
COROWA SHIRE COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2012 - 2017



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MESSAGE FROM BCHM



FRED LONGMIRE

CHAIRMAN – BUSINESS COROWA HOWLONG MULWALA COMMITTEE (BCHM)

It is my pleasure to present to you the Corowa Shire Economic Development Strategy. This strategy has been developed to drive the economic priorities of the community and Council. It is the result of numerous conversations with a range of stakeholders, including local business owners, members of the community, various departments, agencies and industry specialists.

In developing the plan, consideration has been given to who we are as a community, what we have achieved and where we would like to be in the future.

To date, we have seen many excellent projects completed throughout the Shire that have helped to place us in a positive position moving forward. Streetscape projects in all three towns, foreshore development projects, introduction of branding for Corowa shire, industrial estate development and extensive support for a diverse calendar of events are just some examples of projects that have created significant economic benefits for our Shire.

The BCHM Committee is made up of representatives of the various business and industry sectors within the Shire. We will act as a steering committee for this plan and are committed to ensuring the actions within the plan are implemented.

We have a vision, and as a business community we must all work hard to achieve the goals outlined within this plan. I encourage you to work with us so that together we can maximise our strengths, increase investment, secure employment and promote tourism and industry growth.

In conclusion, I thank you for taking the time to read this plan. We look forward to delivering positive outcomes that will help to ensure Corowa Shire remains *the Choice*...

INTRODUCTION

Corowa Shire is a rural community centrally located between Sydney and Melbourne on the Murray River in New South Wales. Covering an area of 2,407.97km², Corowa Shire has a population of around 11,000 people. Corowa Shire includes the towns of Corowa, Howlong, and Mulwala, and the villages of Balldale, Coreen, Buraja-Lowesdale, Daysdale, Rennie, and Savernake. The Shire has a strong and diverse economy that supports a base of 650 enterprises, and a labour force of 5,768 workers.

Corowa Shire Council is committed to improving the well-being of its residents and the liveability of its community through the strengthening of its economic base. This will be achieved by renewing and maintaining its economic and social assets to enhance its capacity to achieve social, cultural, and economic development.

Over the past decade, Corowa Shire Council has employed an Economic Development Manager, and has actively implemented Economic Development Strategies addressing specific town needs (Corowa Shire Community Economic Development Plan 2003; Mulwala Action Plan, November 2003; and the Howlong Community Economic Development Strategic Plan, August 2005). To build on the strengths of the past strategies, Council needs to plan for the future and take steps to improve the Shire's economy. As part of that planning process Council is reviewing its Economic Development Strategies and developing a new plan that will provide economic direction for all the townships of the Shire for the next five year period 2012-2017.

The Corowa Shire Economic Development Strategy provides a framework for Council activities in economic development by identifying priority actions for the next five years. The Strategy encourages the pursuit of activities that will maximise the Shire's competitive advantages and in doing so, will encourage investment and secure employment opportunities for the future.

The Strategy was prepared between July 2011 and February 2012. Research for the Strategy occurred in two parts. The first consisted of a comprehensive desktop literature review to assess global, national and local trends. The second involved extensive stakeholder consultation comprising one-on-one and telephone interviews with individuals and business owners, and a range of business and stakeholder workshops. At the completion of the project, comments were invited from the general public on the draft Strategy and these were incorporated, where appropriate, in the final document. The Strategy was adopted by the Corowa Shire Council in February 2012.

Actions outlined in the Strategy will be monitored throughout the life of the Strategy and updated on an annual basis.

Corowa Shire Council

Corowa Shire Council provides a range of local services to local residents, business and industry, developers and investors as well as to visitors to our area.

Our vision - We are a community built on our strengths – our natural beauty, our land, our opportunities and our people. We embrace and celebrate our rich history; whilst at the same time continue to be excited in our plans for the future. We are inclusive, welcoming and compassionate. We are deeply committed to protecting our families, our environment, and our economy. We are a great place to visit, to live and to enjoy. We are the choice.

Our mission is to provide for a range of community needs and encourage environmentally acceptable development in the region.

Our key objectives are:

1. Administration - To employ effective management and income generating systems for the benefit of the community.
2. Community Development - To provide a safe and healthy living working and recreational environment.
3. Environment - To protect and preserve the sensitive environment of the Corowa Shire Council area.
4. Roads and Transport - To develop and maintain a safe and efficient road and transport network throughout the Shire Council area.
5. Tourism - To promote the development of tourism and tourist facilities, whilst preserving the Tourism features of the Shire Council area.
6. Economic Development - To promote economic development in a way that balances development with environmental issues.

More than 100 staff are employed by Corowa Shire Council across multiple disciplines. Council has various Departments that manage and are responsible for achieving the key objectives and provide services to the Shire's residents. Departments include: Engineering, Environmental Services, Corporate Services and the General Manager.

Council also auspices the Corowa Visitor Information Centre, Social Community and Cultural Planning as well as the Economic Development Unit.

Council is involved in many activities including although not limited to: Family Day Care, Health and medical, Tourism, Arts and culture, as well as Youth activities and programs.

ECONOMIC VISION

Blessed by the Murray River and Lake Mulwala, a central location to capital cities and regional centres and a strong manufacturing, agriculture and tourism sector including some of the region's largest employers, Corowa Shire residents enjoy a vibrant rural community, a deep respect for their place and each other, and will share this in such a way that the shire becomes the choice for new residents, businesses and visitors.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve the economic vision for Corowa Shire this strategy will focus on activities under the following key objectives:

1. A strong and resilient economic community.
2. Marketing activities that attract and retain business, residents and visitors.
3. A competitive advantage.
4. Infrastructure and economic resources that improve business productivity.

INFORMING THE PLAN

To ensure that an informed and measured strategy was developed, Indite Consulting Pty Ltd implemented a broad program of review and consultation from July 2011 to January 2012. Relevant local and regional plans, strategies and documents were reviewed and the business community was consulted through one-on-one interviews and workshops. A summary of activity is outlined.

RELEVANT PLANS

A comprehensive desktop literature review was undertaken to assess global, national and local trends. The reviewed documents contain key economic, environmental and social issues affecting the Corowa Shire community and were used to make economic recommendations. Considered and reviewed documents included:

- Keep Australia Working – Federal
- Social Inclusion Principles for Australia – Federal
- NSW State Plan
- Industry and Investment NSW Corporate Plan 2010-2013
- Top 10 Big Ideas – NSW Business Chamber
- NSW Community Broadband Development Program
- Victorians. Bright Ideas. Brilliant Future
- Maintaining the Advantage, Skilled Victorians
- Healthy Futures, Delivering better health, research and jobs for Victorians
- Growing Victoria Together
- Victoria, Leading the way, Economic Statement
- DIIRD Strategic Directions
- DIIRD Business Plan
- Regional Profile 2011 – Murray Now
- RDA Murray 2010-2015 Regional Plan
- Corowa Shire Community Strategic Plan 2011-2021
- Corowa Shire Draft Management Plan 2011-2014
- Corowa Shire Social and Community Plan 2006-2011
- Corowa Shire Strategic Land Use Plan
- Corowa Shire Local Profile and Issues Paper
- Corowa Shire Local Environment Plan

CONSULTATION

Extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken comprising one-on-one and telephone interviews with individuals and business owners, and a range of business and stakeholder workshops. At the completion of the project, comments were invited from the general public on the draft Strategy and these were incorporated, where appropriate, in the final document.

- Individual telephone and face-to-face interviews with 90 businesses in September and October 2011.
- A business breakfast workshop held on Wednesday 12 October 2011 with 38 business people in attendance.

ECONOMIC PROFILE

Corowa Shire, positioned on the banks majestic Murray River and Lake Mulwala, is located only 3 hours from Melbourne, 4 hours from Canberra and 6 hours from Sydney. With a great climate and vibrant atmosphere, Corowa Shire is an ideal location for businesses, families and retirees to experience exceptional lifestyle and opportunity. All addresses in Corowa Shire are within easy travelling distance to the regional cities of Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Wagga Wagga, and Shepparton.

Corowa Shire is home to a wide array of small to medium sized enterprises ranging from tourism and hospitality to manufacturing and agriculture. Traditionally farming provided the main source of employment in the Shire although this has evolved with the diversification of the economic base to include tourism and various other rural industries.

The major industries include a piggery feedlot and abattoir, agriculture machinery sales and services, food processors, munitions factory, many freight transport companies and tourism, retail and trade businesses. Corowa Shire's economy supports 650 businesses and a labour force of 5,768 workers, and total output annually is equivalent to \$1.760 million.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Corowa Shire has a population of around 11,000 people with the population based in three main towns including Corowa with a population of 5,628, Howlong 2,439, Mulwala 1,985, and 905 people in smaller villages and rural areas of Balldale, Coreen, Buraja-Lowesdale, Daysdale, Rennie, and Savernake.

The Shire has experienced strong growth in recent years with an estimated net population increase of 615 persons (or 1.1% per annum) in the five year period between 2005 and 2010. Corowa was the fastest growing township in the Shire with a net increase of 376 persons between the 2001 and 2006 census, while Howlong and Mulwala increased by about 100 persons in the same period. The growth shown in the

balance of the Shire is most likely attributed to development that has occurred in the areas just outside the township boundaries.

The Shire is expected to continue its strong growth over the next 30 years. At the same time it is anticipated the percentage of young people will decrease while the percentage of persons aged 65+ and the median age will both increase.

There are 4,291 private dwellings within Corowa Shire. The average household size is 2.4 and there is an average of 1.1 persons per bedroom. The median housing loan repayment is \$1,040 month, and median rent is \$150 week.

The median weekly individual income for persons aged 15 years and over was \$389, compared with \$466 in Australia. The median weekly household income was \$776, compared with \$1,027 in Australia. The median weekly family income was \$1,014, compared with \$1,171 in Australia. 58% of persons aged 15 years and over were married, 24% never married, 11% separated or divorced and 7% were widowed.



HISTORIC INFLUENCE

Since the adoption of the Corowa Shire Community Economic Development Plan 2003, there has been a change to Corowa Shire's local government boundaries. As a result of a regional review into the structure of local government in the Albury area, new local government areas were officially proclaimed on 26 May 2004. The change for Corowa Shire is an expansion south-east to essentially encompass Howlong and its surrounds.

LABOUR FORCE/EMPLOYMENT

The number of employed person in the Corowa Shire was estimated at 5,768 people in the June Quarter 2011. The unemployment rate for the June Quarter 2011 for Corowa Shire was 4.9% (287 people) up from 3.9% (222 people) in the comparable period in 2010. The unemployment rate for New South Wales for the June Quarter 2011 was 5.1% from a total working age population (15-64 years) of 3,779,100.

The most common form of qualification in the Corowa Shire was a Certificate. Of the 2,806 people who have a post-school qualification, 65.4% have a Certificate, 14.6% have an Advanced Diploma and 20.0% have completed a Bachelor degree or higher.

Key occupations in the Corowa Shire are labourers, managers, technicians and trade workers. Major employers include Rivalea, Nestlé Uncle Tobys, Licenced Clubs, Thales, Supermarkets, and Corowa Shire Council.

INDUSTRY/KEY SECTORS

Corowa Shire's total output annually is equivalent to \$1,760,241,000 (REMPPLAN 2011). Total regional imports are valued at \$870.192 million, and total regional exports are valued at \$974.378 million.

There are approximately 650 businesses operating within Corowa Shire. ABN data shows that Corowa Shire currently has 3,346 active registered ABNs. New ABN registrations have dropped in number over the past five years.

Corowa Shire's economic strength is in industries that relate to its role as a convenience centre for the surrounding region, including Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing: 23.5%; Accommodation and food services: 15.5%; and Manufacturing: 14.7%. When combined, these industries contribute 53.7% of employment in Corowa Shire.

Corowa Shire's major industries include a piggery feedlot and abattoir, agriculture machinery sales and services, food processors, munitions factory, freight transport companies and thriving tourism, retail and trade businesses.

Tourism, accommodation and the registered club industry are major employers in the area. Tourism is a fast growing part of the region's economic expansion. As at June 2007, Tourism Australia stated that there were 303 tourism businesses operating in the Shire. There were 123,000 visitors staying for 433,000 visitor nights injecting \$46 million into the local economy. Corowa Shire's top markets are holiday/leisure (64%) and visiting friends/relatives (30%) with the average stay being 3.5 nights.

Transport and agricultural industries are also extensive throughout the Shire area. The region raises sheep, cattle and pig meat for export and large domestic contracts. The local transport industry has an excellent reputation and carts product throughout Australia.

Employment in the above industries is readily available throughout the region. There is a wide array of employment opportunities for labourers, tradesmen and service professionals throughout the Shire.

The 2005/06 Agricultural Census reveals the Shire has 274 farm holdings covering an area of more than 215,000ha with an average farm size of 786ha. The major products of the Shire include wheat, barley, triticale, rice, oranges, canola, wool and livestock (pigs, cattle, and sheep).

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

The Murray River and Lake Mulwala play an important part in the environmental and economic sustainability of the area, through their association with agriculture, tourism and industrial development. Levels of these water bodies predicate the success of the tourism industry with many visitors attracted by passive and active water related activities.

The Shire falls within the southwest slopes catchment area of the Murray Darling Basin. Being located on the Murray River, flooding is an important issue for Corowa Shire as it is relatively flat and has an extensive floodplain. Additionally much of the south boundary of the Shire and the areas around the State Forests are in bushfire prone land.

In 2010 there were 54 new dwelling approvals in Corowa Shire. In the past 10 years there have been 668 new lots made available through subdivision, of which nearly half of these were in Mulwala.

Employment land, that is areas zoned as either commercial or industrial, is currently available in Corowa Shire. There are three lots available in the industrial estate at Howlong, Stage two of the Mulwala Business Park also has three lots remaining, and the newly developed Corowa Industrial Estate has 23 blocks available for purchase.

The predominant land use in Corowa Shire is agricultural; being a mix of dry land and irrigated cropping and grazing of modified pastures, and some smaller areas of forestry. The land form across the Shire is generally flat although there are some minor undulations. Urban settlement of Corowa Shire has been focussed on the Murray River and its associated benefits and attractions. The Murray River and Lake Mulwala play an important part in the economic sustainability of the area, through its links with agriculture, tourism and industrial development.

Council's current water entitlement for the Shire as a whole is 4,227 megalitres, of which Council only uses a small proportion (in 2010 it used only 40% of the total entitlement). Riparian water rights are also afforded to landholdings with frontage to a watercourse and for this reason the creation of additional holdings, and particularly multiple small holdings, is not desirable.

Skill shortages are seen in the areas of doctors and other medical professionals, truck drivers, farming (dairy and pig), aged care, health/building inspectors, welders, social workers (Source: Regional Development Australia Murray – 2010 – 2015 Regional Plan).

Corowa Shire boasts six government primary schools, one non-government primary school, one government high school, and two tertiary education campuses. There are 573 children enrolled in primary school and 542 children enrolled in high school, supported by 72.5EFT teachers.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Key areas of priority for major community infrastructure development are currently (in no particular order of importance):

- Replacement of the Corowa and Howlong sewerage treatment plant
- Replacement of the Corowa swimming pool
- Melbourne St, Mulwala redevelopment
- Corowa to Mulwala bicycle trail
- Corowa Riverfront Master Plan
- Corowa Airport development
- Provision of potable water to Balldale
- Corowa Bypass
- Corowa Saleyards
- Lowe Square Master plan and extensive sport and recreation infrastructure redevelopment
- Mulwala Industrial Estate

Transportation within the Corowa Shire is predominately by road. The Riverina Highway passes east-west through the Shire linking Berrigan and Albury. The Murray Valley Highway is located on the opposite side of the Murray River in Victoria with links via new bridges to the Riverina Highway at Corowa and Howlong. Road networks throughout the Shire are sufficient for tautliner/B-Double trucks yet are not accessible to road train traffic.

The only operating rail line within the Shire is from Oaklands to Mulwala, which is used during harvest time to transport grain. Grain can be loaded at Oaklands Cargill (Grainflow) which meets the Melbourne-Albury railway line at Benalla. Rail infrastructure into Corowa, part of the Culcairn-Corowa railway, was opened in 1892 and was decommissioned in 1989.

The Shire is serviced by the Corowa Airport, located north of the town on Redlands Road. However, there are no scheduled commercial air services.

49.0% of households have internet.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The major regional centres closest to Corowa Shire are Albury, Wodonga and Wangaratta, which are located within a comfortable hour drive of most parts of the Shire. The types of services provided in these major regional centres, that are not generally available in the Shire but utilised by some residents include:

- Regional and sub-regional shopping
- Specialist goods and services

- Sports facilities (some indoors) such as rugby, baseball, hockey and 50m swimming pools
- Entertainment such as cinema, Performing Arts Centre, galleries, theatre and restaurants
- Tertiary as well as private primary and secondary education
- Large multi-faceted hospitals and specialist health services
- Airport and railway with regular passenger service

The regional centres also provide a source of employment for many Corowa Shire residents. The major form of transportation to work is personal vehicle and the main commuter routes from the Shire to these regional centres is the Riverina Highway and Federation Way.

ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

Advantages	Challenges - local and external
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural gas availability to residential and industrial areas • Strong availability of residential and industrial land • Two of the region’s largest employers • Daily commercial freight and transport connections to capital and regional cities • Strong statutory planning and development controls • Resilience to reduced water access • Considerable infrastructure investment underway by Council • Comparably low unemployment in the Shire • Access to a range of transport infrastructure, including roads and airport • Relatively high level of exporting outside the Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural gas lines are at capacity which limits availability for major industry • Retention of young people • Education and training accessibility, especially for young people and those with limited transport • Reliability on a few major industries – requires greater industry diversification • Townscapes are not currently unique and distinct • Limited options for business networking • Employment reliance on a small number of employers • Skilled labour shortages may hamper business and industry growth • Poor amenity and lack of a full retail availability • Inconsistent security surrounding water access and availability • Population is ageing with limited employment for older people • Many residents travel to work outside the Shire • Robust infrastructure delivery in neighbouring regional centres • Great livability available in larger centres • Bordered by the local government areas of Berrigan, Jerilderie, Urana, Greater Hume, Albury, Wodonga, Indigo, and Moira, Corowa Shire is significantly impacted by the activities of its neighbours • Located on the NSW and Victorian border, Corowa Shire is affected by both NSW and Victorian State Plans. • Increasingly uncertain global economic environment • Climate change
<p>Opportunities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ethanol/gas recycling innovation or improved gas infrastructure • Regional skill base and workforce planning • Partnerships that facilitate greater tertiary education access • Facilitate growth from within the Shire to develop the economy • Advocate co-ordinated redevelopment of vacated lands within town boundaries • Strengthen regional collaboration • Improve pathways for local expenditure • Encourage industry clusters to better support targeted industries • Enhance Corowa Shire as the choice to live, work, play, invest and visit • Share relevant industry information to foster business growth • Better utilise existing economic resources and facilities in the Shire 	

STRATEGY

Abbreviation	Delivery timeline
Short	2012 – 2013
Medium	2013 – 2015
Long	2015 - 2017
Ongoing	Throughout life of strategy



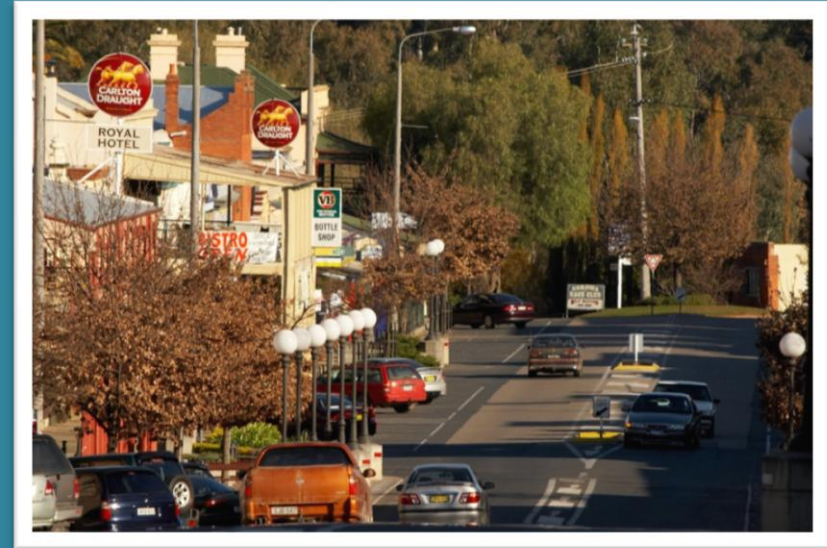
1. A STRONG AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

The heart of any business is the connection it has with other businesses and individuals that it can call upon to meet its needs – such as trading locally and sourcing goods and services. Strong and resilient businesses need great networks to maximise opportunities to retain and expand business, and to attract new business.

Government, business, educators, and the community must work together to create the networks required for a vibrant economy across Corowa Shire.

Networks capitalise on local advantages and collective experience to encourage local enterprise and innovation, serve the needs of local residents, workers, and businesses, and promote stable employment and increased social equity.

Through networking and clever programming, businesses can be encouraged to work as responsible partners, contributing to the communities and regions where they operate, protecting the natural environment, and providing workers with good pay, benefits, opportunities for upward mobility, and a healthy work environment.



1. A STRONG AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

1.1 INNOVATIVE NETWORKS

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Partnerships that allows innovative professional development and connection.			A strong and diverse range of business networks are actively operating throughout the Shire.
Action 1	Develop guidelines to assist business and retail groups in the establishment of sustainable business associations and networks.	Council / BCHM Committee	Short	A strong sense of connectedness amongst the local business community with Council.
Action 2	Actively participate in existing local business networks.	Business owners	Ongoing	Businesses are engaged and represented with decisions that affect them.
Action 3	Work towards establishing industry and business clusters to ensure greater industry representation (i.e. home-based business, tourism).	Chamber of Commerce	Medium	Businesses are aware of, and connected to, government agencies and departments that can offer them support.
Action 4	Routinely consult with business and industry on changes that would potentially impact the local economy.	BCHM Committee	Ongoing	
Action 5	Participate in regional economic development networks to ensure Corowa Shire's interests are advanced.	Council / BCHM Committee	Ongoing	

1. A STRONG AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

1.2 BUSINESS SUPPORT

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Facilitate and provide a comprehensive program of training and assistance, and accurate information that develops and maintains the economic culture of Corowa Shire.			Enhanced business skills. A comprehensive range of formal and informal training opportunities are offered and facilitated.
Action 1	Continue to build relationships with key landowners and large businesses to monitor and respond to their needs.	BCHM Committee / Council	Ongoing	Economic development is viewed as proactive, supportive, and hands-on.
Action 2	Facilitate and promote a calendar of training opportunities.	Council / MHBEC/ Murray Now / RDA / Dept. Industry & Investment	Medium	The BCHM is widely referenced in terms of best-practice governance and economic representation.
Action 3	Strengthen partnerships between government agencies, education institutions and businesses in the delivery of programs that aim at growing business and employment opportunities.	Council	Ongoing	Investors and business can access a range of business planning information. Information is co-ordinated and responsible to investor and business needs.
Action 4	Provide access to current, relevant and timely information on local demographics and economic trends.	Council	Ongoing	
Action 5	Maintain a reliable electronic database of local businesses.	Council	Ongoing	
Action 6	Monitor the impact of legislation and regulations on local business.	Council	Ongoing	

2. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

A strong community is diverse with a broad range of quality choices. The best tool in strengthening the offer provided within the Shire is to know the current profile of the community, and to use existing experiences and successes as a platform for attraction and investment.

Existing and new residents have desires and expectations about the liveability of their community. A diverse retail offer, good schools, accessible natural environment, attractive cafes and restaurants, easy transport and safety are key aspects of a liveable community. Promoting the wonderful aspects of the individual communities within the Shire, both internally and externally will positively impact population growth and sustainability.

Human resources are very valuable in any economy, so communities should provide life-long skills and learning opportunities by investing in excellent schools, post-secondary institutions, and opportunities for continuous education and training available to all.

Retaining existing and attracting new business are important to the wealth creation of the communities within the Shire. Assisting existing businesses to be successful and promoting these successes will encourage new business and industry.



2. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING AND CELEBRATING OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Maintain a broad understanding of the Shire's economic profile and work to recognise and share the successes of the business community.			Local businesses are aware of Council services.
Action 1	Undertake an annual business survey to identify ways to improve Council services, and business confidence.	Council	Ongoing	There is a high level of satisfaction with Council planning and services.
Action 2	Commission market research as needed to inform decision making.	Council	Medium	The broader community is proud of the achievements of its local people and workers.
Action 3	Use existing communication channels to promote business successes to the broader shire community.	Chamber of Commerce / Corowa Shire Tourism	Ongoing	Businesses are recognised for their commercial, innovation and sustainability initiatives.
Action 4	Raise the awareness of and promote successful business enterprise and industry cluster networks.	Chamber of Commerce / Corowa Shire Tourism / Council	Ongoing	
Action 5	Encourage and support businesses to apply for available grants and awards.	Chamber of Commerce / Council	Ongoing	

2. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

2.2 COROWA SHIRE – THE CHOICE

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Promote Corowa Shire, and the distinct individual townships within the Shire, as the choice of destination for relocation, long stay or a visit.			The number of visitors to Corowa Shire, and the length of their stay have increased.
Action 1	Work with Murray Regional Tourism, RDA Murray, Tourism NSW and local tourism associations, operators and visitor centres to advance tourism related marketing and promotion.	Corowa Shire Tourism / Council	Medium	Visiting friends and relatives account for increased overnight visitors.
Action 2	Implement and review the Tourism Marketing Strategy to promote Corowa Shire as a great place to live, visit and stay.	Corowa Shire Tourism	Long	A greater percentage of visitors are staying for 3-4 nights in the Shire.
Action 3	Develop a vibrant and diverse calendar of events focused on showcasing the social, environmental and economic attractions of the Shire.	Council / Community	Medium	Residents, business operators, and tourism operators are engaged in a greater number of events.
Action 4	Pursue opportunities to market the retail, commercial and service offer, and natural assets of the townships within the Shire and encourage businesses to financially support marketing initiatives.	Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	Increase in the number of cross border relationships and collaborative projects.
Action 5	Strengthen partnerships with neighbouring Council's to collaborate on projects that result in cross-border tourism visitor benefit.	Council	Ongoing	
Action 6	Provide incentives to encourage residents of the Shire to visit local attractions with a view to creating tourism advocates.	Businesses / Corowa Shire Tourism	Medium	

2. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

2.3 INVESTMENT

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Make Corowa Shire the choice for internal and external economic investment.			There is ample, competitive industrial land within the Shire.
Action 1	Develop an Investment Marketing Strategy to promote Corowa Shire as a place to invest using a variety of mediums (such as a DVD prospectus, website, events).	Council	Long	Population growth increases to 1.3% per annum. Full implementation and review of the Investment Marketing Strategy.
Action 2	Develop a Residential Marketing Strategy to promote Corowa Shire as a great place to live and work.	Council	Medium	Full implementation and review of the Residential Marketing Strategy.
Action 3	Link owners, tenants, developers and investors to key development sites.	Council / Real Estate Agents	Ongoing	Increased levels of employment in industrial and employment zones.
Action 4	Monitor and ensure that available industrial land meets market demands.	Council	Ongoing	
Action 5	Provide support to home based businesses wishing to invest locally in business growth.	Council	Ongoing	

2. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

2.4 SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Create partnerships and implement projects that seek to attract, retain and develop Corowa Shire's workforce.			Increase in the available labour force. More residents are participating in employment.
Action 1	Work with other regional Councils to implement relevant actions identified in the Workforce Management Plan.	Council	Short	Young people are staying in the Shire for education and employment.
Action 2	Work with government agencies, educators and local industry clusters to identify and address skill shortages and workforce requirements.	Dept. Employment & Workplace Relations / Council / Businesses	Ongoing	Unemployed residents are assisted in finding work in the Shire.
Action 3	Form partnerships and participate in projects that focus on educating and skilling young people and retaining them in employment in the Shire.	Dept. Employment & Workplace Relations / Council / Businesses / Educators	Medium	
Action 4	Work with key employers to develop strategies to address critical retrenchments and lay-offs.	Dept. Employment & Workplace Relations / Council	Medium	

3. A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Corowa Shire's most valuable assets are the ones that we already have, and these existing assets need to be capitalised upon and strengthened.

Existing businesses are already contributing to our local communities, so economic development efforts should give first priority to supporting existing businesses and industry as the best source of business expansion and local job growth.

Community development and economic development should focus on promoting local entrepreneurship to build locally based industries and businesses that can succeed among national and international competitors.

Excellent economic resources and strong infrastructure delivery, as well as positive referral from existing businesses within the Shire will encourage new business and industry to locate in Corowa Shire.



3. A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

3.1 RESPONSIBLE LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Corowa Shire's economic viability and sustainability is protected and advanced through responsible land-use and development.			A place making approach is taken to all water foreshore and open space developments.
Action 1	Develop and implement Open Space Master Plans that improve sociability, access, multi-dimensional uses and activities, comfort and image of places.	Council	Long	Investment opportunities are clearly identified.
Action 2	Develop and co-ordinate strategic land use, economic and issue-specific strategic plans to guide the Shire's physical and economic development.	Council / Dept. Planning	Ongoing	A sufficient amount of industrial land is available throughout the Shire.
Action 3	Monitor the demand and availability of industrial land in Corowa Shire, and provide sufficient zoned land for commercial and industrial development.	Council	Ongoing	
Action 4	Protect high quality agricultural land from development that may be prejudicial to their ongoing operations.	Council / Land owners / Developers / Dept. Lands	Ongoing	
Action 5	Consolidate the commercial areas and allow for mixed commercial/ medium density development.	Council	Long	

3. A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

3.2 DECISION MAKING AND REGULATIONS

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Reduced compliance costs and confusion associated with all regulation approvals processes.			Proactive approach to facilitating investment and business needs.
Action 1	Develop a single point of reference on the Corowa Shire Council website for all economic related regulatory approvals.	Council	Short	Consistent and accurate information provided.
Action 2	Ensure that strategic planning relative to economic development embraces the principles of the Economic Development Strategy.	Council	Medium	Consistent approach to decision making and enforcement.

3. A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

3.3 WATER

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Water is always available and the business community accesses it and uses it in an effective and efficient manner.			There is ample water in the Murray River and Lake Mulwala during peak tourism periods.
Action 1	Work closely with government agencies to manage the impact of changing water levels on the tourism sector.	Council	Ongoing	Council and community assets are well watered.
Action 2	Ensure that Council has a secure water supply that services community infrastructure, business and residential requirements and allows for future expansion.	Council / Murray-Darling Basin Authority	Ongoing	There are several examples of private best practice water use within the Shire. Council has strong partnerships with government agencies to ensure that water is an available resource within the Shire.
Action 3	Develop partnerships that serve to improve irrigation efficiencies and promotion of best practice in rural areas of the Shire.	Council	Short	
Action 4	Identify opportunities and lobby for the implementation of projects and practices that improve resilience to ongoing reduced water access, and encourage environmental best practice within the Shire.	Council	Medium	
Action 5	Implement and promote sustainable water use guidelines, and recognise and celebrate best practice.	Council	Medium	
Action 6	Work closely with government agencies to manage the impact of a future with less water on our agriculture sector.	Council	Ongoing	

3. A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

3.4 TOURISM

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	The Shire's tourism offer is aspirationally positioned through the development of the tourism related product and service offer.			Average spend per night has increased and bypassed the State average.
Action 1	Work with Murray Regional Tourism, RDA Murray, Tourism NSW and local tourism associations and operators to advance tourism related development and investment.	Council	Short	Growth in older working and young midlife singles and couples sectors visiting the Shire.
Action 2	Encourage tourism activity that sustains and enhances the Shire's environmental and social character.	Council	Ongoing	A higher average accommodation rating across the Shire. More choice for eating out options.
Action 3	Develop and implement a Tourism Investment Strategy that considers accommodation, restaurants and attractions on offer in the Shire.	Council / Corowa Shire Tourism	Long	Improvement in tourism product across the shire.
Action 4	Work with tourism operators to encourage innovative and sustainable offering and practices to encourage growth in visitation.	Corowa Shire Tourism	Short	
Action 5	Build cross-border relationships to leverage tourism based opportunities.	Council / Corowa Shire Tourism	Short	

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

The planning, provision and maintenance of infrastructure and economic resources is essential to providing a conducive and attractive business and investment environment. The identification and facilitation of major economic projects and opportunities, creating safe and attractive places, managing movement of people, goods and services, and providing essential services are all key roles for Council in business productivity.

Since industries, transportation, land uses, natural resources, and other key elements of a healthy economy are regional in scope, communities and the private sector should co-operate with Council and government agencies to create regional structures that promote a coherent region that respects local character and identity.



4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

4.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Ensure the protection and sustainability of our communities natural assets			Development is progressed without compromising the natural environment.
Action 1	Implement mechanisms to monitor land supply trends and values and ensure adequate supply for residential and industrial development.	Council	Short	Heritage assets are protect and adequately maintained.
Action 2	Protect the natural environment by zoning identified areas for environmental protection.	Council	Short	
Action 3	Ensure the Shire's principal natural assets, the Murray River and Lake Mulwala, are protected from land use and development that may be prejudicial to its long term sustainability.	Council / Murray CMA / Dept. Water / Murray River Action Group	Ongoing	
Action 4	Clarify roles of council and other external agencies and align policies.	Council	Short	
Action 5	Protect heritage items through local planning provisions.	Council	Ongoing	

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

4.2 UTILITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Monitor and improve the capacity and sustainability of utility provision to business and industry.			Reduce eco-footprint in the business community.
Action 1	Lobby for investment in technology and infrastructure that supports the ability of local businesses to succeed, improves the community, and provides open access to information and resources.	Council	Ongoing	Provision of economic resources required to do business.
Action 2	Investigate opportunities to work with service providers to improve the capabilities of the natural gas network within the Shire, with focus on provision of services to major industry.	Council / RDA Murray	Medium	
Action 3	Review and improve waste management services supporting businesses to improve access to and use of waste recycling services, with a focus on rural industry.	Council / Dept. Water	Medium	
Action 4	Encourage environmentally sustainable building designs for new businesses and industry.	Council / Dept. Planning	Medium	

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

4.3 TRANSPORT

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Transport throughout the Shire is safe, convenient, accessible and easy.			Safe and convenient movement of traffic through the Shire.
Action 1	Design, develop, maintain and manage the road infrastructure throughout the Shire which supports safe and convenient transport movement, and direct access to main roads.	Council	Ongoing	Efficient utilisation of existing car parking infrastructure.
Action 2	Work with government agencies and relevant stakeholder to ensure a strong outcome for the Mulwala/Yarrawonga Bridge.	Moira & Corowa Shire/ Motor Registry Services / VicRoads	Short	Car parking infrastructure that supports increased transactions in commercial and activity centres.
Action 3	Lobby for the improvement of public transport access and connectivity throughout the Shire and into surrounding regions.	Council	Ongoing	Limit isolation and improve public transport services.
Action 4	Consider options for heavy vehicle bypasses.	Council	Medium	
Action 5	Encourage mixed-use centres to reduce travel needs, and explore opportunities to promote greater use of alternative non-vehicle based transportation in town centres.	Businesses / Council	Short	
Action 6	Investigate options for efficient use and development of Corowa Airport	Council	Medium	
Action 7	Review developer standards and contribution towards traffic infrastructure.	Council	Medium	

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES THAT IMPROVE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

4.4 COMMERCIAL & ACTIVITY CENTRES

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective	Corowa Shire's key commercial and activity centres are developed in a proactive and coordinated way so as to provide vibrant, safe and clean environments that reflect the unique character of each precinct.			A sense of place where people can meet and connect. A desirable place to spend time that is clean, safe and easy to access.
Action 1	Design, develop, maintain and manage the hard infrastructure supporting commercial and activity centres to best practice standards for footpaths, street lighting, car parking, landscaping and lighting.	Council	Ongoing	A whole-of-council approach to place management.
Action 2	Work collaboratively with business and community groups to inform infrastructure improvement.	Council	Ongoing	Strong partnerships with key stakeholders delivering structure, business and marketing plans.
Action 3	Develop ongoing relationships with commercial property owners and leasing managers to achieve lower vacancy rates, improved business and retail mix and ensure high level presentation.	Real Estate Agents / Council	Ongoing	Improved economic viability of commercial and activity centres.
Action 4	Encourage non-vehicle transit to commercial and activity centres by providing accessible walking and cycling routes, and improving way-finding signage.	Council / Motor Registry Services	Medium	
Action 5	Develop and implement a Commercial and Activity Centre Branding Strategy that articulates clear identities and precinct branding activities for each respective centre.	BCHM Committee / Council	Medium	

REVIEW

This Economic Development Strategy provides a framework of actions for the next five years. In order for this Strategy to remain relevant to the Shire's business characteristics and changing Council perspective, it is important to build an ongoing monitoring and review requirement into this Strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation the strategy is important to ensure that Corowa Shire Council meets its outlined objectives.

Performance measures outlined in the strategy will form the basis of an annual review. The effective delivery (on time and within budget) of Council initiatives outlined in the action programs will form the basis of assessing the performance of the strategy implementation.