

City of Mount Gambier Strategic Plan



Our Plan for the Community
Towards 2015

MOUNT GAMBIER
LIVE . LEARN . IMAGINE

Adopted 21/08/2007
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MOUNT GAMBIER
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TOWARDS 2015

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INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan 2007-2015 is focussed on a range of goals and strategies to deliver a vibrant and sustainable City into the longer term.

The document addresses the community's expectations now and into the future and responds to community aspirations and the wide range of influences that will affect the City in the medium term.

The Strategic Plan 2007-2015 is community focussed and is supplemented by Council's other forward planning documents including:

- Long Term Financial Plan
- Asset & Infrastructure Management Plan(s)
- Council's Development Plan(s)
- Major Projects Plan.

The Strategic Plan 2007-2015 has been developed to align with the South Australian Strategic Plan and has had regard to a wide range of regional plans and strategies.

WHY HAVE A STRATEGIC PLAN

The City of Mount Gambier is responsible for providing a diverse range of facilities and services which contribute significantly to the quality of life of its community. The City has a strong viable economic base, built on the natural resources of the region, which has contributed to the development of high class community, recreational and cultural facilities.

The role of local government has grown from its traditional base and the scope of services is now wide and diverse including health, aged care, youth and support for sector and special interest groups within the community.

Within the timeframe of this Strategic Plan 2007 - 2015 the community and Council will be faced with new challenges coming from:

- demographic change
- changes to State Legislation
- maintenance of community infrastructure
- issues of environmental and financial sustainability
- adjustments to the structure and expectations of our community sectors

Council needs to be financially prudent and socially and environmentally aware when allocating its limited resources on behalf of the community.

VISION

In developing its Strategic Plan 2007-2015, Council describes its vision as:

“Mount Gambier is the most liveable City in Australia”.

This Strategic Plan focuses on those areas that will be crucial to the achievement of this **Vision** through maintaining high quality services and facilities.

VALUES

Our **Values** underpin and define how Council operates within the community. By staying true to these **Values** we will meet and exceed community expectations.

The **Values** of Council are:

Respect: We respect our community, our people, ourselves and other levels of Government.

Customer Service: We serve people and welcome personal relationships with the community. We are honest and genuine in wanting to meet and exceed the expectations of the community.

Decision Making: Our decision making exhibits courage, sound judgement, initiative and innovation as well as an appreciation of the interaction of the social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of our work.

Proactivity: We are forward looking and positive. Our problem solving and planning seek community input.

Leadership: We are the best in what we do and a role model to local government.

Teamwork: We are committed to the shared goals and strategies of this Strategic Plan. We take collective responsibility for the outcomes of our decisions and actions including the health and safety of our community and our employees.

Equity: We recognise the cultural, economic and social differences in our community and ensure we are inclusive, fair and socially just.

Collaboration: We will collaborate with other bodies to achieve the aspirations of our community and of our people.

Continuous Improvement: We will strive always for continuous improvement in all that we do.

MOUNT GAMBIER
L I V E . L E A R N . I M A G I N E

GOALS

Building Communities: To maintain and improve the quality of life of our people by fostering a range of services and activities.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Building Communities

Commerce and Industry: To support the reasonable needs of our economic generators to ensure the City has a viable and diverse economic base and continues to be a thriving provincial centre.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Growing Profitability

Diversity: To provide opportunities for the diverse needs of our people to fully participate and ensure a continuing sense of their engagement, belonging and recognition.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Improving Wellbeing

Environment: To guide development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Attaining Sustainability

Financial Sustainability: To maintain a balance between meeting increasing demand and that of affordability.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Attaining Sustainability

Health: To encourage and support our people to lead an active and healthy lifestyle, to have local access to high quality health services and to have an environment which supports their health and well being.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Improving Wellbeing

Learning: To be recognised as a lifelong learning community which encourages, respects and celebrates learning.

State Strategic Plan Reference: Expanding Opportunity

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

To maintain and improve the quality of life of our people by fostering a range of services and activities.

The range of community services, programs and events provided by Council, add to civic and community pride and spirit, by a variety of cultural, recreational and social activities available to our people. These services are highly regarded by the users and support the needs of the community and add value to our quality of life. These services are delivered in a variety of ways, with the Council directly responsible or operating in partnership with other service providers.

To the dedicated volunteers and community service organisations who contribute their time for the improvement in the quality of life of residents, Council thanks and acknowledges and supports your efforts on behalf of the community to manage the City's sporting, recreation and community facilities and we will continue to encourage and complement your endeavours.

Council encourages community empowerment and for our community sectors to work towards their own respective self sufficiency.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. Council will strive for an increase in services and facilities provided by State and Federal Governments to ensure the community has equitable access and that the infrastructure needs on the community are met.
2. Continue to encourage the empowerment of the community to lead and self manage their respective desires and aspirations.

Infrastructure:

1. Recognise and support our volunteers, community organisations, recreation and sport community and their long term sustainability as they continue to be the foundation of the community's development, health and well being.
2. Encourage the development of community facilities and community events through direct support, seek funding, facilitation, facilities etc.
3. Establish and implement Long Term Asset Management Plans and Infrastructure Plans so that the needs of the community are met.

Services:

1. Endeavour to provide to the community access to those essential elements that recognise community diversity and the diversity of needs.
2. Develop an enhanced means of communication between Council and the community to seek the community's views.

Support:

1. Support our volunteers to achieve their goals which builds the community capacity and well being.
2. Support the community's development through direct access to Council funding, facilitation and in kind support.

COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

To support the reasonable needs of our economic generators to ensure the City has a viable and diverse economic base and continues to be a thriving provincial centre.

Mount Gambier is the regional and commercial centre of the Limestone Coast. The region has a stable and diverse economic base that makes a significant contribution to the state economy. The strong links between the City and the region have resulted in mutual stability, growth and benefit.

To maintain vitality and viability in a sustainable way, Council must continue to support economic growth and prosperity within the constraints of sustainability principles.

Mount Gambier recognises that it faces competition from within and outside our region to maintain its level of business activity and in response Council intends to support local economic output and ensure that the City continues as a thriving provincial centre. Long-term business viability will be supported and enhanced by Council as a strategic priority.

Council will continue to create the environment that complements existing businesses and encourages new businesses including the need for infrastructure (re)investment and new services.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. In partnership with others, foster the expansion of commerce and industry in a sustainable manner.
2. In partnership with others expand our positioning as the major retail and commerce centre for the region.

Infrastructure:

1. Support the development of local tourism experiences and our capability to grow visitation to our City.
2. Provide and maintain the essential public infrastructure and facilities that contribute to Mount Gambier being able to grow its economic base and quality of life to retain our existing population and attract new residents.

Services:

1. In partnership with others seek to create a capable and resilient workforce to match our aspirations and emerging needs and that of the region.
2. Grow our strategic position and build on our existing successes from major event tourism.

Support:

1. Provide the necessary planning, policy and regulatory frameworks and master planning to strengthen all sustainable economic activities.
2. Seek continuous improvement in development assessment to ensure timely advice and minimise time delays for assessment of applications.

DIVERSITY

To provide opportunities for the diverse needs of our people to fully participate and ensure a continuing sense of their engagement, belonging and recognition.

The community of Mount Gambier comprises a diverse demographic, cultural, age profile, socio-economic capacity and special interests and needs.

Whilst Council notes the ageing of the population there is also a large population of young persons and also a range of sector specific needs within the community.

Council needs to be aware of and attempt to meet all reasonable expectations.

This diversity of needs and wants will challenge Council in the provision of facilities, services and its advocacy role to other levels of Government to ensure our local requirements and aspirations are recognised and resourced will be a priority.

The changing community profile that includes the age of residents, different cultural backgrounds and social expectations will challenge the viability for some services and increase the demand for others. Council has adapted well in the past to these demand shifts and has the experience and expertise to respond to future challenges.

Council will ensure social equity principles are considered within the range of services, events and programs offered by Council.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. Engage with Federal and State Governments to provide resources to meet the specialised needs of our various community sectors.
2. Promote the value of all members of our community and their positive contribution to the community's social, economic, cultural health and overall well being.

Infrastructure:

1. Encourage the community to recognise our collective responsibilities to provide ease of access to physical facilities and spaces (public or privately owned).
2. Understand and facilitate the meeting of demand across a range of services.

Services:

1. Develop programs for our people to support their needs and which contribute to community enhancement and community well being.
2. Facilitate the community's active involvement with Council in meeting the varied aspirations, diverse needs and special services that are required.

Support:

1. Understand and support our community profile and the special needs sectors within our community i.e. LOTE, humanitarian settlement, youth and ageing.
2. Engage with our community sectors to understand their desires and goals for the future.

ENVIRONMENT

To guide development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The protection of the environment is a global, national, state, regional and local responsibility with the local input having the ability to affect all other spheres.

Mount Gambier has a unique environment that is highly valued by the local and health community and visitors to our City. Council wants to ensure that the integrity and health of our environment, is protected, preserved and improved to maintain and enhance the health and well being of current and future generations.

Council has a strong base for continuing to improve the amenity of the City, its operations and enhance the protection of the environment.

Council plans to not only undertake measures to protect the local environment but also make a local contribution to the larger issues such as climate change, carbon emissions etc.

Council is also responding to the increased level of environmental awareness and education and the greater community expectations towards the need for environmental sustainability within the community.

Council strives to be a leader and a role model in aspects of sustainability and environmental enhancement.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. A whole of community need to conserve and reduce the quantity of water use and improve the quality of water entering our groundwater and lakes system.
2. Reduction in the amount of waste to landfill by waste avoidance, material re-use etc through the highest recycling participation that is reasonably possible across all sectors of the community.

Infrastructure:

1. Protect and where necessary enhance the natural and built environment.

2. Support initiatives that value and preserve our unique environment and contribute to environmental sustainability and those elements that contribute to our enhanced amenity.

Services:

1. Use every endeavour to enhance the amenity of Mount Gambier through environmental sustainability and based on the Natural Step Framework.
2. Use every opportunity to increase the level of environmental awareness and community education.

Support:

1. The preservation and enhancement of the City's unique heritage, culture and built attributes for the benefit of future generations.
2. The community's own desires to protect the environment and to reduce their environmental impact.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

To maintain a balance between meeting increasing demand and that of affordability.

The Council is being challenged to be able to maintain and improve the community assets, infrastructure, and services that it provides now and in the future and to do so in a way that is also environmentally and financially sustainable.

An independent report commissioned by the Local Government Association of South Australia in 2005 identified that a third of Councils in the state were not financially sustainable in the long term if they continued their current asset management and financing regimes. While the City of Mount Gambier is not in an at risk category it highlights the need to be fiscally prudent and environmentally aware in the management of Council's finances, assets and affairs.

Council will respond to the asset management and sustainability implications over the medium term to ensure a sound financial base for future generations.

The revenue base of Council is limited and expansion of services usually results in an increase in local taxation through rates. Local Government needs additional sources of revenue to more equitably meet its expanding obligations. Council also needs to resist the impost of additional expenditure from other levels of government through cost shifting.

Council also needs to ensure that any new initiatives it may wish to implement are subjected to a rigorous test of whether it provides a real community benefit outcome against the required input.

In addition Council should evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery not just in financial and efficiency terms but also consider the environmental, social and economic benefits to the community.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. Increase in access to alternative and new sources of growth based revenues.
2. Seek to improve the overall performance of Council through efficiency evaluations and the opportunities from shared services with others (without loss of service to the community).

Infrastructure:

1. Use triple bottom line/environmental sustainability principles to evaluate infrastructure improvement proposals.
2. Action well researched and developed long term asset and financial plans and implement the directions contained therein through the annual budget of Council.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of all service delivery initiatives by applying the triple bottom line methodology i.e. economic, environmental and social inputs against the material returns of the community benefit outcomes.

Services:

1. Develop the necessary long term financial plans to ensure our financial sustainability.
2. Ensure Councils services are efficient, cost effective, reflect community values and where possible "market tested" to maintain Council as a best practise - best value organisation.

Support:

1. Actively participate in relevant programs that compare Councils performance against other like operations.
2. Engage with national, state, regional and local forums and partnerships to provide solutions and options to improve Councils financial sustainability.

HEALTH

To encourage and support our people to lead an active and healthy lifestyle, to have local access to high quality health services and to have an environment which supports their health and well being.

Council will encourage and support the community to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Council seeks to encourage a range of local programs, services and community education to promote healthy lifestyles for its people. Council will collaborate with other levels of government who have primary responsibilities for health. Council will support and advocate for local health services to be able to improve health services and health outcomes.

Council will work with the community to implement localised programs that assist peoples well being.

Local residents deserve ease of access to a comprehensive range of medical and other allied health services. Council recognises that it will not always be possible to provide certain specialist services locally, in which case it is essential that persons requiring services (and their families) be given proper support.

Improved mental health support services and facilities are required to meet the local demand and Council will advocate for greater resources at the local level.

The Council is determined on behalf of the community to advocate for improvements to the quantity and range of services available locally so residents are not required to leave the region to receive higher levels of care. Council acknowledges that health spending is a large impact on the State Government however Mount Gambier should not have service availability less than metropolitan Adelaide.

Council is committed to creating a supportive environment which enhances the health and wellbeing of the community. Council will work to build the resilience, initiative and capacity of the community to make quality health decisions.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. Increase the local awareness and understanding of mental health issues and the techniques needed to meet the peoples needs.
2. Advocate with Federal and State Governments to increase local availability to acute health care services and also primary health care services.

Infrastructure:

1. Provide for the health needs of the community by developing partnerships with others in the provision of needed, affordable and viable facilities and infrastructure.
2. Ensure through research and engagement that the current and future health needs (services and infrastructure) are understood and planned for implementation.

Services:

1. Continue to actively engage with community health service providers to encourage local programs and services.
2. Continue to actively engage with primary (acute) health care providers to expand local availability of specialist services.

Support:

1. Provide program support to increase the level of community engagement in healthy lifestyle programs and to encourage our people to make quality health decisions.
2. Develop partnerships that encourage local solutions for local challenges.

LEARNING

To be recognised as a lifelong learning community which encourages, respects and celebrates Learning.

Mount Gambier has much to be proud of with the achievements of its community, which has grown through a culture of lifelong learning incorporating informal and formal education. The City can expand on these achievements through the further development of its lifelong learning culture.

Increasing the educational opportunities for people to continue past secondary school has proven to be a major benefit to many regional communities. Mount Gambier has benefited from the commencement of degree programs offered through Uni SA, Flinders University and Southern Cross University. There is a need to be able to start and finish a degree program locally and to expand the number of degree programs available locally.

Lifelong Learning does not start and end with tertiary education. Lifelong Learning commences at birth and embraces early childhood development, primary and secondary education and trades and tertiary education and most importantly the community's ongoing involvement in community endeavours which is learning through life.

In addition we will create the environment for Mount Gambier to be a learning city which will attract students from elsewhere to Mount Gambier for quality education experiences.

The greater the knowledge and skills of our people the more dynamic and robust the community becomes.

Strategies:

Advocacy:

1. Support the expansion of formal university degree programs within Mount Gambier.
2. Support the provision of industry based apprenticeships and trade related courses through TAFE SA.

Infrastructure:

1. Enhance the lifelong learning capability of the community with access to modern technologies, IT, internet etc.

2. Develop partnerships to ensure the entire community has the required assets, infrastructure, knowledge and respect to be recognised as a lifelong learning community.

Services:

1. Promote the benefits to the community of lifelong community learning and the contribution learning will make to our enhanced quality of life.
2. Increase community awareness of lifelong learning through "branding" and to showcase local lifelong learning excellence.

Support:

1. Support and encourage a diverse range of community learning initiatives and to celebrate the successes of formal and informal community learning achievements.
2. Support initiatives that encourage all forms of technical and tertiary education to grow our local skills base to meet future needs.

REVIEW PROCESS

For the ultimate success of this Strategic Plan and the achievements and progress anticipated because of the Strategic Plan, Council must action a number of layers of review.

These reviews will include the following:

1. the Senior Officers of Council will prepare their respective half yearly reviews of the status of the Strategic Plan and in particular the achievement of their respective operational activities. These reports will be presented to Council via the Senior Officers Review and Appointments Committee.
2. Each half year a consolidated review report will be prepared (based on the outcomes from 1. above). This report will be presented to Council and also to the Operational Services Committee and the Corporate and Community Services Committee (for the respective review by each Committee).
3. Council must at least every two years review the Strategic Plan and measure the performance against the Strategic Plan and may also make adjustments as and when required.

HIGHER LEVEL COMMUNITY PLAN

This Strategic Plan - Towards 2015 has been developed against the background of the Councils aspirations for the community of Mount Gambier that extends beyond 2015.

Council should also seek to develop a much longer term and more broader Community Plan and Community Vision e.g. beyond the year 2015.

The following elements would comprise the necessary development phases of a broader and longer term Community Plan - Mount Gambier Beyond 2015:

The Plan:

- Represents the aspirations of all of the community for what Mount Gambier could/should be beyond 2015
- Not set in concrete, but subject to review every four years (midway through Council term) via community consultation processes
- A Community Plan that provides a framework for ongoing shorter term Strategic Plans (say four years)
- Council is required to work within the framework of the established Community Plan

Content:

- Built form/buildings/physical features
- Aspirations about
 - things Council and the community do
 - things Council and the community think, respect and value
 - activities/events/functions Council and the community want
- How different parts of the community relate to each other
- Functioning of specific Council activities
- Crosses local government boundaries - so there may well be many joint initiatives with other Councils/organisations
- Measure (for each item)
 - where are we now
 - where do we want to be
- Plan
 - How do we get from now to then (essentially the Council's rolling Strategic Plan)