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ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY

2014

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014

“As a long term business owner, I believe that Moonee Valley is a great place to do business.

Its success is built on the unique identity of our local shopping precincts, its great location and the strong partnerships amongst local business owners.”

**Olga Kenny**

– Local business owner and Chamber of Commerce representative

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# Mayor's message

The Economic Development Strategy 2014 outlines Council's priorities to support the economic growth of Moonee Valley. It will attract new investment, create real and sustainable jobs and improve the delivery of services that underpin a strong and healthy community. Positioning Moonee Valley as a great place to live, work and do business.

Moonee Valley is a mostly residential area covering 43 km<sup>2</sup>, located between four and 13 kilometres from Melbourne's CBD and is a city in transition. With regionally significant business precincts, Moonee Valley is an integral member of Melbourne's west.

The rapid development of Melbourne's west presents many significant opportunities as well as challenges. Population growth has increased significantly over the past decade, with 1.1 million residents expected by 2031. This means more than one in five Melburnians will live in the west.

The impacts of this rapid population expansion are significant and wide ranging. Business investment and growth, employment opportunities, transport networks, education, health care and other community services are all challenges which must be intelligently managed through a strong regional vision, strategic planning and appropriate development.

Moonee Valley, with its healthy local economy, can play a leadership role in supporting population growth and addressing these challenges in the whole western region.

The city will do this both through its prominent role in regional leadership alliances formed with neighbouring Local Government areas, and through the Economic Development Strategy 2014.

In developing this strategy, which builds on previous economic development strategies (including the most recent 2008–2012); Council has consulted with businesses, the community, developers and State Government departments.

Thank you to everyone in the community for their valuable contribution in developing the five economic themes - their guiding principles, performance indicators and action plans - as pillars to drive economic growth.

The themes, which are outlined in this strategy, are:

- Active precincts for all
- Home of professional services
- Businesses emerging and entertaining
- Businesses for healthy lifestyles
- Creating jobs for everyone

These themes will provide a clear roadmap for sustainable, long-term economic growth in Moonee Valley.

Four-year action plans (refer to page 23) will provide shorter - term direction; with regular reviews ensuring that strategic direction remain current and relevant in a dynamic economy.

I look forward to seeing the action plans in this strategy delivered so together we can put Moonee Valley at the forefront of economic growth in the west.

Cr Jan Chantry

Mayor

# Economic vision

Moonee Valley is a desirable place to live, work and visit. We have a vibrant and diverse economy which respects the needs of the environment, and we celebrate cultural diversity and social equality.



# Moonee Valley and Melbourne's west

Melbourne's west comprises the local government areas of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Wyndham and Moonee Valley.

These six councils have formed a strong alliance known as LeadWest. The core principle of LeadWest is: "that everyone in our region should have the same opportunities in education, employment, health and recreation no matter their background or where they live." LeadWest is widely recognised as our regional voice on advocacy and leadership, with the Moonee Valley City Council playing a strong and active role in the alliance.

Melbourne's west has a robust economic base, including significant infrastructure such as Victoria's major airport and international tourism and sporting destinations. Gross regional product is \$27.56b, 13.86 per cent of which is generated by Moonee Valley. Top industries by employment are manufacturing, retail and trade, health care and social assistance. The population of the west is just over 767,000 and there are currently 201,000 jobs.

However the rapid population growth is presenting challenges in the west, with unemployment now standing at 7.3 per cent. By comparison, Moonee Valley's unemployment rate is just 3.5 per cent with the exception of youth unemployment which is 9.9 per cent.

Moonee Valley can therefore build on its acknowledged strengths and develop new employment opportunities for the west's new residents.

More than 10,000 businesses are located in Moonee Valley, the majority of them small companies with fewer than five employees. Small business is the backbone of the Australian economy, and is frequently the sector which drives innovation and has the flexibility to adapt quickly to changing economic circumstances.

Our five economic themes will support business growth, through encouraging more professional services firms to locate here, by promoting a sophisticated night economy in the west and by targeting development in the health and wellbeing sector.

Moonee Valley's local economy is already strong. Our retail sector has healthy indicators when compared to other municipalities, according to a 2013 study by commercial real estate company Knight Frank. Puckle Street in Moonee Ponds has one of the lowest retail vacancy rates of less than 3 per cent, while other prominent streets in Melbourne's inner eastern suburbs had vacancy rates well in excess of 10 per cent.

Home ownership and median household income are higher than the metropolitan average, while unemployment is significantly lower.

This healthy economic base means Moonee Valley is very well positioned to drive economic growth in the west, particularly by attracting new businesses which can provide a greater range of services and employment opportunities.





# Council's role

Global, national and regional market forces will always have a bearing on economic growth in the city.

Council's philosophy is to look ahead, think strategically and be proactive in influencing the conditions for investment and enhanced economic growth in the municipality.

We can best achieve this through strategic planning and relationships with local businesses, the community, other tiers of government and relevant agencies.

Council's regional partnerships are extremely valuable, including LeadWest, Western Melbourne Tourism, Local Learning and Education Network (LLEN) and Western Melbourne Regional Development Australia.

Also important are the State and Federal agencies and community and not for profit organisations that provide support services to our community.

It is these partnerships and a 'whole of Council' method that will ensure optimum conditions for investment. This approach underpins our economic development strategy. Economic development aids many functions of local government and is intrinsically linked to health and wellbeing outcomes for the community.

Council has been steered by a number of key documents in developing the direction for the economic development strategy. Regional influences include Plan Melbourne, LeadWest's Western Agenda 2012-2016 and A Jobs and Industry Strategy for Melbourne's west, written in collaboration with Regional Development Australia.

Internal influencing documents include the Council Plan and Moonee Valley Next Generation 2035 Community Vision, City Sustainability and other strategies and structure plans embracing policy, health and wellbeing.

To date Moonee Valley has implemented a number of economic strategies. The most recent (2008-12) delivered achievements including the 'World Class Locally' branding which Council is committed to building and marketed as an investment attraction tool.

Council's key goals include attracting new investment, creating employment opportunities and delivering community services that enhance the desirability of Moonee Valley as a place to live, work and do business.



# The Moonee Valley advantage

Moonee Valley is a proud, mature and liveable city. Adored for its open space and vibrant cultural and recreational activities that combine work and play for a fulfilling life. The community provides employers a diverse and knowledgeable workforce underpinned by accomplished educational institutions. Coupled with integrated transport networks, Moonee Valley is the perfect location to live, work, visit and invest.





# The Moonee Valley advantage

## Liveability

Many active green spaces make Moonee Valley a desirable place to live. Some 12.5 per cent of the municipality is open space, with 220 reserves, recreation facilities and playgrounds

**Moonee Valley is now one of the most sought-after residential locations in Melbourne:**

- Median house prices increased by 23.9 per cent between June 2008 and June 2013.
- Home ownership is high, with 39 per cent of residents owning their home outright compared to the metropolitan average of 33 per cent.

Moonee Valley also has a slightly higher median household income (\$1,377 per week) compared to the metropolitan average of \$1,333 per week.

## Educated workforce

The education institutions in Moonee Valley are well known and are regional destinations for many families. The quality of secondary institutions is reflected in the community profile, with 26.5 per cent of the population holding a bachelor or higher degree.

## Prosperous industry

Moonee Valley boasts more than 10,000 businesses which create than 40,000 jobs for Melbourne's west. The retail industry has been the backbone of the city and includes regionally significant main street shopping strips for locals and visitors to explore. Public administration, health care and social assistance, education and training and professional services complete the top employers by sector.

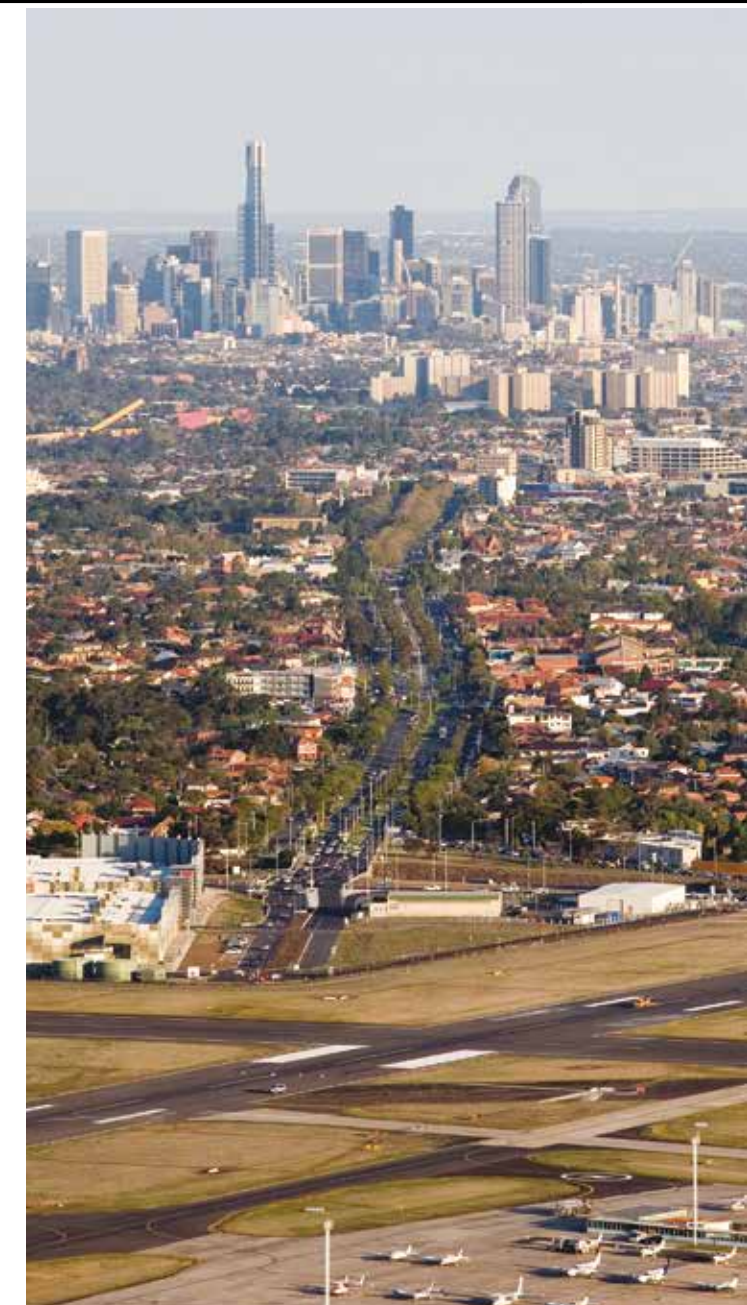
The city's employment profile is strong, with an unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent compared to the metropolitan rate of 6.2 per cent.

## Desired location

Located less than seven kilometres from the heart of Melbourne's CBD, sophisticated public transport and regional road networks ensure Moonee Valley is an ideal location to do business.

## Challenges

Globalisation and the international economic climate are filtering through to the local economy. Growth in the Asian markets, advancements in technology, online shopping and an ageing population are all challenges for Moonee Valley.





## ECONOMIC THEME 1:

### Active precincts for all

Activity centres are vibrant hubs where people shop, work, meet, relax and often live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range from a principal centre such as Moonee Ponds to a neighbourhood centre such as McNamara Avenue in Airport West. Each has a distinctive identity and has drawcard features such as speciality fashion, dining or cultural attractions.

Activity centres with the essential ingredients of commercial, cultural and community value become popular meeting places where businesses grow and prosper. Moonee Valley's activity centres are the backbone of the local economy, providing a significant number of jobs. Council's vision is for accessible, well-planned and designed and regionally recognised centres which provide people with a sense of belonging while fostering business prosperity and growth.

Activity centres are a whole of Victorian Government priority and are being delivered in partnership with councils, the private sector and the local community. ►





## Guiding principles:

1. **Encourage strong trader associations**  
Essential for the success of an activity centre, trader associations provide knowledge, links and significant contributions to building visitation. Collaboration among businesses generates more trade for all than competition.
2. **Implement simple start-up processes**  
These are a key to attracting new businesses which add value to a precinct. Simple start-up processes can change the perception of Council as a compliance and regulatory body to a proactive business supporter.
3. **Attract a diversity of businesses**  
A greater range of businesses attracts a larger customer base, meets more community needs and provides more community connections.
4. **Grow local and social procurement**  
Local procurement is a proven way of stimulating the local economy, with strong flow-on impacts for the economy.
5. **Use footpaths creatively**  
Well planned and designed alfresco dining, footpath trading and performance artists underpin an active and vibrant precinct while maintaining accessibility.
6. **Build enviable reputations**  
Strong reputations attract new businesses and new customers.
7. **Strengthen community pride**  
Pride is strengthened by public infrastructure that is well planned, designed and maintained, and which fosters business development by more frequently attracting the

8. **Promote sustainable transport**  
Walking, cycling and public transport provides easy and convenient access, boosts visitation and encourages more frequent purchases.
9. **Grow green business practices**  
'Growing green' assists business growth by cutting costs through collaborative buying agreements, re-use and recycle programs and a precinct approach to waste diversion.
10. **Create connections through memories**  
Place making activities and events result in rich experiences that create memories and connections.
11. **Build regional destinations**  
Activity centres provide commercial, cultural and retail variety for local communities and people living in Melbourne's west.
12. **Shape a sense of identity**  
A distinctive identity helps attract people and trade to an activity centre, and can be achieved by urban design, landscaping, cultural landmarks, events and community connections. A sense of attachment is driven by people's perception of aesthetics, social experiences and openness of a place.
13. **Pursue sustainable development**  
This engenders pride in an activity centre and is achieved through sustainable design, use and maintenance of buildings and landscapes which respect the local heritage.
14. **Increase housing supply**  
Different types of apartments and homes will bring more people, services, community and growth to our activity centres by increasing the local catchment for businesses.

## Actions will include:

*Note: The comprehensive action plan has been included as an appendix*

1. Utilise the 'Complete Streets' principles to facilitate access to activity centres by all users.
2. Explore and, where feasible, install public realm improvements eg. public art, lighting, bike repair stations and active street furniture.
3. Provide greater support to the Trader Associations, review the current functions of the Economic Development unit and if feasible include place making services.

## Performance indicators:

1. Each special rated precinct has developed and markets its unique identity.
2. Vacancy rates are measured and maintained below industry averages.
3. Use of activity centres by the community is increasing in the annual community survey.

Active precincts attract people into shopping strips underpinning business growth. ►







## ECONOMIC THEME 2: Home of professional services

Currently 6.6 per cent (2,023) of jobs in Moonee Valley are in professional services, yet 4,236 professional service employees leave Moonee Valley for work. Our residents are highly educated (26.5 per cent have a Bachelor degree or higher), and are supported by our prestigious secondary education institutes.

Current lifestyle and education institutes provide an ideal opportunity to strengthen the professional services industry to meet future growth needs of Moonee Valley. Melbourne's west is predicted to grow to more than 1.1 million residents by 2031, increasing demand for services such as accountancy and legal, architecture and engineering, IT, management and consulting firms and financial services.

◀ As population and business growth boost demand for professional services, Moonee Valley can become a new destination for the professional services sector.

### Guiding principles:

- 1. Attract anchor tenants**  
Professional services are well established in Moonee Valley and underpin business growth by providing key tenancies. They are spread across Moonee Valley, from activity centres to neighbourhood strips to home-based businesses.
- 2. Clearly target industry sectors**  
Marketing to specific industry sectors supports business clustering and collaboration, leading to the attraction of similar companies.
- 3. Build digital communication and infrastructure**  
IT services are critical for attracting, growing and operating professional and other businesses.
- 4. Strengthen the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme**  
This actively supports and encourages clustering of professional services.
- 5. Create a home for professionals**  
Professionals like to live in Moonee Valley because of its quality lifestyle, services and schools. These professionals work in the CBD and in Moonee Valley, but will increasingly be drawn to the growing employment opportunities of Melbourne's west
- 6. Reduce commute times**  
This helps foster local communities, families and economies, and encourages environmentally sound transport options such as walking and cycling.

### Actions will include:

*Note: The comprehensive action plan has been included as an appendix*

1. Implement World Class Locally marketing plan in conjunction with key stakeholders in investment attraction eg. real estate agents, government agencies to attract professional services companies.
2. Provide networking opportunities to support open innovation, local procurement and knowledge sharing.

### Performance indicators:

1. Increase the output of the professional services sector measured in REMPLAN for Moonee Valley.
2. Increase in clustering of related professional services in Moonee Valley.
3. Travel to work journey times are improving measured through the annual Community Survey.
4. High satisfaction ratings of networking events measured through evaluation surveys.



### ECONOMIC THEME 3: Emerging businesses and the night economy

Young people in Melbourne's west are a growth market and possess significant spending power. The city will embrace generational change through business development, tapping into this market to develop a sophisticated night economy and provide jobs for young people.

While young people are a rapidly growing consumer segment, they also have a high unemployment rate in Moonee Valley. They provide a large local labour pool for expanding and new businesses, which can in turn generate entry-level jobs and reduce unemployment.

When vibrant streetscapes with innovative lighting are created, our cafes, restaurants and entertainment venues will be encouraged to extend the 9am to 5pm trading period. Business growth and a safer environment will result. Leveraging off existing events, creating iconic street art and installing WiFi hot spots can create a distinctive identity and a sense of belonging that strengthens activity centres. A stronger night economy also supports local business services such as transport, cleaning and maintenance.

A sophisticated night economy will bring people together. It includes a range of dining experiences and entertainment options such as cinema and live shows. ►





## Guiding principles:

### 1. Increase visitation through the night economy

A thriving night economy helps all businesses in the precinct, and moves beyond liquor-based businesses to provide a range of experiences. Atmosphere is essential to the success of the night economy and is achieved through innovative design and infrastructure installations.

### 2. Encourage strong trader associations

These are essential for the success of the night economy, as they provide knowledge, links and marketing expertise which assist established businesses and encourage new business entrants.

### 3. Create pathways to employment

Higher employment rates among younger people will increase their self-esteem, confidence and pride. Their increased spending power also ensures ongoing viability of our businesses.

### 4. Celebrate business success stories

Success breeds success when financial, operational and marketing achievements are shared with the business community.

### 5. Encourage young entrepreneurs

Talented young business leaders are a key to new growth opportunities, particularly in providing new and emerging goods and services. Start-up support will encourage young entrepreneurs to bring new business ideas and innovation to Moonee Valley, and assist in developing future business leaders in the west.

### 6. Encourage multicultural entrepreneurs

Many are already delivering growth in restaurants, cultural products and global services. They are also an important role model for new arrivals from overseas.

### 7. Build digital infrastructure

Reliable, fast digital infrastructure is critical for the operation and promotion of the night economy and other entrepreneurial businesses.

### 8. Extend trading hours

Extended trading hours drive business growth and diversity to meet community needs, including residents needing services and dining later in the evening. These fun, attractive precincts improve local living options and attract regional customers.

### 9. Make streets safer

Active streets are safer than more isolated precincts, particularly for young people and those out late at night. Pop-up businesses, street performers and pop-up art exhibitions will build on existing dining and shopping experiences.

### 10. Unlock the youth market

Young consumers drive new businesses as they seek new products and brands, including the green economy, the sharing economy and information technology. They also want to meet in age-appropriate places, which can be provided through innovative urban design and planning.

## Actions will include:

*Note: The comprehensive action plan has been included as an appendix*

1. Design and, if feasible, develop programs to increase visitation to Moonee Valley eg. Discover Your Own Backyard campaign, way finding signage and significant feature trip nodes.
2. Review the footpath trading policy as a tool to promote business activity and activation of the activity centres. Including busking.

## Performance indicators:

1. The contribution to the local economy from night economy businesses increases measured through REMPLAN.
2. Attraction of businesses that support the development of the night economy measured through Australian Business Register data.
3. Reduction in the youth unemployment rate measured annually through Department of Employment Small Area Market data.

A number of businesses are emerging in hospitality which strengthens visitation and provides a diverse range of employment opportunities. ►





## ECONOMIC THEME 4: Businesses for healthy lifestyles

Moonee Valley will promote its recreation and open spaces to market the city and grow businesses in the health and wellbeing sector.

Moonee Valley is a great place to live and visit, with many sport and recreational opportunities to enjoy. This is evidenced by the high levels of community engagement with our sporting facilities and open spaces. Promoting the city's health and wellbeing through sporting facilities and open spaces provides a powerful opportunity to encourage related businesses and health care services. Healthcare services are the second highest local employment sector (11.6 per cent of employment) and contribute \$387 million to the local economy, while sport and recreation businesses generate \$121 million.

◀ Promoting Moonee Valley's recreation and open spaces as a key message to market the city will help grow health and wellbeing related businesses.

### Guiding principles:

- 1. Grow health and wellbeing business opportunities**  
Clustering new healthcare and wellbeing services near leisure centres and sporting facilities will provide a ready market from our active community.
- 2. Encourage healthy food businesses**  
Fresh food options coupled with the promotion of physical activity and preventative services can reduce the risk and impact of lifestyle-related diseases.
- 3. Grow leisure and social business opportunities**  
Support access and the utilisation of Council facilities to provide greater benefit to the whole community.
- 4. Promote casual outdoor dining experiences**  
Families and groups love to meet in local parks with friends and neighbours, providing opportunities for alfresco dining and food vans.
- 5. Promote sport and leisure venues**  
These are well attended in Moonee Valley, and support the values of an inclusive and healthy community. Venues include sports clubs, racing clubs, leisure centres and high quality open space that attract visitors to local and regional events.
- 6. Ensure healthy urban design**  
Pleasant walking paths and parks encourage good health, reduce car use and connect people to nature and their neighbourhoods. More people walking and lingering also improve local atmosphere and boost local businesses.

### Actions will include:

*Note: The comprehensive action plan has been included as an appendix*

1. Explore opportunities for businesses to leverage the current community events program eg. Moonee Valley Festival, Healthy Ageing Expo and leisure challenge.
2. Develop and implement the actions from the World Class Locally marketing plan to support investment attraction of recreation, allied health and wellbeing businesses.
3. Investigate and, if feasible, trial programs of tactical urbanism (place making) to provide community meeting places eg. pop up parks, pavement to plazas, community gardens.
4. Investigate and, if feasible, implement programs with cafes and restaurants to support healthy eating initiatives.
5. Contribute and advocate for continued investment in the Maribyrnong River in accordance with the master plan.

### Performance indicators:

1. The contribution to the local economy from the health and recreation industry sectors increases.
2. The number of health service and recreation businesses measured through Australian Business Number registrations.
3. Increased participation in sports clubs and leisure facilities measured through annual Community Survey and leisure centre data.





## ECONOMIC THEME 5: Creating jobs for everyone

Moonee Valley will encourage the aviation and automotive industries to expand and develop in Essendon Fields and Airport West.

Manufacturing is the largest employer in Melbourne's west, and Essendon Fields provides a major opportunity with abundant green field sites that can attract significant investment by major employers. The widespread industry development in Essendon Fields, which has 75 hectares ripe for development, will provide significant flow on benefits to business in Airport West.

◀ Creating a nationally recognised employment precinct will support businesses to grow providing long term employment opportunities.

### Guiding principles:

1. **Boost aviation and automotive industries**  
These industries provide a wide variety of employment opportunities for Melbourne's west, ranging from high-level executives and technical specialists to entry-level positions. Essendon Fields and Airport West are positioned as a specialised activity centre, and a targeted marketing strategy will attract new businesses to this area.
2. **Market greenfield sites**  
Sites in Essendon Fields provide a valuable opportunity to increase the cluster of aviation and automotive research and development facilities.
3. **Promote clustering at Airport West**  
Aviation, automotive and manufacturing clustering around Airport West provides great efficiencies and connections for businesses and the workforce. Clustering encourages innovation, supply chain efficiencies and joint ventures.
4. **Encourage local procurement**  
This has a significant multiplier effect within the local economy, generating business growth and more employment opportunities.
5. **Attract emerging and green industries**  
There are big growth opportunities for the manufacturing sector as consumers seek more sophisticated and environmentally friendly products.
6. **Create greater economic value**  
Businesses which focus on social value as well as economic value achieve greater community support, which assists the sustainability of their businesses.
7. **Retain blue collar jobs**  
Blue collar jobs are scarce in the inner city. Retaining them is important for community diversity.
8. **Balance development in Essendon Fields**  
Ensure business growth is managed in a way that is not detrimental to local residential neighbourhoods.
9. **Improve transport options**  
Better transport options for the local workforce are required to support Airport West and Essendon Fields business growth.

### Actions will include:

*Note: The comprehensive action plan has been included as an appendix*

1. Investigate and, if feasible, develop programs to support local jobs for local people and remove barriers to employment eg. Employment clusters.
2. Contribute and advocate for improved Public Transport solutions eg. connection in Essendon Fields and Airport West and frequency of services.
3. Acknowledge the operations of Essendon Airport and advocate to minimise community impact.

### Performance indicators:

1. Increase the contribution to the local economy from Essendon Fields and Airport West.
2. Maintain unemployment rates below the Victorian figure.

# Thank you

Thank you to all the business owners, community members and Council officers who have contributed to the development of this document.

To deliver the Economic Development Strategy 2014, Council's Economic Development unit offers a range of services to support business and grow our local economy.

**Our key services include:**

- Business support
- Marketing
- Placemaking
- Investment Attraction
- Advocacy

To find out more about how we can assist your business, please contact us on **9243 8866** or **[business@mvcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@mvcc.vic.gov.au)**