

SHINE MARYBOROUGH RETAIL RECOVERY PROGRAM



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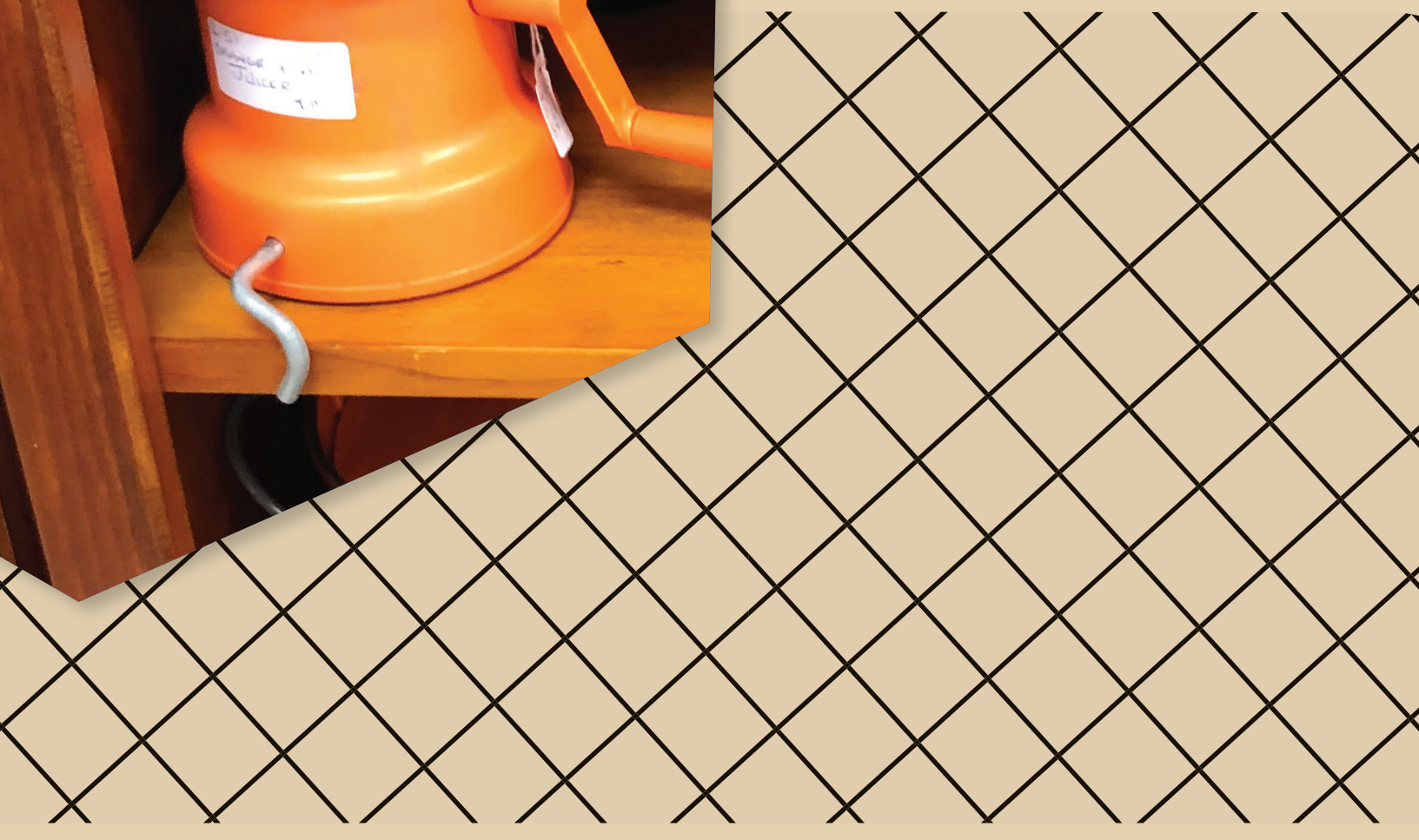


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Hello City
Creative urban strategists
hello@hellocity.com.au
www.hellocity.com.au

SGS Economics and Planning
Retail economics and economic development specialists
www.sgsep.com.au

Local research and engagement consultant
Rebecca Murray
rlmurray78@outlook.com



“You
more of
simply
lot of

You'll hit gold
often if you
try try out a
lot of things."

Ira Glass

DRAFT
June 23



Introduction

In 2021 Central Goldfields Shire Council commissioned SGS and Hello City to work together with the community to define a program of ideas and initiatives to help mainstreets and retailers in Maryborough recover from the impacts of Covid.

The key objectives of the program were to:

- Build on existing strengths
- Provide a program of initiatives and recommendations that respond specifically to the needs, character, values and opportunities of Maryborough
- Connect into and build on existing opportunities and programs
- Encourage residents to shop and spend local
- Increase tourism and visitation, and spend in local shops, restaurants and services
- Build the capacity of traders and makers
- Provide useful and practical support to plan for businesses and advocate for resources
- Enable Council to understand priorities along with specific and targeted ways they can provide support to traders and main street businesses
- Define ways to expand and strengthen connections between organisations, retail, Council and community
- Review the spatial implications of the key recommendations and outline a program of physical works

The report begins with a summary of the conversations had, insights gained and defines the 5 core characteristics of Maryborough.

For each of these characteristics we've captured/created one big, ambitious idea. Each of these ideas expands or supports one of the characteristics and has been chosen because it has the potential to trigger real positive change.

We've also identified 5 key approaches using Hello City's BRASS tacks approach to place activation and provided a number of ideas per delivery mechanisms. Together the 5 big ideas and 5 broad approaches have the power to:

- Attract more people to Maryborough
- Enrich retail experiences and environments so that people spend more time in retail precincts, and travel from further afield to visit
- Tell the story of Maryborough in a way that is both compelling and true
- Celebrate the unique qualities of Maryborough and strengthen its point of difference in the region
- Uncover hidden gems, provide access to special experiences and offers
- Support retailers in ways that help them save money, or make money
- Act as a touchstone for decision-making and investment in physical infrastructure and programs

“I’m not really
running a business,
I’m just selling my
collection”

- Local unconventional trader

Conventional vs Unconventional Traders

It became clear during the process of working with local traders that there is a distinct sub-group of retailers whose reasons for being in business are very different to traditional or mainstream traders, as are the benefits they bring to the mainstreet and the wider community.

For the purposes of this document we will use the term unconventional to refer to this group of traders, while mainstream business and traders will be referred to as conventional.

As a group, unconventional traders are largely invisible in standard retail analysis and strategy development, although they make a critical contribution to social capital and their role in the overall economy and culture is misunderstood.

Unconventional businesses and traders are likely to demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics:

- Not profit-oriented, may not seek to earn a living wage from the business, or from the retail aspect of the business
- Non-monetary returns are prioritised, such as social connection, building and sharing a collection, contributing to the community and quality of experience
- Quality of life, family, social and other personal or professional commitments are prioritised over optimal opening hours and other aspects of operation
- Customer-base is unusually narrow, there is often no desire to promote their retail activities. This narrow customer base might be geographic or needs/ interest based, for example the customer base may be hyper-local, people who share a specific interest or values, or consist mainly of friends and family

- Typically single operator businesses, or staffed by volunteers, friends and family. The unconventional business is sometimes retail connected to a more conventional main business. The retail may be run by employees whose main focus is on non-retail aspects of the business
- Traders prioritise minimising day-to-day running costs over optimal business operation, overheads are often low. Traders either own their building or rely on cheap rent
- Operating processes and procedures are as simple as possible, may not be in compliance with all local and state regulations and by-laws

One way to think about these traders is that their approach to retail is amateur rather than professional. This is not to imply that their offer and the goods and services they provide are not high quality - until recently olympians were amateurs after all - rather that their drivers, barriers and resources are different to mainstream traders.

Each section of this document includes a call-out box which outlines how each recommendation relates to the specific needs and ambitions of unconventional traders.

Additional research to understand the role and significance of unconventional businesses in Maryborough and the Central Goldfields region is strongly recommended.

“Tell me, what
is it you plan
to do with
your one wild
and precious
life?”

Mary Oliver



**RESEARCH,
ENGAGEMENT
& ANALYSIS**

Our Approach

We began by researching the issues, history, retail environment, character, icons and assets of Maryborough. We reviewed the results of previous consultation, strategic documents and studies such as Central Goldfields Shire Community Vision 2031, Central Goldfields Shire Community Plan 2019, Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Jumpstart Maryborough and online resources such as ABS, Street Advisor, .IDcommunity, local papers and local Traders' Association pages.

Place audits and informal consultation carried out by Hello City in Maryborough and in the region as part of Council's COVIDSafe Outdoor Economy project also informed this project.

SGS provided a targeted retail demand and supply analysis to get a picture of the potential surplus or shortage of retail floor space, including by commodity categories for Maryborough. This included an on-site land use audit of retail premises.

Our research included an online non-participant ethnographic study where we observed communities interacting online on various platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and websites such as Google, Yelp, Tripadvisor, Homely.com etc and analysed the dynamics of online engagement, commerce and communication in Maryborough.

A local trader joined our team as an engagement consultant bringing in depth local knowledge and key insights. She led a broad conversation with main street traders and residents of Maryborough and gathered ideas and directions.

After analysing the results from the engagement and research, SGS and Hello City then created a long list of initiatives, recommendations and ideas that would best support Maryborough traders thrive now and in the future.

We pared back and tested these ideas to create a program that supports and expands on the characteristics of Maryborough and that can be delivered over the short, medium and longer term.

The Shine Maryborough Conversation

Over two weeks in November Hello City and CGSC invited traders, residents and locals to be a part of the Shine Maryborough conversation to uncover its local assets and hidden gems.

Later in 2022 the conversation expanded to include traders participating in the COVIDsafe program and owners, traders and people who live, shop and work in Maryborough joined the conversation. Overall we spoke to over 50 traders in Maryborough and more than 70 traders and business operators in the region including Dunolly and Talbot. We spoke to people aged 18 to 70+ and business operators open only a couple of days to those established 45 years ago. Nearly a third of the people who shared their ideas have been in business or worked in the area for over 20 years.

**How can
we make
Maryborough
shine?**



← Point your phone camera here or
visit: projectrestore.com.au/ShineMB

My Maryborough is...

**"A FRIENDLY
COUNTRY
CENTRE"**

"AFFORDABLE"

*"excellent sporting
and entertainment
venues"*

*"more than meets
the eye"*

"happy"

"a tight knit community"

*"a great base to
see surrounding
regions"*

*"FOR THOSE
WHO PREFER
A BIT MORE
CHARACTER"*

"historical"

*"A PLACE OF
AMAZING
POTENTIAL"*

"creative"

"a place I like to escape to"

"peaceful"

"passionate about our town"

*"a welcoming
home for my
friends and
family"*

**"has just
about
everything"**

**"still
growing
and moving
forward"**

What locals would lose from Maryborough...

"shops closing Sundays"

"drugs"

**"trucks using the main
street"**

"Chain Stores"

"the ban on dogs"

"empty shops fronts"

"endemic poverty"

"pokies"

"parking issues"

"negativity"

"scooters and motorbikes"

"single use plastics"

"vandalism"

"unemployment"

"grumpy customers"

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Retail and consumer spending are essential components of the Central Goldfields economy.

- Retail trade accounts for 15% of local employment (over 600 jobs).
- Retail makes up 8% of industry value-added, adding \$43 million to the Central Goldfields economy each year. For comparison, the retail sector makes up 4.5% of the value generated in the Victorian economy more broadly.
- The retail sector also exports \$7.7 million worth of goods and services each year from the Central Goldfields. Exports are goods and services sold to people outside of the Shire, and the money flowing in is critical to a robust local economy.

Maryborough is the retail hub for the Shire and surrounding region, and the centre has a strong and loyal local catchment. Given that Maryborough is the highest-order retail centre in the Shire, the retail sector is expected to continue to account for a large proportion of employment, particularly as the resident and visitor population increases. The population surrounding Maryborough is forecast by the State Government to grow by around another 1,000 residents (or 7.5%) in the next two decades generating further demand for retail.

Council, though, notes in its Economic Development Strategy that the retail sector in the Shire is coming under pressure from tight household finances and digital retailing. Online retailing is becoming increasingly prominent in Australia, with the volume of Australians' retail expenditure directed online growing five-fold between January 2015 and July 2021.

To counter the impacts of the shift to online retailing, retailers and centres are focusing on leveraging their ability to provide a shopping experience that cannot be replicated by online providers. Tactics include increasing floorspace for food, beverage, grocery and non-retail uses to align with strong customer trends towards dining out. In addition, well-designed public spaces and curated entertainment offers are increasingly becoming a part of the way retail centres look and function, serving to ward off the loss of expenditure online.

The impact of COVID-19

The pandemic response in Australia is likely to have an enduring impact on Australian shopping habits, with the proportion of expenditure shifting online increasing significantly. Early indications are that this shift online appears to have been sustained, even with the relaxation of retail restrictions.

A positive factor impacting demand is regional migration and working from home. The ABS notes that migration to Australia's regions in response to the pandemic and shifts to online working has been

the largest net inflow ever recorded from urban to regional areas, particularly in Victoria. There is no clear evidence though of a spike in population growth in the Central Goldfields Shire in 2020 or 2021. However, the intrinsic amenity merits of Maryborough township and its relative affordability compared to neighbouring LGAs such as Mount Alexander (where there has been a recent spike in population growth and dwelling prices) are likely to underpin growth in the short to medium term, notwithstanding its further distance from metropolitan Melbourne.

On the supply side, pandemic restrictions have put enormous financial pressure on retail businesses, particularly those that couldn't easily pivot to online. Businesses may have accrued debts to stay open, which puts their businesses at greater financial risk into the future.

Taking these factors into account, there is ongoing uncertainty around future projections for 'bricks and mortar' retail floorspace. Until the 'dust settles' and new patterns and trajectories in regard to centres become clear, it is difficult to determine what the overall impact (positive or negative) of pandemic will have been on the function of Maryborough as a retail destination.

The importance of the retail sector for local economic development

'Economic development' typically refers to growing a local economy for wider wellbeing. This means growth in economic activity such as more exports of local produce or manufactured products, or more visitors spending money on tourist accommodation or local retail. Growth, in turn, allows businesses to invest in new equipment, hire more people and pay higher wages. Importantly, greater economic activity also means higher government revenues and more money to spend on better quality services for the community. Opportunities to enhance local wealth building can be pursued to 'lock in' the benefits for local businesses and residents. Economic development enables a higher standard of living for people in a region.

An important factor in building the strength of the local economy is reducing the money that can leak out of a local economy as local firms import inputs to production (for instance, using business services from a firm headquartered in a capital city). Similarly, and relevant to the importance of retail, is that consumers also import goods and services, such as buying clothing or products in nearby areas or online. These leakages dilute the multiplier effect of economic activity.

Local economic development aims to identify opportunities for export industry growth, whilst minimising income leakages. That is why a strong, vibrant retail sector and town centre is of critical importance to the economic fortunes of the Shire.

Demand and supply assessment

A supply and demand assessment shows that Maryborough has an adequate supply of retail floor space for present and future demand. A field visit revealed a centre that was vibrant with many different retail uses (see first figure below) and with low vacancies (see figure). Given the vibrancy and low vacancies, any oversupply of retail floorspace is not leading to poor amenity outcomes.

Figure: Retail floorspace use in Maryborough / Note: Goldfields Shopping Centre assumed be 45% food and groceries, 45% furniture & homewares and 10% other retail



Figure: Retail vacancies in Maryborough (January 2022)



For the individual categories, the analysis and site visit reveal that:

- Supply and demand for floorspace for food, groceries and bottle shops is well balanced, with four supermarkets plus specialty stores. But, even with population growth, there is unlikely to be demand for any additional spaces in the coming years. The focus from a policy perspective is ensuring that the supermarkets act as effective anchors for the rest of the retailers, drawing shoppers into the town centre.
- There is a sufficient supply of space for restaurants, cafes and takeaway. From a policy response perspective, the focus is to support these businesses in creating a vibrant hospitality precinct utilising the existing space.
- For clothing and shoes, there appears to be an oversupply of retail floorspace. However, the field trip revealed good occupancy levels, with many of the stores being opportunity and second-hand stores. Given the shift to online retailing, clothing and shoes expenditure is unlikely to increase locally, presenting an opportunity to transform some of these spaces (if vacant) into other uses.
- There seems to be an oversupply of retail space for furniture, whitegoods, homeware, manchester, electronics, hardware and garden, other retail (like newsagents and pharmacies); and retail services (like real estate, optometrists, dry cleaning etc.). However, the gap in the modelled results is likely explained by Maryborough's role as a retail and services centre for surrounding towns, including Castlemaine, St Arnaud, Avoca. Residents from these towns are likely using the retail offer in this category (like Kmart), which helps support such a high retail floor space capacity.
- Another factor in the low vacancy rate given what would typically appear to be an oversupply of floorspace given the available expenditure is the role of the 'unconventional traders' who are occupying floorspace notwithstanding potentially sub-commercial turnovers.

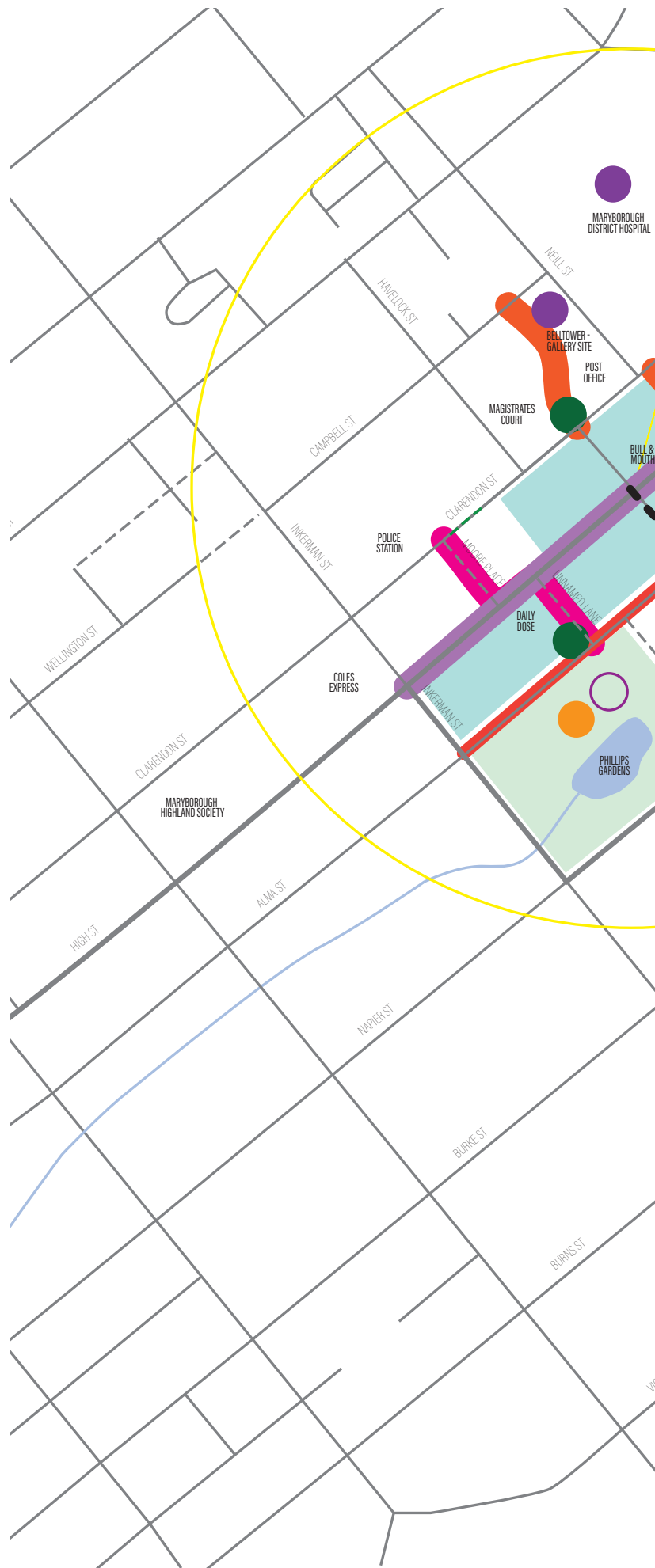
Based on the supply and demand assessment, there is a need to increase the attractiveness of the existing capacity, rather than develop new buildings and floorspace. Many retail spaces can be improved to be more attractive, and the opportunity exists to increase activation by strategic transformation of some spaces into non-retail uses.

Growing retail spending to increase the utilisation of the existing floorspace should also be a priority. Promoting and facilitating the development of infill housing to add more residents in the town centre is an important medium to long term strategy.

The floorspace and expenditure analysis suggests that the Unconventional Trader segment contributes to activating and utilising floorspace in Maryborough that might otherwise be empty or underutilised.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

-  Activity nodes/ destinations: Hospital, new art gallery, railway station
-  Main retail strip; High Street
-  Main pedestrian route to Maryborough Station from the main street
-  Big box retail area, poor interface with surrounding neighborhoods and walkways
-  Pedestrian barrier/ danger spot
-  View-lines to railway station tower
-  Phillips Gardens is spatially disconnected from High & Nolan streets, has key viewlines broken by buildings & has underused potential as a destination
-  Opportunity for improved public/open space
-  Underused pedestrian links/ retail laneways
-  Interruptions to pedestrian network
-  Underused land or possible sites for intensified residential development
-  Old campus site, currently underused open space
-  Underused Alma St axis, interface with Phillips Gardens and rear of High Street
-  Lots with dual street frontages
-  Established open space / waterways
-  400m radius - walkable distance



THE 5 CORE CHARACTERISTICS OF MARYBOROUGH

The heart of Maryborough's brand identity lies in its core characteristics. These characteristics capture the value propositions for why people would want to experience the different locations of Maryborough, either as a place to live, open a new business, invest in an asset or visit.

The identification of these core characteristics allows us to be clear about the special qualities of Maryborough that should be protected as it evolves & grows and the elements we should build on to stimulate increasing confidence & bolster a stronger sense of place.

Fossil

Bric-a-brac
pickers marts
hidden g

A Complete

Everything you
your doorstep, c
easy living

Shopper's Paradise

Trac, Op shops, antiques,
arts, bargains & treasures,
gem promotion

Undiscovered

Ready to shine, up & coming,
underappreciated, changing,
evolving

Complete Package

Everything you need is on
the street, convenient,
friendly

Everyone's a Local

Warm, friendly, connected,
welcoming, relationship-
oriented, make yourself
at home

Proudly Independent

Strong main street, indepen-
dent retailers, long standing
businesses are backbone of the town

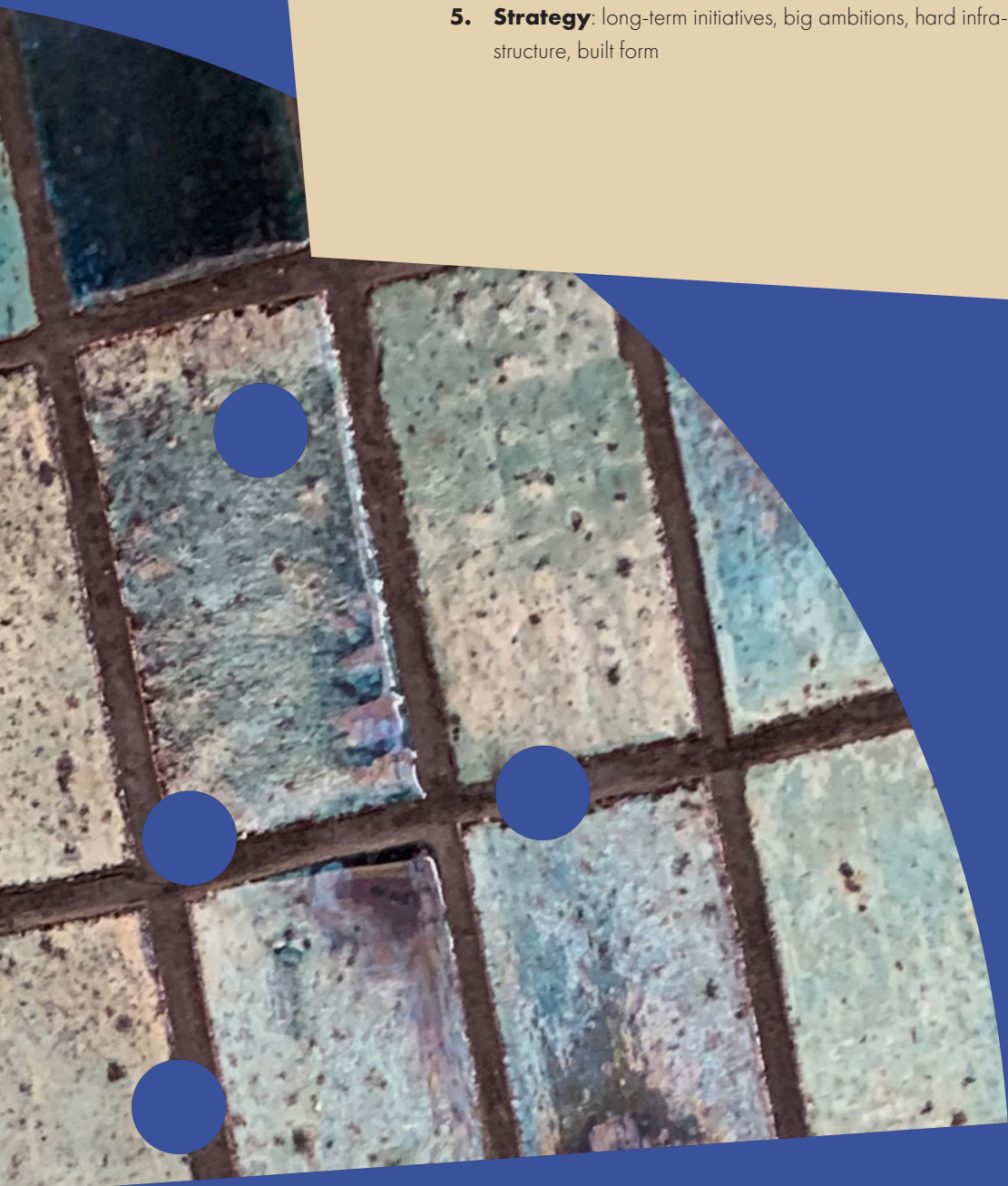
“Keep your
face to the
sunshine and
you cannot see
a shadow.”

Helen Keller

**RECOVERY
& RETAIL
ACTIVATION
PROGRAM**

We have grouped our recommendations and proposed initiatives around **Hello City's BRASS tacks approach to Place Activation**. This approach looks at big, ambitious ideas, but also gets down to the brass tacks of how to make them happen, or get immediate traction. It combines initiatives that are grassroots, low budget or short term with those that are strategic, high budget or long-term.

1. **Basics:** practical initiatives, maintenance, care, polish
2. **Ringfence:** protect assets against threats, future-proof
3. **Activity:** program, shorter-term initiatives or events, intangible assets, relationships, services, partnerships
4. **Storytelling:** showcasing strengths & local assets, brand, vision, leadership
5. **Strategy:** long-term initiatives, big ambitions, hard infrastructure, built form



Program Overview

Core program

Characteristics	Undiscovered	Fossicker's Paradise	A Complete Package	Everyone's a Local	Proudly Independent
5 big ideas	1	2	3	4	5
	Identity Study, urban design plan & place brand	Deconstructed market	Intensify downtown Maryborough	Welcome packs	Upskill traders

Supporting ideas

Basics				4.1	5.1
				Facade upgrades & cleanup	Groundwork: Practical small-scale infrastructure
Ringfence			3.2 Safeguard crossings	4.2	
				Ban single use plastics	
Activity	1.3	2.3	3.3	4.3	5.3
	Undiscovered events program	Roving performers	Make Phillips Gardens the centre of Maryborough	Hospital hampers	VIP parking
Storytelling	1.4	2.4			5.4
	Made in Maryborough	Fossickers trails campaign			Social media kit, training and campaign
Strategy	1.5	2.5	3.5		
	Maryborough Station Domain	Laneways activation strategy & program	Create the ideal retirement location		

Proposed Physical Works Program

Characteristic	Physical works	Capacity	Impact on retail recovery	Score	Priority
Undiscovered	1. Conduct feasibility study into development of the underused Station Domain site and wider Station Precinct into a destination or facility of regional significance and open space provision	4	5	9	1
	2. Improve connections between the Station and Nolan Street Axis to improve permeability and legibility to both vehicles and pedestrians. Consider issues in access & legibility in future feasibility studies & design of the precinct	4	4	8	2
	3. Deliver elements within the streetscape that tell the story of the Maryborough and regional brand e.g street furniture, planting, bins, paving, banners and facades of buildings	5	3	9	1
	4. Undertake small works as needed for Undiscovered Goldfields Events program e.g lockers and changing room facilities for ghost tour performers	4	2	6	3
Fossicker's Paradise	5. Install semi-permanent peddlers' carts and display units that reflect the historic character of the retail main streets and supports place brand	5	5	10	1
A Complete Package	6. Develop/ support development of affordable high and medium density housing with universal design for access (to build retail catchment)	4	5	9	1
	7. Create a network of laneways by connecting existing streets, laneways, walkways, rear accessways and car park areas between Clarendon, Tuaggra, Napier and Inkerman Streets. Upgrade with decoration, artwork, wayfinding, lighting, signage and retail infrastructure such as carts, awnings, seating or tables	4	4	8	2
	8. Conduct feasibility study around acquiring land to create a laneway or 24/7 pedestrian access, to connect High Street to the hospital and break up the two long blocks between Nolan, Clarendon, High, Tuaggra and Alma streets	3	4	7	3
	9. Install short and long-term pedestrian crossings and safety infrastructure at the Napier/Nolan Street intersection and other key locations (as shown on site analysis plan in this document)	5	5	10	1
	10. Upgrade Phillips Gardens, provide essential small scale events infrastructure, improve link to Nolan St and interface with IGA/Library, re-establish key view lines and consolidate unnecessary or underused buildings	4	3	7	3
Everyone's a Local	11. Upgrade and restore main retail streets of High & Nolan including historic facades, verandah renewal/ reinstatement, streetscape fixtures, furniture and lighting and graffiti removal	5	4	9	1
Proudly Independent	12. Install small scale infrastructure for traders and performers in public space, ground sleeves for umbrellas, lighting fixtures, power outlets, fixing points etc	5	4	9	1
	13. Install parking spaces, lockers and end-of-trip infrastructure for workers located 5 walk minutes from high demand parking areas	3	4	7	3



Photo credit: Hello City

**“There’s
more than
meets the
eye”**

- Maryborough Local

1. UNDISCOVERED

Build on the momentum of positive change to enhance and improve Maryborough and protect key values and assets.

It's Maryborough's time to shine!

Investors and visitors are discovering what locals have long known; that the town has much to offer in terms of amenity, affordability, quality infrastructure, architectural charm and quality of life.

Maryborough is rich in history and story, from the feuding volcanoes of the Dja Dja Wurrung dreaming, to the glorious train station (with its live-in ghosts) and beautiful historical shopfronts. It's connected by rail to Melbourne, and within commuting distance from Ballarat, Castlemaine and Bendigo.

Healthcare is top-shelf with major investments ongoing, the town centre is walkable, big box convenience stores and services are available, and home and business property ownership is still accessible.

An Undiscovered Idea

Create an integrated Local, Social, Economic and Spatial Strategy that focuses on driving positive change

Build on the work and momentum of Shine Maryborough and the recent Undiscovered Goldfields brand development work to create a holistic vision and strategy for Maryborough.

Work with a multidisciplinary team that is able to look at multiple elements of place at once, including:

- place identity analysis
- strategic planning
- economic development
- place activation
- infrastructure development
- spatial analysis and design
- branding and marketing

This strategy should:

- Identify the core strengths of Maryborough, expanding on and testing the 5 core characteristics of Maryborough identified in this document
- Test, refine and expand the 20 ideas defined in this document and weave them together into an integrated vision, masterplan, brand identity and marketing strategy

- Capture all this in a compelling and concise prospectus that captures the core value proposition and point of difference of Maryborough, and can be used as a tool to attract investment and funding
- Research and analyse the drivers, barriers, needs and ambitions of traders who don't seek to earn a living wage from their businesses. Capture what these businesses bring to Maryborough's main streets and related issues, benefits and opportunities
- Define a vision for a regionally significant, landmark, mixed-use development in the Railway Precinct
- Position Maryborough in the region so that it can leverage off its proximity to Clunes, Creswick, Ballarat, Castlemaine and Bendigo
- Create an effective tool for funding and lobbying
- Ring fence and protect the character, values and affordability of Maryborough
 - Identify strategies to close gaps and make the most of opportunities such as:
 - Protect and expand existing affordable housing. Provide pathways to home and shop ownership to locals who currently rent particularly retirees, creative workers
 - Close gap in education, particularly for secondary and tertiary students. Consider establishing an art school as a physical or programmatic extension of the new Central Goldfields Art Gallery redevelopment along with affordable student accommodation
 - Lobby for more frequent train services from Maryborough to Melbourne and plan for population growth by strengthening the link from Ballarat to Bendigo, such as exploring reintroduction of the passenger line from Maryborough to Bendigo via Dunolly

The Local, Social, Economic & Spatial Strategy is a key opportunity to understand and address the specific needs of unconventional traders, and what they bring to the identity, culture, community and economy of Maryborough and the region.

Ensure that maximising profit and promotion are not the only benefits to traders who participate in programs and initiatives. Focus on other benefits such as fun, celebration, social connection and ways to simplify retail operations.

Be aware of the critical role cheap rent and live/work spaces play in unconventional retail in Maryborough.



More Undiscovered Ideas

1.3

Undiscovered Events Program

Build a program of events to deliver the proposed Undiscovered Goldfields campaign. This might include creating antique and op-shopping tours and trails, walking tours that cover architecture, history, shopping for artefacts from the past and include lunch at a local venue showcasing local wine and producers. Create quirky day and weekend trips based around train services focusing on Maryborough's unique points of difference with ideas such as; **Prospectors and Pickers** - a weekend of literal and figurative gold digging trying your luck at panning and then at a bargain in town and **Croquet and Crochet** - a croquet lesson/match, lunch and retro cocktails in town and then a crochet session with the ladies from the craft shop. Investigate bringing back to life a version of the popular train station ghost tours, use them to share oral history of the region.

Ensure these events are clearly linked to the Undiscovered Goldfields brand and are well promoted.

1.4

Made In Maryborough

Create a line of merchandise that is made in Maryborough and the region. Focus on items that are fun, playful and reflect the unique characteristics of the place. Frame promotion of the merchandise within broader identity and place branding work (such as Undiscovered Goldfields campaign)

The line should include a mix of low cost products including tote bags, bumper stickers and clothing alongside locally made pieces such as tea cosies, crocheted animals and hand thrown pottery etc.

1.5

Maryborough Station Domain

Develop the Station precinct to intensify activity in the Station Domain site. Create a landmark destination or facility of regional significance that attracts investment and stimulates the economy.

Consider the broader precinct defined by the railway line, Nolan Street, Burns Street, Sutton Street/ Pyrenees Hwy, but focus on the domain site defined by Station Street, Burns Street and Mark Twain Drive. Retain appropriately sized areas of open space.

Ideas to explore include;

- Uses that will attract workers, students and residents such as an tertiary educational facility e.g an art school with subsidised student housing, a permanent, large-scale wet and dry market etc
- A productive arts precinct including resident artist spaces, studios, workshops, performance spaces, small retail and food and beverage outlets
- Reconfiguring land parcels and streets in the Station Precinct to improve connections for both vehicles and pedestrians on the Station and the Nolan Street Axis, to boost permeability and legibility for the retail centre as a whole

**“Maryborough
could become
the next big
antique and
art destination
of country
Victoria”**

- Local Resident

2. FOSSICKER'S PARADISE

Promote and showcase the op-shops, pickers marts, antiques, second-hand book stores and craft shops which all offer true gems at country prices.

Unlike many of its neighbouring destinations Maryborough's second hand offer is still full of bargains and the old-fashioned possibility of that once in a lifetime find. Events, marketing and tourism should find ways to highlight this offer and the unique personalities, stories and culture it boasts.

A Fossicker's Paradise Idea:

Hold a Deconstructed Mainstreet Market

Create a new deconstructed market model that is based around mainstreets and is focussed on supporting bricks-and-mortar retailers and showcasing Maryborough's local or artist-made goods and secondhand, vintage wares.

Rather than collecting market stalls in a hall or park away from the mainstreet, this market strives to activate every nook and cranny of Maryborough's retail centre.

Curate the experience with custom-built peddlers carts, colourful signage and decoration, music and professional promotion. Invite traders to set up stalls outside their shops on market day while makers, market organisers, artisans and visiting traders can set up a stall for the day in front of closed, underused or vacant spaces.

The key steps to making this happen include:

- Develop a governance process for Council to maintain and manage retail display and decorative elements and make available to market stall holders along with associated insurance and health and safety elements
- Commission a musician to create a playlist for each market day that sets the mood and celebrates the local character of Maryborough and the region (locally-based in Dja Dja Wurung Country)
- Identify key locations including currently vacant and under-performing mainstreet locations as well as Council-run spaces including the Visitor Information Centre, the new Art Gallery and the Library etc.
- Expand and link the market to Fossicking Trails (see below) which position Maryborough as the heart of a vibrant antiquing, second hand books, op-shopping, thrifting and salvaging region

- Leverage off established tourist destinations and build on customer base visiting existing popular markets in Maldon, Clunes, Talbot etc
- Integrate with other proposed and existing initiatives such as COVIDSafe Outdoor Retail activations, Laneway Activation Program, Made in Maryborough and proposed Undiscovered Goldfields marketing campaigns (see below).
- Make connections/trails between Maryborough and Talbot, Dunolly and Carisbrook
- Appoint a local coordinator, a professional paid coordinator, local traders association or organisation such as the Committee for Maryborough
- Use the street furniture and signage infrastructure being provided through Part B of the CovidSafe Outdoor Activation Funding
- Build on and incorporate marketing and promotional strategy and collateral being designed by Grosz Co Lab

For more information see the appendices

Unconventional traders form the backbone of the antique, vintage and second-hand offer in Maryborough. Ensure these traders' needs and preferences are prioritised.

Photo credit: Hello City



More Fossicker's Paradise Ideas

2.3 Roving Performers

Bring the stories of Maryborough's recent past to life and enhance customer experience by creating a program of roving performers in both period and retro costume, appearing at existing markets, events and busy shopping days.

Include a mix of period characters such as station master, prospector, bootlegger, wartime nurse and retro 20th Century characters such as 50s/60s housewives, hippies etc to connect a range of time periods and connect gold rush history to the antique/vintage offer.

Partner with existing walking tours and local historians, The Dunolly Museum and historical societies to include specific historical details from the town. Use existing programs run by Sovereign Hill similar to those previously run in Ballarat for period characters and professional clowning and roving performance companies such as Po Po Mo Co or local drag performers for retro characters.

2.4 Fossicking Trails Campaign

Define a series of fossicking trails throughout the Goldfields centred around the Maryborough CBD, specifically the Nolan and Alma Street intersection and laneways.

Link to existing markets including nearby townships and destinations with a bigger profile and existing customer-base such as Clunes, Creswick, Castlemaine, Daylesford and Maldon. Position Maryborough and the Central Goldfields as the undiscovered part of the region where the true gold is waiting to be uncovered.

Routes and trails may include; The centre of a loop between Avoca, Dunolly, Maldon, Clunes/ Part of a bigger triangle of between Maldon, Clunes, Dunolly/ Part of a smaller triangle between Castlemaine, Maryborough, Dunolly/ Part of a route to the south that includes Creswick, Clunes and Talbot

2.5 Laneway Activation Strategy & Program

There are a number of laneways and underused spaces in Maryborough that only need a little love to shine. Create a Laneway Activation Strategy and Program that encourages permanent and pop-up bric-a-brac, vintage, antique and second-hand good traders to sell goods on the footpath. Focus on simple and easily delivered improvements such as decoration, artwork, wayfinding, lighting, signage and retail infrastructure such as carts, awnings, seating or tables.

The Strategy should take in the laneways, walkways, rear accessways and car park areas between Clarendon, Tuaggra, Napier and Inkerman Streets, and focus on:

- The Coach Factory Pickers Market precinct including the courtyard/carpark to the rear and the laneway connecting it to the library, Phillips Garden and Nolan Street.
- Moore Place, laneways connecting High Street to Clarendon Street and the Civic Precinct, Gallery and Hospital, and High Street to Alma Street and Phillips Gardens
- The rear of the Library and IGA building backing onto Phillips Gardens
- Back-of-house spaces behind business along Alma Street and Clarendon Street and private access ways and walk-throughs to High Street

Tie in activation program and events with larger campaigns such as Fossicking Trails and Undiscovered Goldfields.

“...there’s
very little you
can’t buy in
Maryborough”

- local trader

3. A COMPLETE PACKAGE

Protect the completeness of Maryborough's offer, showcase what it already does well and invite more people to share in the easy life it offers.

You can find everything you need in Maryborough with its full offer of businesses, services, nature on your doorstep and close proximity to wineries with scheduled upgrades to the hospital, train station and art gallery. It's well serviced for all retail and hospitality and rather than attracting more and new businesses to town, Maryborough should focus on growing its customer base, keep locals shopping local, make sure there is enough new housing to invite new residents to enjoy Maryborough's good life.

A Complete Package Idea

Intensify Downtown Maryborough

While land is currently cheap in Maryborough, it's unlikely to stay so for long. Act now to plan for and ring fence the benefits that come with cheap rent and affordable housing. Have a strategy for intensification that includes social and key worker housing, infill and high density housing that activates key locations and that provides a strong customer base for existing retail.

Key steps to making this happen include:

- Review Council land holdings and exploring options around Council as developer (or partnering with Development Victoria)
- Undertake a holistic strategic planning process for Maryborough in the context of the wider region including a Local, Social and Spatial Concept Plan (holistic masterplan)
- Prepare shovel-ready projects to enable Council to act quickly to win housing grants and funding
- Review zoning/overlays to enable medium density infill housing development in edge of centre locations in the Commercial 1 and Commercial 2 Zones
- Strengthen laneway connections and frontages to High St, Phillips Gardens, library and the axis of Nolan Street



Many of Maryborough's key unconventional retailers are aged 60+. Consider their needs and the fact that their businesses provide opportunities for social connection and to stay active.

As above, consider the critical role of cheap rent and live/work spaces to the unconventional retail sector in Maryborough.

More Complete Package Ideas

3.2

Safeguard Crossings

Improve pedestrian safety and access at the intersection of Napier and Nolan Streets which currently acts as a barrier to foot traffic, cutting off shops south of Napier Street from the retail centre.

Work with Regional Roads Victoria to install safety infrastructure and in the meantime deliver a program of creative, temporary interventions that immediately improve safety, show the community this issue is on the agenda, raise awareness of the danger and support pedestrians to cross safely.

Ideas for intervention include:

- Commission local artists to paint temporary and artistic chalk paint crossings on the road to slow traffic (in partnership with Regional Roads Victoria)
- Program a calendar of Funny Crossing Guards to help people cross the road as roving performers. Hire professional and amateur performers to help people cross safely using props and instruments, i.e. highland dressed bagpipe player, Queen Victoria and her servants and a gold prospector and his wheelbarrow full of gold.

The key aspects to making this project happen include:

- Traffic and Transport and Arts and Tourism to work closely together to find creative temporary solutions/interventions
- Making this a priority for Council, regardless of ease or popularity
- Use a mix of professionals from Sovereign Hill and well loved locals such as Dunolly local Rachel Buckley a.k.a Queen Victoria
- Ensure safety is paramount using adequate signage to warn drivers and well as highly visible interventions that will force slow and interrupted driving
- Promote the program in The Advertiser, Gold FM and Council social media channels

3.3

Make Phillips Gardens the Centre Of Maryborough

- Encourage properties that have dual Alma/ High Street access to provide an active frontage to both streets. Support mixed-use infill development that addresses the park and Alma Street
- Ensure the Phillips Garden masterplan that is currently underway incorporates an events and activation strategy:
- Create a viable events strategy and program that identifies necessary infrastructure that is practical, in-demand and that will provide excellent bang-for-buck
- Take a try-before-you-buy approach by hiring equipment and using portable infrastructure before investing in large ticket items or permanent elements
- Develop a strategy and treatment for the interface between the IGA building and the library that considers governance, maintenance, program and physical infrastructure that maximise access and the address to Nolan Street
- Encourage retailers to make use of the park
- Program the historic Women's Comfort Station - artists in residence, talks, events etc
- Provide opportunities for people to passively and actively enjoy the ornamental lake, boats, seating, view lines etc
- Remove and consolidate unnecessary or underused buildings to open up view lines within the park and improve overall functionality
- Creates view lines and clear wayfinding and pedestrian connections to the park from High Street and Nolan Street

3.5

Create the Ideal Retirement Location

Find multiple ways to make Maryborough the first choice for retirees by building on and expanding the excellent existing facilities for seniors.

Attract grey nomads by providing programs and events and marketing campaigns targeted at older visitors and residents.

Partner with Maryborough District Hospital to expand delivery of care at home and other support programs to enrich the lives of seniors.

Support the development of affordable 2 bedroom medium density developments with universal design for access.

The welcoming
of customers,
the little chats,
interactions and
conversations.
We build
friendships with
our customers.”

- Local trader

4. EVERYONE'S A LOCAL

Extend Maryborough's old fashioned hospitality and warm welcome to the world and share the love, pride and optimism it has for its future.

Traders in Maryborough greet locals by name and treat visitors like locals. Their businesses are built on relationships and genuine connection and this can be felt by all newcomers and visitors. Locals are proud of the sense of generosity and collective spirit they have nurtured over generations and it's time for them to showcase it.

An Everyone's a Local Idea

Welcome Packs For New Residents

Share the best of what Maryborough has to offer and how to support local business by creating a new Welcome To Maryborough pack for all new renters and homeowners, distributed by local real estate agencies on settlement or when a lease is signed by someone new to town.

Expand the packs already distributed by the Visitor Information Centre and include local maps, promotional catalogues, vouchers for independent business, takeaway menus, tourism brochures, some freshly baked bread, a small piece of Made in Maryborough merch and a copy of The Advertiser etc.

This project could be coordinated by Council, a traders association or The Committee Of Maryborough in partnership with local real estate agencies and The Advertiser.

The key aspects to making this project happen include:

- Create vouchers/offers that are generous and create an immediate sense of goodwill in local business for new residents e.g a free meal for 2, a free bottle of local wine with dinner, half price haircut, a 5 class pass for a gym etc.
- Make sure community events and social opportunities are well represented and the pack includes multiple invitations to take part in local social and sporting events
- Work with real estate agents to personalise and curate the Welcome Pack so that it reflects the needs and interests of each household, e.g interests, young families, retirees etc
- Make the packs more than just written material, include food items, merch and fun stuff
- Create beautiful packaging that references any current Maryborough marketing and branding work i.e Undiscovered Maryborough



More Everyone's a Local Ideas

4.1

Give High Street a Makeover

Partner with traders, locals and community groups to clean up and upgrade the retail facades on High Street. Consider initiatives such as:

- Restore and reinstate verandahs on historic buildings prioritising streets with retail activity, especially High Street and Nolan Streets
- Upgrade fixtures, furniture and lighting
- Develop guidelines / colour palette/ materials etc
- Establish grant program where Council contribute a portion of landowner's spend to upgrade and restore private facades and windows
- Seek grant opportunities from State and Federal Governments e.g verandah renewal/ reinstatement
- Organise working bees to clean up and remove graffiti

4.2

Ban Single Use Plastic

Phase out single use plastic containers, bags as well as use of balloons in public spaces. Start with Council leading by example at all of their events and launch an accompanying good news campaign about Goldfields caring for Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

Promote the use and sale of reusable shopping/tote bags as part of the Made In Maryborough initiative and Undiscovered Goldfields. Ensure independent shops and supermarkets such as IGA sell these bags.

4.3

Create Hospital Hampers and Helpers

Create a program of hampers and support for both in and outpatients at the Maryborough Hospital that can be accessed by patients, family and friends. The program should feature hampers of edible goodies from local businesses, personal care hampers, a personal shopper service for things such as new and second-hand clothing, a book bundle delivery service by Lions Club Book Store, comfy socks knitted by The Craft Shop, electronics needs from a local supplier etc. The program should also include an outpatient meals service prepared by local restaurants or community groups.

Products and services can be sold and promoted within the hospital and also via a central website linked to the hospital website and the program should be developed in collaboration between hospital services, Council, the hospital auxiliary and interested traders.

Unconventional retailers make a significant contribution to the social capital of Maryborough. They are an intrinsic part of what makes Maryborough, Maryborough. Invite these traders to lead these programs and ensure that non-monetary benefits are maximised.

“We are all independent retailers, and as such can choose our own suppliers, aimed at our customers/local community”

- Local trader

5. PROUDLY INDEPENDENT

Find ways to strengthen, protect and celebrate independent and family owned and operated retail and hospitality.

Traders and businesses are the backbone of Maryborough. The community is immensely proud of their legacy of independently and family owned businesses, some of whom have been in operation for 45 years. Locals want to see them thrive and survive in a rapidly changing retail landscape and economy.

A Proudly Independent Idea

Upskill Traders

Develop an ongoing outreach programme to ensure traders are connecting to available technology to reach customers and new markets and ensure they are Commonwealth Games ready. The program would include helping traders register with Google maps, offering cashless transactions and basic tech literacy and social media use.

Deliver the program in partnership with a local education institution such as Learn Local or via a contracted trusted local. Take learnings from the program being piloted by Hello City for Part B of the CovidSafe Outdoor Economy funding.

The key aspects to making this project happen include;

- Take a proactive approach to include traders, do not rely on EOIs, email outs or the like. Pound the pavement and make a phone call to engage traders
- Design the program to be personalised, one on one and flexible
- Identify and understand the different types of traders and that this approach will only work for traders actively seeking to increase customer base and will not increase their admin and bookkeeping load
- Can be delivered in partnership with the Mill House Neighbourhood House Learn Local program as they have the existing resources and educators
- After the first round enlist a champion or spokesperson of the program - a trader who has done it to help get others involved



More Proudly Independent Ideas

5.1 **Do The Groundwork**

Install practical small scale infrastructure that makes it easier for traders and performers to use public space, such as ground sleeves for umbrellas, lighting fixtures, power outlets and fixing points in strategic locations as determined by an audit.

These small amenities will allow for ease and flexibility of outdoor programming/events, fast establishment of outdoor mini precincts i.e dining and markets and will provide safer use of outdoor umbrellas and shade elements.

5.3 **Create V.I.P Parking**

Incentivise and/or formalise off-street parking for shop owners and staff to free up mainstreet parking for customers.

Locate a suitable council owned space no more than a 5 minute walk to High St and provide free or discounted car washes, tyre rotation, basic maintenance and secure storage lockers for traders and retail workers. If there is sufficient demand, consider providing end-of-trip facilities such as toilets, showers and bicycle storage.

Decorate bays colourfully and name them after local business owners who've been in operation 20+ years in the same way business owners used to name their buildings in Maryborough in the early 1900s.

5.4 **Social Media Kit, Training and Digital/ Analogue campaign**

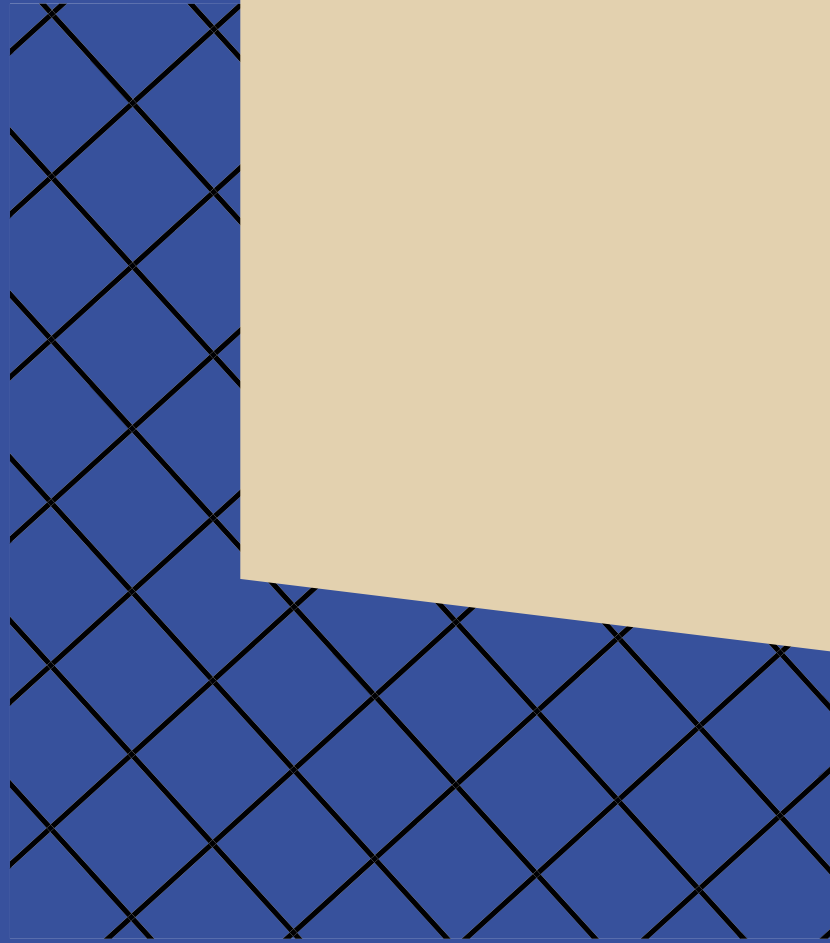
Support traders to promote their business and engage with customers online with a professional social media campaign that fits within the larger Undiscovered Goldfields campaign.

Ensure taking part is as simple as possible, and that communication with traders is clear, straightforward and engaging. If possible follow up with face-to-face conversations.

Take a witty and informal approach that acknowledges and allows for the fact that many successful traders in Maryborough have little or no online presence and much of the charm of the Maryborough offer is offline and analogue in nature.

Make sure upskill programs are based on the needs, capacity and interests of unconventional traders. Don't make assumptions about what they want to get from skill development, or what will incentivise them to take part.

For example, some traders may not be interested in getting more customers, they may not even be interested in making a living from their business - however they may be very interested in connecting with each other or members of a special-interest community, or reducing costs or complexity in their business.



APPENDICES

SPARK PROJECT

Deconstructed Market

Note: Between the writing and publishing of this report Council has launched the Makers & Collectors's Market, a 3 month long outdoor retail activation funded by the Victorian Government's CovidSafe Outdoor Activation fund. This program is being delivered by Council in partnership with Hello City, Grosz CoLab and local traders.

Makers & Collectors Market Project Description

A decentralised monthly market event designed to promote and connect bricks-and-mortar stores with the existing market culture in the Central Goldfields region with a focus on the second-hand, antique and pickers-style shops and artisans and makers.

The Makers & Collectors Market is a trail that connects traders and market stall holders in Talbot, Maryborough, Dunolly and Carisbrook and invites them to put out a specially designed peddlers cart, colourful signage or even just a table and participate in a trail designed to encourage exploration of the region and promote traders coordinating opening hours.

The project has been delivered with help from a local trader coordinator with a lot of time and resources dedicated to accessing previously hard to reach traders. Those without reliable phone numbers, no email addresses and open inconsistent hours. A priority has been placed on ease of participation, with a high level of support and flexibility offered to traders as needed.

Participating traders receive a market kit, including specially designed street furniture and signage infrastructure and a suite of marketing and promotional collateral that mirrored the look and feel of the outdoor furniture as designed by Grosz Co Lab.

The Makers & Collectors activation is a vehicle to upskill traders in the region to increase their online footprint and offer cashless transactions by offering face to face tech support and linking them to grant opportunities.

Alongside traders and market organisers, Council have been allocated several retail units to strategically use in Council run spaces to promote and enhance the program and activate specific locations including The Visitor Information Centre, the new Art Gallery and the library etc.

To help generate atmosphere along the trail a specially curated playlist of artists connected to Dja Dja Wurrung Country has been commissioned by local musician Hannah Blackburn to be played from units.

Recommendations for next steps

- Leverage off the momentum of the current Makers & Collectors Market being delivered as part of the CovidSafe Outdoor Activation Funding.
- Review the successes and failures of the Makers & Collectors Activation and make any changes.
- Nominate a local market coordinator; a trader, traders association, Committee For Maryborough or market committee.
- Use existing promotional material, fonts, landing page and url for Makers & Collectors Market as appropriate.
- Make the Council units available to be hired by artisans, makers and collectors for use outside of empty shop fronts or underperforming locations on High and Nolan Streets.
- Identify and invite stall holders to apply for a stall. Make this possible via the existing Makers & Collectors website.
- Stallholders may be local makers who already sell in the Visitor Information Centre such as Corridor Gallery Tea Cosy Designs, organisations such as The Men's Shed, and even mini exhibitions by local collectors such as the Sew What: Maryborough Sewing Machine Museum.
- Make it easy for busy and overwhelmed traders/artisans/market organisers to participate.
- Understand the communication channels that work for Maryborough traders, with social media being the least effective and in person being the most.
- Partner with the Maryborough Advertiser for event promotion.
- Include special market themes including street side workshops and demonstrations from artisans and craftspeople.



Peddlars' carts and footpath signage at
Coach Factory Pickers Market
Photo credit: Hello City

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Shine Maryborough Engagement Summary

Our engagement focused on conversations with local traders during a very busy time for small businesses; the opening up after lockdown and the lead up to Christmas 2021. We engaged a known and trusted local to carry out face-to-face interviews and provided training on the Hello City approach to research and COVID-safe engagement methods. Our research consultant approached business owners, staff and management directly and focused on qualitative rather than quantitative responses.

The full engagement summary prepared February 2022 is included below.

We used an online engagement platform to provide an alternative way to take part, which was promoted and distributed through Council-run email networks, websites and social media.

Participants completed a short vox pop that captured everyday experiences of Maryborough and asked participants to sum up their local area in a word or phrase. Traders were asked about the unique challenges in running a business in Maryborough, what interventions or support would assist their business and community right now and what kinds of businesses have adapted well to trading during Covid restrictions.

Alongside the official responses from the Vox Pop survey, our consultant made notes on all informal conversations they had with traders revealing further insights into the shape of trading in Maryborough. Information was further tested by consultants from Hello City while conducting intensive consultation implementing CovidSafe Activation projects in the region at the end of 2021.

The analysis of the engagement and research data is designed to uncover the opportunities and challenges of Maryborough, the real experiences and unique characteristics that would encourage people to visit, live and work in or invest here and how Covid has impacted their business and community.

The insights and original ideas sparked by Shine Maryborough have formed the basis of the initiatives and recommendations in this report, along with existing programs and opportunities.





IF YOU WANT TO LOOK
AT ANY BOOKS BY
HIGH SHELVES
PLEASE DON'T HESITATE
TO ASK
FOR ASSISTANCE.

BRIAN

THE BOSS
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Prepared by:
Hello City
creative urban strategists
www.hellocity.com.au

Engagement & Research Consultant
Rebecca Murray

Photo: Hello City

A
WARM
WELCOM

**DON'T NEGLECT
THE GOLD IN
YOUR OWN
BACKYARD.**

— BEN OKRI

blind dog
pottery
.com





Geographical and Historical Context

Central Goldfields Shire is located on the traditional lands of the Djaara or Dja Dja Wurrung people whose territory extends from Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo in the east, Boort in the north, Donald in the northwest, to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca.

Its settler history has been defined by the Victorian Gold Rush in the mid 19th century which has shaped its architecture, identity and tourism offer. Hobbyist prospectors are still digging up small nuggets of gold in the region, which is home to the site of the largest ever gold nugget excavation, The Welcome Stranger.

The heart of the region, Maryborough, has a history of banding together to find ways to thrive when times get tough. When the last gold mine shut down, they created new opportunities for wealth, first by poaching the knitting mill from Clunes and establishing Maryborough as a centre of the wool industry. Later the people of Maryborough used their influence to make sure the government provided them with a railway station so fine even Mark Twain was impressed.

Locals describe each other as unpretentious, generous and friendly, and enjoy the laid-back pace of life in the township. Highlights of living in Maryborough include living in an affordable house close to work, lots to do outdoors from bushwalks to feeding the ducks in Princes Park's Lake Victoria. It's well connected, with both Ballarat and Bendigo less than an hour away with a train link to Melbourne and Ballarat and has a strong culture of community sport. The warmth and welcome of the town is visible, local shopkeepers know your name, you bump into people you know when you're out and about and locals say hello to strangers on the street.

Maryborough has the foundation of a strong retail offer with a bustling high street balanced by bigger retailers, established businesses, located mainly outside the main retail core.

Other towns in the region include Dunolly, Talbot, Carisbrook, Bealiba, Timor, Majorca, Alma, Craigie and Bet Bet.

Preliminary analysis of the strengths of Maryborough





Sickler's Paradise

rac, Op shops, antiques,
rts, bargains & treasures,
n gems promotion

Undiscovered

Ready to shine, up & coming,
underappreciated, changing,
evolving

ite Package

ou need is on
, convenient,
ving

Everyone's a Local

Warm, friendly, connected,
welcoming, relationship-
oriented, make yourself
at home

Proudly Independent

Strong main street, indepen-
dent retailers, long standing
businesses are backbone of the town

Snapshot of local ideas to help Maryborough shine

"Tell the stories of our history using technology"

"The train station veranda could have a festival / market".

"Shops as gallery/ art windows".

"A big local shopping day".

"Pop up stores for homewares and gifts / antiques etc "

"Tourism based events could take advantage of the many parks and reserves around town with the inclusion of the train station/train timetable".

"Events designed to make new connections between families and local services".

"We should make ourselves a retirement town. Expand facilities focused on seniors".

"Make better use of the laneways (Next to my Pizza Pasta) examples like Ballarat: add lighting, hold music shows with local talent and food".

"Super Saturday Day (or evening or Sunday) Lots of promotion and giveaways - lots of entertainment for all ages to draw people back down to the street."

"Celebrate home based businesses and local producers."

"...protect High Street. Currently landlords are filling shops with offices, Government agencies and Allied health services. It makes the street very boring and kills the needed ambience of a vibrant shopping strip".

"Arrange to have our silos painted or artwork to be added to our streetscape "

"The lake in Maryborough needs a council run cafe with open indoor space for art and local made items , a deck needs to stagger over the water for dining".



My Maryborough is...

"A FRIENDLY COUNTRY CENTRE" "affordable"
"peaceful" "more than meets the eye"
"excellent sporting and entertainment venues" **"happy"**
"a tight knit community"

"FOR THOSE WHO PREFER A BIT MORE CHARACTER"

"a great base to see surrounding regions"

"historical"

"A PLACE OF AMAZING POTENTIAL"

"a place I like to escape to"

"passionate about our town"

"a welcoming home for my friends and family"

"has just about everything"

"creative"

"still growing and moving forward"

What locals would lose from Maryborough...

"shops closing Sundays"

"Chain Stores"

"empty shops fronts"

"parking issues"

"single use plastics"

"unemployment"

"drugs"

"the ban on dogs"

"endemic poverty"

"negativity"

"vandalism"

"grumpy customers"

"trucks using the main street"

"pokies"

"scooters and motorbikes"



Other Key Insights

While COVID has left nowhere untouched, lockdowns and restrictions are not the cause of the main challenges facing local businesses in Maryborough

A separate assessment of traffic zoning, parking limits, loading zones etc. may need to be carried out (outside of scope of this project)

Traders in Maryborough see the successful tourism draw and events calendars in larger places like Bendigo, Ballarat and Castlemaine and smaller towns like Maldon, Clunes, Creswick and want to establish something similar

Opportunities, Challenges and Insights

(as identified in consultation and research)

Opportunities

Link to established tourist destinations
Clunes, Castlemaine, Maldon and
Cresswick

Well supported independent retail and
food and beverage offer

New businesses and tree-changers moving
to the area

Still has a proper independent local paper

The Maryborough Advertiser which is
very supportive of traders, as well as radio
station Gold FM.

Affordable goods, shopping and house
prices

On the V-line

Walkability of city centre

Maryborough train station and visitor
centre as a destination/venue

Home of the Energy Breakthrough, which
hasn't run for the past 2 years. But has an
allocated infrastructure upgrade for future
events.

The Committee of Maryborough who are
small business advocates and support
community initiatives

Challenges

Some traders have low interest, or capacity
in expanding their customer base or
increasing profits

Small online footprint, many businesses
have no website, no social media presence,
not on Google maps etc.

Many businesses don't offer eftpos/ square
etc.

When compared to surrounding areas,
traders are poorly coordinated with no
traders association

Inconsistent opening hours and not open
Sundays

A perception of too many empty shop
fronts/un maintained shopfronts

Empty/recently renovated buildings in
the Main Street are increasingly being
converted into office spaces or professional
services such as dentists, solicitors, and
accountants

The first 6 months of the year can be very
quiet for some retail, busiest time are the
months leading up to Christmas

A lack of local events, including no
Maryborough Market or regular Christmas
Market

Dogs are banned from the main street

Weak food and beverage offer

Weak fresh produce offer overall

Tall poppy syndrome, skeptical outlook in
some quarters

Already high unemployment rate-worsened
by COVID

Anti-vax, sovereign-citizen element

Community involvement of The Highland
Society linked to pokies/gambling

Disruptions to Council succession mean
many council officers are new and live
outside the region

No visible music and performing arts scene



