

# Energy Breakthrough Strategic Plan

Central Goldfields Shire Council  
September 2019

## 1 Introduction

This strategic plan has been developed by the S86 Committee for the Energy Breakthrough Program to set out a strategic vision, goals and actions for the Energy Breakthrough Program's future. RM Consulting Group Pty Ltd were engaged by Central Goldfields Shire to support the development of this plan.

## 2 The plan

### **Preparation of the plan**

This strategic plan has been developed based on a workshop held on 16 September 2019 with the S86 Committee that aimed to establish a vision, goals and actions for the future of the Energy Breakthrough Program. Underpinning the strategic plan is the Energy Breakthrough Business Plan, which was finalised in August 2019.

### **Implementation**

The S86 Committee comprises representatives from the community, volunteers, Country Education Partnership and the Central Goldfields Shire Council. This committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this strategic plan and reviewing its progress.

# 3 Context

## 3.1 ENERGY BREAKTHROUGH

Energy Breakthrough is an educational program aimed at students, teachers and parents to work together throughout the school year to design and construct a vehicle, machine or innovative technology that represents an 'energy breakthrough'. Towards the end of the year, a celebration event is held in Maryborough, where the teams compete across three areas of assessment: Design and Construction, Display and Presentation, and Trials.

The celebration event is a major drawcard for Maryborough, bringing around 23,000 people to the town every year (three times Maryborough's population). Included within this figure are approximately 8,500 direct participants and 800 volunteers. The event is the largest of its kind in the Central Goldfields Region and is a significant contributor to the local economy.

The Energy Breakthrough program began in 1991 and was a joint initiative of Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Country Education Partnership. The Country Education Partnership oversees the educational program component of the Energy Breakthrough, while the Central Goldfields Shire Council focuses on the logistics of the event.

The program has grown in popularity with schools from across Victoria over the last 28 years and has been well supported by volunteers, sponsors, communities, operations crews and key partners. A business plan, which focusses on the partnerships, operation and logistics side of the event as well as financial sustainability and governance, was recently developed to support its future.

## 3.2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The workshop identified the challenges and opportunities for the Energy Breakthrough Program in the future. They are outlined in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Opportunities and challenges for Energy Breakthrough**

OPPORTUNITIES	BARRIERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Contribute to Maryborough's identity</li><li>▪ Attract parents to the event and visitors to Maryborough</li><li>▪ Create a more diverse range of options for participation i.e. Work experience for students interested in other areas such as event management, catering, etc. complimentary events/showcases for innovative technology, sustainability, etc.</li><li>▪ Alternative accommodation, i.e. glamping, billeting</li><li>▪ Marketing more broadly to Victorian families</li><li>▪ Attracting more day/night visitors</li><li>▪ Partnerships with other similar events</li><li>▪ Expanding the time window, so more schools can participate</li><li>▪ Masters event for adults.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attitude of schools</li><li>▪ Attitude of businesses</li><li>▪ Physical constraints of the tracks</li><li>▪ Funding</li><li>▪ Accommodation offerings</li><li>▪ Communication with parents</li><li>▪ Location of the event is situated away from the town centre businesses.</li></ul>

# 4 Strategic plan

## 4.1 VISION

**Our vision:** *Energy Breakthrough is an education program and multi-day festival centred on Maryborough that brings people together from across generations to explore the latest developments in environmentally sustainable technology.*

## 4.2 OBJECTIVES

- Increase economic activity for Maryborough
- Connect and collaborate with the Maryborough community to increase engagement at the event
- Maintain the educational aspect of the program and continue to deliver high quality learning
- Incorporate the latest environmentally sustainable technology into the event.

## 4.3 FOCUS AREA 1: EXPANDING THE EVENT

### CONTEXT

The objectives of the Energy Breakthrough program (listed in Appendix A.) are focussed on the technology project that requires school kids, parents and teachers to work together throughout the year to explore solutions to environmental and transport issues. It also provides teams the opportunity to explore vehicle design, driving skills and vehicle passenger safety issues, and showcase their year's work at the celebration event at the end of the year. This event is centred around the achievements of the program participants. However, there is the opportunity to expand the event to:

- Provide an opportunity for other businesses / organisations to showcase their work in the technology or environmental sustainability spaces
- Host parts of the celebration event in other parts of Maryborough to expose visitors to local businesses
- Create a festival atmosphere with entertainment and multiple exhibitors.

### GOALS

The long-term goals for this action area are:

- A program and event that enables broader participation from schools, local businesses and organisations, and extended families
- Maximise the economic benefit of the event to Maryborough.

## **ACTIONS**

The most important actions required to achieve this goal are:

1. Review the educational component of Energy Breakthrough to ensure it links with the school curriculum and meets the needs of schools
2. Develop a vision, scope and participation requirements for an exhibition that enables local businesses and organisations to showcase their work
3. Explore opportunities to identify and trial new components of the Energy Breakthrough program and event.
4. Investigate the feasibility of extending the timeframe of the event to accommodate more schools
5. Seek a partner organisation that could deliver a “sustainable technology festival” that coincides with Energy Breakthrough.

## **4.4 FOCUS AREA 2: MARKETING**

### **CONTEXT**

The Energy Breakthrough celebration event brings around 23,000 people to Maryborough annually and has the capacity to be a key component of Maryborough’s identity. The event has continued to grow and contribute to the local economy over almost 30 years, however, there is the capacity to market more directly to different audiences to attract more visitors to the event, and to Maryborough as well as increase its financial sustainability.

There are four audiences for whom program and event communication are essential to the success of the program and the celebration event:

- Potential partners and funders
- Schools, parents and students who directly participate
- Extended families, friends and other day/night trippers who may visit but not participate
- Broader public beyond those who are directly or indirectly participating.

### **GOALS**

The long-term goals for this focus area are:

- Increased number of partnerships with relevant organisations
- Schools, parents and children have a clearer understanding of the outcomes of participation in the program and have the tools to navigate the event prior to arriving in Maryborough
- Increased number of visitors to the event, and to Maryborough outside the event
- Participation from organisations in the technology and environmental space that add value to the program and the event.

## **ACTIONS**

The most important actions for this focus area are:

1. Brand the event as a “sustainability innovations festival” and “regional event” to attract funding and encourage new and innovative projects and exhibitors
2. Investigate ways to brand Maryborough as the home of Energy Breakthrough, e.g. murals
3. Strengthen the core reasons Energy Breakthrough operates and the ways schools can be catered for and supported for the purpose of developing key messages
4. Create a streamlined communications path that schools, parents and students can access.

## **4.5 FOCUS AREA 3: EXPANDING ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

### **CONTEXT**

There are limited accommodation options in Maryborough for large events such as Energy Breakthrough. Currently on offer are a limited number of motels and Airbnb options, a caravan park and several temporary camping places, which are at maximum capacity over the event weekend. Increased accommodation options will be needed, as the event continues to grow.

Alternative temporary camping options have been embraced by other large events such as the Groovin the Moo music festival in Bendigo, where temporary camping or glamping sites on school grounds, private property and sporting grounds were made available. Some of these options offer campsite entertainment and catering.

Additional campgrounds with entertainment and billeting are options that have been flagged for further feasibility investigations.

### **GOALS**

The long-term goals for this focus area are:

- All event participants have access to a variety of accommodation that is close to the event site
- Increased participation and overnight stays in Maryborough during the event.

### **ACTIONS**

The most important actions for this focus area are:

1. Explore billeting as an option to increase accommodation options
2. Investigate options for creating a “village” atmosphere at temporary accommodation sites that includes entertainment (i.e. movie night) and food options.

## **4.6 FOCUS AREA 4: BRINGING LOCAL SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES ON-BOARD**

### **CONTEXT**

Anecdotally, there have been a number of negative reports of the impact of the Energy Breakthrough event from the community and from some schools, who have a select group of students participating. Some schools have reported that the program causes significant disruption to students who are not directly participating, because the program is all consuming in the lead up to the event. There are also local businesses who appear to close doors when the event is on and that locals leave town due to the influx of visitors.

It was acknowledged that Energy Breakthrough should be a positive event for Maryborough and provide the opportunity for local businesses to capitalise on the increased number of visitors. Consideration also needs to be given to how the program and event could work closer with businesses and schools to better include them in the program and the event.

## GOALS

The long-term goals for the focus area are:

- Improved economic outcomes for local businesses
- Local businesses are supportive of the Energy Breakthrough event
- Local school staff are supported to manage the logistics and planning that is required to complete the program
- Local schools see Energy Breakthrough as a rewarding worthwhile program
- Students are given the opportunity to participate in other aspects of the event such as catering, event management etc.

## ACTIONS

The most important actions for this focus area are:

1. Re-engage with local business community to support them to be involved and plan for the event
2. Identify ways students can volunteer or undertake work experience in other aspects of the event such as catering, event management, planning, etc.
3. Support local schools to plan and manage the logistics and planning for the program and event.

## 4.7 FOCUS AREA 5: SUSTAINABILITY

### CONTEXT

Long-term sustainability of the Energy Breakthrough Program and celebration event is a key focus of the S86 committee. As the event has grown, so has the investment required for staffing, finances, planning and infrastructure. In 2018, the program and celebration event cost a total of \$504,000<sup>1</sup>. This figure does not include in-kind support provided by either party. A key partner and financial supporter of the Energy Breakthrough program was RACV, however the organisation recently ceased support, which has left a large gap in the operating budget.

In addition to the financial component, there are over 800 volunteers who support the program and the celebration event. There are both local volunteers and volunteers from across the state who have travelled to be involved in the event with almost 40% under the age of 30<sup>2</sup>. These volunteers are an integral part of the event and are involved from set-up to pack-up in varying roles and capacities. Without their continued dedication and support the event would not be possible.

### GOAL

The long-term goal for this focus area is:

- The Energy Breakthrough program and celebration event are sufficiently resourced on an annual basis.

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<sup>1</sup> Total cost includes \$446,393 ex GST for Central Goldfields Shire Council staffing and depot costs, and \$57,950 ex GST for Country Education Partnership costs. Costs are outlined in the Energy Breakthrough Business Plan 2019.

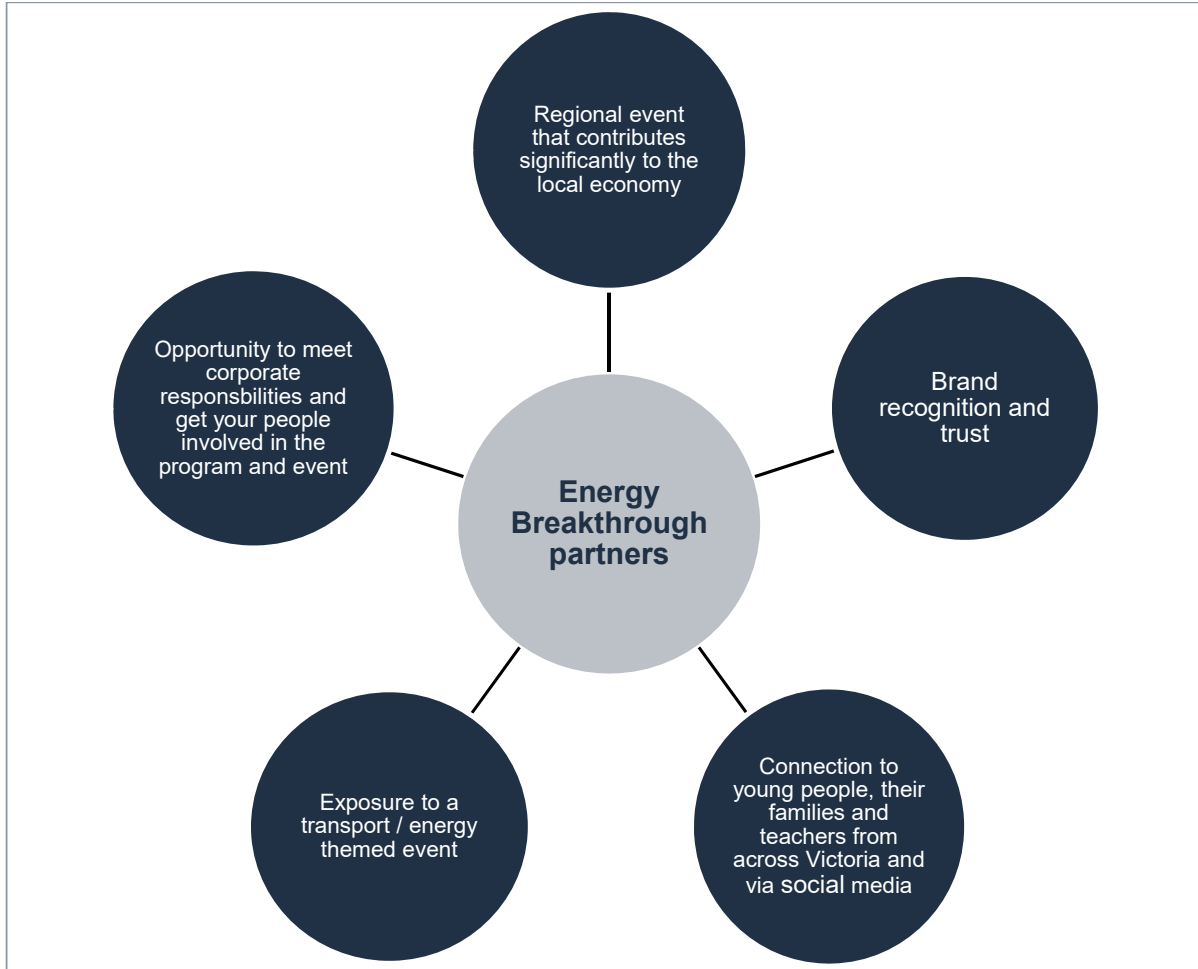
<sup>2</sup> Energy Breakthrough Business Plan 2019.

## ACTIONS

The most important actions for this focus area are:

1. Implement the Energy Breakthrough Business Plan, as a matter of priority
2. Investigate ways to make delivery easier for sponsor, funders and partners
3. Continue to survey volunteers to identify and implement ways to better support them.

## 5 Why partner with us?



**Figure 5-1: Why partner with Energy Breakthrough?**

# Appendix 1: Objectives

## Program Objectives<sup>3</sup>

- Provide an excellent technology project for students from Prep to VCE level
- Encourage young people to explore solutions to environmental and transport issues
- Provide an opportunity for schools and communities to work and learn together
- Provide an opportunity for females to participate in what has traditionally been a 'male' dominated area of the curriculum
- Be a fun program with real world challenges
- Offer students opportunities to explore and address vehicle design, driving skills and vehicle and passenger safety issues.

## Event Objectives

**Product:** To maintain the education focus of the event whilst continuing to provide opportunities for greater levels of participation and high-quality learning experiences.

**Finance:** To maintain financial integrity of the event to ensure it's on going sustainability.

**Marketing:** To increase awareness of the event, the Central Goldfields Region and the regions tourism strengths and attractions.

**Environment:** To raise community awareness of environmental issues, particularly those relating to personal transport and ensure that the event is run in a manner that takes into account its impact on the environment.

**Professional Development:** To support all event personnel (staff and volunteers) through skills development and access to the resources required to do the job.

**Customer Service:** To ensure that the experience is positive and rewarding for participants, visitors and the community.

**Risk Management:** To maintain the high safety standards (moved from Product Heading) and to ensure that all potential risks are appropriately identified, documented and resolved.

**Community:** To connect, engage and collaborate with the community and local businesses to support greater community engagement in the event.

**Economic Benefit:** Generate increased economic activity for businesses in Maryborough and the Central Goldfields Shire.

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<sup>3</sup> Objectives are outlined in the Energy Breakthrough Business Plan 2019



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