



Donnybrook-Balingup Economic Development & Tourism Strategy

Report prepared for

Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup

July 2026



lucid

/ˈluːsɪd/

adjective

1. expressed clearly; easy to understand

2. bright or luminous



Document Control

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Acknowledgement of Country

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Executive Summary

The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup is a distinctive regional economy within Western Australia's South West, defined by a strong agricultural base, a growing tourism sector and a highly attractive rural lifestyle.

Agriculture underpins the local economy, supported by a diverse mix of high-quality agricultural production. At the same time, the Shire is undergoing structural change, including increased population movement into the region, evolving workforce patterns and renewed growth in visitation.

Tourism is emerging as a key diversification opportunity. While currently modest in scale, the sector plays an important role in attracting expenditure into the Shire, supporting local businesses and strengthening the region's identity.

Despite these strengths, the Shire faces a number of structural constraints:

- Limited housing supply, restricting population growth and workforce availability
- A relatively narrow economic base, with exposure to agricultural and external market conditions
- Limited depth of tourism product, particularly in accommodation and bookable experiences

The opportunity for the Shire is not to fundamentally change direction, but to build on its existing strengths. In particular, there is clear potential to:

- Expand and diversify tourism, particularly through experiences and accommodation
- Strengthen and extend agricultural production and value-adding
- Support population growth through improved housing supply
- Enhance the overall visitor and place experience

The role of the Shire in this context is not to directly deliver these outcomes, but to enable them. This Strategy positions the Shire as a facilitator and coordinator of economic and tourism activity, with a focus on:

- Creating the conditions for private sector investment
- Supporting local business growth
- Strengthening partnerships across the community and industry
- Providing clear and consistent planning and policy settings

To support this, the Strategy (This Strategy provides long-term direction for the Shire's economic development and tourism activities. The associated Action Plan provides more tactical, short-term guidance to support implementation of the Strategy.

Figure E.1) is structured around four core pillars relating to the key roles that the Shire has to play in terms of economic development and tourism:

- Coordination
- Planning
- Promotion
- Advocacy

These pillars are supported by a targeted Action Plan to implement this Strategy.

This Strategy is ultimately about enabling growth in a way that aligns with the Shire's identity, builds on its strengths and delivers long-term economic and community outcomes.

The Strategy therefore focuses on enabling these outcomes through a clear and coordinated approach to coordination, planning, promotion and advocacy. The role of the Shire is to create the

conditions for private sector investment, support local industry and strengthen partnerships across the community to deliver a stronger, more diverse and more resilient economy.

This Strategy provides long-term direction for the Shire’s economic development and tourism activities. The associated Action Plan provides more tactical, short-term guidance to support implementation of the Strategy.

Figure E.1. Donnybrook-Balingup Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Framework

Vision: A strong, diverse and resilient economy			
Purpose: To guide investment, policy and activities across the Shire’s economy and tourism sector through a clear and coordinated framework that enables sustainable economic growth.			
Economic Focus Areas: • Tourism experiences and products • Tourism accommodation • Housing diversity and supply		• Agriculture and Value-adding • Improved retail offering • Town activation	
The Role of The Shire			
Coordination The Shire can actively engage with businesses and the community to align priorities and facilitate collaboration across the district.	Planning The Shire should provide an efficient and customer-focused planning regime that ensures sufficient land supply, reduces barriers and enables private sector investment.	Promotion The Shire should support promotion of the district to attract new residents, additional visitors and investment.	Advocacy The Shire should advocate for funding and infrastructure support by positioning local priorities and projects for investment.

Source: Lucid Economics

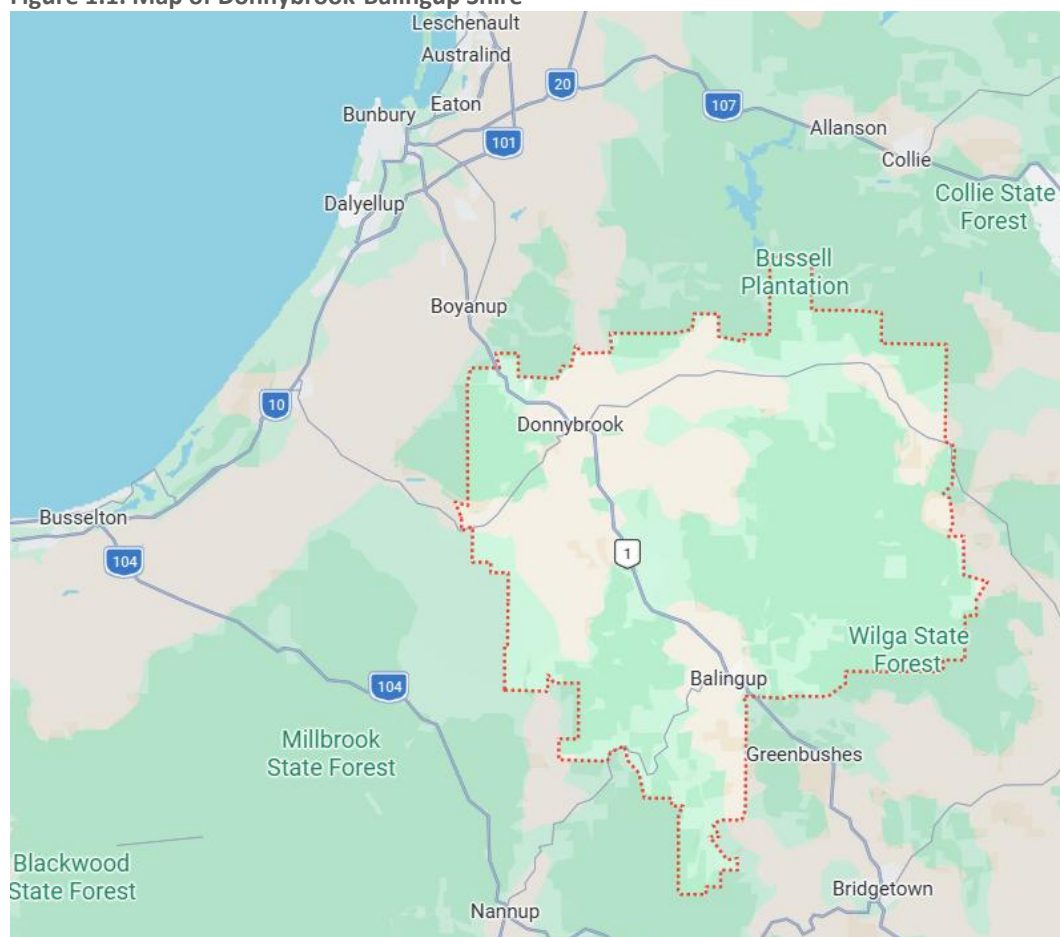
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1. Introduction

The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup is located in the South West region of Western Australia, centred around the townships of Donnybrook and Balingup and extending across a diverse rural landscape including a number of other small settlements. Situated approximately 200 kilometres south of Perth, with close proximity to Bunbury and Busselton, the Shire benefits from strong connections to major regional centres while maintaining a distinctive country setting.

Figure 1.1. Map of Donnybrook-Balingup Shire



Source: Google Maps

Donnybrook-Balingup is widely recognised for its strong agricultural base, high-quality horticultural production and attractive rural lifestyle. These attributes underpin the local economy and contribute to the Shire's identity as a place to live, work and visit. At the same time, the Shire is experiencing ongoing structural change, including shifts in population, workforce patterns and visitation, creating both challenges and opportunities for future economic development.

The development of this Strategy has been informed by a structured and evidence-based process (Figure 1.2). This process has included a detailed research and analysis phase, involving review of the local economy, industry structure, population trends and broader economic conditions. This phase was followed by a stakeholder consultation phase, engaging with local businesses, community groups and key stakeholders to capture practical, experience-based insights into the opportunities, challenges and future direction of the Shire. This Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Background Report and the Consultation Summary.

Figure 1.2. Project Process



Source: Lucid Economics

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a clear and coordinated framework to guide future Shire based activities to support economic and tourism growth, while reinforcing the Shire's unique character and identity. The Strategy identifies key opportunities, establishes strategic priorities and outlines the role of the Shire in enabling economic development and tourism outcomes. It provides a tactical plan and recommendations for the Shire.

2. Current Economic Context

Like many communities across Western Australia, the economy of the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire has been shaped by its past and continues to evolve. Agriculture remains the most significant industry, accounting for 30% of the economy. This concentration reinforces the importance of diversification while also highlighting the opportunity to build additional value through processing, tourism and related activities. While agriculture is the dominant industry, as a sector it is diverse. While known for its apple production, which is significant, there are a wide range of agricultural products, including notable quantities of pears, avocados, cherries, pumpkins and nectarines as well as cattle and sheep.

While some limited quarrying activities still remain (Donnybrook Sandstone), mining has seen growth recently, mostly notably through the growth of the nearby Greenbushes Lithium–Tantalum Mine as well as the growth of a local fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) workforce that services the mines of the Pilbara. The construction industry has also grown recently as a result of the local mining sector in the South West as well as the significant increase in population growth post-COVID.

Outside of these sectors, there are a raft of other sectors that, while relatively small, provide a diversified base of economic activity. There remains some limited timber-related manufacturing as well as small scale food production activities. Combined with a variety of mostly locally focused service sectors (i.e. healthcare, retail, education, public administration), these sectors round out the structure of the local economy.

Tourism has emerged into an important sector for the Shire, attracting just under 200,000 visitors per year who inject \$35.8 million into the local economy, which largely flows to locally owned small businesses. Tourism represents 4.6% of the total economy and 7.7% of total employment, making it the fifth most important employing sector in the Shire. While relatively small, tourism provides economic diversity and represents a key export from the Shire. The existing tourism sector can be a strong foundation for future growth, expansion and diversification.

Population growth has been volatile (as it often is in Western Australia), however, overall population growth has been greater post-COVID compared to the period directly before the Pandemic. In smaller communities, population is an important growth stimulus for the local economy, increasing local household expenditure and demand for services. Interestingly, the data seems to indicate that the population growth over the last few years is based on workers choosing to live in the district, many of whom are likely associated with the mining sector. Continuing to attract new residents and families will not only deliver a significant economic boost but it will also help to address the rapidly aging of the population.

As the population has increased, there has been a rise in building approvals, which will hopefully increase the supply of houses in the near future. Housing availability in the Shire is close to zero and is severely limited, which can stymie population growth, restricting what otherwise would be a driver of economic growth. Naturally, housing is constrained across the country, so the issue does not put the Shire at a competitive disadvantage, however, it remains a constraint on growth. Additional housing is required in order to enable continued (and future) population growth.

Based on the most recent Census data (2021), the population of the Shire is older and aging quickly, as the district has seen a decrease in families (i.e. children 14 and under and adults 35-54 years old) and a significant increase in people 65 and over. The more recent labour force data may show a potential shift in this trend, as there is anecdotal evidence of many mine workers moving to the district with their families. The 2026 Census will provide further insights.



Population and Demographics

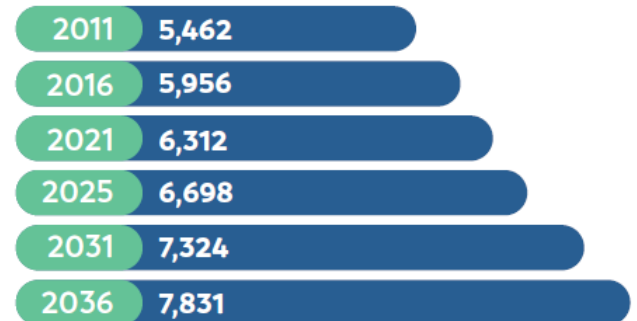
Population (2025)



Median Age



Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup Population



Source: ABS (2026); WA Tomorrow (2026); Lucid Economics



Economy

Gross Regional Product (2024-25)

\$451 Million



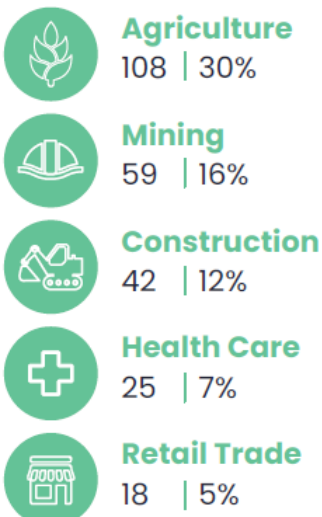
Unemployment rate
2.9% (March 2026)

amongst the lowest since 2010

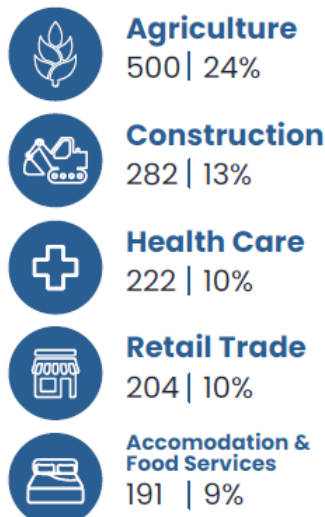
Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Key Sectors

Contribution to Economy (\$M)



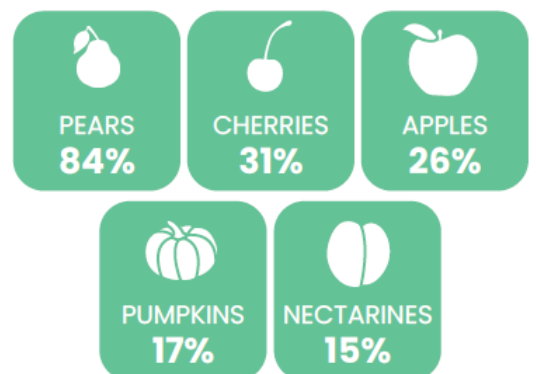
Contribution to Jobs (No.)



Source: REMPLAN (2026)

Agricultural Production

Agricultural Product



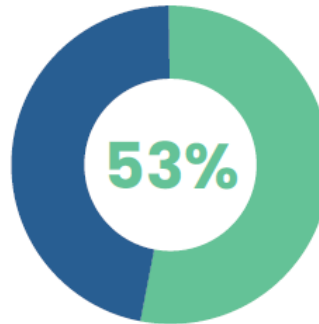
% of Western Australia (2021-22)

Source: ABS (2022)



Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup has **33% FEWER JOBS** than resident workers.

Source: ABS (2022)



53% of local residents work outside the Shire

Source: ABS (2022)

Housing

Region	2026	Annual Change	Since 2020
Donnybrook	\$690,000	22%	125%
Balingup	\$602,000	14%	108%
Greater Perth	\$880,000	15%	83%

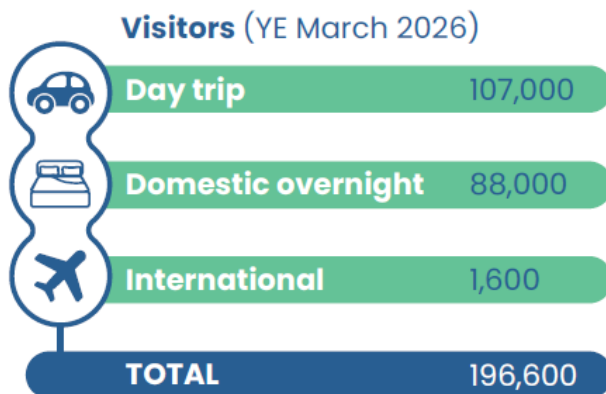
Source: REIWA (2026)



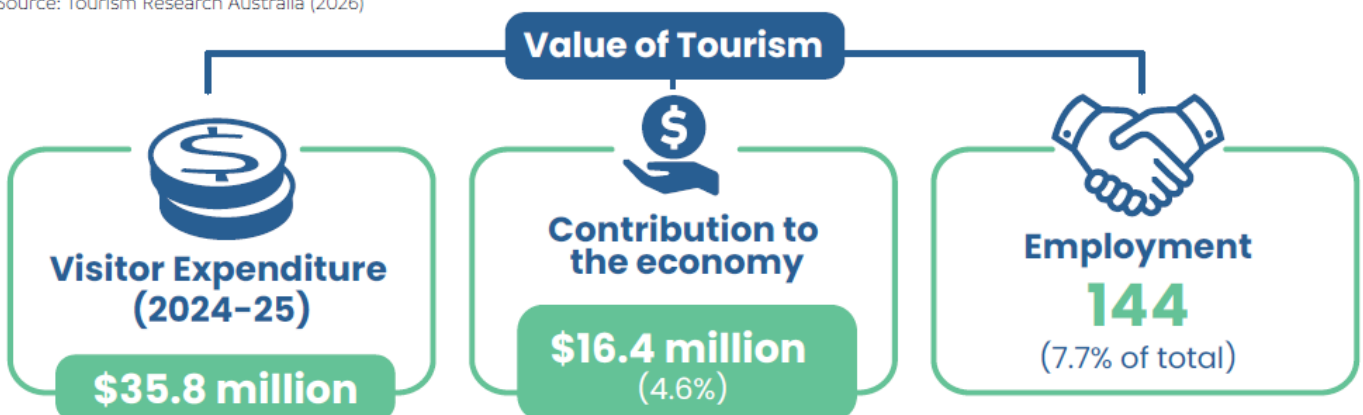
Residential vacancy rate:
0%
(June 2026)

Source: SQM Research (2026)

Tourism



Source: Tourism Research Australia (2026)



Source: REMPLAN

(in Gross Regional Product terms)

3. What Stakeholders Said

The development of this Strategy has been informed by engagement with local businesses, community organisations, tourism operators and key stakeholders across the Shire.

Stakeholders provided clear, practical and experience-based insights into the current performance of the local economy, the opportunities that exist for future growth and the challenges that must be addressed to realise this potential. Stakeholders also clearly articulated their expectations in terms of the role that the Shire should play in terms of economic development and tourism.

A variety of strong and consistent messages emerged through the consultation process.

Lifestyle and liveability are really important...

The lifestyle offering of the Shire was one of the most consistently identified strengths. Stakeholders highlighted affordability, space, community connection and access to natural environments as key factors attracting residents to the area.

Importantly, this lifestyle advantage is reinforced by proximity to larger regional centres, allowing residents to access services and employment opportunities while maintaining a high-quality regional lifestyle.

This combination of lifestyle and accessibility is a key driver of population attraction and has the potential to support future workforce growth and economic development.

The district enjoys a strong agricultural foundation...

Agriculture was universally recognised as the foundation of the local economy. Stakeholders highlighted the depth, diversity and adaptability of the agricultural sector, as well as its ongoing importance to local employment and economic activity.

Beyond traditional production, stakeholders identified opportunities to further strengthen the agricultural sector through value-adding, diversification and stronger connections to tourism.

There is also a recognition that agriculture is evolving, with a mix of larger-scale operations and smaller, niche producers contributing to the overall structure of the sector.

Tourism is a key growth opportunity for the Shire...

Tourism was consistently identified as one of the most significant opportunities for future economic growth.

Stakeholders highlighted the strength of the Shire's natural assets, events and existing attractions, as well as the growing interest in nature-based, agri-tourism and experience-based tourism.

However, there was also strong consensus that the current tourism offering is not fully developed. In particular, stakeholders identified:

- A lack of accommodation options
- Limited depth of bookable experiences
- A need for stronger integration and presentation of existing assets

As a result, the Shire is not currently capturing the full economic value of visitation, with many visitors passing through rather than staying overnight.

A lack of housing and housing diversity is a constraint on growth...

A key and consistent issue identified by stakeholders was the lack of available housing across the Shire. This constraint is limiting population growth, workforce availability and the ability of local businesses to expand.

While population growth is occurring, stakeholders noted that it is constrained by limited housing supply, with strong demand not being matched by available housing options. Addressing this issue is seen as critical to supporting future economic development.

There is a need for greater economic depth and activity...

Stakeholders identified that while the Shire has strong underlying assets, there is limited economic depth in terms of retail, hospitality and general activity, particularly outside of peak periods and major events.

There is a desire for:

- More local services and businesses
- Greater activation of town centres
- Increased vibrancy, particularly in the evenings

Improving the level of economic activity is seen as important not only for residents, but also for improving the overall visitor experience.

The Shire has a significant and strong role to play in economic development and tourism...

Stakeholders were clear that the Shire has a critical role to play in enabling economic development and tourism outcomes, although not necessarily as a direct provider.

The Shire is expected to act as a facilitator and enabler by:

- Supporting private sector investment
- Providing clear and efficient planning processes
- Coordinating stakeholders and local efforts
- Promoting the region and its opportunities
- Advocating for infrastructure and funding

This role is seen as central to unlocking the opportunities identified throughout the consultation process.

There is a need for consistent direction about the future...

Overall, stakeholder feedback indicates that the Shire does not need to fundamentally change its economic direction. Instead, the focus should be on:

- Leveraging existing strengths
- Addressing key constraints, particularly housing and accommodation
- Strengthening the tourism and visitor economy
- Enhancing the overall place experience
- Improving coordination and delivery across stakeholders

This provides a clear and practical foundation for the Strategy, grounded in local knowledge and aligned with the Shire's existing character and capabilities.

Figure 3.1. Key Advantages and Barriers from Stakeholder Feedback



Source: Lucid Economics

4. Key Advantages and Future Opportunities

4.1 Competitive Advantages

The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup has a clear and well-defined set of competitive advantages that underpin its economic performance and future potential. These advantages are strongly place-based, reflecting the Shire's natural environment, agricultural capability, lifestyle offering and position within the South West region. Together, they provide a credible and durable foundation for economic development and tourism, shaping both the types of future growth opportunities and the way the Shire can position itself to residents, visitors and investors.

- Natural environment and landscape:** The Shire's natural environment is a defining competitive advantage, underpinning both its lifestyle appeal and visitor economy. Forests, rivers, orchards and open landscapes provide a strong foundation for nature-based tourism and contribute significantly to local liveability. These assets are not easily replicable and differentiate the Shire within the South West region. The environment also functions as core economic infrastructure, supporting tourism, visitation and residential attraction.
- Lifestyle and regional living appeal:** The Shire offers a high-quality regional lifestyle characterised by affordability, space, community connection and access to nature. Stakeholders repeatedly emphasised the importance of the local lifestyle as a key advantage of the area. This lifestyle has become increasingly attractive in the context of post-COVID population movement. Importantly, the Shire combines this lifestyle offering with proximity to Bunbury and Perth, allowing residents to access services and employment opportunities. This balance between lifestyle and accessibility supports both population growth and workforce attraction.
- High-quality agricultural base:** Agriculture is the foundation of the local economy, supported by fertile soils, reliable water access and established orchard systems. The sector is both significant in scale and diverse in output, with a mix of traditional and emerging crops. This diversity provides resilience and adaptability in response to changing market conditions. The strength of agricultural production also provides a platform for local agri-tourism experiences, value-adding and export-based economic activity.
- Strategic location within the South West:** The Shire occupies a central position within the South West region, with strong connections to Bunbury, Busselton and other key destinations. This location provides access to major transport networks, visitor markets and regional services. The Shire has the potential to function as a base within the region, rather than simply a pass-through location. This positioning supports both tourism growth and broader economic connectivity.
- Established tourism assets and events:** The Shire benefits from a range of established visitor attractions, such as the Apple Fun Park and the Golden Valley Tree Park, and events (including the Apple Festival and Medieval Carnivale amongst others) that contribute to visitation and regional identity. A variety of nature based assets such as parks, trails and local attractions provide a foundation for the tourism sector. Major events play a significant role in drawing visitors and activating the local economy. These assets provide a strong base from which to expand and diversify the Shire's tourism offering.

- **Strong community and local networks:** An active and engaged community is a key advantage, supporting local events, businesses and overall place identity. Community organisations and local networks contribute to the delivery of experiences and the vibrancy of the Shire. This level of engagement supports economic development outcomes through collaboration and local ownership. While there are some differences across townships, the overall strength of the community is a significant asset.

4.2 Opportunities

Building on these competitive advantages, a range of practical and achievable opportunities have been identified to support future economic and tourism growth. These opportunities are not about fundamentally changing the direction of the local economy but rather leveraging existing strengths more effectively and addressing key constraints. These opportunities reflect both the underlying economic evidence and the insights of stakeholders, providing a clear pathway to increase investment, diversification and economic activity across the Shire.

These opportunities directly inform the strategic framework set out in the following section.

Table 4.1. Economic and Tourism Opportunities, Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup

Opportunity	Description	Why?
Tourism accommodation	There is a clear and immediate opportunity to expand the supply and diversity of tourism accommodation across the Shire, including hotel/motel, nature-based accommodation, resorts/retreats, B&B, etc. The current accommodation offering is limited and constrains the ability to capture overnight visitation and extend visitor stays. Increasing the availability and quality of accommodation would allow the Shire to retain more visitor expenditure and support the growth of the tourism sector.	• Strong visitation base • Existing tourism assets • Proximity to major tourism markets • Gap between supply and demand • Supports longer stays and higher spend
Tourism development and diversification	The Shire has significant potential to expand and diversify its tourism offering, particularly through nature-based, agri-tourism and experience-based activities. This opportunity focuses on building depth in the visitor experience rather than creating entirely new markets. Enhancing and integrating existing assets will improve the overall visitor offer and increase competitiveness within the South West region.	• Natural environment • Agricultural base • Established events • Growing demand for experiences • Lifestyle-driven destination appeal • Supports longer stays and higher spend
Agricultural value-adding	There is an opportunity to increase the value generated from the agricultural sector through local processing, packaging and production of higher-value goods. This includes utilising second-grade produce and creating new food and beverage products. Value-adding can increase margins, create new business opportunities and support local supply chains.	• Diverse agricultural production • Existing industry capability • Access to local produce • Export potential • Links to tourism experiences

Opportunity	Description	Why?
Agri-tourism and farm-based experiences	There is an opportunity to develop more agri-tourism experiences that connect visitors directly with farming, production and rural landscapes. These experiences could also provide additional income streams for producers and enhance the overall visitor offering.	• Agricultural identity • Visitor interest in authentic experiences • Existing farms and producers • Lifestyle and landscape appeal • Complements existing tourism offering
Residential housing and population growth	Addressing housing supply constraints presents a critical opportunity to support population growth and workforce availability. Increased housing supply (and diversity of housing options) will enable businesses to attract and retain workers and a growing population will drive increased demand for a range of products and services.	• Strong lifestyle appeal • Existing population growth trends • Available residential land • Proximity to larger centres • Increases local household expenditure pool, creating additional local demand
Town centre activation and local services	There is an opportunity to strengthen the vibrancy and functionality of local town centres through increased retail, hospitality and service offerings. Greater activation in towns and a reduction in vacancy will increase the vibrancy of town centres, encouraging more visitors and residents to the area.	• Existing town centre infrastructure • Empty shops and premises on main streets • Growing community demand for services • Future visitor economy growth • Events and activation potential
Improved visitor experience and coordination	There is an opportunity to better coordinate and present the Shire's tourism offering through improved branding, marketing and integration of assets. A clearer and more consistent visitor experience will increase dwell time, visitation and expenditure.	• Strong underlying assets • Existing visitation flows • Fragmented current offer • Proximity to tourism markets • Need for clearer identity and marketing

Source: Lucid Economics

5. Strategy Overview

5.1 Overview

The Donnybrook-Balingup district is positioned as a lifestyle-driven, agriculture-based and nature-focused regional economy with the opportunity to strengthen its visitor economy, expand its population base and build greater economic depth over time.

This Strategy is structured around a clear and practical framework that guides how the Shire will support economic development and tourism outcomes over time (Figure 5.1). The framework is designed to translate the Shire's competitive advantages and identified opportunities into a coordinated set of actions that enable sustainable growth.

The Strategy is underpinned by a simple but deliberate delivery model. It reflects the role of the Shire not as a direct provider of economic activity, but as a facilitator and enabler of investment, growth and collaboration across the local economy.

The framework brings together:

- A clear economic direction based on local strengths and opportunities
- A defined set of economic focus areas
- A delivery model centred on coordination, planning, promotion and advocacy
- A practical action plan aligned to each strategic area

Together, this framework provides a coordinated approach to economic development and tourism that supports a strong, diverse and resilient local economy.

The Strategy focuses on a defined set of economic areas that reflect the Shire's competitive advantages and the opportunities identified through analysis and consultation. These focus areas provide clarity around where effort and resources should be concentrated to maximise economic outcomes.

The key economic focus areas are:

- Tourism experiences and products
- Tourism accommodation
- Housing diversity and supply
- Agriculture and value-adding agriculture
- Retail offering and town centre activation

The delivery of this Strategy is based on a clearly defined role for the Shire. Consultation has reinforced that the Shire's primary function is to enable economic outcomes, rather than directly deliver them.

This role is structured across four key functions:

- **Facilitator:** Supporting investment, coordinating stakeholders and enabling outcomes
- **Regulator:** Providing a clear, consistent and efficient planning and regulatory environment
- **Promoter:** Actively promoting the Shire as a place to live, visit and invest
- **Advocate:** Representing the Shire's interests and securing funding and infrastructure

These roles underpin the Strategy framework and guide how initiatives are delivered.

Figure 5.1. Donnybrook-Balingup Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Framework

Vision: A strong, diverse and resilient economy			
Purpose: To guide investment, policy and activities across the Shire’s economy and tourism sector through a clear and coordinated framework that enables sustainable economic growth.			
Economic Focus Areas: • Tourism experiences and products • Tourism accommodation • Housing diversity and supply		• Agriculture and Value-adding • Improved retail offering • Town activation	
The Role of The Shire			
Coordination The Shire can actively engage with businesses and the community to align priorities and facilitate collaboration across the district.	Planning The Shire should provide an efficient and customer-focused planning regime that ensures sufficient land supply, reduces barriers and enables private sector investment.	Promotion The Shire should support promotion of the district to attract new residents, additional visitors and investment.	Advocacy The Shire should advocate for funding and infrastructure support by positioning local priorities and projects for investment.

Source: Lucid Economics

5.2 Coordination

The Strategy will focus on strengthening coordination across the Shire's economy and tourism sector to ensure that activities, investment and stakeholder efforts are aligned and mutually reinforcing. Economic development outcomes require alignment between businesses, industry, community organisations and government and effective coordination is critical to achieving outcomes.

Without strong coordination, efforts can become fragmented and uncertain, reducing the effectiveness of investment and limiting collaboration. A clear and active coordination role ensures that stakeholders are aligned, opportunities are progressed and barriers are identified early and addressed collectively.

This role includes proactively engaging with businesses and the community to align priorities and facilitate collaboration across the district.

5.3 Planning

The Strategy will focus on strengthening planning and land use outcomes to ensure that the Shire provides a clear, efficient and investment ready environment for economic development and tourism. The availability of appropriately zoned and serviced land, together with consistent and timely planning processes, has a direct impact on the ability of the private sector to invest and grow.

Stakeholder feedback identified planning as both a key influence on investment outcomes and an area where improved efficiency can unlock significant opportunity. Strengthening the planning function will support development, reduce uncertainty and create a more investment ready environment.

This function includes ensuring sufficient land supply for future development is available and that barriers to development are reduced to enable private sector investment.

5.4 Marketing and Promotion

The Strategy will focus on strengthening the promotion of the Shire as a place to live, visit and invest, building a clear and consistent narrative that reflects its competitive advantages and target markets. While the Shire has strong underlying assets and a distinctive identity, these strengths are not always clearly understood or communicated externally.

A coordinated and consistent approach to promotion will enhance the Shire's positioning within the South West region and support increased visitation, population growth and investment. This includes clearly articulating the Shire's value proposition and ensuring that messaging aligns with its competitive advantages and target markets.

This role includes strengthening the visibility and positioning of the district to attract visitors, residents and investment.

5.5 Advocacy

The Strategy will focus on strengthening advocacy to secure the investment, infrastructure and support required to enable economic development and tourism outcomes across the Shire. Many of the opportunities identified through this Strategy require investment and support beyond the Shire's direct control.

A clear and targeted advocacy approach will ensure that local priorities are effectively represented and supported at regional, State and national levels. Through effective advocacy, the Shire can work with partners to influence funding decisions and ensure that local priorities are clearly positioned for public investment.

This function includes advocating for funding and infrastructure support from State and Commonwealth Governments.

6. Action Plan

The following action plan has been developed to implement the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. This action plan provides specific guidance to the Shire regarding future activities that are aligned with the strategy and the Shire's current level of resourcing. The action plan should be reviewed and evaluated after the initial 12-18 month period and new or revised actions should be developed at that time. In such a way, the strategy provides long-term direction to the Shire and the Action Plan provides short-term implementation.

Table 6.1. Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Action Plan

Pillar/Action	Priority
Coordination	
Partner with the Chamber to deliver targeted workshops that support local businesses and strengthen connections	High
Establish ongoing forums with key stakeholder groups to identify issues and coordinate responses	Med
Proactively engage with businesses and operators to identify needs and support activity	High
Investigate the opportunity to facilitate a community ambassador network to promote the district and support visitor servicing	Med
Work with regional partners and operators to develop and promote coordinated visitor itineraries	Med
Work with stakeholders to explore opportunities to develop rail trail experiences and associated partnerships	Low
Work with partners to ensure the Kirup Oval and Donnybrook Ovals can be utilised for temporary camping and shuttle services for major events	High
Planning	
Provide clear and accessible planning guidance (factsheets) for key development activities such as food businesses and accommodation	High
Review planning policies to identify opportunities to reduce barriers and unlock development	Low
Provide planning support and guidance to enable nature based accommodation across the Shire	Med
Explore with DBCA opportunities for nature-based accommodation and activation at the old town site of East Kirup	Med
Explore planning approaches to enable rural residential and visitor accommodation using onsite infrastructure solutions	High
Ensure sufficient land is available to support a diversity of residential development	High

Pillar/Action	Priority
Promotion	
Support partners to increase the web presence of visitor assets and towns	Med
Undertake a formal review of signage and wayfinding to improve the visitor experience	Med
Investigate the opportunity to deploy interpretive visitor kiosks in the Shire to provide visitor information	Low
Provide a temporary, pop-up greeter or volunteer visitor service centre near key attractions during peak periods	High
Facilitate a volunteer camp host service for each transit park to increase visitor servicing	High
Organise a family-focused event to promote opportunities for family daycare with various support agencies	High
Work with property owners to support activation of vacant premises through interim uses	Low
Support development of short stay trail products and experiences	Low
Facilitate access to existing amenities (Balingup Recreation Centre) for trail walkers	High
Advocacy	
Advocate for funding to support acquisition of event telecommunications infrastructure	Low
Advocate for funding to support the purchase of event traffic signage that could be used by local groups for major events	High
Advocate for investment in infrastructure to support major events	High
Support funding applications and partnerships to deliver a seasonal produce facility in Balingup	Low
Advocate for funding to support rail trail related infrastructure and experiences	Low
Support and position accommodation opportunities for external investment and grant funding	Med

Source: Lucid Economics

7. Recommendations

Based on the research and consultation conducted for this project, Lucid Economics makes the following recommendations:

- Council should note and acknowledge the findings from this project, including:
 - The importance of population growth to supporting economic growth
 - The important role that local growers and larger businesses in the Shire play as a key catalyst for economic activity
 - The role of tourism plays in supporting local businesses and the importance of increasing length of stay and encouraging accommodation development as a mechanism to significantly increase visitor expenditure in the Shire
 - The important role that the Shire has to play in terms of economic development and tourism
- Council should adopt this strategy document and implement the action plan
- Council should seek to grow resources for economic development and tourism over time, with the goal to hire an Economic Development and Tourism Officer
- Council should continue its membership in Southern Forests and Valleys in terms of destination marketing and branding (due to strong alignment with the existing tourism offering):
 - Council should ensure that both Donnybrook and Balingup are featured as key destinations in the broader region
 - Council should seek to maximise the value of this membership by working with Southern Forests and Valleys to promote and market the local destination
 - Council should work with Southern Forests and Valleys as well as Australia's South West on specific tourism marketing campaigns in order to leverage the membership and affiliation

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