



Draft City of Casey

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

The City of Casey proudly acknowledges the traditional owners, Casey's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last year we have seen Casey's local economy hit by our changing world. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in us needing to create over 3,300 jobs year on year to 2030, to get back to our pre-COVID forecasts. We are also seeing a growing reliance on a few dominant industries, such as the fact that a third of our local economy depends on construction. This lack of diversity and innovation brings economic risk to the quality of life for our residents, limits the impact we all came here to have and means we need to build in more resilience into our local economy.

To tackle this, we have created the Economic Development Strategy, one of five domain strategies that will provide us with a clear understanding of the conditions, capabilities and strategies that are critical, to ensure we can achieve our objectives to:

- be investment ready
- revitalise employment centres and preserve employment land
- upskill our community
- foster innovation and diversification in industry
- increase economic resilience, and;
- advocate for and partner with our business community

Ultimately, it will see Council focusing greater effort on strategies that we are best positioned and empowered to implement and prioritise resources to innovate current strategic sectors and grow emerging sectors. Doing so will mean we will be able to create more jobs, diversify across industries, increase resilience, promote innovation, and create the stronger connections and places that will allow our businesses and workers to thrive.

At a strategic level, the Strategy includes insight into the current and emerging conditions, strategic opportunities, and risks that are shaping the local economy.

At an operational level, this document identifies Council's role in economic development, communicates strategic objectives and the strategies that guide how Council can confront strategic risks, and improve economic prosperity for residents, businesses, and workers.

This Strategy is guided by the deliberative engagement, research, and consultation undertaken by the Council Plan.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF ADMINISTRATORS

As part of our ongoing commitment to community engagement, and the aspiration to stand our city in good stead for the future, the City of Casey is excited to launch a further suite of strategic documents.

These documents, which include the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Environment Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy and Economic Development Strategy are the next layer of Casey's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework and provide further insight and a closer look into some of the major areas that influence the liveability of our municipality.

These strategies have been designed following the adoption of the Council Plan 2021-25, and Long Term Community Vision 2031, both of which were developed based on the feedback, thoughts and ideas shared by you during the Shape Your City engagement program, in 2020 and 2021.

These strategies deliver on our Vision, which is to become a more connected, bold and resilient community.

While the Council Plan sets out what our organisation aims to achieve, these strategies set out how we are going to achieve that, and some of the key challenges that Council will face and the goals and intentions by Council to move our city forward.

Each strategy focusses on a vitally important area for Council and contains key linkages back to the current Council Plan.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy builds on the success and strengths from the previous plan and sets out how Council will work in partnership with both the community and other levels of government, to support positive health and wellbeing. It contains six key priorities, which are outlined in the strategy.

Council's Economic Development Strategy then sets out how Council plans to create more jobs, diversify industries and prompt innovation, while supporting our local businesses.

The Environment Strategy outlines how we plan to tackle some of the big issues facing our local environment, how we plan to become more climate change ready, and support a more sustainable approach to the local environment.

Finally, the Infrastructure Strategy plans for the future growth of our community and outlines how Council will provide the adequate infrastructure to meet that demand. The strategy covers community facilities, sport and recreation facilities, drainage, transport, paths and trails, and much more.

I would strongly encourage you to view these strategies and see how we are planning to further support our rapidly growing and diverse community.

Once again, thank you for your continued participation in our community engagement programs and I urge you to regularly visit our online engagement hub, Casey Conversations to see what topics you can have your say on today.

Noelene Duff PSM
Chair of Administrators
City of Casey

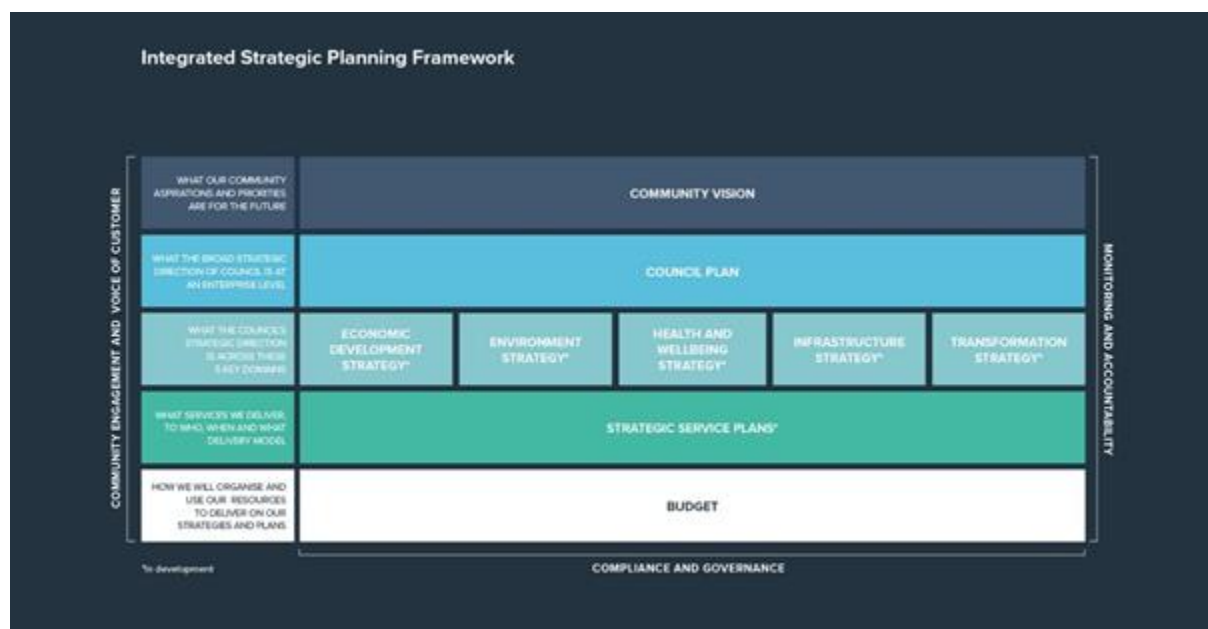
OUR INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The City of Casey's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework guides Council in identifying community needs and aspirations over the long term (*the Vision*), medium term (*Council Plan*) and short term (*Annual Budget*, incorporating the *Annual Action Plan* and *Capital Works Program*), and then how it will hold itself accountable (*Annual Report and Audited Statements*).

The purpose of integrated planning and reporting is:

- to determine the priorities for the municipality in terms of its future outlook, how our community want to live and the city we desire to be
- to consider what is changing and how these changes present an opportunity to shape our future
- to establish clear strategic direction for responding to change
- to prioritise Council business and identify projects and services that will deliver the best return on investment
- to inform Council's long-term financial planning and budgeting
- to inform annual Council planning, business planning and service planning across Council departments
- to provide a line of sight for employees to see how their individual work tasks contribute to the overall strategic direction of the Council and community.

The following illustration demonstrates Council's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework.



Background

WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

While economic prosperity is undeniably fundamental to the liveability of a community, there is no universal definition of 'economic development'. For the purpose of the Economic Development Strategy, Council share the definition of Local Economic Development as defined by the Victorian Auditor-General's *Local Government and Economic Development Report*:¹

'Building the economic capacity of a locality to improve its economic future and the quality of life of its citizens. In this process, public, business and community sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and job creation.'

ECONOMIC OUTPUT

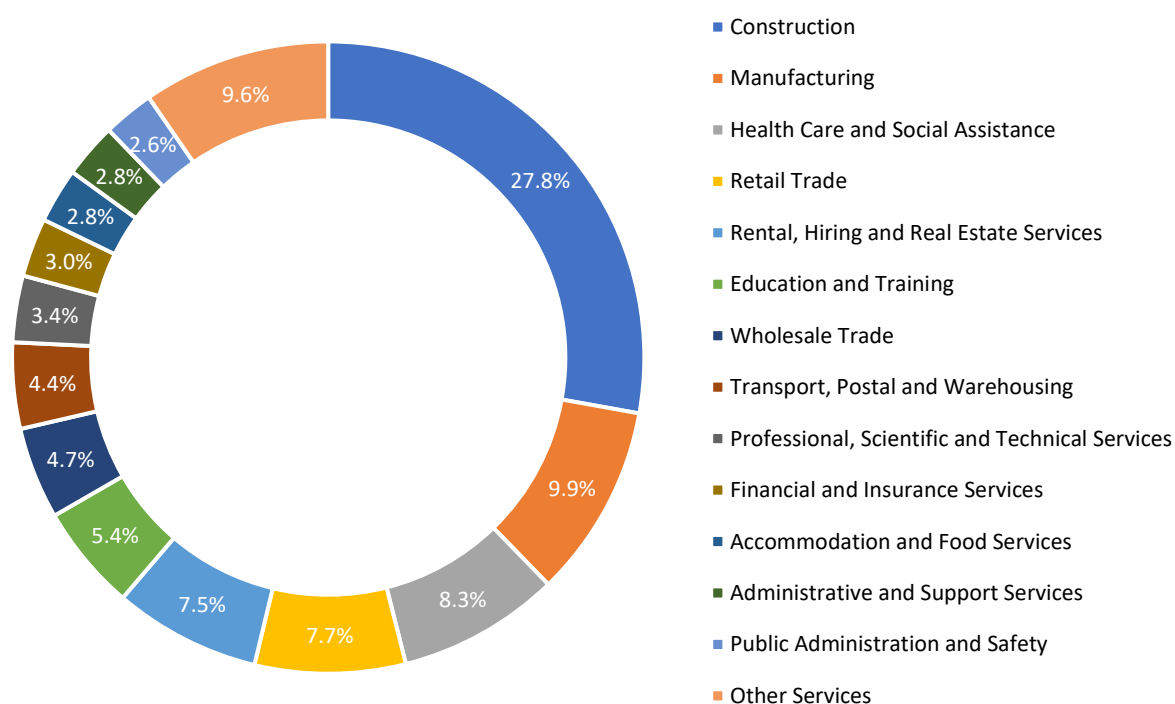
In 2019-20 the City of Casey's economic output was \$17.99 billion.²

Construction has the largest output by industry, generating \$4.9 billion, which equates to 27.8 per cent of Casey's total economic output.

Despite the construction sectors importance, its significant representation of economic output also creates a degree of risk to the local economy.

The City of Casey represents 12.7 per cent of the Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) economy.

Figure 1: Output by Industry Sector – City of Casey - 2019-20³



EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

There were 86,451 jobs in the City of Casey during 2019-20 in a range of sectors requiring diverse skillsets.

Over the last decade, Casey has enjoyed a significantly stronger job growth than the Greater Melbourne average, mainly driven by population serving industries, such as; Health and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Construction, and Education and Training.⁴ Not surprisingly, these sectors are highly represented in terms of local employment.⁵

Table 1: City of Casey - Employment by Industry Sector 2019-20

Industry	Employment (No.)	Employment (%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	14,834	17.2
Retail Trade	14,226	16.5
Construction	9,684	11.2
Education and Training	9,602	11.1
Accommodation and Food Services	5,716	6.6
Manufacturing	5,420	6.3
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3,427	4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3,302	3.8
Administrative and Support Services	2,873	3.3
Public Administration and Safety	2,772	3.2
Other	14,595	16.9
Total	86,451	100

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employer, generating 14,834 local jobs. The city is also home to a vibrant retail sector accounting for 14,226 local jobs. Construction is driven by significant residential development throughout the growth corridor, generating 9,684 local jobs. Education and training sectors accounts for 9,602 local jobs.

Tourism and hospitality are also key contributors to the Casey economy, and represent occupations across several industries. Together, tourism and hospitality account for 3,012 local jobs.⁶

While population serving sectors drive our economy, population growth has continued to exceed the rate of the local job market resulting in an employment self-containment below the metropolitan average. The additional jobs per 10 additional people between 2001 and 2021 in Casey was 2.9 compared to the Metropolitan average of 5.6.⁷

The local economy supported 51,463 less jobs than local resident workers in 2016, which includes all employed residents in the local area regardless of where they work.⁸ Currently 67.3% of Casey's resident workers must travel outside the municipality for work.

Employment locations across Casey are vast, but largely centralised in key activity centres.

KEY BUSINESSES AND STRATEGIC INDUSTRIES

There are a total of 26,011 registered businesses in the municipality with the majority of these being from the following sectors, as shown in Table 2:⁹

- Construction (24.2 per cent)
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing (20.4 per cent)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (8.9 per cent)

The mix of businesses in Casey is consistent with the signs pertaining to a growth area economy, which are often population serving focused. While it is no surprise construction businesses are the most common, it may seem the latter two industries are overrepresented. This highlights the business trends of Casey, more so than output, because when compared with employment figures, businesses in these industries are normally micro businesses and/or sole traders, and often based at home. For example, tradesmen, accountants, and couriers. This is supported by the fact that 70.4 per cent of Casey businesses are non-employing businesses.

Table 2 – Business Counts by Industry, City of Casey, 2020

Industry	Number	%
Construction	6,297	24.2
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	5,309	20.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,302	8.9
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1,692	6.5
Administrative and Support Services	1,509	5.8
Financial and Insurance Services	1,379	5.3
Retail Trade	1,344	5.2
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,162	4.5
Accommodation and Food Services	829	3.2
Manufacturing	823	3.2
Other	3,365	13.1
Total	26,011	100

An analysis of the concentration of an industry or occupation within an area in contrast to another areas, reveals Casey's comparative advantage. These industries include:

- Construction
- Retail
- Education and Training
- Health Care and Social Assistance

The post COVID-19 recovery is forecast to be long and bumpy for all of Casey's strategic sectors, with the exception of the health care and education sectors, which are forecast to be the only to remain in a positive position by Q4 2021-22 compared to pre-COVID.¹⁰ It is timely to consider how Council can improve industry resilience by leveraging the rise of emerging industries leading the way in global transformation

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Casey has the highest population of any Local Government area in Victoria. The municipality is home to 380,531 people, ¹¹ It is also the workplace for 86,451 people. The Casey community is a mine of untapped economic potential.

The size of Casey's labour force in March 2021 was 194,729, of which 15,561 (8 per cent) were unemployed.¹² Due to a mismatch between locals' skills and the composition of Casey's economy, as well as lower job growth than population growth, residents in Casey are disadvantaged in terms of job choices, contributing to 67.3 per cent of employed residents travelling outside of Casey to get to work.¹³

Residents are quickly upskilling. Over the last three Census periods, the proportion of bachelor degree educated residents increased from 27 per cent to 35 per cent.¹⁴ The primary field of study for the highest qualifications by Casey residents are in the areas of management and commerce (19 per cent), engineering and related technologies (17 per cent), society and culture (11 per cent) and health (8 per cent).

Casey's population is relatively young. The largest age group is 35 to 49 (22 per cent) followed by a growing young workforce of ages 24 to 34 (14.8 per cent). The median age is 34.¹⁵

The city's diversity continues to grow rapidly. More than 20,000 residents are migrants who have arrived within the last five years. Approximately 38.2 per cent of residents were born overseas, arriving predominantly from India, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom.¹⁶

The local migrant population are well-educated and, in many cases, multi-lingual making important contributions to the labour market in both high and low skilled occupations. In 2016, 38.5 per cent of recent arrivals in the City of Casey had a tertiary qualification. Of the 107,277 non-English speakers, 83.8 per cent reported to speak another language, as well as being proficient in English.¹⁷

Table 3 – City of Casey - Birthplace

Birthplace	Number	%
Australia	168,029	56.1
India	17,931	6
Sri Lanka	11,279	3.8
United Kingdom	10,728	3.6
Afghanistan	8,534	2.9
Total overseas born	114,212	38.2

What is Council's role in Economic Development?

The principal legislation in Victoria that governs the operation of Council's economic development is the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council performs its role in relation to several principals, which include:¹⁸

- priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations,
- the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, and
- the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision-making collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.

Under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the objectives of the planning framework, include 'to enable land use and development planning and policy to be easily integrated with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels.'¹⁹

Under the Acts above, Council has power to undertake land use and development planning, beneficial enterprises, investment, sell or exchange land, make local laws, create and defer special rates and charges, and provide infrastructure and services.

Local government is often perceived to be responsible for compliance and regulation, both being important areas, but these are not the only roles for Council when it comes to enabling competitive economic development.

Due to Councils proximity to businesses and workers they make an important contribution to fostering conducive business growth environments, attracting investment, and facilitating development.

Many elements of the local economy also rely on the contributions made by state and federal governments, such as; legislative frameworks, networks, and financial incentives, attraction of foreign direct investment, and facilitation of exports.

Council is aware there are limitations as to what they can provide alone. Council plans to only operate in spaces that they have the best opportunity to leverage positive economic development. In doing so, Council undertakes the following roles on behalf of the community, to fulfilling their role in economic development:

- Deliver – direct responsibility and power to influence
- Facilitate – shared responsibility
- Advocate – areas beyond Council's control but of importance to our community

Case for Change

At the City of Casey, we believe economic development is fundamental to improving the quality of life of our residents.

In a world that is constantly changing, the future holds great prosperity for governments that can identify and confront the conditions influencing their local economy but holds great risk for those who get it wrong.

By 2025, the City of Casey will be a regional leader driving economic diversity, with quality and accessible jobs of choice, and an increasingly skilled and capable workforce.

If Councils wish to realise this potential, they must create an economic development strategy that leverages immediate and emerging conditions.

A condition is a factor that affects the way in which people live, play, and work. Conditions consist of the state of a situation, circumstance, trend, disruptors, or occurrence that is happening anywhere in the community or world.

This strategy recognises that strategies are often fixed to a specific set of conditions, however this strategy seeks to rely on a conditions map that is in a constant state of flux so that it can effectively manage changing circumstances. Hence, the conditions analysis that informs this Strategy will continue to be updated post the publishing of this document, and relied upon to provide guidance.

The following pages consist of the key immediate and emergent conditions and their associated risks to the City of Casey. These were derived through a comprehensive organisation-wide engagement and further informed through Council's largest ever engagement program, *Shape Your City*.

Key Immediate Conditions

Post-pandemic recovery	Challenged growth assumptions	Skills shortage and alignment	Infrastructure and governance gaps	Technological advancement
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the most significant contraction in economic activity since the Great Depression.	Population growth is anticipated to slow; Council cannot rely on the assumption that Casey will continue to follow the same strong population growth trajectory prior to the pandemic.	There exists a skills shortage and poor alignment between local skilled residents and the local economy.	There exists a huge gap in much-needed infrastructure. Benchmarked against other OECD countries, Australian local governments, including Casey, suffer from Governance fragmentation and limited institution capacity for development.	Drastic improvements in technology are changing the way individuals, businesses, and government interact. This includes the evolution of communication and smart city tech.
For the City of Casey this means (Strategic Risks):				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Casey economy needs to grow by around 3,300 jobs year on year to reach pre-COVID forecast by 2030. - A V-shaped recovery for most industries is highly unlikely, however indications for the Health and Education sectors look to be positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The slowdown is an opportunity to improve job self-containment but doing so in a population serving economy during a population slow down makes it no easy feat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are disadvantaged in terms of job choices. - Increasing political pressure to create more job opportunities for skilled workforce. - Contributes to the 67.3 per cent of employed residents travelling outside of Casey to get to work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate infrastructure to accommodate for the growing community. - Dependence on high state and federal governments for region-wide solutions. - Need to address deficits through partnerships, including innovative funding and knowledge sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved digital connectivity gives way to more opportunities to work from anywhere, a culture more embraced post-COVID-19. - Opportunities to tap into this growing sector to build home grown innovation and jobs. - Growing need to support businesses to innovate and optimise.

Key Emergent Conditions

Ageing population	Increasing climate change	Economic transition	Rise of Asia and geopolitical uncertainty	Employment land supply
City of Casey's over 65's population to double by 2040.	Weather volatility likely to increase. Business' ability to manage climate impacts will become more prominent. Opportunities in sustainable technologies to increase.	In time, population serving industries will create a smaller share of jobs as the population growth slows and Casey becomes a more established city. Council's ability to diversify will drive resilience and competitiveness.	Rapid income growth across Asia will create more demand for services, products and education. However, as China takes a new leadership role, adversarial geopolitics may interfere with supply chains and access to markets.	City of Greater Dandenong's employment land to become significantly exhausted in mid-2020's, thus bringing Casey employment land to the forefront.
For the City of Casey this means (Strategic Risks):				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Altered demand in the labour market, housing, transport, and health services. - Need to increase intergenerational awareness and communication in business community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demand for sustainable carbon neutral assets and services. - Need to put in place more systematic approaches to resilience and emergency management. - Opportunities to investigate new investments in the rapidly growing renewables sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing need to seek investment attraction in areas outside of Casey's population industries. - Concentrated effort required to support or attract key anchor institutions that will support new industries. - Finding a balance between competitive advantage and new domains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The economic shift towards Asia will build new export markets, trade relations, business models and cultural ties. - Geopolitical transition may create new opportunities, but in some cases damage confidence in existing opportunities. - Council will need to rely on state and federal governments to guide facilitating exports and FDI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added pricing pressure in Casey's industrial and commercial property market. - Council must work with the State Government to ensure land supply. - Need to quarantine future employment to avoid economic implications of rezoning.

What will need to change?

Council creates the most impact where their role is to deliver. Therefore, Council will spend greater effort on strategies that they are best positioned and empowered to deliver, though this does not preclude Council from facilitation and advocacy.

Delivering requires Council to concentrate on making use and exploring the powers provided to them under the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, such as, land use and development planning, beneficial enterprises, invest, sell, or exchange land, local laws, special rates and charges, and infrastructure and services. Council has previously been reluctant to use some of their powers in the economic development realm due to being perceived as promoting private interests, however it is rather the contrary given these measures create jobs and increase economic output, both areas of community significance.

There are four key foundations that allow for a market sector to thrive, as highlighted in Figure 3. Casey's strategic sectors (population serving, and health and education) are already dominant, self-sustainable, and self-determined in all these key foundations with the exception of a culture of innovation. As for emerging sectors, they are considered weak across all four foundations.

Council will shift their resources to fostering innovation in Casey's existing key strategic sectors and growing all key foundations in emerging sectors. These changes will make Casey more diverse, resilient, and competitive.

Figure 3 – Key Foundations for a Thriving and Resilient Sector



Fostering a culture of innovation is the one foundation considered either weak or missing across all sectors. This provides a great opportunity to encourage existing strategic sectors to withstand the test of time and encourage emerging sectors to grow.

Fostering innovation involves creating an environment that is conducive for existing businesses to embed new practices that are future-focused and improve businesses goods and service offering. This includes but is not limited to; high-technology applications (Advanced manufacturing, Internet of Things, MedTech, and Artificial Intelligence) along with sustainable practices (circular economy, green jobs, waste management, renewables).

An assessment of Casey's Economic Opportunity Analysis (Graph 1) in conjunction with the State governments priority industries and sectors identified Casey's strategic and emerging sectors as:

- Construction technologies
- Wholesale Trade
 - Machinery and Equipment Wholesaling
- Manufacturing
 - Food and Fibre – Product Manufacturing
 - Defence Technologies
 - Space Technologies
 - Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing
 - Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals
- Retail, Transport Distribution and Logistics and Postal
- Administration and Support Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Visitor Economy (Arts, Sports, and Racing)
- Creative Industries
- International Education, and
- Digital Technologies

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Five strategic objectives identify how the City of Casey will work to achieve its Economic Development priorities in line with the 4 year Council Plan 2021 -25.

Under these strategic objectives are several strategies that will be relied upon over the next four years to guide Council initiatives and give Casey's economy the best chance of success.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 - BE INVESTMENT READY

The City of Casey is the next frontier to start and grow a business. The key to ensuring investors have the best chance of success are efficient processes and customer service that make doing business easy.

We will proactively position Casey as favourable location to do business, through key relationships, marketing and facilitating fast and efficient planning process to avoid costly and timely delays.

Council is also acutely aware that the impact of COVID-19 has made getting business momentum more difficult for both the private and public sector, which is why we are investigating how we can effectively partner and facilitate productivity.

Council Plan 2021-25– Strategic Direction Touch Points

Strategy	Council's Role	Measures of Success
1.1. Establish and maintain investment facilitation and business development services that will support Casey businesses and prospective investors to navigate government processes with ease	Deliver	Provision of quality engagement with potential new businesses, retention of businesses, improved ease of doing business, increase in employing businesses
1.2. Investigate how Council can attract new businesses and establish partnerships to increase investment and infrastructure	Deliver	Partnerships to deliver infrastructure and services, improved return on investment, time to deliver infrastructure and services
1.3. Increase transparency and quality of data across the organisation to enable more informed, real time decisions by Council and the community	Deliver	Extent of data available via platforms, number of visitors to data platforms

Strategic Objective 1 is in alignment with the following objectives and strategies of the Council Plan:

- **Objective 2: Grow Casey's current and emerging economies**
 - 2.1 Support the creation of new jobs by focusing on developing local businesses, attracting investment, revitalising activity centres and facilitating employment pathways
 - 2.2 Build and leverage partnerships that enhance service provision, infrastructure delivery and funding opportunities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 - REVITALISE AND PRESERVE EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PLACES

It is estimated that employment land supply in the City of Greater Dandenong will become constrained by the mid-2020s. It is essential that the City of Casey has connected, timely and sufficient supply of employment land to allow for seamless business growth across the region.²⁰

Our focus is beyond just preserving employment land and supply, but also unlocking the potential of key precincts across the municipality. For example, Council's bold and ambitious *Strategic Property Program* makes way for Council to play a greater role in the development of their landholdings to achieve revitalisation and positive liveability outcomes.

COVID-19 has inadvertently accelerated a shift towards 20-minute neighbourhoods by transitioning towards more mobile workplaces. Where the CBD has suffered, outer suburban economies have benefited from less congestion and retention of consumer spending. As Council increases its focus on revitalising and activating new precincts, we will make a deliberate effort to accommodate for 'remote work' friendly places to keep residents working locally.

Strategy	Council's Role	Measures of Success
2.1. Develop and implement place-based revitalisation strategies to unlock investment, facilitate economic growth and create great places for our community	Deliver	Number and quality of aligned partnerships and investment, additional jobs created, uplift in use of Council assets, uptake of services, value of offers to Council (e.g., rents, royalties services), extent of revenues directly impacted (e.g. rates)
2.2. Engage and partner with landowners, developers, neighbouring councils, and state government to deliver connected, timely, and sufficient supply of employment land	Facilitate	Commercial and Industrial land supply and recent consumption – zoned occupied, zoned vacant, future supply, available supply, consumption rates.
2.3. Support local businesses and organisations to create 'remote work' friendly places at home or in local neighbourhoods that incentivises people to work from within Casey	Facilitate	Reduction in employed residents leaving Casey to get to work, increased local sales and consumer spending.

Council Plan 2021-25 – Strategic Direction Touch Points

Strategic Objective 2 is in alignment with the following objectives and strategies of the Council Plan:

- **Objective 2: Grow Casey's current and emerging economies**
 - 2.1 Support the creation of new jobs by focusing on developing local businesses, attracting investment, revitalising activity centres and facilitating employment pathway

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 - INNOVATE CURRENT STRATEGIC SECTORS AND GROW EMERGING SECTORS

Almost a third of the Casey economy depends on construction, and more than half of the economy is made up of population serving sectors, and health and education.

A lack of diversity and innovation brings economic risk to the quality of life for our residents, limits the impact we all came here to have and means we need to build more resilience and diversity into our local businesses and sectors.

Innovating the existing strategic sectors and growing emerging sectors will diversify the local economy and support continued success of existing businesses.

We have an opportunity to make way for a competitive and resilient economy by retaining our strategic sectors. We will do this by fostering a culture of innovation that increases high-technology applications and sustainability so our local businesses can withstand the test of time.

Council will not stop at retention and adaptation but will also proactively undertake attraction strategies to make Casey home to emerging sectors.

Strategy	Council's Role	Measures of Success
3.1. Foster an innovation, entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem that increases business resilience	Facilitate	Increased innovation and diversification of local businesses, and resilient future-focused business practices.
3.2. Support growth of emerging technology sectors, including biotech, medtech, climate infrastructure, engineering, and advanced manufacturing	Deliver	Increased industry diversity, expanded local supply chains, growth in key traded industries and growth in tech-oriented businesses
3.3. Coordinate proactive engagement between the local building, development, and construction sector and the Victorian government's Big Housing Build initiative	Facilitate	Cost of living, improved connectivity, better community cohesion and inclusion and the outcomes of social and affordable housing
3.4. Through the implementation of a Cultural Tourism Strategy, position Bunjil Place as a leading arts destination in Australia	Deliver	Increased number of visitors, increased tourism offerings, growth in tourism industry, increase in visitor spending and community cohesion and inclusion
3.5. In partnership with elite sporting clubs, host major local sporting events	Deliver	Increased number of visitors, increased tourism offerings, growth in tourism industry, increase in visitor spending, community cohesion and inclusion, and increase in interest from elite sporting clubs to host their events in the City of Casey
3.6. Deliver a program of works to support the growth and retention of existing businesses	Deliver	Reduction in business closures, increase in employing businesses, local businesses growth and expansion and increased business satisfaction in business support

Council Plan 2021-25 – Strategic Direction Touch Points

Strategic Objective 3 is in alignment with the following objectives and strategies of the Council Plan:

- **Objective 2: Grow Casey's current and emerging economies**
 - 2.1 Support the creation of new jobs by focusing on developing local businesses, attracting investment, revitalising activity centres and facilitating employment pathways
 - 2.2 Build and leverage partnerships that enhance service provision, infrastructure delivery and funding opportunities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 - ADVOCATE AND PARTNER ON BEHALF OF OUR REGIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

In comparison to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) municipal governments, most Australian cities, with the exception of Brisbane, function in a context of major local governance fragmentation due to representing a smaller share of metropolitan population. This has resulted in difficulties leading in regions across Australia in the same way other OECD countries.²¹

To overcome this governance gap, Council co-founded the Greater South East Melbourne Group to collaborate with councils and implement regional solutions that would otherwise be missed opportunities.

We aim to collaborate and advocate for improved infrastructure provision across Greater South East Melbourne so that our business community can be more connected and serviced.

We also acknowledge that our role is best served in areas that we have best proximity to our investors, businesses, and workers, which is why we will avoid duplicating services offered by our state and federal counterparts and instead leverage their work and international connections to attract foreign direct investment and facilitate exports.

Strategy	Council's Role	Measures of Success
4.1. Work with State and Federal Government, and non-government organisations to leverage infrastructure outcomes for Casey	Advocate	Change in policy, change in legislation, increased public investment
4.2. Partner with local migrant communities, industry bodies, and Victorian and Australian governments to attract foreign direct investment and assist businesses export goods and services	Advocate	Growth in exports activities, growth in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), increased global business representation, increased global event activities.
4.3. In partnership with Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) coordinate economic development and business advocacy at a regional level	Advocate	Change in policy, change in legislation, increased public investment, improved value for money, enhanced supplier attraction, accelerated delivery

Council Plan 2021-25 – Strategic Direction Touch Points

Strategic Objective 4 is in alignment with the following objectives and strategies of the Council Plan:

- **Objective 2: Grow Casey's current and emerging economies**
 - 2.2 Build and leverage partnerships that enhance service provision, infrastructure delivery and funding opportunities
- **Objective 4: Advocate to State and Federal Governments for key service and infrastructure delivery**
 - 4.1 Secure funding through Council's advocacy campaign, Connecting Casey, to provide transport, infrastructure, and community services

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5 - ENABLE UPSKILLING, SKILL ALIGNMENT, AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Residents in Casey are disadvantaged in terms of job choices, contributing to the 67.3 per cent of employed residents travelling outside of Casey to get to work.

Casey residents deserve jobs or choice, and accessible upskilling and reskilling.

This objective seeks to stimulate the knowledge economy and relationship between academia, industry, and government to cultivate a skilled workforce that is aligned to and employed by local businesses.

Through the production, distribution, and application of knowledge we seek to empower our disadvantaged communities so that they can pursue fulfilled careers in the local workforce.

Strategy	Council's Role	Measures of Success
5.1. Connect workers with education institutions and businesses to upskill, reskill, or employ.	Facilitate	Improved alignment of skills to industry needs, improved level of local skills available
5.2. Facilitate employment accessibility through improved communication in the business community that resonates with our disadvantaged communities	Facilitate	Increased number of jobs available in the local economy, increased community cohesion and inclusion

Council Plan 2021-25 – Strategic Direction Touch Points

Strategic Objective 5 is in alignment with the following objectives and strategies of the Council Plan:

- **Objective 2: Grow Casey's current and emerging economies**
 - 2.1 Support the creation of new jobs by focusing on developing local businesses, attracting investment, revitalising activity centres, and facilitating employment pathways

STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT

Targeted engagement of the business community was undertaken as part of Council's *Shape Your City* community engagement program. A survey was conducted during late March/early April in 2021 to better understand the immediate and future challenges, opportunities, and aspirations for businesses in Casey.

The survey received 80 responses from a broad-cross section of the business community.

Respondents represented included:

- a diverse range of industries from automotive services, building construction and education to medical, online, and shop-front retail services.
- varying levels of business tenure from start-ups to established businesses operating for 20 years or more.
- different sizes from medium businesses (20-199 employees) to smaller businesses (5-19 employees) and sole traders.
- a relatively even split of home-based vs. site-based businesses.

Survey Key Findings

- Of the 80 respondents, 72.5 per cent planned to employ additional staff in the next 12-24 months and 35 per cent were looking to expand within their current premises or new premises in Casey.
- 73.75 per cent of respondents had made changes to the way they manage or run their business in response to COVID-19.
- When asked what is good about having a business based in Casey, 72.5 per cent cited close to home and 35 per cent said it was their strong customer base.
- When questioned around the challenges their business currently faced, access to staff with right skills rated highly with 36.25 per cent of responses, followed by cash flow (30 per cent) and cost of utilities (27.5 per cent).
- Over half of respondents (61.25 per cent) were not aware that the City of Casey had an Economic Development team that supports businesses.
- When questioned around barriers to accessing Council's online business information and business support, uncertainty around eligibility and being unsure of where to look were the most common.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the Strategy will take place annually through progress updates on the actions that stem from this Strategy. This update will be made public via a report to Council. This will be supported through the Economic Development Working Group.

A more in-depth evaluation will take place after four years where the Strategy achievements and impacts over the lifetime of this strategy are evaluated, so that the next iteration can be improved upon in the future.

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Customer Service Centres

Cranbourne Customer Service Centre Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre, Shop 156, South Gippsland Highway, Cranbourne

Narre Warren Bunjil Place, 2 Patrick Northeast Drive, Narre Warren

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