

2025/26 Progress Report

Economic Development Strategy 2022-26

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Summary

The Economic Development Strategy 2022-26 presents Council's commitment to invest in new opportunities and big ideas in partnership with the public and private sectors, industry business and associations. It guides work to ensure the City is a productive, liveable place with sustainable economic development that enables local job growth.

You can view the strategy here.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate progress made against the commitments within this Plan. It shows the work undertaken across the life of the strategy.






Total Initiatives	Completed	Progressing	Not Started
14	*13	0	0

**Theme 4 initiatives realigned with Council's new Creative Wyndham Strategy 2026-30.*

Achievement highlights 2022-26:

Awards:

- Winner 2024 National Economic Development of Australia – Excellence in Strategic Thinking *(WYNnovation Festival 2024)*
- Finalist 2024 National Economic Development of Australia – Excellence in Economic Development Initiatives *(Innovate Business Growth Program)*
- Winner 2025 Mainstreet Australia Awards - Best Council Traditional or Digital Marketing Campaign *(Love Your Local)*
- Finalist 2025 National Economic Development of Australia – Excellence in Marketing & Promotion *(Love Your Local)*
- Finalist 2025 QS Reimagine Education Awards – The Power of Partnerships *(WyndhamAI for Business powered by RMIT University)*
- Finalist 2025 National Growth Areas Alliance Awards for Collaborative Impact *(WyndhamAI for Business powered by RMIT University)*

SPARK Business & Innovation Hub reached 100% occupancy in 2025-26, exceeded annual revenue target by 330%and secured further Council capital investment in 2026-27 to expand facility, double capacity and deliver a potential long-term return for Council.

The COVID-initiative **Small Business Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund** ceased in 2023. Funding was redirected into two new entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives.

Partnering on the future**,** Wyndham City Council and RMIT University launched **WyndhamAI for Business** in June 2025 - a pioneering model of government-academia innovation to uplift SME capability through partnership, program and place, anchored at the RMIT Business & Technology Studio within SPARK – Wyndham's first higher education technology presence for business. Since October 2025, 270+ businesses engaged through workshops and bespoke intensive AI sprints.

Priority of sponsorship investment saw **Business Awards sponsorship revenue nearly quadrupling** between 2024/25 and 2025/26, increasing by **286 per cent**, reflecting a stronger strategic approach to attracting and securing sponsorships, expanded corporate partnerships, and increased investment in Wyndham's programs, events and initiatives.

WYNnovation Festival and the inaugural Proudly **Wyndham Business Expo** 2024 business events evolved over the period building the city's innovation and entrepreneurial muscle, whilst pursuing sustainable operational models, culminating in the delivery of Wynnovation Business Expo in May 2026 - 500 businesses through four interconnected experiences and a 400 per cent increase in sponsorship revenue.

Council's free **business training program** has seen significant growth over the period. In particular, the Starting a New Business workshop jumped from 49 registrations in February 2023 to 200 in March 2026 with the highest attendance on record of 135.

The **Agribusiness Framework** has been completed to support the future of Wyndham's agribusiness sector. Recommendations and actions from the framework will be considered for implementation in the next Economic Development Strategy.

Development Victoria appointed by the State Government as master developer for the State owned 540-hectare site following the release of the **East Werribee** Opportunity Statement in May 2024. This outcome reflects many years of Council advocacy and will continue as the project progresses through long-term planning to unlock one of Victoria's most significant urban renewal and employment precinct opportunities.

According to the 2025/26 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey, activities promoting economic development and investment in the local area were given:

- an importance score of 9.0 out of 10 by respondents
- a satisfaction score of 7.7 out of 10 - "very good". This result was higher than the long-term average satisfaction since 2021/22 of 7.3 out of 10, or "very good", and the equal highest score recorded for this service. Comparatively, this result was broadly consistent with the metro average satisfaction with "Council's activities to promote economic development" of 7.6 out of 10

This report represents the last progress report, with this Strategy ending at 30 June 2026.

Theme 1: Business Engagement and Connection

This theme seeks to foster new opportunities for investment and growth by strengthening connections between government, industry, and community. Actions are laser-focused on building a culture of supporting local, advocating for collaboration between relevant partners, government and the private sector and celebrating collective win



Business Award Winners 2025

Initiative	25/26 status
1. Initiate target sector roundtables to identify barriers and opportunities for investment and growth.	**Completed**
2. Celebrate business excellence and promote Wyndham as a business and investment destination.	**Completed**
3. Deliver events, programs and communications that enhance local business connections, knowledge and progress.	**Completed**
4. Deliver an industry engagement program.	**Completed**

In 2025/26, Council continued to strengthen relationships across Wyndham's business community, creating new opportunities for businesses to connect, learn and grow. Major initiatives including the **2025 Wyndham Business Awards and Women in Business event** attracted more than 700 business owners, professionals and industry representatives.

The Wyndham Business Awards 2025 also attracted increased sponsorship investment, with sponsorship revenue growing by **286% year-on-year**, reflecting strong business support for recognising and celebrating local business excellence.

Whilst delivering these events, Council demonstrated its commitment to supporting local businesses through its own procurement practices, with **100 per cent** of Business Awards Finalist event expenditure, **70 per cent** of Business Awards Gala expenditure, and **83 per cent** of Women in Business event expenditure directed to Wyndham-based suppliers.

This local-first approach complements the **Love Your Local campaign**, which encourages residents to discover, support and spend with local businesses. The campaign received both state and national recognition, winning a **Mainstreet Australia Award** and being named a finalist in the **2025 National Economic Development Awards.**

In addition, Council undertook **496 business engagements** in 2025/26, significantly exceeding the annual KPI target of 100. Additionally, Council-led robust engagement with the agribusiness sector to inform the development of the Agribusiness Framework. We also participated in sector specific forums including data centres, education and AI. This is in line with the commitment to identify barriers and opportunities for investment and growth. A refreshed 'Roundtable Series' will be delivered in 2026/27, closely aligned to emerging economic trends, business intelligence and priority growth sectors.

Council completed its annual Business Confidence Survey in May 2026. It revealed ongoing **cost pressures** and **economic uncertainty** for local businesses, while also highlighting areas for future growth and support. Demand was strongest for business capability programs in **artificial intelligence** (44%), **digital marketing** (36%), and **finance and business planning** (29%), while larger businesses reported increasing interest in sustainability and ESG initiatives.

These insights will continue to inform Council's business support programs and strengthen its responsiveness to evolving business needs. Together, these initiatives strengthened business networks, increased participation, supported local spending, and enhanced Council's connection with the local business community.



Women in Business Event 2025/26

Theme 2: Entrepreneurship and innovation

This theme seeks to develop a diverse, robust and resilient local economy underpinned by businesses responsive to local, national and global influences. All of the efforts under this theme seek to build the City's innovation and entrepreneurship muscle. Stronger businesses will ensure the City retains talent and that the business community expands. Council is particularly focused on facilitating accelerated early-stage business growth.



Wyndham AI for Business program and RMIT Studio at Spark

5. Deliver an annual business training calendar.	**Completed**
6. Evolve SPARK	**Completed**
7. Deliver the annual WYNnovation Festival.	**Completed**
8. Successfully manage the Small Business Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund.	**No Longer Relevant**

In 2025/26, Council advanced entrepreneurship and innovation through expanded business capability programs, innovation initiatives and strategic partnerships. Over the period, Council delivered **six business workshops** which attracted **547 businesses**, with demand-led topics including starting a new business, AI for business marketing, profitability and cashflow, and cybersecurity. The most popular workshop, 'Starting a New Business', **attracted 135 participants**, highlighting strong entrepreneurial activity and interest in business creation across Wyndham.

The SPARK Business and Innovation Hub maintained **100 per cent occupancy**, whilst increasing its capacity by **13 per cent** (from 47 to 53 workspaces). SPARK also welcomed **27 new businesses** and exceeded its annual revenue target by **330 per cent**. Current members represent professional, scientific and technical services, financial, legal, real estate, digital marketing, AI and education sectors.

Council's flagship and reimagined **WYNnovation Business Expo 2026** attracted **500 businesses** through four interconnected experiences: a Business Expo showcasing more than 55 local suppliers, a conference program

featuring industry experts and keynote speakers, the Pitch Grand Finale showcasing five innovative local businesses, and an After Dark Networking Mixer attended by more than 100 businesses. The event achieved a 400 per cent increase in sponsorship revenue.

The Business Expo and the **new Wyndham AI for Business Program powered by RMIT** University replaced a COVID initiative, the Small Business Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund. Council's pioneering partnership delivered the WyndhamAI for Business program, which included completion of bespoke sprints for four local manufacturing and professional services businesses to implement AI solutions that improved productivity, processes and competitiveness. It also led to the development of a pilot Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Program which will take place during 2026/27, creating pathways for RMIT students to gain industry experience while supporting SPARK members. The partnership's impact was recognised nationally and internationally, being a finalist in the **2025 NGAA Awards for Collaborative Impact**, as well as being shortlisted from more than 1,500 global entries in the 2025 QS Reimagine Education Awards – The Power of Partnerships.

The inaugural **IGNITE Wyndham Business Mentoring Program** pilot attracted 33 mentors and 62 mentees, achieving 100 per cent satisfaction, expectation and recommendation scores from mentees. The strong results demonstrated the value of structured business mentoring within Wyndham's entrepreneurial ecosystem, with the success of the pilot leading to IGNITE continuing as an ongoing Economic Development program delivered by Council.

Together, these achievements strengthened Wyndham's innovation ecosystem, enhanced business capability, accelerated technology adoption, and created new pathways for entrepreneurship, talent development and business growth.



WYNnovation Business Expo 2026

Theme 3: Investment

This theme seeks to attract, facilitate and enable job creation investment particularly in priority sectors. One of the important initiatives as part of this is the future development of the East Werribee Precinct.

Initiative	25/26 status
9. Maintain a proactive approach in facilitating investment in priority sectors.	**Completed**
10. Develop an Agribusiness Strategy.	**Completed**
11. Advocate the State Government for the long-term development of the East Werribee Precinct.	**Completed**

In 2025/26 Council's Economic Development team continued to support investment and employment growth through strategic partnerships, investment facilitation and business engagement initiatives.

Although still some way to go, during the life of this strategy, Council actively advocated for the **East Werribee Precinct**. Council was pleased to achieve a significant milestone, with Development Victoria appointed by the State Government as master developer for the State owned 540-hectare site following the release of the East Werribee Opportunity Statement in May 2024. This will continue to remain an important advocacy opportunity for Council as it works with the State Government to secure this precinct for the attraction of local jobs for Wyndham.

This outcome reflects many years of Council advocacy to advance the East Werribee vision and unlock one of Victoria's most significant urban renewal and employment precinct opportunities. The project is now progressing through long-term planning and design phases and is expected to deliver substantial housing, employment and economic outcomes for Melbourne's west.

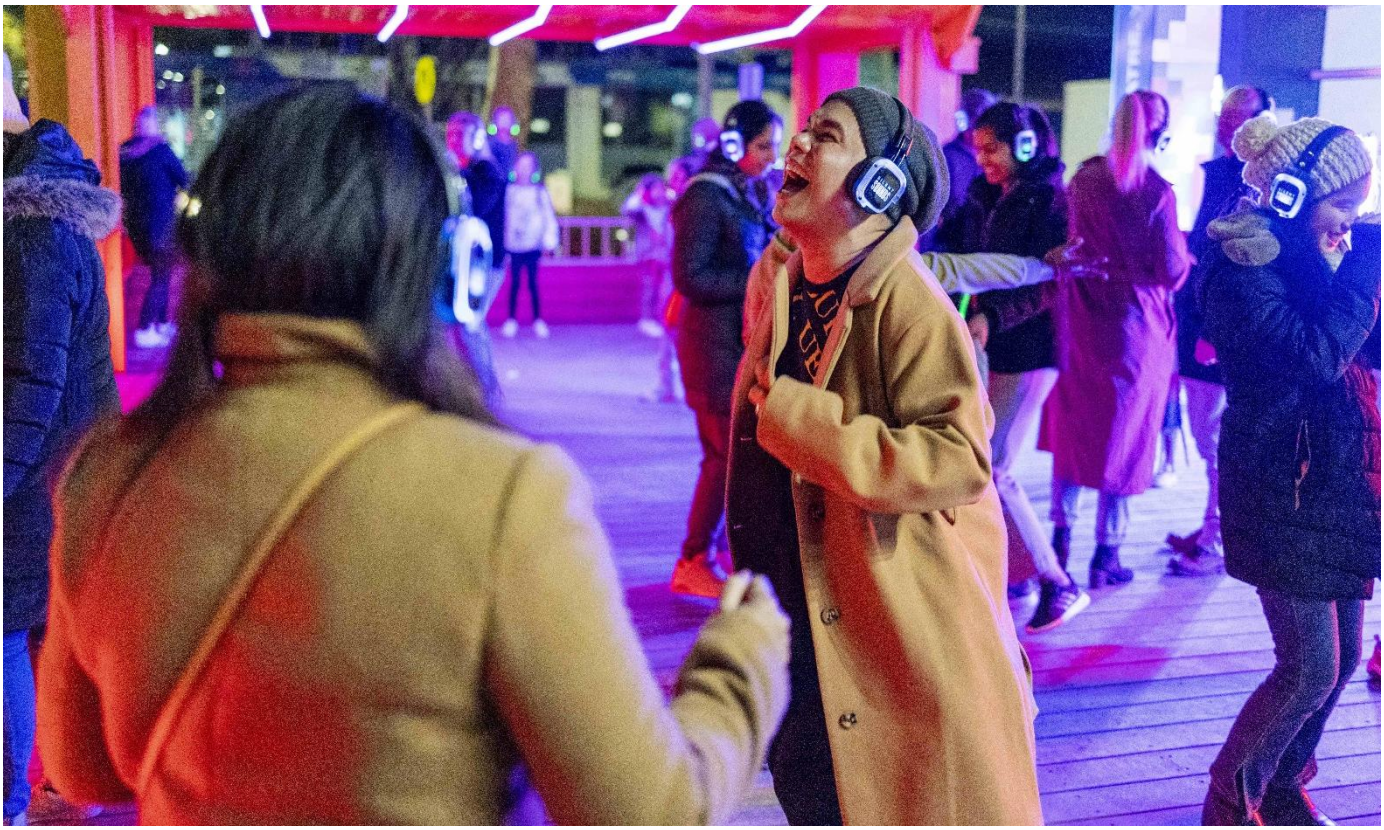
In line with the commitment to maintaining a proactive approach to facilitating investment into the municipality, Council responded to opportunities arising from major infrastructure and development projects such as data centres, transport and logistics, and manufacturing. We also responded to international enquiries and delegations, as well relocation and expansion of local businesses.

Council also strengthened local procurement efforts by updating its **Procurement Policy** and improved processes. Additionally, promotion of Council tenders, commercial opportunities, and the Wyndham Supplier Portal to local businesses was prioritised.

The **Agribusiness Framework** was completed during the year, providing recommendations that will be considered as part of future economic development action plans to support the long-term growth and competitiveness of Wyndham's agribusiness sector.

Theme 4: Activity centre development and enhancement

This theme seeks to grow and enhance Wyndham's activity centres, to provide additional local jobs, services, attractions and city-living opportunities for Wyndham's growing population



Initiative	25/26 status
12. Develop and deliver activity centre visions, plans, policies and programs.	**Completed**
13. Improve activity centre place experiences through enhancement works.	**Completed**
14. Attract investment and partnerships to support future activity centre developments.	**Completed**

In 2025/26 Council continued to strengthen its activity centres through investment in infrastructure, planning and activation across Werribee City Centre, Hoppers Crossing, Woodville, Point Cook and other local centres.

Key achievements included progress on the **Werribee City Centre Plan** and **Woodville Place Plan**, upgrades to streetscapes, parks and pedestrian connections, and the incorporation of the **Wyndham Plan** into the Wyndham Planning Scheme, an important milestone providing greater certainty for future investment and development across Wyndham's network of activity centres.

Council also delivered and supported **a range of activations** in centres including Werribee City Centre, Hoppers Junction, Tarneit and Point Cook, with major events such as the Winter Street Party, The Rink, LIT and Firefly Night Market, alongside local marketing campaigns including Why Watton and Love Your Local, as well as numerous local activations such as movies or seasonal activities.

Place improvement grants funded **upgrades** in Hoppers Junction, Woodville and Sharp St and outdoor dining initiatives, and additional support extended to community-led activations in collaboration with developers such as Soho Point Cook and Point Cook Pop Up Park. All of this sought to enhance the attractiveness of local centres, increase visitation and support local businesses and local spend.



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