

21.07

27/11/2014
C104(Part 1)

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

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Vision

Council will consider planning applications and make decisions in accordance with the following vision:

- To provide leadership and to facilitate a well connected, inter-active economic environment in which to do business.

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Overview

The Shire has a strong economic base derived from versatile, high quality agricultural land, the local processing of product and the expansion of services to support production. It is one of the richest agricultural areas in the nation and has major tourism development opportunities.

The Shire is strategically positioned at the gateway to Gippsland and within one and a half hour drive of central Melbourne and 30 minutes from the Latrobe Valley towns. This location provides substantial advantages in terms of developing partnerships within the region and beyond in value-added industry, education, health, transport, tourism and marketing.

The role of the tertiary sector, agricultural service industries and manufacturing in providing employment means the role of the towns is critical to the economy of the Shire.

Agriculture and rural employment is gradually declining in common with Statewide trends in the restructuring of these industries. However this decline in employment does not reflect a decline in overall production. Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicates that for the year to June 2013 overall agricultural production (excluding value-adding) was \$384 million compared to \$370 million to the year June 2011, when there was more people employed in the agricultural sector.

However the fall in agricultural employment is expected to continue and be counterbalanced by growth in tertiary sector employment.

The Shire's employment pattern is dominated by the tertiary sectors, especially in community services and public administration. These sectors are represented in extensive education institutions, health services and the Warragul central business district.

Objective 1

To establish and maintain a strong, dynamic economy and employment base by building on the comparative advantages in primary industry, timber, transport, tourism, education, manufacturing, service industry and commerce.

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| Strategy 1.1 | Encourage investment and establish value added industry both within the Shire and in the region, particularly those which relate to the agricultural base and the natural resources. |
| Strategy 1.2 | Develop a co-operative and co-ordinated approach to economic development with other municipalities and Gippsland regional development agencies and community development services. |
| Strategy 1.3 | Capitalise on the Shire's heritage, environment and produce by improving the promotion of the Shire as a tourism area. |
| Strategy 1.4 | Support world class land management practices to ensure production of export quality. |
| Strategy 1.5 | Reinforce local retail and business services to meet local and regional needs. |
| Strategy 1.6 | Encourage high speed information and communication technology to be made available and used to develop prosperity and social inclusion. |
| Strategy 1.7 | Ensure land supply is managed to facilitate resilient primary, secondary and tertiary industries in the Shire, supported by relevant and current planning scheme policy. |

Objective 2

To ensure the community and local business is ready to take advantage of opportunities arising from the carbon economy.

Strategy 2.1

Investigate opportunities for the Council as a trader in the carbon economy.

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Primary Production

Overview

Baw Baw is part of the Gippsland region that represents an important critical mass of agricultural productivity at the National and State level and associated value added industries and employment opportunities.

The Shire is a major agricultural producer in the West Gippsland region. Agricultural output in the Shire is highly valued.

Dairying is the strength of the economy of the Shire. The south-west area of Gippsland within which the Shire is located, produces a substantial amount of Victoria's dairy production and a significant proportion of the State's vegetables.

Many opportunities exist for the further economic development of the Shire. Such opportunities include traditional produce, cut flowers, fresh fruit, nuts, bulbs, potato seeds and the timber industry. Such products will also assist in the further development of the Shire as a centre for agricultural production, research and education.

Demands on the Shire's resources from a range of industries will continue to influence the Shire's development. These include the maintenance of water resources, biodiversity values, environmental hazards, the impact of the timber industry and mining and the expansion of agriculture, horticulture and silviculture.

The economic strength of the Shire will continue to lie in agricultural production, principally in dairying and in a range of support services and industries. The requirements of traditional agriculture are rapidly changing with practices such as high input farming techniques and improved stock through genetic enhancement coupled with an increase in the average size of establishments.

Increased land values have resulted in some commercial farmers relocating out of the Shire where land prices are lower and the pressures from urban development are less. These changes and the popularity of alternative agricultural pursuits mean that there should be a more flexible approach to facilitating agricultural production.

The future of agriculture for the Shire not only lies locally, but overseas. The agricultural sector will increasingly think globally for its continued prosperity. The needs and standards expected by these markets in quality produce and food processing will strongly influence the Shire's development and economy.

Objective 1

To enhance rural based economic activity in agriculture, horticulture and silviculture.

Strategy 1.1

Facilitate opportunities to expand and value add to raw products.

Strategy 1.2

Develop the concept of the Shire as a centre for high quality agricultural production.

Strategy 1.3

Co-ordinate and continue the development of agricultural research, education and marketing facilities.

Strategy 1.4

Discourage uses and developments likely to impact detrimentally on agriculture and the environment.

Strategy 1.5

Encourage land subdivision only where it enhances primary industry productivity and sustainability.

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Secondary and Tertiary Sectors

Overview

The service industry sector and its links with agriculture provide a solid and diversified economic future for the Shire. The Shire acts as a centre for agricultural production and research.

BAW BAW PLANNING SCHEME

Natural resources and raw materials from the Shire's forests and farms are often processed outside the Shire. Economic development will be assisted by increased local processing.

Future opportunities for major industrial activity particularly that which adds value to the Shire's primary products, are important to the economic development of the region.

The Shire is home to several substantial educational and health establishments, which, by themselves and through supporting businesses, provide many employment opportunities. These establishments are also significant attractors for new residents to the region.

Objective 1

To recognise and support manufacturing, service industries and the tertiary sector (education, administration, retailing, services) as major contributors to the local economy.

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| Strategy 1.1 | Support these industries by targeting Warragul and Drouin as twin towns and as the main tertiary and service centres. |
| Strategy 1.2 | Support Trafalgar and Yarragon as important centres for manufacturing, service industries and the tertiary sector. |
| Strategy 1.3 | Protect the amenity of residents by appropriate design and siting requirements and pursuit of minimum impact techniques. |
| Strategy 1.5 | Provide for future large scale plants processing local agricultural product in the Princes Highway transport corridor. Development is to be subject to environmental requirements, in particular how it treats and disposes of waste and ensures that water quality is not affected. |

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Tourism

Overview

There are many opportunities for expanding tourism. Baw Baw National Park contains the closest downhill skiing facility to Melbourne and also provides opportunities for other recreational pursuits. Walhalla, an isolated old gold mining town in the north of the Shire, presents visitors with a journey through history with great potential to accommodate visitors in the nearby picturesque towns of Rawson and Erica. The existing day-visit or weekend stay businesses present an excellent foundation for linking tourism with the area's produce and other natural and cultural attractions

Baw Baw Shire Council seeks to attract high quality tourist development that is compatible with the environmental attributes of the area. Development should be designed to be unobtrusive and ensure that current environmental and aesthetic values are retained and not degraded. Landscape features such as the Strzelecki Ranges, Mount Baw Baw and the numerous ranges and hills are important to the tourism industry.

Development should build on the strengths of the area in terms of expanding the accommodation and conference base and continue to offer a wide range of recreational activities and accommodation types.

Strip development along major highways and roads should not be supported. The appearance of the environment is important to the tourism industry.

In order to promote active recreation and tourism, Council strongly supports the development and maintenance of a network of cycling, walking and horse riding trails including Rail Trails, as proposed in the Shire Bicycle and Walking Paths Development Plan, 1998.

Objective 1

Seek to attract high quality tourist development that is compatible with the environmental values of the area.

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| Strategy 1.1 | Develop and promote tourism based on natural and built resources. Building design and location should take into account the attributes of the natural environment and local character. |
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BAW BAW PLANNING SCHEME

Strategy 1.2	Ensure that infrastructure is supplied to the site to treat and contain all wastes, provide potable water, have all weather vehicle access and install appropriate on site fire fighting facilities.
Strategy 1.3	Support and encourage the utilisation of the Shire's resources for tourism where they are consistent with the sustainable management of the natural resource base, the provision of infrastructure and without compromising service provision and amenity for residents.
Strategy 1.4	Develop a coordinated Tourist Strategy encompassing the key tourism features of the Shire.
Strategy 1.5	Support tourism through improvements to accessibility of the ski fields at Mount Baw Baw/ Mount St Gwinear, and linking Erica and Rawson with Walhalla by a tourist train and by heritage based development of Walhalla.
Strategy 1.6	Capitalise on the abundant tourism opportunities available in National Parks, State and Regional Parks.
Strategy 1.7	Implement a consistent signage theme and comprehensive directional and tourist signage system, complementing the Latrobe regional signage system.
Strategy 1.8	Support tourism based around agricultural assets.
Strategy 1.9	Support the improvement of access to places of interest to the public while protecting their quality by ecologically sustainable management practices.

Reference Documents

- Growth Management Strategy and Structure Plans – Warragul and Drouin (2005).
 - Warragul Town Centre Urban Design Framework and Station Precinct Masterplan
 - April 2010
 - Warragul Town Centre Masterplan May 2011
 - Drouin Town Centre Strategy November 2010
 - Other Township studies, including Shire of Narracan Planning Strategies Report, Urban Areas (1994).
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