

# Summary of Discussion Paper

## Community Vision Framework 2041 (CVF2041)

### What is Community Vision Framework 2041? (CVF2041)

**CVF2041 is a Southern Grampians Shire Council led initiative that seeks to create excitement and optimism within Council and the community about the future of the Southern Grampians Shire and the opportunities that can be realised.**

It seeks to encourage innovation by industry and the delivery of community led initiatives that reinforce the unique attributes of Shire's towns and communities. It seeks to build dynamic partnerships with others for the future vision beyond the traditional responsibilities of "roads, rates and rubbish".

The Shire is fortunate to have significant natural resources, climatic conditions conducive to support agriculture and renewable energy and a stable population base. But the challenges are also there, the large distances to capital cities, relatively poor public transport and funding challenges based on dispersed assets.

Council recognises that community and industry' wants and needs have changed significantly over time and will continue to evolve at a rapid rate, and that technology and climate change may deliver a range of both opportunities and challenges. Council is cognisant of the potential scale of the changes facing the Shire as well as the finite financial resources at its disposal.

Council has a strong desire to improve the long term sustainability of the Shire's towns, businesses, community groups and services and is driving efforts to sustain the population base of the Shire and develop new and innovative local industries.

CVF 2041 will to help shape strategic community planning for the next two decades, providing a foundation for all other work delivered by Council. The projects to be delivered will be based on needs and opportunities identified, refreshed advocacy activities and the partnerships needed.

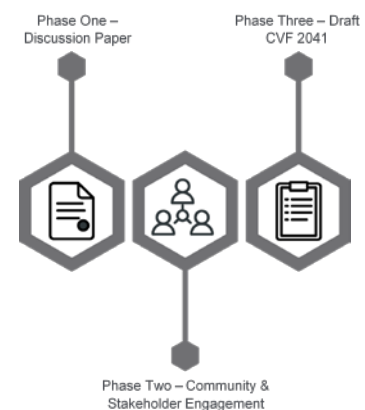
**CVF2041 poses the core question: Can the Shire capitalise on its natural resources, the potential benefits of digital transformation and mitigate the impacts of a declining population base, to build a sustainable future for all?**

### Process for developing the CVF2041

Council will develop CVF 2041 in three key phases. Engagement began prior to COVID-19 and will continue (in different forms) during COVID-19 and will be finalised post COVID-19.

A comprehensive program of engagement that respects social distancing requirements under COVID-19 will be delivered in 2020.

The objective of the engagement campaign is to obtain detailed input into the CVF 2041 and vision for the Shire. The campaign will include online engagement and workshop activities at phases two and three. Details are contained within the CVF2041 Discussion Paper. Scheduled face to face and group discussions will verify initial engagement results secured from online engagement.



# Social and Economic Profile

The following is a snapshot of the Southern Grampians Shire.

<b>Location</b>	Southern Grampians Shire is located 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south east of Adelaide. The Shire covers an area of 6,655 square kilometres and comprises three per cent of the Victoria's total land mass.
<b>Residents</b>	In 2018, the estimated population was 16,135 residents, comprising 49.0% male and 51.0% female residents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.5% of the population (2016 Census QuickStats).
<b>Median Age</b>	The median age of residents was 44 years. Children aged 0-14 years and people aged 65 years or older comprised 18.6% and 19.9% of the population respectively. The Shire had a lower proportion of children (under 18) and a higher proportion of persons aged 60 or older relative to Regional Victoria.
<b>Country Of Birth</b>	92.6% of people were born in Australia. The other most common countries of birth were UK 2.4%, NZ 1.3%, the Netherlands 0.4%, India 0.4%, South Africa 0.3%.
<b>Language Spoken At Home</b>	97.4% spoke English at home. Other languages included Filipino / Tagalog 0.2%, Mandarin 0.2%, Malayalam 0.2%, Afrikaans 0.2%, German 0.2%, Dutch 0.1%, Punjabi 0.1% and Thai 0.1%.
<b>Education</b>	In 2016, 21.5% of residents aged 15 years+ had a tertiary qualification. 36% of residents completed Year 12. This is lower than the regional average. at 38.9%.
<b>Health</b>	In 2016, 5.6% of residents reported requiring assistance with core activities. This is lower than the average for regional Victoria at 6% (Council, ID data_2018).
<b>Households</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average size of households - 2.3 persons</li> <li>• Families - 65.8% of household compositions</li> <li>• Single person households - 31.96%</li> <li>• Average weekly household income - \$1,043</li> <li>• Average weekly rental payment - \$175</li> <li>• Average monthly household mortgage payment - \$1,082</li> <li>• Average number of vehicles - two per household.</li> </ul>
<b>Dwellings</b>	7,965 residential dwellings in Southern Grampians Shire in 2016.
<b>Gross Regional Product</b>	Southern Grampians Shire's for 2017/18 was estimated at \$0.92 B, or 0.2% of the State's Gross State Product (GSP).
<b>Employment</b>	7,781 jobs with 8,061 of the resident population over 15 years of age in employment.
<b>Employment sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture (1,373 jobs) – Largest employer in the Shire</li> <li>• Health and Social Assistance (1,162 jobs)</li> <li>• Retail (734 jobs)</li> <li>• Education and Training (683 jobs)</li> <li>• Accommodation and Food (441 jobs)</li> <li>• Public Administration and Safety (433 jobs)</li> <li>• Construction (369 jobs).</li> </ul>

# Opportunities and constraints

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## Agriculture



In 2016 the gross value of agriculture in the Shire was \$474 million. Gross value tripled between 1996 and 2016 due to growth in meat and wool. The value of grain production tripled over the last 20 years while hay decreased in the last 10 years.

### Key questions:

- How can we diversify our employment opportunities beyond traditional agricultural opportunities (sheep and cattle)?
- Why is industry not locating in the area to leverage off the high levels of agricultural production?

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## Workforce development and regional employment



The region has the lowest unemployment rate in Victoria (3.6%).

Ageing workforce with the average age of a farmer in the region of 55 years of age and 30% of workers in agriculture aged more than 60 years. There is a small pool of younger potential employees with just 650 school leavers per annum.

### Key question:

- Do we require regional workforce attraction and industry attraction strategies for new workforce entrants?

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## Connectivity to support a digital economy



On average in Victoria, businesses connected to the NBN have seen a 14% increase in productivity due to its installation. Transition to a digital economy has a range of demonstrated economic impacts, including:

- Automation of jobs, especially manual and repetitive labour
- Creation of jobs, especially in creative, technical and support industries
- Changes to jobs, such as locations and ways of working, as well as productivity increases, and
- Access to broader and international markets for businesses

### Key questions:

- How can the Shire capitalise on the potential benefits of digital transformation?
- Is connectivity via high speed broadband a higher priority than some other infrastructure?

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## Education



44.0% of the population aged 15 and over held educational qualifications, and 44.7% had no qualifications, compared with 45.0% and 42.8% respectively for Regional Victoria.

### Key questions:

- Is the current offer sufficient and why are targets in Health and Wellbeing Plan not being achieved? What can be done about it?
- Will regional study hubs assist and are there other initiatives also required?

Quality transport infrastructure is a key component of a productive and efficient Shire, facilitating connections to resources, industry, infrastructure, tourism and employment.

**Air transport** – The nearest currently operating passenger airport is in Mount Gambier, South Australia which is around 75-90 minutes' drive time west of Hamilton. Council owns and maintains a CASA registered airport north of Hamilton. Sharp Airlines operated commercial services from here until 2014.

**Rail services** – There are presently no passenger rail services into Hamilton or Southern Grampians Shire though the track exists, as well as a station in Hamilton. Freight rail provides other opportunities for the Shire to reduce road freight.

**Road access** – A journey from Hamilton to Melbourne is around 3 hrs 30 minutes. A journey from Hamilton to Adelaide takes around 5 hrs 30 minutes.

## Transport



Southern Grampians by 2050 will experience an increase in temperature (max. and min.) and reduction in the amount of rainfall. The region can expect more hot days and warm spells, with fewer frosts, less rainfall in winter and spring with harsher fire weather and longer fire seasons. Although rainfall is predicted to decline on average, an increase in intense rainfall events is likely to result in more flooding. The impact is likely to be less than in Horsham and northern Victoria.

Key considerations with climate change will include clear policy and direction on:

- Priority irrigation projects and water security for surface waters within the region.
- Significant investment in science and research behind sustainable use of groundwater resources for agriculture.
- Adaptability of crops to climate change where higher temperatures and lower rainfall become normal (a similar conversation is occurring in NSW on wine crops).
- Heat health response policies in key settlements.

## Climate Change



The Shire is currently home to two wind farms that are capable of producing 82 MW of electricity. The Shire has strong wind opportunities and is located within proximity to currently identified nationally significant renewable energy zones in SW Victoria.

### Key questions:

- Should renewable energy be actively pursued and supported within Southern Grampians Shire? In what form (wind, solar, geothermal, biomass) and under what conditions?
- How should Council and industry approach the transition to renewable energy?
- Is Council's advocacy sufficiently clear within the renewables sector?
- Are there aligned value add employment opportunities that can be pursued by Council, Government and industry, similar to what Warrnambool is doing with hydrogen research and development?
- Within the broader question of energy supplies (fossil and renewables), is there a clear view with respect to onshore gas extraction and are there any conditions or situations where this position may change?

## Renewable energy production



## Tourism



The Shire is proximate to major VIC domestic and international tourism attractors including the Great Ocean Road, Twelve Apostles, Grampians National Park and the Budj Bim cultural landscape and area. It is also close to many of the major visitor attractors of South Australia including Coonawarra Wine region, Naracoorte Caves and Mount Gambier's Blue Lake.

### Key questions:

- Does the Shire have a unique selling point to attract tourism?
- How can Council work with the private sector and Government to grow the visitor economy for the Shire?
- How can cultural tourism be respectfully embedded within the Shire? Options include cultural arts programming, volcanic landscapes marketing and destination experience to leverage off Budj Bim?
- Is there an opportunity for the development of unique tourism opportunities in the smaller towns?

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## Population Growth



The population of Southern Grampians Shire is 16,140 (2018) and is projected to decline to around 15,000 people by 2036 representing an average annual decline of 0.5% p.a between 2016 and 2036. Many models exist for attracting residents to the Shire.

### Key questions:

- What is the appropriate model for Council to facilitate population attraction to fill vacant jobs and market the amenity of the area?
- Are these initiatives scalable to provide a measurable difference to bridge the gap between job opportunities and the employment pool?
- What can Council learn from comparable LGAs?
- What is the role of cultural arts, in attracting new populations to live in the Shire?

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## Water and Utility Services



The settlements of Hamilton, Tarrington, Dunkeld, Cavendish and Balmoral have potable water supplies. Hamilton, Dunkeld and Coleraine are connected to reticulated water and sewerage services. Lack of reticulated sewer options can limit growth prospects for many towns as significant investment in reticulated sewage is unlikely.

Water management is also be a key to supporting intensive agriculture and economic growth.

### Key questions:

- Is there a requirement for an Integrated Water Management (IWM) plan that is adaptive to changes and considers the needs of the community?
- How can we better understand and manage ground and surface water to support intensive agriculture and economic development?
- What is the future for areas that are topographically or geographically unable to be connected to the sewerage and wastewater network?
- What other key water infrastructure is needed to maximise value from existing or planned new assets?
- What utility infrastructure upgrades are needed for the power grid and when and by whom should this be delivered?



According to the ABS, there are 244 residents of the Shire who identify as Aboriginal or are from the Torres Strait Islands. As a percentage of population, this is twice the Victorian average.

**Key questions:**

- How can Aboriginal culture be better acknowledged, celebrated and shared?
- Is there a role for an Indigenous Reference group within the Shire?
- How can we share Indigenous stories of connection to land through cultural arts programming as well as urban projects?
- How can we support opportunities for better economic outcomes for indigenous communities?
- How can the story of the volcanic landscape be told, given the extent of this land system from Mount Gambier and the Limestone Coast to Warrnambool?

**Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait  
Islander people**



Council provides more than 70 services and a diverse range of assets that compare favourably with many other larger population centres, and include a cinema, art gallery, library, indoor heated pool/leisure centre, ovals and halls.

**Key questions:**

- Do we need all the existing assets? Should some be retired to enable new or different assets to be delivered or better invest in more heavily used facilities?
- Should Council's focus be on the services required under legislation?
- Should we return non-Council used assets to their landowners? These include State Government assets which are maintained by Council.
- Existing assets have ongoing costs to maintain. What are 'acceptable costs' – do we have appropriate measures for assets (such as usage rates, return on investment (ROI) etc.).

**Community  
Assets and  
Services**



Council's ability to adjust rates and increase rate revenue for strategic projects has been reduced since the introduction of the Rate Capping Policy in 2015. Rate revenue has increased slightly each year since 2012/13 however the Council's ability to invest in larger projects is constrained.

**Key questions:**

- What decision making frameworks are needed, what partnerships with other stakeholders to ensure Council is effective in its role to deliver needed infrastructure and services?
- How do we avoid the sunken cost fallacy – that what we have always invested in needs to continue being invested in. How do we judge this, by what measure?

**Rate revenue  
and other  
income**



Council supports emergency services to plan cooperatively for prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies. During emergencies Council works with emergency services to provide resources, local knowledge and community connections. Council is responsible for coordinating relief and recovery efforts after the initial emergency has passed. This includes establishing relief centres for people who have been affected by disasters and need assistance.

**Key questions:**

- What is the role of an emergency management hub for Hamilton?
- What is the future role and opportunities for Hamilton airport as a fire base?

**Emergency  
Management**



# Strategic planning for townships

Council delivers planning for services and infrastructure through a range of mechanisms including structure plans, urban design frameworks and issue specific strategies (wastewater management, recreation and leisure strategies). The following chart summarises the work undertaken on structure plans, UDFs and community plans.

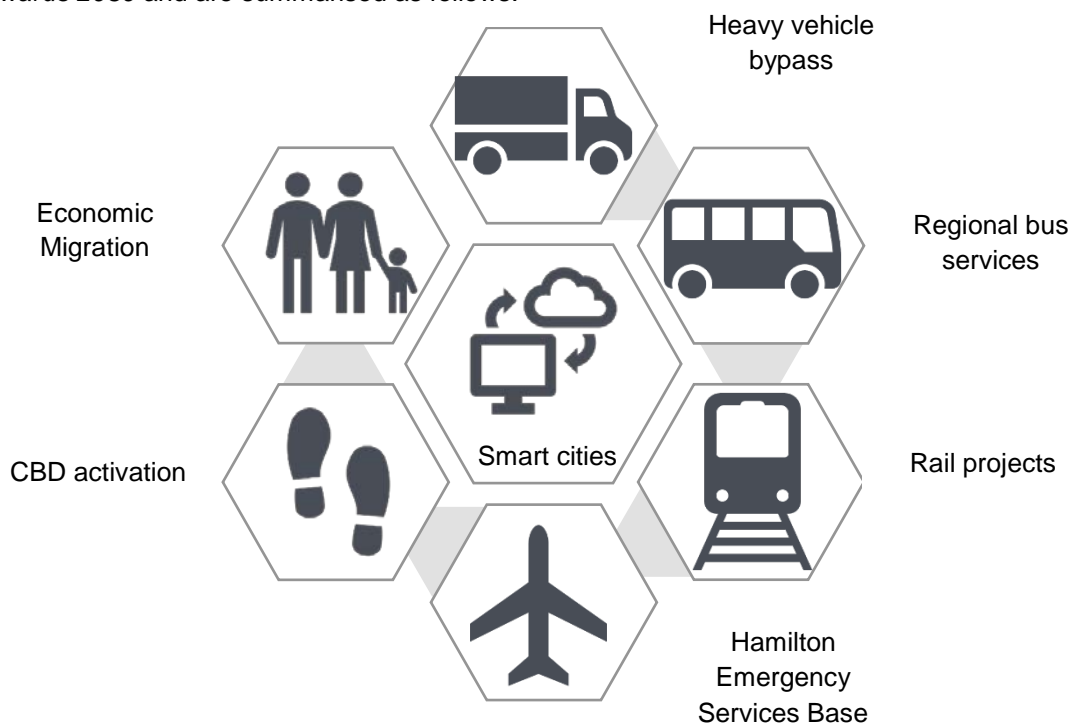
	Balmoral	Branxholme	Byaduk	Cavendish	Coleraine	Dunkeld	Glenthompson	Hamilton	Penshurst	Tarrington	Wannon
<b>Structure Plan</b>						✓		✓		✓	
<b>Urban Design Framework (UDF)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Community Plan</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	

## Key question:

- How best should community plans, structure plans and urban design frameworks be integrated into a coherent framework that ensures local actions are clear, realistic and achievable, with clear champions identified?

# Current advocacy and key projects

Council advocates for a range of projects across the Shire. The priorities for 2018-2020 are contained in *Towards 2030* and are summarised as follows:



# Timeline and how to get involved

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## Share your thoughts via:

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**Community workshops** Five online community workshops will delivered be to hear from a broad range of communities and seek their input into CVF 2041. Discussions and themes at the workshops will be informed by the Discussion Paper.

**Citizen's Panel** Council will also invite members of the community to join a Citizen's Panel that will meet on three separate occasions to provide input into CVF 2041 and develop the draft vision for the Shire. The Panel will provide a draft vision and recommendations for CVF 2041 for Council to consider.

**Survey** Complete the online survey via Council's Have Your Say Page via <http://www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au>

**Email / letter/ submission** Please send you comments to:

- [council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au)
- Locked Bag 685, Hamilton VIC 3300

## Find out more

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Contact: Andrew Goodsell, Director Planning & Development via 03 5573 0246 or [agoodsell@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au](mailto:agoodsell@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au)