



CELEBRATING **20** *Years*

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE COUNCIL  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

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*Financial records and audit statements contained on disc.*



# COUNCIL'S VISION

*To be a community with choice.*

## VALUES

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

- **Accountable**

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

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

- **Progressive**

Strive for constant improvement.

Find new and creative ways; focus on the future.

- **Respectful**

Listen actively and consider other viewpoints.

Embrace and respect diversity and inclusion.

This Annual Report outlines how the Central Goldfields Shire vision for the future has been achieved through the delivery of strategies, projects and services in the period 2014-2015.

# ABOUT THE SHIRE

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

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

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

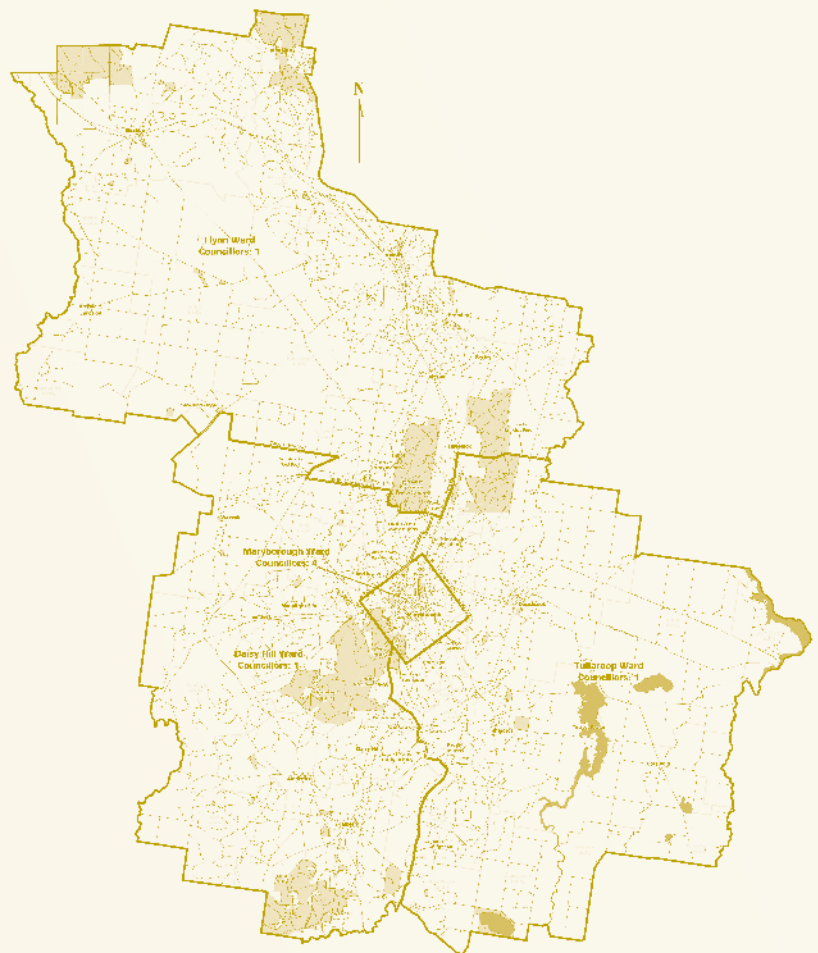
The shire is currently experiencing significant growth with key infrastructure projects and residential developments reaching fruition.

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

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

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

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



# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to the 2014/15 Annual Report. The year had many highlights for Central Goldfields Shire, and Council was pleased to deliver key components of the Council Plan, bringing to life its vision: to be a community with choice.

The early part of the financial year was spent working with major parties in the lead up to the Victorian State Election. The Go Goldfields project funding, first provided by State Government in 2010, was drawing to a close and highest priority for Council was to secure the project's future. Pleasingly, both parties recognised the importance of Go Goldfields and agreed to continue to fund the project for a further three years.

Go Goldfields, now in its fourth year, continues its ground breaking work to address disadvantage and improve the lives of children, youth and families in our shire. Council and its partner organisations are incredibly proud of the results achieved so far. These results are documented in the 2012-2014 Go Goldfields evaluation report. With the extended funding, Go Goldfields is now looking to build further on its successes and is planning for a sustainable future.

Some of the most exciting news for the year came in the form of economic development. Food manufacturing business Edlyn Foods confirmed it would commence operations in Maryborough, and Capilano Honey will soon return to its former home, also in Maryborough.

Securing these businesses is a major boost for our shire. They offer new employment and workforce development opportunities, and this has a flow on effect of encouraging population growth, as evidenced by strong commercial activity and record levels of residential development – all of which are key themes in Council's Economic Development Strategy. Furthermore, the basis for a food cluster has been established, which should prove attractive to other food manufacturers.

Another exciting moment in our year was having the RACV Energy Breakthrough again recognised in the Victorian and Australian Tourism Awards. It is the second consecutive year that the event has won the top honour in the Victorian Awards in the category of Festivals and Events. At the Australian Tourism Awards, the event won a silver medal and we are now striving for Gold next year.

The ongoing success of this event is testament to the dedicated staff, volunteers, students and families that give so much time and effort. It not only showcases our shire on a national stage, it injects over \$4 million into our economy – a truly valuable event.

Through the Grampians Goldfields Healthy Together program we were excited to have Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food mobile kitchen visit Maryborough in April, teaching healthy cooking and eating to

our community. New skills and messages on healthy eating were passed directly on to the 465 participants, and by taking these skills and learnings home, the participants are spreading the valuable information further.

Getting the message on health and wellbeing out to the community has been strengthened by the adoption and implementation by Council of a new social media strategy. These mediums are proving very popular and are a terrific way to inform and engage residents.

Social media, and in fact all media, went into overdrive when Maryborough's Matthew Dellavedova played in the NBA Championship Playoffs. An exemplary young ambassador, Matthew put us on the world stage and provided Maryborough with an unparalleled opportunity to showcase our great region.

Within our organisation, Council has achieved positive outcomes too. The 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey showed Central Goldfields Shire Council as a leader in all major categories. This is when compared to other small rural shires and against the State. We are proud to receive consistently high scores each year, and pleased our community is happy with our performance in the areas of advocacy and decision making.

Common within all councils is budget management. Diligent controls have seen a favourable financial result produced again this year, while a five year financial projection shows Council aiming for an increasingly strong, sustainable financial position. Council implemented a new rating strategy this year, to achieve a fair and equitable composition of rates and charges across the community.

2015 marks the 20 year anniversary of Central Goldfields Shire, and in this report we have taken time to reflect on our major infrastructure and community developments of the last two decades. It is fair to say the face of our shire has changed significantly. Of course, we have had our challenges, such as major floods and natural disasters; social disadvantage, and the loss of major industry and employment.

Importantly, we respond to challenges and create opportunities. Rail services and major industry has returned, and our community has strengthened. Over 20 years Central Goldfields Shire has proven it is proactive, with a broad focus and capacity. Now more than ever, we are optimistic about our exciting future.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Wendy McIvor', written in a cursive style.

**Cr Wendy McIvor**  
Mayor

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark Johnston', written in a cursive style.

**Mark Johnston**  
Chief Executive Officer

# COUNCILLORS



**Cr Wendy McIvor (Mayor)**  
**Maryborough Ward**

Wendy was first elected to the role in November 2012, and became Mayor in November 2014.



**Cr Helen Broad**  
**Tullaroop Ward**

Helen became a councillor in March 2015 in a by-election, following the resignation of Ian Robertson. It is her first time in the role.



**Cr Bob Henderson**  
**Flynn Ward**

Bob was elected in a by-election in August 2013, following the resignation of John Smith. Bob was a councillor for the Shire of Bet Bet for three years until amalgamation in 1997.



**Cr Geoff Lovett**  
**Maryborough Ward**

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



**Cr Paula Nixon**  
**Maryborough Ward**

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



**Cr Barry Rinaldi**  
**Maryborough Ward**

Barry first became a councillor in March 1997. He served as Mayor from November 2012 to November 2014, having previously filled the role from March 1999 to March 2001.



**Cr John Van Beveren**  
**Paddy's Ranges Ward**

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

# COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE STAFF



## **Mr. Mark Johnston** **Chief Executive Officer**

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

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

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



## **Mr. David Sutcliffe** **General Manager Technical Services**

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

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

In 2009, Mark was appointed to the Loddon Mallee Committee of Regional Development Australia - an Australian Government initiative that aims to bring together all levels of government to enhance the growth and development of regional Australia. Mark has led and facilitated several major economic and community development initiatives including the ground breaking Go Goldfields - a community driven approach to tackle entrenched disadvantage and improve social, education and health outcomes for children, youth and families.

### **Areas of responsibility**

- Governance
- Civic Services
- Legal Services
- Policy Development
- Economic Development
- Corporate Planning
- Best Value/ Continuous Improvement
- Public Relations
- Organisational Development
- Human Resources
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Customer Services
- Records Management

### **Areas of responsibility:**

- Planning
- Subdivision
- Building Control
- Heritage Advice
- Infrastructure Design
- Traffic Management
- Roads
- Construction & Maintenance
- Waste Management
- Emergency Management
- Stores
- Plant & Equipment
- Environment Education
- Parks & Gardens
- Property Maintenance

# COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE STAFF



## **Mr. Wayne Belcher**

### **General Manager Corporate and Community Services**

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

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

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

#### **Areas of responsibility:**

- Financial Management
- Environmental Health Services
- Local Laws Enforcement
- Committees of Management
- Aged & Disabled Services
- Pre-schools
- Marketing & Promotions
- Youth Services
- Recreation & Leisure Services
- Sports & Leisure Centres
- Tourism
- Arts and Culture
- Preventive Health
- Risk Management



## **Ms. Sharon Fraser**

### **General Manager Go Goldfields**

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

Sharon's background is in speech pathology; health and community health management; and social change management. Her professional interest and expertise is in system design and redesign to achieve improved outcomes for rural and regional communities. There is a natural extension of this work into social redesign with communities to achieve better community outcomes.

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

Sharon's qualifications include a Bachelor of Applied Science (Speech Pathology), Masters in Business (Management) and a Graduate Diploma Company Direction.

#### **Areas of responsibility:**

- Go Goldfields
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Maternal & Child Health
- Children's Services
- Library Services



# COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS FOR 2015

Council continued its high performance in 2015, according to the Community Satisfaction Survey from JWS Research.

Council's performance on all key measures was at least equal to or higher than both the State wide and Small Rural Shire group results.

Core performance areas where Council scored significantly higher than councils across the State were Advocacy, Making Community Decisions, and Overall Council Direction.

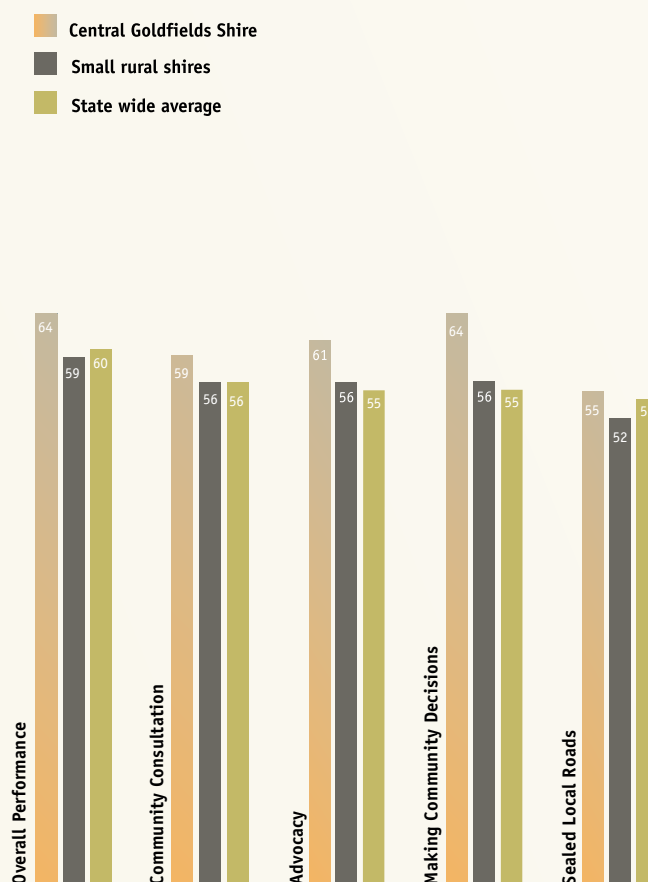
The 2015 survey is the eighteenth undertaken to measure how residents rate the performance of their local government. The survey is conducted by an independent research group and coordinated by Local Government Victoria. A minimum of 400 telephone interviews are conducted in each municipality.

The key performance measures are for Overall Performance; Community Consultation; Advocacy; Making Council Decisions; Sealed Local Roads; Customer Service, and Overall Council Direction.

This large scale annual survey forms part of a continuing process which Council has in place to monitor and assess community priorities, issues and concerns.

While generally, the results were excellent, Council is also aware there are areas that require greater focus and these will receive attention.

## 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey results



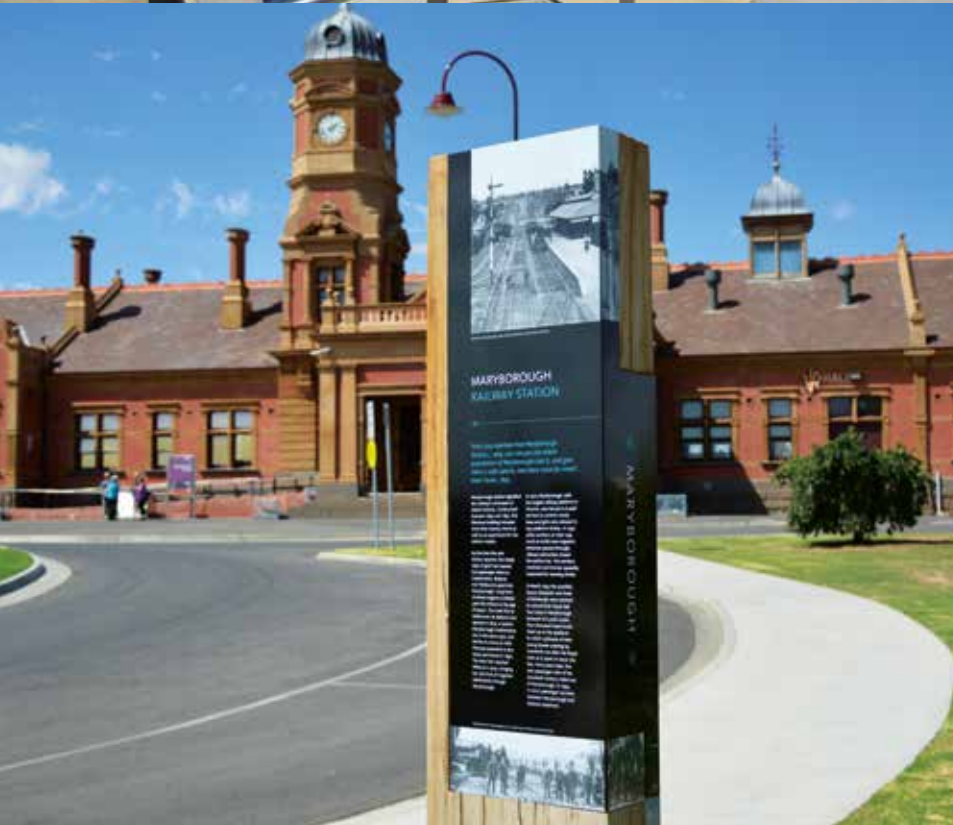
# CELEBRATING 20 Years







# OF CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE









# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

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



## Focus area: community development/connectedness

*Foster community resilience, connectedness and social capital.*

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: health and wellbeing

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

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: community safety

*Foster a whole of community approach.*

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: arts, culture and heritage

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

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: recreation and sport

*Increase participation in physical activity.*

### Projects/services implemented:

1. Recreation plan





# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: community development/connectedness

*Foster community resilience, connectedness and social capital.*

### GO GOLDFIELDS

Go Goldfields has transformed from an alliance of organisations into a Collective Impact initiative, engaging the community on the design, delivery and measurement of the work. This change stems from strong engagement with key community agents, who are now working together to deliver on a set of shared outcomes to address issues facing children, youth and families.

#### 2012-2014 evaluation

In 2014 the team completed the final evaluation report of the first stage of the Go Goldfields Alliance work. It was a broad scale evaluation of the collective impact of the Go Goldfields strategies on the Central Goldfields community.

The evaluation showed many successes of the work so far, but as could be expected of a place-based project, there have been many challenges to progressing this work.

Key successes are:

1. Parents and early years service providers are more aware of the importance of early communication, literacy and numeracy skills. Many have incorporated these skills into their interactions with children.
2. Community speech pathology has built the capacity of parents and early years service providers to detect issues and to collaboratively manage these issues with professionals. This success has led to the Maryborough District Health Service redeveloping its speech pathology service in line with an early years focussed approach. Less children are requiring speech pathology on entering school.
3. Prep reading levels and measures of childhood development have somewhat improved, however data over ensuing years is needed in order to identify ongoing impacts of the work.
4. Families have had increased opportunities to be involved in social and capacity building activities. This has improved their social connections, confidence and skills in parenting.
5. Recent work to develop a sustainable community arts approach will build on all platforms to provide opportunities for children, youth and families to be connected through the arts. Work needs to continue to engage local artists to ensure the sustainability of this approach.

6. Family and early years service providers are demonstrating an increased commitment to working together to achieve Go Goldfields outcomes, including formalising common approaches and developing plans to collaboratively service the community.
7. Engaging with community groups or community champions to drive the work has been a significant step in achieving enduring community cultural change.
8. Dedicated, flexible funding is needed to achieve meaningful community change. Without the \$2.5 million from the Victorian Government, the Go Goldfields work would not have progressed substantially. Flexible funding has added the capacity to be responsive to emerging needs as they unfold.
9. The progress made to build relationships and work towards common understandings has been considerable and created a strong and necessary foundation for future success.

Achieving community engagement, although essential to success, requires considerable work. This will be further progressed in the next phase of Go Goldfields, by reorienting governance structures and processes. A Collaborative Table will be developed, where people with lived experience, community and business leaders, service leaders and decision makers will come together to design, deliver and measure the work into the future. The learnings from these successes and challenges will be integrated into future work.

The Go Goldfields Alliance has committed to developing a shared measurement approach across the initiative. This will assist in the alignment of the work in organisations and in the culture of the community.

Go Goldfields is committed to delivering improved community outcomes. Go Goldfields has strong relationships with funders, decision makers and government. Future work is needed to ensure that this informs systems and reporting and funding structures within the shire.

Penetration of the work into agencies remains a constant challenge; competing with staff changeover and changes in policy and funding by government departments and organisations. The next phase of Go Goldfields needs to translate learnings beyond behaviours and interactions, and into documented systems, policies and structures so that the work is robust against staffing and other changes.





Overall the first three years of Go Goldfields implementation has been a success, with significant progress towards the desired community outcomes - particularly with children. The work continues to require a review of best available evidence and a constant openness to exploring new and emergent ways of doing things. The greatest successes have stemmed from trying different things; give up power and ground and create a space for new thinking and directions that could only have happened by working together.

### **Making parenting easier**

The Family Facilitator position focused on creating and supporting networks of professionals to lead to improved system coordination across services supporting children and families.

The Early Years Forum was established in 2014, following two successful half day workshops exploring improved transition to school, and involving all of the kindergartens and schools across the shire. This group has expanded to include all early years (0-8 years) providers to enable cross sector strategic conversations.

This network of early years professionals attracted a high quality, intensive training program delivered through Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and funded by Department of Education and Training, which will further common understanding and collaborative approaches.

A group of local educational leaders across early years, kindergarten and schools visited the innovative community based and integrated educational facility in Doveton (Doveton College). This stimulated further lateral thinking on how to ensure good access to support that can benefit families, including those who may be experiencing vulnerability.

During 2015 the Centre for Community Child Health was engaged to work with our kindergarten teachers and other educators to strengthen their capacity. A network of child, family and adult focused services met several times to build stronger relationships, discuss how a local shared practice framework might look, and explore the development of a place-based wrap around approach to support vulnerable children and families. This work has been documented and will continue.

Work occurred to design the delivery of additional parent education. Parent and family education will now be delivered regularly as part of supported playgroup in Dunolly. Maryborough also held a workshop, which attracted over 30 parents, and

further work is underway in partnership with the community and services to embed more regular workshops into our community.

During the first part of 2015, six organisations and agencies sent a practitioner or teacher to complete a three day Circle of Security seminar. This is an evidence based family support program that has proven highly effective with vulnerable families.

### **Workforce development**

Over the past 12 months Council has created strong partnerships with local business and industry to create a shared understanding of the issues and strengths of our local workforce. Driven by the Workforce Development Steering Committee, a training needs matrix was developed; there has been an increased focus on work education for youth; and promotion of employment opportunities to local people and potential relocaters has increased.

Moving forward, workforce development will be further embedded into the work of Go Goldfields, with the transition of the Steering Committee into the new Youth and Workforce Development Action Group, which will sit within the Go Goldfields Collective Impact model.

Extensive community consultation has helped us to identify key areas where we can best impact the local workforce and make best use of the fantastic resources our shire already contains. The focus of the work in the coming 12 months can be summarised into three key statements:

- We can teach technical skills, as long as people have the soft skills e.g. communication, presentation, time management, respect etc.
- We need to create pathways for jobseekers to build careers not jobs.
- We need to build stronger relationships between our jobseekers and employers/businesses.

### **Aspiring youth**

The focus has been on strengthening existing services and supports for young people, and providing a more coordinated approach to youth service delivery.

The Youth Service Providers group, which was developed in 2013, continues to strengthen the local youth service sector, be a community of practice for workers to share resources, and professional development opportunities, and improve support systems for youth.



# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: community development/connectedness

*Foster community resilience, connectedness and social capital.*

One key achievement has been the implementation of a Youth Mental Health Clinic at Maryborough Education Centre and improved referral channels for young people presenting with mental health issues.

The Youth Service Providers group is also in the process of exploring a wrap around approach to supporting youth. Service providers have participated in a series of workshops aimed at developing a commitment to coordinating a universal approach to working with young people that is young person centred. Approximately 50 young people were part of the consultation. The key themes and developments from youth consultations and HATCH:

- Young people want to feel valued and recognised in their community.
- Young people want opportunities to participate and be engaged in their community.
- Young people want more recreational options and youth activities, events and programs.
- Young people want to be able to lead programs and to be responsible for the marketing for youth events.
- Young people want more workplace experience and employment opportunities, more workplace support and better connections with businesses.
- Young people want to be upskilled to be able to feel confident when applying for positions.
- Young people want to be supported by their families and have positive role models eg. youth mentors.
- Young people want to be able to cope with change and transition through life smoothly.

### Oral language and literacy

Go Goldfields aims to improve communication, language and literacy skills, and offer more opportunities for rich, positive life experiences for children and their families.

Over the last 12 months, Go Goldfields has developed a uniform approach to literacy across early years service providers; built parents' skills in fostering literacy development with their children; and raised community awareness and ownership of literacy.

This has been done through partnerships with individuals and organisations; consulting and co-designing; sharing resources, knowledge and experience; and recognising that the community has much to offer, and a foundation to build on.

### Let's Read – one year on

The national Let's Read project, initiated by Go Goldfields, celebrated its first year in this shire. The scheme encourages parents and carers to share books with their babies and toddlers to help build strong foundations for literacy development.

Book Packs are gifted by Maternal and Child Health Nurses at four key points in a child's early years of development, and by library staff (after a story time) in Kindergartens at 3 to 4 years of age. In addition to these packs, Go Goldfields has also developed a Newborn pack, which includes a baby's first library card, information about Rhyme Times, and a black and white book.

As well as funding from the Maryborough Lion's Club, Best Start Stronger Families and sponsorship from True Foods, we also received sponsorship from the Maldon and Community Bank Branch, which was used this year to buy Let's Read books and resources for the Dunolly and Bealiba primary schools, and the Dunolly and Bealiba playgroups.

### New DVD launched to promote early learning

The DVD *Learning Starts Early: Talk, rhyme read and play, with your baby every day*, features local families and is distributed via the Antenatal Clinic at Maryborough District Health Services. The DVD was a collaborative project and is a resource that the entire community is encouraged to utilise and share. The DVD encourages new parents and expecting parents to interact with their baby through stories, song, talk and rhyme, and highlights that as a parent, they are their baby's first teacher.

Clips from the DVD are also available to view on YouTube, sharing the message locally and internationally.

### Shared approach to literacy

Implementing a shared approach to teaching literacy has been a priority, and 29 support staff, teachers and other early years professionals have received training from the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation. The course aims to develop and integrate strategies that support early learning for language and literacy, and the methods and resources are being used in most early education settings in the shire.



### Dinosaur Day 2

Back by popular demand, Dinosaur Day 2 was held during the Easter holidays at the Californian Gully Kindergarten. The event was attended by 100 children and their families and was a successful way to embed literacy in local community events. Partners in organising the event were: St Lukes, Go Goldfields, Best Start and Playgroup Victoria.

The day also presented the opportunity for families to meet local services provides from the Maryborough District Health Service, the Maryborough Regional Library, Maryborough Supported Playgroup and the Maryborough Toy Library.

### The next 12 months

Moving forward under the Collaborative Table model, literacy will underpin all platforms and the objectives will be embedded into Go Goldfields Youth and Work Force Development domains to ensure literacy is integrated in all strategies.

### MARYBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal commenced in 2009 with the purpose of combining and connecting top-down and bottom-up processes for social investment, service coordination and community involvement in decision making. The project was planned to conclude in June 2015, and has been extended to September 30, 2015.

A Community Action Plan has been implemented based on six objectives;

1. Increase pride and participation
2. Enhance housing and the environment
3. Lift employment, training and education and expand local economies
4. Improve personal safety and reduce crime
5. Promote health and wellbeing
6. Increase access to services and improve government responsiveness

The past twelve months focussed on building a sustainable local governance structure and developing a two-year community action plan, underpinned by a neighbourhood agreement that articulates stakeholders' commitments to the continuation of this important work.



*Councillor Helen Broad and volunteers at the Maryborough Community House celebrate literacy with free books for all.*

# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: community development/connectedness

*Foster community resilience, connectedness and social capital.*

### A community plan for Maryborough

The Neighbourhood Renewal team conducted a series of community consultations in July and August 2014 to identify the priority areas of the future community action plan. Over 100 people participated in these consultations. This was followed by a series of three community workshops held in September and October 2014. 50 members of the community attended the workshops, representing all age groups and economic backgrounds, sharing their ideas and vision for the town.

From the consultations four priority areas were identified for the first phase of the Community Plan 2015-2017. These are:

- Economy and growth
- Belonging and joining in
- Natural environment and public spaces
- Health and wellbeing.

A Community Planning Group, made up of volunteers and organisation/service representatives, is leading the development and implementation of the Community Plan. They conducted a further two consultations at the Maryborough Sunday market earlier this year and have displayed the plan for public comment. Drawing on the community feedback gathered over the past year, the Community Plan will be launched during the Spring Fling festival in October, 2015.

### The final Neighbourhood Renewal survey

12 local residents were trained to conduct the final Neighbourhood Renewal community survey. 86 residents participated in the survey, answering questions about current improvements and future needs of their neighbourhood. The survey findings were shared with the wider community.

Areas showing signs of improvements were:

- Ratings of the neighbourhood as a place to live
- The state of housing and the physical environment
- Conditions for crime and personal safety
- Pride and community participation in local activities.

The results also highlighted areas that need further attention. These include:

- Local employment opportunities, employment services, and the local economy generally
- Community health and wellbeing
- Transport.

The survey findings confirmed that residents have a strong sense of belonging, and believe that collaborative work will help improve their neighbourhood. Respondents made a number of suggestions to further engage residents and achieve collaborative outcomes.

### Working with the Maryborough Community House

The Neighbourhood Renewal is supporting the Maryborough Community House to secure funding to upgrade the existing building. With an increasing number of activities and services on offer, and an ever growing pool of volunteers, the Maryborough Community House remains a key player in the Neighbourhood Renewal program.

### Employment and learning

Internal collaboration with Go Goldfields and the Goldfields Business Group meant that the Neighbourhood Renewal team could reach businesses and industry representatives that were already engaged in local activities.

Employment and learning initiatives offered in the past financial year include:

- The development of a training needs matrix, to better coordinate training delivery and ensure industry training needs are met.
- An increased focus on work education for young people.
- Continued promotion of employment opportunities to locals as well as professionals wanting to relocate to the area.
- Community consultations which highlighted the need to focus future efforts towards building the jobseekers' skills, and facilitating stronger relationships between local jobseekers and employers.

### Housing and environment

Major internal and external upgrades were provided to all public housing properties in Maryborough during 2014/15. An estimated \$4.7 million has been spent on upgrades to public housing properties in Maryborough since the start of Neighbourhood Renewal. This means that public housing tenants in Maryborough will live in the best possible conditions, with new kitchens and other internal improvements, as well as external upgrades that provide front gardens and fences.

### Pride and participation

Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal continued to engage the community to encourage pride and participation, and foster an inclusive community environment. Major projects included activities targeting low income earners at the Maryborough Community House; the development of a free community consultation resource for local groups; and the implementation of the Go Goldfields community engagement strategy, called HATCH, which further enhanced local participation. The courses, free events and good news stories from Neighbourhood Renewal were shared with the community in a quarterly newsletter.

### Health and wellbeing

In 2014/15, Neighbourhood Renewal kept nurturing existing partnerships and relationships to increase in-reach services for local residents. Neighbourhood Renewal also maintained its focus on healthy eating through the provision of a weekly healthy breakfast at the East Maryborough bus stop, and by sponsoring nine local residents in Jamie's Ministry of Food program.

### Crime and safety

Neighbourhood Renewal collaborated with Maryborough Rotary Club and Go Goldfields to implement the Central Goldfields Shire's Family Violence Strategy with a focus on increasing community awareness.

### Responsiveness of services

The Better Transport for Maryborough campaign gave residents a chance to voice their concerns regarding public transport issues in the area. Feedback from 60 community members were passed on to the consultants developing the Regional Transport Strategy.

Neighbourhood Renewal continued to advocate for better services for residents in the areas of transport, child protection and justice. Existing partnerships with service providers continued, ensuring local residents' needs are met into the future.

### AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

For the 2015 Australia Day Council hosted a morning ceremony in the Station Domain precinct in Maryborough.

This year the tradition of presenting medallions to all babies born the previous year returned; and all children starting kindergarten were given a book. 41 medallions and 12 books were presented.

A crowd of around 300 community members came to see Betty Lovel named Citizen of the Year; community leaders Sophie Williams and Austin Lynch named joint Young Citizens of the Year; and the Maryborough Rotary was awarded the Outstanding Community Contribution honour.

### COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

The Community Grants Scheme is a valuable source of funding for community groups that don't have access to funding from other sources. In 2015, all groups applying for the funding were asked to show how their project fitted with the themes of the 2013-2017 Council Plan.

17 applications were received this year. The total funding sought across all applications was over \$40,000. The applications were assessed in accordance with the grant scheme guidelines, and 10 projects were successful. A total of \$11,330 was allocated.



*Minister for Family, Children and Youth Affairs Jenny Mikakos visited Maryborough to launch the early learning DVD.*

# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: health and wellbeing

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

### CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN

Council adopted a health and wellbeing plan impact statement to ensure Council policies, plans and strategies are considered against an agreed health and wellbeing lens. This has added a valuable dimension to all aspects of Council's operations.

### POSITIVE AGING

Over the past 12 months, the Active Service Model (ASM) was fully implemented. The ASM enabled more clients to remain independent, thereby reducing the demand for Home Care services.

Council's Home and Community Care (HACC) services assisted over 600 residents to remain in their own homes. Upcoming changes to the aged care funding stream (from State and Federal Government), and the launch of the My Aged Care website are likely to impact on internal processes. Council is dedicated to making the transition as seamless as possible for the clients.

Council also provided package care for 22 clients. The provision of package care for clients, including case management, assists them in navigating the service system by identifying their needs and ensuring that those needs are met. Changes to care packages' name (Loddon Mallee Consortium became SupportFirst) and structure (client directed care) have provided clients with more control over the services they receive.

Other events and projects Council participated in during year included:

- **The Seniors Festival and Volunteer Week**

These two annual events provided a unique opportunity to celebrate and thank special members of the Central Goldfields' community.

- **Improving Liveability for Older Persons (ILOP) project**

The ILOP project submitted a successful funding application to build new facilities for the Maryborough Men's Shed. The new shed was built and it is a valuable facility for the shed members.

- **Social Support Program**

Aimed at keeping older adults active and connected to their community, the Social Support Program continued to provide daily opportunities for seniors to meet new friends and maintain their health and wellbeing. Activities included: gentle chair exercises; a demonstration from the Occupational Therapy team on how to make tasks easier around the house easier; and a demonstration of cooking, incorporating recipe favourites to stimulate memory.

Talks from various organisations included Taxi Victoria, Telstra, Arthritis Australia and the CFA on tips and tricks for tasks of everyday living.

### HEALTHY TOGETHER GRAMPIANS GOLDFIELDS

With the discontinuation of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, ongoing advocacy to maintain funding has been a focus throughout much of this financial year.

Council continued to lead a partnership with Pyrenees Shire and Ararat Rural City. A number of successful initiatives were implemented to promote health where people live, learn, work and play and encourage positive behaviour changes. Some of these initiatives are:



*Community members of all ages have loved learning to prepare healthy meals.*



### **Regional Manager's Forum**

Healthy eating was prioritised in the Loddon Mallee Region Strategic Plan 2014, following identification of commonalities in the Public Health and Wellbeing Plans of each of the councils in the Loddon Mallee. Central Goldfields Shire Council is leading the work in this area for the Regional Management Forum.

### **Healthy Together Food Report**

The Healthy Together Food Report identified food availability and access as major barriers to consuming a healthy diet in the Healthy Together Grampians Goldfields (HTGG) area; particularly for those living outside major towns, where access to supermarkets and affordable fresh food is likely to require time, travel, transport and fuel. The three local government areas that form the HTGG are rated as the most food insecure in the State.

The report also highlighted a poor food environment where packaged meals, fast food, takeaway options, and alcohol are offered in abundance compared to fresh food. There are more alcohol outlets per person in HTGG than in other Healthy Together communities.

### **Healthy eating workshops**

In partnership with Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS), HTGG facilitated healthy eating workshops for school canteen staff and volunteers. Participants learnt how to implement healthy changes in schools and deal with challenges such as menu planning, budgeting costs and allergies. Other training opportunities targeted at staff from long day care facilities, provided information on how to help children develop healthy eating habits and plan menus that meet the requirements of the National Quality Standards and Australian Dietary Guidelines.

### ***That Sugar Film* screenings**

'That Sugar Film' follows a man's journey to document the effects of a high sugar diet on a healthy body. HTGG coordinated three screening sessions in Ballarat and Ararat, which attracted more than 1,500 people. A Facebook post about the screenings reached a record 71,552 people.

### **Jamie's Ministry of Food**

Jamie's Ministry of Food mobile kitchen rolled into the Grampians Goldfields region on Saturday 18 April, offering health focussed

cooking classes to those interested. A total of 465 participants, 25 community groups and organisations, and 42 volunteers joined in the fun of the 10 week cooking program. Participants travelled from within and beyond the three local government areas (some in excess of 50km) to increase their knowledge of nutrition and healthy eating.

Messages of healthy eating, growing your own produce and physical activity further resonated throughout the community. Many parallel activities emerged in the region at this time, including additional exercise classes, edible garden projects, donations and demonstrations from community gardens, donations of planter boxes, and the creation of a food swap initiative.

### **Food Revolution Day**

Jamie Oliver visited Maryborough in May as part of Jamie's Squash It Sandwich for Food Revolution Day. Two students and their teacher from each of the seven local primary schools filled the mobile kitchen to cook alongside Jamie and learn the importance of healthy eating for good health. Participants then shared their new knowledge with class mates to conduct their own Food Revolution Day.

### **Regional Victoria Living Expo**

Local produce was showcased at the Melbourne Convention Centre for the Regional Victoria Living Expo. The HTGG team demonstrated three fun, nutritious and very different ways to cook using items from local manufacturers, True Foods and Capilano Honey. Audience members thoroughly enjoyed the demonstrations and were committed to trying the recipes at home.

### **'SafeLanding' – sexuality education for schools**

Healthy Together Grampians Goldfields partnered with Family Planning Victoria to provide sexuality education professional development sessions to educators from primary and secondary schools in regional and rural Victoria. Principals, school nurses and teachers from across the State attended the two day workshop, which provided a model of implementation and a toolkit of resources including curriculum materials.

# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: health and wellbeing

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

### Achievement Program

Participation in HTGG's Achievement Program increased significantly in the past 12 months. 94.7% of the early childhood centres, 92% of the primary schools, 66.6% of the secondary schools and over 2,400 employees are now registered with the program. A culture shift where health and wellbeing are embedded into practice and policy for all individuals will take time to implement but the community's involvement is promising.

Next financial year, a reduced workforce will continue to support the State-wide Healthy Together infrastructure, including the Achievement Program and the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

### MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

Council's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centre provides guidance, early intervention and referral services to families with children aged from birth to 6 years. Run by specialised registered nurses, this inclusive service caters for a range of physiological and emotional needs and also provides extended support for families with special requirements. Offered under the banner of the Enhanced MCH service, this extended support to vulnerable families includes extra home visits, assistance with ordering nursery, breast feeding assistance, housing coordination and substance abuse management. The centre collaborates with external services to provide integrative care to help families achieve better outcomes.

The past year was extremely busy for the MCH nurses with 615 consultations in the universal service and an extra 360 face-to-face, and 171 over the phone consultations, 114 referrals for children and 31 for mothers, 129 birth notices followed up, and a total of 945 enrolled patients.

The centre continued to offer group activities to families including Lap Time (previously called Rhyme Time), new mothers' groups, as well as 91 community strengthening activities.

A new partnership was formed with the Maryborough District Health Service to offer antenatal education sessions to women expecting their first child. These classes complement the services already offered by the centre and provides a unique opportunity to introduce the other services available to mothers post birth.



## **YOUTH SERVICES**

### **Central Goldfields Youth Advisory Council**

The Central Goldfields Youth Advisory Council consists of six young people aged 14 to 20 years. Members from a cross section of the community, representing local schools, Federation University, and employed young people.

Members of the Central Goldfields Youth Advisory Council have participated in a number of initiatives across the shire this year, including:

- Organising the 2015 Central Goldfields Youth Awards (to be held in August 2015)
- Writing stories for the Youth Focus Page in the local newspaper
- Conducting a youth survey on the participation of young people in events, sports and other activities
- Providing input into the Central Goldfields Community Plan
- Engaging in a number of leadership development programs
- Representing the community at the READY Awards
- Participating in social change projects with the Foundation for Young Australians.

### **Engage! Youth Program and FreeZa Events**

The Youth Engage Program and FreeZa Events are facilitated by Council in close collaboration with local youth committees. Major achievements for these programs in 2014/2015 included: the staging of the Open Air Cinema at the Maryborough RACV Energy Breakthrough; and the 2015 National Youth Week Skate Jam, "Shred For Nanga".

The continued development and utilisation of the Youth Engage Space has also provided great participatory and learning opportunities for the local youth.

Council was successful in securing \$125,000 in Engage! Youth Program funding for the 2015 – 2017 period, ensuring that these critical youth development services continue to be provided to the local community.

### **Central Goldfields Shire L2P Program**

The Central Goldfields L2P Program is an initiative by VicRoads and the TAC to assist young learner drivers to access a suitable mentor and vehicle in order to achieve the regulatory 120 hours of supervised driving before getting their Probationary licence. This program has been incredibly successful. Currently the Central Goldfields is exceeding the numbers allocated to the program (20) and operating with 25 participants.

# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: health and wellbeing

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

### GOLDFIELDS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The Goldfields Children's Centre (GCC) is scheduled for a major redevelopment. This is due to be completed in 2016. The new development will involve integrating the existing centre with Maternal and Child Health Services, visiting services and Best Start Supported playgroup.

#### Gems Room (Age: 6 weeks to 2 years)

Educators work closely with families to gain an understanding of all of the children's needs and routines to ensure a smooth daily transition between home and the centre.

Songs, storybooks and conversations during play are used to develop language skills; while gross motor skill development includes activities such as throwing and catching balls, climbing on foam blocks, and climbing up the ladder to slide down the slide. Children's early literacy development continues to be a focus, with books always readily available for children to sit with and have a read.

Health and wellbeing extends to the community's youngest members, with a vegetable garden incorporated into the children's learning. Children have enjoyed this experience, assisting a gardener with the planting of tomatoes and then eating the produce.

Gems Room educators continue to focus on the development of children's language skills to enable a smooth transition to the Opals Room.

#### Opals Room (Age: 2 to 3 years)

2015 has seen the change of rooms for educators as well as children. Educators have watched the children flourish as they build on their wellbeing and confidence, through having a safe, warm, friendly, reliable environment.

This year all children have enjoyed the art and craft experiences, such as drawing, shaving cream art, play foam/clay, play doh and painting. These experiences are also teaching the children patience and turn taking.

#### Dynamites Room (Age: 3 to 4 years)

Educators used the children's ideas and interests to initiate this year's program, incorporating Belonging, Being and Becoming values and principles. Children's stories were centred on their family life and the activities they do at home, such as camping, cooking, fishing, walks and playground visits.

The cooking program has been a huge success with lots of taste testing and mathematical presentations involved in these experiences. Children have explored colours, numbers and letters in preparation for the Kinder Room.

#### Kinder Room (Age: 4 to 5 years)

The kinder program has implemented a curriculum to inspire young learners to be active caretakers of our world. Children have explored their identity of self, formal concept application, and a passionate understanding of national and global environmental realities.

Children studied the workings of the human body, spending hours completing a three dimensional 'body puzzle'. Lung, heart, kidney, liver, stomach and rib cage placement became familiar through repetitive use of the puzzle. Amazing conversations emerged about the 'why' of body functions and an extension of this interest took the group to view the visiting Mobile Blood Van.

Formal concepts of literacy, numeracy and science are focused on during play and routine; and taking excursions into the local community has given children the opportunity to make 'out of centre' connections with the world around them. Discussions as a shared preschool community is a highlight of the program, with issues of local, national and global impact readily explored with age appropriate honesty.

For Australia Day the group explored the historical events of colonisation; while Anzac Day brought about honest conversation concerning war. Global sustainability is explored daily. Simple conversations at group time about recycling and increasing CO<sub>2</sub> levels has children checking empty containers for the recycling symbol and the switching off unused power outlets.

#### Family Day Care

The service offers families the opportunity to have children cared for in a family home environment.

There are five educators currently working in the program to ensure quality outcomes for children.

#### Outside School Hours Care

The Outside School Hours Care program undertook its first assessment against the National Quality Standard. The NQF emphasises quality outcomes for children, regardless of the education and care setting. The service is rated overall at 'Working towards National Quality Standards'. The service continues to look at areas for improvement and by working through the Quality Improvement Plan.





*The children from Family Day Care helped our Parks and Gardens staff with planting in Philips Gardens.*

# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: community safety

*Foster a whole of community approach.*

### MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

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

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

- Reviewed and updated the Neighbourhood Safer Places plans for Maryborough, Carisbrook, Dunolly and Talbot.
- Developed the Central Goldfields Flood Emergency Plan.
- Reported the compliance of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan audit in accordance with the new Emergency Management Manual Victoria and legislation.
- Audited relief and recovery centres.
- Developed a Children in Emergencies sub plan.
- Developed a Radio Communications Plan for emergencies.
- Updated the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.
- Participated in emergency management training exercises to test emergency plan and emergency support processes.
- Maintained and updated Crisisworks software program and conducted training for EM Staff ready for endorsement by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning committee.
- Developed the draft Animal Emergency Plan.
- Reviewed and audited the Heat Wave Plan.
- Supported cross border emergency management arrangements in response and planning for emergencies.
- Upgraded resources for utilisation in the Municipal Emergency Control Centre.

- Continued to participate in the Northern Regional Water Monitoring Partnership in relation to the management of river and creek rainfall/flood monitoring and early warning systems.
- Committed to participating in the Victorian Northern Cluster Project with Bendigo, Campaspe, Mount Alexander and Loddon councils.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE STRATEGY

Since adopting the Central Goldfields Family Violence Strategy there have been considerable system police response improvements.

The Go Goldfields Alliance has also worked in partnership with Rotary and Zonta to support the development and implementation of a community action plan. The plan focuses on the key role that community leaders can take, which are:

- Advocacy for the needs in the community
- Raising community awareness
- Supporting community connections and bringing people together to jointly name and address issues.

This partnership continues to be strong and has led to a shared approach in the development and understanding of the importance of integrated system responses. However, there is a long way to go to ensure consistent, safety led responses to women and children experiencing family violence.

Increased awareness, improved system and police responses have resulted in record numbers of women seeking support, whether through increased police attendances, referrals from other support services (child protection, family services, drug and alcohol) or self referrals.

Presently, several key family violence support services are located in Bendigo, with outreach programs to the shire. Council and its partners want to ensure that the local community has adequate accesses to these services.

Whilst very good telephone support is available to women, Council must not underestimate the impact of timely, face to face support, where a trusting relationship can be established. This would enable appropriate risk and safety assessments, safety planning and response and recovery programs to be put in place.

These issues have informed the Go Goldfields and Council's submissions to the Victorian State Government's Royal Commission into Family Violence. Within the submission a range of recommendations were made that included prevention, early intervention and intervention in line with our Family Violence Strategy.

In line with the Central Goldfields Shire Family Violence Strategy we have supported Rotary and the Loddon Mallee Women's Health in the delivery of By-Stander training in the shire. This training, aimed at business, teaches strategies that can be used when someone witnesses inappropriate treatment of women and children or inappropriate comments about women.

Through HATCH, Council and Go Goldfields is looking to hold a number of conversations with the community on the next steps for Family Violence.



*Community forums will be part of progressing the family violence strategy.*



# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: community safety

*Foster a whole of community approach.*

### ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

This financial year Council continued to implement its Animal Management Plan to ensure the safety of both the community and animals. A number of new steps were implemented this year to manage ongoing issues within the shire.

- The Local laws department has worked with community members to assist in reducing dog barking problems. Council now rents “barking towers” to residents in extreme situations and these have a good success rate in keeping neighbouring dogs quiet.
- Feral, stray and wandering cats is a problem in all areas, however the introduction of cat desexing vouchers helped reduce the number of stray cats with kittens. Unfortunately, this system relies on donations and the vouchers have had to be reduced due to lack of funds.
- Council is currently investigating a site for off lead area for dogs. Meetings with interested stakeholders and Council representatives are ongoing. It is hoped an off leash dog area will help reduce the number of nuisance dog complaints and incidents.
- Council continues its education program in the community on responsible pet ownership. This includes school programs and distribution of booklets. Regular stories in the local newspaper from Council Rangers highlights the important issues on this subject.

### WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

The White Ribbon Ambassador campaign has continued to be supported by Council as part of its approach to community safety. Council maintains at least two organisation representatives (including the CEO) as White Ribbon Ambassadors and facilitates functions to recognise the role.



*Community group Zonta created a White Ribbon tree in honour of the cause and the work being done in the shire.*



## Focus area: arts, culture and heritage

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

### ART CENTRAL

Art Central is a community based art project aiming to support the development and delivery of sustainable cultural and artistic opportunities in Central Goldfields Shire. The project is a partnership between the local community, and representatives from the education, health, sport and business sectors.

In 2014, Art Central invited participation from community members to create the Museum of Truth and Lies, an exhibition featuring the truths and lies in everyday life.

A series of workshops targeted towards creating work for the museum were offered to residents and community groups. Over 600 people of all ages contributed to the project, working with artists at workshops, sharing ideas, or donating bits and pieces to be made into artworks.

The Museum of Truth and Lies was a terrific success that received significant media traction and welcomed over 600 visitors from around the world.

Other arts activities in 2014/15 included:

- Story Op Shop for Maryborough's Words in Winter.
- The Arty Farty Fun Book - a resource book of art games for parents and toddlers.
- Our Garden - mural with Beckworth (Maryborough Education Centre).
- Play Me Piano - an initiative aiming to encourage the general public to play piano outside Art Central headquarters in High Street.
- Training and mentoring program for local artists, which began in 2014 and continued in 2015.

### CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY

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

To increase community appreciation of the arts, the Central Goldfields Art Gallery continues to present a diverse calendar of exhibitions.

Participation in the arts is strengthened by the annual Community Arts and Crafts exhibition, which continues to enjoy the support of local business sponsorship, plus the annual VCE Art and Design exhibition. Both of these exhibitions were held at the end of 2014.

#### Casey Room exhibition

A selection from the gallery's permanent collection is exhibited in the Casey Room. This growing collection includes works by artist of regional and national significance, such as Arthur Boyd, Pro Hart and Ray Crooke.

#### Golden Textures

The biennial textile art exhibition Golden Textures launched the 2015 exhibition program. This extremely popular exhibition was curated by world renowned textile artist and quilt judge Jenny Bacon. The acquisitive award attracted entries from all over Australia, with the prize awarded to Western Australian based artist Ruth de Vos.

#### Homecoming

To mark the centenary anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli, the gallery placed large scale photographic portraits of First World War soldiers throughout the shire. This engaging public art exhibition, entitled Homecoming, placed the soldiers back into the community they were once a part of. A book relating wartime stories of 41 soldiers from Central Goldfields Shire was published in conjunction with the exhibition.

The community was asked to contribute stories and photographs to the project and the response was overwhelming. Banners were displayed in Maryborough, Carisbrook, Talbot and Dunolly where business owners generously provided windows to assist in displaying the photographic portraits.

Homecoming will continue to encourage the community to remember its First World War soldiers with the photographic portraits on display again during the months of April and November until 2018.

# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: arts, culture and heritage

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

### School holiday art workshops

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

### Friends of the Gallery

The gallery continues to build on its Friends of the Gallery membership. The gallery nurtures this group of art lovers within the community by facilitating group events, excursions and artist talks.

### HERITAGE STUDY

The completion of various heritage studies is important to ensure a complete picture of the heritage assets across the shire and to guide appropriate development and protection of those assets.

While the completion of the heritage studies is considered a worthwhile exercise and necessary in the long term, Council's planning department is currently investigating and developing a Heritage Strategy, which may provide other options to achieve similar outcomes in the shorter term.

The Heritage Strategy will make recommendations for Council's consideration in future budget preparations.



*The Maryborough Railway Station is one of the shire's most notable heritage assets, obtaining recognition from UNESCO.*

## MARYBOROUGH REGIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

The Maryborough Regional Library is committed to making its resources inclusive and accessible throughout the shire. Catering for a range of ages and interests, the library collections are available to residents through the Maryborough Library, the outreach services, and the library van and mobile library (through the Goldfields Regional Library Corporation, Bendigo).

In 2014/15, the library continued to develop and entertain the little ones with twice weekly story time for toddlers, weekly rhyme time for babies and regular visits to kindergarten and playgroups. The library also attended major community events - such as Australia Day, Circus Day at the Hub and Dino Day - and offered special activities during school holidays - 'Monsters in my wardrobe' and 'Jim the Magician' were among the most popular events, attracting a combined 167 attendees.

The Maryborough Regional Library provides outreach services to the Talbot community via a static collection housed within the Talbot Community Library building. Library staff visit Talbot weekly with resources and to provide support to the dedicated library volunteers. The library regularly visits kindergartens, playgroups and Havilah Hostel and will soon extend its route to service residents in Bealiba.

Making the library building a welcoming, safe and practical environment continues to be a priority. Funding secured through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Grant was used to purchase new shelving for the large print resources, additional shelving for the children's room, a public computer work station and study corrals. The children's room remains a popular destination for community groups, preschools and playgroups and the recent upgrades have been greatly used and appreciated.

With an ever increasing demand for computers and wifi access, the library installed an extra computer, bringing the total to six. Password restrictions were removed from the wifi, enabling visitors to access free wifi from 9am to 5pm, seven days a week.

The past year also saw the launch of the SWIFT one card. The card provides library users with access to resources and collections from the 24 public libraries involved in the SWIFT Library Consortium across Victoria and New South Wales.



*Among the many surprises at the Maryborough Regional Library this year was a visit from Sesame Street favourite, Elmo.*



*Theatre performances are a popular school holiday activity at the library.*



# COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

## Focus area: recreation and sport

*Increase participation in physical activity.*

### RECREATION SERVICES

2014/2015 was a significant year for Council's Recreation Services in terms of strategic planning and capital works developments.

#### 2014/2015 Sports Summit – Way Forward Project

The Sports Summit's objective was to ascertain the current health and wellbeing of the sector and then produce a strategic plan for local sport and recreation organisations, Council, and the community to increase the likelihood of improved health and wellbeing for all stakeholders.

As a consequence of the Sports Summit – Way Forward Project, a key objective was established:

*The Central Goldfields Shire community will work collaboratively and cooperatively to increase participation in active recreation and physical activity through informal and formalised opportunities.*

The development and sustainability of sport and active recreation in the shire is the responsibility of the whole sport and recreation sector, and will not reach its full potential without a whole of community approach. Council now plans to facilitate the establishment of a Sport and Active Recreation Community Steering Committee.

#### 2016 – 2026 Central Goldfields Walking & Cycling Strategy

Council recognises the need to develop a Walking and Cycling Strategy Plan to meet the community's continued growth and interest in these forms of sport and active recreation.

Council's Bicycle Strategy Plan (2004 - 2013) has been a very useful document. However this plan needs to be updated to: reflect new developments and trends that are occurring in active recreation and transport; build upon the achievements of the previous plan; and incorporate the needs and benefits of walking, running, cycling, and other forms of active transport.

Cycling and walking paths and trails also provide linkages in the community between important community infrastructure such as residences, businesses, open space, hospitals, and schools. With growth, development, and in some cases decline, these linkages must be examined to ensure they assist the effective function of our active transport network.

In June 2015, Council advertised for a consultant with relevant skills and experience to develop the 2016 – 2026 Central Goldfields Walking and Cycling Strategy with the project expected to be delivered by May 2016.

#### Cycling Capital

Continued planning, infrastructure development, and hosting of major cycling events, coupled with an impressive network of gentle undulating and flat rural roads, enables the shire to continually build upon its already strong position as a cycle friendly community.

The Central Goldfields Shire Bicycle Advisory Group provides the community with a representative and advisory function for Council, and was instrumental in several major cycling developments this year.

- The development of the Ballarat – Maryborough Heritage Cycling Trail, a joint initiative of the Central Goldfields Shire, Hepburn Shire, and the City of Ballarat, entered its implementation phase in 2015, with the official opening of this iconic cycling trail planned for the 2015/2016 year.
- Central Goldfields Shire's major sport and recreation tourism event, the RACV Energy Breakthrough was once again an enormous success. The event generated \$4.71 million for the local economy and won the 2014 Victorian Tourism Award for Festivals & Events, and received the Silver Prize in the corresponding category of the 2014 Australian Tourism Awards.
- Other major cycling events hosted in the shire included the South Pacific Veterans Cycling Championships, Vision Super Central Goldfields Reverse Triathlon, and Mountain Bike Orienteering Sprint and Ultra Long Event.

### Central Goldfields Shire Physical Activity Group

The Central Goldfields Shire Physical Activity Group provides opportunities for community sport and recreation organisations, schools, and the entire community to become involved in sport and active recreation.

The 2014 Get Up & Go Family Fun Day was a culmination of several initiatives to get the community active. The project involved local schools in the VicHealth Walk To School Program and Hunt For The Golden Shoe, the Spring Into Summer Stroll, and the Physical Activity Expo. All initiatives built on the objective of increased participation in sport and active recreation.

### Sport and Active Recreation Infrastructure Development

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

The following capital works projects were completed in 2014/2015:

- Maryborough VRI Croquet Club – green drought proofing project
- Carisbrook Recreation Reserve – outdoor amenities upgrade
- Maryborough Gun Club – clubroom and shooting grounds upgrade
- Talbot Tennis Club – multipurpose court surface upgrade
- Hedges Oval – clubroom upgrade (compliments of the AFL Footy Show).



*Central Goldfields Shire is proud to be recognised as a premier location for cycling.*









# ECONOMY AND GROWTH

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



## Focus area: economic activity

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

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: tourism and events

*Maintain and grow local events stock.*

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: economic activity

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

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Council has worked to implement key elements of its Economic Development Strategy, most notably with employment growth and record residential development. The commitment by Edlyn Foods Pty Ltd to establish an operation in Maryborough was wonderful news for the community, as was the announcement that Capilano Honey was to re-establish in the town.

# ECONOMY AND GROWTH

## Focus area: economic activity

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

### BUSINESS INITIATIVES CONSULTANT

In the second and final year, Council's Business Initiatives Consultant continued to build relationships in the community, attract new connections and develop plans and ideas for a strong economic future.

This year the consultant worked with new businesses and provided mentoring when required. This included discussions with potential new business owners to gain an understanding of the assistance required and guide, where appropriate, to a potential business site, networking opportunities, and Council assistance.

The consultant took the role of Chair and active member of the Workforce Development Committee, and worked closely with business leaders to implement outcomes from the feasibility study.

Council, through various programs such as Neighbourhood Renewal, has put much effort into improving the community's work readiness. The Business Initiatives Consultant highlighted opportunities for businesses to share skills and training. This model is now moving into the HATCH model as part of Go Goldfields.

A visit from Small Business Victoria occurred in August, and this resulted in mentoring meetings for five local businesses. In October the shire celebrated Small Business Day for the second consecutive year. This involved voucher giveaways, a shopping day and promotion of the Central Goldfields Business Group.

Council was seeking to formalise a Digital Strategy. Workshops and round tables were completed with the community and businesses in late 2014 to assist in building the strategy, and it is now in its finals stages. From here Council will undertake actions from the strategy with businesses and the community to assist in further digital activities for the region and improve productivity and operating efficiency. Through the work of the Business Initiatives Consultant, Central Goldfields Shire Council was the first smaller shire to complete its strategy.

The consultant represented Council at various Economic Development Workshops hosted by Regional Development Australia within the Loddon Mallee Region. This informed Council of the economic development initiatives occurring in neighbouring shires.

Council chose not to host the biennial business awards in its usual format this year, however businesses were still able to come together to celebrate. Through the consultant, an event to celebrate local businesses and network is planned for early in the new financial year, with guest speaker Gerry Ryan OAM. This is just one example of the valuable connections Council has been able to establish through its Business Initiatives Consultant.



*Mayor Wendy McIvor with Council's Business Initiatives Consultant Marg O'Rourke.*



## INVOLVEMENT IN THE CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS BUSINESS GROUP

Council, through the Business Initiatives Consultant, continued its close engagement with the Central Goldfields Business Group, aiming to make the group self-sustaining into the new financial year. This included providing administrative support to secure membership and sponsorship; and coordinating networking events and promotional opportunities for businesses.

The Central Goldfields Business Group accompanied Council to the 2015 Regional Victoria Living Expo, which proved valuable in making new connections with skilled workers and potential new business owners. Many fruitful discussions were had with people keen to relocate outside Melbourne. There were more than 120 names and information gathered over the weekend. These details now form a database used by the group to distribute job information.



*Business Initiatives Consultant Marg O'Rourke has worked closely with the Central Goldfields Business Group.*



# ECONOMY AND GROWTH

## Focus area: tourism and events

*Maintain and grow local events stock.*

### CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS EVENT STRATEGY

In 2014 Council adopted a new events strategy to achieve a number of outcomes including the optimisation of local events, the development of new events, and the use of existing regional events as a platform for local visitation.

The strategy was implemented in a number of ways this financial year. Council used the National Trust Heritage Festival as an opportunity to participate in Goldfields Heritage Month. This was in partnership with the Victorian Goldfields.

The shire's biggest annual event, the RACV Energy Breakthrough, was optimised by focussing on a new promotional angle – day visitation. As it stands, the event has all accommodation in the region booked solidly. So in 2014, the benefits of day visits to the event were promoted to increase visitation to the shire without further impacting the demand for local accommodation.

### TOURISM INITIATIVES

#### Maryborough and Surrounds Official Visitors Guide (OVG)

The tourism department produced a new Maryborough and Surrounds Official Visitors Guide (OVG). Production included new layout, content, images and design. Approved and endorsed by Tourism Victoria, the OVG is the shire's major piece of printed tourism collateral that is distributed state wide. 30,000 copies were printed.

#### Central Goldfields Shire Liveability Promotional Video

Utilising funding through RDV for the Regional Victoria Living Expo, a video on liveability in Central Goldfields Shire was created. The video features a young family that has recently moved to the area, has high involvement in the community and runs a successful business. The two minute feature video was played during the 2015 Regional Victoria Living Expo, and then posted on Council's social media channels and websites. Since being posted on Visit Maryborough Facebook page in May the video has reached 22,662 people, been viewed 8725 times, and had 156 likes.

#### Richard Cornish – The Age articles

Council had the pleasure of hosting writer Richard Cornish from The Saturday Age in October 2014. As a result, the shire received two feature articles: *Six reasons to visit Maryborough* was published in November 2014, followed by *Six reasons to visit Talbot* in March 2015.

#### 2015 Goldfields Heritage Month

Central Goldfields Shire took part in the inaugural Goldfields Heritage Month in May 2015. The festival was part of the National Trust Heritage Festival and was celebrated throughout the Goldfields region. Central Goldfields hosted 25 activities in the program, which received great feedback, and plans are underway to hold the festival in May 2016.

#### Victorian and Australian Tourism Awards

The RACV Energy Breakthrough won the RACV Victorian Tourism Award for the Festival and Events category in November 2014. A fantastic achievement for the event itself and the community of Maryborough.





As a result the event automatically qualified for the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards held in Adelaide in April 2015 and gained a silver award.

### **RACV Energy Breakthrough Ambassadors**

Successful coordination of the Central Goldfields Ambassadors at the RACV Energy Breakthrough. A team of 11 ambassadors worked at the event and collected a total of 200 names and contact details to take part in the online RACV Spectator Survey to assess the value of the RACV Energy Breakthrough to the region.

### **Three Well Known Australians exhibition**

The Central Goldfields Visitor Information Centre hosted Martin Shaw's exhibition, Three Well known Australians in April 2015. Locals and visitors were asked to study the painting and guess the identities of the three people depicted in the painting. The guesses were recorded and form part of the touring exhibition, which will continue as it has since 1983. The exhibition received a terrific response from the local community, with many coming in to view it and record their opinion.

## **MAJOR EVENTS**

### **Spring Fling**

For the third year, Central Goldfields Shire's annual Spring Fling promoted events in Maryborough, Dunolly, Talbot, Bealiba and Carisbrook.

The festival ran throughout October and offered a variety of events to suit all ages and interests, including theatre, history, children's activities, art, exhibitions, tours and markets.

Spring Fling is a great opportunity for visitors to explore Central Goldfields while enjoying the entertainment on offer. It's also a chance for local people to have fun in their own backyard and socialise with their neighbours and friends.

### **Summer in the Domain**

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

- **Twilight Market**

The twilight market was hosted by the Carisbrook Lions Club on Friday, 19 December 2014. The Lions Club's monthly market was specially moved to the Friday to accommodate the Christmas shoppers.

- **The Domain Carols**

Hosted by the Maryborough Theatre Group, a crowd of around 300 enjoyed the celebrated Australian tradition that is carols by candlelight.

- **NYE in the Domain**

Hosted by the Carisbrook Lions Club for the first time, the New Year's Eve celebrations provided music, fun and entertainment to 500 people.

- **Station Domain Market**

This monthly market was hosted by the Carisbrook Lions Club on the last Sunday of the month in January and February.

- **Clowning around**

This one-off summer event brought families out for a lively morning of songs, stories, and circus performing.

# ECONOMY AND GROWTH

## Focus area: tourism and events

*Maintain and grow local events stock.*

Local community groups took part in the event to showcase their specialties. Tennis hot shots, girl guides, the netball association, Maryborough library, and MEC playgroup got involved. The Maryborough Education Centre was a big supporter, providing circus performers to entertain and involve visitors. Students from Maryborough Federation University provided roving entertainment with Best Start as the major sponsor.

### Relay for Life

Held in April 2015, the sixth annual Relay For Life welcomed 35 teams consisting of 767 participants. Thanks to the commitment from 15 volunteers, the 18 hour event was a great success, raising \$59,269.85 and bringing the shire's overall total raised to \$425,685.72.

The event was filled with emotions, with a number of people sharing stories of their personal journey through disease and loss of loved ones.

### Wings and Wheels

The second annual Wings and Wheels event was held in Maryborough in September 2014 and was again a highly successful event. A crowd of over 2000 came to town for the weekend to see visiting aircraft and a large contingent of vintage and classic cars.

On Saturday, patrons enjoyed a vintage car display and rally; while Maryborough's Aerodrome hosted sprint racing and a display of historic aircraft and cars on Sunday.

The event is building a strong following and event organisers look forward to 2015.

### ANZAC Centenary

As part of the Victorian Government's ANZAC Centenary program (2014-2018), a free community roadshow called Victoria's Journey of Remembrance was launched and visited Maryborough. This program encouraged and supported Victorians to learn more about their World War I history, to research their personal connections, and to work within their local communities to commemorate the ANZACs.

80 students from Highview Christian Community College and over 300 from the Maryborough Education Centre enjoyed an afternoon session held in the Maryborough Town Hall. Approximately 120 locals filled the hall in the evening for this very informative show.

### FIRST NATIONAL HERITAGE REGION

The Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive (VGTE) continues to campaign to have the Goldfields declared Australia's First National Heritage Region. VGTE arranged for the Inquiry into Heritage Tourism and Ecotourism to visit the Goldfields and see what it has to offer.

As a result, the Inquiry recommended that processes commence towards securing World Heritage Listing for the Castlemaine Diggings National Park, which will bring huge tourism and economic benefits to the Goldfields region.

Further developments include:

- The Goldfields Way touring route connecting Ballarat and Bendigo through Dunolly, Maryborough and Talbot was agreed, signed and launched.
- Targeted advocacy and public relations for the Goldfields Track was undertaken. The track is now listed as a State Significant Track in Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2024.
- A partnership between VGTE and with the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (NTAV) was developed with commitments to establish a new National Trust Branch in the Goldfields Region.
- As part of the VGTE and NTAV partnership, the first annual Goldfields Heritage Month was held in 2015 in conjunction with the NTAVs Heritage Festival.



## INVOLVEMENT IN THE BENDIGO REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD

Bendigo Regional Tourism (BRT) has completed some highly valued projects that have made a big difference to Central Goldfields Shire.

### Destination Management Plan

This plan aims to build on the region's strong growth and tourism potential, and deliver a targeted approach to maximise employment, growth and investment. It will be a key tourism strategy of the region for the next five years. The Destination Management Plan will:

1. Provide an overarching strategy BRT defines directions and actions, highlighting investment (both hard and soft) opportunities.
2. Articulate the current market perceptions of the region (recognising the diversity and maturity of the product) across the broader region.
3. Identify the triggers of visitation to the region, including marketing strategies and their relative importance and effectiveness.
4. Clearly identify perceived gaps in the current product and experience offer relevant to the region.
5. Quantify jobs and potential jobs growth in the tourism industry across the region.
6. Prioritise product development opportunities based on: target market appeal; economic viability (investment appeal - be it private or public); the potential to increase visitation and extend length of stay; and improve the quality of the visitor experience.
7. Identify and prepare relevant material and information that will be critical to private sector investment decisions making for priority product development opportunities;
8. Respond to projected trends over the next five years.
9. Identify how the member councils of BRT can work together with their individual and collective marketing, visitor services and digital strategies.
10. Follow best practice Destination Management models as identified by ARTN (Australian Regional Tourism Network).

## Development of new Goldfields Regional Map and branded individual town maps

Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive funded the development of a suite of regional and town maps for the Goldfields' municipalities. These maps are distributed through each of the Visitor Information Centres located within the Goldfields region.

### Production of a regional Food and Wine App and Touring Map

A regional food and wine smartphone app was launched, and a regional food and wine touring map was developed to promote and profile farm gate friendly food growers, wineries, breweries, cider makers, farmer's markets, cafes and restaurants that use locally grown produce. This initiative is a great opportunity for operators to generate product awareness. The touring map is available from visitor centres and key food and wine businesses.

### Creation of a Regional Showcase video

BRT received State Government funding to deliver a regional showcase video that highlights quality experiences, venues and attractions throughout the region. There is a package of three videos and all versions are uploaded through social media channels and visitor websites across the BRT region.

### Royal Melbourne Show

Through BRT funding, local food and wine producers represented the Central Goldfields Shire at the 2014 Royal Melbourne Show. BRT secured a stand in the popular Taste of Victoria pavilion to promote the region as a food and wine lovers' holiday destination. Local producers were given the opportunity to sell direct to the public, offer samples of produce, plus support the region by acting as an ambassador.





MARTINBOROUGH





# BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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



## Focus area: infrastructure assets and facilities

*Protect and enhance our existing amenities.*

### Focus area: infrastructure assets and facilities

*Protect and enhance our existing amenities.*

#### Projects/services implemented:

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

### Focus area: natural environment and sustainability

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

#### Projects/services implemented:

1. Waste management plan review

### Focus area: strategic land use

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

#### Projects/services implemented:

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

## WORK WITH CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WATER

Council meets with Central Highlands Water (CHW) every six months to discuss water supply and quality issues. CHW continues to improve the water supply system and is undertaking improvements valued at \$1 million to the Maryborough Treatment Plan in 2015/16 to improve water quality and water taste. Additionally it is in the process of installing a fluoride system, which will improve dental health for children in the shire.

## ASSET MAINTENANCE

Council continues its commitment to maintaining and upgrading the shire's vast infrastructure. While much of the work involves maintaining and renewing, major consideration is given to safety improvements, and this is incorporated into the works.

Some of the more notable projects completed this year were:

### Tullaroop Road shoulder construction

As one of the shire's busiest roads and a major link and designated truck route, this road was selected for a major safety and maintenance upgrade.





# BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## Focus area: infrastructure assets and facilities

*Protect and enhance our existing amenities.*

### Maryborough Town Hall restoration

Painting has vastly improved the appearance of the hall as well as the precinct in general. The hall is a 'jewel in the crown' and complements the recent streetscape works undertaken in Neil and Campbell Streets.

### Victoria Street drainage and parking improvements

This was a major safety and amenity improvement that formalised street parking at Highview College and eliminated ongoing drainage issues in the area.

### Resealing

Much of the shire's urban and rural network was repaired this year to ensure that the road life is maximised and safety maintained.

### Maintenance of street infrastructure and furniture

This ongoing work helps maintain the aesthetic appeal of the shire's towns. The Operations Department is systematically replacing key infrastructure as part of an ongoing program, which includes replacing cycle of seats, benches and bins through parks and streets.

### Open spaces

Sport and recreation is a major part of the Central Goldfields' culture and the importance of this must be reflected in the maintenance of the open spaces. Council is committed in ensuring that sporting grounds, parks, garden and open spaces are meticulously maintained.

Ongoing programs such as oval renovations and aeration of grounds, tree plantings, tree assessment and maintenance, mowing and maintenance, street sweeping and town cleanliness are key to ensuring the high standards are kept for all to enjoy.

### Hidden infrastructure

Behind the scenes Council is maintaining a multitude of hidden infrastructure that often goes unnoticed. An example includes the renewal of the recycled water main that runs from the Maryborough water treatment plant to the shire's key sporting ovals. This main has been in operation for over 20 years and requires ongoing maintenance to ensure reliability, and also to ensure recycling and drought proofing initiatives are effective.

## TOWNSHIP ENHANCEMENTS

A key project for the year was the upgrade to Inkerman Street and Majorca Road, including the Inkerman Street/Clarendon Street Intersection Maryborough. This project involved the complete renewal of road, drainage and footpath infrastructure, including intersection improvements.

Link roads within Maryborough have been line marked to provide a safer road environment for vehicles and cyclists.

Safety upgrades throughout the shire towns were implemented:

- Pedestrian Crossing in Neill Street, Maryborough
- School Car Park Victoria Street, Maryborough
- 40k/h CBD speed area in Maryborough
- Dunolly-Bealiba-Moliagul Road Y Intersection.

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

- Tullaroop Road, Maryborough widening
- Neill Street, Maryborough upgrade
- Fells Gully Road, Dunach sealing.

Beautification initiatives were implemented, such as street tree planting, nature strip and roundabout planting.

Significant building works during the year included the Resource Centre Shade Structure, and the restoration of the Maryborough Town Hall.

## FLOOD MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In accordance with the Central Goldfields Flood Emergency Plan and the Carisbrook Flood Study (developed in 2013), Council engaged consultants to investigate and provide final designs for the flood mitigation works at Carisbrook.

The designs, to be completed by August 2015, include a western levee around Carisbrook with a support levee at Williams Road south of Carisbrook. Levee construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the flood mitigation work in the 2015/16 year.

The Tullaroop Creek clearing works, as part of the flood mitigation works, are being coordinated by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, and will be undertaken in the 2015/16 year.

The Dunolly Flood Study was completed this year. Flood mitigation works for Dunolly are currently in design and will involve reinstatement and rehabilitation of the north eastern levee.





## Focus area: natural environment and sustainability

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

### WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

The Waste Management Plan was last reviewed in May 2014. Since then, waste disposal cost increases, the review of waste charges for community organisations, and the retendering of the waste services contract have been completed.

Key achievements include:

- Materials recovered (recyclables and organics) from the waste stream have stabilised at about 39%, which meets regional targets.
- The green waste collection voluntary service has increased in number of users from 576 in 2009/10 to 915 in 2014/15.
- The Food from Waste small scale compost trial introduced a fortnightly kitchen organics waste collection with the urban kerbside green waste collection service. It treated about 300 tonnes of green waste and kitchen organic this year.
- Facilities and services at the Carisbrook Transfer Station have improved with the extension and upgrade to the recoverable materials resales shop, to provide a larger selling area and lock up areas for the workshop and plant.
- A new compost bagging machine and a screening trommel were purchased to allow compost to be processed at the Carisbrook Transfer Station, which augments the operation of the compost facility.
- The rehabilitation of the closed Carisbrook landfill was completed this year with the completion of hydrological assessment and the preparation of an on-going aftercare management and reporting plan.
- Council implemented 32 new Public Place Recycling bins throughout the shire in Maryborough, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Talbot and Bealiba.
- The waste services contracts conclude in October 2015 and the new waste services contract has been tendered and will be awarded early in the new financial year.
- The new Victorian Waste and Resource Recovery Policy 'Getting Full Value', implemented by the State Government in 2013, introduces a number of new reforms and challenges in waste and resource recovery for the future. This will be addressed within the Council's Waste Management Strategy.

The Waste Management Plan 2011-2016 can be viewed on Council's website.

# BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## Focus area: strategic land use

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

### CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS PLANNING SCHEME

In order to ensure that Council's planning scheme is up to date and reflecting the current vision of Council, a review of the planning scheme was completed and a new scheme drafted. The process to have the draft formalised and implemented will take place in the 2015/16 year, with completion and approval by the Minister for Planning.

Once approved and updated, the planning scheme is expected to overcome the following local issues identified in the review process.

- Assist in managing bushfire risk, which could prevent some existing zoned residential land from being developed for urban development.
- Assist in attracting a share of urban growth occurring in the larger regional centres of Bendigo and Ballarat.
- Provide a strategy to accommodate population growth.
- Help reconcile urban growth with environmental risks such as bushfire and flooding, and the need to protect native vegetation.
- Assist in the capture of economic development opportunities through tourism given the significant heritage assets.

### Major Case VCAT appeal

Council officers have been dealing with a proposed broiler farm at 141 Clarkes Road, Moolort, which has become Council's first major case at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) following Council's decision to grant a permit in March 2014.

Local objectors appealed this decision to VCAT and the applicant also appealed proposed Council conditions. This case was heard at VCAT over several dates and was a very complex appeal involving landmark consideration of the 2009 Broiler Code of Australia.

On 15 April 2015, VCAT overturned and set aside Council's decision to approve the planning application for the proposed broiler farm. The applicant has since lodged a further appeal with the Supreme Court against VCAT's decision on various matters of law, seeking to have the case re-heard at VCAT.

### Development activity

Council's planning office received 138 planning permit applications in the 2014/2015 year with some notable applications including:

- Alterations to warehouse/factory to accommodate Edlyn Foods.
- Construction of amenity building/hay shed at existing Potts Lane broiler farm to allow the conversion of the farm to an egg processing facility.
- Extension of Havilah Aged Care Facility.
- Use of existing heritage buildings in Inkerman Street for place of assembly (chapel).
- 13 applications for multi-dwelling developments.
- 25 applications for subdivision. The applications were generally two or three lot subdivisions with most of the activity in Maryborough (17 applications) and Carisbrook (5 applications). This is an increase in smaller subdivision activity creating many infill developments in existing urban areas.

### Building

The Council Building Department is responsible for administering the Building Act 1993, providing permits and inspection services for building works on dwellings, sheds, factories, extensions and renovations.

The past year has seen the retirement of some long standing staff. The changeover of staff was achieved without disruption to services to the public.

A program of finalising old incomplete permits has commenced. Permit fees have increased to assist recovery of costs and bring them in line with Private Building Surveyors.

In the past 12 months, the following permits were issued:

33	new dwellings
94	new sheds and carports
42	Building extensions and renovations
23	Other works, including commercial works, pools, fences.

Building activity is up by approximately 9% compared to the 2013/14 financial year.



## **RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT STRATEGY FOR MARYBOROUGH**

The framework strategy adopted in June 2014 led to a detailed investigation of land to the north of Ross Street with a view to ensure sufficient residential zoned land is available to accommodate growth within Maryborough into the future.

Council, assisted by funding from the Rural Planning Flying Squad, has undertaken a strategic review of this land and is finalising the preparation of the Maryborough North Development Plan. The plan has been prepared in consultation with various stakeholders, including the existing landowners and authorities.

This plan is expected to guide future development and ensure that residential development in has appropriate access to open space, infrastructure and creates an attractive and vibrant living atmosphere for future residents.

## **LODDON MALLEE REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN**

The Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan was adopted by Council as part of a regional response to the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan. The Regional Growth Plan was supported by all Loddon Mallee South municipalities and was the result of municipal collaboration. The plan sets a blueprint for future growth activity.









# PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

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



## Focus area: organisational processes and systems

*Demonstrate good governance and provide quality customer service.*

### Projects/services implemented:

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

## Focus area: leadership and governance

*Provide strong leadership in representing the community.*

### Projects/services implemented:

1. Advocacy
2. New industry partnerships
3. Council awards and work showcased on the national stage
4. Council communications channels
5. Participation in the 2015 Regional Victoria Living Expo

## Focus area: financial sustainability

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

### Projects/services implemented:

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

# PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

## Focus area: organisational processes and systems

*Demonstrate good governance and provide quality customer service.*

### COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Council adopted a new communications strategy in October 2013, which was developed to align with Council's plan and vision.

Implementation of the strategy has continued in the 2014/15 financial year. It forms the foundation of communications for Council, ensuring the same key messages are used across all channels, with the aim of giving the target audience a clear understanding of Council's goals.

New communications channels have been introduced this year. These are discussed in detail below.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

The Customer Service Charter has been developed to articulate Council's response to its customers in line with the vision and values in the Council Plan.

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

Additionally, Council has an obligation under the Public Records Act 1973 to have a system in place to create and manage records that meets recordkeeping needs and protects the rights and interests of Council, its employees, contractors, clients and other stakeholders affected by its actions and decisions.

In line with current standards Council is currently in the process of upgrading its electronic records management system.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Council aims to maintain a safety culture that supports an incident and injury free workplace for all employees, councillors, contractors, visitors and the public. Over the past 12 months Council has maintained its safety management system. This has involved undertaking six monthly safety audits of the worksites. A review of all hazardous substances was undertaken and alternative non-hazardous chemicals sought.

Council was involved in a WorkCover Collaborative Project with four other rural councils, aimed to improve the return to work processes by implementing early intervention initiatives. This has had benefits for both Council and staff.

As part of this project Council identified seven high risk positions within the organisation. It then identified the inherent requirements of these positions to ensure that potential employees are aware of the requirements.

### HUMAN RESOURCES

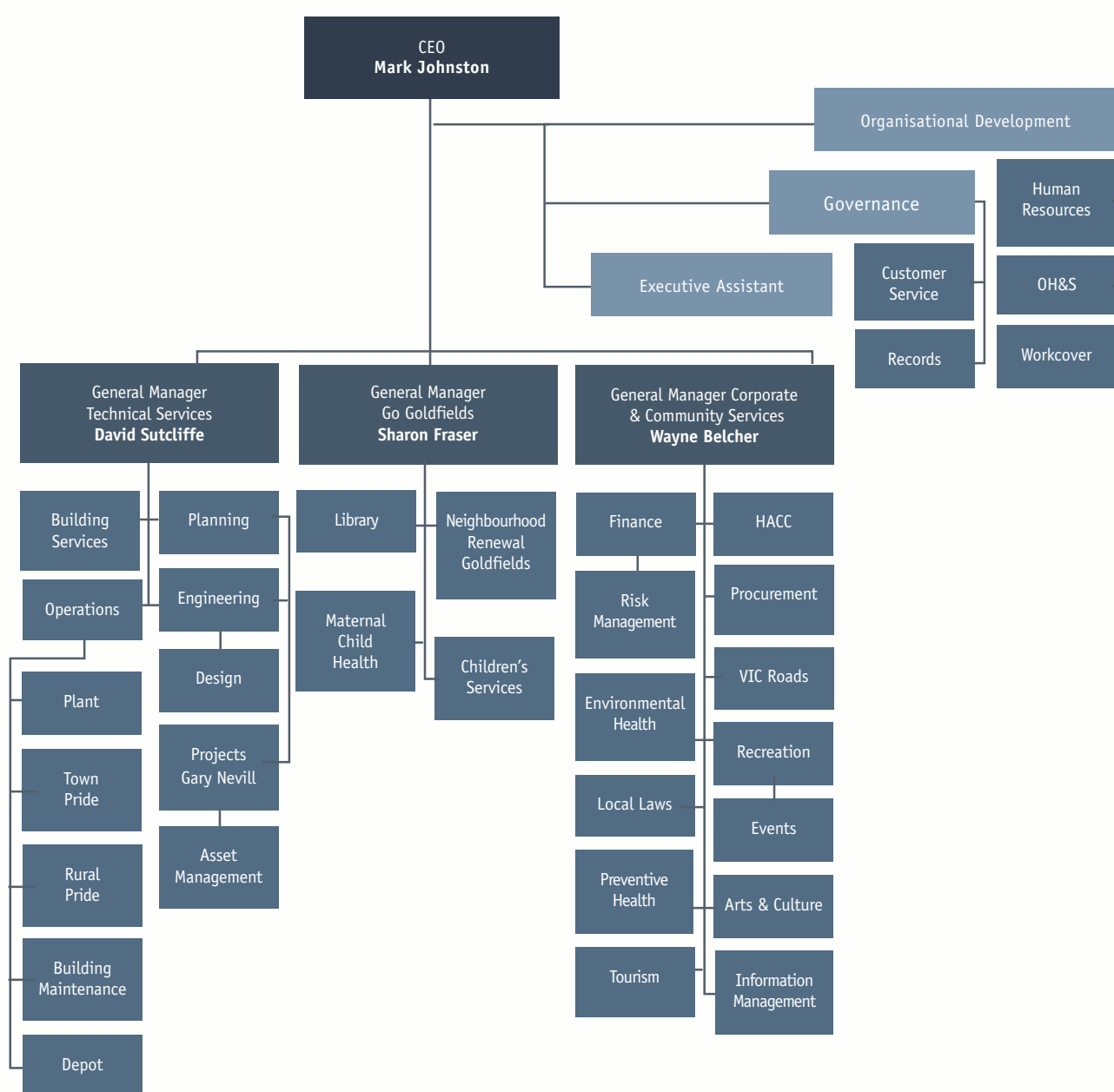
Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO has responsibility for the day to day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan. The CEO and three General Managers form the Executive Management Team and lead the organisation.

### Organisational structure

A chart setting out the organisational structure is shown right.



## Organisation Chart



# PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

## Focus area: organisational processes and systems

*Demonstrate good governance and provide quality customer service.*

### Council staff

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) council staff by organisational structure, employment type and gender is set out to the right.

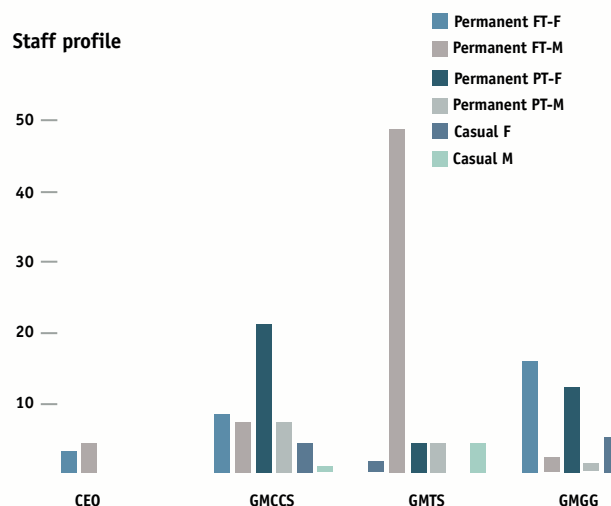
CEO: Chief Executive Officer

GMCCS: General Manager Corporate and Community Services

GMTS: General Manager Technical Services

GMGG: General Manager Go Goldfields

Staff profile



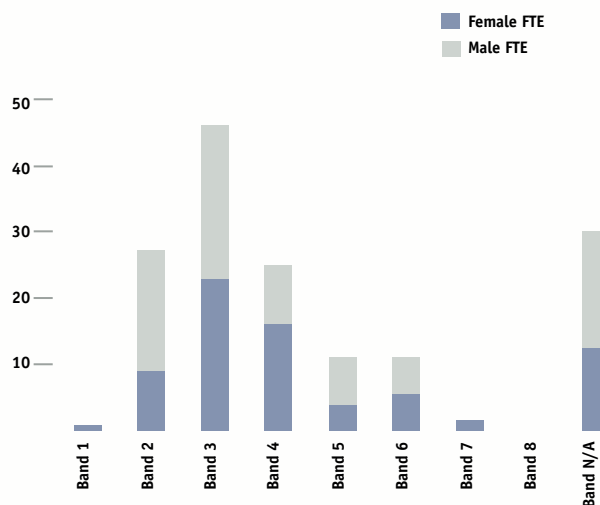
A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by employment classification and gender is set out to the right.

### Equal Employment Opportunity Program

Council is an equal opportunity employer and strives to ensure that all staff members work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. Council supports access and equity and recognises diversity as a valuable strength that will create benefits for employees and the community.

Council's Equal Opportunity Policy has been reviewed against the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 this financial year to ensure compliance has been maintained.

Staff are provided with a copy of the policy on appointment as part of their induction kit. Further information has been made available via the staff newsletter and posted on staff noticeboards.





### **Enterprise Bargaining Agreement**

Council successfully negotiated a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for Council employees which was approved by Fair Work Australia, with an operative date of 4 July 2014 for a period until 30 June 2017.

### **Professional development**

Council offers study assistance for staff undertaking relevant undergraduate and post graduate studies. In the past year, two staff were successful in obtaining this form of support.

Council also provides a comprehensive corporate learning program that supports a broad range of staff development needs. In the past 12 months there have been 24 sessions offered on various topics and either attended offsite or completed in house. This is developed in alignment with strategic priorities, as well as in response to needs identified through performance and development appraisals.

A variety of learning methodologies are used including facilitated workshops, eLearning and coaching.

### **Long service awards**

In December 2014, Council presented awards to staff for length of service to the organisation. 11 staff were awarded for 10 years' service; 10 staff were awarded for 15 years' service; three staff were awarded for 20 years' service; and one staff member was awarded in each of the categories of 25 years, 35 years and 40 years.

### **Policies**

A complete review of all the Human Resource policies and procedures was completed this financial year in line with the Council Plan and rolled out in the 2015/16 financial year.

## **GOVERNANCE PROCESSES**

### **Council meetings**

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

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

### **Councillor remuneration**

The Mayoral Allowance of \$56,402 and Councillor Allowance of \$18,878 are within the maximum allowable amounts set by the State Government for shires the size of Central Goldfields. Council set remuneration levels for the term of the Council during the adoption of the 2013/14 budget.

### **Code of conduct**

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

Council adopted a Code of Conduct on 28 October 2009. Review of the code is carried out, as is required under the Act within 12 months of a Council election.

### **Council Plan**

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

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

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



# PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

## Focus area: organisational processes and systems

*Demonstrate good governance and provide quality customer service.*

### Citizenship ceremonies

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

### Carer's Recognition Act 2012

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Protected Disclosure Act 2012

#### Council's procedure

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

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

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

During the 2014/15 year Council received no protected disclosures.

#### Documents held by Council

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

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

#### Publicly available documents

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

1. Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors under Section 74 and 74A of the Local Government Act.
2. Details of senior officers' total salary packages for the current financial year and previous financial year including gross salary, the amount of the Council or employer contribution to superannuation, the value of any motor vehicle provided by Council, and the total value of any other benefits and allowances provided by Council.





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

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

#### **Freedom of Information Act 1982**

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

The FOI Act embodies the following basic principles:

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

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

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



# PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

## Focus area: leadership and governance

*Provide strong leadership in representing the community.*

### ADVOCACY

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

Council enjoyed working with candidates for the State election of November 2014, and securing commitments from both major parties for funding to continue the Go Goldfields project.

Council's high performance in advocacy was reflected in the 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey, as it rated significantly above Small Rural Shires and state wide for that category.

### NEW INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Council continued to meet on a periodic basis with key local industries – supporting businesses and industries, facilitating opportunities and providing a conduit to Government and agencies. This has allowed a greater two way understanding between Council and industries with industry representation for example providing invaluable on a Workforce Development Group.

### COUNCIL AWARDS AND WORK SHOWCASED ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

#### Victorian and Australian Tourism Awards

The success of 2013 RACV Energy Breakthrough was recognised at a gala ceremony at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on 27 October, 2014 with the event being named the state's best Event or Festival at the Victorian Tourism Awards. This is the second consecutive year the event has won this award.

As a winner of the state awards the RACV Energy Breakthrough represented Victoria at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards gala ceremony in Adelaide in April this year and won the Silver award, placing one spot higher than the previous year.

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

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

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



*The RACV Energy Breakthrough team accepts top honours at the Victorian Tourism Awards.*



## COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

Council has invested further into online communications this year, with the relaunch of social media channels, having first established a Facebook page in 2010. With the assistance of a social media consultant, the Central Goldfields Shire Council Facebook page was relaunched in March 2015 and the response was very positive.

By the end of the financial year, Council's Facebook page had grown from 200 followers to over 600. Posts to the page are now made every few days, and cover all Council matters such as events, reminders, improvements to local facilities, and photos of daily operations.

The items that generated the most interaction from followers related to local sports star Matthew Dellavedova and his involvement in the United States NBA championship playoffs.

Fantastic support was also received for a video Council posted showing the story of a family that recently relocated to Maryborough and the great life they have built.

Facebook communications are supported by the Council website, which was overhauled last year. Updates are made regularly to ensure user friendliness and ease of access to information.

In addition to Facebook, Council started a Twitter account this year. With Facebook now running smoothly, the Twitter account will receive more attention in the next 12 months.

Internally, Council implemented Yammer - a channel for staff and departments to better communicate with one another. The aim is to reduce the number of internal emails circulating. Take up of Yammer has been slow, however a stronger push for its use will be implemented in the coming year.

Council maintains its traditional media communications, with a half page advertisement in the local newspaper each week, regular press releases, quarterly newsletter and weekly Councillor Columns.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE 2015 REGIONAL VICTORIA LIVING EXPO

Held in May at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, the fourth Regional Victoria Living Expo provided an opportunity for Council to promote the region as a means to attract residents, skilled workers, business and investment from Melbourne.

A record 10,156 visitors attended the event and 1,000 Central Goldfields Shire show bags were distributed. The expo was a worthy investment for Council, with 130 people registering their interest in employment with the Central Goldfields Business Group, and around 10 people enquiring about land and real estate.

A promotional video featuring the region was produced for the day and well received with visitors as well as through social media channels. The video is featured on Council's website for ongoing promotion.

# PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW (WHELAN REPORT)**

Council has continued to champion the Whelan Model with May 2015 seeing a more succinct version of the Whelan Report produced to be more readily used in advocating for adoption/application of the model.

The model identifies and quantifies inherent structural characteristics within a municipality which impact on Council's financial sustainability.

## **RATING STRATEGY REVIEW**

A rating strategy review was undertaken, with Council adopting a new rating strategy in June 2014 for application in 2014/15 year. The strategy aims to represent a fair and equitable composition of rates and charges across the community.

Council applies a municipal charge, a general rate and seven other differential rates. The general rate is applied to the Maryborough residential area.

## **BUDGET COMPLIANCE**

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







## Central Goldfields Shire Council

22 Nolan Street  
MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465

### Postal Address

PO Box 194  
MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465

Phone: (03) 5461 0610

International: 0011 61 3 5461 0610

Email: [mail@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au)

[www.centralgoldfields.com.au](http://www.centralgoldfields.com.au)