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MOORABOOL SHIRE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MOORABOOL SHIRE COUNCIL | FEBRUARY 2023



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L1 302-304 Barkly St, Brunswick VIC 3056
+61 3 9482 3888 urbanenterprise.com.au

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1. CONSULTATION SUMMARY

1.1. OVERVIEW

This report summarises the outcomes from consultation undertaken with community, business and government stakeholders to better understand the issues and opportunities for economic development and tourism in Moorabool Shire.

The consultation process helped to inform the key themes, strategic directions and projects included in both the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) and the Visitor Economy Strategy (VES).

The engagements were undertaken across November 2021, December 2021 and January 2022 and conducted by Urban Enterprise. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions at the time, all consultation was held virtually via videoconference. This included a combination of formats, such as:

- **1:1 Stakeholder consultations** with key government agencies and key local operators, as identified by Council;
- **Industry Workshops** by geographical areas, to identify unique challenges and opportunities across the Shire; and
- **Community and Business Survey**, distributed by Council through a wide range of online channels.

Note: The following provides a summary of the key points identified during the consultation and survey process. Individual statements have been amalgamated and categorised where appropriate.

1.2. CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

A rigorous consultation process was undertaken as part of development of the EDS and VES (see Table T1T1).

Each engagement session was designed to inform both the EDS and VES reports. As such, stakeholders were encouraged to contribute to both strategies.

In total there were over 350 participants in engagement activities, including face-to-face meetings, videoconferences and surveys.

T1. CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Stakeholder Group / Engagement Activity Participants/Organisations	Number of attendees
Community and Business Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 online survey open for 6 weeks 	256
Moorabool Shire Council 1 online workshop with representatives from Councillors, Execs and Council Staff.	19
First Nations 2 online workshops with representatives from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawarrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.	3
Government Stakeholders 5 online workshops with representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Victoria • Regional Development Victoria • Visit Victoria • Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) • Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) • Parks Victoria • Invest Victoria 	10
Industry Workshops 6 workshops with local businesses and residents based on geographic location, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural West of Shire (x2) • Bacchus Marsh and surrounds (x2) • Ballan, Gordon and surrounds • Greendale, Dales Creek, Blackwood and surrounds 	44
Other external stakeholders Online workshops with representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information Centre Volunteers • Local Business Advisory Committee • Ballan Chamber of Commerce • Parwan and Co. • Kryal Castle • Farming Moorabool • Naturipe Fruits • City of Ballarat • Ballarat Regional Tourism • Local real estate agents and businesses 	43

1.3. QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey included 53 questions covering the following topics:

- Home-based businesses;
- Business operations and performance;
- Business development;
- Business support;
- Economic development;
- Relationship with Council;
- COVID-19 impacts; and
- Tourism industry.

In total, the community and business survey received **256 responses**, including 78 responses from business owners.

CONSULTATION DISCUSSION POINTS

The consultation posed the following range of subjects and questions to stakeholders to help them consider the priorities for economic development and tourism in Moorabool Shire:

Project Drivers and Objectives

- What do you hope the Strategies will achieve?

Competitive Strengths and Key Assets

- What are the competitive strengths of the economy and key assets for the Shire (to drive economic growth, tourism development and support communities)?

Issues and Barriers to Growth

- What are the key issues and barriers for economic growth in the Shire?
- What are the key issues and barriers for tourism development in the Shire?

Growth and Development Opportunities

- What are the opportunities for economic development in the Shire?
- What are the opportunities for tourism growth in the Shire?

Project Priorities and Areas of Focus

- What are the priorities for economic development and tourism growth?
- How can Council utilise its resources more efficiently and effectively to achieve economic development and tourism objectives?

2. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

2.1. OVERVIEW

The key outcomes from the consultation process are detailed in this section, with findings collated and categorised to help inform the tourism and economic development process.

The following sections provide a separate summary of consultation outcomes specific to the the EDS and VES. The consultation findings have been summarised and categorised into the following broad topics (based on the above discussion points), which have been used to identify the relevant 'strengths', 'issues' and 'opportunities' for Moorabool Shire as follows:

- **What are our strengths?** *The competitive advantages and attributes of Moorabool Shire that can be utilised to facilitate economic and tourism growth.*
- **What are our barriers to growth?** *The issues constraining economic growth and tourism development, as well as specific areas that require further work.*
- **What are our opportunities and priorities?** *The focus areas, including initiatives, projects and activities that can be pursued to achieving economic development and visitor economy objectives.*

Although both the EDS and VES reports were discussed during the engagement sessions, aggregate comments have been categorised (where possible) based on relevance to either economic development or the visitor economy.

Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix A of this document.

2.2. MOORABOOL SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

T2. CONSULTATION SUMMARY FINDINGS

What are our strengths?

- Proximity to Melbourne and other regional centres, as well as accessibility via established transport corridors, has led to significant population growth, workforce growth and business investment.
- An increase in population growth in Bacchus Marsh has enabled its transition into a service centre for residents, workers and visitors.
- Lifestyle benefits associated with the natural environmental assets, including state and national parks.
- Large tracts of productive agricultural land ensure agriculture is a key economic and employment driver for the Shire.
- The role of the Shire as a food bowl for Victoria, particularly horticultural production.

What are the barriers to achieving growth and development?

- A lack of population-based services available in smaller towns and villages, including hospitals, schools and supermarkets.
- Basic development infrastructure (e.g. road quality, drainage, water and sewerage supply) needs to keep pace with population growth and development to ensure a sustainable economy and community, particularly for Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.
- Slow NBN and internet connection in smaller townships resulting in poor and disrupted business operations.
- Overcoming housing availability and affordability, which will encourage prospective residents to relocate to the Shire.
- A lack of public transport available throughout the Shire. This makes it difficult for the workforce to mobilise and residents to travel across the Shire for services.
- Road quality and infrastructure needs improvement, with issues including potholes and narrow/single-lane roads, as well as a lack of bike lanes or road shoulders for road cyclists.
- A lack of retail diversity in Bacchus Marsh, particularly big box retail, as well as a large proportion of professional services along high streets, has diminished the retail offering for visitors and residents and constrained local expenditure.
- Without suitable industrial and commercial land in the Shire, to meet increasing demand, future investment and economic growth will be constrained.
- Skilled and unskilled labour shortages affecting business operations, including a lack of international workers to fill workforce gaps.

What are the opportunities and priorities for the Shire?

- Opportunity to take advantage of flexible working arrangements and attract working professionals from nearby population centres to live and work in the region.
- Need for additional population-based services to accommodate the increasing population, including hospitals, schools and supermarkets, including in key population centres (Bacchus Marsh, Ballan) as well as smaller towns.
- Advocate for funding to upgrade critical development infrastructure, including water, sewerage, drainage and power supply.
- Road infrastructure improvements are needed, in particular to accommodate heavy or oversized vehicles that service the agriculture industry.
- Strengthen the public transport connection to Melbourne CBD, as well as develop a local bus network to transport workers and visitors between key townships.
- Attract unique and boutique retail offering to diversify the retail stock currently available in Moorabool Shire and promote increases in local expenditure.
- Land supply and demand analysis is required to map development and adequately plan for the future. This will help support growth in affordable commercial and industrial land, particularly in Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.
- Protection for agricultural land is needed to preserve and develop the agritourism and produce industry.
- Maintain an interface between rural farming zone and residential developments – ensuring overlays on new housing doesn't impact rural land uses.
- Opportunity to attract a small meat processing operator to establish themselves in Moorabool Shire, leveraging the raw materials produced in the Shire and adding value to the agricultural sector.
- Ensure production and processing of fresh produce remains in Moorabool Shire, as well as explore opportunities for high-tech agriculture sector to establish in the region.

-
- Encourage and foster innovation in the agriculture industry, particularly through an uptake of sustainable land use practices.
 - Encourage Moorabool Shire residents to support local businesses and producers, as well as promote local business and products to visitors, including their visiting friends and relatives.
 - Provide professional development services for businesses, particularly agricultural businesses, about how they can contribute to the visitor economy and wider community.
 - Support succession planning for farmers to ensure the longevity of agricultural businesses and the industry as a whole.
 - Develop facilities and amenities to service home-based business, including co-working spaces and conference rooms.
 - Attract higher education providers (i.e. a remote/satellite campus) to promote education and training for young people in the region and encourage resident and worker retention.
 - Identify education, apprenticeship and employment opportunities for young people and promote these opportunities through local high schools. Focus should be on industries including trades, agriculture, community services and aged care.
 - Diversification of industry sectors to support economic development growth, particularly around Parwan and Ballan.
-

2.3. MOORABOOL SHIRE VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY

T3. CONSULTATION SUMMARY FINDINGS

What are our strengths?

- The landscape in the Shire is unique and distinct from the surrounding Council areas, including an abundance of National and State Park areas.
- The natural beauty of the region is a major draw card for visitors and highly valued by local residents.
- A number of self-guided, nature-based walks in the Shire for visitors to undertake during their visit. These include the Mineral Springs Trail and the Significant Tree Walk in Blackwood.
- A number of historical buildings and sites located within small towns, such as Blackwood, often connected by informal, self-guided walks.
- Lal Lal Falls is heritage listed site and a significant part of Wadawarrung culture.
- A number of significant cultural sites are located within Wombat State Forest and Lerderderg State Park.
- Kryal Castle is a unique adventure and exploration experience offering located within Moorabool Shire, however it is currently more closely aligned with Ballarat.
- The Strawberry and Cherry Festival has historically attracted large crowds and are popular amongst visitors and locals.

What are the barriers to achieving growth and development?

- Moorabool Shire is not formally attached to a Regional Tourism Board, which limits exposure and promotion opportunities for the Shire.
- The Shire has a poor online presence with no formal destination website and limited presence on other regional destination websites, including Visit Ballarat.
- There is poor visitor awareness of Moorabool Shire as a visitor destination. There is increased awareness, however, amongst the visitor market for key townships within the Shire, including Bacchus Marsh, Parwan and Blackwood.
- There is a lack of physical collateral for visitors to utilise whilst visiting the Shire, including maps and brochures.
- There is a lack of awareness amongst local residents of what to see and do within the Shire. This prevents the ability of residents to promote the region and attract friends and relatives to Moorabool Shire.
- A lack of commercial visitor accommodation constrains the ability to attract higher-yielding overnight visitors.
- Current visitor accommodation stock in the Shire is outdated and not meeting the expectation of the contemporary visitor market. In addition, caravan Parks are mostly occupied by a transient workforce, forcing touring caravan and campers to stay outside the region.
- Low quality and limited visitor amenities throughout the Shire, including public toilets, picnic areas and digital connectivity, impact the visitor experience and dwell time.
- Poor visitor signage and wayfinding, including a limited sense of arrival in the smaller townships.
- Businesses have limited operating hours (i.e. close early/limited days open) due to staff shortages and increasing labour costs, decreasing the ability to service visitors.
- Poor public transport and connectivity between townships for both visitors and workforce.
- The Avenue of Honour is currently underutilised and in poor condition.
- Moorabool Shire lacks a clear tourism node/precinct for visitors to base themselves in whilst visiting the region.
- Kryal Castle is currently associated with Ballarat although it is located within Moorabool Shire. This is a missed opportunity for Moorabool Shire.
- Moorabool Shire lacks high quality food and beverage experiences. The current offering is primarily pubs, cafes and takeaway establishments.
- Werribee Gorge does not currently have the infrastructure to support the substantial increase in visitation. This includes lack of parking spaces, toilet infrastructure and picnic areas.
- Lack of visitor amenities and facilities available at Brisbane Ranges for visitors, particularly campers. This includes parking spaces, camp sites, picnic areas and toilet infrastructure.
- Some environmental areas of the National and State Parks are not healthy enough to sustain an increase in visitation and population growth. These need to be assessed and balanced when considering development to prevent exploitation of sensitive areas.
- The Mineral Springs are poorly maintained, and surrounding infrastructure is out-dated and worn down. Upgrades are needed to establish the mineral springs into more attractive assets for the region.
- Poor roads and road infrastructure throughout Moorabool Shire makes it dangerous for new drivers to the region and discourages road cyclists from travelling through the region.

- Lack of large-scale, signature tourist event or festival to support repeat visitation, increase the diversity of offer and generate economic benefits.

What are the opportunities and priorities for the Shire?

- Establish and formalise alignment to a Regional Tourism Board to maximise state funding and marketing opportunities.
- Opportunity to partner with Ballarat and Pyrenees. Provide a hinterland experience for Ballarat and allow Moorabool Shire to leverage existing visitation and awareness.
- Develop an identity and direction for Moorabool Shire and key townships within the region. This includes strengthening the connection between established products and experiences with the Shire.
- Promote business networking and engagement opportunities to encourage tourism operators to connect with each other.
- Collaboration and cross-promotion opportunities for local business, including the development of packaged experiences.
- Educate locals and business owners about products and experiences within Moorabool Shire. Opportunity to utilise workforce and residents as local ambassadors for the regions.
- Diversify the food and beverage offering to attract visitors from surrounding regions and elevate the overall visitor experience in the region in line with other tourism destinations. This includes new and contemporary beverage experiences, including a winery, cidery, craft brewery or gin distillery.
- Opportunity to develop experiential accommodation that aligns with the surrounding natural environment, including glamping, eco-friendly cabins and off-grid accommodation, in smaller townships.
- Opportunity to develop boutique and high-quality accommodation in larger townships, including Bacchus March.
- Explore the potential to strengthen mid-week and off-peak visitation to support business operators, including through events, festivals, etc.
- Leverage proximity to surrounding employment centres to attract the business events market.
- Opportunity to attract day spa and wellness retreat experience operators to the region to capture the health and wellness visitor market of the surrounding region.
- Develop contemporary products and experiences targeted at the family market, including splash parks and destination playgrounds.
- Opportunity to develop cohesive signage and wayfinding across Moorabool Shire to deliver a well-connected experience.
- Streetscape and visitor amenity improvements are needed in key townships to improve overall visitor experience, including footpath improvements, picnic areas and visitor amenities.
- A local bus network is needed within Moorabool Shire to transport the visitor economy workforce, as well as visitors, between key townships.
- Elevate and promote "pick your own" fruit picking experiences, as well as highlight produce that is available at different points of the year.
- Opportunity to develop Mount Egerton into a tourist attraction for gold mining and walking tours.
- Need for increased accessibility and safety provisions for visitors at nature-based assets. This includes improved accessibility at Werribee Gorge, such as increased parking and a loop road for management of traffic.
- Improve visitor experience and amenities at natural mineral spring sites.
- Development of sustainable products and experiences within the National and State Parks to preserve and protect the natural environment, as well as ensuring the protection and regeneration of sensitive cultural areas.
- Develop rail trails utilising disused rail lines, incorporating e-bikes, push bikes and walking, to attract the growing cycling and walking markets.
- Revitalise Maddingley Park for visitors and local residents, providing the opportunity to host large-scale events and festivals.
- Develop a strong events calendar, including:
 - The establishment of a unique event or festival that capitalises on the local agritourism industry.
 - Enhancing and supporting existing and past events, including Ballan Autumn Festival and Bacchus Marsh Strawberries and Cherries Festival.
- Protection of heritage buildings is needed to maintain the unique character and appeal of smaller villages.
- Opportunity to develop formalised self-guided walking trails through towns showcasing history and the historical buildings.
- Activate the Avenue of Honour, including a raised waling platform along the avenue, illuminating trees and beautification of Moon Reserve.
- In collaboration with Traditional Owners, develop interpretive and interactive signage touchpoints at significant cultural sites, as well as develop cultural experiences, particularly art experiences. It is critical this is led by Traditional Owners and supported by Council.
- Opportunity to grow arts and culture sector through the development of art galleries and large-scale theatres.

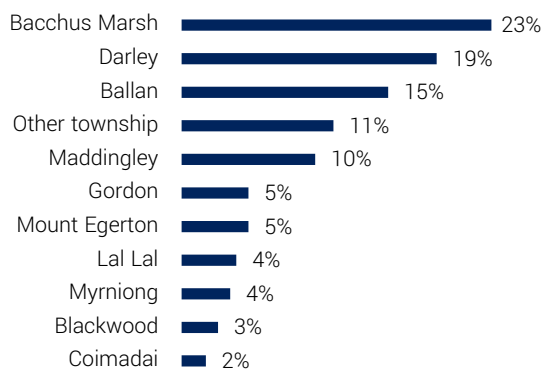
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

WHO RESPONDED?

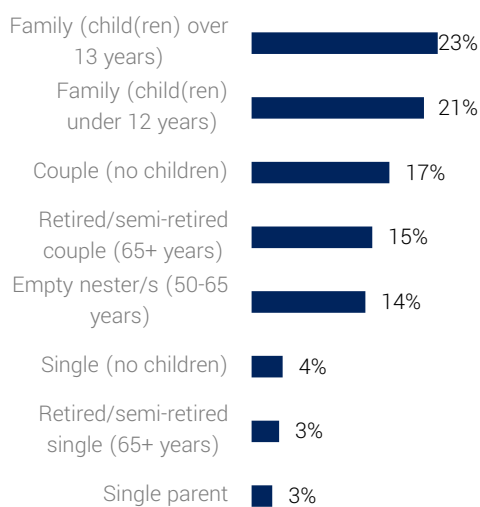
The business and community survey received 256 responses, including 78 responses from business owners. As shown in Figures F1 and F2, the majority of survey responses were from families with children, who lived in Bacchus Marsh, Darley and Ballan. A large proportion of survey respondents have lived in Moorabool Shire for over 10 years, as shown in Figure F3.

F1. SURVEY RESPONDENT LOCATION



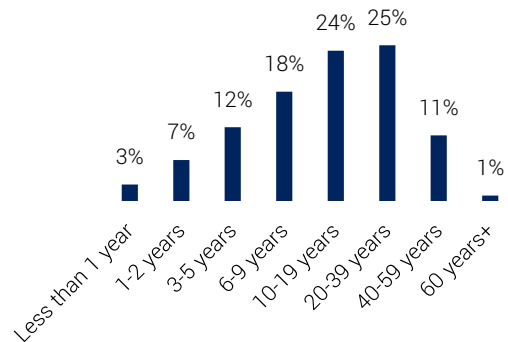
Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q2. "What township do you reside in?"

F2. HOUSEHOLD DESCRIPTION



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q6. "Which of the following best describes your household?"

F3. YEARS LIVED IN MOORABOOL SHIRE

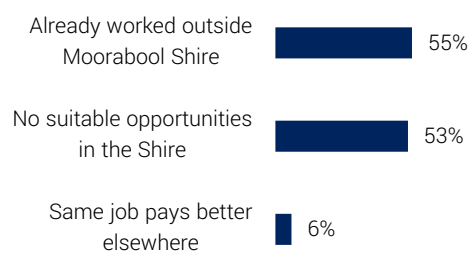


Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q3. "How many years have you lived in Moorabool Shire?"

38% of employed respondents work within Moorabool Shire, with 62% working outside of Moorabool Shire.

As shown in Figure F4, majority of those who work outside the Shire do so because there is no suitable opportunities in Moorabool Shire (55%) and better pay opportunities outside the Shire (6%).

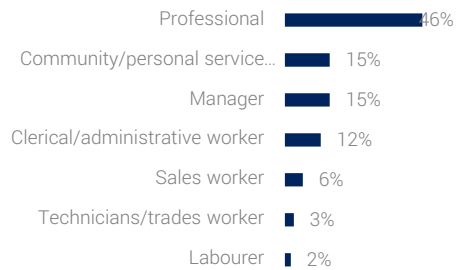
F4. REASON FOR WORKING OUTSIDE THE SHIRE



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q12. "Why do you work outside Moorabool Shire?"

The most common occupation among survey respondents was professional, manager and community/personal service worker, as detailed in Figure F5.

F5. OCCUPATION

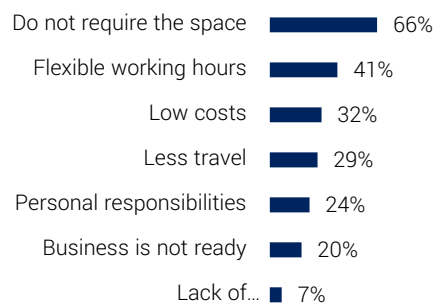


Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q14. "Describe your occupation."

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

57% of business owner survey respondents operate a home-based business. As shown in Figure F6, businesses primarily operate from home as they do not require a business premises (66%), prefer to work flexible hours (41%) and avoid the costs associated with renting or owning a premises (32%).

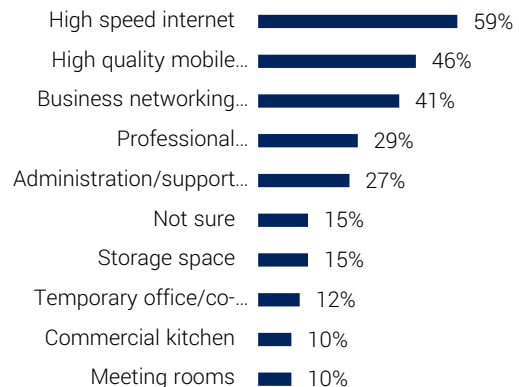
F6. REASONS FOR BEING A HOME-BASED BUSINESS



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q23. "What are the main reasons for your business being home-based?"

Services and facilities that would benefit a home-based business include high speed internet (59%), high quality mobile connectivity (46%), business networking opportunities (41%) and professional development and training (29%).

F7. SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR HOME-BASED BUSINESSES



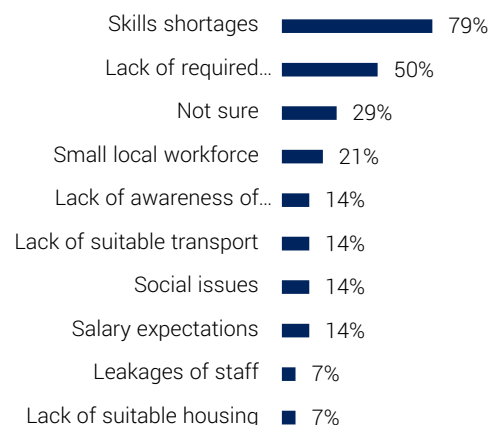
Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q24. "As a home based business, which of the following services or facilities would benefit your business?"

STAFFING

59% of business owner survey respondents do not employ staff, with 41% of businesses employing staff.

Majority of businesses reported having no difficulty recruiting staff (80%), with only 20% having difficulty recruiting staff. As shown in Figure F8, the key reasons for difficulty employing staff is skill (79%) and qualification shortages (50%).

F8. RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES



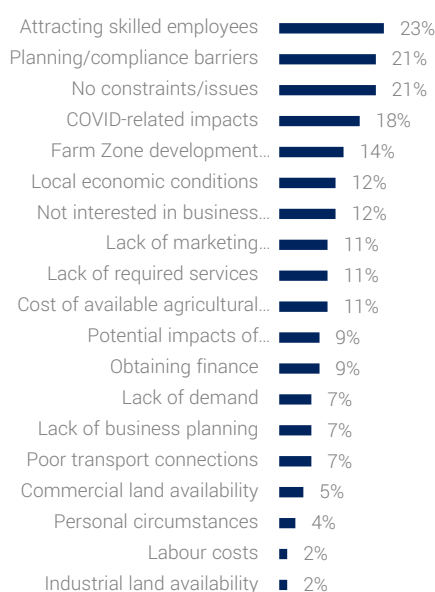
Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q30. "What are the main reasons you have found it difficult to employ staff for your Moorabool Shire based business?"

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

75% of business owner survey respondents believe that the benefits of establishing and operating a business in Moorabool Shire include the lifestyle it offers, the strategic location and affordability of land.

As shown in Figure F9, the main constraints to the operation and growth of businesses includes attracting skilled employees (23%), planning and compliance barriers (21%) and covid-related impacts (18%).

F9. BUSINESS CONSTRAINTS



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q35. "What are the main constraints to the operation or growth of your business?".

Business owner survey respondents were able to submit open-ended responses regarding products and services that are currently not offered locally, that they would utilise if available. Responses included the need for more population-based services, such as post offices, formalised networking events and improved infrastructure, such as sewerage networks and mobile connectivity.

"Not one part or consumable we use for the business can be purchased in this Shire. Delays in delivery or travel to pick up items is a huge cost and inconvenience to my business" – survey respondent

Business owner survey respondents were asked to rank the top five business development topics that

they would like training or professional development in. The top five topics include:

1. Financial management
2. E-commerce
3. Innovation and business agility
4. Tax advice and accounting
5. Marketing, social media and online tools

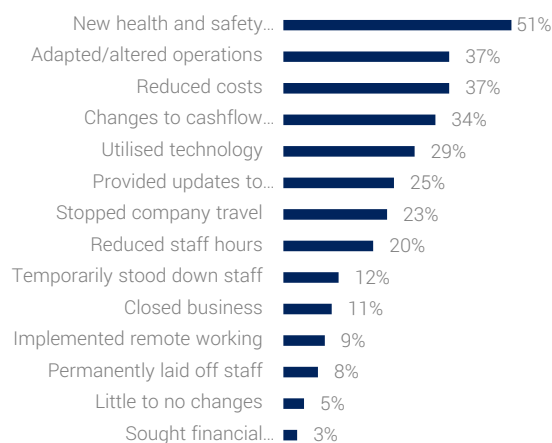
86% of businesses are not currently a member of any local or regional industry/tourism networks or associations.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19

Business owner survey respondents were asked to compare the 2020-21 financial year to previous years. 48% of respondents reported a decrease in turnover, 56% reported staff numbers remained the same and 50% reported business confidence remained the same.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, business owner survey respondents enforced new health and safety procedures (51%), adapted and altered the operations of their business (37%) and reduced costs (37%).

F10. COVID-19 IMPACTS



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q33. "How has your business responded to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic?".

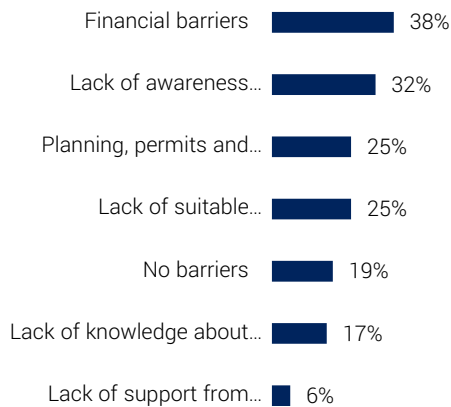
40% of business owner survey respondents reported to have already fully recovered from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 33% expecting to be fully recovered by the end of 2022.

STARTING A BUSINESS

34% of respondents have considered starting a business in Moorabool Shire, with majority of respondents having never considered starting a business in Moorabool Shire (66%).

As shown in Figure F11, financial barriers (38%) and lack of awareness for demand (32%) are key barriers and concerns that prevent respondents from starting a business in Moorabool Shire.

F11. BARRIERS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

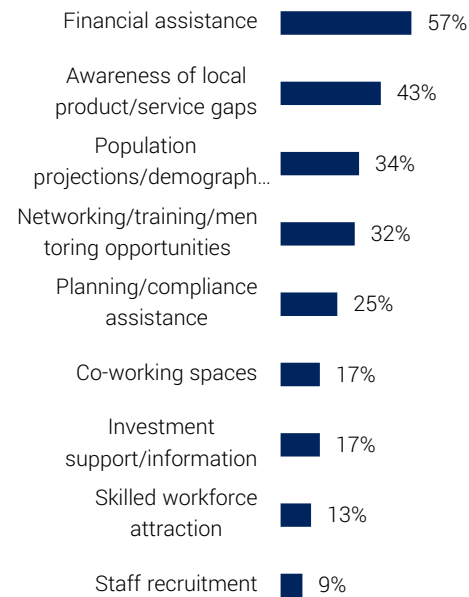


Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q15. "What are some of the key barriers or concerns that prevent / have prevented you from starting a business in Moorabool Shire?".

"Until recently, our local area didn't have a dedicated economic development business unit to assist." – survey respondent

Financial assistance would greatly assist respondents in starting a business in Moorabool Shire (57%), as well as awareness of service and product gaps (43%).

F12. START-UP ASSISTANCE



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q16. "Which of the following types of support would assist you in starting a business in Moorabool Shire?".

TOURISM INDUSTRY

36% of survey respondents promote Moorabool Shire to visiting friends and relatives.

As shown in Figure F13, majority of survey respondents obtain information about dining, attractions, activities, and events available in Moorabool Shire from recommendations they receive (82%) and social media (71%).

F13. TOURISM INFORMATION



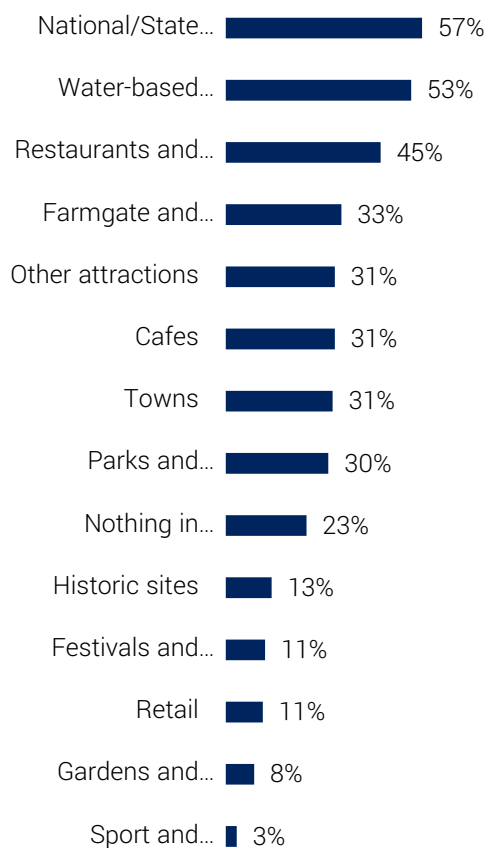
Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q46. "What sources would you generally utilise to obtain information about dining, attractions, activities, and events available in Moorabool Shire?".

Survey respondents were asked to rank the experiences and attractions that they felt could be enhanced to attract more visitors to Moorabool Shire. The top five experiences and attractions were:

1. Agritourism
2. Arts, culture and heritage attractions
3. Cycling and walking trails
4. Improved access to nature based assets
5. Food and beverage experiences

The top attractions and experiences that survey respondents take their friends and relatives to when visiting Moorabool Shire include National and State Parks (57%), natural water-based attractions (53%) and restaurants and pubs (45%).

F14. TOP ATTRACTIONS AND EXPERIENCES



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q44. "When you have friends or relatives visit Moorabool Shire, what are the top 5 places / experiences you take them to see?".

Survey respondents were asked to detail the best hidden gems that have the potential to be developed into key tourism assets. Majority of responses highlighted the potential for nature-based assets to be

further developed, including tracks and trails and water-based assets.

"Surprisingly, a lot of people don't know about the Avenue of Honour, fruit picking or farm gates here. They're always so pleasantly surprised when they visit" – survey respondent

F15. HIDDEN GEMS IN MOORABOOL SHIRE



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q48. "What do you feel are Moorabool Shire's best hidden gems that have potential to be developed as key tourism assets?".

Survey respondents were able to submit open-ended responses regarding the key outcomes they would like to see from the Visitor Economy Strategy. As detailed in Figure F16, key outcomes include marketing and promotion, improved visitor amenities and support and development of events and festivals.

"Improvement of street appeal of the rural towns so residents can be proud, as well as documentation of the history displayed for visitors. In turn this could encourage new visitor-based business and enhance existing experiences." – survey respondent

F16. KEY VISITOR ECONOMY OUTCOMES



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q53. "Please describe (in a few sentences) the key outcomes you would like to see from the Visitor Economy Strategy?".

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Survey respondents were asked to detail any existing or past events that could be developed into major or signature events within Moorabool Shire. Top responses included:

- Strawberries and Cherries Festival Bacchus Marsh
- Ballan Autumn Festival
- Blackwood Wood Chop and Easter Carnival

"The Strawberry and Cherry Festival was a big asset for Moorabool Shire. I used to travel 45 minutes to attend before I moved here." – survey respondent

Survey respondents were able to submit open-ended responses regarding the type of events they believe would enhance tourism in Moorabool Shire. Majority of survey respondents believe farmers markets a local produce events could be further developed to enhance tourism in Moorabool Shire.

F17. EVENTS TO ENHANCE TOURISM



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q50. "What type of events (both new and existing) do you believe would enhance tourism in Moorabool Shire if further developed?".

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority of survey respondents have never been in contact with Council's Economic Development Unit (74%). Only 17% have been in contact with the Council's Economic Development Unit.

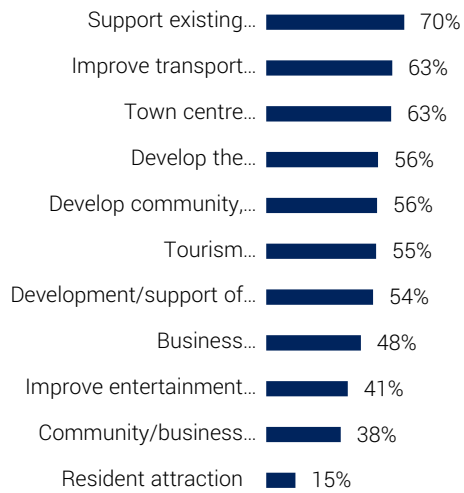
Survey respondents were asked to rank what they felt were Council's role in economic development should be. The top five experiences and attractions were:

1. Supporting existing business
2. Improve standard of living for community
3. Attracting new business and investment
4. Growing tourism and the visitor economy
5. Attracting residents

As shown in Figure F18, survey respondents believe that supporting existing businesses and industries, attracting and promoting new businesses and developing the tourism and events industries would make Moorabool Shire a more prosperous and better place to work and operate a businesses.

"I feel there is a need for the business community to unite across all of Moorabool Shire, but in particular within Bacchus Marsh. They need to learn about each others businesses and cross promote each other." – survey respondent

F18. TOP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q43. "Which of the following economic development initiatives do you think would make Moorabool Shire a more prosperous and better place to work and operate a business?".

Survey respondents were able to submit open-ended responses regarding the key outcomes they would like to see from the Economic Development Strategy. As displayed in Figure F19, responses reveal the need for ongoing business support and networking events, building tourism and diversifying the retail industry.

F19. KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES



Source: Moorabool Shire Business and Community Survey, Urban Enterprise 2021. Q52. "Please describe (in a few sentences) the key outcomes you would like to see from the Economic Development Strategy?".

In the future, survey respondents would prefer to receive information from Moorabool Shire Council about business support and development services by email and e-newsletters (78%), social media (32%) and the Council website (24%).

