



# Advocacy projects 2026 and beyond

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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge and extend appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are on.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



# INTRODUCTION

## We are proud to present the Central Goldfields Shire Advocacy Projects 2026 and beyond.

Located in the heart of Victoria, nestled between the two fast-growing regional cities of Bendigo and Ballarat, Central Goldfields Shire is at the centre of the magnificent landscape of the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid.

We might be the second-lowest ranked shire in Victoria for socio-economic advantage, but we are aspirational and determined and have identified the projects we need to deliver as drivers for change in our community.

We've identified a series of projects that will not only offer opportunities and support to our residents, but will benefit the people in our surrounding region who come here for employment, education, retail, health and recreation.

As a small, rural council, with limited capacity to raise revenue, for us to drive change and to reach our full potential, we are dependent on investment from both Victorian and Australian governments.

Federal and State government investment over recent years has delivered essential infrastructure upgrades across our Shire and we are grateful for these partnerships.

We look forward to continuing to work with our local Members of Parliament to secure more funding to deliver on our Advocacy Projects 2026 and beyond.

### **Central Goldfields Shire Mayor and Councillors**



# OUR PEOPLE AND PLACE

*A community not defined by its challenges, but by its aspirations and determination*

Central Goldfields Shire is located in the heart of Victoria, nestled between the two fast-growing regional cities of Bendigo and Ballarat. The Shire's rich history began with Traditional Owners and has been enriched by migration during Victoria's gold rush era.

All of the Shire's townships feature iconic heritage architecture and streetscapes – so much so that a UK World Heritage expert described the landscape of the Central Victorian Goldfields as the best-surviving example from the 19th century gold rush.

While we are the second-lowest ranked local government area in Victoria for socio-economic advantage, this drives us to lay the foundations for a stronger, more assured future. We see the potential in our community and we're committed to working together to nurture and grow this.

In 2031, our community envision a people and place that's not just surviving but thriving –

*"We are an inspiring, thriving and prosperous community of choice, we've taken bold steps towards growing our economy and our community is full of optimism and opportunities.*

*We are kind, connected and inclusive and we nurture creativity, leadership and innovation. We value and invest in our young people and our health and wellbeing is high.*

*We live sustainably, cherish and protect our environment and heritage and we have access to outstanding jobs, education, health, community services, infrastructure, and affordable housing."*

Central Goldfields Shire Community Vision 2031, October 2021, Page 8.





**40%** over 60 years



**20%** under 20 years



**52 years** median age



**49%** not in labour force



**2,651** total young people (under 20 years of age)



**22%** of families are single parent



**\$904** median weekly household income



**45%** households are welfare dependent



**Over 80%** Australian born (67% Australia) (65% Victoria)



**Over 15%** do not achieve higher than Year 9



**Over 25%** of families experience family violence



**4x** more likely than average Victorian to live in a caravan or improvised dwelling

# MAJOR PROJECTS



# MARYBOROUGH HERITAGE OLYMPIC POOL COMPLEX: SEEKING ESSENTIAL ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

\$5m

## Background

The Maryborough Municipal Olympic Pool, the Shire's only 50-metre outdoor pool, was closed in 2022 after an independent technical assessment deemed it to be at its "end of life" stage due to severe structural cracking and water leakage. The assessment recommended it be demolished and rebuilt. The nearest alternative facility is a 45-minute drive away in Castlemaine, highlighting the critical need for this pool for Central Goldfields Shire's residents.

Detailed designs for stage two and stage three of the project are currently underway and will be completed by 30 June 2026.

Using the funding already secured, it is anticipated that stage two will be delivered in 2026 and 2027.

The detailed designs will give us a clearer understanding of how much the project will cost in its entirety.

Given the size and complexity of the project, we anticipate that there is a shortfall in funding to deliver stage three of the project which includes the 50-metre outdoor pool.

We are advocating to the State Government for additional funding to complete stage three.



## How much funding do we have?

To date, \$9 million has been secured for the project:

- \$4.5 million from the Federal Government (funding commitment – still pending formalisation via grant application)
- \$3 million from the Victorian Government
- \$1.5 million from Council – \$150,000 in the 2025-26 Annual Budget and \$1.35 million in future borrowings in the 2026-27 Annual Budget

## Why will the project cost so much money?

It is a large and complex project:

- Construction costs across the world have reached record highs and are expected to continue rising beyond 2027.
- Council values its heritage buildings as they are tourist attractions and the Maryborough Outdoor Pool is one of only two swimming pools in Victoria with a heritage-listing.

The presence of groundwater in the surrounding soil, as well as building and swimming pool regulations, are also key factors. Like any major project, we also need to plan for unexpected issues as the detailed designs advance.



## PROJECT DELIVERY STAGES

### ✓ Stage One: Completed

Stage One included the rebuild of the Octagonal Toddlers Pool, extensive pavilion infrastructure preservation works and pump room repairs. The funding was also used for design and documentation – required in order to pursue funding applications and carry out future works. A detailed list of what was delivered as part of stage one is available at: [www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/outdoorpool](http://www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/outdoorpool)

### Stage Two: Current Stage

Detailed designs underway and will be complete by 30 June, 2026. It is anticipated that stage two will be delivered in 2026 and 2027.

#### Stage two includes:

- Full replacement of the intermediate/learn to swim pool including new filtration system and balance tank, renovation of the tiling and shell and construction of a disability access ramp.
- Upgrade to pavilion to accommodate a new compliant entry with ticketing, kiosk, car parking, footpaths, ramps and landscaping.
- New change room facility – a new standalone building including family change rooms, accessibility and a changing place facility.
- Plant room structural repairs.
- Upgrades to the existing male and female changerooms including new toilets, showers.
- Upgrades to services at the site including power and sewer.

### Stage Three: Future Stage

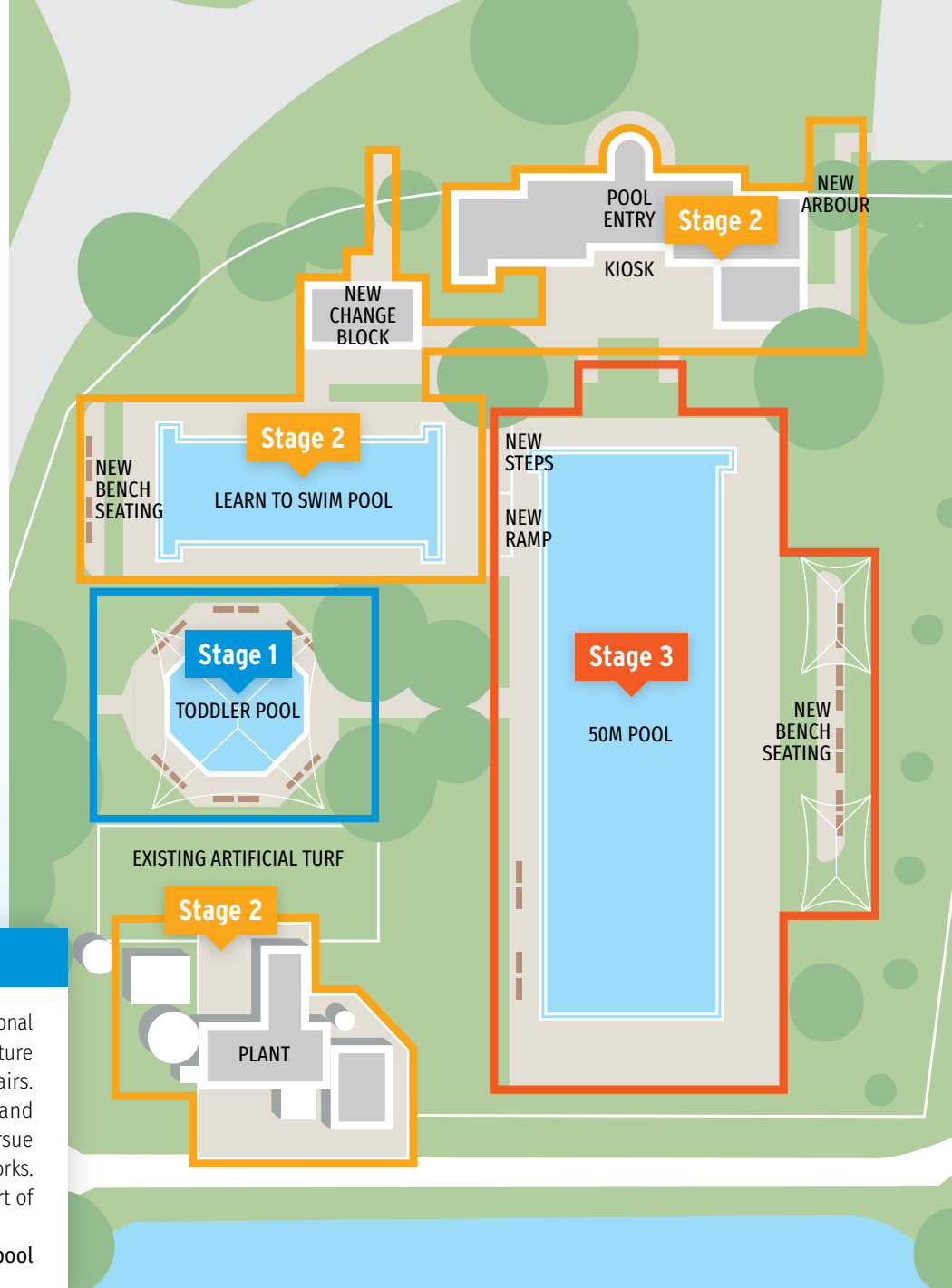
Detailed designs underway and will be complete by 30 June, 2026. The delivery of stage three is dependent on external funding.

#### Stage three includes:

- Demolition and rebuild of 50 metre pool
- New concourse
- New filtration system and balance tank
- Footpaths connecting all areas

### For more information visit:

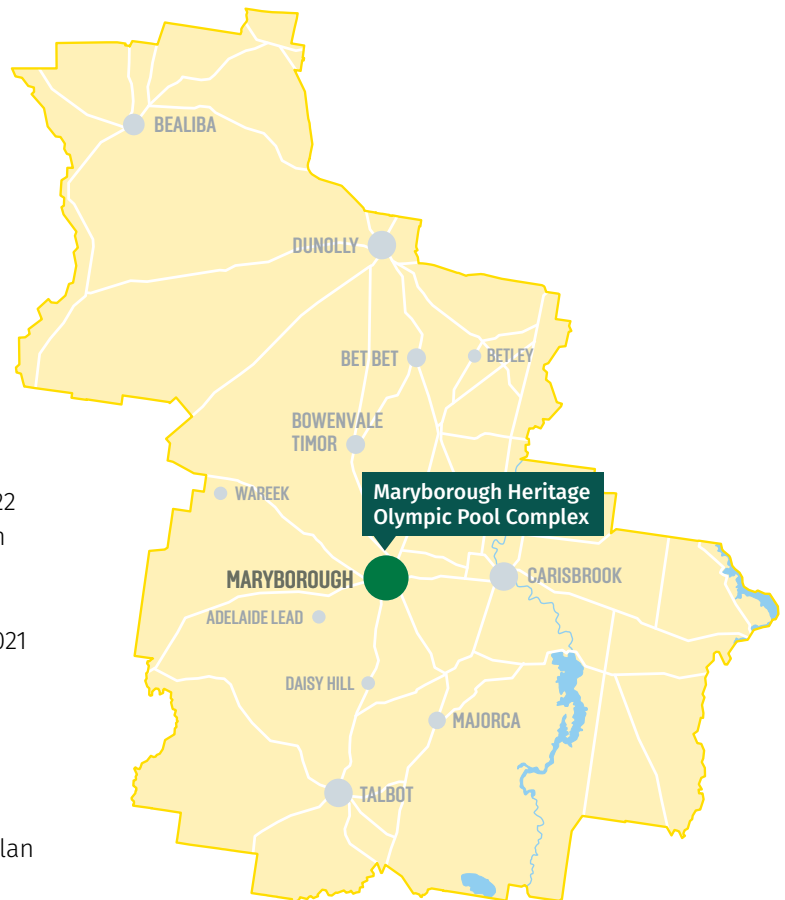
[www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/outdoorpool](http://www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/outdoorpool)



## Strategic precedence

This project directly aligns with the Loddon Campaspe Economic Growth Strategy and regional economic development strategies. It also aligns with Central Goldfields Shire's key strategic priorities, including:

- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
- Provision of infrastructure to meet community need
- Value and care for our heritage and cultural assets
- Maryborough Major Reserves Master Plans 2022
- Active Central Goldfields: Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2020-29
- Conservation Management Plan 2018
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021
- Population, Housing and Wellbeing Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Tourism and Events Strategy
- Disability Action Plan
- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Goldfields Villages Destination Management Plan
- Priority Projects Plan



## Delivery schedule

- ✓ Feasibility studies are complete.
- ✓ Detailed planning was finalised during 2023 and 2024.
- ✓ Octagonal pool
- Stages 2 & 3, including reconstruction of the Learn-to-Swim Pool and the Olympic Pool

## Conclusion

The cost of not having a community pool is significant, ongoing, and measurable.

Each year, the community loses an estimated \$2–2.5 million in health, transport, and economic opportunity, alongside diminished water safety, social connection, and inclusion.

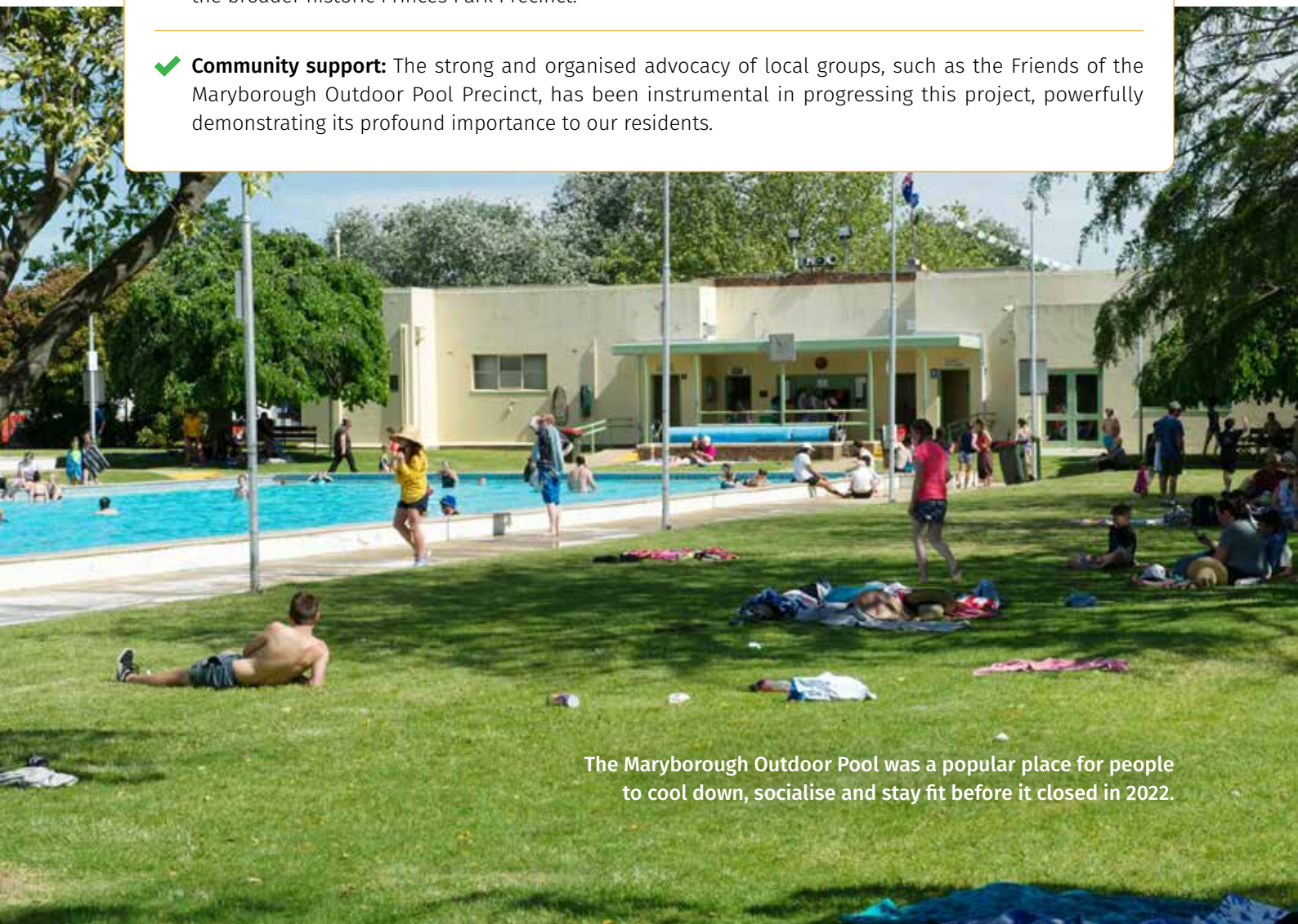
Investment in a community pool is not a discretionary project, but a strategic response to an identified market failure — addressing inequity in access to essential health and recreation infrastructure for Central Goldfields Shire residents.

Given the revised total project cost of \$14 million and the current funding of \$9 million, we are facing a critical shortfall of \$5 million in addition to the \$1.35 million in borrowings for the Maryborough Municipal Olympic Pool Complex redevelopment.

## The benefits

The Maryborough Municipal Olympic Pool Complex is far more than just a swimming facility; it is a **highly valued community asset** with profound historical and social significance.

- ✓ **Heritage significance:** The complex is **heritage-listed on the Victorian Heritage Register** for its architectural, aesthetic, and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It is celebrated as a **rare and intact example of a 1930s swimming pool complex**. Being heritage-listed means that while changes must typically align with original design and materials, modifications for contemporary standards, such as accessibility, are permitted after careful negotiation.
- ✓ **Community wellbeing and safety:** Regional pools are crucial for **reducing drowning risks**. Public pools are statistically the safest aquatic environments, benefiting from professional lifeguard supervision. This facility is vital for children to learn to swim outdoors and for fostering essential social connections within the community. The Maryborough community has endured too many summers without its outdoor pool, and its reopening is paramount for promoting local health and wellbeing.
- ✓ **Accessibility:** The redevelopment will ensure the complex meets contemporary standards, including the provision of **disability access ramps** into the pools and compliant change rooms, making it an inclusive facility for all community members. A new standalone building will incorporate family change, accessible change, and changing places facilities, some of which will be accessible year-round to further complement the broader historic Princes Park Precinct.
- ✓ **Community support:** The strong and organised advocacy of local groups, such as the Friends of the Maryborough Outdoor Pool Precinct, has been instrumental in progressing this project, powerfully demonstrating its profound importance to our residents.



The Maryborough Outdoor Pool was a popular place for people to cool down, socialise and stay fit before it closed in 2022.

## GO GOLDFIELDS

**\$2.5m**  
over five years

### Background

Children in the Central Goldfields Shire are deeply affected by the socio-economic challenges experienced by our community.

The Go Goldfields program proved that a coordinated approach can make a difference. This was a place-based partnership between State Government, Council, service providers and the community supported by core staff.

Despite numerous successes, our ability to make a lasting difference is at risk due to a lack of ongoing funding.

### The facts

18.5% of Central Goldfields children were vulnerable in two or more domains (40.7% in one) compared to the state average of 11.8% (and 22.3% in one).

33.6% of children in Central Goldfields are growing up in poverty. Many others are not far above it.



Central Goldfields is in the highest bracket for rates of family violence. 34% of these incidents were witnessed by a child.

Central Goldfields children are twice as likely to be living with a parent with mental health concerns than other Victorian children.

13% of children in the Central Goldfields area have an intellectual disability, developmental delay or learning disability compared to 8.2% statewide.

Almost one in four children in Maryborough live in a family where no parent is working



22% of Central Goldfields families are single parent families (state average is 15%)

45% of Central Goldfields households depend on government payments as a primary source of income

People in Central Goldfields are four times more likely to live in a caravan, cabin, or improvised home as their primary residence compared to the Victoria average (ABS)



#### Family Stressors (SEHQ)

Alcohol or drug related problem in family  
History of abuse to parent  
History of abuse to child  
Child witness to violence  
History of mental illness of parent

#### Central Goldfields

%

9.3  
19.6  
6.5  
14.0  
17.0

#### Victoria

%

3.6  
5.4  
1.9  
3.5  
9.0

## The facts (continued)

Establishing The Nest was a key success of the Go Goldfields program that enabled practical and tangible support for families and practitioners in Maryborough. There were more than 2200 family visits to The Nest drop-in sessions between July 2022 and December 2024, with more than 1300 referrals to additional supports and services.

Improvements in social and emotional competence of children starting school despite state and national trends falling between 2021 and 2024.

Recognised as the winner of 2024 Victorian Early Years Awards in categories of:

- Continuity of Learning – for our work on transition from kinder to school
- Supporting Parents to Build their Capacity and Confidence – for establishing The Nest

There is no ongoing funding available to continue the life changing work started by Go Goldfields.

## Key issues

### **Economic and social disadvantage:**

Highest rate of poverty in Victoria with disproportionate levels of poor health, family stress, substance abuse, and mental health issues.

### **Service gaps and accessibility:**

Significant gaps in services, geographic isolation and poor public transport further limit access.

### **Community trust and engagement:**

Trust in institutions is low, compounded by limited social capital and fragmented service delivery.



## Strategic priority

- Our children and families need continued investment in Go Goldfields to support the ongoing development of integrated community-led supports and service design

## Stakeholders and key partners

- Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS)
- Centre for Non-Violence
- Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
- Department of Health (DH)
- Department of Education (DE)

## Background

- Investment of \$500,000 per year for a sustained period of five years will support the reactivation of Go Goldfields and the peer-to-peer parenting program to continue this much needed work.

# PRINCES PARK GRANDSTAND

\$8m

## The ask

Funding for upgrades to Princes Park Grandstand while preserving the heritage values as outlined in the Conservation Management Plan (and subject to Heritage Victoria approval).

## The brief

The heritage-listed Princes Park Grandstand is a much-loved community asset and an iconic feature of the town. Beyond the heritage values, the grandstand serves an important community function with urgent facility upgrades needed.

Within the Grandstand –

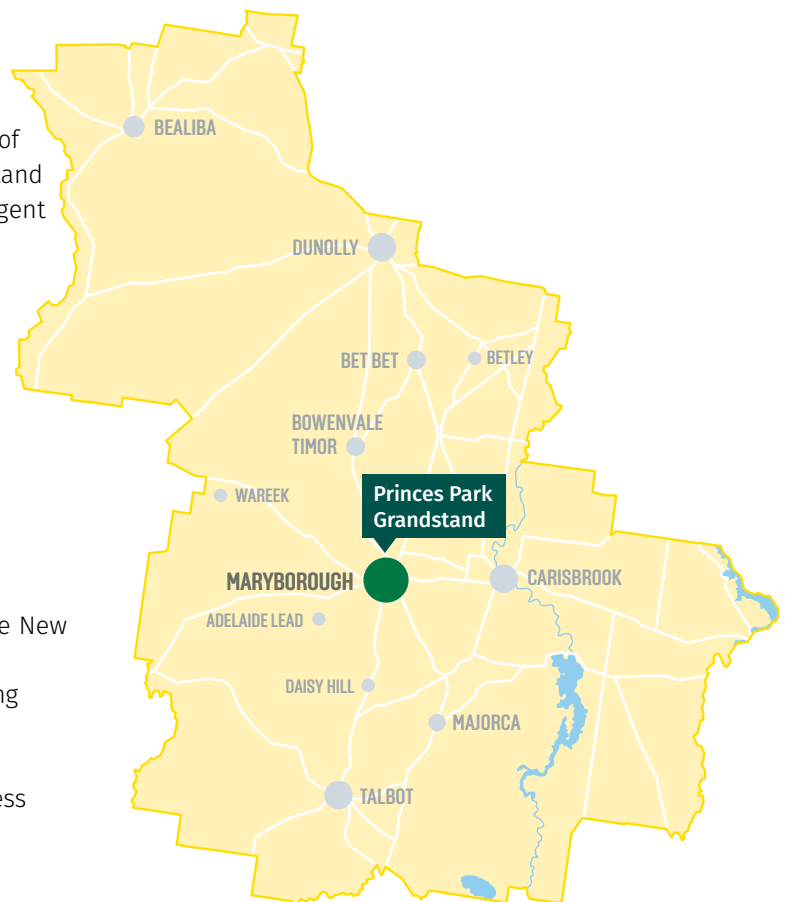
- A new design layout within the existing space to increase the functionality utilisation and to upgrade facility
- Retrofitting of change rooms to be female friendly (players and umpires)
- General conservation work including renewal of failed structural elements that support the historic grandstand

At the Junction between the Grandstand and the New Club Room addition (in 1979) –

- Redesign of layout to allow for more co-sharing of facilities
- Refurbishment of changing rooms and toilets
- Access to Grandstand to enable universal access to the seating area

Other matters requiring funding include –

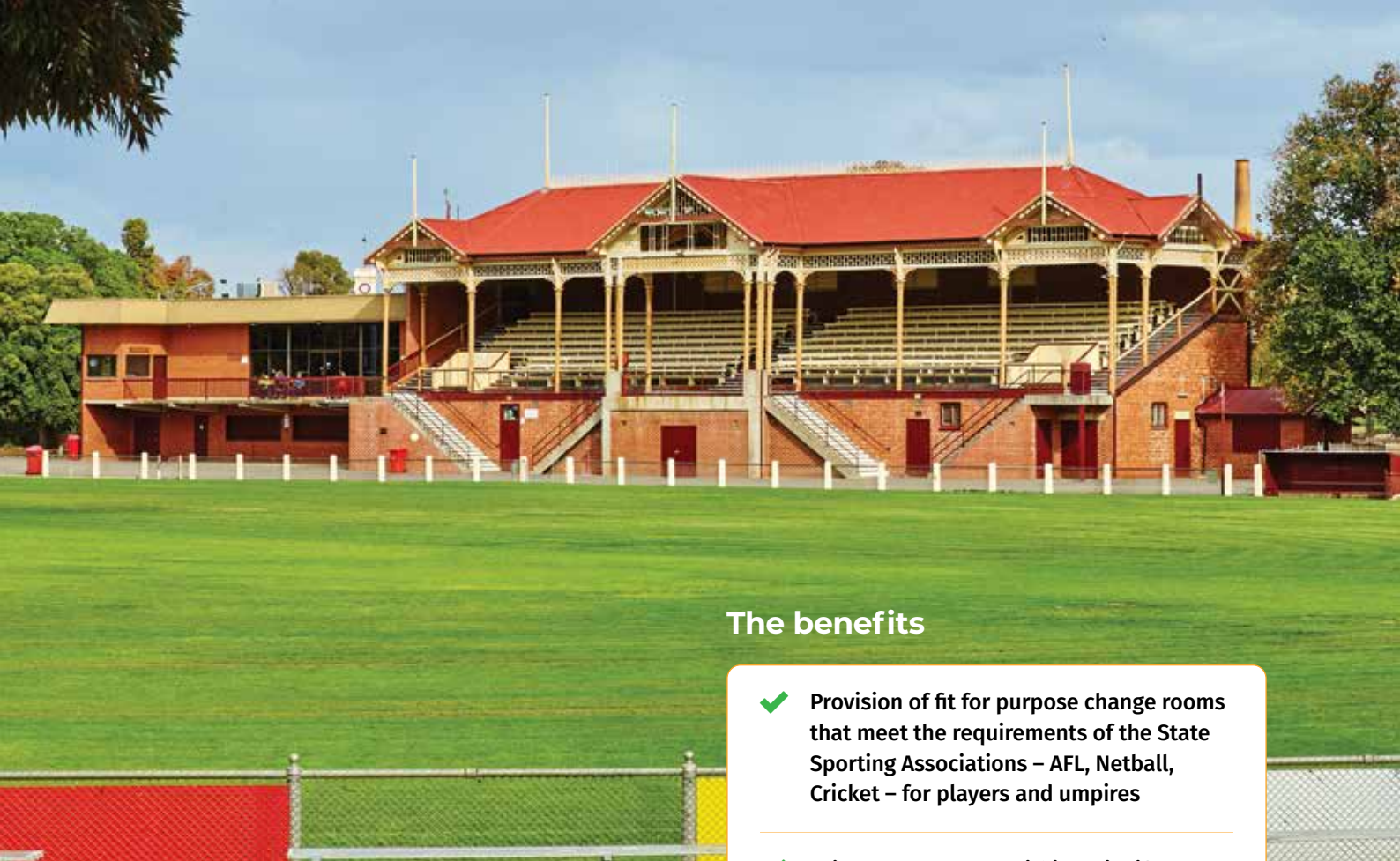
- Increasing disability access throughout the facility as per DDA requirements
- Upgrade canteen to make it compliant with health and safety requirements



## Project status and funding

The State Government has promised \$550k to make the changerooms female friendly and to upgrade the upstairs disability toilets.

Community consultation has occurred on the overall design.



## The benefits

- ✓ **Provision of fit for purpose change rooms that meet the requirements of the State Sporting Associations – AFL, Netball, Cricket – for players and umpires**
- ✓ **Brings components within a significant historical Grandstand up to current standards, making it more user friendly and retaining its long history as a valued community sporting asset**
- ✓ **The Grandstand will be more accessible and inclusive and will be available for use by all community members**
- ✓ **Increasing the functionality and use of an important community asset**
- ✓ **Supports the World Heritage Bid through maintaining and enhancing a highly valued heritage asset**

## Strategic precedence

- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
  - Provide infrastructure to meet community need
  - Value and care for our heritage and cultural assets
- Active Central Goldfields, the Central Goldfields Shire's Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2020–2029
  - Continue planning to make the Princes Park Complex the Premier Sport, Recreation and Open Space
  - Increasing shared use by clubs/associations
  - Grandstand Renewal
- Princes Park Grandstand, Cultural Management Plan, 2021
  - The CMP recommends the Princes Park Grandstand to be restored to its former glory.
- Maryborough Major Reserves Master Plans 2022

## Delivery schedule

- ✓ **Feasibility study – Not applicable due to Cultural Management Plan**
- ✓ **Detailed planning**
- **Shovel ready / Implementation**

# MARYBOROUGH TOWN HALL

\$10m

## The ask

Funding to repair and refurbish the Maryborough Town Hall in line with modern standards. This will enhance the historic significance of the building and bring it alive for arts and civic activities.

## The brief

The heritage-listed Maryborough Town Hall has architectural significance as a notable and largely intact example of a late nineteenth century provincial town hall, and as a major public building designed by the prominent Melbourne architect George Johnson. It is notable for the fine interior of the hall, particularly the gallery and painted ceiling.

There are significant opportunities to upgrade the Town Hall so that it is more widely used and open more often to the community and broader public. These include, creation of a function and modernised performance space and facilities as well as community and creative industry spaces.

In 2024, Council undertook an audit and a 10-year capital works plan to prepare estimates for this important project.

The revitalised Town Hall will form a central part of the full civic upgrade planned for Maryborough (Maryborough Central Activity District project) which will support the town to further cement its role as a regional centre, serving communities across the area in terms of access to new, high quality cultural, civic and wellbeing opportunities.

## The benefits

- ✓ **Bring one of Maryborough's most cherished and historically significant buildings back into use for the community**
- ✓ **Establish modern performance facilities which can attract new investment into the Shire and enhance the cultural life of the community**
- ✓ **Along with the Art Gallery and Railway Station, create a major civic precinct for Central Victoria**
- ✓ **Supports the World Heritage Bid through maintaining and enhancing a highly valued heritage listed asset**



## Strategic precedence

- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
  - Provide infrastructure to meet community need
  - Value and care for our heritage and cultural assets

## Delivery schedule

- ✓ 10-year capital works plan – Completed 2024
- ✓ Detailed design – 2025
- Implementation from 2026 onwards

## MARYBOROUGH CENTRAL ACTIVITY DISTRICT (MCAD)

\$5m

### Background

Significant public-sector investment is required to revitalise key civic sites in Central Maryborough. As well as enabling affordable town-centre housing, this will encourage private-sector investment in the retail, tourism, hospitality and services sectors.

### The brief

The fine heritage architecture of the Post Office, court house and Town Hall buildings create a space that can be re-imagined as a civic square or open plaza in the European tradition.

Integrated urban infrastructure treatments will invite pedestrians to explore the award-winning, newly re-imagined Central Goldfields Art Gallery and the High Street retail area as well as provide a strong connection to the redeveloped Hospital precinct.



Further staged works along the Nolan Street spine will draw visitors from the newly activated Maryborough Railway Station into this civic and retail area, integrating the Resource Centre, Phillips Gardens and Paramount Theatre area into a unified town core.

### Conclusion

Revitalising civic anchor sites in Central Maryborough and improving connections with the Princes Park heritage precinct will activate the town's heart.

It establishes a cohesive vision and long-term view in which government investment in the public realm stimulates private sector investment in the retail, tourism, hospitality and services sectors

### The benefits

- ✓ Leverages major projects already underway around Central Maryborough and regional initiatives such as the evolving World Heritage recognition of the Victorian Goldfields
- ✓ Links key historical sites and facilitates activation of public spaces through supporting foot traffic and visitor 'stickiness' (local spending) through differentiating the centre of Maryborough from generic city/suburban/mall spaces and online retail
- ✓ Walkability of Central Maryborough encourages inner-town residential renewal and diversification in a context of limited land supply and changing demographics



## Strategic precedence

- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025 – 29
- Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2025
- Tourism and Events Strategy 2020 – 2025
- Maryborough Retail Recovery Program

## Delivery schedule

- ✓ Feasibility study – Completed
- ✓ Detailed planning – 2025
- Implementation 2026 onwards

## MARYBOROUGH RAILWAY STATION ACTIVATION – STAGE 5

\$3m

### The ask

Funding for Stage 5 of the iconic Maryborough Railway Station precinct to broaden the storytelling capability of the existing multi-media infrastructure to further support the World Heritage Bid.

### The brief

With funding support from the State Government, in 2023, stage three of the Maryborough Railway Station activation project delivered a world class interpretative centre.

At the heart of the project was the delivery of a theatrette featuring multi-media infrastructure where visitors can watch the “Welcome Stranger” digital animation.

The engaging Welcome Stranger animation, developed in partnership with DJAARA, facilitates truth sharing and introduces diverse narratives of the mid-nineteenth century goldrush period in the region that, while so very important, are rarely told.

The Welcome Stranger digital animation is identified as an exemplar project and a model to be replicated in the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Master Plan.

The Master Plan positions the Victorian Goldfields as Australia’s foremost World Heritage Journeys destination: renowned universally, captivating global audiences and honouring the richness of First Peoples experiences and the global goldrush story.

It has also helped earn recognition in the recently released Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Master Plan. The Station with its wonderful Visitor Centre is cited as a benchmark for ‘World Heritage Hubs’/visitor centres across the region.

Further funding is needed so that we can continue to develop product as we wait for the World Heritage Bid to be realised.

With the theatrette and multi-media infrastructure in place – we have an opportunity to share other stories that help to build tourism and transition people through the region.



### The benefits

- ✓ Provides a key driver for the local and regional visitor economy as a “must visit” destination
- ✓ Encourages wider and extended local regional visitation and greater spend by showcasing engaging stories of regional locations in an immersive way and boosts a recovering regional economy
- ✓ Promotes civic pride and investment attraction as this splendid heritage building is used in creative and engaging ways putting Maryborough and Central Goldfields on the map
- ✓ Supports the World Heritage Bid through maintaining and enhancing a highly valued heritage-listed asset



## Strategic precedence

- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
  - Value, celebrate and actively engage First Nations culture and people
  - Capitalise on tourism opportunities
  - Value and care for our heritage and culture assets
- Central Goldfields Tourism and Events Strategy 2020–2025
- Central Goldfields Economic Development Strategy 2020–2025
- Central Goldfields Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2023–2026

## Delivery schedule

- ✓ Feasibility study – Completed
- ✓ Detailed planning – Completed
- Shovel ready / Implementation – 2026 onwards

# HOUSING AND PLANNING

## Delivering Plan for Victoria

\$2.3m

### The ask

\$2.3m for planning reforms to meet housing targets and provide affordable and social housing while also identifying, protecting and promoting our heritage as we prepare for World Heritage Listing.

### Background

Central Goldfields has the lowest SEIFA scores for relative socio-economic disadvantage in Victoria. Affordable housing, education and training, and employment opportunities are critical to addressing this disadvantage.

Council with Government support has prepared a Land Use Framework Plan for the Maryborough to Carisbrook area, and for Talbot.

**Plan for Victoria** has established a target of 1700 dwellings but fails to identify the role Maryborough plays in regional services and industrial employment, with major food processing industries in Maryborough.

Central Goldfields is part of the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage bid. Council is currently reliant on studies from the late 1980s and early 1990s before the current planning system and framework of historical themes. Understanding our places of significance and being able to share those stories will be critical to new employment opportunities.



### The brief

#### Housing

Employers have identified housing as a key issue impacting the recruitment and retention of staff, and cost-of-living pressures are also impacting housing affordability.

The land use frameworks have shown that Talbot and Carisbrook North are the key sites for future residential development in the Shire and Flagstaff as the main location for future industrial development.

The framework planning has highlighted the challenges to planning for growth and employment in the municipality.

There is no land available for growth in Maryborough and there are no expansion options within Maryborough (fire risk) or Carisbrook (flooding).

Elevated land at Carisbrook North has been identified as the major future growth area for the municipality with support from the CMA and CFA to continue investigations.

A detailed structure plan including technical assessments and a planning scheme amendment is required to progress this area to meet the Victoria Government's housing targets.

Talbot can accommodate some growth once the area is connected to sewer. Assistance is required to deliver critical service infrastructure upgrades.

#### Employment and Activity Centres

Maryborough Town Centre supports the local region for major retail, health and professional services which also provide employment opportunities.

Support is required to review the zoning of the central areas to unlock opportunities to provide new employment opportunities and identify and support the delivery of affordable and social housing opportunities around the commercial area and station precinct.

Industrial development in Flagstaff is limited by service restrictions and environmental issues. A framework plan focusing on service delivery, consideration of cultural heritage management and the preparation of a native vegetation precinct plans will support private sector investment / employment creation in this area between Maryborough and Carisbrook population centres.

Expansion of bus services to Flagstaff, Carisbrook and Carisbrook North is required.

### Heritage

Council does not have a shire-wide heritage study undertaken to current statutory requirements. In 2005 a review of the former shire studies was undertaken and priority actions identified.

The Maryborough Heritage Review is the only priority identified that has been progressed.

Support is needed from Heritage Victoria to fast track assessment of gold-related sites in the Shire for inclusion in the World Heritage Listing bid and to support the tourism, economic development and employment opportunities to capitalise on this. Central Goldfields must be central to the Victorian Goldfields heritage story.

### Funding is required for:

- Delivery of detailed structure plans and technical assessments for future growth areas to support potential rezoning, including development contributions and design controls.
- Preparation of a Structure Plan for Flagstaff, identifying how to deliver infrastructure services and to assess Aboriginal cultural heritage and native vegetation for incorporation into the planning scheme to determine how development can occur on land already zoned for industrial development.
- Funding of sewer services to Talbot.
- Establish a bus service between Maryborough Station, Flagstaff, Carisbrook and Carisbrook North.
- **Housing activation / activity centre:** Conduct feasibility testing of identified infill and intensification sites, prioritise early yield opportunities, undertake developer partnerships, prepare concept plans and medium density design guidance.
- **Heritage:** Provision of funding to support the assessment of sites linked to the Victorian Goldfields bid for potential inclusion on the VHR.

### The benefits

- ✓ **Provide the strategic basis for delivering the Victorian Government's Housing Target.**
- ✓ **Increase the range of affordable housing options close to jobs, transport and services**
- ✓ **Heritage-led economic development related to the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing bid**

### Strategic precedence

- Plan for Victoria
- Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing Bid
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025 – 29
- Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan
- Talbot Structure Plan
- Recommendations Report – Maryborough North, Flagstaff and Carisbrook Land Use Framework Plan
- Central Goldfields Heritage Study Stage 1

# TALBOT FUTURES

\$40m

## The ask

Implementation of a sewerage system for Talbot to enable population and housing growth



## The brief

The charming village of Talbot is well placed to accommodate some of the renewed regional growth, and to take advantage of economic opportunities, but is currently constrained by a lack of wastewater infrastructure.

Talbot is strategically located between Maryborough and Ballarat, with an upgraded train station, a famous farmers' market and intact goldrush heritage to offer. A town structure plan that ties in with a sewerage service area is almost complete. Up-to-date costings for the sewerage scheme are also being finalised, which will lead to a 'shovel ready' project for delivering the infrastructure.

Funding the installation of a modern sewerage system would enable growth while improving the quality of life for existing residents, and allow local businesses to expand in servicing a growing population in line with the recently supported Talbot Futures Structure Plan.





## The benefits

- ✓ **Provision of sewerage infrastructure will ensure the safety and health of Talbot residents and deliver much needed population and economic growth for the township**
- ✓ **A structure planning approach in consultation with residents and other stakeholders is almost complete, with a priority of retaining the charm and heritage character that is valued by the Talbot community**
- ✓ **As a 'village-sized' community within the Ballarat to Maryborough corridor that already includes Creswick and Clunes, Talbot can play a role in providing much-needed housing and share the benefits of growth beyond Maryborough**

## Strategic precedence

- Plan for Victoria
- Loddon Mallee Housing Group
- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
  - Complete planning for a wastewater scheme for Talbot township.
  - Ensure sufficient land is zoned to accommodate residential growth.
- Population, Housing and Residential Strategy 2020

## Delivery schedule

- ✓ **Structure plan – Completed**
- Detailed design and community consultation
- Obtain external funding and amend the Planning Scheme
- Proceed to implementation

# INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT PRECINCT

\$10m

## The ask

Funding to support the delivery of a new industrial precinct including detailed design work, a development plan, subdivision, site clean-up and infrastructure provision

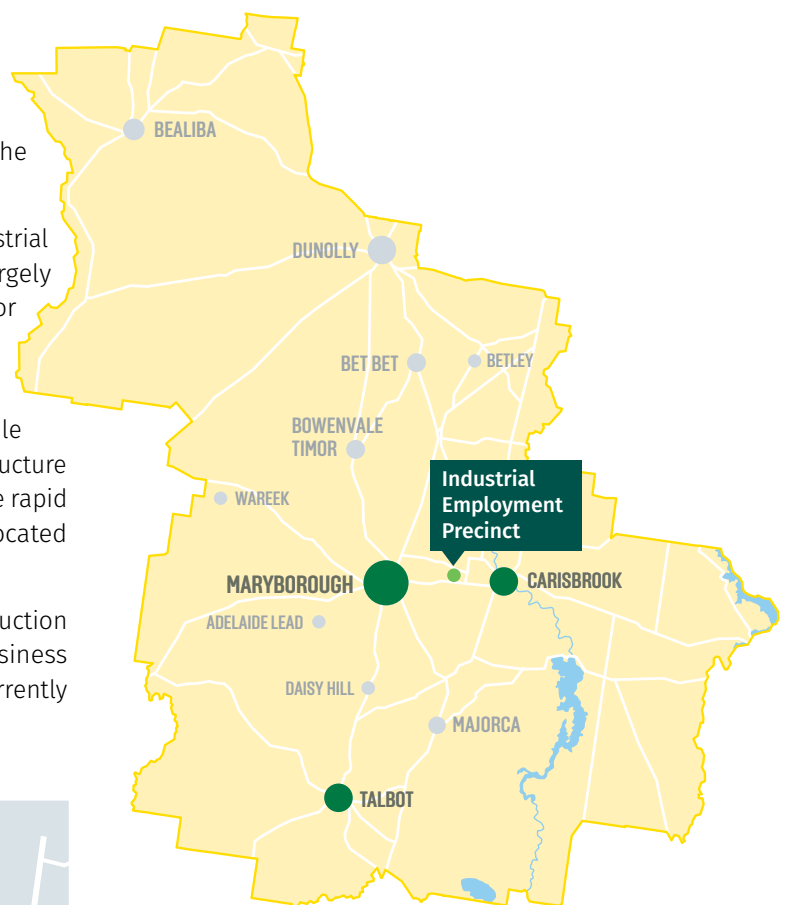
## The brief

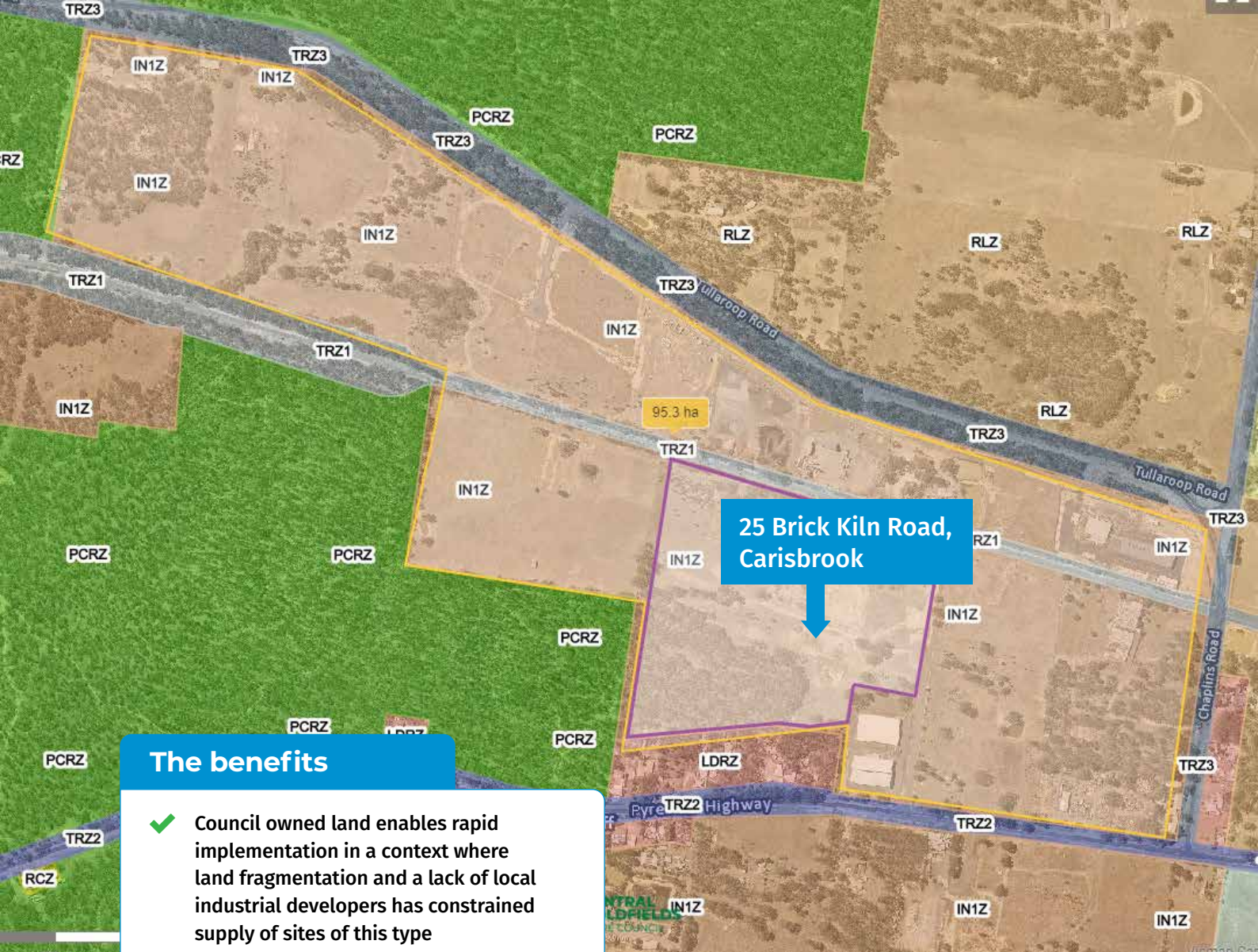
The recently adopted Industrial Land Supply & Demand Assessment and Strategy has identified the need for small lot industrial sites in the Shire.

A large (18 hectare) Council-owned site zoned Industrial 1 is available for this use. The land is level and largely cleared and only a small portion of it is needed for future use by Council.

A sewer pump station and local network would unlock over 80 hectares of Industrial Zone land, while a development plan, subdivision and other infrastructure for an 18 hectare council-owned site would enable rapid establishment of multiple businesses and a relocated council depot.

Based on this supply scenario, hundreds of construction and ongoing local jobs would be created. A business case to bring the proposal to feasibility stage is currently being developed.





## The benefits

- ✓ Council owned land enables rapid implementation in a context where land fragmentation and a lack of local industrial developers has constrained supply of sites of this type
- ✓ Meet growing demand as evidenced by an adjacent factory site seeking additional land for expansion, as well as private operators and Investment Victoria seeking land to establish new industrial businesses in the area
- ✓ With infrastructure provision, the broader precinct meets an identified need for small to medium industrial lots as well as development-ready medium to large sites and creates 7–10 years of supply
- ✓ Establishes a major employment precinct close to Maryborough and the future growth areas of Carisbrook and Talbot
- ✓ Supports the growth of small local businesses that underpin supply chains in goods, maintenance and other services and attracts larger industrial businesses to the Shire

## Strategic precedence

- Central Goldfields Community Vision 2031
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
  - Support existing and new and emerging business and industry
  - Develop a skilled and diverse workforce
- Industrial Land Supply & Demand Assessment and Strategy

## Delivery schedule

- ✓ Feasibility study – Completed
- Detailed planning – 2025–2026
- Shovel ready / Implementation – 2026 onwards

# SOUTHERN WIMMERA NORTHEAST PYRENEES WATER PIPELINE

**\$163.5m**

## The ask

**\$163.5 million over four years to construct the Southern Wimmera Northeast Pyrenees Water Pipeline to provide water security and protect against climate change.**

## The brief

Victoria's north-west is a productive agricultural region that has become increasingly vulnerable because of climate change.

Between 2002 and 2010 the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline was constructed with the installation of 9000km of pipeline to enhance water security for the region that was previously serviced by a very inefficient 16,000km earthen channel network.

This pipeline has brought significant social, environmental, and economic benefits to this large region and enjoys strong community support.

A major gap remains in water supply within the Southern Wimmera Northeast Pyrenees region that struggles with unreliable rainfall and inadequate groundwater.

Without intervention, our region will continue to face poor water security, hampering its economic, environmental, and social growth.

A business case that was undertaken in 2024 found there will be significant economic benefits if this project is delivered.



## The benefits

- ✓ **Reliable water supply for 3000 farming businesses across 354,000 hectares in the Shires of Central Goldfields, Northern Grampians, and Pyrenees**
- ✓ **This will increase production by reducing the impact of drought and climate change**
- ✓ **A stronger regional economy**
- ✓ **Improved safety, health, and wellbeing for rural, farming and First Nations communities**
- ✓ **A healthier environment**

## Strategic precedence

- Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2025–29
  - Economic growth and prosperity
  - Infrastructure that supports growth and liveability
- Central Goldfields Shire Economic Development Strategy 2020–2025
- Central Goldfields Shire Council Climate Action Plan 2022–2030 – Land & Water

## OTHER ADVOCACY PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

### Better and safer State roads

Victorian Government roads leading into the Central Goldfields need ongoing maintenance and improvements to provide safe connectivity with other regional centres and with Melbourne.



### Recruitment and retention of key personnel

Doctors, nurses, police, emergency service workers, and teachers contribute to the fabric and wellbeing of our community. There needs to be a strategic approach from the State Government to recruit and retain key staff who provide state services.



### Relocation of the Maryborough SES

SES volunteers are at the frontline of emergency responses. Their current facility in Maryborough is not suitable and should be relocated to more appropriate accommodation that supports and encourages this vital service.



### Upgrade Maryborough Aerodrome

A business case in 2023 identified safety improvements that are needed to ensure the Maryborough Aerodrome continues to operate effectively as a critical link for the local community and grows capacity to support emergency services.



### Learning Hub

Establish a Learning Hub in Maryborough to provide a contemporary adult study facility that drives high-quality learning outcomes and promotes different educational pathways. This will help local businesses to upskill and retain employees.



# OTHER ADVOCACY PROJECTS





## ARTS AND CULTURE

### *The ask: \$60,000 per year from the Regional Partnerships Program to support artistic services at Central Goldfields Art Gallery*

#### Some success

- ✓ State Government investment in the Gallery redevelopment through the 2019-20 Regional Infrastructure Fund, \$1.2 million from the Regional Tourism Investment Fund and \$355,000 from the Regional Collections Access Program.
- ✓ 100% increase in visitation based on pre-redevelopment figures
- ✓ Community led demand for increase in visual arts education, exhibition and public program services



#### Ongoing advocacy

- Temporary closure of the Bendigo and Ballarat art galleries for redevelopment provides an opportunity for the Central Goldfields Art Gallery to become a regional hub in 2026.
- Collaboration with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation in First Nations led visual arts exhibitions and cultural programs, in conjunction with Council's Reconciliation Action Plan
- Through membership of the Public Galleries Association of Victoria, ongoing advocacy through this peak body and increased partnership with major neighbouring public galleries in Ballarat and Bendigo
- Demand for education and public program services informed by:
  - local early years, primary, secondary and life long educators
  - network of key community organisations across the disability, health, community and creative sectors

#### Key issues

Funding to provide Australian Museums and Galleries industry standard staffing to support:

- local visual artists in the creation and presentation of work in partnership with the Creative Space at Maryborough Railway Station
- students and teachers with access to a diverse range of creative learning programs and opportunities
- increase First People's leadership and practice
- care, development and increase access to the growing permanent art collection

#### Strategic priorities

- Realisation of the Gallery's vision to be an inclusive and innovative public art gallery for residents and visitors to the Shire (Central Goldfields Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2023–2026)

#### Stakeholders and key partners

- Creative Victoria
- Local residents
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Tourists
- The regional creative community
- Education providers from early years to tertiary providers
- Public Galleries Association of Victoria

# DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

## *The ask: Investment in digital connectivity*

### Some success

- ✓ Fibre to the home is being rolled out in Dunolly
- ✓ A mobile tower in Talbot
- ✓ A fixed wireless solution is being developed for Talbot
- ✓ Two new NBN fixed wireless towers were activated in August 2025, covering Maryborough East and West.



### Ongoing advocacy

- Our digital connectivity priority is to:
  - Ensure mobile broadband coverage is equal to metropolitan areas and able to withstand emergencies.
  - Accessible and dependable digital connectivity has become crucial for remote work, learning, healthcare education and more. However, current infrastructure is struggling to keep up with the increased demand and is causing unreliable coverage.
- We're calling for investment in:
  - Improved coverage and access across regional and rural areas.
  - Critical infrastructure to service new industrial and commercial precincts.
  - Increased capacity in rapid growth areas to support periods of high demand for businesses (tourism, events, etc.) and households (early evening).
  - A funding stream to roll out digital infrastructure across the region.

## Key issues

- Numerous communication technology black spots across Central Goldfields Shire
- Central Goldfields Shire has a digital inclusion score of 65.6 which is 7.6 points below the Australian average and the fifth worst score in Victoria

## Strategic priorities

- High quality digital connectivity for all areas of Central Goldfields Shire
- Reliable mobile phone coverage
- Fast and affordable internet coverage

## Stakeholders and key partners

- Connecting Victoria
- Telstra
- NBN and other internet providers
- Mobile Blackspots Program (Federal Government)
- Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC)
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership (LCRP)
- Regional Development Australia Committee

## TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

### *The ask: Increased investment to improve public transport*

#### Some success

- ✓ Additional weekend train services commenced in December 2022



#### Ongoing advocacy

- **Increase train services between Maryborough and Ballarat on weekdays, from two per day to five**, to enable commuting for local residents to travel by train for work and study; attend business, medical and other appointments; and to promote tourism and enhance social connectivity.
- **Reinstate passenger train services between Maryborough and Mildura** to establish Maryborough as a regional rail hub, reactivate rail as a public transport option at Dunolly, and to improve public transport links between Melbourne and Mildura via Maryborough.
- Continue working with DTP to **review bus timetables to improve links to train services** at Ballarat and Castlemaine.

### Key issues

- Limited train services between Maryborough and Ballarat, and a timetable that doesn't suit regular commuters
- Infrequent and poorly coordinated public transport across Central Goldfields Shire

### Strategic priorities

- Increase the frequency of weekday train services between Maryborough and Ballarat
- Reintroduce passenger trains between Maryborough, Dunolly and Mildura
- Review other public transport connections to improve links to key services

### Stakeholders and key partners

- Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
- V/Line
- Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils
- Re Mildura rail: Northern Grampians Shire, Buloke Shire, Yarriambiack Shire and the Rural City of Mildura
- Community and advocacy organisations including the Rail Revival Alliance, Public Transport Users Association and the NorthWest Rail Alliance



