



Shire of West Arthur
Strategic Community Plan
2017-2027

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1. Welcome from the Shire President

The Shire of West Arthur Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027 was the first full review of the Strategic Community Plan prepared in 2013 as a requirement of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Guidelines.

Following a number of community engagement activities in late 2017, a desktop review of the Plan was undertaken in 2018. A full review will be undertaken after the 2019 local government elections and prior to the preparation of the 2020/21 Budget.

During the past five years there has been some significant infrastructure development that has assisted to meet the community's vision including the completion of the Darkan Town Hall redevelopment, completion of eight new aged persons housing units, completion of the Darkan Light Industrial Area extension, Collie Darkan Rail Trail extension, and Darkan Caravan Park redevelopment. Other projects that are still in progress include Darkan railway reserve redevelopment, Lake Towerrinning enhancement project, and expansion of the Health and Resource Centre.

As we look into the next ten years, funding for projects will be far more competitive and limited which will result in the Shire focusing more on services, community development, asset maintenance and preservation activities, and advocacy to ensure that the Shire remains a safe, sustainable and vibrant place to live.

This plan is the overarching guide for the future of our Shire and drives the community's vision. It identifies how the Shire will address issues like reduced funding, encouraging economic development, ensuring community vitality, and retention and enhancement of services. It is Council's commitment to achieving the vision and the community's aspirations.

The Shire has carried out a number of community engagement activities to ensure the Plan aligns with the desires, expectations and vision of local residents and ratepayers. Thank you to the community members who responded to surveys, met with Shire staff, participated in focus group planning, and attended the Enterprising Communities workshops.

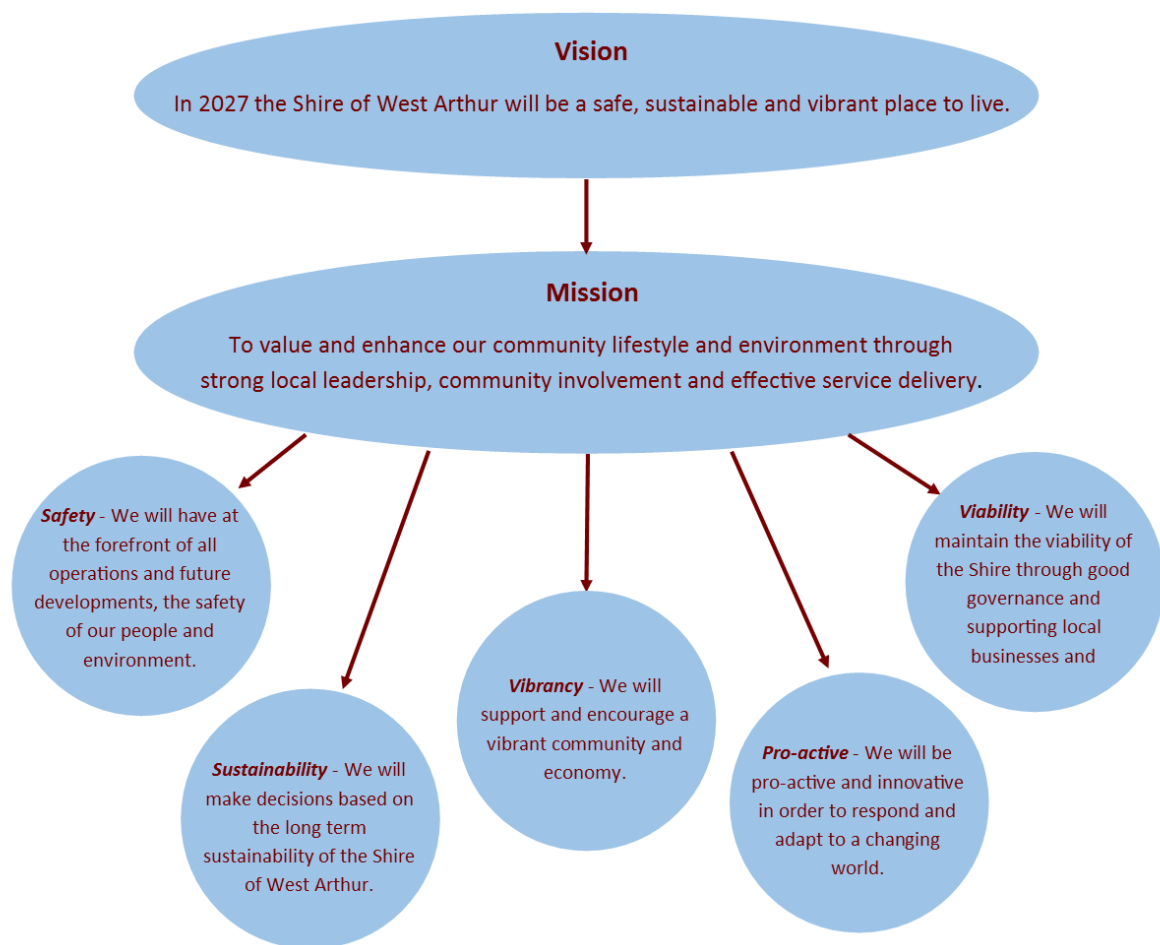
The ongoing viability of this Shire and community will continue to be at the forefront of all deliberations of Council. We look forward to implementing the Plan.

Ray Harrington
Shire President

2. Our Community Strategic Plan

This document is the Shire’s principal 10-year strategy and planning document and guides the development of other plans. This Plan has been prepared with reference to local strategies and takes into consideration input from community surveys, and various local stakeholder groups which has shaped our vision, mission and values.

The purpose of this plan is to give a clear sense of direction with priority areas and key goals for the community and the Shire for the next ten years. It should be read with the Corporate Plan which outlines the actions that will be undertaken to achieve each of the key goals.



2.1 Key Stakeholders and Documents

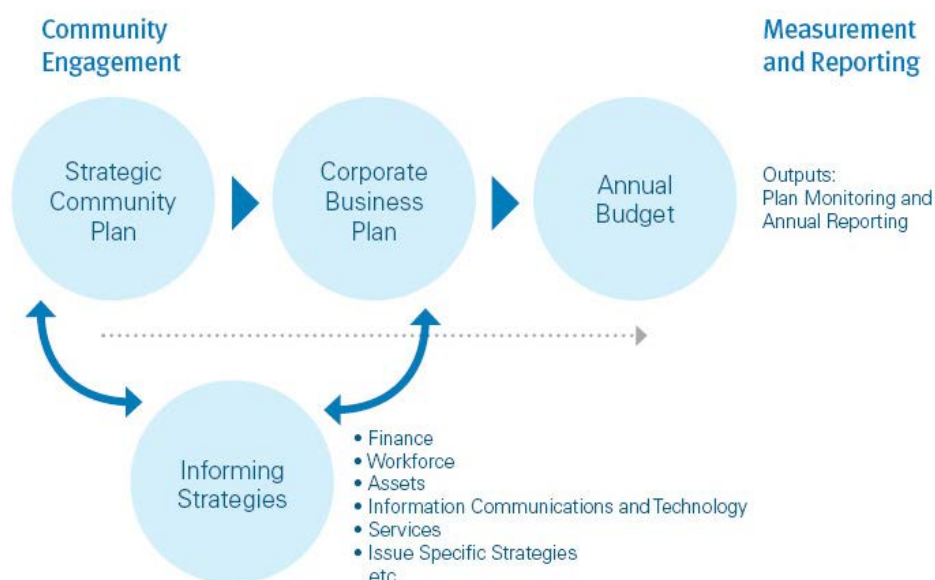
The Shire of West Arthur is a stakeholder in the Wheatbelt Blueprint and Wheatbelt South Sub-Regional Economic Strategy. This analysis has been undertaken within the context of Federal and State planning.

Federally the Shire of West Arthur collaborates closely with Regional Development Australia – Wheatbelt and is a stakeholder in the RDA Wheatbelt Regional Plan in particular infrastructure and telecommunications strategies.

Our community has contributed to this plan through the following community engagement opportunities

Community survey (42 responses).
Youth focus planning through direct surveys, focus group meetings and in person during youth week activities
Seniors focus planning by the Shire’s seniors support officer directly with seniors.
Landcare workshop and development of Landcare strategy by Blackwood Basin Group.
Lake Towerrinning Management Plan review including stakeholder meeting
Reference to stakeholder group meetings including Kids Central members and Arthur River Development Group meetings.
Enterprising Communities Workshops.
Contributions made by the community at the Shire display at Sheepfest

2.2 The Shire’s Planning framework



Elements of Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Shire’s planning framework is reviewed and updated in accordance with Section 5.56 of the local Government Act 1995 and Section 19DA of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996. The table below outlines the review schedule required.

Element	Review Frequency
Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027	Minor review every 2 years (2018, 2020) Major review ever 4 years consisting of comprehensive community consultation (next review 2021)
Corporate Business Plan	Reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process
Supporting Plans and Strategies	Reviewed as specified with latest version available on the Shire website

Initial plans were for a complete review of the plan in 2020 to align with Council elections, however the COVID pandemic in March 2020 resulted in a desktop review only in 2020 with the intention of undertaking a full review in 2021. This 2020 desktop review was adopted by absolute majority at the June 2020 Council Meeting.



3. Context

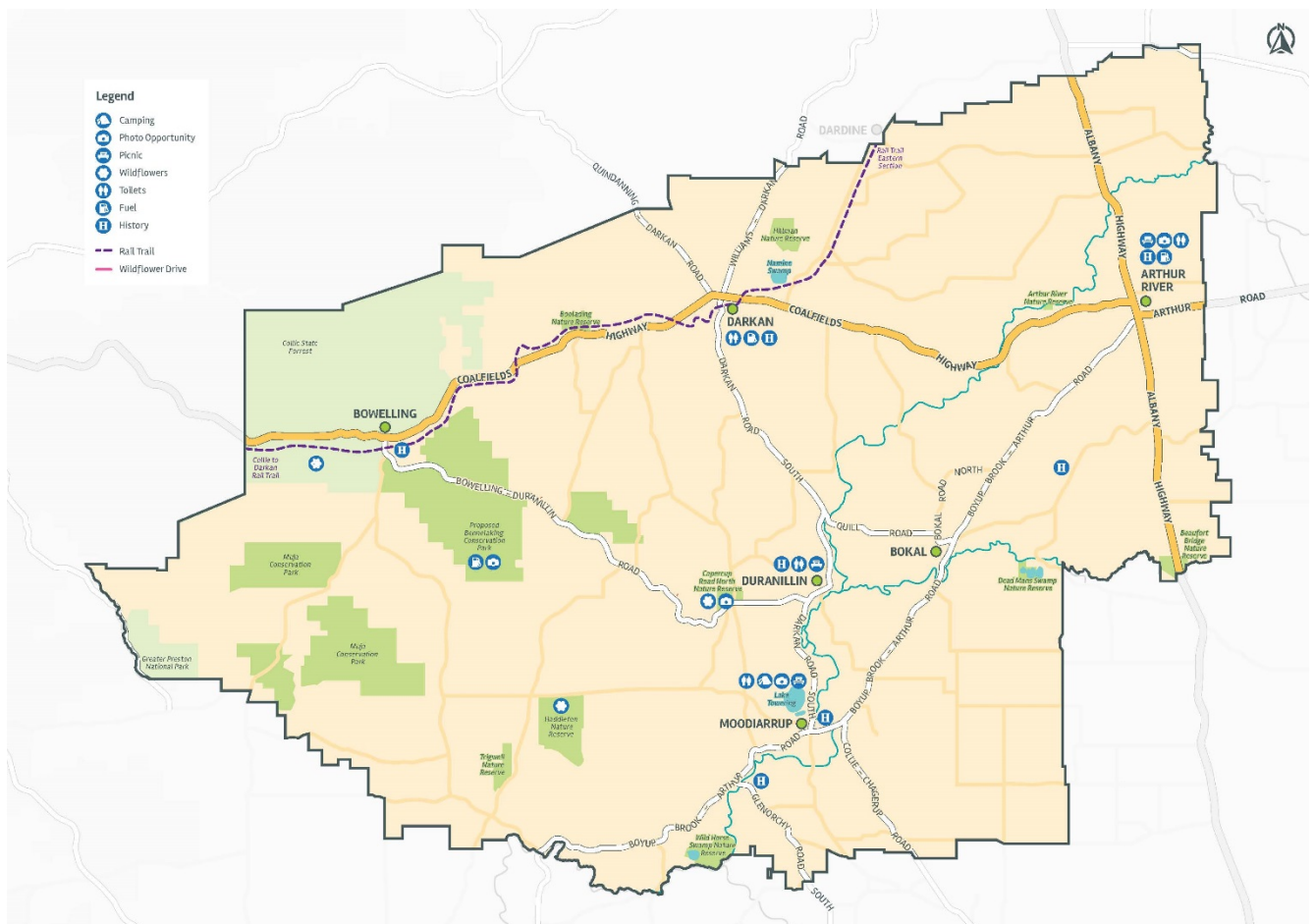
3.1 Community and Economic Profile

Situated 204 kilometres south of Perth and 115 kilometres east of Bunbury, the Shire of West Arthur is nestled between the forests of the South-west and the Wheatbelt with the western side of the Shire characterised by bush and forest and the eastern side predominantly broad acre farming with less than 5% remnant bush.

At 2580 sq. kilometres it is one of the larger shires in the area and includes Lake Towerrinning, agricultural and bush land, and nature reserves. It is home to unique flora and abundant wildlife, steeped in history and is characterised by an agricultural economy.

The Noongar people were the first inhabitants of the area, moving about the Shire for food, shelter and social interaction. British explorers arrived in the 1830s seeking suitable farming land to develop. In 1908 the railway line opened from Narrogin to Collie and with it brought rapid development of the Shire and in particular agriculture. Today 82% of privately owned land is used for agriculture.

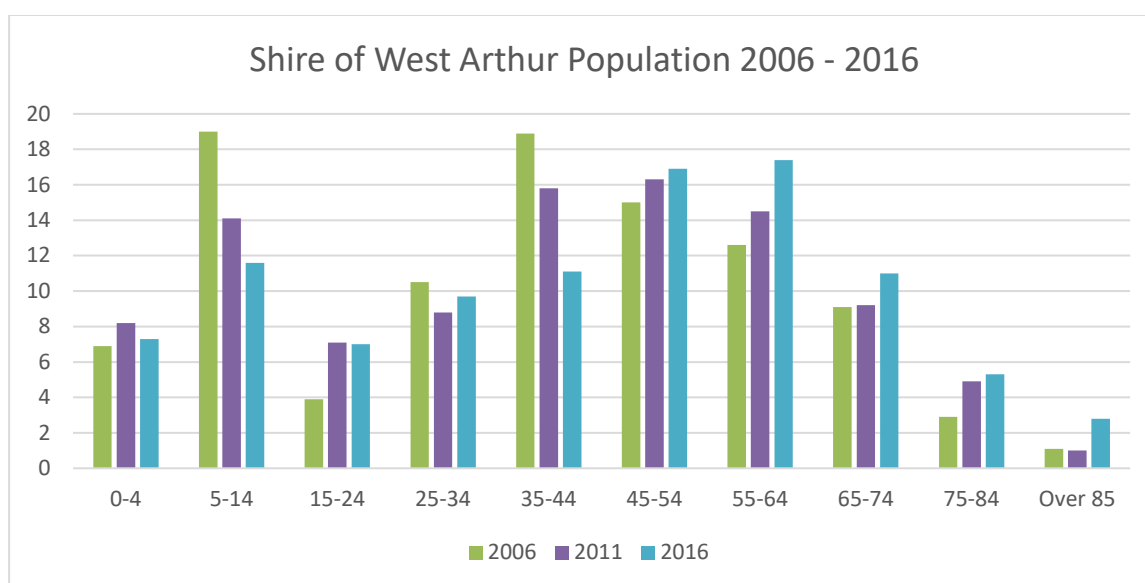
Darkan is the main town and administrative centre of the Shire and a number of smaller localities and settlements are scattered through-out the Shire.



Our Community at a Glance

Census Trends			
	2006	2011	2016
Population	856	868	809
Median Age*	29	44	47
Male	456	449	418
Females	397	418	392
Overseas born	78	83	79
Median weekly household income	\$788	\$889	\$1,143
Percentage of People over 15 working in Agriculture	63%	57%	54%

*State average was 37 in 2016



Our Facilities and Events

<p style="text-align: center;">Sport and Recreation</p> <p>Darkan Sports Complex, Moodiarrup Sports Complex, Arthur River Country Club, Darkan Gym, Football Oval and change rooms, Darkan Hall, Moodiarrup Hall, Duranillin Hall, Arthur River Hall, Darkan Swimming Pool, Youth Area, Nature Playground, Walk Trails, Outside Gym, The Shed, Lake facilities</p> <p><small>Shire managed facilities in Bold</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Administration and Education</p> <p>Darkan Primary School, Shire Administration Buildings, West Arthur CRC, Kids Central, Library</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Historical and Other</p> <p>Arthur River Heritage Buildings, Six Mile Cottage, Duranillin School, War Memorial, Information Bay, Pioneer Memorial, Darkan Station, Bowelling Station, Darkan Station Masters House</p>	
<p>Events</p> <p>Biennial Cultural Event, Sheepfest, ANZAC Day, Australia Day, Volunteers Event, WAX (West Arthur eXpression), Youth Week, Shows on the Go</p>	

3.2 Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED FOR WEST ARTHUR



COMMUNITY CHALLENGES



The following actions were outlined in order for the Shire of West Arthur to leverage these opportunities and address the challenges.

Ongoing Actions	Completed Since Previous Review of Strategic Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate tourism enhancement projects, including Astrotourism, Heritage tourism Continue to support the Well Aged 4WDL Housing initiative and age friendly communities Continue to improve the facilities at Lake Towerrinning and continue to manage the Lake in accordance with the Lake Management Plan Promote industrial site availability and develop infrastructure on the industrial sites for suitable businesses to attract industry to the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of the Health and Resource Centre project Completion of the Landcorp light industrial feasibility study Investigate realignment of Collie-Lake King Highway as part of Main Roads Grain Freight Improvement Program Monitor and investigate the impacts of Albany Highway and Collie Lake King Highway realignment on small businesses and heritage buildings

Specific strategies which the Shire of West Arthur see regional and sub-regional impact include:

- Trail development and enhancement – Collie to Darkan Rail Trail; Pump Track Darkan Nature Play Area linking to WA Mountain Bike Strategy and South West Mountain Bike Plan.
- Enterprising communities’ outcomes – building economic opportunities
- Enterprising communities’ outcomes - tourism opportunities through Astrotourism, the Betty Brown Historical Centre and other historical tourism.
- Continued partnerships and collaborative activities identified with the 4WDL alliance.
- Wheatbelt Southern Inland Health Initiative
- Fire and emergency services including bushfire mitigation
- Water and agriculture – Southwest Catchment Council and Blackwood Basin Group
- Beaufort Paleochannel – continue to work in partnership with surrounding Shires in relation to the development of intensive agricultural usage of water from the Beaufort Paleochannel
- Wheatbelt secondary freight project - the WSNF project is a collaborative project between Wheatbelt local governments, with the support of State and Federal government, to upgrade local government managed roads that connect with State and National highways to provide access for heavy vehicles in the region.

3.3 Strategic Risk Management

Risks may arise and impact on the Shire’s ability to deliver its identified strategic outcomes. The Shire maintains a risk register and the identified risks are regularly reviewed with regard to the appropriateness and effectiveness of systems and procedures for risk management.

Strategic risks identified below have been considered in the development of this Plan.

STRATEGIC RISKS



4.0 Community Engagement

Our Community told us:

They Like and Value	Their Vision includes	Ideas for Achieving this Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is friendly and caring – proactive – is inclusive of all and celebrates different cultures, and – has a strong sense of community and community pride. • A safe, peaceful and quiet environment with a beautiful natural setting. • Well maintained infrastructure and amenities including sporting facilities and Mens Shed. • Good services available including medical and childcare. • The lifestyle offered in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development including encouraging research and value adding to agriculture and diversification into other industry; • Darkan developed as a centre and improved and expanded commercial services including general store, specialist stores, hotel accommodation, and dine-in meals and take-away. • Improved aged services, including transport, meals and increased medical services. • Improved communications including internet and mobile coverage. • Develop attractions for visitors, put Darkan and West Arthur on the map including ecotourism, using Hillman Rock, trails, rivers and Lake Towerrinning. • Improve, value add, and utilise public open space and reserves including Nangip Creek reserve and Lake Towerrinning. • Access to public conveniences available at the cemetery. • More housing and accommodation. • Local education options and part time employment for high school aged children and full time employment and training options for post high school. • More community events and activities including youth activities, and sport and fitness activities. • Investigation into a five year water management plan within the Shire that includes farmers and businesses in the consultation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing population. • Actively support economic growth and job creation including part time and full time and options for youth. • Local education including support of the local primary school to ensure its ongoing sustainability. • Maintain and improve roads and footpaths. • Natural resource management and emergency water supply for rural land for fire and drought. • Promoting a sustainable environment including recycling and provide verge and green waste pick up service. • Encourage and coordinate more use of community facilities i.e. activities in town halls. • Valuing and maintaining our built heritage. • Retaining services in Arthur River including roadhouse, shop, freight and post. • Improving visual attractiveness of Duranillin. • Continue development of the Darkan Railway Reserve eg old bowling greens, nature play, gardens etc. • Construct a permanent fixture for Darkan to encourage visitors to stop, develop ecotourism and provide more accommodation for visitors. • Community transport including bus and car for appointments. • Promote and support more events. • Maintaining low rates.

5.0 Strategic Direction

This Plan is divided into six key themes. Each theme is further expanded with strategies and measures of achievements on the following pages.

Community Wellbeing

A safe and enabling place to live with a strong sense of identity and a thriving, active culture.

Local Economy

A vibrant, sustainable and growing community with active business and agricultural sectors

Built Environment

Well maintained infrastructure that supports the community and the economy.

Natural Environment

Natural biodiversity maintained and responsible land and water use to preserve the environment for future generations

Governance and Organisation

Strong local leadership; and responsible, ethical management; and efficient service delivery.



Community Wellbeing

Goal 1 - The Shire of West Arthur will be a safe and enabling place to live with a strong sense of identity and a thriving, active culture.

Outcome 1.1 - The Shire is a SAFE place to live, strives to reduce risks and is prepared for emergencies.	
Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government agencies, Shire and community are prepared for and responsive to, emergencies and volunteers are supported in their roles. • The community is aware of hazards and risks and seeks to manage these with support from the Shire. • Safety is considered in planning and works management to protect employees and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient volunteers available to respond to all emergencies. • Emergency Management Arrangements and the number of LEMC meetings held meet statutory requirements. • Risk management plans prepared for all events.

Outcome 1.2 - People of all ages have the SUPPORT they require to live and participate in the community.	
Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors will be valued and their needs met to enable them to stay in the Shire and participate in the community for as long as they desire • The needs of people with disabilities will be considered to enable access and inclusion in the community. • An engaging and positive environment will be provided for children and youths to create lasting connections with the community and facilitate growth and development. • Affordable housing will be available to enable people to live in our community. • People who live in our community will not be prohibited from opportunities due to isolation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of seniors' events held. • Number of aged persons housing units available and maintained. • Disability Access and Inclusion Plan reviewed and submitted annually. • At least 4 youth, children's and family events held annually.

Outcome 1.3 - PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING will be enhanced through a variety of sport and recreational opportunities located through-out the Shire.	
Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of health and support services will be available to all in the community. • Collaborative partnerships with sport and recreational clubs will be formed to ensure sustainability and good governance. • Public access facilities will be maintained and improved. • Cultural, artistic and sporting events will be supported for community development and enjoyment. • Lifelong learning and skill development will be promoted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of families using childcare centre does not reduce. • Number of health services available is maintained or increased. • Number of sporting clubs participating in the asset renewal reserve program. Number of sport and recreational opportunities in community does not reduce.

Outcome 1.4 - PRIDE in our community and a strong sense of identity is forged from our cultural heritage and past and present achievements

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our cultural heritage will be preserved and sites of significance maintained/conserved for future generations.• Our cultural and shared heritage will be commemorated at community events.• The community has a sense of pride in our public access areas and assists the Shire in the maintenance and development of these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of heritage and cultural projects is maintained or increased annually.



Local Economy

Goal 2 - *The Shire of West Arthur will be a vibrant, sustainable and growing community with active business and agricultural sectors and well maintained infrastructure.*



Outcome 2.1 - The business community will be DYNAMIC, GROWING AND DIVERSE providing employment and economic benefit to the Shire.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light industrial land and infrastructure will be developed to promote light industry development. • New businesses will be encouraged to locate in the Shire and new employment opportunities will be supported. • Support will be provided to existing and new businesses • Support approaches to eco-tourism and tourism development? 	<p>Business owners' satisfaction with level of support provided.</p>

Outcome 2.2 - Agricultural businesses will be VIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE providing employment and economic benefit to the Shire.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay abreast of current issues affecting farming businesses. • Ensure our farmers have the opportunity to be up to date with latest developments and encourage investigation and learning to ensure their farms remain viable and sustainable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local trials and landcare groups satisfaction with the level of service provided. • Number of fields days or workshops held for farmers.

Outcome 2.3 - The community will have a GROWING POPULATION which will support new business development

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Shire will be an appealing and attractive place to move to.• There will be a range of short stay accommodation options for visitors to use encouraging them to stay in and explore the Shire.• The Shire will be promoted to people outside of the Shire as a fantastic place to visit and live.• There will be a range of residential and lifestyle options available.• Tourism will be supported locally and regionally to encourage visitors and promote the Shire and lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population is maintained or increased.



Built Environment

Goal 3 - The Shire of West Arthur will have well maintained infrastructure that supports the community and the economy.

Outcome 3.1 - A WELL MAINTAINED road system.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads will be well designed and constructed and regularly maintained for safe transport. • Work with other shires and State Government to ensure sound planning and resource utilisation for maximum transport outcomes for the Shire. • Collaborative partnerships will be formed with road users to enhance road safety strategies and plan for future demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community satisfaction with road network. • Long term road construction and maintenance program has been developed and regularly reviewed.

Outcome 3.2 – Sustainable, well maintained QUALITY FACILITIES that support long term community needs

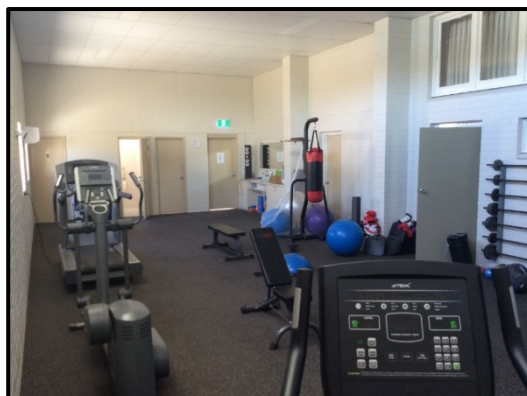
Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term approach to upgrades and improvements of facilities. • Buildings, facilities, and public amenities are maintained to an appropriate standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset management plans have been developed for all Council buildings and community infrastructure. • Annual inspections on all buildings and public infrastructure have been undertaken.

Outcome 3.3 – ATTRACTIVE townscape and public facilities for locals and visitors to enjoy.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve the Shire’s parks, gardens, reserves and public open space to a high standard. • Complete townscape projects to continue to improve the appearances of townsites and localities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community satisfaction with appearance of public areas. • Number of townscape projects completed.

Outcome 3.4 – APPROPRIATE planning and development.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, amend and implement the town planning scheme and policies to ensure any planning and development is appropriate through the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of town planning undertaken. • Number of policies reviewed or developed.



Natural Environment

Goal 4 – *The Shire of West Arthur will maintain its natural biodiversity and built heritage, and ensure responsible land and water use to preserve the environment for future generations.*

Outcome 4.1 - Sustainable management of WATER RESOURCES

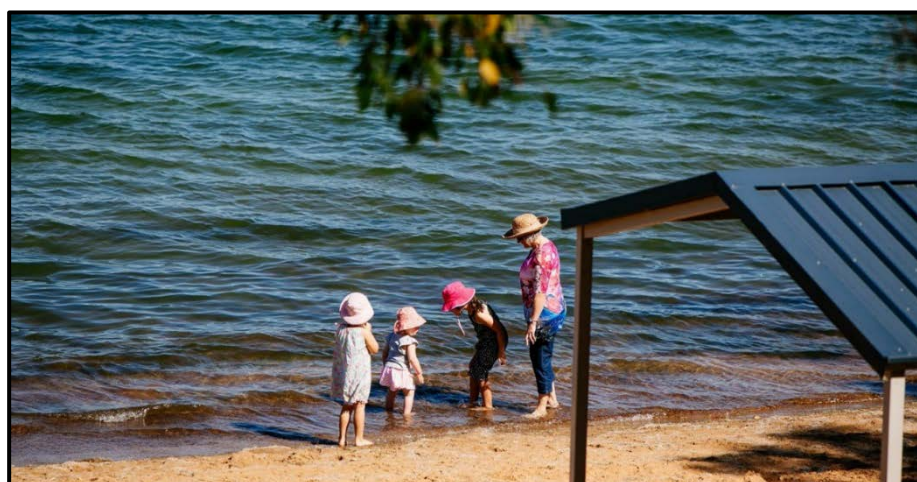
Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible use of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of water saving devices on developments and gardens planned around water wise principles. Improvements to dams or other water infrastructure.

Outcome 4.3 - NATURAL BIODIVERSITY of the Shire will be maintained and valued.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elimination/management of weeds and pests will be supported within the community by collaborative partnerships with government departments, local organisations, and community groups. The unique flora and fauna of the Shire will be protected and monitored/recorded Collaborative partnership with Government departments, friends of groups, and catchment land managers will be formed and supported to maintain natural bushland and waterways Biodiversity and protection of bushland will and considered with all land use applications and developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community satisfaction on management of Shire managed reserves.

Outcome 4.4 - Environmental and SUSTAINABLE principles will be promoted to the community and sustainability and the environment will be considered in all land use planning.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability of rural operations and economic viability. Promote environmental sustainable principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community programs and promotions focusing on environmental sustainable principles.



Governance and Leadership

Goal 5 - Through strong leadership and responsible, ethical management the best outcomes will be achieved in partnership with the people of the Shire.

Outcome 5.1 - Representation by skilled councillors to achieve the best outcomes for the Shire

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire Council is representative of the people, interests and needs of the Shire. • Elected members have the skills and knowledge relevant to local government to act in the best interests of the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training programs that elected members participate in – in-house and externally.

Outcome 5.2 - Accountable service delivery by Council and well trained, motivated, customer focused staff

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously strive to improve performance and delivery across all functions with a focus on customer service • Compliance with regulations and best practice standards will drive good decision making by staff and Council • Financial management and decision making will be transparent, accountable and in an accessible format for the public. • Staff training and support programs will attract and retain the best quality staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community satisfaction with the services provided by Shire staff.

Outcome 5.3 - Strong leadership in advocacy and planning to ensure sustainability of the Shire

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will advocate and lobby to meet the needs of the local community • The Council will provide leadership to the community in local government reform. • Strategic alliances will be formed and fostered to achieve maximum outcomes for the Shire and region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of regional meetings attended by elected members and staff. • Number of meetings held or coordinated with state or federal representatives.

Outcome 5.4 – Active engagement with the Community to optimise input into planning and decision making.

Strategies	We will measure our success by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement strategies will be integrated into planning and decision making. • Community participation with Council will be facilitated through a variety of methods. • Partnerships and relationships will be formed and maintained that nurture community interests and support community capacity building and good governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of forums, meetings or workshops held with the community on local issues.

5.4 Decision Making Criteria

(how Council assesses costs, benefits and risks in making choices)

In assessing opportunities and requests, Council takes into consideration the following:

Long term vision and strategic direction	Is it aligned with the Shire's strategic direction?
Compliance and risk	Is it a compliance requirement or necessary to reduce risk and exposure to the Shire? Are there any compliance requirements associated with it and what are the risks of proceeding or not with consideration for financial implications, legislation, staff and community welfare, reputation and ethics?
Costs	What, if any, implications will there be on the long term financial plan, is this acceptable to Council and would it be acceptable to the community? What is required to manage the whole of life costs? Resourcing requirements - can it be done within existing staff resources or will we need to employ more staff? Does it replace anything that could be discontinued or potential for other efficiencies to reduce costs?
Equity/Fairness	Is it equitable distribution of funds across the community now and over time?
Environment	What is the impact on the built and natural environment?
Cost Benefit Analysis	What is the return on benefits to the Shire and the community for the expense required?

6.0 Resourcing Implications

This Strategic Community Plan was developed with an understanding of our current and anticipated future resource capacity.

6.0 Resourcing Implications

This Strategic Community Plan was developed with an understanding of our current and anticipated future resource capacity.

6.1 Financial

Ensuring minimal increases in rates has been a priority for Council in the past. There have been low to moderate rate increases in the past and this is also a priority for the future. The Shire's 2019 long term financial plan is based on a 2.6% rate increase in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years and 3% increases each year thereafter. When finalising the Shire's 2020 Corporate Plan, Council will consider lowering the rate increase in the 2020/21 financial year due to the current financial climate.

The Shire of West Arthur prides itself on being in a sound financial position with reserves established to meet long term asset replacement plans (some with funds matched by community groups) and low borrowings.

As at 30 June 2019, the Shire had:	
Cash backed reserves	\$1,756,241
Property Plant and Equipment	\$16,803,645
Infrastructure Assets	\$85,183,922
Loans	\$806,535
Annual Rate Revenue	\$1,674,054

The Shire does however, have a number of buildings and other infrastructure that require upgrading including community halls, staff housing, footpaths and playgrounds. Replacing this ageing asset base whilst continuing to improve road infrastructure, and maintaining minimal to moderate rate increases represents a significant challenge for the Shire.

Over the recent past the Shire has been fortunate to attract a number of grants which have assisted us to provide new or upgraded infrastructure for the community and most of the Shire sporting facilities and special purpose buildings are currently in very good condition and well backed by reserves. We have relied heavily on grants to achieve the current condition of our infrastructure and it is recognised that these grants may not be available in the future and, where funding is available, it is likely to become more competitive.

The Corporate Plan outlines actions and projects aligned to the strategies of the Community Plan and a Long Term Financial Plan demonstrates that the Shire can achieve the outcomes of this Plan sustainably provided Council is cautious about commitments to expenditure, and efficiencies are implemented where possible. The Shire may not be able to meet all of the community's expectations, however the West Arthur community is known for its resourcefulness and will be supported by the Shire where possible.

6.2 Asset and Workforce Requirements

The Shire's current workforce includes:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Finance, Administration and Community Support Services (4.6 FTE including managers)
- Additional project officers as approved through the budget process or otherwise by Council.
- Works Manager and 17.5 FTE support staff including supervisors, operators, mechanic, builder, and gardeners.
- Cleaning staff (1.3 FTE)

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