



# Annual Report



*November  
2023*

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The Committee for Echuca Moama acknowledges the traditional custodians and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

# Combined Economic Profile

Campaspe Shire & Murray River Council LGA



## POPULATION

51,513 people



## WORKFORCE

22,024 jobs



## OUTPUT

\$7.148 billion

Data from [Remplan \(Murray River Council\)](#) and [Remplan \(Campaspe Shire Council\)](#)



# Message from the CEO and Chair

While the year appears to have passed quickly, some may say that the road to post-pandemic and post-flood recovery has been slower than anticipated and, in some instances, not as comprehensive as it needed to be. For example, there continues to be a range of housing challenges in the Rochester area, with some houses fully repaired while neighbouring houses remain an empty shell, a testament to the damage that was sustained during the floods and a clear picture of what still needs to be done. C4EM continues to see a need for ongoing support of our local businesses and the community that sustains them. This support is needed not only in times of disaster but in an ongoing manner during times of recovery.

With Deanne Armstrong stepping down earlier this year, the board identified that for the organisation to fulfill its potential membership and project delivery, that a strategic-thinking CEO would be needed to continue to build on our vision and commercial focus, and we welcomed Chris Janson onboard in February.

Chris' drive and enthusiasm has seen him quickly become involved in several comprehensive issues in the region including:

- The draft Echuca Moama Flood Study Report, which is currently open for comments and is the first part of the Echuca Moama Torrumbarry Flood Study and Risk Management Plan Project. The second part of the project will follow in 2024.
- The Echuca Safe Towns Sub-committee and implementing CCTV and safety measures in the CBD.
- A partnership with Committee for Greater Shepparton to attract investment and employment opportunities through regional-based opportunities in food and fibre production.
- Recognised at the Climate and Leadership Jobs Summit as the lead go-to agency for renewable energy in our region.
- Water security under the Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Bill 2023 which, if passed will reintroduce water buybacks and remove the requirement to consider the social and economic impacts of purchasing water from irrigators.

Late last year, C4EM submitted and was successful in a funding application to provide a well-being event to locals affected by the recent floods. Tickets to the event were snapped up within the first 48 hours, demonstrating the need for such community support. The event was held in June this year, and survey results pointed to 100% of attendees scoring the event with a 7 out of 10 or higher (70% of attendees rating the event as 10/10).



With the support of local businesses in mind, C4EM conducted free informational breakfasts for members on the topics of internet connectivity, and later in the year, renewable energy. At both events, C4EM were able to provide relevant and knowledgeable speakers who clearly demonstrated the importance of these topics in doing business in the current environment, including providing local examples.

In continuing support for local business and our members, C4EM has been successful in applying for a \$20,000 grant to provide a presentation, half-day workshop and one-on-one financial consultations for flood-affected businesses in the region. The current plan is to kick off these events early in the new year in Rochester.

Here at C4EM, we see an important part of our role to be as relevant as possible to our members, which means actively listening to the concerns and challenges of businesses in the region. A consistent message has been the difficulties associated with attracting and retaining suitable staff. As such, one of the major endeavours we have been working on is the Community Connector project, which has been facilitated in partnership with Echuca Regional Health through several workshops and presentations, with local organisations and community representation.

Moving forward, we see it as important to develop and expand our membership and continue to organise relevant events with a focus on the community and local businesses.

As always, we thank you for your continued support.

**Chris Janson (CEO) & Dean Oberin (Chair)**



# Our Board Members



**Dean Oberin, Chair**  
On the Board since 2011



**Cath Lees, Deputy Chair**  
On the Board since 2021



**John Mawson, Board Member**  
On the Board since 2011



**Paul Barnes, Board Member**  
On the Board since 2011



**Oliver Boyd, Board Member**  
On the Board since 2016



**Scott Spedding, Board Member**  
On the Board since 2022



**Tim Ford, Treasurer**  
On the Board since 2022



**Anne Marie Cairns, Board Member**  
On the Board since 2023



**Grace Angel, Board Member**  
On the Board since 2023

For more information about our Team and Board Members, visit our website [here](#)

# Honorary Board Members



**Geoff Kelly**  
Honorary Board Member



**Bob Smith**  
Honorary Board Member



**Peter Marks (dec)**  
Honorary Board Member



**Tod Collins**  
Honorary Board Member

## Our Team



**Chris Janson**  
Chief Executive Officer

Chris joined Committee for Echuca Moama in February 2023 and brings a wealth of experience in the Information Technology industry. All his roles have revolved around developing and implementing systems to solve complex business problems.

He has worked in London for several years, along with short stints in New Zealand and Hong Kong while working at IBM. More recently he has been a director and club treasurer of a multi-million dollar ski lodge at Mount Hotham, gaining more than 10 years of valuable expertise and insight into club governance and the tourism industry.

He is passionate about working with Not-for-Profits and as a resident of Echuca, he is excited to help the community grow and flourish.

Chris was born in Richmond, Victoria but grew up in Williamstown. In his teenage years he lived on a small family farm near Rockbank which was a great introduction to agricultural life.

Natalie grew up on a rural property in north-east Victoria and, apart from three years at Deakin University in Geelong, has lived regionally her whole life.

She spent almost twenty years working as a journalist and sub-editor for McPherson Media's Riverine Herald and Shepparton News.

Since then, she has worked as an electoral officer for Member for Murray Plains Peter Walsh, writes fiction and helps her husband run their merino enterprise at Bunnaloo.

Since starting her role in August 2022, Natalie has been working on bringing our stories and project updates to our members and community and also supporting to run events.



**Natalie Durrant**  
Administration Assistant (Media)

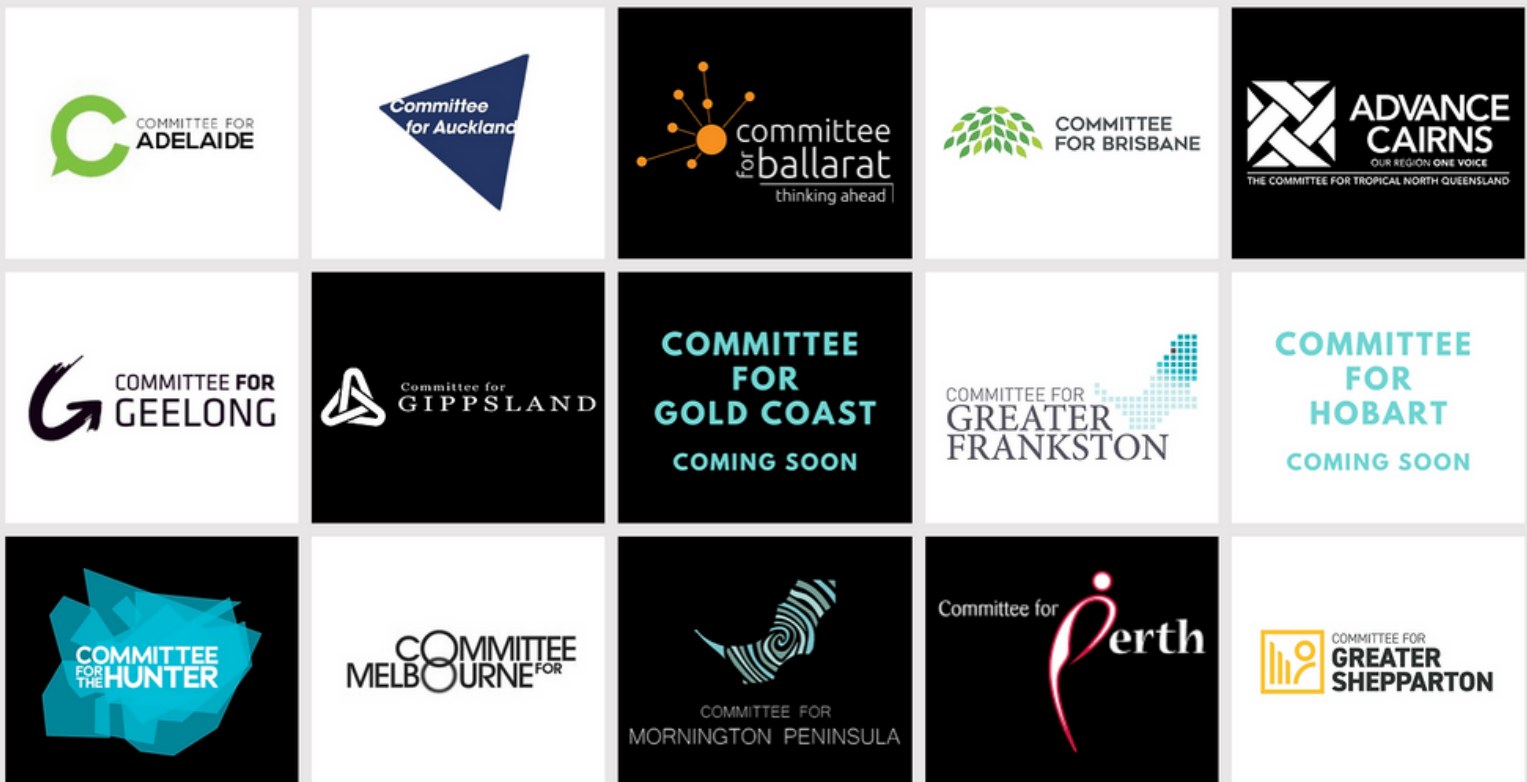
# Committees for Cities & Regions Overview

C4EM is a membership-based, incorporated Association that operates under the purpose and rules of its constitution. The organisation comprises a Board of members, made up of the various categories of membership, and includes both elected and appointed members.

C4EM is part of a larger family called Committees for Cities and Regions. This family is an influential network of independent, like-minded organisations each operating within their particular city or regional area to enhance their economic, social, cultural and environmental development. Building on the rising strength of Australia and New Zealand's cities and regions, we work together to advance issues of significance around population growth, economic development and social cohesion.

Through the individual membership profiles of the network partners, Committees for Cities & Regions is financially underpinned by almost 700 of the most significant corporate brands in Australasia. Individually, each organisation brings leaders from business and industry sectors together with community and government organisations, to identify and analyse local issues and work strategically to promote the development of their city or region as an exciting and dynamic place to live and work.

By adopting a strategic, long-term focus, our organisations maintain a non-partisan position, transcending short-term political cycles and therefore enabling us to think and act locally, nationally and internationally as advocates for the sustainable, responsible and dynamic development of our cities and regions.







## OUR PURPOSE

To collaborate with all stakeholders to inspire innovative and visionary thinking that facilitates community well-being and growth.

## OUR VISION

A well-connected, adaptable voice advocating for investment and development in cultural, social and economic well-being to support a prosperous, vibrant, diverse and inclusive region

# Our Pillars

## Pillar 1: 'Echuca Moama' one community

- Echuca & Moama = Echuca Moama
- State border irrelevant in description & marketing
- Echuca Moama a significant regional centre



## Pillar 2: Support & plan for sustainable population growth

- Greater population growth = stronger local economy
- Quality infrastructure & liveability attracts new residents
- The need to embrace & cater for a more culturally diverse population

## Pillar 3: Develop new & unique offerings

- Embrace our rich & unique heritage and indigenous cultural experiences – Strong connection to water & land
- Grow & highlight our unique natural environment experiences to attract a broad range of investment & event opportunities
- Grow our Food & Fibre tourism experience – Paddock to plate, local product, niche food processing



## Pillar 4: Strengthen food & fibre related industries

- Echuca Moama = An integral part of Australia's Food Bowl
- A leader in innovation, research & development
- Secure affordable water

## Pillar 5: Workforce & leadership development

- Developing a skilled workforce to address labour shortages mainly in; Hospitality, Health, Food & Fibre, and Trades
- Developing a local education hub offering TAFE & University options inclusive of innovation, research & business development to address skills shortage industries
- Promote & create pathway opportunities for our future young people & leaders



# Our Projects



## CCTV CAMERAS

Committee for Echuca Moama is continuing to push its Echuca Moama Safe Towns Project which involves installing a Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Camera network through Echuca's central business district.

[Read More](#)



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing is such an important topic on the agenda for our communities and all over Australia. Covid has played a large role with the migration of people coming to regional communities, highlighting the need for conversations to discuss our infrastructure and support services into the future.

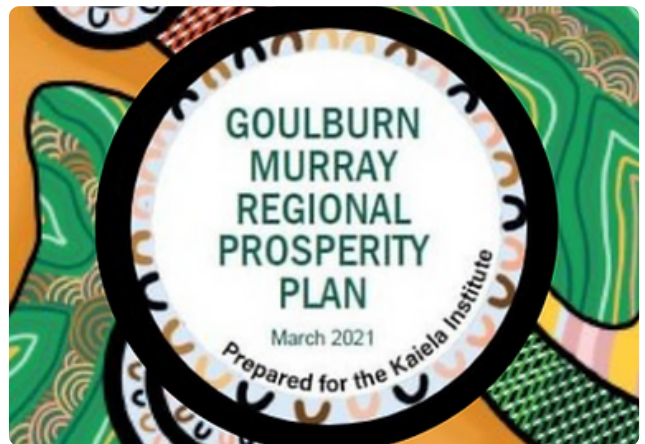
[Read More](#)



## FOOD & FIBRE GROUP

The Food and Fibre group started through a round table discussion in 29th April 2021. This event was supported by a Regional Development Australia Committee \$2,000 grant.

[Read More](#)



## GOULBURN MURRAY REGIONAL PROSPERITY PLAN

The Plan was launched on the 15th July 2021 and has a vision to build a thriving First Nations economy that will generate new income, opportunities and shared prosperity for the benefit of everyone in the region.

[Read More](#)



# Our Projects



## BRIDGE ARTS PROJECT

Echuca Moama has a strong arts community, however the region lacks an art gallery to do justice to the array of talent in the district. The Bridge Art Project Committee is committed to changing that with the establishment of a breath-taking, ground-breaking arts precinct in Moama.

[Read More](#)



## GOULBURN MURRAY RESILIENCE TASKFORCE

The Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce acts as the custodians of this strategy, the region's shared vision and voice and was established in May 2021. We translate the Strategy's vision into action.

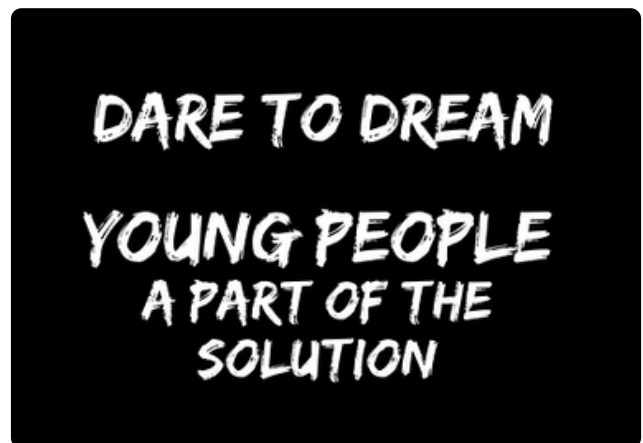
[Read More](#)



## PETER MARKS SCHOLARSHIP

C4EM is committed to supporting and growing our future leaders by providing the financial assistance to cover the enrolment costs, \$6,600, for completing the Fairley Leadership Program beginning in March each year.

[Read More](#)



## DARE TO DREAM

Committee for Echuca Moama's Dare to Dream project saw five young women from across the district come together to produce a video telling the story of their challenges, their hopes and their dreams for the future.

[Read More](#)

# Highlights from the Year

## Celebri-Tee Golf Day and Dinner

The third Celebri-Tee Golf Day and Sportsman's Dinner and Auction raised an amazing \$60,000 for Echuca Neighbourhood House (ENH).

Run jointly by Committee for Echuca Moama and Rich River Golf Club, the funds went towards a bus for ENH's Food Bank service which helps support and deliver nutritious fresh food to those in need.

The winning golf team on the day was Two Lads, who played with former Hawthorn great Paul Hudson.

Following the golf, Tataila Room hosted 170 for a dinner and auction, hosted by comedian Des Dowling.

The dinner included Hawthorn legend Gary Buckenara hosting a question-and-answer session with football greats Michael Tuck, Tony Jewel, Frank Marchesani and Paul Hudson.





# Highlights from the Year



## Digital Marketing Workshops

Committee for Echuca Moama proudly partnered with J2 Creative to run three free digital marketing workshops, to help equip local business owners with skills to help grow their businesses on social media.

After years of difficult circumstances impacting on normal trading, the workshops were an excellent opportunity for local business owners to learn essential skills to grow their businesses online.

The marketing workshops held at Bendigo TAFE's Echuca campus were delivered with funding secured through the Victorian Government's Business Chambers and Trader Groups Grants Round Three.

## Take a Well-being Break

Participants at the Take a Well-being Break learned how to improve their well-being thanks to coach, mentor, speaker and author Cynthia Mahoney. She kept the crowd amused as she led them through various exercises to help improve mental health.

The session at Moama RSL was run in a fun, interactive way to help people identify practical strategies they can immediately implement to positively impact their well-being.

The session was made possible thanks to a grant from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal's Strengthening Rural Communities Program.



## nbn Breakfast

Connectivity and capabilities were on the agenda for the nbn Connectivity breakfast at Radcliffe's.

Participants learned about the rollout of the nbn network in the region and what they can expect from the service.

Nbn representatives and community engagement managers Michelle Cobb and Andrew Cottrill spoke about the upgrades taking place over the next two years which will enhance the capabilities of the business, medical and education sector.

The delivery phase will add an extra 120,000 customers to the fixed wireless network and range from fixed wireless towers will extend from 14km to 29km which will cover many more people.



# Highlights from the Year



## Barefoot bowls

Bowls, barbecue and banter were the order of the day when C4EM hosted a barefoot bowls event in March.

It was a great chance for members to meet new chief executive officer Chris Janson.



## Let's Talk Renewables

Committee for Echuca Moama hosted a Renewables Breakfast at Radcliffe's which looked at energy prices, an overview of the Victorian and NSW electricity market and initiatives to help achieve cheaper, more efficient and renewable outcomes.

The morning was run by Dr Iain Jennings from 1circle, a specialist energy management firm who helped Mawsons Concrete and Quarries become the first concrete and quarry business in Australia to switch to 100 per cent renewable energy.

At the moment, renewable energy is about 4c/kilowatt hour more expensive than fossil fuels, but lock-in contracts of three years can still provide good value for money, according to Iain, and it is particularly attractive for businesses who have budgeted on using renewable energy and the upside is their green status is more attractive to customers and banks.



# Our Members



## **BYFORD**

To be an industry-leader, in the fabrication of stainless steel and aluminium products, we create innovative solutions for the transport of bitumen, chemical, dairy, fuel and wine industries. To do so, we work closely with operators to design, fabricate and repair tankers and service some of Australia's leading names in the dairy, wine, and chemicals industries. We constantly strive to set the industry benchmark in innovation, quality, productivity, service and have a workforce that is motivated, skilled, flexible, and happy.



## **MOAMA BOWLING CLUB**

At Moama Bowling Club, we're so much more than our bricks and mortar. Beneath our brand as a world-class sporting, dining and entertainment venue, we're about community. And there's no greater way to build strong communities than through working in partnership with others. It's how we create opportunities right across our region for connection and belonging. Because when people are connected and feel a sense of belonging in their work, family life and community, they're happier, healthier and more resilient individuals.



## **RICH RIVER GOLF CLUB**

Near the banks of the scenic Murray River, Rich River Golf Club is your gateway to refined and relaxed living. Enjoy stunning views of the golf course while you dine in the newly renovated club house. Boasting an abundance of sporting facilities, including two championship golf courses, 17-bay driving range, Golf Simulator, four A-grade croquet greens, three tift-dwarf bowling greens and 6 synthetic tennis courts plus new 9 hole mini golf course, Rich River is a great place to relax or play during your time away.

# Our Members

## Corporate Members



**ACE RADIO**



**AMERICAN HOTEL**



**BENDIGO TAFE**



**COOLABAH TURF**



**E.B. MAWSONS & SONS**



**ECHUCA REGIONAL HEALTH**



**FOODMACH**



**KAGOME**



**MOAMA RSL**



**NBN**



**RIVERINE HERALD**



**UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

## Business Members



**ACM**



**ADVANCE COMPUTING**



**HIGH AND LESLIE PLACE**



**CHARLES. L KING**



**ECHUCA MOAMA COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE**



**GO TRAFFIC**



**GOULBURN VALLEY CREAMERY**



**HIGH & LESLIE PLACE**



**MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA**



**NATIONAL FOOD INSTITUTE**




**NULLARBOR TIMBER**



**NUTRIEN HARCOURTS**



**PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTS**



**ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE ECHUCA**



**TELSTRA**



**UNIQUE SAFETY SERVICES**



# Our Business Partners



**J2 Creative**



**Public Sector Contracts**



**Maureen Kyne & Associates**



**Fairley Leadership Program**



**Move to More**



**Invest Loddon Mallee**



**RDA Murray**



**RDA Loddon Mallee**



**Regional Development Victoria**



**Business Victoria**



**Victorian Chamber of Commerce**





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