



CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014

CONTENTS

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE COUNCIL

- Council's vision 1
- About the shire 2
- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer 3
- Councillors 4
- Council's Executive Staff 5
- Community Satisfaction Survey results for 2014 6

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE 9

- Community development/connectedness 10
- Health and wellbeing 16
- Community safety 19
- Arts, culture and heritage 21
- Recreation and sport 23

ECONOMY AND GROWTH 27

- Economic activity 27
- Tourism and events 30

BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT 35

- Infrastructure assets and facilities 35
- Natural environment and sustainability 36
- Strategic land use 37

PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE 39

- Organisational processes and systems 40
- Leadership and governance 46
- Financial sustainability 48

Financial records and audit statements contained on disc.

Cover image

Central Goldfields Shire's inaugural Wings and Wheels event
September 2013

COUNCIL'S VISION

To be a community with choice.

VALUES

Three behaviours that support our vision are being: accountable; progressive; and respectful.

- **Accountable**

Responsible for our actions and results and do what we say we will.

Act with integrity – deal with all people honestly, ethically and transparently.

- **Progressive**

Strive for constant improvement.

Find new and creative ways; focus on the future.

- **Respectful**

Listen actively and consider other viewpoints.

Embrace and respect diversity and inclusion.

This Annual Report outlines how the Central Goldfields Shire vision for the future has been achieved through the delivery of strategies, projects and services in the period 2013-2014.

ABOUT THE SHIRE

Located at the geographical centre of Victoria, Central Goldfields Shire covers 1,532 square kilometres and has an estimated residential population of just over 12,500 people.

Maryborough is the shire's major business centre with a population of around 7,500. Maryborough has gained recognition in recent years as having some of the finest sporting facilities in regional Victoria, together with significant historical buildings dating back to the goldmining era of the 1850s.

Other towns in the shire include Bealiba, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Majorca, Talbot, Bowenvale-Timor and the rural districts surrounding these centres. All are famous for their heritage architecture and significant agricultural industries.

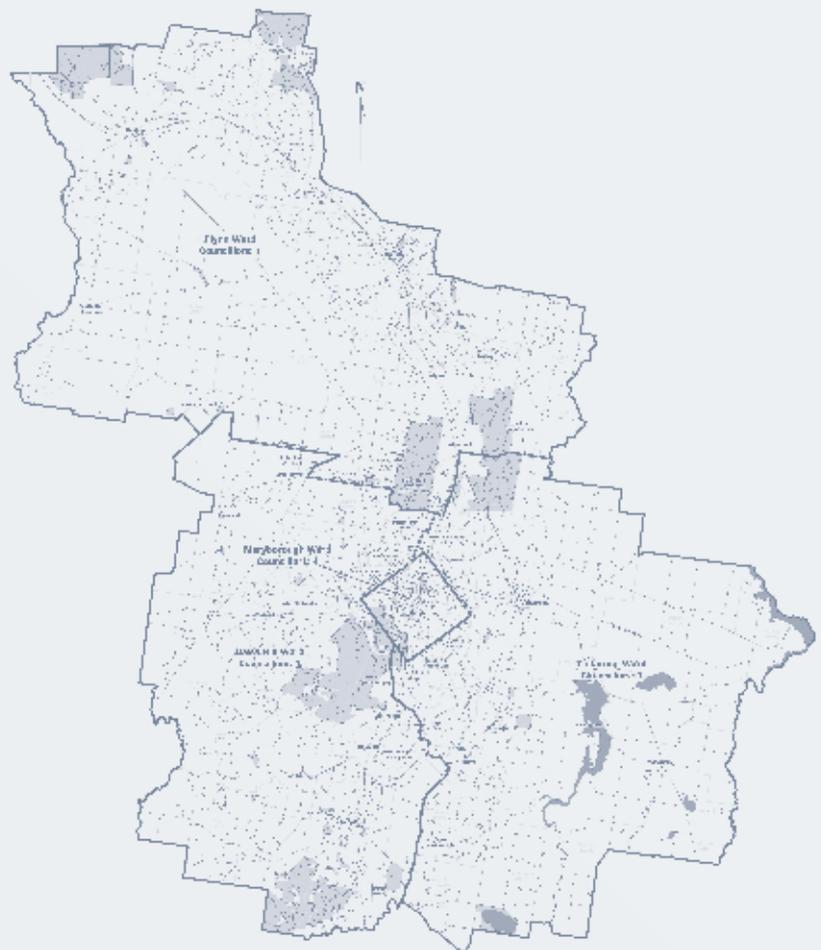
The shire is currently experiencing significant growth with key infrastructure projects and residential developments reaching fruition.

The State Government's commitment to the shire has seen recent investments in the areas of health, education, and law and order, together with assistance to economic development activities initiated by Council.

The shire is located within one hour's drive from main provincial centres of Ballarat and Bendigo and just two hours from Melbourne.

The first democratically elected council for Central Goldfields Shire was elected on 15 March, 1997. In 2005, the Minister for Local Government determined that the number of councillors to represent the shire be increased from five to seven.

The next election will be held in October 2016 with councillors elected for a four year term.



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Armed with the new Council Plan, we embarked on the 2013/2014 financial year with enthusiasm, ready to make strong inroads into the plan's many objectives.

Now in full swing, Go Goldfields continues to break new ground in bringing about major social change for the shire. Children, youth and families are feeling the positive effects, and the community as a whole is embracing new practices in the areas of children's literacy; youth education and employment; and family support services. Through a coordinated approach, Go Goldfields has achieved some great outcomes, which were documented in the mid term evaluation report released last February.

Art Central is one arm of the Go Goldfields project that has had community members throughout the shire intrigued, involved and inspired. Open to all community members, Art Central provides artistic opportunities, and the results have been remarkable. Vases n Verses, Art Central's most successful project so far, boasted nearly 1500 participants, and the artwork created was displayed around Maryborough. The colour and life the art brought to the streets gave the community a unique and very welcome boost in morale and civic pride.

Go Goldfields also called on the shire's young leaders, and held a forum to discuss new ideas and plans for the shire's future. Pleasing to see, our community and our shire is in good hands, with much enthusiasm shown by all who attended the forum and subsequent events.

Economic development is at the forefront for all councils, and this year has seen significant progress for Central Goldfields. Council adopted a new economic development strategy in December, which focuses on four key themes: population growth; workforce development; employment and business; and Central Goldfields lifestyle.

Council's Business Initiatives Consultant has worked closely with the Central Goldfields Business Group, resulting in major advancements including a new website, several networking and business building events, and growth of the group's board to include some of the shire's major business executives.

The Central Goldfields Business Group accompanied Council to the 2014 Regional Victoria Living Expo. The partnership sent a strong message to Melburnians that our shire is in a positive position with much to offer any tree changer. Once again our team made some valuable connections, and we hope to welcome new residents very soon.

Always keen for progress in tourism and events, Council completed and adopted an events strategy that aims to optimise the potential of existing events, develop new events and leverage off other major regional events.

As for new events, 2013 saw the debut of Wings and Wheels. Nearly 2000 people came to see vintage cars and planes on display and in action over one September weekend. The overwhelming success of the event has secured it on the Central Goldfields Shire events calendar, and we look forward to building on the success of the inaugural event later this year.

Our long standing events are shining brighter than ever. The 2012 RACV Energy Breakthrough was victorious at the state tourism awards, winning the Festivals and Events category. Proceeding to the national level, the event won the Bronze prize in the same category at the Australian Tourism Awards. These exceptional results are a deserving accolade to the many volunteers, Council staff and committee members who work year round to coordinate this great event.

Council's partnership with the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board has been in effect for a year now and we are very pleased with the achievements of the partnership. We are able to build our tourism offer, which in turn builds our local economy.

Heritage remains an important part of our identity and our future. We continue to work with surrounding shire councils to have Victoria's goldfields recognised as the first national heritage region, which will further boost our tourism appeal.

Within our townships, the maintenance of heritage assets remains a priority. One of the major projects for the financial year was the upgrade to Scandinavian Crescent and Ballarat Street, Talbot. This project involved the complete renewal of road, drainage and footpath infrastructure in a heritage valued area. The end result is a beautifully restored town centre.

These are just a few of the many highlights for the 2013/2014 financial year; one where Central Goldfields Shire has really shone. We are pleased and proud to present this year's annual report, and thank our dedicated staff for their work in making these many achievements possible.



Cr Barry Rinaldi
Mayor



Mark Johnston
Chief Executive Officer

COUNCILLORS



Cr Barry Rinaldi – Maryborough Ward (Mayor)

Barry Rinaldi first became a councillor in March 1997. He was elected to the role of Mayor in November 2012, having previously filled the role from March 1999 to March 2001.



Cr Geoff Lovett – Maryborough Ward

Geoff Lovett has been a councillor for Central Goldfields Shire since amalgamation in 1997. He was Mayor in 2004, 2005 and again in 2007.



Cr Paula Nixon – Maryborough Ward

Paula Nixon was first elected to Council in a by-election in early 2008, and was the Mayor in 2012.



Cr Bob Henderson – Flynn Ward

Bob Henderson was elected in a by-election in August 2013, following the resignation of John Smith. Bob was a councillor for the Shire of Bet Bet for three years until amalgamation in 1996.



Cr Wendy McIvor – Maryborough Ward

Wendy McIvor was elected to the role of councillor in November 2012. It is her first time in the role.



Cr Ian Robertson – Tullaroop Ward

Ian Robertson has been a councillor for Central Goldfields Shire since amalgamation in 1997. Previously he was a councillor for the Shire of Tullaroop. Ian was Mayor of Central Goldfields Shire in 2001, and again in 2003.



Cr John Van Beveren – Paddy's Ranges Ward

John Van Beveren became a councillor in November 2012. It is his first time in the role.

COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE STAFF



Mark Johnston – Chief Executive Officer

As Chief Executive Officer, Mark Johnston leads an organisation focussed on customer service; community participation; financial and strategic management; and value for money services. Strategic leadership is the keynote.

Mark has held the role of CEO since 1995 - initially overseeing the amalgamation process. Prior to that, Mark was the CEO of the former Shire of East Loddon, which followed the completion of the Bachelor of Business (Local Government) qualification.

Heavily involved in local community organisations and activities; a previous Chair of the Bendigo Football League Board of Management, Mark currently serves on the inaugural AFL Central Victoria Commission, and since 2006 has been a Director on the Board of the Bendigo TAFE.

In 2009, Mark was appointed to the Loddon Mallee Committee of Regional Development Australia - an Australian Government initiative that aims to bring together all levels of government to enhance the growth and development of regional Australia.

Mark has led and facilitated several major economic and community development initiatives including the ground breaking Go Goldfields – a community driven approach to tackle entrenched disadvantage and improve social, education and health outcomes for children, youth and families.



Wayne Belcher – General Manager Corporate and Community Services

Wayne Belcher joined Central Goldfields Shire Council in April 1999 as the Director of Corporate Services, assuming the responsibility for both Corporate and Community Services in 2003.

Prior to commencing a career in local government, Wayne had a career spanning more than 21 years in health administration commencing at the Maryborough and District Hospital, before accepting a position with the Sisters of Mercy administering hospitals in Bendigo and Greensborough.

Wayne has a Degree in Accounting / Economics Hospital Administration and a Graduate Diploma of Education.



David Sutcliffe – General Manager Technical Services

David Sutcliffe commenced the General Manager role at Council in April 2009.

David has a Degree in Engineering from Ballarat University, and has worked as a professional engineer with the Ministry of Housing, Bayside Council and the City of Casey. David ran his own business for several years before taking on a consulting engineer role with HDS Australia. He then moved to Baw Baw Shire, going on from there to join Central Goldfields Shire.



Sharon Fraser – General Manager Go Goldfields

Sharon Fraser began her role at Council in November 2011. Sharon was appointed to oversee the State funded Go Goldfields project – a landmark community initiative that targets the needs of children, young people and families throughout the shire and tackles social disadvantage.

Prior to joining Council, Sharon held executive and management roles in health and community health in state, regional and rural services.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS FOR 2014

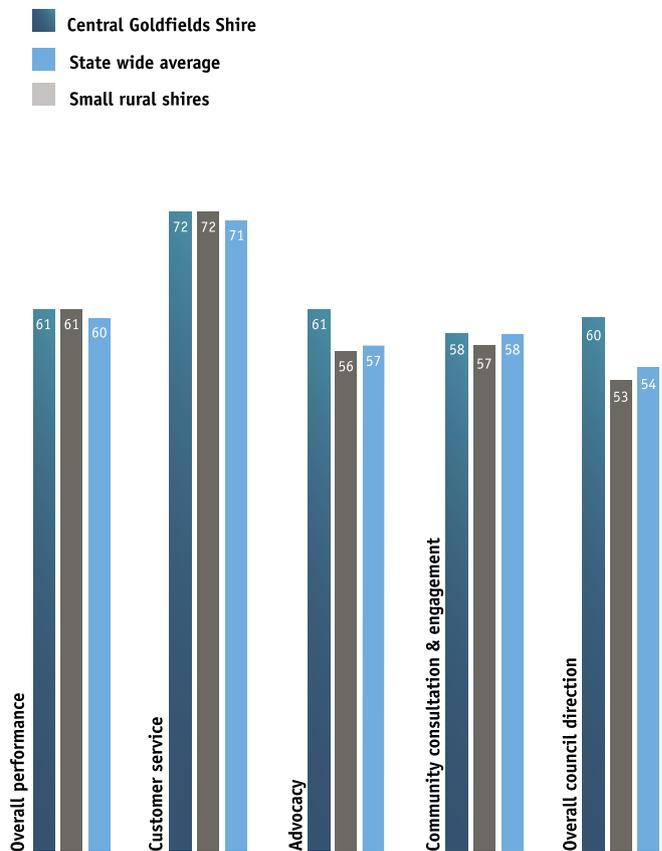
Council is proud to have achieved outstanding results in the 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey, and commends its staff members for performance and dedication.

Each year the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) coordinates and auspices this Community Satisfaction Survey throughout Victorian local government areas.

The main objectives of the survey are to assess the performance of councils across a range of measures and to seek insight into ways to provide improved or more effective service delivery.

In 2014 Council scored significantly higher than councils across the State in Advocacy and overall Council Direction. Significantly, 90% of those surveyed believe the direction of Council's overall performance has been maintained or improved. Exact figures are detailed below.

2014 Community Satisfaction Survey results



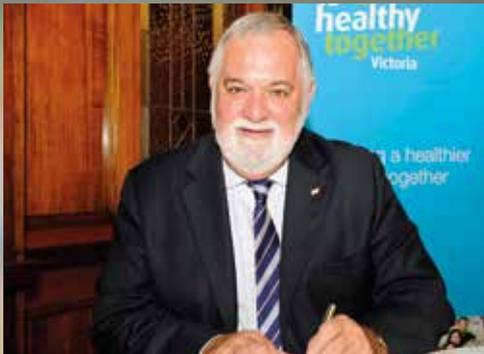
Council was pleased with the community's feedback in the 2014 survey.





COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Purpose: Foster community connectedness and social capital, and services which improve people's health and wellbeing.



Focus area: community development/connectedness

Foster community resilience, connectedness and social capital.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Go Goldfields
2. Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal
3. Australia Day celebrations
4. Community grants scheme

Focus area: health and wellbeing

Improve people's health and wellbeing throughout all life stages.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Central Goldfields Health and Wellbeing Plan
2. Positive ageing
3. Healthy Together Grampians Goldfields
4. Maternal and Child Health services
5. Youth services
6. Goldfields Children's Centre

Focus area: community safety

Foster a whole of community approach.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Municipal Emergency Management Committee
2. Family violence strategy
3. Animal management plan
4. White Ribbon campaign

Focus area: arts, culture and heritage

Increase community awareness/appreciation of and participation in arts, culture and heritage.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Art Central
2. Central Goldfields Art Gallery
3. Heritage Study
4. Maryborough Regional Library services

Focus area: recreation and sport

Increase participation in physical activity.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Recreation plan

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Focus area: community development/connectedness

GO GOLDFIELDS

Go Goldfields is an innovative alliance of organisations, created to deliver locally relevant responses to social issues that are too complex and too long term for previous solutions. Supported by the Victorian Government in the amount of \$2.5 million over three years, the Go Goldfields alliance has developed a series of shire wide, community driven approaches to improve social, education and health outcomes for children, youth and families.

In the past 12 months, Go Goldfields made significant progress towards achieving the program's desired outcomes:

- A reduction of notifications to Child Protection Services (meaning a reduction in re-notification and out of home care) involving families from the Central Goldfields Shire.
- Improved communication and literacy skills, opportunities and positive life experience for children and their families.
- Improved community connectedness for children, youth and families.
- Improved youth connection to appropriate training and education to achieve employment outcomes.
- Increased breastfeeding rates.

The addition of the breastfeeding outcome is in recognition of Go Goldfields' integration with the Best Start program.

The Go Goldfields Mid-Term Evaluation Report was compiled in November and December in partnership with the Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership, and ratified in February 2014. The report illustrated progress against all desired community outcomes but that, as expected, broad scale social change takes time. Early results included:

- 31% increase in the number of Preps achieving Level 5 reading when compared to 2011.
- 6% decrease in the level of developmental vulnerability (AEDI).
- 72% reduction in absenteeism for the Maryborough Education Centre's Year 5 and 6 students.
- Community leaders, early years service providers and parents reported things are improving when everyone works on the outcomes together.
- There is more work to do on collaboration between services.

- Although parental skills and confidence is improving, significant improvements need to be made when working with families to achieve better outcomes.

Data from the RMIT Cultural Development Network demonstrated the important role that Art Central is making to meaningful social connection in the community.

The impact of Go Goldfields can be felt throughout the community, with programs implemented in all areas and for all audiences.

Creating a literacy community of early years professionals

25 teachers and early childhood professionals completed their Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation training. This was a significant investment of all involved with four full days of workshop based learning. A further three workers are scheduled to complete their training in September, 2014. A local school principal who attended the course is now establishing and leading a literacy community of local professionals.

Let's Read online training

31 staff members from the Goldfields Children's Centre are now registered to do the Let's Read online training. This is a four hour, self paced program that aims to provide workers with strategies to foster emergent literacy with babies and preschool aged children.

Construction of six book boxes by the Maryborough Men's Shed

Decorated by community groups under the supervision of Art Central, the boxes are stocked with second hand books available free to the community, and located at key community locations across the shire.

Free mini library in the Maryborough Community House precinct

Designed, decorated and stocked by local children in collaboration with Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal, Go Goldfields and Art Central, the outdoor library has generated strong media interest including an article in the United Kingdom Metro newspaper.

Targeted book gifting

55 books were gifted to all babies and children who attend the shire's supported playgroups. 22 kindergarten aged children received books at the Australia Day celebrations. New books

were also made available to the children who attend the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Friday morning pancake breakfasts.

Story Sack making with the Maryborough Toy Library

A Story Sack Day with parents was organised at the toy library. A Story Sack is a drawstring bag containing a book, a few small toys associated with the theme of the book, as well as a sheet of suggested associated activities for parents. The toy library now has six story sacks available for loan.

Publication of literacy booklets

Two booklets were developed to encourage parents to foster their child's learning and language skills through sharing books and talking. *Talk, rhyme, read, and play with you baby every day* is designed for parents and carers with young babies, while *Share stories with your child every day* is for parents and carers with toddlers. The booklets are available at the Maternal and Child Health Centre, the local antenatal clinic, the Community Health Centre, the library and online.

Playgroup Extravaganza

In October the Go Goldfields Literacy Facilitators collaborated with Art Central, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal, Healthy Together Grampians Goldfields, the Maryborough Regional Library and Maryborough Toy Library, as well as shire playgroup leaders to stage the Playgroup Extravaganza in the Town Hall. Over 200 parents, carers and children from across the shire attended the three hour session. The aim was to provide opportunities for social connection, while showcasing a range of literacy enhancing activities that could easily be done at home or playgroup.

Dinosaur Day

Working in partnership with Neighbourhood Renewal and the Maryborough Regional Library, literacy facilitators organised a half day event in January that showcased a range of fun, free activities that can be done at home to encourage the development of literacy skills. 56 families attended the session.

Finding frozen eggs was an exciting part of Dinosaur Day.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Let's Read project for the Central Goldfields Shire

Let's Read is an early literacy program being implemented in communities across Australia with the support of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Smith Family. The *Let's Read* project for Central Goldfields Shire is delivered by the staff at Maryborough Maternal and Child Health.

From June 2014, families with babies and toddlers receive free Let's Read packs at four key Maternal and Child Health visits over two years. These packs include a library card especially designed for babies, an age appropriate book as well as some tools to help parents enjoy sharing books with their babies and children.

Rhyme-music sessions for all shire playgroups

During 2014 six playgroups and new parent groups had rhyme-music sessions facilitated by a music therapist. All families involved received a free CD recording of the session to facilitate the singing of rhymes and songs at home.

Building stronger families - Family Group Worker

St Luke's is contracted to deliver the family group work on behalf of Go Goldfields. Over the past twelve months this has included initiating or managing groups such as:

- Parents and Children Together (PACT) support group
- Grandparent support group
- Hosting opportunities for personal empowerment
- Rhymes music and songs at Maryborough Maternal & Child Health
- Start early – antenatal clinic pilot project.

Family Facilitator appointed

In June the new Family Facilitator position commenced. This position follows from a consultation undertaken with 45 families late in 2013. The Family Facilitator role will work with the service sector over the coming twelve months, to make improvements in:

- Accessing support
- Good support (the behaviour of workers)
- Service coordination
- Family consultation
- Responding to family violence
- Further family consultation processes.

Youth connection to education and training

The focus of the work in this area has been on strategies addressing prevention and early intervention so that youth of the future will stay connected to education and training to achieve employment outcomes. In 2013, 76 young people were consulted to investigate issues impacting on youth connection to education and training. The results of this consultation have informed the development of a number of strategies such as:

- Social marketing messages and approaches aimed at increasing parental and community recognition of the importance of education and how to support children's home work and development of study habits. All school principals in the shire were engaged for this approach.
- Approaches to developing aspiration with students, in partnership with Maryborough Education Centre, which lead to trialling a "Getting ahead in a just gettin' by world" pre work readiness program with Year 7 students.
- Consulting with parents about developing a parent space/engagement process with Maryborough Education Centre.

In 2014 Go Goldfields incorporated a School Focused Youth approach. This has meant a more cohesive approach to working with youth.

Workforce Development Strategy

The Central Goldfields Workforce Development Strategy has progressed significantly and is creating strong partnerships and pathways that will benefit the shire. The aim of the strategy is to provide business and industry with a workforce that is deemed "work ready"; provide more appropriate training that better meets local needs; and to strengthen links and pathways between job seekers and employers.

The strategy is driven by a Steering Committee, which is a partnership between Council and the Central Goldfields Business Group. This work is also supported by Neighbourhood Renewal workers to assist in implementing initiatives.

Work to date includes: investigation into better methods of recruitment and how to use IT and other media better to source workers; training needs analysis to better inform training bodies; and strengthening of work experience and placement models to help expose youth to the workforce in a more supported way.

The current phase of Go Goldfields is due for completion between December 2014 and June 2015.

A fully costed, evidence based plan has been developed titled Go Goldfields, Next Steps 2015-2017.

MARYBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal has continued to work on the priority areas as listed in the community action plan 2013 to 2015 around the six objectives:

- Lift employment and learning
- Improve housing and the environment
- Increase community pride and participation
- Improve health and participation
- Decrease crime and increase safety
- Improve the responsiveness of services.

Employment and learning

The year has seen the alignment of the Employment and Learning Coordinator with the Central Goldfields Workforce Development Strategy. This has allowed for progress of employment initiatives that are essentially driven by local business and directly meet their needs.

Initiatives to date include:

- The drafting of a training needs matrix to better coordinate training delivery and ensure industry training needs are met.
- Promotion of employment success stories in the local media to help create a positive narrative of local employment.
- A commitment from the Central Goldfields Business Group to work with Neighbourhood Renewal's Employment and Learning Coordinator to develop activities for a Work Readiness Week.

Also implemented through the position was a series of meetings of youth service providers to develop a shared commitment to work together to improve services for young people and gain a better understanding of each other's roles. The group meets every few months to provide informal, professional development and support those working with youth.

The Maryborough Skills Expo was again held in September using the same format as the previous few years. The expo was a large event with around 40 stall holders attending

Council promoted career opportunities at the 2013 Maryborough Skills Expo.



The value of education is reinforced throughout the community.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

and 300 visitors, and a jobs board on display promoting over 100 employment opportunities within a one hour drive of Maryborough. While feedback was generally positive, most agreed that the format needs review. The event has been redesigned with more of a focus for work readiness of individual job seekers in 2014.

The Go Goldfields Young Leaders forum was held in August with 40 people taking part. This was a chance to provide support and training to the next generation of community leaders and identify ways to support their development. A follow up session was held in April with a further 25 participants and 20 additional community leaders attending to show support.

The Employment Support Initiative Next Steps worker was employed in April with a focus to support nine young people to develop a training and career plan. To date the role has engaged five young people and is making good connections throughout the town. The position is funded until December 2014. The work will include social capital building activities, such as the reformation of the police youth boxing gym.

Housing and environment

An estimated \$4.7 million has been spent on upgrades to public housing properties in Maryborough since the start of Neighbourhood Renewal. This means that public housing tenants in Maryborough live in the best possible conditions, with new kitchens and other internal improvements, as well as external upgrades that provide front gardens and fences.

Pride and participation

Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal partnered with the Maryborough Community House to undertake capacity building mentorship around event management. This partnership saw three events run: a trivia night; a Footy Finals Fun Day for children; and a community Christmas party. The Maryborough Community House is now running regular events with an established events committee.

The Shutterbugs group, started by Neighbourhood Renewal in 2010, launched postcards that showcase the shire. The group received a community grant from Council to undertake the project and the postcards are available for free at several outlets around the shire.

Morning pancakes at Spring Street bus stop have continued every Friday during school terms. This has involved help from Maryborough Education Centre teachers, Go Goldfields Children's Literacy Facilitators and older students.

The 'Show us ya Tats!' project collected and shared the stories of some local residents with tattoos, providing an opportunity to increase social literacy and promote diversity within our community.

The 'I Heart Maryborough' photographic competition commenced in June and aims to encourage positive community conversations about local assets.

Health and wellbeing

Neighbourhood Renewal facilitated a partnership between the local Street Harvest group and the Alma Street Public Housing Garden. Neighbourhood Renewal has also been instrumental in the Free Community Meals, run every Monday night at the Baptist Church, serving around 50 people every week.

Responsiveness of services

Neighbourhood Renewal continued to advocate for better services for local residents. In the past year residents have received improved access to the mobile tool trailer, and to regional services such as child protection services and Department of Justice services. Residents continue to be concerned about public transport to regional cities and within Maryborough. A working group has formed to canvass the extent of the concern and identify avenues for residents to have their concerns addressed.

The year ahead

As Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal transitions to conclusion in June 2015, work has commenced to build a sustainable local governance structure and develop a two to three year community action plan. It will be underpinned by a neighbourhood agreement that articulates stakeholder commitments to the continuation of this important work.

The final community survey is underway. It is anticipated that 80 to 90 residents will be interviewed to determine what they think should be done to improve their neighbourhood; housing and the physical environment; transport services; employment; education; the local economy; health and wellbeing; personal safety and reducing crime; and pride and participation in the community. The survey will also be used to evaluate the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal initiative. The results of this survey will identify potential priority areas for the development of the future community action plan, with the report available in December 2014.



An important part of the year ahead is continuing to bring together the community and key stakeholders to establish sustainable governance and an associated community plan that will operate beyond the formal funding period, and ensure that all Maryborough residents can make the most of the many opportunities available to them.

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

The 2014 Central Goldfields Shire Australia Day celebrations were a morning ceremony in the Station Domain precinct in Maryborough on Sunday, 26 January.

Australia Day celebrates what's great about the shire, Australia and being Australian. In a move to motivate and encourage more participation at the 2014 event, Council re-introduced the baby medallions for all babies born in 2013 and introduced a new initiative to give all children starting kindergarten an age appropriate book.

The re-introduction of the baby medallions was well received. Parents/guardians of 48 babies born in the shire in the past twelve months registered for a medallion, and whilst not all could attend the event, 29 baby medallions were awarded on the day, with the remainder collected from the Council office.

The books for kindergarten children was another well received initiative. 30 parents/guardians registered their children for books with 22 books collected on the day.

A crowd of around 300 attended to see Bridgidine Nun Sister Barbara May named Citizen of the Year, community leader Joel Radlof named Young Citizen of the Year, and the Maryborough Garden Club awarded the Outstanding Community Contribution honour.

COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

The Community Grants Scheme has proved to be a very valuable source of funding for many community groups that don't have access to funding from other sources. In 2014, Council allocated \$15,000 to the scheme. Any group applying for funding was asked to show how their project fitted with themes of the 2013 – 2017 Council Plan.

31 applications were received for 2014. The total funding sought across all applications was \$43,268. The applications were assessed in accordance with the grant scheme guidelines, with 11 projects receiving a level of funding.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Focus area: health and wellbeing

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN

Under Section 26 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, Council is required to develop a new municipal health plan. Council prepared the draft document internally, recognising that it is strategically placed to develop, lead and implement policies to influence the determinants of health. These include the traditional areas of health, as well as areas such as land use, transport, roads, parks, housing, recreation and cultural activities.

Consultation with community stakeholders, such as the Maryborough District Health Service and Central Victorian Health Alliance, as well as general research were conducted to develop the draft document. The results identified four priority areas:

- supporting healthy eating
- increasing participation in physical activity
- safe, connected communities
- reducing tobacco use and harm from alcohol misuse.

These four areas formed the framework for the plan.

In October, Council held a special meeting and formally adopted the Central Goldfields Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 – 2017. Work has begun to develop the action plan that will guide implementation and detail specific initiatives towards achieving the desired outcomes.

POSITIVE AGEING

Over the last 12 months, Council's Aged Care Department continued to implement the Active Service Model, the Positive Ageing Strategy and increase social support activities to prevent isolation and to keep clients connected to the community.

The new Active Service Model assists clients to remain as independent as possible. Council's occupational therapy services have been instrumental in identifying alternative ways for clients to complete tasks in the home. This has reduced the demand for home care services for some clients.

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Assessment Model has been fully implemented, enabling Council to empower clients by assisting them to maintain their independence. Services provided can therefore be targeted at what clients are unable to do alone. Council provided HACC services to over 600 clients this year.

Council also provided package care for 22 clients. The provision of package care for clients, including case management, assisted

them in navigating the service system by identifying their needs and ensuring that those needs were met. Council's package care program is part of the Loddon Mallee Consortium, which this year was successful in winning an award for Outstanding Team Contribution in the Local Government Authority (LGP) awards.

HEALTHY TOGETHER GRAMPIANS GOLDFIELDS

Council has been leading local action to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities across the shire, as it is very well placed to lead efforts that improve the quality of life of the community.

Healthy Together Grampians Goldfields is a preventive health initiative across Central Goldfields Shire, Pyrenees Shire and Ararat Rural City Councils. The team works with health services and partners to improve people's health where they live, work, learn and play. Healthy Together is taking a systems approach to address lifestyle related diseases with a focus on the wider population through early childhood services, schools, workplaces and community settings.

A number of organisations across the shire have made the commitment to improved health and wellbeing as part of the Healthy Together Achievement Program. Council and Maryborough District Health Service are leading the way, along with seven schools and four early childhood services.

Healthy Together has supported the development of the Central Goldfields Health and Wellbeing Plan, which has a prevention and early intervention focus.

Council took the step of adopting a Health and Wellbeing Impact Statement. This is a significant action to ensure health and wellbeing is part of all policies, plans and strategies. The statement adopted (see below) sees Council leading the way toward a "health in all policies" approach:

The health and wellbeing of individuals and communities is fundamental to the work of Central Goldfields Shire Council. Council will consider the impact of its activities on individual and community health and wellbeing in the preparation of plans, policies and strategies based on community needs and aspirations.

The Healthy Together team coordinated a Healthy Together Challenge that saw close to 500 local residents participate in a lifestyle program using accelerometers. Mayor Barry Rinaldi lead a call to action for people to start on the road to improved health and wellbeing. It has been recognised that prevention is a key to

good health and this includes healthy eating and physical activity, but most importantly, it is about having healthy supportive environments.

The Healthy Together Challenge Central Goldfields provided the motivation for people to put up their hand to get healthy with their family, friends, neighbours and work mates. It enabled organisations to support community members to start making changes and has showcased a range of opportunities to increase physical activity and promote healthy eating, both structured and unstructured.

Those that participated in the challenge enjoyed a wide range of activities like yoga, mountain bike riding, martial arts and walking groups. Many embraced the spirit by challenging their friends and family members to walk the most steps in a day, or to be the first to 250 minutes of activity in a week.

Two of the largest employers in the shire, Maryborough District Health Service and True Foods, encouraged their employees to participate by having on site registration assistance. Positive feedback has shown that the level of physical activity has risen significantly, with more people attending swimming and group fitness classes in addition to walking in groups. Families have joined in to support each other to make positive healthy changes.

The introduction of laws banning smoking around children's play areas came into effect in April and Council has been supporting clubs with an education and awareness campaign.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

Council's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centre provides an extensive range of services for families with children aged from birth to 6 years. It is a universal service with enhanced and intensive services for vulnerable families or families who have special needs.

2014 has been an exciting year with many new programs for parents. Weekly education sessions provide information and socialisation for new parents, who can feel isolated and overwhelmed caring for new baby. The Weekly Lap Time program is a basic literacy program involving nursery rhymes, singing and introducing conversation between mothers and infants.

Engaging children through songs and games.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Over the year the centre consulted with approximately 800 families and children; and made 91 referrals to appropriate agencies including speech pathology, audiology, general practice doctors and psychologists.

The centre received 115 birth notices, but had 170 enrolments of children who have moved into the shire or come to the centre from outlying shires.

The maternal and child health nurses attend workshops and conferences as they arise, as Council knows it is essential to increase knowledge in these changing and difficult times for families. Incidents of domestic violence, drugs and neglect of children is now included in the MCH area of responsibility.

Pleasingly, immunisation rates continue to be high. The centre manages immunisations during clinical consultation for children aged 8 weeks to 4 years, as well as the school immunisation program and adult vaccinations for influenza as required.

YOUTH SERVICES

The Central Goldfields Shire Youth Engage Program and FreeZa events are facilitated by Council in close collaboration with local youth committees. Major achievements for these programs this year included the staging of the Open Air Cinema and the extremely popular Big Brother house mates meet and greet at the RACV Energy Breakthrough.

The continued development and utilisation of the Youth Engage Space and the hosting of the 2014 National Youth Week Skate Comp and Youth Activities Day also provided great participatory and learning opportunities for the local youth.

In a first for Central Goldfields Shire the development of a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was achieved in February. The YAC will act in an advisory role to Council and has many projects planned including the development of a Youth Awards Gala Event.

GOLDFIELDS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The centre provides a wonderful and enriching learning program that nurtures children's innate curiosity and extends their thinking and understanding. The program offers many possibilities for each child to play, explore, question, create and discover. The learning program is child centred and reflects the children's emerging interests, ideas and questions. It extends, enriches and supports children to develop their own understandings of their world. Council's staff nurture the children's creativity through providing opportunities for the children to engage in learning

experiences that involve music, drama, dance, visual art and storytelling.

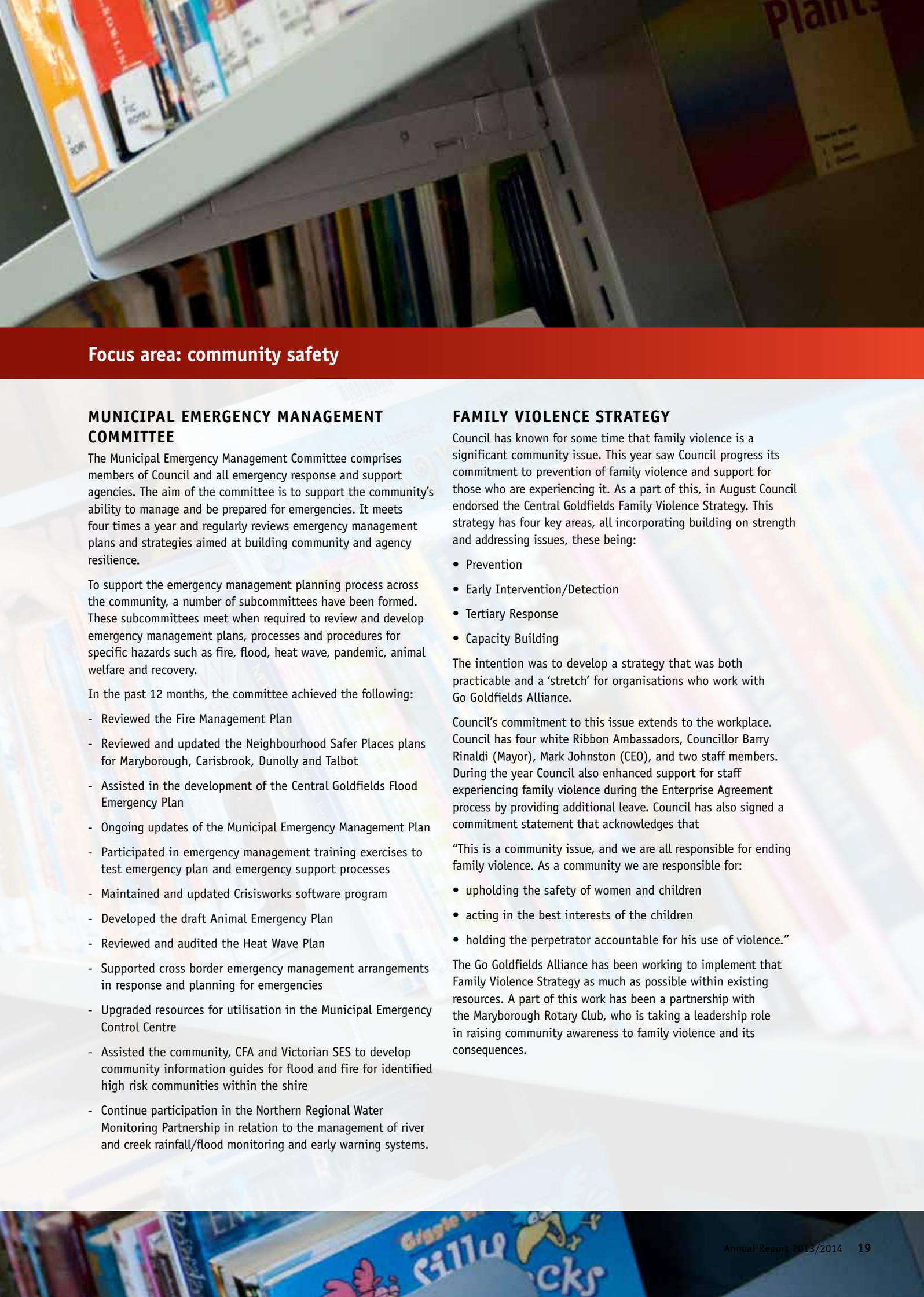
The program supports children to develop a strong sense of belonging and connectedness within the community through establishing links with local people and services. Many wonderful excursions are planned throughout the year that provide valuable learning experiences such as visits to community gardens, nature walks and visits to local services such as the library and nursing home.

Parents are valued and welcome participants in the learning program. Parents are partners in their child's learning and development. Together, children, families and educators from the community work together to provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.

Council has been successful in obtaining a capital works grant for the development of the existing children's services into a community based early childhood education and care facility - The Children's Hub.

The new development will involve integrating the existing children's centre with Maternal and Child Health. The development will also add two rooms to allow a funded kindergarten program to run, and include the Best Start supported playgroups, parenting programs and visiting specialist intervention services to utilise the facility.

Plans are now complete and the tendering process is underway so building can begin. The schedule indicates the facility will be complete by June 2015. The following twelve months will be a very exciting time for the service and the community.



Focus area: community safety

MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Municipal Emergency Management Committee comprises members of Council and all emergency response and support agencies. The aim of the committee is to support the community's ability to manage and be prepared for emergencies. It meets four times a year and regularly reviews emergency management plans and strategies aimed at building community and agency resilience.

To support the emergency management planning process across the community, a number of subcommittees have been formed. These subcommittees meet when required to review and develop emergency management plans, processes and procedures for specific hazards such as fire, flood, heat wave, pandemic, animal welfare and recovery.

In the past 12 months, the committee achieved the following:

- Reviewed the Fire Management Plan
- Reviewed and updated the Neighbourhood Safer Places plans for Maryborough, Carisbrook, Dunolly and Talbot
- Assisted in the development of the Central Goldfields Flood Emergency Plan
- Ongoing updates of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Participated in emergency management training exercises to test emergency plan and emergency support processes
- Maintained and updated Crisisworks software program
- Developed the draft Animal Emergency Plan
- Reviewed and audited the Heat Wave Plan
- Supported cross border emergency management arrangements in response and planning for emergencies
- Upgraded resources for utilisation in the Municipal Emergency Control Centre
- Assisted the community, CFA and Victorian SES to develop community information guides for flood and fire for identified high risk communities within the shire
- Continue participation in the Northern Regional Water Monitoring Partnership in relation to the management of river and creek rainfall/flood monitoring and early warning systems.

FAMILY VIOLENCE STRATEGY

Council has known for some time that family violence is a significant community issue. This year saw Council progress its commitment to prevention of family violence and support for those who are experiencing it. As a part of this, in August Council endorsed the Central Goldfields Family Violence Strategy. This strategy has four key areas, all incorporating building on strength and addressing issues, these being:

- Prevention
- Early Intervention/Detection
- Tertiary Response
- Capacity Building

The intention was to develop a strategy that was both practicable and a 'stretch' for organisations who work with Go Goldfields Alliance.

Council's commitment to this issue extends to the workplace. Council has four white Ribbon Ambassadors, Councillor Barry Rinaldi (Mayor), Mark Johnston (CEO), and two staff members. During the year Council also enhanced support for staff experiencing family violence during the Enterprise Agreement process by providing additional leave. Council has also signed a commitment statement that acknowledges that

"This is a community issue, and we are all responsible for ending family violence. As a community we are responsible for:

- upholding the safety of women and children
- acting in the best interests of the children
- holding the perpetrator accountable for his use of violence."

The Go Goldfields Alliance has been working to implement that Family Violence Strategy as much as possible within existing resources. A part of this work has been a partnership with the Maryborough Rotary Club, who is taking a leadership role in raising community awareness to family violence and its consequences.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council's domestic animal management plan has been in effect for 12 months, with several of the plan's objectives achieved in that time.

- Officers have received training relevant to their roles.
- Steps have been taken to minimise the number of unregistered pets in the shire, including the distribution of reminder notices with follow up house calls and school information sessions to educate children on responsible pet ownership.
- New services have been offered to people with issues relating to dog barking and disturbance, to reduce the number of complaints received.
- Steps have been implemented to reduce the number of dangerous and menacing dogs, including the distribution of information brochure and school education programs.
- The cat desexing and education program is assisting with a reduction in over population and high euthanasia.

Council's animal management plan is a four year plan with several objectives, which Council will continue to implement in the coming year.

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Council's commitment to the White Ribbon campaign has continued, with a ceremony held in November to swear in more ambassadors and take the opportunity to remind the community of the campaign's importance.

One of the issues highlighted at this year's event was the malicious publicising of intimate and private photos as a means of revenge. This matter illustrates the changing face of violence against women in modern times, and the need for the community's idea of violence to change with the times.

At this year's White Ribbon ceremony, three new ambassadors took the oath, and Mayor Barry Rinaldi, also an ambassador, told the community in no uncertain terms that violence against women will not be tolerated.



Focus area: arts, culture and heritage

ART CENTRAL

Since its inception in early 2013 the number of people visiting Art Central to view an exhibition or find out what's going on, to participate in a workshop or simply dropping in for a yarn, has steadily increased. On any one day people of all ages and from all socio economic backgrounds are making art.

During the year the Art Central program included discrete projects, seven school residency projects and an open access workshop program. Books and banners were produced, exhibitions and installations presented, and two projects - Vases 'n Verses and Scroll, occurred in the public realm.

Vases 'n Verses had over 150 people involved in its creation, and had the community talking. Maryborough residents were proud to see their work, and this was when many people began to understand what Art Central is about. 2013 was completed with a Retrospective Exhibition and Food for Thought Community Consultation sessions to review the year and explore ideas for 2014.

The 2014 project, *The Museum of Truth and Lies*, has been introduced in sessions for local artists, organisations, teachers and general public. Workshops are underway to create the content. Community workshops include Art on Demand, Community Collaborations, and Open Studio sessions.

Other community arts activities 2013/2014 have been:

- Community engagement and information sessions for local artists and the general public
- Professional development and information session for teachers
- Maryborough Education Centre's *The Yard Project*: a project to beautify the students' outdoor area around the Beckworth block
- Maryborough Community House's *Shipping Container Project*: design and painting of an old shipping container used for storage
- *Mini Library Book Boxes* with the Community House - a collaboration with the Go Goldfields Children Literacy Facilitators and Neighbourhood Renewal
- *Art Resource Book for Families*: arts activities for parents and children (0 - 5 years and extension ideas for 5 - 8 year olds) that can be done at home with available resources
- *Children's Rag Book*: completion of project with mums and babies commenced in 2013.

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY

Located in the historic 1861 fire station, Central Goldfields Art Gallery offers an exciting program of changing exhibitions. The gallery has a commitment to supporting and promoting artists of the goldfields region.

To increase community appreciation of the arts and to assist in programming a diverse yearly exhibitions calendar, the gallery hosted a National Exhibition Touring Scheme (NETS) Victoria exhibition. *Cut with the kitchen knife* was an exploration of contemporary collage, featuring works by leading Australian and international artists.

Participation in the arts is strengthened by the annual *Community Arts and Craft exhibition*, which has gained a local business sponsor, plus the annual VCE Art and Design exhibition. Both of these exhibitions were held at the end of 2013,

T.R.Pridgeon

This exhibition launched the gallery's exhibition program for 2014. It had a historical significance to Maryborough as Thomas Read Pridgeon taught art and design at the Maryborough Technical College during the first half of the twentieth century, and the family is still part of our community. With assistance from grandchildren, this exhibition was researched and curated by the artist's granddaughter, Sally Pridgeon. Most of the artwork had been in storage in the original Pridgeon family home for up to 100 years and had been sensitively restored and conserved.

This exhibition proved hugely successful with community members, and also brought many visitors from Melbourne and other regions in Victoria to the gallery.

Bloomin' Art

Held during the Queen's Birthday long weekend, this exhibition was extremely popular. *Bloomin' Art* is a unique collaboration of two modes of artistic expression where traditional art and floral design meet.

An added feature of the exhibition this year was the involvement of local businesses. *Make your Windows Bloomin'* saw several shops in Maryborough's retail sector display a stunning arrangement of fresh flowers advertising the exhibition. It proved a huge hit with visitors and community members.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

School holiday art workshops

Tutored by artists and teachers from the shire, these workshops continue to engage children in the practice of art making, with a focus on the exhibition in the gallery at the time of the workshops.

HERITAGE STUDY

Various heritage studies were undertaken before Central Goldfields Shire's amalgamation. These are used for planning enquiries and applications. There are gaps in the study information and Maryborough is covered by a blanket heritage overlay that is considered excessive and arguably restrictive. Work is needed to finalise the studies and recommendations and further implement the findings into Council's planning scheme.

In 2004 consultants were engaged by Council to undertake a review of the existing heritage studies and determine what was required to finalise the heritage data and citations for the shire and incorporate it into the Planning Scheme Heritage Controls.

Completion of the heritage studies is a worthwhile exercise, which would provide increased flexibility to some land owners and possibly increase the regulation on others. In May, Council reviewed the matter and referred it for consideration in the preparation of the 2014/2015 budget.

MARYBOROUGH REGIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

The Maryborough Regional Library aims to increase community awareness and participation by providing equity of access through the shire with its service. This is facilitated through three means: The Maryborough Library, outreach services, and the Goldfields Mobile Library Service (from Bendigo).

The Maryborough Regional Library is maximising its role in the community in learning, literacy and leisure. Twice weekly the library offers story time, weekly baby rhyme time, visits kindergartens and play groups, and attends community events. The library has conducted school holiday activities, participated in Words in Winter and held one on one computer lessons.

The service obtained an education week grant this year, which was used to engage author and palaeontologist Andrew Plant to conduct workshops at the Maryborough Education Centre. The library also collaborated with students and staff at Federation University to present National Simultaneous Story Time.

The library is working in partnership with the Go Goldfields team to ensure that the annual program for the library supports the development of language and literacy for children and families. An example of this is the current development of a baby library bag and card for newborns. This will be provided to new mothers through the new baby pack provided by Maternal and Child Health Services.

Providing a safe place for mothers to meet is a new service of the library. This encourages mothers and babies to access the library throughout the week. Currently the library hosts a mothers' group fortnightly in the children's room. Mothers have reported to library staff that they like to meet in the library because it is a safe place that does not cost anything. This has created thoughts around a role the library may be able to play as a safe space in the community within the Family Violence Strategy.

During school holidays the library endeavours to provide two free activities for children. The Grampians Zoo visit was immensely popular with over 90 children attending. Parents now approach the library before each school holiday to enquire about activities. The program provides the valuable opportunity to ensure that children access reading activities, which helps to avoid the dip in reading skills that happens with children over the long holiday breaks.

The Home Library Service provides house bound library patrons with the items selected by library staff and delivered to their homes by volunteers. This service has a very steady client base and is greatly appreciated by recipients.

The Maryborough Library provides outreach services to the Talbot community via a static collection housed within the Talbot Community Library building. Library staff visit Talbot weekly with resources and to provide support to the dedicated library volunteers.

The library van is now operational and has visited kindergartens, children's centres, play groups, supported play groups, ASTERIA Services and Havilah Hostel. It has also been used for community events such as Dinosaur Day and the launch of the Mini Library at Maryborough Community House.

Focus area: recreation and sport

RECREATION PLAN

This was a significant year for recreation services in terms of strategic planning and capital works developments.

2014 Sports Summit

Council embarked on a landmark process for its sport and active recreation community - the development of the 2014 Central Goldfields Sports Summit.

The summit's objective was to ascertain the current health and wellbeing of the sector and then produce a strategic plan, the "Way Forward", for local sport and recreation organisations, Council, and the community to increase the likelihood of an improved health and wellbeing for all these stakeholders in the future.

The Sports Summit was conducted in May with outstanding representation from local organisations, state sporting associations, Sport and Recreation Victoria, and local government.

Council and the community now awaits the production of the "Way Forward" Strategic Plan for action into the future.

Central Goldfields Shire Physical Activity Group

The Physical Activity Group continued to provide opportunities for sport and recreation organisations, schools, and the entire community to become involved in sport and active recreation.

The 2013 Get Up & Go Family Fun Day was a culmination of several initiatives to get the community active. The project involved the Hunt For The Golden Shoe, the Spring Into Summer Stroll, and the Physical Activity Expo.

The 2013 Get Up & Go Family Fun Day was a popular family day out.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Cycling capital

Planning, infrastructure development, and hosting of major cycling events, along with an impressive network of undulating and flat rural roads, enables the Central Goldfields Shire to continually build upon its already strong position as a cycle friendly community.

The Bicycle Advisory Group continues to provide the community with a representative and advisory function for Council, and was instrumental in several major cycling developments this year.

The Maryborough – Carisbrook Bike Path was officially opened by Mayor Barry Rinaldi in October as part of the Ride To Market event, and a suite of bicycle storage facilities was installed throughout the shire to enable cyclists to confidently leave their bikes unattended when in town.

The development of the Ballarat – Maryborough Heritage Cycling Trail, a joint initiative of Central Goldfields Shire, Hepburn Shire, and the City of Ballarat councils continued in its developmental phase in 2014, with the official opening of this iconic cycling trail planned for 2015.

The shire's major sport and recreation tourism event, the RACV Energy Breakthrough, was once again an enormous success attracting record crowds to enjoy the energy and excitement.

The event generated an impressive \$4.41million for the local economy and won both the 2013 Victorian Tourism Award for Festivals & Events and the Bronze Prize in the corresponding category of the 2013 Australian Tourism Awards.

Other major cycling events for the shire included the South Pacific Veterans Cycling Championships, Vision Super Central Goldfields Reverse Triathlon, and the Mountain Bike Orienteering Victorian State Series.

Sport and active recreation infrastructure development

Council continues its partnership with local sport and active recreation organisations to improve the community's built environment with the objective of increasing participation in physical activity.

The official opening of the Lake Victoria Fishing Platform Boardwalk by Mayor Barry Rinaldi highlighted the outcomes that can be achieved through strategic planning. This facility provides a safe and functional fishing facility for people of all abilities, whilst also enhancing the experience for walkers and joggers.

Goldfields Reservoir has received a facelift. The popular outdoor aquatic facility was upgraded with a new boat trailer parking facility and picnic beach area development to complement the outstanding walking track around the facility.

Aquatic facilities

The Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre continues to provide outstanding opportunities for the community to participate in formalised and unstructured sport and active recreation pursuits.

Upgrades at the centre included a new air handling system, recommissioning of the solar pool water heating system, and the development of the outdoor decking. The centre held a free Open Day for the whole community to experience all the facilities and services on offer.

Patrons of the Dunolly Outdoor Pool also enjoyed improved facilities with the upgrade of the change rooms, enabling access for all abilities throughout the outdoor pool season.

Manyborough's premier event, the RACV Energy Breakthrough, generated \$4.41 million for the local economy.







ECONOMY AND GROWTH

Purpose: *Encourage and support economic activity, particularly that which facilitates employment in the community.*



Focus area: economic activity

Focus area: economic activity

Support and facilitate activities which contribute to the municipality's economic prosperity.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Economic development strategy
2. Business Initiatives Consultant
3. Involvement in the Central Goldfields Business Group

Focus area: tourism and events

Maintain and grow local events stock.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Central Goldfields Event Strategy
2. Tourism initiatives
3. Major events
4. First National Heritage Region
5. Involvement in the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Council adopted a new economic development strategy in December 2013, choosing to focus on four key themes: population growth; workforce development; employment and business; and Central Goldfields lifestyle.

Since December, Council has made steady progress on a Residential Settlement Strategy and a Workforce Development Strategy. There is also ongoing work to attract a major business to Maryborough, and an events strategy has been developed and adopted to maximise the shire's existing event and tourism offer, and explore new opportunities.

The Workforce Development Strategy is being coordinated through the Central Goldfields Business Group, in partnership with the Go Goldfields team. Council's Business Initiatives Consultant chairs the committee. The aim of the strategy is to provide business and industry with a workforce that is deemed "work ready"; provide more appropriate training that better meets local needs; and to strengthen links and pathways between job seekers and employers.

ECONOMY AND GROWTH

BUSINESS INITIATIVES CONSULTANT

In November 2012, with State Government assistance, Council appointed a Business Initiatives Consultant to assist in: developing a digital strategy to ensure our region is ready for the impending introduction of the national broadband network; boosting the work of the Central Goldfields Business Group to better support existing business.

The role has had a significant impact on activity within the business community, with an extensive list of implemented projects and ongoing activities. The consultant has spent many hours meeting with business owners to gain a firm understanding of what works well and what is lacking for local business. Further to this, a business leaders strategic conversation was held in March, which helped build on information already gathered.

Free business mentoring has been another part of the consultant's offer to the community, and potential new business start ups have taken advantage of this valuable Council resource.

Some of the activities implemented have been a retailers event on Small Business Day, and a Side Walk Christmas sale. For Maryborough's biggest event, the RACV Energy Breakthrough, the business community coordinated an information flyer highlighting the various food outlets in town, maximising the tourism spend the event brings.

A *Living Wall* was also set up for two days in Maryborough's central business district, which allowed community members to post ideas for the town, and allow others to view and comment on those ideas.

Using funds from the Street Life grant, a series of television commercials was developed to promote two key messages: *shop locally; and visit Maryborough*. The commercials aired on WIN TV between November and February, the key shopping and travelling time of year, and provided a significant morale boost for business owners and the community overall.

The Business Initiatives Consultant has an instrumental role in Council's Workforce Development Strategy, as the chair of the committee.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS BUSINESS GROUP

The Central Goldfields Business Group (Goldfields Business) has had a significant boost in activity and overall drive with Council's involvement through its Business Initiatives Consultant.

Having successfully obtained the State Government's Street Life grant, Goldfields Business established a website, which acts as an information site for the group, and a promotional tool for all the group's members. The site contains video footage promoting local businesses, special weekly sale offers, and information on how to become a member. The website has given Goldfields Business members the opportunity to have an online presence without having to develop and maintain their own website, which can be time consuming and expensive.

In a later development, the website added a local employment page, promoting jobs available with Goldfields Business members. This aids job seekers, and saves Goldfields Business members the cost of advertising employment roles.

Goldfields Business's electronic offer extends to Facebook, Twitter and a fortnightly eNewsletter.

Council's consultant has also boosted Goldfields Business by gaining valuable sponsorships, increasing membership, and building the group's Board of Management by securing key business leaders as board members.

A major activity for Goldfields Business was its presence at the 2014 Regional Victoria Living Expo. Council attends this event annually, and assisted the group with its participation, appreciating that it would be of benefit to the group as well as Council in managing the large number of enquiries the weekend generates.

The group also hosted four speaking events, a Digital Enterprise Workshop on introduction to the NBN, and a series of free workshops for local business owners and operators to attend.

The Maryborough District Health Service and Bendigo Health gave a presentation on current and planned health services at a Goldfields Business networking event.





ECONOMY AND GROWTH

Focus area: tourism and events

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS EVENTS STRATEGY

In April 2014, Council adopted a new events strategy that aims to optimise the potential of existing events, develop new events and leverage off other major regional events. It is a five year strategy that is underpinned by the existing events calendar, which is coordinated by Council.

The strategy is designed to consider existing and potential events to maximise economic and positive impacts on the community. Conversely it also considers the potential negative social impacts events may have and how these can be addressed.

The strategy has been prepared in such a way that it can be a useful planning tool for Council staff and those wishing to continue with existing events, or introduce new events to the shire.

TOURISM INITIATIVES

Throughout the year the Tourism and Visitor Information Centre departments were involved in some exciting projects to further enhance the visitor experience in Central Goldfields Shire and the Goldfields Region as a whole.

Ballarat Regional Tourism

Through Council's growing relationship with Ballarat Regional Tourism, Talbot was included as part of the Ballarat Historic Villages Destination Management Plan. The final plan was launched in June. It has a completed product audit and identifies product development opportunities through a series of projects that will further enhance the tourism sector in the town of Talbot. The plan will be in place for the next 15 years.

Goldfields Way route

Agreement was reached between VicRoads, Tourism Victoria, Cities of Ballarat and Greater Bendigo, and Loddon, Hepburn and Central Goldfields Shire councils in 2011 for the installation of signs promoting the Goldfields Tourism region.

Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure confirmed \$16,000 for the development of the signs on the route. In kind contributions from the local councils were also made. Signs have now been installed, with marketing and a local launch to take place. The route includes Ballarat, Creswick, Clunes, Talbot, Maryborough, Dunolly, Eddington and Bendigo.

Central Victorian Indigenous Tourism Feasibility Study

Council has been a part of an indigenous tourism feasibility study. Aboriginal tourism is a growing sector within Australia's tourism industry. In an exceptional circumstance, the Dja Dja Wurrung community is partnering with Bendigo Coachlines with a view to sharing their unique traditional cultural heritage with visitors to the region.

While central Victoria has a long connection with the Dja Dja Wurrung, there are no existing tourism services to showcase their culture to local, interstate or international visitors to the region. The project seeks to address this gap by ascertaining the feasibility of establishing new indigenous tourism ventures in central Victoria. The study is focussing on the Deep Creek indigenous site at Carisbrook.

Ballarat-Maryborough Heritage Cycling Trail

Funding was obtained through the Department of Transport (\$5,000) and Advancing Country Towns (\$25,000) for the development of the Ballarat-Maryborough Heritage Cycling Trail, which includes the towns of Ballarat, Creswick, Clunes, Talbot and Maryborough. Two of Council's staff members are on the steering committee, which has begun work on the project, and will likely be rolled out and completed in the second half of 2014.



Development of 2014-2017 Central Goldfields Visitor Information Centre Business Plan

This plan was created through the Grow Your Business Program, which was a Bendigo Regional Tourism initiative. Council approved the plan in September 2013. Some of the plan's objectives are:

- Increase time and dollars spent in shire by intrastate, interstate and international visitors.
- Encourage repeat visitation.
- Promote the role of the Centre to Council, local community and local business and tourism operators and other visitors.
- Raise the profile of the Central Goldfields Visitor Information Centre with other centres as a resource and point of referral.
- Increase participation in local events and relevant regional shows and events.
- Promote availability of the centre to promote local events through displays, promotion, brochures and ticketing.
- Maintain and exceed expectations in the level of customer service provided.

MAJOR EVENTS

Wings and Wheels

The inaugural Wings and Wheels event was held in Maryborough in September 2013 and was hailed a huge success. An estimated crowd of 2000 came to town for the weekend to see visiting aircraft and a large contingent of vintage and classic cars.

Saturday's car display at Station Domain and rally to Talbot, hosted by the Maryborough and District Historic Vehicle Club, attracted more than 80 vehicles; whilst the Sunday sprints at the aerodrome, organised by the Austin 7 Club, also featured around 80 vehicles.

Some of the estimated 30 aircraft that flew in for the weekend ranged from Tiger Moth and Comanche aircraft to a Russian Yak 52 radial engine Russian military trainer aircraft, which offered the crowd a unique joy flight experience.

RACV Energy Breakthrough

Now in its 22nd year, this remains Maryborough's premier event. It was once again an enormous success, attracting record crowds. The event generated an impressive \$4.41 million for the local economy.

As always, Council is incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of the community, without whom this event could not run as it does, and continue to grow and break records.



ECONOMY AND GROWTH

Spring Fling

The Central Goldfields Shire's annual Spring Fling hosted over 50 unique events in Maryborough, Dunolly, Talbot, Bealiba and Carisbrook.

The festival kicked off on October 11 with a very successful Dunolly Gilbert and Sullivan, selling out all shows across the weekend. This was complemented by various new and old events including art, tours, readings, markets, open days, and Dunolly's first Swap Meet and Ute Show.

An online survey this year provided some much needed feedback from those who attended the various events. Respondents were encouraged to complete the survey with the chance to win up to \$300 in Goldfields Business gift vouchers, kindly donated by the Central Goldfields Business Group.

Summer in the Domain

The Summer in the Domain was held in Station Domain from December to February. Five events were held during this time:

- **The Domain Carols**
Hosted by the Maryborough Theatre Group, a crowd of around 300 enjoyed this celebrated Australian tradition that is carols by candlelight.
- **NYE in the Domain**
The Salvation Army held a successful new years eve event. The crowd of between 400 and 500 people appreciated the various activities provided.
- **Australia Day**
Australia Day celebrates what's great about the shire, Australia and being Australian. This year Council re-introduced the baby medallions for all babies born in 2013 and introduced a new initiative to give all children starting kindergarten an age appropriate book.
- **Twilight Movie Night**
Apex Club of Maryborough hosted Shrek in the Domain, which proved a fantastic family event for a warm summer evening.
- **Fairytale Fun**
Fairytale Fun brought families out for a lively morning of songs, stories, and entertainment and children dressed as their favourite fairytale character. Local community groups hosted activities relevant to their interests including tennis, football and painting, keeping the children busy for the morning. The Amazing Mister Mike (magician) was a big hit with the kids both big and small.

Relay for Life

The fifth annual Relay For Life was held in April 2014. 28 teams consisting of 688 participants registered for the event raising over \$50,000. This brought the shire's overall total raised to \$363,283.03.

The Relay For Life is a great community gathering that brings people together for their own unique reasons. The 2014 event had a special focus on the involvement of young people as guest speakers, in the key ceremonies and activities.

Maryborough's event has a strong commitment from the 20 volunteer committee members that work together for six months of the year to coordinate this event .



FIRST NATIONAL HERITAGE REGION

The focus for the year was building on the substantial commitment between councils to this project, and the strategic commitments within the two respective Regional Strategic Plans for the project.

Key developments to achieve this included:

- A cross-regional workshop of key tourism stakeholders conducted to identify priority opportunities and initiatives.
- Agreement on a framework for a cross-regional Goldfields Destination Management Plan to provide a focus for investment and better support councils to identify value-adding tourism priorities.
- A comprehensive submission by the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive (VGTE) on behalf of regional tourism stakeholders and supported by councils to the State Parliamentary Inquiry into Heritage Tourism and Ecotourism on the project. This was followed by a presentation to the Inquiry in Ballarat and facilitation of the Goldfields visit.
- Listing the continued development and implementation of the project in the Goldfields regional priorities of Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016, launched by the Minister for Tourism in November.
- Inclusion of the project and a commitment to resourcing its development within the VGTE's Strategic Plan for 2013-2016, which was endorsed by the Victoria Tourism Board and the Minister.
- Active promotion and marketing of the Goldfields region and development of a social media presence and promotion of the Goldfields Track.
- Successful advocacy for its inclusion in the recently released Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2024 as a state wide Significant Trail within the strategy.
- Successful advocacy for the Goldfields Way Touring Route as a signature initiative for the project and a planned public relations and media campaign to include Central Goldfields towns.
- Development of an implementation strategy for the project and briefings for government and other stakeholders.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE BENDIGO REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD

Council has been an active member of the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board (BRT) over the past 12 months. BRT has completed some fantastic projects and has made a big difference for Central Goldfields Shire by creating several opportunities. Some of these opportunities include:

- Employment of Regional Tourism Development Officer
- Production of a regional food and wine App and touring map
- Regional food and wine videos
- Introduction of Bendigo Regional Tourism Events Grant, in which three Central Goldfields events were successful, to the amount of \$10,000.
- Royal Melbourne Show opportunity, coming up in September 2014, to promote the region as a food and wine lovers' holiday destination.

These are fantastic tourism opportunities for Central Goldfields Shire, and only possible through the BRT partnership.



BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Purpose: *Value, conserve and enhance the rich built and natural environment.*



Focus area: infrastructure assets and facilities

Focus area: infrastructure assets and facilities

Protect and enhance our existing amenities.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Work with Central Highlands Water
2. Asset maintenance
3. Township enhancements
4. Flood management planning

Focus area: natural environment and sustainability

Value, add and value-add to our natural environment and sustainability.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Waste management plan review

Focus area: strategic land use

Achieve outcomes in planning and policy activities to create environments that support public wellbeing and economic success.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Central Goldfields Planning Scheme
2. Residential settlement strategy study of Maryborough
3. Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan

WORK WITH CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WATER

The Water Task Group held meetings during the 2013-2014 year on 3 April 2013 and 7 November 2013. The purpose of the group is to identify and develop networks and frameworks within the industry and the community for the communication of information relating to:

- the Moolort groundwater project
- input into the preferred water resource options
- water conservation information.

ASSET MAINTENANCE

Council continued its painting program of shire buildings. A notable project for the year was the painting of Maryborough Town Hall, one of the most significant buildings in the shire. Preparation and repairs were completed on the hall, and painting is scheduled to commence in the warmer and drier months.

The shire's sporting and recreation facilities are a major asset and as such, they are a significant component on the asset maintenance program. Oval renovations were completed during the year, and the Dunolly outdoor swimming pool received upgrades to the change rooms.

Goldfields Reservoir received a facelift, which included a new boat trailer parking facility and picnic beach area to complement the walking track around the facility.

The Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre upgrades included a new air handling system, recommissioning of the solar pool water heating system, and the development of the outdoor decking.

BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Focus area: natural environment and sustainability

Installation of heritage style lights within Phillips Gardens was also completed. The light poles were originally installed in Maryborough's central business district, and removed in 2009 during major street scape upgrades. The relocated lights complement the gardens with a style that suits the surrounds and the heritage value of the area with the added touch of history.

TOWNSHIP ENHANCEMENTS

A key project for the year was the upgrade to Scandinavian Crescent and Ballarat Street, Talbot. This project involved the complete renewal of road, drainage and footpath infrastructure in a heritage valued area.

The existing buildings and structures had to be considered in the design. The restoration of existing bluestone to create the kerb side drainage was a huge challenge, with the construction having to be designed in a way that meets engineering requirements as well as aesthetics and functionality.

The end result is a beautifully restored town centre, cleverly designed to reflect the heritage of the area.

Safety upgrades throughout shire towns were implemented, including improvements at crossings near St Augustine's Primary School in Maryborough. In Bealiba, car park and footpath construction at the primary school has significantly improved safety and overall access to the school for drivers and pedestrians. Improvements to a number of pedestrian crossings were also made to enhance community safety.

Road improvements are an ongoing task for Council. This year, some of the major projects included:

- Paul Street / Oxford Street, Talbot rail crossing
- Bull Street, Dunolly street scape
- Sorrenson's Road seal preparation.

Beautification initiatives were implemented, which included street tree planting, nature strip and roundabout planting.

FLOOD MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In July 2013 Council endorsed the Central Goldfields Flood Emergency Plan. The plan is a working document that provides background to the 2011 flood events, indications of flood levels with respect to different circumstances, and captures events and effects for future generations.

Council had no documentation from previous floods, making this document a step forward as it will preserve knowledge for future generations.

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

In May 2014 Council reviewed its Waste Management Plan. The review showed a number of achievements:

- Green waste collection services have increased significantly. At the time of the review, there were 836 participants (up from 579 in 2010).
- The "food from waste" compost trial has been a significant development in the area of organics recovery, public awareness and community education.
- Facilities and services at the four waste transfer stations have been steadily upgraded.
- The closed Carisbrook landfill has been rehabilitated.
- Public place recycling has been implemented in Maryborough and Dunolly, as well as at events such as the Talbot Farmers Market and the RACV Energy Breakthrough.

Council, in partnership with the community, has made significant progress in developing a consistent waste management services approach. Moving ahead, the challenge is to further improve the management of waste services towards reduction, recovery and provision of a sustainable waste management strategy.



Focus area: strategic land use

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS PLANNING SCHEME

Council's planning department had another busy year. State wide changes to zoning have impacted the region, and Council is working to ensure the shire's local planning scheme is appropriate in the local context.

Subdivisions continue throughout the shire. To summarise:

- 22 planning permit applications were received for subdivisions this year.
- Subdivision activity was generally in Maryborough (12 applications) and Carisbrook (6 applications) with the others (4) spread across the shire.
- A major broiler farm planning permit application in Clarkes Road, Stathlea was approved by Council in February, 2014 with the matter now proceeding to VCAT for final determination.

There were seven mining proposals, including the Council approved two year trial mining project in the State Forest near Amherst. The applicant, Octagonal Resources, who operates an underground mine and treatment plant at Maldon, is proposing to test the viability of the old mine sites via an open pit mining venture. This "Pearl/Croydon" project will supply ore to the Maldon Treatment Plant. If the initial mining yields prove successful a larger project will proceed.

Multi dwelling applications were approved for the former Maryborough 404 Primary School site, now known as Calista Gardens Estate.

An essential role of the Planning Department, under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 provisions, relates to the areas of Planning Scheme compliance or enforcement. This can involve enforcement action against illegal activity and permit condition compliance. This year a number of minor enforcements occurred relating to issues such as off site promotion signage and illegal placement of shipping containers.

RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT STRATEGY STUDY FOR MARYBOROUGH

The framework for this strategy was adopted by Council in June 2014. It will set the long term provision for population growth, contributing to economic and social wellbeing.

LODDON MALLEE REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The Loddon Mallee plan is one of eight plans across the State that will help to guide a coordinated regional response to population growth and regional change over the next 30 years. It identifies the regions most important issues and presents a framework to maximise opportunities and manage future growth and change in a way that strengthens the economy, helps people to thrive and protects the rich natural and cultural heritage.

It is a framework for planning that is supported by key industries and community organisations, and endorsed by all local councils, the Loddon Mallee Regional Management Forum and the Regional Development Australia Committee. This united approach will dramatically improve the way the region identifies, prioritises, supports and delivers projects that will make a real difference to the future of the region.

The plan was adopted by Council in September 2013, and Council's CEO Mark Johnston is a member of the Steering Committee.

Excitingly, Maryborough has been identified as a regional centre to manage and support growth.



PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

Purpose: *Implement strong, clear and transparent corporate governance, strategies and actions.*



Focus area: organisational processes and systems

Demonstrate good governance and provide quality customer service.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Review of communications strategy
2. New customer service charter
3. Occupational Health and Safety
4. Human resources
5. Governance processes

Focus area: leadership and governance

Provide strong leadership in representing the community.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Advocacy
2. New industry partnerships
3. Council awards and work showcased on the national stage
4. Council communications channels
5. Participation in the 2014 Regional Victoria Living Expo

Focus area: financial sustainability

Deliver responsible financial management and business planning to ensure long term sustainability.

Projects/services implemented:

1. Local Government Financial Sustainability Review (Whelan Report)
2. Rating strategy review
3. Budget compliance

PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

Focus area: organisational processes and systems

REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Following the adoption of the Council Plan 2013 – 2017, which included a new vision, Council's communications strategy was redeveloped to align with the plan. The new communications strategy details Council's target audiences and the key messages for each audience, and these key messages are based on Council's vision: *to be a community with choice*.

The strategy was designed to encourage the same key messages be used in all communications, so that the target audiences have a clear understanding of Council's vision and goals.

The strategy also outlines the various channels Council uses to communicate with its audiences. Some of these channels are unchanged, some have been redeveloped, and new channels have been introduced.

The new strategy was adopted by Council in October 2013, and since then, implementation of the strategy has had steady progress.

The new key messages were used beyond the local level, when Council developed its communications and promotional tools for the 2014 Regional Victoria Living Expo.

NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

In the Council Plan 2013-2017, Council committed to demonstrate good governance and provide quality customer services, and one of the actions identified to achieve that end is the implementation of a Customer Service Charter.

A draft Customer Service Charter was developed to articulate Council's response to its customers, in line with the vision and values in the Council Plan.

Every effort will be made by staff to uphold the standards outlined in the charter, and if circumstances outside of Council's control prevent this from happening on occasion, staff will contact the customer to keep them updated on the progress of their request.

This is an in house project developed in consultation with staff, including front line Customer Service staff.

Following the adoption of the Customer Service Charter, Council communicated its plans to the public via local media, and also published it on the website.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Council's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee meets every two months and is comprised equally of representatives from employees to employer. The committee worked consistently through the year to maintain high level of safety standards for Council.

- A new incident/accident form was introduced to thoroughly and accurately record data and streamline the reporting process.
- Two safety survey programs were conducted, which involve an OHS representative and a placed based employee working together to report on the safety of their work space.
- Various training programs for employees were completed, including first aid and anti bullying for all employees; and an OHS refresher course for all committee representatives.
- A Qfever immunisation program was introduced for all employees.
- Council contractors received a new induction manual, and warnings were issued to contractors who did not comply with Council's clothing regulations and traffic management requirements.
- The protective clothing and uniform policy was revised for all outdoor staff.
- A new fire services equipment maintenance program was introduced.

Council takes much pride in its OHS standards and does all it can to ensure they are the highest standard, knowing that the safety of employees and contractors is of utmost importance.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Work experience program

Council is an active supporter of the work experience program that operates in the school system, and regularly hosts Year 10 students. During the year, Council utilised the Horizons website to advertise work experience opportunities. Students came from Highview College and Maryborough Education Centre and were assigned to work with the teams at the Goldfields Children's Centre, Recreation, and Engineering over a one week block.

Staff health and wellbeing

This year Council was successful in achieving Recognition Point 1 of the Healthy Together Achievement Program. This was largely due to the progress of the Corporate Health and Wellbeing Committee, which included organising special events for staff and discounted flu immunisations.

The next 12 months will see the Health and Wellbeing Committee implementing the health and wellbeing plan.

Staff training program

Council has been a Victorian Government Skills Pledge business since 2010, and is committed to the ongoing professional development of staff. Council has remained committed to providing staff with access to training and development opportunities that enable continuous learning and career growth in line with individual aspirations and Council's goals. These opportunities can be identified by staff during their annual performance review, or can be introduced by Council to ensure legislative requirements are met and qualifications remain current. Some of the training completed during the year included:

- Occupational health and safety
- First aid and CPR
- Computer applications
- Competency
- Compliance.

Traineeships

Council supported four childcare staff to complete Certificate III and/or Diploma in Children's Services this year. This was aided by external funding.

Communications

A staff newsletter is distributed fortnightly via the intranet. The newsletter includes items of interest, job advertisements, coming events and health and wellbeing items.

Council holds monthly meetings for all staff. The meetings provide the opportunity to hear about projects from other departments. This meeting also allows staff to gain a greater understanding of other areas with departmental presentations. Staff are also informed of matters taken to the Council table and given the opportunity to ask questions of the Executive.

Council has several notice boards in the administration building, which provide information to staff, as well as opportunities to provide feedback.

Certificates of service recognition

Council presented 16 certificates of service recognition in December 2013. The length of service ranged from 10 years to 35 years. This is a great testament to the dedication of staff at Council.

Equal employment opportunity

Council supports access and equity for all employees and recognises diversity as a valuable strength that will create benefits for employees and the community.

Council's equal employment opportunity policy ensures that any potential breach is resolved impartially and fairly. Council regularly reviews its policies, procedures and practices to ensure equity and transparency for all staff.

Enterprise agreement

Council commenced discussions around the enterprise agreement in February 2014 with staff representatives and the relevant unions. The final agreement was submitted to the Fair Work Commission on 17 June 2014.

PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

Staff profile

| Department | FTE | Comprises | | |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | | Permanent Full Time | Permanent Part Time | Casual |
| Community | 19.2 | 13 | 5.55 | 0.65 |
| Health & Human Services | 51.89 | 15 | 31.66 | 5.23 |
| Economic Development | 11.7 | 4 | 7.3 | 0.4 |
| Culture & Heritage | 4.7 | 2 | 1.92 | 0.78 |
| Recreation & Leisure | 16.97 | 16 | 0.84 | 0.13 |
| Transport | 36.56 | 32 | 2.9 | 1.66 |
| Waste & Environment | 9.98 | 7 | 2.19 | 0.79 |
| Administration | 18 | 13 | 4.87 | 0.13 |
| Total | 169 | 102 | 57.23 | 9.77 |

Average age of staff is 46 years.

Recruitment

Council advertised and filled 26 positions in the 2014 financial year. All new staff participated in an induction process from the commencement of their employment.

GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

Council meetings

Council meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month in the Community Hub, 48 Burns Street Maryborough at 5.30 pm.

Special meetings are called as required and are advertised in the local newspapers and on Council's website.

Councillor remuneration

The Mayoral Allowance of \$55,026 and Councillor Allowance of \$18,418 are within the maximum allowable amounts set by the State Government for shires the size of Central Goldfields. Council set remuneration levels for the term of the Council during the adoption of the 2013/14 budget.

Code of conduct

Section 76c of the Local Government Act 1989 requires each Council to adopt a Code of Conduct for Councillors. The code commits councillors to work effectively together and provides for effective participation and accountability to the community.

Council adopted a Code of Conduct on 22 October 2013. Review of the code is carried out, as is required under the Act within 12 months of a Council election.

Council Plan

Section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989 requires Council to prepare and approve a Council Plan within the period of six months after each general election or by the next 30 June, whichever is later. A Council Plan must include:

1. The strategic objectives of Council
2. Strategies for achieving the objectives for at least the next four years
3. Strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives
4. A Strategic Resource Plan containing the matters specified in Section 126
5. Any other matter prescribed by the regulator.

Council developed and adopted the Council Plan for the period 2013 – 2017 at a Special Meeting on 23 April, 2013, with annual reviews thereafter.

Citizenship ceremonies

Council conducts citizenship ceremonies on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. The Mayor conducts these ceremonies at a private ceremony or a formal ceremony prior to an Ordinary Council Meeting.

Carer's Recognition Act 2012

Council has taken all practicable measures to comply with its responsibilities outlined in the Carers Recognition Act 2012. Council has promoted the principles on the Act, to people in care relationships who receive council services; to people in care relationships, and to the wider community by:

- distributing printed materials through relevant Council services
- displaying posters at Council community venues
- providing links to State Government resource materials on Council's website
- providing information to organisations represented in Council/community networks.

Council has taken all practicable measures to ensure staff, Council agents and volunteers working for Council are informed about the principles and obligations of the Act by including information on the care relationship in:

- Council induction and training programs for staff working in HACC and disability services
- Council induction and training programs for staff working in front line positions in the general community
- Induction and training programs for volunteers working directly in the community.

Council has taken all practicable measures to review and modify policies, procedures and supports to include recognition of the carer relationship and has provided the following additional activities and resources to recognise the care relationship:

- Providing access to carer's leave
- Supporting staff through family friendly initiatives
- Information provided in induction programs
- Information link on website.

PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

Protected Disclosure Act 2012

Council's procedure

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 requires a public body, other than an investigating entity, that is required under another Act to provide an Annual Report for a financial year must include in that report;

- a) Information about how to access the procedures established by the public body under Part 9; and
- a) In the case of a public body that can receive disclosures made in accordance with Part 2 – the number of disclosures notified to the IBAC under section 21(2) during the financial year.

Council has adopted guidelines and appointed an officer to the Protected Disclosure Coordinator role. The guidelines are available for viewing by members of the public by contacting Council's Protected Disclosure Coordinator (Manager Governance).

During the 2013/14 year Council received no protected disclosures.

Documents held by Council

Council maintains a variety of documents as part of its day-to-day operations. Both property and subject based files are held to assist in the coordination of documents and correspondence relating to its areas of responsibility. Property files relate to the location, street name and number. Subject files cater for matters of a more general nature and cover a range of areas such as Council administration and community services.

Other technical material held includes: road construction; infrastructure plans; planning and building records; and statutory information Council is required to keep such as food premises registrations and dog and cat registrations.

Publicly available documents

The following information is available for inspection at Council's administration office. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, inspection can be arranged on request. Fees may apply.

1. Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors under Section 74 and 74A of the Local Government Act.
1. Details of senior officers' total salary packages for the current financial year and previous financial year including gross salary, the amount of the Council or employer contribution to superannuation, the value of any motor vehicle provided by Council, and the total value of any other benefits and allowances provided by Council.
2. Details of overseas or interstate travel (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months, including the names of the Councillors or members of Council staff and the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the overseas or interstate travel.
3. Names of Council officers who were required to submit a return of interest during the financial year and the dates these returns were submitted.
4. Names of Councillors who submitted returns of interest during the financial year and the dates these returns were submitted.
5. Agendas and minutes for ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months kept under Section 93 of the Act except where minutes relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of the Act.
6. A list of all special committees established by the Council and the purpose for which each committee was established.
7. A list of all special committees established by the Council which were abolished or ceased to function during the financial year.
8. Minutes of meetings of special committees established under Section 86 of the Act except where minutes relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of the Act.
9. Applications for enrolment on the voters' roll under Sections 12 and 13 of the Act for the immediate past roll and next roll being prepared.
10. Register of Delegations kept under section 87, 88 and 98 of the Act.
11. Submissions received under section 223 of the Act during the previous 12 months.
12. Agreements to establish regional libraries under Section 196 of the Act.
13. Details of all property, finance and operating leases involving land, buildings, plant, computer equipment and vehicles entered into by the Council as lessor or lessee, including the name of the other party to the lease and the terms and the value of the lease.

14. Register of authorised officers appointed under Section 224 of the Act.
15. List of donations and grants made by the Council during the financial year, including the names of persons or bodies which have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.
16. List of the names of organisations which the Council was a member during the financial year and details of all membership fees and other amounts and services provided during that year to each organisation by the Council.
17. List of contracts valued at \$100,000 or more which the Council entered into during the financial year without first engaging in a competitive process and which are not contracts referred to in Section 186(5) of the Act.

Freedom of Information Act 1982

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 1982 requires Council to make available information and documentation where such information is not exempted by legislation.

The FOI Act embodies the following basic principles:

1. That members of the public have a legally enforceable right of access to government information;
2. That government departments and agencies are required to publish information concerning the documents they hold;
3. That people may ask for inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading information to their personal records to be amended; and
4. That people may appeal against a decision by a government body not to give access to the information or not to amend a personal record.

The FOI Act provides the opportunity for public access to certain Council documents and Council fully supports these principles and makes a wide range of information available to the public.

The initial point of contact relating to FOI is the Manager Governance, who is Council's FOI Officer. Advice will be provided on the documents that may be accessed without the need to make a formal FOI request. For example, many of Council's documents are open for public inspection.



PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

Focus area: leadership and governance

ADVOCACY

Council is very proud to have excellent working relationships with government representatives, includes ongoing dialogue around key issues. It strongly supports the Municipal Association of Victoria, and partners with the organisation to advocate on major industry issues.

Council has enjoyed working with federal member Dan Tehan to secure funding for closed circuit television cameras for Maryborough's central business district. This is a fantastic step towards community safety and gives the retailers better security as well.

Council's high performance in advocacy was reflected in the 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey, as it rated significantly above Small Rural Shires and State wide for that category.

NEW INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Council's CEO Mark Johnston is a member of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Loddon Mallee Committee and the Loddon Mallee Regional Management Forum.

RDA is a partnership between all three levels of the Australian Government – Federal, State and Territory, and local government - to support the growth and development of Australia's regions.

The RDA committee has been established to provide a strategic framework for economic growth in each region. The RDA committee works to:

- Support informed regional planning.
- Consult and engage with the community on economic, social and environmental issues, solutions and priorities.
- Liaise with governments and local communities about government programs, services, grants and initiatives for regional development.
- Contribute to business growth plans and investment strategies, environmental solutions and social inclusion strategies in their region.

Through these committees, Council is forging strong and valuable partnerships that will benefit Central Goldfields Shire.

COUNCIL AWARDS AND WORK SHOWCASED ON A NATIONAL STAGE

Victorian and Australian Tourism Awards

The success of 2012 RACV Energy Breakthrough was recognised at a gala ceremony at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday, November 11, 2013 with the event being named the state's best Event or Festival at the Victorian Tourism Awards.

As a winner of the state awards the RACV Energy Breakthrough represented Victoria at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards gala ceremony in Sydney in February and won the Bronze award.

The Australian Tourism Awards are the tourism industry's peak awards recognising and promoting excellence in tourism. A wide and diverse range of tourism businesses enter their state and territory tourism awards, in hopes of becoming a prestigious national awards finalist.

For both industry and the consumer, being an Australian Tourism Awards finalist and winner is recognised as a mark of excellence. It is therefore a true achievement and a very proud moment to have the RACV Energy Breakthrough recognised on such a scale.

This success has been possible thanks to the hard work by scores of volunteers, Council staff, our partners at RACV and the Country Education Project and our supporters Holden, VicRoads and the Victorian Education Department.

National Awards for Local Government

Council continues to participate in the National Awards for Local Government. Since enjoying success in 2009, Council has been proud to submit a variety of projects for consideration in categories covering arts, asset maintenance and recreation. These awards provide a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of major local projects on a national scale.

Television coverage

Due to Council's participation in the Regional Victoria Living Expo, Maryborough featured in an episode of Channel 7's Coxy's Big Break, which aired in March 2014. The feature showcased the town's best tourism assets and highlighted two local businesses. Maryborough was one of four towns in the feature that focussed on regional places that are progressing strongly.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication with Council's target audience is an important task to ensure Council remains transparent in its operations. Under the guide of the new communications strategy, Council has maintained a number of communications channels, upgraded other existing channels, and introduced new ones.

The corporate website was redeveloped to align with the new communications strategy. Improvements include the incorporation of the new key messages, new images, easier navigation, larger text, and scrolling headlines. Feedback regarding the new look website has been very positive.

A new communications channel has been a weekly half page in the shire's major paper, the Maryborough District Advertiser. The same section of the newspaper is reserved for Council each week, providing space to advertise and deliver short news items and updates. The implementation of this channel has ensured some consistency around new updates, being at the same time and in the same place each week, and it has become a reliable avenue of communication between Council and the community.

Councillors now enjoy a direct line of communication, through the Councillor Columns. These are printed weekly and councillors rotate turns to write a column. The subject matter is a personal choice, allowing each councillor the opportunity to share personal thoughts or advocate particular matters of interest.

Council has continued to publish quarterly newsletters in the Maryborough District Advertiser. The newsletters are a valuable tool for updating the community on developments, as it is an opportunity to present more detailed information.

Mayor Barry Rinaldi (centre), and RACV Energy Breakthrough committee members, celebrate the win at the Victorian Tourism Awards.



PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

Focus area: financial sustainability

PARTICIPATION IN THE 2014 REGIONAL VICTORIA LIVING EXPO

The third Regional Victoria Living Expo was held in April at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre with a record 9,638 visitors through the door.

Two council employees represented Central Goldfields Shire on a stand during the three day event. Two other shire stands, the Central Goldfields Business Group and Whirakee Rise, were instrumental in promoting the key elements of business, employment and real estate.

The weekend was considered very successful with around 1200 show bags distributed, 80 people registering for employment with Goldfields Business and around 10 people showing a keen interest in land and real estate.

The event provides Council with the opportunity to promote the benefits and opportunities available in the area in order to attract residents, skilled workers, business and investment from Melbourne.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW (WHELAN REPORT)

Council has continued to champion this piece of work, known as the Whelan model. The Whelan model uses selected environmental factors that significantly influence Council performance; quantifies the degree to which each factor impacts on operating costs and revenues; and applies the results to assess the relative sustainable capacity of each council.

The model is widely recognised, including by Government, as a most definitive indicator of sustainable capacity and is subsequently referred to in decision making.

RATING STRATEGY REVIEW

The Council Plan 2013 -2017 identified “undertake a rating strategy review” as a key action.

Following the preparation of a draft strategy and full public consultation, Council adopted a new rating strategy in June, 2014.

The challenge in any rating strategy is to adopt a model that represents a fair and equitable composition of rates and charges across the community. Council elected to retain a municipal charge, a general rate (Maryborough Residential) and seven other differential rates. The previous Recreational Land rate was abolished.

Council will undertake a communications campaign to help ratepayers better understand the system of rating.

BUDGET COMPLIANCE

In addition to internal monitoring, a budget progress report is presented monthly to Council, checking actual against estimated income and expenditure. Diligent controls have seen a favourable financial result produced again this year while a five year financial projection shows Council in an increasingly strong sustainable financial position.



Central Goldfields Shire Council

22 Nolan Street
MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465

Postal Address
PO Box 194
MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465

Phone: (03) 5461 0610
International: 0011 61 3 5461 0610

Email: mail@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au
www.centralgoldfields.com.au