

Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework SUMMARY



Message from the Mayor

Southern Grampians residents are justifiably proud of the strong sense of community that prevails today and the amenity and assets present within this Shire. Throughout the development of Southern Grampians 2041 - Community Vision Framework (SG2041), the sense of local pride and anticipation of a stronger, bolder and more innovative future was a focus of the feedback shared with Council from residents and key stakeholders.

SG2041 enabled a broad discussion and critical assessment of the opportunities and challenges present today and those that we must collectively address over the coming twenty years, if we are to realise the potential for positive change that is before us and to mitigate emerging risks including climate change, water availability, online and transport connectivity and population decline.

Many of the identified opportunities and challenges are outside of Council's direct control and will require effective partnerships to realise the vision for Southern Grampians by 2041. SG2041 highlights the role of Council, State and Federal Governments and

the not-for-profit and private sectors in each of the identified initiatives.

SG2041 will be a live document that is updated on a regular basis, in alignment with the Council Plan process. In this way, it will continue to reflect the community's changing priorities and areas of concern and will remain a shared vision, rather than a point in time reflection of the state of play for Southern Grampians.

SG2041 is the first time that Southern Grampians Shire Council has had a twenty-year road map for the future of the Shire and I commend the work that has gone into bringing it to fruition. The framework is an exciting opportunity for this Council and future Councils to have a long-term view of the needs and wants for the community and the projects that will make a significant difference in the lives of our residents.

I would like to thank the community members and key stakeholders who generously provided their time and valuable insights into the development of SG2041. More than 488 people provided their feedback through

workshops, surveys and interviews throughout the development of SG2041 from late 2019 to early 2021.



Figure 1: Cr Bruach Colliton (Mayor)



Acknowledgement of traditional landowners

Southern Grampians Shire
Council acknowledges
the Australian Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the Gunditjmara, Tjap
Wurrung and Bunganditj people, the
traditional custodians of the lands where
we live and work.

We pay our respects to ancestors and
Elders, past and present.

Southern Grampians Shire Council
is committed to honouring Australian
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
people's unique cultural and spiritual
relationships to the land, waters and seas
and their rich contribution to society.

Executive Summary

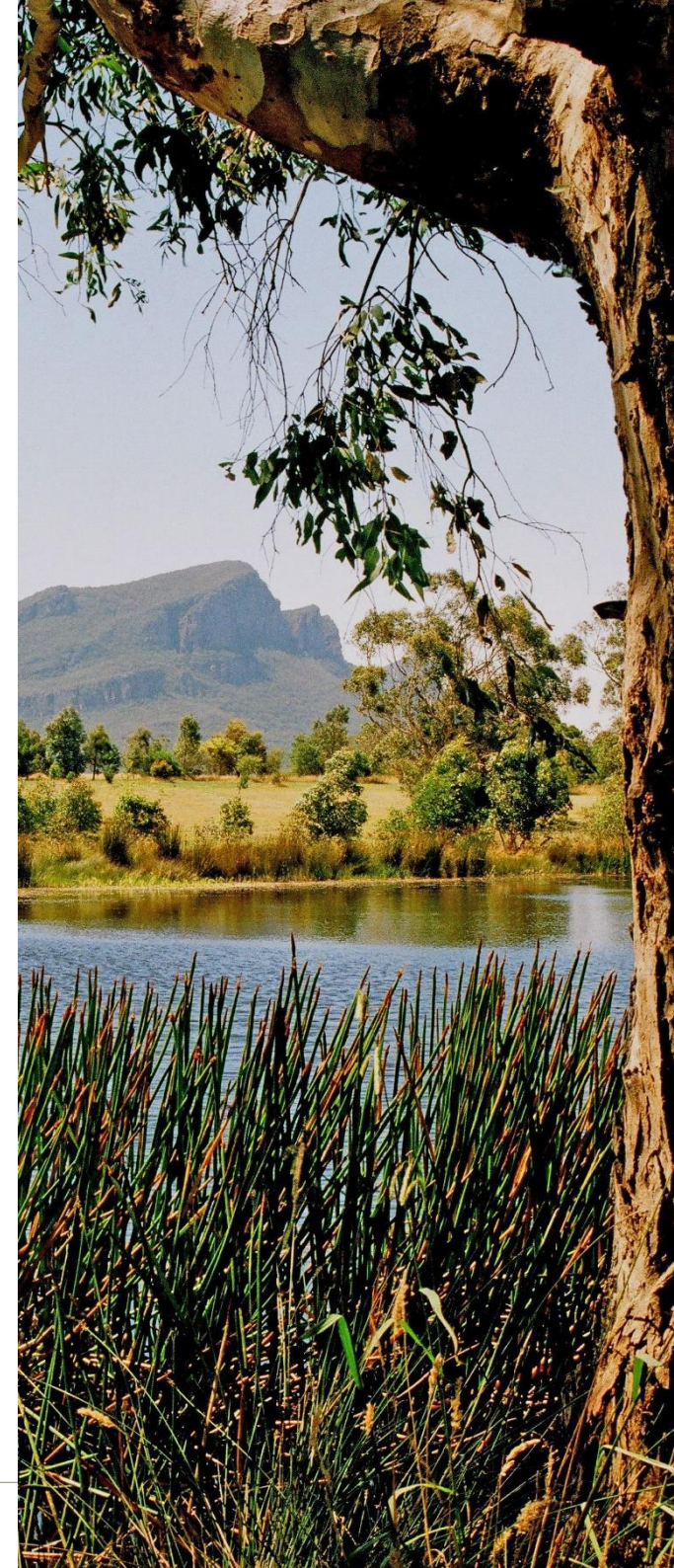
Southern Grampians 2041 - Community Vision Framework (SG2041) is in essence a community vision, comprising a twenty-year strategic direction, together with suggested opportunities for advocacy and partnership with stakeholders. It is ambitious in nature as our community expects us to have a longer-term view of how we shape our world.

For consistency purposes, the key themes or pillars behind the workplan are the same themes found in the Council Plan 2021-25 (in preparation) – namely community, economy, building and infrastructure, environment and governance. The assumptions built into SG2041 are:

1. Our limited funding requires us to collaborate with others to make our investments extend further.
2. We needed a longer-term work plan linked to a ten-year financial plan.
3. We must work smarter with decisions based on clearer understanding of how changes in technology, community needs and demographic shifts (ageing etc.) will affect our service and asset management delivery.

To determine priorities, input was obtained from a wide range of stakeholders. A significant deep dive into regional relationships, challenges and opportunities has occurred. A crystal ball view of the next twenty-years drives the thinking on challenges and how we respond as a community. One thing will be clear – the next two decades will not be the same as the last and together we must address a range of issues from climate change to ageing populations, the digital economy, reconciliation and supporting each other.

We must start this strategic planning by recognising that we have a number of regionally significant assets and services, some of which are maintained by Council and others are not. These drive the liveability or 'attractiveness' of Southern Grampians. They comprise (in no order) the Hamilton



Regional Livestock Exchange, Hamilton Performing Arts Centre, Hamilton Art Gallery and Hamilton Indoor Leisure and Aquatic Centre. Beyond that, the Western District Health Services (WDHS) base hospital (and broader health sector), and Victoria Police (VICPOL) HQ and Country Fire Authority (CFA) office provide regional/district functions. So too does the education system, including RIST, Baimbridge College, SW TAFE and the private college system – Monivae College and Hamilton and Alexandra (amongst others). Investment and support of these assets protects our points of difference, the jobs they deliver, the services they offer are what make our Shire worth investing and living in. The landscape itself, the volcanic grasslands and plains as well as Grampians National Park make our area State and nationally significant (as are our wind resources).

We need to manage all key assets, regardless of who owns them, but do so sensibly and with financial accountability, based on data confirming the value they deliver and what we can afford. Council cannot do this work alone and it must therefore reach out to organisations, as well as State and Federal Government agencies on the services and facilities the community needs, the quality of the infrastructure that connects us and how beyond being an agricultural powerhouse, the community is supported to achieve its needs. Tourism will be a key emerging platform in the next twenty-years. Ongoing infrastructure investment in the tourism sector allied to a genuine need to better connect our Shire within the region (rail, road, air, digital) will be the drivers of the next decade and beyond.

SG2041 will be a living document, as it was in this case, developed concurrently with the Council Plan (in preparation). In this way it will remain relevant and a proper reflection of the views of its community and their vision. The Strategy includes the following schedules - engagement (Schedule A); services delivered by Council (Schedule B); the integrated planning framework (Schedule C); suggested advocacy opportunities (Schedule D); liveability metrics (Schedule E); a summary of challenges with key worker housing (Schedule F); and identified partnership opportunities (Schedule G).

The indicative workplan for SG2041 is articulated in the Strategic Directions section.

For further information or details, please review the Southern Grampians 2041, Community Vision Framework document, downloaded from www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au



Our Vision Our Future

Vision Statement

The input of the community was central to the development of a Vision for Southern Grampians Shire.

Survey participants for SG2041 were asked to select their preferred choice to describe their community in 2041. **'Feel connected, valued and respected'** was the top rating response for the intercept survey. From the internal survey results, **'Be strong and vibrant'** was the top response.

Workshop participants and survey respondents were asked 'What will the Southern Grampians be known for in 2041?' Responses were provided as free text and have been themed. The top responses were a **dynamic, diverse, inclusive innovative and caring community, and liveability.**

For school students¹, the overarching sentiment was that young people wanted **more things to see and do**, more opportunities for study, travel and work, and **improved sporting facilities**. They expect or want to have a professional, trade or well-paid job and their future professional opportunities and financial security is of concern. A significant proportion, **eighty per cent expect to leave** the Southern Grampians by 2041. This was due to a desire to live, work, study and travel elsewhere but also because of a perceived lack of opportunities for them locally. There was also an interest in maintaining and having a **clean natural environment** with native wildlife.

From survey results, the **importance of community** came through in all questions, noting the importance of being socially aware, inclusive and caring as well as connected. As for what will the Southern Grampians be known for, the top responses were a dynamic, diverse, inclusive innovative and caring community, and liveability. From this research and community feedback obtained in developing the Council Plan 2021-25, a vision statement for Southern Grampians Shire has been developed:

“

Southern Grampians is a growing, inclusive and connected community that fosters sustainability, diversity and innovation.

”



Strategic Directions

To be read in conjunction with Council Plan 2021-25 and Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25

Table 1: Strategic Directions, SG2041

Objectives What we need to achieve	Strategies How it can be done	Timelines Now (<1 yr.) Short term (2-4 yrs.) Medium term (5-10yrs) Long term / Ongoing (>10yrs)	Who? Drive (D) Partner (P) Advocate (A)
More targeted and effective youth support services (aged 12-25) ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth strategy Health and Wellbeing Plan with specific actions on youth needs. 	Strategy – Now Implementation - Ongoing	D & P
Effective partnerships with First Nations established	Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) or Partnership Agreement (TBD)	RAP - Short term Implementation - Ongoing	D
Facilitate opportunities for people to participate in community life, through volunteering, civic leadership, social programs, to enable inclusion, social connection and wellbeing	Advocacy and education. Council to examine its volunteer policies and frameworks & advocate for greater recognition of volunteers	Ongoing	D, P & A

Objectives What we need to achieve	Strategies How it can be done	Timelines Now (<1 yr.) Short term (2-4 yrs.) Medium term (5-10yrs) Long term / Ongoing (>10yrs)	Who? Drive (D) Partner (P) Advocate (A)
Clear vision of our visitor experience and product, adequately supported by investment.	Review Regional Tourism Board (RTB) funding model. Greater Hamilton Volcanic Trails Master Plan	RTB funding – Now Volcanic Trail – long term	D, P & A
Partner and advocate to recruit skilled staff into the area by addressing worker housing and regional liveability	Complete Key Worker Housing Strategy.	Strategy – Now Delivery of housing - Ongoing	D & P
Facilitate sustainable population growth	Population attraction strategy ideally for south west Victoria	Ongoing	D, P & A
Clearer planning rules for farming sector in planning scheme	Complete Rural Land Use Strategy (RLUS)	RLUS – Now Implementation - Short term	D
Position the economy for renewables investment benefits	Complete Sustainability Strategy	Strategy - Short term Implementation - Ongoing	D, P & A

Objectives What we need to achieve	Strategies How it can be done	Timelines Now (<1 yr.) Short term (2-4 yrs.) Medium term (5-10yrs) Long term / Ongoing (>10yrs)	Who? Drive (D) Partner (P) Advocate (A)
Hamilton CBD Revitalisation	Hamilton Central Business Area Activation Master Plan	Short term / Ongoing	D, P & A
Clearer strategic plans for smaller settlements	Small Towns Strategy, informed by Community Infrastructure Framework	Short term / Ongoing	D
Consolidate/strengthen role as a regional leader in digital innovation	Include strong digital component in Economic Development Strategy	Short term / Medium term	D & P
Better integrated transport solutions	Re-examine network needs including 2017 rail strategy and update advocacy as appropriate	Short term / Ongoing	D, P & A
Council to deliver a strategic approach to Arts and Culture infrastructure, including progressing the new Hamilton Art Gallery	Implement Arts and Culture Strategic Plan with Hamilton Gallery Business Case adopted	Short term / Medium term	D, P & A
Council to be a leader in active transport	Develop and implement bike strategy in two parts:	Strategy – Short term	D
	A Recreational B Commute	Implementation – Long term	

Objectives What we need to achieve	Strategies How it can be done	Timelines Now (<1 yr.) Short term (2-4 yrs.) Medium term (5-10yrs) Long term / Ongoing (>10yrs)	Who? Drive (D) Partner (P) Advocate (A)
Celebrate and better manage our environmental assets	Environmental Assets Strategy	Strategy - Short term Implementation - Ongoing	D, P & A
Position the Shire for renewables investment benefits	Complete Sustainability Strategy	Strategy - Short term Implementation - Ongoing	D, P & A
Objectives What we need to achieve	Strategies How it can be done	Timelines Now (<1 yr.) Short term (2-4 yrs.) Medium term (5-10yrs) Long term / Ongoing (>10yrs)	Who? Drive (D) Partner (P) Advocate (A)
Maintaining and enhancing liveability status of Shire	Great South Coast Rural and Regional Liveability Framework	Framework - Short term Implementation - Ongoing	D, P & A
High-level asset management delivered through good design and universal access principles	Community Infrastructure Framework (CIF)	CIF - Short term Implementation - Ongoing	D

A plan informed by our community

The program of engagement for the SG2041 ran from October 2019-March 2021 and was designed to attract input from a random and representative sample of the community and key stakeholders with an interest in the development of the community vision. Notwithstanding the impacts of COVID-19, the comprehensive program of engagement included stakeholder workshops, online surveys, intercept surveying, stakeholder interviews and online interactive workshops to test themes, build awareness and elicit valuable input. The activities were supported by content on the Southern Grampians Shire Council website, media release and eight posts to Council’s Facebook page to generate participation and awareness. A summary of that engagement effort is provided below.

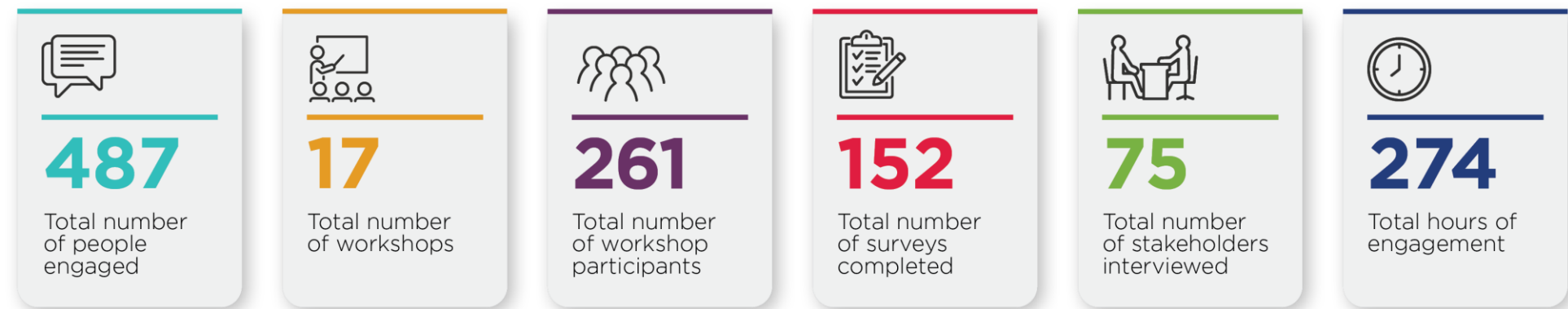


Figure 2: Engagement overview

Council received feedback and input from 488 people, which is 112 more people than were required to achieve a representative sample size of the population of 376 people, with a confidence level of ninety-five per cent (see Schedule A – Engagement Process). The challenges identified included but were not limited to a range of infrastructure concerns - poor roads, lack of public transport, digital connectivity; as well as demographic - young people leaving, an ageing population and housing supply shortages. The identified opportunities included culture / tourism, liveability, sustainability and education and are summarized in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Identified opportunities

