

Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

Campaspe Shire Council

Engagement Summary Report
September 2023

Conversation Co.



MAX HARDY
CONSULTING



Conversation Co. respectfully acknowledges the people of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta Nations as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways in the area also known as Campaspe Shire. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

1. Executive Summary

Project overview

Campaspe Shire Council is developing a new strategy, the *Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2023-2028* (CEDTS 2023-28). An *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* was prepared to provide background research and to inform the pending industry engagement.

Two external engagement companies - Max Hardy Consulting and Conversation Co. - were responsible for the planning, and delivery of the engagement program. The objectives of this engagement project were to:

- Engage with industry, community and government on the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* to understand the needs and interests of the business community.
- Strengthen partnerships with industry and businesses.
- Engage the whole of Campaspe Shire in the development of the CEDTS 2023-28.
- Build ongoing interest in the CEDTS 2023-28 implementation.

Engagement methodology

An engagement plan was developed outlining project timelines and scope, the level of stakeholder influence (negotiables and non-negotiables) and the engagement activities planned.

The engagement activities were an online survey, a Summit event for business and industry networks, telephone interviews with local business owners, community pop-ups at six locations throughout the Shire and industry forums for more in-depth conversations. The engagement period was from mid-May to the end of August 2023.

Participation

Across all engagement activities there were a total of 403 participants, including 33 Council representatives at the Summit event. Some organisations and their representatives participated in more than one engagement activity.

The Summit event (32.0%) and the online survey (23.6%) attracted the majority of participants. At the six community pop-ups, 69 people (17.0%) participated in conversations about economic development in the Shire.

The majority of participants (70%) were either residents and visitors (32.8%) or business owners and managers (37.2%), with the next largest interest group being those working in a Tourism Business (11.2%). There was also a small percentage of participants that were Government/Public sector agency employees



(9.2%) and Council Staff/Councillors (8.2%). There was limited participation from potential business owners (<1%) and those that did not state an interest (1%).

All industries were represented throughout the engagement process. The industry sectors that provided the largest volume of feedback via the survey, pop-ups and interviews were Accommodation and Food Services (19.8%), Retail Trade (12.3%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (12.3%).

More than half of the businesses engaged in the survey/pop-ups/interviews were sole traders or small businesses with 10 employees or less (59.4%). However, engagement captured input from businesses of all sizes (including those with 100+ employees) as well as feedback from those that worked in Government or the Public Sector. Over half of businesses that participated were well-established businesses operating for 10+ years in the Campaspe region (58.3%), though newer businesses, including two that were not yet operational were also represented.

Geographically, Echuca had the highest proportion of businesses and residents represented (41.7%) in the survey/pop-ups and interviews. There was also representation from Kyabram (15.2%), Rochester (12.1%), other towns in the shire (11.4%), Colbinabbin (7.6%) and Stanhope (6.1%). The consultation activities were designed to capture a wide range of geographic representation with the online sessions, the different locations across Campaspe and the attendees at the summit..

Key findings

Reflecting on the challenges that had a negative impact on the economy in the last twelve months elicited a variety of responses for participants. For survey and interview responses the impact of natural disasters, impacts of Covid-19, labour and skill shortages, increased energy costs and inflation were identified the most. At the summit, the negative impacts mentioned most (by individuals) were technological advancement (digital divide/struggling to keep up), housing shortages, labour and skills shortages, and workforce and lifestyle migration.

Measures taken to address these challenges have focused on internal changes – such as changing business strategies (33 responses), increasing promotion (20 responses), increasing costs (16 responses) and changing suppliers (10 responses). There has been some assistance sought through government funding or grants (14 responses) and professional advice (10 responses).

All groups engaged were relatively consistent in terms of what they see as advantages to the area. There were the most comments in support for tourism, location (road links/proximity to Melbourne), agriculture/farming/manufacturing, community spirit and lifestyle factors. The overall roles that Council were identified as being able to play included provider (of infrastructure/events), facilitator (for information sharing/business support networks), regulator (planning role), partner (with industry groups, Traditional Owners), advocate (to State and Federal Government and peak bodies) and funder (through grants/investment).



From the initial list of threats identified in the Issues and Opportunities paper, the following were identified the most frequently by survey and summit participants - skilled labour shortages, access to services and housing, poor transport connections and climate change/impact on water flows. Additional threats that were identified included rebuilding after the October 2022 floods, inability or unwillingness of Council to take required action/skill to deliver, poor road infrastructure, poor provision of health services, childcare and youth services, higher cost of living, ageing population, and cross-border regulatory challenges.

Potential future role of Council in supporting the local economy and industry:

- Provider – infrastructure, running events to bring visitors to the region, consulting with the community, amenities and supporting local business.
- Facilitator – empower the community to run events, listen and discuss opportunities with the community, deliver the strategy and incentivise business and investment attraction.
- Regulator – improve access to housing, cut red tape and streamline application times.
- Partner – upskilling/education programs, with local industries and small business.
- Advocate – to the State/Federal Government for housing, renewable energy investment, support with flood mitigation investment and assistance with promotion of the region.
- Funder – support efficiency upgrades, tourist information and programs to support business sustainability and growth.

Potential future role of businesses in supporting the local economy and industry:

- Longer opening hours, coordinate opening hours on Mondays-Tuesdays and in peak periods.
- .
- Improve buildings and facades.
- Offering 'complete experience' that matches what tourists are seeking, including child-friendly experiences.
- Actively advertise and promote the region through their business operations to reinforce what the region has to offer.
- Encourage local spending and networking among other businesses.
- Continue to work with CPE to promote and assist in the revitalisation of the tourist precinct in Echuca.

Potential future role of other levels of government were:

- State government to support investment attraction and destination marketing and event funding support through Visit Victoria.
- Recognition and funding for infrastructure to mitigate flood events.
- Support small businesses.
- Utilise Echuca as a location for events and conferences.
- State Government to provide increased Public Transport services.
- Federal government to consider domestic reservation policy for gas.



Recommendations

Recommendations were focused on the key role that Council could play to help deliver on opportunities that were regularly raised throughout the engagement processes. These recommendations included:

Provider

- Provision of infrastructure, asset planning and prioritisation e.g. roads, drainage, pedestrian and cycle paths, parks, public wi-fi, parking and EV charging.
- Beautification and soft infrastructure e.g., enhancing tourist areas, providing signage/wayfinding, tree planting, supporting smaller towns with maintenance and attraction, creative styling.
- Provide quality tourism services – parks, parking, toilets, dump points etc.
- Maintain, repair and rebuild facilities/amenities to a higher standard including better community facilities and neighbourhood amenity.
- Information and support to allow people to maximise their time in the region and support new residents to settle in, including to smaller towns e.g., information centre, accommodation support, support finding employment etc.
- Facilitate and run activities and events across the shire including cultural events, First Nations.
- Council creates an environment that supports development and growth - less red tape and reduced fees to get things done, particularly housing development.
- Promote the Shire and opportunities e.g., showcase in other regions including Melbourne.
- Work with other Council's on challenges and opportunities.
- Communicate significant infrastructure projects including road upgrades to keep residents and visitors aware of what is being done.

Facilitator

- Encourage renewable energy and investment. Support businesses to go green.
- Host business events to bring businesses together to share information, network and encourage innovation etc.
- Connect service and goods providers to support visitors and tourists.
- Share information around opportunities and funding.
- Create an environment that works strategically to achieve goals – work together towards tangible outcomes rather than reacting to events.
- Change in cultural attitudes e.g. embedded celebration of indigenous ancestors and their culture and language.

Regulator

- Support and fast-track land use planning where it provides more residential housing.
- Support businesses to navigate the regulatory environment - less red tape and roadblocks, streamlined application process.
- Improve strategic planning to reflect current issues and meet future opportunities – e.g. better planning of shopping precincts, industrial land.
- More community consultation in future planning – ensure that planning responds to community needs.



- Creating an environment focused on universal design solutions – accessible infrastructure and development.

Advocate

- To the State and Federal Government for improved funding and policies for roads and bridges, public housing, transport links, disaster relief, improved services (including disability and youth services) and to support and respond to local trends and community needs.
- Investigate a regional deal model between the two states and involve the federal government for longer term infrastructure investment.
- Councillors ‘fly the flag’ for the region by advocating for funding support and promoting liveability to attract new residents.
- To local business organisations such as Committee for Echuca Moama (C4EM), Rochester Business Network (RBN), Kyabram Chamber of Commerce etc to support Councils endeavours.

Partner

- Partner with local businesses to support increased spending and promotion e.g., ‘Buy Local’ campaigns.
- Education partnerships with major universities and Tafes to deliver programs locally and address skill shortages. Also look at CCLLEN.
- With other Councils around shared interests.
- With tourism organisations to promote tourism and enhance the experiences we can offer visitors.
- Act as a referral partner between businesses – including a good awareness of what is going on/who needs to be connected to who.
- Public/private partnerships for private development – particularly to meet housing shortage.

Funder

- Business grants - financial support for businesses and entrepreneurs to help meet the goals of the economic development strategy e.g. diversifying offer, efficiency upgrades.
- Mentoring programs and other skill building opportunities for businesses.
- Infrastructure upgrades in all towns in the Shire to incentivise population growth.

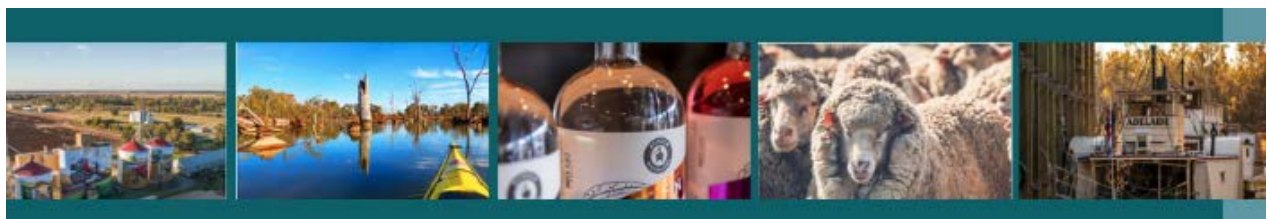


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2. Introduction

2.1 Project background

The Shire of Campaspe is a large rural municipality in northern Victoria and is one of the richest and most diverse agriculture and food processing areas in the state. In addition to on-farm food production, food processing/manufacturing, health, construction, and tourism are major employers across the Shire. Recognised as an attractive tourism destination, visitors and locals alike enjoy food, wine, and events not usually available to like-sized communities.

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.

Council may be responsible for some identified outcomes but mostly it will work in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

It has been nearly a decade since Council's previous economic development strategy. Accordingly, the Council is now developing a new strategy, the *Campaspe Economic Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2028* (CETDS 2023-28). An *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* was the first phase in the process of the development of the CETDS 2023-28, with this paper being used to inform industry engagement.¹

2.2 Engagement methodology

Two external engagement companies - Max Hardy Consulting and Conversation Co. - were responsible for the planning, and delivery of the engagement program. An engagement plan was developed outlining:

- Project timelines and scope.
- Challenges and opportunities associated with engaging business and industry.
- Level of stakeholder influence, including negotiables and non-negotiables for input.
- Outline of engagement activities planned.
- Measures of success for the project.

The objectives of this engagement project were to:

- Engage with industry, community and government on the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* enabling the development of potential priorities for the CEDTS 2023-28.
- Ensure the needs and interests of the business community are tabled.
- Strengthen partnerships with industry and businesses to support delivery of the CEDTS 2023-28.
- Engage the whole of Campaspe Shire in the development of the CEDTS 2023-28.
- Build ongoing interest in the CEDTS 2023-28 implementation from its development to delivery.

¹ Campaspe Shire Council, Request for Quote – Economic Tourism Development Strategy Issues and Opportunities - Engagement, March 2023



Engagement activities

A mixed-method community engagement program consisting of online and face-to-face activities was used to reach participants from a range of different levels of interest in the project. The engagement activities were based on the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum of 'Inform' and 'Consult'. The engagement activities completed by Max Hardy Consulting and Conversation Co. are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Engagement activities

Activity	Rationale	Stakeholders	Details
Online survey	Provides opportunity for participants to provide confidential information at their convenience, without having to attend face-to-face engagement.	Industry Small and large businesses Broader community	15 May - 31 July 2023 Via Council website project page
Summit event (4.5 hours duration)	An event to present ideas from early engagement and discuss questions to involve business and industry networks in planning.	Industry Small and large businesses Council Staff	21 July 2023 7.30am - 12.00noon Moama Bowling Club Open invitation to the community to register interest in attending
Telephone interviews x 30 (30 mins duration)	Provides an opportunity for participants to provide confidential information at their convenience. Ability to probe and clarify answers.	Industry and business	5 June - 4 August 2023
Community pop-ups at six locations (2 hours duration)	Provides broader community and businesses who do not have established relationships with Council to participate during their day to day activities.	Broader community Business owners	15 June 2023: Kyabram, Stanhope, Colbinabbin 16 June 2023: Lockington, Rochester Echuca
Forums x 14 (2 hours duration)	Provides an opportunity for free ranging conversations, information sharing, collaboration and networking within a group.	Industry and business	16 August - 24 August Online and in Echuca, Rushworth, Kyabram, Tongala, Lockington



3. Who Participated?

3.1 Participation by engagement activity

Table 2 provides a summary of the engagement activities which involved a total of 406 participants, including 33 Council representatives at the Summit event. It should be noted that some participants participated in more than one engagement activity (e.g., attended the Summit and completed an interview). Participation at an organisational level, in the face-to-face engagement activities, is shown in Appendix 1

Table 2. Participation by engagement activity

Engagement activity	No.	%
Online survey	96	23.8
Community pop-ups	69	17.1
Interviews with stakeholders	30	7.4
Forums - business, industry, residents	45	11.2
Summit Event - 28 Council staff and 5 Councillors	33	8.2
Summit Event - business, industry, public sector	130	32.3
TOTAL participants	403	100%

Note: The Mayor and some Council staff also participated in the forums but are not counted here.

3.2 Participation by interest in the project

Table 3 provides a summary of the engagement activities divided by given interest. This includes those that identified as residents and visitors, business owners and managers, potential business owners, tourism business owners/managers/employees, government/public sector agency employees, Council Staff and Councillors and those that did not state an interest. It is noted that as these interest areas were not declared for the summit and forums, participants have been placed into the best fitting category based on their responses.

Table 3. Participation by interest in project

Interest in project	Survey, Pop-ups and Interviews	Summit (approx.) and Forums	TOTAL
Residents and visitors	107 (54.9%)	25 (12.0%)	132 (32.8%)



Interest in project	Survey, Pop-ups and Interviews	Summit (approx.) and Forums	TOTAL
Business owners and managers	53 (27.2%)	97 (46.6%)	150 (37.2%)
Potential business owners	2 (1.0%)	-	2 (<1.0%)
Tourism business owners/managers/employees	19 (9.7%)	26 (12.5%)	45 (11.2%)
Government/public sector agency employee	10 (5.1%)	27 (13.0%)	37 (9.2%)
Council staff and Councillors	-	33 (15.9%)	33 (8.2%)
Not stated	4 (2.1%)	-	4 (1.0%)
TOTAL participants	195 (100%)	208 (100%)	403 (100%)

Note: The Mayor and some Council staff also participated in the forums but are not counted here.

Table 3 identifies that the majority of participants (70%) were either residents and visitors (32.8%) or business owners and managers (37.2%), with the next largest interest group being those working in a Tourism Business (11.2%). There was also a small percentage of participants that were Government/Public sector agency employees (9.2%) and Council Staff/Councillors (8.2%). There was limited participation from potential business owners (<1%) and those that did not state an interest (1%).

3.3 Participation by industry sector

Table 4 shows participation by industry sector where there was at least one organisation that participated (represented by the ● symbol). Tourism businesses were food services and accommodation (n=9), arts and recreation services (n=4) and retail trade (n=2).

Table 4. Participation by industry sector and business characteristics

Industry sector	Survey, Pop-ups and Interviews	Summit and Forums
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	6 (7.4%)	●
Mining	1 (1.2%)	●
Manufacturing	2 (2.4%)	●
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1 (1.2%)	●
Construction	2 (2.4%)	●
Wholesale Trade	1 (1.2%)	●
Retail Trade	10 (12.3%)	●



Industry sector	Survey, Pop-ups and Interviews	Summit and Forums
Accommodation and Food Services	16 (19.8%)	●
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3 (3.7%)	●
Information Media and Telecommunications	1 (1.2%)	●
Financial and Insurance Services	3 (3.7%)	●
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	4 (4.9%)	●
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3 (3.7%)	●
Administrative and Support Services	2 (2.5%)	●
Public Administration and Safety	2 (2.5%)	●
Education and Training	6 (7.4%)	●
Health Care and Social Assistance	10 (12.3%)	●
Arts and Recreation Services	6 (7.4%)	●
Not stated	3 (3.7%)	-
TOTAL businesses/organisations	87	123

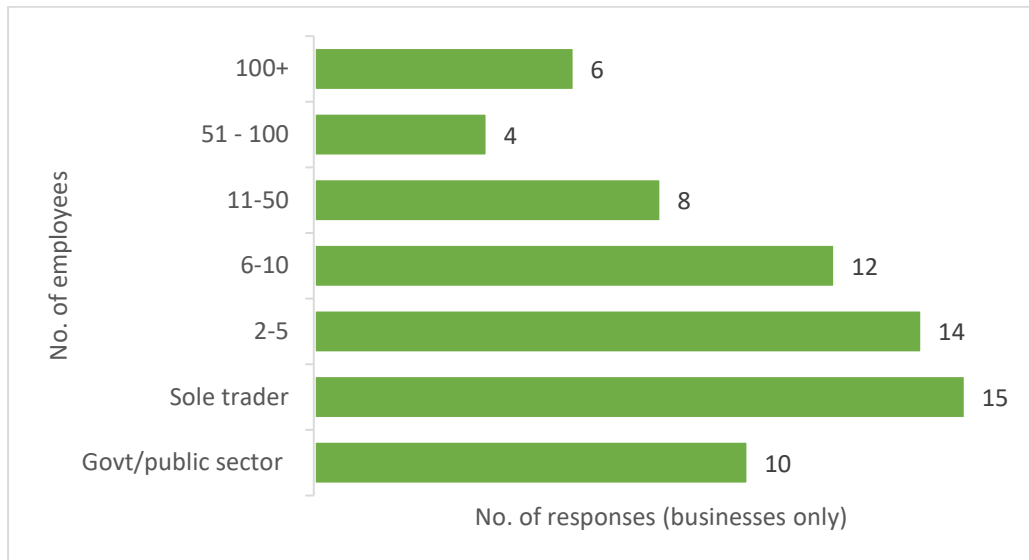
Note: Industry types are those used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Industry types were assumed for Summit and Forum businesses (not recorded by participants)

All industries were represented by the engagement process. The industry sectors that provided the largest volume of feedback via the survey, pop-ups and interviews were Accommodation and Food Services (19.8%), Retail Trade (12.3%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (12.3%).

Figure 1 provides a graph of Participation by the number of employees (businesses only) This graph highlights the size of businesses that participated in the online survey, community pop-ups and interviews in terms of the number of employees. This figure identifies that more than half of the businesses that were spoken to were small businesses with 10 employees or less (59.4%). However, engagement captured input from businesses of all sizes as well as feedback from those that worked in Government or the Public Sector.

Figure 1. Participation by number of employees (businesses only)



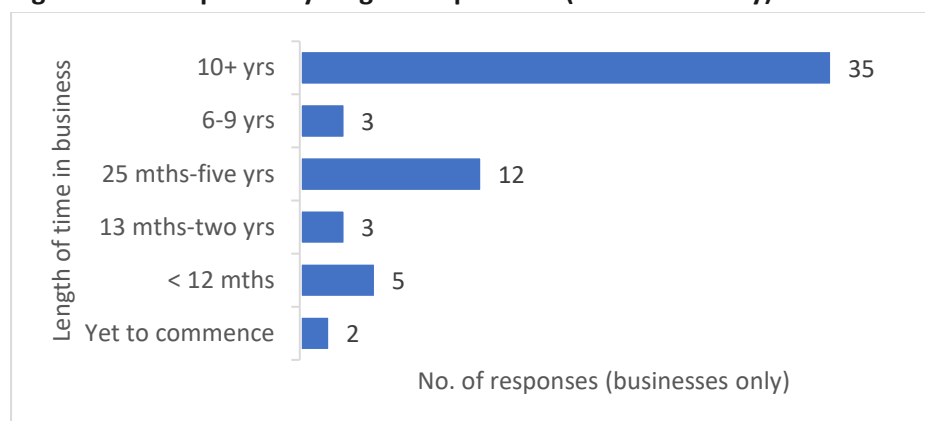


Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups and interviews.

Figure 2 graphs the number of businesses engaged in the online survey, pop-ups and interviews by the length of time they have been in operation. This graph highlights that over half of businesses participating were well-established businesses operating for 10+ years in the Campaspe region (58.3%), though newer businesses were also represented.



Figure 2. Participation by length of operation (businesses only)



Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups and interviews.

3.4 Participation by geographical area

For those that participated in the survey, pop-ups, interviews and Summit, Table 5 provides an overview of geographic location for both businesses and residents.

Note that although no business locations were recorded for the Forums it is considered a broad range of locations were represented due to both attendance and the locations where forums were held (Echuca, Tongala, Rochester, Kyabram, Rushworth, Lockington and Online).

Table 5. Participation by township/area

Town/region	Business locations No.	Residential locations No.	TOTAL %
Echuca	44	23	45%
Kyabram	13	7	13.4%
Rochester	6	10	10.7%
Colbinabbin	4	9	8.7%
Stanhope	4	4	5.3%
Other towns in Shire	13	2	10%
Regional Victoria	7	-	4.7%
NSW border towns (Moama/Barmah)	2	1	<2.0%
TOTAL business/participants	93	56	149 (100%)

Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups, summit and interviews.



Table 5 identifies that most locations in the shire were represented by the engagement approach, though Echuca had the highest proportion of businesses and residents represented (41.7%). There was also representation from Kyabram (15.2%), Rochester (12.1%), other towns in the shire (11.4%), Colbinabbin (7.6%) and Stanhope (6.1%).



4. Key Findings - reflections

4.1 Reflecting on the last twelve months

In the online survey, the interviews and at the Summit, business owners were asked the question; ‘In the past 12 months, has your business been negatively impacted by any of the following trends?’. Business owners in the survey were able to select their top five trends from a list whilst the other participants provided a verbatim answer. The most common events or issues that negatively impacted the shire and region are shown in Table 6, in descending order. At the Summit, the question was asked more generically about trends that are having the “most impact”.

Table 6 provides a high-level summary of responses though it is noted that as the survey, interviews and summit responses were all collected differently it is difficult to compare the number of responses and infer importance. We can identify that due to the wide variety of responses including the number of additional negative impacts raised that this is a very complex environment with a lot of competing factors. For survey and interview responses it was the impacts of natural disasters, impacts of covid-19, labour and skill shortages, increased energy costs and inflation that were identified the most often. For the summit it was Technological advancement (digital divide/struggling to keep up), housing shortages, labour and skills shortages, and workforce and lifestyle migration that were mentioned most.

Table 6. Negative Impacts over last twelve months and other trends

Negative Impacts/other trends	Survey and interview responses	Summit responses
Impacts of natural disasters (floods)	32	1
Impacts of COVID-19	29	
Labour and skills shortages (also connected to housing shortages)	27	8
Increasing energy costs	21	2
Inflation	21	
Declining visitation to the area	12	1
Economic and social infrastructure gaps	11	2
Increasing transport costs	10	
Workforce and lifestyle migration	4	7
Work from home/Flexible Work/Hybrid Work	4	6



Negative Impacts/other trends	Survey and interview responses	Summit responses
Climate change	3	4
Technological advancement (digital divide/social media/automation of jobs)	2	11
Housing Shortages	2	9
Slowing population growth/Migration Patterns/Ageing population	2	2
Shift from product based to service based economy	1	-
Additional Themes		
Sustainability (lack of so far, need to move towards)*	-	3
General challenges of doing business - cost of living particularly in a regional setting (impact on workers), perceived Council inaction, delayed planning approval, water shortages	38	15
TOTAL responses	218	71

Data sources: Online survey, Summit and interviews. Multiple response questions.

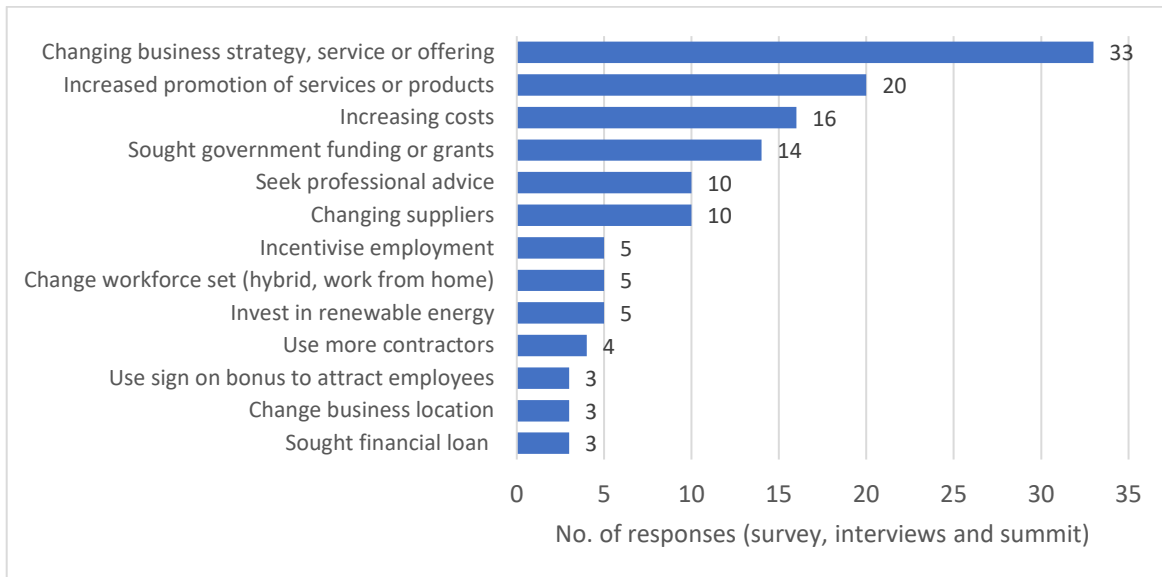
4.2 Measures taken to overcome recent challenges

In the online survey and interviews and at the Summit, business owners were asked the question; ‘What measures have you taken to overcome any of these challenges?’. Business owners in the survey were able to select their top five measures from a list whilst the interviewees provided a verbatim answer. The most common measures taken are shown in Figure 3, in descending order. In addition, there were 28 other comments made, though these focused on describing the problems and issues faced and not necessarily the measures taken to resolve them.

When reviewing Figure 3 it is evident that the focus on overcoming challenges faced by businesses has been largely centred around internal changes – such as changing business strategies (33 responses), increasing promotion (20 responses), increasing costs (16 responses) and changing suppliers (10 responses). There has been some assistance sought through government funding or grants (14 responses) and professional advice (10 responses). There were also a number of responses that indicated a focus on creating more attractive working environments for employees.

Figure 3. Measures taken to overcome recent challenges.





5. Key Findings - economic development

5.1 Economic advantages of the Shire

Most participants were asked to comment on the economic advantages in the Shire, as an open question. However, at the community pop-ups, participants were shown the list of advantages identified in the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* and asked to select their top one. Their responses are summarised in Table 7 below.

This feedback identifies that groups are relatively consistent in terms of what they see as advantages to the area. There were the most comments in support for Tourism, Location (road links), agriculture/farming/manufacturing, community spirit and lifestyle factors.

Table 7. Economic advantages in the Shire/region

Advantages	Individual feedback - examples and number of comments	SUMMIT Small group discussion - examples and number of comments
Tourism features and attractions	32 comments focused on more music events, car shows, festivals, and silo art.	25 comments focused on Silo art, paddle boats, indigenous culture, recreation on the river.
Road links and proximity to Melbourne/major transport hubs	14 comments	23 comments
Community spirit and connection, collaboration	16 comments	23 comments
Lifestyle and amenity, family focus	11 comments	22 comments
Agriculture, farming and manufacturing base	23 comments Growth in sector, dairy, organic farming	22 comments Access to water, food production
Specific infrastructure	5 comments Diversity of infrastructure	18 comments Health services, education
Murray River, natural attractions	5 comments	15 comments



Land/housing availability and affordability	6 comments	11 comments
Climate and weather	3 comments	7 comments
Employment opportunities, education path	8 comments	6 comments
Negative/no/irrelevant comment	21 comments	4 comments

Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups, interviews, Summit - table discussions.

Note: Summit responses were from individuals, not consensus of small groups.

Participants were asked how these advantages can be built upon or strengthened by Council, other levels of government and businesses. Table 8 shows the various potential roles Council could play, which have been categorised by Conversation Co. as Provider (of infrastructure), facilitator for information sharing, regulator (planning role), partner (with industry groups, Traditional Owners), advocate (to Government and peak bodies) and funder (grants/investment).

Table 8. Potential roles for Council - building on advantages

Type of role	Actions mentioned by participants
Provider (18 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision of infrastructure, asset planning and prioritisation ● Revamp the Port, build boat ramps and river access points ● Repair and rebuild facilities/amenities ● Activities and events to keep going ● Make the toilets closer to site, toilet signs ● Dump point in town for travellers ● Support and advice about services, signage/wayfinding to help people get around towns ● Make available usable space and parks at the river ● More free parking ● More interpretive information about the region and wine growing ● Not close the tourist information centre ● Support smaller towns with beautification ● Maintain assets to a higher standard and ensure future infrastructure meets community expectations - parks, roads, open spaces, and community facilities
Facilitator (12 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage new businesses to offer variety ● Role in supporting partnership brokering - share information around opportunities and funding availability ● Bringing business together for better promotion ● Encourage local businesses to innovate and invest in existing natural assets and infrastructure (e.g., Echuca's waterfront kiosk) ● Facilitation of information sharing and coordination of leaders



Regulator (10 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land use planning - providing more land ● Less red tape and roadblocks, deters business and investment. ● Fast track planning for development ● Assist small business - flexibility for signage etc. ● 'Build to rent' development to provide staff
Partner (10 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Buy local' campaigns ● In-kind support for promotion ● Education partnerships with major universities to deliver programs locally ● Attract a large medical training centre delivering tertiary education in different locations ● Attract overseas workers to settle in Echuca – particularly in health and aged care and construction-related industries ● Work together with indigenous partners ● Work with businesses and organisations including EMDTA, MRTB, EMMA, CPE, Visit Rochester to promote tourism, and encourage new experiences/product development ● Coordination of a mentoring program in schools to support employment pathways and apprenticeships
Advocate (9 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of local trends and advocate for the necessary support/councils that can see the big picture tend to serve the community ● For improved roads and bridges ● Investigate a regional deal model between the two states and involve the Federal Government for longer term infrastructure investment ● Stand alongside businesses to speak with state and federal governments - lobby for improving road/rail infrastructure ● Transport connectivity by rail as road infrastructure is poor ● For alternative energy sources such as industrial waste conversion ● Councillors have to 'fly the flag' for the region, advocating for state and federal funds
Funder (3 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incentives to establish businesses in the area ● Incentivise targeted development where it advances the region (discounted permit application process)
Role not clear (2 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of understanding as to the direct role of Council in supporting businesses ● Perceived absence in the past five years

Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups, interviews.

Note: The different types of roles were categorised by Conversation Co., not by the participants.

Potential roles for businesses were:

- Longer opening hours, coordinate opening hours on Mondays-Tuesdays and in peak periods.
- Provide child-friendly experiences.
- Improve buildings, facades but difficult with heritage regulations.



- Offering 'complete experience' that matches what tourists are seeking.
- Advertising and promotion of tourism and agriculture.
- Seek user feedback.
- Liveability for workers.

Potential roles for other levels of government were:

- State government to promote the region as a destination to visit and explore.
- Funding the revitalisation of the tourist precincts - beautifying Echuca and entrance to the town.
- Recognition that Shire is flood affected and flood mitigation strategies should be considered.
- Funding and grants for infrastructure and flood mitigation.
- Support small businesses.
- Utilise Echuca as a location for events and conferences.

5.2 Strengthening economic development

Participants were asked how economic development in Campaspe Shire can be strengthened by Council, other levels of government and businesses. Table 9 summarises the 85 responses regarding the potential roles Council could play. These focused on the areas of operating as a provider, facilitator, advocator, regulator, partner and funder.

Table 9. Potential roles for Council - strengthening economic development

Type of role	Actions mentioned by participants
Provider (43 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less red tape and reduce fees to get things done - planning permissions, cultural heritage and heritage overlays can be a barrier. Create easier pathways for events or sports ● Better signage for local areas of interest ● Plantings in the street, parks and gardens maintained/restored after flooding ● Better community facilities, prioritise amenities for young people and tourists ● Invest in infrastructure - drainage, electric vehicle charging near arts precinct, Kyabram walking track ● Urban market garden as an economically viable source of food in Rochester ● Communications about the needs and opportunities in the Shire ● Invest in the small regional towns with the potential to build on the tourism market that already exists e.g. Kyabram Fauna Park ● Learn strategic thinking ● Listen and engage with local communities ● Needs to employ more staff to help businesses and negotiate new businesses to Shire ● Parking ● Provide information kits for newcomers ● Being accountable about the actions in the Strategy



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support Echuca-Moama Tourist Information Centre
Facilitator (15 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with peak industry bodies, facilitating delivery of products and services ● Bringing business networks together, contact point for business promotion. Facilitate local business forums to discuss common issues and ways to work together on projects ● Council to lead initiatives to draw visitors to the Shire, connect service and goods providers to support visitors and tourists ● Let the stakeholders drive the outcome, Council to guide and support ● Providing a clear plan and channelling the energies of relevant stakeholders towards achieving the agreed plan
Advocate (17 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate to state government for more public housing, better services (including disability and accessibility) and roads in the Shire ● Advocate for improved rail infrastructure for freight and trains for commuters/visitors, and improved roads ● Promote region to attract new residents, employers, and workers (hospitality, medical) ● Work with providers to strengthen accommodation offerings ● Work with state government on alternative energy sources
Partner (5 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Councillors working together with business/industry - cohesiveness. Campaspe needs to understand what a partner is ● Be close to the action, know what is going on, work with services to reduce crime ● Continue to purchase from local suppliers ● Referral partners for business ● Partner with peak industry bodies such as EMT and C4EM
Regulator (5 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Better planning of shopping precinct ● Strategic planning of Rochester land ● Managing growth in small towns ● Faster planning approvals/streamline application processes for developments
Funder (4 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business grants and incentives ● Grants to enable different service offerings due to tourism season change

Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups, interviews.

Note: The different types of roles were categorised by Conversation Co., not by the participants.

Participants at the community pop-ups and the online survey provided 43 comments about the potential roles for businesses. The most common theme was the need to collaborate and encourage other businesses into the region, to network with and support other sectors (by purchasing local). Again, an extension of opening hours was mentioned regarding Saturday and evening trading. Participants also mentioned businesses acting as advocates for their own sector - to Council and to state government.



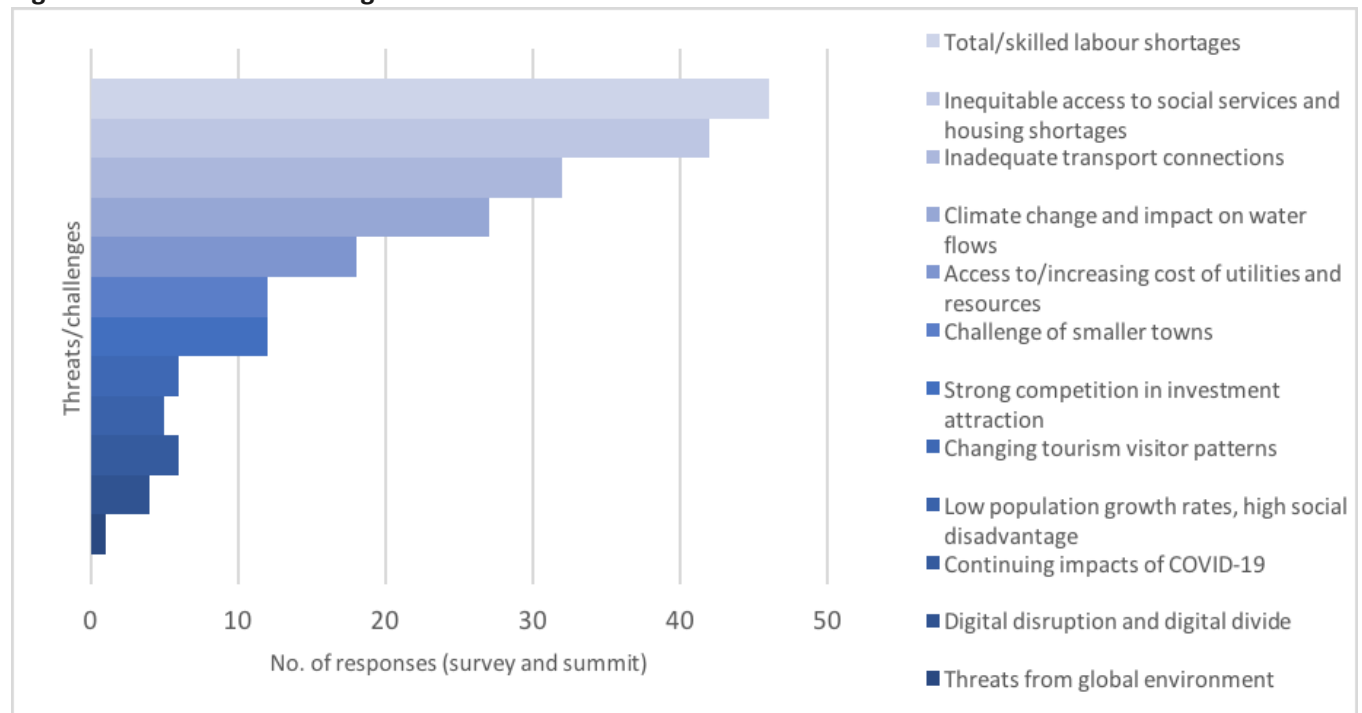
Participants at the community pop-ups and the online survey provided 36 comments about the potential roles for other levels of government. The two main themes were funding through grants and infrastructure. In addition to grants funding, participants mentioned the need for incentive payments to encourage professionals to the Shire such as doctors, pharmacists, and teachers, also incentives for manufacturing companies to establish in the area. The expressed need for infrastructure was in the areas of public transport (trains), public housing, flood/bushfire support, freight transport, road maintenance and sporting facilities. Other minor themes were governments acting as promoters and facilitators, setting policy for population growth and workforce skills, and being an advocate for regional investment.

5.3 Managing threats to economic development

The Shire’s economic threats and challenges had already been identified in the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* based on research and technical data. However, community and stakeholders’ views were sought to verify and expand upon those twelve threats (refer to Figure 25 of the Discussion Paper), specifically how to better manage or monitor these threats.

Survey respondents were shown the list of threats identified in the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper* and asked to select their top five threats or challenges. Figure 4 shows the threats and challenges of most concern, from this initial list of twelve. This identifies that skilled labour shortages, access to services and housing, poor transport connections and climate change/impact on water flows were raised the most frequently in the Survey and Summit.

Figure 4. Threats and challenges for the Shire



As well as survey respondents, the participants at the Summit event and at the community pop-ups were asked to nominate other threats or challenges, as an open question. A small number of comments



related more to needs or issues (often repeated from previous questions) or were irrelevant to the topic so these were not considered.

Participants in the online survey, community pop-ups and interviews noted the following additional threats or challenges that will need to be managed:

- Reputational impacts and rebuilding challenges associated with Rochester floods.
- Inability or unwillingness of Council to take required actions - apathy, red tape, lack of strategic thinking, loss of resources.
- Poor road infrastructure - bridges, road condition, connections, lack of secondary roads.
- Low appeal to new residents/young people not staying after school due to lack of services and opportunities.
- Poor provision of health services.
- People struggling with higher costs of living, higher interest rates.

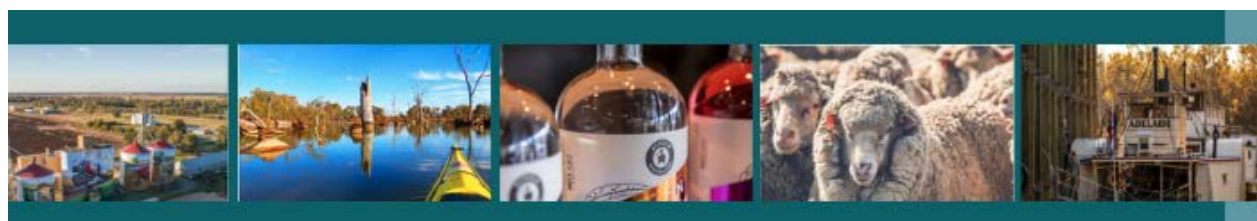
The Summit responses are summarised in small groups which were generally organised by industry sector. Participants in the Summit event (more business and industry) noted the following additional threats or challenges that will need to be managed:

- Lack of appropriate skills and advice at Council - land use, zoning, no strategy for individual towns, cross-border inconsistencies. Red tape and over-regulation.
- Impact of population ageing (demand for aged care, loss of civic leaders) and demographic stagnation (need more diversity).
- Cross-border differences in regulations, funding, policy clashes, service duplication.
- Need for childcare and health services.

Participants were asked how Council, other levels of government and businesses can best manage these threats. Table 10 shows the various potential roles Council could play as mentioned by participants.

Table 10. Potential roles for Council - managing threats or challenges

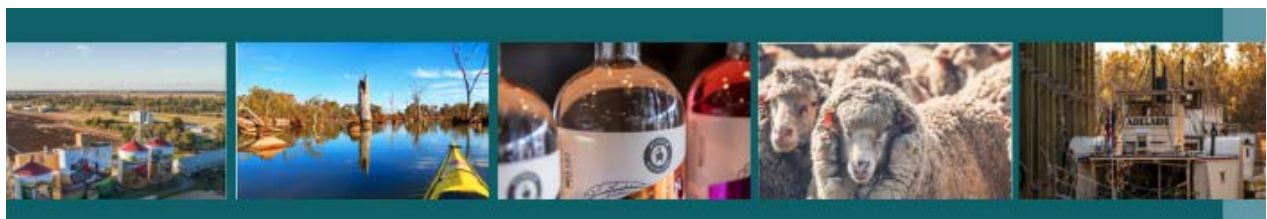
Type of role	Actions mentioned by participants
Provider (17 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Caravan travellers need waste drops ● Maintain infrastructure - clean streets, unoccupied homes ● Prioritise the economy instead of “insipid community based warm and fuzzy rubbish” ● Improved signage for the silos, free maps of the trail ● Integrate more renewables, invest in renewable energy - use available land. Investment in green infrastructure ● Run major events, get a Big Cow, promote the town ● More community consultation in future planning - how we're spending money. “Reassess the areas in which you are suppose to represent and ‘respond to local community needs”



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide infrastructure for new developments in Kyabram, preparing the land to be utilised for housing subdivisions ● Remove parking fees to increase trade ● Resurface. Make sure our roads don't have potholes ● Support local businesses and social groups to make improvements in environmental impacts ● Toilets/portaloos, kinder
Facilitator (8 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be more proactive to empower the community to develop more events and open up the Port Precinct ● Council must listen and discuss opportunities ● Incentivise by bringing companies here from Melbourne ● Learn how to think strategically. Be “on the front foot”, not always reactionary ● Reinvent the Port Authority (achieves very little). Let the community know what is being accomplished by CPE ● Work together to form a tangible strategy with outcomes for all ● Plant alternative crops e.g., turf, tomatoes
Regulator (5 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create more residential options. Improve strategy for opening land/ converting zones to residential to keep up with demand for more housing ● Flood proof housing ● Cut red tape (2) ● Improve turnaround times for planning applications
Partner (5 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advertising and marketing - offer appealing towns and activities ● Education programs to promote telehealth services and online health ● Need to help industries more ● Promote small business in the region
Advocate (6 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate for young people to get housing ● increase minimum wage ● Housing and affordable accommodation for pension aged people ● Regional LGA Partnerships ● Provide land for public housing/more land for housing ● Advocate for funding/grants ● Advocate for branding
Funder (4 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding support for efficiency upgrades ● Continue to fund the Tourist Information Centre and Tourism Bureau
Role not clear (3 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unsure what Council’s role is managing market influences ● Unsure what Council’s role is in emergency response, or who’s direct role this is ● Unsure whose role it is to subsidise mental health support and awareness, spread knowledge of available services

Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups, interviews.

Note: The different types of roles were categorised by Conversation Co., not by the participants.



Potential roles for businesses were mentioned in a more generic manner such as working harder, working together/collaboration and thinking bigger. Potential roles for other levels of government were:

- Better government policy. “Broad and aggressive” policy actions on climate change and its impacts.
- Budget and support/cut taxes and Workcover.
- Incentives for people to move to the region to work. Stronger support for the regions.
- Encourage new immigrants to locate to regional areas, more immigration.
- Provide money for housing.
- Governments “need to be answering honestly”. Objectivity is a priority, not boosting the government's own marginal electorates.
- Listen to the needs of our local community, not the demands of state and federal governments.
- Police resources to stop crime.
- Cut red tape.
- Rethink Murray-Darling Basin Plan and negative socio-economic impacts on the Shire.
- Supporting building industry with trade incentives to ensure that industry can keep up with demand.
- More transport. Improve rail connectivity to get people from Melbourne.



6. Key Findings - tourism development

Tourism businesses and other businesses were asked to answer a set of questions about tourism development. This section was considered optional for non-tourism business owners.

5.4 Tourism opportunities

In the online survey, respondents were reminded of the area's attractions (natural assets, historic and cultural value, food and wine, outdoor activities, water sports and events) and also noted that the tourism sector caters to a wide range of life stage groups with most tourism activity occurring in Echuca. They were then asked about any other opportunities to develop the Shire's tourism offering and support the tourism economy.

The following opportunities were identified:

- Expansion of resources into the smaller towns - beautifying streetscapes, host a major event in Rochester, Kyabram, Girgarre and Tongala, showcase historical buildings.
- Events - live music from local artists (like Day on the Green), Farmers Markets, wineries trail/cellar doors, carnival with rides. Coordinate the event program on weekends across all towns.
- Remove parking meters and remove parking charges to shop renters.
- New facilities - swimming pool with splash park, upgrade the sportsgrounds, repurpose spaces like the Courthouse, use Colbinabbin shop as a visitor information centre.
- No closure of the Tourist Information Centre.
- Revamp the entrances to Echuca township and Hare Street (especially at the Council end).
- Better signage for caravans and RV parking in town, free camping spots near town.
- Port area - regular music, entertainment and theme days targeting families. river frontage developed.
- Agri tourism - support farmers to develop products and experiences.

5.6 Threats or challenges to tourism

In the online survey, a number of national and regional trends were listed as threats or challenges for the Campaspe tourist sector. Survey respondents were asked if there were any other threats or challenges, and they mentioned the following:

- Closing the Visitor information Centre (2).
- Apathy - more active marketing of the region.
- Empty buildings on the riverfront and in town.
- Ignoring what the vast majority of tourists want to see.
- Train station is not connected to the town (needs walkways or shuttle service).
- River area is not accessible for fishing, swimming or boating.
- Port area has deteriorated, and needs to focus on heritage (e.g. Swan Hill).

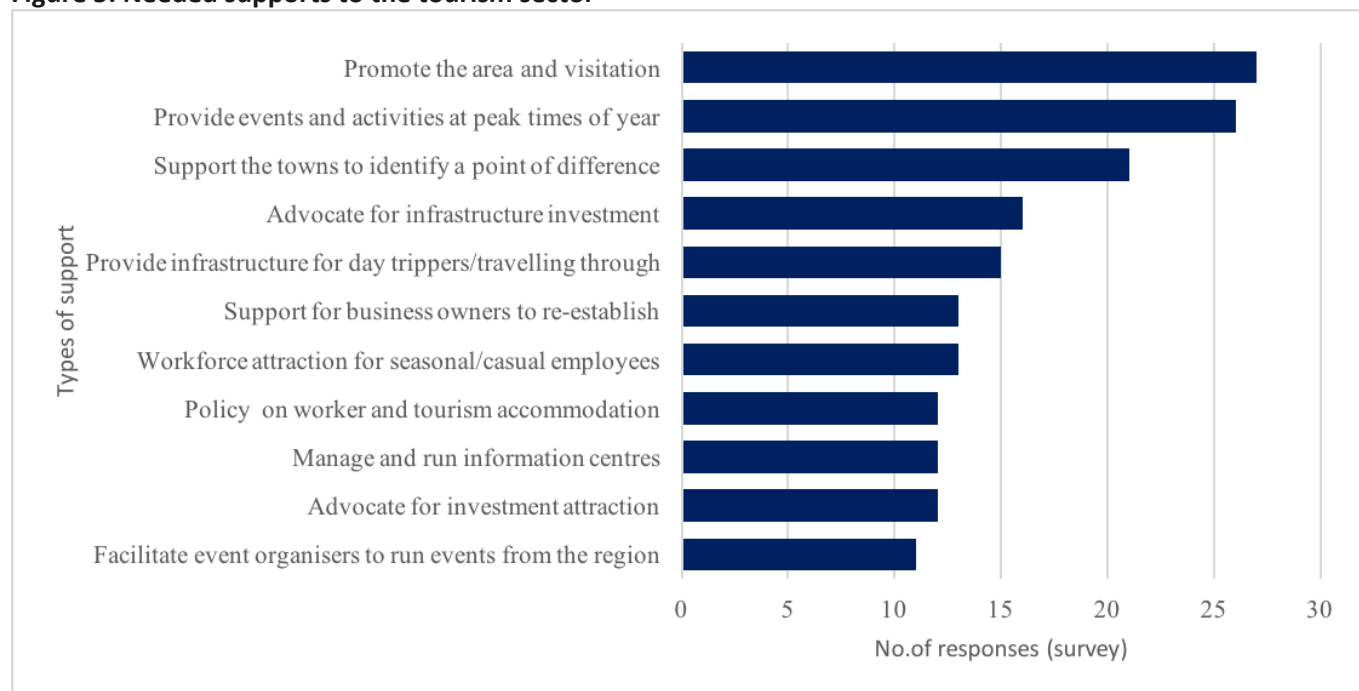


5.4 Support to the tourism sector

Survey respondents were asked to select five ideas that would support the tourism sector, from a list of eleven ideas. Survey respondents could also mention their other ideas, these ideas included accommodation, less planning ‘red tape’ for small businesses, developing a point of difference to attract ‘foodie’ tourists and, small town beautification.

The most selected ideas were promotion of the area to increase visitation, provide events/activities at peak times of year, and support for towns to identify a point of difference. All remaining ideas received a relatively consistent level of support.

Figure 5. Needed supports to the tourism sector



Data source: Online survey.

Participants were asked how Council, other levels of government and businesses can best manage these threats. Table 11 shows the various potential roles Council could play as mentioned by participants.

Table 11. Potential roles for Council to support the tourism economy

Type of role	Actions mentioned by participants
Provider (5 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make available Council parks for events. Activities at the Port ● Parks maintenance, free parking ● Support all local businesses ● Walk and hiking tracks, beautify the river frontage for recreation - create beach frontage on Echuca side of river like Mildura ● Being more creative with the decorating/styling/street planting
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bringing together other operators to network and collaborate (2)



(6 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with small business to enhance town image and attractiveness ● Inviting all interested parties' ideas to improve community assets ● Listen to the ratepayers, be a voice for our community ● Provide a clear plan and channel all stakeholder input
Regulator (1 comment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guide businesses through red tape
Partner (4 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advertising and marketing the region as a whole (3) ● Promote all tourist attractions in every town
Advocate (3 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up a group of local people in each town to advocate for events for their area ● Advocate for infrastructure ● Advocate for the region
Funder (2 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use available land to host large events and activities to support visitation ● Invest in all towns in the Shire

Data sources: Online survey.

Note: The different types of roles were categorised by Conversation Co., not by the participants.



5.7 Tourism group discussions in Forums

A summary of the tourism Forums discussions is outlined in Table 12. A more detailed report from the Forums is available on request.

Table 12. Summary of Forum tourism group discussions

Sector or Industry	Summary of Forum group discussions
Tourism	<p><u>Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain the Visitors Centre or provide alternatives, demand for in-person advice. ● Need permanent activities for families with children, also at night time. ● Attracting people to Rochester post-floods. ● Lack of events in non-peak times. ● Demand for cultural tourism from international tourists. Want more indigenous heritage and history information, the point of difference is natural resources. Cultural and ecotourism are the two areas that will bring overseas visitors. Build a large, state-of-the-art facility in a prominent spot to celebrate the indigenous culture. Make it a gateway to Yorta Yorta Country – biodiversity, landscapes and waterways. ● Small towns and districts need promotion, smaller events. ● Resources duplicated between Campaspe and Murray Shires. ● Use previous recommendations about promoting Echuca-Moama. ● Infrastructure investment needed - Port, conference centre, 5 star accommodation. ● QR Code/Digital Wayfinding that encourage- visitors to discover other towns and businesses can provide bonus/awards/promotion. ● Need bike path connections - Echuca-Moama, Kyabram, Murchison-Rushworth.
	<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work collaboratively with Murray River Council to choose the right option, place for infrastructure and ensure region promotion is on the same message. ● Wi-fi infrastructure for digital wayfinding/events calendar. ● Events that include Indigenous elders and language, place names with Indigenous names and signage. ● Investigate feasibility of a First Nations tour - sustainable and culturally safe. ● Tourism Info Centre - staffed 7 days, kept open until an alternative is found. ● Measure visitor attendances. ● Advocate to improve guidelines for disaster relief funding. ● Support attracting people to smaller towns - information, accommodation support. ● Showcase the region in other cities (e.g. Melbourne). ● Provide land for caravan park - similar to movement in Tongala. ● Support for hosting festivals on private property.



	<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industry to help promote digital wayfinding and develop the product. ● Indigenous organisations engaged with Council. ● Community groups to supply volunteer staff for the Tourism Information Centre, involve shop owners in displays. ● Approach to Murray Shire regarding use of the old shire offices.
	<p><u>Prioritisation of key ideas (#1 is highest priority)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Nations Strategy 2. Digital wayfinding by QR code 3. Cultural tour product 4. Information distribution if no Information Centre

5.8 Tourism group discussions at the Summit event

After discussing the Shire’s economic strengths/weaknesses and current trends, the small groups discussed (by sector, on their own table) the key opportunities to be explored, how Council could play a role in the opportunity and what could other organisations contribute. Tables could then endorse the discussions from other tables and comment on the opportunities discussed. Table 13 shows the summary of the tourism tables’ discussions, highlighting specific key opportunities and roles for council and other organisations.

Table 13. Summary of Summit small group discussions by sector

Sector or Industry	Key opportunities and roles for organisations (individuals’ suggestions)	Support from other Summit participants
Tourism and Hospitality (Tables 15, 16, 18, 22, 23)	<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aboriginal heritage walk/activities, indigenous, interpretation and immersion, ecological history ● Accommodation mix (meets market requirements) ● Attraction that identifies our story - river, agriculture, history, use of steam ● Build a large conference centre (1000 people, outdoor space) ● River-centric recreation area, bush trails/bike tracks, installations along river walkways ● Cross-border alignment and collaboration ● Foreign workers ● Grow off-peak visitation ● Host targeted summits/networking events ● Improve digital storefront 	<p><i>“ecological - love it”</i></p> <p><i>“Love all these ideas”.</i></p> <p><i>“Definitely need more culturally focussed events”</i></p> <p><i>“Foreign workers support - great idea”</i></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local foods/indigenous foods - recipes, cultivating ● Professional event organiser ● Signage telling stories, tours or self-guided, maps ● Public transport between towns and to Melbourne ● Upgrade boat ramps along river to access the river ● Upgrade of cycling paths and connections 	<p><i>“Cabins in caravan parks”</i></p> <p><i>“There is a rich heritage we can draw on”</i></p> <p><i>“Love! cultural emergence”</i></p> <p><i>“Low energy ideas needed in the future”</i></p> <p><i>“Upgrade all river access points”</i></p>
<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aboriginal employment ● Enhance relationships with Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people ● Assist in accessing funding, grant writing education ● Find suitable land and prioritise permits and planning ● Facilitate workshops regularly - Shires and tourism bodies ● Campaspe and Murray River Council need to work together ● Promotion of the area post-floods ● Call for volunteers ● Moving events across the municipality ● Provide connections, supplier lists, shared database ● Potential new Council role - work with/help to reduce red tape to holding events 		
<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indigenous presence in visitor centres ● Work with businesses to have a concerted effort together ● Work with EMAA-EMT Murray Shire to encourage private investment ● Keeping community members connected and welcome 		





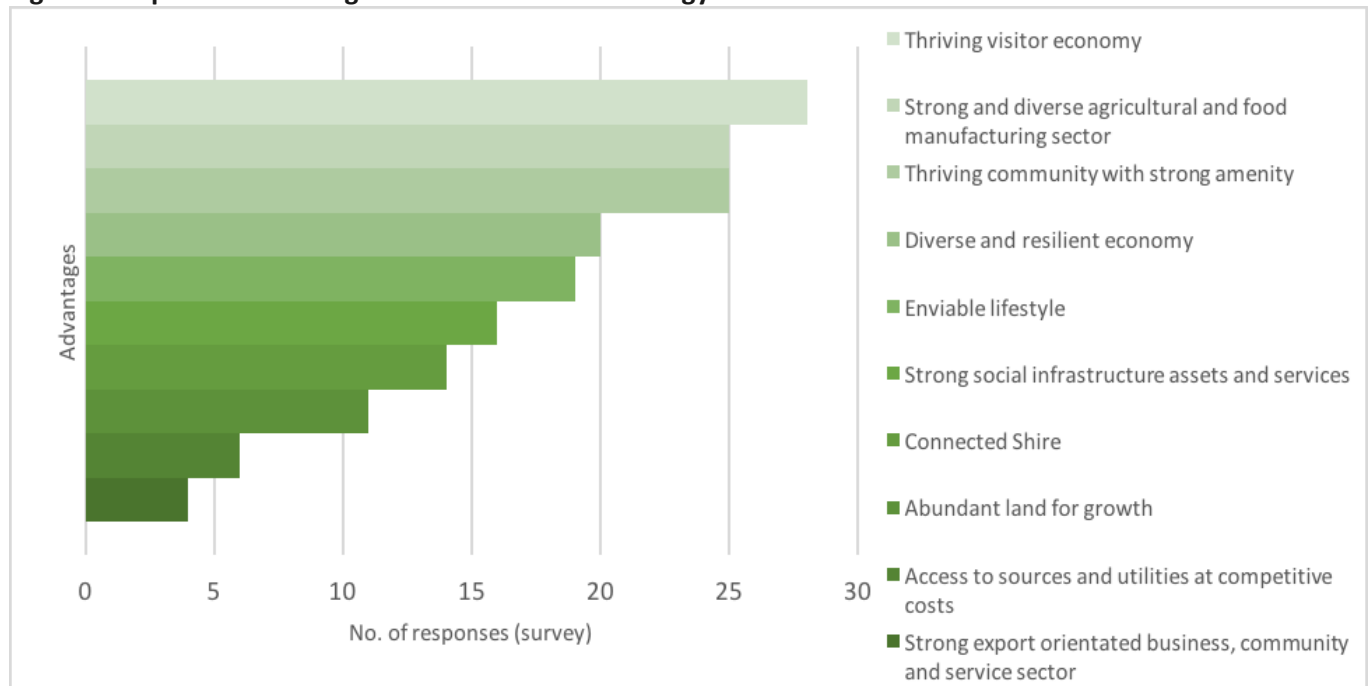
6. Priorities for the draft Strategy

6.1 Advantages to build upon

Survey respondents were asked to select their top three advantages that the draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy should build upon for the next five years, from the list identified in the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper*.

From this list of advantages, the three that were most selected by survey participants were Thriving visitor economy (28 responses), strong and diverse agricultural and food manufacturing sector (25 responses) and a thriving community with strong amenity (25 responses)

Figure 6. Top three advantages to build on in the Strategy.



Data source: Online survey

6.2 Priorities

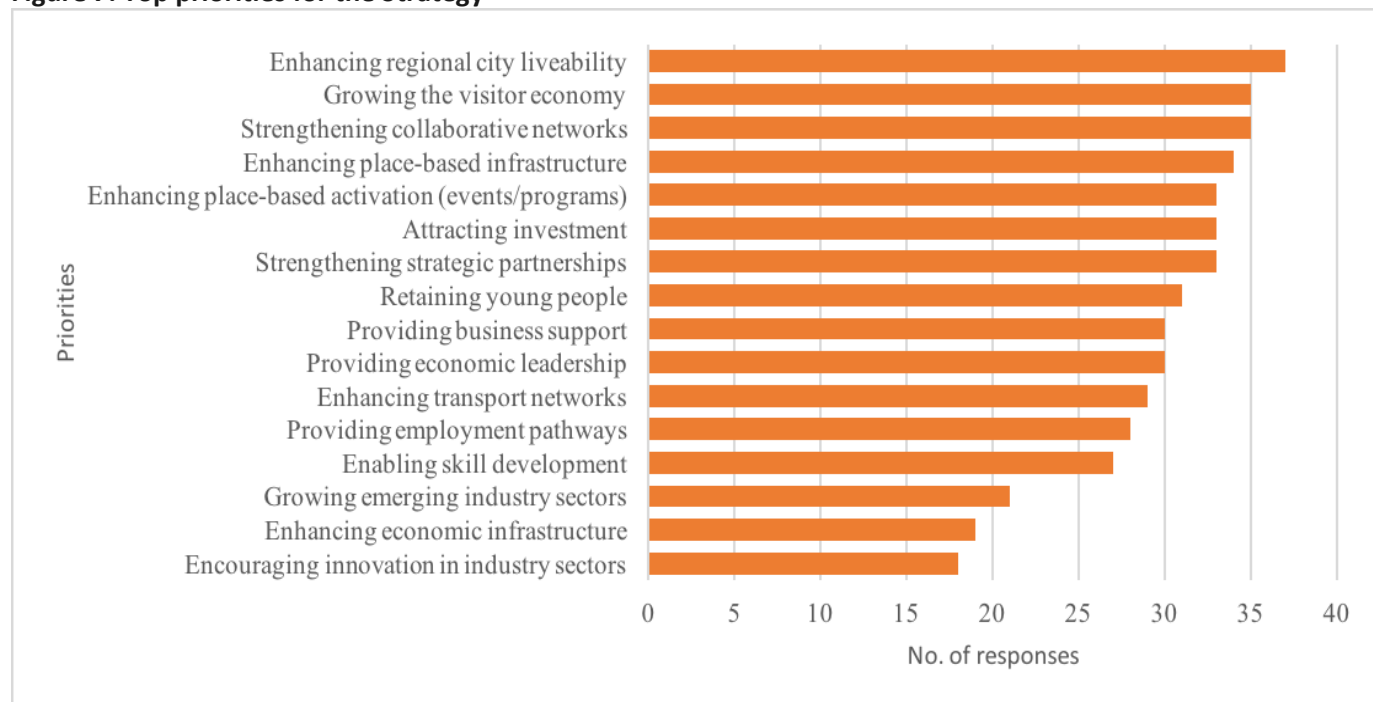
Participants were asked to select their priorities for the draft Economic and Tourism Development Strategy, from the list of 16 identified in the *Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper*. Survey and pop-ups participants were asked to nominate their top five priorities. Interview participants were asked if each of the 16 potential priorities were a high priority, a low priority or if they could not comment on its priority.

The findings presented in Figure 7 identify that a high number of priorities received between 30 or more responses. This might indicate that all priority areas should be considered and that priority areas of focus may vary depending on respondent interests. Items that received 30 or more votes included enhancing regional city liveability, growing the visitor economy, strengthening collaborative networks, enhancing



place-based infrastructure, enhancing place based activation, attracting investment, strengthening strategic partnerships, retaining young people, providing business support and providing economic leadership. It is worth noting that other items also received a moderate number of responses including enhancing transport networks (29 responses), providing employment pathways (28 responses) and enabling skill development (27 responses) and should still be heavily considered by Council.

Figure 7. Top priorities for the Strategy



Data sources: Online survey, community pop-ups and interviews.

Interview participants mentioned additional important priorities for the Shire:

- Collaboration between the two border municipalities.
- Celebrating indigenous culture and heritage as a tourism initiative.
- Looking at other energy sources (renewables, battery storage, reducing diesel use).
- Meeting the demand for housing.
- Providing riverbank water activities and green spaces for tourists.

Pop-up participants also were asked to rank their list of five, with one representing the most important priority. Their top ten most important priorities were:

1. Retaining young people.
2. Enhancing place-based infrastructure.
3. Strengthening collaborative networks.
4. Enhancing regional city liveability.
5. Providing employment pathways.
6. Providing business support.
7. Growing the visitor economy.



8. Enabling skill development.
9. Enhancing place-based activation (events/programs).
10. Enhancing transport networks.

The follow-up survey question about Strategy priorities and the role of Council was not answered by many participants and subsequently this question was found to have a software error. From the relatively small number of responses, the role of Council most selected was for Council to provide infrastructure.

6.3 Sector-specific priorities - surveys and interviews

In the online survey and interviews, business owners and managers were asked ‘Do you have any needs or ideas for these priorities specific to your sector or industry?’ The responses provided are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Priorities specific to particular industries/sectors

Industry type	Needs or ideas
Accommodation and Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Events are the biggest drivers of visitation - a calendar of events with at least 6 major events is needed (Shire wide) ● Develop an event strategy - bring people into Echuca first then send them out to the smaller towns ● Working with businesses to get the ‘service offering’ up to scratch - opening hours extended ● Council visiting every existing business and find out what they need over next five years ● Sporting infrastructure- sports parents have the best spend ● Holiday accommodation - need more than average 2 night stay, enhancing the region would encourage people to stay longer and spend more locally ● Create a foodie route like the Surf Coast Shire ● Open communication with EMT and C4EM, peak advocates for tourism and business rather than trying to replicate that within the Council
Administrative and Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business support and training, local events and networking (Kyabram)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Affordable housing to meet seasonal workforce needs (Tongala) ● Appropriate family housing to assist with workforce attraction ● Communicate and advocate for upgrades to roads to allow easier movement of road trains into town ● Investment attraction opportunities to connect the Campaspe region to national and international buying markets



Arts and Recreation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revitalise and breathe life into Torrumbarry - need Council support for affordable housing and workers ● Work experience program for disengaged youth - need Council support ● Collaborating and making package deals
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic plan needs to recognise connections to education and training. Partnerships with post-secondary college learning and skill-building opportunities ● Public transport is inaccessible - need linkages between regional centres
Health Care and Social Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environment at the centre of everything we do - point of difference to other regions, innovative programs focused on weather-resilient infrastructure, putting back into our environment rather than depleting it ● Providing facilities for indigenous connections back to land e.g. Melbourne University re-homing and releasing animals back into natural environment ● Recycling and circular economy - plastic reuse industry could develop
Public Administration and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solutions specific to the small town - seek out leadership, creative thinking ● How to work with private companies ● Energy transition and water transition. Solar farming to transfer between Bendigo and Campaspe ● Gold mining opportunity ● Mineral sands mines will need to employ people from outside ● Planning overlays and schemes to attract the businesses you want
Retail Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism buses
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a splash park with waterslides by the river to attract tourists ● Utilise the land on the highway for feature planting or marketing ● Reuse older style buildings, old factories and farms to convert into visitor attractions or hospitality venues Brewery ● Need to know what support is available - grants/funding, marketing on a budget, customers online, small business program
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not consulting with just road freight operators about transport, need rail freight advice ● Alternate energy sources needed – not just wind or solar. Council should seriously explore industrial waste conversion (circular economy) ● Partnerships with technical schools and TAFE – directly recruit people with the needed skills e.g. forklift drivers

6.4 Sector-specific priorities - group discussions in Forums

A summary of the Forums is outlined in this section, from the small group discussions. A more detailed report from the Forums is available on request.



Table 15. Summary of Forum group discussions (excluding tourism)

Sector or Industry	Summary of Forum group discussions
Agriculture	<p><u>Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting a resilient agricultural sector, Council can play more of a role ● Circular economy - opportunities to use waste in a productive way ● Roads - poor quality of roads limits work ● Disaster Relief - review funding ● Dairy industry decline due to water policies, more mechanisation ● Beef farming - more popular ● Need homes for workers to live
	<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocacy to state and federal governments for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ improved infrastructure for farmers and dairy industry in general ○ support a circular economy ○ maintain roads. ● Promote Councils Road Management Plan and implementation. ● Employ an Agroecology person to support circular economy goals ● Facilitate regular meetings, connect people ● Concierge service for farmers to connect with investment, workers and accommodation for workers (seasonal hands, pickers) ● Set up Agricultural Advisory Committee
	<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bendigo Bank - grants and partnerships
General business/ industry including retailers	<p><u>Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shortage of quality applicants for jobs, need support with induction and on-boarding (relocation, wellbeing) ● Remuneration is competitive with other large businesses, wage differences between the states. Competition for the local labour force ● Lack of recruitment support for immigrant workers (banking, superannuation, navigating the Australian system) ● Professionals lack career progression opportunities ● Need better accommodation options, telecommunications and public transport ● New mining industry - change ● Infrastructure upgrades to attract new residents - housing, roads, healthcare, schools, public transport ● Volunteer burnout - need to recruit new people ● Lack of database of local businesses for promotions ● Community connection - breaking into existing social groups
	<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council support for event planning and management ● Offer upskilling/capacity building for grants applications ● Continue and expand partnerships with local Chamber of Commerce groups and business network ● Provide a ‘town concierge’ service with customer service focus ● Library to host English classes, New Residents Open Day ● Information portal shared by both Shires to assist employers/new residents listing relevant service providers ● Research affordable and appropriate housing (eg: what housing does a doctor desire). Source temporary housing options for new families/workers Advocate for increased services in towns and more trips to Melbourne/Bendigo/Shepparton
	<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goulburn Broken CMA circular economy project ● Flood recovery work, Waranga rail trail and nature-based projects - community networks ● Attend professional conferences and universities to promote regional opportunities (eg. Engineers conference) ● Expand the careers expo - larger venue ● Influence youth to consider skills/training aligned to more industry demands, collaborate with university and schools ● Support older workers to become certified workplace mentors ● Establish better recruitment agency coordination amongst the region ● Young Professionals Business Network established
<p>Health and Community Services</p>	<p><u>Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenge of future heat waves and bushfires ● More affordable housing, more smaller dwellings (change of attitude), disability housing. Public/private partnerships for private development? ● Family violence - lack of support and housing opportunities ● Funding for preventative health care or health promotion difficult to obtain ● Low Councillor profile in Kyabram (Echuca focus) ● Need to break down social cliques in towns ● Limited availability of medical support, general practitioners, essential services ● More diversity needed - cuisines, LGBTQIA+, support for non-English languages
	<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assistance with accessing grants ● Run social events for new residents. Establish different welcome packs for the region (including markets, shopping, attractions, maps, services, transport).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Buddy program” for newly arrived families ● Partner with Murray River Council to jointly fund a workforce liaison role - integrate new workers into the community, assist with job matching for partners, school or childcare facilitation for families, accommodation needs with local real estate etc ● Multicultural awareness and education for residents. Social connections, food, religious support for migrants
	<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Partnership Committees (federal government)
Industry and Manufacturing	<p><u>Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attracting and retaining workers ● Road infrastructure - affects business efficiency and profitability ● Opportunities - use land in Kyabram, ‘high end’ beef industry ● High cost of living and fuel costs ● No housing for sponsored workers (migration) ● Licensing across two states ● Lack of regional promotion/marketing as living and working destination ● Entryway into Echuca unattractive
	<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to support development and Community Connection Forum event ● Supporting small businesses with advice and support - red tape, licensing, funding, overseas visas ● Community education - drivers licences, English skills.
	<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Banks - introduce local business owners to Melbourne-based expertise ● Local learning employment networks (CCLLENs) - continued partnerships
Professional Services	<p><u>Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attracting staff ● Lack of childcare - women not returning to work ● Not welcoming environments for CALD residents, tend to socialise in their own groups. ● Road and water infrastructure not keeping up with growth ● Signage and maps of attractions needed ● Genuine engagement and communication needed ● Sunday opening hours for retail
	<p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business support for Kyabram ● Small business grants, assistance with finding and completing grants ● Invest in destination marketing



6.5 Sector-specific priorities - group discussions at the Summit event

After discussing the Shire's economic strengths/weaknesses and current trends, the small groups discussed (by sector, on their own table) the key opportunities to be explored, how Council could play a role in the opportunity and what could other organisations contribute. Tables could then endorse the discussions from other tables and comment on the opportunities discussed.

Table 16 shows the summary of these table discussions, by sector, highlighting specific key opportunities and roles for Council and other organisations..

Table 16. Summary of Summit small group discussions by sector (excluding tourism)

Sector or Industry	Key opportunities and roles for organisations	Support from other Summit participants
Agriculture (Tables 1 and 2)	<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build more resilient communities following natural disasters ● Build the education sector and tertiary opportunities ● Enhance the water advocacy currently happening in other councils ● Facilitate housing diversity and affordability. ● Increase use of technology in farming ● Investment prospectus on the benefits of Campaspe ● International audience for product produced in Campaspe Shire <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of resilient community plans ● Ensuring internal processes are streamlined and fit for purpose - permit processing ● Bring big players together. ● Continue to resource the Murray group/existing networks Consider support and compensation from the government ● Identifying opportunities for different housing in activity centres. ● Advocacy for grants to innovate ● Coordinating the promotion of the area. ● Coordination of event planning ● 	No comments recorded



		<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agriculture Victoria – provide information to support good decision making. ● Education providers - support changes. ● Affected industries to provide/share information and advocate through their own networks the same message. ● Existing production to investigate circular economies - waste products, reinvestment, environmental benefits 	
<p>Community (Tables 14, 21 and 24)</p>		<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural festivals - aboriginal, international cultures, immersive experiences, ecological education ● Small farms being amalgamated into larger farms ● New manufacturing - olives, goats, camels, air dried vegetables, organic chicken farms ● More dams ● Gateway for Yorta Yorta country ● Build on sporting culture ● Crown land <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change of Council attitude towards Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people, bring language back to Country ● Quicker turnaround time for planning permits ● Avoid nepotism when zoning new estates ● Review minimum acreage for housing, better use of exciting land for housing ● Collaborate with other councils to promote the region ● Formation of a volunteer network ● Financial assistance (migrants) ● Adequate open space facilities for sport ● Provide small bus trips to towns ● Provide guides for showing people around, support for newcomers <p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcoming committee/community hub - international migrants in Tongala 	<p><i>“Ecological education (not just cultural)”</i></p> <p><i>“Locally produced, owned and distributed very important to community wellbeing”</i></p> <p><i>“Higher density housing along Echuca railway line, close to amenities”</i></p> <p><i>“Moama and State work with Campaspe EMT, more inclusive, big businesses contribute”</i></p> <p><i>“Western and Aboriginal cultures co-exist and thrive - most important untapped opportunity”</i></p>



Community Services (Table 19)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water buyers e.g farmers <p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 30-50 year olds with families, activities for 10-17 year olds. ● Aged care and child care integration ● Community concierge service/welcome. ● Digital literacy. ● Eco-tourism ● Housing strategy - ● Pooling and sharing 'like' workforces ● Regional recruitment strategy/partnership. ● Renewable energy exports. ● Vacant shops ● Waste and circular economy ● Youth leadership program <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth engagement ● Youth employment programs. ● Facilitate."Retirement home for four year olds". ● Welcome Hub ● Facilitate messaging, access digital services ● Develop 5-10 year vision ● Greater resource availability ● Encourage pop ups. ● Encourage recycling facilities, invest into ongoing supply source (rubbish) ● Professional development, cadetships ● Youth committees/boards <p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get over your own competitive views. Think community. ● Help create "social licence" ● Bring pop ups. ● Cadetships/traineeships opportunities. 	<p><i>"Aged care and child care integration - invest as a big market"</i></p>
Education and Youth (Table 13)		<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alternative education setting ● Tourism and hospitality training ● Youth engagement ● Investment in social capital <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p>	<p><i>"Other sectors Table 11 - agree"</i></p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collating data from industries to formulate education/training needs ● Support ideas for CPE/Port of Echuca - better utilised as entertainment precinct ● Invest more in programs for youth targeting current trends <p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Echuca TAFE - community could add their voice to what is needed on campus including recreational classes ● Business to recognise the role in engaging youth ● Partnerships to create multiple beneficiaries of events 	<p><i>Port as entertainment precinct - great idea from Industry and Manufacturing Table 6, use what we already have"</i></p>
<p>Industry and Manufacturing (Tables 6, 7, 8 and 14)</p>		<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4 day working weeks - more employees but happier staff, award productivity not time spent at work ● Address common issues with cross-border communities ● Learning from other areas ● Business Network ● Clarity of brand ● Cultural based tourism ● Hold expo to promote Campaspe ● Housing ● Increased advocacy and support with sponsoring visa workforce (manufacturing, agriculture and aged care) ● Land for developing housing <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pathway to solutions rather than roadblocks ● Transparency ● Lead the Shire ● Joint State funding model ● Share resources of people ● Facilitator ● Work with brand development ● Informed planning strategy, fast processes, appropriate zoning, red carpet not red tape 	<p><i>"Expo/ investment prospectus - see Agriculture Table feedback"</i></p> <p><i>"Good mix of opportunities, important to see the environmental focus"</i></p> <p><i>"Other sectors Table 11"</i></p> <p><i>"Retail/ Professional Services Table 20 - circular economy opportunities"</i></p> <p><i>"Want housing diversity options"</i></p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross-border collaboration - services, sport and recreation, roads ● Give advice and direction to small/medium businesses for future projects ● Advocacy, for grants, source funding <p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrating diversity of roles ● Training investment in employees ● Encourage family progression ● More consultation with working community members ● Inclusiveness ● Roving Expo - Council not required ● Industry bodies in consultation with Shire ● Sell and enhance the brand ● Continue to innovate ● State planning scheme - advocacy on land use strategy ● Add value back to community, more community involvement 	<p><i>and short term housing, partner opportunities for sharing accommodation”</i></p> <p><i>“Agriculture Table 2”</i></p>
<p>Professional Services /Government/Retail (Tables 9 and 20)</p>		<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activate Murray and Campaspe River frontages, make more accessible ● Business/professionals Network ● Career pathways, targeted recruitment ● Increasing population and housing ● Local jobs online ● Promote lifestyle/environment ● Improve town entrance appeal ● Promote start-ups ● Repurpose existing facilities ● Support smaller towns <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pro development and planning- inter agency (NSW, Government) ● Business network coordination/facilitation of speakers ● Linkages - higher education providers, schools, employers ● Promotion of local jobs, attend careers expo ● Better recreation facilities 	<p><i>Network - great idea, needs energy to drive. MBN is missed. Amazing networking today - can we get 2-3 events per year?”</i></p> <p><i>“More awareness of who's out there”</i></p> <p><i>“Increased affordable housing options”</i></p> <p><i>“Possible shop share - pop up shops to allow</i></p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Precinct plans ● Improve turnaround for applications and streamline. Advocate to State Government, Lobby for electricity lines and infrastructure ● Destination marketing ● Investment attraction ● Entry to town, street presentation and amenities ● Zoning/planning constraints ● Engage with metropolitan audiences on what's on offer improved budget - maintenance. ● Attract recruitment agents <p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pop ups, night markets ● Local developers/builders/architects resources ● Real estate agents ● Community connector role (GRH) ● Planning for schools and childcare. ● Attract solar, wind, biogas generation 	<p><i>new entry possibilities”</i></p>
<p>Health and Community Services (Tables 4 and 5)</p>		<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <p>Embrace and promote commuter workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross-border community ● Funding from cancelled Commonwealth Games for housing ● Highlighting careers and opportunities available ● Increase childcare to support workforce ● Strengthen university/education partnerships ● Support people to relocate and integrate. ● Workforce strategy for health and community services <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocacy for public transport ● Working with neighbouring Shires - reduce duplication, opportunities for joint projects ● As an employer highlighting pathways ● Going overseas to employment forums to attract staff ● Advocacy to developers ● Council to offer relocation, wellbeing and support role 	<p>No comments recorded</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitation - lead development of working group 	
		<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employers promote opportunities ● Providing evidence and case studies ● LLEN - work together to showcase opportunities and how careers work, be clear on training needs ● Health and other providers provide financial contribution.: Accessible places for aged/people with disability ● Advise Council what Council-owned assets could be used for 	
Other sectors (Tables 3, 10 and 11)		<p><u>Key opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manufacturing career pathways ● Nature-based tourism ● Sell the lifestyle of jobs ● Employment flexibility ● Supporting trials in research and development ● Sustainability and water security ● Promote agricultural ● Review town layout and infrastructure ● Riverfront activation ● Trees, town entrances <p><u>Potential roles for Council:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create hubs for local clubs – cannot continue to support separate infrastructure ● Leading by example -facilitating conversations, listen, action ● Acknowledge resources with the community ● Advocate for funding (state/federal) ● Create a program for schools ● Council planning department to identify and plan future allotments ● Processing applications - improve turnaround times ● Facilitate high density housing in town, utilise vacant land ● Cohesive vision to strengthen look and feel of townships 	<p><i>“Aligns with Tables 13 and 6”</i></p> <p><i>“Sell lifestyle - great idea”</i></p>



		<p><u>Potential roles for other organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional buy in, communicate project ideas to Council • Contribute with skills and products • Support Council by offering representatives and work placement 	
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7. Engagement evaluation

An important part of our practice is to consider the activities that support participation and where improvements can be made.

7.1 Measures of success

The project Engagement Plan identified measures of success for the engagement. To date there is opportunity to reflect on the processes of the engagement and later, reflect on the engagement impact once the draft Strategy is considered by Council. Progress on these measures is reported in Table 17.

Table 17. Measures of success for engagement

Measure	Success Criteria	Result
Test the areas of focus from the <i>Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper</i> with a broad cross-section of industries, businesses, community members.	Content across the issues and opportunities raised in the Discussion Paper. Participation numbers and spread across Shire: Summit target: 80-100 people Forums target: 20-30 people Survey target: Minimum 120 respondents Pop-up comments: Minimum 400 comments	Engagement questions taken directly from the Discussion Paper and feedback provided was very useful. Summit target: Exceeded Forums target: Exceeded Survey target: Not met. Pop-up comments: Nearly Achieved. 338 comments including Dotmocracy and Prioritisation activities.
Strengthen relationships with individual businesses and business networks across the Campaspe Shire after the COVID-19 pandemic and recent natural disasters.	Industry and business engagement and interest in the project. Networks follow-up or choose to stay involved. Repeat engagement across the consultation period. Participants come back to launch.	Of the 122 organisations that participated in either the Summit event, the Forums or interviews, 25% participated in more than one engagement activity.



Develop an understanding of the needs and character of individual townships.	Township specific stories, perspectives and data.	Representation from each of the towns from both businesses and community members.
Build a commitment to work in partnership with individual businesses and industry groups to support the delivery of the Strategy.	Council demonstrate a commitment to working in partnership that is well received	To be assessed following Council endorsement of the Strategy and the completion of the launch event
Leverage opportunities to work together to advocate for the region and regional needs.	Number of partnership opportunities	To be assessed at project debrief by Council Project Team
Understand the advantages, threats and challenges to economic development for specific stakeholders and groups.	A clear sense of the economic community's perceived advantages, threats and challenges.	To be assessed at project debrief by Council Project Team
Understand the economic priorities and role of Campaspe Shire Council over the next six years.	Campaspe Council Project team identifies and prioritises areas for action	To be assessed following Council endorsement of the Strategy and action plan

7.2 Strategies to support participation

Activities that supported engagement:

- Online project page outlining the purpose of the project and details of all engagement activities <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/Business/Economic-Development-Tourism-Strategy-2023-2028>.
- Comprehensive communication planning to achieve a high level of stakeholder and community awareness and understanding of the CEDTS engagement process, and to optimise participation in the various engagement opportunities. Campaspe Shire Council promoted the engagement through the following channels:
 - Media release - Newspaper articles - four local papers.
 - Social media posts
 - Council Website
 - Economic Development eNews newsletter, flood recovery news
 - Posters and flyers
 - Radio
 - Direct marketing.



Potential barriers to engaging with stakeholders:

- Timing of pop-ups, scheduled during winter weather (15-16 degrees) may have contributed to lower participation.
- Topic complexity - some of the concepts in the survey may have been difficult to comment on, for people who did not work in the business/tourism sectors. Many people are also not aware that local government plays a role in economic development.
- Summit participation - a few comments from the Forums was that it wasn't well advertised and as an invitation only event, it felt like a controlled/closed session.
- Forums participation - a few comments about timing and publicity of these sessions. Suggestions to use local Facebook Groups and local noticeboards.



8. Recommendations

This section provides the key recommendations across all forms of engagement as highlighted throughout this report. It is intended that this section is used to guide Council in developing the *Campaspe Economic Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2028* (CETDS 2023-28). Information presented is based on findings that came up multiple times through the consultation.

8.1 Key issues and opportunities

Overall, there was consistent feedback across all engagement methods in regards to the issues and opportunities.

The issues that received the most comments during the engagement process were:

- Housing shortages
- Labour and skill shortages
- Poor transport connections
- Impacts of Climate Change, natural disasters and Covid-19,
- Increased energy costs
- Technological advancement (digital divide/struggling to keep up)
- Workforce and lifestyle migration

Though most issues identified in the Issues and Opportunities Paper did receive some level of response/agreement, there was a sense that different sectors were struggling with different issues as a priority.

A summary of the opportunities highlighted include:

- Improve housing mix and offer including the use of vacant land.
- Manufacturing career pathways and training e.g. increasing digital literacy, pooling and sharing similar workforces, strategy to recruit health and community services, partnerships with universities and learning establishments.
- Sell the lifestyle of living in Campaspe Shire – employment flexibility, cost of living.
- Expansion of resources into the smaller towns - beautifying streetscapes, better signage, events across the shire.
- Diversify tourism opportunities to grow off-peak visitation including agricultural tourism that showcases produce, cultural tours and First Nations history, eco-tourism.
- Improve roads, remove parking meters and parking charges to shop renters to encourage visitation. Make sure plans for road improvements are communicated.
- Take advantage of grants and funding (any available).
- Leverage and work towards sustainability – e.g., employ an Agroecology person to support circular economy goals, waste management, export renewable energy.
- Developing a community concierge service or other way to welcome people to the community and share information.



- Increased advocacy and support with sponsoring visa workforce (manufacturing, agriculture and aged care).

This provides an overview of some of the opportunities that came up most frequently, though there were more specific opportunities that were identified by industry sector throughout the engagement process as identified in the Key Findings section of this report.

8.2 Potential roles for Council

Suggested actions or priorities from the community are themed under potential role/s Council play.

Provider

- Provision of infrastructure, asset planning and prioritisation e.g. roads, drainage, pedestrian and cycle paths, parks, public wi-fi, parking and EV charging.
- Beautification and soft infrastructure e.g., enhancing the Port, providing signage/wayfinding, tree planting, supporting smaller towns with maintenance and attraction, creative styling.
- Provide quality tourism services – parking, toilets, dump point.
- Maintain, repair and rebuild facilities/amenities to a higher standard including better community facilities and neighbourhood amenity.
- Information and support to allow people to maximise their time in the region and support new residents to settle in, including to smaller towns e.g., information centre, accommodation support, support finding employment etc.
- Facilitate and run activities and events across the shire including cultural events, First Nations.
- Council creates an environment that supports development and growth - less red tape and reduced fees to get things done, particularly housing development.
- Promote the Shire and communicate needs and opportunities clearly e.g., showcase in other regions, work with other Council's.
- Communicate upgrades to roads and other infrastructure investments to keep residents and visitors aware of what is being done.

Facilitator

- Integrate more renewables, invest in renewable energy - use available land. Investment in green infrastructure and support businesses to go green.
- Host business events to bring businesses together to share information, encourage innovation etc
- Connect service and goods providers to support visitors and tourists.
- Share information around opportunities and funding.
- Create an environment that works strategically to achieve goals – work together towards tangible outcomes rather than reacting to events.
- Change in cultural attitudes e.g. embedded celebration of indigenous ancestors and their culture and language.

Regulator

- Support and fast-track land use planning where it provides more residential housing.
- Support businesses to navigate the regulatory environment - less red tape and roadblocks, streamlined application process.



- Improve strategic planning to reflect current issues and meet opportunities – e.g. better planning of shopping precinct, land in Rochester earmarked for future development to manage growth in small towns.
- More community consultation in future planning – ensure that planning responds to community needs.
- Creating an environment focused on good and universal design solutions – accessible infrastructure and development.

Advocate

- Funding and programs to support and respond to local trends and community needs.
- Advocating to the State and Federal Government for improved funding and policies for roads and bridges, public housing, transport links, disaster relief and services (including disability and youth services).
- Investigate a regional deal model between the two states and involve the federal government for longer term infrastructure investment.
- Councillors ‘fly the flag’ for the region by advocating for funding support and promoting liveability to attract new residents.
- Advocate to local business organisations such as Committee for Echuca Moama (C4EM), Rochester Business Network (RBN) etc.

Partner

- Partner with local businesses to support them e.g., ‘Buy Local’ campaigns
- Education partnerships with major universities to deliver programs locally and address skill shortages (also look at LLENs).
- Work with other Councils around shared interests.
- Partner with tourism organisations to promote tourism, and enhance the experiences we can offer visitors.
- Act as a referral partner between businesses – including a good awareness of what is going on/who needs to be connected to who.
- Public/private partnerships for private development – particularly to meet housing shortage.

Funder

- Business grants - financial support for entrepreneurs and businesses that would help meet the goals of the economic development strategy e.g. diversifying offer, efficiency upgrades.
- Mentoring programs and other skill building opportunities for businesses.
- Subsidised mental health support and awareness, spread knowledge of available services.
- Infrastructure upgrades in all towns in the Shire to incentivise a move to the area.

8.3 Future Involvement of participants

It was clear that there was a good level of Community interest in supporting the economic Development of Campaspe Shire and Council should continue to work with and inform the community as they develop and deliver the Economic Development Strategy.

Survey respondents were asked how they would like to be involved in the implementation of the Strategy and their responses were:



- Help to deliver on some of these priorities (11 responses).
- Be kept up to date about future opportunities (10 responses).
- Share my personal experiences or business learnings (10 responses).
- Joint grant applications (3 responses).
- Attend future business or networking events (2 responses).

There was a desire identified in the Summit and Forums for greater community involvement and communication with the community. There was a sense that Council could work better to involve communities through developing and facilitating networks as well as making sure they were listening to locals and discussing opportunities. It was also identified that Council could benefit from employing a staff member/s who had a role of liaising with the community and could broker relationships between Council and community members seeking information. It is also important that Council regularly let the community know what is being accomplished through a variety of methods (website, local media, social media etc.).



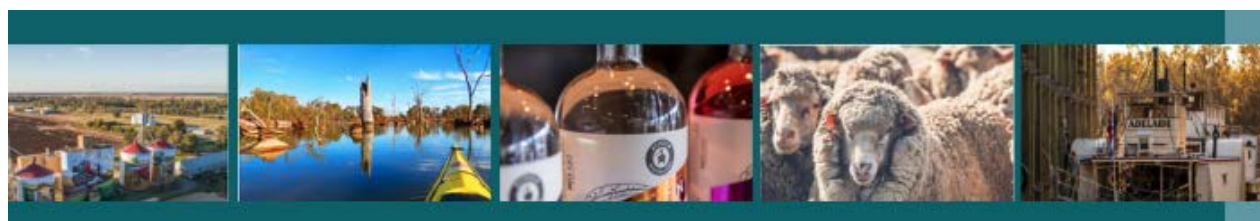
9. Appendices

Appendix 1. Business and organisation participants

Organisation	Summit	Forums*	Interviews
3rd Cavalry Regiment Association	●		
7 Beans Coffee	●		
AC Milk	●		
Advance Computing		● (2)	
Agriculture Victoria	●	●	
AusIndustry	●		
Australian Industry Group	●		
Border Real Estate	●		
C4EM	●		
Cadell Food Services	●		
Campaspe Community Association Inc.	●		●
Campaspe Port Enterprise (6 people)	●		
Campaspe Shire Council Mayor	●		
Campaspe Shire Council, Councillors (3)	●		
CCLLEN (5 people)	●		●
Claas Harvest Centre	●		
Community Living & Respite Services		●	●
Colbinabbin Community Development Group (2)	●		
Community Living & Respite Services (2)	●		
Coolabah Turf	●		●
Dairy Farmer	●		
Destination Goulburn Valley	●		
Department of Education (2 people)			●



Dja Dja Wurrung	●		
Dumawul (2 people)	●		
Echuca Distillery			●
Echuca Farmers Market	●		
Echuca Luxury Houseboats (2 people)	●		
Echuca Moama Entertainment	●		
Echuca Moama Tourism / Accommodation Assoc	●		
Echuca Moama Triathlon Club (Multisport Weekend, Sweat vs Steam)	●		
Echuca Neighbourhood House (2 people)	●		
Echuca Racing Club	●		
Echuca Travel Centre	●		
Edgspace (2 people)	●		
Eishold Property	●		
Elmore Field Days (2 people)	●		
ERH (2 people)	●	●	●
Evans Shoes	●		●
Fairley Leadership Program	●		
Farmer	●		
Fifteen50	●		
Fonterra	●		
Foodmach	●		
GO TAFE (2 people)	●		
Goolwa River Retreat	●	●	
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority	●	●	
Goulburn Murray Community Leadership	●		
Goulburn Valley DAMA	●		
Goulburn Valley Health	●		



Goulburn-Murray Water	●		
Green Pedal Cycles			●
Girgarre Development Committee			●
Gunbower Community and Development Group	●		●
Gunbower Development Committee	●		
Gunbower Hotel	●		
H & D Phillips Master Builders (2 people)	●		●
HW Greenham & Sons (2 people)	●	●	●
IGA Rochester	●	●	●
Irvine Books	●		
Kagome	●		●
Kangan BKI	●		●
KCLC	●		
Ky Valley Dairy	●		●
Kyabram Cold Storage (2 people)	●	●	●
Kyabram District Health Service	●	●	
Kyabram Hospital		●	
Lactalis	●		
La Trobe University	●		●
Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit	●		
Loddon Shire	●		
Luca Solutions		●	
McPherson Media Group	●		
Melbourne Zoo/Kyabram Fauna Park	●		●
Minerals Council of Australia		●	
Moama Water Sports Club	●		●
Moira Shire Council	●		



Morgans Transport	●		
Murray Dairy (2 people)	●		
Murray Life Adventures	●		●
Murray PHN		●	
Murray Regional Tourism Board (3 people)	●		●
Murray River Council (2 people)	●		
Murray River Resort	●		
NAB		● (2)	
Nicol Trading	●		
Nix-Tracks	●	● x 2	
Njernda	●		
OPT	●		
Private Citizens	● (2)	● (25)	
Radcliffes/Winter Blues Committee	●		
RDV & RDA Loddon Mallee	●		●
REALM Building Design	●		
ReCivil	●		
Rich River Golf Club	●		
RMCG	●		
Rochester Motel	●		
Rushworth Events	●		
Rushworth Rail Trail	●		
Sandcliffe Dairy	●		
Sheridan Partners	●	●	●
Shearing Shed House		●	
Silo Art Committee	●		
SLTec	●		



St Anne's Vineyards & Echuca Chocolate Company	●		
St Joseph's College, Echuca	●		
Start Up Central Victoria	●		●
Stubberfield Group	●		
Swan Hill Rural City Council	●		
Telstra Regional Australia, North West Victoria	●		
The Nook/American/Nirebo	●		
Tiamo Twin Flames	●		
Tongala Resident	●		
Twist & Sprout	●		●
twistED Science	●		●
Victoria Police	●		
Victorian Clay Target Association	●		
VIVID (2 people)	●		
Winter Blues Festival		●	
Workforce Australia Goulburn/Murray	●		
Yorta Yorta National Aboriginal Corporation (2)	●		●
Zamagias Consulting	●		
Zoos Victoria	●		

