



Economic Development And Tourism Strategy

Summary of the
Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper

NOTE: The following is a summary of the full Economic Development and Tourism Strategy – Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper.

Prepared by Cloudstreet Economics for Campaspe Shire Council



Acknowledgement of Country

The municipal area of Campaspe lies within the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples.

Council acknowledges their unique cultural heritage, and pays our respects to their ancestors, descendants, and emerging leaders as the Traditional Owners of this Country.

We acknowledge their living culture and unique role in the life of this region.



Contents

1. Report Overview	1
2. Economic Overview	3
2.1 The Role of the Tiers of Government	3
2.2 Global, Australian and Victorian Context	5
2.3 Campaspe Economic Context	7
3. Economic Overview	13
3.1 The importance of Tourism to Victoria	13
3.2 The Campaspe Visitor Economy	14
3.3 The Campaspe Visitor Offering and Profile	16
3.4 Destination Strengths and the USP	17
3.5 Council Role in the Tourism Industry	18
4. The Role and Activities of Council in Economic Development	19
4.1 The Role of Council in Economic Development for the Region	19
5. Planning for the Future	24
5.1 The Campaspe Advantage	24
5.2 Threats and Challenges	25
5.3 Key Immediate and Emerging Trends and Issues	26
6. Possible Strategic Principles and Priorities	29
Acronyms	30

1. Report Overview

The Shire of Campaspe is in the heart of one of the richest and most diverse agriculture and food processing regions in Victoria. It has a vibrant rural community comprising many towns including Echuca, Kyabram, Rochester, Lockington, Gunbower, Rushworth, Stanhope, Girgarre, Toolleen and Tongala. The shire is best known for its history, natural assets and relationship with Australia's iconic Murray River. It is recognised as a thriving community with opportunities for growth.

Promoting the economic viability and sustainability of the local community is a primary objective of Council. Council's role in economic development is to facilitate, advocate, enhance and maintain an environment that enables the community to sustain and improve its economic status.

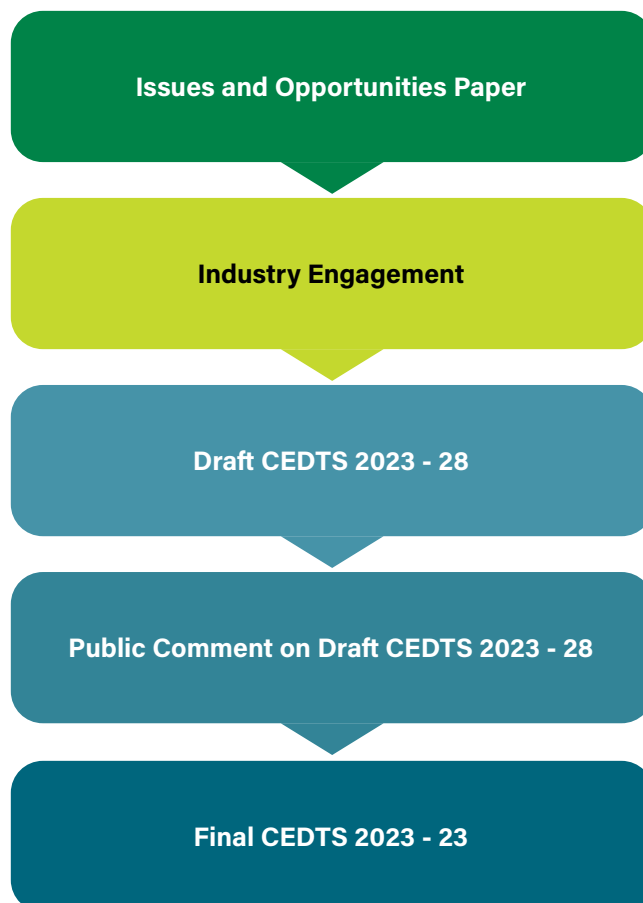
Local economic development is led by business and industry and supported by government. Council will not necessarily always be responsible for delivering a particular outcome, this will be produced in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

Council stimulates the economy as one of the shire's largest employers, and delivers a major capital expenditure program where, through procurement strategies, a high proportion of local spend supports local businesses.

The development and implementation of an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy provides Council with a strategic economic direction for the shire. The previous *Economic Development Strategy 2014 -2019* was completed and endorsed by Council in 2014.¹ This strategy was then further supported by the *Loddon Campaspe Economic Growth Strategy*, which was jointly developed by the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership and the Regional Development Australia Loddon Mallee Committee.²

Council is collaborating with the community to prepare a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2023-2028 (CEDTS 2023-28), with the development stages detailed below.

Figure 1: Development of the CEDTS 2023-28



The first stage in the development of the strategy is this *Economic Development and Tourism Strategy - Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* (the Issues Paper), which will be used to inform the next step of Industry Engagement.³

¹ A majority of the actions and initiatives in the previous strategy have been completed or are in the process of implementation.

² The regional stakeholders were Campaspe Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council.

³ The final CEDTS will be a council document, outlining actions where Council can assist the progression of economic development. As a council document, actions in the final strategy will be confined by the key functions of Council with Council's role being in assisting to create an environment that is supportive of economic growth and development.

Key Issues and Questions for Consideration

Below is a summary of the questions identified for consideration by Council and industry stakeholders in the Issues Paper. These are not designed as 'stand-alone' questions, but rather need to be considered in conjunction with the contents of the various sections of the Issues Paper.

Section 2: Economic Overview

- Delivery of an EDS is a partnership between all tiers of government and industry stakeholders – what mechanisms and structures can be used to ensure this partnership operates effectively?

Section 3: The Role of Tourism in the Campaspe Economy

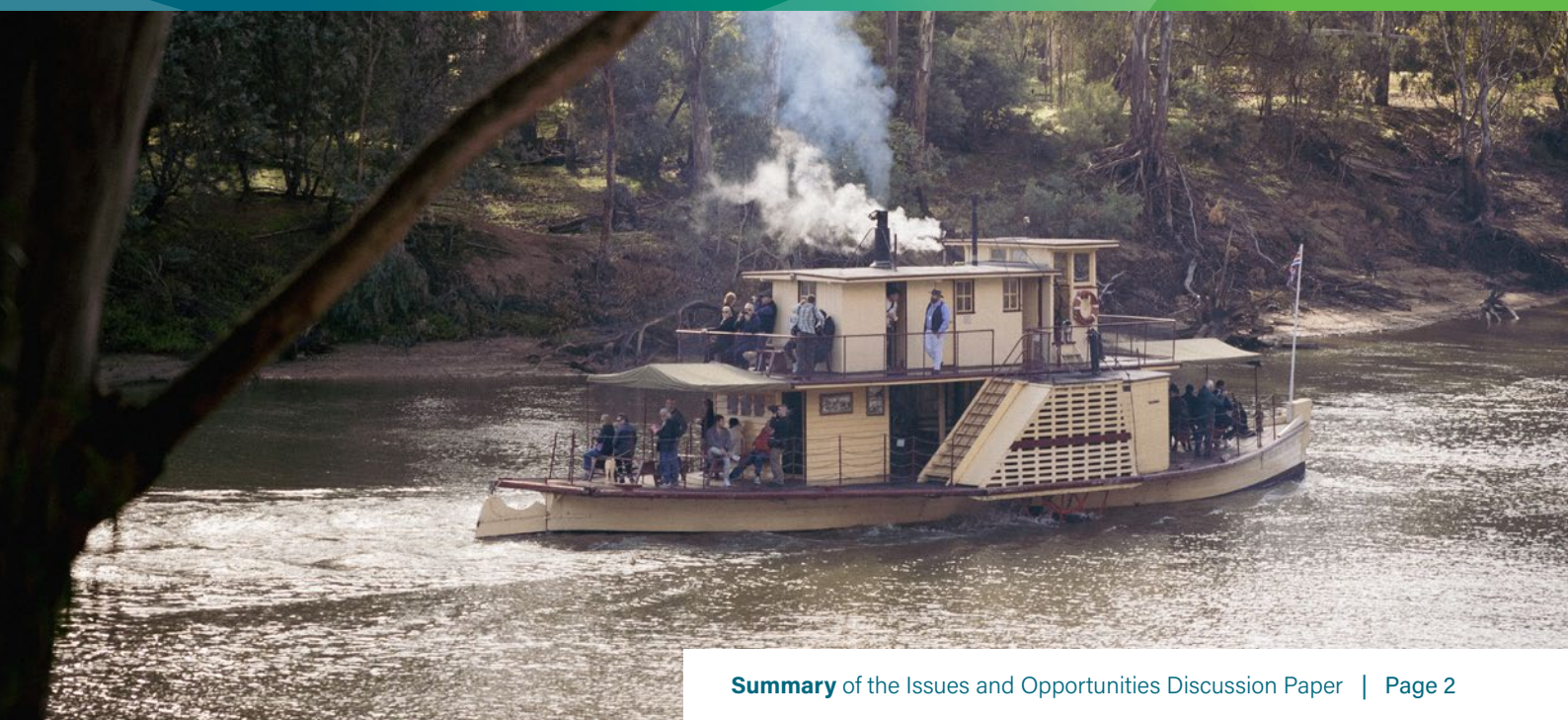
- What are the key tourism strengths of the region and what forms the regions USP?
- What opportunities exist to further develop the visitor offering and support the visitor economy?
- What are the main key strategies for the region, and what is the role of Council in delivery of the identified strategies?
- Based on these strategies, what are the proposed Actions relevant for Council and, of these Actions, which ones are regarded as being of priority?
- What framework is required to oversee implementation of the Actions? How does this fit within the existing Governance structure? Are there any suggested changes to the Governance structure?

Section 5: Planning for the Future

- Campaspe Advantages - Are these identified advantages appropriate?
- Campaspe Advantages - Are there any others to consider?
- Campaspe Advantages - What should the Council do in regard to the EDS to take advantage of these advantages?
- Campaspe Threats and Challenges - Are these identified threats and challenges appropriate?
- Campaspe Threats and Challenges - Are there any others to consider?
- Campaspe Threats and Challenges - What the implications of these threats and challenges to the Council EDS?
- What are the implications of these (identified) trends to the Shire and to the EDS of Council?
- Do these indicate opportunities that may be appropriate for Council to pursue?

Section 6: Possible Strategic Principles and Priorities

- What initiatives may be considered to support the priorities?

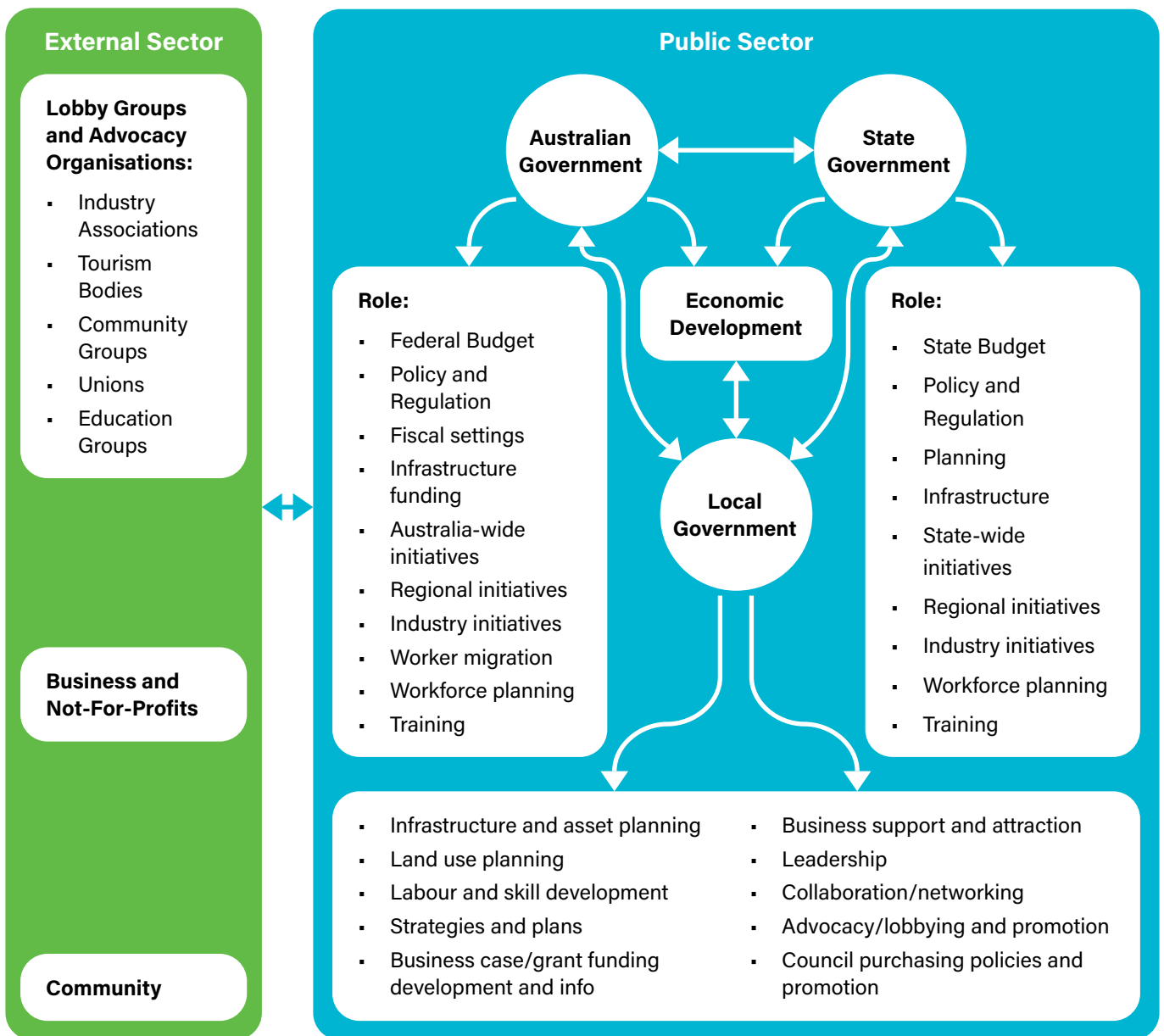


2. Economic Overview

2.1 The Role of the Tiers of Government

Australia operates under a three tier system of Government with each of the tiers – Australian, State (Victoria) and Local (Campaspe) - having a role in economic development, However, the roles are often not clear and there is a high level of interdependency between each tier.

Figure 3: The Three Tier System of Government



2.1.1 Australian Government

The Australian Government performs a key role in local and regional economic development both direct and indirectly, including through taxation, funding and regulations along with being a key investor in regional and urban development infrastructure. The majority of funds for infrastructure are associated with transport, and a few smaller programmes support other infrastructure needs for community and regional development. Further funding programmes include subsidies for public services in remote locations, along with tax offsets for individuals in those locations.

2.1.2 Victorian Government

At a Victorian Government level, while various state departments and agencies have aspects of responsibility for facilitating economic development within the State, primary responsibility rests with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).

DJSIR is tasked with bringing together many of the key functions that drive economic development and job creation across the state. These include investment attraction and facilitation, trade, innovation, regional development and small business, together with key services to sectors such as the creative industries, resources and tourism.

Within DJSIR, the key agency responsible for regional development is Regional Development Victoria (RDV). The agency works closely with various Victorian government agencies including local councils to facilitate economic, infrastructure and community development in regional Victoria.

The other state bodies of relevance in regional economic development are the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), Agriculture Victoria (AgV), Visit Victoria (VV) and Local Government Victoria (LGV).

2.1.3 Campaspe Shire Council

The principal legislation in Victoria that governs the operation of Council's economic development is the Local Government Act 2020 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Under the Local Government Act 2020, Council performs its role in relation to several principals, which include:⁴

- priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community
- the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks
- the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision-making collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.

Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the objectives of the planning framework include 'to enable land use and development planning and policy to be easily integrated with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels.'⁵

Within local governments the focus on economic development can vary widely with it stretching from being a secondary or minor role to a major function of the agency. Campaspe Shire Council regards economic development as a core activity with the role of Council.

Regional economic development in Australia is highly complex. At a regional level, many elements of the local economy rely on the contributions made by State and Australian governments. Therefore, any local EDS needs to recognise the importance of the State and Australian governments and ensure the activities of these agencies is integrated into the strategy.

Question for Consideration:

Delivery of an EDS is a partnership between all tiers of government and industry stakeholders – what mechanisms and structures can be used to ensure this partnership operates effectively?

⁴ Local Government Act 2020 (Authorised Version incorporating amendments as at 10 May 2022), Clause 9.

⁵ Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Authorised Version incorporating amendments as at 25 April 2020), Clause 4(2)(c).

2.2 Global, Australian and Victorian Context

The following provides an overview of the medium term outlook at a global, Australian and Victorian level including a consideration of the key policy setting framework. The key implications of this setting for Campaspe is then considered in Section 4.

2.2.1 Key Global Trends:

It is relevant to consider both longer-term global and regional economic trends, along with trends directly associated with the current uncertain global economic environment, in the development of an economic strategy for Campaspe, as these can have important implications for the local business environment. The following provides a high level outline of the trends and associated implications.

General Economic Trends

- **Globalisation** – there has been for a number of years a clear trend of globalisation of businesses. Globalisation forces, such as the creation of global financial markets, improved communication, knowledge and technology transfer, improved transportation and the internet is fundamentally changing the way we all do business.
- **Clustering** - Globalisation is changing the nature and location of the way we manufacture goods and complete research, which results in greater industry specialisation or clustering. Clustering focuses on models for ideal industry sites and considers transport costs, raw material costs and final product costs. Benefits to a local economy (such as knowledge creation and sharing, innovation, resource sharing, scale economies) increases with cluster numbers.
- **Competitive advantage** – the concept of competitive advantage puts the focus on efficiencies, performance and intangibles such as quality of life and social capital, rather than just cost, which defines the concept of comparative advantage. Many governments still promote a comparative advantage to attract industry, rather than the more all-encompassing competitive advantage. Due to the impacts of globalisation and clustering, a comparative advantage alone is no longer the only consideration for a relocating organisation or business.
- **The Knowledge Economy** – we have now entered the era of the Knowledge Economy which has implications for the structure of industry and for the type of professionals that are required to support and develop this new economy. (Refer discussion below in regard to 'creative professionals')
- **Social Capital and Quality of Life** – Quality of life is now an important relocation consideration for high income earning families, cashed-up retirees and relocating businesses with this contributing to the social capital of a community. Meeting these Quality of Life attributes is important in attracting 'creative professionals' (highly skilled, high income earning and mobile professionals) who in turn create economic opportunities.⁶
- **Climate Change** – the impacts of Climate Change are being felt around the world with it driving government policy, influencing energy pricing, and increasing pressure on corporates to develop and implement emission reduction strategies.

These trends influence the infrastructure and services required to support the economy of the future along with the importance of focussing on clustering opportunities. It also provides a guide to changes that are occurring in the location and social structure features that are now important in attracting new business and investment.

⁶ Creative professionals' are attracted to areas that have developed their quality of life factors including good social and physical infrastructure, accessible 'lifestyle amenity' networks, high standard sporting facilities and reliable internet technology availability.

Trends Associated with the current Uncertain Economic Environment

The above has also resulted in the exacerbation of an already existing uncertain economic environment which will have potentially significant impacts on the Australian economy going forward.

- The Australian Government forecast for global real GDP growth over the next 4-5 years is relatively low, with the near term outlook in particular being highly uncertain due to the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing impact of COVID-19.
- This outlook will also be impacted as various countries continue to remove fiscal and monetary support and adopt an increasingly protectionist stance.
- The Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered a surge in energy prices.
- Global supply chains remain disrupted and, while temporary, they may continue as a constraint on growth in the medium term.
- There is a growing trend to increasing individual country self-sufficiency.

2.2.2 Key Australian Trends ⁷

At a demographic level Australia is experiencing:

- **Population** - reduced population growth along with a shift to regional areas.
- **Migration** - net overseas migration is forecast to become positive at 41,000 persons in 2021-22, with migration returning to and exceeding pre-COVID levels from 2023-24 on.
- **Working patterns** - COVID has resulted in the substantial increase in people 'working from home.'

The medium term Australian monetary macroeconomic settings are likely to include:

- Continuing comparatively high interest rates (when compared to the recent historically low rates).
- Continuing higher levels of inflation.
- Mounting pressure for higher levels of wage increases (when compared to the recent relatively flat rates of increase).
- Continuing low unemployment rates with declining underemployment.

The key Australian fiscal policy settings were outlined in the recent Australian Budget, being:

- The Australian Government operating at a budget deficit for the foreseeable future (albeit declining).
- Government debt continuing at an historically high level of over 30% of GDP.

2.2.3 Key Victorian Trends ⁸

The Victoria economy is exhibiting similar trends that that of Australia. While the forecasts in the most recent (2022) Budget differ slightly from the Australian budget, the fundamentals are very similar.

The 2022-23 Budget continues the government commitment to major infrastructure investment, resulting in Net Debt increasing to \$101.9 billion at June 2022 (being 19.8% of GSP), with it continuing to rise over the forward estimates before reaching \$167.5 billion by June 2026 (being 26.5% of GSP).

Included in the budget were a significant list of initiatives that have the potential to stimulate regional economic activity, but the extent to which these have flowed into the Campaspe Shire is limited.

A number of the other initiatives (e.g. increased health workers, increased paramedics and police) would have implications for the Shire, but the extent of these are not clear.

⁷ The commentary on Australian trends was based on information prior to the expected May 2023 budget including the July 2022 Ministerial Statement on the Economy.

⁸ Budget information in this section has been sourced from Department of Treasury and Finance, *Overview Budget Statement - Victorian Budget 2022/23*, State of Victoria, 2022 and supporting Budget Papers. The information was prepared prior to the expected May 2023 budget.

2.3 Campaspe Economic Context

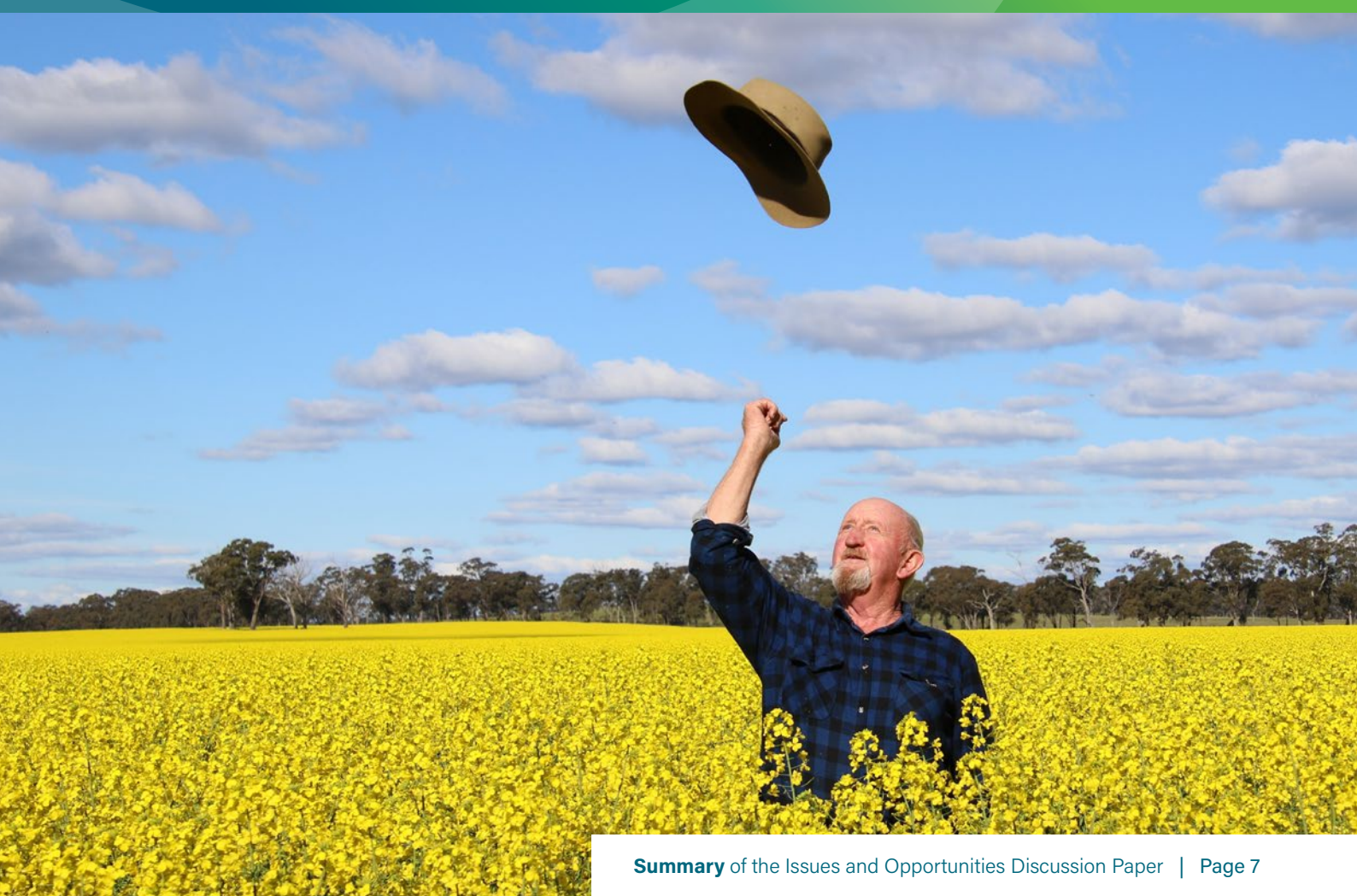
Campaspe Shire is a predominantly rural area, with significant residential areas in the larger town of Echuca and Kyabram. Smaller towns include Gunbower, Lockington, Rochester, Rushworth, Stanhope and Tongala. The Shire encompasses a total land area of approximately 4,500 square kilometres with the Land used mainly for agriculture, particularly dairy farming, cereal and grain growing and sheep grazing. Tourism is also an important industry.

Campaspe's economy and workforce is diverse with the region's natural assets creating strengths in primary industries and tourism. The region's 'food industry' is one of the strongest contributors to the economy, creating demand across farming, processing, transporting and food service. The highly fertile land and water access, and extensive irrigation infrastructure is well suited to agriculture with the region being a major producer of dairy and sheep, beef and pig meat, as well as strengths in grains, wool and poultry.

With population growth and changes in how services are delivered, the shire is increasingly shifting from a product-based to service-based economy. Health and community services has outpaced growth of other industries and now accounts for 17 per cent of the total workforce, making it the dominant industry in the region.

The region's proximity to Melbourne along with its natural features such as the Murray River and heritage make it an attractive tourist destination. Tourism is a strong contributor to the retail trade, accommodation, and food services.

The following provides an overview of the economic structure of the shire along with how it compares to the wider Loddon-Mallee Region and Victoria.



2. Economic Overview

Table 1: Summary Economic Statistics

Measure	Period	Indicator			Campaspe 5 Year Change
		Campaspe	Loddon Mallee Region	Victoria	
Population and Demographics					
Population ('000)	2021	38.5	347.6	6,648.0	0.6%
Annual population growth rate	2021	2.3%	1.6%	-2.2%	
Average household size (number)	2021	2.4	2.5	2.6	
Percentage born overseas (%)	2021	8.2%	11.8%	31.6%	
Employment					
Jobs ('000)	2021	16.7	138.4	3,329.6	-1.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	2022 – Q3	2.5%	3.4%	4.0%	
The top 3 Sectors by Employment in the Shire in 2021 were Health Care and Social Assistance (with 2,721 FTEs being 16.3% of the total), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (with 2,165 FTEs being 13.0%) and Manufacturing (with 1,807 FTEs being 10.9%).					
Economic Activity					
Output (\$m)	2020	\$5,674	\$43,509	\$1,002,600	N/A
Total Number of Businesses ('000)	2021	4.2	30.8	652.6	0.3%
The top 3 Sectors by Value Add in the shire are Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (\$354m being 15.3% of the total), Agriculture, Manufacturing (\$327m being 14.1%) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (\$295m being 13.5%).					
Building and Property					
Residential Building Approvals (\$m)	2022	\$59.5	\$1074.0	\$29.8b	2.3%
Non-resid. Building Approvals (\$m)	2022	\$65.9	\$637.7	\$17.5b	11.6%
Total Building Approvals (\$m)	2022	\$125.4	\$1711.7	\$47.3b	6.6%
Tourism					
Domestic day visitors ('000)	9/22	553	2,365	50.7m	-7.9%
Domestic overnight visitors ('000)	9/22	826	2,889	24.2m	2.6%
Total Domestic Visitors ('000)	9/22	1,379	5,254	75.6m	-2.5%
Value of Tourism – Direct Spend (\$m)	9/22	\$458	\$1,989	\$26,500	5.2%

Source:

Measures Other than Tourism:

- Victorian Regional Information Portal (www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal) accessed on 27 March 2023. The portal access information from the ABS, including updates for the 2021 Census as the information is released.

- Building and Property information along with specific industry information is from <https://app.remplan.com.au/campaspe/economy/> website accessed on 27 March 2023.

Tourism:

- Murray Regional Tourism, Travel to the Murray Region Year ended September 2022 Quarterly Tracking of Selected Measures. Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Victoria's Visitor Economy: Latest performance results – year ending September 2022, State of Victoria, 2023. 5 year change covers the years from Dec 17 to Sept 22. Comparator is for the Murray River Region rather than Loddon Mallee.

The above provides a snapshot of the economic structure of the shire, with the following sections providing further information on key areas.

2.3.1 The Echuca-Moama Partnership

It is important to take into consideration, in developing an EDS for Campaspe, the interplay between Echuca/Campaspe Council with Moama/Murray River Council. The two key cities of Echuca and Moama have an extensive interrelationship where one provides support and is integral to the other, with it being appropriate to consider them as an integrated large town rather than as separate entities (divided by the Murray River

The connection between Echuca and Moama is clearly significant and it is important that the development of an ESD be completed:

- in conjunction with consultation with Murray River Council
- that the resultant strategy be consistent with the approach being adopted by Murray River Council
- that it be recognised that a number of possible initiatives may be most effectively undertaken in conjunction with Murray River Council.

2.3.2 COVID 19

COVID-19 continues to have impacts on businesses and communities across the globe. In Australia, Victoria experienced the longest and strictest restrictions in the country. While restrictions have eased and 'life is slowly returning to normal' the pandemic and the associated changes it has brought to our way of life is likely to continue (e.g. working from home).

Industry level analysis indicates that tourism focused industries or those based on social gatherings have experienced the largest and most prolonged declines. Some industry sectors have recovered from the impacts of COVID-19 better than others. While tourism related industries were significantly impacted, visitation levels are quickly recovering albeit not to the pre-COVID levels. All sectors, but particularly tourism and agriculture, continue to face the dual challenge of a lack of unskilled (and skilled) workers along with increasing cost pressures.

2.3.3 Recovery from the October 2022 Flood Event

The Shire (and region) experienced a major flood event in October 2022 which has heavily impacted all areas of the Shire economy, with provision of recovery support being a key focus of Council. This support includes advocacy with the State Government on key flood recovery advocacy priorities, with the Victorian Government has already supported some of Council's flood recovery advocacy priorities.

Further support is expected into the future.

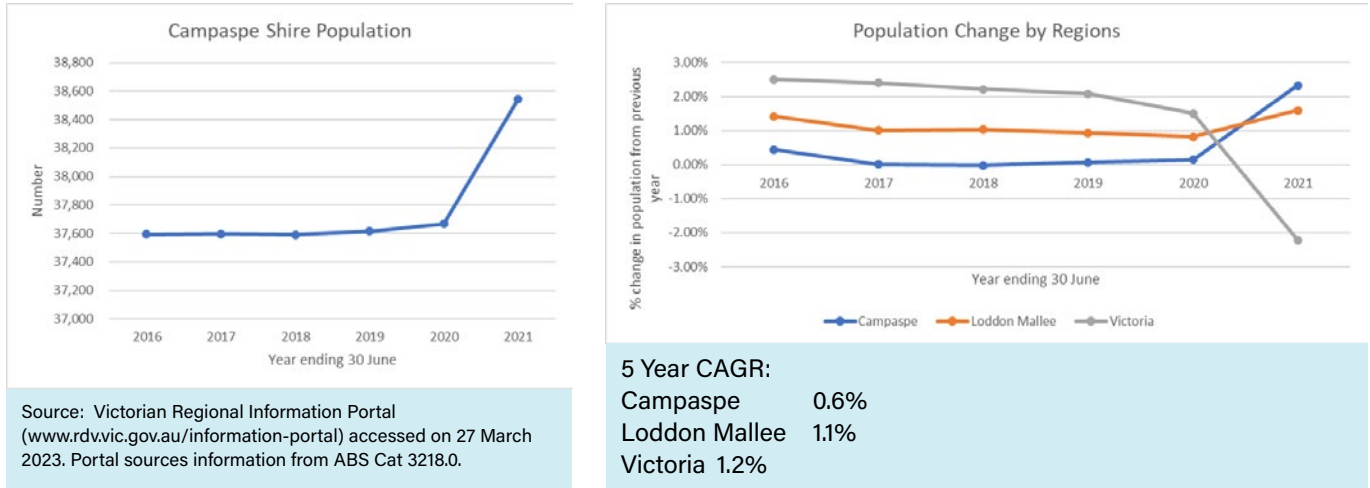
2.3.4 Population and Community

As is demonstrated in the below tables and diagrams:

- While the Shire population in total has been increasing, the rate of increase is small and is significantly lower, over the last 5 years, than both the Loddon-Campaspe region and Victoria (and forecasts indicate that this low level of growth will continue into the foreseeable future).
- This 5 year trend reversed in 2021, with the annual population growth rate in Campaspe (at 2.3%) exceeding that for Loddon Mallee (at 1.6%) and Victoria (at -2.2%). Campaspe Shire, and particularly Echuca-Moama, has benefited from the regional 'great migration.'
- The Shire has a low level of demographic diversity with the portion of the population with overseas origins being significantly below the State average.

The population is also aging, with this expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

Figure 4: Campaspe Shire Population Numbers and % Change

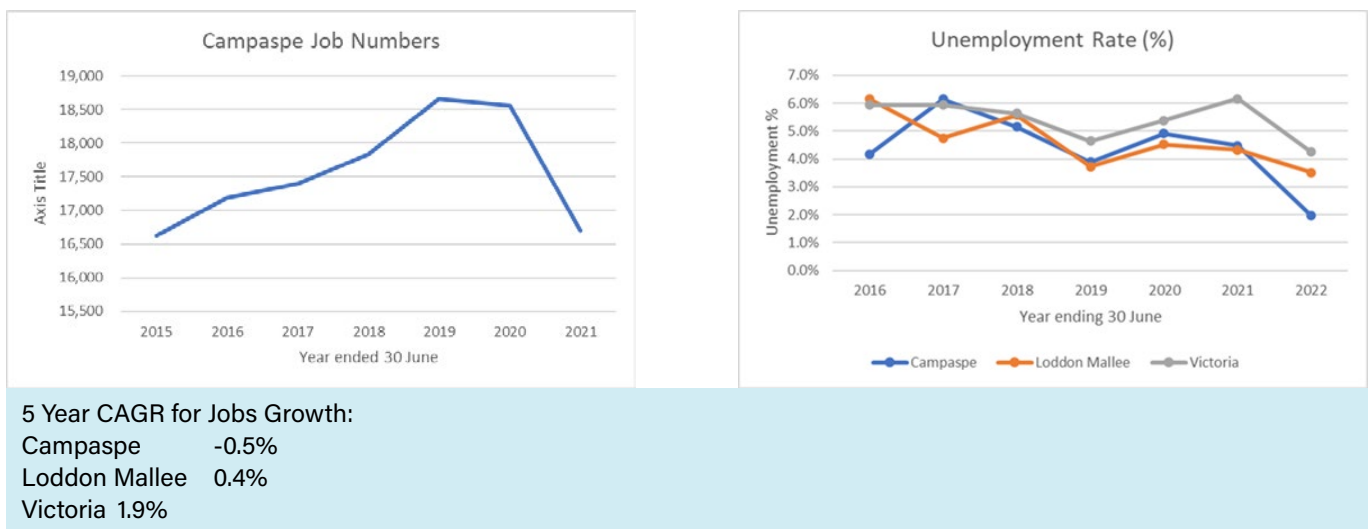


The population growth areas for the Shire are around the major towns (Echuca and Kyabram), while the areas with smaller towns (being the remainder of the Shire) are forecast to experience minimal or negative population change.

2.3.5 Local Skills and Employment

The decline in job numbers over the last 5 year period (at -0.5%) is even lower than the change in population growth (at 0.6%), with both being below the State average. While the population growth rate increased significantly in the 2021 year, this has not yet been reflected in the identified job numbers. Since June 2021 there has been a significant decline in the unemployment rate (from 4.5% at June 2021 to 2.0% at June 2022), which suggests there has more recently been significant jobs growth.

Figure 5: Job Numbers and Annual Growth Rate



2. Economic Overview

There has also been a marginal improvement in the skills base of the Shire workforce, with the portion of the population with relevant academic qualifications improving. However, at a comparative level, the Shire workforce is predominantly unskilled, with this highlighting the need for further training.

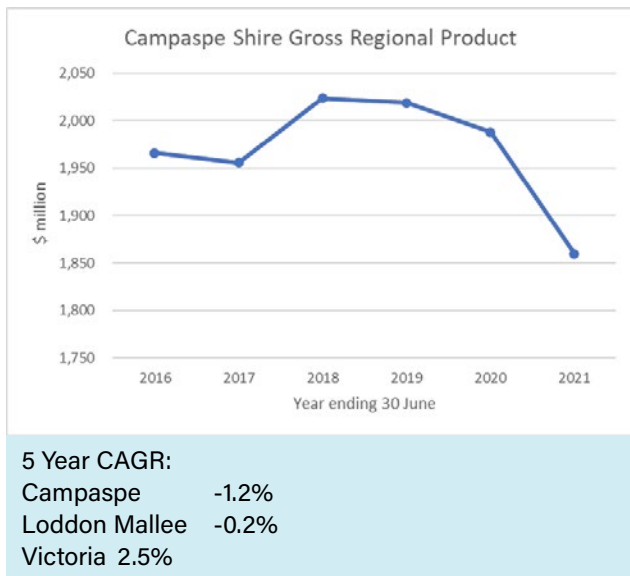
A recent review of skills requirements in the region identified that most industries have high vacancies; with them unable to meet current demand let alone fill the any new jobs anticipated from industry growth. Without resolving staff shortages it is likely that industry growth will be significantly constrained with critical services are unable to be delivered, particularly for health care and community services, construction and tourism. Primary industries are increasingly turning to technology in the absence of staff, creating a higher skill need.

With existing shortages, the region faces a major challenge meeting expected demand for both skilled and low-skilled labour. The growth in service-based industries provides an added imperative to engage diverse groups to ensure the workforce represent the communities they serve.

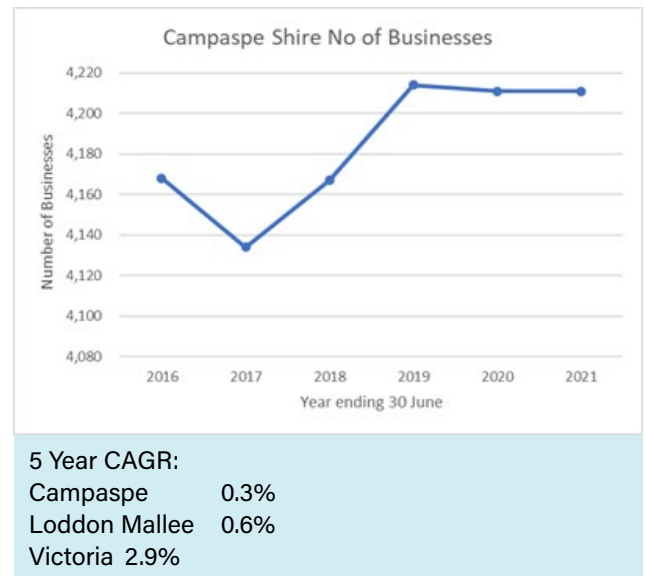
2.3.6 Economy and Business

The economy of the Shire has followed a consistent trend across all major economic measures with the economy achieving reasonably growth up to 2018, with it then marginally declining in 2019 and significantly declining in 2021.

Figure 6: Campaspe Shire Gross Regional Product and % Change



Source: Victorian Regional Information Portal (www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal) accessed on 27 March 2023. Portal sources information from NIEIR modelling.



Source: Victorian Regional Information Portal (www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal) accessed on 27 March 2023. Portal sources information from 8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits.

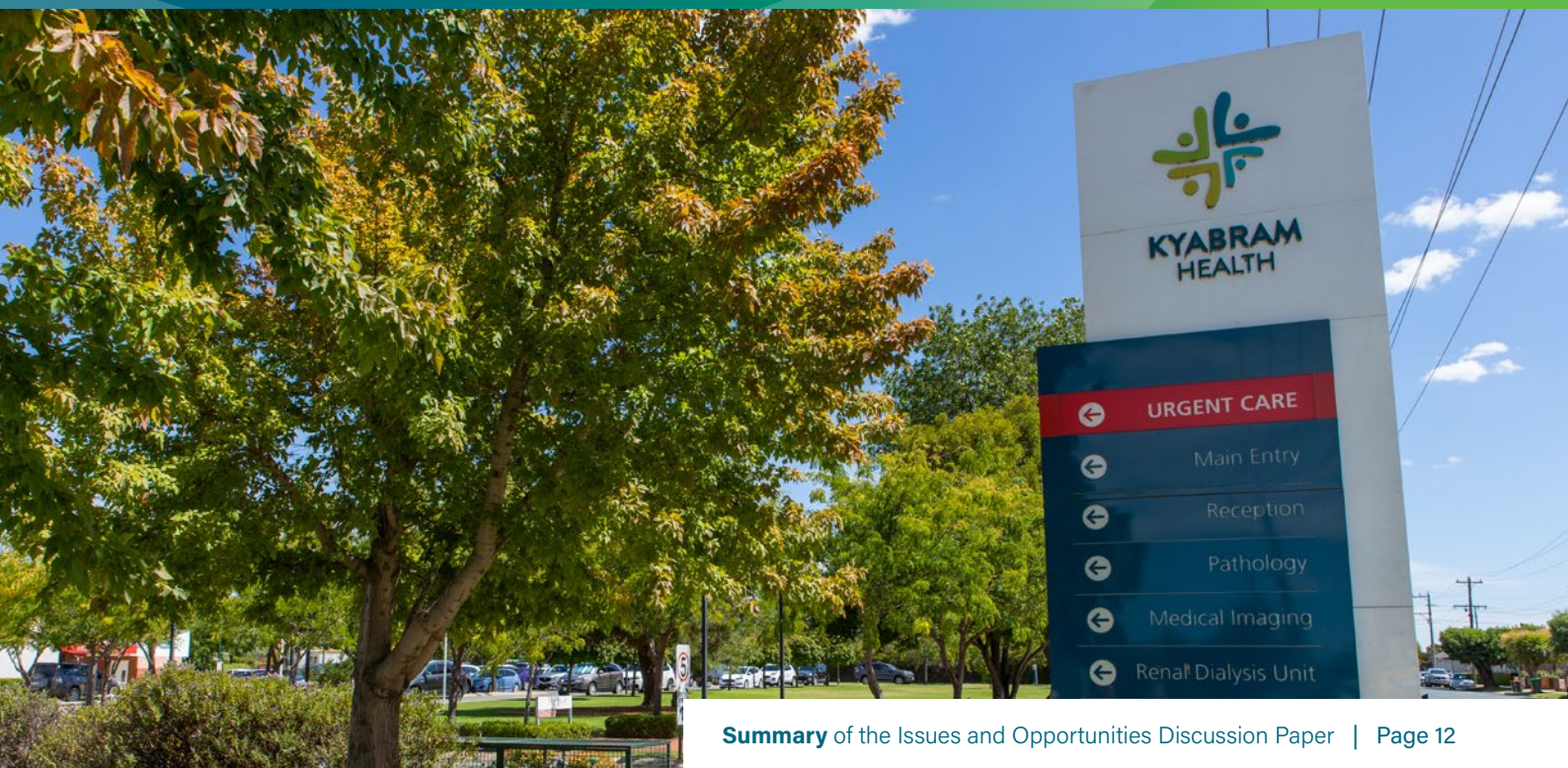
2.3.7 Key Industry Sectors

Based on a review of Campaspe's key industry sectors it is evident that Campaspe's economy, while having a diverse range of activity, is heavily dependent on the Health Care, Agriculture and Manufacturing sectors along with Tourism (which is not treated as an industry sector but rather is a component of a number of sectors). A comparison of the key industry sectors also indicates that the structure of the economy has not changed significantly over the last 8 years.

- Health Care and Social Services is the main employer with it also being the fastest growing sector having one of the highest wages and salaries expense.
- Agriculture is also a key employee with it also having the most number of business entities, many of whom would be sole traders or small business. Combining these two would indicate that Agriculture is the industry with the most workers (being employees and principals).
- Manufacturing is another primary employer for the region, with it also having the largest wages expense. The sector contributes the majority of the output to the region (being 26.1% of the total) and is the major exporter, although this has declined recently with its contribution in the previous year being 31.2%. The food industries is the dominant key industry sub-sector, with this dominated by the larger businesses with ownership outside the region.

- While not one of three key sectors, the Construction sector is still an important contributor to the Shire – with it being in the top 5 industry sectors across all economic measures.
- A number of the other sectors in the top 5 – accommodation and food industries, retail trade and rental, hiring and real estate services – represent sectors where tourism would be a major contributor to the total with this therefore indicating the importance of tourism to the Shire.

The above high level global, Australian, Victorian and regional economic overview has highlighted a number of trends and issues which may have implications for the future economic development of Campaspe and, therefore, the strategies and actions included in the CEDTS 2023-28.

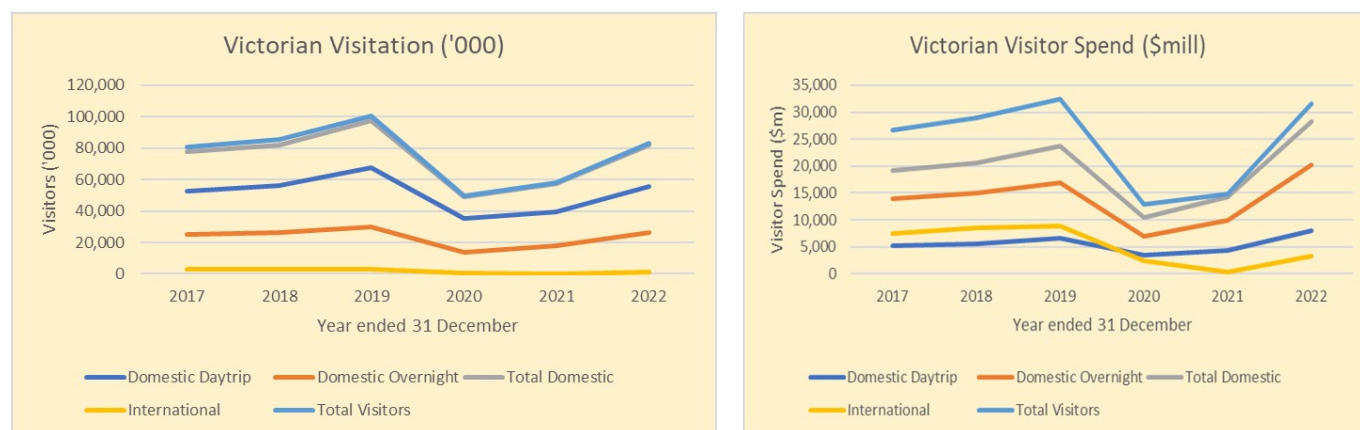


3. The Role Of Tourism In The Campaspe Economy

3. The importance of Tourism to Victoria

Tourism is a major industry for the Victorian economy, with the following providing an indication of the size and importance of tourism to the total Victorian economy.

Figure 7: Victorian Visitors and Visitor Spend



Key results for the year ending December 2022 (released April 2023) are:

- Total tourism expenditure in Victoria was \$31.5 billion in the year ending December 2022, an increase of 113% compared to the year ending December 2021. Overall total tourism spend was back to 97% of the pre-pandemic level (year ending December 2019).
- Total visitors to and within Victoria were up 44% from the year ending December 2021 to 83.1 million. Total visitors were back to 83% of the pre-pandemic result.
- Total visitor nights spent in Victoria were 110.0 million in the year ending December 2022, representing an increase of 79% year-on-year. This was back to 70% of the pre-COVID-19 result for the year ending December 2019.

Source: Victoria's visitor economy Latest performance results – year ending December 2022, State Government of Victoria, April 2023

While the above represents the contribution of tourism to total Victoria, it is relevant to note that the importance of regional tourism has increased as, for the year ending December 2022 (released April 2023):

- Total domestic spend in regional Victoria (including daytrip and overnight) in 2022 reached \$15.3 billion, 32% above the pre-pandemic spend in 2019, and 59% above 2021.
- Total domestic visitors to/within regional Victoria increased by 35% year-on-year to 53.9 million, with this being 88% of the pre-pandemic level.
- Domestic visitor nights in regional Victoria increased by 19% to 51.9 million nights compared to 2021, representing a recovery to 98% of the 2019 level.⁹

⁹ business.vic.gov.au/business-information/tourism-industry-resources/tourism-industry-research/regional-visitation accessed on 18 April 2023

3. The Role of Tourism in the Campaspe Economy

The Victorian government, therefore, commits significant resources to supporting the industry, including a focus on regional tourism. In March 2019, the Victorian government commissioned the Regional Tourism Review (the RTR review). The outcomes of the RTR review then informing the governments April 2021 *Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan* (VERRP).¹⁰ The VERRP established a future plan for the regional tourism industry based on the a number of initiatives with the government also committing to an investment of \$633 million over 4 years (from 2020-2024) to support the implementation of the VERRP. The key themes in the VERRP commitments are around:

- Products and infrastructure to strengthen our tourism offering
- Industry strengthening
- Destination marketing
- Events
- Strategic collaboration and planning.

While the funding commitment is significant, little of this has flowed through to the Campaspe, with other regional areas receiving much more direct support.

Another major initiative in the VERRP is the restructuring of the Regional Tourism Boards into a new network of Visitor Economy Partnerships. While this transition is progressing, Campaspe Shire has not yet been significantly involved in this transition initiatives.

It is important, in developing the tourism strategy for the Shire, that this be developed around the tourism policy of the Victorian Government as integration with the state government initiatives is vital. It may, therefore, be appropriate to develop the Campaspe strategies around the 5 key themes identified.

3.2 The Campaspe Visitor Economy

Tourism and visitation is a key driver of economic activity for the Shire, with Echuca-Moama being the key visitor centre for the Shire. Minimal reliable information is available for the specific Campaspe Shire tourism economy¹¹. However, data covering the Central Murray Region is more reliable and does provide some indication of specific Campaspe trends with these being consistent with the trends for the main visitor economy location in the shire of Echuca-Moama (noting that the Moama component is located in the adjoining Murray River Council). There is also more relevant data for Echuca-Moama as a visitation destination.

In Echuca-Moama visitation numbers had been consistently growing to 2018. However, visitors declined in 2019 with subsequent years then being heavily impacted by COVID-19. While visitation has again been increasing more recently it has not yet returned to the pre-COVID levels.

There has also been, more recently, a change in the mix of visitors between daytrip and overnight visitors. Pre-COVID, the split between daytrip and overnight visitors was consistently even. However, post-COVID this has changed with overnight visitors now clearly being the dominant visitor category.

¹⁰ Dept of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan, Victorian Government, April 2021.

¹¹ While visitation for the Shire is sourced by Tourism Research Australia, the sample sizes used to generate the information are not sufficient to provide a satisfactory level of confidence in the outcomes.

3. The Role of Tourism in the Campaspe Economy

Figure 9: Echuca - Moama Visitor Numbers by Category



Source: Murray River Tourism Quarterly Reports for years ended 31 December 2016 to 2021 and year ended 30 September 2022, *Travel to the Murray Region - Quarterly Tracking of Selected Measures*

This change in visitor numbers has also been reflected in visitor expenditure. Visitor expenditure declined drastically during COVID but has since recovered. In particular, while 2022 visitor numbers remains below the 2018 levels, visitor expenditure now exceeds the previous levels.

Figure 10: Echuca - Moama Visitor Spend by Category



Source: Murray River Tourism Quarterly Reports for years ended 31 December 2017 to 2021 and year ended 30 September 2022, *Travel to the Murray Region - Quarterly Tracking of Selected Measures*

However, it should be noted that businesses reliant on the tourism sector continue to face significant challenges. In particular, they (like other industries) continue to be challenged by both supply chain difficulties and labour shortages. In addition, in times of economic uncertainty (as is currently faced by the Australian community) consumers constrain areas of discretionary expenditure (e.g. tourism expenditure).

3.3 The Campaspe Visitor Offering and Profile

Visitation to the Shire of Campaspe is a key driver of economic activity with it supporting a wide range of businesses. Best known for its history, natural assets and relationship with Australia's iconic Murray River, the unique mix of great weather, culture, food and wine, natural assets and events attracts increasing numbers of visitors (pre-COVID) and residents to the Shire.

Echuca-Moama is the key visitor centre for the Shire with the focus of the tourism offering being the post settlement history and heritage of Victoria and Australia through the Port of Echuca and the historical Echuca town centre.¹²

The port experience is not the only reason tourists visit Echuca-Moama. The region offers a wide range of unique experiences including nature based tourism experiences, food and wine offerings, water sports offerings and experiential accommodation on houseboats along the Murray River.

While tourism is predominantly based around Echuca-Moama other regions in the Shire are also attracting growing visitor numbers and present future opportunities for growth. These include:

- Kyabram Fauna Park in Kyabram, which attracts over 25,000 visitors per annum.
- The Mount Camel region wineries experience.
- Rail Trails –the development of a number of rail trails including the Rushworth to Murchison Rail Trail, the Girgarre to Stanhope Rail Trail and the Murray River Adventure Trail.

Echuca-Moama and the wider region is also recognised as a centre for community and major regional and state-based events. These include such events as the Winter Blues Festival, the Riverboats Music Festival, the Steam Rally, the Southern 80, the Moama Lights event on the NSW side (which is delivered by Murray River Council), the Kyabram Rodeo, the Lockington Heritage Tractor Rally, the Rushworth Wildflower Hunt and the Rushworth Heritage Easter Festival.

Visitor Origin

The origin of visitors to the Shire are predominantly interstate or intrastate visitors, with international visitors consistently being less than 1% of total visitors. Visitation to Echuca-Moama is primarily driven by the Victorian market, comprising 87% of daytrip visitors and 81% of overnight visitors to this destination. The majority of visitors from within Victoria originate from the greater Melbourne region, which is influenced by the destinations close proximity to Melbourne (with Echuca being the closest point to the Murray River from Melbourne). Echuca-Moama sees smaller proportions of visitors originating from outside Victoria.

Visitor Purpose and Activities

Domestic visitation to Echuca-Moama is primarily driven by holiday and leisure travellers, accounting for 50% of daytrip visitors and 49% of overnight visitors. The destination also has a strong visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market, accounting for 29% of daytrip visitors and 35% of overnight visitors.

The completed research also indicates that the Echuca-Moama visitors are primarily engaging in passive activities, including dining out, VFR and general sightseeing. While this outcome is surprising (given the region feature of nature-based and river-based activities) it is also supported by specific research commissioned by Campaspe Shire.¹³

This predominance of passive visitor activities may also be a reflection of the characteristics of the visitor to Echuca-Moama. While there are numerous possible approaches to segmenting the tourism market the approach adopted in the Destination Drivers report commissioned by Campaspe Council focussed on family characteristics. This report found that visitors to Echuca-Moama was weighted towards the older non-working segments. (being the Older non-working Singles and Couples (at 40%) and the Older Working Singles and Couples (at 25%)) with the younger generation not being as prevalent (being 26% for the Family Travelling with Children and 9% for the Younger Single or Couple).¹⁴

¹² It is appropriate to consider Echuca-Moama as an integrated tourism offering with the visitor making little distinction between the two. While Echuca has a number of the major tourist attractions, Moama is a major supplier of accommodation for visitors and the Murray River is accessed from both sides.

¹³ newfocus, Destination Drivers, Campaspe Shire, September 2021, p. 43.

¹⁴ newfocus, *ibid*, p. 3

3.4 Destination Strengths and the USP

Recent research commissioned by Campaspe Shire Council into the visitor market for Echuca and the Echuca Port area provides valuable insights into the strengths of the region along with areas that may require attention.

Some of the key outcomes from this research is as follows:

- **Perception of Echuca** - Echuca is perceived as a river town with river activities that are quaint and relaxing with river/water activities being the dominant image of Echuca across all segments.
- **Satisfaction of visitor needs** - Echuca was seen as best able to meet visitor travel needs for Places to enjoy nature and with Strong local history (each 90% agreement). This was followed closely by Camping and caravanning (89%). The two lower perceived ability areas for Echuca to meet requirements related to Dining, restaurants and café, nightclubs (79%) and Events (73%).
- **Satisfaction levels across segments** - Echuca is seen differently by different segments. Most positive perceptions are held by Families, followed by Older non-working segments and least so by Younger single or couple travellers.
- **Comparative satisfaction of visitor requirements** - Echuca is generally meeting traveller requirements as well as other destinations, with there being little specifically distinguishing Echuca.
- **Visitor likelihood to recommend** - Echuca and the Port area stand up well against other travel destinations, with it ranked equal 4th on visitor likelihood to recommend (at 83% with Goldfields, Daylesford). Destinations ahead of Echuca were the Great Ocean Road (at 86%), the Grampians (at 85%), Gippsland (at 84%) and Yarra Valley (at 84%).

While the above provides guidance on what may be attracting visitors to Echuca-Moama it is also informative to consider reasons visitors do not travel to Echuca, with the research indicating that:

- **Considering Echuca as a destination to visit** - Approximately a quarter of those who have not visited Echuca in the past 3 years did consider visiting but rejected this for various reasons.
- **Reasons for not visiting Echuca** - The three dominant reasons for not visiting Echuca (which were aligned to specific segments) were
 - 'I or others have been there before' at 27% (mainly the Older segment)
 - 'Too far to go' at 23% (mainly Younger and Family segments)
 - 'Not enough of the things we seek to do' at 19% (mainly Younger).

All of the above comments combine to provide a guide to the Echuca-Moama Unique Selling Proposition, with the recent Echuca-Moama Local Area Plans report defining the USP within the Murray region as:

*"The Port of Echuca, the paddle steamer cruising and the heritage backdrop and stories of Echuca-Moama are the USP for this destination. The Port of Echuca provides an anchoring point for the destination and can act as a strong visual landmark."*¹⁵

¹⁵ Urban Enterprise, *Echuca-Moama Local Area Plan and Recommended Actions*, Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray NSW, 2023, p.8.

3.5 Council Role in the Tourism Industry

Campaspe Shire Council provides a number of services which support the tourism economy. Tourism products provided by Council include:

- Ownership and management of the **Port of Echuca**, with this now being provided through Campaspe Port Enterprises Pty Ltd (a Beneficial Enterprise under the Local Government Act owned by Council).
- Provision of a **paddlesteamer cruising** offering through the ownership and management of 3 paddlesteamers. This service is also now provided through Campaspe Port Enterprises Pty Ltd, thus enabling the provision of an integrated service in the port precinct.
- Ownership of the **Echuca Holiday Park** (with NRMA contracted as the manager).
- Until recently Council was also joint manager of the **Kyabram Fauna Park** (with DELWP, now DEECA). In 2023 Zoos Victoria assumed responsibility for the KFP.

Council also provides a number of services which supports the tourism industry including:

- Financial and in-kind support for **Echuca-Moama and District Tourism Association** for the provision of the Visitor Information Centre and completion of destination marketing. Council's funding arrangements with EMDTA will change given their organisational review and changing focus.
- Financial and in-kind support for **Murray Regional Tourism**.
- Provision of funding support for selected **Events** along with provision of support to event managers in meeting Council delivery requirements.
- Industry **advocacy** to government on specific tourism industry requirements and opportunities.

Question for Consideration:

What are the key tourism strengths of the region and what forms the regions USP?

What opportunities exist to further develop the visitor offering and support the visitor economy?

What are the main key strategies for the region, and what is the role of Council in delivery of the identified strategies?

Based on these strategies, what are the proposed Actions relevant for Council and, of these Actions, which ones are regarded as being of priority?

What framework is required to oversee implementation of the Actions? How does this fit within the existing Governance structure? Are there any suggested changes to the Governance structure?



3. The Role And Activities Of Council In Economic Development

As was noted previously, Australia operates under a three tier system of Government with each of the tiers – Australian, State and Local government - having a role in economic development. However, the roles are often not clear and, from a local government perspective, there are a number of possible strategic approaches. Therefore, the following initially considers the possible approaches that may be taken by local government.

4.1 The Role of Council in Economic Development for the Region

It is widely accepted that local governments can and do make an important contribution to local and regional economic development (OECD 2004), although promoting economic development is a relatively recent feature of the (official or otherwise) remit of councils in Australia.¹⁶ Local Government is increasingly playing an active role in driving economic development in their communities, and looking to new and innovative ways to encourage business growth and create local jobs, while at the same time balancing this against social and environmental objectives

Local Governments have a direct impact on economic activity through the delivery of services and infrastructure and regulatory functions, and through undertaking activities aimed at supporting their local economy. They also influence the broader economic environment indirectly through the creation of vibrant and liveable communities.

Local Governments also actively undertake activities aimed at supporting their local economy and business environment, in particular to attract, retain and grow businesses; encourage tourists; improve community outcomes and bring new investment into the local area. They aim to achieve this through strategic long-term actions and plans.

These multiple roles all contribute to the important and increasingly recognised economic leadership role of Local Government, which extends well beyond the confines of legislative responsibilities into all areas of activity.

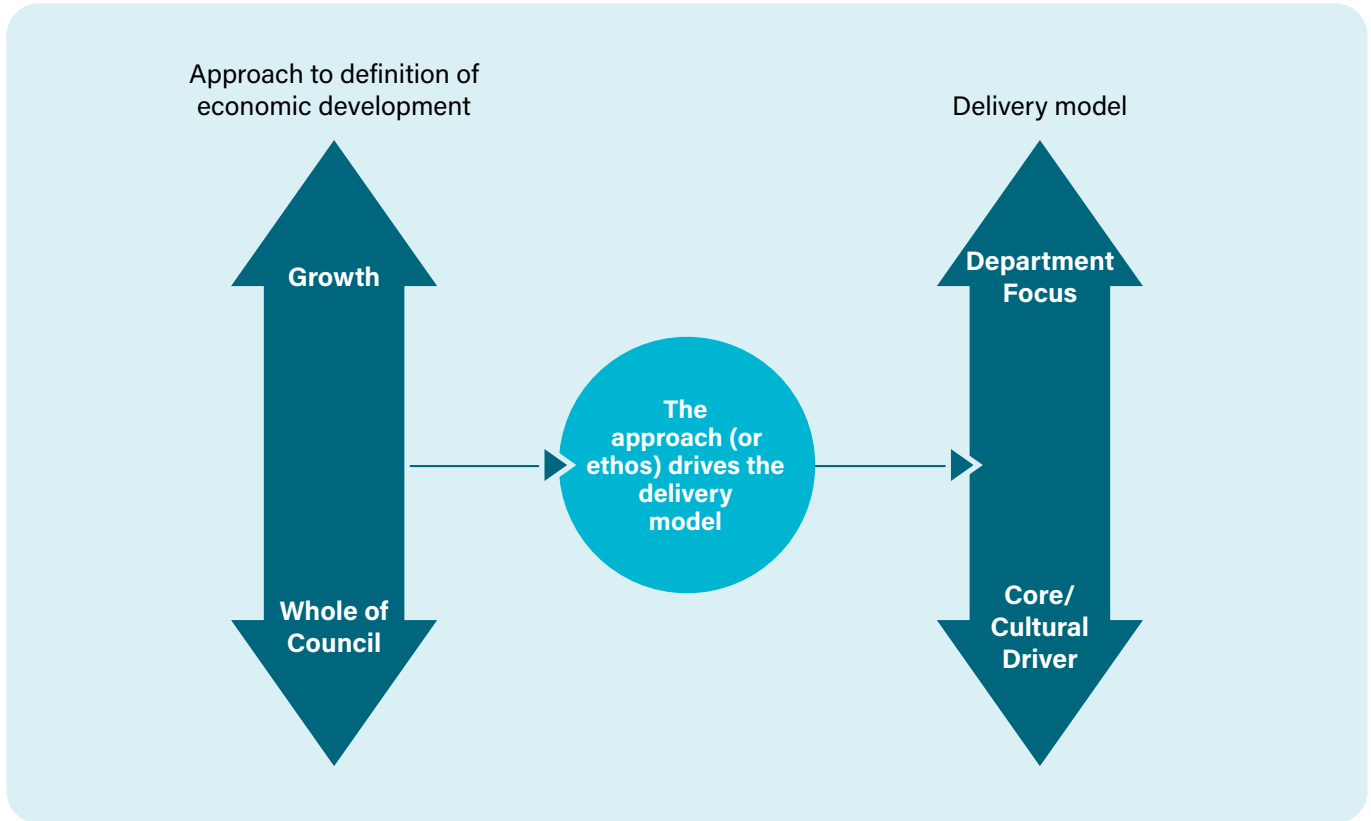
4.1.1 The position of Economic Development in the ethos of Council

While economic development is generally accepted to be a co-responsibility across all tiers of government and social and economic stakeholders, the translation of this principle into practice is a key challenge – with this being reflected in the various positioning of Economic Development within the ethos and culture of a Council.

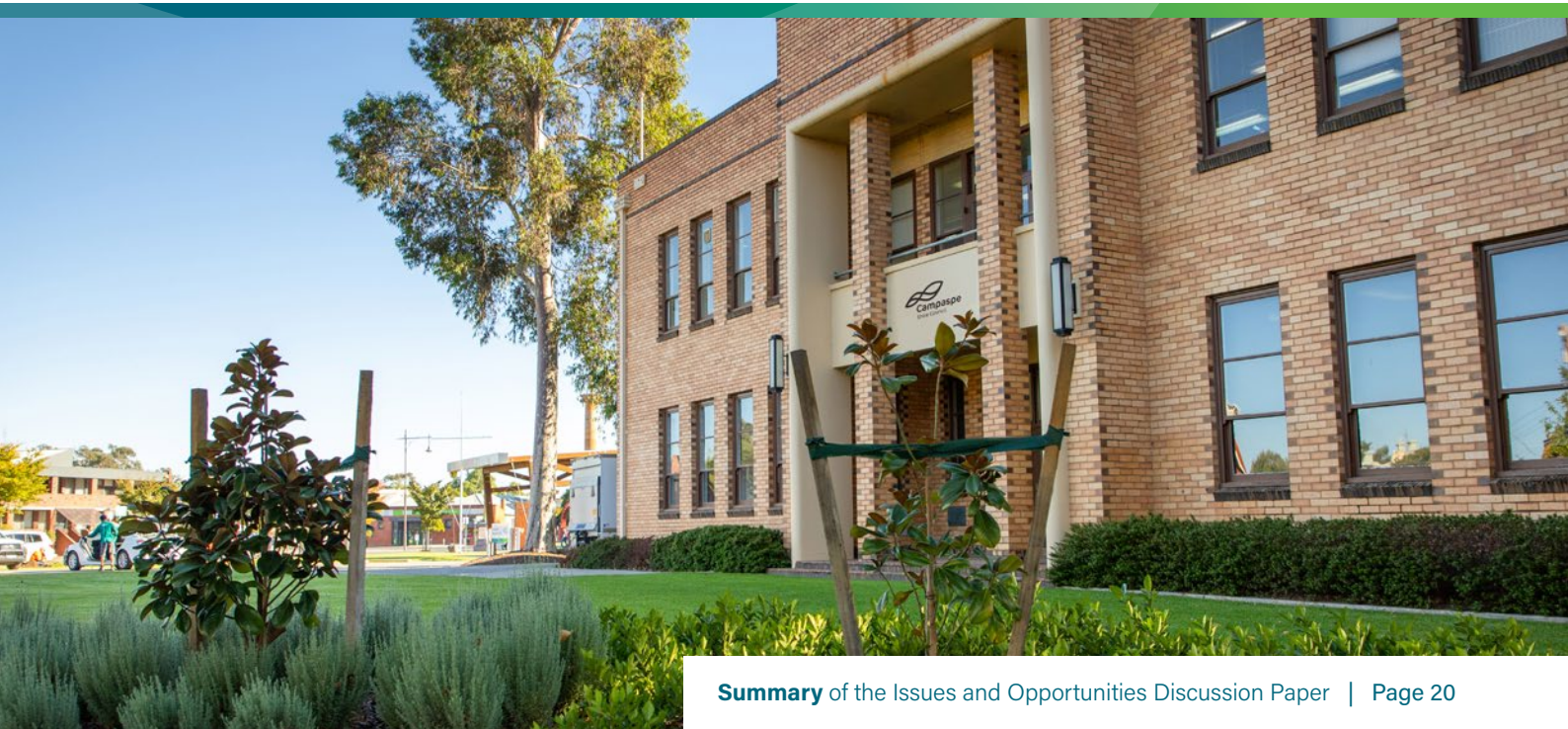
In essence, the approach taken by a Council to Economic Development can extend along a continuum between a more restrictive focus on supporting business and economic growth (where economic development is not necessarily perceived as a 'general function' of the organisation) to a broader interpretation where economic development is embedded within the culture of the organisation with economic development extending beyond a focus on growth to the more encompassed focus on economic and community development, social equity and sustainability.

¹⁶ OECD 2004, Evaluating Local Economic and Employment Development: How to Assess What Works among Programmes and Policies, OECD, Paris.

Figure 12: Local Government Economic Value Approach and Delivery Model Continuum



Over recent times there has been an increasing incidence of councils developing and publishing economic strategies extending beyond the minimalist approach, with this potentially reflecting the expanding remit of councils and the importance that they attach to economic development.



4.1.2 Council Activities to support Economic Development

It is instructive to consider the range of activities or services that Council may become involved in in the promotion, facilitation and support of local and regional economic development.

Table 4: Local government's range of economic development roles/services

Potential Council Activities
<p>Infrastructure and assets planning and prioritisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Infrastructure development and maintenance (e.g. road maintenance).▪ Connecting business with infrastructure e.g. councils may own airports, have primary responsibility for roads, provide ICT technology etc.▪ Develop and implement large scale projects in collaboration with other levels of government and with funding from state and Australian government agencies.▪ Use of assets (e.g. buildings) to promote economic development▪ Provision of required infrastructure to support business (e.g. waste services)▪ Supporting the development of transport services and freight routes▪ Facilitating the delivery of high standard telecommunication services and other utility services (water and electricity). <p>Land use planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Devising 'business-friendly' and 'fast-track' planning procedures and systems.▪ Working with businesses to help them negotiate council requirements particularly with regard to planning applications.▪ Developing Master Plans to support economic growth and sustainability.▪ Facilitating the adequate supply of industrial and residential land.▪ Planning for the future.▪ Contributing to State Planning Policies and Processes (e.g. Smart Planning). <p>Business support and Investment Attraction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acting as a 'shop front' for investors and other levels of government.▪ Grants for small business (e.g. innovation grants).▪ Seed funding of ventures where private sector funding is not available.▪ Whole-of-council approach to help support the attraction and development of business.▪ Minimising regulatory and compliance burdens on business.▪ Facilitating communication between businesses and council. <p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establishing the environment, and setting the framework, to facilitate and encourage economic development <p>Collaboration/networking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Facilitate networking, learning and opportunities for collaboration amongst economic stakeholders.▪ Create governance structures, partnerships and forums to foster collaboration.

Table 4: Local government's range of economic development roles/services

Potential Council Activities
<p>Advocacy, lobbying and promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lobbying state and federal government for support, investment and resources.▪ Advocating for required infrastructure provision.▪ Promoting their area to a broader audience (e.g. tourists, investors etc.).
<p>Strategies and plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strategic planning processes, workforce planning and the production of economic strategies and associated documents.
<p>Labour and skills development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Facilitating skills development opportunities.▪ Use of Public Libraries and Community Centres to support skills training.
<p>Business case development, evidence and information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Undertaking feasibility and capacity studies.▪ Develop business cases.▪ Sector-based research, business surveys, data gathering and monitoring, including economic profiles and economic assessments.▪ Stakeholder mapping exercises.
<p>Council Purchasing Policies and Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Procurement processes and local content requirements.▪ Building commercial relationships.▪ Joint briefings for local businesses on procurement topics such as responding to tenders.

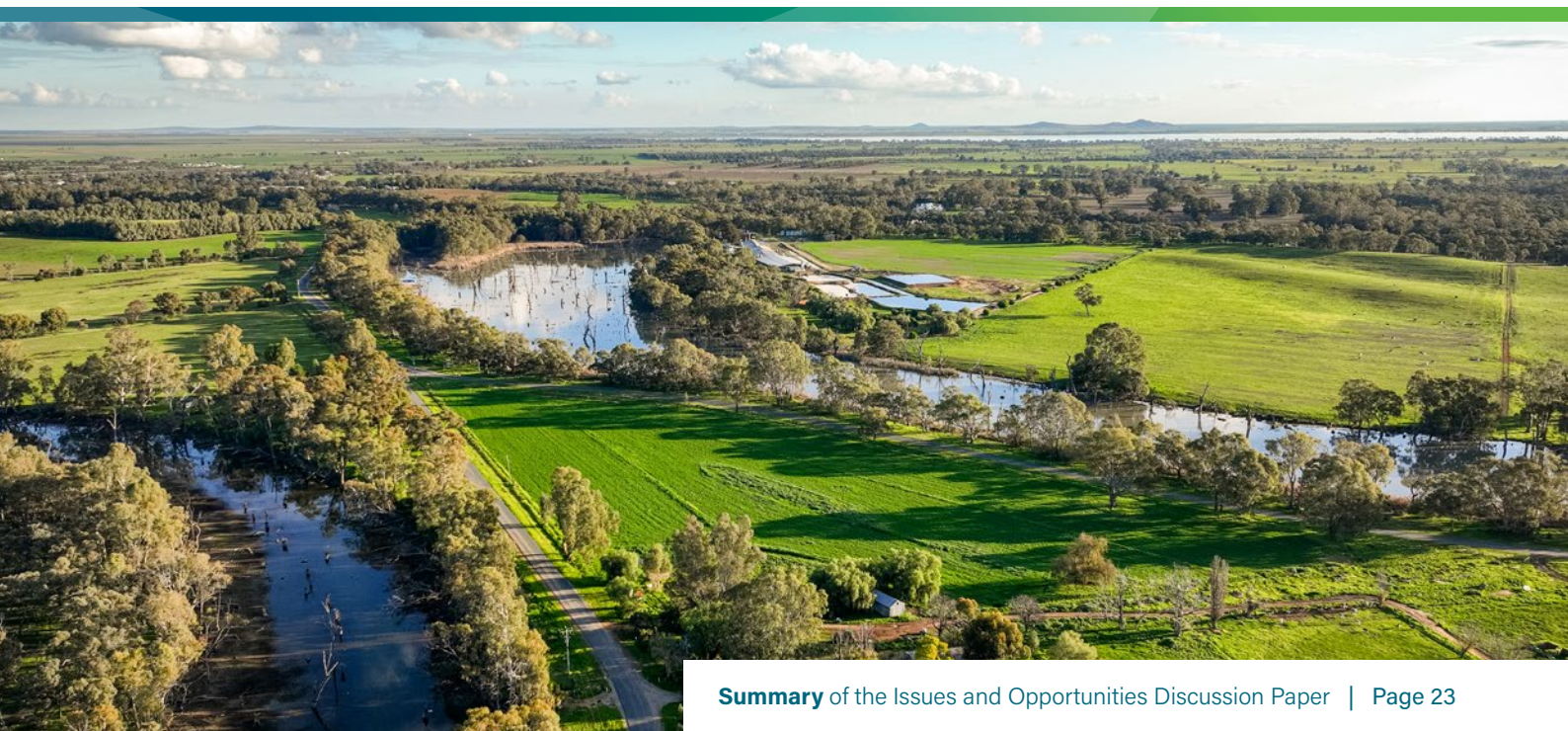
It is obvious from the above that local governments responsibilities in economic development are potentially broad and include a wide range of functions across all areas of Council activities, all of which have an impact on the economic and business environment.

4.1.3 Conditions for developing and implementing an Economic Development Strategy

The literature on the development and implementation of Economic Development Strategies by Local Government identifies a number of matters that have constrained the effectiveness of these activities in the past. Conversely, they represent matters to take into consideration when developing and implementing the strategies and when providing the service.

- **Allowing for local conditions** - Each Local Government has unique local conditions that influence how attractive an area is to businesses, workers and supporting institutions. To best respond to these conditions, communities need to build and implement a tailored local economic development strategy.
- **Funding** - The ability to fund economic development activities is a potential barrier, particularly in regional areas. The 2018 VAGO Report determined that in 2015-16 Victorian Councils spent \$866 million on business and economic services with Councils spending an average of 9.3 per cent of their total expenditure on business and economic services.¹⁷
- **Staff capacity and capability** - The lack of appropriately skilled and adequate resources to deliver economic development services has been identified as a clear constraint.
- **Three tiers of government** - A strategic partnership is needed between all three levels of Government to drive closer collaboration and alignment in economic development.
- **Strategic Consistency** - While EDS's normally entail a 5 year planning horizon other plans and strategies developed within Council are often for a shorter duration. To be effective, it is important for strategies and plans to be appropriately aligned with consistent priorities.
- **Perception v Reality** - It is important that internal and external perceptions match the reality.
- **Use of Incentives and Structures Available** - Council have available to them a number of incentive structures (e.g. rate rebates) and alternative structures which can assist in the completion of economic development activities but are only used infrequently or in restricted circumstances.
- **Stakeholder Involvement** - A key finding from studies completed is the need for all stakeholders to discuss and debate their specific understandings of local and regional economic development before embarking on activities, such as the development of an economic strategy.
- **Monitoring and Reporting** - The VAGO Report identified the need for improved setting of targets and subsequent monitoring and reporting as an area for improvement.

¹⁷ VAGO 2018, Local Government and Economic Development, March 2018, page 41.

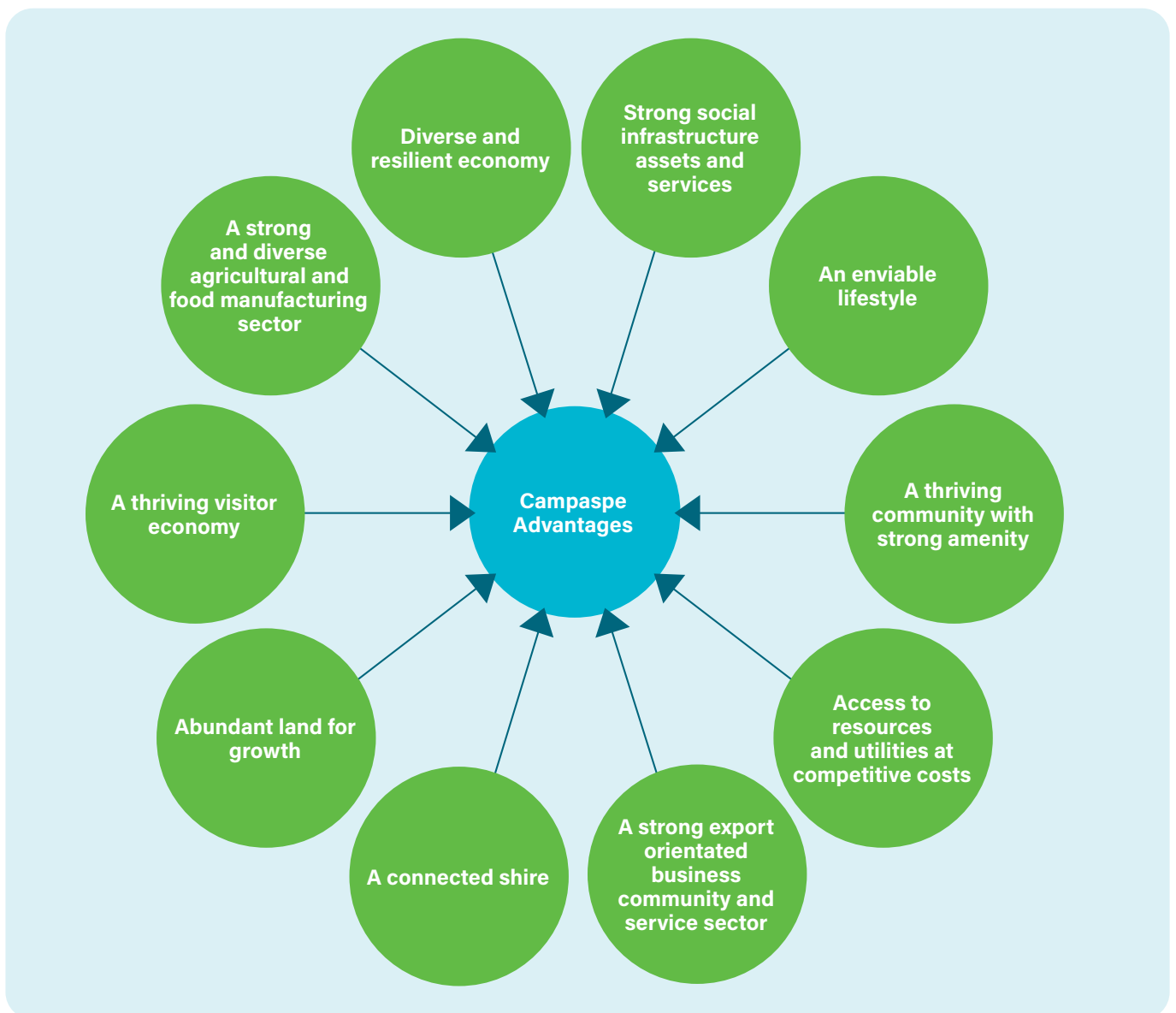


5. Planning For The Future

5.1 The Campaspe Advantage

The Shire of Campaspe has a number of strengths and natural assets that provide a competitive advantage which will assist its future economic growth and development and support future opportunities. Key strengths identified are outlined in the diagram and table below:

Figure 14: The Campaspe Economic Advantages



These competitive advantages make the Shire of Campaspe an attractive location to live, visit and invest, and form a solid base to leverage economic development over the coming years.

Question for Consideration:

Are these identified advantages appropriate?

Are there any others to consider?

What should the Council do in regard to the EDS to take advantage of these advantages?

5.2 Threats and Challenges

The Shire has continued to achieve economic growth over the last five years, despite significant economic headwinds, with the identified Campaspe Advantages assisting in achieving these outcomes. The Shire, though, also faces a number of threats and challenges which need to be considered in the preparation of a future economic development strategy. These are summarised in the diagram and table below.

Figure 15: Campaspe Treats and Challenges



Question for Consideration:

Are these identified threats and challenges appropriate?

Are there any others to consider?

What the implications of these threats and challenges to the Council EDS?

5.3 Key Immediate and Emerging Trends and Issues

The previous high-level economic overview along with the above consideration of Campaspe's competitive strengths, threats and challenges has highlighted a number of trends and issues which may have implications for the future economic development of Campaspe.

Figure 16: Immediate and Emerging Trends and Issues

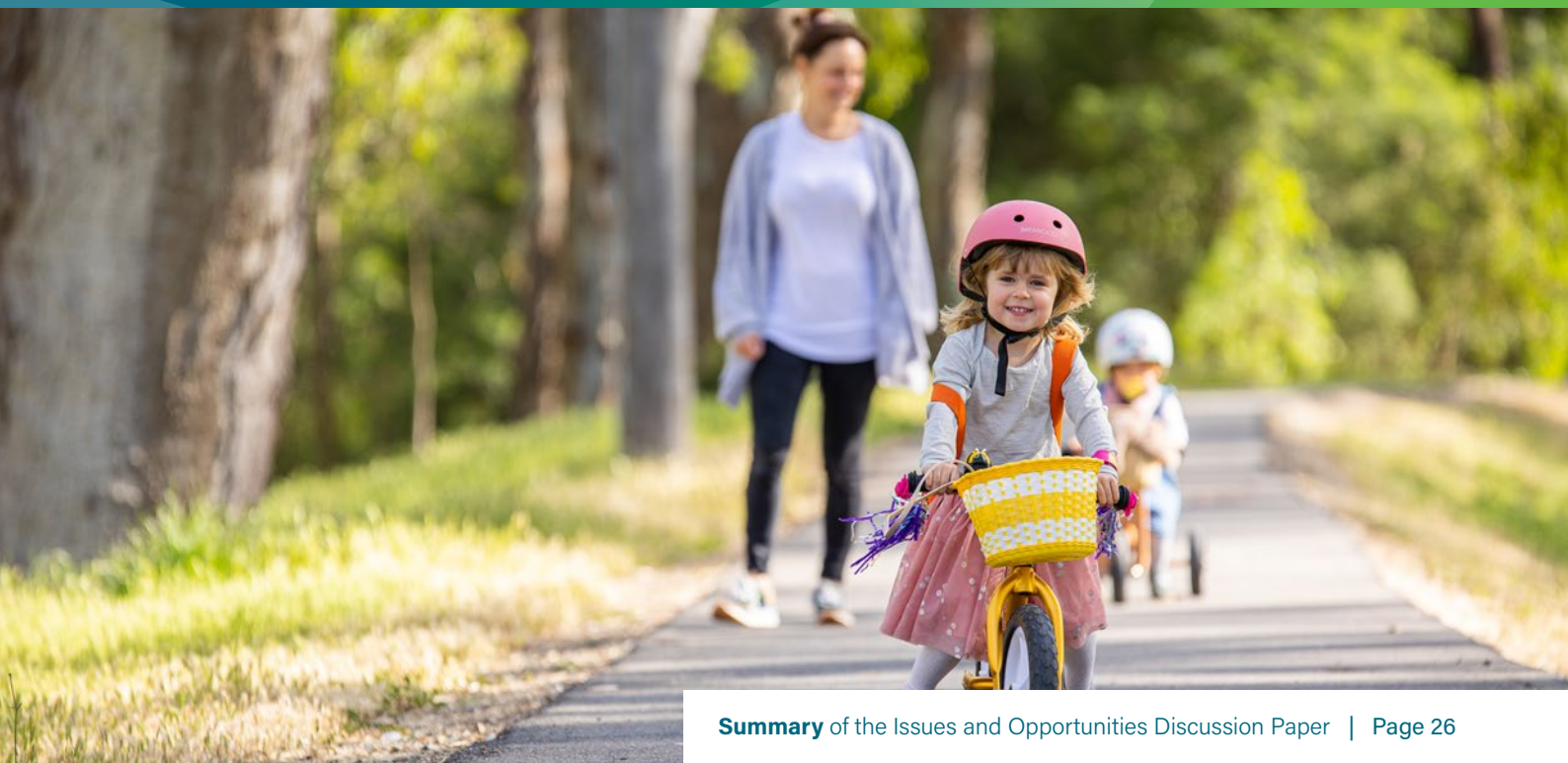
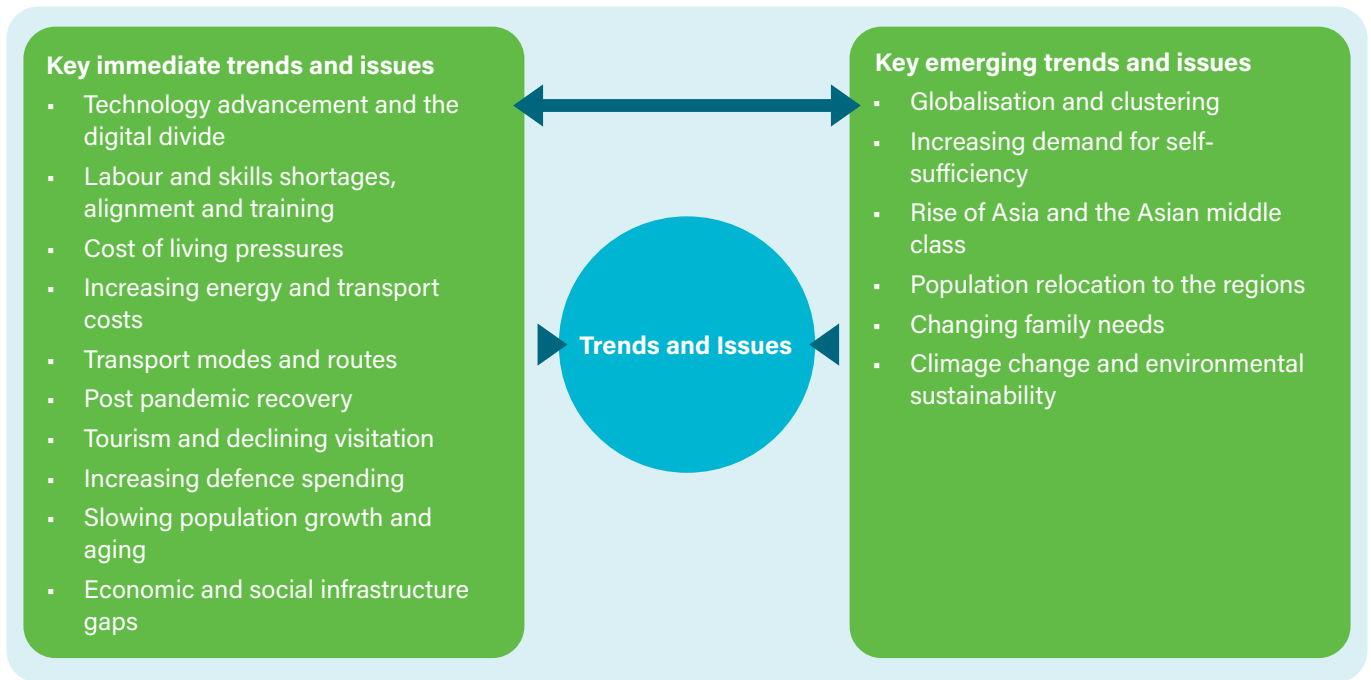


Table 5: Economic and Social Trends and Implications

Trend	Implications for Campaspe
Key Immediate Trends and Issues	
<p>Technological advancement and the Digital Divide – Improvements in technology are changing the way individuals, businesses, and government interact.</p> <p>Enabling technologies are changing the face of how and where we work, providing access to information and data, enabling growth in new and home-based businesses, and encouraging investment in home-based offices.</p> <p>New digital technology and online platforms such as Google, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft enable new business models and connect consumers to the world. This includes growth in e-commerce, e-health and e-education and in home-based businesses.</p>	<p>Technological needs require Council to consider the associated infrastructure requirements, while also providing a number of potential opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved digital connectivity gives way to more opportunities to work from anywhere, a culture more embraced postCOVID-19. • Opportunities to tap into this growing sector to build home grown innovation and jobs. • Growing need to support businesses to innovate and optimise • Technology also provides opportunities to communicate and interact with new and existing businesses to further strengthen the Council's business interactions.
<p>Labour and skills shortages, alignment and training – There exists a labour and skills shortage with poor alignment between local skilled residents and the skill requirements of the local economy.</p>	<p>Strategies to attract and/or develop resident workers with appropriate skills will be important to support existing and future industries.</p>
<p>Cost of living pressures - Families are facing increasing cost of living pressures in an uncertain environment where inflation and interest rates are both on the rise</p>	<p>These pressures may result in further demand for Council support services.</p>
<p>Energy and transport costs – Energy and transport costs are increasing with this trend expected to continue.</p>	<p>There is a danger that some of the Shire's competitive advantage is dissipated as the relevance of transport to total costs increases.</p>
<p>Transport modes and routes – Transport systems continue to evolve with efficient transport routes being an important input in determining supply chains.</p>	<p>Councils continued commitment to maintaining roads and developing key centres as intermodal points is important.</p>
<p>Post pandemic recovery- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the most significant contraction in economic activity since the Great Depression.</p>	<p>Council will need to continue to monitor the impacts and collaborate with Australian and State Governments, local stakeholder, businesses and the community.</p>
<p>Tourism and declining Visitation – Visitation declined significantly as a result of COVID-19. While there has been an update in numbers post-COVID this is occurring slowly.</p>	<p>Support for the tourism and events industry needs to continue along with appropriate additional marketing.</p>
<p>Increasing Defence spending – The global uncertainly coupled with the changed approach of China and Russia's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in significantly increased spending in defence.</p>	<p>The expected growth in the defence supply industries may present an opportunity.</p>

5. Planning for the Future

<p>Slowing Population Growth and Aging – Population growth is not only slowing, there is a greater number of older residents and younger retirees and a large number of single households.</p>	<p>The slow population growth along with population aging will impact on the ability to provide employees for new business and the need to address labour shortages.</p>
<p>Economic and Social Infrastructure gaps – There exists a gap in much-needed economic and social infrastructure, with this particularly prevalent in regional communities .</p>	<p>Much of the required infrastructure is dependent on State and Australian government funding.</p>
<p>Key Emerging Trends and Issues</p>	
<p>Globalisation and Clustering – There is now a clear trend of globalisation of businesses, which is changing the nature and location of the way we manufacture goods and complete research, resulting in greater industry specialisation or clustering. Benefits to a local economy (such as knowledge creation and sharing, innovation, resource sharing, scale economies) increases with cluster numbers.</p>	<p>Provides an opportunity for businesses in the Shire to leverage its existing strength in agriculture and food manufacturing.</p>
<p>Increasing demand for Self-sufficiency – The trend to protectionism along with the current global instability is driving a demand for increasing self-sufficiency and supply security across a range of industries including food and health services.</p>	<p>Provides an opportunity for businesses in the Shire to leverage its existing strength in agriculture and food manufacturing.</p>
<p>Population Relocations to the Regions – There is an emerging trend for families to relocate to regional areas with this being, in part, driven by the increased ability to work remotely.</p>	<p>The attraction of the ‘creative professional’ presents an opportunity, but one that also requires a commitment to the provision of the required lifestyle services and infrastructure.</p>
<p>Changing Family Needs - People and families are time poor, they desire connectivity to their home, workplace and city, residential and lifestyle preferences are changing, and many more people are working from home but require places for social connection.</p>	<p>Changing family needs put a premium on facilities close to each other such as shopping, meeting places and recreation, and involve access to public green space such as parks, ovals and community gardens.</p>
<p>Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability – The impacts of Climate Change are being felt around the world with it driving government policy and increasing pressure on individual corporates to develop and implement emission reduction strategies.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability is also now a key focus for much of the local community.</p>	<p>To meet this challenge it is important Council remain committed to maintaining and enhancing the urban environment and strengthening the Shire’s resilience to climate change.</p> <p>The trends also presents opportunities to investigate new investments in the rapidly growing renewables sector (the circular economy).</p>

These trends require consideration in developing the Campaspe Economic Development Strategy as they provide guidance on potential areas for focus while also highlighting some potential opportunities.

Question for Consideration:

- What are the implications of these trends to the Shire and to the EDS of Council?
- Do these indicate opportunities that may be appropriate for Council to pursue?

6. Possible Strategic Principles And Priorities

The previous discussion has provided guidance on what may be potential Strategic Principles and Priorities, around which the strategy may be developed. The following suggested principles having been developed to guide the work and of Council and stakeholders to achieving positive local economic development.

Growing our Economy:

- Aligning all Council activities and processes with the objective of economic growth
- Taking action (with stakeholders) to develop place-based, local economic development strategies and initiatives.

Focusing on Local Economic Development:

- Meeting the needs of current and attracting future investors and businesses
- Working together on strategies to build-on the skills and knowledge of local businesses and to create innovative, new opportunities;
- Supporting population growth and appealing to relocating families, retirees, creative professionals and the youth.

Innovation and Technology:

- Using innovation and technology as a key enabling for future development
- Identifying improved and new ways of working and creating new job opportunities
- Providing inspiration and incentives to encourage innovation and investment

Collaboration:

- Working together with all stakeholders to improve the Campaspe Shire business environment;
- Aligning with a shared vision and purpose;
- Building-on and connecting existing assets, strengths and competitive advantages;
- Developing broad coalitions across all levels of the public and private sectors to identify and resolve key challenges and take opportunities.

Leveraging Knowledge:

- Using knowledge and skills development as a foundation to change
- Starting with young people, while emphasising lifelong learning and skill development;
- Integrating learning and education into all approaches; and
- Raising awareness through digital marketing and cross-promotional activities.

These strategic principles provide the framework around which Council may work to deliver on a range of Strategic Priorities, with the possible priorities being:

- Providing economic leadership and strengthened collaborative networks and strategic partnerships
- Attracting investment and providing business support
- Enhancing economic infrastructure and transport networks
- Enabling skill development, providing employment pathways and retaining young people
- Enhancing place-based activation and infrastructure
- Encouraging innovation in current strong industry sectors and growing emerging sectors
- Growing the Visitor Economy and enhancing Regional City Liveability.

Question for Consideration:

What initiatives may be considered to support these priorities?

Acronyms

AgrV	Agriculture Victoria
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
BBRF	Better Building Regions Fund (Aust Govt)
CEDS 2014-19	Campaspe Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019
CEDTS 2023-28	Campaspe Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027
Council	Campaspe Shire Council
CPE	Campaspe Port Enterprise Pty Ltd
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreement
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Vic)
DJSIR	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (Vic)
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning (Vic)
EMDTA	Echuca Moama District Tourism Association
FTE	Full time employee
GBCMA	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
LGV	Local Government Victoria
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
MBN	Murray Business Network
MRTB	Murray River Tourism Board
NCCMA	North Central Catchment Management Authority
PoE	Port of Echuca
PoEDC	Port of Echuca Discovery Centre
PoEP	Port of Echuca Precinct
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
REDHS	Rochester and Elmore District Health Service
RJIF	Regional Job and Investment Fund (Vic)
USP	Unique Selling Proposition



Corner Hare and Heygarth Streets, Echuca

Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday

Postal: PO Box 35, Echuca VIC 3564

Telephone: 03 5481 2200
1300 666 535

Email: shire@campaspe.vic.gov.au

Website: www.campaspe.vic.gov.au

Social:  @CampaspeShireCouncil

 @campaspeshire

 #campaspeshire

Customer Service Centres

Kyabram, 19 Lake Road

Rochester, 43-45 Mackay Street

Rushworth, 33 High Street

Tongala, 37 Mangan Street