

Shire of Victoria Plains



STRATEGIC PLAN 2007 - 2011

The Shire of Victoria Plains...
Many localities
One perfect lifestyle
A place to grow

Introduction - The Shire of Victoria Plains Today

The Shire of Victoria Plains – many localities – one perfect lifestyle – a place to grow

The Shire of Victoria Plains is a unique community, with a number of distinctive townsites spread out over an expanse of 256,973 hectares. Those towns include Bolgart and Wyening in the south, leading to the more centrally located town of Calingiri, with Yerecoin and Piawaning in the North-east and New Norcia, Gillingarra and Mogumber towards the west.

Surrounded by seven local governments, the Shire recorded a population of 1008 in the 2001 ABS Census. The highest numbers in age groups form around the 0-9 year olds and the 30 to 49 year old groups. Very low numbers are seen in the 15-19 year age group and then again in the 70 to 85 plus. The ABS population projection for the Shire over the next fifteen years (to 2021) is that the 2001 figure will reduce by approximately 10%.¹

Traditionally and predominantly a prosperous farming district, the Shire boasts Australia's only Monastic Town, New Norcia which welcomes approximately 70,000 visitors to the town each year. In addition, each town features a community hall, and there is a recreation centre, the Shire Administration, public library and sports oval in Calingiri. Both Bolgart and Calingiri have caravan parks, and the Victoria Plains Tourism Association holds an annual Wildflower Walk just south of Calingiri each year around August.

Even though the Shire has a small population, it is filled with community energy and enthusiasm, making it a special place to live.

What is a Strategic Plan and what will it do?

The Shire of Victoria Plains Council has recognised the need to have a clear direction that will guide the Council decision making and officer priorities. The result is the development of this Strategic Plan 2007-2011.

This Plan contains the following information;

- How this Plan was developed
- The challenges ahead
- Message from the President
- Shire Vision
- Values
- Mission
- Goals
- Strategies
- Key success factors
- Message from the Chief Executive Officer

¹ *Western Australia Tomorrow; Population Projections for local government areas 2004 to 2021*

How this Plan was developed

The content of this Plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the Council, staff and the community. This process involved a combination of informing, consulting and involving stakeholders.

In April 2007, the Shire held a number of community workshops and called for written submissions, the results of which were presented to the Shire's Executive Staff and Councillors. This approach has reversed the more traditional approach where a Council forms its ideas and then presents them to the community. In this unique approach the community was placed first in the development of a blueprint for the Plan.

This Plan was reviewed by the Strategic Planning Focus Group, a group made up of representatives from each of the communities within the Shire. Following consideration and endorsement by the Council the Draft Strategic Plan was available to all ratepayers and residents of the Shire during June / July 2007 for their comment.

This Strategic Plan is a living document and will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued viability and relevance.

The challenges ahead

The consultation for the development of this Plan highlighted a number of key challenges which will need to be acknowledged and confronted if the Council's vision is to be achieved.

The Shire is at a vital point in its history. There have been the changes to the agricultural industry, as well as increasing demands from the tourist sector, early indications of a potential population boost from a "bush-change" phenomenon, combined with the talk of local government structural reform, all having an impact on the landscape and direction of the Shire today. Other challenges include;

- Improving the current community perception of the Shire due to prior communication breakdowns.
- Shortage of housing availability to attract people made worse by blockages to the release of land suitable for development.
- Local government reform and the potential for change to the existing structure.
- Difficulty in attaining public funding for infrastructure development.
- Changes to farm sizes and its impact on a diminishing population.
- Demonstrating equitable practices between communities.
- Changes in practices to and awareness of the environment.
- Ability to attract and retain good staff and services.
- Changes in expectations from the community and tourists.
- Limited financial and other key resources.

In addition there are the opportunities for the Shire's future consideration; including the demand for inexpensive land which could bring new people to the district, New Norcia's well known identity in WA, and the beauty and history of the Shire.

MESSAGE FROM THE SHIRE PRESIDENT
Councillor Michael Anspach

I am very pleased to present this Strategic Plan for the Shire of Victoria Plains. It is important that we have a Plan that is a reflection of our community's aspirations and can provide direction of our finite resources.

My congratulations and support goes to the Shire's officers for developing this comprehensive plan for the future which engaged many community members, either through the workshops or through written submission. It is this valuable feedback that has helped to determine the Shire's future direction.

I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors who contributed to this process, and I look forward to ongoing communication with the community and staff to continue to create a unique place that attracts tourists and new residents to the region.

Vision

Our vision statement is an expression of what we aspire to ensure the Shire of Victoria Plains is like for the people who live here in the future.

The Shire of Victoria Plains – many localities – one perfect lifestyle – a place to grow

It is the year 2011; and the Shire of Victoria Plains is...

- A growing shire, continuing to attract more people to its diverse and unique region
- Attractive country living within reach of the City
- A sustainable lifestyle with clean and green environmentally friendly practices
- Underpinned by sustainable private enterprise and essential services accessible to all communities
- A shire working and growing in cooperation

Values

The Council has identified a number of values which describe the underlying philosophy that will guide the Shire of Victoria Plains in the conduct of its activities.

COMMUNICATION

We will conduct open communication, with each other and with the community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are a Shire that is responsible for its decisions and its actions, is open to scrutiny and meets all statutory requirements.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

We undertake our functions based on truthfulness, honesty and fairness.

OUTCOME FOCUS

We encourage innovation, creativity, and being proactive whilst achieving our goals.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Shire will have a long term focus, based on triple bottom line measurement, to support a solid future.

COMMUNITY

Our focus is a team approach. Working together with the community and drawing the community together.

Mission

Our mission statement explains our sense of purpose and how the Shire of Victoria Plains will seek to conduct its business on behalf of the community—

To work in partnership with the community, developing the potential of the Shire and building a positive future in accordance with our core values.

Goals

The goals included in the Strategic Plan are the broad outcomes which in the long term will ensure that the vision is achieved. They are the broad description of how the Shire will set about achieving the vision. The Shire's goals provide the foundation for ensuring alignment between the Council's vision and the activities which are approved and undertaken. By constantly seeking alignment of all actions with the vision Council will ensure that the Strategic Plan is implemented over the long term.

The following four goals will guide the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

- GOAL 1: GROWTH**
Plan for and facilitate sustainable growth and development
- GOAL 2: COMMUNITY**
Increase the sustainability of the community
- GOAL 3: SHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE**
Responsibly maintain as fit for purpose
- GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE**
Ensure good governance of the Shire

Strategies

GOAL 1: GROWTH

Plan for and facilitate sustainable growth and development

The Shire will achieve this goal through:

- Facilitating the release of land
- Supporting the sustainable management of the Environment
- Water management

1.1 *Facilitating the Release of Land*

- STRATEGY 1.1.1 - Develop a Feasibility Study for land release
- STRATEGY 1.1.2 - Develop and implement the Structural Land Use Plan
- STRATEGY 1.1.3 - Develop a 'Town Site Plan' for each identified growth centre which identifies the infrastructure needs e.g. water, sewerage, power
- STRATEGY 1.1.4 - Develop and implement strategies to lobby for government support for land release

1.2 Supporting the sustainable management of the Environment

- STRATEGY 1.2.1 - Develop an Environmental Management Plan that creates appropriate environmental policies for the Shire that reflects the community's expectations for the management of the natural environment, salinity and drainage
- STRATEGY 1.2.2 - Develop a policy that supports and practices good environmental planning

1.3 Water Management

- STRATEGY 1.3.1 - Work with relevant agencies and the community to improve practices in water use

GOAL 2: COMMUNITY

Increase the sustainability of the community

The Shire will achieve this through:

- Health and Education
- Community Prosperity
- Community Enrichment

2.1 Health & Education

- STRATEGY 2.1.1 - Support the local primary schools to help maintain their viability and encourage teachers to the area
- STRATEGY 2.1.2 - Develop a 'Health Services Plan' that identifies ways to increase the number of health professionals to support the area and provide more aged housing / accommodation
- STRATEGY 2.1.3 - Conduct a review into the needs and promotion of HACC (home care) funded programs within the Shire

2.2 Community Prosperity

- STRATEGY 2.2.1 - Recognise the importance of local tourism by:
 1. Working in partnerships which support and encourage the tourist industry
 2. Supporting the development of local initiatives through a small Shire-managed Funding Program
 3. Assisting with the promotion of local tourist locations (through the website and other mediums)
 4. Develop a plan for the Caravan Parks that includes a review of the management structure and maintenance of the facilities
 5. Implement the individual townsites Beautification Plans
- STRATEGY 2.2.2 - Encourage and support economic development (including new business) through;
 1. Facilitating the development of business alliances to support a potential 'Victoria Plains Business Association' using new technology methods to link businesses
 2. Utilise the services of the Small Business Development Corporation and other relevant agencies to create an 'Innovation Plan' to encourage new business to and support small business within the Shire

2.3 Community Enrichment

- STRATEGY 2.3.1 - Encourage the artistic community through the development of a Community Arts / Cultural Plan and that includes supporting community events and projects that contribute to the development of community spirit and celebration of history
- STRATEGY 2.3.2 - Develop a 'Recreational Facilities and Equipment Need Study' that includes outlining potential funding sources for the Shire, emergency and voluntary services across the Shire
- STRATEGY 2.3.3 - Support the development and maintenance of community facilities in the Shire
- STRATEGY 2.3.4 - Foster the growth and development of 'Connect Victoria Plains'
- STRATEGY 2.3.5 - Review the usage of the community halls to determine the specialist use of each facility, and build on its comparative advantage

- STRATEGY 2.3.6 - Investigate the opportunities for and foster the development of a local community-based transport system
- STRATEGY 2.3.7 - Continue to support and recognise volunteers
- STRATEGY 2.3.8 - Examine the possibility / feasibility of engaging a part time or contract 'Community Development Officer' position for the Shire to support objective 2.3 Community Enrichment

GOAL 3: SHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE

Responsibly maintain as fit for purpose Shire Infrastructure

The Shire will achieve this through:

- Roads
- Waste
- Community Buildings

3.1 Roads

- STRATEGY 3.1.1 - Develop a fully-costed 'Road Plan'
- STRATEGY 3.1.2 - Develop an 'Asset Management Plan'
- STRATEGY 3.1.3 - Identify gravel reserves / raw materials

3.2 Waste

- STRATEGY 3.2.1 - Develop a long term 'Plan for Waste Disposal'
- STRATEGY 3.2.2 - Develop a long term 'Plan for Recycling'

3.3 Community Buildings

- STRATEGY 3.3.1 - (See Strategy 3.1.2 Develop an 'Asset Management Plan')
- STRATEGY 3.3.2 - Develop a plan for the sustainable funding for infrastructure (Debt Management Plan)

GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE

Ensure good governance of the Shire

The Shire will achieve this through:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Compliance
- Advocacy
- Innovative Solutions
- Administration
- Communication

4.1 Finance

- STRATEGY 4.1.1 - Develop a 5 year Financial Plan to guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan
- STRATEGY 4.1.2 - Examine and develop opportunities to grow the Shire's revenue base
- STRATEGY 4.1.3 - Research and employ an innovative approach to sourcing resources

4.2 Human Resources

- STRATEGY 4.2.1 - Develop a 'Training and Development Plan' that investigates feasibility, cost and opportunity for:
 1. Training and professional development of staff (in line with their Performance Reviews) and Councillors;
 2. Shire Traineeships;
 3. A Cross Cultural Awareness Program for the Shire Administration and Council

4.3 Compliance

- STRATEGY 4.3.1 - Maintain / retain full compliance with statutory obligations
- STRATEGY 4.3.2 - Conduct a Red Tape Audit
- STRATEGY 4.3.3 - Develop and implement a self assessment review for Councillors to be completed annually

4.4 Advocacy

- STRATEGY 4.4.1 - Develop strategies for targeted lobbying to support relevant strategies
- STRATEGY 4.4.2 - Foster opportunities for partnerships that can support strategies and achieve shared outcomes

4.5 Innovative Solutions

- STRATEGY 4.5.1 - Conduct an annual review of the Strategic Plan progress, measuring the Key Success Factors
- STRATEGY 4.5.2 - Actively seek opportunities for resource sharing and joint service arrangements

4.6 Administration

- STRATEGY 4.6.1 - Conduct a review incorporating feasibility and opportunities for the Shire Administration arrangements and location where they can be demonstrated as cost efficient and effective alternatives

4.7 Communication

- STRATEGY 4.7.1 - Develop and implement a communication and consultation policy based on actively promoting and encouraging two way communication between the Shire and its stakeholders through various strategies (including surveys, the Shire's website, print media, local radio, Shire Newsletter, public meetings and forums, community events and noticeboards)
- STRATEGY 4.7.2 - Examine the possibility / feasibility of engaging a part time or contract 'Communications Officer' position for the Shire to support objective 4.7 Communication
- STRATEGY 4.7.3 - Continue to enhance and develop the Shire's website as a major (two-way) communication tool
- STRATEGY 4.7.4 - Develop strategies for consulting with and engaging the Indigenous community

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Mr Harry Hawkins

The need for having a clear direction to drive a successful organisation is imperative. This Plan will set the strategic direction for the Shire for the next five years, from 2007 to 2011. It provides an overview of the major activities to be undertaken during this period, setting the direction for operational and financial expenditure.

One of the key themes raised during the consultation process was to maintain the Shire and to foster its growth, in order to be a sustainable, prosperous community. The Shire's key role in achieving this will be through leadership, planning, networking, communication and good governance.

The Plan reveals the Shire's Vision for the future, and its mission, values and four main goals that have been created in order to achieve our vision.

Thanks to the community for their input, the Council for their support and the Shire officers for their ongoing commitment to the Shire of Victoria Plains. I look forward to working along side the dedicated Councillors, officers and the community to implement this Plan.

Key Success Factors

Key Success Factors are provided as an indication of how the Council and staff can be judged on their progress in meeting the strategic direction and goals of the Strategic Plan.

They are linked to strategies within the Plan and describe what needs to be done and allocate a timeline. Setting timelines which are realistic and achievable is important. In some instances success will depend on enlisting the support and cooperation of others, and this factor alone takes time. The Plan is for the future and will not be achievable in one or two years. This is recognised by establishing Key Success factors over the life of the Plan.

The Key Success Factors should be used as a guide. Some strategies may be able to be achieved sooner than suggested and others may take longer. The important thing is that by having established some Key Success Factors the Council has built in an accountability mechanism for the Strategic Plan.

GOAL 1: GROWTH

Plan for and facilitate sustainable growth and development

MEASUREMENT	YEAR
Facilitating Land Release	
Feasibility Study for Land Release developed	Dec 2007
The successful release of additional land for development in the Shire	Dec 2008 - 2011
Increase in number of development approvals	Dec 2008 - 2011
Positive population growth as measured by the ABS Census Data (2006 to 2011)	2011
Development of Structural Land Use Plan	Dec 2008
Town site plans progressively developed for each identified growth centre	2008-2009
Management of the Environment	
Development of an Environmental Management Plan	June 2008
Policy on Environmental Planning developed and adopted	Oct 2007
Water	
Improvements in water usage, baseline developed 2008, improvements from 2009	Dec 2008 - 2011

GOAL 2: COMMUNITY

Increase the sustainability of the community

MEASUREMENT	YEAR
Health & Education	
All schools maintained	Ongoing
School teachers surveyed to identify initiatives the Shire could consider to encourage teachers to the area	June 2008
HACC funded program in operation. Planning and preparation 2008, implemented by January 2009.	2008 - 2009
Development of a Health Services Plan for the Shire	June 2008
Community Prosperity	
Tourism Plan developed	June 2008
Implement Tourist Plan initiatives	2008 - 2011
Increase in the number of local new businesses, create data base 2008 to allow future assessment of growth	Dec 2008 - 2011
Facilitate a forum to encourage formation of a Victoria Plains Business Association	Dec 2007
Development of a Tourism Funding Program	May 2008
Development of a Small Business Innovation Plan	June 2008
Increased numbers of tourists, develop baseline 2008, monitor from 2009	2008 - 2011
Community Enrichment	
Development of a Shire Community Directory	Dec 2008
Connect Victoria Plains in existence	Ongoing
Volunteer numbers maintained / grown, develop baseline 2007, monitor from 2008	Ongoing
Increase number of community activities/events, compare annually to 2007	Commence 2008
Assessment of engaging a part time or contract 'Community Development Officer' position presented to Council to allow consideration in 2008 budget	May 2007
Adoption of a Community Arts/Cultural Plan	Oct 2008

GOAL 3: SHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE
Responsibly maintain as fit for purpose

KPI	YEAR
Roads	
Road Plan developed	May 2008
Road plan progressively implemented	2008 - 2011
Asset Management Plan complete	March 2008
Plan progressively implemented	2008 - 2011
Waste	
Plan for Waste disposal and Recycling developed	Feb 2008
Community Buildings	
Sustainable Funding for Infrastructure Plan developed	March 2008

GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE
Ensure good governance of the Shire

KPI	YEAR
Finance	
5 Year Financial Plan adopted	Sep 2007
Shire's revenue base grown by 5% greater than CPI annually	Commence 2008
Strategic Plan reviewed annually	Commence May 2008
Human Resources	
Development of a Training and Development Plan	Jan 2008
Improved employee satisfaction and retention levels (staff survey)	Annually
Compliance	
No instances of less than full compliance with statutory requirements	Annually from 2007
Self assessment review developed and implemented annually	Feb 2008
Advocacy	
New partnerships developed, review current and potential 2007, assess from 2008	Assess annually
Innovative Solutions	
Opportunities for resource sharing and joint service arrangements assessed and implemented	Annually from 2008
Meeting Key Success Factors	Annually
Administration	
Future of Shire's service locations determined	March 2008
Communication	
Increase in community satisfaction of Shire's communication and consultation (measured by biannual survey), first survey budgeted 2008-09	2008 - 2011
Development of a Shire Communication & Consultation Policy and adoption by Council	Jan 2008