



Moira Shire Economic Development Strategy

2025 - 2029

Acknowledgement of Country

Moira Shire Council acknowledges the Yorta Yorta Nation as the Traditional Owners of this land. We recognise the deep spiritual connection to land, waterways and community of the eight clan groups of Yorta Yorta Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



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Economic Development Strategy 2025 to 2029

The Moira Shire Council is dedicated to creating the conditions for Moira's economy to thrive.

Every day the Council influences the short, medium and long term future of Moira Shire, as directed by the Shire's Community Vision (long term plan), the Council Plan (medium term plan) and council's budget (short term plan).

This *Economic Development Strategy 2025 to 2029* focuses on the medium term horizon. To 2029, the Strategy aims to facilitate the conditions to propel the Shire's next stage of economic development, building from the previous *Economic Development Strategy 2019 to 2023*, the insights detailed in the *Moira Shire Economic Opportunities Study 2023 (REMPLAN)* and the directions and actions detailed in our new Destination Management Plan.

The delivery of this economic development strategy will have systemic impacts across Council activities while correspondingly underpinning the Shire's wellbeing by boosting opportunity, incomes and jobs.

Changing Conditions

Economic conditions are forever changing, shaping new forms of opportunity while compelling adaptation to new circumstances.

Today our economy is impacted by:

- The post-COVID impacts on workforce and housing
- Digital commerce and production
- Corporate agriculture and international supply chains
- A renewed focus on manufacturing and rebuilding productive capacity
- A historic shortage of workers
- Water policy
- Extreme weather
- An aging community

The priorities and actions detailed in this strategy respond to a rapidly changing world. Council's responses will help foster the conditions for our business community to thrive and drive more investment and income into our community.



Cactus Country Strathmerton

Our Economic Vision and Priorities

To continue economic prosperity across our community, we must make sure we provide suitable conditions in which businesses can grow, there is access to housing and a high quality lifestyle, and visitors have every opportunity to enjoy our diverse environment.

We are a proud community that exports our produce throughout the nation and the world. We are also a destination for recreation and leisure visitors who are drawn to our rivers, lakes and forest and our food, accommodation and events.

Our towns support vibrant main streets and rapidly expanding service sectors that every year serve increasing numbers of households drawn to Moira's attractive quality of life.

Together our primary production, manufacturing, towns, tourism and service sectors make up a growing economy to help our community thrive.

Climate change, global policy, new technologies and digital disruption are changing the global economic landscape. We must plan and prepare for the challenges and opportunities that these changes will bring and be well-placed to proactively and sustainably embrace new practices.

Our Economic Vision

A thriving, diverse, investment and business friendly municipality that embraces the needs of growing industry while welcoming new residents, workers and a growing number of visitors.

Our Priorities

- Priority 1: Enable our producers, exporters and manufacturers to innovate, grow and invest
- Priority 2: Set the conditions for vibrant and thriving town economies
- Priority 3: Foster a year round and growing visitor economy
- Priority 4: Facilitate a local vocational and higher education sector
- Priority 5: Enhance advocacy, business engagement and industry attraction activities

Our Economic Actions

Priority 1: Enable our producers, exporters and manufacturers to innovate, grow and invest

Initiatives		Actions	
IN1	Foster conditions for new investment and industry expansion	A1	Support the delivery of major investment proposals via the establishment of a concierge service that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides personalised and focused development assistance • enables a common understanding of the needs of major proponents • enables major proponents to navigate approval processes and infrastructure co-ordination
		A2	Support industry in obtaining industry assistance from Federal and State governments by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting opportunities to apply for industry grants • supporting grant applications through data and information on the Shire • connecting industry with experienced grant authors.
IN2	Foster the conditions for labour force growth	A3	Facilitate the development of worker housing in proximity to industry by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a housing policy and implementing into the Moira Planning Scheme • engaging with State and Federal worker housing programs
IN3	Advocate for water certainty	A4	Continue to advocate for water allocation outcomes that sustain our primary production and manufacturing sectors.
IN4	Attract new national and global industry and investment	A5	Promote Moira's investment strengths by updating <i>Invest in Moira</i> with targeted information that promotes Moira's investment attractors including quality soils, road networks, high water availability, climate, quality of life and established agricultural supply networks and expertise.
IN5	Ensure our infrastructure supports our producers and manufacturers	A6	Advocate for expanded digital connectivity as essential to the economy.

Priority 2: Set the conditions for vibrant and thriving town economies

Initiatives		Actions	
IN6	Foster the growth of our township economies	A7	Ensure there is sufficient land to support commercial and industrial expansion by establishing the Moira land monitor that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> audits land available for commercial, industrial and housing growth in and around major townships identifies the supply of land serviced by infrastructure and unserviced land enables Council to engage with landholders on barriers preventing development.
		A8	Encourage new retail and mixed use development to incorporate service and office space to attract urban professionals and new service providers.
IN7	Develop and implement a Moira Housing Action Plan to boost and diversify housing	A9	Develop and deliver a Moira Housing Action Plan to boost and diversify housing supply in targeted locations.
IN8	Support Main Street economies	A10	Work with traders and trader's associations to harmonise and expand weekend and peak tourism trading hours.
		A11	Investigate ways in which we can continue to improve the amenity of our main streets including road pacification, opportunities to promote outdoor dining and via improved pedestrian connections.

Priority 3: Foster a year round and growing visitor economy

Initiatives		Actions	
IN9	Develop an updated Destination Management Plan that facilitates a yearly event program	A12	Develop an events strategy to identify opportunities to support new events and potential delivery pathways.
		A13	Establish a transparent framework to identify events that merit Council support.
		A14	Provide support for approved events in accordance with relevant assessment structure.
IN10	Support the delivery and renewal of tourism infrastructure	A15	Investigate and identify the infrastructure needed to support the role of the Yarrawonga foreshore as an events location.
		A16	Deliver the Thompsons Beach Master Plan and identify implementation priorities and seek investment partners.
		A17	Work with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to support the development of the Dharnya Centre.
		A18	Promote our visitor economy by updating our digital marketing approach.
IN11	Monitor Tourism Activity	A19	Acquire data on tourism flows and expenditure to assess the economic impact of tourism events and the overall visitor economy.

Priority 4: Facilitate a local vocational and higher education sector

Initiatives		Actions	
IN12	Attract technical, vocational and further education providers to the Shire	A20	Explore opportunities to attract higher education, vocational and technical education providers to the municipality.
		A21	Advocate for funding to attract a local presence for higher education, vocational and technical providers.
IN13	Facilitate a Vocational Needs Analysis	A22	Undertake a training needs analysis to identify local skill requirements and training needs. Provide training needs analysis results to potential providers.
IN14	Facilitate Career Pathways	A23	Facilitate connections between schools and industry.

Priority 5: Enhance Moira Shire Council's business engagement, advocacy and investment attraction activities

Initiatives		Actions	
IN15	Foster a business and investment friendly Council	A24	Undertake regular dialogue with the business community to understand private sector needs.
		A25	Pro-actively address business concerns while maintaining regulatory, quality of life and environmental standards.
IN16	Support business innovation, connection and learning	A26	Support business capacity by facilitating events on contemporary issues, such as marketing and promotion, digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence, recruitment and retention etc.
		A27	Organise business networking and skill development opportunities that address evidence-based gaps.
IN17	Support our community in managing the impact of industry change	A28	Support effective responses to community shaping business decisions and catastrophic operational events by fostering ongoing relationships with State and Federal agencies.
IN18	Engage with agencies, State and Federal Governments to protect and grow the Shire's economy	A29	Work with government agencies to establish the conditions to unlock development.
		A30	Engage with State and Federal Governments to protect and support water certainty agricultural, food manufacturing and public space

Our Role in Economic Development

Successful economic development boosts our quality of life and ensures Moira is an attractive place to live and invest.

In facilitating economic growth Council will focus on achieving the best outcomes for both the current and future community. In making strategic plans and decisions, such as an economic development strategy, Council is also required to engage with the community. This strategy reflects the results of extensive engagement with the community and business and industry sectors.

Many of Council's functions bring Council into close contact with businesses, consumers and workers, which provides a unique and ongoing opportunity to foster an environment that is conducive to business growth, investment, innovation and development.

It is acknowledged however, that Council is only one part of the complex legislative, regulatory, consumer, investment and financial networks. These networks set the fundamental conditions for economic activity, while also setting boundaries on what Council can and cannot do in pursuing, supporting and facilitating economic growth.

Prioritising action

This Strategy is forward looking and action oriented that:

- prioritises actions and initiatives that will strengthen our short, medium and long term economic capacity,
- addresses identified enduring issues within Council's responsibility and capacity to influence,
- sets in place a rationale for future decisions that will direct Council's advocacy, collaboration, investment and land use planning.

We will work with our partners

We see the delivery of this strategy as a partnership between Council and local business, State and Federal Governments, the Goulburn Murray region, tourism operators and associations, infrastructure agencies, investors and emerging entrepreneurs.

Council's Role in Economic Development

Attracting **new investment** and **business development**

Funding, delivering and **maintaining** local **infrastructure** projects

Facilitating **business events** and **networking** opportunities

Facilitating **work force growth** and **skill development**

Promoting **local tourism**

Advocating to State and Federal government on **local issues**

Responding to and **resolving business needs**

Planning at the local level for the **development** and future needs of our areas

Collaborating with **local businesses, industry** and the **community**

Delivering Our Community Vision

The Council's community vision sets out our long term social and economic aspirations. The vision reflects the results of extensive community consultation and engagement.

The vision and its corresponding statements embrace the municipality's unique agricultural, lifestyle and environmental advantages. The vision is defined by four guiding pillars that set out long term goals for our community, environment, liveability and prosperity. These pillars inform Council's planning and delivery of future investment, infrastructure and services.

The Vision's prosperity pillar identifies strong and innovative agricultural, commercial and manufacturing sectors as fundamental to our community's wellbeing and prosperity. Likewise, the Vision identifies the need for all year visitor experiences and a strong local education sector as essential to growth. In addition, the Vision embraces a forward thinking and progressive mindset that seeks to benefit from change as essential to a prosperous community.

This Economic Development Strategy details economic priorities and actions that set the conditions to achieve the Community Vision particularly the Plan's emphasis on supporting industry, expanding tourism and fostering a local vocational education sector .



Our Economy & People

Our Economy

Moirā is growing. Our population, economy and economic output is undergoing sustained growth. Our economy supports \$5.0 billion in annual output, almost 12,000 jobs and over 60 businesses with a \$10 million or more turnover per annum.

Our economy is thriving. Unemployment is measured at just 1.3% (September 2024), down from 3.9% five years earlier, which means that, in practice, there are nearly as many jobs available as workers and there are plenty of opportunities for those looking for employment.

Businesses from a variety of sectors are looking to expand their workforce and operations over the next five years. One of our key challenges is to establish the conditions to expand our labour force so that our community and businesses can continue to grow. Part of this also entails expanding opportunities for local training and skill development to grow workforce capacity.

We are a proud production community

Our economy and communities are founded on our agricultural sector, which includes dairy, fruit, cropping, live stock and food processing sectors that together deliver over \$2.25 billion in annual economic value to our communities.

We can be proud of the outputs of our community, which are exported across the nation and internationally. Everyday, households across the globe consume produce and products grown, harvested, processed and transported by our community.

Our soil, water, sunshine and expertise make Moirā a premium agricultural area hence why we continue to attract major global and national agri-businesses with substantive expansionary plans and in turn career, income, and skill development opportunities for our community.

Our service and urban sectors are growing

As our towns and community grow, the way in which our community earns income is also changing. Today, services and activities that directly support the needs of our local households comprise an increasing share of our economy. Healthcare, social assistance and education employment are our fastest growing employment sectors. Likewise, food, accommodation and construction are also major industries for employment growth.

Our high quality, affordable lifestyle, together with our superb climate, will continue to attract new residents, driving ongoing demand for skills and services.

We are a place to visit, relax and recreate

Tourism also plays a vital role in our local economy. Lake Mulwala, the Murray River, our local food and events and our wide range of outdoor recreation experiences are a major destination for visitors.

The Shire attracts on average 637,000 domestic visitors per annum, comprising 399,000 overnight visitors and 238,000 day visitors, spending on average \$380 per visit¹. Tourism, visitation and the activity, vibrance and opportunity that visitation stimulates represents a dual opportunity for our community, both as a source of income and employment, as well as a way of attracting future residents and permanent community members. A key challenge is to broaden, extend and improve the quality of our seasonal tourism experience to be a year round vibrant tourism destination.

¹ Tourism Research Australia 2024

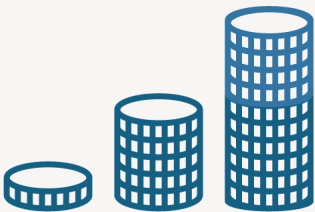
Economic Snapshot

Gross Regional Product



\$2.3B in 2024
↑ **\$574M** since 2019

Economic Output



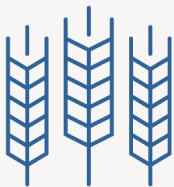
\$5.0B in 2024
↑ **\$1.6B** since 2019

Unemployment



1.3% in 2024
↓ **1.7%** since 2021

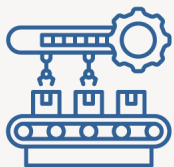
Top Industries - Employment 2021



Agriculture
2,178 jobs



Healthcare
1,666 jobs



Manufacturing
1,331 jobs

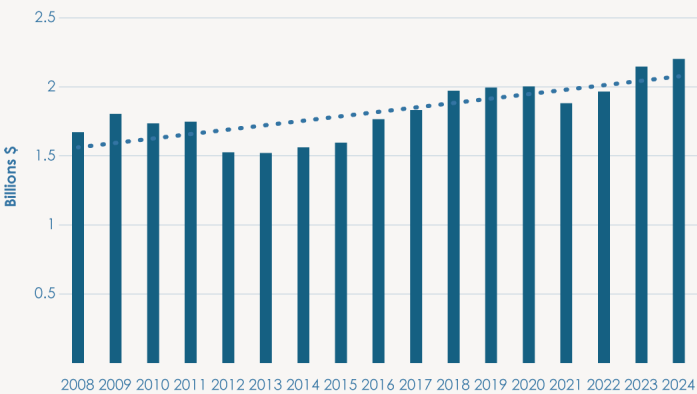


Construction
1,238 jobs

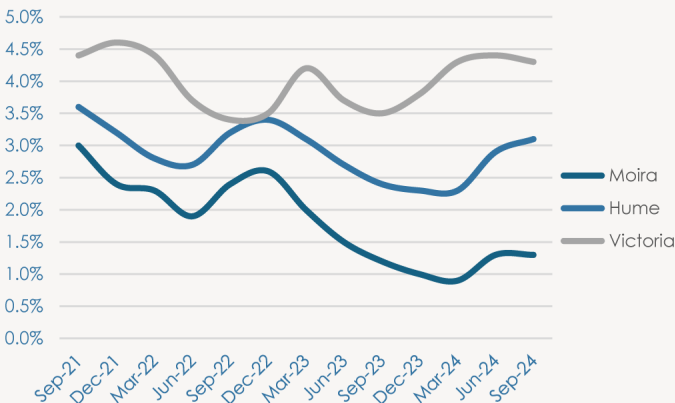


Retail Trade
1,238 jobs

Gross Regional Product 2008 - 2024



Unemployment Rate 2021 - 2024



Our People

We are growing

In 2021, our Shire supported a population of 30,350 having grown by more than 1,200 over the last five years and 2,200 over the last ten years.

Our young adult population is growing, particularly new residents aged 25-34 years. This is helping our economy to thrive.

Our older population has also been growing, and we face the challenge of supporting an aging community while growing our long term economic prosperity. Our median age of 48 years is higher than the Regional Victorian average.

Our Shire's population is projected to continue to grow, adding approximately 4,300 new residents over the next 20 years at which point we will be a community of 34,670. Recent building approvals suggest that our community might be growing faster than anticipated, particularly in Yarrawonga.

A growing population will facilitate new economic activity in the region, increasing the demand for local goods and services and expanding the Shire's workforce. To ensure that our growing population can be sustained, it is essential that local services, amenities and infrastructure are provided appropriately.

Given our higher median age and expected population growth in older age groups, the promotion of Moira as a place for families and young people to relocate, live and work is important to the sustainability of our economic future. Bringing new skills and workers into the Shire will boost our labour force and productivity.

A high proportion of our working age population live and work within the Shire. Workers that live in the Shire earn and spend income in our community directly contributing to our economic well-being and future.

We are becoming more skilled

We are also achieving higher educational and training attainment. During 2016-2021, the number of residents with a bachelor degree or higher grew by 30% and the number of residents enrolled at TAFE and other vocational training providers rose by 31%. This means a more skilled workforce and community.

Housing is an Issue for the Economy

Our housing is affordable, with a median house price of \$510,000 and unit price of \$349,000, which is an advantage in attracting new residents into our community from metro or larger regional centres. Home ownership is high, with 46% of dwellings owned outright and 32% owned with a mortgage. Rentals represent just 22% of housing stock, below the average for Regional Victoria at 25%. The price of rents is increasing and rental vacancy is incredibly tight. As of July 2025, our rental vacancy rate was only 1.3% which means there are effectively very limited options for new residents to rent. The price of rentals has also increased by more than 30% in the last three years.

We know that providing sufficient, affordable and diverse forms of housing is critical to sustain and grow our workforce and economy.

We are committed to facilitating more housing. The number of residential building approvals in FY 2023/24 was the highest on record and represented the largest number of approvals for higher density dwellings. This is set to expand our residential footprint and options.

We need to continue to deliver sufficient housing to meet the needs of our growing population and to support business and employment growth.

Population & Housing

2021

Population



30,350

Median Age



48

Households



13,300

Housing



Median House Price

(September 2024)
\$510,000



Median Unit Price

(September 2024)
\$349,000



Owner Occupied

78%



Building Approvals

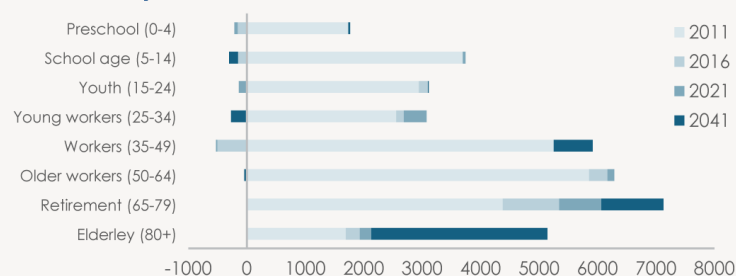
300 (FY2024)



Average Weekly Rent

(February 2025)
\$510 (House)
\$324 (Unit)

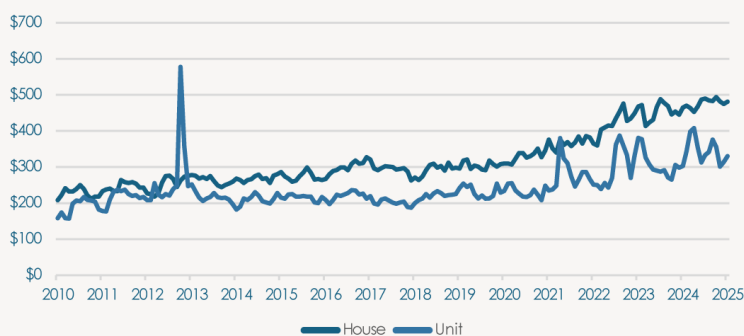
Moir's Population 2011 - 2041



Rental Vacancy Rates 2010 - 2025



Average Weekly Rent 2010 - 2025



Our Economic Priorities

Economic Priority 1

Enable Our Producers, Exporters and Manufacturers to Innovate, Grow and Invest

Everyday across the globe households consume produce grown, harvested, processed and transported by and from our community.

We are a proud production society that produces goods enjoyed by national and international consumers. Our primary produce delivers over \$2 billion in economic output to our community which is set to grow.

One in three jobs in our community entails primary production and manufacturing with many more jobs (services, transport, construction) intertwined with these sectors. We are committed to growing our primary production and manufacturing sectors as the lifeblood of our economy.

Our objective is to

Empower our producers, exporters and manufacturers to innovate and grow, igniting investment in the region:

We will:

- IN1 Foster conditions for new investment and industry expansion
- IN2 Foster the conditions for labour force growth
- IN3 Advocate for water certainty
- IN4 Attract new national and global industry and investment
- IN5 Ensure our infrastructure supports our producers and manufacturers to embrace technological change

We enjoy many primary production advantages

Moria Shire is a vibrant community known for its rich agricultural heritage in the "Food Bowl" of Australia.

Our highly productive primary producers benefit from average annual sunshine of 2,200 hours, rich alluvial soils and water supply. Livestock, horticulture, cropping and dairy producers cultivate our land in increasingly technologically advanced ways to produce essential foods and food inputs for national and international households.

Unlike much of Victoria, Moria and Victoria's north has retained its manufacturing capacity through 40 years of de-industrialisation. We are now positioned to lead the revival of national manufacturing which remains a core part of our identity and community.

We benefit from our access to multi-directional major transport routes that provide access to national markets and the nation's ports. We will continue to advocate for high quality road connections, water availability and ongoing infrastructure investment to support our production community.

Ongoing investment means opportunity for our community

Some of the nation's largest agri-businesses operate within our Shire, investing capital in the Shire to innovate, grow and diversify their operations.

Future investment will see the scale, energy efficiency and technological sophistication of primary production and associated processing capabilities continue to expand. Our engagement affirms that Moria is a great place to invest with firms ready and able to expand.

The corporatisation of the farm sector, while a departure from the family farm origins of our community, also provides new opportunities. Larger vertically integrated farms linked to national and global networks provide access to capital, knowledge and infrastructure investment that support many new career options and growth for our community.

Primary production is changing

The primary production and agriculture sector is undergoing significant change both through consolidation of farms and through the introduction of new capital and technology.

Increasingly, contemporary agriculture is subject to smart technology and new energy inputs that both increase productivity and reduce costs. The new agricultural and food manufacturing sector requires technological support, broadband and satellite access and a workforce with advanced digital technology skills. The table below outlines the influence of new technologies on the primary industry sector and rural communities.

Table 1: Agricultural Change and New Technology

Innovation	Description	Farm Application
Internet of Things	Devices fitted with sensors to measure and provide data. These technologies collect and transfer information from devices to central management systems.	Further automate watering systems. Potential for robotic tractors and milkers. Supports 24-hour operations.
Solar Energy	The collection and use of energy and heat.	Use of solar energy to power water pumps, lights and sprinklers. The use of thermal solar to provide heat to crops, livestock buildings and horticulture operations. Solar grazing (mostly compatible with sheep grazing).
Bioenergy	Energy generated through the organic decay of waste material such as manure, straw or vegetable waste.	Collection of bioenergy turns agricultural waste into a source of energy, in particular gas-based energy.
Batteries	Storage of on-farm generated energy.	Opportunity to reduce peak demand charges and increases the use of clean energy.
Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)	Production of primary produce in a controlled indoor environment that is largely independent of weather conditions.	Indoor horticulture including vertical farming. Results in high productivity production of vegetables and consistent quality. Requires significant energy.

Economic Priority 2

Set the Conditions for Vibrant and Thriving Town Economies

We are a growing community of 30,350 people and 13,300 households, that is adding an average of 165 new residents per annum.

Our towns are the focus of our growth particularly Yarrawonga, which has attracted 90% of recent population growth as the town's enviable lifestyle and affordability advantages attract ongoing migration.

Growth is propelling local demand for professional, personal and health services, the food economy and an array of construction jobs which represent an increasing share of our economy and local employment.

We need to establish the conditions for the economies of our towns to grow and prosper so that we capture and retain as much local expenditure as possible within the community, so that we all benefit from growth.

Our priority is to:

Set the conditions for vibrant and thriving town economies

We will:

- IN6 Foster the growth of our township economies
- IN7 Develop and implement the Moira Housing Action Plan to boost and diversify Moira's housing
- IN8 Support main street economies

Unlocking our economic potential is about housing

Our businesses need labour, our communities need young people and new workers need places to live. Housing and all forms of housing (rentals, owner occupied, worker housing) is the key to unlocking the potential of our community.

Our unemployment rate is historically low, businesses are challenged in finding staff and when they do, they have limited housing options. Housing is central to any endeavour to grow our economy and renew our population.

We have consistently heard from industry and employers that they need housing for workers. This is why a key focus of our economic development strategy is the delivery of housing (private, worker and rental housing) without which our economy cannot grow. We are therefore committed to developing a Moira Housing Action Plan that will identify targeted actions that aim to boost and diversify Moira's housing stock. We will also establish a worker housing policy that explicitly supports dedicated worker housing while also working with State and Federal Governments on worker housing initiatives.

Growing services for a growing community

Jobs in health, education, social services and the public sector now represent nearly 1 in 4 local jobs in our Shire.

As we grow and attract more visitors our economy is more urban with jobs located in our towns and settlements, as there has been significant growth in work-from-home opportunities.

Healthcare and education employment lead our jobs growth, most recently adding more than 100 jobs per annum or almost 50% of our jobs growth.

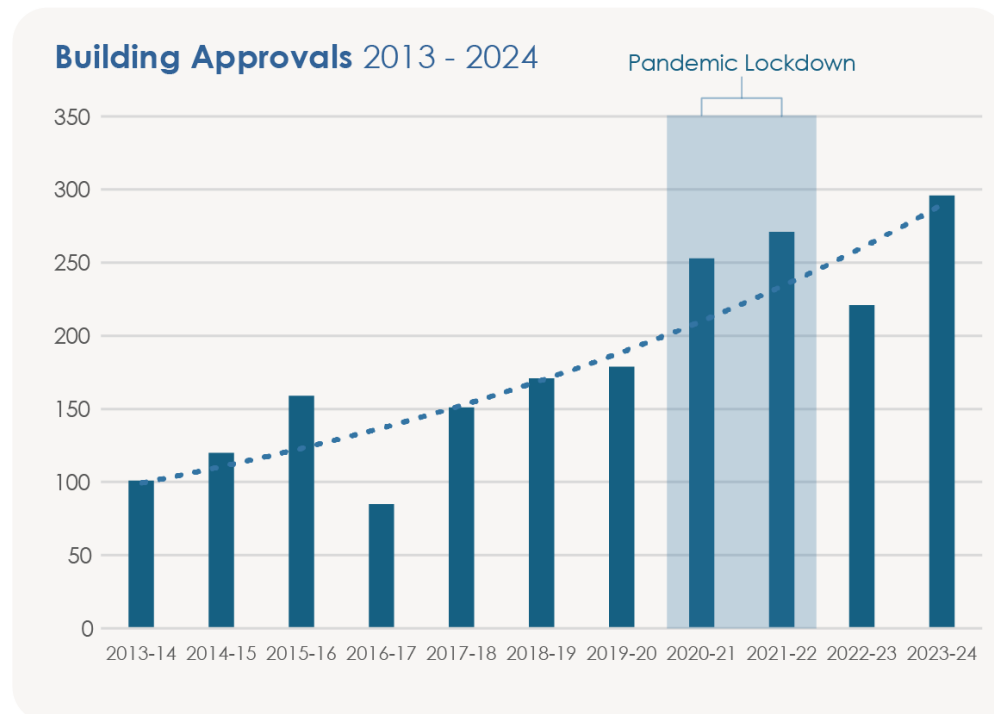
Our settlements are also service centres and as we attract more and older residents, service demand will continue to grow. We know that our residents import significant finance, legal, accounting and other professional services from outside of the Shire, which means there is an underlying and growing opportunity to attract new professional services in our key settlements.

We are an increasingly skilled community with growing numbers of highly trained and educated residents – our post graduate community has increased by 44% since 2016. Population growth and skills represent an untapped opportunity to grow our service sector for the benefit of our community.

The Post-COVID Building Boom

The pandemic has fuelled a residential building boom. Prior to the pandemic, Moira averaged approximately 150 new dwelling approvals per annum. Since 2021, approvals have increased to above 250 dwellings per annum.

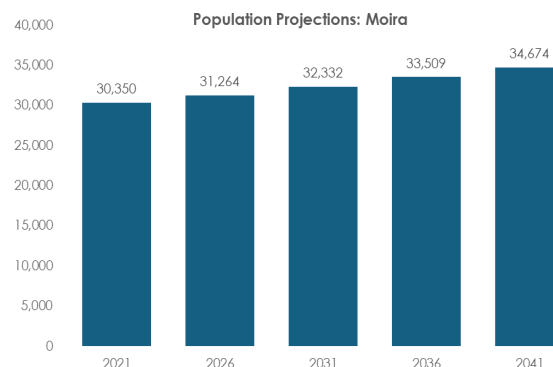
In 2023, Moira recorded 296 dwelling approvals primarily in and around Yarrawonga. This rate of growth is certain to translate into increased and faster population growth, more service demand and more household expenditure flowing through our communities. It's therefore vital we ensure our main streets and commercial centres are ready.
Source: ABS



Are we growing faster than projected?

According to current projections by REMPLAN, we are projected to become a population of over 34,670 people by 2041. Our population is currently estimated at approximately 30,350 people. As a result, we are expected to add an average of 200 people per annum over the coming years.

However, the post-COVID building boom in which we are adding over 200 dwellings per annum suggests that our population may be growing at faster and greater scale than projected, potentially at over 300 people per annum, much of which is focused in and around Yarrawonga.



Population Projection by Settlement

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Cobram	8,928	9,032	9,115	9,232	9,363
Yarrawonga	11,414	12,207	13,094	13,993	14,882
Nathalia	2,877	2,863	2,884	2,927	2,961
Numurkah	7,132	7,162	7,239	7,357	7,468

Source: REMPLAN

Economic Priority 3

Strive to Achieve an All Year and Growing Visitor Economy

Moirā Shire's unique environment, quality accommodation, water sports and recreational options attract approximately 637,000 domestic visitors per annum and consistently growing. We also incorporate 10% of Australia's art silos.

For those that love the outdoors, nature and water, our Shire provides a wide array of visitation options.

Visitation is, however, very seasonal.

Our priority is therefore to:

Create an all year and growing visitor economy

We will:

IN 9: Develop an updated Destination Management Plan that facilitates an all year round events program

IN 10: Support the delivery and renewal of tourism infrastructure

IN 11: Monitor Tourism Activity

Strengthen our digital engagement

The discovery phase of every visitation experience begins on peoples' phones and computers so it's vital that our social media and internet profiles connect with the experience people are seeking.

We need to continually raise our digital profile, our penetration, awareness and validation through smart and impactful digital marketing. This is marketing that promotes our nature, activities and accommodation options while emphasising what is special about our unique environment.

All year round events

We need to develop a program of signature events to diversify and expand our visitation experience.

We have the attributes and weather conditions to support visitation at every season.

We will work with the community and our tourism sector to identify opportunities to expand on our calendar of events and champion all year round attractions. As Council, we will seek to support the management and approval of events.

Update our branding

We need to update our tourism marketing. We currently market ourselves as *Sun Country on the Murray*. Council has heard that the Shire's tourism sector needs a new marketing focus that captures the dynamism and breadth of our visitor experience.

Continue to work with the tourism sector

Council works with and supports the Shire's multiple tourism associations and a regional tourism board.

The Shire will continue to work with our tourism sector and operators to support the development of tourism infrastructure, market our destinations and experiences and align our visitor economy goals.

Tourism Economy



Domestic Overnight Trips

399k in 2023



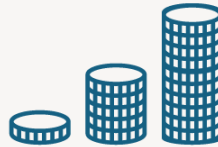
Domestic Day Trips

238k in 2023



Tourism Jobs

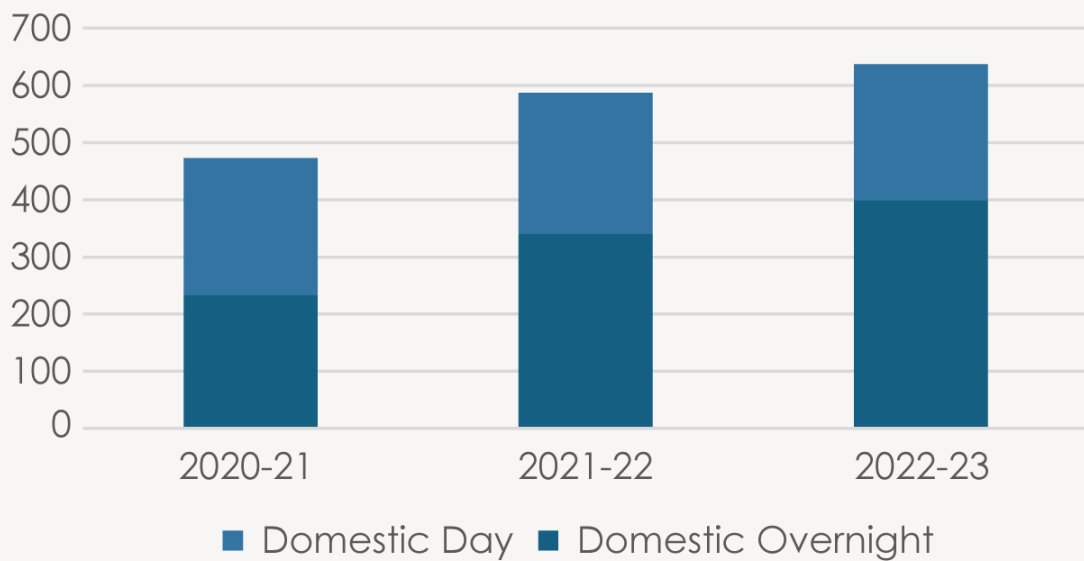
841 in 2023



Economic Output

\$163M in 2023

Domestic Day & Overnight Trips (000) 2020 - 2023



Economic Priority 4

Facilitate a local vocational and higher education sector

Rural communities often experience a mismatch between available jobs and local skills. Vocational programs and tertiary education can directly target high-demand occupations in our community providing immediate pathways to well-paying careers in occupations that our community needs.

Our community and businesses need a wide array of technological, health, agricultural and service skills. As our community grows, we need to foster an educational sector that enables our community to gain contemporary skills without leaving the community.

Our goal is to:

Explore opportunities to attract vocational and higher education providers to our community.

We will:

- | | |
|------|--|
| IN12 | Explore opportunities to attract higher education, vocational and technical education providers to the municipality. |
| IN13 | Facilitate a vocational needs analysis. |
| IN14 | Facilitate career pathways |

Modern Skills in Primary Industries

Agriculture increasingly requires sophisticated technical knowledge. Modern vocational programs teach precision agriculture techniques, sustainable farming practices, equipment diagnostics, and agricultural business management. Part of our economic development focus is helping primary industries remain competitive in a changing world. We need vocational education that helps our community to adapt to technological change.

Education needs Assessment

We aim to facilitate vocational education opportunities that are responsive to local needs that establishes strong industry connections and recognises that rural communities bring valuable existing knowledge and work ethic that can be enhanced through targeted skill development.

Local Career Pathways

Vocational education can directly connect individuals to local job markets. Our community needs targeted educational options that don't require leaving the community. In addition, education programs that emphasize practical problem-solving and hands-on skills will help boost local entrepreneurship and business development.

Partnership opportunities

Moira has unique advantages for training providers. The close-knit nature of our community enables direct access to business and can facilitate relationships between experienced industry leaders and early career trainees. Through our educational needs analysis, we aim to identify opportunities to foster partnerships between schools, employers, and community organisations in targeted areas that are conducive and attractive to educational providers.

Economic Priority 5

Boost Business Engagement, Advocacy and Investment Attraction Activities

Local government has a critical role in directly supporting economic growth via invaluable technical assistance, regulatory assistance, marketing and promotion, advocacy and facilitation for our community and its businesses.

We have a role to play in our economic growth and we plan to excel.

Our priority is therefore to:

Enhance our advocacy and investment facilitation

We will:

- | | |
|------|---|
| IN15 | Foster a business and investment friendly Council |
| IN16 | Support business innovation, connection and learning |
| IN17 | Support our community in managing the impact of industry change |
| IN18 | Engage with agencies, State and Federal Governments to protect and grow the Shire's economy |

Infrastructure enabled growth

Reliable infrastructure, transport, energy and communications are critical factors needed to attract new industry and to enable established businesses to grow. Infrastructure is also essential in the development of housing and the commercial and retail facilities needed to turn vacant land into new communities.

The Shire has strong growth prospects for its manufacturing, retail trade, health and education sectors, specialised and high value-added tourism, and new and emerging industries, including renewable energy generation.

We will therefore advocate to influence State and Federal infrastructure programs and budgets to ensure that our communities have the infrastructure they need to thrive and our businesses to grow. This includes drainage, water provision, electricity and gas provision and storage, and road and public transport.

Nurturing our businesses

The Shire will continue to support business through its grants and business support and networking programs.

Over many years, small businesses have received Council assistance to expand operations, develop marketing approaches, address regulatory requirements and upgrade skills. We want to help our businesses grow by providing support and resources to overcome challenges to expand.

We also want to encourage our innovators and entrepreneurs to continue to take calculated risks and launch new ventures in our community. We will explore options to nurture new businesses through their critical early stages of formation, potentially through a mentorship program and via support to apply for grants from both Federal and State government.

Proactive economic development

We have an important regulatory role to play in facilitating development, events and directing and delivering infrastructure planning and investment in a business friendly environment.

Council will prioritise and support major proposals that will deliver significant economic benefits to our community. Council will seek to support applicants to navigate the planning process by helping improve the quality of applications, helping navigate regulatory agencies, and helping to expedite assessment of applications and permits.

What You Told Us

What You Told Us

Strategy formulation is an opportunity to listen to the voice of business and the broader community to understand their expectations and aspirations.

Our strategy reflects the intelligence and insights of local industry and the community and their perceptions of long-term opportunities and challenges.

In the development of this strategy, extensive engagement with the community, industry sector and business was undertaken.

Online survey

An online survey explored the economic issues, opportunities and priorities of our community.

Local workshops and street talk

Workshops were conducted with business owners across agriculture, retail, commercial, hospitality, tourism and professional services within Yarrawonga, Numurkah, Nathalia, and Cobram. We explored the opportunities and constraints impacting on business in our settlements.

Intercept surveys were conducted along the streets of Yarrawonga, Numurkah, Nathalia and Cobram. This engagement method targeted on-street and business responses, where local business could provide direct feedback on their experience.

Industry engagement

Industry interviews were structured around key themes to explore relationships with the economic profile of Moria. Industry stakeholder interviews included representatives from the retail, health, hospitality, accommodation, leisure, professional services and manufacturing sectors. These in-depth interviews provided key insights into the perceived advantages, challenges and opportunities of doing business in Moira.

Key Themes

The action and initiatives set out in this strategy reflect the results of the engagement with community and industry.



Our Businesses Want to Grow

70% of businesses interviewed plan to invest in Moira



Our Businesses Need Workers

44% of businesses interviewed experienced challenges recruiting staff and filling jobs



Housing Is An Economic Issue

20% of businesses interviewed identified access to housing for their workers as an economic issue



All Year Round Tourism

Moira's tourism industry performs strongly in peak periods but faces seasonality and declines in off-peak times

Insight 1

Our Businesses Want to Grow

70% of businesses interviewed during the industry engagement plan to invest in Moira

A consistent theme across the interviews was the strength of Moira's economy. Interviewees reported robust demand for their goods and services, plenty of employment opportunities and the intention to invest and grow their business activities, in many cases with the adoption of new technologies.

Even businesses that expressed frustration with a range of regulatory, worker, housing and infrastructure conditions stated that they were committed to Moira and planned to grow through investment, workforce and adoption of technology.

Some businesses, due to changing circumstances, expressed caution about the future.

Interviewed businesses said...

There is an aggressive plan to spend money

Growth is inevitable

Yes – we plan to more than double turnover and add another 20 staff in the next 3-5 years

Cautious at present and will wait to see how the economy progresses over the next 12 months, before committing to investing/expanding

As a business, we are putting in more silos, worm farms, waste water solutions

Insight 2

Our Businesses Need Workers

44% of businesses interviewed identified challenges recruiting staff and filling jobs

The Shire and broader region has very low unemployment. There are currently plenty of job opportunities across a variety of industry sectors with many jobs unfilled.

As we grow, demand for goods and services across both health and education, construction, agriculture and manufacturing sectors is reported to be strong, which is why a significant proportion of businesses interviewed are planning to invest and expand their operations.

Our existing workforce is aging and there are challenges in attracting highly skilled workers needed in all facets of the contemporary economy. Businesses are implementing new technologies that are dependent on skilled workers.

Part of the solution is continuing to link local industry and the education sector to align the skills of young people with the needs of business. We also need to investigate new opportunities to attract higher education providers, that link to our core industries, into Moira. We need to support regional education opportunities and leverage from our affordable and unique environment to attract families to boost worker skills.

Interviewed businesses said...

Businesses from a range of sectors are expecting to need considerably more workers over the next 2-4 years

There are many career and job opportunities

Upskilling local workers and promoting moving to Moira

Management level and experienced senior staff are challenging to find

Expansion of the site is challenging. Attracting skilled workers, chemical engineers, skills to run the technology in the plant is challenging.

A lot of technology is coming in and requires skilled workers and qualified staff

Business Interview Soundbites



Insight 3

Housing is an economic issue

20% of businesses interviewed identified access to housing for their workers as an economic issue

The lack of available and suitable housing in Moira emerged as a consistent theme in every industry.

Businesses report strong demand for their products and services and a depth of employment opportunities, but the lack of housing is a barrier to encouraging new workers into Moira.

Housing needs to be of a suitable standard, within a convenient travel time to workplaces and enable individuals and households to make a long term commitment to our community. As new businesses move into the area and existing businesses expand, limited rentals and long term housing options are now a major economic issue for our community.

Interviews identified the need for a range of housing solutions including high quality housing for labourers, essential workers, families and professionals .

A key issue is limited rentals. A lack of rentals limits the opportunity for new households to experience Moira before making a long term commitment to our community.

Interviewed business said...

We are not competing with other organisations for workers, but competing for housing

Need to expand worker housing

Housing is very difficult, renting and prices have gone up

We try to recruit workers from Melbourne. However, it's hard to find housing/accommodation for workers - motels are being used to house workers.

There is an issue with housing for new workers

Housing is affordable and there are lots of attractions and services in Yarrawonga that people should know about.

Insight 4

All Year Round Tourism

Moira's tourism industry performs very well in the peak season, but faces significant seasonality and revenue declines during the off-peak months

Feedback from Moira's tourism sector highlighted a strong high season, but there is a need to encourage greater visitor numbers and spending during the off-peak season.

There are a wide range of views on how to promote and expand our tourism economy which generates significant flow-on benefits for services, recreation and food and beverage outlets.

Our natural assets including the Murray River, river beaches, Lake Mulwala and the 66,000 hectare Barmah National Park are major attractors.

The Sebel Yarrawonga is a prize winning 4.5 star resort that sets a new standard for regional accommodation. We are currently on a journey to improve Thompsons Beach as a visitor destination via the Thompson Beach Master Plan. Thompsons Beach is the largest inland beach in the Southern Hemisphere. Additionally, the expansion of the Dharnya Centre in the Barmah National forest will further boost visitation and expenditure in our community.

In the post-COVID era visitation to Moira has been growing at 20% per annum reaching near on 400,000 domestic visitors in 2023 up from 233,000 visitors in 2021.

Interviewed business said...

Encourage more tourists outside of summer high season

Grow all year round events

Reform tourism branding, moving away from the "sunshine" brand

Cactus Country is a major attraction

Trying to extend the length of stay

We can provide the nature escape people are looking for

Moira Shire has the river beaches, Lake Mulwala, Sebel in Yarrawonga, Barmah National Park

The Yarrawonga lake front is a great place to visit in summer and live. This is an untapped gem that could attract more development.

Nathalia's silo tower does not have a mural. This would bring more people into the town and encourage more tourism.

Promote the lifestyle, promote strengths to visitors



Charter
Keck Cramer

Advisory, Capital, Projects,
Research, Valuations