



**SMALL TOWNS
AND
SETTLEMENTS
STRATEGY**

**PART C
- POLICY CONTEXT**

September 2016

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1.0 Policy and Strategy Context

The Small Towns and Settlements Strategy is informed by a broad set of plans, strategies and documents, which apply to the Shire. It reflects State Government directions for managing small towns and contemporary management practices for social and community infrastructure, and the development of hierarchies and town clusters for servicing.

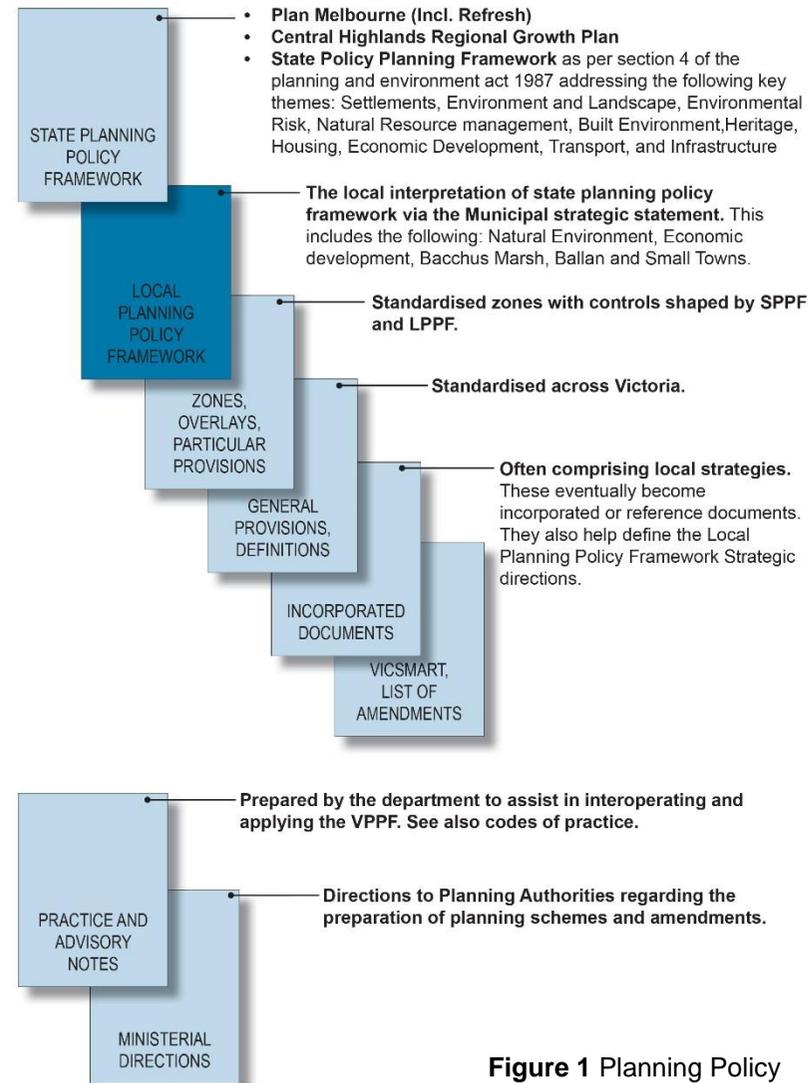
The objectives, strategies and actions contained within the STS will be given effect and implemented through the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

It is important that the STS is consistent with State and regional plans and policies and, therefore the STS has incorporated a number of key themes and directions from Plan Melbourne and the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan.

2.0 State Planning Framework

2.1 Plan Melbourne

Plan Melbourne (2014) is the State Government’s current planning strategy for Melbourne’s growth to 2050, and integrated planning for Victoria’s regional and peri-urban areas. Importantly, Plan Melbourne recognises that a number of fast growing peri urban towns, such as, Bacchus Marsh and Ballan are suitable to accommodate increased development and offer an alternative housing destination within reach of Melbourne.



PLANNING POLICY HIERARCHY
The Victorian Planning Policy Framework

Figure 1 Planning Policy Hierarchy

Plan Melbourne prioritises environmental protection and agricultural productivity in green wedges and the peri-urban area and growth in regional Victoria.

The Plan Melbourne directions relevant to the STS are as follows:

- 6.1. Deliver a permanent boundary around Melbourne.
- 6.2. Rebalance Victoria's population growth from Melbourne to rural and regional Victoria over the life of the strategy.
- 6.3. Integrate metropolitan, peri--urban and regional planning implementation.
- 6.4. Improve connections between cities.

2.2 Plan Melbourne Refresh Discussion Paper (October 2015)

In 2015 the Victorian Government announced a 'refresh' process for Plan Melbourne with the objective of having a revised version of Plan Melbourne later in 2016. The updated Plan Melbourne is anticipated to retain the existing key priorities, as well as strengthening the focus on housing affordability, climate change and energy efficiency.

Protecting key values in green wedges and peri-urban areas

Under Plan Melbourne there is general recognition of the important values and features of Melbourne's green wedge and peri-urban areas and the need to plan for them in a more coordinated way. It outlines their important environmental and agricultural values and their role as tourism destinations close to Melbourne. In addition, Plan Melbourne identifies the opportunity for towns in these locations to provide affordable options for living and working locally – especially along the regional transport corridors.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee undertaking the refresh of Plan Melbourne suggested in their 2015 Report that the refreshed Plan Melbourne needed to better reflect the significance of these areas so their intrinsic values are not diminished. It suggested these areas need to be identified as a valuable resource due to their aesthetic appeal, their ability to provide jobs and their agricultural and horticultural industries, as well as, important extractive industries required for building our community – and not simply as 'vacant land awaiting urban development' or 'dormitory suburbs'.

A number of other government initiatives underway will provide additional policy and guidance for Melbourne's peri-urban areas. These include a review of significant agricultural land and earth resources, and the Animal Industries Advisory Committee, appointed to review intensive animal farming practices and regulations and examine ways for the planning system to better support agriculture and surrounding land uses.

2.3 State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) comprises general principles for appropriate land use and development in Victoria and details the State's policies for key land use and development activities, including settlement, environment, housing, economic development, infrastructure, particular uses and development. It seeks to ensure the objectives of planning in Victoria, as set out in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, are in the interests of net community benefit and sustainable development.

Guiding principles of the SPPF

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) has provided critical guidance in the development of the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy and a number of key guiding themes are summarised below.

- Support the continuing role of towns and small settlements in providing services to their districts, recognising their relationships and dependencies with larger towns.
- Support development and investment in small towns, which are facing economic and population challenges.
- Foster the sustainability of small rural settlements.
- Maintain and enhance the distinctive and valued characteristics of settlements in the region, including townships associated with early settlement and the gold rush.
- To strengthen communities especially in small towns.
- Support the ongoing role and contribution of the Shire's small towns and settlements through investment and diversification of their economies.

SPPF provisions for Moorabool 2041

The objectives and strategies in the SPPF that are relevant to this study are outlined in the following table:

Clause	Key Objectives	Relationship to the Small Towns & Settlements Strategy
<p>11: Settlement</p> <p><u>Key terms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional development ▪ Melbourne’s hinterland areas; and ▪ Rural productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to promote sustainable growth through a network of settlements and to manage land use change and development in rural areas to promote agriculture and production. • Planning aims to prevent environmental problems created by siting incompatible land uses together. • To manage growth in Melbourne’s hinterland, the area immediately beyond Metropolitan Melbourne and within 100 kilometres of Melbourne. • To develop regions and settlements which have a strong identity, are prosperous and are environmentally sustainable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support resilient communities and the ability to adapt and change. • Prevent dispersed settlement. • Concentration of development to urban areas to maximise accessibility to facilities and services. • Limit new housing in rural areas. • Protect new development from environmental hazards. • Avoid development impacts on environmentally significant land. • Ensure regions and their settlements are planned in accordance with any relevant regional growth plan.
<p>12: Environment and Landscape Values</p> <p><u>Key terms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Significant environments & landscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect native habitat and areas of important biodiversity through appropriate land use planning, this includes achieving a net gain in the extent and quality of native vegetation. • Environmentally sensitive areas, landscapes and significant open spaces should be protected in supporting sustainable environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect significant flora & fauna habitats. • Assist re-establishment of links between isolated habitat remnants. • Improve landscape qualities, open space linkages & environmental performance in conservation & non-urban areas. • New development should not detract the natural quality of sensitive landscape areas.
<p>13: Environmental Risks</p> <p><u>Key terms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate change impacts ▪ Floodplains ▪ Soil degradation ▪ Noise & air 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a best practice environmental management and risk management approach to assist in avoiding or minimising environmental degradation and hazards. • Identify and manage the potential for the environment, and environmental changes, to impact upon the economic, environmental or social well-being of society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid intensifying the impacts of flooding through inappropriately located uses and developments. • Promote vegetation retention, planting and rehabilitation in areas prone to erosion. • Apply the precautionary principle to planning and decision-making in areas at risk from bushfire.

Clause	Key Objectives	Relationship to the Small Towns & Settlements Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bushfire 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the protection of human life over other policy considerations in planning and decision-making in bushfire risk areas.
<p>14: Natural Resource Management</p> <p><u>Key terms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture ▪ Water ▪ Resource exploration & extraction 	<p>To assist in the conservation and wise use of natural resources including energy, water, land, stone and minerals to support both environmental quality and sustainable development. Requires the significance of productive farmland to be considered on a local or regional basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect productive agricultural land from unplanned loss due to permanent changes of land use. • Support effective agricultural production & assist genuine farming enterprises. • Protect water catchments & water supply facilities to ensure the continued availability of clean, high quality drinking water. • Provide for the long term protection of natural resources.
<p>15: Built Environment and Heritage</p>	<p>Ensure all new land use and development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context, and protect places and sites with significant heritage, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure any new development responds to its context and reinforces special characteristics of local environment and place. • Provide for the protection of natural heritage sites and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and biological diversity.
<p>16: Housing</p> <p><u>Key terms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural residential development; and ▪ Location of residential development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning should provide for housing diversity, and ensure the efficient provision of supporting infrastructure, access to services and affordability. • Manage development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop rural areas to protect agriculture & avoid inappropriate rural residential development. • Reduce the proportion of new housing development in rural areas. • Minimise or avoid property servicing costs carried by local & State governments. • Discourage development of isolated small lots in rural zones from incompatible uses, such as rural living. • Encourage consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.

<p>17: Economic Development <u>Key term</u> ▪ Tourism</p>	<p>To encourage tourism development to maximise the employment and long-term economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the State as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that tourism facilities have access to suitable transport and be compatible with & build upon the assets & qualities of surrounding rural activities, along with cultural/natural attractions.
<p>19: Infrastructure <u>Key terms</u> ▪ Renewable energy; and ▪ Development infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth and redevelopment of settlements should be planned in a manner, which facilitates the efficient provision and maintenance of infrastructure. Planning should facilitate efficient use of existing infrastructure and human services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure provision must be efficient, sustainable, and relate to key needs. • Protect energy infrastructure against competing and incompatible uses. • Ensure water quality in water supply catchments is protected from possible contamination from agricultural land uses. • Ensure lots created through subdivision are capable of adequately treating & retaining all domestic wastewater within the boundaries of each lot.

Table 1 SPPF Relevant Clauses

3.0 Regional Frameworks and Strategies

3.1 Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan

The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan (CHRGP) includes eight municipalities across the Central Highlands region and provides broad direction to guide regional land use and development over the next 30 years.

The Plan reinforces the principles set out in the State Planning Policy Framework and reiterates the need for orderly and structured strategic initiatives that balance growth with the maintenance and enhancement of amenity and economic well-being.

The Regional Settlement Strategy (Section 13.3 of the Plan) provides direction for the preferred locations for growth and the role of settlements within the Central Highlands settlement framework. Ballarat is expected to experience significant growth and will remain the primary urban centre of the region. Within proximity to Ballarat there are three towns, which are expected to accommodate medium level growth: Creswick, Smythesdale, and Ballan.

Other than Bungaree, the subject towns of the Small Towns Strategy are not specifically referred to in the CHRGP. The subject towns fall within the CHRGP categories of either 'Small Towns' or 'Rural Settlements'.

According to the CHRGP, the future role of small towns, like Bungaree is summarised as follows:

- Lower population levels than towns.
- Access to services such as a small primary school and limited convenience shopping
- Connection to reticulated water is generally available but access to sewer connection varies.

The future role of rural settlements is summarised as follows:

- Characterised by small rural dispersed population with some small concentrations of housing and minimal services, for example sole general store and primary school;
- Reliant on other settlements for wider range of services;
- Connection to reticulated water may be available,
- Unlikely to have reticulated sewerage connection.

While the CHRGP does not include any specific actions for the subject towns, it states that:

“the ongoing incremental development of small towns and rural settlements should not be precluded and local councils should plan to support sustainable growth and incremental change in these communities as required.”

Future directions for small towns and rural settlements are as follows:

- Plan for the sustainable growth of small towns by building on local opportunities.
- Consider the role of small towns within a regional context.
- Plan to further strengthen small settlements to be adaptable and resilient to local challenges.
- Encourage small settlements to be planned as part of a cluster of settlements to improve access to key services.
- Land use policies, strategies and actions.
- Encourage planning and service delivery that takes account of settlement clusters, including those across municipal and regional boundaries, shares facilities and supports improved transport access between closely linked settlements.
- Encourage the development of integrated planning and economic development policy to identify tailored strategies for individual small settlements, including protecting strategic land for growth.
- Undertake planning for settlements affected by major infrastructure to ensure they take advantage of opportunities.
- Support ongoing upgrades to infrastructure and new integrated, networked models to deliver community services.
- Monitor the role of growing small towns to identify whether they should be elevated in the regional settlement framework.

Although the CHRGP does not include any specific actions for the subject towns, it refers to areas which are considered attractive for residential development, including land within and in proximity to the Western Freeway corridor between Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat.

In regard to the provision of sewerage infrastructure, the Plan recognises that smaller settlements which rely on septic tanks may have impacts on declared water supply catchments. Furthermore, any decision to provide a reticulated sewage system needs to be carefully considered, with business cases measured against environmental factors, anticipated growth and supported by planning policies concerning that settlement.

Other key directions include:

- Plan for development and facilities shared around clusters of linked settlements, particularly for groups of small settlements, or settlements without easy access to a close major settlement.
- Plan for rural residential development on a regional basis to ensure it is directed to locations where it will most benefit the region.
- Support commercial development and activity in each settlement that is consistent with the role and function of that settlement that will encourage economic self-sufficiency and reduce trade leakage to Melbourne, and reinforce the primacy of existing town centres.

- Maintain access to productive earth resources.
- Promote and protect the significant goldfields and Aboriginal cultural heritage as key regional economic and social assets.
- Support tourism opportunities that contribute to positive cultural heritage and natural environment outcomes.
- Direct settlement growth and development to areas where it will avoid impacting on high value environmental assets, including designated water supply catchment areas, strategically important terrestrial habitat, soil health, waterways and wetlands.
- Provide social infrastructure that is well located and accessible in relation to residential development, public transport services, employment and educational opportunities.
- Manage growth in towns subject to natural hazards, such as, bushfire and flood.

3.2 Central Highlands Infrastructure Study

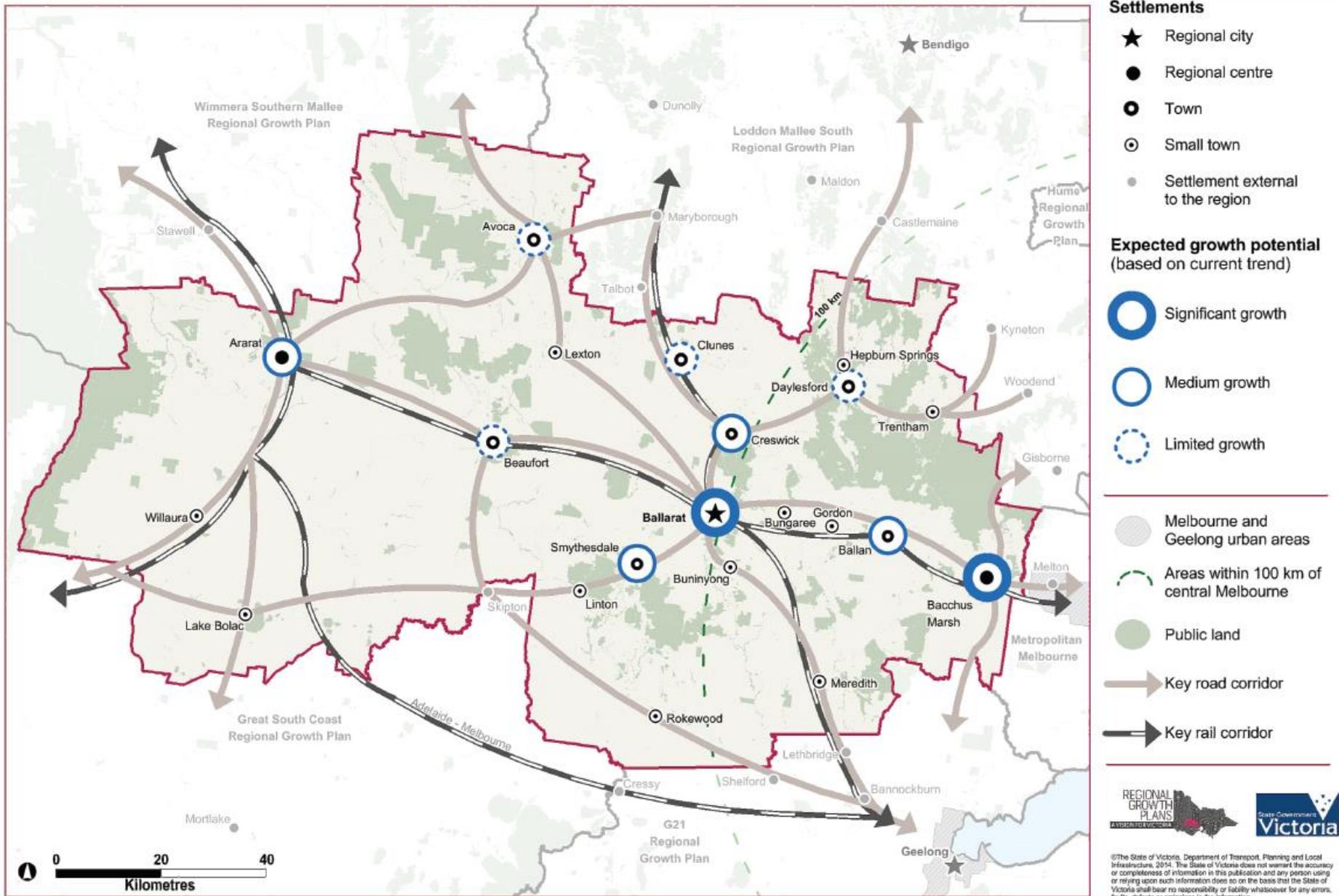
The Central Highlands Infrastructure Study investigated the utilities infrastructure of forty-five urban centres in the Central Highlands Region.

The centres studied in the Moorabool Shire were:

- District town of Bacchus Marsh.
- Town of Ballan.
- Rural centres of Blackwood, and Gordon.
- Rural settlements of Bungaree, Clarendon, Dunnstown, Elaine, Greendale, Lal Lal, Mount Egerton, Myrniong, Wallace, and Yendon.

Areas of interest within the study were:

- The availability of water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telecommunications, solid waste disposal, and renewable energy infrastructure;
- The capacity of the utilities infrastructure now and if future growth was to occur;
- Opportunities associated with the utilities infrastructure, which may provide the Region with a business advantage and which could assist in growing the urban centres.



Map 1 Regional Framework. Source Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan (source: DTPLI, 2014)

The findings of the Study included:

Sewerage:

- Towns with sewerage have advantages for future development in facilitating higher density development and re-development within the existing urban centre.
- Corridor growth (Melbourne – Ballarat and Geelong – Ballarat) will place pressure on some urban centres and drive the strategy and priorities for servicing upgrade.
- Some centres without sewerage may become designated for growth, providing impetus for development of sewerage, e.g., Wallace.
- Some centres without sewerage may have implications for catchment management – surface or ground water quality. This applies to:
 - Wallace, Elaine, Dunnstown, Bungaree, Mount Egerton - Moorabool River catchment.
 - Greendale for the Pykes Creek Catchment - Werribee River catchment.
 - Myrniong - Werribee River catchment.

Natural gas:

- It is unlikely that high-pressure transmission pipelines will be extended to urban centres in addition to the centres currently supplied.
- Telecommunications:
- The national broadband rollout has defined those centres receiving fibre-optic cable, fixed wireless and those relying on satellite technology for internet access.

Other types of infrastructure groups, such as, transport (road, rail, air), drainage, bridges or flood mitigation were not specifically considered in the Study. However, comments were made on these if relevant to the servicing of particular urban sectors.

3.3 Regional Bushfire Planning Assessment For Grampians Region (DPCD, 2012)

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC) emphasised the importance of considering bushfire matters at all stages of the planning process, including through regional settlement planning and in the Local Planning Policy Framework. The Regional Bushfire Planning Assessment (RBPA) supports this approach and is part of the Government's response to Recommendation 38 of the VBRC relating to the development of regional settlement policy in Victoria.

This Assessment provides additional information about areas where a range of land use planning matters intersect with a bushfire hazard to influence the level of risk to life and property from bushfire. This information is to be addressed as part of strategic land use and settlement planning at the regional, municipal, and local levels.

In relation to the Moorabool Shire, the RBPA commented:

- The Great Dividing Range extends across the north-east corner of the municipality. This region contains the steep and hilly landscape of the Lerderderg State Park, Wombat and Pyrite State Forests and smaller conservation reserves. Scattered settlements populate the vegetated foothills of these parks and reserves and contain small residential or rural-residential lots, which directly interface with bushfire hazard areas. Other settlements that are surrounded by these parks contain small lots among a vegetated landscape. Some settlements in bushfire hazard areas are accessed by unsealed single access roads.
- The western region of the municipality contains multiple pockets of state forest, natural lakes, watercourses and a moderate number of rural settlements across a largely agricultural landscape. Settlements are located in the foothills or valleys surrounding Mount Doran, Mount Egerton and other vegetated hillsides and lakes. They contain rural-residential lots which directly interface with bushfire hazards.
- In the south-eastern part of the municipality, *“settlements are generally limited to grassland environments and are separated from more significant bushfire hazard areas.”*

3.4 South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study

The South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (SWVLAS) is a study conducted on behalf of the former Department of Transport, Planning, Local Government and Infrastructure (DTPLI) to better understand and assess the visual character and significance of the landscapes of south-west Victoria. It is intended to be used to inform new planning scheme policy, to assist planning decision making and to ensure landscapes of importance are adequately protected and managed into the future.

All non-coastal, non-urbanised areas in the south-west of Victoria, from Port Phillip Bay in the east, to the Great Dividing Range in the north were included in the study area. This area included Moorabool Shire and 17 other municipalities, or parts of municipalities. The SWVLAS complemented landscape assessment studies, undertaken separately in coastal areas.

The SWVLAS does the following:

- Defines and describes the landscape character of south-west Victoria.
- Determines which places, features and views are most significant and why.
- Includes the community’s values on the character and significance of the landscape.
- Assesses and evaluates various forms of development that have occurred in the landscape, both positive and negative.
- Recommends use of policies and guidance in local planning schemes, such as, the Significant Landscape Overlay to protect and manage landscapes into the future.



Map 2 SWVLAS Area

or National Park designation. Others are recommended for inclusion within the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO).

The eight significant landscapes identified within the Moorabool Shire have characteristics and values, which are considered to warrant protection. Of these, only areas included within National or State Parks, or publicly reserved land, are afforded statutory protection. These areas include the Lal Lal Gorge, parts of the Werribee Gorge, Brisbane Ranges, Wombat State Forest and Mineral Springs, and Lerderderg Gorge.

SWVLAS recommends that additional information should be included in the Moorabool Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), to provide strategic and over-arching policy direction relating to the landscapes of all non-urbanised areas mapped and described in the Study.

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES – STATE SIGNIFICANCE	SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES – REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	SIGNIFICANT VIEWS	RECOMMENDED SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY AREAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lal Lal Gorge Werribee Gorge Brisbane Ranges & Rowsley Scarp Parwan Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bacchus Marsh Agricultural Valley Mount Buninyong & Mount Warrenheip Wombat State Forest & Mineral Springs Lerderderg Gorge & Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mount Blackwood (State-Significant View) Lal Lal Falls (State-Significant View) Mount Warrenheip & Mount Buninyong (Significant View) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parts of Werribee Gorge outside of the State Park Brisbane Ranges and Rowsley Scarp, adjacent to the Brisbane Ranges National Park Parwan Valley Bacchus Marsh Agricultural Valley Mount Buninyong (the part of the foreground setting within the Shire) & Mount Warrenheip.

Table 2 Summary

SWVLAS Findings for Moorabool Shire

Eight areas of landscape significance were identified within Moorabool Shire. Several are already protected through their State

4.0 Municipal Frameworks and Strategies

4.1 Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) and Municipal Strategic Statement

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) sets the local and regional strategic policy context for the municipality. It comprises the Municipal Strategic Statement and specific local planning policies and operates consistently with the State Planning Policy Framework. The relevant clauses of the Municipal Strategic Statement are outlined below:

Clause & Key Objectives	Relationship to the Small Towns & Settlements Strategy
<p>21.01.2 Key Issues <u>Protection</u> - Balance residential growth objectives with the protection of environmental, landscape and lifestyle values. <u>Special Water Supply Catchment</u> <u>Housing diversity</u> - required to attract residents and meet the needs of an ageing population. <u>Transport</u> – Improved connections and services. <u>Environment</u> - Preservation and management of key environmental assets. <u>Economic Development</u> - continued use of farming land for productive and sustainable agricultural and horticultural purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Water Supply Catchment covers two thirds of the Shire. Development which may affect the domestic water supply storages, such as, housing reliant on septic tanks needs to be carefully managed. • Need to improve vehicle and freight links between communities within the municipality and links to destinations outside the Shire. Improved public transport and integration throughout the municipality are needed to support sustainable growth. • Preservation and management of key environmental assets such as Wombat State Forest, Moorabool, Werribee and Lerderderg Rivers, Werribee Gorge State Park and Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve as well as, significant waterways, historic buildings, rural townscapes, and landscapes, which contribute to the Shire's numerous places of natural and cultural heritage significance. These features inter-twine to form the character and lifestyle opportunities, which attract people to Moorabool Shire.
<p>21.02 Natural Environment <u>Non-Urban Landscapes</u> – to maintain and enhance the natural environment and the Shire's rural identity & character. <u>Water & Catchment Management</u> – to protect the quality and quantity of water within the Moorabool Shire. <u>Biodiversity</u> – to positively enhance biodiversity in the Shire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the landscape and scenic qualities of forested hill slopes, rural landscapes, and bushland setting of the Shire's rural areas. • Promote land use and development compatible with the Shire's natural environment, native vegetation, and places of environmental significance.

Clause & Key Objectives	Relationship to the Small Towns & Settlements Strategy
<p><u>Wildfire</u> – to minimise risk of wildfire damage.</p> <p><u>Environmentally Sustainable Development</u> – to manage and use in an environmentally sustainable manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require an increase in sustainable rural land management practices (in particular weed and pest management) when supporting land use change or development within rural areas. • Require land use change and development to retain native vegetation and to minimise soil disturbance. • Strongly discourage the subdivision of land within special water supply catchments, and land use and development, which has the potential to reduce the quantity and/or quality of water produced.
<p>21.03</p> <p>Settlement & Housing</p> <p><u>Landscape & Rural Character</u> – to ensure new development in all zones respects the existing character, landscape setting & amenity of the local area.</p> <p><u>Rural Lifestyle Opportunities</u> – to support development in small towns & rural lifestyle opportunities as an additional residential choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid urban development where it is likely to impacts on highly productive agricultural land, environmental values and the long-term sustainability of natural resources. • Towns are to be assessed as to capability for growth and planning is to take account of existing and proposed infrastructure. • Avoid residential development within farming areas unless it is required for the agricultural use of the land. • Limit residential development in areas without reticulated services where the development would compromise water quality (particularly in Special Water Supply Catchments), adversely affect agricultural production, or affect native vegetation and habitat values.
<p>21.04</p> <p>Economic Development & Employment</p> <p><u>Agriculture & horticulture</u> – to protect good quality agricultural land & support the productivity & sustainability of existing & future agricultural & horticultural activities.</p> <p><u>Industry</u> - to provide for a range of industrial development and activities in proximity to transport networks & existing infrastructure & avoid off-site impacts on nearby rural residential amenity, environmental quality, or agricultural values.</p> <p><u>Local employment</u> - Support the development and facilitation of increased local employment opportunities in order to strengthen the local economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain productive farm sizes by discouraging fragmentation of land for non-rural use and development. • Direct rural residential & rural living developments to strategic growth areas where they will not affect agricultural and horticultural production. • Manage off-site impacts and avoid conflict with sensitive uses to realise economic development opportunities. • Recognise & protect the long-term potential of stone & mineral resources.

Clause & Key Objectives	Relationship to the Small Towns & Settlements Strategy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate development of the tourism sector by protecting the natural environment, heritage and town character. Economic development benefitting from the full diamond interchange at Wallace, natural gas, and surrounding agricultural use, should be explored via further strategic planning.
<p>21.06 Heritage To preserve, promote, and enhance places of heritage significance including those of historical, aesthetic, architectural, scientific, and/or social value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect important landscape features, views and built heritage including conservation of natural environment that have significant geological, botanical, zoological or other scientific importance. Protect significant built heritage assets and streetscapes especially in ..., Blackwood, Gordon, and Mount Egerton.
<p>21.09 Small towns The small towns provide a limited level of services and facilities to their residents and the surrounding rural areas and are characterised by visual dominance of the rural landscape. These towns are integral to the cultural heritage of the Shire. The demand for alternate lifestyle choices has provided limited growth to the townships, particularly within the main Ballarat corridor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for the sustainable development of small towns. Support limited development in small towns as an additional residential choice. Provide a clearly defined and compact urban form and character for the small towns with rearrangement of lot boundaries that demonstrate beneficial and sustainable use. Protect prominent view-lines in small towns particularly to and from the Western Freeway. Advocate for sewerage in the small towns.

Table 3 LPPF Relevant Clauses

4.2 Moorabool Shire Council Plan 2013 – 2017

The Moorabool Shire Council Plan 2013-2017 is an adopted plan of Moorabool Shire Council and represents the key directions and identifies the critical projects required to respond to a constantly changing and challenging environment. It is a framework from which Council strives to achieve the vision of facilitating “vibrant and resilient communities with unique identities” and to satisfy the mission to “work together with our people to deliver valued outcomes that improve community well-being and are economically responsible”.

The Council Plan is built on three key pillars of:

1. Responsible Leadership of our Community.
2. Community Wellbeing.
3. Enhanced Infrastructure and Natural and Built Environment.

These three pillars contain eighteen strategic directions which inform the delivery of services and projects for the residents of Moorabool Shire and Council's strategic planning for the future. The STS is strongly aligned with the three pillars of the Council Plan and aims to meet the complex needs of the community as outlined in the Council Plan's Strategic Directions.

4.3 Moorabool Shire Council Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2014

The Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) was developed by Moorabool Shire Council to identify domestic wastewater management issues within the Shire and recommend actions to manage potential risks. The management of domestic wastewater is a key issue for un-sewered areas of the Shire, and the Plan considered the potential risks and measures to protect public health and the environment. Key issues for Domestic Wastewater Management (DWM), which have been identified within the Shire, include:

- There are a number of sensitive catchments within the Shire and the protection of these areas is important for the supply of potable drinking water to residents within Moorabool, Ballarat, and Geelong;
- Failing DWM systems have the potential to pollute these sensitive environments; and
- Physical environments may limit the effectiveness of DWM systems within the Shire and, therefore, many systems may require a high level of design and management to ensure each DWM system is sustainable.
- The Plan enables Council to take a greater strategic approach to managing domestic wastewater by:
- Assessing and considering the potential risks posed by existing septic systems, and methods to reduce and manage these risks;
- Allowing for future development in unsewered areas using a broad scale risk assessment to ensure wastewater is contained onsite;

- Developing a flexible monitoring and improvement protocol to ensure the protection of public health and the environment.

4.4 Moorabool West Small Towns Residential Assessment 2014

The Moorabool West Small Towns Residential Assessment 2014 was initiated as part of the Moorabool 2041 Rural Growth Strategy, to assess residential market demand in the small towns of Bungaree, Wallace, and Dunnstown.

Objectives of the study were to determine the:

- Attractiveness of towns for residential growth;
- Demand drivers for residential land;
- Competing supply of residential land;
- Market segments and household types which would be attracted to the towns; and
- Impact of the construction of a sewerage scheme on population projections.

The key findings from the analysis included:

- The CHRGP provides clear policy support for the location of future population growth. Its settlement framework shows that residential demand in the subject towns will be affected by their proximity to:
- Ballarat, the largest centre in the region and where significant growth should be supported; and
- Ballan, Smythesdale and Creswick, which are designated as medium growth towns and are expected to accommodate a significant proportion of population growth outside of Ballarat.
- Although the subject towns are not specifically identified for growth, the Plan refers to areas within, and in proximity to, the Western Freeway corridor between Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat as being attractive for residential development.
- The majority of population growth in the region is expected to be accommodated within the major centres of Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh. The primary residential market for the major centres will continue to be first homebuyers. It is considered that the subject towns appeal to different market segments, primarily tree changers, commuters, and retirees. Therefore, these towns operate within a different competitive framework than the major centres.
- Population growth in the subject towns will be limited by strong competition in the region with other small towns, including Gordon, Ballan, Smythesdale, Snake Valley, and Creswick. Existing community facilities, strategic location, and high amenity (especially Wallace) will mean demand for residential properties in these towns could result in moderate dwelling growth if utility infrastructure, particularly sewer, is established.

- Analysis of towns, which have been sewered in recent years, including Gordon and Smythesdale, shows that the provision of reticulated sewerage has corresponded to a small increase in development activity. However, it has not resulted in any significant stimulus for development, which suggests that there is not a major level of latent demand in the region for residential development in the small towns.
- The experience of Gordon is particularly relevant to the subject towns given its proximity and similar rural and landscape qualities. The slow rate of uptake in Gordon suggests that the installation of enhanced utilities in the subject towns will not necessarily lead to a 'rush' of new development, rather it would be a long-term growth prospect. It is important to note that the monitoring period since the sewerage scheme is very short (approximately 18 months) and a full understanding of the impact of the sewerage scheme would require another two or three years of monitoring.

Key factors, which make the subject towns attractive for residential development, include:

- Location on the Western Freeway as well as on the eastern side of Ballarat (i.e., Melbourne side);
- Proximity to employment and services in Ballarat, and to a lesser extent proximity to employment in western Melbourne;
- Existing community facilities and services with capacity to support further growth; and
- The landscape values and rural amenity of the small towns, particularly Wallace.

Housing market segments, which may be attracted to the towns, include retirees, tree changers, and commuters. Commuters to Ballarat are considered a key market given the accessibility to central Ballarat (fifteen minutes' drive time) and the future Western Employment Zone.

Township Assessment

Wallace and Bungaree are considered to be well positioned to attract residential growth should reticulated sewerage be available in the future, with Wallace likely to be slightly preferred due to the high amenity, community facilities (especially for families and commuters), and excellent access to the Western Freeway.

Dunnstown may experience minor levels of infill growth, however, the lack of opportunity for future sewer connectivity will severely limit growth rates in the future. In addition, Dunnstown is not as well positioned in relation to the Western Freeway as the other towns.

Conclusions

- Analysis of regional population growth projections and location trends confirms that there is likely to be significant demand for dwellings outside of the major towns of Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat.
- Due to their amenity and access, Wallace and Bungaree are considered to be well suited to attract a proportion of the demand for dwellings outside of Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat.

- Wallace is considered to be the best positioned to attract residential growth, due to the relatively high local amenity, direct access to the Western Freeway, and existing local community services.
- Bungaree is well placed to accommodate population growth, due to excellent access to Ballarat via the Western Freeway, and availability of community facilities.
- Dunnstown may experience minor levels of infill growth, however, the lack of opportunity for future sewer connectivity will severely limit growth rates in the future.
- If enhanced infrastructure were provided (sewerage for Wallace and Bungaree, reticulated water for Dunnstown), it is estimated that future growth could be in the order of 12-25 dwellings per annum across the three towns. This equates to dwelling growth of between 240 and 500, or population growth of between 600 and 1,250 over a 20-year period across the three towns.

4.5 Small Towns Services Study 2014 (Aecom)

Moorabool Shire Council engaged AECOM to prepare a planning and engineering study to assess the opportunities, challenges, and viability of providing reticulated sewer and gas at Bungaree, town water at Dunnstown, and sewer at Wallace, as part of the Moorabool 2041 project.

As part of the Study, a land use planning and community facility analysis was prepared to identify the potential population capacity of Bungaree and Wallace based on the provision of existing community facilities. The land use and community facility analysis considered:

- Community facilities and their capacity to support population growth.
- Current demographics and future population projections.
- State, regional and local planning policy and controls.
- Land use constraints that influence opportunities for urban growth.
- Land use opportunities where urban growth could be located.

An urban development scenario was then developed to inform and assess the feasibility for providing reticulated sewerage infrastructure in Bungaree and Wallace. The combined development yields projected for Bungaree and Wallace were a total of 5,146 dwellings and 13,895 people.

A detailed assessment of community facilities and services available in each town was provided in the report. The services, which are considered most likely to influence the opportunity for urban growth, include:

- Childcare and kindergarten facilities.
- Maternal child health facilities.

- Recreational facilities.
- Halls and community facilities.

According to the assessment, the existing community facilities in Bungaree and Wallace could support a combined population of 8,000 people across the Moorabool West SLA, before facilities would need to be upgraded. The analysis of existing facilities was based on commonly use benchmarks and trigger points for population levels, rather than a detailed analysis of their suitability and catchment areas. A more detailed analysis would be required to determine their full capacity and suitability to cater for population growth.

In considering population growth rates, realistic populations for Wallace and Bungaree short/medium term are 1,000 people per town, with capacity for further growth if demand becomes apparent. A two-stage development process was envisaged, Stage 1 was based on accommodating a total population of 1,000, either totally in Bungaree, or divided equally between Bungaree and Wallace, and then, subject to development uptake, population would be encouraged to increase to 2,000, with a limit of 1,000 people per town (Stage 2).

Although the report's findings provide an indication of potential township capacity and growth projections, a number of additional studies would be required to assess environmental constraints and market demand.

The project explored multiple servicing options through a number of stages, which were then refined into preferred options. A summary of each of the preferred servicing options is included below:

Sewer Option A (Stage 1 – Bungaree 1,000 population)		
Item	Description	Approximate Cost
Collection and Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 mm diameter rising main from Bungaree to the Ballarat pump station. • Main pump station and storage tank in Bungaree. • Gravity collection systems in Bungaree with local rising mains where required. 	CAPEX \$6,773,302
Disposal/Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed that the sewage will be conveyed to the Ballarat Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) where it will be treated and disposed of or reused. 	
Sewer Option B (Stage 1 – Bungaree 500 population & Wallace 500 population)		
Collection and Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 mm diameter rising main from Bungaree to the Ballarat pump station. • Main pump station and storage tank in Bungaree. • Gravity collection systems in Bungaree. • Gravity collection systems in Wallace. • Main pump station and storage tank in Wallace. • Wallace to Bungaree transfer rising main. 	CAPEX \$9,212,452
Disposal/Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed that the sewage will be conveyed to the Ballarat WWTP where it will be treated and disposed of or reused. 	
Water (Dunnstown)		
Gravity Transfer Main	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to the existing Central Highlands Water supply tank, located on Mahers Road, approximately 4 km north of Dunnstown. 	CAPEX \$1,739,000
Gas (Bungaree)		
SP AusNet Gas Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of existing SP AusNet gas infrastructure located to the east of Bungaree. 	\$4.1 – 4.5 million

Table 4 Summary of preferred servicing options

4.6 Moorabool 2041 Environmental Assessment Project

The Environmental Assessment Project was initiated as part of the Moorabool 2041 Rural Growth Strategy, to assess and review the physical and legislative environmental constraints on sixteen towns and settlements within the Shire. The aim was to identify environmental factors, which may limit the future development of these settlements within the Municipality.

Key Findings

Native vegetation:

- Due to the history of inhabitation and agriculture, the five larger towns of Wallace, Dunnstown, Elaine, Bungaree and Myrniong do not contain large patches of native vegetation. Where there are patches of native vegetation remaining, they are generally constrained to the waterways and the fringes of the 500-metre investigation buffer.
- Wallace contains several large scattered eucalypts, which should be considered as part of future development plans for their ecological and township character values.
- Due to the development history of the other 11 smaller towns and settlements investigated as part of this project, native vegetation has been retained within the townships or settlements and is present in large quantities, which in several cases resulted in the bushfire risk assessments being identified as extreme. Future development of many of these towns and settlements will need to be sympathetic to the native vegetation for environmental, bushfire management and town character (social) and some instances will be a critical factor as to whether future development is achievable.

Cultural Heritage:

- The assessments did not identify new elements of European or Aboriginal cultural significant values. However, this report is only indicative and further studies will be required if any future development of any of the towns or settlements is to occur.

4.7 West Moorabool Heritage Study Stages 1 and 2a

Stage One of the Moorabool Shire Heritage Study was completed in June 2010. It included the preparation of a thematic environmental history and a draft list of indicative places, which demonstrate themes relating to the development of the Shire for further investigation and documentation in 'Stage Two' of the Study. The study identified 720 potential heritage places in the western region of the Moorabool Shire, including 641 potential heritage places not included as heritage overlays.

Stage Two of the Western Region Heritage Study comprised:

- Revision of the thematic environmental history;
- Detailed assessment of the places on the draft indicative list; and

- Preparation of a statement of significance for each place deemed to meet the threshold of local significance required to include the site in the Heritage Overlay, and recommendations for planning scheme implementation.

Priorities for assessment in Stage 2A of the Study were determined to be:

- Heritage precincts in Ballan, Blackwood and Lal Lal;
- Individual heritage places in Blackwood; and
- Individual heritage places between Ballan and Ballarat, along the Western Freeway corridor.

The Study Area is parts of the western portion of the Moorabool Shire. The Project Brief outlined the following priorities:

- Heritage Precincts.
- Ballan to Leigh Creek Corridor. The Ballan to Leigh Creek Corridor encapsulates the 19th century service town of Ballan, the smaller centres of Gordon, Wallace, Bungaree, Leigh Creek and Warrenheip following the original rail and roads transport routes between Melbourne and Ballarat.
- Blackwood.

The Study recommended applying the Heritage Overlay to:

- Eight precincts - Five in Blackwood, two in Ballan and one in Lal Lal, including:
 - The 13-25 Golden Point Road Heritage Precinct, Martin Street Heritage Precinct, Prayer Hill Heritage Precinct, Simmons Reef Road Heritage Precinct, and Whalebone Road Heritage Precinct in Blackwood.
- The Lal Lal Heritage Precinct, which contains the original centre of the small 19th century rural settlement.
- One hundred and ten individual places, including:
 - Ten places in Blackwood.
 - Seventeen places in Bungaree.
 - One place in Mount Egerton.
 - Seven places in Wallace.

4.8 Moorabool Shire Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy was developed to identify the vision, objectives and targets for the future of the economy in Moorabool Shire. It details the strategies and actions, which Council and the business community can take to support local growth while enhancing lifestyle in the Shire.

The Economic Development Strategy has three main objectives:

1. New local jobs, for local people.
2. A diverse and entrepreneurial local industry base.
3. Facilitate the capacity and diversity of our workforce.

It identifies the development of service clusters as a way of supporting economic growth in some of the smaller towns across the Shire, in particular Gordon, Wallace/Bungaree, and Blackwood. There is an imperative to ensure the timely provision of services and diverse retail offerings.

4.9 Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy, 2041

The Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy was developed to support the premise that retailing in Moorabool Shire will be the catalyst for thriving activity centres that meet the growing community's retail, services and recreation needs, providing employment opportunities for residents and engaging places for people to interact. The Retail Strategy identifies possible scenarios for retail floor space which support this objective and enable Council to better plan the appropriate scale of development in the small towns over the next 20-25 years.

The Strategy identifies that there may be potential for increased residential demand/growth in Gordon, Bungaree and Wallace, subject to the provision of additional services, such as, sewerage, gas, and water infrastructure. In the case of Gordon, any new retail facilities would serve residents of Mount Egerton given the proximity of the two towns.

If the towns reach certain population thresholds, there may be potential for additional retail facilities in the towns. However, it is important to note that as the provision of retail facilities in the Ballan Town Centre increases, residents of the smaller towns will be likely to shop more regularly in Ballan.

To provide an indication of the amount of retail floor space, which may be able to be supported within each town and town cluster, consideration has been given to the amount of floor space that is sustainable when the towns reach the following population thresholds:

1,000 people:

- A food store of 300 – 500 square metres.
- A small number of specialty shops, potentially around 10 stores, of around 100 square metres each.
- A limited range of non-retail stores, such as, a bank and a real estate agent, of around 150 square metres each.

2,000 people:

- A small supermarket of 500 – 1,000 square metres.
- A small number of specialty shops, potentially around 15 - 20 stores.
- A limited range of non-retail facilities.

3,000 people:

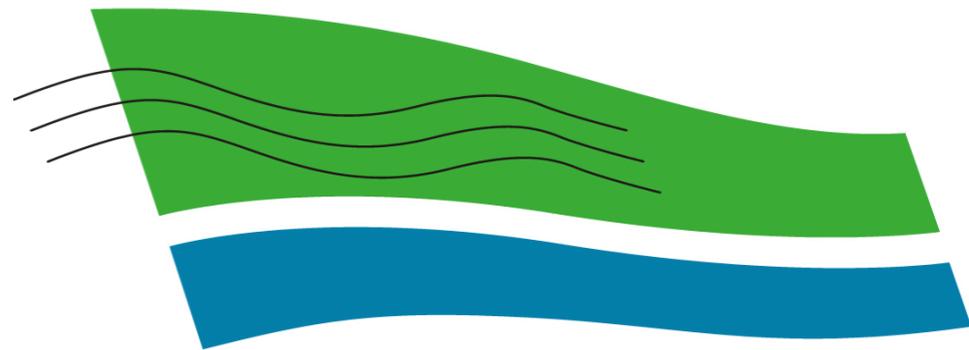
- A medium supermarket of 1,000 – 1,500 square metres.
- A number of specialty shops, potentially around 20 - 30 stores.
- A range of non-retail facilities and services.

Gordon/Mount Egerton is expected to experience the most population growth with an existing population of 1,680, growing to 1,890 by 2021 and up to 2,690 by 2041. As this occurs, there will be potential opportunities for Gordon include a small supermarket, additional cafes/restaurants, fresh food stores, retail services, and some non-food specialty stores.

The Bungaree/Wallace sub-region has an existing population of approximately 1,170 people and is forecast to grow to 1,620 by 2041. Over the medium to longer term, this presents opportunities for a small food store to be developed in the area, as well as, additional specialty stores.

Blackwood and Myrniong are unlikely to experience significant population growth in the future, however, the towns have tourism potential due to their proximity to the Wombat State Forest, Lerderderg State Park, the Garden of St Erth, and a number of popular wineries and restaurants.

The remaining small towns in Moorabool are expected to experience very modest growth and no major retail opportunities have been identified in this Strategy. There may however, be opportunities for these towns to increase their provision of retail and other uses which cater to the tourism market.



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