



GREATER SHEPPARTON 2030

BACKGROUND and ANALYSIS REPORT NO. 3: COMMUNITY LIFE

Adopted by Council at Ordinary Council Meeting on 3 October 2006

coomes consulting



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Abbreviations / Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CBD	Central Business District - Shepparton city centre
GSCC	Greater Shepparton City Council
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
GB-CMA	Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority
G-MW	Goulburn-Murray Water
Greater Shepparton	Refers to the whole municipality of Greater Shepparton
MSS	Municipal Strategic Statement
Shepparton	Refers to the urban areas of Shepparton
SIR	Shepparton Irrigation Region
VPPs	Victorian Planning Provisions
WFP	Whole Farm Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Greater Shepparton 2030 – Process and Outcomes

The Greater Shepparton City Council and the Department of Sustainability and Environment have prepared *Greater Shepparton 2030*, a blueprint for building sustainable economic activity and maximising the quality of life in the municipality over the next 30 years.

This plan will update the previous City of Greater Shepparton Strategy Plan 1996 which formed the basis for the current Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS). The MSS is the local strategy component of the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme.

A key element of the preparation of this plan was the integrated planning approach, and the process and extent of community engagement involving all stakeholders. This engagement was achieved from a number of initiatives to obtain a depth of understanding of issues from both technical and personal perspectives. The feedback from the community consultation assisted in the development of visions for the municipality.

The methods of community engagement included an open invitation for community representatives to attend a number of advisory groups. These workshops covered the specialist topics of:

- Environment
- Heritage and culture
- Community services
- Infrastructure
- Transport
- Business and tourism
- Agriculture
- Recreation and open space
- Youth

In addition, specific workshops were held to discuss the towns of:

- Congupna
- Dookie
- Katandra West
- Merrigum
- Mooroopna
- Murchison
- Shepparton
- Tallygaroopna
- Tatura
- Toolamba
- Undera

Specialist input was also received from single purpose workshops with Councillors, Council officers and Regional Development agencies.

A number of individual interviews were held with representatives of key statutory agencies. In addition to community engagement, the preparation of the strategy involved detailed research and investigation of the main issues.

Current and emerging issues are considered, ranging from global issues such as world economics, global warming, energy sources and population migration.

Domestic issues are considered, including changes to the horticultural and dairy industries, potential for new rural enterprises, water distribution, the highway bypass, changes to road and rail freight patterns, and community development and settlement patterns.

This report also provides a profile of the city and the forecast population projections.

The key land use and development principles that together form the basis of a functioning city are:

- People (Demographic Profile)
- Settlement and Housing
- Community Life
- Environment
- Economic development
- Infrastructure

This grouping generally reflects the land use and development principles embodied in State and local documents including the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs), the Greater Shepparton City Council Plan and Melbourne 2030.

Attachment 1 contains a complete list of topics, a key direction for each topic, and a list of themes within each topic, that together comprise the policy coverage of *Greater Shepparton 2030*.

There is a background and analysis report for each of the above topics. This grouping is for ease of description of related sub-topics and for implementation by various public and private agencies. It is recognised that, in practice, these principles are intrinsically interrelated in a holistic view of the municipality.

Greater Shepparton 2030 contains objectives, strategies, and implementation suggestions for each of these topics. These were derived from a set of overarching sustainability principles, which have also driven Greater Shepparton's Council Plan.

In addition, some of the topics will contain framework plans. A framework plan will spatially map the preferred form of future use and development.

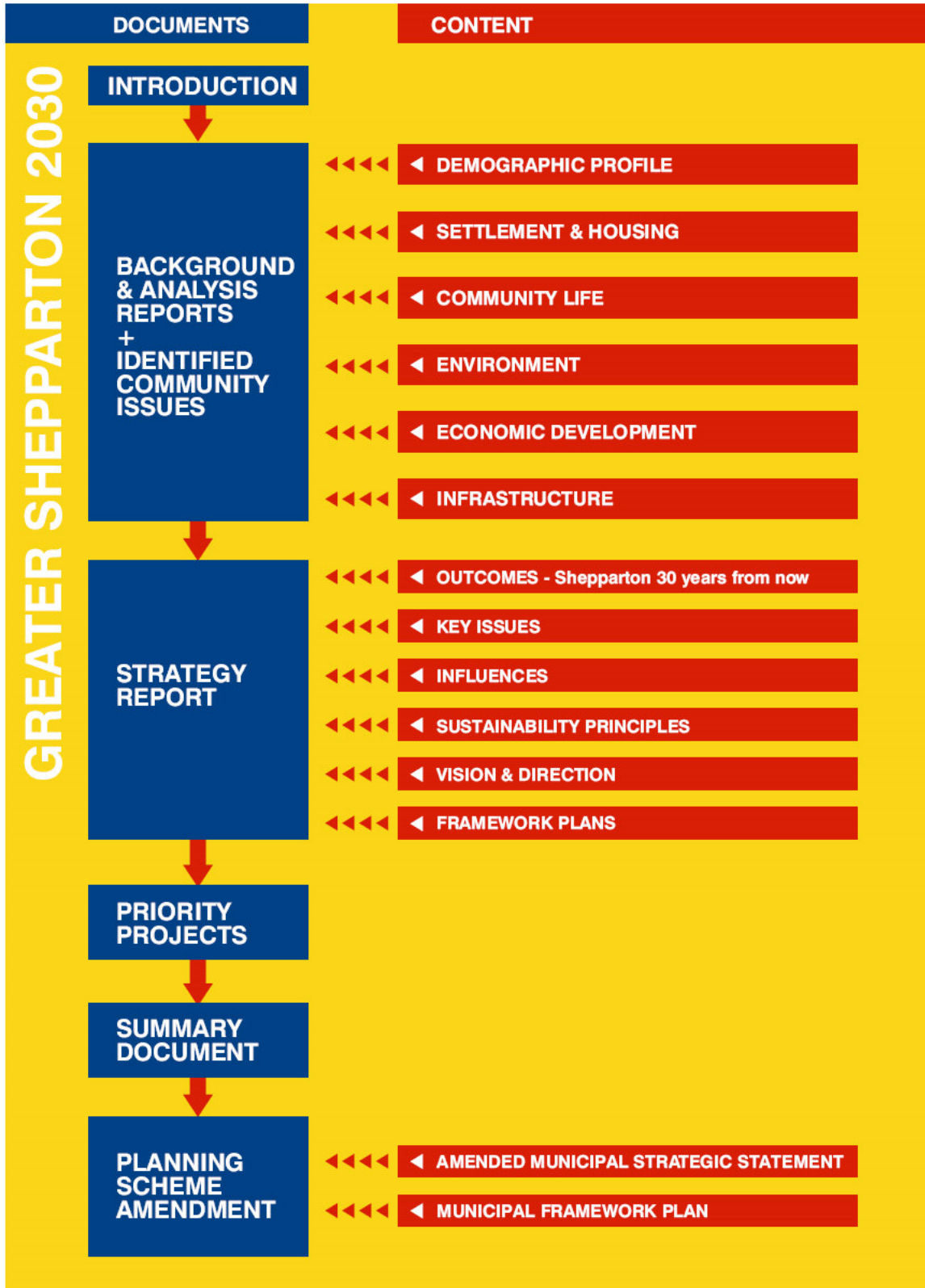
In line with the sustainability outcomes sought for the long term, the plan will contain triple bottom line assessments of opportunities and challenges for land use planning, social planning and economic analysis. This analysis will identify priority projects which will be included in *Greater Shepparton 2030: In Summary*, a summary document for the Greater Shepparton City Council.

The outputs of this Strategy will consist of a number of corporate and strategic planning documents for the municipality, including the Municipal Strategic Statement. The implementation of the Actions listed in the Strategy Plan will be undertaken in the context of the constraints of the Strategic Resources Plan as contained in the Council Plan 2004-2008.

The total package of documents comprising the *Greater Shepparton 2030* is shown in Figure 1.

GREATER SHEPPARTON 2030

THE COMPONENTS OF GREATER SHEPPARTON 2030



Knowledge Creativity Performance
Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Architecture Project Management

Figure 1: The Components of Greater Shepparton 2030

1.2 This Report – Community Life

The ‘community life’ component of this strategy plan is inclusive of a wide range of sub-topics that are interrelated and often interdependent.

The sub-topics that are discussed in this strategy plan are:

- Health and Social Services (Section 5)
- Education (Section 6)
- Recreation and Open Space (Section 7)
- Safe and Accessible Environments (Section 8)

The concept of ‘community life’ embodies a number of intangible attributes, which may include feelings of connection, security, belonging, and a shared future. Of course the meaning of community will be unique for each individual. However, for the purposes of this strategic plan, the sense of community may be manifested in a number of ways, for example, in the form of social connectedness and networks, social support structures, leadership, in the strength of local volunteerism, in the scope of social networks and social support structures, and in the degree of self-autonomy and self directed action.

The scope of services and facilities that form the foundations of community life cannot be practically covered in this strategic plan. Both the Council's annual corporate plan and the Public Health Plan 2002-2005 contain many strategic directions for social planning.

The municipality is home to a diverse number of ethnic groups, including indigenous Aborigines, second and third generations of European migrants, and newer first generation migrants from Europe, Asia and the Middle East, some of who initially arrived in Australia as refugees.

The number and diversity of ethnicities presents challenges for GSCC in terms of social inclusion, tolerance of other cultures, and access and integration into essential support services, community facilities, employment, education, community facilities and the like. Yet this unique indigenous and multi-cultural population mix also presents opportunities for celebrating the unique characteristics of national and other cultures, a new labour force for existing and planned businesses, and an understanding of the broader world.

A functioning community requires the provision of basic health and social services. These services are usually state subsidised, and many are also directly supported through Council funding. Their distribution and form of provision to regional and rural locations has changed over time. The financial constraints on these services are unlikely to be revealed in the future. Therefore the challenge for service providers is to fulfil their user needs within budgetary constraints, by pursuing creative delivery methods. Greater Shepparton City Council supports this approach and is actively pursuing this objective through a number of community strengthening initiatives which focus on responding to the actual needs of communities, rather than the provision of standard services for those residents who have the ability and capacity to access them.

A “liveable” community is one where residents feel they live in a secure environment with access to facilities. Such security and accessibility enables social interactions, and creates opportunities for mixing of varying age groups and cultures.

A resounding theme throughout the consultation is the skills base and lifelong education of the community. The retention of a proportion of the local youth for post-secondary study and a career in the region can only be attained if relevant training opportunities and careers are available. In addition, there must be a corollary investment in lifestyle attractors for this age group, for example housing, transport, entertainment and sports facilities. The improvement of education facilities cannot be narrowly viewed as a competition for institutions from other regional cities.

Health and fitness are important indicators of a well-balanced community. The moderate climate and short commuting distances create opportunities for a range of passive and active recreational facilities, and this must be promoted to all residents.

This report provides a snapshot of the demographic profile of the Greater Shepparton City Council and a review of a number of social issues covering social connectedness education, health, housing, crime and community infrastructure.

The report has relied on a mix of quantitative and qualitative research including:

- ABS Census 2001 data, 2002 projections and comparisons are made between the municipality and the Regional Victorian average as well as between the 2001 and 1996 Census figures.
- Additional quantitative data from DETWR, Crime Prevention Victoria, the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, including “Know Your Town”.
- A series of reports on thematic issues including the provision of services for older people, health promotion, youth affairs, the renewal of the Parkside Estate and employment training initiatives.
- Interviews with State and local government officials and health care providers including Goulburn Valley Family Care, Office of Housing and Department of Human Services.

1.3 Structure of This Report

This report is divided into 10 sections:

Section 1 contains an introduction to the strategy plan, an outline of subtopics addressed in this report, and a list of sustainability principles.

Section 2 provides an overview of the topic, with the major issues identified in the 1996 plan and comments about where the future focus should be in this current strategy plan. This section concludes with a singular direction for the topic of community life, which will drive the detailed strategies.

Section 3 contains a summary of comments from the community engagement process: firstly the comments regarding the major issues of social services education and recreation, and secondly, ideas and visions for the potential achievements in 20 years time. These comments are displayed graphically to show linkages and common themes.

Section 4 contains a statistical overview of Greater Shepparton and the distribution of community services.

Sections 5 to 8 address each of the subtopics in detail and may include all or a number of these items:

- Key issues, including major structural changes and key initiatives undertaken.
- Any reports or studies relevant to the study area, published since the 1996 plan.
- A broader strategy framework, indicating where local strategies fit into regional, state, national and international strategy frameworks.
- A list of objectives, derived from the community engagement feedback and vision setting plus the above situational analysis. These objectives have been tested against the sustainability principles.
- For each of the objectives, a list of strategies to achieve the objectives.
- For each of these strategies a list of actions to implement the strategies.
- In addition, the role taken by the Council, the priority of the project and an indicative cost are included as part of the implementation process. Council has the following roles:
 - Provider – Council's role is to provide the service
 - Facilitator – Council's role is to provide the service with other providers
 - Advocate – Council's role is to lobby the provider to provide the service
- Where relevant, a framework plan that spatially maps the preferred form of future use and development. This may be an amended version of an existing framework plan from the 1996 strategy plan, or a new plan.

Section 9 This section contains a summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for this topic.

1.4 Sustainability principles

There is widespread agreement that solving global problems requires the adoption of local policies and programmes that lead to sustainable development.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs. Sustainability is not just an environmental consideration it has economic and social and environmental perspectives and relevance too.

The recently released statement of metropolitan planning policy – Melbourne 2030– has advanced a suite of principles as fundamental platforms to the attainment of sustainable development.

These principles, which start with sustainable practice, are equally applicable and relevant to the development of Greater Shepparton and are adopted as principles underpinning the strategy plan.

Principle	Outcome
Sustainability:	Sustainable economic, social and environmental development
Innovation:	Commitment to finding new solutions
Partnership and Inclusiveness:	Collaboration with others and considerations of their needs and aspirations
Leadership:	Leadership and encouragement of/in others
Equity:	Fairer access to benefits of growth and change
Adaptability:	Planning to change and being adaptable when faced with it
Integrated Planning:	Planning and implementation of actions undertaken through an integrated planning process

2 An Overview – Community Life

2.1 Strategic Context – From the MSS to a Future Focus

The current Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) in the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme is based on the findings and recommendations contained in the 1996 Strategy Plan.

This section firstly summarises the key strategic focus of the current MSS as it relates to community life.

Secondly, this section provides an overview of the preferred future focus, which ultimately will be incorporated as the strategic directions in the amended MSS.

2.1.1 Current Municipal Strategic Statement

The MSS highlights the major regional community and social infrastructure in Shepparton, in the form of the Goulburn Valley Base Hospital and the university campuses of La Trobe University, Melbourne University and Goulburn Ovens TAFE (GOTAFE).

The plan acknowledges that the spatial distribution of services is biased to the Shepparton centre, rather than dispersed throughout all the townships.

The strategic direction derived from the 1996 plan is to provide services and facilities appropriate to the needs of residents and visitors, and to extend these services to the growth areas.

In terms of implementation, the MSS foreshadows a need to prepare a Development Contributions Plan (DCP) for the equitably funded provision of community services and physical infrastructure for future populations.

2.1.2 Future Focus

The provision of appropriate community services and facilities remains a primary objective in this strategy.

This plan acknowledges the challenges facing an ageing population, with their extended retirement years and variable accommodation needs ranging from independent to fully supported. The future focus for this plan will be the smart delivery of services and facilities, in recognition of the competition for funding and the shrinking of direct services dispersed throughout local townships. It is no longer practical to maintain facilities and services because 'they have always been here.' Nor is it appropriate to provide all services in all urban and township areas, and particularly if these same services are duplicated in nearby regional centres and municipalities.

The future focus will be on how a service is provided. For example, in terms of community and social services the method of delivery must be flexible with changing demographic profiles. In terms of recreational services the facilities and hours of operation can be targeted to different user groups, including specific ethnic groups. In the pursuing of a model university city, GSCC is not seeking to attract a single tertiary institution to locate in or near the centre, and then wait for the positive multiplier effects on the local economy. Greater Shepparton 2030 encourages a unique model of a university city whereby courses are provided across a number of coordinated service providers. The potential flow-on effects include the retention of youth in the

region, skills development, increased business and a stimulus to social interactions and community life.

In terms of public open spaces and recreation reserves, the goal for an integrated network is still applicable; however this must be underpinned by the recognition of two key influences - water scarcity, with respect to their design, maintenance and upkeep, and the protection of flora and fauna. Planning for the provision and the design of these facilities must bear in mind these considerations.

2.2 The Direction – Community Life

To achieve the overall vision and outcomes of Greater Shepparton 2030 (as outlined in the Strategy Plan report) a major direction has been developed for each topic. These directions are complimented by a series of objectives and strategies and an implementation plan for each topic.

The direction for the topic of community life is:

Enhance social connectedness, physical and mental health and well being, education and participatory opportunities in order to improve liveability and provide a greater range of community services

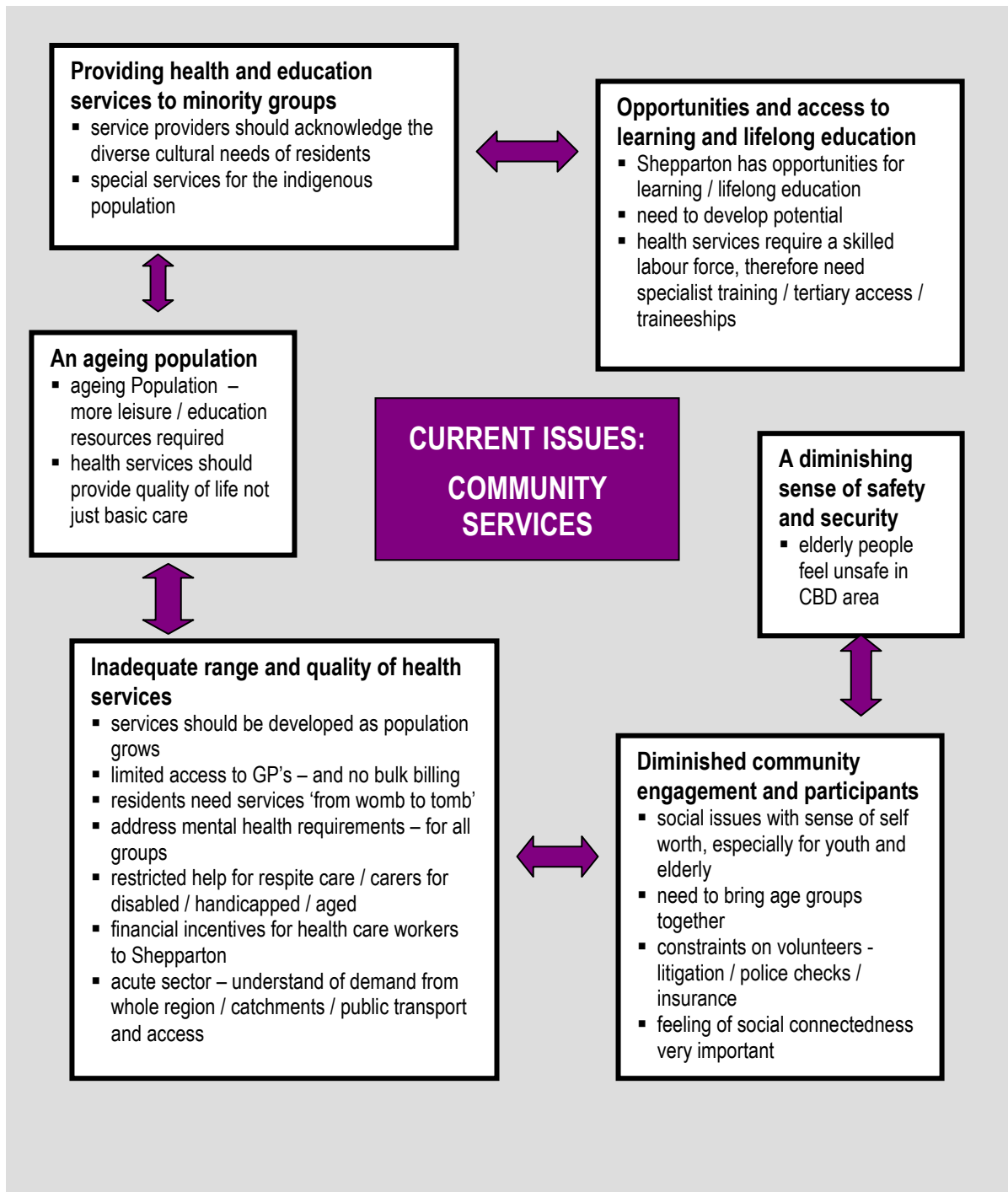
3 Community Engagement

The figures on the following pages provide a summary of the feedback from the community consultation sessions.

The discussion was focussed on two stages:

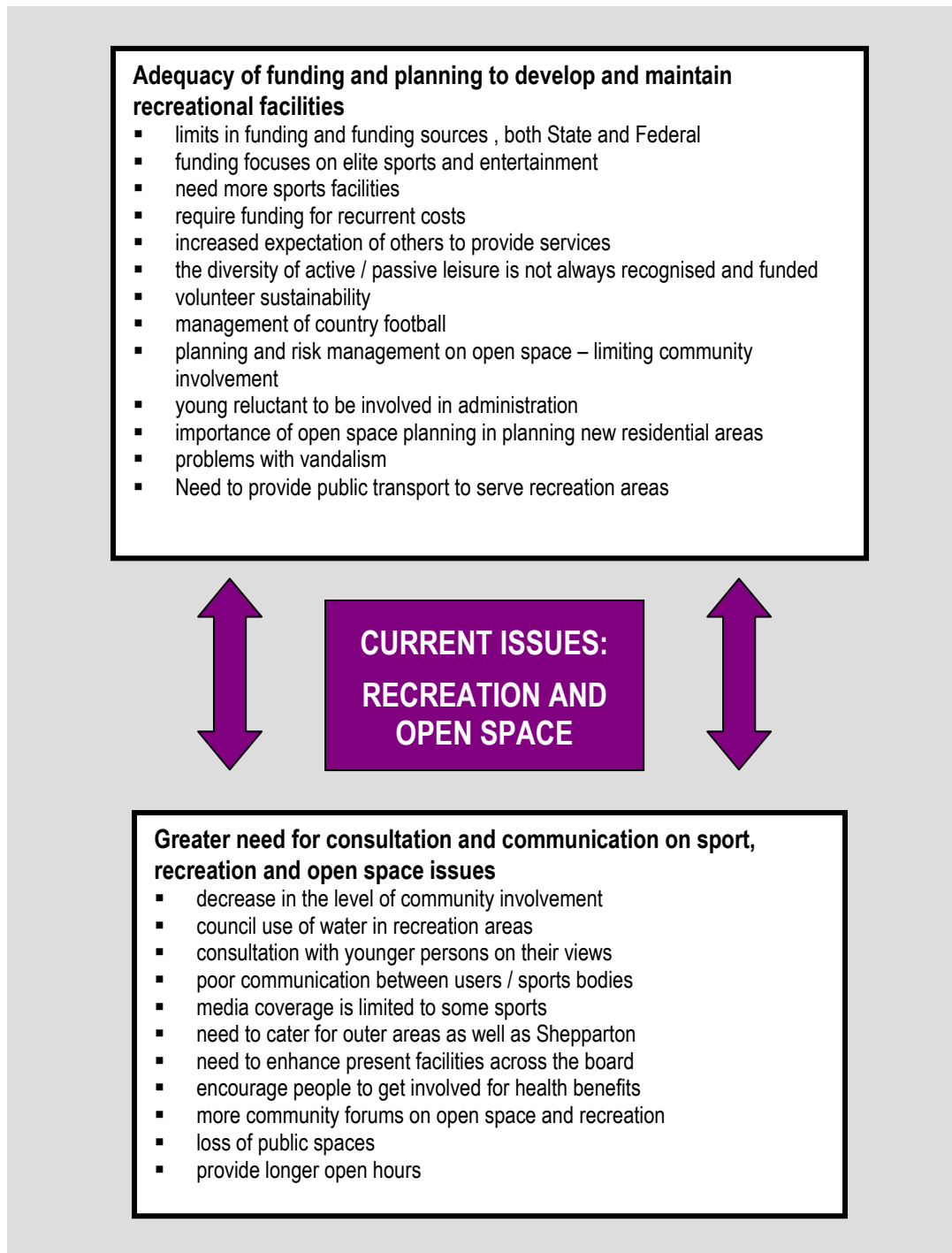
- Current issues in the topic areas of community services and recreation and;
- Visions for the community services and recreational achievements in 20 years time in Greater Shepparton.

The responses are shown diagrammatically to indicate the common themes from the discussion and also to show the inter-linkages between the themes.



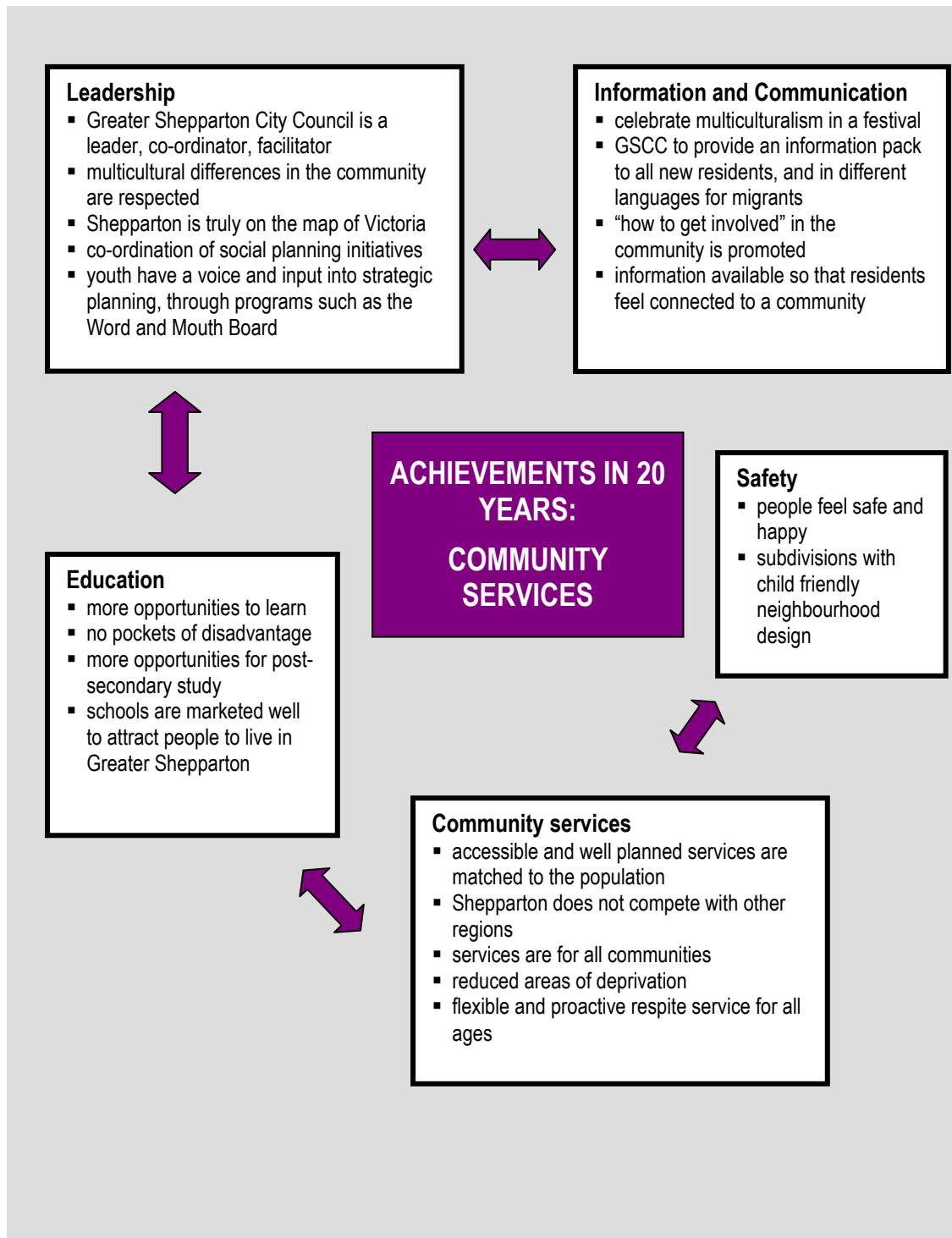
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Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Figure 2: Community Consultation on Community Service - Current Issues



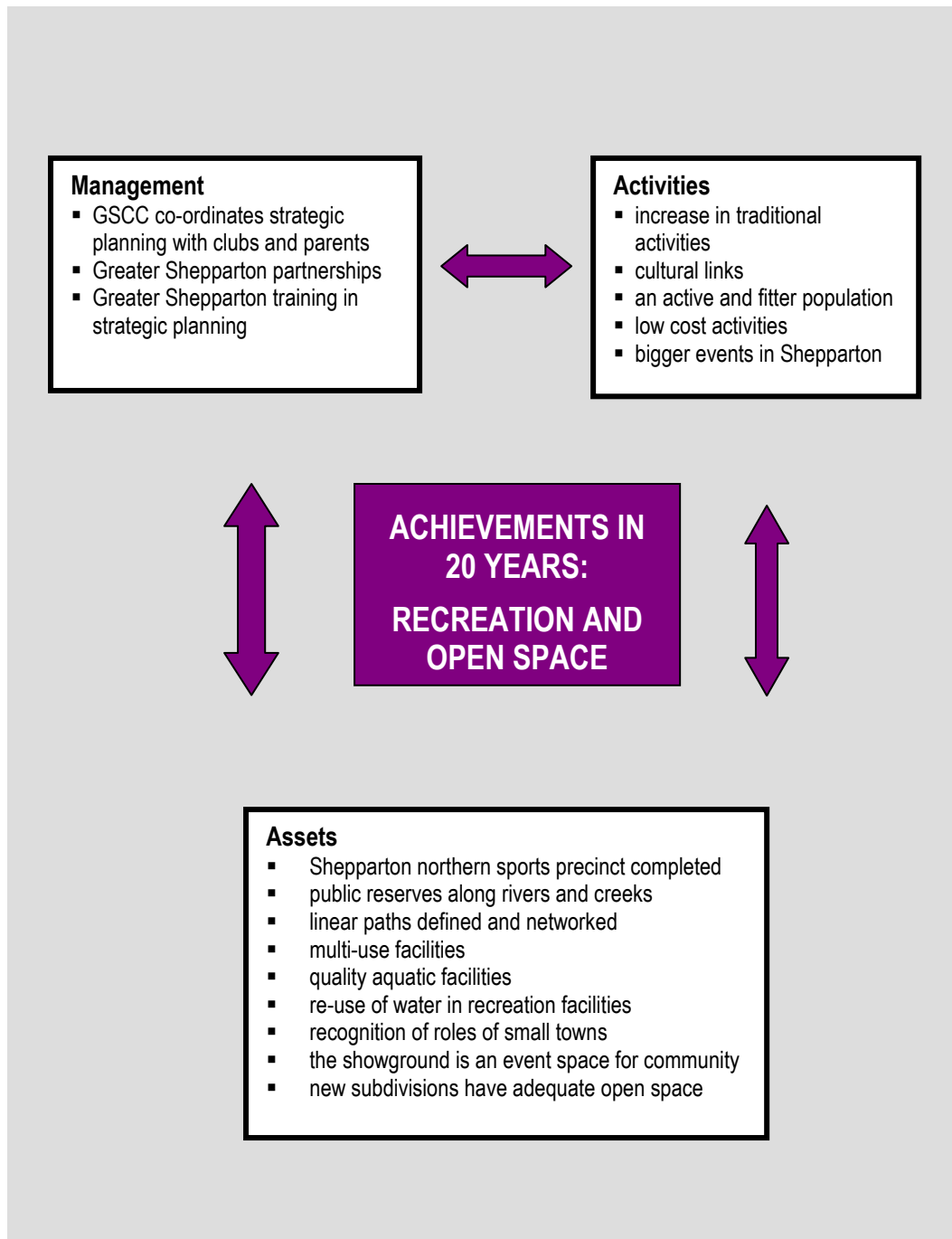
Knowledge Creativity Performance
Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Figure 3: Community Consultation on Recreation and Open Space - Current Issues



Knowledge Creativity Performance
Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Figure 4: Community Consultation on Community Service - Achievements in 20 Years



Knowledge Creativity Performance
Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Figure 5: Community Consultation on Recreation/Open Space - Achievements in 20 Years

4 Profile – Overview of Community Services

4.1 Population

Data for Greater Shepparton is shown in Attachment 2. This provides a snapshot of local socio economic conditions.

In many ways, the profile of Greater Shepparton is typical of much of regional Victoria, however several unique variances are also apparent, for example the high number of indigenous residents. Refer to Background and Analysis Report No. 1: Demographic Profile.

The following key findings are evident from this snapshot:

- The population of the municipality was approximately 60,000 in 2004¹. Population growth in the municipality is concentrated in the areas of Shepparton and Mooroopna.
- The median age of people in the municipality was 34 years, marginally below the State average.
- 2.6% of the population identified themselves as being of indigenous origin, over five times the Victoria average.
- The municipality has also seen a recent influx of immigrants and refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds, with an estimated 2,000 Arabic speaking residents². This does not appear to have been recorded in the Census data, most likely as much of the migration has occurred since 2001. This is also evidenced in the take up of ESL places.
- Educational performance in the municipality is marginally lower than the average for regional Victoria with only 8.2% of the population with a bachelor degree or higher compared to the rural Victoria average of 9% (or 17% for the whole of Victoria). By contrast, nearly 62% of the population have no recognised academic qualification compared to a regional Victoria average of 58%.
- Agriculture, manufacturing and the retail sectors are the biggest employers of local people.
- 92.3% of households own a car, on par with the average for regional Victoria.
- 26% of residents rent their homes compared to the regional Victoria average of 20%.
- Life expectancy rates are close to the State average.
- The DSE forecasts the municipality's population at 80,720 by the year 2030 representing an annual growth of approximately 1.3%. However, within this forecast, it is clear that there will be a substantial increase in the number of elderly people and a fall in numbers of the preschool and school age children³.
- The preschool population of the municipality has risen marginally since 1996 (from 4,129 to 4,182) but there are a number of indications that this will fall to about 3,500 by 2021⁴.
- The municipality's population is ageing. The population over the age of 60 rose from 7,883 to 8,748 in the period 1996 to 2001.

¹ Source: Know your Area, DSE, 2004

² Source: City of Greater Shepparton Public Health Plan, 2002-2004;

³ Source: Hames Sharley Victoria report "School Provision Plan" covering 19 of the City's 36 primary schools

⁴ Source: DSE

4.2 Housing

The typical house type in the municipality, which represents 90% of the housing stock, is a detached house on a large lot. Only 4.3% of the stock comprises flats or units.

House prices in the Greater Shepparton area are amongst the highest in regional Victoria outside of the Bellarine Peninsula and the Surf Coast.

Table 1: Review of median prices for residential land, Greater Shepparton 2004⁵

Accommodation Type	Median price in \$
House	\$192,000
Unit/ apartment	\$169,000
Vacant block	\$ 87,500
Number of house sales	765

(Source: "Know Your Town" DSE, 2004)

The municipality also has relatively high proportions of publicly rented housing (5.2%) and privately rented housing (20.4%) compared to the regional Victoria average (3.9% and 16.6% respectively).

The largest concentration of public housing is at the Parkside Estate and the neighbouring estates (600 homes).

4.3 Employment Statistics

The strengths of the local economy have been in "brawn" sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. This is reflected in the predominance of primary industries and manufacturing in the local economy relative to the rest of regional Victoria.

Table 2: Proportion of Population in Agriculture or Manufacturing Related Jobs⁶

Employment by industry	Greater Shepparton (%)	Regional Victoria (%)
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	12.5	11.2
Manufacturing	15.7	13.4

Unemployment at March 2003 was marginally higher than the average for regional Victoria (6.5% against the regional Victoria average of 5.9%). By contrast the unemployment rate in the municipality is lower than in Greater Bendigo (7%) or Ballarat (9.1%).

Clearly there is substantial variation in unemployment within the municipality with Greater Shepparton Part A (broadly defined as the urban areas of Shepparton and Mooroopna) experiencing substantially higher unemployment than the surrounding rural areas (refer Table 3 over page).

⁵ Source: "Know Your Town" DSE

⁶ ABS Census, 2001

Table 3: Unemployment Statistics - Greater Shepparton City Council

	Greater Shepparton (%) ⁷	Regional Victoria (%)
Greater Shepparton average	6.5	5.9%
Greater Shepparton Pt A	7.3	
Greater Shepparton Pt B (East)	2.6	
Greater Shepparton Pt B (West)	4.4	

Source: Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Quarterly Report, March 2003

The average unemployment rate has decreased from 7.1% to 6.5% over the period from December 2001 to March 2003, consistent with the downward trend in regional Victoria.

Census data for 2001 indicates that youth unemployment was higher than the average for regional Victoria. There are indications that this difference relates to a skills mismatch between skills sought by employers and those offered by school leavers⁸.

4.4 Crime Statistics

Crime Prevention Victoria has collated statistics on recorded crime and fear of crime⁹. In summary, the findings indicate:

- Reported crime rates were marginally higher than the average for Victoria (9,528 crimes per 100,000).¹⁰
- The majority of crimes reported were crimes against the property (74%), followed by crimes against the person (10.5%).
- Rates of “behaviour in public”, assault and drug possession crimes considerably exceed the Victorian average.

Residents’ responses to questionnaires on perceived crime hotspots identified the Shepparton Mall and the Parkside Estate as the two areas where residents consistently felt to be unsafe.

Residents’ fears at each of these locations included:

- Shepparton mall and surrounding area especially Maude Street - youth crime/ gangs, anti social behaviour, theft from ATMs, drunk and disorderly behaviour.
- The Parkside Estate and surrounding area – gangs, burglary, theft of and from cars.

Other hotspots identified in this survey include Victoria Lake and Mooroopna Primary School.

Research carried out by Root Projects Australia¹¹ indicates that 45% of residents do not believe the Shepparton CBD/central area is a safe place for older people.

⁷ DETWR Small Area Labour Markets Review – December 2002

⁸ GMLLEN (2001) Regional Audit and Gap Analysis – the report identifies skills gaps and a poor level of achievement from school leavers

⁹ Crime Prevention Victoria (October 2002) “Local Crime and Safety Profile” and questionnaire sent to 100 residents identifying locations where crime is perceived to be a problem.

¹⁰ Crime figures should be treated with caution as they only reflect reported or detected crime. These figures are influenced by police priorities and people’s willingness to report crime.

¹¹ Root Projects Australia (2002) “Aged Care Strategy- Greater Shepparton City Council”

While the Parkside Estate will shortly benefit from Neighbourhood Renewal expenditure to promote its physical and economic renewal, it may be pertinent that Council and other stakeholders consider reviewing policies around the Central Business District of Shepparton including policing, licensing policy and the management of existing licensed premises.

4.5 Provision and Geographic Distribution of Community Services

This section provides a brief review of the range of community facilities and services offered. While it is not a formal needs assessment as such, this review examines the geographical distribution of services relative to population distribution.

4.5.1 Urban Shepparton

Most facilities are located in the heart of urban Shepparton. Moreover, Shepparton has a strong regional focus not just for shopping but for other higher order services - health, education, sports and recreation facilities and a range of social support services.

Key regional/sub regional facilities include:

- Government offices, civic centre and municipal offices
- Goulburn Valley Base Hospital
- Private hospitals (2)
- Nursing homes
- TAFE College
- State Secondary Schools (5)
- Goulburn Valley Grammar School
- Church Schools (5)
- Special Developmental Schools (2)
- Shepparton Sports Precinct
- Raymond West Swimming Complex
- Aquamoves and
- other indoor-outdoor sporting facilities and recreation reserves.

However within the urban area of Shepparton, there are residential areas (for example, Parkside Estate) where there is limited access to services¹² by reason of geographic isolation and the concentration of low-income families without access to cars (SEIFA index 637.068)¹³. This issue is being addressed through the combined efforts of the Neighbourhood Renewal Project, the Greater Shepparton Community Building Project and Greater Shepparton Public Health Plan.

As the population of the municipality ages, it is reasonable to assume that more sectors of the population will have difficulties accessing services.

¹² Parkside NR Estate - Briefing Paper, 2002

¹³ ABS, Seifa Index of Deprivation, Dec 1998

4.5.2 Growth Corridors in the Urban Area

Over the next fifteen years two major growth corridors are proposed along the Goulburn Valley Highway to the north and south of Shepparton, releasing up to 690ha of land for a mix of residential based development providing up to 2,600 homes.

This level of development will clearly have implications for the delivery of a range of services in the municipality although it is not likely to result in the need for a new secondary school¹⁴. However it is anticipated that additional primary school(s) may be required to meet the needs of the growing population.

A third growth area in Mooroopna has been identified for development but is constrained by flood controls and the route of the Shepparton bypass. A fourth area has been identified in the south east of Shepparton.

4.5.3 Rural Areas of the Municipality

With respect to the rest of the municipality, the population residing to the west of Shepparton (Greater Shepparton Part B West SLA) is greater than that of the east. However there are no service centres of any significance serving the population to the east of Shepparton.

To the west of Shepparton are the service centres of Mooroopna and Tatura, 4km and 20km from urban Shepparton respectively, as well as smaller centres such as Murchison and Merrigum.

In the east, Dookie, Katandra West and Tallygaroopna are the main centres. However these towns generally have a population of under 350 people, with Dookie's population being boosted by staff of the Dookie College (University of Melbourne) their families and student population.

In other words, residents living to the east of Shepparton do not have the same ready access to a range of local shopping and community facilities and services at the location as those residents in the west. Issues relating to travel time, cost and distance are therefore more likely to be greater for residents living in these parts of the municipality.

¹⁴ Source: Hames Sharley Victoria report "School Provision Plan" covering 19 of the City's 36 primary schools

5 Health and Social Services

5.1 Key Issues

By way of providing background and context to the key issues relevant to health and community services within the municipality, an employment profile of this sector is provided.

Greater Shepparton is currently provided with a range of health facilities, including public hospitals, general practitioners and specialists. In addition, there are other related health services including aged care, family day care, early childhood services and senior citizen's centres.

According to the 2001 ABS Census of Population and Housing, over 10% of the resident labour force (or 2,525 persons) is employed in Health and Community Services.

This sector is also an important source of employment for Greater Shepparton, and according to Table 4 there are around 2,680 jobs in this industry. This implies that the industry is a net importer of jobs.

**Table 4:
Journey to Work by Destination and Health and Community Services Sub-industry, 2001**

Health and Community Services	Greater Shepparton		Greater Shepparton		Greater Shepparton		Greater Shepparton	
	Part A	Part B - East	Part B - West	Part B - West	Part B - West	Part B - West	Part B - West	
Health Services	1760	69.8%	7	70.0%	95	62.1%	1862	69.3%
Community Services	647	25.7%	3	30.0%	45	29.4%	695	25.9%
Health and Community Services, undefined	115	4.6%	0	0.0%	13	8.5%	128	4.8%
Total	2522	100.0%	10	100.0%	153	100.0%	2685	100.0%

Source: ABC Census of Population and Housing, 2001

Note that due to random rounding process by the ABS to protect privacy, any single digit figure must be interpreted with caution.

The majority of specialist health care facilities are concentrated in Shepparton, and it is an important health care centre for residents of central and northern Victoria. It is often considered more convenient than travelling to Melbourne for high order medical needs.

In Shepparton there are two hospitals; Shepparton Private Hospital and Goulburn Valley Health. Goulburn Valley Health is the largest referral hospital in north-eastern Victoria.

The health and community services sector is also an important sector for Tatura and Murchison, accounting for over 8.4% and 12.8% of employed persons and there are small hospitals in both towns.

Issues associated with the provision of community services in part relate to the residential growth that is occurring within the municipality. Population forecasts and the ageing of the population indicate that there is likely to be a significant increase in demand for health and community services over the coming twenty years. There is a need to ensure that the infrastructure and systems are in place to support the additional demand.

5.1.1 Levels of Service Provision

Children's Services

There is a range of maternal and child health services within Greater Shepparton, with twenty-seven pre-school centres and childcare centres in the municipality run by a range of service providers, of which twelve are located in Shepparton and Shepparton East.

Sessions with regard to maternal and child health services outside Shepparton are provided at nine other venues, being three in Mooroopna and one in Tatura, Merrigum, Murchison, Toolamba, Dookie and Katandra West.

It is significant that there are only two services (one and two sessions three times monthly respectively) offered in the east of Shepparton.

There are five kindergartens and pre-schools in Mooroopna, two in Tatura, and one each in Dookie, Katandra West, Kialla, Murchison, Merrigum, Tallygaroopna, Toolamba and Undera.

The Best Start Program is currently being administered by the Council to improve access to essential health services for families and children aged 0-8 years)

Services for Older People

There is a demand for Health and Community Care (HACC) services across the municipality. Information supplied by the Council for the period April to June 2003 revealed that the number of clients using each of the services is as follows:

Table 5: HACC Services Usage

HACC service	Number of Clients
Homecare	614
Personal care	81
Respite care (home and overnight)	111
Assessment and care management	730
Meals (at home and at centre)	241

While information on the number of clients on a geographic basis is not available, it is important to point out that social isolation is one of the key issues facing older people in rural areas.

In fact, while government policy maybe to keep older people in their homes via HACC services, other forms of housing such as retirement village living, or hostel accommodation in a familiar setting with easy access to support services- senior citizens, or day centres, may be more appropriate to overcome some of these problems.

The municipality has a range of residential aged care beds and independent living care accommodation¹⁵. Table 6 over the page provides a breakdown of these facilities.

¹⁵ Root Projects Australia, op cit . p17

Table 6: Aged Care Accommodation, 2002

Aged Care Accommodation	Existing	Planned
Low care (hostel) beds	260	62
High care (nursing home) beds	165	30
Independent living unit	427	518

Retirement villages in the municipality include:

- Rodney Park, Mooroopna: 47 Independent living units, 30 hostel beds;
- Kialla Garden, Kialla Lakes: 20 independent living units; and
- Wybalena Retirement Village, Murchison: 11 independent living units.

With respect to hostel accommodation, Tarcoola provides some 120 hostel units as well as an 18 bed dementia unit and 30 bed nursing home which is generally used by Tarcoola residents. Moyola Lodge in Tatura provides 21 hostel units.

Other nursing home beds are found in Shepparton (30), Murchison (30), Tatura (11) and Mooroopna (60).

Root Projects Australia¹⁶ was commissioned to carry out an Aged Care strategy for the municipality in August 2002. Their research comprised interviews with key service providers, public forums and qualitative research with elderly people over the age of 55.

In summary, the research indicates a good level of services for older people, and this is one of the attractions of Shepparton.

However, the review also identified that access to services especially for isolated rural residents is a problem. Other comments raised by stakeholders in this research included:

- A lack of affordable health services for residents, especially GPs offering bulk billing services.
- Insufficient post acute care/ rehabilitation care for older people.
- A need for new services to cater for older people including education and community outreach for isolated older people.

5.1.2 Health Services

In some areas, the municipality is well served by primary, secondary and tertiary health care establishments. However there is a recognised shortage of GP's, with new residents finding it difficult to make medical appointments. Also there is limited bulk billing which presents "access to doctor" issues for many people.

Within the municipality, there are 53 GPs and 18 dentists.

In addition, there is a wide range of support facilities for community health initiatives provided by the government, private and voluntary sectors (for example, AA, AI-Anon, therapists, mental health support, sexual health, Goulburn Valley Community Health Service, Kyabram & District Community Health Service, Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperation and other associated health services, podiatrists).

¹⁶ Root Projects Australia, op cit

While the municipality is well served with medical facilities for all sectors of the population, the same issues of access identified among older people affect other sectors of the population. For example, much of the workload of the emergency department of the Goulburn Valley Hospital is attributed to residents of North Shepparton who are unable to access medical services located primarily in central Shepparton.

The Greater Shepparton Public Health Plan 2002-2004 identifies four priorities for public health. These are:

- sense of belonging
- safe and healthy childhood
- promotion of physical activity
- drug and alcohol abuse

As with much of regional Victoria, the Public Health Plan identifies that Greater Shepparton issues with regard to physical and mental health services access and faces a shortage of GPs and skilled health professionals.

5.1.3 Youth Services

Youth services are delivered by a range of agencies. The main youth centres in the City are:

- The Bridge Youth Services, at Orr Street (run by the Salvation Army).
- Brayton Youth and Family Services.
- Cutting Edge Youth Services (run by the Uniting Church).
- The Ardmona KidsTown at Peter Ross-Edwards Causeway is run by a local community organisation.

The municipality has five community houses with funding from the DHS and the Council who help a range of residents including young people.

In addition, the Greater Shepparton City Council is responsible for the following services:

- Play areas.
- Two outdoor swimming pools at Merrigum and Tatura.
- S-Cape Regional Skate Park.
- Shepparton Sports Precinct at Brauman Street.
- Local schools provision – Wanganui School has recently extended its stadium which includes a drop-in centre for young people.

There are three bodies which oversee the co-ordination and provision of youth services across the municipality:

- The Goulburn Youth Affairs Group (GYAG) meets bi-monthly and comprises 36 members representing various local youth focused organisations.
- The Youth Council comprises residents from Years 9 and 10 from each of the six secondary schools within Greater Shepparton and serves as a consultative committee on youth issues.
- A Youth Task Force was established in June 2002 comprising young people, Councillors and Council staff. Its aim is to provide feedback on youth issues in the municipality. It meets on a monthly basis.

A number of studies have been produced focusing on the needs of young people. In 2000, Council commissioned a paper 'Living Life – Maybe Making it Better' to look at issues facing young people.

More detailed research has been commissioned in and around South Shepparton, North Shepparton and Mooroopna. The Fairley Foundation initially commissioned the research paper 'Young People Building Our Community' in 2002 which seeks to establish strategies to improve the situation for young people up until the year 2020. This position has now been advanced with the establishment of the Word and Mouth Board comprised of 12 appointed young people from a wide range of professional, academic and cultural backgrounds. The Board has responsibility for advocating on behalf of Greater Shepparton youth, providing leadership training opportunities for young people and having input into strategic planning and decision making process which will shape the future of Greater Shepparton. Financial support for the Board for the next 3-5 years has been provided through a partnership between Council and the Fairley Foundation as well as the State Government.

The Greater Shepparton City Community Building Demonstration Project, with support from the University of Melbourne School of Rural Health, commissioned an additional piece of research 'Improving and Enhancing Education and Employment Opportunities for Young People'. Funding for this initiative was secured through Council and the Community Support Fund of Victoria. This research forms part of a broader project auspiced by the GSCC and partners including secondary schools, youth service providers, neighbourhood houses, ethnic and Aborigine organisations, the police, business and industry, Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network and the Fairley Foundation.

The Fairley report in particular identified the following strengths and weaknesses in the provision of services for young people¹⁷:

- the City has made its youth policy central to its future actions and has set up a Junior Council.
- over the last decade, a range of community services have set up in Greater Shepparton to respond to young people who have fallen out of school and sometimes, family. Some services are the result of local concerns, others come from head offices of larger state or federal bodies; non government and government.
- the diversity of Greater Shepparton young people has increased through an increasing internal migration from Aborigine people and also an influx of newcomers including those from the Middle East, especially Iraq and Kuwait.
- the schools are becoming aware that more must be done to retain young people. The Goulburn Murray LLEN (Local Learning and Employment Network) is aware of the difficult issues in reconnecting young people to school and community, and is about to pilot a number of programs (including the new Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) for Victorian young people.
- new initiatives which offer opportunities for young people to remain at school (Families and Schools Together – FAST program), or reengage with school (Young Mum's program), have also been advanced through the Greater Shepparton Community Building Demonstration project with the assistance of partners including the Fairley Foundation and Wanganui Park Secondary College

¹⁷ Fairley Foundation report (2002) "Young People Building Our Community"

The Fairley report also identified the following disadvantages to young people/early school leaving: Greater Shepparton school completion rates are poor.

- extended periods of youth unemployment for some reflected in Centrelink's data on benefit recipients.
- increased evidence of alcohol, drug abuse and homelessness with estimates of 200 homeless young people in Greater Shepparton.
- some public disorder, especially in the Mall, and relatively new community safety issues.
- disconnection of most Aborigine young people from the community, including school.
- the silence and isolation of many young newcomers, especially those from the Middle East.
- the discomfort of young gay and lesbian people.
- the 'brain drain' of Greater Shepparton bright young people".

5.1.4 Demand for Services for an Increasing Ageing Population

The group of ageing residents will increase in the next three decades. A proportion of this group are the current middle-aged working farmers. A number of issues for social services become apparent:

- Ageing farmers who have lived on the land their entire lives may not wish to move to the urban areas of Shepparton/Mooroopna, but they may not have children or relatives who will continue farming the land and provide a source of support. At some stage these farmers will require supported living and preferably in their familiar local area.
- The funding of the retirement of these farmers may also be jeopardised by the early use of superannuation funds for drought relief income in recent years.
- Early retirees may face an extended period of retirement due to an increase in life expectancy. Retirement benefits, whether public or private, will be spread across a larger number of years. For these retirees, an active lifestyle may include sport, part time employment, travel and entertainment.
- In terms of giving, these early retirees will also be a source of community support for volunteer services.

5.1.5 A Mismatch between Location of Services and Their Users

With the increasing population, many new young families are moving in, especially to the new subdivisions in the growth areas. These families need local services, childcare, medical clinics and local public transport. Families will also be attracted to Greater Shepparton if the local schools have a good reputation.

Greater Shepparton contains a proportion of highly educated people working at universities, institutes and major production companies. These potential employees and their families may want access to urban services whilst living in a rural setting, and community services are important to the choice of locating in Greater Shepparton. This could be used as a competitive advantage in terms of offering an attractive lifestyle package to these skilled employees who are often highly mobile between regions and states.

5.1.6 Potential for Restructuring of Service Provision

A model has been developed through the Greater Shepparton Community Building Project which focuses on working with communities to identify the actual services they need and responding to those needs. This model implores a genuine "Joined Up

Government” approach to service provision and in many cases, has an emphasis on using existing resources more effectively and more efficiently. The approach taken through this model complements the recently released state government social policy “A Fairer Victoria”. Much of the success of this approach will be dependent on being able to change the existing state government department’s “silos” culture with its concentration on the provision and measurement of standard services for all residents, regardless of actual need and/or ability to access such services.

When designing new facilities for community services consideration should be given to multi use facilities, or adaptable room layouts, and the potential to share land and buildings for differing uses depending on the prevailing demographic profile. The north and south Community Hubs in Shepparton reflect this design and provide such a facility.

A major issue is young people moving away and not returning. A proportion of youth leaving is inevitable. However a number of youth may prefer to stay in the region and pursue educational activities, and educational services can be structured to provide such an opportunity. For many families the question of tertiary study in Melbourne or other regional centres necessitates funds for student fees plus city accommodation and expenses. Given the precarious financial situation of many families such an investment cannot even be considered. These children are potentially denied the opportunity to realise their academic potential.

For many indigenous and ethnic groups, the concept of the youth leaving for tertiary study is inconsistent with family values and cultural norms such as in the Aborigine and Muslim communities.

5.1.7 Attracting Skilled Health Professionals

Greater Shepparton faces a shortage of GPs and skilled health professionals. The Melbourne University School of Rural Health brings a high profile to rural medicine however it does not create long-term professionals in local medical services.

The state government’s initiative to provide incentives to doctors locating to country areas may also have a positive effect in the long term.

5.1.8 Relevant Assistance to Aboriginal and Other Ethnic Populations

There is a large indigenous Aboriginal population within the municipality, estimated to be approximately 6,000 in Greater Shepparton, and also large groups of people from ethnic backgrounds that are new to Australia. These groups need assistance with information about health and community services, in their own language and preferably in a format which is culturally familiar.

5.2 Update on Relevant Strategies/Reports

5.2.1 Public Health Plan, Greater Shepparton City Council

The Greater Shepparton Public Health Plan 2002-2004 identifies four priorities for public health. These are:

- sense of belonging and social connectedness
- safe and healthy childhood
- promotion of physical activity
- minimisation of drug and alcohol abuse

Access to available physical and mental health and medical services is also noted as a fundamental issue by the Health Plan Advisory Panel.

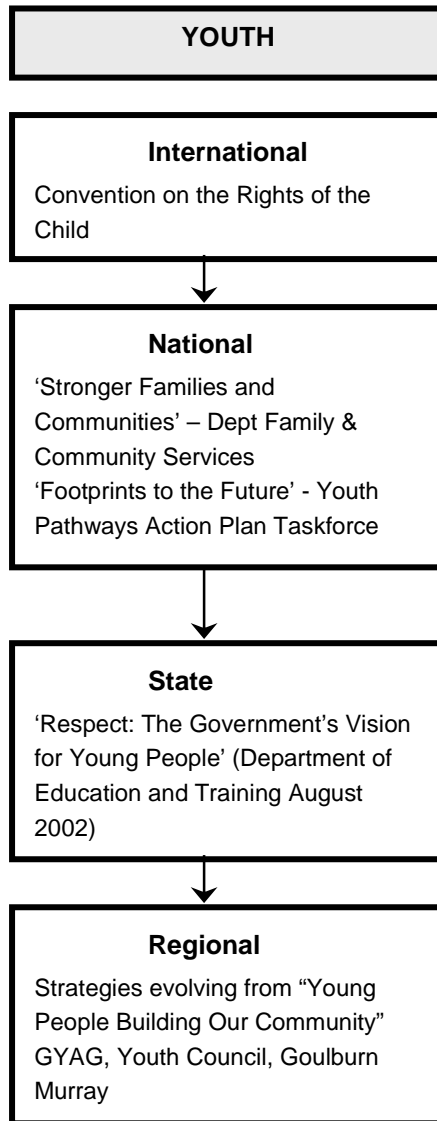
5.2.2 Community Hubs, Greater Shepparton City Council

Greater Shepparton was successful in obtaining funding from the State Government for a three-year Community Building Demonstration Project. This project is aimed at revitalising the involvement of residents in their community and assisting communities to develop new networks, partnerships, structures and frameworks to support ongoing improvement to overall community wellbeing. Greater Shepparton has chosen to focus on providing greater opportunities for young people to have input into matters which directly affect them, while at the same time, making a positive contribution to their communities i.e. strengthening our future community capacity through an investment in our young people. Community Hubs are considered to be an ideal physical and social focal point for communities. A Hub has been established in Mooroopna and this facility is now attracting a range of new support services for residents e.g. Centrelink, Rural Housing and Medicare. Plans have been also developed for future Community Hubs in both North Shepparton and South Shepparton.

5.2.3 Youth Policy, Greater Shepparton City Council, 2002

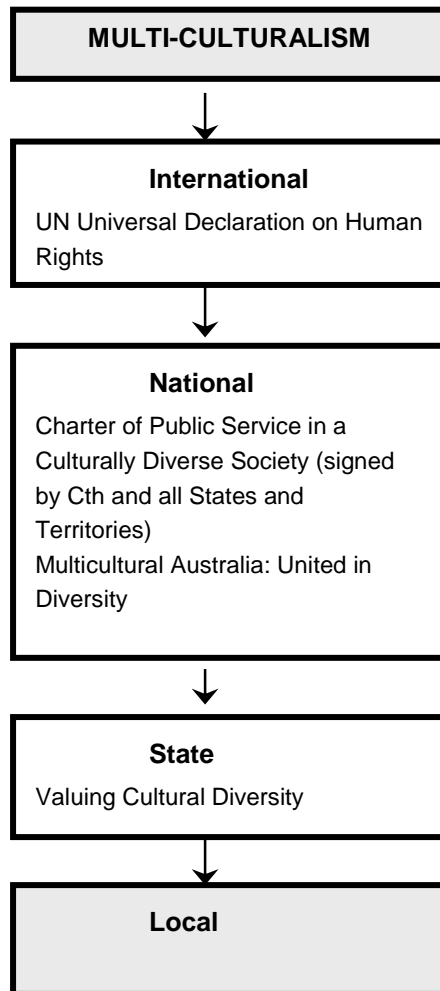
Council's Youth Policy was adopted by the Council in June 2002. It was determined that the policy document would act as a framework to guide the Council's actions in addressing youth issues and outline the Council's roles and responsibilities in relation to young people.


5.3 The Broader Strategy Framework



Knowledge Creativity Performance
Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Figure 6: Strategy Framework – Youth



 Strategy not commenced

Source: Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs

Knowledge Creativity Performance
Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Figure 7: Strategy Framework – Multiculturalism

5.4 Achieving the Strategic Objective

The key objectives for this subtopic are:

- Objective 1:** To provide an equitable and efficient distribution of community facilities and services.
- Objective 2:** To encourage and implement activities that will strengthen community spirit.

The following table provides the detailed strategies and an implementation plan.

Table 7: Health and Community Service - Achieving the Strategic Objective

Topic: Community Life Theme: Health and Social Services				
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority
1 To provide an equitable and efficient distribution of community facilities and services.	1.1 Promote clustering of facilities to enable multi use and sharing of community facilities, such as the Community Hubs.	These strategies will be implemented by: Using Policy and the exercise of discretion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the GS 2030 Framework Plans. Develop an integrated planning policy. Applying Zones and Overlays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the Development Plan Overlay to new growth areas. Apply the Development Contributions Plan Overlay to new growth areas. Other actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a community services map to identify the distribution and adequacy of facilities within existing and new communities located within townships, including sport and recreation facilities and child care. Continue the implementation and facilitation of the Community Hubs project. 	Provider	
	1.2 Locate facilities and service centres where they can be accessed by public transport and/or walking/cycle paths.		Provider	
	1.3 Encourage flexible design to meet user group needs over the lifecycle and changing demographic structures.		Provider	
	1.4 Link the provision of facilities with the release of new subdivisions, through the approval of Development Plans and a Development Contributions Plan.		Provider	
			Provider	M \$20,000
			Provider	H \$80,000

Knowledge Creativity Performance
 Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
 Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Topic: Community Life Theme: Health and Social Services					
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority	
2	<p>To encourage and implement activities that will strengthen community spirit.</p> <p>2.1 Encourage new development and redevelopments of existing areas to include community gathering spaces, such as village greens, local public open spaces and sporting facilities.</p> <p>2.2 Ensure that special interest groups are included in community activities and the provision of services.</p> <p>2.3 Optimise accessibility to services and facilities for people with a disability, the elderly, youth, diverse ethnic/cultural groups</p>	<p>These strategies will be implemented by:</p> <p>Using Policy and the exercise of discretion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apply the provisions of the Public Health Plan ▪ Apply the provisions of the Disability Action Plan <p>Other actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate a commitment to participate in programs to improve the health and well being of the community, through initiatives identified in the Public Health Plan and Disability Action Plan ▪ Continue to strengthen relationships with the Aboriginal community ▪ Pursue a genuine “Joined Up Government” approach to the provision and delivery of essential personal and family support services. 	<p>Provider</p> <p>Provider</p> <p>Provider/ Facilitator/ Advocate</p> <p>Provider/ Facilitator/ Advocate</p> <p>Facilitator/ Advocate</p>	<p>H</p> <p>H</p> <p>H</p> <p>H</p> <p>M</p>	

6 Educational Services

6.1 Key Issues

There are 36 primary and secondary schools within the municipality. It is understood that a review of educational provision in the municipality is to be undertaken. The Department of Education and Training (DET) is yet to confirm a timeframe.....¹⁸

There is a range of tertiary opportunities in GSCC including certificates, diplomas, bachelor and postgraduate degrees. These are offered by conventional face-to-face teaching and also by distance education and on line education.

Tertiary qualifications are offered in the traditional courses of arts, business, commerce, teaching and nursing. Specialist courses that are more locally relevant are agriculture, horticulture, food technology, food production, rural health and health promotion.

The tertiary institutions currently located in Greater Shepparton are:

- Goulburn Ovens TAFE - two campuses in Shepparton, at Fryers Street and Wanganui Road providing a range of courses. The Wanganui Road campus specialises in agricultural courses.
- LaTrobe University – the campus at Shepparton provides undergraduate and postgraduate courses on a full and part time basis for over 300 students.
- Melbourne University – the Institute of Land and Food resources at Dookie College provides a range of agricultural related courses in a 2,400 ha farm setting.
- Melbourne University – The School of Rural Health in Gordon Street. The Rural Health unit has also contributed to local public health initiatives including the Shepparton Public Health Plan and community health initiatives.
- Australian Catholic University – originates from the Notre Dame college and provides courses in teaching and theology.
- Open Learning Australia – is located at the Shepparton Learning Centre and offers distance education courses through other Australian Universities.

Shepparton is the fourth largest provincial centre in Victoria and contains Shepparton campus of La Trobe co-located with Goulburn Ovens TAFE, Melbourne University's School of Rural Health and Dookie campus.

However, Shepparton has low tertiary participation rates of 14.9% in 1999, which is less than half the state average. The secondary school drop out rate is also high by regional standards at 37.6%. Of the potential tertiary students, one third go to Universities or to work at other regional centres eg Ballarat and Bendigo. This represents a brain drain for the municipality.

Structural and cultural change is required to boost these low participation rates.

¹⁸ undated paper from Kathleen McBain, GSCC.

The issue is to retain the young people in meaningful long-term courses with the potential for a career in the region. This is particularly important for Aboriginal and other ethnic groups who do not move away from home and their cultural base, and for low-income earners who cannot afford rental to support a child in other regional centres or Melbourne.

GSCC has embarked on a strategy to develop a unique regional University City based on flexible degrees across existing campuses and links to other external campuses, rather than investing all efforts in retaining one major provider. This concept extends to education of all sectors, including skills and agricultural business training to local farmers. The strategy is outlined in the following section.

The importance of this ‘lifetime learning’ concept was reiterated on numerous occasions in the public consultation forums. It became apparent that the acquisition of skills is closely linked to the potential for economic and social development of the region.

There is also the issue of silo mentality within DET i.e. funds available for students under the VCAL program not available for the same students under another program based around personal support in employment. Outcome – these students drop out of school and draw on social support.

6.2 An Update on Relevant Strategies/Reports

6.2.1 GSCC (2004) Shepparton Tertiary Education Precinct (STEP)

GSCC prepared a strategy plan as background to a submission to a Ministerial discussion paper into regional universities. The aim of the strategy plan is to be a net importer of university students, with a target of 2000 students in Shepparton by 2006, and to retain local students by providing a real university alternative.

The plan for the ‘university city’/tertiary education precinct will be based on a specialist model. It does not foresee the traditional ‘university town’ model which is dominated by one institution.

The specialist model will have the following characteristics:

- A number of universities / institutions with complementary degrees and double degrees.
- A university precinct in the city, not necessarily for tuition functions, but for services, libraries, entertainment and gathering places.
- Some studies based on the regions’ competitive advantage – food studies and rural health, with links to local businesses.
- Supported on-line degrees.
- At least one exclusive high demand degree program.
- Interaction between staff, students and the local community.
- A municipal library linked to TAFE.

To date, the Commonwealth funding has supported the University City Strategy Plan to provide placements for delivery of courses in Shepparton, commencing in 2005 as follows:

- 55 places at Australian Catholic University – majority for Grad Dip Education,
- 54 places at the University of Melbourne.

6.2.2 Encouraging Arts in the Community Policy, Greater Shepparton City Council

The Greater Shepparton City Council adopted the “Encouraging Arts in the Community” policy which outlines its role in facilitating and developing community involvement in arts. The policy was prepared with the assistance of an Arts Co-ordinating Group and is based on the premise that the Council's role is to support arts in the community, and to encourage and facilitate participation in and support for arts by as many people as possible. The construction of the Eastbank Centre, and the implementation of the Riverlinks management system for Eastbank and the WestSide Performing Arts Centre, provide new opportunities for the development of arts in Greater Shepparton.

6.3 Achieving the Strategic Objective

The key objectives for this subtopic are:

Objective 1: To make Greater Shepparton a regional centre of education facilities for a variety of education requirements, including ongoing facilitation and support of the University City concept.

Objective 2: To promote learning through arts and culture programs.

The following table provides the detailed strategies and an implementation plan.

Table 8: Education - Achieving the Strategic Objective

Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE Theme: Lifelong learning				
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority
1 To make Greater Shepparton a regional centre of education facilities for a variety of education requirements, including ongoing facilitation and support of the University City concept.	1.1 Encourage the establishment of educational facilities to retain and attract young people to the municipality. 1.2 Support the expansion of educational facilities for future populations. 1.3 Provide for student accommodation in the redevelopment areas within the Shepparton CBD, including shop top housing. 1.4 Promote Greater Shepparton, including Dookie, as a unique university city with links to businesses in the agricultural production sector and allied services. 1.5 Encourage plans for new university and educational campuses to display contemporary and innovative architecture styles. 1.6 Encourage the location of business to integrate with existing and planned campus facilities.	These strategies will be implemented by: Applying Zones and Overlays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the Development Plan Overlay to the site of the University Precinct Undertaking further strategic work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a master plan for the University City concept to be integrated with educational facilities in the Shepparton CBD Prepare a Housing Strategy including the a report on student housing and affordable housing issues report on student housing 	Provider Provider Provider	H \$70,000 H \$80,000

Knowledge Creativity Performance
 Engineering Surveying Planning Urban Design Landscape Architecture
 Sustainability and Environment Agribusiness Project Management

Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE				
Theme: Lifelong learning				
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority
		<p>Other actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a Community Services Map to link age cohorts and distribution of schools at all levels. ▪ Work with key groups to facilitate and promote ancillary facilities to support the University City Strategy ▪ Prepare a marketing plan for the University City concept to inform the broader community about the integrated concept rather than a separate singular campus <p>Pursue the establishment of a joint university/community/TAFE library facility</p>	<p>Provider</p> <p>Facilitator</p> <p>Provider/ Facilitator</p> <p>Advocate</p>	<p>M \$20,000</p> <p>H</p> <p>H</p> <p>M</p>
2	To promote learning through arts and culture programs.	<p>2.1 Encourage new cultural development which provide a diverse visual and performing arts program for the community.</p> <p>2.2 Promote Westbank and Eastbank as the centres of arts in Greater Shepparton.</p>	<p>These strategies will be implemented by:</p> <p>Other actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuing to promote and refine the Encouraging Arts in the Community Policy 	<p>Provider</p> <p>M</p>

7 Recreation and Open Space

7.1 Key Issues

Greater Shepparton contains a number of major sporting facilities and clubs, and the re-development of the showgrounds will create a major site for public recreational use and staging of formal community, sporting and business events.

Shepparton's principal recreational centre is its Sports Precinct (including McEwan Reserve) and the Stadium.

The Aquamoves Aquatic and Leisure Centre provides a range of swimming and gym facilities in a lakeside environment by Victoria Park Lake.

Deakin Reserve provides a comprehensive range of sporting facilities.

The municipality has a number of outlets for the promotion of the arts. Its major arts centres are the Eastbank Centre on Welsford Street, Shepparton and Westside Centre in Mooroopna. The Eastbank Centre houses the Shepparton Art Gallery, Eastbank Concert Hall and the Riverlinks Box Office. It has a function room capable of accommodating 1,000 people.

Greater Shepparton is also host to a number of cultural events including the Shepparton Arts Festival, the International Ceramics Award, Moo-ving Cows, Taste of Tatura, Fruit Salad Day in Mooroopna and many more.¹⁹

There is evidence of tourist related expenditure arising from the municipality's role as a local business and conference centre with road, rail and flight connections. This is reflected in increases in visitors to the Greater Shepparton Visitors Information Centre (VIC) and tourist expenditure²⁰.

7.1.1 Management, Funding and Promotion of Facilities and Clubs

The community consultation revealed a number of other issues regarding sports facilities. A key theme centred on the perceived deficiencies in the management and funding of sport and recreation across the municipality such as:

- An emphasis on elite sports in terms of funding and media coverage at the expense of other sports.
- The distribution and locations of playgrounds.
- The future of the Parkside Gardens site.
- Management of country football.
- Involving the community, particularly youth, in management positions.

These concerns indicate the role of GSCC in the coordination of the management of sporting bodies, assistance with business matters, and as a facilitator of promotions throughout the community.

¹⁹ City of Greater Shepparton "Encouraging Arts in the Community"

²⁰ Greater Shepparton Economic Monitor May 2001

7.1.2 A Network of Open Space and Environmental Protection

The ageing population and their preferred leisure activities were defined in the Recreation and Open Space Strategy (see section 7.2 below). In particular the network of passive open space areas will be more heavily used as this demographic group increases.

The creation of an integrated park network, with linear parks along floodways and river frontage, is essential to provide additional opportunities for walking, cycling, and children's play. This issue is interlinked with the protection and enhancement of the river environs and native vegetation. The proposed Open Space Framework plan for the municipality and for the Shepparton-Mooroopna centre indicates the dominance of these river environs.

7.2 An update on relevant strategies/ reports

7.2.1 Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Melvin Recreation Management Consultants (Adopted June 1998)

This report contains the results of a household survey for local participation rates. In the findings, Shepparton has higher rates of participation than the Victorian average, especially in the 65+ group.

The top ten summer and winter sports are listed as:

Summer

- Tennis
- Golf
- Lawn Bowls
- Cricket
- Swimming
- Basketball
- Netball
- Water skiing
- Softball
- Fishing

Winter

- Golf
- Tennis
- Football (Australian Rules)
- Netball
- Basketball
- Indoor Bowls
- Squash
- Badminton
- Lawn Bowls
- Soccer

Interestingly for open space planners, recreational walking was the highest in the top ten recreational activities.

- Walking
- Shopping
- BBQ/Picnic
- Camping
- Theatre/Music
- Visiting Parks
- Spectator Sports
- Fishing
- Cycling
- Swimming

The consultants developed a four tiered hierarchy for sports facilities responsive to competition requirements, and used this hierarchy as the basis for recommendations about the priorities for investment in particular sports and activities. For example, the report recommends investment in indoor lawn bowls and indoor tennis.

7.2.2 Draft Playground Provision Strategy 2003 GSCC (2003)

This plan reviews all playgrounds in the municipality, and recommends action with respect to existing and proposed playground equipment. It is recommended to remove old and dangerous equipment, with little or no play value, for safety reasons.

The report contains a rationalisation of equipment with the following three outcomes:

- The provision of new equipment to new residential areas.
- In some parks playground equipment will be removed without replacement
- In other parks an accelerated replacement program.

The consultation program has recently commenced. At this stage the plan is recommending removal and replacement of equipment only. This report does not propose to close any parks.

7.2.3 Bicycle Strategy, Greater Shepparton City Council, 2001

The Bicycle Strategy provides for improvements and extensions to on-road bike lanes and shared paths in the urban areas of Shepparton, Tatura and Mooroopna as well as touring routes and trails throughout the municipality.

Included in the draft strategy is provision for a 10-year works program including 120 projects.

7.2.4 Mosaic of Gardens, Greater Shepparton City Council, 2001

The Mosaic of Gardens is being developed in stages, with garden projects completed in various locations throughout the municipality. The Council is committed to providing all residents with ready access to an area of high quality, public open space.

7.3 Achieving the Strategic Objective

The key objectives for this subtopic are:

- Objective 1:** To ensure that facilities, services and policies are appropriate to the sporting and recreation needs of the community
- Objective 2:** To protect and enhance the network of public open space that contributes to the amenity of the municipality and advances the image of the community

The following table provides the detailed strategies and an implementation plan.

Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE				
Theme: Recreation and open space				
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority
	1.6 Apply benchmarks to identify the number and location of parks to be provided within each category of open space in the hierarchy.	<p>Undertaking further strategic work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Open Space and Recreation Strategy and investigate the potential for increased contributions for open space in nominated areas and to identify future land for linkages in the open space network. Review the Playgrounds Study. <p>Other actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare masterplans to guide the development of key open space and sporting areas in the municipality Prepare a network of resource users and their locational requirements for potential joint use and development of facilities. Prepare development contributions plans to include sports facilities, public open spaces and community facilities 	Provider	M \$50,000
	1.7 Encourage recreational opportunities on land managed by other agencies.		Provider	M
	1.8 Promote a healthy lifestyle and the use of recreation and sporting facilities.		Provider/ Advocate	M-H \$50,000 each
	1.9 Encourage the upgrade the signage at open space and sports facilities to provide information about the location of parks and the range of facilities provided.		Provider/ Facilitator	L
			Provider/ Facilitator	M-H

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Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE Theme: Recreation and open space				
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority
2 To protect and enhance the network of public open space that contributes to the amenity of the municipality and advances the image of the community.	2.1 Encourage the provisions of linear links between existing and proposed open space areas and between urban areas.	These strategies will be implemented by: Using Policy and the exercise of discretion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the local policy Stormwater Management. Undertaking further strategic work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare masterplans of major parks and open space areas, recreation reserves and sports facilities, including the potential expansion of Aquamoves to enable its all year round use. Other actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the provisions of the Shepparton Stormwater Management Plan 2003 Examine options for developing existing linear tracts of land, including floodway and river frontage, to provide additional opportunities for walking, cycling, and children's play Prepare a works program for acquisition and construction of public open spaces and facilities. Negotiate with developers for additional open space to retain environmental features 	Provider	M-H
	2.2 Ensure the provisions of quality areas of open space when new housing subdivisions are planned.		Provider	
	2.3 Improve the image and appearance of public parks and spaces.		Provider	
	2.4 Encourage development on only one side of the road where land is adjacent to public open space (and where appropriate), to provide for passive surveillance and limit the 'privatisation' of public open space.		Provider	
	2.5 Protect open space areas from pest plants and animals.		Provider	
	2.6 Integrate open space planning / landscape treatments with environmental improvements of the stormwater drainage system.		Provider	
	2.7 Enhance the image of sporting facilities and recreational reserves		Provider	
		Advocate	H	

7.4 Framework Plan

The Open Space Framework Plan for the Shepparton, Mooroopna & Kialla area is characterised by:

- Major open space areas located a within and along the floodplains of the Goulburn River, Broken River and Sevens Creek.
- A number of other major sporting facilities:
- The Plan shows on road and off road bicycle paths.
- The intention is to link many of the parks, open spaces and bicycle paths to create connectivity between the three urban areas of Shepparton, Mooroopna and Kialla, with the floodplain becoming a recreation asset linking the three urban areas.



Figure 8: Greater Shepparton 2030 Open Space Framework Plan - Shepparton, Mooroopna & Kialla

8 Safe and Accessible Environments

8.1 Key Issues

8.1.1 Safety

The public consultation forums revealed a number of perceptions about the degree of social and domestic problems in Greater Shepparton, including drugs, youth crime and behaviour, some elements of a criminal underworld, and domestic violence.

In reality, police advise that the majority of crime is against property (74%), which could in part be drug related.

However there is a strong perception crime, especially in the hotspots of Shepparton Mall and Parkside Estate. (There has been a recorded reduction in crime in Parkside Estate of recent times) This perception leads to avoidance of the areas and a lack of enjoyment of facilities and social interactions by certain groups especially the elderly. In a self-fulfilling prophecy such avoidance may ultimately result in some areas becoming degraded and therefore attract criminal activity and antisocial behaviour.

The future of the mall is critical to the Shepparton centre. Within the centre the provision of a mix of shops, entertainment venues and public spaces must be attractive and accessible across a number of age groups. In this regard, mall management of licensed premises can improve the perception of safety.

8.1.2 Accessibility

There are large numbers of people in the community who have physical access problems. They may have wheelchairs, walking frames and sticks, prams, pushers, or be visually impaired.

Modern building design codes, street and park planning, and subdivision planning incorporate disability access measures to a limited extent only.

GSCC can assist in the public domain by reviewing its own services, including its street furniture, and by preparing Mobility Maps of the main centres. Such maps are useful for residents, carers, and visitors to the municipality and can contain information relating to:

- Accessible paths and linkages within the centre and any restrictions on opening hours
- Public transport stops
- Taxi ranks
- Drop – off points
- Disabled motorist parking bays
- Toilets for disabled
- Public telephones
- Gradients and major obstacles
- Public seating

8.1.3 Social Isolation

There are a number of groups within the Greater Shepparton community who may not have adequate access to facilities and services or basic information about availability of services.

This issue can be addressed by GSCC taking a coordinating role in providing information in culturally relevant formats to different groups, for example the large Aboriginal community, and for the non-English speaking migrants with different cultural backgrounds.

Access to public transport for the elderly and youth in remote townships and to migrant groups was also raised as a concern. This links to the provision of public transport suitable for the needs of the population (refer background and Analysis Report No. 5 Infrastructure).

It is proposed that all these aspects will be responded to in any future “community strengthening” initiative within Greater Shepparton. Council has provided substantial funding in the 2005-06 budget to support such a proposal, subject to complementary state government financial backing.

8.2 Achieving the Strategic Objective

The key objectives for this subtopic are:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Objective 1: | To ensure community safety in the planning and management of the urban environment. |
| Objective 2: | To provide accessible environments in public spaces and new developments. |

The following table provides the detailed strategies and an implementation plan.

Table 10: Safe and Accessible Environments – Achieving the Strategic Objectives

Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE				
Theme: Safe and accessible environments				
Objectives	Strategies	Action	Council Role	Priority
1. To address community safety in the planning and management of the urban environment.	1.1 Encourage the creation of safe streets, public parks and spaces, and integration with Victoria Police' community safety programs.	<p>These strategies will be implemented by:</p> <p>Using Policy and the exercise of discretion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply community safety criteria in the development of development guidelines for sustainable communities. <p>Applying Zones and Overlays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the Development Plan Overlay to future growth areas to ensure adequate linkages between shops, schools and residential areas, and provisions of passive surveillance opportunities. <p>Undertaking further strategic work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Recreation and Open Space Strategy. 	Provider	H
	1.2 Ensure recreation areas and sporting facilities are designed with safety considerations.		Provider	H
	1.3 The Recreation and Open Space Strategy to provide future links between shops, schools and residential areas to create interactions and casual surveillance.		Provider	H
	1.4 Encourage development on only one side of the road where land is adjacent to public open space (and where appropriate), to provide for passive surveillance.		Provider	M \$50,000
	1.5 Ensure proposed public car parks are designed to maximise safety of the users.			

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Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE Theme: Safe and accessible environments				
<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Council Role</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2. To provide accessibility in public spaces and new developments.	2.1 Ensure reasonable access to community services with a program of transport integration to service these facilities.	These strategies will be implemented by: Using Policy and the exercise of discretion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all new development proposals require compliance with disability guidelines. Undertaking further strategic work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a Disability access study to ensure facilities and open space areas are physically accessible for all users. 	Provider/ Advocate	H
	2.2 Encourage public facilities to be located on or near to a public transport route or bicycle/walking path.		Advocate/ Facilitator	H
	2.3 Promote and educate the general community on accessibility issues and publish a Mobility Map.			

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9 A SWOT Summary

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A strong economic base but an inequitable income distribution within the City. ▪ Good levels of service provision relative to other parts of regional Victoria (for example in the areas of health care and the arts). ▪ Multicultural context - Aboriginal and other cultural heritages. ▪ The proximity of the airport and good road / rail connections. ▪ Direct access to Melbourne. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills mismatch / perceived shortage in essential services (eg childcare, education). ▪ Low completion rates at school (37.6% do not complete Year 12). ▪ Lack of access to affordable health care (lower levels of bulk billing), compounded by isolation and lack of access to services. ▪ The Shepparton town centre is unappealing, with a limited range of cuisines, perceptions of crime, and limited heritage assets in the town centre. ▪ Shepparton dominates surrounding rural townships, especially Mooroopna resulting in limited provision of services outside of Shepparton. ▪ Brain drain of skilled and professional employees to Melbourne and, more importantly, other regional centres. ▪ The predominant housing stock is inappropriate for the forecast demographic profile. ▪ Recreation facilities are not appropriately marketed to user groups.

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Background and Analysis Report No. 3 – Community Life

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Neighbourhood renewal funding (Parkside) and funding to engage young people (Community Building Initiative) but limited in its extent.▪ University City concept has potential to make town centre more vibrant, retain more skilled young people, and create a 'Café Quarter'.▪ Opportunity to exploit and celebrate the multicultural aspects of the City.▪ Ageing population and high levels of volunteerism in the town, potential solution to delivering some social services (for example localised transport).▪ Aboriginal Rumbalara Football Club pursuing elders centre to mix age and youth.▪ Provision of mobile clinics to townships and other services (eg libraries).▪ Source of active independent retirees.▪ Creative mentoring of youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increased centralisation of public services will divert investment away from Shepparton to Melbourne or other regional centres (for example, Bendigo).▪ Real increase in petrol prices has potential to isolate rural populations.▪ Ageing population will generate increased demand for social services.▪ Reduction in water rights to Council will impact on management of recreational facilities.

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Background and Analysis Report No. 3 – Community Life

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Hames Sharley Victoria (2001) for Department of Education, Employment and Training	School Provision Plan

Attachment 1 – Greater Shepparton 2030- topics, directions and themes

Greater Shepparton 2030 Strategy Framework

Topic: SETTLEMENT	
<p>Direction: Commitment to growth within a consolidated and sustainable development framework</p>	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth ▪ Housing ▪ Sustainable Design
Topic: COMMUNITY LIFE	
<p>Direction: Enhance social connectedness, physical and mental health and well being, education and participatory opportunities in order to improve liveability and a greater range of community services</p>	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health and social services ▪ Education and learning ▪ Recreation and open space ▪ Safe and accessible environments
Topic: ENVIRONMENT	
<p>Direction: Conservation and enhancement of significant natural environments and cultural heritage</p>	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The natural environment ▪ Floodplain management ▪ Sustainable / Best practice land management ▪ Cultural heritage ▪ Built heritage
Topic: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
<p>Direction: Promote economic growth, business development and diversification, with a focus on strengthening the agricultural industry</p>	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture and rural land ▪ Commercial activity centres ▪ Industry ▪ Tourism
Topic: INFRASTRUCTURE	
<p>Direction: The provision and re-structure of urban and rural infrastructure to enhance the performance of the municipality and facilitate growth</p>	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traffic and transport systems ▪ Urban services