



# SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE

## Strategic Community Plan

July 2014 - June 2024





**Adopted by Council by absolute majority on 22 May, 2014.**

**SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE**

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# SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN

## DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This Strategic Community Plan will help shape the services that the Shire of Ravensthorpe will deliver over the next ten years.

It has been developed with our community's aspirations and needs at its heart. These have been gathered through a process of consultation and engagement. We used a number of methods to make sure we sought the view from as wide a range of people in our community as possible including residents, business owners, Councillors, Government Agencies, Local Administration staff and others.

## CONSULTATION PROCESS UNDERTAKEN

The Shire of Ravensthorpe employs a variety of methods to collect community feedback. Some of the measures that the Shire operates include:

- **Public Meetings** held throughout the year in Hopetoun, Munglinup and Ravensthorpe.
- Other techniques such as **newsletter distribution, online council website enquiries, community paper.**
- **Community consultation workshop with focus group.**
- **Community Survey –**

A consultant from the Curtin University Graduate School of Business and the Co-operative Research Centre - Remote Economic Participation was engaged to research and facilitate the engagement process.

The community was advised of the process with newspaper advertisements and a letter to all residents of the Shire of Ravensthorpe. A comprehensive survey was mailed to all residents and a QR hyperlink was published in the Community Spirit which enabled respondents to download the survey. The survey was encrypted so that only one return could be received from a particular computer. All respondents remained anonymous and the returns have been stored in a secure facility under the Curtin University ethics guidelines. A response rate of approximately 28 per cent was achieved with valid returns were received from 339 respondents.

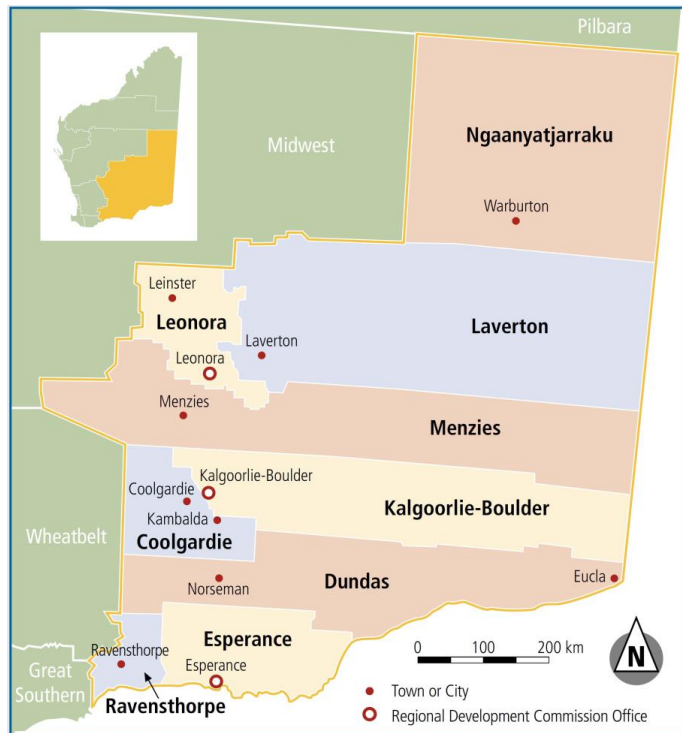
Community meetings were conducted with Shire representatives and executive and a community focus group with 19 participants was convened at the conclusion of the survey return analysis to verify the findings and refine the themes of the Community Plan.

In general, the survey returns and the results from the focus group confirmed a consistent message regarding the community's aspirations for the future. These are outlined in the Plan.

# OUR COMMUNITY

## ABOUT THE SHIRE

The Shire of Ravensthorpe is a Local Government Area in the southern Goldfields-Esperance region of Western Australia (WA), about halfway between the city of Albany and the town of Esperance and about 530km southeast of Perth. The Shire covers an area of 12,872km<sup>2</sup>, and its seat of government is the town of Ravensthorpe. The following map shows the Shire's place within our region:



Source: Department of Regional Development and Lands

The Shire has its main town of Ravensthorpe (population 390, ABS 2011) with four surrounding settlements of Fitzgerald, Hopetoun (population 786, ABS 2011) which includes Jerdacuttup and Munglinup.

Hopetoun is on the south coast of the Ravensthorpe Shire border, located 590 kilometres southwest of Perth. It was established in 1900 to service the Phillips River Mining District, and named after the 7th Earl of Hopetoun and first Governor General of Australia, John Hope. The town's population grew due to the establishment of a nickel mine in 2007 located between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe. Munglinup is a small town located along the South Coast Highway between Ravensthorpe and Esperance and close to the Munglinup River. Population growth has now stabilised.

The shire comprises approximately two thirds natural bush land and this includes the Fitzgerald River. The agricultural industry grew significantly in the 1950s and '60s and despite recessions and drought the industry has stabilised within the district ever since. Cereal growing is becoming the main agricultural focus, with sheep and cattle farming also occurring in the Shire. Additionally, the Ravensthorpe Range is also noted for its salmon gums and encircles the Ravensthorpe town.

The Shire is experiencing a population plateauing despite the expansion of the nickel mine. Mining operations have generated negligible commercial activity and some business opportunities.



## OUR COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

### ABOUT THE SHIRE (CONTINUED)

The Shire's population has fluctuated over the years with the cyclical nature of the mining industry. With smaller farms being purchased and amalgamated into large holdings, and very little cottage industry within the shire, population growth has been negligible.

The rate of volunteering has declined from 31 per cent in 2006 to 27.5 per cent in 2011, with 34 per cent of all women in the Shire volunteering, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 census data. This rate of participation is significantly higher than the State participation in volunteering (17 per cent). Volunteers play a large part in keeping the towns vibrant, as do the many clubs and groups.

There are town blocks available and a number of rural properties of various sizes for sale. There is currently an oversupply of homes available for rent. Tourist accommodation is in high demand during the summer and autumn with three caravan parks, two motels and two hotels which meet business and tourist traveller demand.

The Shire is also blessed with a wide range of sporting facilities. It is envisaged that these sporting facilities will beneficially serve the future of the Ravensthorpe Shire.

The Dunn brothers brought sheep farming to the area in 1871 when George and John Dunn drove a herd from Albany to the area they had established earlier. They were awarded a land grant in 1873 of 4049 ha.

Another of the Dunn brothers, James Dunn discovered gold at Annabel creek and was awarded a claim by the government. More profitable discoveries followed in 1900 that resulted in a boom.

The population climbed to over 1000 and by 1901 the government gazetted the town of Ravensthorpe.

The government completed construction of a copper and gold smelter about 2km south east of the town in 1906, used to cast copper and gold ingots. At its peak of production the smelter employed over 120 men. The now disused smelter still remains and is now surrounded by large piles of tailings waste.

The area continued to prosper and the population grew accordingly, by 1909 the population was over 3000. This prosperity was short-lived; however World War I took its toll on the town and by 1918 the local copper smelter had closed and many of the copper and gold mines were abandoned.

### *Hopetoun:*

Hopetoun was established in 1900 as a coastal town servicing the Phillips River Mining District, and named after the 7th Earl of Hopetoun and first Governor General of Australia, John Hope.

It was a terminus of one of Western Australian Government Railways' isolated branch lines between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe, and became a shipping port for the mining industry, with a jetty built in 1901. The railway closed in 1925 and the jetty demolished in 1983.

Some of the town's electricity is generated by a wind-diesel system. Hopetoun has two 600 kilowatt wind turbines.

# OUR COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

## LOCAL HISTORY (CONTINUED)

### Munglinup:

The word Munglinup is Indigenous Australian in origin and of unknown meaning. The name first appears on maps made by early settlers in 1868.

The region was first opened up for farming in the late 1950s and by the early 1960s the community asked for a town-site between Esperance and Ravensthorpe to be considered. The town-site was surveyed in 1961 and gazetted in 1962. Munglinup is however being considered for amalgamation with the Shire of Esperance.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

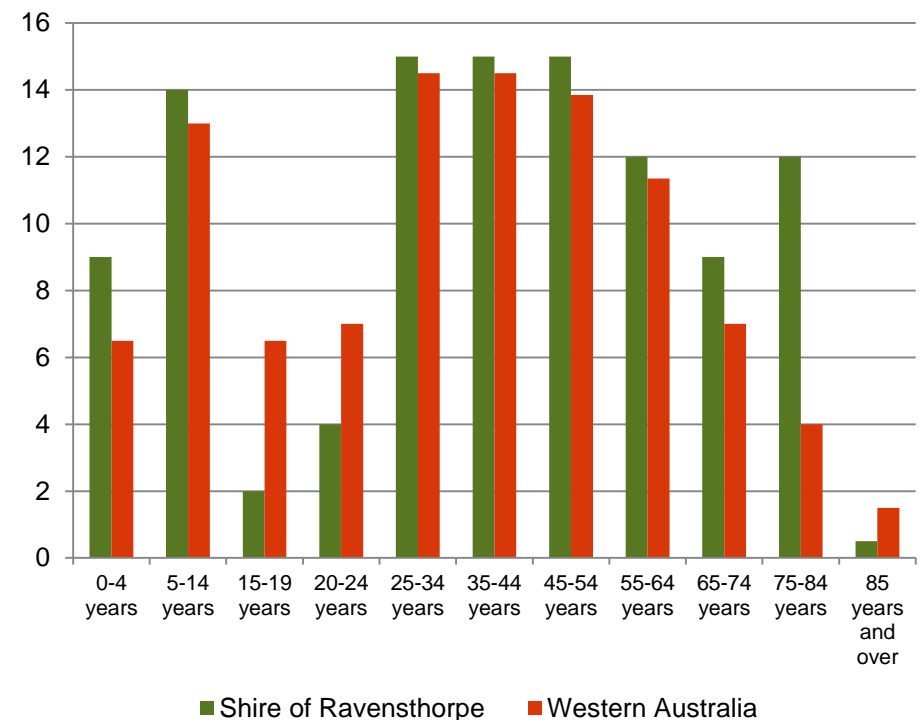
The Shire has an estimated residential population of 1,951 in 2006, comprised of 60% male and 40% female residents. Indigenous residents account for 2% of the Shires population and up to 18% of the Shire residents are born overseas, however only 5% speak a language other than English at home (ABS 2006).

The age distribution of the Shire compared to the Western Australian population is shown below. The Shire has a noticeably higher percentage of residents between the ages of 25-54 and 55-64 years (ABS 2011), yet a lower proportion of elderly (85 years and over) compared to the State average suggesting that the Shire attracts an older retiree cohort but it does not have adequate services for high level geriatric care.

The median age of residents in the Shire of Ravensthorpe at the 2011 census was 39 years.

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

Chart 1: The Shire of Ravensthorpe compared to Western Australia (2011)





## OUR COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

### DWELLINGS

The Shire of Ravensthorpe includes the towns of Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun and Munglinup; which primarily exist to serve the surrounding agricultural area and mining enterprises. As a result of the rapid population decline experienced post closure of the Ravensthorpe Nickel Project, it was estimated that there was a surplus of between 94-101 residential dwellings in the town of Ravensthorpe and 399-407 dwellings in Mary-Anne Waters Estate located in the Hopetoun ward during 2009. As at 2011, there were 1,712 persons per 717 households.

### GENERAL REGIONAL CONTEXT

The southern Goldfields-Esperance region faces a variety of challenges with those most relevant to the Shire being:

- **Retaining a skilled workforce with requisite skills** The labour force at the 2011 census of the Goldfields-Esperance Region has remained steady and the unemployment rate in the region remained at a low of 2.2 per cent although with the contraction of mining activity in 2013 it has increased to 2.8 per cent. The mining industry remains the largest employer in the Goldfields-Esperance Region, although agriculture is the highest employer in the Shire of Ravensthorpe. This industry is vulnerable to foreign exchange and trade fluctuations.
- **Providing infrastructure** to a relatively small and geographically diverse population with limited capacity for economies of scale.
- **Population trends** The estimated resident population of the Goldfields-Esperance Region which constitutes 29.9 per cent of the

land mass in Western Australia was 58,024 in 2013. In the decade to June 2009, the region's population increased at an average annual growth rate of 0.4 per cent, however in 2012/13 the mining employment contracted in the region due to a transition from construction phase to operational phase for many operations and a decrease in exploration. Both increases and decreases experienced across the region are directly linked to the mining industry. The population trend for the Goldfields-Esperance region is intended to increase in line with the Western Australian Planning Commission's estimate of 65,400 by the year 2031.

- **Environmental challenges** Significant challenges emerging in the environment arena also need to be addressed by the region with key issues including focus on:
  - Change adaptation and mitigation implications on regional bio-diversity agriculture, eco-tourism, the resources and fishing industry, health and other social conditions;
  - Strategic regional water access, security and cost policies, planning and management strategies; enhanced and integrated transport planning; innovative responses to the impacts of high and rising energy and fuel costs including the capacity to deliver increased local "peak power" infrastructure in order to improve industry efficiency and deliver community cost-benefits; and



# OUR COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

## GENERAL REGIONAL CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

- Land use strategic planning, development and release strategies, with a focus on substantial environmental conservation and management initiatives (e.g. Great Western Woodlands).
- **Diverse economic and employment options** to retain current residents and attract more people, through supporting the development of a wider range of sustainable business opportunities such as innovative and coordinated (intra- and inter-regional) tourism as well as new and innovative primary industries (including agricultural, pastoral fishing and recycling initiatives); opportunities for the sustainable use of significant sites after current and future mining operations and institute a protocol that supports the development of new resource projects in a sensitive and timely manner providing the greatest benefit to the region.



## TOURISM

Tourism continues to be important, particularly with improved facilities and better access to the national parks however the high value Australian dollar has negatively impacted on the tourism industry nationally. Nonetheless, the pristine coast, vast beaches and sheltered camping areas attract artists, photographers and the more adventurous travellers. In spring when the regions' world renowned wildflowers bloom, visitors arrive from all over the globe to see the exceptional variety on display and the unique Ravensthorpe Shire's flora.

Tourism is an important component of economic activity in the Shire and is likely to grow in the future. Tourist numbers are seasonal and particularly prevalent during the summer months along the coastal areas between Hopetoun and Starvation Bay and the National Parks.

Given tourism's traditional role in the area (providing a small but not insignificant economic impact) it is believed important to re-evaluate this industry and determine a strategy to assist it to grow to support the local economy and help optimise infrastructure investment. The "Tourism Strategy for the Shire of Ravensthorpe", is designed to commence that process. As such, the Shire is aware of the long term benefits of tourism and is focusing on ways of improving the potential of the Shire to harness its inherent potential in this area.

## OUR COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

### INDUSTRY

Economic growth is essential to assist in attracting residents, industry and services to the Shire. At present, the three main economic drivers of the Shire are based around the agricultural, mining and tourism industries. In addition to these key industries, the economic growth and development of the Shire and each of the settlements is dependent on adequate land availability and the provision of services and infrastructure.

Agricultural production remains the key economic activity which underpins the local economy in the future. Latest data available (2011) indicates that the gross value of agricultural production was approximately \$107 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011). Major crops include wheat, barley and canola. Livestock enterprises include cattle and sheep (wool and meat). Production remains stable.

The State Government has indicated the areas of the Shire which have high potential for mineralisation particularly for gold-copper, nickel, base metals, graphite and limestone. These areas are generally located through the central region of the Shire. Further exploration is required to determine the full extent and viability of mining.

Mining Operations include First Quantum Minerals (nickel). This project provides opportunities for local employment employing 405 people (2014), and continued sustainability for the Shire of Ravensthorpe.



# YOUR COUNCIL AND SHIRE

## COUNCILLORS:

Councillors have a specific role in relation to developing the local government's vision and long term goal setting with appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). These are responsibilities that require specific skills and experience.

The development and implementation of our community's aspirations and goals will be facilitated by the Shire's seven councillors. The Councillors meet regularly to discuss issues and imperative areas arising in the community. Councillors act to ensure that they:

- Represent the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district;
- Facilitate communication between the community and the Shire of Ravensthorpe;
- Participate in the local government decision-making processes at council and committee meetings;
- Provide appropriate services & facilities are efficient, effective, adequate and equitable;
- Properly manage the environment, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development; and
- Take into account the long-term cumulative effects of the Shire's decisions.



# YOUR COUNCIL AND SHIRE (CONTINUED)

## COUNCILLORS (CONTINUED):



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## YOUR COUNCIL AND SHIRE (CONTINUED)

### EXECUTIVE TEAM:

The Executive Team oversees the day-to-day operations of the Local Government and is tasked with delivering agreed outcomes documented in the Shires Corporate Business Plan.

The Executive Team Includes:

**Pascoe Durtanovich**  
**(Chief Executive Officer)**

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# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE

The Shire of Ravensthorpe is building on a successful history of community engagement to ensure that the community can grow and thrive as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work and visit.

Developing our aspirations and plans for the future will shape the delivery of services to the community and the direction of economic development. The integration of community aspiration and service delivery is called the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPR). This will ensure that the Shire of Ravensthorpe's policies and services are aligned to the community's aspirations.

## OUR IPR PROCESS

The process, driven by this 10-year Strategic Community Plan will create a 4-year Corporate Business Plan to ensure that we deliver the community's aspirations. This will:

- Strengthen our council's strategic focus; and
- Improve sustainability.

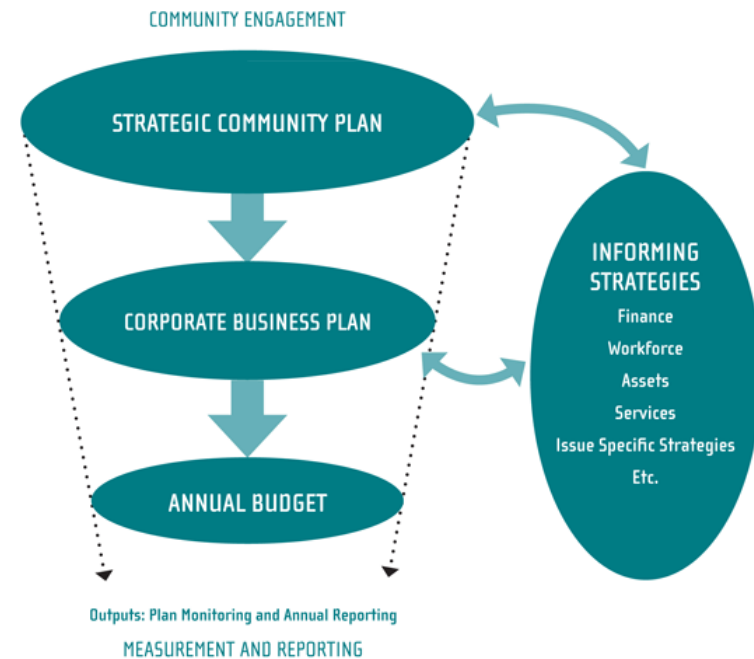
## GOVERNANCE

This Strategic Community Plan, which represents the needs and aspirations of the community, has been developed by the Shire's Councillors and sets out the vision for the next 10 years.

The task of turning this vision into a reality rests with the Local Government Administration. They will set out how this will be achieved in its Corporate Business Plan (CBP).

Alongside the CBP, the Administration will create a 10-year Long-Term Financial Plan and a 5-year Asset Management and Workforce Plans which will set out the resources needed to deliver the CBP.

The Councillors will review the progress towards achieving the 10-year plan on a regular basis.





# VISION, VALUES AND STAKEHOLDERS

## VISION

The revised Vision Statement for Shire of Ravensthorpe is to be...

*"Growing our Community."*

## VALUES

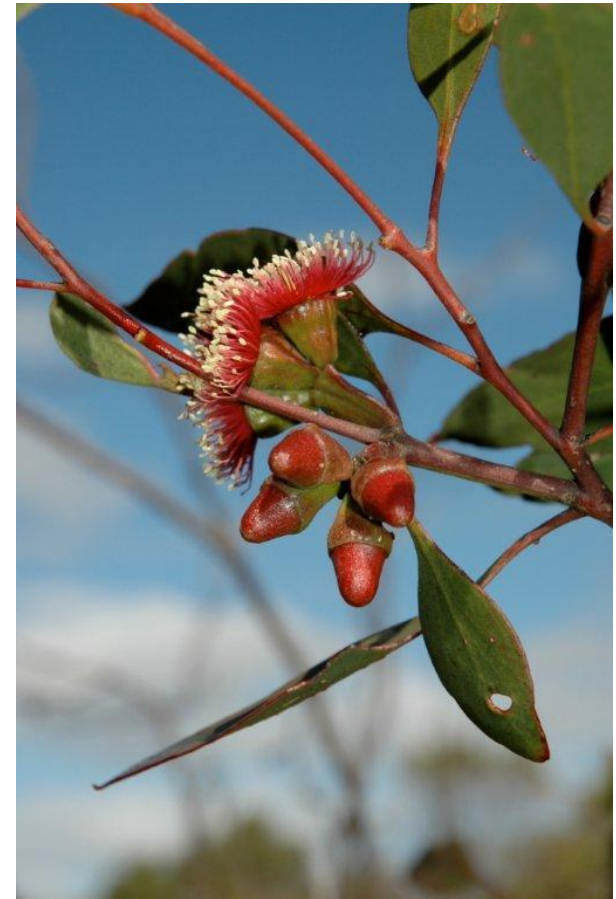
In respecting the community, Council and Staff will promote and enhance the following values in our interactions ...

- Honesty and Integrity
- Strong transparency and customer service
- Quality communications
- Fairness, equity and sensitivity and
- Financial accountability

## STAKEHOLDERS

The Shire of Ravensthorpe has identified the following groups as key stakeholders ...

- Businesses (present and future) Other levels of government
- Councillors and staff Government Departments
- Ratepayers and residents Other local governments
- Community groups and organisations





## KEY THEMES AND STRATEGIES

Community engagement has led to the development of four key themes which will underpin the development of goals and strategies. The goals and strategies under each theme create the framework for the delivery sustainable outcomes to achieve our vision.

The four themes formed from the community engagement process include:

**(1) *A vibrant, supportive and socially connected community***

A healthy, strong and connected community that is actively engaged and involved.

**(2) *A thriving business and industry including tourism***

A strong, diversified economic tourist and industrial base that provides varied employment opportunities for all ages.

**(3) *Adequate services and infrastructure to cater for the community***

Sustainable infrastructure that allows for effective travel, and services within the local government and to other rural and metropolitan areas.

**(4) *Civic Leadership***

The provision of responsible, accountable, representative and efficient governance



## KEY THEMES AND STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

Theme 1 – A vibrant, supportive and socially connected community			A healthy, strong and connected community that is actively engaged and involved.	
Outcome No.	Desired Outcome	Goal/Strategy No.	Goal / Strategy	Outcome Key Indicators
1.1	Connected families	1.1.1	Supporting families to remain connected relating to health, aged care, education and work.	No. of facilities and services available
		1.1.2	Youth are retained in the community	No. of facilities and services available
1.2	Vibrant & attractive town-site	1.2.1	Town centres are vibrant and attractive places.	Works program successfully completed
		1.2.2	Regular cultural and recreational activities.	Works program successfully completed
1.3	Community engagement	1.3.1	A Council that proactively engages with all elements of its community in order to make decisions that reflect positively on the future of the Shire of Ravensthorpe.	No. of community activities available
				Range of target groups accessing activities
1.4	Supportive volunteers	1.4.1	A Shire who has a dedicated and supported volunteer base committed to serving the needs of the community.	Number of operating volunteer organisations

## KEY THEMES AND STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

Theme 2 – A thriving business and industry including tourism			A strong, diversified economic tourist and industrial base that provides varied employment opportunities for all ages.	
Outcome No.	Desired Outcome	Goal/Strategy No.	Goal / Strategy	Outcome Key Indicators
2.1	Sustainable Economy	2.1.1	The Shire of Ravensthorpe is economically sustainable with a stable or growing population.	No. of businesses Population statistics
2.2	Diversified agricultural land-base	2.2.1	Retention of a diversified agricultural land base.	No. of businesses Planning policy implemented
2.3	Development of tourism	2.3.1	Promotion and development of the natural assets as a business opportunity.	Tourist numbers

## KEY THEMES AND STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

Theme 3 – Adequate services and infrastructure to cater for the community			Sustainable infrastructure that allows for effective travel, and services within the local government and to other rural and metropolitan areas.	
Outcome No.	Desired Outcome	Goal/Strategy No.	Goal / Strategy	Outcome Key Indicators
3.1	Effective transport networks	3.1.1	Transport networks which meet the needs of all users.	Level of implementation of Asset Management Plans
		3.1.2	Transport networks which meet the needs of Agriculture, Tourism and Mining industries.	Level of implementation of Asset Management Plans
3.2	Provision of basic services, power and water	3.2.1	Basic services, infrastructure, power and water supply, meet the community service level expectations now and into the future.	Amount of waste delivered to regional waste facility
				Availability of potable water
				No. of power interruptions
3.3	Reliable communication services	3.3.1	Reliable phone and internet connectivity.	Phone and internet access
		3.3.2	Access to broadband	Phone and internet access
		3.3.3	Adequate capacity for future needs	Phone and internet access
3.4	Provision of public transport	3.4.1	Regular affordable public transport between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe and major regional centres.	No. of public transport options available
3.5	Provision and maintenance of recreation and community resources	3.5.1	Maintaining and improving recreational and community resource facilities in the Shire.	Level of implementation of Asset Management Plans
		3.5.2	Increased utilisation of facilities	Level of implementation of Asset Management Plans

## KEY THEMES AND STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

Theme 4 – Civic Leadership			The provision of responsible, accountable, representative and efficient governance.	
Outcome No.	Desired Outcome	Goal/Strategy No.	Goal / Strategy	Outcome Key Indicators
4.1	Financial Sustainability	4.1.1	A financially sustainable local government.	Level of Integrated Planning
4.2	Corporate Governance and Accountability	4.2.1	High quality corporate governance, accountability and compliance.	Community satisfaction No. of staff and elected members in training
4.3	Responsible and responsive leadership	4.3.1	Quality, effective and responsive representation.	Community satisfaction No. of staff and elected members in training

## OUR RESOURCE CAPACITY

This Strategic Community Plan was developed with an understanding of our current resource capacity, both financial, workforce and asset resources. A 15 year Long Term Financial Plan has been developed to outline the future resource capacity.

### CURRENT RESOURCE CAPACITY

The 2013 Annual Financial Report reflected the following Shire resource profile as at 30 June 2013.

RESOURCE	LEVEL
Workforce	33 FTE
Infrastructure Assets	\$28,193,020
Property, Plant and Equipment	\$17,740,411
Cash Backed Reserves	\$2,774,137
Borrowings	\$1,735,571
Annual Rates Revenue	\$3,229,689
Annual Revenue	\$8,661,117
Annual Expenditure	\$8,528,540

### FUTURE RESOURCE CAPACITY

Future resource capacity is dependent on other levels of government however, the following long term trends are expected in each resource level.

RESOURCE	RELATIVE FUTURE LEVEL
Workforce	Increasing in line with inflation
Infrastructure Assets	Increasing above inflation
Property, Plant and Equipment	Stable
Cash Backed Reserves	Reducing
Borrowings	Reducing
Annual Rates Revenue	Increasing above inflation
Annual Revenue	Increasing above inflation
Annual Expenditure	Increasing in line with inflation

Refinement of Asset Management Plans, a Workforce Plan and Long Term Financial Plans will further influence expected future resource levels for consideration during Corporate Business Planning and Annual Budget processes.