-for purpose buildings and services**. Hamilton benefits from having facilities that directly enhance the liveability of the place. Baimbridge College, WHDS and others typically have service catchments of 100km radius. This is also true of the cluster of emergency service providers in the Shire – Ambulance Victoria, CFA, SES. For Shire residents these are important assets and directly link with the liveability of the place. But the initial investments made in facilities needs ongoing commitment to remain fit for purpose. Timely investment is important for their ongoing role, attracting key staff and remaining appropriate to task;
- the roll out of housing is fundamental to people choosing to live in the Shire, especially for **key worker housing**. Whether it be VicPol, CFA, Council, WDHS or other agencies similar stories emerge about a constrained rental market. This market is critical in that many/most households looking at taking up new positions will seek to rent before buying. Council's role as a landowner should be further explored;
- economic opportunities attached to **mining and extractive industry**. Significant resources and/or infrastructure exist in or near the Shire – from mineral sands processing plants (ILUKA) through to highly promising mineral deposits in Stavely east of Glenthompson – Stavely Minerals being an active prospector amongst others. How these can be promoted to create new economic opportunities warrants further investigation;
- what benefits if any Council can secure from **forestry industry sector** and the **Green Triangle**. Plantation forestry appears to be an activity that has happened to the Shire, not one we have been a partner in. Whether it be the taxation system and the managed investment scheme (or MIS), the manner in which forestry plantations were seen as a visible face of farmers leaving the land, or the impact on road networks, the merits of plantation forestry can be a polarising debate. Nonetheless, major businesses in the Shire include Vickery Bros have a significant role in this sector. Waste to energy opportunities (biofuel), opportunities to buy local campaigns using Green Triangle products and even recent examples of wind farms in forestry plantations are noted opportunities. A mature debate on how forestry can be managed to spread greater benefit in the community is warranted;

- **wrap around (comprehensive) youth support services** will be critical if we seek to assist our youth (particularly those aged 12-25). There is an ongoing discussion within Council and other agencies about which agency is best suited to deliver a range of local services. One of these is likely to be youth support with a number arguing Council should be resourced both internally and by State Government to be a leader in this space. A dedicate youth officer, along with a youth strategy to prioritise actions has merit. A youth hub within Hamilton is a probable need.

What has impacted the support of youth appears to be the level of resourcing – whether it be lack of funds to implement the priority areas for development derived from Crazy Ideas College to the heavy dependence on schools to deliver support which is provided by a number of agencies in larger centres like Warrnambool and Horsham (Headspace, Brophy etc¹¹);

- ensuring access to support **with alcohol and drug dependency** as well as **mental health and social disadvantage**, amongst youth and the wider community. These issues often chase each other and manifest in specific housing needs, education/training as well as food and other support services including transport. Hamilton has access to a range of services (often through WDHS as well as including community bus services¹²) but often these are extension services with limited office hours in the Shire. Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, provides support for the indigenous community across a range of services¹³ delivered through Hamilton and Heywood. The Health and Wellbeing Plan amongst other initiatives may warrant a further review of local needs;
- a roadmap which enables Council and the general community to more comprehensively partner with **First Nations communities**. A clear governance structure and channels for engagement would benefit all parties. The substance of these can be found in the Local Government Action Plan (2019)¹⁴. Horsham and Glenelg also have Reconciliation Action Plans which is one, but by no means the only, way to reconcile the past with the present and future;
- managing **volunteer fatigue**. Volunteers are critical in emergency management, religious institutions, sport and underpin much of civic life today. It is likely beyond CVF 2041 to explore all the challenges in this area but it is noted that some sectors struggle with recruitment, diversity of volunteers and the services they provide, especially as these change over time to meet changing community needs. These volunteers are integral to the concepts of ‘community’;
- **partnerships** based on shared expectations can leverage capacities of key agencies and reduce the resource burden of each through co-ordinated sharing of information, resources and capacities. Whether it be how Council works with Glen Hopkins CMA, Wannon Water, CFA, ParksVic, WDHS or others, there are a number of opportunities that could and should be considered in the next phase of CVF 2041;

¹¹ A number of NFP sector operate in Hamilton but only as outreach services (Salvoconnect, Beyond the Bell etc).

¹² Council also provides a community bus support service.

¹³ GP Clinic, chronic disease management, dental, housing etc.

¹⁴ <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-partnerships/aboriginal-local-government-action-plan>