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VC37**TOURISM****Overview**

The Shire's tourism potential is related to its genuine and intact goldfields heritage, and box ironbark forests.

The "Golden Way" regional tourist route is a new tourism product that links tourist attractions and features in the heart of the Goldfields Tourist Region. The 'Golden Way' touring concept can be extended to include regional environmental drives, walks and venues within the Shire such as 'box ironbark' forests, the Moolort Plain, Pyrenees Ranges and Quartz Mountain.

Council and local communities have embarked on strategic projects aimed at enhancing tourism. They include the Dunolly Retail and Tourism Business Plan (1996) and precinct planning for the Maryborough railway station area.

Local tourism and promotion of the Central Goldfields has improved in recent years with the restoration of the Maryborough Railway Station, a new tourism brochure and a range of other heritage initiatives, including interpretative signage.

Issues

- Lack of a tourism marketing theme, regional image and a non-cogent local tourism strategy.
- Regional tourism linkages are generally poor.
- Central Goldfields shares common tourism themes with other municipalities and areas in the region. There is potential to promote combined themes for the region eg. gold heritage, spa, wine, Pyrenees Mountains.
- Strategies are needed for several tourism and heritage assets in the Shire.
- Recent growth in viticulture and the wine industry has potential for increased tourism benefits.
- Upgrading of the two alternate Daylesford/Maryborough Road connections (via Creswick or Newstead) is considered a regional tourist priority.
- Eco-tourism opportunities in the Shire include quartz mountain, aboriginal heritage, box-ironbark forests, flora and fauna parks and reserves, vineyards and the nearby Pyrenees Mountains.

Objective 1

Continue to develop the shire's cultural tourism niche related to small gold towns, goldfields and mining heritage and genealogy.

Strategies

- Promote and market a tourism product that combines the themes of gold heritage, spa, wineries and Pyrenees mountains.
- Protect the heritage character of buildings, streetscapes, places and areas in the shire.
- Improve heritage interpretative signage and local heritage information brochures for the townships and their mine-site environs.
- Encourage development of private and public tourism assets and infrastructure.

- Ensure the “Golden Way Tourist Route” is appropriately maintained, improved and signed.

Objective 2

Develop the tourism potential of the shire’s townships.

Strategies

- Undertake strategies for the following major tourist venues and precincts:
 - Carisbrook, Majorca and Bealiba Main Streets and Talbot Civic Precinct and Main Street.
 - Dunolly preferred tourist route and areas.
 - Amherst and “Quartz Mountain” (a geological quartz blow feature).
 - Welcome Stranger Site Moliagul and the Flynn memorial at Moliagul.
 - Timor, Moonlight and Deep Leads.
 - Koori Heritage Sites: Talbot, Carisbrook, Amherst.
 - Major Eco-Tourism Sites and Mine Sites.
- Develop a concept plan for a series of linked tourist precincts in Maryborough, namely the Railway Station Precinct and Industrial Heritage Precinct, Princes Park Precinct, the, Central Business Area and Civic Precinct, and Bristol Hill.
- Seek the establishment of a Level 1 accredited information facility at the new Community Resource Centre (when built) and continue the tourist information role at the railway station to an appropriate accredited level.

Objective 3

Continue to develop regional tourism links with a major emphasis on the “Golden Way” Touring Route

Strategies

- Continue marketing of “The Golden Way” touring route as a regional tourism product associated with the gold heritage cities of Bendigo and Ballarat.
- Investigate the potential for the shire to participate in the promotion and marketing of a new tourism region - “Goldfields Spa and Wine Region” - located between Ballarat and Bendigo.
- Use of the “Golden Way Heritage Trail” (town signs and brochure) to encourage touring and discovery around the shire and sub region.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

- Application of Heritage Overlays covering heritage buildings, sites and places in the townships of Maryborough, Dunolly and Talbot.
- Use of a Tourism Development Local Policy to achieve high standard tourist development in the shire.
- Use of township structure plans to identify tourism opportunities.

- Application of a Design and Development overlay covering the Maryborough Central Business Area.
- Use of an Urban Design local policy to enhance the visual character, amenity and tourism image of urban areas, particularly major tourism precincts such as town centres and town entrances.

Undertake further strategic work

- Investigate the local and regional benefits of a potential new region of common interests, “Goldfields Spa Pyrenees Region”, located between the regions of Ballarat and Bendigo.
- Pursue funding to assist in preservation and protection of heritage buildings and sites.
- Develop the concept of an eco-tourism proposal to provide a major tourism/educational facility for the shire.
- Develop Central Goldfield’s Tourism Brochure(s).
- Facilitate implementation of the Shire’s Tourism Strategy.
- Pursue opportunities for further development of the Maryborough Railway Station Precinct.
- Complete interpretative signage project and develop heritage/tourism trails, including individual heritage property plaques.
- Investigate better utilisation of Maryborough airport for tourism purposes.