Economic Development Strategy 2014 to 2019

Executive Summary
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The Wodonga Economic Development Strategy 2014 to 2019 has been developed to guide the economic development and investment attraction activities of Wodonga Council through what is a unique and exciting time in the city's history.

Wodonga is quickly becoming a significant regional city and important contributor to Victoria's economy, liveability and vision for a "state of cities".

Wodonga continues to be one of Victoria's fastest growing regional cities and has enjoyed a sustained population growth rate, as well as ongoing residential, commercial and industrial development.

Wodonga's residential population is fast approaching 40,000 and the city services a catchment of 180,000 people, making it the largest city in North East Victoria.

This strategy identifies the following vision for Wodonga's economy.

In 2019, Wodonga is a city with a vibrant and diverse economy, driven by innovative and sustainable businesses.

The city's central business area has emerged as a premier retail, entertainment and service destination for North East Victoria, where the offerings are sophisticated and reflect the community's active and creative lifestyle.

The completion of the intermodal terminal and attraction of significant new private investment at Logic has strengthened its reputation as a leading industrial precinct.

Wodonga businesses feel engaged, supported and encouraged to grow, while new businesses and industries are attracted to Wodonga because of its location, stable workforce and high-quality infrastructure.

Public and private investment has continued around the city, with clear and consistent council strategies, polices and plans in place to ensure certainty for investors and developers.

Four focus areas and supporting goals provide the platform for achieving this vision, with the success of the strategy measured by the achievement of the pillars identified for each focus area.

**Focus area 1: Central business area**
Goal: To attract investment, development and activity that will contribute to the revitalisation of Wodonga's central business area.

**Focus area 2: Logic**
Goal: To be the leading industrial precinct for large manufacturing, transport, warehousing and logistics in northern Victoria and along the eastern seaboard on the Hume Freeway.

**Focus area 3: Existing businesses**
Goal: To ensure Wodonga businesses are provided with the assistance and support they need to enable them to grow and prosper.

**Focus area 4: Investment attraction**
Goal: To capitalise on Wodonga's key competitive strengths to leverage government and private (both Australian and international) investment to grow the city's economy.
Introduction

Wodonga is in the unique and exciting position of emerging from its existence as a rural-based town, to very quickly becoming a significant regional city and important contributor to Victoria’s economy, liveability and vision for a “state of cities”.

The city’s population is fast reaching 40,000 (with a growth rate of 2.1 per cent in 2012-2013) and between 2006 and 2011 it grew by more than the local government areas in North East Victoria (Wangaratta, Indigo, Towong and Alpine) and Albury combined (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011). Together with Albury, Wodonga is Australia’s 17th largest city.

While the city’s economy is concentrated in a relatively small area (434km²), it provides a range of higher order services and facilities to a broad rural catchment of approximately 180,000 people.

Wodonga Council has embraced the significant opportunities in the city and in 2013 adopted its Wodonga Council Plan 2013-2014 to 2016-2017.

The plan recognises the changing face of the city and seeks to achieve the strategic objective that “Wodonga is a prosperous regional city, alive with opportunity and thriving on growth and investment”.

The plan specifically identifies the key priority activity “revise the Wodonga Economic Development Strategy with an increased focus on assisting existing businesses to grow and prosper”.

As a result, this strategy has been developed to guide the council’s economic development and investment attraction activities for the period 2014 to 2019.
Wodonga now: Situation analysis

Competitive advantages

Wodonga has a significant number of competitive advantages that assist in attracting development, investment and people to the city.

- A high level of water security as a result of the water storage capacity at Lake Hume makes the city an attractive location for manufacturing, particularly that which is high water-intensive.
- The city is a strategic location for many national and multinational businesses, with more than 75 per cent of Australia’s population able to be reached by next-day transport shift.
- The city boasts access to a stable, skilled local workforce of more than 50,000 people and a regional workforce of more than 80,000 people.
- The local economy is not reliant upon one industry and in times of downturn it remains steady.
- Significant development-ready industrial land is available, including Logic and Baranduda Industrial Estate.
- Residential land releases, including White Box Rise, Riverside Estate and the future Leneva-Baranduda growth area, provide a diverse range of offerings.
- The city features high-quality transport, telecommunications, water and energy infrastructure.
- World-class health and education facilities are available and service the whole North East region.
- Exceptional recreational facilities, walking and cycling tracks and parks and open spaces are enjoyed by residents and visitors.
- The future Baranduda Fields project, located on 100ha of council-owned land at Baranduda, will service a large proportion of the city’s future sporting and recreation needs.
- There is an abundance of fresh, delicious and healthy produce, to suit a variety of tastes.
- A vibrant and energetic artistic community, state-of-the-art performance venues and events for all ages give local residents a sense of belonging and civic pride.
- The city has strong linkages with Australia’s history through the Bonegilla Migrant Experience, the largest and longest operating migrant reception centre in the post-war era, and the Bandiana Army Museum.
Challenges and opportunities

Several key factors will influence Wodonga’s economy, any of which if not harnessed will result in a significantly underperforming economy.

**Wodonga is the fastest growing city in North East Victoria and one of the fastest growing in regional Victoria.**

- Based on population growth forecasts there is a need to create an additional 5270 new jobs to cater for population growth by 2031 and achieving these job outcomes will be critical in ensuring the economy progresses.

- There is a higher proportion of people aged 17 years and under in Wodonga (26.1 per cent) than regional Victoria (23.5 per cent) and a lower proportion of people aged 60 years and over (17.5 per cent compared with 24.2 per cent), providing significant opportunities for expansion of education and retention of young people to fill skill vacancies and to drive the future economy.

**The key drivers of Wodonga’s economy (in terms of regional exports, employment, value-added and local expenditure on goods and services) are health care and social assistance, manufacturing and public administration and safety.**

- The volume of vacant industrial land around Wodonga provides significant opportunities for attracting new manufacturers and enabling existing manufacturers to expand.

- Wodonga’s water security, strategic location and skilled and stable workforce make the city an attractive option for manufacturers looking to relocate from their existing location.

- Further development at Logic and the redevelopment of the CBA will boost the transport, postal and warehousing and retail trade sectors, potentially growing them to become key economic drivers.

- The expected rollout of the NBN and advancement in the digital economy have the potential to increase Albury-Wodonga’s economic output by $480 million annually if harnessed.

**The CBA revitalisation has created the opportunity to build a city heart and will significantly strengthen and diversify the city’s retail and commercial footprint, reducing leakage and creating jobs.**
• Analysis shows that 50 to 55 per cent of Wodonga’s non-food retail expenditure is lost to other cities.

• Driving visitation to the CBA through the provision of services, events, entertainment and arts and culture will help the retail sector to flourish.

• Developments in the CBA need to have a social focus to cater for Wodonga’s young population and to build community engagement and pride in the city.

Logic plays a vital role in the attraction of major employers.

• The jobs created at Logic will help drive population growth in Wodonga and the region.

• The construction and operation of the intermodal terminal will not only drive employment growth but will also improve community and industry perceptions of the development.

• Opportunities around manufacturing, and particularly food manufacturing, at Logic need to be explored.

• The relocation of the saleyards to land next to Logic provides opportunities for agribusiness industries to locate there to reach the attendees on market days.

• Victorian and Australian government funding for infrastructure will be critical in enabling development to progress.

Wodonga’s economy is fuelled by 2750 businesses that on average employ seven people.

• Assisting these businesses to remain sustainable and/ or expand will be critical in creating new jobs;

• Existing businesses require significant support through provision of information and research to assist their businesses and targeted training to help with skill gaps; and

• New small businesses can be encouraged through the implementation of an incubator and business support centre model which removes many of the financial impediments for emerging businesses.
Wodonga in the future: Economic vision

In 2019, Wodonga is a city with a vibrant and diverse economy, driven by innovative and sustainable businesses.

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The completion of the intermodal terminal and attraction of significant new private investment at Logic has strengthened its reputation as a leading industrial precinct.

Wodonga businesses feel engaged, supported and encouraged to grow, while new businesses and industries are attracted to Wodonga because of its location, stable workforce and high-quality infrastructure.

Public and private investment has continued around the city, with clear and consistent council strategies, polices and plans in place to ensure certainty for investors and developers.
The way forward: Achieving the economic vision

Strategy framework

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<tr>
<th>Focus area</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Pillars for success</th>
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| 1. Central business area | To attract investment, development and activity that will contribute to the revitalisation of Wodonga’s central business area. | 1. Retail  
2. Entertainment and hospitality  
3. Accommodation  
4. Arts and culture  
5. Professional services  
6. Education  
7. Health  
8. Street activation and increased economic activity |
| 2. Logic               | To be the leading industrial precinct for large manufacturing, transport, warehousing and logistics in northern Victoria and along the eastern seaboard on the Hume Freeway. | 1. Intermodal terminal  
2. Gas gate connection  
3. Private investment attraction  
4. Small lot subdivision |
| 3. Existing businesses | To ensure Wodonga businesses are provided with the assistance and support they need to enable them to grow and prosper. | 1. Business engagement  
2. Training and development  
3. Expansion opportunities  
4. Small and home-based business development |
| 4. Investment attraction | To capitalise on Wodonga’s key competitive strengths to leverage government and private investment to grow the city’s economy. | 1. Government investment  
2. Private investment (both Australian and international)  
3. Strategic planning |