Strategy for the future of our community

CAMPASPE: OUR FUTURE

January 2015
Contents

1. Community vision 3
2. About Campaspe: Our Future 4
3. Our history 6
4. Our municipality 9
5. Who we are... and who we will become 11
6. Challenges we need to meet 13
7. What the community told us 23
8. Principles 27
9. Strategies and actions 29
10. How we will know we are on track 33
11. Working together 34
1. Community vision

Our community has described its vision for the future…

We want to be strong, supportive, vibrant and sustainable.
2 About Campaspe: Our Future

Campaspe: Our Future is a long-term strategic plan for the future which has been developed in direct response to community input. For Council, the plan will inform the development and implementation of all strategic and operational plans to ensure all Council activities are delivering on the community’s vision for the future.

The plan sets out a shared vision for our future and the principles through which that future can be delivered. It is a plan that identifies how the community, Council, stakeholder groups and other partners can work together to overcome challenges, profit from opportunities and build resilience to ensure a strong and sustainable future.

Campaspe: Our Future has been developed by independent community engagement specialist, Straight Talk, based on extensive feedback received from community members, organisational stakeholders, community groups and Council.

This feedback was primarily gathered during the first half of 2014 through the following means:

> **Online survey** – available via Council’s website throughout June, collecting feedback from the community, including secondary school students, about what the community values about the municipality and where they live, their aspirations and the things that are of most concern to them about the future

> **Community workshops** – conducted in Echuca, Rochester and Kyabram to collect feedback about what the priorities for the future should be

> **Outreach (pop-up) activities** – short, fun activities were undertaken in Stanhope, Rochester, Kyabram, Lockington and Echuca to capture feedback on values, aspirations and the vision for the future

> **Stakeholder meetings** – to capture feedback on long-term trends and the key priorities for the future

> **Schools competitions** – two competitions to encourage primary and secondary school students to participate in the engagement process and provide feedback on young people’s vision for their community and its future

> **Campaspe Conversation Day** – undertaken in March 2014, in Echuca, Kyabram, Rochester, Rushworth and Lockington, the day provided an opportunity to have a conversation with Council about issues of concern, ideas and feedback to help improve and drive Campaspe in the right direction.

Social inclusion is important because isolation results in health issues and social issues
This collective feedback reflected the community’s vision for its future and its values and aspirations. This feedback formed the basis for the development of principles to guide how the future vision should be delivered. Information obtained from stakeholder meetings, and from Councillors and senior Council staff, has informed the high-level implementation strategies.
3 Our history

The history of the Shire of Campaspe is uniquely its own, it reflects the broader history of Australia and the social, economic and political influences on its development.

The history of the occupation of the area of land known as the Shire of Campaspe is a long one. Indigenous Australians have been connected with this area for thousands of years. The Dja Dja Wurrung, Yorta Yorta and Taungurung people are today recognised as representing the traditional owners who lived in the area along the Murray, Campaspe and Goulburn Rivers prior to the arrival of the first Europeans in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

The Yorta Yorta people are recognised as the traditional custodian of the land around the central Murray-Goulburn region. The name Yorta Yorta comes from the traditional language spoken by Aboriginal clans across the region. Within one generation of European settlement there was an 85% reduction in the size of the Yorta Yorta population and in 1874 the Aboriginal population was moved to Maloga Mission on the New South Wales side of the Murray River. However, from as early as 1860 and to the present, the Yorta Yorta people have been seeking land and reparations.

Today, the Shire of Campaspe has a higher percentage of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander residents compared to Victoria as a whole and this, together with the names of many of the towns in the municipality, reflect its Aboriginal cultural heritage. These town names include:

- **Ballendella**, meaning ‘resting place’
- **Bamawn**, meaning ‘windy’
- **Carag Carag**, derived from ‘carrak’ meaning ‘magpie’
- **Colbinabbin**, meaning ‘meeting of the red and black soils’
- **Corop**, after the cry of birds – ‘kor-rop’
- **Echuca**, meaning ‘meeting of the waters’
- **Nanneella**, meaning ‘sandy ground’
- **Kyabram**, derived from ‘kiambram’ meaning ‘thick forest’
- **Koyuga**, meaning ‘plain in the forest’
- **Timmering**, derived from ‘tinara’ meaning ‘kangaroo’
- **Tongala**, derived from ‘Dhungala’, the name given to the local section of the Murray River
- **Wyuna**, meaning ‘clear water’.

In 1836 the New South Wales Surveyor General Major Thomas Mitchell named the Campaspe River, after which the Shire takes its name, and from the 1840s pastoralists started to settle in the area. The land was used predominately for sheep grazing, dairy farming and timber. The township of Echuca, originally named Hopwood’s Ferry after Henry Hopwood, who built the Bridge Hotel, was established in 1853.

The Victorian Gold Rushes resulted in increased movement around the area and population growth in nearby towns such as Rushworth and Rochester. The township of Rushworth was established in 1853, as it was a stopping place between the Bendigo and Beechworth goldfields, and Rochester in 1855. The township of Kyabram was established in the late 1870s followed by the townships of Lockington and Gunbower in the late 1800s.
The extension of the railway line to Kyabram and Echuca in the later half of the 1800s prompted increased population growth in both towns. Similarly, the extension of the railway line to Rochester shifted the centre of town away from the eastern side of the Campaspe River. However, the expansion of the railway lines across the state and improvements in the road network caused the decline of paddleboats as a mode of commercial transport. This had a detrimental effect on Echuca’s economy as it had, until then, been Australia’s largest inland port and heavily reliant on the paddleboat industry.

Despite economic down-turns, the population of the municipality increased gradually after World War Two as a result of the construction of two water storages that provided irrigated water for farming in the area. The introduction of manufacturing also contributed to the growing population in the area. Gradually, since the arrival of post-WWII European migrants, who were predominantly Italian, the region has attracted more and more people from diverse backgrounds.

Today the municipality reflects its Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage and culture, with a rich tapestry of architecture, written and oral history and dreaming. The future of Campaspe needs to be built on these strong foundations and the values they represent of community and family.

Wouldn’t it be great if in 20 years…

“lots of people that I know are still here”
The Shire of Campaspe was created in 1994 and is located in north central Victoria, 180 kilometres directly north of Melbourne.

The municipality encompasses approximately 4,500 square kilometres and is a mostly rural area through which the Campaspe, Murray and Goulburn Rivers run. Although our regional location is responsible for many of the things we value about living in the area, like small, friendly communities, it also creates limitations. Transport costs and connectivity in particular, have limited the ability of the municipality to attract new business to help strengthen the economy and provide diverse job opportunities, which in turn impacts the viability of smaller communities.
5 Who we are… and who we will become

The people who make up the Shire of Campaspe reflect its history and development. While relatively homogeneous compared to other regions in Victoria, there is diversity in the people who live in the townships and communities across the municipality. This diversity contributes to the identity and sense of community encountered in the Shire of Campaspe.

**We are growing**
In 2013, the population was just 36,919 and is expected to grow to almost 43,000 by 2036.

**We are becoming older and younger**
Compared to regional Victoria we have a higher population of both younger people (school age residents) and older people (retirees, seniors and the elderly). This trend is expected to grow, leaving us with a ‘population donut’ with less and less working age residents in the municipality.

**We are relatively homogenous**
Almost 90% of residents have Australian, English, Irish or Scottish heritage and 93.3% only speak English. However, non-European migration to the area is an emerging trend.

**We have a large Indigenous population**
2.3% of residents are Indigenous, compared to only 0.7% in Victoria as a whole and 1.5% in regional Victoria. In some towns we have an even higher percentage of Indigenous residents.

**We have low education levels**
As a population we have lower levels of education than the rest of regional Victoria and only 47.2% of residents hold a qualification of some sort (it’s 51.6% for regional Victoria).

**We have low income levels**
In 2011 our median weekly income was only $886, compared to $945 for regional Victoria (and $1,242 for Australia as a whole), although median income levels vary significantly across the municipality.

**We work in a variety of industries**
Approximately 40% of Campaspe’s employed residents work in manufacturing, agriculture (including forestry and fishing) or health care (including social assistance). Many others work in tourism related industries, such as food services, accommodation and retail trade.
The community in the Shire of Campaspe currently benefits from a strong and diverse economy, high employment levels, good health care and education, a healthy natural environment and a friendly, supportive community spirit. However, like other communities across the country, our community is facing a number of challenges that have the potential to impact on its future. How the community and Council meet these challenges and the opportunities they create will determine the sort of future the community in the Shire of Campaspe will enjoy.

Key challenges for the future include:
> Changing employment opportunities
> Increasingly older population
> Drug and alcohol abuse
> Education and training
> Technology changes
> Water access
> Energy availability and carbon cost
> Community facilities renewal
> Changing operational environment
> Changing community expectations.

### Changing employment opportunities
Traditionally the municipality has enjoyed an economy based on agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, and strong levels of employment. Changes to the job market present challenges and opportunities.

**This is because:**
> Australia’s manufacturing industry has been declining over the last twenty years due to competition in the international market as a result of the high Australian dollar and high labour costs
> Technological advancements have reduced the size of the manufacturing industry’s labour force and changed the type of skills necessary to work in the industry
> Farming trend is for larger scale operations with automation, which requires workers with different skills
> New employers, such as large scale retailers, are moving into the area.

**What this means for the community:**
> Fewer jobs that match the current skills of the population leading to the opportunity to upskill and/or retrain
> Increased financial pressures for residents who are retraining or are unemployed
> Changing job opportunities in traditional employment fields such as farming and manufacturing, and a greater variety of jobs within the job market.

**What this means for industry:**
> Need to identify and attract workers with the right skill sets for current and future requirements
> Increasing trend for overseas workers to fill positions within the agricultural industry
> Possible ‘knock-on’ effect of changing employment market on industries such as retail trade and hospitality.
What this means for Council:
> Changing population, including increased overseas migration, impacting on community expectations of Council
> Increased need to attract non-traditional industries to the municipality to promote economic growth and new employment opportunities, and to promote the municipality to professional and skilled workers
> Increased advocacy and focus on economic development to support long term economic viability and diversification of the local economy
> Potential negative economic impact of unemployment on Council’s rate base.

Increasingly older population
As Campaspe’s population increases, so too does the number and percentage of older residents and this trend will continue into the future.
This is because:
> People are living longer than they ever have before
> Greater number of retired people are moving to the area
> Younger people are leaving the area, often never to return.

What this means for the community:
> More people with disabilities, particularly mobility impairment
> Less people and a lower percentage of the population that is employed full time or at all
> Declining populations in small towns
> Capacity to access and pay for services
> Increased pressure on health services including hospitals, doctors and ambulances
> Increased reliance on volunteers and volunteer organisations to meet community needs.

What this means for industry:
> Changes in housing needs so that older people can ‘age in place’ but still be close to family and services
> Changing service needs and demands
> Ageing workforce and increased difficulty in recruiting and retaining younger staff locally
> Increase in the need for medical services.

What this means for Council:
> Increased and changing demand for facilities, services, programs and recreational opportunities
> Decreasing demographic diversity
> Need to provide accessible services in smaller communities
> Less capacity to pay for services.

Drug and alcohol abuse, particularly amongst young people
A rise in drug use, especially anti-social drugs such as ‘ice’ and other methamphetamines, and higher levels of alcohol abuse are concerning many residents, particularly young people.
This is because:
> Drug dealers are deliberately targeting regional areas
> There is an increasing problem across the whole Australian community
> Methamphetamines are highly addictive and their use can often result in violent, anti-social behaviour and have long-term mental health impacts.
> There are a lack of facilities and events to entertain young people
> Alcohol is widely promoted and easily available
What this means for the community:
> Increased pressure on health related services including hospitals, ambulances, doctors and psychologists
> Increased pressure on law enforcement and support services including police, courts, correctional centres and community legal centres
> Less young people engaged in formal work or study which will negatively impact their employment opportunities and/or income
> Potential increase in anti-social and violent behaviour and consequently increased fear about safety within the community.

What this means for industry:
> Less young people with sufficient skills and/or educational levels to fill local employment opportunities.

What this means for Council:
> Impact upon existing services and changing service needs of the community
> Increased need to partner and advocate with other organisations to identify solutions to community challenges
> Need to review design and layout of Council buildings and the public environment, to improve passive surveillance and public safety
> Increased need to support community and evidence-based initiatives that educate and empower young people in making healthy choices concerning drugs and alcohol.

Education and training
Campaspe’s data shows low levels of education across the population and consequently lower incomes.

This is because:
> Employment opportunities in manufacturing and agriculture have historically not required formal qualifications
> The pressure to earn an income at an earlier age is greater in low income families which can limit educational attainment
> Young people who leave Campaspe to study do not return to the community until they are ready to start a family, if at all.

What this means for the community:
> As education is closely correlated to income, low income levels are likely to persist
> Low education attainment and low income increases the risk of certain health conditions including obesity
> Loss of young people to education institutions whom may never return to the district.

What this means for industry and the farming sector:
> Companies that require highly skilled workers may look unfavourably on Campaspe which limits the diversity of industries in the municipality
> Businesses have difficulty recruiting skilled staff locally
> Local staff with the appropriate skills to oversee high-tech farming equipment and processes are not available.

What this means for Council:
> Difficulty in recruiting skilled staff locally
> Affordability of services provided to the community
> Increased need to partner and advocate with other organisations to identify solutions to community challenges.
Technology changes

Although the NBN and other forms of internet access provide great opportunities to regional areas, the municipality lags behind regional Victoria in terms of access.

This is because:
> The cost of broadband internet makes it unaffordable for many residents
> Distance reduces the speed and quality of an ADSL internet connection and therefore rural areas are difficult to service effectively
> Some areas of the municipality only have access to dial-up internet connections
> Campaspe’s comparatively small dispersed population means there is no commercial incentive for the provision of high speed services

> The municipality is not fully serviced and different parts of the community have different methods of accessibility.

What this means for the community:
> Communication is more difficult meaning communities are socially isolated
> Other areas benefit from the advantages of the NBN, at our community’s expense
> Need to adapt to evolving technology as it becomes available
> Less able to take advantage of modern service delivery options, such as online health and education services.

What this means for industry and the farming sector:
> Local businesses are less efficient and less competitive due to a lack of high-speed access
> Campaspe is less attractive to new and emerging businesses that are reliant upon high speed internet access
> Reduced ability to implement automated farming equipment that relies on remote monitoring and operation
> Unable to take advantage of modern service delivery options, such as video conferencing, online education, instant online transactions, product sales and large data transfer.

What this means for Council:
> Council is more restricted in its provision of online services knowing the existing limitations of internet service
> Increased need for advocacy to support investment for advanced rollout of NBN and other services across the municipality
> Reduced efficiency given reduced internet speeds and community availability of high speed broadband
> Increased advocacy and focus on economic development to support economic and business investment generating employment by new and existing businesses within the municipality.

Water Access

Water for agricultural purposes has become less available and water affordability is a continuing challenge.

This is because:
> The Murray Darling Basin Plan limits the amount of water available for irrigation so that it can be allocated for environmental purposes
> Climate in southern Australia is predicted to become dryer
> Retail price setting and taking, and changes to the market environment affect the availability and affordability of water.
What this means for the community:
> Changing employment opportunities in the agricultural industry, as farming practices adapt and respond to water availability
> Need to upskill and retrain to keep pace with emerging farming methods.

What this means for the farming sector:
> Opportunity to innovate and increase agricultural efficiency through technology
> Increased cost of water that could threaten the viability of some agricultural businesses
> Changes to crops being produced and to agricultural production levels, increasing production in some sectors but reducing it in others
> Increased investment in agricultural automation both on and off farm
> Transitional farming as producers adapt practices to suit farming with less water
> Potential increase in soil erosion, pests and weeds due to the absence of irrigation and more vacated agricultural land.

What this means for Council:
> Different infrastructure needs for farming sector as crop volumes increase and crop types change
> Changing demographics resulting in a reduction in youth and the working population and increased older people
> Need to attract new manufacturing and processing industries
> Increased advocacy and focus on economic development to support long term economic viability and diversification of the local economy.

Energy availability and carbon cost
Predicted changes in the cost, availability and reliability of energy supplies have the potential to significantly impact on existing industries and our standard and cost of living.

This is because:
> Demand for energy is increasing
> Greenhouse gas reduction targets and the removal of current fossil fuel subsidies are expected to further increase the price of energy
> The price of carbon is expected to increase
> Energy infrastructure is ageing.

What this means for the community:
> Country living may be perceived as being less environmentally sustainable given increasing fuel cost and limited public transport.

What this means for industry and the farming sector:
> Production costs will increase which will make the manufacturing industry in particular less competitive when compared to off shore production costs
> Increasing energy costs will increase the cost of automation and other efficiencies, reducing the viability of farming
> Increased investment and reliance on renewable energy sources, such as solar will be required.

What this means for Council:
> It may become harder to attract new industries to the municipality, leading to reduced diversity in the economy and less opportunities to attract skilled workers
> Increased input costs (such as fuel) to provide services across the Shire
> Need to put measures in place which support the uptake of renewal energy by the community and business, and which reduces its own energy usage.
Community facilities renewal

As the owners of community assets, including roads, bridges, and public facilities, such as libraries, swimming pools etc., Council must effectively manage and maintain these.

This is because:

> Council only has a limited source of income – the rates it collects from its citizens, grants from state and federal governments, and fees for services
> Grants for the construction of new infrastructure do not cover the cost to maintain or renew the infrastructure
> Our population is growing and we need to provide additional and updated services to look after people properly (further reducing the funds available for infrastructure)
> Community expectations around the standard of facilities is increasing
> State and federal governments historically funded the construction of many community assets, including roads and recreation facilities
> Many of our assets are hard to protect – from the weather, from vandalism and ageing
> Our smaller townships have declining populations, and therefore rate base, to support infrastructure
> New community assets are expensive to establish, maintain and renew.

What this means for everyone:

> Rates from larger communities, like Echuca, will continue to ‘pay’ for infrastructure in other parts of the municipality
> May need to travel to access facilities as the need to rationalise assets increases and they are spread across the municipality
> Local assets may be updated less frequently or decommissioned
> Increased user fees and facilities available
> Reduction in the scale of the road network and/or the standard of road being provided to meet community need
> Reduced community facilities available to support local workforces
> Facilities that meet current and future demands, not historical needs
> Roads will not be maintained as frequently or to the same standards.

What this means for Council:

> We need our assets and infrastructure to meet community needs, whilst balancing increasing service expectations and this will mean targeting funding carefully
> We need to carefully plan for our future financially so that we have adequate funds to maintain and renew appropriate assets and infrastructure
> Community facilities will need to have a number of functions so they are fully utilised to justify their expense
> Increased need to rationalise community facilities and their maintenance
> Increased need for collaborative procurement and delivery to reduce costs
> Rationalise the road network to reflect current community requirements, reducing the number of roads being maintained and maintaining others to a higher standard
> We need to plan ahead to ensure community and public transport is available to allow access to community facilities across the municipality and in other regional centres.
Changing operational environment

Financial pressure to meet increasing responsibilities and funding that does not align with Council’s core responsibilities or statutory obligations due to cost-shifting.

This is because:

> Council’s responsibilities, the functions it undertakes and its core services are established by legislation and supporting regulation, and through state and federal government policies, are increasing

> There is a well-established Australia-wide trend of both the state and federal governments transferring their responsibilities to local government, without transferring sufficient funding or grants to cover the cost of that service delivery

> Decreasing federal government grants are not keeping pace with the actual cost of service delivery and the recently announced cap to the growth of local government grants will impact into the future.

What this means for the community:

> There may be a reduction in services and facilities Council provides

> There may be an increase in rates or a shift to a ‘user-pays’ model for Council services and community facilities.

What this means for industry and the farming sector:

> There may be an increase in rates or a shift to a ‘user-pays’ model for Council services.

What this means for Council:

> There is increased financial pressure on service delivery, particularly home and community care, emergency management, recreation services (aquatic facilities) and public libraries

> Council will need to reduce services, increase fees and charges to reflect the true cost of service delivery and/or increase rates to make up the shortfall

> The community is less able to afford services

> Council will need to rationalise community assets

> Services will need to be rationalised and provided to meet only identified community needs

> Increased legislation and compliance requirements will drive increased costs

> Increased collaborative agreements with Council and service providers to reduce cost

> Need to investigate alternative funding sources such as through entrepreneurial activities.
Changing community expectations

Local government has experienced significant change over the last thirty years however expectations of the community about what Council should provide are not necessarily framed within a good understanding of what Council is able to provide.

This is because:

> Council’s role in delivering services has expanded more than its resources
> Community expectations are high based on the view that prior to the creation of the Shire of Campaspe in 1994, smaller local councils provided more services or higher standards of service
> Changes in the community demographic has resulted in an increased need for some services
> There is an increasing lack of trust in government in general across the country.

What this means for everyone:

> The community’s expectations of Council may not have caught up with its changing circumstances
> There is some community resentment towards Council as a result of unmet expectations
> Council and the community working together to ensure services are reflective of the current environment and service needs
> Participation in opportunities to engage with Council and contribute to its decision making.

Constructive relationships with the community, and the not-for-profit sector, service delivery partners and business provide the space for difficult discussions to take place. Given the future challenges facing Council and the community the need for these conversations, particularly around the prioritisation of services, will also increase.

Building community resilience so that communities can work together, respond to and recover from disasters, challenges and tragedies, and join in celebrating successes can be one of the most intangible and important contributions that local government can make. Community resilience grows from doing, and Council can assist communities to develop their resilience by fostering conversations and responsive planning within the community.
More than 500 members of the community participated in engagement activities, sharing their vision, values and aspirations for the future, and identifying the factors they think are ‘just right’ now and those that need changing. We heard from all different types of people from across the municipality – older people, young families, Indigenous people, retirees and those heading towards retirement, young people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Thanks to the support of secondary school principals and staff, 75 secondary school students participated in the online survey, giving us great feedback from young people. As the upcoming generation of community members who will help shape the future of the community in the Shire of Campaspe their feedback will be highlighted throughout this section of Campaspe: Our Future, whenever it reflects a different view to other participants.

NOW…

**What the community values most about living in the Shire of Campaspe**

**Friendly communities** – The overwhelming response from the community was that friendly communities and the sense of belonging was what people value most about living in Campaspe. Supporting each other in times of trouble and having a community spirit were also very highly valued.

**Family-friendly environment** – A great place to bring up kids, with good quality schools and community facilities, such as pools and libraries, were also reasons people love living in Campaspe.

**Healthy lifestyles** – Campaspe was also valued as a place where there was the right environment to live a healthy lifestyle, a place where there was peace and quiet but which was also accessible to large regional centres, such as Bendigo and Shepparton, as well as Melbourne.

**Economy** – A diverse economy that provides job opportunities, the environment in which to start and run a business, and an affordable lifestyle was also important.

Young people also value friendly communities, the family-friendly environment and the healthy lifestyle in Campaspe, in addition to the quality of the schools and community facilities.

**What is ‘just right’ now**

In addition to the things the community values most about living in Campaspe, the things said to be working particularly well now are:

> Standard and availability of community services
> Availability and standard of sporting facilities
> Community facilities such as libraries and swimming pools
> Size of towns and smaller communities.

“More money for education, primary and secondary school”

“…”
‘Quality of life’ in Campaspe

More than 60% of survey participants, and 68% of young participants, rated the quality of life in Campaspe as ‘fantastic’ or ‘pretty good’ and a number of participants in the outreach activities said they wouldn’t change a thing about the municipality and were happy with how things currently are!

The factors that were most important to the quality of life in Campaspe were:
1. Employment opportunities
2. Health care
3. Sense of safety/security
4. Low levels of drugs and alcohol abuse
5. Educational opportunities
6. Strength of the local economy
7. Low levels of violence
8. Natural environment.

While very similar, the factors young people identified as most important were in a different order:
1. Employment opportunities
2. Educational opportunities
3. Sense of safety/security
4. Low levels of violence
5. Low levels of drugs and alcohol abuse
6. Natural environment
7. Health care
8. Activities for young people.

INTO THE FUTURE...

Future vision

The community were asked to articulate their vision for the future community they want to live in. The results were:
Concerns about Campaspe’s future
When asked to identify the things that were of most concern to them, when thinking about the future, people said:

About people – future levels of drugs and alcohol abuse and levels of violence were most concerning, for young people in particular.

Over 98% of young people who undertook the online survey said when thinking about the future they were concerned about the level of drug and alcohol abuse and levels of violence. Almost 64% of young people were highly concerned about drug and alcohol abuse and over 58% about levels of violence.

About places – the maintenance and improvement of public infrastructure and the natural environment were the things of most concern.

For young people, the availability and affordability of land for farming was also a concern, as was the availability and standard of sporting facilities.

About prosperity – people are most concerned about future employment opportunities, and the cost and availability of both energy and water.

For young people, the affordability of housing is the second greatest concern after employment opportunities, while energy and water availability and cost are their third and fourth greatest concerns, respectively.

What needs to change
The overwhelming response from the community, when asked what needs to change about living in Campaspe now to help create the future community people wanted to live in, was the level of drug and alcohol abuse.

For young people in particular, this was a significant concern. They also identified the level of violence as something that needs to change.

Other things the community identified as needing to change were:

> Employment opportunities
> Sense of safety/security
> Activities for young people
> Strength of the local economy
> Transport connectivity.

Priorities for the future
Stakeholders were asked to identify what they thought the priorities for the future should be, given the challenges and opportunities the future will present to the community. Community workshop participants were later asked to use these ideas to rank their priorities. Collectively, the results indicated the top six priorities for the future were:

1. Workforce development, education and employment opportunities
2. Social inclusion, where everyone feels welcome
3. Investment and economic growth
4. Infrastructure for technology and transport, such as roads, IT, utilities, rail etc
5. Environmental resources such as the availability, cost and sustainability of water and energy

These priorities reflect the feedback received from outreach activities and the online survey, which also identified safety and security, and the natural environment as priorities.
8 Principles

To successfully deliver the community’s vision for its future, five key principles have been developed. These principles articulate what needs to be done to protect the things the community values and how the community’s vision could be achieved.

**HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**
Protection of our natural environment and delivery of programs and services to support a connected and healthy community to:
> Foster our community spirit
> Ensure the long-term availability of natural resources
> Encourage environmental tourism
> Provide a healthy environment, particularly for young people
> Assist community members to make healthy lifestyle choices.

**LAND USE**
Sustainable use of land, which encourages population growth whilst ensuring the viability of farming and industry, and development which consolidates and respects the historical built environment to:
> Maintain the essence of our towns and smaller communities
> Meet changing housing needs, including population growth and the ageing population
> Protect valuable farming land and ensure its affordability
> Encourage industry
> Support cultural tourism.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**
Establish and maintain community facilities that are appropriate to the needs of communities to:
> Ensure the longevity of community assets
> Support tourism
> Attract business to the area
> Provide connectivity to other centres
> Be financially responsible.

**BUSINESS GROWTH**
Foster a business-friendly environment that encourages business growth and innovation to support local jobs and a diverse economy to:
> Protect the viability of communities and the Shire
> Develop a skilled and professional local workforce
> Work with the transport and logistics sectors to ensure strategic planning and state and regional initiatives support local freight and transport needs, and that investment is targeted to maximise productivity
> Provide a range of local skilled job opportunities so young people continue their education and stay in their communities
> Attract skilled and professional workers to the area
> Ensure economic resilience.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
Model responsible Council decision-making, underpinned by strategic planning and community input to:
> Ensure community money is spent where it is most needed
> Provide the community with the opportunity to give feedback on decisions that affect them
> Meet the changing needs of the community
> Provide appropriate support to the community and those most in need.

These five principles will be used by Council to inform its strategic decision-making and whenever it develops or reviews strategic and operational plans.
9 Strategies and actions

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT – Protection of our natural environment and delivery of programs and services to support a connected and healthy community

What Council can do

> Provide access to and support for programs that reduce social isolation such as arts and recreation
> Increase community awareness of family violence prevalence, impacts and effective ways to respond as a bystander
> Promote alcohol and drug free events with a particular focus on young people
> Support evidence based community initiatives that educate and empower young people to make healthy choices concerning drugs and alcohol
> Support local community events and encourage the use of Council-owned facilities such as halls and sports grounds by community groups
> Provide community transport to ensure isolated community members have access to services and programs
> Demonstrate environmental best practice in carbon-neutral operations, through renewable energy options and sustainable activities, such as recycling

What others can do

Community:
> Participate in community events and support community groups
> Obtain information on how to be more environmentally sustainable from Council and other organisations, and participate in available educational opportunities on environmental sustainability
> Introduce more sustainable practices at home or work, such as recycling, the use of renewable energy and harvested water
> Support businesses that practise environmental sustainability
> Join and participate in land care groups or other environmental community groups to better the environment
> Volunteer and support programs aimed at reducing social isolation.

Business:
> Introduce sustainable practices, such as the effective management of and reduction in waste and water harvesting
> Use renewable energy and up-take energy saving technology.

Developers:
> Build clean, green buildings and facilities that maximise the use of environmentally sustainable technology.
**LAND USE** – Sustainable use of land, which encourages population growth whilst ensuring the viability of farming and industry, and development which consolidates and respects the historical built environment

**What Council can do**
- Work with developers to ensure housing availability meets the changing needs of the community, such as ageing residents
- Ensure appropriate planning laws are in place to protect historic buildings and places
- Encourage commercial development that supports visual amenity
- Work with the community to identify areas where higher density housing would be appropriate
- Facilitate developers and the community working together to establish the appropriate amenity of new developments
- Advocate for the re-use and retrofitting of existing buildings, where appropriate, for housing and other uses
- Develop and implement strategic plans for each town and township, in partnership with the community
- Ensure new land uses are located to maximise access to appropriate infrastructure, such as public transport, and advocate/plan for additional public transport as necessary
- Advocate for new residential developments to include affordable housing for low-income people and accessible housing for older residents
- Assist older residents to age in place by allowing the ready modification of existing properties, for example for granny flats or sub-divisions
- Identify areas within the municipality to be used for agriculture
- Support development of strategies to provide alternative transport options for people who are isolated and/or older, such as carpooling.

**What others can do**
**Developers:**
- Work with Council to ensure housing availability meets the changing needs of the community, such as ageing residents
- Involve the community in establishing the appropriate visual amenity of new developments
- Look for opportunities to re-use and retro-fit existing buildings for housing and other uses
- Respect historic building and the existing visual amenity.

**Community:**
- Participate in opportunities to provide feedback on developments
- Volunteer for community groups who work to maintain and protect historic buildings and places
- Recognise that as the community changes needs and townscapes also need to change.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES** – Community facilities that are appropriate to the needs of communities

**What Council can do**
- When replacing existing community facilities, consider how new infrastructure can be multi-purpose or multi-use
- Make strategic decisions about the future needs of the community and rationalise resources when necessary
- Consider the needs of older residents and non-car users when planning footpath and road upgrades to aid accessibility and the use of non-motorised transport, such as walking and cycling
- When rationalising community infrastructure identify how public transport can support community members accessing available facilities across the municipality and in other regional centres
- Advocate with appropriate state and federal government agencies, such as VicRoads, VicTrack, Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Health, to ensure future infrastructure meets the needs of the growing population and its changing nature
- Advocate for affordable and efficient public transport
- Develop asset management plans that ensure community facilities are appropriate for the size and demographic of communities
- Maintain effective data management systems to efficiently manage and maintain community facilities.
What others can do
Community:
> Lobby relevant agencies to ensure the community’s views on future infrastructure in the municipality are heard
> Recognise that as the community changes community facilities also need to change
> Participate in helping Council to prioritise infrastructure needs and plans.

Business:
> Lobby relevant agencies to ensure business needs are considered when planning future infrastructure in the municipality
> Work with Council to ensure it understands the infrastructure needs of business.

BUSINESS GROWTH – Business-friendly environment that encourages business growth and innovation to support local jobs and a diverse economy

What Council can do
> Work with educational institutions, community based organisations and other levels of government to encourage life-long learning and a well-educated and skilled community
> Work with the transport and logistics sectors to ensure strategic planning and state and regional initiatives support local freight and transport needs, and that investment is targeted to maximise productivity
> Reduce red tape to assist businesses efficiency
> Advocate to other levels of governments for infrastructure that supports business establishment and development
> Support business chambers to provide information and promote local business networks
> Advocate with state government to ensure the availability and accessibility of all levels of education.

What others can do
Community:
> Embrace life-long learning opportunities and skill development
> Support local businesses and enterprises.

Business:
> Work with Council on mutually beneficial initiatives
> Advocate to other levels of government for support
> Support other local businesses and enterprises
> Provide genuine job opportunities to young people, especially young Indigenous people
> Participate in business networks and forums.

ACCOUNTABILITY – Responsible Council decision-making, underpinned by strategic planning and community input

What Council can do
> Ensure the long-term intentions and strategic plans of other levels of government are considered when making decisions, such as the Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan; Plan Melbourne; the Freight State; and the Murray Basin Rail Project amongst others
> Consult with the community on decisions that affect them
> Maintain effective data management systems so that relevant and accurate information is available to support good decision making
> Regularly provide information to the community about the real cost of service delivery and infrastructure, and the utilisation of rates across the municipality, so that community members can provide informed feedback on Council’s intentions
> Partner with others to ensure coordination of existing or new services to meet the needs of residents with multiple or complex needs, such as those with disabilities, older Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
> Undertake regional strategic planning and projects with regional partners, including neighbouring councils and state governments.

What others can do
Community:
> Provide constructive feedback to Council and participate in feedback gathering opportunities
> Understand the fiscal restraints on Council and its need to prioritise community needs.

Business:
> Work with Council on mutually beneficial initiatives
> Participate in business networks and forums, and opportunities to provide feedback to Council.

Council’s delivery of the strategies and actions supporting Campaspe: Our Future will be undertaken within the context of its legislative responsibilities. Additionally, the strategic and operational plans Council must develop will be informed by Campaspe: Our Future and its principles, ensuring that all Council decision-making and service provision will be aligned to our community’s vision for the future.
10 How we will know we are on track

Working towards the community vision is a long term enterprise and community changes will indicate if progress towards the vision is being achieved.

To measure the progress we make towards delivering the vision in Campaspe: Our Future Council will use a range of indicators*, including those measuring community wellbeing. Community wellbeing indicators are collated independently of Council by the University of Melbourne, from a number of sources, and measure changes in five key topic areas. The results of these measures over the long term will indicate how the community has changed.

Long term measures will include:

**Healthy, safe and inclusive communities**
- Satisfaction with life
- Feeling part of the community
- Feeling of safety.

**Dynamic resilient local economies**
- Secondary school retention rates
- Workforce skills
- Rate of employment.

**Sustainable built and natural environments**
- Housing affordability
- Household waste recycling.

**Culturally rich and vibrant communities**
- Opportunities for and participation in arts and cultural activities.

**Democratic and engaged communities**
- Opportunities to have a say on important local issues.

In addition to community wellbeing measures, progress will also be tracked by considering trends in:
- Use of water and renewable energy
- Energy efficiency
- Waste to landfill
- Planning application processing timeframes
- Usage levels of community assets
- Accessibility to public and commercial premises
- Public transport usage.

*Success will be dependent on multiple contributions, not just Council’s, including the community, business, the not-for-profit sector, other government agencies and community organisations.

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A business friendly environment is important because

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job creation and productivity create wealth and pride in the community
Although *Campaspe: Our Future* will be used as a guiding document for Council, to help shape its decision-making and the development of shorter term operational plans, it is a plan for the whole community.

The plan articulates the strategies and principles Council, the community, delivery partners and stakeholder groups need to implement in order to create the future the community wants. It recognises that all members of the community within the Shire of Campaspe have a responsibility to work together to bring about the community-wide changes needed so that the community’s vision for its future is realised.

The successful implementation of the community vision will also be affected by decisions made by both State and Federal governments and by other external factors such as the economy.
The future our community wants

Everyone has a responsibility to work together

Federal Government

State Government

Economy

Community groups

Stakeholder groups

Council

Delivery partners

Principles

Strategies