



# Central Goldfields Shire Council

Tourism & Events Strategy  
2020 - 2025 : Background  
& Discussion Paper





## Contents

**6**

Executive  
Summary

**8**

Background

**10**

Vision &  
Strategic  
Themes

**12**

Location &  
Strategic  
Context





**15**

Visitor  
Economy  
Profile

**22**

Products &  
Experiences  
Profile

**26**

Events  
Profile

**28**

Visitor  
Servicing &  
Marketing

**29**

Strategic  
Framework

**44**

Appendices





### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges the ancestors and descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung. We acknowledge that their forebears are the Traditional Owners of the area we are on and have been for many thousands of years. The Djaara have performed age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Council gratefully acknowledges the contribution made by stakeholders who contributed to the consultation phase by attending workshops and meetings, and completing surveys, including:

- Community members;
- Local businesses;
- Government agencies; and
- Central Goldfields Shire Council.







## Acronyms

AAGR	Average Annual Growth Rate
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
DMP	Destination Management Plan
EDS	Economic Development Strategy
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IVS	International Visitor Survey
LGA	Local Government Area
LQ	Location Quotient
MTB	Mountain Bike
NBN	National Broadband Network
NBT	Nature-Based Tourism
NVS	National Visitor Survey
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
SEIFA	Socio Economic Index For Areas
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
UCL	Urban Centre Locality
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
VGTE	Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive
VIC	Visitor Information Centre



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

Central Goldfields Shire Council is planning for the Shire's economic future by preparing a Tourism and Events Strategy to provide a clear vision and action plan for growing the Central Goldfields tourism industry.

The Strategy will plan for future growth and enhancement of the Central Goldfields visitor economy to benefit visitors and locals alike through focusing on the existing and potential tourism and product strengths of the region, and addressing any gaps and barriers to successful and sustainable visitor economy growth.

To inform the Strategy, this Background and Discussion Paper has been prepared to understand the visitation, economic and demographic trends, as well as existing product, experiences and events that are impacting the local and regional visitor economy. The research and analysis presented in this Paper highlights the issues that should be addressed and the opportunities that could be unlocked to achieve positive outcomes for the Shire's visitor economy and community.

The information in this Paper is informed by independent research and analysis, as well as consultation with representatives of community groups, organisations, businesses and Government stakeholders

### Visitor Economy Context

The Central Goldfields Visitor Economy currently supports 134 tourism businesses, providing services to over 225,500 visitors annually, and equating to over \$35.1 million in domestic visitor expenditure.

Central Goldfields Shire forms part of the Goldfields Tourist Region, which includes the two significant population and visitation hubs of Ballarat and Bendigo which are well serviced and easily accessible from Melbourne.

Whilst these cities are growing significantly and developing reputations as hubs of arts, heritage, culture and food; product development and promotion of the villages which comprise the Central Goldfields, and the remainder of the Goldfields Region, has been lacking.

The Shire has a range of existing significant assets, however to date product development, activation and interpretation of these assets has been limited. Existing strategic policy supports development of key existing and emerging product and experience strengths across the Shire, including arts and culture, gold rush history, indigenous cultural heritage and nature based tourism.

### Themes

Based on research, analysis and consultation, the following seven key themes have been identified to provide the framework for enhancing and progressing the visitor economy in the forthcoming Tourism & Events Strategy.

- 1. Shift the Narrative around the Shire's Identity and Perception**  
Shifting the existing narrative both inside and outside the Shire will be integral to improving the current tourism offer, with a holistic approach that goes beyond external marketing required.
- 2. Improve Visitor Experience, Product and Activation**  
As with the wider Goldfields Villages region, there is a distinct lack of quality visitor experiences and products through the Shire, which impacts on the potential to encourage visitors to stay and explore.
- 3. Enhance and Reinterpret the Gold Story**  
The existing history and heritage of the region is currently both an identity strength and weakness, with existing heritage assets providing the perfect backdrop from which to build and leverage tourism visitation, but existing community sentiment a barrier to the development of aligned and ancillary experiences that would attract key regional target markets.



4. **Support and Leverage the Emerging Arts & Culture Sector**  
Development of the arts and culture sector within the Shire presents a range of opportunities to enhance both the Shire’s visitor offer, and community liveability outcomes.
5. **Revitalise Assets, Infrastructure and Accommodation**  
Assets and infrastructure are currently an issue across the Central Goldfields, both in supporting the visitor experience, and in meeting community requirements
6. **Develop and Enhance Events and Festivals**  
There is a need for more active promotion of existing events, and the development of new events which encourage community participation and draw visitors to the Shire. Attracting and enhancing the right events should be a key consideration across the Shire, focused on events which align to the Shire’s existing strengths that appeal to key target markets.
7. **Provide a Contemporary Approach to Marketing and Visitor Services**  
Building awareness of the region in a contemporary way that showcases existing assets and signature experiences will be key to shifting the existing negative perception of the Shire.

### **Transformative Projects**

A number of transformative projects are proposed and discussed below. Other ideas and opportunities are presented later in this Paper.

#### ***Social Media Strategy***

Undertake a Central Goldfields Shire led social media strategy, targeting both locals and Melbournians which promotes the unique positive attributes, local heroes and stories of the Central Goldfields.

#### ***Maryborough Railway Station Tourism Concept and Masterplan***

Undertake a tourism concept masterplan for Maryborough Railway Station, which will guide innovative contemporary tourism uses for the Station and surrounding precinct.

#### ***Maryborough to Newstead Rail Track Rider***

Assess the feasibility of creating a pedal-powered 'Railtrack Rider' course from Maryborough to Newstead that allows visitors to travel through and enjoy a unique experience of the Central Goldfields Shire.

#### ***WHL Bid Enhancement***

In conjunction with the other Goldfields Villages, conduct an audit of existing history and heritage sites to inform development of the Goldfields Heritage and Cultural Sites Audit project and subsequent Goldfields Villages Heritage Museums Improvement Plan (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP).

#### ***Arts & Culture Strategy***

Undertake an arts and culture study for the Shire in conjunction with the local arts and culture community.

#### ***Central Goldfields Art Gallery Redevelopment Feasibility Study***

Conduct a redevelopment feasibility study for the Central Goldfields Art Gallery to enhance and activate the space including addressing street activation issues (e.g. existing fire doors).

#### ***Refresh Central Goldfields Visitor Accommodation***

Conduct a redevelopment feasibility study for the Central Goldfields Art Gallery to enhance and activate the space including addressing street activation issues (e.g. existing fire doors).

#### ***Golden Winter Event Series***

Create a Winter Event Series across the Shire which is based around the key themes of the Goldfields Villages Touring Concept (cultural journey, creative journey and culinary journey) and creates connections to gold and goldrush history.

#### ***Events Tiering & Funding Criteria***

Development of an event tiering and funding criteria to assess new and existing events against key objectives.

#### ***VIC Relocation***

Consider relocation of the current VIC services to the Maryborough train station in a smaller footprint satellite VIC capacity (to Bendigo VIC) to capture more visitors, this could also be collated within a larger community use space to promote activation such as a creative arts enterprise or a coworking space.

## BACKGROUND

Central Goldfields Shire Council is planning for the Shire's economic future by preparing a Tourism and Events Strategy to provide a clear vision and action plan for growing the Central Goldfields tourism industry.

The Strategy will plan for future growth and enhancement of the Central Goldfields visitor economy to benefit visitors and locals alike through focusing on the existing and potential tourism and product strengths of the region, and addressing any gaps and barriers to successful and sustainable visitor economy growth.

### The process so far...

To inform the Strategy, this Background and Discussion Paper has been prepared to understand the visitation, economic and demographic trends, as well as existing product, experiences and events that are impacting the local and regional visitor economy. The research and analysis presented in this Paper highlights the issues that should be addressed and the opportunities that could be unlocked to achieve positive outcomes for the Shire's visitor economy and community.

The information in this Paper is informed by independent research and analysis, as well as consultation with representatives of community groups, organisations, businesses and Government stakeholders

**A number of opportunities and ideas are presented in this document that directly respond to issues that emerged throughout the research component and were raised throughout consultation.**

**Council invites input and feedback from all members of the community on the content of this Background and Discussion Paper**



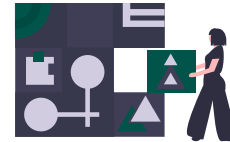




### What is the Visitor Economy?

As the economic impact of tourism has become more widely researched and its impacts more closely understood, the traditional definition has evolved to a more complex appreciation of the industry. It is now recognised that visitor activity does not occur in isolation moreover contributes to the wider investment and jobs across a range of industry sectors.

As recognised by the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy (2016) the 'visitor economy' refers to the production of goods and services for consumption by visitors, which includes the industries that directly service visitors such as hotels, transport providers, tour companies and attractions, as well as intermediaries and those involved indirectly, such as retail and food production.



### What is Council's role in the Visitor Economy?

The visitor economy is much broader than 'tourists' and 'tourist attractions' but plays a key role in the development of regional local economies through the creation of jobs for locals, and enhancing services and assets for use by tourists and locals alike.

**Local Government therefore plays an important role in facilitating the growth and development of the visitor economy, through tourism service delivery which includes the following:**

- Delivery of visitor information services;
- Industry support;
- Domestic marketing;
- Content development;
- Event attraction and support; and
- Investment attraction



## VISION AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Council's vision for this strategy sits within its overall vision for the Central Goldfields community and specific objectives for the local economy, as expressed in the Council Plan.

**Our Vision:**

*'To be a vibrant, thriving and inclusive community.'*

**Our Purpose:**

*'To achieve the best outcomes for the local community and having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions.'*

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**Economic Development Outcome:**

**'A vibrant local economy which contributes to the municipality's economic prosperity.'**

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**Economic Objectives**

- Facilitate an environment which is conducive to industry/business growth and employment growth and retention.
- Develop a skilled workforce to support economic growth
- Promote Central Goldfields as a place of choice to live, work and play
- Provide a supportive environment for existing business to prosper
- Strengthen and facilitate diversification for the Agri-business and food processing sectors
- Grow the digital capability of the Shire
- Capitalise on tourism and the visitor economy through growth of events and promotion of unique local experiences.



## Themes

Based on research, analysis and consultation, seven key themes have emerged and are proposed to form the framework for the forthcoming Tourism & Events Strategy.

<b>1</b>	<b>Shift the Narrative around the Shire's Identity and Perception</b>	Shifting the existing narrative both inside and outside the Shire will be integral to improving the current tourism offer, with a holistic approach that goes beyond external marketing required.
<b>2</b>	<b>Improve Visitor Experience, Product and Activation</b>	As with the wider Goldfields Villages region, there is a distinct lack of quality visitor experiences and products through the Shire, which impacts on the potential to encourage visitors to stay and explore.
<b>3</b>	<b>Enhance and Reinterpret the Gold Story</b>	The existing history and heritage of the region is currently both an identity strength and weakness, with existing heritage assets providing the perfect backdrop from which to build and leverage tourism visitation, but existing community sentiment a barrier to the development of aligned and ancillary experiences that would attract key regional target markets.
<b>4</b>	<b>Support and Leverage the Emerging Arts &amp; Culture Sector</b>	Development of the arts and culture sector within the Shire presents a range of opportunities to enhance both the Shire's visitor offer, and community liveability outcomes.
<b>5</b>	<b>Revitalise Assets, Infrastructure and Accommodation</b>	Assets and infrastructure are currently an issue across the Central Goldfields, both in supporting the visitor experience, and in meeting community requirements
<b>6</b>	<b>Develop and Enhance Events and Festivals</b>	There is a need for more active promotion of existing events, and the development of new events which encourage community participation and draw visitors to the Shire. Attracting and enhancing the right events should be a key consideration across the Shire, focused on events which align to the Shire's existing strengths that appeal to key target markets.
<b>7</b>	<b>Provide a Contemporary Approach to Marketing and Visitor Services</b>	Building awareness of the region in a contemporary way that showcases existing assets and signature experiences will be key to shifting the existing negative perception of the Shire.



## LOCATION AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Location

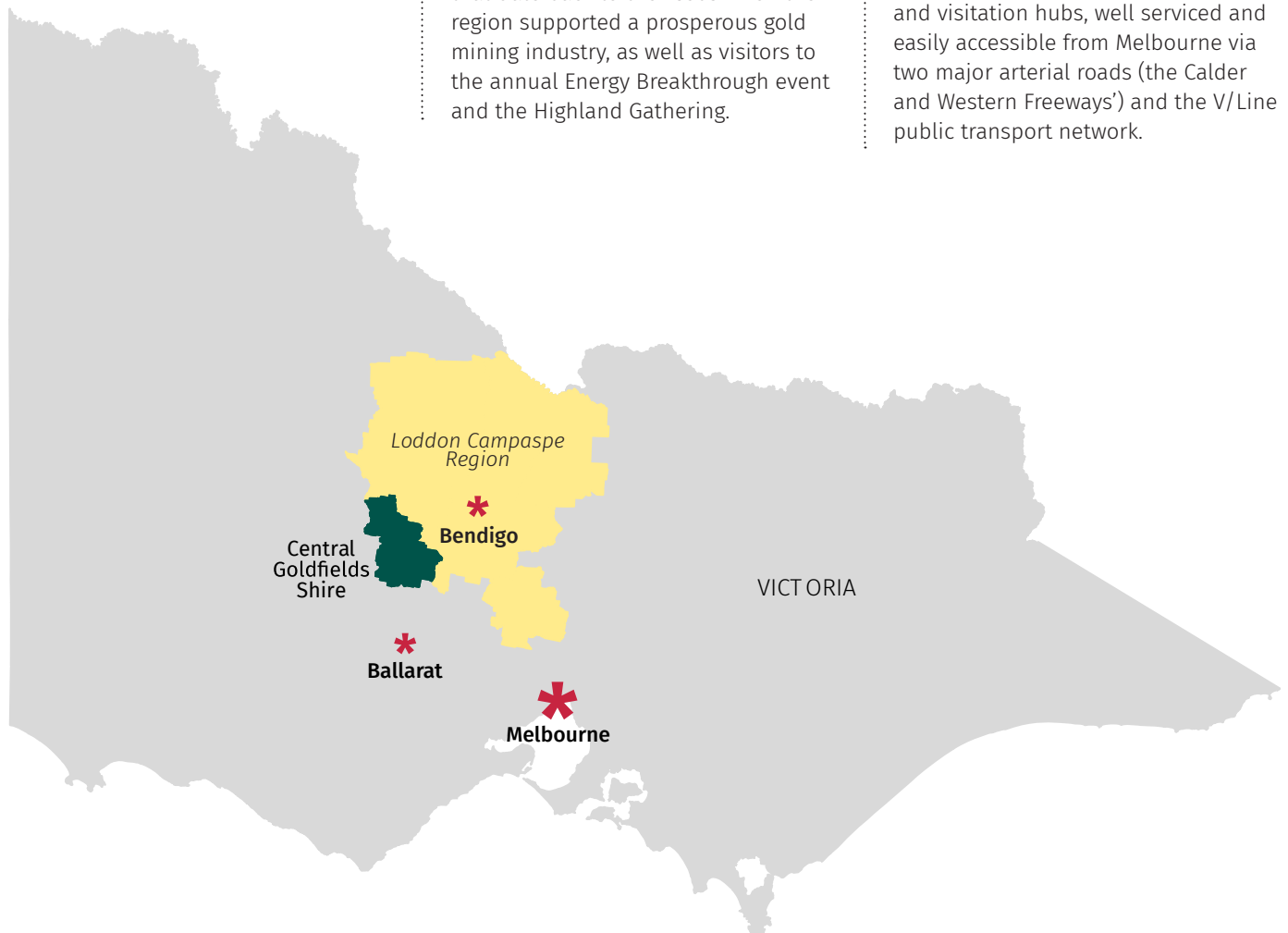
Central Goldfields Shire is located approximately 150 km north west of Melbourne. the Shire is uniquely located between two regional cities, approximately 40 km north of Ballarat and 55 km south west of Bendigo.

Located at the geographic heart of Victoria, Central Goldfields Shire is home to just over 13,000 people. Maryborough is the Shire’s major business centre and is a health and retail centre for surrounding towns including Castlemaine, St Arnaud, Avoca, Talbot and Dunolly. The Shire also hosts a number of food manufacturing businesses. The Shire is part of the Goldfields Tourist Region, with many visitors coming to see the historic buildings and townships that date back to the 1850s when the region supported a prosperous gold mining industry, as well as visitors to the annual Energy Breakthrough event and the Highland Gathering.

### Regional Tourism Context

Central Goldfields Shire forms part of the Goldfields tourism region, as defined by Visit Victoria, which also includes the Local Government Areas of City of Ballarat, City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire, Mount Alexander Shire, Pyrenees Shire, and the northern section of Golden Plains Shire

Within the Goldfields Region, the two regional cities of Ballarat and Bendigo are significant population and visitation hubs, well serviced and easily accessible from Melbourne via two major arterial roads (the Calder and Western Freeways’) and the V/Line public transport network.



Whilst these cities are growing significantly and developing reputations as hubs of arts, heritage, culture and food, product development and promotion of the villages which comprise the remainder of the Goldfields Region has been lacking.

With Maryborough, Talbot and Dunolly three of the key villages between these two growing cities, Central Goldfields has a key part to play in helping to connect and strengthen both the existing product strengths of these growing visitor hubs, and the product emerging across the key villages.





### Strategic Context

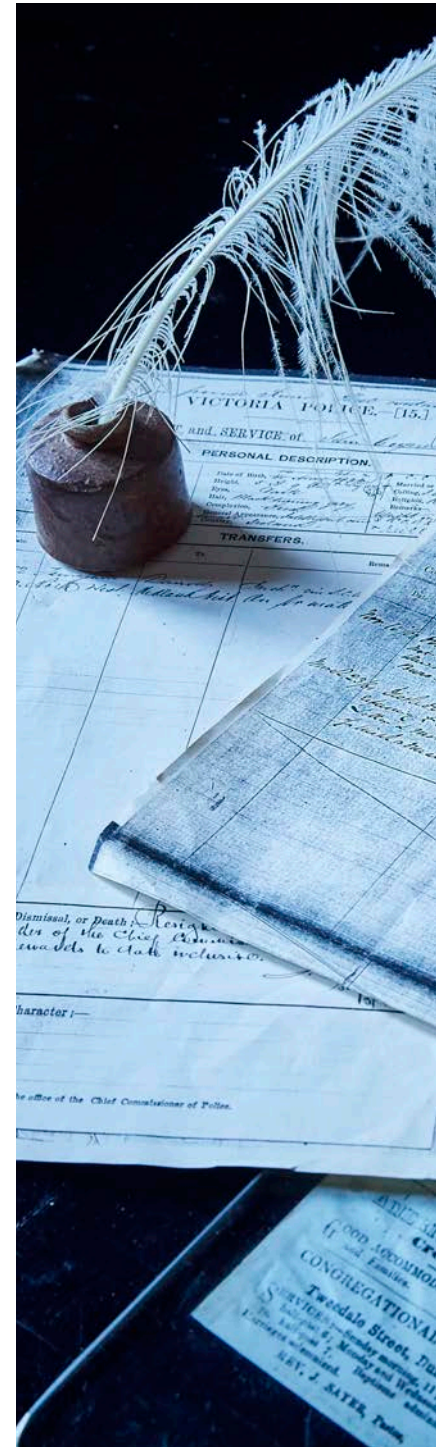
A range of strategic policy which provides a guiding framework for tourism has been prepared for the Central Goldfields and surrounds at a local, regional and state level. Existing policy supports development of key existing and emerging product and experience strengths across the Shire, including arts and culture, gold rush history, indigenous cultural heritage and nature based tourism.

Key state strategies also highlight that the creative sector presents significant opportunities for product development and growth across Central Goldfields Shire, and the wider Goldfields region, with a range of existing arts and cultural assets, and an emerging community of passionate artists and makers in the nearby towns and cities of Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine. There is capacity for Central Goldfields to actively support and develop initiatives in this space to promote resident and visitor attraction.

The World Heritage Listing Bid, and the development and promotion of indigenous tourism also present significant opportunity for the wider Victorian Goldfields Region, and Central Goldfields in particular

**The following documents have been reviewed to inform this Background and Discussion Paper:**

- Regional Tourism Review Discussion Paper (2019)
- Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy 2016-2020
- Victoria's 2020 Strategy
- Victoria's Tourism and Events Industry Strategy 2020
- Victorian Regional Economic Development and Services Review 2015
- Creative State 2016-2020
- First Peoples Action Plan for the Creative Industries 2018 – 2020
- Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism Development Strategy 2013-2023
- Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-24
- Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2018
- Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (2014)
- Draft Loddon Campaspe Regional Economic Growth Strategy (2019)
- Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan (2018)
- Goldfields Villages Touring Concept Product Development & Marketing Plan (2018)
- Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing Bid (2017)
- Goldfields Heritage Development and Opportunity Summit 2017
- Developing Victoria's Goldfields into Australia's Cultural Heritage Region 2012
- Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive Annual Plan 2018-19
- Bendigo Region Destination Management Plan (2015)
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2017-2021
- Destination Central Goldfields Strategic Tourism Plan 2010-2020
- Central Goldfields 5-year Events Strategy (2014)



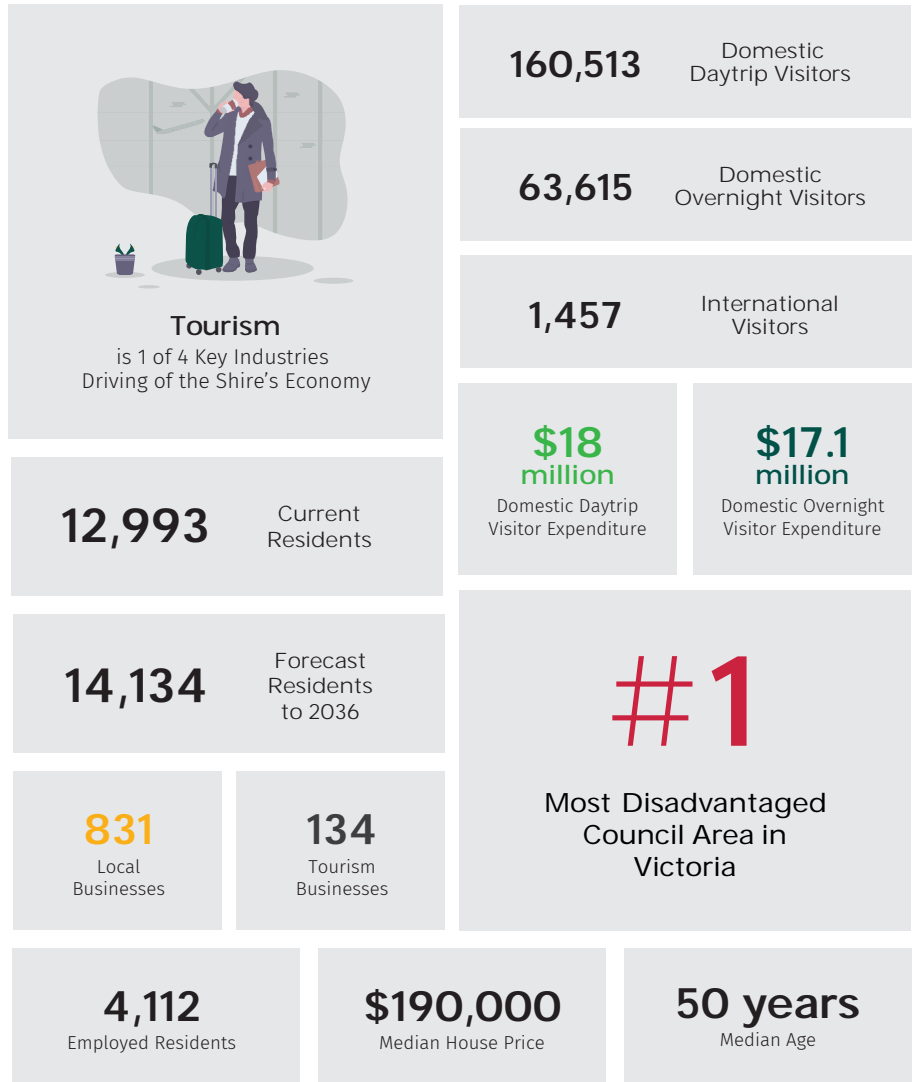
## VISITOR ECONOMY PROFILE

### Visitor Economy Snapshot

As the economic impact of tourism has become more widely researched and its impacts more closely understood, the traditional definition has evolved to a more complex appreciation of the industry. It is now recognised that visitor activity does not occur in isolation moreover contributes to the wider investment and jobs across a range of industry sectors.

As recognised by the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy (2016) the 'visitor economy' refers to the production of goods and services for consumption by visitors, which includes the industries that directly service visitors such as hotels, transport providers, tour companies and attractions, as well as intermediaries and those involved indirectly, such as retail and food production.

The visitor economy in Central Goldfields is broader than just visitors to the Shire and traditional tourism businesses, with tourism being a major driver of the Shire's economy, and the local community having a key role to play in both servicing visitors and positively promoting the region.







**Key Policy**

*Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan and Goldfields Villages Touring Concept Product Development & Marketing Plan*

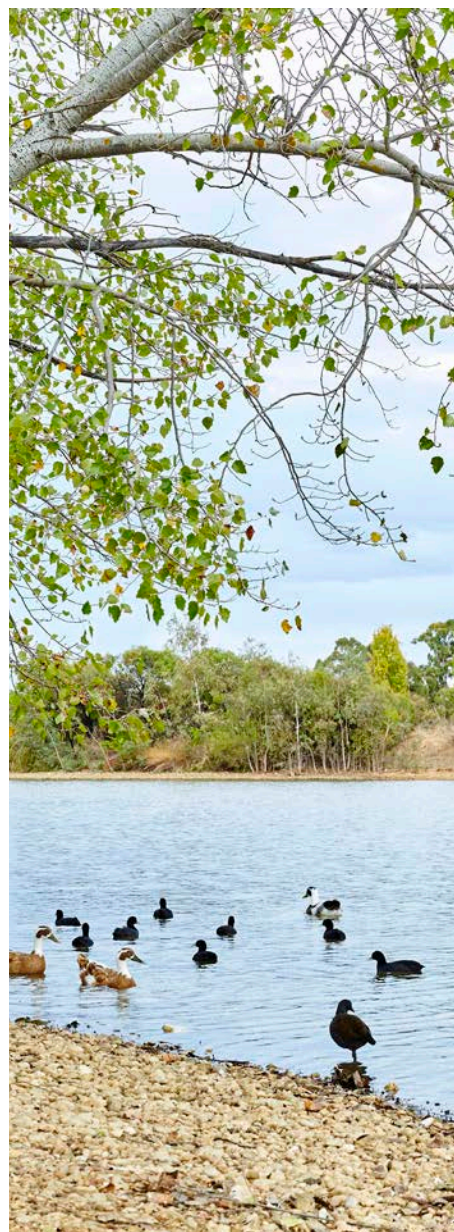
The recently prepared Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan and Goldfields Villages Touring Concept Product Development & Marketing Plan which build on previous Destination Management Plans prepared for the Bendigo and Ballarat regions (as well as other local plans and strategies conducted across the municipalities that make up the Goldfields Villages region) both provide key guidance for tourism across the Goldfields Villages region, and an overarching framework for the Central Goldfields Shire Tourism & Events Strategy.

In particular strengths and opportunities identified within the Shire closely align to themes and objectives as outlined in the DMP document; with development, growth and promotion of the Shire’s creative, cultural and culinary products and experiences forming the central spine connecting the strong regional experiences offered in the cities that bookend the region, Ballarat and Bendigo.

*Regional Tourism Review*

- 1. Strengthening our tourism offering**
  - Making the most of our natural and cultural sites
  - Improving and increasing our accommodation offering
  - Catering for diversity
  - Encouraging regional and business events
  - Supporting our boutique producers and cross-sector partnerships.
- 2. Making the most of our marketing spending**
  - There are multiple levels of investment in regional marketing
  - Working together on shared priorities
  - Making sure our marketing activity is aligned
- 3. Supporting industry**
  - Facilitating investment in our regions
  - Improving planning and approval processes
  - Securing labour and skills
  - Supporting the tourism industry to harness technology
- 4. Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards**
  - Boards have a common purpose but varied governance arrangements
  - Funding models and levels differ
  - Local support and buy-in matters
  - Boundaries and scale are important for success
- 5. Better coordinating effort**
  - Building on work and lessons from the past
  - Many actors have a role to play
  - Better leveraging our shared investment
  - Aligning state and regional strategies

To inform the further development of the Review, a range of feedback activities occurred throughout regional Victoria in July and August 2019, including a public online submission portal.



## VISITOR PROFILE

Central Goldfields attracted an estimated 225,585 visitors annually between 2009 and 2018. Visitation to the Shire was dominated by daytrip visitors, who comprised 71% of total visitors to the Shire annually.

### Trended Visitation

Total visitation to the Shire showed strong growth over the 10 year period, growing from 246,556 visitors annually in 2009 to 343,621 visitors annually in 2018.

### Total Visitation to the Shire

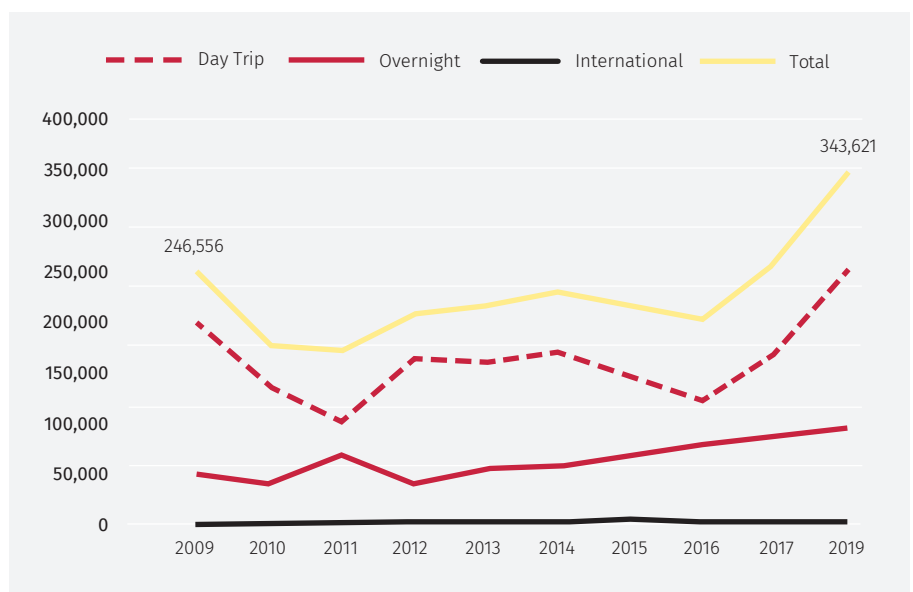
In the Goldfields Villages DMP, it was identified that the Goldfields Villages currently capture an exceptionally low proportion of the total number of visitors to the wider Goldfields Region, with Central Goldfields Shire itself capturing only 4% of total visitation to the Goldfields Region. Including an average of 3.8% of daytrip visitors, 4.1% of overnight visitors and 3.5% of international visitors between 2009 and 2018.

### Share of Regional Visitation

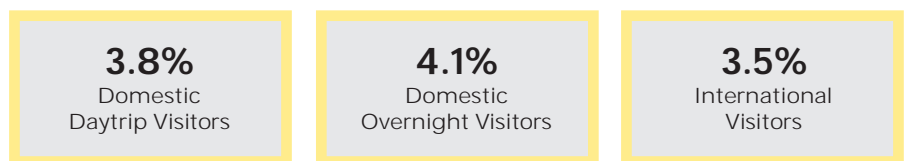
This demonstrates a large market opportunity for the Goldfields Villages to increase visitation through the development of products and experiences that promote their unique stories in line with themes that already draw visitors to Bendigo and Ballarat (e.g. arts, heritage and food), and presents a key opportunity for Central Goldfields in particular, having both unique existing assets across these themes, and strong community and industry interest in their activation and development.



Summary of Average Annual Visitation to the Shire (2008-2019)



Total Visitation to Central Goldfields Shire^



### Share of Regional Visitation

This is particularly important as currently the Shire attracts primarily VFR visitors across domestic daytrip, domestic overnight and international visitor markets, which is inconsistent with the wider Goldfields Region and regional Victoria where holiday was the primary purpose of visit.

Key demographics for daytrip, overnight and international visitor

markets to the Shire are outlined overleaf as compared to the Goldfields Region and regional Victoria.

Notably visitors to the Shire were more likely to be older, visiting friends and relatives, and participating less in popular visitor activities such as eating and dining out, as compared to the Goldfields Region, and regional Victoria.

<sup>^</sup>All visitor and demographic data has been based on the 10-year average from 2008 to 2018 (calendar years) due to low sample sizes across the investigation regions.



**Key Visitor Demographics 2009-2018**

Source: TRA CDMOTA NVS & IVS Calendar Year 2009-2018 average.

	Daytrip Visitors				Overnight Visitors				International Visitors			
	Indicator	CG	G	RV	Indicator	CG	G	RV	Indicator	CG	G	RV
Age Structure	15-24 years	12%	12%	13%	15-24 years	12%	14%	15%	15-24 years	3%	12%	15%
	25-34 years	6%	14%	16%	25-34 years	13%	16%	17%	25-34 years	21%	18%	24%
	35-44 years	16%	16%	17%	35-44 years	15%	17%	17%	35-44 years	11%	13%	14%
	45-54 years	19%	19%	17%	45-54 years	22%	17%	17%	45-54 years	24%	18%	15%
	55-64 years	23%	18%	17%	55-64 years	15%	18%	17%	55-64 years	31%	21%	18%
	65+ years	24%	21%	19%	65+ years	22%	19%	17%	65+ years	9%	18%	12%
Origin State/Country (Top)	Victoria	100	98%	97%	Victoria	83%	81%	85%	United Kingdom	19%	18%	17%
	New South Wales	0%	1%	3%	NSW	8%	8%	7%	New Zealand	14%	19%	13%
	South Australia	0%	0%	1%	SA	4%	4%	4%	United States of America	13%	9%	9%
					Qld	2%	3%	2%	Singapore	6%	3%	3%
Purpose of Visit (Top)					WA	2%	1%	1%	Hong Kong	6%	1%	2%
	Visiting friends and relatives	43%	34%	30%	Visiting friends and relatives	52%	44%	33%	Visiting friends and relatives	46%	38%	30%
	Holiday	41%	44%	52%	Holiday	32%	37%	54%	Holiday	40%	49%	66%
	Other reason	9%	11%	10%	Other reason	3%	6%	3%	Business	11%	8%	5%
	Business	8%	11%	9%	Business	12%	13%	10%	Employment	2%	2%	3%
					In transit	0%	1%	1%	Education	1%	3%	2%
Activities (Top)	Visit friends & relatives	41%	38%	35%	Visit friends & relatives	59%	52%	44%	Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	94%	94%	93%
	Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	37%	46%	46%	Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	44%	52%	54%	Go shopping for pleasure	77%	81%	78%
	Go shopping for pleasure	19%	21%	17%	Sightseeing/looking around	25%	22%	28%	Sightseeing/looking around	75%	80%	80%
	Sightseeing/looking around	18%	16%	19%	Go shopping for pleasure	19%	18%	20%	Go to markets	61%	62%	58%
	None of these	10%	13%	10%	Pubs, clubs, discos etc	15%	18%	20%	Pubs, clubs, discos etc	54%	58%	53%
	Attend an organised sporting event	6%	4%	3%	Bushwalking / rainforest walks	13%	7%	15%	Visit national parks / state parks	51%	69%	64%
	Visit history / heritage buildings, sites or monuments	6%	5%	3%	Visit history / heritage buildings, sites or monuments	8%	9%	5%	Visit botanical or other public gardens	46%	60%	52%
	Pubs, clubs, discos etc	5%	5%	6%	None of these	6%	8%	7%	Visit museums or art galleries	39%	60%	46%
	Picnics or BBQs	5%	3%	5%	Play other sports	6%	4%	4%	Visit history / heritage buildings, sites or monuments	34%	55%	46%
	Other outdoor activities nfd	4%	1%	2%	Go on a daytrip to another place	5%	4%	5%	Visit farms	29%	29%	23%
Go to markets	4%	3%	3%	Visit museums or art galleries	5%	10%	5%	Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums	27%	50%	44%	
Visit industrial tourist attractions / mines / breweries (breweries excl 2016 onwards)	3%	2%	1%	Exercise, gym or swimming	5%	4%	5%	Bushwalking / rainforest walks	25%	49%	44%	

### Hub & Spoke Model

The key opportunity for Central Goldfields as part of the Goldfields Villages, is to further leverage from current and future visitation to both Ballarat and Bendigo, by developing products and experiences that entice visitors to disperse from these two regional hubs. As such, identified target markets for these regional cities (and the villages themselves, including within Central Goldfields) include:

**Ballarat**

- **Families**
- **Socially aware**
- **Older travellers**
- **Western Anglo Markets**
- United Kingdom
- New Zealand
- **Chinese**

**Bendigo**

- **Lifestyle Leaders**
- Creative Opinion Leaders
- Food and Wine Lifestylers
- Enriched Wellbeing
- Inspired By Nature
- **International Experience Seekers**

### Key Target Markets

#### Creative Opinion Leaders

Creative Opinion Leaders represent approximately 6% of the total population 18+. They are creative both in terms of their involvement in cultural and creative pursuits and their openness to risks, new experiences and new ideas. Their extensive social networks and extroverted nature means that once they've visited a destination, the latest exhibition or experience, they will generate positive word of mouth among their friends and family.

#### Food and Wine Lifestylers

Food and Wine Lifestylers represent approximately 13% of the population aged over 18 years. They are a credible authority for eating out and seek to enhance their sophisticated palate and culinary knowledge through an understanding about everything food and wine. In particular they like to get to know the characters and stories behind the food and wine from the winemaker or chef.

#### Inspired by Nature

Represent approximately 14% of the total population 18+. They regularly get away for weekends and want a choice of activities that allow them to get active to varied degrees, from hiking and cycling to shopping and dining. Their genuine environmental concerns lead them towards preferring an eco-tourism experience where respect for natural surrounds is paramount.

#### Enriched Wellbeing

Enriched Wellbeing represent approximately 7% of the total population over 18 years old. They are progressive, educated and professional individuals who seek luxurious breaks to indulge personal passions within a culturally rich, natural or rejuvenating setting. They are financially secure, and spend more on travel and luxury accommodation. They value quality over price and seek enrichment and rejuvenation through connecting with nature and focussing on their wellbeing.





## ECONOMIC PROFILE

### Overview

Central Goldfields Shire’s economy is small relative to the broader region, and is attributed to the lower population base. The Shire accounts for 6% of the region’s population, 4% of employed persons and 4% of businesses.

Based on employment data, the industry strengths of the Shire are closely aligned to the Loddon Campaspe region, with the highest employing sectors identified as health care and social assistance, manufacturing and retail trade.

	Central Goldfields	Loddon Campaspe
Population (2016)	12,993	232,903
Employed Residents (2016)	4,112	101,109
Highest Employing Sectors (2016)	1 Health Care & Social Assistance 2 Manufacturing 3 Retail Trade	1 Health Care & Social Assistance 2 Retail Trade 3 Manufacturing
Local Businesses (2018)	831	20,283
Median House Price (2017)	\$190,000	\$322,000

### Economic Snapshot - Central Goldfields

### Industry Composition

A profile of the Central Goldfields Shire based on a range of economic indicators, including employment and business by industry and sub-sector identifies that tourism is one of four key industries driving the Central Goldfields local economy.

**Population-Driven**  
Retail, Hospitality, Other Services

**Primary Trade**  
Agriculture, Construction, Manufacturing, Transport

**Knowledge & Public Sector**  
Health, Education, Government

**Tourism**  
Accommodation, Hospitality, Arts and Culture

### Local Economy Key Drivers

Source: Urban Enterprise 2019, derived from economic indicators (employment, business), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011, 2016

### Tourism Businesses

TRA identified that the Central Goldfields had an estimated 134 tourism businesses of which:

- 49 were non-employing;
- 50 had between 1 to 4 employees;
- 24 had between 5 to 19 employees; and
- 5 had 20 or more employees<sup>1</sup>.

The accommodation and food services sector, which primarily relates to the tourism industry, has been identified as a major employing sector within Central Goldfields Shire.

Employment in this sector grew significantly between 2011 and 2016, increasing by 28% (+63 jobs). Employment across all sub-sectors increased over that period.

Cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services is the highest employing sub-sector, as it accounts for 60% of employment and increased by 21% (+31 jobs), suggesting that the hospitality role and product offering of the Shire is strengthening.

### Domestic Visitor Expenditure

#### Daytrip Visitors

Domestic daytrip visitors to Central Goldfields spent an estimated \$18 million on average annually between 2015 and 2018, equating to \$104 per trip

### Overnight Visitors

Domestic overnight visitors to Central Goldfields spent an estimated \$ 17.1 million on average annually between 2015 and 2018, equating to \$210 per trip, or \$92 per night during their trip. Overnight visitors spent an estimated \$140 per night on average for commercial accommodation.<sup>1</sup>

	2011	2016	Change (No.)	Change (%)
Accommodation and Food Services	228	291	63	28%
Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services	145	176	31	21%
Clubs (Hospitality)	26	37	11	42%
Accommodation	30	35	5	17%
Pubs, Taverns and Bars	24	28	4	17%
Food and Beverage Services, nfd	3	11	8	267%
Accommodation and Food Services, nfd	0	4	4	0%

### Business Counts - Central Goldfields Shire - 2011 to 2016

Source: Business Counts (by employment range), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016, 2018

\* Note that employment figures differ from those presented Table 16, as not all sub-sectors have been included



<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia, Local Government Area Profiles 2018, data averaged for 2015-2018.



## PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES PROFILE

### Products & Experiences Snapshot

The Shire has a range of existing significant assets, however to date product development, activation and interpretation of these assets has been limited.

Identifying core products and narratives across arts and culture, history and heritage and food and wine that should be enhanced and promoted as part of the Goldfields Way Touring Concept is a key opportunity for Central Goldfields Shire.

Existing assets within the region which showcase the region’s Gold Rush legacy are currently underutilised and have the capacity, if leveraged effectively, to both build awareness and attract visitors to the region.

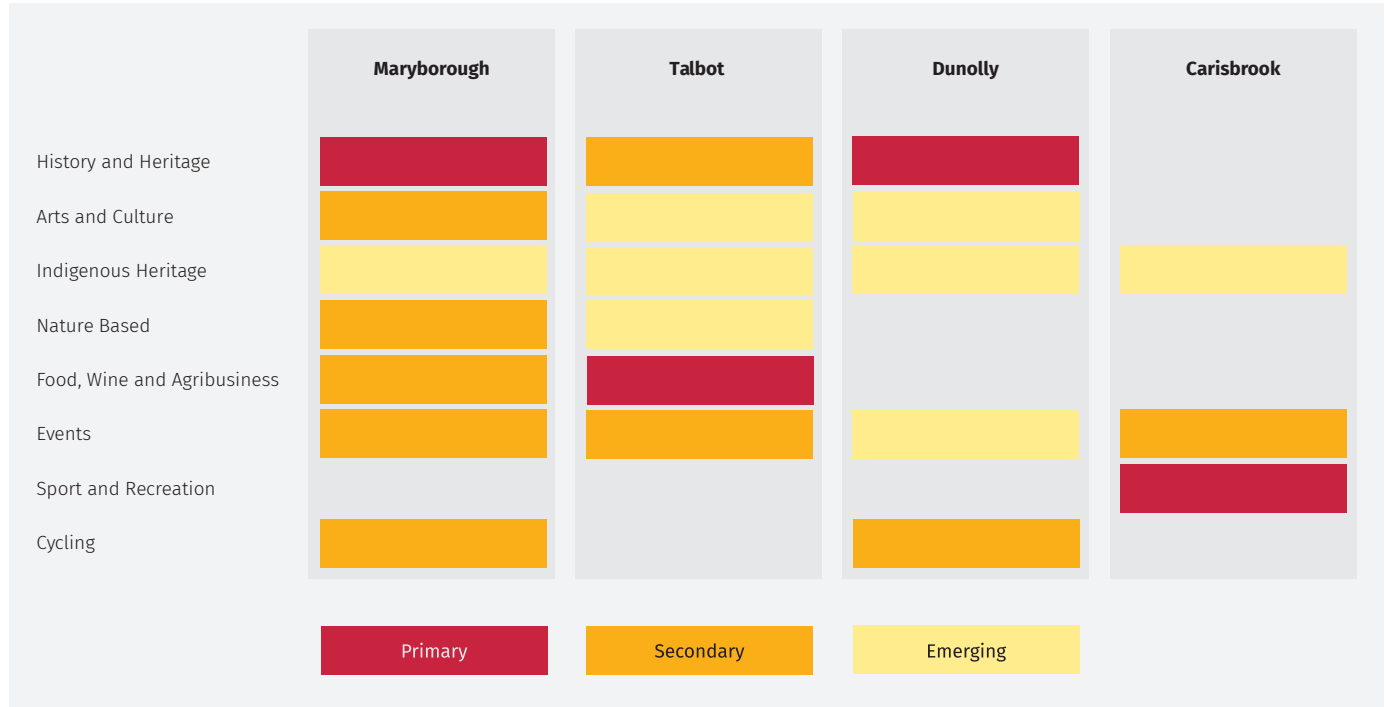
Signature food and wine experiences are starting to develop in the Shire, with Talbot township a leader in this space with both the Talbot Provedore and Eatery, and the Talbot Farmers Market.

Central Goldfields also has a burgeoning artists and makers community and a range of existing arts and cultural assets which could be better promoted and activated.

There is opportunity to utilise this to both increase liveability and social inclusion outcomes for the local community, and attract visitors to the region (particularly lifestyle leaders).

In particular utilising the arts to contemporise and leverage existing signature assets (such as gold) through installations, interpretation, activation and events is a key opportunity.

The Shire also has a range of natural assets including state and regional parks, and waterways, which are currently underutilised and could be developed or enhanced to support increased community and visitor use.



Township Product Strengths Comparison

## History and Heritage

The wider Goldfields Region is known for its iconic history and heritage, and Central Goldfields Shire has a diverse range of existing heritage products and visitor experiences, with varying levels of development and interpretation.

Key historic assets and experiences in the Shire include Maryborough Railway Station, Dunolly Historic Precinct, Bristol Hill Tower, Moliagul Historic Reserve, Grand Duke Mine in Timor, Worsley Cottage in Maryborough, McLandress Square, Talbot historic streetscape and the Ballarat to Maryborough Heritage Trail.

## Gold Rush

The extensive Gold Rush history is a key feature and strength of the Goldfields Region, with Central Goldfields in particular home to unique Goldrush narratives such as the Welcome Stranger Gold Nugget (as well as a host of other more recent significant finds, particularly within Dunolly). The Gold Rush era heritage streetscapes and architecture across the Shire's townships are both a distinguishing feature and underutilised tourism backdrop.

The goldfields history is extensive across the wider region and Central Goldfields Shire, however there are limitations to the experience and interpretation of the assets.

The Goldfields Villages DMP identified the need for a thorough audit of all heritage sites across the Goldfields region and the creation of stories and interpretation that brings depth to the goldfields heritage experience. This presents a unique opportunity for Central Goldfields to build on and leverage from their existing assets and unique stories within this wider Gold Rush narrative to create a point of difference for their Gold history.

## Indigenous

Indigenous tourism is relatively unexplored in the Goldfields region, with a significant number of assets recorded across the region, but these assets, and the Indigenous history either not well known or not promoted. The Indigenous story presents a key opportunity to explore and develop a different narrative for the region (pre gold rush), which could be heroed by Central Goldfields Shire. The Goldfields Villages DMP identified the potential to expand upon existing known assets through identification, interpretation and subsequent or improved promotion, particularly within the Maryborough region where existing assets include Aboriginal Wells; Bull Gully Rock Wells and The Aboriginal Shelter Tree.

In particular development of arts and culture experiences which celebrate and promote indigenous culture (such as the current Ngardang Girri Kalat Mimini exhibition at Central Goldfields Art Gallery) is a key opportunity.

## Nature-Based

Central Goldfields Shire has significant State and regional parks, including the Maryborough-Dunolly Box-Ironbark Region, however product and experience development to date has been limited. Existing parks include Paddy's Ranges State Park and Maryborough Regional Park, as well as Havelock Nature Conservation Reserve, Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve, Bristol Hill Reserve, and Timor Conservation Reserve; which support a range of active and passive recreational uses. Waterways are also a key feature of the region, including Tullaroop Reservoir, Cairn Curran Reservoir and Goldfields Reservoir.

A number of golf facilities are also located across the Shire, including golf clubs/courses in Dunolly, Maryborough, Talbot, as well as the popular Maryborough Harness Racing Club in Carisbrook.

## Cycling and Walking

The Goldfields Region is an emerging cycling region, with existing cycling assets across the Central Goldfields including the Ballarat Maryborough Heritage Trail taking in townships of Creswick, Clunes and Talbot; Cycle Central Goldfields; and Dunolly Cycle Tracks.

There are also a range of established walking-only trails within the Shire including Maryborough Town Walk; and Goldfields Reservoir Walk in Paddys Ranges State Park.



## Arts and Culture

Ballarat and Bendigo are both developing a growing market recognition for arts and culture, attracting strong arts-based communities and a range of art and culture products and experiences. Arts and culture across the Goldfields is still emerging, and presents significant opportunities for Central Goldfields Shire, including leveraging from Ballarat and Bendigo's existing assets and experiences.

Existing assets and experiences within the Shire include the Alvah Art Gallery (Dunolly), Dunolly Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Dunolly Historic Precinct, the Corridor Gallery (Talbot), Railway Station Gallery (Talbot), Central Goldfields Art Gallery (Maryborough), Ministry of Fun (Dunolly), Talbot Arts and Historical Museum, Puzzleflat Gallery (Dunolly), and Possum Gully Fine Arts Gallery (Adelaide Lead).

## Food, Wine and Agritourism

Food, wine and agritourism is a key strength across the wider Goldfields Region, with both Ballarat and Bendigo foodie hotspots well regarded for their emerging food and wine culture. Further product and experience development, and use and promotion of local produce to tie into this regional strength presents a significant opportunity to improve the offer of all Goldfields villages across the region.

Within the Central Goldfields, Talbot in particular is developing an emerging strength in this space with both the Talbot Provedore and Eatery and the very popular Talbot Farmers Market. Other existing food and agritourism

products and experiences across the Shire include Bull & Mouth Hotel, Lillicur Vineyard, Daily Dose Cafe, Amherst Winery, Madam Chi Chi Café, Storm Café, Railway Café and Tracks Bar and Court House Hotel.

## Wine Regions

There are several wine regions partly located in the Goldfields Region, including Bendigo Wine Region, Heathcote Wine Region, and Pyrenees Wine Region, part of which is located in Central Goldfields Shire. Bendigo, Heathcote, and Pyrenees wine regions (along with the Grampians wine region) have recently been designated as the fifth pillar "Central Region" of Wine Victoria's Five Pillars Tourism Project. This represents significant opportunity for the wider Goldfields Region to grow its food and wine offer through increased promotion and marketing, and strategic contemporary product and experience development. The Pyrenees Wine region includes approximately 26 wineries, with 22 including a cellar door, and one of which, Amherst Vineyard, located in close proximity to Talbot.

## Accommodation

A total of 24 accommodation establishments were identified within the Central Goldfields, with 50% of establishments (12) and 64% of room stock (112 rooms) located in the main township of Maryborough. There were four properties located in Dunolly, three in Talbot, and two in Carisbrook. Almost half (42%) of all establishments (10) were a cottage, self contained, and/or farm stay, and 38% were a hotel, motel or motor inn. Quality of establishments varied with a number

of establishments dated and unlikely to attract contemporary visitors/target markets (such as Lifestyle Leaders).

Room occupancy rates for Hotels, motels and serviced apartments in 2016<sup>3</sup> (June Quarter) varied across the Goldfields Region, from 49.6% in Ballarat Tourism Region to 63.5% in Bendigo Loddon Tourism Region, as compared to 68.5% for Victoria as a whole.

AirDNA estimates that Central Goldfields has a total of 31 entire house rentals available on Airbnb/HomeAway and 2 private rooms, with an average daily rate of \$150 and a 33% occupancy rate. A total of 934 Airbnb/HomeAway entire home rentals were recorded within the LGAs that comprise the wider Goldfields Region<sup>4</sup> with approximately 33% of these located within Bendigo (312 entire house rentals) and 32% within Ballarat (including Creswick township) (300). In total, 1159 active properties were recorded across the Goldfields Region.

## Touring

There are a number of existing formal touring routes that currently traverse, or are in close proximity to, Central Goldfields Shire, including the Fossickers Way, and Goldfields History Drive. These touring routes are shown in the figure on the right.

The creation of a contemporary touring experience based on a series of three interpretation themes was identified within the Goldfields Villages DMP, and an associated Goldfields Villages Touring Product Development & Marketing Plan has been developed.

<sup>3</sup> 2015-2016 is the last release of the ABS Tourist Accommodation dataset. Results are not available for Central Goldfields Shire individually.

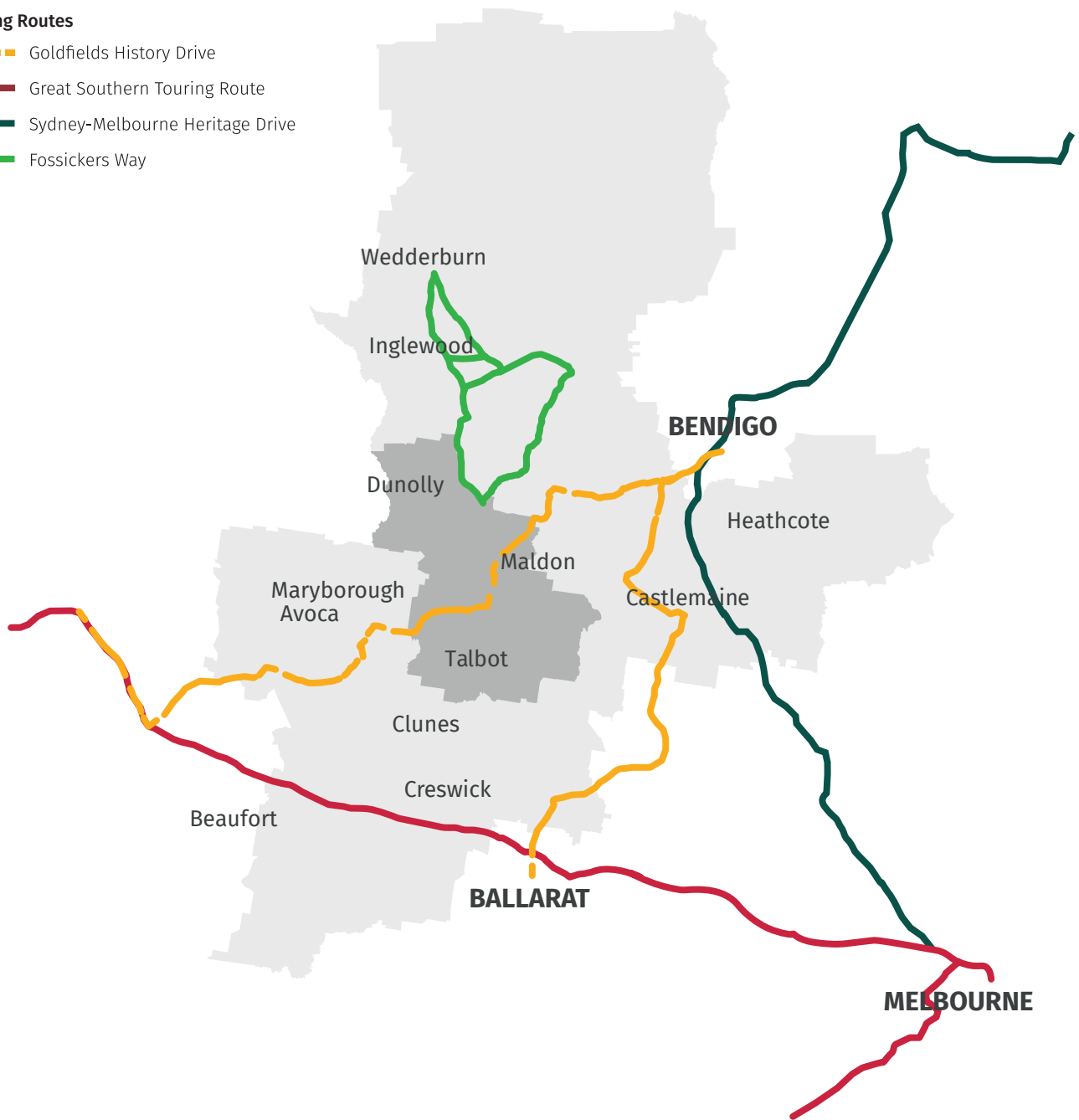
<sup>4</sup> This includes the LGA's of Central Goldfields; Ballarat (including the Creswick township); Bendigo; Loddon; Mount Alexander; Pyrenees; and the Clunes township.

**LEGEND**

- Goldfields Villages Region
- Central Goldfields LGA

**Touring Routes**

- Goldfields History Drive
- Great Southern Touring Route
- Sydney-Melbourne Heritage Drive
- Fossickers Way



Goldfields Villages Touring Landscape





## EVENTS PROFILE

### Events Snapshot

Events are a growing strength for both Ballarat and Bendigo and utilised to address seasonality issues and promote the respective strengths of each township.

Coordination of event calendars in the two regional cities presents a key opportunity for growing visitation across the villages, including within Central Goldfields.

Currently there are 31 events held annually across the Shire, including 11 key events held across the year. This

includes a number of unique signature events which draw significant visitation to the region regularly, in particular the Energy Breakthrough event and Talbot Farmers Market, however expansion and development potential of these events is limited due to resourcing capacity limitations.

Development of aligned events and product/activity across multiple days/townships will enable increased yield and length of stay from these signature events



	Type	Township	Month	Estimated Attendance
Energy Breakthrough	Educational	Maryborough	November	25,000
Maryborough Highland Gathering	History & Heritage	Maryborough	January	4,000
Talbot Farmers Market	Market	Talbot	Monthly	3,500
Talbot Town Hall Market	Market	Talbot	Monthly	3,500
Redwood Carnival	Sport & Recreation	Carisbrook	August	2,000
Maryborough Antique Bottle & Collectables Fair	History & Heritage	Carisbrook	August	1,500
Maryborough Gold Cup	Sport & Recreation	Carisbrook	March	1,500
Maryborough Lions Tourist Market	Market	Maryborough	Monthly	1,500
Tiny Towns Arts Trail	Arts & Culture	Shire wide	April	1,500
Words in Winter Festival	Arts & Culture	Shire wide	August	1,000
Chopped	Sport & Recreation	Carisbrook	October	3,000

### Key Events Summary

Source: Central Goldfields Shire, 2019

Currently arts & culture events (e.g. Dunolly Queens Birthday Festival (incorporating the Gilbert & Sullivan Festival)), markets (e.g. Talbots Farmers Market), and sport & recreation events (e.g. Chopped, and Maryborough Gun Club Grand Prix) are the main type of events held in Central Goldfields Shire.

Maryborough has the largest number of events with the shire (13), followed by Carisbrook (5) and Talbot (4 events). The main event types for Maryborough were sport & recreation, arts & culture and lifestyle and community events.

The number of events and event attendance, whilst limited, is fairly consistent over the year due to local monthly markets which draw significant attendance (such as the Talbot Farmers Market and Talbot Town Hall Market). The Energy Breakthrough event, which is the key event for the Shire creates a distinct peak in event visitation in November, drawing an estimated 25,000 visitors to the Shire. Talbot Farmers Market (and the Talbot Town Hall Market held at the same location/time) also draws significant attendance, attracting an estimated 3,500 attendees monthly, equal to 42,000 attendees annually.

Overall, there is significant potential to expand the events calendar, particularly across the winter months, as well as the months of February, September and December.

The majority of events held within Central Goldfields were single day events (15 events). Of events, 14 were held on a weekend.

There were a total of 17 facilities that hosted events across the shire, with 6 of these in Maryborough, 5 in Dunolly,

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Energy Breakthrough event currently receives 25,000 visitors annually, and attracts participants from interstate and occasionally internationally</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Talbot Farmers Market attracts significant visitation year round and transforms the township during the event</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Limited number of events Predominantly small-scale events not generating much yield or attracting many visitors Lack of complementary tourism product to support events</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Develop signature arts and culture event(s), and food and/or beverage event(s)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Development complementary/ancillary events for signature events such as the Energy Breakthrough and Talbot Farmers Market - as expansion of the existing events is currently limited</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Develop complementary tourism product (e.g. dining, accommodation) to support events</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nature-based tourism events</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lack of activities for event visitors within the shire</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Small-scale of most tourism events poses a threat to long-term sustainability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Niche nature of many events may attract repeat visitors only and no new visitors (reducing the WOM marketing and awareness building capacity)</p>

**SWOT Analysis**

3 in Talbot and 3 in Carisbrook. Major venues included the Maryborough Harness Racing Club in Carisbrook, and Princes Park Complex in Maryborough.

In addition to Council, a further 12 current event organisers were identified within the Shire. These were Carisbrook Historical Society; Central Goldfields Historical Machinery Society Inc; Dunolly Community Market Inc. Energy Breakthrough;

Maryborough & District Gun Club INC; Maryborough District Historical Vehicle Club (MDHVC); Maryborough Golf Club; Maryborough Harness Racing Club; Maryborough Highland Society; Maryborough Theatre Company; Talbot Farmers Market Committee; and Dunolly & District Inc.





## VISITOR SERVICING & MARKETING

### Existing Marketing and Network Snapshot

Urban Enterprise conducted a review of visitor services and marketing activities undertaken by Council across Central Goldfields Shire including:

- The current Visitor Information Centre network in Central Goldfields;
- Identification of Central Goldfields' digital presence, including websites and social media platforms;
- Identification of marketing activities undertaken by Central Goldfields; and
- An overview of the governance structure and resources currently dedicated to tourism, arts and culture and visitor services.

There is currently one accredited (under the previous guidelines) VIC located within Central Goldfields Shire, the Central Goldfields Visitor Information Centre. Housed within the Maryborough Resource Centre the building is relatively new and well set out, providing limited but quality local merchandise<sup>4</sup>, as well as a pop-up VIC at major local events.

Staffing related to VIC services in Central Goldfields currently includes a Visitor Services Team Leader (0.6 EFT); Tourist Officers x 2 (0.4 EFT); and a Tourist Officer (Casual). The visitor services review (2017) also identified there were 10 volunteers who assisted with the VIC contributing approximately 2,000 volunteer hours.

There are a number of existing visitor information centres and other visitor information service providers located across the wider Goldfields Region, including larger scale VICs located within the city centres of both Ballarat and Bendigo, and accredited VIC's within the villages including at Heathcote, Castlemaine, Wedderburn, Maldon and Clunes.

Walk-in visitation to the Central Goldfields VIC has declined steadily since 2009/10, with the VIC only attracting just under 13,000 walk in visitors in 2017/18. This represents only 4.3% of total visitors to the Shire, or 2.8% including the estimated proportion of local residents who visited the VIC. Phone and email enquiries have also shown decline over the period.

The current expenditure and resources dedicated to operating the VIC is below that of VICs of a similar size across Victoria, however is considerably higher than other VIC's across the Goldfields Region<sup>5</sup>, estimated at a cost of \$8.19 per walk in visitor.

Strategic policy highlights the need to intercept visitors on multiple points in their journey, with a need to go digital and provide face to face engagement that is mobile in nature.

Central Goldfields is currently working in Partnership with the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board to promote Maryborough and surrounds as well as other locations within the Bendigo region.

There is a need for further investment in marketing by Central Goldfields Shire aligned to townships and connections with surrounding regions in order to grow brand recognition and drive visitation.

There are a number of websites promoting the Central Goldfields region to visitors including Council's website and websites developed in partnership with the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board.

There were three websites identified that are either run by or run in partnership with, the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board: the Bendigo Tourism website, Maryborough and Surrounds (launched in early August 2019); and the Heathcote tourism website. With the launch of the new Maryborough and Surrounds website visitors to the Bendigo Tourism website who are currently redirected to the Visit Maryborough website will be redirected to the Maryborough and Surrounds website

<sup>4</sup> Goldfields Visitor services review (2017), Bill Fox & Associates

<sup>5</sup> Accuracy of VIC visitation estimates across the region vary due to data collection methods which may influence comparative estimates

A photograph of two young boys looking at a museum display. The boy in the foreground is wearing a red shirt and is leaning forward, looking intently at the display. The boy behind him is wearing a blue jacket and is also looking at the display. The display is a glass case containing various items, including a teapot and other objects. The background is slightly blurred, showing other museum exhibits.

## Strategic Framework

This section provides the proposed strategic framework for the Tourism & Events Strategy and discusses the key considerations to be addressed in the Strategy.

Strategic considerations presented in this section are informed by the research and analysis provided in the Background & Discussion Paper, as well as extensive consultation that was undertaken with the community, businesses, Council and government stakeholders.

Findings and directions identified within the Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan and Goldfields Villages Touring Product Development & Marketing Plan for the wider Goldfields Villages region have also been taken into consideration.



## Themes

Based on research, analysis and consultation, seven key themes have emerged and are proposed to form the framework for the forthcoming Tourism & Events Strategy.

<b>1</b>	<b>Shift the Narrative around the Shire's Identity and Perception</b>	Shifting the existing narrative both inside and outside the Shire will be integral to improving the current tourism offer, with a holistic approach that goes beyond external marketing required.
<b>2</b>	<b>Improve Visitor Experience, Product and Activation</b>	As with the wider Goldfields Villages region, there is a distinct lack of quality visitor experiences and products through the Shire, which impacts on the potential to encourage visitors to stay and explore.
<b>3</b>	<b>Enhance and Reinterpret the Gold Story</b>	The existing history and heritage of the region is currently both an identity strength and weakness, with existing heritage assets providing the perfect backdrop from which to build and leverage tourism visitation, but existing community sentiment a barrier to the development of aligned and ancillary experiences that would attract key regional target markets.
<b>4</b>	<b>Support and Leverage the Emerging Arts &amp; Culture Sector</b>	Development of the arts and culture sector within the Shire presents a range of opportunities to enhance both the Shire's visitor offer, and community liveability outcomes.
<b>5</b>	<b>Revitalise Assets, Infrastructure and Accommodation</b>	Assets and infrastructure are currently an issue across the Central Goldfields, both in supporting the visitor experience, and in meeting community requirements
<b>6</b>	<b>Develop and Enhance Events and Festivals</b>	There is a need for more active promotion of existing events, and the development of new events which encourage community participation and draw visitors to the Shire. Attracting and enhancing the right events should be a key consideration across the Shire, focused on events which align to the Shire's existing strengths with appeal to key target markets.
<b>7</b>	<b>Provide a Contemporary Approach to Marketing and Visitor Services</b>	Building awareness of the region in a contemporary way that showcases existing assets and signature experiences will be key to shifting the existing negative perception of the Shire.





## THEME 1

### Shift the Narrative Around the Shire's Identity and Perception

Shifting the existing narrative both inside and outside the Shire will be integral to improving the current tourism offer, with a holistic approach that goes beyond external marketing required.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Challenging existing community sentiment
- Historic negative perception

#### *Challenging the Existing Community Sentiment*

From an internal perspective, the current attitude of a section of the community to place is a major barrier for the Shire, both in terms of increasing liveability outcomes for existing residents and in effectively drawing visitors to the Shire.

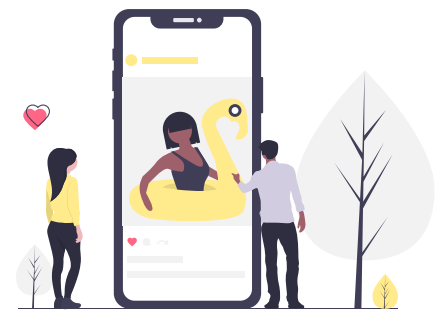
There is a need to rebuild community confidence through identifying and actioning clear, tangible outcomes that show demonstrated progress and help build a sense of pride of place within the Shire.

#### *Historic Negative Perception*

Externally, the Shire has historically suffered from overrepresentation in negative media narratives, and active positive promotion is required to build awareness and recognition of what the Shire does have to offer.



#### Transformative Project: Social Media Strategy



A social media strategy could be led by Central Goldfields Shire, targeting both locals and Melbournians which promotes the unique positive attributes, local heroes and stories of the Central Goldfields. This should include paid social media advertising and will support VFR visitation and build awareness of the positive attributes of Central Goldfields in the key visitor market.

#### Opportunities:

- Provide a clear staged implementation plan for identified tourism and event strategy actions with community feed-back mechanisms available as actions are implemented.
- Garner community support and involvement in actioning tourism and event 'quick wins'.
- Actively identify and promote 'good news stories' for the Shire.



THEME 2

Improve Visitor Experience, Product and Activation

As with the wider Goldfields Villages region, there is a distinct lack of quality visitor experiences and products through the Shire, which impacts on the potential to encourage visitors to stay and explore.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Contemporary interpretation
- Supporting product and experience
- Activation of existing underutilised assets
- Leveraging from existing nature assets



*Contemporary Interpretation*

The Shire’s tourism offer currently consists primarily of a range of heritage assets which are mostly dated and static in format, including architecture, streetscapes and gold mining history.

There is a need to maximise existing heritage assets, in particular identifying opportunities for contemporary interpretation and cultural heritage experience development.

*Supporting Product and Experience*

Food and wine experiences, as well as high quality accommodation remain limited across the Shire, with a few recent notable exceptions (Talbot Provedore Eatery, Talbot Farmers Market and Bull & Mouth Hotel), there is a need to create more contemporary, motivating experiences that will drive visitation to the Shire.

*Activation of Underutilised Assets*

Consideration of initiatives that will create activation and provide the visitor with a meaningful and interesting experience is required, whether it be food and beverage experiences, goldrush stories, cycling, walking or exploration of art and makers.

Existing significant assets within the region which showcase the region’s legacy (such as Maryborough Railway Station) are currently underutilised and have the capacity, if leveraged effectively, to both build awareness of the Shire and attract visitors to the region.

*Leveraging from Existing Nature Assets*

Although the wider Goldfields Region is not currently recognised as a premier nature based destination, opportunity exists within Central Goldfields Shire to build on and activate existing natural assets for both visitor and community use.

Nature based assets in the Shire are currently underutilised and under recognised, requiring enhancement and/or development of supporting infrastructure to enable increased community and visitor use.

There is opportunity to provide better physical and conceptual linkages between nature based assets and the heritage strengths of the region through contemporary interpretation (including indigenous heritage).

### Transformative Project: Maryborough Railway Station Tourism Concept and Masterplan



Undertake a tourism concept masterplan for Maryborough Railway Station, which will guide innovative contemporary tourism uses for the Station and surrounding precinct. This will include visitor accommodation, arts and culture, visitor services, events spaces and activation.

### Transformative Project: Maryborough to Newstead Rail Track Rider

Assess the feasibility of creating a pedal-powered 'Railtrack Rider' course from Maryborough to Newstead that allows visitors to travel through and enjoy a unique experience of the Central Goldfields Shire.

#### Other Opportunities:

- Develop an investment prospectus for the Shire for potential private investors targeted towards the development of high quality/ experiential accommodation (in areas such as Talbot) and food and beverage developments.
- In conjunction with the other Goldfields Villages, conduct an audit of existing history and heritage sites to inform development of the Goldfields Heritage and Cultural Sites Audit

project and subsequent Goldfields Villages Heritage Museums Improvement Plan (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP).

- Development of on-road cycling experiences/trails in Maryborough.
- Identification of villages loops (cycling) and walks to be included in region wide networks (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP).
- Investigate the establishment of mountain biking and walking trails in the parks and forests surrounding Maryborough, in particular Maryborough Regional Park.



**Rail Cart Tours, Forgotten World Adventures, New Zealand**

Source: Andy Jackson, Fairfax NZ





THEME 3

Enhance and Reinterpret the Gold Story

The goldfields history is extensive across the wider region and Central Goldfields Shire, however there are limitations to the experience and interpretation of the assets.

The existing history and heritage of the region is currently both an identity strength and weakness, with existing heritage assets in the Shire providing the perfect backdrop from which to build and leverage tourism visitation, but existing community sentiment around what heritage ‘should’ be, and a singular focus on the traditional ‘gold history’, a barrier to the development of aligned and ancillary experiences that would attract key regional target markets.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Supporting and leveraging from the World Heritage Listing Bid
- Gold assets are not enough in isolation
- New products and experiences should connect to stories of gold



*Supporting and Leveraging from the World Heritage Listing Bid*

Central Goldfields Shire sits at the centre of the Central Victorian Goldfields region and therefore has an important role to play in advancing the World Heritage Listing Bid, as well as significant opportunity to leverage from the WHL appointment, particularly through the identification of assets and experiences that showcase the goldrush story and are unique to the Shire.

*Gold Assets are not enough in Isolation*

The physical and narrative legacy of gold in the region is an important asset, but one that is not unique to Central Goldfields Shire, and therefore innovative and contemporary interpretation to increase its appeal to new audiences and identified regional target markets is required to better showcase existing assets, and draw new visitors to the region.

*New Products and Experiences Should Connect to Stories of Gold*

The Goldfields Villages DMP identified the need for a thorough audit of all heritage sites across the Goldfields region and the creation of stories and interpretation that brings depth to the goldfields heritage experience, This presents a unique opportunity for Central Goldfields to build on and leverage from their existing assets and unique stories within this wider Gold Rush narrative to create a point of difference for their Gold history.

This should include exploration of potential opportunities to connect arts and makers experiences and assets to stories of gold to better appeal to key Lifestyle Leader target markets.

**Transformative Project:  
WHL Bid Enhancement**

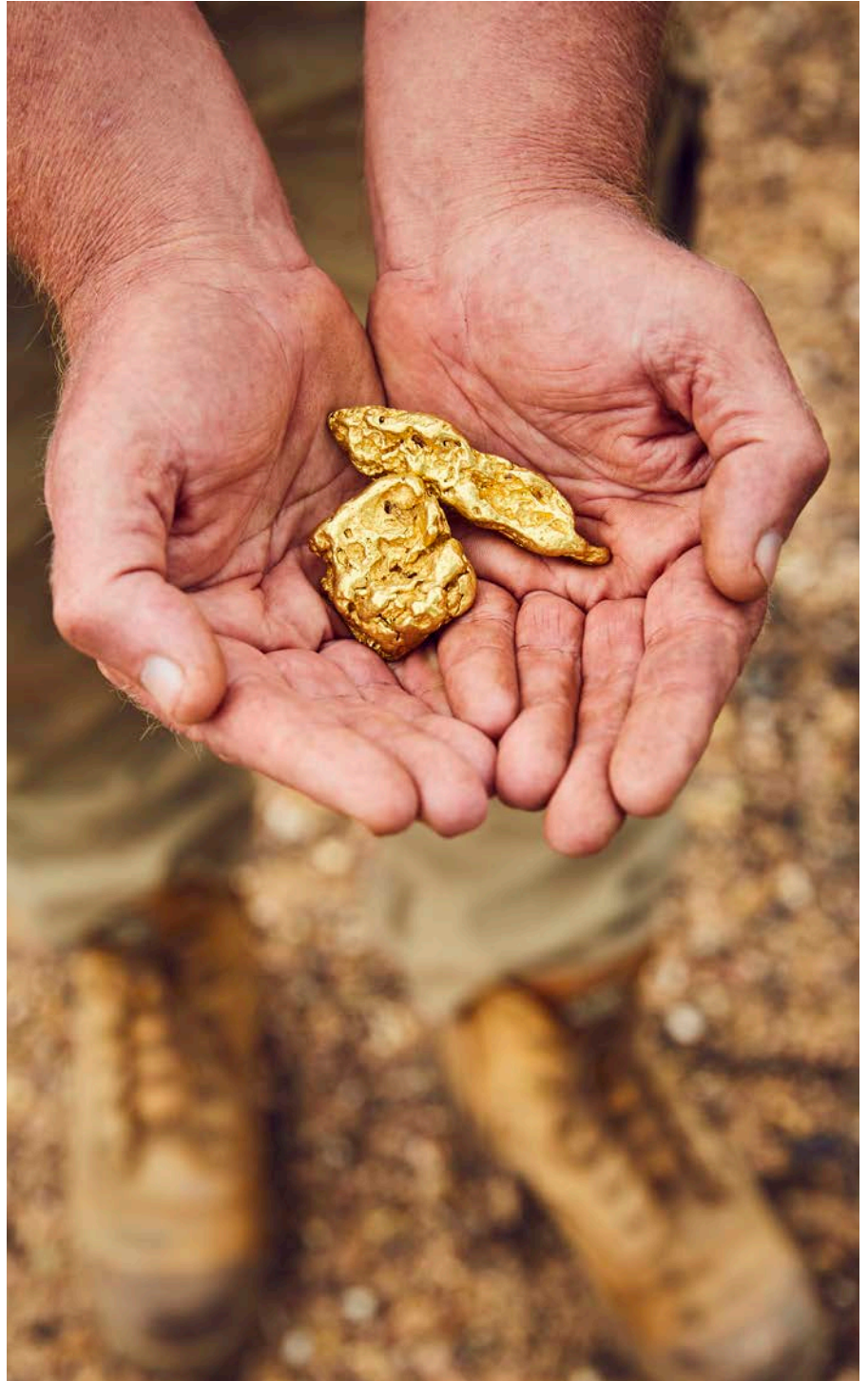


In conjunction with the other Goldfields Villages, conduct an audit of existing history and heritage sites to inform development of the Goldfields Heritage and Cultural Sites Audit project and subsequent Goldfields Villages Heritage Museums Improvement Plan (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP).

Within this audit, Central Goldfields should focus on identifying the Shire’s signature gold assets and narratives which contemporary interpretation can then be focused on, to create a point of difference within the WHL area. This should include exploration of VR/AR experiences which provide appeal to contemporary audiences. A key narrative which should be explored is the legacy of large gold nuggets discovered in the Dunolly area.

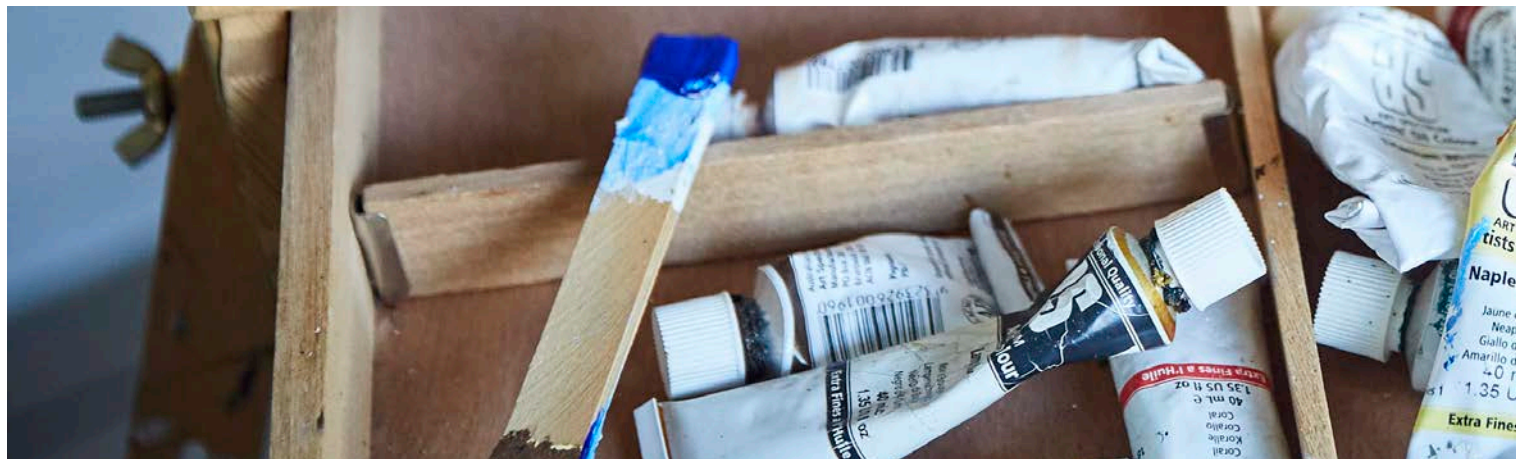
**Other Opportunities:**

- Develop a festival that provides contemporary interpretation of the Gold history of the region, in conjunction with the other Goldfields Villages (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP).



THEME 4

Support and Leverage the Emerging Arts & Culture Sector



Development of the arts and culture sector within the Shire presents a range of opportunities to enhance the both the Shire’s visitor offer, and community liveability outcomes.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Increasing liveability
- Bringing history and heritage alive
- Activating spaces and the public realm

*Increasing Liveability*

Supporting the emerging role of arts and culture in the Shire presents an opportunity to positively influence and shape the narrative and identity of the region, in order to improve liveability and social inclusion outcomes for current residents, as well as attract new residents and visitors to the Shire.

Arts and cultural initiatives provide increased opportunities for participation and social connection enhancing the liveability and social cohesiveness of the Shire, in particular increasing youth engagement.

Improving and activating existing arts and culture assets across the Shire presents significant opportunity to improve liveability for local residents and create products and experiences which align well with key target markets such as Creative Opinion Leaders.

*Bringing History and Heritage Alive*

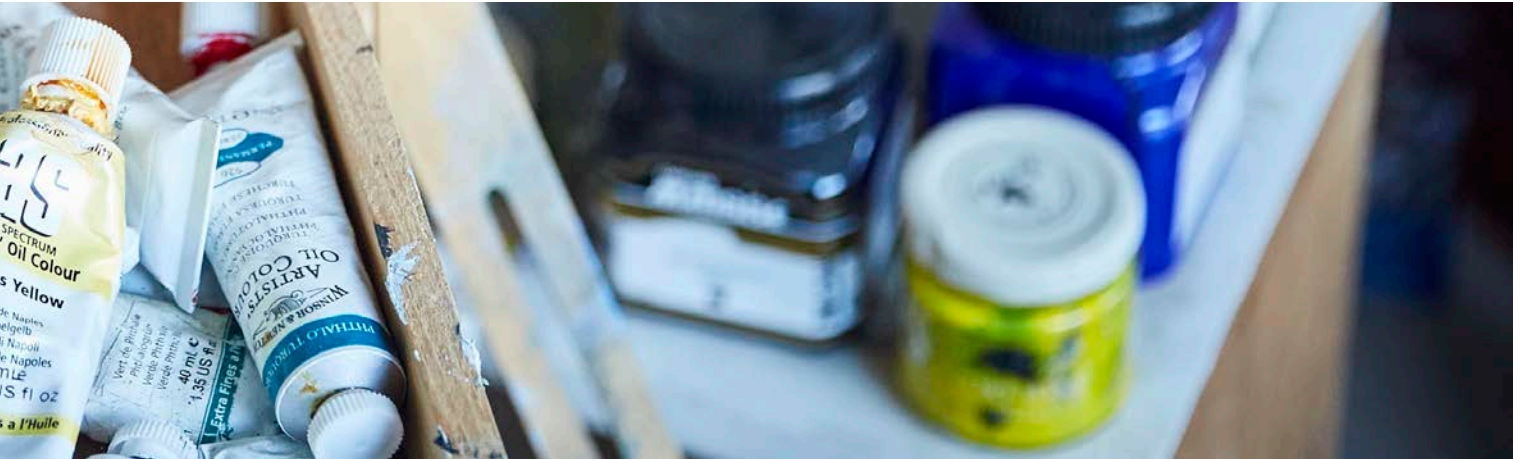
The development of arts and culture experiences which explore the history and cultural heritage of the Shire through creative interpretation provide the opportunity to increase recognition and awareness of the Shire in a positive light.

*Activating Spaces and the Public Realm*

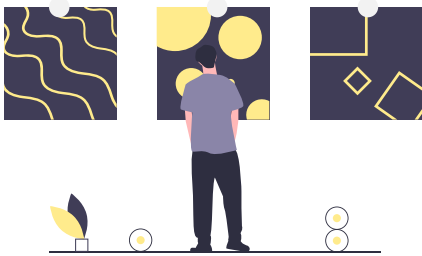
Improving the public realm and amenity of key townships through artistic interventions will improve both the visitor experience; and create increased community pride of place.

Increasing promotion and activation of the Shire through events and exhibitions aligned to the arts is also a key opportunity for the Shire.





### Transformative Project: Arts & Culture Strategy



Undertake an arts and culture study for the Shire in conjunction with the local arts and culture community to identify:

- Arts initiatives and programs to engage the local community; and
- Existing key assets and required infrastructure upgrades and interpretation possibilities to increase activation and visitor/ community uses.

### Transformative Project: Central Goldfields Art Gallery Redevelopment Feasibility Study



Conduct a redevelopment feasibility study for the Central Goldfields Art Gallery to enhance and activate the space including addressing street activation issues (e.g. existing fire doors).

### Other Opportunities:

- Development of a cultural arts precinct which links the key heritage sites in Maryborough including the Town Hall, Art Gallery, and Train Station.
- Activation of the recently refurbished Dunolly Courthouse with a focus on the arts.
- Establish a permanent indigenous exhibition at the Central Goldfields Art Gallery in conjunction with the Ngardang Girri Kalat Mimini network.
- In conjunction with the local arts community identify areas for artistic interventions within each of the key townships, these should be linked to key narratives for each township.
- Development of an indigenous sculpture trail through the Shire in collaboration with local indigenous artists.

THEME 5

**Revitalise Assets, Infrastructure and Accommodation**

Assets and infrastructure are currently an issue across the Central Goldfields, both in supporting the visitor experience, and in meeting community requirements.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Meeting contemporary visitor expectations
- Increasing accessibility and connectivity

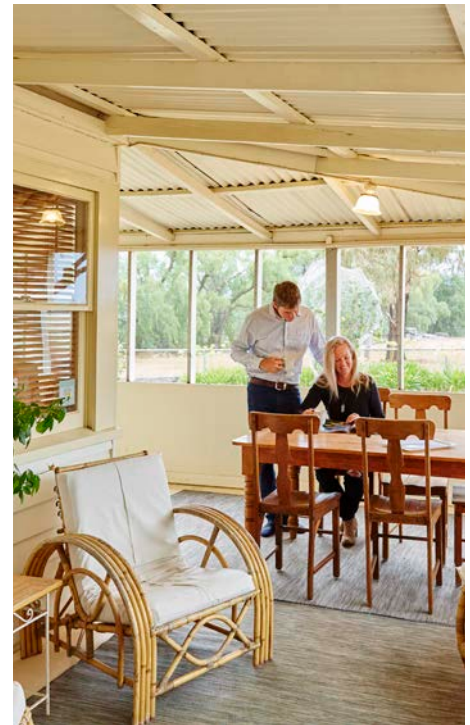
*Meeting Contemporary Visitor Expectations*

Existing assets, infrastructure and accommodation in the region are not in line with current visitor expectations, particularly for the identified target markets at a regional level (e.g. Lifestyle Leaders).

*Increasing Accessibility and Connectivity*

There are a range of infrastructure gaps across the Shire that effect the development of the Shires tourism offer as well as negatively impacting on residents and workforce development, particularly in relation to connectivity and accessibility.

Identified issues include digital connectivity (wifi blackspots) and transport connectivity, such as train service frequency and timing, as well as smaller scale transport options between townships, as well as digital connectivity issues which effect the capacity of businesses to effectively service the visitor economy.



**Transformative Project: Refresh Central Goldfields Visitor Accommodation**



This project looks at two things: The development of a refresh accommodation project similar to that being undertaken in Noosa, where by accommodation operators are provided with hard and soft refresh options that can be rolled out easily across accommodation facilities and secondly promoting the use of permanent dwellings for use as holiday rentals including advice as to improvements and marketing. This will improve the existing accommodation stock to meet current market expectations but also deliver new stock by local entrepreneurs.

**Other Opportunities:**

- Conduct an accommodation audit of existing accommodation throughout the shire and upgrades required to service current visitor demand.
- Optimise towns for capturing the RV market.
- Conduct a review of current public transport network timetable across the Shire with a view to optimising frequency and timing to increase visitor use.
- Lobby government to address key digital connectivity issues across the Shire (i.e. wifi blackspots).

THEME 6

Develop and Enhance Events and Festivals

There is a need for more active promotion of existing events, and the development of new events which encourage community participation and draw visitors to the Shire. Attracting and enhancing the right events should be a key consideration across the Shire, focused on events which align to the Shire’s existing strengths with appeal to key target markets.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Coordination of effort
- Effective event procurement
- Better Leverage from Existing Signature Events and Festivals

*Coordination of Effort*

Coordination of the existing Shire events calendar with the Goldfields Region is required in order to effectively leverage from existing and future events occurring with Ballarat and Bendigo in particular, as well as in surrounding townships.

*Effective Event Procurement*

Development of an events tiering and funding criteria which will give Council direction regarding events promotion, funding and support should be considered, aimed at building on identified strengths of the shire, and attracting the development of events which will effectively capture identified regional target markets (e.g. Lifestyle Leaders). This includes in particular arts and culture, food and wine and heritage themed events.

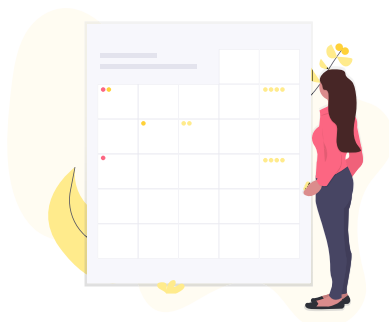
Working in conjunction with other identified Goldfields Villages to develop or attract regional level events which can disperse visitors through the region and effectively promote increased stays is required, beginning with those identified as Tier 1 priorities within the Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan.







### Transformative Project: Golden Winter Event Series



Create a Winter Event Series across the Shire which is based around the key themes of the Goldfields Villages Touring Concept (cultural journey, creative journey and culinary journey) and creates connections to gold and goldrush history. This could be run across three (non-consecutive) weekends with each based around one theme and developed in partnership with local key business to promote overnight stays and repeat visitation.

### Transformative Project: Events Tiering & Funding Criteria



Development of an event tiering and funding criteria to assess new and existing events against key objectives including:

- Strong attendance and visitation – Is the event of state significant in terms of size and capture of attendance and visitation?
- International, national or local/ regional event – What is the market focus of the event (International, national, local)?
- Key driver for overnight visitation – Does the event drive overnight visitation or does it simply service visitors already in the region?
- Drives visitation during the off peak – Does the event drive visitation to the Central Goldfields during the off peak?
- Event alignment – Does the event align with Central Goldfields market strengths?

This criteria will be used to assess both new and existing events to accurately allocate funding and resources to those events which will provide the best benefit for the Shire.

#### Opportunities:

- Development of a coordinated events calendar which leverages from the existing Goldfields Region events where possible.
- Development a signature arts & culture event (Goldfields Art Villages Project) in conjunction with the other Goldfields Villages (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP), this could have an indigenous art theme for Central Goldfields.
- Development of a signature food and wine event in conjunction with the other Goldfields Villages (as identified in the Goldfields Villages DMP), this could be a paddock to plate style long lunch developed in conjunction with Talbot Provedore and/or Talbot Farmers Market.
- Support an entrepreneurship festival in Central Goldfields.
- Create an event prospectus for event organisers that showcases benefits for hosting events in the Shire, including available incentives, desired event types and event facility details. This should be supported by a dedicated streamlined regulation and planning process for event applications.



### *Better Leverage from Existing Signature Events and Festivals*

There is opportunity to improve the community and economic benefit generated by signature events held across the Shire through identifying gaps and opportunities in the event visitor experience. For example although the Talbot Farmers Market attracts significant visitation from outside of Central Goldfields Shire, Talbot township (and surround Central Goldfields Shire townships) do not currently effectively capture visitors during their market visit, with many only visiting the market itself and utilising businesses in Clunes on their way back to Melbourne due to the lack of product options in Talbot township itself.

#### **Opportunities:**

- Explore opportunities to create aligned events for current signature events in the Shire, in particular the Energy Breakthrough and Talbot Farmers Market which are currently constrained from expanding their current event operations. This could include:
- Explore opportunities for Energy Breakthrough organisers to align with other events/event organisers (E.g.: hotrod industry) and/or renewable energy initiatives.
- Identify opportunities to enhance existing signature events and festivals including:
- Identifying infrastructure upgrades to improve the visitor experience at events such as the Talbot Farmers Market;
- Identify mechanisms to help local businesses leverage from the visitation generated from signature events such as the Talbot Farmers Market; and
- Conduct collaborative marketing activities showcasing signature events and aligned product and experiences across the Shire to promote dispersal and yield.
- Assisting the Talbot Farmers Market in the creation of aligned one off events or short events series such as a Winter in July Market, moonlight cinema (which could include local produce food offering from the Talbot Provedore), etc.
- Assisting Energy Breakthrough organisers to create aligned events in the other townships across the region through resourcing/financial assistance;

THEME 7

**Provide a Contemporary Approach to Marketing and Visitor Services**

Building awareness of the region in a contemporary way that showcases existing assets and signature experiences will be key to shifting the existing negative perception of the Shire.

**Issues and opportunities for this theme are categorised as follows:**

- Development and promotion of the Goldfields villages touring concept
- Creating an effective and sustainable visitor services offer



*Development and Promotion of the Goldfields Villages Touring Concept*

The Goldfields Villages Touring concept was developed to reflect the way contemporary visitors tour regions and destinations, with emphasis placed on providing a journey that encourages visitors to experience a narrative across the villages with a focus on culture and heritage, arts and creativity, and culinary products and experiences.

Central Goldfields Shire has a key role to play within the development and promotion of this concept, including the identification of key stories within the Shire which align to these journeys (and their potential interpretation), with Maryborough, Talbot and Dunolly identified as ‘hero’ or ‘emerging’ villages within each of the three sample itineraries, each home to various signature and emerging experiences identified within the Plan.

In particular, all three villages are identified as ‘emerging’ villages within the ‘Creative Journey’ itinerary, further highlighting the need for support and development within the arts and culture sector across the Shire.

Maryborough and Talbot were also identified as ‘hero’ villages within the Cultural Journey and Culinary Journey respectively, highlighting the strengths of these townships in each of these spaces, but also identifying the need for further enhancement and promotion in these spaces in order to create a motivating journey.

*Creating an Effective and Sustainable Visitor Services Offer*

There is a need to move away from the traditional VIC visitor services model to create a contemporary offer for the Shire. This should focus on the provision of timely and engaging digital content, and mobile visitor services that capture visitors at key times (such as major events) in order to maximise their experience (and spend) in the Shire, and ideally increase their length of stay in the region/lead to repeat visitation.

Existing attitudes effect the overall visitor readiness of the Shire, with training and development required to ensure industry operators are acting brand ambassadors for the Shire, and are aware of the role that tourism does (and can) play in the local economy, including the inherent value for their individual business.

Local industry will be visitor ready, playing an important role as brand ambassadors for the region through engaging effectively with visitors. Community will also have a role to play in this.

Working in conjunction with other identified Goldfields Villages to develop or attract regional level events which can disperse visitors through the region and effectively promote increased stays is required, beginning with those identified as Tier 1 priorities within the Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan.



### Transformative Project: VIC Relocation



Consider relocation of the current VIC services to the Maryborough train station in a smaller footprint satellite VIC capacity (to Bendigo VIC) to capture more visitors, this could also be collated within a larger community use space to promote activation such as a creative arts enterprise or a coworking space.

### Other Opportunities:

- Identify opportunities to enhance and promote the key experiences and stories of the region that align with the Goldfields Villages Touring Concept.
- Continue the recent focus on the provision of digital visitor information services including the rollout of the new Maryborough and surrounds digital resources through Bendigo Tourism.
- Provide support and training to increase the digital capacity of existing businesses to create a more cohesive online brand for the region through a mentoring program delivered through Council.
- Provide increased pop up visitor services at major events across the Shire; as well as utilising existing businesses to disperse visitor information.
- Providing industry education around what it means to be visitor ready, and how to maximise their role as brand ambassadors of the Central Goldfields and wider Goldfields Region.



## Appendices

### Appendix A Stakeholder Summary

Name	Industry	Company/Organisation	Consultation Date	Consultant	Format
Charles Williamson	Agricultural	lamb and wool	12/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Sandra Hamilton	Community Development	Go Goldfields	15/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Mark Delavedova	Property/Real Estate/Land Development	Land Developer/Real estate/business owner	16/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Darren Ross	Agricultural	agric, hay and straw baling	16/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Anna Ashton	Arts and Culture	Ministry of Fun/president of Dunolly and District Inc	16/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Kay Parkin and Helen Kaptein	Arts and Culture	Central Goldfields Art Gallery	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Deborah Halpern	Arts and Culture	International artists based in Dunolly	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Lisa Miller	Tourism and Accommodation	Maryborough Caravan Park	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Janet McDonald	Tourism and Accommodation	Junction Motel	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Jo Reid	Tourism and Accommodation	Bull & Mouth	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Peter McAlister	Food Manufacturing/Manufacturing	True Foods & C for M	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Windsor Main	Food Manufacturing/Manufacturing	Edlyn Foods	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Kerrie Dowling	Food Manufacturing/Manufacturing	Sonac Australia/Committee for Maryborough	17/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Terry Welsh	Health	Maryborough District Health Service	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Carli Springate	Education	Bendigo TAFE - Castlemaine	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Kate Ashton	Property/Real Estate/Land Development	Maryborough Ballarat Real Estate	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Anthony Nigro	Retail	McDonalds owner/ Business owner	18/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
David Sutton	Education	Maryborough Education Centre	19/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
John Stafford	Events	Energy Breakthrough	23/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Les Chapman	Events	Maryborough Harness Racing Club	23/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Felicity Martin	Events	Talbot Farmers Market	24/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Garry Higgins	Retail and Hospitality	Parkview Bakery/Committee for Maryborough	24/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Rod Stuart	Retail and Hospitality	Dunolly Bakery	24/07/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Maria Smith	Professional Services / Education & Training	Bounce Australia	09/08/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one
Georgia MacGuire	Arts and Culture	Indigenous Exhibition Organiser	14/08/2019	Urban Enterprise	one-on-one

Stakeholder group	Location	Attendees	Date	Consultant	Format
Community T	albot 1	5	4/06/2019 T	win Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Community M	aryborough	6	5/06/2019 T	win Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Community M	aryborough	20 1	2/06/2019 T	win Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Community D	unolly 1	1	11/06/2019 T	win Prism / Urban Enterprise	Workshop
Council Officers	Maryborough	15 1	3/06/2019 U	rban Enterprise W	orkshop
Council Officers (Tourism, Arts & Culture) M	aryborough	7	13/06/2019 U	rban Enterprise	Workshop



