

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A paved road with a dashed center line and solid edge lines runs from the bottom center towards the middle ground. To the right of the road, there are several houses, including a large wooden house with a white roof and a smaller red house. The background shows rolling green hills and dense forests. The sky is clear and blue.

# **SMALL TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS STRATEGY**

**PART A**



**MOORABOOL**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

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# Separate documents:

<b>Part B Town Assessments</b>	Investigation Town Assessments
<b>Part C Policy Context</b>	State, Regional and Local Policies and Strategies
<b>Attachment One</b>	Submissions
<b>Attachment Two</b>	Moorabool Shire Council's response to submissions

## Acronyms

<b>ABS:</b>	<b>Australian Bureau of Statistics</b>
<b>CHRGp:</b>	<b>Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan</b>
<b>DELWP:</b>	<b>Dept. of Environment, Land, Water and Planning</b>
<b>DEPI:</b>	<b>Dept. of Environment and Primary Industries</b>
<b>EPA:</b>	<b>Environment Protection Authority (Victoria)</b>
<b>EVC:</b>	<b>Ecological Vegetation Classes</b>
<b>VPA:</b>	<b>Victorian Planning Authority (was MPA)</b>
<b>LGA:</b>	<b>Local Government Area</b>
<b>LPPF:</b>	<b>Local Planning Policy Framework</b>
<b>M2041:</b>	<b>Moorabool 2041 Growth Framework (1)</b>
<b>MSS:</b>	<b>Municipal Strategic Statement</b>
<b>PTV:</b>	<b>Public Transport Victoria</b>
<b>RGS:</b>	<b>Rural Growth Strategy - a component of M2041 (2)</b>
<b>SLA:</b>	<b>Statistical Local Areas (SLA's)</b>
<b>SPPF:</b>	<b>State Planning Policy Framework</b>
<b>UGB:</b>	<b>Urban Growth Boundary</b>
<b>VPP:</b>	<b>Victorian Planning Provisions</b>

(1) - Which comprises an urban and rural growth strategy.

(2) - The Small Towns and Settlement Clusters Strategy is the core element of the RGS.

## Abbreviations

<b>Ballarat:</b>	<b>City of Ballarat</b>
<b>Council:</b>	<b>Moorabool Shire Council</b>
<b>Melton:</b>	<b>City of Melton</b>
<b>Moorabool:</b>	<b>Moorabool Shire</b>
<b>Planning Scheme:</b>	<b>Moorabool Planning Scheme</b>





# 1.0 Executive Summary

# 1.0 Executive Summary

The Moorabool Shire Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (STS) provides an overarching vision as to how the Shire will manage the future of its small towns and settlements. The Strategy has been developed as a key driver of Moorabool Shire Council's strategic planning for the Shire through to 2041, called Moorabool 2041.

The STS addresses community pressure to maintain and enhance the sustainability of the Shire's small towns and settlements by providing a growth framework identifying what is possible, efficient and justifiable.

Understanding sustainability in small towns requires a historical perspective of how the settlements once functioned, what they have become and what they will be. These relationships have changed over time as the region has changed.

Land use planning is one tool that impacts future development. The introduction of planning scheme controls frequently announce an expectation of growth. In practice the absence of reticulated sewer and /or being located in potable drinking water catchments results in significant growth limitations.

Some towns with existing infrastructure investment such as Bungaree and Wallace have seen residential or other development stagnate for the last decade.

Factors such as these do not create a recipe for sustainability.

Council's local planning policy cl.21.09 reflects these concerns.

Discussions regarding the critical population mass needed to make towns into sustainable communities have taken place throughout the development of this strategy. The future potential of some towns is limited by the fact they are not strategically located to attract investment. For others, many current residents do not have an appetite for change.

Competing infrastructure priorities exist at Local, State and Federal level. Water is a critical constraint on many of Moorabool's small towns, both in terms of reticulated supply and waste disposal. Water authorities are limited in their capacity to fund the delivery of reticulated services and require a sound business case to support significant capital investment over timelines of 20-30 years. Much work needs to be done at a local level, in partnership with relevant water authorities and local communities to resolve these issues.

The goal of the STS is to create a vision, supported by strategic planning analysis that creates a growth management framework.

The STS seeks a balance between accommodating future growth, while maintaining the unique amenity of the Shire. This balance will not be achieved through ad-hoc residential development extending into high quality agricultural land. Decisions need to be made about the essential qualities of Moorabool's communities and how these

may be retained and enhanced over the next 25 years.

The STS promotes a view of the small towns and settlements as a network of interrelated communities or clusters. Each town and settlement has been considered in the context of its current and future ability to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

The wider planning framework for the STS is defined by Plan Melbourne, the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan (CHRGP) and State and Local Policies detailed in the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP). The fundamental directions taken from this body of work are that growth scenarios and opportunities in small towns and settlements needs to be broadly consistent with the hierarchy contained in the CHRGP.

Appropriate levels of engagement with service authorities have underpinned the STS, especially in areas where future capital works plans may be impacted by expectations of additional servicing investment.

The growth potential of small towns also needs to be viewed in the context of projected regional population growth figures to 2031 and beyond as well as Shire growth.

Finally, a solid strategic basis for identifying growth investigation towns needs has been provided, setting a clear direction for future planning.

Commencing in 2015, with community visioning workshops, the engagement process has been strongly supported and informed by residents. A further round of formal consultation on the STS was completed in July and August 2016. In total Council received 22 submissions from DELWP, neighbouring councils, CFA and other authorities (Annexure 1). Overwhelmingly, the submissions support the STS proceeding.

The STS is presented in three main parts:

- Part A Small Towns Strategy, Strategic Directions
- Part B Small Town Assessments
- Part C Policy Context

### **The Challenge**

The population of Moorabool Shire is growing rapidly but unevenly. Rapid growth is occurring in the east in Bacchus Marsh (currently exceeding 18,000 residents) where there is convenient access to metropolitan jobs and services. Ballan, with a population currently exceeding 3,000 residents, is also growing. In the west of the Shire, many small towns and settlements with 200 or fewer residents have experienced little or no growth and a number have experienced population decline in recent decades.

It is not realistic to expect to distribute growth pressure evenly in the Shire. Bacchus Marsh and surrounds (including Myrniong) are strongly influenced by, and will be increasingly integrated into, metropolitan Melbourne. Western Moorabool towns are firmly within the City of Ballarat's area of



influence (journey to work, access to shopping and services, education). In turn, the conversation for many small towns - some of them acting as clusters, is what service role they should play having regard to the wider role of Ballarat.

As the vast majority of small settlements considered in the STS are within Water Catchments (Proclaimed Water Catchment Areas for urban and rural supply) issues have been considered with respect to financially sensible investment decisions for sewer and water reticulation.

The towns with a solid business case, clear community support for growth and a strong or emerging service role founded on a base of existing infrastructure investment are more likely to grow in the future.

## **The Response**

Key recommendations of the STS include:

- Four towns, Bungaree, Dunnstown, Myrniong and Wallace have been identified as having long-term potential to warrant some further growth investigation on the following basis:

### **1. Bungaree**

Bungaree is a Western Freeway corridor town located close to Ballarat. It contains significant local infrastructure and a strong community aspiration for growth, in terms of service offer and residential expansion to ultimately enable residents to raise families and also retire in Bungaree. Growth will be dependent on the provision of reticulated sewerage as the town is within a water catchment. The town provides a modern regional scale sports facility, hotel, local State Primary School, a general store and enjoys significant scope to benefit from its strategic location close to the Western Freeway.

The provision of reticulated sewer will cost between \$5.0 - \$7.2 million. A suitable public private partnership to fund the sewer and to gain Central Highlands Water's support to include Bungaree in the CHW five year capital works program will be required. During the life of the STS, Bungaree would likely remain a small town but become one at a scale similar to Gordon.

### **2. Dunnstown**

Dunnstown is conveniently located for access to Ballarat. It supports significant local infrastructure and community growth aspirations. Growth opportunities will be contingent on the provision of reticulated water supply and sewer, and retaining a suitable buffer from the Boral quarry to the south.

The community has aspirations to facilitate

residential and commercial development and expand the services available to nearby settlements such as Yendon and Navigators. Future planning by the City of Ballarat along its growth front at Warrenheip will shape the future of Dunnstown.

Water reticulation is likely the highest priority for Dunnstown, provided a suitable business case is supported by Central Highlands Water (CHW). At this point, controlled growth which retains Dunnstown as a small town is the recommended strategy.

### **3. Myrniong**

Myrniong has convenient access to the Western Freeway, a strongly patronised State Primary School servicing the district including Greendale and Blackwood, and a renowned local gourmet hotel.

Myrniong is supported for growth investigation in the existing planning scheme and is considered to have some limited development potential. However, growth is not likely to be significant – it will remain a small town into the future (likely less than 500 residents).

Myrniong, unlike the other identified towns described above, is not located within a potable water catchment and is a satellite of Bacchus Marsh, which may give scope for a more localised sewer scheme specific to the town. An audit of vacant Township Zoned land is required along with further water quality testing in local streams to determine the efficiency of local wastewater solutions.

### **4. Wallace**

Wallace is considered to have development potential as it has fewer drainage constraints than Bungaree and excellent access to the Western Freeway in both directions via the diamond interchange.

Like Bungaree, any accommodation of population growth in Wallace will be dependent on the provision of reticulated sewer, firstly to Bungaree and then to Wallace. Establishing a suitable public private partnership to fund the sewer and gain support to include Wallace within a future five year capital works program of Central Highlands Water is a logical next step

Wallace, has significant facilities and services and has current scope to effectively serve a larger population. The community has some aspirations to enable managed growth, however, the timeline needs to be defined.

The agricultural land which surrounds Wallace and Bungaree is to be maintained.

The proposed removal of the rail loop located between Wallace and Bungaree will remove scope for future rail stations but will facilitate discussion on appropriate bus networks and the quality of service required to access Ballarat and Ballan train stations.

During the life of the STS Wallace will remain a small town.



- **Elaine** is the first town within the Shire reached from Geelong on the Midland Highway, and has the potential to become a provider of a wider range of community services to residents in the south-western sector of the Shire. To a degree, Elaine provides some of these services now (hotel, general store, recreation reserve, community hall). However, it is not identified as a settlement that is likely to financially justify provision of either reticulated sewerage or water at this time. Any development therefore would need to be reliant on the application of Council's Domestic Wastewater Policy. Only limited residential growth is envisaged in Elaine, retaining it as a small town not dissimilar to its size today.
- **Blackwood, Lal Lal and Mount Egerton** are identified as significant heritage towns. Blackwood has, and will, continue to benefit from improved mobile phone coverage and the Blackwood Localised Septic Program to improve the treatment of wastewater in the settlement. A structure plan in Blackwood would enable the management of future incremental growth, preserve heritage values and encourage suitable investment leveraged off local experiences (accommodation, tourism trails, walks, etc.). Whilst Lal Lal and Mount Egerton do not require structure planning, they would benefit from more local consideration of marketing opportunities based on local attractions, enhanced signage and other infrastructure, via Urban Design

Frameworks. In a service context, Mount Egerton appears to be reliant on services available in Gordon. Bushfire hazard risk in all three settlements is a relevant planning consideration.

- Many settlements (**Greendale, Yendon, Balliang, Balliang East, Korweinguboora, Barkstead**) have been identified as having limited or no growth potential for residential development or significant investment in further service infrastructure. These areas are characterised as rural districts and they are reliant on other larger settlements for most services. Substantial change to the scale or service function is not recommended for these settlements. Many of the settlements are impacted by significant bushfire hazard risk which also limits growth potential.
- **Clarendon** is identified as likely to support some residential infill growth as it contains a large number of vacant lots within the Township Zone and is not located in a potable drinking water catchment. In a service relationship context, Elaine is the likely key destination for this immediate area. Clarendon is therefore functionally a residential satellite of Ballarat and where orderly growth is to be managed and lot amalgamations facilitated.

- There are common issues which can and should be systemically addressed in the majority of settlements. Urban design treatments, such as green edges, buffers and treatments to town entrances which can be used to establish a defined boundary edge to settlements, provide a buffer between urban and rural uses and clearly separate settlements, are all desirable. These potential actions would need to be further developed as part of Urban Design Frameworks or Settlement Improvement Plans, prepared in concert with the local communities.
- The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) will be revised to reflect the findings and recommendations of the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy, and the STS will be included as a reference document within the Moorabool Planning Scheme.
- Further strategic work in relation to the settlements with limited growth potential, such as Settlement Improvement Plans and Urban Design Frameworks can be undertaken in the short to medium term.
- Recommendations of the Strategy will be considered in the preparation of future Council budgets, Council Plan, Service Plans, Five Year Capital Works Programs, economic development initiatives, etc.

The STS provides a long-term strategic plan to guide decision-making and future planning for the small towns and settlements to achieve the goal of supporting vibrant and resilient communities with unique identities, as outlined in the Council Plan 2013-2017.

### **Implementation**

Several phases are required and the intention is to:

- Amend the Moorabool Planning Scheme cl. 21.09 Small Towns, to identify where future structure planning is desirable either to manage sustainable growth (Bungaree, Wallace, Dunnstown); manage existing character and local issues such as effluent treatment (Myrniong, Blackwood); as well as urban design frameworks and more localised smaller planning across the Shire;
- Update adopted Council policy as appropriate and identify capital works priorities linked to a cluster infrastructure strategy of supporting towns;
- Chart a future for a host of small towns, having particular regard to the role of Ballarat as the regional city. Explore the meaning of planning in small central highlands towns unified by issues of agricultural land protection, historical links to the land, catchment management and cultural connections to the Central Highlands Region.



Hepburn Shire Council

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

City of Ballarat

**Moorabool Shire Council**

City of Melton

Golden Plains Shire Council

City of Greater Geelong

City of Wyndham

# 2.0 Context

Map: 2-1 Regional Context



## 2.0 Context

Moorabool Shire is a semi-rural municipality covering an area of 2,112 square kilometres, stretching from the top of the Great Dividing Range at Mollongghip, across to Woodman's Hill on the rural fringe of Ballarat, through to the urban township of Bacchus Marsh.

Located in Melbourne's peri urban region and the Central Highlands region of Victoria, Moorabool Shire straddles the Western Freeway and the Melbourne to Ballarat Railway Line. Moorabool Shire's eastern boundary is located forty kilometres immediately to the west of the Melbourne CBD, and it extends westwards to within five kilometres of the City of Ballarat. The Shire is bounded by seven separate Council areas, as shown on Map 2-1: Regional Context.

The Aboriginal history of Moorabool Shire is acknowledged by Council, as the land was traditionally occupied by, and connected to, a number of communities, most notably the Wada Wurrung (also known as Wathaurung) Tribe, Dja Dja Wurrung and Woi Wurrung Tribe whose lands extended north east.

European settlement of the Shire dates from the 1830s, with significant growth from the 1850s stimulated by the discovery of gold in Buninyong, Gordon and nearby Ballarat. The townships of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan grew rapidly due to their role as stopping points for coaches travelling between Melbourne and the goldfields. Significant development has occurred in and around Bacchus Marsh and Ballan in recent decades, particularly from the early 1990s.

Bacchus Marsh is the retail centre for the Shire.

A number of smaller settlements exist to the west of Bacchus Marsh. Ballan in the centre of the Shire is the second largest town with more than 3,000 residents. Gordon presently has a population of approximately 500 residents. The sewerage treatment plant capacity at Gordon limits growth to a maximum of 800 residents.

Moorabool Shire has many settlements, most with populations of less than 200 residents. The only settlements with populations larger than 500 people are Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Gordon.

The settlements of the Shire comprise of Balliang (part), Balliang East, Barkstead, Barrys Reef, Beremboke, Blackwood, Blakeville, Bolwarrah, Bullarook (part), Bullarto South (part), Bunding, Bungal, Bungaree, Buninyong (part), Cargerie, Clarendon, Claretown, Clarkes Hill, Coimadai, Colbrook, Dales Creek, Darley, Dunnstown, Durham Lead (part), Elaine, Fiskville, Glenmore, Glen Park (part), Gordon, Greendale, Grenville (part), Hopetoun Park, Ingliston, Korobeit, Korweinguboorra (part), Lal Lal, Leigh Creek, Lerderderg, Long Forest, Maddingley, Meredith (part), Merrimu, Millbrook, Mollongghip (part), Morrisons (part), Mount Doran, Mount Egerton, Mount Wallace, Myrniong, Navigators, Parwan (part), Pentland Hills, Pootilla, Rowsley, Scotsburn (part), Spargo Creek, Springbank, Trentham (part), Wallace, Warrenheip (part), Wattle Flat,

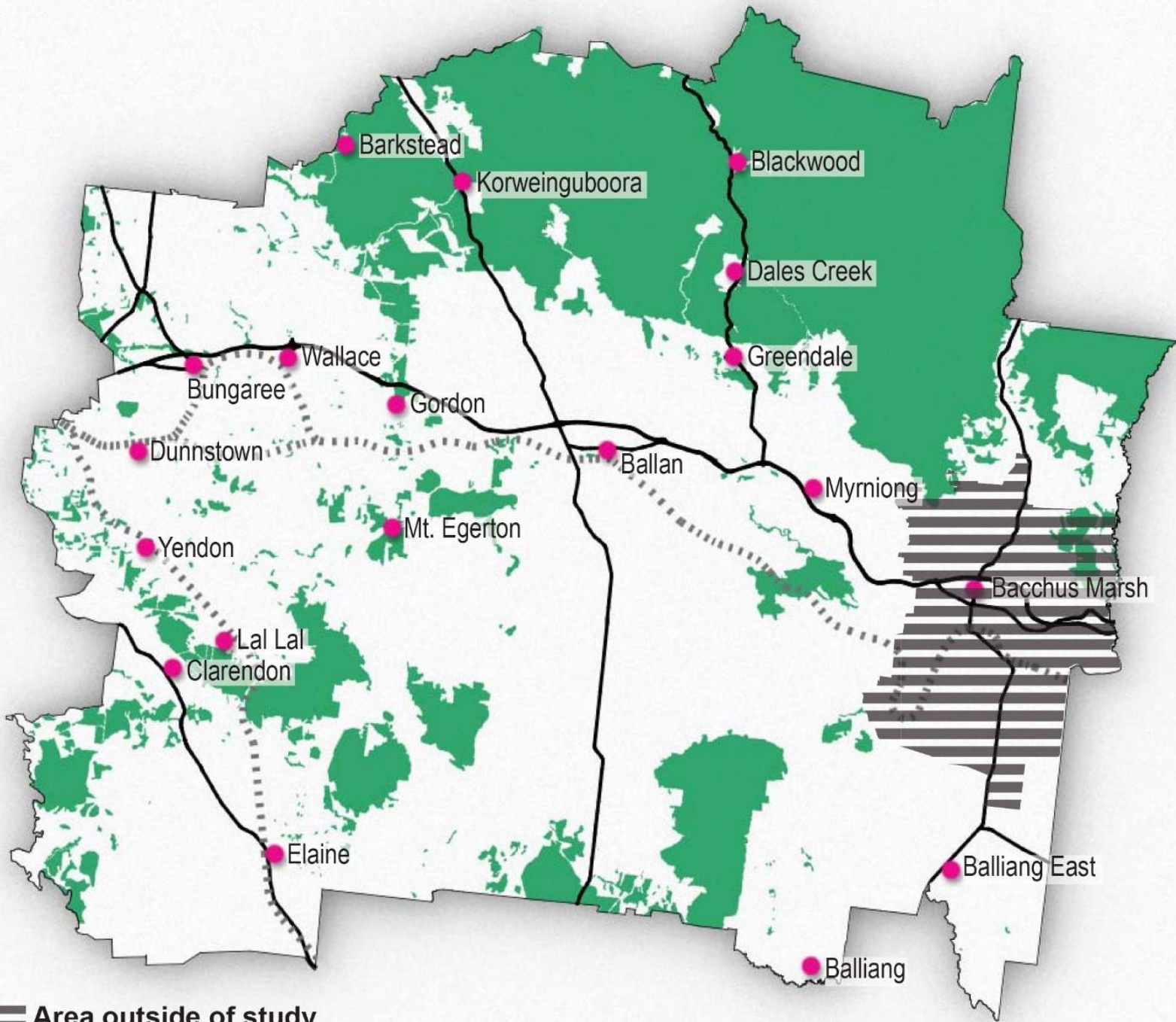
(part) and Yendon.

Moorabool Shire is predominantly a rural landscape, and has substantial forests, waterways (including water catchments and storages) and rural residential areas. Most of the northern area is rural, with a large portion being forest. Approximately seventy-four percent of the Shire consists of water supply catchments, State Forest, or National Park.

Some of the many reservoirs in the Shire are Lal Lal, Bostock, Pykes Creek, Moorabool and Korweinguboorra. In addition, three major rivers, the Werribee, Lerderderg and Moorabool, flow through the Shire.

Much of the rural area in the Shire is used for agricultural purposes, including horticulture, sheep and beef farming, timber production and more recently, viticulture. In addition, mining and quarrying occurs in some areas.

Moorabool is increasingly becoming a lifestyle destination. Many people (especially from Melbourne's west) are relocating to Moorabool Shire to experience a more relaxed, country style of living. Moorabool offers easy access to Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat with affordable housing and a growing business sector. The Western Freeway, the main arterial connecting Melbourne and Western Victoria, roughly transects Moorabool Shire (Map 2-2). A comprehensive rail system also enables travel between Melbourne, Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and beyond to Ballarat.



# MOORABOOL SMALL TOWNS

**Map 2-2** Small Towns and Settlements considered in the STS



A key corridor for development, and the focus of the State Government, has been the Western Freeway corridor connecting Western Melbourne with Ballarat and beyond. Controlling and yet encouraging growth within this corridor is critical to State Government planning initiatives for Melbourne. These policy settings and housing affordability pressures have created demand for housing within areas of Moorabool Shire, which are remote from settlements, more suitable for productive agricultural purposes, and or endowed with environmental assets, or otherwise located in areas that should not be compromised by subdivision and development.

There may be opportunities to promote a network of inter-related and sustainable communities through limited growth being accommodated in some small towns and settlements. Nonetheless there are some key issues and constraints, which hinder the possibilities of this vision being realised.

Matters which need to be resolved include; the provision of sewerage, water or gas in some areas, land capacity and infrastructure requirements to address the proclaimed water catchment area issues, potential bushfire risk, the ability to leverage existing community infrastructure and protecting the rural character of small towns. These matters are discussed at a local level within the Strategy on a case by case basis.

## 2.1 Moorabool 2041

Council commenced the Moorabool 2041 (M2041) project in 2012. It is a process / framework aimed at documenting the opportunities, pressures and challenges facing the Municipality through to 2041. It is anticipated that the project will lead to a long-term vision to guide the development of the Moorabool Shire, whilst retaining its character and valued places, and ensuring that change is positive and provides new services and opportunities for residents.

The purpose of Moorabool 2041 is:

**“To develop a vision and strategic document that guides future sustainable development in appropriate locations in the Shire, addressing land use, amenity and lifestyle opportunities whilst matching growth with the provision of physical and social infrastructure”.**

Moorabool 2041 will be a key Strategy to:

- Guide our planning scheme content to deliver sustainable development and the protection of our agricultural, cultural and environmental resources.
- Plan for the augmentation of social and physical infrastructure and identify the role for State and Federal Governments in closing the infrastructure gap.
- Ensure that as the population grows, the employment and retail offer also grows to reduce the need to commute to Ballarat and Melbourne for work or personal services.

Moorabool 2041 has two main components – an Urban Growth Strategy based on Bacchus Marsh and the surrounding urban towns in the eastern end of the Shire, and a Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (STS) based on the smaller towns and settlements as shown in Figure 2-1. The Urban Growth Strategy and STS are informed by a range of supporting research and strategies including Retail, Economic Development, Industrial Lands, Housing and the draft Community Infrastructure Framework.

Preparation of the STS is the key component of the Rural Growth Strategy and it aims to advance a sustainable network, or cluster, of thriving small communities in the Shire.

Principles to guide the preparation of the STS include:

- There should be separation between settlements and each town should have a defined form based on physical attributes,
- To plan for, and manage, current and predicted physical and social infrastructure provision with the Shire,
- Plan for a network of settlements with high quality urban form and function,
- Protect landscape character and ecological sensitivity,
- To ensure future housing development complements the character of the town, and
- To preserve, promote, and enhance places of heritage and environmental significance.

The overarching directions for the STS are:

- Moorabool has an existing network, or clusters, of communities and settlements. The opportunity exists to plan and promote them as a vibrant sustainable network of communities, building on existing social and physical infrastructure capacity.
- Moorabool Shire is located on the Melbourne to Ballarat growth corridor and is bisected by the Western Freeway and Melbourne to Ballarat railway line. Opportunity exists to build on the substantial accessibility advantages this location brings, including promoting and developing rural activity hubs.
- To provide direction for the development of each of the selected small towns and allow the growth potential to be identified.

- Identify the preferred character for development and identify potential social and hard infrastructure gaps and needs.
- Identify potential areas of growth and town boundaries and develop a better understanding of interest in the provision of sewer and services. It is understood that the towns will differ in their potential for development and some towns will not need to be planned to the same level of detail as others.

- The strategy will determine the potential drivers and constraints to growth and potential infrastructure gaps and opportunities. The small town sewerage capacity study will provide input into the strategy.

In summary, the STS will provide direction for the development of each small town and settlement. It will enable the identification of growth potential, the preferred character for development and potential social and physical infrastructure gaps and needs.

## DEVELOPING MOORABOOL 2041



Figure 2-1 Moorabool 2041



## 2.2 Study Area and Purpose

The STS focuses on the rural localities and settlements of the Municipality beyond the main urban areas of Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Gordon.

The towns investigated in this stage of the project are Balliang, Balliang East, Barkstead, Blackwood, Bungaree, Clarendon, Dales Creek, Dunnstown, Elaine, Greendale, Korweinguboorra / Spargo Creek, Lal Lal, Mount Egerton, Myrniong, Wallace and Yendon as shown on Map 2-2. The localities of Navigators and Millbrook were considered in the earlier stages of the project.

Council has already undertaken strategic planning for Ballan and Gordon, and an Urban Growth Strategy is being developed for Bacchus Marsh. As a result of this separate work, the STS does not focus on the larger centres, although it fully recognises and maps their important service role.

The STS has been developed to provide greater certainty and clarity on the future direction for the Shire's small towns and settlements. The STS will facilitate orderly long-term strategic and infrastructure planning and prioritisation. It has been prepared in parallel with the draft Moorabool Shire Community Infrastructure Framework, which audits all community infrastructure within the Shire, and assesses its current usage and optimal use into the future.

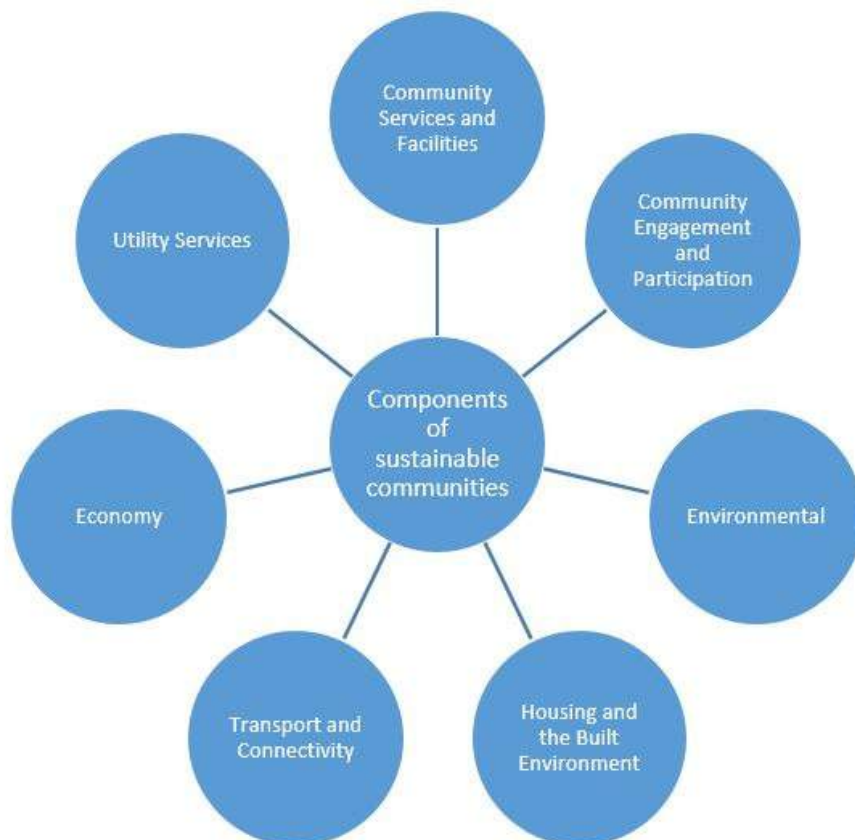
It is envisaged that the STS will form the basis for future partnerships with Government, landowners and other stakeholders who will work with Moorabool Shire Council to deliver on the vision for growth in identified towns and to build vibrant settlements across the Shire. The STS is an invitation to the local communities and stakeholders to work with Moorabool Shire Council and to have a stake in the future of these settlements, assisting them to reach their potential.

The Strategy will be consistent with current State Government and Moorabool Shire Council policies and the MSS, which seeks to provide for the sustainable development of small towns in the Municipality.

## 2.3 Objectives of the Small Towns Strategy

1. To identify the hierarchy of the small towns and settlements and their current role, based on population size, existing infrastructure investment, service role and consider their optimal future service role and growth opportunities , to 2041.
2. To identify the towns that are most likely to experience obvious population growth and where infrastructure investment to support that growth is desirable.
3. To identify the strategic work required to support individual towns to reach their potential. This may include structure plans and urban design frameworks.

4. To develop a comprehensive vision for the rural areas of the Shire that can be used to advocate for increased support from Government including water authorities and stakeholders.
5. To develop a strategy that supports vibrant communities and townships and prioritises economic growth across the Shire through commerce and tourism opportunities.
6. To safeguard the environmental, heritage and cultural assets of the Shire and to support opportunities to share the natural and cultural wealth of Moorabool Shire with residents and visitors.



**Figure 2-2** Conceptual Model for Strategy Input (source: CPG)

## 2.4 Methodology for developing the Small Town Settlement Strategy

The methodology undertaken to develop the STS involved a highly analytical assessment of small towns and settlements throughout the Shire. The analysis was completed in several stages to ensure a thorough analysis and strategic recommendations; from Shire-wide level right through to those for individual settlements.

**1. Context or Key Issues Report:** This provided the background research and contextual information on the status and influences on settlements in Moorabool Shire. For the sake of brevity, the detail of the context report is not repeated in this Strategy document, however the information has been used in the justification of the specific recommendations in the settlement appraisals. Read the Context Report via <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/residents/building-and-planning/strategic-planning/moorabool-2041>

### 2. Identification of Settlements and Clusters

The investigated settlements were identified by considering a combination of factors, including but not limited to:

- Surveyed town grid – locations where there was a Crown Township.
- Township or Rural Living Zoning.
- Location of a disjunction between housing and rural land through abrupt change in lot sizes.

- Aerial photography, which shows changes in land use pattern between actively farmed land, and land within a commonly accepted boundary of a settlement.
- Any service district mapped by way of water reticulation or other service, which denotes a settlement service area.

This process identified a number of locations where dwellings were grouped together in rural localities, either in defined settlements or in historical subdivisions in remote locations.

Fifteen settlements were identified, generally based on existing townships with land zoned Township or Rural Living, or former settlements now forming part of the rural landscape. The exception was Dales Creek, which was created from historical ad-hoc subdivision approvals, reflecting de facto rural living. Dales Creek does not have a demonstrable connection to other settlements and lacks the infrastructure and services required to meet State Government planning policy for rural living development.

The sixteen settlements addressed by the STS do not function independently of each other. Neighbouring settlements in close proximity, or with direct road access, function as small clusters. Generally these clusters provide many of the essential daily services and facilities that people need.

A key principle emerging from the research is the need for protection of rural land from residential style development.

### **3. Assessment of Existing Services and Infrastructure**

The established patterns of larger settlements, with their extended range of services and infrastructure, are an important influence in identifying locations where growth can be accommodated.

Following the identification of settlements and clusters, an assessment of the corresponding availability of services and infrastructure was undertaken. The key utility services assessed were the provision of reticulated water, sewerage, gas, electricity, public waste and wastewater management services.

The majority of settlements within the Shire are not serviced with reticulated water or sewerage, nor are they likely to be in the near future. Instead, residents rely on water tanks and on-site septic systems.

Council has directed significant resources into its Septic Audit Project to assess over 3,500 septic systems in the Shire. The project assessed whether the systems were functioning adequately and assisted owners to understand how to manage these systems to protect themselves and the wider community.

The provision of suitable effluent management services is fundamental to the form and density of any future development accommodated by settlements and small towns within Moorabool Shire.

### **4. Community Infrastructure**

The provision of, and access to, appropriate community infrastructure is one of the key requirements of sustainable communities. Community infrastructure is important for building cohesive and vibrant communities and often acts as the social hub for a community or district.

The level of existing community infrastructure available to residents informs decisions regarding the appropriate level of growth of existing settlements.

A number of small towns and settlements in the Shire contain community facilities, such as, schools, maternal child health centres, recreation reserves, and community halls. In many cases these facilities are the result of significant historical investment into settlements that expanded significantly during the gold rush years. While often underutilised, these facilities remain important to the local communities and accordingly it is important to encourage a level of activity, which will ensure that the settlements retain these types of services and facilities into the future.

### **5. Small Towns and Settlement Strategy (STS)**

This details the objectives, strategy and recommendations to implement the preferred approach to the support and management of the small towns and rural settlements.

The Strategy is based upon a framework of



strategic principles and has involved broad consultation with the communities and public authorities. An outline of the consultation is detailed below in Section 5.

The principles and strategies contained in the Strategy support social, economic and environmental outcomes for each settlement and the Shire. Recommendations for each town have been provided. These are supported by detailed town appraisals and consideration of the key constraints and the capacity for growth in each settlement (Part B of the STS – Town Assessments).

Whilst opportunities have been identified for some growth in the ‘least constrained’ areas of the Shire, much of the Strategy focuses on recognising the prevailing development conditions and protecting the rural amenity and productivity of the area. In some locations, the Strategy seeks to constrain further development in light of substantial environmental issues and bushfire risk.

Recommendations arising from the Strategy have been formulated through consultation with the local communities, public agencies, and Council at key stages of the project. This process has ensured that all stakeholders within the Moorabool Shire community have been provided with the opportunity to have

their views taken into account on several occasions, when identifying the opportunities and constraints in the small towns and settlements within the Shire.

## 2.5 Use of Population projections

The 'Forecast ID figures' prepared for Council by ID Consulting have been used in preference to those from Victoria in Future (VIF).

The VIF figures extend to the year 2031. While the Forecast ID figures extend to 2041. It is impractical to use the VIF figures to 2031 and then the Forecast ID figures to 2041 to meet Council's long range planning objectives.

Council has utilised Forecast ID figures for many years and the difference with the VIF data is generally not significant. The ID figures are marginally more conservative to 2031 than the VIF figures. The difference by 2031 is about 1,000 residents or around 6% as Table 2-1 highlights.

**Table 2-1** Comparison between VIF 2016 and id Forecast population projection. Source VIF 2016 and Forecast ID.

<b>Population</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2011-31</b>	<b>2041</b>	<b>2011-2041</b>
Victoria In Future						
2016	28,700	36,100	46,100	17,400	n/a	n/a
id Forecast	28,680	36,457	44,403	15,723	53,270	24,590
<b>Difference</b>	-20	357	1,697	1,677	n/a	n/a

A photograph of a stone wall in a rural landscape. The wall is constructed from stacked stones and bricks, with a section of red bricks visible in the upper part. The wall runs across the middle ground, with a large tree on the right side. The background shows a green field and more trees under a bright sky. A large orange arrow-shaped graphic points from the bottom left towards the center, containing the text '3.0 Policy and Strategy Context'.

# 3.0 Policy and Strategy Context

## 3.0 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 community and social infrastructure, and the development of hierarchies and town clusters for servicing.

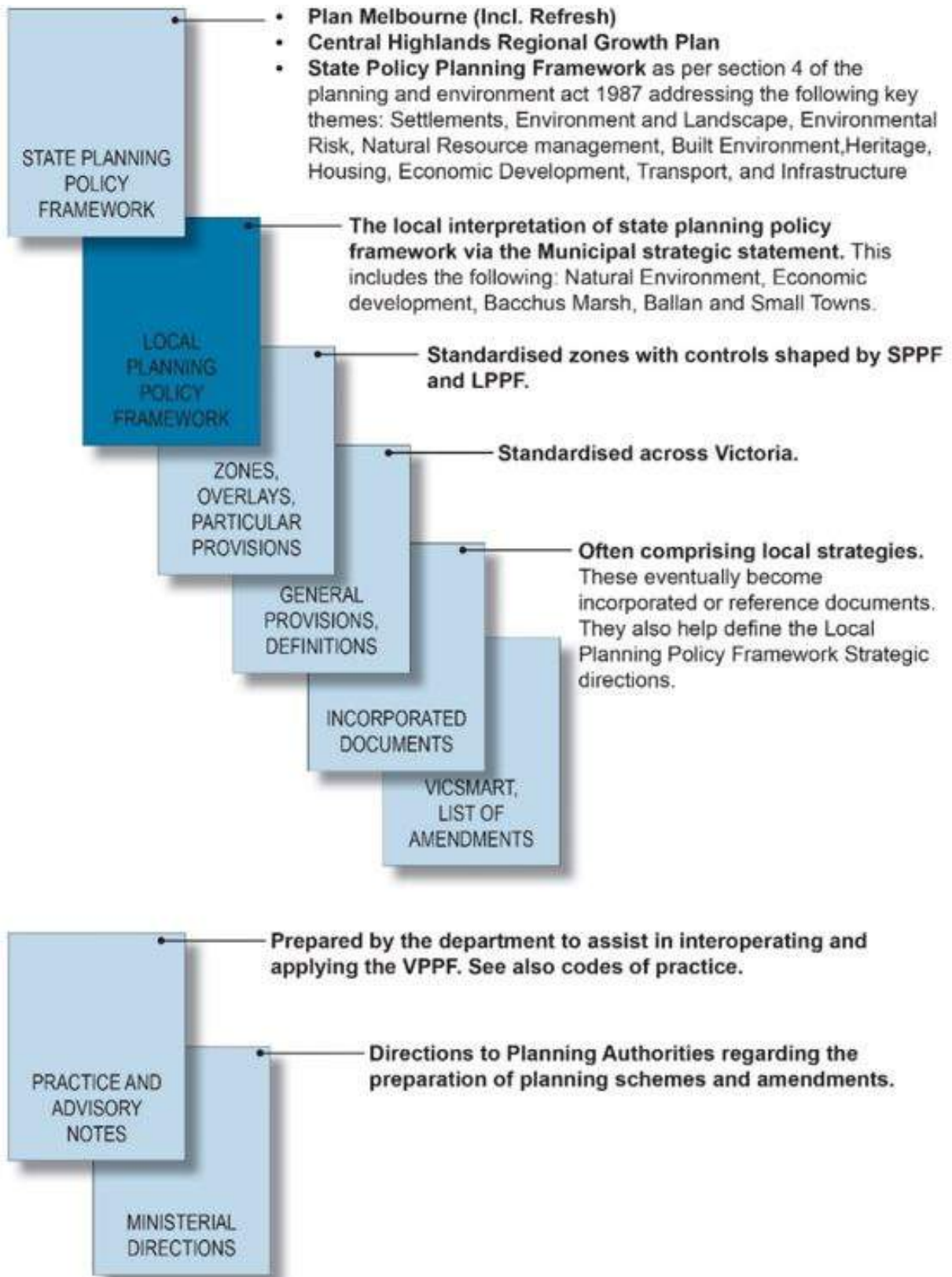
The objectives, strategies and actions contained within the STS will be given effect, and implemented through the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

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 (CHRGP).

The STS incorporates the findings and analysis of a range of strategic investigations into services, particularly sewer, and Council strategies and plans including the Council Plan 2013-17.

The following is a summary of the broad range of material that has been considered in the development of the STS.

The findings and influences of these strategies is outlined in the following section of the STS and a comprehensive overview of this material is contained in Part C.



## PLANNING POLICY HIERARCHY

The Victorian Planning Policy Framework

Figure 3-1 Planning Policy Hierarchy



## 3.1 State Planning Framework

**Plan Melbourne (2014)** represents the Metropolitan Planning Strategy as issued by the Victoria State Government. The key themes within Plan Melbourne focus on delivering jobs and investment; housing choice and availability; liveable communities; the environment and water; and regional population growth (A State of Cities chapter).

Whilst all the themes are relevant to strategic planning, the State of Cities section is the most relevant to the STS and peri-urban Victoria. Plan Melbourne identifies the following Growth Sectors as priorities - knowledge intensive services; tourism related services; capabilities in food processing; and transport and machinery manufacturing .

Attracting population growth out of Melbourne, into identified towns is explicitly a goal of Plan Melbourne. This objectives also relies on the regional considerations contained in the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan (CHRGP).

Plan Melbourne's key directions are:

- 1. 6.1:** Deliver a permanent boundary around Melbourne. **Comment:** Not critical to STS.
- 2. 6.2:** Rebalance Victoria's population growth from Melbourne to rural and regional Victoria over the life of the strategy. **Comment:** The STS is seeking sustainable population growth in appropriately identified towns.

- 3. 6.3:** Integrate metropolitan, peri-urban and regional planning implementation. **Comment:** The STS is based on mapping a future of small towns in peri-urban Victoria, having regard to infrastructure, environment, community needs and regional planning priorities. It is the first Moorabool land use strategy that has such a focus.
- 4. 6.4:** Improved connections between cities. **Comment:** The functioning of small towns is inextricably linked to infrastructure corridors, especially road and rail linkages between Melbourne and Ballarat. These issues have been considered in the STS.

Designating towns for growth in peri-urban areas, identifying a pipeline of new small rural town-style developments along with road and rail upgrades to connect and facilitate social, economic and environmental outcomes are mentioned as potential strategic solutions.

The **Plan Melbourne Refresh** Discussion Paper (2016) has subsequently been issued and an updated Plan Melbourne is expected later in 2016. The details and directions of Plan Melbourne may be modified, however it is likely that the reliance on strategic planning outcomes via regional growth plans will remain the accepted planning model into the future.

According to Government, the Refresh was not intended to be a comprehensive re-write of Plan Melbourne. It builds on the extensive work and consultation underpinning the

original Plan. There is bipartisan support for much of Plan Melbourne 2014. The refreshed Plan Melbourne is anticipated to include a focus on housing affordability, climate change and energy efficiency.

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 report on intensive farming practices and look at ways the planning system can better support agriculture. Their report was due to Government on 29 April 2016.

**State Planning Policy Framework Provisions (SPPF).** These provide the overarching strategic context for which the Moorabool 2041 project needs to be considered. The provisions relevant to this study are outlined in Table 3- 1.

**Table 3-1** State Planning Policy Provisions.

CLAUSE	KEY OBJECTIVES	RELATIONSHIP TO THE STS
<p><b>11: Settlement</b> Key terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional development</li> <li>• Melbourne’s hinterland areas; and</li> <li>• Rural productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Planning aims to prevent environmental problems created by siting incompatible land uses close together.</li> <li>• To manage growth in Melbourne’s hinterland, the area immediately beyond Metropolitan Melbourne and within 100 kilometres of the Melbourne’s Central City.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support resilient communities and the ability to adapt and change.</li> <li>• Prevent dispersed settlement.</li> <li>• Concentration of development to urban areas to maximise accessibility to facilities and services.</li> <li>• Limit new housing in rural areas.</li> <li>• Protect new development from environmental hazards.</li> <li>• Avoid development impacts upon environmentally significant land.</li> </ul>

<b>CLAUSE</b>	<b>KEY OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP TO THE STS</b>
<p><b>11: Settlement (cont.)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop regions and settlements which have a strong identity, are prosperous and are environmentally sustainable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure regions and their settlements are planned in accordance with any relevant regional growth plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12: Environment and Landscape Values</b></p> <p>Key terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Significant environments &amp; landscapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Environmentally sensitive areas, landscapes and significant open spaces should be protected in supporting sustainable environments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect significant flora &amp; fauna habitats.</li> <li>Assist re-establishment of links between isolated habitat remnants.</li> <li>Improve landscape qualities, open space linkages &amp; environmental performance in conservation &amp; non-urban areas.</li> <li>New development should not detract the natural quality of sensitive landscape areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13: Environmental Risks</b></p> <p>Key terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change impacts</li> <li>Floodplains</li> <li>Soil degradation</li> <li>Noise and air</li> <li>Bushfire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a best practice environmental management and risk management approach to assist in avoiding or minimising environmental degradation and hazards.</li> <li>Identify and manage the potential for the environment, and environmental changes, to impact upon the economic, environmental or social well-being of society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid intensifying the impacts of flooding through inappropriately located uses and developments.</li> <li>Promote vegetation retention, planting and rehabilitation in areas prone to erosion.</li> <li>Apply the precautionary principle to planning and decision making in areas at risk from bushfire.</li> <li>Prioritise the protection of human life over other policy considerations in planning and decision-making in bushfire risk areas.</li> </ul>

## CLAUSE

### 14: Natural Resource Management

Key terms:

- Agriculture
- Water
- Resource exploration & extraction

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- 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.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE STS

- Protect productive agricultural land from unplanned loss due to permanent changes of 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 in Victoria.

### 15: Built Environment and Heritage

- 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.

- 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.

### 16: Housing

Key terms:

- Rural residential development; and
- Location of residential development

- Planning should provide for housing diversity, and ensure the efficient provision of supporting infrastructure access to services and affordability.

- Develop rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development.
- Reduce the proportion of new housing development in rural areas.



<p><b>CLAUSE</b></p>	<p><b>KEY OBJECTIVES</b></p>	<p><b>RELATIONSHIP TO THE STS</b></p>
<p><b>16: Housing</b> (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of rural living and rural residential areas restricted by application of Ministerial Direction No 6.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise or avoid property servicing costs carried by Local &amp; State governments.</li> <li>• Discourage development of isolated small lots in rural zones from incompatible uses, such as rural living.</li> <li>• Encourage consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.</li> </ul>
<p><b>17: Economic Development</b> Key terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that tourism facilities have access to suitable transport and be compatible with &amp; build upon the assets &amp; qualities of surrounding rural activities, along with cultural/natural attractions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>19. Infrastructure</b> Key terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable energy; and</li> <li>• Development infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect energy infrastructure against competing and incompatible uses.</li> <li>• Ensure water quality in water supply catchment is protected from possible contamination from agricultural land uses.</li> <li>• Ensure lots created through subdivision are capable of adequately treating and retaining all domestic wastewater within the boundaries of each lot.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Regional Frameworks and Strategies

As earlier noted in Figure 3-1, a range of documents and strategies identify the regional framework for planning in Moorabool Shire and regional Victoria more generally. Whilst these are discussed in more detail in Part C of the STS, the primary consideration is the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan (CHRGP).

The CHRGP includes eight municipalities across the Central Highlands region and provides broad direction for regional land use and development. It is a regional framework to guide future land use planning over the next 30 years. The CHRGP reinforces all 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) 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. With the exception of Bungaree, the subject towns of the STS are not

specifically referred to in the CHRGP. The STS 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:

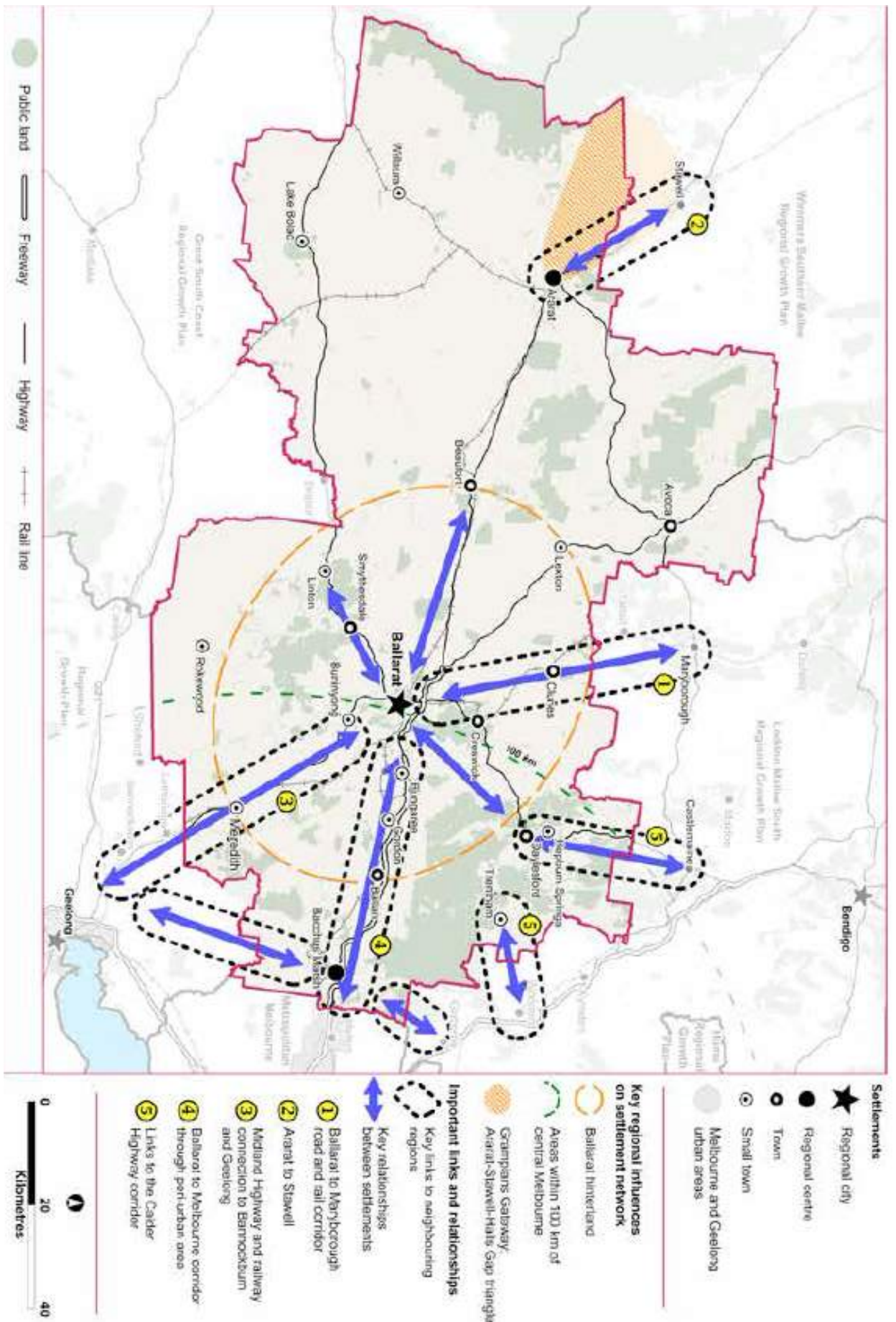
- Lower population levels than towns.
- Access to services such as a small primary school and limited convenience shopping
- Connection to reticulated water is generally available but access to sewer connection varies.

While the CHRGP does not include any specific actions for the subject towns of the STS, 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.

Map 3-1 identifies the key regional relationships.



Map 3-1 Regional Settlement Relationships (source: DTPLI, 2014)

The CHRGP then states under Land Use Policies, Strategies and Actions, the following:

- *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 of the STS, 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 CHRGP 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 reinforces 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.
- Manage growth in towns subject to natural hazards, such as, bushfire and flood.



- Provide social infrastructure that is well located and accessible in relation to residential development, public transport services, employment and educational opportunities.

It would be expected that the preparation and adoption of the STS will drive a more clearly defined position by Council for future updates of the CHRGP.

Map 3-2 identifies the support for growth at a regional level.



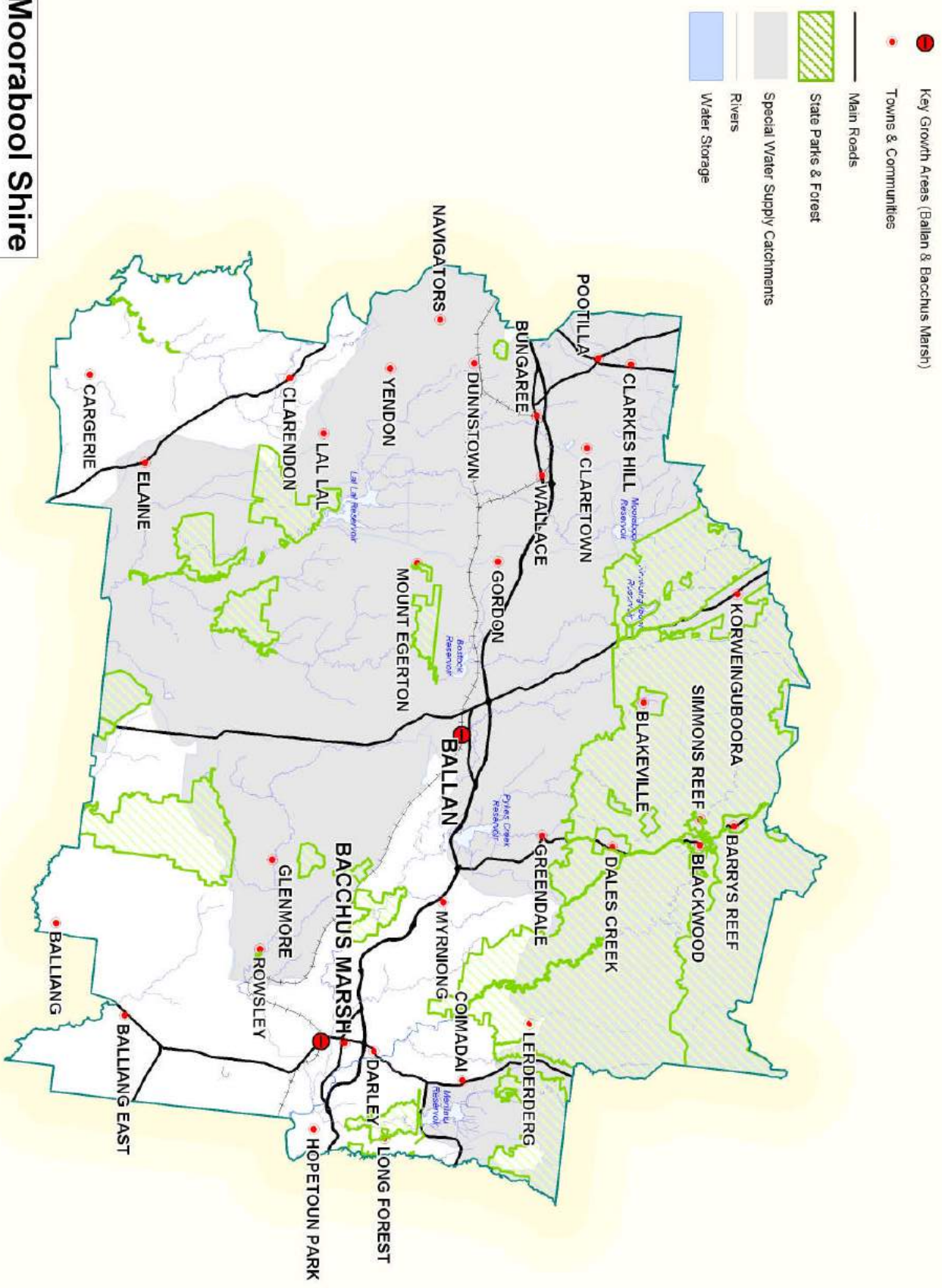
### 3.3 Municipal Frameworks and Strategies

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

Clause 21.01-2 of the Moorabool Shire Planning Scheme contains a range of key issues and limitations that affect local land use planning and include:

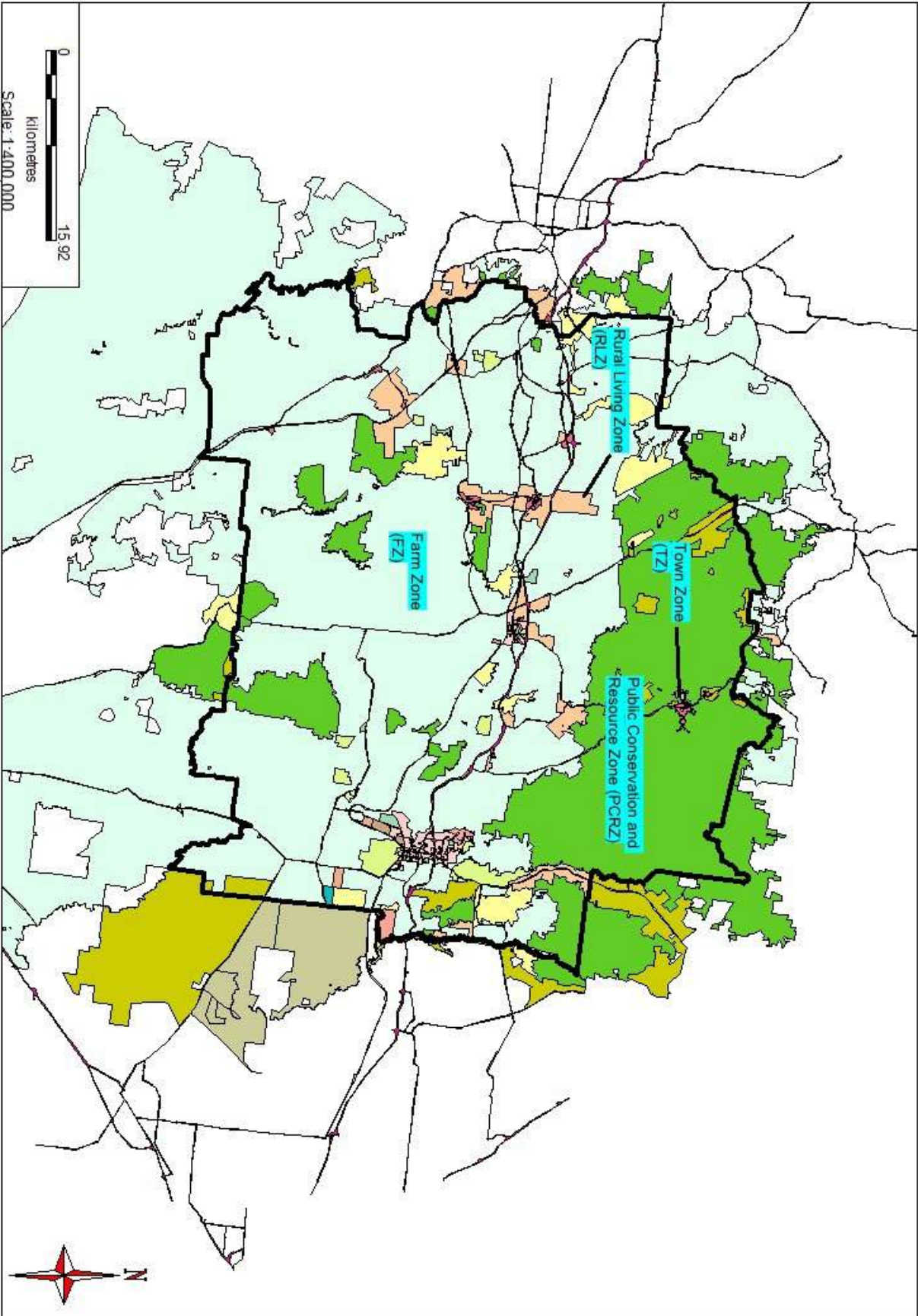
- Increased pressure to balance residential growth objectives with the protection of environmental, landscape and lifestyle values across Moorabool. The significant population growth expected over the next 25 years will require cost-effective service delivery models to be applied.
- The Special Water Supply Catchment covers two thirds of Moorabool Shire. Development which may affect the domestic water supply storage, such as, housing reliant on septic tanks needs to be carefully managed.
- Housing diversity is required to attract residents and meet the needs of an ageing population.
- Enhanced public transport integration with the existing rail corridor particularly along the Western Freeway between Ballarat and Melbourne.
- Economic development focusing on the continued use of farming land for productive and sustainable agricultural and horticultural purposes is required, without encroachment from residential use. A strengthening of local economies and ongoing access to coal, sand and other resources is encouraged.
- Transport. There is a need to improve vehicle and freight links between communities within the Municipality and links to destinations outside the Shire. There is a need for links to address physical division created by the Western Freeway and Ballarat Rail line. Improved levels of services for public transport and integration throughout the municipality, particularly along the Melbourne – Ballarat rail corridor are needed to support sustainable growth.
- Environment. The varied and rich topographical features of Moorabool Shire need to be conserved not only for their intrinsic environmental and landscape values but also as a recreational resource to the Shire. The environmental assets (including the Brisbane Ranges National Park, Wombat State Forest, Lerderderg State Park, Long Forest Nature Reserve and Werribee Gorge State Park), as well significant waterways, historic buildings, rural townscapes, and landscapes contribute to the Shire’s numerous places of natural and cultural heritage significance. These inter-twine to form the character and lifestyle opportunities that attract people to Moorabool Shire.

**Moorabool Shire  
Framework Plan**



**Map 3-3** Main Settlements in Moorabool Shire – MSS (source: MSC)





Map 3-4 Zoning Arrangements - Moorabool Shire (source: MSC)



Zone	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Farming Zone (FZ)	130,500	63.0
Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)	52,820	25.6
Rural Living Zone (RLZ)	5,760	2.8
Town Zone (TZ)	840	0.4
Subtotal	206,100	N/A

**Table 3-2** Shire Zone Breakdown (source: MSC)

Clause 21.09 Small Towns provides policy statements on a number of settlements. Gordon is identified for sewerage (now completed) and promoting a settlement that captures urban growth opportunities.

The objectives for Blackwood are to facilitate orderly and controlled development, with a narrative of resolving existing water quality issues via sewerage. A structure plan is recommended that controls the scope and type of development. Heritage, vegetation protection and wildlife risks are all noted as matters to be considered in the structure plan.

Myrning is recognised as being well placed to continue to attract in-migration, with growth investigation to be further considered.

Sustainable populations are to be facilitated in Bungaree, Wallace and Dunnstown, with appropriate zones applied to achieve these outcomes.

Advocating for sewerage in small towns is noted as a specific action.

A full summary of the relevant local planning clauses is provided in Part C.

## 3.4 Background Research for the STS

A number of studies were commissioned to inform the development of the STS and Moorabool 2041. These include the following (Table 3-2):

The work undertaken is referenced throughout the STS. The Industrial Strategy confirms, for instance, the role of extractive industry as an employer across the Shire as well as the employment generated from dedicated industrial estates including at Ballan.

### Activity / Strategy

- Moorabool Industrial Strategy (SGS)
- Moorabool West Small Towns Residential Assessment (Urban Enterprise)
- Small Towns Servicing Study (Aecom)
- Moorabool Retail Strategy
- Moorabool Economic Development Strategy (Macroplan)
- Moorabool Small Towns Servicing Assessment
- The Way Forward 2015 (MSC)
- Moorabool 2041 Environmental Assessment Project (Ecology and Heritage Partners)
- Moorabool Shire Community Infrastructure Framework (MSC)
- Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2015-2021 (Simon Leisure)
- Community visioning workshops and discussion paper (MSC)

### Status

**Adopted (2015)**  
**Completed (2014)**

**Completed (2014)**  
**Adopted (2016)**  
**Adopted (2015)**

**Internal doc (2016)**

**Internal (2015)**  
**Internal (2015)**

**Ongoing\***

**Adopted (2015)**

**Completed**

**Table 3-3** Background Studies

\*Principles endorsed 2016

The Moorabool West Small Towns Residential Assessment (Urban Enterprise, 2014) identifies the very limited development that has occurred in Wallace, Bungaree and Dunnstown, in large part due to lack of sewer in these towns (Table 3-4).

The same study shows that between 2001-2011 79 houses were built in West Moorabool. Of these less than 10% would likely have been in existing towns, the rest being in Farming Zone, Rural Living Zone and other zones.

<b>Town</b>	<b>Dwellings Constructed 2004-2014</b>
Bungaree	0
Dunnstown	4
Wallace	1

**Table 3-4** Dwelling approvals 2004-2014 for select towns (source: Urban Enterprise, 2014)

	<b>Population</b>			<b>Dwellings</b>		
	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>% growth p.a.</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%Growth p.a.</b>
<b>West Moorabool</b>	3,486	3,573	0.25%	1,427	1,506	0.54%
<b>Ballan Region</b>	5,594	6,534	1.57%	2,473	3,000	1.95%
<b>Bacchus Marsh</b>	14,779	18,025	2.01%	5,383	7,091	2.79%
<b>Moorabool (S)</b>	24,225	28,125	1.50%	9,283	11,585	2.24%
<b>Ballarat (C)</b>	80,756	93,502	1.48%	32,986	40,473	2.07%
<b>Golden Plains (S)</b>	14,605	18,765	2.54%	5,475	7,316	2.94%

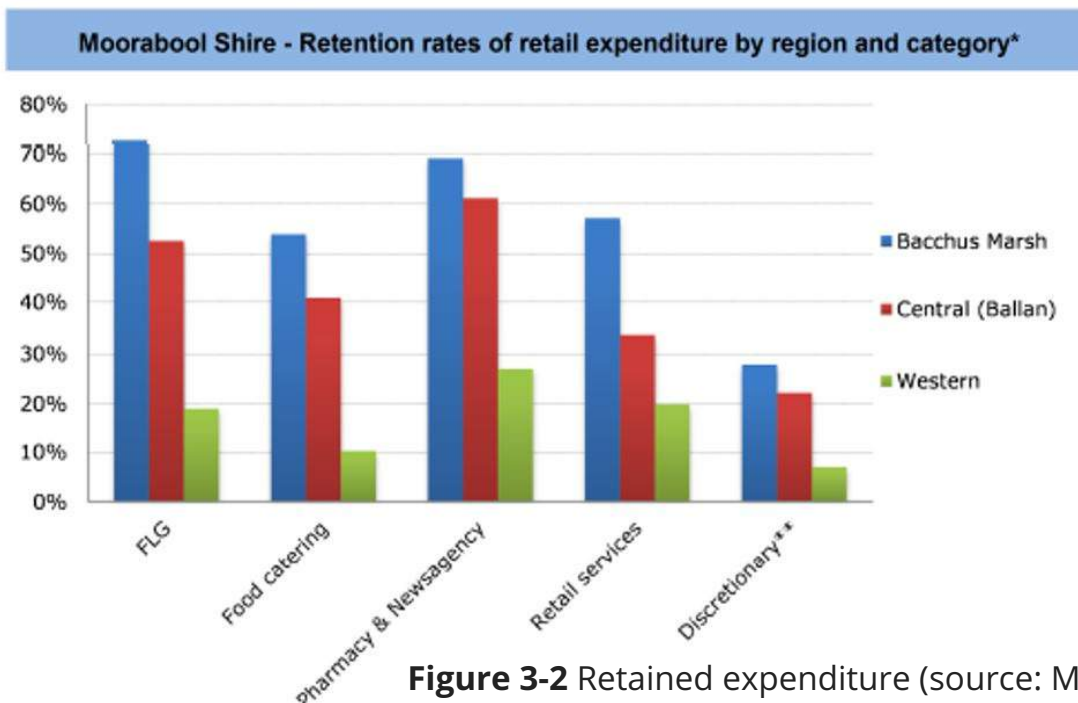
**Table 3-5** Dwelling approvals 2004-2014 for select towns (source: Urban Enterprise, 2014)

As covered in Section 4, costings on waste water solutions for Bungaree, Dunnstown, Myrniong and Wallace have been developed based on concept design. Water reticulation for Dunnstown has also been costed. That work forms the basis for more detailed future investigations at a local level.

The Retail Strategy provides additional input to the STS. The regional retail hierarchy is mapped from Ballarat to Melbourne. The escape expenditure is also modelled (Figure 3-2). In practical terms, less than 20% of food, liquor and groceries for the western region are purchased in the Shire, a figure well below that for Ballan (central area) and Bacchus Marsh (east). To a large degree these patterns match journey to work – though Bacchus Marsh is as dependent on out of area employment as western towns but has much greater local spending due to local retail offer.

Such low levels of local spend equates to opportunities lost in local business and jobs, though is pretty typical of towns with 200 or less residents with limited retail choices.

Retail scenario modelling to identify the level of retail that a sustainable small town could support, suggests approximately 1,000 residents within a settlement is required for a food store and a small cluster of specialty stores.



**Figure 3-2** Retained expenditure (source: Macroplan, 2016)



## 3.5 Overview

A strategic discussion of towns between all stakeholders is required and may consider:

- What should small towns be in the future? Community expectations are relevant. Do local communities want population growth? What is realistic and achievable? This issue is covered in Section 5.
- How do we understand small towns and rural settlements in terms of scale and time horizons for future planning? Strategic planning is determined by a range of factors including mapping the existing and future service role of a town, and balancing a range of competing needs – catchment water quality, sense of place, preservation of agricultural land.
- Uncoupling the issue of sustainable development from incremental growth is critical. For the vast majority of towns reviewed, little or no residential growth is likely due to bushfire risk, lack of services and competing infrastructure priorities. But for a small number of other towns, where strategic potential for growth exists, the investment required to achieve a sustainable strategic outcome may be incremental in nature (such as upfront capital to fund local sewer schemes)

The STS seeks a balance between articulating local community needs and expectations, a realistic understanding of competing infrastructure priorities and a settlement hierarchy that reflects the likely role of small towns in the medium to longer term.



CARLTON  
DRAUGHT  
GB

SHAMROCK HOTEL.

1905.

SHAMROCK

BISTRO

BAR  
FOS  
LA  
AUSTRALIA'S

4.0 Balancing  
the influences  
of growth in the  
small towns



## 4.0 Balancing the influences on growth in the small towns and settlements

Many of the small towns and settlements within Moorabool Shire were once thriving settlements with strong local economies and in several cases populations which numbered in the thousands. Today the settlements are far more modest with smaller resident populations, mostly numbering in the hundreds, dotted throughout the landscape and with little economic activity.

The challenge for the towns considered in the STS is that there are simultaneously drivers for, and constraints to growth, that may end up simply preserving the status quo for these towns. The task for the Moorabool Shire Council in delivering on the vision of “vibrant and resilient communities with unique identifies” is to balance these conflicting forces and ensure the best outcomes for the small towns and settlements into the future (Council Plan 2013-17).

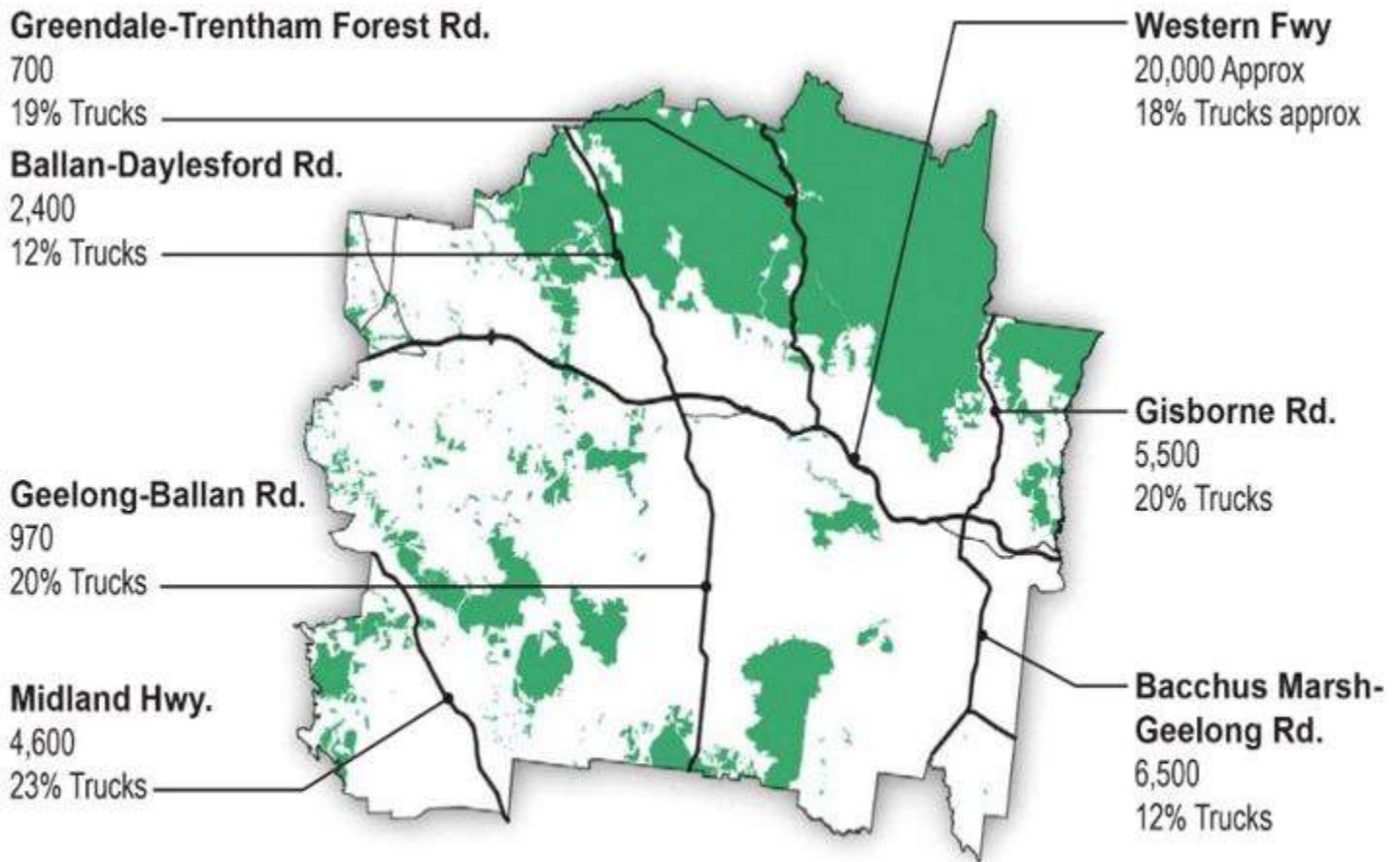
### 4.1 Population Change

Population forecasts indicate that Victoria’s population is expected to grow to 10 million people by 2051. The majority, approximately 7.8 million people, are expected to live in Greater Melbourne and the remainder will live in the regions. Moorabool Shire’s location on the edge of Greater Melbourne and along the Western Freeway places pressure on the Shire to accommodate some of the population growth strain from Melbourne.

Accordingly, the Victorian Government has identified Moorabool Shire as part of the population growth solution of rebalancing population growth to the regions through Plan Melbourne and the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF).

Evidence of the population growth pressure on Moorabool Shire is already visible in the growth occurring in and around Bacchus Marsh. The population of this area was 13,748 residents in 2011 and by 2016 it was estimated to be 18,585, an increase of 4,837 people in a period of only five years. Over the next 25 years, the population in the Bacchus Marsh area is expected almost double to 30,518 people. At the other end of the Western Freeway growth corridor, Ballarat is expected to accommodate an additional 40,000 residents to reach a population of 145,197 by 2036.

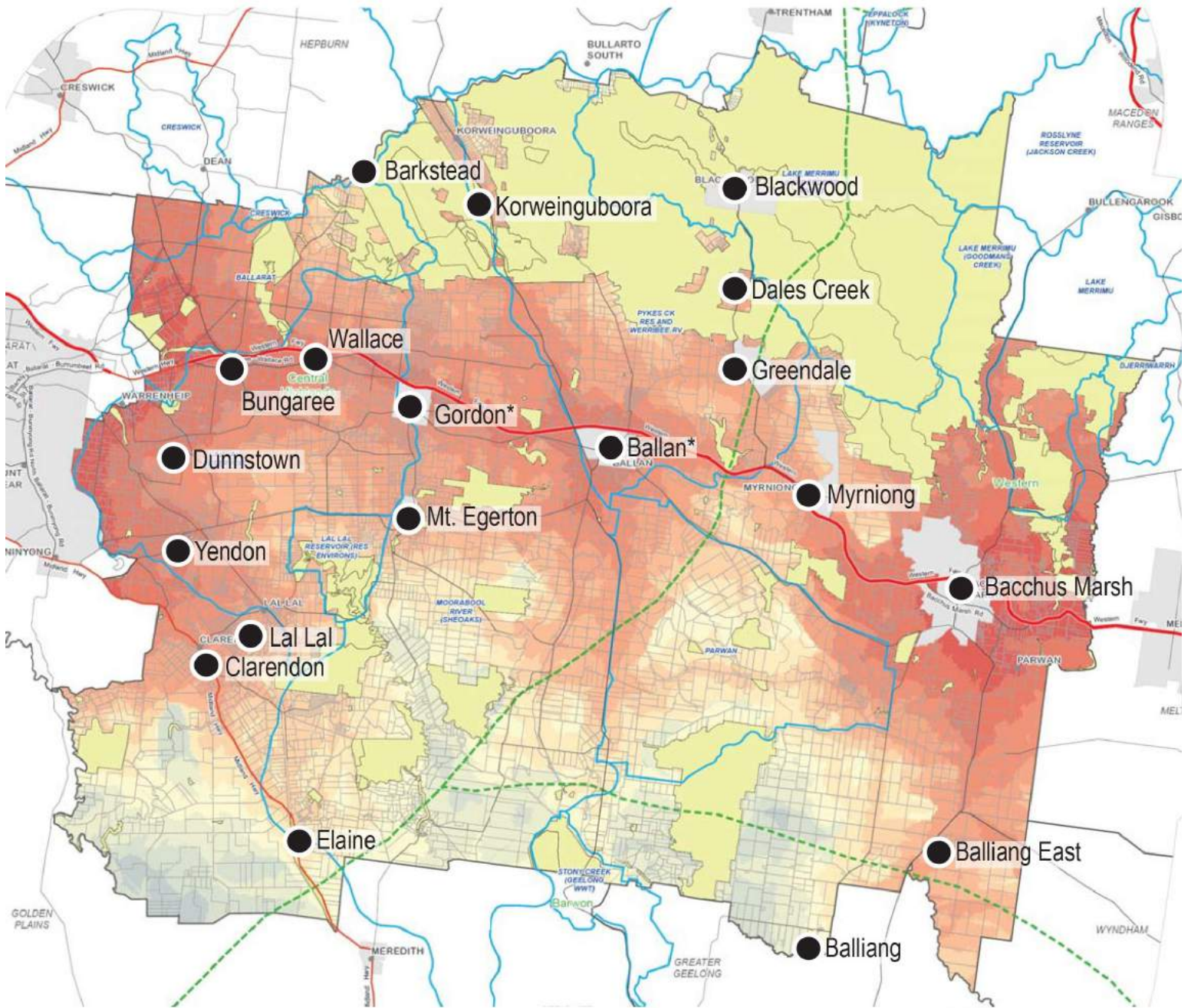
The movement of vehicles (shown over) on the Western Freeway already emphasises the significant volume of people travelling to Melbourne and Ballarat for employment and other purposes, fueled in large part by population growth.



## AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES 2015

**Map 4-1** Daily traffic volumes in Moorabool Shire

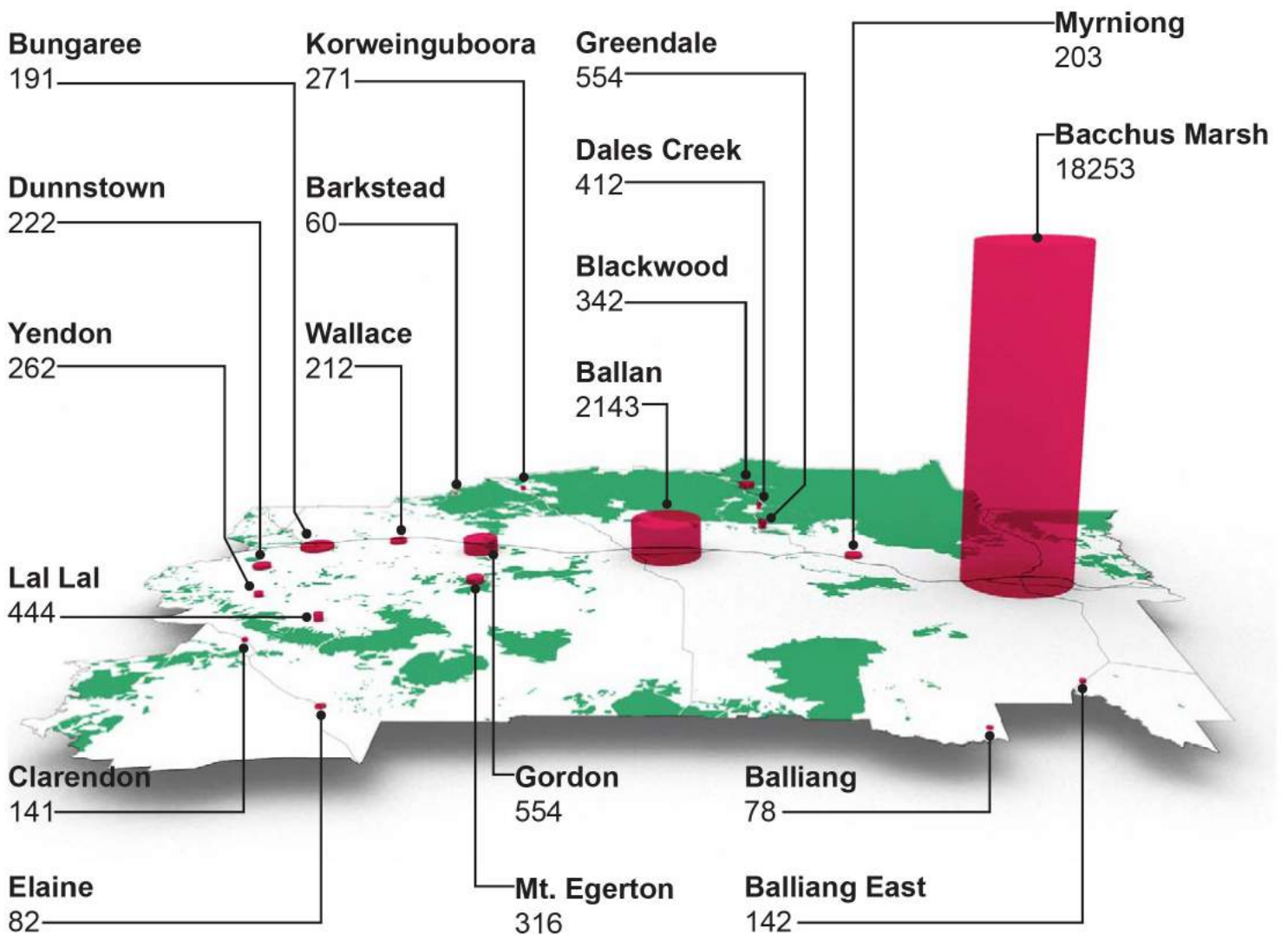




**Map 4-2** 'Attractiveness' Index (source: Peri Urban Group of Councils as modified)

The population growth in Metropolitan Melbourne, Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat is expected to have an impact on the small towns and settlements. It is expected there will be a migration of people to these areas who are seeking to avoid the congestion and pressures of living in the urban centres.

Conversely, the ageing population and those seeking employment opportunities are expected to migrate from the rural areas towards urban centres to access health, aged care and other services.



## POPULATIONS

Map 4-3 Population Distribution (2015)

Map 4-3 shows the current populations and densities across Moorabool Shire. Table 4-1 highlights the population change forecasts of the small towns and settlements of the STS and indicates that this area will support 7,366 residents by 2041, an increase of 1,851 residents (source Forecast ID).

The number of dwellings in Rural West is forecast to grow from 2,385 in 2011 to 2,743 in 2026, with the average household size falling from 2.61 to 2.50 in the same period (source Forecast ID). However, extrapolating growth beyond 10 years is to be carefully undertaken as many factors can change the results.

With little if any housing delivered in small towns over the last 20 years and homes being built largely in the Rural Living Zone and Farming Zone, this raises questions as to whether the 720 new homes to be built between 2016 and 2041 will be built in the existing settlements or almost exclusively outside of them (source Forecast ID).

Overarching the strategic objectives of directing growth into the regions and the growth trends reflected in the Forecast ID projections in Table 4-1, is the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF). The SPPF guides land use planning in Victoria and is informed by contemporary planning and land use theories. It directs Councils to avoid dispersed settlements and to concentrate development into urban areas to maximise resident access to facilities and services.

Community expectation has a role in this context as communities will often have mixed views about the future of their town. Some residents support population growth to secure much needed additional services like reticulated sewerage and others oppose change, to retain the rural feel and country amenity of the current settlement. The views of the individual communities have been considered and reflected in the analysis completed on the subject towns and settlements of the STS.



## Moorabool Shire

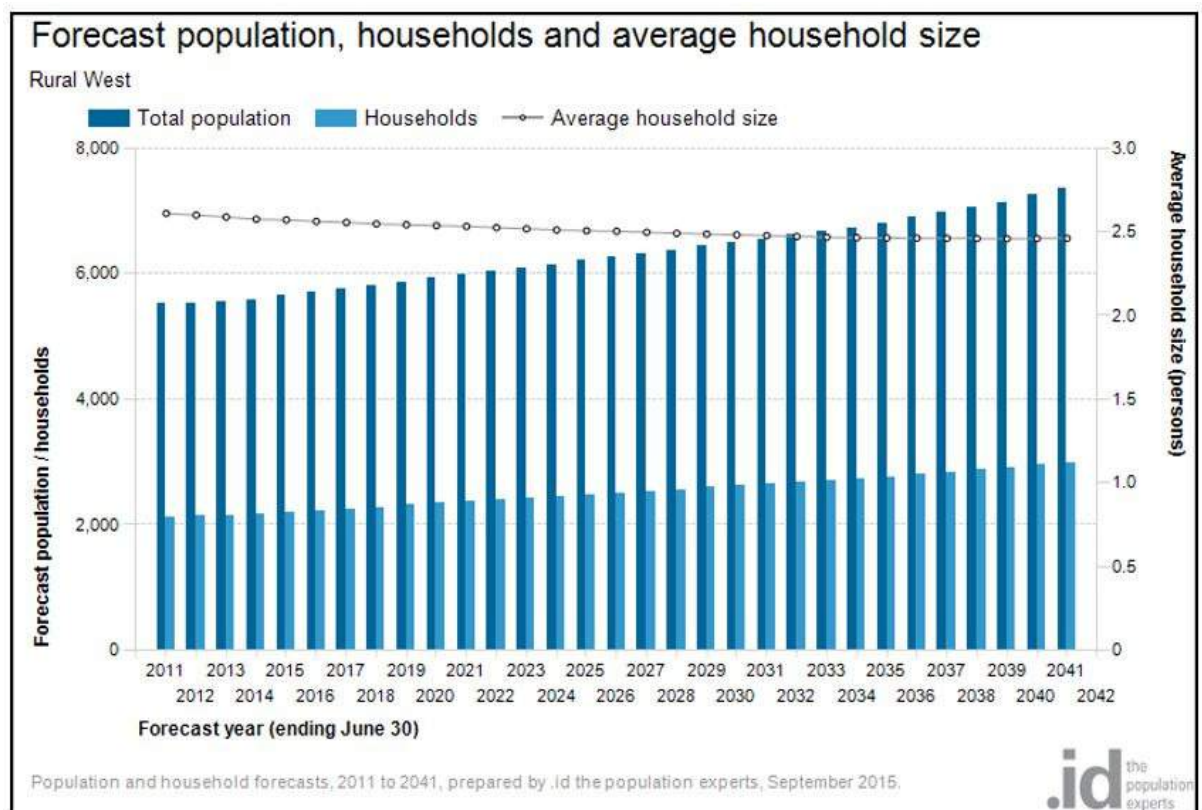
## Forecast year

Area	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Moorabool Shire	28,680	32,311	36,457	40,351	44,403	48,891	53,270
Bacchus Marsh (BM)	5,976	6,502	7,722	8,768	9,921	11,217	12,215
Ballan	2,806	3,010	3,347	3,913	4,506	5,160	5,910
Darley	7,439	8,871	9,429	9,419	9,251	9,113	9,043
Maddingley	2,327	3,212	4,511	5,797	7,051	8,198	9,261
Rural East*	4,617	5,019	5,469	6,194	7,125	8,302	9,475
Rural West	5,515	5,697	5,979	6,261	6,549	6,900	7,366
BM & surrounds	15,742	18,585	21,662	23,984	26,223	28,528	30,518

**Table 4-1:** Population change between 2011 and 2041 revised forecast (ID Consulting)  
\* includes Myrningong

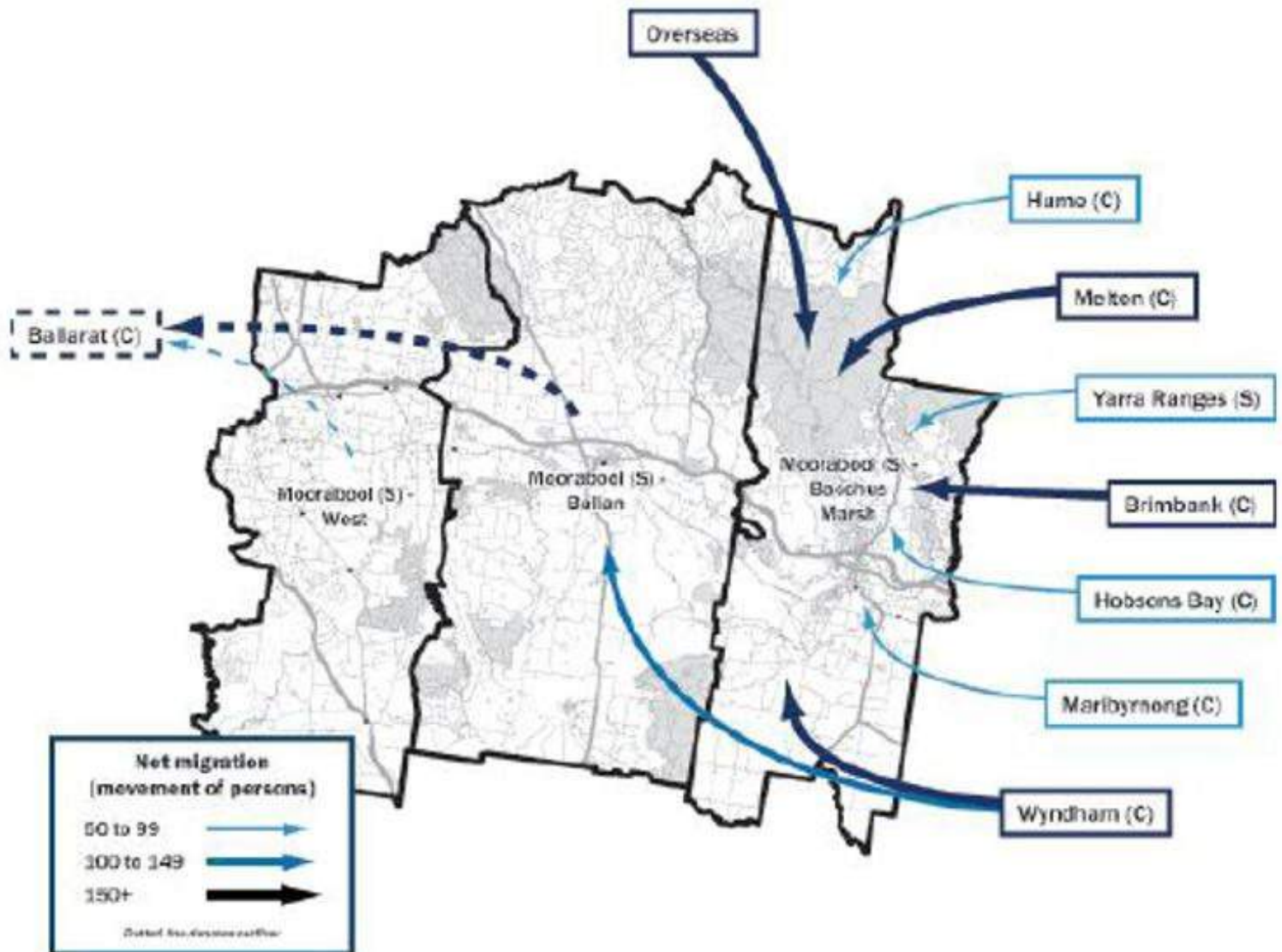
*In 2011, the total population of Rural West was estimated to be 5,515 people. It is expected to increase by over 740 people to 6,261 by 2026, at an average annual growth rate of 0.85%. This is based on an increase of over 380 households during the period, with the average number of persons per household falling from 2.61 to 2.50 by 2026 (Profile Id).*

**Figure 4-1**  
Projected population growth in West Moorabool SLA (source: ID Consulting).

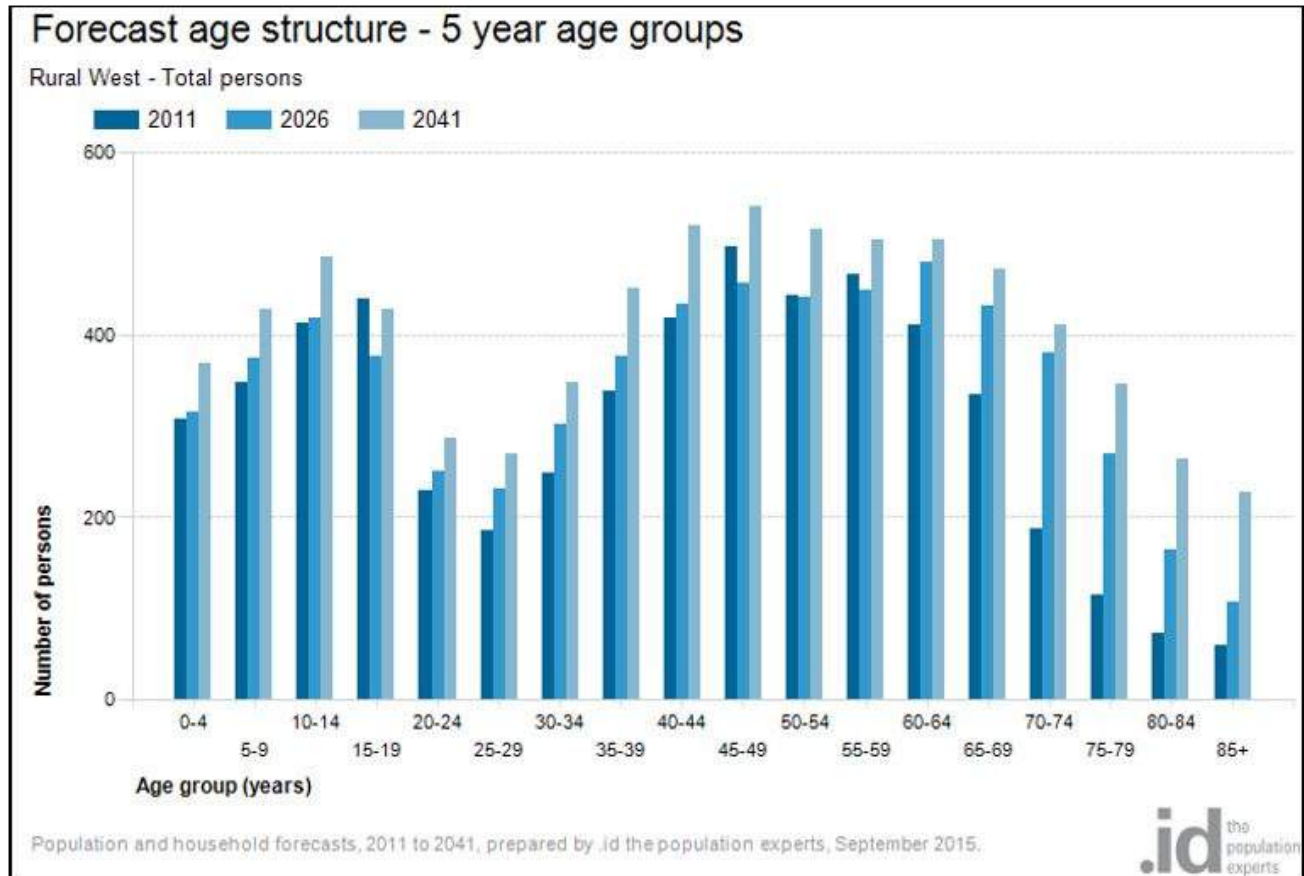




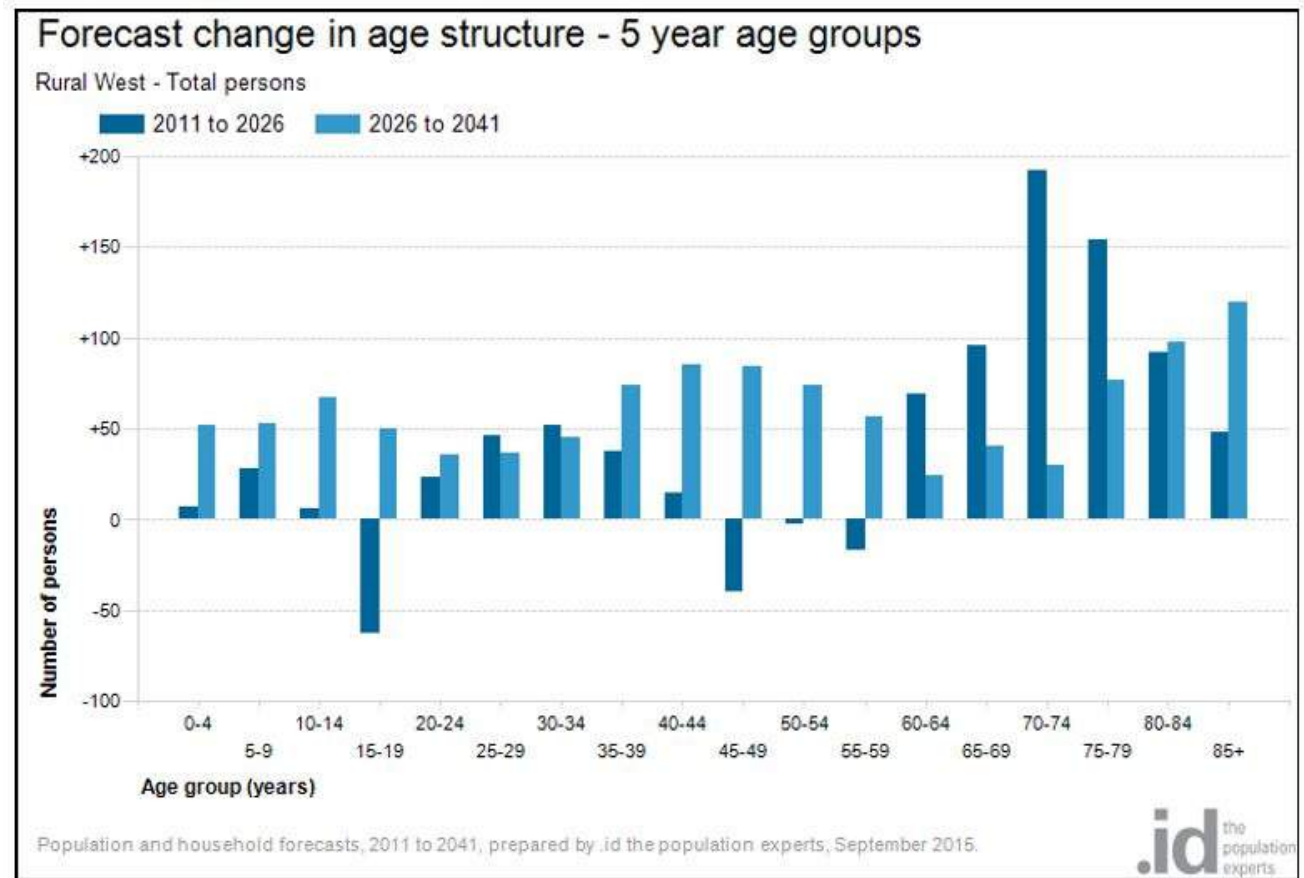
Population growth is being fueled by in migration from Western Melbourne as shown in Map 4-4.



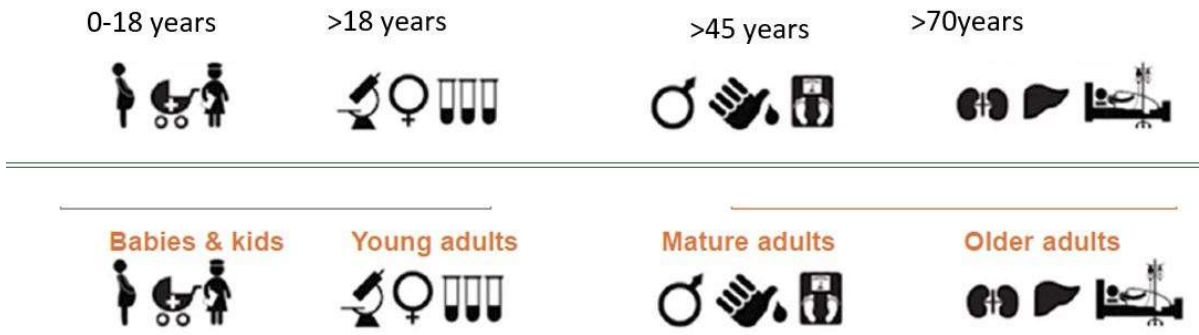
**Map 4-4** In-Migration Patterns (Source: ID Consulting)



**Figure 4-2** Age distribution in Rural West (source: ID Consulting)



**Figure 4-3** Age distribution in Rural West (source: ID Consulting)



**Figure 4-4** Lifecycle service needs (Source: DHHS, 2016)

The most significant population growth will be in the older age cohorts with a doubling of 75-79 year olds with similar results in the 70-74 age cohort and 80 years and over cohort. Ageing patterns are wider issues across the Shire and region. However in small towns this raises issues of access to services, support infrastructure and the capacity of towns and districts to function efficiently to meet different age category needs – whether it be access to local jobs, education, medical support or transport.



## 4.2 Environment and Bushfire

The small towns and settlements of Moorabool Shire are surrounded by significant forests, waterways and water catchments, mineral resources and protected flora and fauna. Seventy-five percent of the Shire is protected by National Park, State Parks and special water catchments and it includes eight areas of landscape significance identified by the South Western Victorian Landscape Assessment Study (SWVLAS).

As part of the recent Government refresh of Plan Melbourne, it was noted that these types of areas should be identified as a valuable resource due to their aesthetic appeal and their ability to provide jobs in agriculture, horticulture and extractive resource industries.

The beauty of these areas makes them highly desirable for people seeking a “tree change” and visitors seeking a nature based tourism experience or active recreation opportunities.

Opportunities for nature based tourism are unique to these towns and form part of Council’s considerations in the development of a vision for each of the small towns and settlements considered in the STS. The opportunities are tempered by provisions in the SPPF requiring the protection of natural assets and managing the identified and significant risks associated with bushfire.

## 4.3 Heritage

The early settlement, gold rush and Aboriginal heritage of the small towns and settlements are unique and defining qualities for this area. The West Moorabool Heritage Study Stage 1 identified 720 potential heritage places in the Shire.

The heritage areas and assets are protected by a significant number of Planning Scheme directions. These seek to ensure that development is sympathetic to the identified heritage elements.

There are opportunities for the small towns and settlements to capitalise on the heritage tourism values of these areas, to strengthen the local economies and provide increased employment, however these opportunities are dependent on protecting the heritage assets.

Council has undertaken a Western Moorabool Heritage study Stage 2A, focusing particularly on towns along the Western Freeway (Ballan, Bungaree, Wallace, Gordon and Millbrook) as well as Blackwood to the north and Lal Lal in the south. This work has been advertised and will be adopted in coming months, leading to future planning scheme amendments. Other heritage towns such as Elaine and Greendale will be reviewed in subsequent assessments.



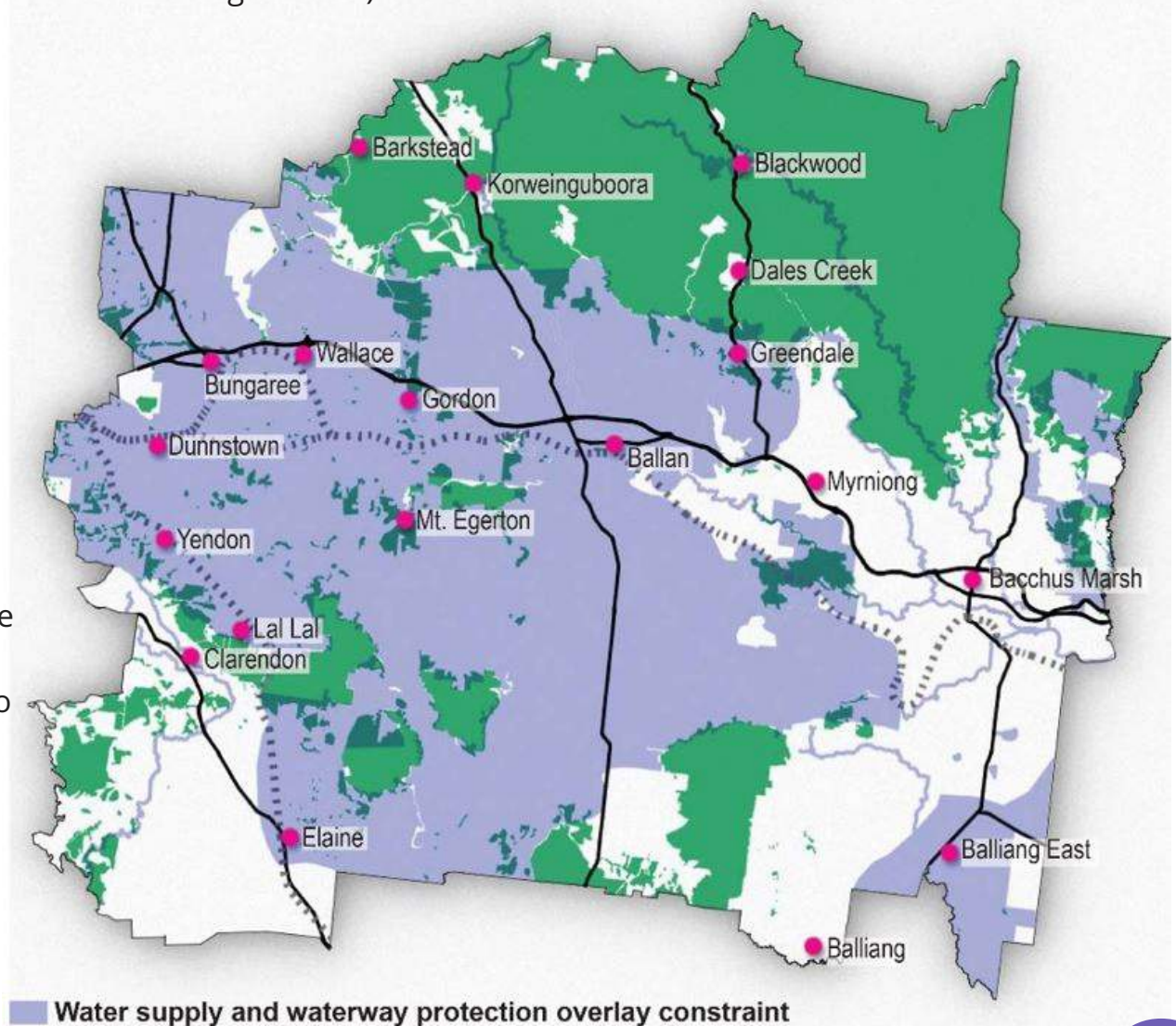
## 4.4 Special Water Supply Catchments

The water catchments, which cover two thirds of Moorabool Shire, are the subject of a number of policies and strategies to ensure the ongoing provision of clean, high quality drinking water. The subdivision of land within the water catchments for residential use is strongly discouraged due to potential contamination of water from sewage overflows and wastewater from the properties (Moorabool Planning Scheme).

Wallace, Elaine, Dunnstown, Bungaree, Mount Egerton, Greendale and Myrning are all identified as having a potential impact on the local water catchment. Accordingly this limits the ability for these towns to grow without a appropriate sewerage system to prevent further contamination (Central Highlands Infrastructure Study).

**Map 4-5**

Moorabool is situated within the upper catchment of the Werribee River and is subject to wide ranging controls on development within potable water districts.



## 4.5 Sewerage and Water

According to the Central Highlands Infrastructure Study, towns with reticulated sewerage have advantages for attracting and supporting future development.

The Urban Enterprise (2014) Moorabool West Small Towns Residential Assessment also identified that there has been a small increase in development activity in towns which have been recently seweraged, such as Gordon (from around 6 building permits per year to 9-10 permits). A similar trend was found at Smythesdale.

As part of investigations into the future of the small towns and settlements and their ability to accommodate increased populations, a number of studies have been undertaken on the costs and practicalities of providing sewerage systems to Bungaree, Dunnstown, Myrniong and Wallace.

The studies found that anticipated growth for Wallace, Bungaree and Dunnstown, if reticulated services can be provided, is in the order of 500 to 2,000 residents.

It was noted that Wallace has significant residential amenity and is likely to attract higher levels of population growth if supported by reticulated sewerage. However, Bungaree's proximity to Ballarat's sewerage systems makes it the more likely candidate for sewerage in the first instance.

The capital expense (CAPEX) for a sewerage trunk connection for Bungaree is estimated to cost \$6.8 million and an extended system connecting to Wallace via Bungaree would cost \$9.2 million. Internal reticulation is a separate cost.

Urban Enterprise (2016) identifies a gravity sewer for Dunnstown costing in the order of \$2.8 million. Aecom costed water reticulation to Dunnstown at a further \$1.7 million. The cost of connecting Myrniong to reticulated sewerage would be approximately \$5.3 million. The quoted costs exclude operational expenses (OPEX).

The quantum of funding required for these potential projects is a significant obstacle to their delivery. The options are to seek their inclusion in upcoming or future five-year capital works plans of Central Highlands Water (Bungaree and Wallace) and Melbourne Water (Myrniong) or to co-fund the projects with contributions from landowners and the State Government. The estimated level of contribution required from home or landowners for these projects ranges from \$13,000 to \$38,000 per lot.

## 4.6 Agriculture, extractive industry and the local economy

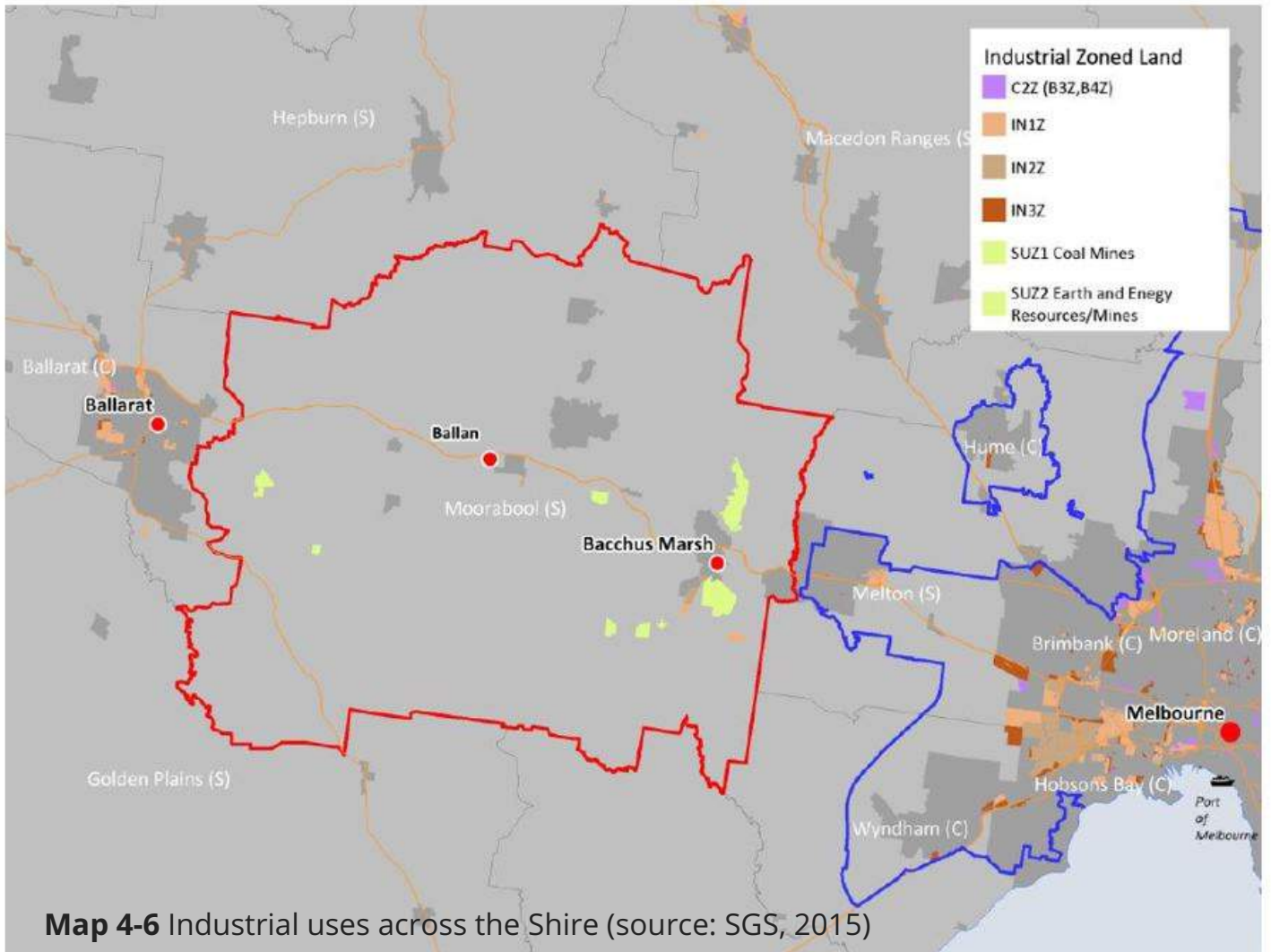
Agriculture and primary production are important drivers of the Moorabool Shire local economy and will remain significant into the future. In the 2011 Census, the value of agriculture across the Shire was \$93 million annually (Geografia, 2014, 2).

Expansion of any of the small towns or settlements will possibly encroach into Farming Zoned land to enable additional dwellings to be accommodated. Both the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework prioritise the retention of agricultural lands for productive agricultural use rather than residential development. Furthermore, they discourage additional residential dwellings in the Farming Zone.

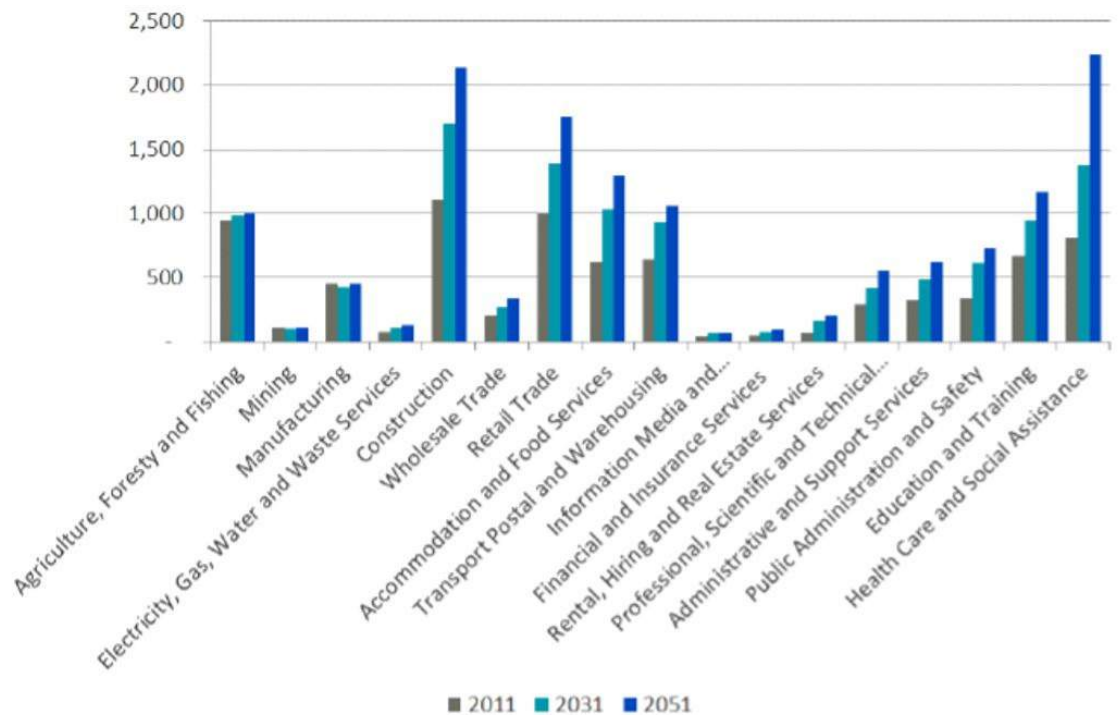
Industry, especially manufacturing is shrinking across the Shire, declining in total employment by 5% between 2006 and 2011. Reasons for this relate to increased efficiencies, mechanisation and business closure. Nevertheless, more widely viewed, mining operations in Dunnstown provide for 45 equivalent full time staff (EFT), operations in Lal Lal a further 6 EFT and there are 106 EFT in the Ballan industrial estate. The remaining 700 EFT are employed across sand mines, coal mines and other operations centred around Bacchus Marsh and Merrimu (SGS, 2015).

Any significant industrial investment in the Shire is contingent on maintenance of suitable buffer areas from sensitive uses such as private residences. The provision of adequate infrastructure is critical to the ongoing future of these businesses. Location decisions are also impacted by the choices available across the wider region including the City of Ballarat and Greater Melbourne.

By 2051, the shape of the local economy of Bacchus Marsh will likely resemble that depicted in Figure 4-4. Service sectors like education and public administration are expected to continue to grow. While agriculture, forestry and fishing are expected to remain steady in total job numbers.

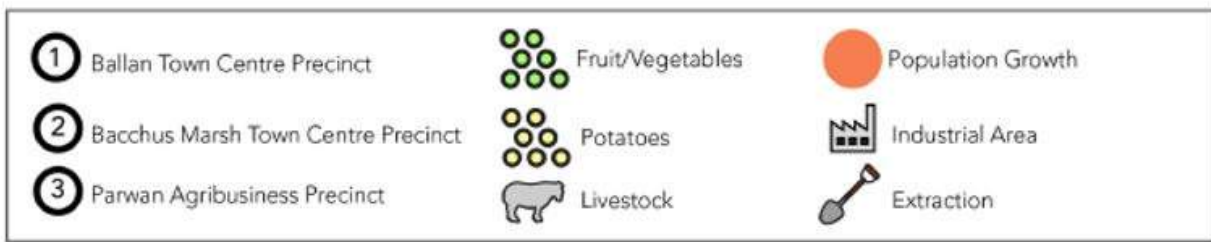
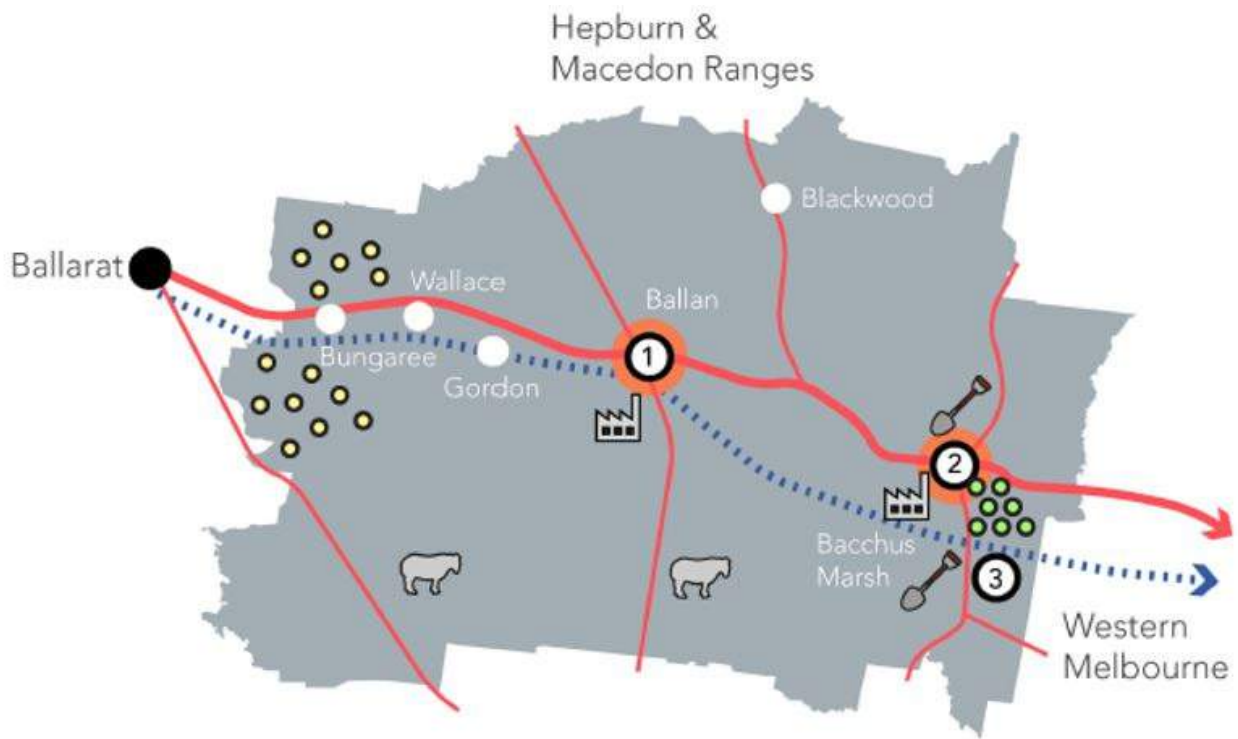


**Figure 4-5** Future economy and jobs (source: SGS, 2015)

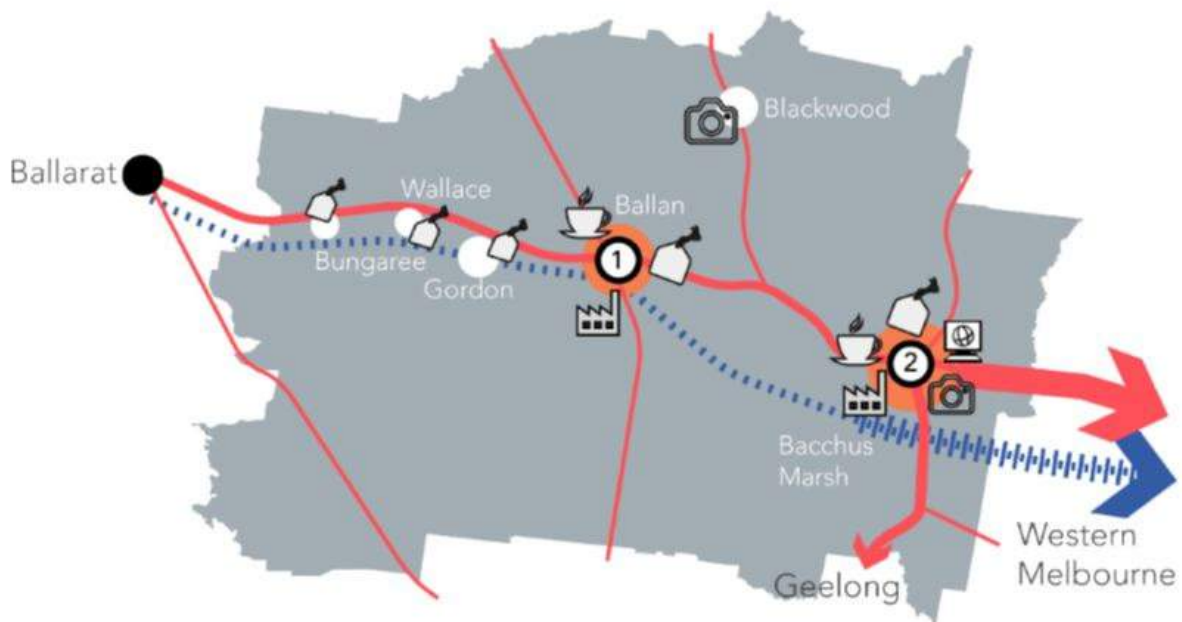


Source: SGS Economics and Planning





**Map 4-7** Regional land use perspective (source: Geografia, 2015)



**Map 4-8** Economic perspective (source: Geografia, 2015)

## 4.7 Transport Networks

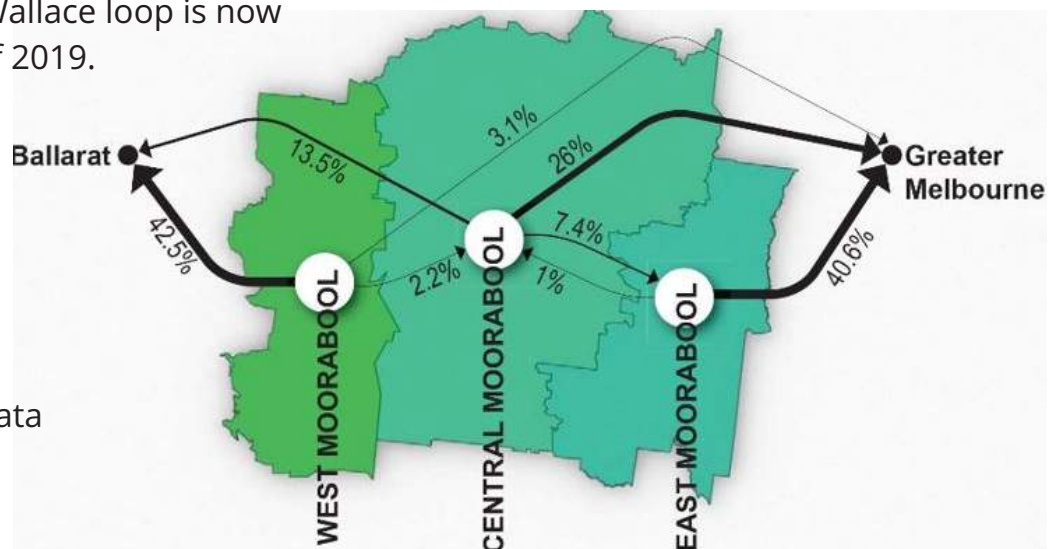
The future economy is expected to continue and consolidate existing trends with working aged residents in the west travelling primarily to jobs in Ballarat (Map 4-9). Ballan will be more divided between Ballarat and Greater Melbourne with towns near Bacchus Marsh reliant on Bacchus Marsh and Greater Melbourne.

Reliance on road networks, especially the Western Freeway will remain high.

Bus and rail networks will also be critical considerations in future planning. The nearest train stations to West Moorabool are Ballan and Ballarat stations. Ballan train station patronage has increased from around 30,000 to 90,000 passenger journeys per year from 2005-2015. The Ballarat line patronage has grown strongly, from 1,039,347 journeys to an approximately 3,484,915 in 2015 (John Hearsch Consulting, 2016).

To enhance frequency and travel times, the removal of the Bungaree-Wallace loop is now expected before the end of 2019.

**Map 4-9** Journey to work data (source: ID Consulting as modified)



This will improve travel times, but removes future train station options in Bungaree and Wallace, which previously supported train stations.

The Gordon station remains closed and is not identified by PTV for opening in the short to medium term. It is therefore envisaged that public transport in the west of the Shire will focus on convenient access to Ballan or Ballarat stations via bus services.

Presently, there are limited bus services in small towns. Bungaree, Dunnstown and Wallace are provided with 3 bus services each week that connect with Ballarat (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday). Myrning and Yendon do not have a bus service. Gordon and Mount Egerton have a daily return service to Ballan.

The minimum service level would need to be reconsidered if any of the towns within the STS were to develop further.

## 4.8 Moorabool Community Infrastructure Framework (CIF)

The Community Infrastructure Framework (CIF) is currently in advanced preparation phase and will provide Moorabool Shire Council with ongoing processes and planning tools for measuring and monitoring the demand for, and the provision of, services and facilities within the Shire's communities. The CIF will compare the current supply of community infrastructure with a set of planning standards (targets) to identify shortfalls or surpluses in provision. The CIF will use the Shire's population projections to forecast how these shortfalls in provision may change over time. The end result will be a prioritised list of the services and facilities that are required across the Shire and timeframes for provision.

The primary purpose of the CIF is to plan for constructed facilities such as buildings, sports courts, ovals and associated structures. In its first stage, the CIF will focus on facilities owned, operated or funded by Moorabool Shire Council.

*Caveat: The draft Community Infrastructure Framework is not currently an adopted strategy of Council. It is expected to be considered in 2016/17. The draft CI Framework has however been tabled at the Section 86 Urban Growth Committee and the Section 86 Rural Growth Committee public meetings and has been exposed to Council review over the past 12 to 18*

*months and the principles have been adopted.*

One means of understanding the relationships between towns is to examine the community services and facilities, which each town or settlement provides. It becomes clear that some are significant providers of services (such as, Ballarat, Ballan and Bacchus Marsh) while many settlements are dependent on services and facilities provided in other towns.

Bacchus Marsh is the major service provider in the eastern part of the Shire, serving Myrning and Greendale as well as many rural settlements, such as, Balliang, Balliang East, Coimadai and Long Forest. Myrning and Greendale are examples of towns which do not possess many facilities but are able to access a wide range of services within a 10 to 20 minute drive.

Ballarat is the major provider of services to many towns in the western part of the Shire, particularly those close to either the Western Freeway or Midland Highway. The range and number of facilities in Ballarat, as well as jobs, means that towns in the west are as dependent on Ballarat as they are on the towns within Moorabool Shire.

In the centre of the Shire, Ballan is a significant provider of services and contains 19 of 25 infrastructure types identified by Council as critical for meeting people's daily needs. Its proximity to the Freeway and main roads to Daylesford and Geelong enables Ballan to serve many of the surrounding

towns within a 20 minute journey time. The analysis of these relationships shows that Gordon, Wallace, Bungaree and Dunnstown collectively act as network or cluster of providers of local services. Together they provide 14 of the 25 critical infrastructure types through 13 facilities. In addition, this network serves surrounding towns including Navigators, Yendon and Mount Egerton.

A number of small towns have limited community infrastructure, due to their small populations and significant road distance from other larger towns.

Blackwood's location in the far north of the Shire means it relies as much on Daylesford and Trentham for services, as it does Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.

Settlements particularly disadvantaged due to their location include, Barkstead, Elaine, Korweinguboorra, Morrisons and Mount Wallace. The residents of many of these towns access services in Ballarat, Golden Plains and Hepburn Shires.

Elaine, Meredith (Golden Plains Shire) and Morrisons have a close relationship due to their proximity to each other, as do Elaine with Clarendon, and Clarendon, Lal Lal and Yendon. These neighbouring towns share services and form small clusters of demand for community infrastructure. Demand in one town must therefore be planned with consideration to supply and demand in neighbouring towns.

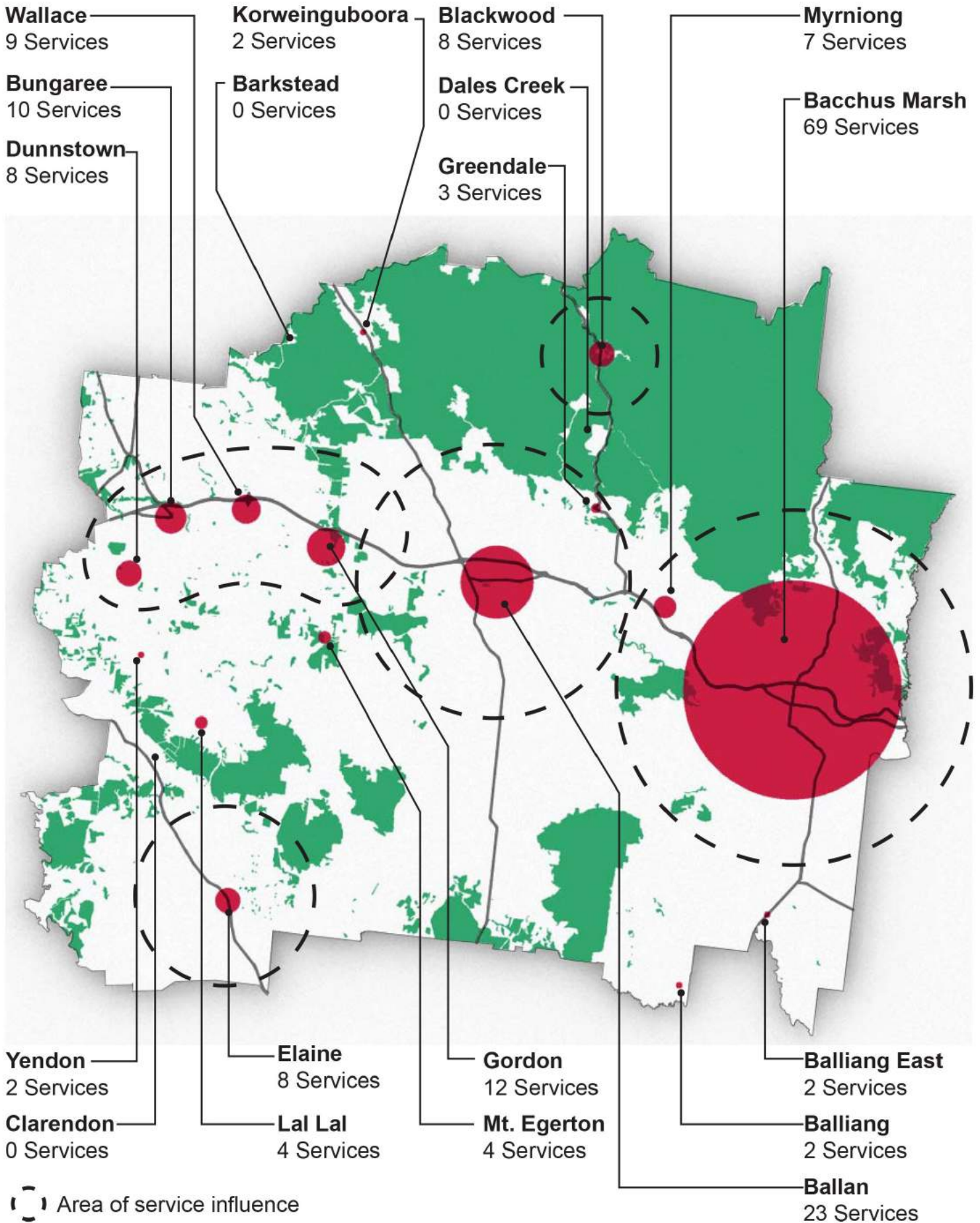
Map 4-10 shows the current range of community facilities available in the small towns and settlements.

While Table 4-1 is an indicative list of the services and facilities that can be supported within settlements of increasing size, and within a 10, 20 and 30 minute drive of the settlement. The tables are indicative and show the scalability of services and facilities available based on a population of 100 to 200 residents and a settlement with more than 500 residents.

When considered by Moorabool Shire Council, the CIF will include tables and lists of services and facilities for communities in the following categories:

- under 200 residents;
- 300 to 500 residents;
- 500 to 800 residents; and
- 800 to 2,000 residents.





# CRITICAL SERVICE PROVISION

Map 4-10 Critical Service Provision

Indicative Services and Facilities in Settlements of populations between 100 and 200 people			
Within settlement	Playground Community venue – local		
Within 10 minute drive	Library (rural service)		
Within 20 minute drive	Centre-based meals Planned activity groups Skate or BMX park Youth space Long Day Care Tennis court (competition) Netball court (competition)	Maternal & Child Health 4 year old kindergarten Community venue – district Community venue - municipal Library (centre-based) Basketball court (competition)	Football oval (competition) Cricket oval (competition) Soccer pitch (competition) Lawn bowls (competition) MSC customer service centre
Within 30 minute drive	Swimming pool (outdoor) Swimming pool (indoor)		
Indicative Services and Facilities in Settlements of populations between 500 and 2,000 people			
Within settlement	Playground Community venue – local Library (rural service)		
Within 10 minute drive	Long Day Care Maternal & Child Health 4 year old kindergarten Community venue – district Library (centre-based)	Tennis court (competition) Football oval (competition) Cricket oval (competition) Netball court (competition)	Soccer pitch (competition) Lawn bowls (competition) MSC customer service centre Basketball court (competition)
Within 20 minute drive	Centre-based meals Planned activity groups Skate or BMX park	Youth space Long Day Care Swimming pool (outdoor)	

**Table 4-1:** Indicative Services and Facilities for Moorabool Settlement





# 5.0 Community Engagement

# 5.0 Community Engagement - What you said ...

Talking 2041 is the largest ever community engagement campaign undertaken by Moorabool Shire Council. The Talking 2041 campaign has been designed to inform Council's strategic planning framework, Moorabool 2041, and the two sub-strategies, which are the Urban Growth Strategy and the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (Rural Growth Strategy).

The Talking 2041 campaign has enabled Moorabool Shire Council to build a narrative about growth across the whole of the Shire and the interrelationships between the rural and urban areas of the Shire with regards to population growth pressures and protection of productive agricultural areas, heritage and natural environments.

The program of community engagement activities delivered for the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy has been comprehensive and contemporary, and completed with extensive input from the residents in the rural areas of the Shire.

Council has also sought input and support from relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders.

Using the IAP2 Community Engagement Framework, the community was invited to participate throughout the process at an involved level and accordingly their

aspirations and concerns have driven the vision statements, and the recommendations for each of the towns.

The level of attendance by resident at community workshops held across the Shire is strongly reflective of the interest people have in their local towns.

Moorabool Shire Council is grateful to the residents of the rural areas of the Shire for their participation, for sharing their local knowledge and expertise on the functional relationships between towns, the community priorities, vision statements for the towns and views on future growth.

The community and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken in three key stages. These are outlined in Chart 5-1: Community Engagement Process for Small Towns and Settlements Strategy.

Participants were asked about their aspirations for their town and assisted to develop draft Vision Statements for each of the key investigation towns. The resulting Vision Statements have been refined and are contained in each town's strategy assessment – Part B of the STS.

The summaries of the community engagement activities are provided at <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/residents/building-and-planning/strategic-planning/moorabool-2041>



**STAGE 1**  
CONTEXT REPORT  
FEBRUARY 2015

**ACTIVITIES**

- Invitations to participate posted to 3,150 residents.
- The Context report is available via [www.moorabool.vic.gov.au](http://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au)
- Visits to 12 Primary Schools
- Ballan Train Station activity
- [www.haveyoursaymoorabool.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaymoorabool.com.au)

**OUTCOMES**

- 273 people attended workshops (9% participation rate)
- 553 completed surveys returned (18% participation rate)
- 268 students in years 4 to 6 participated
- 265 people participated through Have Your Say Moorabool

**STAGE 2**  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT REPORT  
AND TOWN SUMMARIES

- Community Engagement Report and Town Summaries were placed on [www.haveyoursaymoorabool.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaymoorabool.com.au)
- The Community Engagement Report and Town Summaries are available via [www.moorabool.vic.gov.au](http://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au)

- 22 responses

**STAGE 3**  
KEY INVESTIGATION  
TOWNS - SECOND ROUND  
WORKSHOPS

The towns of Bungaree, Wallace, Myrniong, Dunnstown and Elaine were identified for small to moderate growth in population and or services.

- Five community workshops held in December 2015

- 10 to 15 residents attended each workshop

**Chart 5-1** Consultation process



# 6.0 A Vision and Principles for the Small Towns

# 6.0 A Vision and Principles for the Small Towns

This section outlines the vision statement and principles which have assisted in defining the STS growth management framework and shaping the recommendations contained in Chapter 7. This section also contains the proposed growth management hierarchy for the subject small towns and settlements.

This work is built upon the objectives and methodology provided in Chapter 2 and the key issues and challenges faced by Moorabool Shire's small towns and settlements outlined in Chapters 3 and 4.

## 6.1 Vision Statement

Moorabool Shire supports a diverse range of settlements each with unique qualities and roles. The communities and towns of Moorabool Shire have a strong rural setting and character that is defined by the local agricultural base, spectacular scenic landscapes and diverse vegetation. It is important to ensure that these values, which draw people to the area, are protected.

Future planning, investment and infrastructure decisions will build on these characteristics within a cluster narrative. This will ensure services and roles for each small town and settlement are defined, duplication is avoided, opportunities for managed or incremental growth are facilitated and all

aspects of community life and achieving sustainable communities are factored into decision making.

## 6.2 Principles

### 6.2.1 Principles for the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy

The STS analysis and recommendations are based upon a range of principles. The principles have been derived from the contextual research and an appreciation of the elements required for sustainable communities. These principles guide the overall strategy and provide direction to the strategies for individual towns and settlements.

### 6.2.2 Social and Settlement

Key principles of the Strategy in relation to Social and Settlement issues are:

- Population growth should be accommodated in sustainable locations in the Shire, to create a network of integrated and prosperous settlements.
- Strengthen networks of settlements by maintaining and improving transport links, spatial patterns of service delivery, and promoting commercial relationships and community activities.
- Plan for development and facilities that are shared around clusters of linked settlements, particularly for groups of small settlements, or settlements without easy access to a close major settlement.

- Provide social infrastructure, which is well located and accessible, in relation to residential development, public transport services, employment and educational opportunities.
- Guide population to settlements where a base framework of community services and facilities already exists.
- Guide population and development to those settlements where the capacity to accommodate growth can be most effectively met, which optimise the use of existing water, energy and utility infrastructure, and minimise the need for infrastructure upgrades or expansion.
- Strengthen the viability of existing community infrastructure in small towns and settlements.
- Consider the transportation needs of an ageing population, including recognition of the need for innovative and cost-efficient responses where demand is relatively low.
- Continue to promote walkability and encourage active lifestyles through continuous streetscape improvements, and expansion of the pedestrian and cycle path network.
- Ensure that new development in settlements with reticulated infrastructure constraints does not overburden existing services, or cause adverse environmental impacts.
- Encourage population growth and development in settlements in a manner, which respects the distinctive character defining attributes of each settlement.

- Support the sustainable growth and incremental change of small towns and settlements.
- Strengthen liveability and character in small towns and settlements.
- Provide for diversity and choice in residential land in appropriate locations.
- Maintain clear distinctions and separation between settlements in the Shire.

### **6.2.3 Economic**

Key principles of the Strategy in relation to Economic issues are:

- The Shire's economy should be strengthened so it becomes more diversified and resilient.
- The Shire should capitalise on its close links with other regions and cities.
- Guide population and development to settlements, which will foster the economic base of the region and provide for the protection and growth of employment.
- Diversify the local economy, particularly through local industries and business, and provide for/encourage the protection and growth of employment in small towns and settlements.
- Support commercial development and activity, which is consistent with the role and function of the settlement, to encourage economic self-sufficiency and local employment.
- Direct growth and development to locations where:
  - It will not affect productive earth resources.



- Utility, transport, commercial and social infrastructure and services are available, or can be provided in the most efficient and sustainable manner.
- Key agricultural resources should be protected, productivity maintained and the development of rural industry supported.
- Facilitate appropriate economic development in areas of the Shire, which have tourism, recreational, or environmental attractions.
- Promote and protect significant goldfields and Aboriginal cultural heritage, as key economic and social assets.
- Support economic opportunities based on cultural heritage, the built and natural environment.
- Encourage and promote the development of the local tourism sector, and support tourism opportunities, which contribute to positive cultural heritage and built and natural environment outcomes.
- Support the development of tourism infrastructure and accommodation capable of attracting year round visitation in appropriate locations.
- Strengthen tourism links with adjoining municipalities.
- Promote the establishment of farmer's markets, and the purchasing of local food and other products.

These economic principles reflect the objectives of Council's Economic Development Strategy.

#### **6.2.4 Environment and Landscape**

Key principles of the Strategy in relation to Environment and Landscape issues are:

- The Shire's land, soil, water, and biodiversity should be managed, protected, and enhanced.
- Direct settlement growth and development to areas:
  - Which are appropriately zoned or identified for urban growth under the planning scheme.
  - Where it will avoid affecting environmental and cultural assets, and landscapes, including special water supply catchment areas, strategically important terrestrial habitat, soil health, waterways and wetlands.
  - Of lower natural hazard risk (i.e., bushfire and flood), and carefully consider development in locations where there is a significant risk, which cannot be avoided.
  - Away from locations of higher quality productive agricultural land.
- Provide protection to special water supply catchments by guiding development to settlements where reticulated water and sewerage is available, or appropriate effluent management plans are in place, or where sewerage is a reasonable expectation to consolidate an existing settlement.
- Ensure that new development in settlements responds to bushfire risk in a manner, which minimises loss of the environmental values of the surrounding landscape.

- Protect and enhance the environmental and cultural heritage values, and rural landscape character of the municipality, as community assets and major contributors to its liveability, tourism, and economic growth.
- Support the improvement of knowledge and resources about Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage in the Shire.
- Encourage strategic land use planning that promotes adaptable land uses, which respond to climate change and enable economic diversification.
- Support the sustainable use of public land. Activities, such as, bushwalking, recreational vehicle use and rock-climbing should take into consideration the potential for environmental impacts, by avoiding sensitive areas.

### 6.2.5 Sustainability

A key theme of the Strategy is the development of sustainable communities within the Moorabool Shire, which is consistent with State Policy direction. This approach should be undertaken to ensure that settlements in the Shire will grow efficiently with respect to major infrastructure networks, such as, transport and communication networks, are affordable and liveable, and create a sustainable legacy for future generations.

Although commonly used, the term 'sustainable communities' is not always clearly defined. For the purpose of the STS, the following definition of 'sustainable

communities' will be applied:

*“Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.”*

Small towns and sustainable settlements have an important contribution to make to the communities they serve and to Moorabool Shire more broadly, and they are viewed in the following terms:

- Land use patterns, developments and infrastructure that support self-reliant and sustainable communities.
- Sustainable and vibrant communities are supported by access to key services.
- An individual identity, which is embraced by the local residents, who develop, shared goals for the settlement.
- Build upon the strengths and opportunities available to each town or settlement in social, economic, and environmental development.
- The development of distinct settlements should be supported to create healthy, attractive and liveable communities.
- Provide convenient access to a broad range of services.
- Awareness of the need to protect productive and versatile rural land and environmental assets.

- Critical population and development mass is required to justify major capital investment in services, such as, utility infrastructure.
- Provide choice in a range of services and housing expectations, and where possible, provide employment opportunities in the towns and settlements.
- Work collaboratively to determine the most effective and beneficial targets for capital investment.
- Accommodate change within the towns and settlements without causing short or long-term detrimental effects to the environment.
- The Shire's assets should be used to facilitate the diversification of the economy and ensure a resilient community.

### **6.3 Recommendations on Growth**

Detailed appraisals of each settlement and cluster against a consistent framework of considerations are provided in Part B of the STS.

These appraisals provide specific recommendations for the future role and intended outcomes for each settlement or cluster, changes to be made to the planning scheme (if required), and recommendations regarding the growth and development of each settlement.

It is recommended that a cautionary position be taken towards encouraging substantial further growth in the smaller settlements of the Shire, as they do not meet many of the requirements for a sustainable community. Under State policy, it is preferable to consolidate growth around existing settlements strategically identified as having capacity to accommodate additional population growth in a sustainable manner.

In addition, this Strategy expresses the growth capacity or constraints of settlements in Moorabool Shire based on the following likely growth management approaches:

- **Growth Investigation Towns** – A number of settlements have been identified as having growth potential pending the investigation and commitment to the provision of reticulated sewerage and/or water supply. A Structure Plan or Urban Design Framework will be developed for each of these towns.
- **Urban Design Framework Towns** – these towns are not encourage to grow, but their size and capacity for expanded economic or tourism activity requires the development of an Urban Design Framework which will be developed in consultation with the community and will guide the future of the settlement.
- **Settlement Improvement Plans** - settlement improvement plans will be recommended in settlements where growth is not encouraged and the community size does not warrant a full urban design framework.

## 6.4 Determination of Settlement Hierarchy

The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan 2014 provides a Settlement Role and Function framework to recognise the role of small towns and settlements and categorise their capacity for growth. The categorisation in the CHRGP distinguishes Regional City, Regional Centre, Town, Small Town, and Rural Settlement. Each category within the hierarchy denotes a role for that settlement in economic, residential growth, land use and infrastructure terms (Map 3-2).

Ballarat dominates the growth framework as the regional city and relatively central within the Central Highlands Region. Active growth is promoted for Ballarat. Bacchus Marsh is also identified for directed growth as a regional centre. Likewise, Ballan is recognised as a town that should be supporting growth.

All of the remaining settlements in Moorabool Shire shown on Map 3-2 are small towns or rural settlements. There is no distinction in the map between the two.

Many of the settlements within the Shire are not shown on the CHRGP map.

Moorabool Shire has developed an enhanced hierarchy, based on the CHRGP framework. This hierarchy addresses the local conditions of the small towns and settlements, both now



and into the future.

The hierarchy is influenced by the following:

- (A)** The identified service role of towns within districts and clusters of settlements as mapped by the Community Infrastructure Framework methodology (Elaine for instance is smaller than Korweinguboorra but provides many more services to the local district);
- (B)** 'Sunken infrastructure' investments (i.e. the value of existing assets) made and therefore the imperative to use that infrastructure more efficiently (whether it be recreational facilities or local schools for instance);
- (C)** Strategic location relative to likely investment attractive areas (residential but also commercial/industrial growth opportunities), which in turn prioritises settlements nearer the Western Freeway as opposed to remote rural settlements;
- (D)** Community expectations;
- (E)** Identified environmental constraints to growth – flood risk, bushfire, historic character;
- (F)** Broader considerations of critical mass to support business cases for key utility funding in potable water catchments; and
- (G)** Policy support within the LPPF framework as consistent with (a) to (f) above.

Table 6-1 below articulates the hierarchy as proposed.

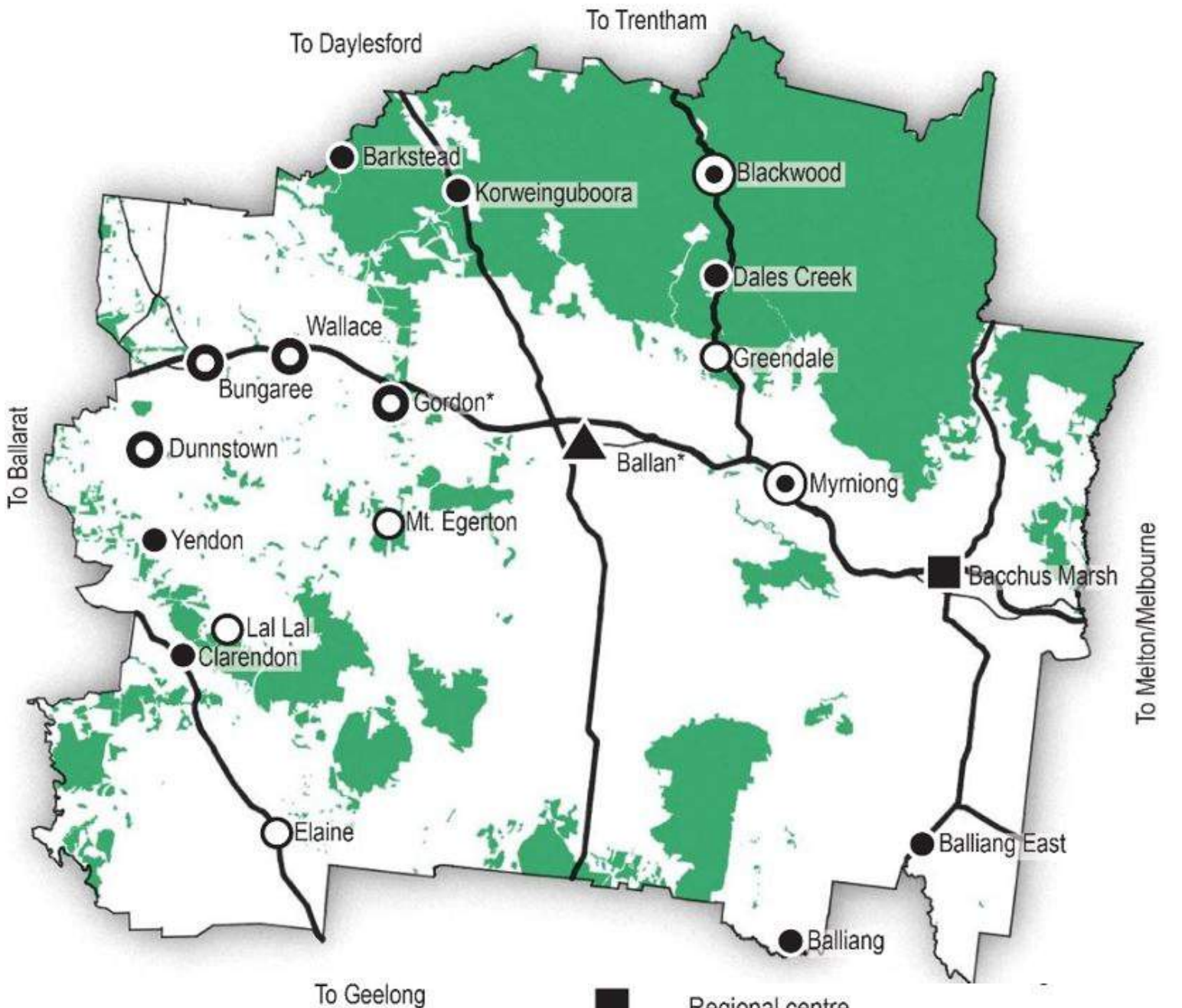
## HIERARCHY

	Small Town - consolidated growth investigation pop. 800 - 2,000	Small Town - incremental change pop. < 800	Small Town - consolidation pop. 200-500	Small Town - consolidation pop. < 200
Indicative definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to a limited range of education &amp; health service, may contain a retail centre.</li> <li>• Strong employment relationships with larger settlements nearby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small populations but a focal point for the surrounding are.</li> <li>• Access to larger centres for retail, business, cultural facilities etc.</li> <li>• Efficient local sewer solutions to protect catchments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small population within the Township Zone.</li> <li>• Reliant on other settlements for higher order services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster of housing on smaller than average rural sized lots, within non-urban zones.</li> <li>• Residents are reliant on other settlements for higher order services</li> </ul>
Typical Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Reticulated water</li> <li>• Sewer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Reticulated water</li> <li>• (usually)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Reticulated water</li> <li>• (possibly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Phone</li> </ul>
Typical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local conveniences</li> <li>• General store/Post Office, CFA, Police Station (some cases), Primary School, community/recreation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic needs of the community.</li> <li>• Small Primary School &amp;/or General Store with postal facilities (possible), CFA (some cases), Hotel, community/recreation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 key service e.g. CFA.</li> <li>• General Store/Post Office, Hotel &amp;/or small Primary School (possible).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The settlement usually doesn't have any services, other than a community-recreation facility, &amp;/or CFA.</li> </ul>
Physical form/ layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to contain a 'main street' &amp; small retail area.</li> <li>• Evidence of public spaces &amp; facilities.</li> <li>• Closer settlement pattern (density)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined main street.</li> <li>• Grid rad layout with housing around local services likely).</li> <li>• Mix of co-existing uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks a compact core &amp; may not have definable edges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development along main road (often).</li> <li>• No definable edges to the housing cluster, lack of grid layout</li> <li>• May lack gateway feature/ signage.</li> </ul>
Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bungaree</b></li> <li>• <b>Dunnstown</b></li> <li>• <b>Gordon*</b></li> <li>• <b>Wallace</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Blackwood</b></li> <li>• <b>Myrniong</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elaine</b></li> <li>• <b>Greendale</b></li> <li>• <b>Lal Lal</b></li> <li>• <b>Mt Egerton</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Balliang, Balliang East</b></li> <li>• <b>Barkstead</b></li> <li>• <b>Clarendon</b></li> <li>• <b>Dales Creek</b></li> <li>• <b>Korweinguboorra / Spargo Creek</b></li> <li>• <b>Yendon</b></li> </ul>

**Table 6-1** Moorabool Shire Small Towns Hierarchy

\* - Gordon's future needs are addressed via its adopted structure plan. No change proposed.

# Moorabool Small Town Hierarchy Map



**Map 6-1** Moorabool Shire Hierarchy of Small Towns and Settlements

- Regional centre
- ▲ Town
- ⊙ Small Town - Consolidated growth investigation
- ⊙ Small Town - Incremental change
- Small Town - Consolidation
- Small Town - Rural settlement



## 7.0 Summary of Recommendations



# 7.0 Summary of recommendations

The individual settlement summaries (Part B) contain the detailed analysis and recommendations for each of the settlements reviewed. The following table is a summary indicating the themes under which recommendations to support the improvement of amenity and services have been made, and those designed to support growth in suitable settlements.

The recommendations made in the STS will be subject to further analysis and investigation prior to including the most effective initiatives in future Council Budget funding rounds, capital works plans and advocacy frameworks requesting Government support.

Further strategic work has been identified for thirteen of the settlements. The strategic work is scaled across three types of plans:

## **(1) Settlement Improvement Plan (SIP)**

This Plan is to enhance the settlement's place and community, and identify key actions and priorities for capital works. Settlement Improvement Plans are recommended for Balliang, Balliang East, Clarendon and Korweinguboorra / Spargo Creek.

## **(2) Urban Design Framework (UDF)**

The UDF provides a vision for the settlement, enhances its sense of place and community, identifies key actions and priorities for capital works, and the implementation of any recommended design guidelines, and

changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Planning Policies of the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

A UDF has a strong landscape and 'place making' focus.

Urban Design Frameworks are recommended for Elaine, Greendale, Lal Lal, Mount Egerton and Yendon.

## **(3) Structure Plan**

This provides the long-term vision and strategic framework to guide the future planning and development of the settlement. The Structure Plan is incorporated into the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Planning Policies of the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

Structure Plans can include elements of the Urban Design Framework and the Settlement Improvement Plan and will review any zoning changes required to address development and use issues.

It is recommended that Structure Plans should be prepared for Blackwood, Bungaree, Dunnstown, Myrniong and Wallace with further consideration of how to accommodate limited growth in Elaine.

However, Council is unlikely to commence the preparation of Structure Plans for Bungaree, Dunnstown, Myrniong and Wallace until formal decisions are made in relation to the provision of reticulated sewerage. For this to occur more detailed discussions with landowners to gauge interest and resolve a viable business case is required.

Another impetus for further work to investigate potential growth in these towns is the desire to facilitate tourism development and encourage vibrant sustainable towns along the Western Freeway and Midland Highway.

Blackwood is identified for a Structure Plan to protect and enhance the local heritage and significant environment surrounding the settlement. Although the Structure Plan is not intended to support residential growth, it could consider limited managed growth of retail and tourism opportunities, subject to bushfire consideration and consolidation of vacant lots for limited new housing.

This analysis has recommended the development of business cases for potential reticulated sewerage projects at Bungaree, Dunnstown and Wallace. The business cases will assist Council, the water authorities and the local landowners to assess the financial viability for the delivery of reticulated sewerage for these settlements.

All of the other settlements have been identified as having limited growth potential for residential development. No substantial change is recommended for the majority of these settlements. For Myrniong further water testing is needed and negotiations with Western Water on possible infrastructure to accommodate managed growth. From that point a decision on sewer options can be further developed.

## TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS - KEY

<b>H</b>	<p><b>Heritage</b> - Further investigations / studies into the heritage of the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Gaps Study to identify any additional places heritage significance in the settlement and surrounds.</li> <li>• Undertake the West Moorabool Heritage Study Stage 2B to assess the identified places of potential heritage significance in the settlement and surrounds.</li> </ul>
<b>ESO</b>	<b>Environmental Significance Overlay</b> - to clearly define that the settlement is located within a Special Water Supply Catchment.
<b>F</b>	<b>Flooding Study</b> - Undertake a Flood Study in partnership with the appropriate catchment management authority, as funding allows.
<b>RCZ</b>	<b>Rural Conservation Zone</b> - Revision of the RCZ Schedule to reflect the environmental attributes/context of the settlement and similar settlements within the Wombat State Forest.
<b>CHMP</b>	<b>Cultural Heritage Management Plan</b> - required for large-scale development or listed high impact activity within areas of cultural heritage sensitivity, as defined by the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007. This may be completed by a developer.
<b>SP</b>	<b>Structure Plan</b> - to provide a long-term vision and strategic framework to guide the future planning and development of the settlement.
<b>SP*</b>	<b>Structure Plan</b> - to be completed if business case and funding model for delivery of reticulated services is complete and viable.
<b>UDF</b>	<b>Urban Design Framework</b> - to develop a vision for the settlement, enhance its sense of place and community, identify key actions and priorities for capital works, and implementation of any recommended design guidelines, and changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Planning Policies of the Moorabool Planning Scheme
<b>SIP</b>	<b>Settlement Improvement Plan</b> - to enhance the settlements place and community and identify key actions and priorities for capital works

# 7.1 Summary of Recommendations

		PAGE NUMBER FOR DETAILED FINDINGS - IN PART B	SETTLEMENT CENTRE	SETTLEMENT GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT	FARMING AND RURAL INDUSTRY	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES	INFRASTRUCTURE	RECREATION & LEISURE	STREETSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT	BUILT FORM & URBAN DESIGN	TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	HERITAGE	FURTHER STRATEGIC WORK	RECOMMENDATION FOR GROWTH INVESTIGATION
BALLANG	3	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	SIP + H	NO
BALLANG EAST	12	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	SIP + H	NO
BARKSTEAD	22	X	X	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	ESO + RCZ + H	NO
BLACKWOOD	31	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	SP + F	NO
BUNGAREE	47	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	SP* + F + CHMP	YES
CLARENDON	63	X	X	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	SIP + F + CHMP + H	NO
DALES CREEK	73	X	X	NIL	NIL	NIL	✓	NIL	✓	NIL	✓	✓	ESO + RCZ	NO
DUNNSTOWN	81	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	SP + F + H	YES
ELAINE	95	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	UDF + F + H	NO
GREENDALE	108	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	UDF + H	NO
KORWEINGUBOORA	119	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NIL	✓	✓	SIP + ESO	NO
LAL LAL	130	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	UDF + F	NO
MOUNT EGERTON	43	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	UDF + H	NO
MYRNING	155	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	SP + CHMP + H	YES
WALLACE	169	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	SP + F + CHMP	YES
YENDON	182	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	UDF + F + H	NO

Chart 7-1 Summary of Recommendations from STS





# 8.0 Conclusion

# 8.0 Conclusion

The Small Towns and Settlement Strategy (STS) and associated Context Report have sought to provide direction for the Moorabool Shire in the management of small town and settlement growth, consistent with the availability of infrastructure, environmental constraints, existing supply and demand, and Government policy.

The Strategy has been developed in response to increasing pressure to maintain and enhance the sustainability of the small towns and settlements within the Shire, as highlighted in the findings of the community engagement undertaken as part of the Strategy.

The STS seeks to balance the accommodation of future growth, while maintaining the unique amenity of the Shire. This will not be achieved through ad-hoc residential development extending into high quality agricultural land. The Moorabool Shire has natural and productive values, which could be compromised or lost through uncontrolled development. Decisions are being made now about the essential qualities of Moorabool's communities and how these may be retained and enhanced over the next 25 years and beyond.

Growth in the Moorabool Shire is influenced by many factors, particularly bushfire risk, community infrastructure, special water supply catchments, transportation infrastructure, and availability of utility services. These factors, as well as, many

others, were considered in informing the recommendations for future growth in the Shire.

The availability of utility services such as water supply, electricity, phone and internet varies across the Shire.

Reticulated water is only available to a limited number of small towns and settlements within the Shire. Furthermore, reticulated sewerage is not provided to any of the small towns and settlements. Provision of these services is the responsibility of water authorities and private sector utility providers.

The provision of these services is based on a number of considerations including, but not limited to, supply and demand, population growth, relevant legislation and policy, cost constraints and environmental considerations.

Detailed analysis of the contextual issues of the 16 identified small towns and settlements has been undertaken, and recommendations made regarding their future roles and capacity for development and/or growth.

Importantly the recommendations of this study emphasises the protection of human life, meaning that settlements and infrastructure must be carefully planned to minimise the risks associated with environmental hazards, land degradation and

waterway health. In particularly hazardous or sensitive locations, new development is discouraged altogether.

Key findings and recommendations of the STS include:

**(1)** Four towns have long-term potential to accommodate some population growth, Bungaree, Dunnstown, Myrning and Wallace. This limited growth will be dependent on the provision of reticulated sewerage or, in the case of Myrning possibly other local solutions. In addition, any growth in Dunnstown will be dependent on the provision of reticulated water supply.

**(2)** Elaine has the potential to become a provider of a wider range of community services to residents in the south-western part of the Shire. Limited growth, if it occurs, will rely upon Council's domestic wastewater policy and suitable sites being identified for housing.

**(3)** All other settlements that have been identified as having very limited residential growth potential and no substantial change is recommended for the majority of these settlements.

**(4)** Urban design treatments, such as, green edges, buffers and town entrances could be established to define settlement edges, provide buffers between urban and rural uses and clearly separate townships.

**(5)** The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) will be revised to reflect the findings and recommendations of the STS, and the STS will be included as a reference document within the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

**(6)** In relation to the towns and settlements with low growth potential, further strategic work such as urban design frameworks, or streetscape improvement plans, can be undertaken in the short to medium term.

**(7)** Further strategic work in relation to the development of the towns with long-term prospects to accommodate some population growth can be undertaken when it is determined whether reticulated sewerage can be provided to those locations.

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