



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2026 - 2029



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

Economic Development Strategy 2026 - 2029

Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

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1 Introduction

The Yarriambiack Shire Council (The Shire) Economic Development Strategy 2026-2029 has been developed to align with the Yarriambiack Shire Council, Council Plan 2025-2029, and they should be read in conjunction with each other.

The Shire is home to 6,556 people across 7,158 square kilometres and produces an economic output of \$784.3million. There are 2,670 jobs within the Shire as well as 960 businesses.



Yarriambiack Shire
Population 6,556
Length of Roads 4,824 kms

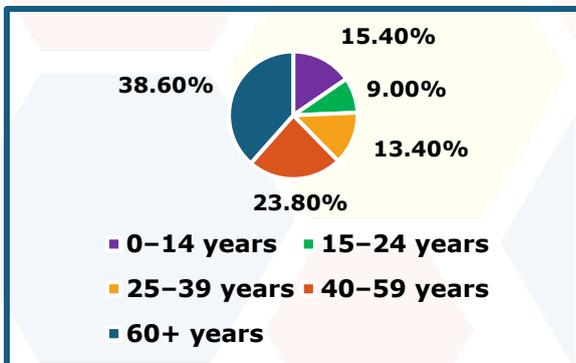
Agriculture is the leading industry in the Shire, accounting for 28% of local employment and providing the most jobs overall.

The Shire ranked as the sixth largest Local Government Area for barley production in Australia during 2022/23. In 2020/21, Yarriambiack was the third largest Local Government Area producer nationally, placed ninth in wheat, first in lentils, and ninth in canola by value.

The Shire is experiencing new economic growth, reversing a long-term population decline. Employment in Yarriambiack increased over the past five years for the first time in over half a century, indicating that development initiatives are underway. The Council now projects a nearly stable population rate (-0.01% annually), which is more optimistic than regional forecasts.

Projected growth is anticipated as a result of the Victorian State Government's 2025 Transmission Plan, administered by VicGrid, which claims to modernise the energy grid and includes established renewable energy zones. The Shire lies within the Western Renewable Energy Zone, projected to reach the highest onshore wind capacity, ranging from 0.8 gigawatts to 4.5 gigawatts, depending on the scenario modelled for 2040.

The Shire also features in the Victorian State Government's Critical Minerals Roadmap, with significant deposits of titanium, zirconium, and rare-earth elements.

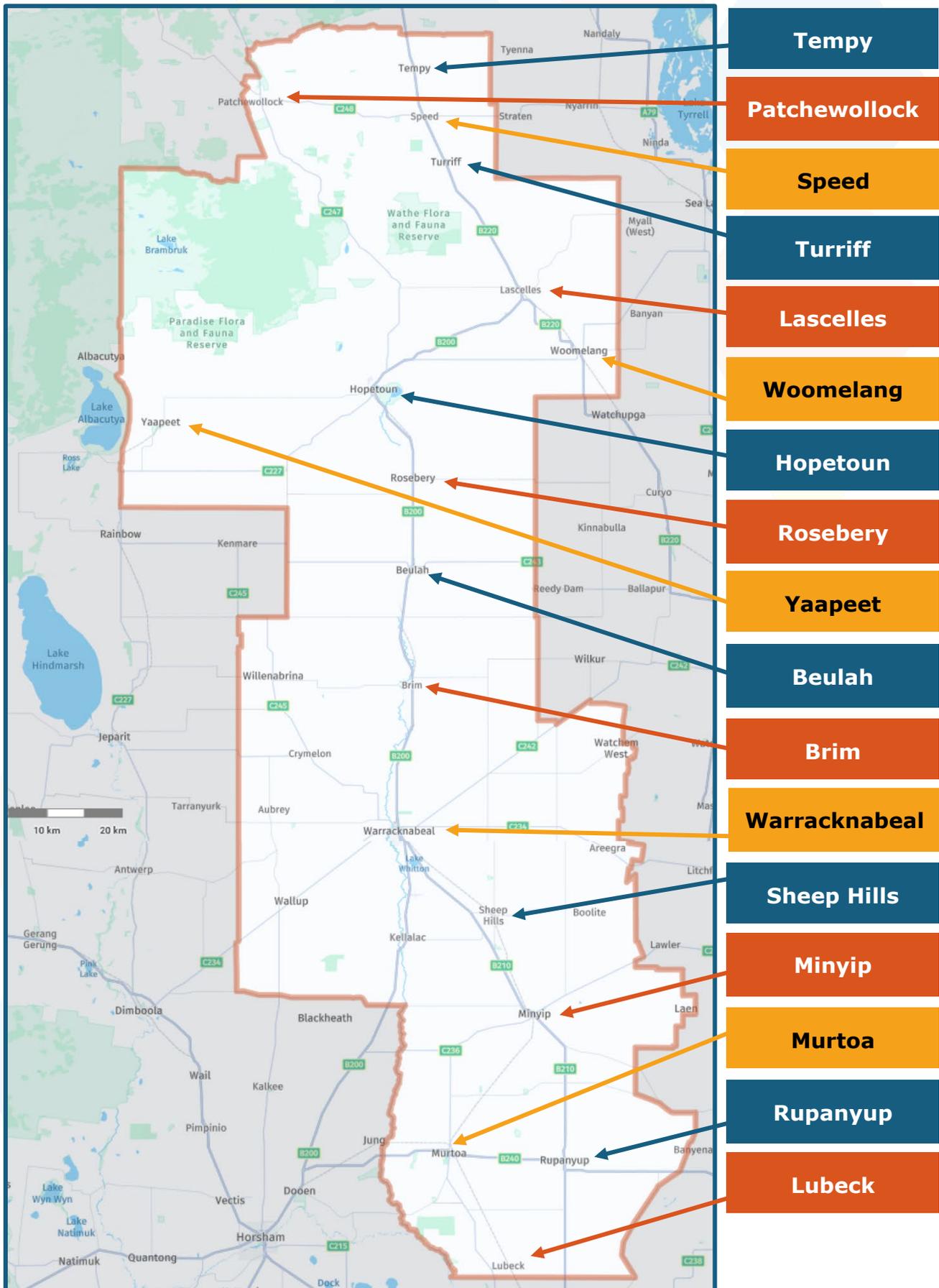


Demographically, the Shire has a high median age (52 years) and 38.6% of residents are 60 or older, presenting challenges for youth retention and volunteer participation. Census data show older age groups dominate, while the youth population remains steady but low. To support job growth, attracting new residents is essential.

With Federal Government policies promoting aging at home, demand for related services will grow. Health care, already a major employer, is likely to expand further.

In conclusion, this strategy is designed to manage the outcomes of transformational change being thrust upon our Shire and communities, ensuring that our Shire derives maximum benefit from the activities ahead.

2 Yarriambiack Shire Council Map

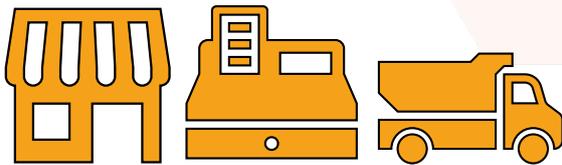


3 Yarriambiack Snap Shot



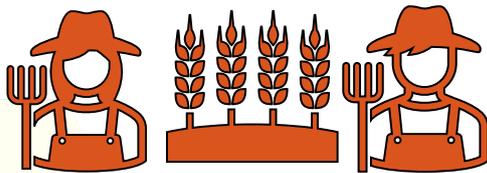
6,556 people over a diverse 7,158 km² of prime rural land

\$784.3 million – total economic output of the Shire



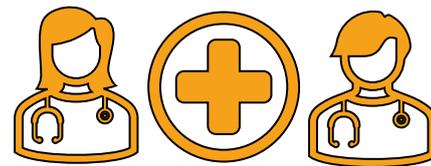
960 local businesses

2,670 local jobs



Agriculture is our largest industry contributing 37% of total output and our largest employing industry with 28% of total jobs

Health Care and Social Assistance is our second largest employment industry with 20% of total jobs



52 was the median age of Yarriambiack residents in 2021 (much greater than the Victorian median of 38 years) and 29.2% of residents were aged 65 years and over

Tourism is another key industry. Water-based activities and the Silo Art Trail are popular activities in Yarriambiack, as well as boating and fishing on the creek to lakeside holidays. Our region and historic townships offer further opportunities to grow the visitor economy.



4 Economic State of Play in Yarriambiack Shire
4.1 Agriculture


At the 2021 Agricultural Census, Yarriambiack Shire’s farmgate gross value of agricultural production totalled \$607.4 million (3.3% of Victoria’s total agricultural products value), and 91.5% of this, or \$511.5 million, was in broadacre grain production.

The Agricultural Census reports a much higher gross value than the \$290.19 million gross output (37% of total output) estimated here, likely because much agricultural production is not sold but kept in storage or includes non-traded livestock.

The Agricultural Census ceased in the 2021 year, however the 2022-23 and 23-2024 broadacre crops value for Yarriambiack region is reported as follows:

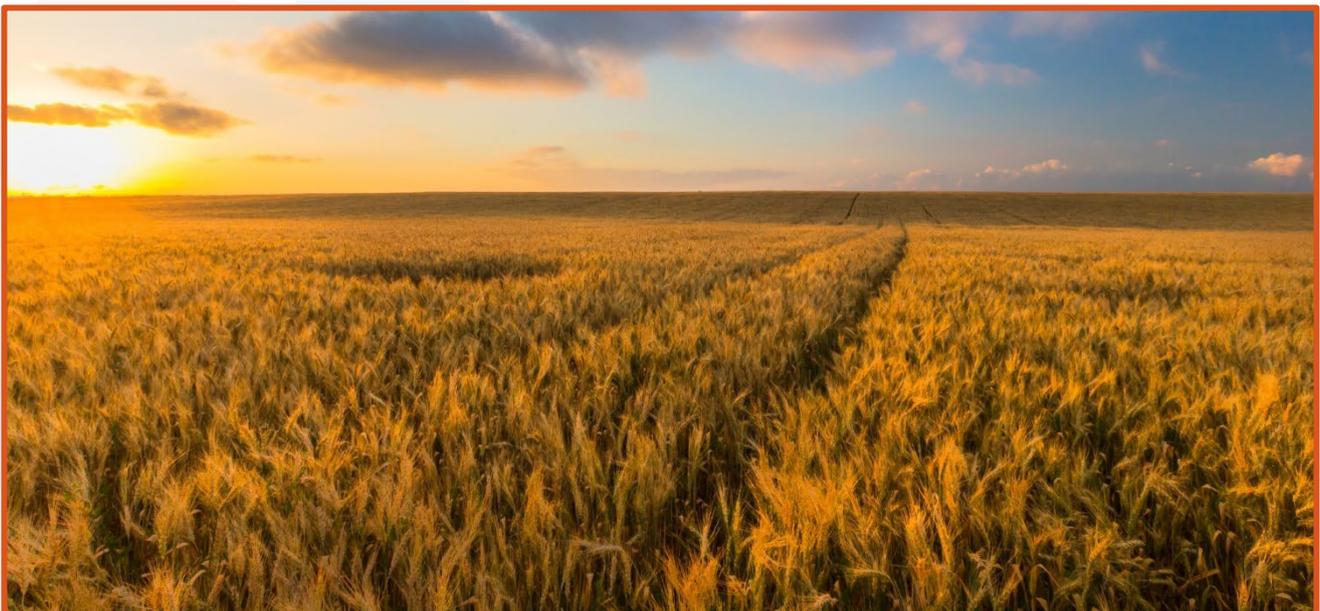
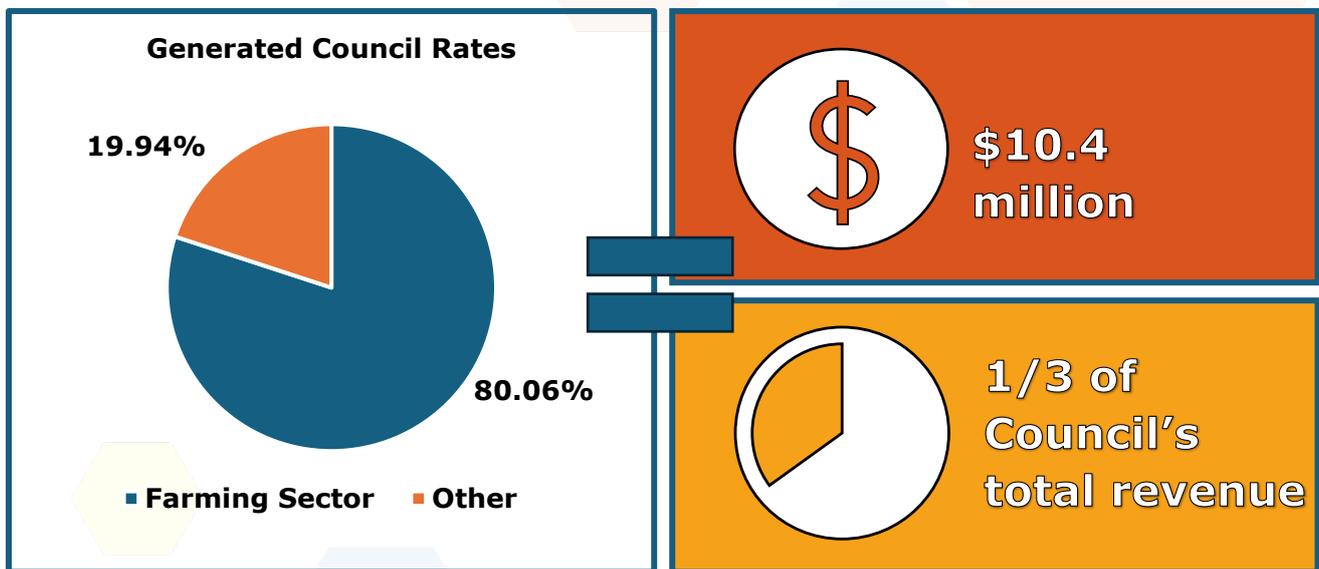
Broadacre Crops	Dollar
Wheat for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	200,811,287
Barley for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	121,342,598
Oats for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	1,862,796
Canola for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	95,899,684
Chickpeas for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	1,223,076
Lentils for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	168,132,672
Lupins for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	3,793,168
Sorghum for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	613,501
TOTAL	593,678,782

Broadacre Crops	Dollar
Wheat for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	175,521,858
Barley for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	128,418,831
Oats for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	1,499,915
Canola for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	104,848,983
Chickpeas for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	2,289,415
Lentils for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	192,789,140
Lupins for grain or seed - Local value of levied crop 0,AUD	7,786,327
TOTAL	613,154,469

Favourable seasonal conditions have contributed to an expansion in the agricultural workforce. Between 2016 and 2021, agriculture saw its first employment increase in decades, with further growth continuing. This trend may indicate that although average farm sizes continue to grow and agricultural technologies become increasingly advanced, it is not having an impact on agricultural employment demand.

Recent technological advancements, enhanced biosecurity measures, and a transition toward biological and higher-value production systems are likely contributing factors to job growth within the sector. Looking ahead, as less favourable seasonal conditions may occur over the next five years, the primary challenge will be to sustain current momentum and for the agricultural sector to invest in diverse business ventures and capitalise on value-adding opportunities.

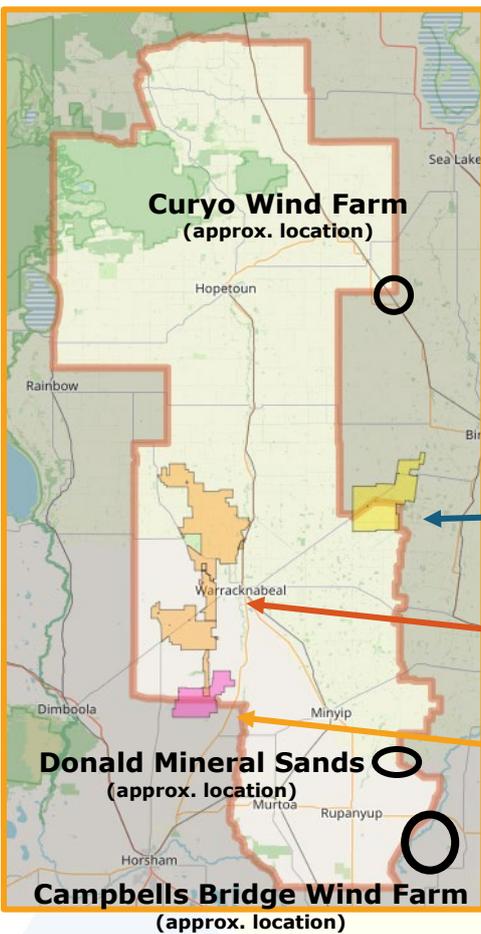
In 2025-26 it was estimated that 80.06% of Council's rates are generated by the farming (agricultural) sector, equating to \$10.4 million, and approximately one third of Council's total revenue base.



4.2 Renewable Energy

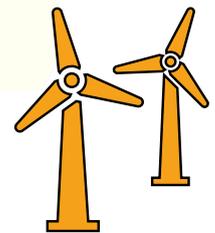


**Renewable
Energy**



The Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) was published in August 2025. It proposes that the Western Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) will cover a large portion of Yarriambiack Shire. The Shire is already host to the Murra Warra Wind Farm (shared with Horsham Rural City Council). Energy projects under development in the Shire include:

1. Warracknabeal Energy Park
2. Campbells Bridge Wind Farm
3. Wilkur Wind Farm
4. Curyo Wind Farm



Wilkur Energy Park

Warracknabeal Energy Park

Murra Warra Wind Farm

There are other energy projects in neighbouring municipalities that will border Yarriambiack, such as the Wimmera Plains Energy Facility in the Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) area.

The field of renewable energy is dynamic and continually advancing. Council has established a State Projects page on our website ([State Projects - Yarriambiack Shire Council](https://www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/State-Projects)) to provide our community with up-to-date information on projects within our Shire that have come to Council's attention.



State Projects Webpage

<https://www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/State-Projects>

4.3 Payment in Lieu of Rates

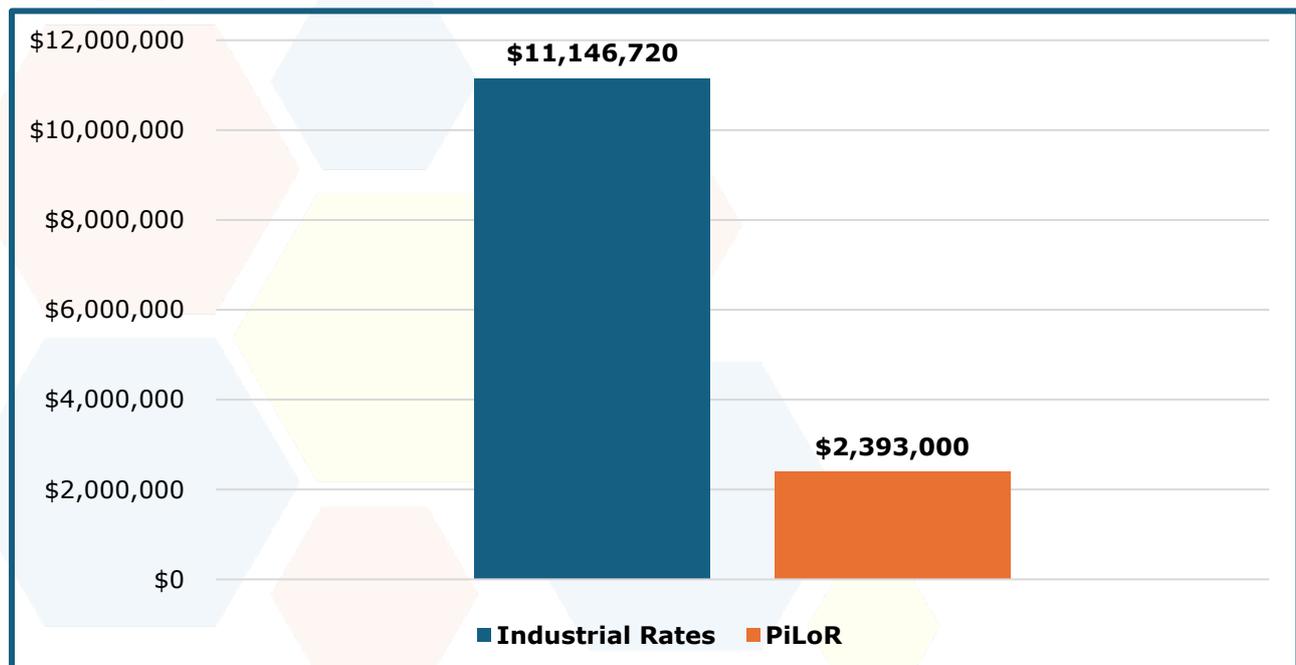


Renewable Energy (RE) projects in Victoria are exempt from paying ordinary Council rates. Instead, they are subject to Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLoR). Under PiLoR, energy facilities pay much lower rates than they would if they were treated like other commercial and industrial facilities.

Some view PiLoR as an economic stimulus for Councils that might otherwise lack access to such funding. However, while it may present a valuable financial opportunity for a Council facing sustainability challenges, such as Yarriambiack, concerns remain regarding the fairness of rural communities effectively subsidising the RE industry.

Unlike other businesses that pay rates based on their land's capital improved value, energy project developers pay significantly less. While reduced rates once helped the renewable energy industry grow, the Shire believes this support is no longer needed as the sector is now expanding quickly and should not receive a subsidy.

One example of this inequity is as follows: The Warracknabeal Energy Park is listed with a cost of \$3.68 billion. The following table compares the possible annual payments to the Council from ordinary rates with those from PiLoR. For ordinary rates, the Yarriambiack commercial rate is applied to the project's capital improved value. The PiLoR payment is calculated using the current rate of \$1,480 per megawatt plus a fixed amount of \$65,000.



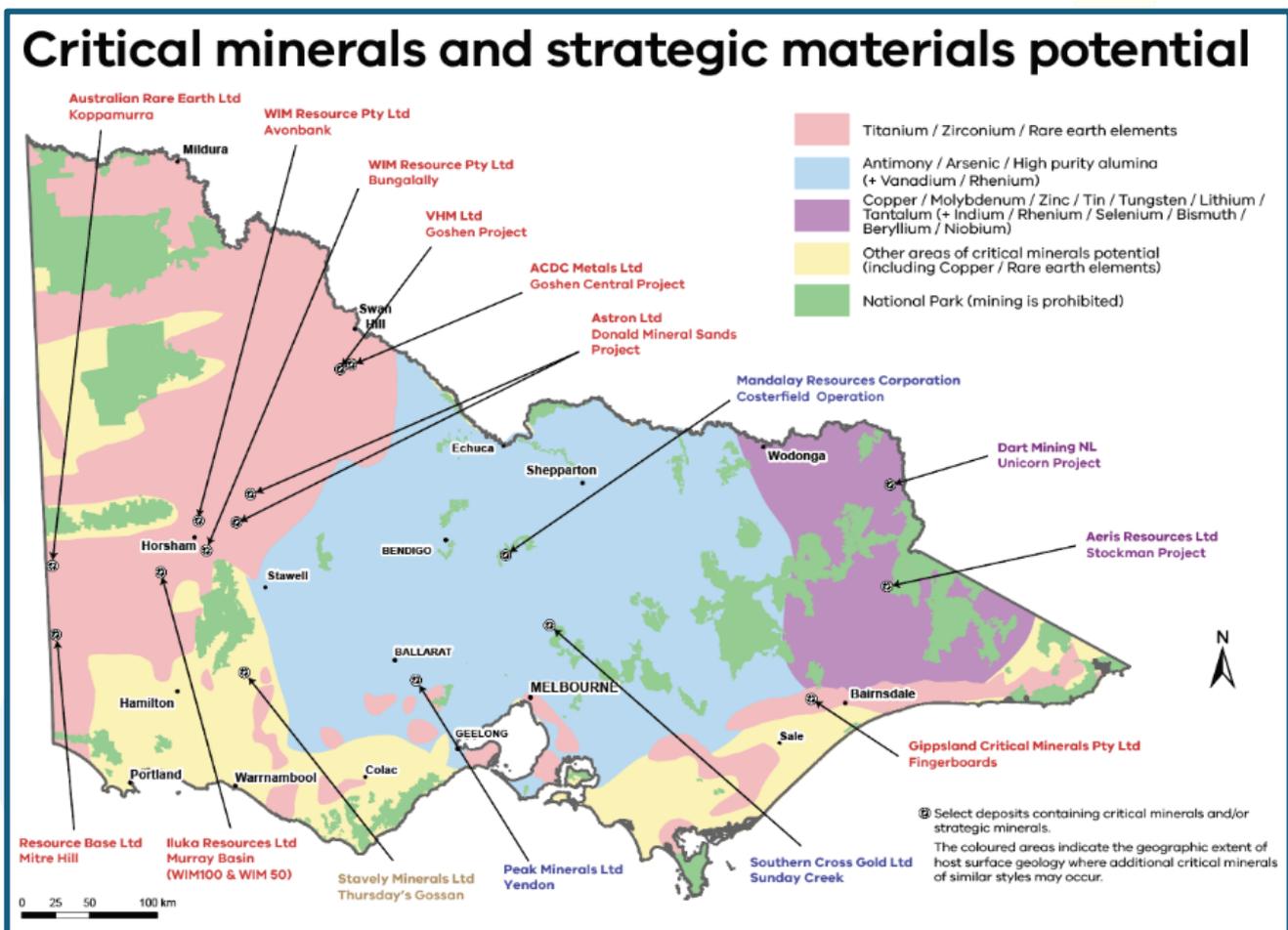
This comparison demonstrates the need for an overhaul of the rates paid by energy facilities. The current PiLoR rate provides just over 21% of the standard rate.

4.4 Mining



Alongside renewable energy initiatives, the Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap, published in December 2024, highlights a significant portion of Yarriambiack Shire as an area of interest for mining activities. Within the region, three mineral sand and rare earth mines are currently under development. The workplan for the Donald Mineral Sands Project has been approved, with construction scheduled to begin in the Shire in 2026.

Extract from Victoria State Government, [Understanding Victoria's critical minerals and strategic materials potential](#) website page



4.5 Job Growth and Demand

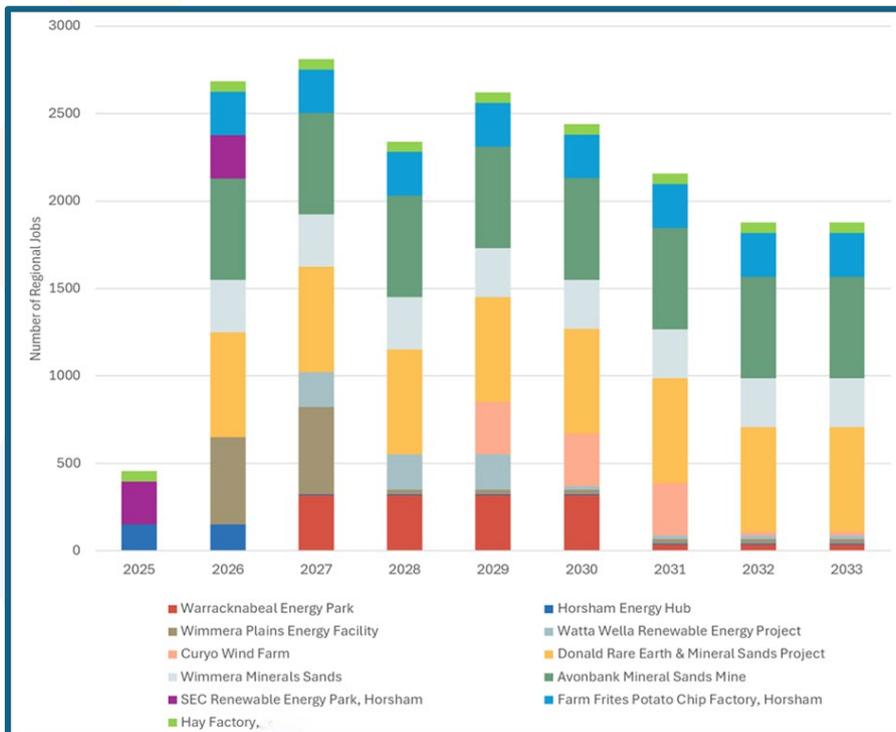


Rental vacancy rates are very low in the Shire and Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC), with available data showing 0.16–1.4% for Yarriambiack Shire and 0.54–2.07% for HRCC, alongside limited short-term accommodation. According to the [Commonwealth Government’s 2024 Budget papers](#), a balanced rental market has a 3% vacancy rate, so rates below this indicate tight conditions.

The Shire has noted that project proponents and the Victorian State Government may not fully recognise the cumulative impacts of major energy and mining projects on both the Shire and the surrounding region. The continued development of these large-scale initiatives is projected to place significant pressure on the local housing supply.

The Shire has recognised significant energy, mining, and manufacturing developments currently underway in or adjacent to its jurisdiction. Drawing upon publicly accessible information from project proponents, the Shire has compiled the following graph reflecting worker numbers for those projects where employment data is available.

Figure 1: Selected Projects – Indicative Regional Jobs, 2025 to 2033



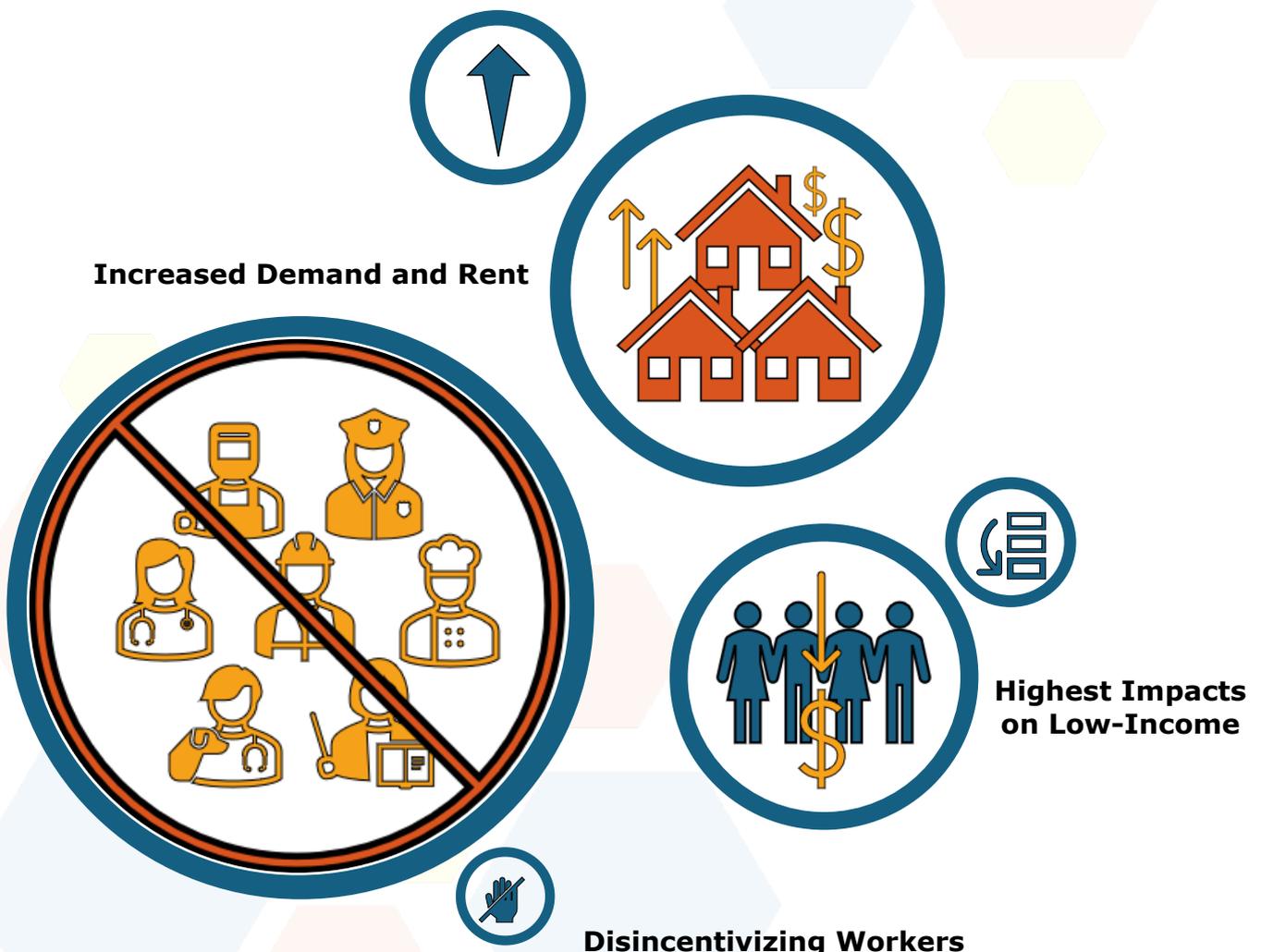
Notes: This graph is indicative only. It shows the project jobs and cumulative jobs required for the construction and operation of the named projects as described on the project websites or as provided by the project proponents in September 2025. It uses the lower figure of 318 construction jobs for the Warracknabeal Energy Park and does not include the 630 other jobs described in the EES. It does not include job numbers for two other large wind farm projects under development in the Yarriambiack Shire: Campbells Bridge and Wilkur. The Shire acknowledges that it is unlikely that all projects will proceed, and those that proceed may proceed at different times, but the graph provides a good indication of the likely level of construction employment in the region.

The graph shows a peak construction workforce for the identified projects of around 2,800 in 2027. The 2021 Australian Census recorded a workforce of approximately 2,639 jobs in the Yarriambiack Shire, similar to the peak construction workforce in 2027 for the identified projects.

Yarriambiack’s largest town, Warracknabeal, had a population of 2,359 in 2021 according to the Australian Census. Horsham is the largest city in the region and is 58 km south of Warracknabeal. The population of Horsham Rural City Council was 20,429 in 2023-24 and has a workforce of around 8,600.

The impacts of the large workforce on the Shire and the region include:

- **Increased demand** for all types of housing and accommodation.
- **Increased rents** for all types of housing and accommodation.
- **Highest impacts on low-income** households and homeless people.
- **Disincentivizing workers** from moving to the Shire to take up non-project-related employment due to the unavailability and cost of housing.



As new industries emerge and drive up demand, the Shire must allocate resources to tackle its housing challenges.

4.6 Employment



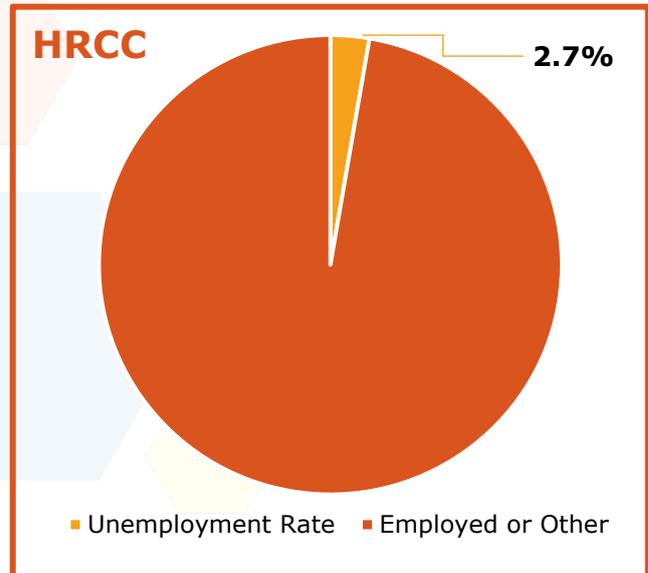
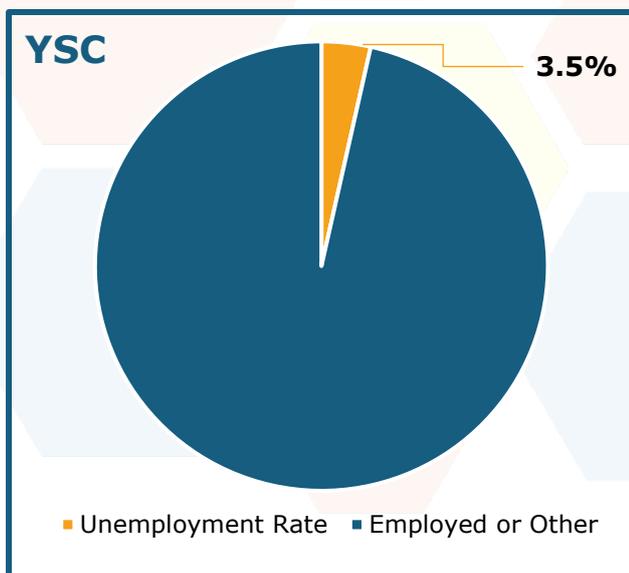
The region’s tight labour market has created substantial workforce shortages and a small pool of available workers. There is high risk that the growth potential across all industries in the region will fail to be realised if significant workforce shortages are not addressed and if demand for new workers (above and beyond current vacancies and anticipated retirements) cannot be met.

There is concern that the wave of large energy and mining projects, and their cumulative effects on the Shire and the region, are under appreciated by the project proponents and the Victorian State Government. In 2023, the Victorian Government’s [Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Skills Demand Profile](#) did not identify energy as a separate industry for its job demand outlook, and it underestimated the demand for construction and mining jobs.

The region already has a tight labour market, with unemployment in the HRCC at 2.7% ([2025 Aus Gov NEMA](#)) and in Yarriambiack Shire at 3.5% ([2025 Aus Gov NEMA](#)).

With renewable infrastructure projects occurring concurrently across the region, there is a high likelihood of labour competition and shortages. This will reduce the availability of employees for agriculture, essential services, and all other existing businesses, potentially disrupting the local economy.

Concern has been expressed in regards to the cumulative effects of numerous projects competing for labour resources, as well as the challenges faced by local businesses in attracting and retaining employees due to limited housing availability.



4.7 Housing



With projected job growth, and low unemployment, housing will be a challenge within our Shire, and more broadly across the region.

Our region needs connecting infrastructure that supports housing growth. High costs for essential connections like power, water, and sewer deter developers from investing in our Shire.

Current funding models overlook rural challenges and expenses. With a construction boom approaching, immediate investment is necessary to enable housing development.

Council has several housing developments proposed and included as part of its housing Strategy as follows:

Hopetoun Former School Site – Delivering up to 10 affordable new homes, as part of the development of the former school precinct. Included as part of the development, option for a stage 2 housing development, with an additional 10 lots for housing.

Anderson Street Warracknabeal – The project aim is to construct essential infrastructure for a 9,838 sqm site in Warracknabeal, including roads, footpaths, drainage, and utility connections. Located 300 metres from the town centre, this would enable the development of up to 20 units for older residents to downsize, or to support workers moving to our region.

Gibson Street Rupanyup - Council is working with Rupanyup Future Fund to develop land on Gibson Street Rupanyup, with the aim of opening up land parcels for people to either move to Rupanyup and build, or for current residents to build, which will free up existing housing in the township. Gibson Street requires a power upgrade, along with sewer and water service connections to support this development.

Murtoa Lakeside Sewer and Water Scheme Extensions - This project will extend sewer and water infrastructure to undeveloped land west of Lake Marma, Murtoa. It involves installing new sewer and water mains to connect over 20 properties, removing a significant barrier to residential development in this well located area near the town centre.

Additionally, the Shire has recognised additional opportunities for housing, including:

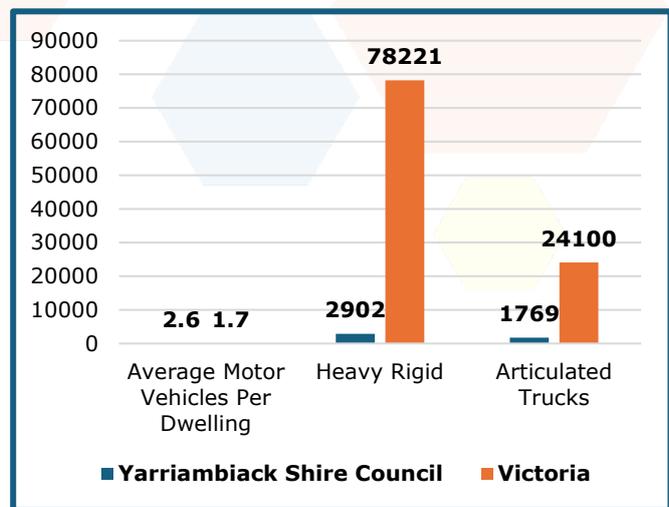
- Murtoa former school site, privately owned land, and land Council has gifted to the Murtoa Housing Innovation.
- The land at Stewart Street, Rupanyup, is suitable for additional housing. The Council plans to subdivide this parcel of land for future residential development.
- The former Warracknabeal secondary school site has been recognised as offering significant potential for residential development.
- The former Murtoa Catholic school site and its associated land have also been identified as highly suitable for future housing projects.

4.8 Roads



In the Yarriambiack Shire, agricultural demand is the primary driver of road infrastructure requirements, as the industry contributes 37% of the total economic output and accounts for 28% of all jobs. Analysis shows that modern farming trends are placing unprecedented pressure on the regional road network.

The average number of motor vehicles per dwelling in the region is 2.6, compared to 1.7 in Victoria. In addition to this, there are 2,902 heavy rigid and 1,796 articulated trucks registered in the region, comprising of 3.71% and 7.34% respectively of these vehicles in Victoria.



As outlined in Council’s advocacy document, All Roads Lead to Yarriambiack Shire;

- **Expanding Farm Footprints:** Farmers increasingly purchase land remote from their "home block," necessitating year-round movement of heavy machinery across larger distances.
- **Machinery Size and Clearance:** Modern agricultural machinery (e.g., field bins, agricultural equipment) are becoming wider and lower-clearance, often exceeding the design capacity of existing gravel and narrow sealed roads.
- **Export Reliance:** As Australia's largest lentil producer and second-richest grain region, 90% of Yarriambiack's lentils are exported. This creates a total reliance on road freight to transport produce from farm gates to rail hubs and ports.
- **On-Farm Storage:** Increased popularity of on-farm storage leads to more frequent, high-volume heavy vehicle movements throughout the year rather than just during harvest.

The issue is further complicated by a shortage of expected funding: according to the Shire’s Long Term Financial Plan review and health check, as well as the approved Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035, the Council faces a renewal gap of \$24.2 million for roads and \$27.5 million overall.

Additional challenges may arise from increased demand on the road network due to mining and renewable energy projects. While project proponents will enter agreements with Council to help fund, upgrade, and maintain certain roads, other commuters are likely to use alternative routes to avoid congested areas, creating more pressure and increased deterioration of the road network.

4.9 Rail



The Shire is part of the Rail Freight Alliance and actively promotes transporting freight by rail. Upgrading the Maroona to Portland line is considered crucial for enabling more freight movement to the Port of Portland by rail. Additionally, both the Port of Melbourne and the Port of Geelong are available options for handling containerised freight.

Rail transport is often regarded as superior to road transport when moving large volumes over long distances because it is generally more fuel-efficient, cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and safer. Trains can move significantly larger amounts of cargo per trip with fewer emissions and accidents compared to multiple trucks. However, it can be argued that road transport offers greater flexibility for door-to-door delivery.

Given the significant financial investment needed to address the Shire’s renewal gap, it is vital to prioritise actions that prevent further deterioration of our road infrastructure.

As part of the Sunshine Super Hub development, it is proposed that two Sunshine Regional Rail Link Crossovers would be removed. Rail Freight would primarily be diverted an additional 47 kilometres via Geelong. This would increase train transit and cycle times and incur additional expense in crewing and fuel cost. The removal of these crossovers could have a detrimental impact on rail freight in Victoria, increasing rail costs and driving more freight to road.

FREIGHT TRANSPORT COMPARISON



4.10 Water Security



The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline (WMP) replaced domestic and stock supply dams with tanks, and the open channel distribution system with pipelines to improve water efficiency. A portion of the water savings from the WMP was converted to an environmental entitlement to improve the conditions of the flow stressed rivers, creeks and wetlands within the region.

In addition, an allocation was promised via the WMP business case to recreational water, where lakes and weir pools are well understood to be fundamental to community wellbeing and creating positive social health and wellbeing outcomes. Furthermore, visitors to the lakes contribute significantly to the local economy and serve as an economic catalyst for small businesses.

In 2010, GWMWater was appointed as the Storage Manager in respect of the Bulk Entitlements and Environmental Entitlements granted for the Wimmera-Mallee System Headworks. As part of this role, GWMWater is required to allocate water in accordance with the bulk entitlements and environmental entitlements granted under the *Water Act 1989*.

As outlined in the Bulk Entitlement (Wimmera and Glenelg Rivers – GWMWater) Order 2010, the recreation water allocation is provided for as a separate line item within the Order. Whilst, domestic and stock supply is rolled up and included in the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline product allocation.

The reliability profile of the recreation entitlement is lower than other Wimmera Mallee Pipeline products. The impact on allocations of this reliability profile difference is exacerbated by the series of dry years experienced since 2011 (barring 2016, 2022). This has created the circumstance where GWMWater has had to transfer consumptive water into the Recreation Water entitlement in nine of the last eleven years since 2012-13 (not including 2016-17 and 2022-23). Without this transfer by GWMWater the recreation lakes on the WMP would be dry and unusable in most years in the last decade.

GWMWater has repeatedly indicated that they should not be the sole entitlement holder that is meeting the recreation water commitment made to the Wimmera Mallee community in the WMP Business Case. Our Shire would like a long-term solution that all entitlement holders should contribute to increasing the recreation water reliability profile to match the other Wimmera Mallee Pipeline products. GWMWater has undertaken extensive modelling of options to address this issue and the impact on average water allocations to all entitlement holders is less than 1%.

Advice from the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action to GWMWater is this issue will be dealt with as part of Western Sustainable Water Strategy. It is anticipated to be negotiated in 2026.

Furthermore, once mineral sands mining start taking water, the water which is currently being transferred for Recreational Lake use is unlikely to be there.

5 Strategy in Context

How does the Yarriambiack Shire Council's Economic Development Strategy align with federal and state policies?

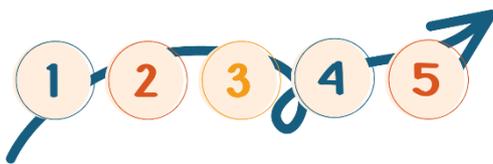
5.1 Commonwealth (Federal)

Australia's economic development strategy centres on a national "Future Made in Australia" agenda, investing heavily in clean energy, critical minerals, and advanced manufacturing to build a net-zero economy and enhance resilience¹.

In addition, Australia's agricultural economic development strategy centres on the Ag2030 vision to grow the sector to \$100 billion by 2030, focusing on increased productivity, sustainability, innovation (AgTech), strong biosecurity, market access, and rural community resilience. In addition, rural and regional development has a focus with supporting vibrant communities, improving rural livelihoods and investing in infrastructure (like roads)².



5.2 State



The State Government's Economic Growth Statement outlines five key priority areas being; advanced manufacturing and defense, health technologies and medical research, circular economy (including minerals extraction and processing & renewable energy), digital technologies and agribusiness³.

5.3 State – Wimmera Southern Mallee (WSM)

According to Regional Development Victoria (RDV), regional Victoria is a driving force behind our state's economic growth and prosperity⁴.

The WSM Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) outlines four key strategic pillars as follows:

<p>1</p> <p>Strengthen agriculture and food manufacturing through diversification.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Promote growth and development of the visitor economy, leveraging natural assets and aboriginal heritage.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Support and expand economic opportunities in growing sectors (health and social services).</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Position the region to benefit from emerging growth opportunities in natural resources.</p>
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¹ [Australia's development program | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade & Australia's economic and fiscal outlook | Corporate Plan 2025-26 | PM&C](#)

² [Agriculture and Land Sector Plan - DAFF & 2030 Roadmap – National Farmers' Federation](#)

³ <http://vic.gov.au/economic-growth-statement>

⁴ [Regional Economic Development Strategies \(REDS\) - Regional Development Victoria](#)

5.4 The Yarriambiack Shire Context

The Shire’s Council Plan includes the following Strategic Objectives and Priorities to enable and support economic development:

Strategic Objective 1: An Innovative and Diversified Economy 1

Strategic Priorities:

We will:

- Advocate and support agriculture, economic development and investment in our region.
- Advocate for continued and enhanced funding to enable strategic investment in our roads, footpaths, and associated assets to support tourism, economic development and social inclusion and connection across our Shire.
- Understand, support and advocate for services and associated skilled workforces to unlock economic and community development opportunities across our Shire.

What you will expect from Council over the next four years:

INDICATOR	MEASURE / TREND
Proactively advocate for funding, and support Council practices that enhance economic development activities across our Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust and/or review the differential rating system to ensure it supports agricultural / farming activities across the Shire. • Apply for all available road and connecting infrastructure funding opportunities to improve our road and associated networks. • Deliver Council’s Economic Development Strategy initiatives.
Assess the impact of mining on agricultural land use across our Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund a social benefit cost analysis to analyse the impact of mining on societal welfare.
Advocate for equitable access to internet and mobile connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support funding submissions and advocacy to improve and construct mobile towers and install satellite and NBN across our Shire.
Township structure plans developed outlining Council’s preferred direction for future growth and development and how it will be managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding and complete township structure plans.
Update and improve planning schemes, reflecting changes in an area, implementing new policies or addressing specific issues or errors, ensuring the Yarriambiack Planning Scheme remains relevant and effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete planning scheme amendments.

Major Projects / Initiatives:

- Secure funding for the construction of the Beulah Supermarket.
- Secure funding to widen our strategic road network across the Shire.
- Finalise planning scheme amendments to support effective and efficient development and planning across the Shire.
- Complete town structure plans that inform long-term, strategic guidance for future development and change in a town or area, addressing issues like land use, housing, infrastructure, and community need.

Strategic Objective 2: A Healthy and Inclusive Community

2

Strategic Priorities:

We will

- Develop and/or maintain strong partnerships to deliver high quality services and sustainable infrastructure to enhance the social health and wellbeing outcomes for all our residents.
- Plan for and support diverse housing options to meet community needs now and into the future.

INDICATOR

MEASURE / TREND

Advocate, partner and seek funding for increased housing across our Shire.

- Where feasible, allocate land to create housing opportunities.
- Apply for and secure funding to construct connecting and trunk infrastructure.
- Seek out opportunities to develop Council owned land across the Shire.

Services and partnerships that inspire greater health, educational and wellbeing outcomes for our Community.

- Improved/enhanced Kindergarten service delivery across our Shire.
- Increase the number of day care places across our Shire.

Major Projects / Initiatives:

- Provide diverse housing options across the Shire, in partnership with private developers and/or the community with priority to be given to the Hopetoun Former School site, Anderson Street Warracknabeal, Gibson Street Rupanyup and Cromie Street Murtoa.
- Support funding applications to expand connecting infrastructure in Murtoa to unlock housing opportunities.

Strategic Objective 3: A Resilient and Sustainable Natural Environment 3

Strategic Priorities:

We will

- Advocate and strategically position Council to maintain and enhance water security and harvesting.
- Advocate for responsible land use, with consideration for the natural environment.

INDICATOR	MEASURE / TREND
Advocate for recreational water security, to maintain and enhance tourism, livability and social health and wellbeing outcomes of our residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the revision of the Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy, advocating for changes to the Wimmera Glenelg Bulk Entitlements and recreational water security.
Advocate for sustainable community benefits from State Government mandated renewable energy and transmission projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding for legacy sustainable infrastructure that benefits the Yarriambiack community.



5.4.1 Economic Development Objectives

The Yarriambiack Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2026-2029 Strategic Objectives are as follows:

1. We are committed to facilitating housing development throughout our Shire by advocating for essential infrastructure connections, transferring or donating land for projects, and collaborating with developers to expand the Shire’s housing stock in support of economic growth.
2. We are committed to enhancing access to childcare services in rural communities and encouraging investment in school site infrastructure for both childcare and kindergarten. We acknowledge that insufficient childcare availability poses a substantial obstacle to workforce participation.
3. We will engage with federal, state, and private sector stakeholders to promote increased investment in rail infrastructure, facilitating enhanced freight transportation by rail and decreasing dependence on heavy vehicles within our road networks.
4. We will prioritise investment in strategic and statutory planning, emphasising the facilitation of business investment as well as supporting housing growth and development.
5. We are committed to advocating for water security for the agricultural sector as well as recreational water resources, supporting tourism and contributing to the economic growth of local small businesses.

Priorities	Indicator	Measure
Housing	Collaborate with developers, provide or transfer land to boost housing supply, and seek infrastructure grants to advance housing projects.	Increase the number of houses, with specific focus on Murtoa, Minyip, Rupanyup, Warracknabeal and Hopetoun.
Childcare	Partner with Emerge to expand our childcare offerings across the Shire. Advocate for a range of childcare alternatives, including on-site care, family day care, and long day care services.	Provide buildings to Emerge for a peppercorn lease to support childcare, and the expansion of childcare services. Provide buildings, where available, and appropriate for in-venue childcare options. Undertake advocacy to both levels of Government for funding for rural childcare services.
Freight to Rail	Promote and facilitate the development of rail sidings, terminals, and the transfer of freight to rail in order to preserve the integrity of our road network.	Active rail terminal or side raiiling built in the Shire. Transporting mined products by rail, either from Horsham or the southern part of our Shire. Businesses opting for rail over freight in logistics.

Priorities	Indicator	Measure
Strategic and Statutory Planning	Promote housing and business growth by implementing effective strategic and statutory planning.	<p>Gift and/or transfer land for housing development.</p> <p>Undertake structure planning of our townships to support housing growth and development.</p> <p>Create and manage planning scheme amendments to simplify processes and decision making.</p> <p>Boost resources in the planning department to effectively meet and support current demand.</p>
Water Security	Promote water security for our Shire and the surrounding region to sustain the agricultural sector and ensure reliable water resources for recreational purposes.	<p>Secure participation as a representative in the Western Sustainable Water Strategy stakeholder workshop.</p> <p>Changes to the Wimmera Glenelg Bulk Entitlement, that would provide assurance to our community that recreational water will receive the same high security supply to that of domestic and stock.</p>

6 References

Internal

- Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035
- Council Plan 2025-2029
- Housing Strategy
- Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036
- Tourism Strategy

External

- Commonwealth Government’s 2024 Budget papers
- Victorian Transmission Plan
- Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap
- [Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Skills Demand Profile](#)
- [2025 Aus Gov NEMA](#) – Horsham Rural City Council
- [2025 Aus Gov NEMA](#) – Yarriambiack Shire Council
- [Australia’s development program | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)
- [Australia’s economic and fiscal outlook | Corporate Plan 2025–26 | PM&C](#)
- [Agriculture and Land Sector Plan - DAFF](#)
- [2030 Roadmap – National Farmers’ Federation](#)

- <http://vic.gov.au/economic-growth-statement>
- [Regional Economic Development Strategies \(REDS\) - Regional Development Victoria](#)

7 Definitions

Term	Description
HRCC	Horsham Rural City Council.
VTP	Victorian Transmission Plan.
YSC	Yarriambiack Shire Council.

8 Consistency with Governance Principles Local Government Act 2020

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;	Section 5
b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;	Section 5
c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;	Section 5
d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;	Section 5
e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;	Section 5
f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;	Section 5
g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;	Section 5
h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;	Section 5
i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.	Section 5

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—

<p>Community Engagement Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope. • Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation. • Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement. • Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement. • Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.
<p>Comment:</p>	<p>This Strategy meets these principles by establishing clear objectives and scope for participation. It provides objective, relevant, and timely information to all stakeholders, enabling informed input. Engagement activities are designed to represent the diverse groups affected by economic development initiatives, and reasonable support is offered to facilitate meaningful involvement. The Strategy also outlines how community feedback will be considered in Council decision-making, ensuring transparency and demonstrating the value of community contributions in shaping outcomes.</p>
<p>Public Transparency Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act. • Council information must be publicly available unless— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest. • Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community. • Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.
<p>Comment:</p>	<p>The Strategy demonstrates public transparency by making Council decision-making processes and information accessible and understandable to the community. The strategy is published as a public document, available online and referenced with clear links to supporting materials, such as the Council Plan, Asset Management Strategy, and external government reports. The document provides detailed explanations of Council’s objectives, actions, and the rationale behind key decisions, such as the approach to housing, infrastructure, and economic priorities. Public awareness is further supported by the inclusion of web links to project pages and external resources, and by encouraging community engagement</p>

	<p>and feedback throughout the strategy’s implementation and review processes.</p>
<p>Strategic Planning Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted. • Strategic planning must address the Community Vision. • Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation. • Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation. • Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.
<p>Comment:</p>	<p>The Strategy adopts an integrated approach by aligning with the Council Plan 2025–2029 and referencing related strategies such as the Asset Management Strategy, Housing Strategy, and Long Term Financial Plan. Additionally, the Strategy is explicitly designed to advance the Community Vision by focusing on economic growth, community wellbeing, and sustainable development, as reflected in the Council’s strategic objectives and priorities. Resource needs for implementation are considered through detailed project listings, funding requirements, and advocacy actions, as well as by identifying partnerships and infrastructure investments necessary for success. Furthermore, the Strategy addresses risks by highlighting challenges such as housing shortages, workforce constraints, and infrastructure renewal gaps, and by proposing mitigation actions like advocacy, planning scheme amendments, and targeted investment.</p>
<p>Financial Management Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans. • Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances. • Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community. • Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.
<p>Comment:</p>	<p>The Strategy ensures sound financial management by aligning all revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, and investments with Council’s established financial policies and strategic plans, as referenced throughout the document. Moreover, the Strategy highlights the importance of monitoring and managing financial risks, such as the renewal gap for roads and infrastructure, and proposes prudent actions to address these challenges. Financial stability and predictability for the municipal community are supported through transparent rating systems, advocacy for equitable funding, and regular reviews of financial policies.</p>

Service Performance Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community. Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended. Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community. A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring. Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.
Comment:	<p>The Strategy commits to equitable service provision by identifying and addressing the diverse needs of the Yarriambiack Shire community, such as housing, childcare, health, and infrastructure. The Strategy emphasises value for the community by advocating for funding, efficient planning, and partnerships to deliver high-quality services at sustainable costs.</p>

9 Strategy Review

This Strategy will be formally reviewed every four years to ensure it remains current, effective, and aligned with the needs of Yarriambiack Shire Council and its community.

From time to time, circumstances may require minor administrative changes to be made to this Strategy. Where an update does not materially alter this Policy, such a change may be made administratively and need not be considered and adopted by Council.

Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this strategy, or the legal responsibilities of any member of the community, it must be considered and adopted by Council, or by the Chief Executive Officer in reliance on delegated authority.

10 Legislative Context

Although an Economic Development Strategy is not a legislated requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020*, it supports compliance with the Act's governance and strategic planning principles.

Council Approved

Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 23 August 2023	Item 14.3 Minute Book Page 26
Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting [Date]	Item [Number] Minute Book Page [Number]

Attachment – Council Statistics & Sources

Council Area	Yarriambiack Shire Council	Horsham Rural City
Total Population	6,556 (2021 Census) 6,346 (30 June 2024, ABS)	20,429 (2021 Census , Horsham 2023/24 Annual Report) 20,376 (30 June 2024, ABS)
Total Workforce	2,745 (2021 Census) 2,938 (2025 Aus Gov NEMA)	10,177 (2021 Census) 10,589 (2025 Aus Gov NEMA)
Unemployment Rate	2.9% Unemployment (2021 Census) 3.5% Unemployment (2025 Aus Gov NEMA)	3.1% Unemployment (2021 Census) 2.7% Unemployment (2025 Aus Gov NEMA)
Residential Vacancy Rate	0.16% Rental Vacancy Rate (2025 Real Estate Investor)	0.54% Rental Vacancy Rate (2025 Real Estate Investor)
	0.41% Rental Vacancy Rate (2025 HTAG)	2.07% Rental Vacancy Rate (2025 HTAG)
	1.4% Rental Vacancy Rate for the Suburb of Warracknabeal (August 2025 SQM Research)	1.2% Rental Vacancy Rate for Horsham the Suburb (August 2025 SQM Research)





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