

AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL

5:45 PM - MONDAY 3 AUGUST 2020



VENUE:

**Reception Room
25 Liebig Street
Warrnambool**

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to social distancing measures, members of the public will not be permitted in the public gallery. The meeting will be livestreamed via Council's website – www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au.

COUNCILLORS

Cr. Tony Herbert (Mayor)
Cr. Robert Anderson
Cr. Sue Cassidy
Cr. Kylie Gaston
Cr. Michael Neoh
Cr. David Owen
Cr. Peter Sycopoulis

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can be obtained online at www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au

Vikki King
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AUDIO RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

All Open and Special Council Meetings will be audio recorded, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the agenda. This includes public participation sections of the meeting. Audio recordings of meetings will be made available for download on the internet via the Council's website by noon the day following the meeting and will be retained and publicly available on the website for 12 months following the meeting date. The recordings will be retained for the term of the current Council, after which time the recordings will be archived and destroyed in accordance with applicable public record standards. By participating in Open and Special Council meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information that they share at the meeting (including any personal/sensitive information), for the purposes of Council carrying out its functions.

BEHAVIOUR AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Thank you all for coming – we really appreciate you being here. These meetings are the place where, we as Councillors, make decisions on a broad range of matters. These can vary greatly in subject, significance and the level of interest or involvement the community has. As part of making these decisions, we are presented with comprehensive information that helps us to form our position – you will find this in the agenda. It should also be remembered that the Council meeting is a “meeting of the Council that is open to the public”, not a “public meeting with the Council.” Each Council is required to have a local law that pertains to governance meeting procedures. Warrnambool City Council has followed best practice in this regard and its Local Law No.1 - Governance (Meeting Procedures) Local Law provides regulations and procedures for the governing and conduct of Council meetings. Copies of the Conduct and Behaviour excerpt from Warrnambool City Council Local Law No. 1 - Governance (Meeting Procedures) Local Law can be obtained online at www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au or are available from the table at the rear of the room

We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter.

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1. OPENING PRAYER & ORIGINAL CUSTODIANS STATEMENT

Almighty God
Grant to this Council
Wisdom, understanding and Sincerity of purpose
For the Good Governance of this City
Amen.

ORIGINAL CUSTODIANS STATEMENT

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we stand and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

2. APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

Ordinary Council Meeting held on 6 July 2020

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 6 July 2020 be confirmed.

4. DECLARATION BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Pursuant to Sections 77, 78 and 79 of the Local Government Act 1989 (as amended) direct and indirect conflict of interest must be declared prior to debate on specific items within the agenda; or in writing to the Chief Executive Officer before the meeting. Declaration of indirect interests must also include the classification of the interest (in circumstances where a Councillor has made a Declaration in writing, the classification of the interest must still be declared at the meeting), i.e.

- (a) direct financial interest
- (b) indirect interest by close association
- (c) indirect interest that is an indirect financial interest
- (d) indirect interest because of conflicting duties
- (e) indirect interest because of receipt of an applicable gift
- (f) indirect interest as a consequence of becoming an interested party
- (g) indirect interest as a result of impact on residential amenity
- (h) conflicting personal interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken. Councillors are also encouraged to declare circumstances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

5. REPORTS

5.1. POLICY & PROCEDURES REVIEW

PURPOSE:

This report is to have Council consider the adoption of several important policies that have been out for public feedback and to confirm an updated policy in relation to Councils Election Period Policy These policies form a suite of governance documents that are required to be considered by Council prior to September 1 2020, as set out in the implementation timeframe of the 2020 Local Government Act.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is presented several policies for consideration that have been out for public comment. These include Council's Transparency Policy, Council Expenses reimbursement policy and the Councillor Resources Facilities Policy. In addition an amended Election Period policy is proposed for adoption that has been revised to align with the new Act.

Council in alignment with the transparency principles set out in the new Local government act has sought out community input to the attached documents which included Councils Draft Transparency Policy, the Draft Councillor Reimbursement of Expenses Policy, Councillor's Draft Resources and Facilities Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council adopt the

- i) **Draft Transparency Policy – refer Attachment 1.**
 - ii) **Draft Councillor Reimbursement of Expenses Policy – refer Attachment 2.**
 - iii) **Draft Resources and Facilities Policy – refer Attachment 3.**
 - iv) **Draft Election Period Policy - refer Attachment 4.**
-

BACKGROUND

The policies attached to this report that sought feedback from the community included:

- Draft Transparency Policy.
- Draft Councillor Reimbursement of Expenses Policy.
- Draft Resources and Facilities Policy.

Councils Election Period Policy is procedural and has been presented directly to Council for consideration and adoption.

CONSULTATION

Council has received feedback from one submitter Mr Jim Burke

Feedback on Council's draft Council Transparency Policy

1. PURPOSE

'This policy supports Council ...'

This sentence structure is horrible. This policy does not support anything, it provides guidance.

Can I suggest:

The purpose of this policy is to guide Council on the provision of good governance and clarifies the importance of open and accountable conduct. It also provides guidance on how council information might be made publicly available.

WCC Comment

The draft wording is a direct transcribe from the Local Government Victoria draft prepared with Engage Victoria. It is more than 'guidance', it gives direction. Retain current wording.

'Particularly pertinent to the purpose of this policy ...'

This is a horrible sentence structure; with an unnecessary attempt at alliteration and insufficient punctuation. I would suggest the following redraft of this entire section.

Council is required to adopt and maintain a public transparency policy in accordance with section 57 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). This policy is to give effect to the Public Transparency Principles laid out in section 58 of the Act. These principles are:

- 1. Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act,*
- 2. Council information must be publicly available unless –*

(i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act, or

(ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.

- 3. Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community, and*
- 4. public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.*

This policy is guided by the overarching governance principles and supporting principles provided in Section 9 of the Act. In particular, this Act demands that Councils must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governing principles. According to the Act, these overarching governance principles are:

- 1. Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law,*
- 2. priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations,*
- 3. the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted,*
- 4. the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making,*
- 5. innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued,*
- 6. collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought,*
- 7. the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured,*
- 8. regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making, and*
- 9. the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured*

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

1. *the community engagement principles, as provided in s.56 of the Act*
2. *the public transparency principles, as provided in s.58 of the Act*
3. *the strategic planning principles, as provided in s.89 of the Act*
4. *the financial management principles, as provided in s.101 of the Act, and*
5. *the service performance principles, as provided in s.106 of the Act.*

WCC Comment

Agree with thrust of submission.

Replace all wording after first paragraph with following:

The Council must adopt and maintain a public transparency policy in accordance with sec. 57 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). This policy is to give effect to the Public Transparency Principles set out in sec. 58 of the Act. These principles are:

- a. *Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act;*
- b. *Council information must be publicly available unless –*
 - (i) *the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or*
 - (ii) *public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest;*
- c. *Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community; and*
- d. *public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.*

The Act requires that the Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. These principles are:

- a. *Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;*
- b. *priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;*
- c. *the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted,*
- d. *the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making,*
- e. *innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued,*
- f. *collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought,*
- g. *the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured,*
- h. *regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making, and*
- i. *the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured*

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, the Council must also take into account several supporting principles:

- a. *the community engagement principles, as provided in s.56 of the Act*
- b. *the public transparency principles, as provided in s.58 of the Act*
- c. *the strategic planning principles, as provided in s.89 of the Act*
- d. *the financial management principles, as provided in s.101 of the Act, and*
- e. *the service performance principles, as provided in s.106 of the Act.*

This policy is guided by the overarching governance principles and supporting principles.

2. OBJECTIVES

‘The objective of Council’s Public Transparency Policy is to formalise ...’

I propose:

In giving effect to a requirement of the Act that Council develop a Transparency Policy as described above, this policy seeks to apply the above listed principles to:

1. *providing greater clarity in Council’s decision-making processes,*
2. *increasing confidence and trust in the community through greater understanding and awareness,*

3. *enhancing decision making by the community,*
4. *improving Council performance through greater accountability,*
5. *facilitating access to information that is complete, current, and disseminating it in a timely manner, and*
6. *reassuring the community that Council is spending public money wisely through the transparency of its decision and resource allocation processes.*

This policy covers documentary information and process information including the process to determine how information will be made available to the public.

WCC Comment

The objectives list is effectively the same as the draft. The variation is in the introductory sentence. The draft wording is a direct transcribe from the LGV draft.

Improvement in the grammar is proposed.

The overarching objective of the Policy is to formalise the Council's support for transparency in its decision-making processes and the public awareness of the availability of Council information.

As a result, this policy seeks to promote:

- a. *Greater clarity in Council's decision-making processes;*
- b. *Increased confidence and trust in the community of Council through greater understanding and awareness;*
- c. *Enhanced decision making by the community;*
- d. *Improved Council performance through greater accountability;*
- e. *Access to information that is current, easily accessible and disseminated in a timely manner;*
- f. *Reassurance to the community that Council is spending public monies wisely by being transparent as to its reasoning around decisions and resource allocation.*

The policy covers documentary information, process information and how information will be made available to the public.

4. DEFINITIONS

‘Consultation The process of seeking input on a matter.’

I would be seriously disappointed if I thought Council considered such a definition as being complete. Can I suggest:

Consultation	<i>A deliberate exchange of information to consider a particular issue in order to facilitate good decision making processes and to promote accountability.</i>
Stakeholder	<i>A person or a group having a shared interest in, or affected by the pending decision of Council</i>
Closed Meetings	<i>When the Council resolves to close a meeting to the general public in order to consider confidential information as defined by the Local Government Act 2020</i>
Transparency	(this definition needs more work. ‘transparency’ might well be a human rights issue etc. but s.58 makes no mention of this.)
Public Interest Test	(I am not sure what this definition is doing here. There is nowhere in the Act that refers to a public interest test. There is Confidential Information, and restricted matters, both of which are clearly defined by the Act. All other information should be publicly available unless it would be contrary to the public interest.)

It is worth discussing the public interest test further. There is no mention in the Act of a public interest test per se. In s.58 (b)(ii) it simply states that (Council information must be publicly available unless) ‘public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest’. It

gives no other guidance on the matter. I would argue that if you were to introduce a public interest test into this policy, and I can understand why this might be necessary, then you are bound to provide guidance as to what this test might comprise and how it might be applied.

WCC Comment

The draft wording for all definitions is a direct transcribe from the LGV draft.

Support changes to some definitions

Term	Comment	Definition/Meaning
<i>Consultation</i>	<i>Already defined in the Community Engagement Policy. Appropriate to be consistent.</i>	<i>A two-way relationship with the Council providing information, considering feedback and providing information on an outcome.</i>
<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Already defined in the Community Engagement Policy. Appropriate to be consistent.</i>	<i>A person, group or system that can affect or be affected by a council action.</i>
<i>Closed meeting</i>	<i>Support submission content</i>	<i>When the Council resolves to close a meeting to the general public in order to consider confidential information as defined Act</i>
<i>Transparency</i>	<i>Draft seems reasonable</i>	<i>No change</i>
<i>Public Interest Test</i>	<i>Draft seems reasonable</i>	<i>No change</i>

5. WHAT WILL COUNCIL BE TRANSPARENT WITH Decision Making at Council Meetings

- Will be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Governance Rules.

Where are the WCC Governance Rules? The Council has a Governance page on its website, but it contains little more than a motherhood statement that has nothing at all to do with governance. If the governance rules already exist, have they been published, if not, they must be devised and published under the terms of s.60 of the Act.

It is worth noting here that having these rules is not optional and arguably neither is the need to develop them in consultation with the community. They must also be publicly available.

WCC Comment

Governance Rules are being drafted and are out for public comment

*The Act provides that until a Council adopts Governance Rules the Local Law Meeting Procedures made by the Council under the Local Government Act 1989 apply as if the Local Law Meeting Procedures had been adopted as Governance Rules.
No change required.*

Council Information

You should include, in this list, ‘applications for approvals, permits, grants and access to Council service or facilities’

WCC Comment

*This item is listed in the following section “Process Information”.
No action required.*

Process information

It might good to list the ‘Governance Rules’ here too.

WCC Comment

Add additional items

- *Local Laws*
- *Governance Rules*

6. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Perhaps this dot point might be better expressed as follows: *All publicly available information will be published on the Council website unless, by its nature, it is not amenable to electronic publication. In that event, information will be available at Council offices or by request.*
- Consideration will be given to accessibility and cultural requirements in accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Specifically, which elements of this Act would the Council consider in this context?

- This dot point might be better drafted more simply and directly as: *Public access to Council information will be assessed against the confidentiality requirements section 58 (b) of the Local Government Act 2020.*
- This dot point might more clearly and comprehensively drafted as: *When considering publication of Council information or a request for Council information, Council will consider the application of all relevant statutes and the Public Transparency Principles.*

WCC Comment

The draft wording is a direct transcribe from the LGV draft.

- *1st point*
 - *Reasonable that all options for access, as listed in first point, are available. Not just a preference for online.*
- *3rd point*
 - *Agree with submission. Change wording:*
 - *Public access to Council information will be assessed against the confidentiality requirements of the Act*
- *4th point*
 - *Agree to minor change for clarity. Change wording:*
 - *Council will, in responding to requests for information, consider the application of all relevant Acts, the Public Transparency Principles, and this Policy.*

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Council Add: 'Monitor implementation of this policy'.

Executive

Management Team Change: 'Monitor implementation of this policy' to 'Ensure implementation of this policy'.

Manager Governance: Add 'Monitor legislative amendments and changes to government policy to ensure that this policy remains valid'.

WCC Comment

The draft wording is a direct transcribe from the LGV draft.

Monitoring implementation is a responsibility of management.

Add to Council role:

- *Oversee the implementation and application of the Policy.*

9. HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER

Section 13 of the Charter simply identifies that the Council is subject to the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. It is probably superfluous, but if it has any use, it might be more simply expressed as:

This policy complies with the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and in particular, section 18 (Information Privacy Principles).

WCC Comment

Agree that this clause is superfluous in the Policy.

It should be included in the covering report to Council on the preparation of the Policy.

Delete part of clause.

10. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

‘If a member of the community wishes to question a decision about the release of information, this should be raised directly with the officer handling the matter in the first instance’

This may be difficult for many people to achieve because it is not always clear who is handling any particular matter at any given time and without contact details (which is also often the case) making contact is problematic. In any event, Council needs a single point of contact for these matters.

‘If still not satisfied and would like to contest the decision, this can be reported to the Council’s FOI officer’

The FOI officer has a specific function as prescribed in the Freedom of Information Act 1982, having that officer also handle first instance complaints about the transparency of information that has already been released may cause to arise a perceived or an actual conflict of interest. The complaint may actually be about something the FOI officer has released in response to an unrelated request.

In Council’s Privacy Policy you nominate Council’s Manager Governance as the point of contact in the event of a complaint. Why not apply the same standard to complaints regarding requests for information.

WCC Comment

Agree with submission re officer for contact if not satisfied with outcome.

Replace FOI Officer with Manager Governance

‘If not satisfied with Council’s response, the concerns can be raise directly with the Victorian Ombudsman’s office’

This is absolutely and categorically incorrect. I find it gobsmacking that Council could make such a basic error in such an important matter.

There is no facility for the Victorian Ombudsman to investigate or arbitrate Council’s FOI decisions. The applicant may apply to the Office of the Information Commissioner for review of a decision refusing to grant access to a document, deferring access to a document or refusing to waive or reduce an application fee. (See section 49 of the FOI Act 1982).

Further, since September 2017 there have been circumstances where certain FOI decisions can be reviewed by VCAT. Here is the URL that will take you to a broad explanation of these circumstances. It took me little more than 30 seconds to find it: <https://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/get-started/review-and-regulation/freedom-of-information-act-1982-review>.

WCC Comment

The draft wording is a direct transcribe from the LGV draft.

Re Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's website says:

"We take complaints about the actions and decisions of Councils, including:

- services (eg bin collection, local road maintenance, parking fines)*
- poor customer service or communication*
- how the Council responded to your complaint*
- compliance with policies, procedures or law*
- other actions or decisions which may be unreasonable."*

This would therefore, by implication, include the Transparency Policy.

Retain wording.

11. OTHER WAYS TO ACCESS INFORMATION

'The Freedom of Information Act 1982 gives you the right of access to documents that Council holds. Council is committed to, where possible, proactive and informal release of information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Professional Standards issued by the Victorian Information Commissioner. Read more at www.ovic.vic.gov.au.'

I am not sure how this statement is relevant to the section heading: Other ways to access information. This simply a motherhood statement that might make the drafter feel good but it achieves little else. I think that it is a good thing that Council feels the need to point residents to the Freedom of Information Professional Standards perhaps it could add a sentence to this effect in section 6 (Access to information). If you choose to do this, perhaps you could use the more appropriate URL: <https://ovic.vic.gov.au/book/professional-standards/>.

WCC Comment

Agree with FOI reference. Change website link to

<https://ovic.vic.gov.au/book/professional-standards/>

'A list of available information is provided in the Part II Statement published on Council's website ...'

This information is not to be found on Council's website. Section 7 (1A) of the FOI Act 1982 has insisted that Council's publish this information on their website and update it annually. Subsection (1A) was inserted in 1993 yet there is no sign that Council has ever complied with this legislative requirement.

WCC Comment

The Part II Statement is available on the Council's website

12. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

'Council commits to monitoring processes, information sharing and decision making to understand the overall level of success in the Policy's implementation.'

Passive language and vague intentions, perhaps it would be better drafted as:

Council will monitor the application of this policy to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Council and the community it serves.

'A 4 yearly review of this policy will be undertaken to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.'

Again passive language and vague intentions, perhaps it would be better drafted as:

This policy will be amended as circumstances or legislative requirement demand. Notwithstanding, this policy will be reviewed every four years.

WCC Comment

Agree with suggested changes.

Change clause 12 to read:

Council will monitor the application of this policy to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Council and the community it serves.

This policy will be amended as circumstances or legislative requirement demand. Notwithstanding, this policy will be reviewed every four years.

13. RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

Council's:

- Governance Rules (these do not appear yet to exist)
- Public Transparency Principles (s.58 of the Local Government Act 2020 listed below)
- Governance Framework (Not sure what this is but clearly, we do not have one yet)
- Community Engagement Policy
- Information Privacy Policy (listed as simply 'Privacy Policy' this document should be reviewed in light of the creation of an up to date Transparency Policy)
- Health Records Policy (We don't have one, nor does it seem, that Council has ever had such a policy.)
- Information Rights Policy
- Open Data Policy

It is not clear what these last two items cover, but Council does not yet have such policies. Is it intended that these policies will replace Council's extant Privacy Policy?

WCC Comment

The draft wording is a direct transcribe from the LGV draft.

*Change Clause heading to be consistent with Council policy framework to **13. REFERENCES***

Replace current list with table:

Legislation	<i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Freedom of Information Act 1982 Local Government Act 2020 Local Government Act 1989 Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 Equal Opportunity Act 2010.</i>
Standards & Guidelines	<i>Public Transparency Principles Freedom of Information Professional Standards</i>
Council Related Policy & Procedures	<i>Governance Rules Community Engagement Policy Privacy Policy Customer Service Charter Public Interest Disclosure Procedure</i>

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.1 Provision of opportunities for the community to actively participate in Council's decision-making through effective promotion, communication and engagement

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

This report provides a suite of policies that are required by the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 to be in Place by September 1 2020

TIMING

The final drafts with any amendments will then be presented for Council's consideration to be adopted before 1 September 2020.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No conflict.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Transparency Policy July 2020 [**5.1.1** - 12 pages]
2. Draft Council Expenses Reimbursement Policy [**5.1.2** - 8 pages]
3. Draft Councillors Resources Facilities Policy [**5.1.3** - 16 pages]
4. GA Edit Election Period Policy [QHCJ] [**5.1.4** - 13 pages]



DRAFT

Council Transparency Policy

COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Council Transparency Policy
Policy Type:	Council
Responsible Branch:	Governance
Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Document Status:	Draft 22 July 2020
Approved By:	
Adopted Date:	
Review Date:	

COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY



Contents



COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY

1. PURPOSE

This policy supports Council in its ongoing drive for good governance and the importance of open and accountable conduct, and how council information is to be made publicly available.

Part 2 of the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 deals with the role of Council.

Particularly pertinent to the purpose of this policy are the overarching governance principles and supporting principles enshrined in the Local Government Act guide Councils in relation to the need for and role of transparency of Governance, and the reasons why information should be made available to our community-

The Council must adopt and maintain a public transparency policy in accordance with sec. 57 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). This policy is to give effect to the Public Transparency Principles set out in sec. 58 of the Act. These principles are:

- a. *Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act;*
- b. *Council information must be publicly available unless –*
 - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or*
 - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest;*
- c. *Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community; and*
- d. *public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.*

The Act requires that the Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. These principles are:

- a. *Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;*
- b. *priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;*
- c. *the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted,*
- d. *the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making,*
- e. *innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued,*
- f. *collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought,*
- g. *the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured,*
- h. *regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making, and*
- i. *the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured*

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, the Council must also take into account several supporting principles:

- a. *the community engagement principles, as provided in s.56 of the Act*
- b. *the public transparency principles, as provided in s.58 of the Act*
- c. *the strategic planning principles, as provided in s.89 of the Act*
- d. *the financial management principles, as provided in s.101 of the Act, and*
- e. *the service performance principles, as provided in s.106 of the Act.*

COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY



This policy is guided by the overarching governance principles and supporting principles.

2. OBJECTIVES

The overarching objective of the Policy is to formalise the Council's support for transparency in its decision-making processes and the public awareness of the availability of Council information.

As a result, this policy seeks to promote:

- a) Greater clarity in Council's decision-making processes;
- b) Increased confidence and trust in the community of Council through greater understanding and awareness;
- c) Enhanced decision making by the community;
- d) Improved Council performance through greater accountability;
- e) Access to information that is current, easily accessible and disseminated in a timely manner;
- f) Reassurance to the community that Council is spending public monies wisely by being transparent as to its reasoning around decisions and resource allocation.

The policy covers documentary information, process information and how information will be made available to the public.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors and Council staff of the Council.



COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, Council adopts the following definitions:

Community	<p>Community is a flexible term used to define groups of connected people or all the peoples of a municipal district as a whole.</p> <p>We use it to describe people of a municipality generally and separately, including individuals or groups who live, work, play, study, visit, invest in or pass through the municipality.</p> <p>More specifically, it can refer to everyone affiliated with the municipality, or smaller groups defined by interest, identity or location, and not necessarily homogenous in composition or views. Different types of communities often overlap and extend beyond municipal boundaries. Communities may be structured, as in clubs or associations or unstructured, such as teens. Communities are flexible and temporary, subject individual identity and location</p>
Consultation	<p><i>A two-way relationship with the Council providing information, considering feedback and providing information on an outcome.</i></p>
Public Participation	<p>Public participation encompasses a range of ways to garner public involvement, from simply informing people about what government is doing, to delegating decisions to the public and community activity addressing the common good. Councils Public engagement policy will define when the different levels of participation are utilised in decision making.</p>
Stakeholder	<p><i>A person, group or system that can affect or be affected by a council action.</i></p>
Closed Meetings	<p><i>When the Council resolves to close a meeting to the general public in order to consider confidential information as defined Act</i></p>
Transparency	<p>A lack of hidden agendas or conditions, and the availability of all information needed in order to collaborate, cooperate and make decisions effectively. Importantly, "transparency" is also a human rights issue: the right to have the opportunity, without discrimination, to participate in public affairs (s.58 of The Act).</p>
Public Interest Test	<p>Council may refuse to release information if it determines that the harm likely to be created by releasing the information will exceed the public benefit in being transparent. When considering possible harm from releasing information, the Council will only concern itself with harm to the community or members of the community. Potential harm to the Council will only be a factor if it would also damage the community, such as where it involves a loss of public funds or prevents the council from performing its functions.</p>

COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY



The Act The Victorian Local Government Act 2020

5. WHAT WILL COUNCIL BE TRANSPARENT WITH

Decision Making at Council Meetings

- Will be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Governance Rules.
- Will be conducted in an open and transparent forum, unless in accordance with the provisions in the Act and Governance Rules they are made in a closed meeting.
- Will be informed through community engagement, in accordance with the Community Engagement Principles of The Act and the Community Engagement Policy established by Council.
- Will be made fairly and on the merits of the information available, and where a person whose rights would reasonably be thought to be directly affected by a decision of the Council, should be entitled to an opportunity to communicate their views and have their interests considered.

Council Information

This information includes but is not limited to:

- Plans and Reports adopted by Council;
- Policies;
- Project and service plans;
- Grant applications, tenders and tender evaluation methodology;
- Service agreements, contracts, leases and licences;
- Council leases, permits and notices of building and occupancy; and
- Relevant technical reports and /or research that informs decision making.

Process information such as:

- Practice notes and operating procedures;
- Application processes for approvals, permits, grants, access to Council services;
- Decision making processes;
- Guidelines and manuals;
- Community engagement processes;
- Complaints handling processes.
- Customer service charters
- **Local Laws**

COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY



- Governance Rules

COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY



Council records will, at a minimum, be available on Council's website:

- Council meeting agendas;
- Reporting to Council;
- Minutes of Council meetings;
- Reporting from Advisory Committees to Council through reporting to Council;
- Audit and Risk Committee Performance Reporting;
- Terms of Reference or charters for Advisory Committees;
- Registers of gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to Councillors or Council Staff;
- Registers of interstate and overseas travel undertaken by Councillors or Council Staff;
- Registers of Conflicts of Interest disclosed by Councillors or Council Staff;
- Submissions made by Council;
- Registers of donations and grants made by Council;
- Registers of leases entered into by Council, as lessor and lessee;
- Register of Delegations;
- Register of Authorised officers;
- Register of Election campaign donations.
- Summary of Personal Interests
- Any other Registers or Records required by legislation or determined to be in the public interest.

Publications

In addition to formal reports Council publishes a wide range of newsletters, reports and handbooks for residents, businesses and visitors to council. You can download them from the website or call Council for a copy. Some of these publications are available at Council's Library.

6. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- All publicly available information will be published on the Council website unless, by its nature, it is not amenable to electronic publication. In that event, information will be available at Council offices or by request
- Consideration will be given to accessibility and cultural requirements in accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.
- Public access to Council information will be assessed against the confidentiality requirements section 58 (b) of the Local Government Act 2020.
- Council will, in responding to requests for information, consider the application of all relevant Acts, the Public Transparency Principles, and this Policy.



COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY

7. INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE

Some Council information may not be made publicly available. This will only occur if the information is confidential information or if its release would be contrary to the public interest or in compliance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

"Confidential information" is defined in section 3 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. It includes the types of information listed in the following table.

Type	Description
Council business information	Information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.
Security information	Information that is likely to endanger the security of Council property or the safety of any person if released.
Land use planning information	Information that is likely to encourage speculation in land values if prematurely released.
Law enforcement information	Information which would be reasonably likely to prejudice the investigation into an alleged breach of the law or the fair trial or hearing of any person if released.
Legal privileged information	Information to which legal professional privilege or client legal privilege applies.
Personal information	Information which would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs if released.
Private commercial information	Information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that relates to trade secrets or that would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage if released.
Confidential meeting information	Records of a Council and delegated committee meetings that are closed to the public to consider confidential information
Internal arbitration information	Confidential information relating to internal arbitration about an alleged breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct.
Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information	Confidential information relating to a Councillor Conduct Panel matter
Confidential information under the 1989 Act	Information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>



COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Party/parties	Roles and responsibilities	Timelines
Council	Champion the commitment and principles for public transparency through leadership, modelling practice and decision-making. Oversee the implementation and application of the Policy.	Ongoing
Executive Management Team	Champion behaviours that foster transparency and drive the principles through policy, process and leadership. Monitor implementation of this policy.	Ongoing
Senior Management Team	Manage areas of responsibility to ensure public transparency, good governance and community engagement is consistent with this policy.	Ongoing
All Staff	Public transparency is the responsibility of all employees as appropriate to their role and function. All staff respond to requests for information and facilitate provision of information in consultation with their manager and in alignment with the Policy.	Ongoing
Manager Governance	To monitor implementation of this policy and conduct periodic reviews to drive continuous improvement.	Ongoing
Communications Department	Monitor the currency of information on Councils website to improve community access to pertinent information	Ongoing

9. HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER

This policy has been reviewed against and complies with section 18 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, which recognises a person's right to participate in the conduct of public affairs.

10. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

If a member of the community wishes to question a decision about the release of information, this should be raised directly with the officer handling the matter in the first instance. If still not satisfied and would like to contest the decision, this can be reported to the Councils Manager of Governance either by phone through our main switch numbers on 5559 4800 or 1300 003 280 or by e-mail at Contact@warrnambool.vic.gov.au.

If not satisfied with Council's response, the concerns can be raised directly with the Victorian Ombudsman's office on (03) 9613 6222. or via the website – www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au.



COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY

11. OTHER WAYS TO ACCESS INFORMATION

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives you right of access to documents that Council holds. Council is committed to, where possible, proactive and informal release of information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Professional Standards issued by the Victorian Information Commissioner. Read more at <https://ovic.vic.gov.au/book/professional-standards/>

A list of available information is provided in the Part II Statement (Statement) published on Council's website in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. This Statement requires government agencies and local councils to publish a number of statements designed to assist members of the public in accessing the information it holds.

If you can't find the information you require, call Council directly so we may assist you.

12. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Council will monitor the application of this policy to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Council and the community it serves.

This policy will be amended as circumstances or legislative requirement demand. Notwithstanding, this policy will be reviewed every four years.

13. RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

Legislation	<i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010.</i>
Standards & Guidelines	<i>Public Transparency Principles</i> <i>Freedom of Information Professional Standards</i>
Council Related Policy & Procedures	<i>Governance Rules</i> <i>Community Engagement Policy</i> <i>Privacy Policy</i> <i>Customer Service Charter</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure Procedure</i>

INTERNAL USE ONLY

14. REVIEW

Responsible Manager: Manager Governance & Risk

Date Adopted: August 2020

Date of Next Review: August 2024



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT
COUNCIL EXPENSES POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Council Expenses Policy
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Responsible Branch:	Corporate Strategies
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate Strategies
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Council Expenses Policy



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Council Expenses Policy



1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This policy supports Councillors and members of a Delegated Committee to perform their role, as defined under section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed. The policy also provides guidance on:

- entitlements
- processes for reimbursement
- reporting requirements.

The policy is intended to ensure that Councillors and members of a Delegated Committee are supported to perform their duties without disadvantage.

Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and members of a Delegated Committee.

Councillor duties are those performed by a councillor as a necessary part of their role, in achieving the objectives of council.

These duties may include (but are not limited to):

- attendance at meetings of council and its committees
- attendance at briefing sessions, workshops, civic events or functions convened by council
- attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs related to the role of councillor, mayor or deputy mayor
- attendance at meetings, events or functions representing council
- duties in relation to constituents concerning council business.

Members of a Delegated Committee exercise the powers of councillors, under delegation. This policy also applies to those members in the course of undertaking their role as a member of a Delegated Committee.

Definitions and Terminology

Term	Meaning
Carer	A carer is defined under section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012
Delegated Committee	Under the Local Government Act 2020 a delegated committee means: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a delegated committee established by a Council under section 63; or• a joint delegated committee established by 2 or more Councils under section 64; or• a committee, other than a Community Asset Committee, exercising any power of a Council under this Act or any other Act delegated to the committee under this Act or any other Act.
Accompanying Person	Spouse, partner or de facto or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a councillor.

Council Expenses Policy



References

Category	Document
Legislation	Local Government Act 2020 Carers Recognition Act 2012 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Freedom of Information Act 1982 Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Gender Equity Bill 2020
Standards and Guidelines	Conflict of Interest, A Guide for Councillors – 2012
Council Related Policies & Procedures	Governance Rules Councillors Code of Conduct

2. POLICY

Councillors and members of a Delegated Committee are entitled, under section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), to the reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

All expenses provided under this policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office. Allowances for general expenses are not permitted under this policy. **NOTE: Definitions to be included in Definitions & Terminology.**

This policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Councillors and members of a Delegated Committee will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that are:

- Bona fide expenses; and
- Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of councillor; and
- Are reasonably necessary for the councillor and member of a delegated committee to perform this role.

Principles

The Council commits to the following principles:

- **Reasonable expenses** - Councillors and Delegated Committee members should not be out of pocket as a result of performing their Council functions and duties;
- **Proper conduct** - reimbursements claimed by Councillors and Delegated Committee members must be for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in performing their official Council functions and duties;

Council Expenses Policy



Participation and access - enabling people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles and those with special needs to serve as a Councillor or as a Delegated Committee member;

- **Accountability and transparency** - payment of any allowances, the reimbursement of expenses and the support provided to Councillors and Delegated Committee members must be accountable and transparent to the community;
- **Equity** - there must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for Councillors and Delegated Committee members; and
- **Appropriateness** - unless directly delegated by the Council or the Mayor to attend, any costs associated with attending community run and organised events will be met by Councillors or Delegated Committee members.

Travel and General Expenses

Councillors and delegated Committee members will be eligible for the reimbursement of reasonable expenses associated with:

- Travel (including the use of private vehicles, taxi or public transport) involved in attending any meeting/briefing of the Council or a Council Committee, as a member of the Committee. All travel should be undertaken using the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport;
- Travel, accommodation, meals, fees and expenses incurred in representing Council at any meeting or function outside the municipality where the Councillor or Delegated Committee member is requested to attend by the Council or the Mayor;
- Travel expenses incurred in carrying out duties associated with representing Council as the delegated Council representative to another organisation and or community association; and
- For Councillors, travel expenses incurred in attending civic functions hosted by the Council, including but not limited to:
 - citizenship ceremonies;
 - official Council Australia Day celebrations;
 - official Council welcome receptions for Ministers, Sister City officials; and
 - other civic events.

The Council will not pay any traffic or parking fines or administrative charges for road toll accounts.

The Council will cover costs associated with a Councillor and accompanying person attending any Council run and organised event.

Councillors and Delegated Committee members must pay for all costs not provided for in this Policy, unless where extenuating circumstances exist, and the Council and/or Chief Executive Officer have approved payment of such expenses.



Council Expenses Policy

Carer and Dependent-related Expenses

The Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a Delegated Committee to perform their role (s 41(2)(c)).

This applies to the care of a dependent, while the Councillor or Delegated Committee member is undertaking their official duties; and may include expenses such as hourly fees and booking fees, if applicable.

The Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a Councillor or Delegated Committee member who is a Carer incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.

Payments for Carer and childcare services will not be made to a person who resides with the Councillor or Delegated Committee member; has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or Delegated Committee member; or has a relationship with the Councillor or Delegated Committee member or their partner.

Reimbursement of child and/or family care expenses shall in accordance with the following provisions:

- Reimbursement for childcare is available up to \$25 per hour for Council activities that are deemed claimable;
- Reimbursement will only be paid for services where a receipt from the caregiver is received showing the dates and times the care was provided;
- The care must be for a person who resides with the Councillor or Delegated Committee member, and for whom the Councillor or Delegated Committee member is the sole primary carer;
- The care must not be provided by a person who is an immediate family member and/or normally or regularly lives with the Councillor or Delegated Committee member; and
- When a need is identified the Councillor or Delegated Committee member involved can work with Council to develop appropriate care arrangements.

Claims and Payment of Expenses

Claims for reimbursement:

- All claims must be made on the approved expense reimbursement form, available from the Executive assistant to the CEO and Mayor.
- Original receipts must be attached for all claims (credit card receipts will not be accepted).
- Where the provider of the goods or service is registered for GST a tax invoice must be obtained and provided (without this the GST component of the cost cannot be reimbursed).
- Claims must be lodged with the Chief Executive's office.

Payments:

- The rate of travel reimbursement for the use of a private vehicle will be per kilometre travelled and based on the rates determined the Australian Taxation Office for tax deduction purposes.
- Expenses, authorised under this Policy, can be booked and charged directly to the Council by prior arrangement with the Chief Executive's office.

Council Expenses Policy



- All claims for the reimbursement of expenses will be authorised for payment by the Chief Executive or his/her delegate.
- Reimbursements will be provided monthly by electronic funds transfer.

Monitoring and Reporting

Quarterly reports of all Councillor and Delegated Committee member expenses will be submitted to:

- The Council as an inclusion in the Finance Report; and
- The Audit and Risk Committee.

The report will include:

- Expenses incurred during the quarter; and
- Reimbursement claims made during the quarter

The Council commits to monitoring processes and decision making to understand the overall success of the policy's implementation.

3. GOVERNANCE

Review

The Director Corporate Strategies is responsible for undertaking a periodical review of the policy to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

The policy must be submitted to the Council for review no later than six months after a general election.

Compliance

Suspected breaches of this policy are to be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

Alleged breaches of this policy shall be dealt with by following the processes outlined for breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

The Audit and Risk Committee shall exercise an oversight function over compliance with this policy.



COUNCILLORS

RESOURCES & FACILITIES POLICY

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy
Policy Type:	Council
Responsible Branch:	Corporate Strategies
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Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



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Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This policy outlines the range of resources and facilities provided to support Councillors to enable them to effectively carry out their role.

Resources and facilities include the provision of communication and computer equipment; and opportunities to participate in professional development activities and networks relevant to local government and public sector governance.

The policy does not include the following:

- Out-of-pocket expenses, including private travel use – covered in separate Council Expenses Policy
- Allowances - set by determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors.

This Policy is not intended to prescribe every possible situation that may arise. Should a situation arise that is not adequately covered by this policy, the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer and if required to Council for determination by resolution.

References

Category	Document
Legislation	Local Government Act (Vic.) 2020
Council Related Policies & Procedures	Councillors Code of Conduct Council Expenses Policy Light Fleet Policy Election Period Policy Media Policy

2. POLICY

Principles

This Policy establishes the resources, administrative and professional development support to be provided to elected Councillors to enable them to carry out their duties as representatives of the community, communicate with each other, Council staff and the community.

The development of this Policy was guided by the following principles:

- Ensuring that all Councillors have available to them the tools, services and facilities necessary to undertake their roles;

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



- Councillors should not be out of pocket as a result of performing their Council functions and duties;
- Achieving best practice governance by supporting Councillors in skill development and knowledge of issues effecting the local government sector;
- Assisting Councillors to improve skills necessary to perform their role and function as Councillors on a group or individual basis;
- Payment for the support provided to Councillors must be accountable and transparent to the community.

3. RESOURCES and FACILITIES

Transport

The Council pool vehicles may be booked by a Councillor, subject to availability of a vehicle and the Council's Light Fleet Policy, for travel to/from official meetings, conferences, seminars, training and events.

- The conditions of use of the Council vehicles shall be in accordance with Council's "*Light Fleet Policy*".

Pool car travel arrangements will be made for Councillors attending relevant functions, where Council staff are attending.

Councillors will be provided with car parking permissions to park in the designated Council parking bays adjacent to the Civic Centre Offices when attending for Council business.

Information Technology and Communications

Councillors will be provided with the following information technology and communications equipment:

- A smartphone with voicemail facilities and hands free (Bluetooth) kit (if required). The account for this mobile telephone will be paid by the Council;
- A tablet/laptop computer/iPad with access to email and loaded with Council approved applications and anti-virus software;
- A suitable internet facility for the tablet/laptop/iPad;
- A multi-function colour printer/scanner/copier and fax device; and
- A case to protect the smartphone and tablet/iPad.

Councillors will be provided with a Warrnambool City Council (WCC) email address, which will be linked to the Council's electronic Mail (& Calendar) system to allow for diary management by the Chief Executive's office.

Council's IT department will provide support to Councillors for Council provided equipment and software.

Where a Councillor wishes to use their own equipment, full IT support may not be provided and/or expenses reimbursed by Council.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



The configuration and use of Council provided IT and Communications equipment shall be in accordance with the *Councillors Information Technology and Communications Usage Standards* (Appendix 1).

Stationery & Printing

Standard stationery shall be provided to carry out Council duties, including but not limited to, diaries, notebooks and pens.

Paper will be supplied for the printer on an 'as needs basis'. For large documents and print jobs Councillors may contact the Chief Executive's office to arrange printing at the Civic Centre Offices.

Administrative Support

Relative to Council business, administrative support will be provided to Councillors through the Chief Executive's office. Staff will not provide non-Council business administrative services, run personal errands, or undertake non-Council business administrative tasks for Councillors.

Office Access & Meeting Rooms

Each Councillor will receive a security pass allowing access to the Councillors meeting room and public areas of the Civic Centre Offices during business operating hours. After hour arrangements shall be made and approved the Chief Executive's office.

A Councillors meeting room is provided at the Civic Centre Offices for Councillor briefing/meetings and civic functions as arranged by.

Other meeting rooms at the Civic Centre Offices can be booked (subject to availability) by Councillors for meetings associated with their role as a Councillor. Bookings are made through the Chief Executive's office.

Meals and Refreshments

The Council will provide reasonable refreshments during meetings on Council business and reasonable meals where Council or Committee meetings are to be held over extended periods or are likely to have a late conclusion time, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and/or Mayor.

The nature of the meal and refreshments shall depend on the nature of the meeting, the timing and attendees and all arrangements are made through the Chief Executive's office.

Protective Clothing

The Council shall, upon request, make available on loan protective clothing required to assist in carrying out the duties of office. This clothing is to be returned promptly upon the completion of the activity/duty for which the articles were required.

The clothing shall be limited to clothing held in store to meet the organisation's requirements.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



Insurance

Councillors are covered by the following Council insurance policies while undertaking their Council duties.

- Public Liability
- Professional Indemnity
- Councillors and Officers Liability Insurance
- Personal Accident
- Motor Vehicle (while driving Council owned vehicles)
- Loss of No Claim Bonus/payment of excess in the event of an accident whilst using their own vehicle (subject to having comprehensive insurance), limit is \$1.000, no excess); and
- Loss or damage to personal property in excess of the policy excess
- Statutory Liability and Defence Costs Indemnity
- Cyber Risk

Council equipment provided to Councillors is covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies. Councillors are expected to exercise due care in protecting the equipment from damage or theft.

All policies have terms, conditions, exclusions and deductibles and specific information can be obtained by contacting the Manager Governance & Civic Support.

Council will pay any applicable policy excess in respect of claims made against a Councillor arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers.

Workcover

A Councillor injured while carrying out their Council duties may be entitled to claim workers compensation under the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*.

Each workers compensation claim will be determined based on its individual circumstances and merit.

Councillors may make a workers compensation claim in accordance under *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* and the relevant Council policies and procedures.

Legal Expenses

Other than by specific Council resolution or in accordance with a Council policy, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor will be the responsibility of that Councillor.

Councillors may discuss potential claims on a case by case basis with the Chief Executive Officer to determine if any insurance claim is applicable.

The Council may, if requested, indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:
a councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act provided that the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the councillor

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



- a councillor defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the Act and the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the councillor
- a councillor for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the Act and the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the councillor.

In the case of a code of conduct complaint made against a councillor, legal costs will only be made available where the matter has been referred by the general manager to a conduct reviewer and the conduct reviewer has commenced a formal investigation of the matter and makes a finding substantially favourable to the councillor.

Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a councillor of his or her functions under the Act are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a councillor has done during his or her term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this section.

The Council will not meet the legal costs:

- of legal proceedings initiated by a councillor under any circumstances
- of a councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation
- for legal proceedings that do not involve a councillor performing their role as a councillor.

Reimbursement of expenses for reasonable legal expenses must have Council approval by way of a resolution of the Council prior to costs being incurred.

Other Support

Councillors will be supplied upon request with a copy of the Local Government Act, the Planning and Environment Act and any other appropriate legislation as requested but are encouraged to access the electronic versions of these documents from www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

Councillors will be provided with a Warrnambool City Council name badge for use while on Council business.

Mayoral Resources

In addition to the resources and facilities available to all Councillors, the Mayor will also be provided will:

- A furnished office with desktop computer connected to Council printers, a telephone, bookshelf and drawers; and
- Private use of a medium sized, executive vehicle with a five star safety rating, hands free (Bluetooth) kit and fuel card.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



Interstate and International Travel

All interstate and international travel undertaken by Councillors must be in accordance with the achievement of Council's corporate objectives and goals and be approved by a resolution of the Council.

For interstate travel the class of air travel is economy class. For international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy. All air travel bookings and payment will be made by the Council.

A register disclosing the details and costs relating to all interstate and international travel undertaken by Councillors (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than three days) is made available for public inspection.

Councillors undertaking any approved travel under this clause must ensure that the final details on the travel expenses are provided to the Manager Governance & Risk within seven days of return from travel.

Where a conference or seminar involves interstate or international travel, Councillors attending must provide a written report on their attendance. The report must be submitted to a Council meeting as soon as practicable.

4. DISABILITY and CARER SUPPORT

The Council encourages wide participation and interest in civic office. It will ensure council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight or hearing impaired councillors and those with other disabilities.

For any Councillor with a disability, the Council will provide reasonable additional resources and facilities in order to allow that Councillor to perform his/her duties as a Councillor.

Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member will be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses, as set out in the Council Expenses Policy.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

Councillor professional development is encouraged in order to develop and maintain Councillors' skills and abilities with regards to effective community representation, decision making and strategic Council planning.

Avenues for Councillors to utilise professional development opportunities include;

- Councillor Induction Program and regular in-house workshops arranged through the Chief Executive's office.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



- Workshops, seminars, conferences, and other day training as offered by industry partners, local government networks and support organisations or participation in relevant formal study courses at appropriately recognised training facilities.
- Professional membership activities of peak Australian Local Government bodies and related organisations.

The costs associated with the Councillor Induction Program and in-house workshops will be borne by Council.

Access to professional development/training opportunities shall be at the discretion of each Councillor, who will be entitled to have paid (up to a set annual maximum allowance) the following professional development costs:

- Registration fees for attendance at conferences and seminars.
- Conference dinner/meals – payment for the main conference dinner if not covered by registration fee costs together with all meals within reasonable limits for the duration of the conference or seminar.
- Accommodation – appropriate accommodation from the day prior to registration day and each day on which the conference or seminar is held. Any additional costs as a result of the attendance of partners and/or children shall be borne by the Councillor.
- Transportation in the most appropriate mode to, from and during conferences and seminars. Car parking fees including airport and hotel parking.
- Professional Membership fees associated with any of the following bodies
 - Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
 - Victorian Local Government Associations (VLGA)
 - Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
 - Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA)
 - Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)

The Mayor and/or delegated Councillor/s accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer will endeavour to regularly participate in the following key local government events, of which attendances costs will be covered by the Council:

- ALGA National General Assembly
- MAV Annual Session
- MAV Plenary Session

Notes:

- The professional development fund allocation is set at \$3,000 per annum per Councillor for skills development programs and topics at the discretion of each Councillor approved in accordance with this Policy.
 - The Chief Executive Officer shall assess and decide on all Councillor professional development applications.
 - If the Chief Executive Officer refuses the application the Councillor may request that the application be referred to the Council for review.
- An additional \$500 allowance is available per annum per Councillor exclusively for access to governance related professional development and/or memberships approved in accordance with this Policy.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



- The annual allocation shall be subject to annual review as part of the Council budget approval process.
- Registration and payment for conferences, seminars and memberships shall be organised through the Chief Executive's office.
- Unused annual allocations will not be carried forward to the following year.
- The Council may resolve to approve a higher annual cost for requests to undertake a formal relevant qualification, such as a certificate, diploma, or relevant units of an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.
- Appendix 1 outlines a recommended yearly program and examples of options available for Councillors to consider over their four year electoral term.

6. GOVERNANCE

Review

The Manager Governance and Risk is responsible for undertaking a periodical review of the policy to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

The policy must be submitted to the Council for review no later than six months after a general election.

Compliance

The Director Corporate Strategies shall exercise an oversight function over compliance with this policy.

Where a Councillor fails to comply with this policy, the issue shall be dealt with in the same manner as disputes arising under the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Ownership of Property

All equipment provided under this Policy remains the property of the Council and must be returned to the Council at the end of a Councillor's term of office or upon retirement/resignation of the Councillor.

Should a Councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by the Council, then the councillor may make application to the Chief Executive Officer to purchase any such equipment. The Chief Executive Officer will determine an agreed fair market price or written down value for the item of equipment. This option does not include motor vehicles.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



APPENDIX 1 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY and COMMUNICATIONS USAGE STANDARDS for COUNCILLORS

IT RESOURCES

- All laptops, tablets, iPads, mobile/smart phones and service numbers/addresses must be used in compliance with applicable licenses, notices, contracts and agreements.
- Councillors will be issued with a Council email address (.... @warrnambool.vic.gov.au). Due to the business email security requirements the address will not be linked to a personal email account.
- The email account will be linked to the Council's electronic Mail & Calendar to allow for diary management by the Chief Executive's office.
- The email account, internet access and web pages should not be used for any purpose other than Council/Councillor related communications.
- Any document received over the internet and by email is considered corporate information for which the Council is responsible. All corporate information must be appropriately registered through the Council's central records systems.
- The Council provided IT equipment and resources including email accounts, internet access and web pages must not be used for electioneering purposes. For further information refer to the *Election Period Policy*

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- The confidentiality of correspondence via email cannot be guaranteed. Confidential emails should be sent with encryption or by traditional methods, not electronically.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND INFORMATION PRIVACY

- Freedom of Information, Privacy and Data Security legislation applies to all documents flowing through the organisation. This includes electronic documents received and produced through the internet and email.
- To maintain the original integrity of documents, no personal comments should be added or alterations made to the original document. Comments may be recorded on a separate memo, file note, or electronic copy, which can be separate from the original document.

COMMUNICATIONS

- All communications produced by Councillors contribute to the community's perception of Council's image. This includes internet and email communications, which must conform to organisational standards to project the public image desired by Council. For further information refer to the *Media Policy and Councillor Code of Conduct*.

SECURITY & MONITORING

- Use of the internet and email may be subject to monitoring for security or network management reasons. Councillors may also be subject to limitations on their use of such resources.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



- Councillors must not share Council issued internet or email access or passwords with any other person. Each Councillor is responsible for all activity that takes place under his or her Council login.
- The distribution of any information through the internet, computer-based services, email and messaging systems is subject to the scrutiny of the Council. The Council reserves the right to determine the suitability of this information.
- Councillors must not download or transmit executable programs, screensavers, system components (e.g. fonts, patches) graphics, pictures, movies, audio files or similar files, without approval from the Manager Information Services.
- All internet and email use is monitored and results are reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

PERSONAL USE

- Council provided internet and email privileges, like telephones, computer systems and networks, are considered corporate resources and are provided primarily for work purposes.
- Notwithstanding, limited personal use of the equipment is permitted. The Chief Executive Officer must approve (in advance) any use in excess of limited personal usage, as well as any arrangements to reimburse Council.

LOST, STOLEN OR MISPLACED EQUIPMENT

- For security purposes and to avoid misuse of equipment after loss, the service must be cancelled immediately once it is determined missing.
- The theft or loss should be reported to the nearest police station and the Chief Executive's office must be contacted immediately in order to have the service barred.

USE OF MOBILE/SMART PHONES WHILST DRIVING

- Mobile phones should not be used in any case when operating a vehicle. The user should safely park the vehicle before taking or making a call.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

- Key tips on care of equipment include:
 - Keep the equipment dry – take care around liquids
 - Keep the equipment out of extreme cold or heat.
 - Do not attempt to open the housing, except to replace the battery according to User Guide instructions.
 - To clean, wipe only with a soft cloth slightly dampened in a mild-soap-and-water solution.
 - Handle the SIM card and all other components with care

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- A case is provided to protect the tablet/iPad/smart phone from damage.
- With regard to use of internet and email, Councillors should not:
 - Visit internet sites that contain obscene, hateful or other objectionable materials; send or receive any material that is obscene or defamatory or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person or which contravenes the Equal Opportunity principles.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



- Receive email without following records management procedures.
- Produce communications over the internet that do not conform to organisational standards. Solicit emails that are unrelated to business activities.
- Make or post indecent remarks, proposals, or materials.
- Upload, download, or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to parties outside of the Council, or the Council itself.
- Reveal or publicise confidential or proprietary information which includes, but is not limited to financial information, new business and product ideas, marketing strategies and plans, databases and the information contained therein, customer lists, technical product information, computer software source codes, computer/network access codes, and business relationships.
- Examine, change or use another person's files, output or user for which they do not have explicit authorisation.
- Councillors must report immediately to the Chief Executive's office any incorrect or inappropriate communications transmitted and or received.

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy



APPENDIX 2 - COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Conferences, seminars and training courses are organised throughout the year by Council, local government related organisations, professional bodies and private sector providers on issues and events which may be relevant to the role of a Councillor.

The selection of conferences and training should be based on its relevance to the responsibilities and the specific training needs of a Councillor and Council's Council Plan goals and are likely to encompass but not limited to:

- Sessions organised by Local Government peak bodies including the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA).
- Specialist training related to the duties, responsibilities and competencies of a Councillor as organised by the Chief Executive's office.
- Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) or other courses approved by the Chief Executive related to governance and leadership.
- Sessions conducted inhouse as part of Council's annual Councillor training program, briefings and workshops.
- Specific needs based training as approved by the Chief Executive, including, but not limited to media and public speaking.

Suggested Training Options:

Councillors are open to select their own professional development training program. The following is provided for illustrative/guidance purposes only.

Year	Professional Development/Training Program
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC Councillor Induction program • MAV Mayoral Workshop (as appropriate) • MAV/VLGA new Councillor & Councillor development short courses e.g. Meeting Procedures • Australian Institute Company Director's Course • Diploma of Governance (Local Government) • WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops e.g. Media training, Team Building, Financial Management and Budgets, Conflict of Interest, Local Government/Planning & Environment Acts
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAV Mayoral Workshop • Chairing of Meetings/Meeting Procedures • Australian Institute Company Director's Course • Diploma of Governance (Local Government) • WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops • MAV, VLGA or Australian Institute of Company Directors, short courses or specific workshops as relevant.
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAV Mayoral Workshop

Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy

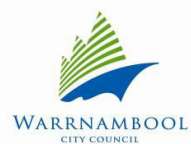


Year	Professional Development/Training Program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Institute Company Director's Course• Diploma of Governance (Local Government)• WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops• MAV, VLGA or Australian Institute of Company Directors, short courses or specific workshops as relevant.
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops• MAV, VLGA or Australian Institute of Company Directors, short courses or specific workshops as relevant.



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY



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ELECTION PERIOD POLICY



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ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

1.1 PURPOSE

During the period preceding a Council election the Council assumes a “caretaker role”. This period is defined in the Act as the ‘Election Period’.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the business of local government in the City of Warrnambool continues throughout an Election Period in a responsible and transparent manner in accordance with statutory requirements and established “caretaker” conventions.

Councils Procedure and proceedings functions are set out in Part 3 Division 2 of the 2020 Local Government Act the caretaker provisions that Councils must take heed of are contained in section 69.

1.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors and staff.

During an Election Period the business of the Council continues, and ordinary matters of administration still need to be addressed. This policy establishes a series of caretaker practices which aim to ensure that actions of the Council do not bind an incoming council and limit its freedom of action.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition/Meaning
Act	Local Government Act 2020
Election Period	The period that: Starts at the time that nominations close on nomination day; and Ends at 6pm on election day
Nomination Day	The last day on which nominations to be a candidate at a Council election may be received in accordance with the Act and the regulations
Publication	includes any means of publication, including letters and electronic information on the Internet
Public Consultation	A process that involves inviting individuals, groups or organisations or the community generally to comment on an issue or proposed action or proposed policy, and which includes discussion of that matter with the public
Council Resources	Includes the financial, human and material resources of Council and includes – offices, vehicles, staff, hospitality, services, property, equipment (phones, computers etc.) and stationery etc.

2. POLICY

2.1 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy commits the Council during an Election Period to:

- not making any major decisions;
- not making decisions that significantly affect the municipality or unreasonably bind the incoming Council;
- ensuring that public resources, including staff resources, are not used for election campaign purposes, or in a way that may improperly influence the result of an election; and
- not publishing or distributing electoral matter, unless it is simply information about the election process.

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

This policy prescribes the actions and procedures the organisation, Councillors and staff will implement during an Election Period in observance of the statutory requirements and in the interests of good governance and a fair election generally.

2.2 POLICY POSITION

This policy applies during any Council Election Period and covers:

- Major decisions made by the Council;
- Scheduling consideration and announcement of major decisions;
- Use of the Council's resources including staff and materials published by Council;
- Access to information by Councillors and candidates;
- Council's online presence including social media;
- Communications and media services;
- Attendance and participation at Council organised activities and events;
- Public Consultation.

2.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.3.1 Councillors

Councillors are bound by sec. 76D and 76E of the Local Government Act 1989 regarding misuse of position and improper direction and improper influence. A breach of sec. 76D attracts serious penalties including possible imprisonment.

During an Election Period, Councillors must not use Council resources for campaigning to increase advantage over other candidates or to influence voters.

2.3.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer will ensure, as far as practicable, that all Councillors and staff are informed of the application of this policy at least 30 days prior to the commencement of an Election Period and instructions are provided to staff on the implementation of the procedures detailed in this policy.

During an Election Period the Chief Executive Officer will be the official spokesperson for the Council in relation to all matters.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 DECISION MAKING PROCESSES DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

- a) It is an established democratic principle that elected bodies should not unnecessarily bind an incoming government during an election period. The Council therefore commits to this principle in that it will make every endeavour to avoid making decisions that inappropriately bind the incoming Council. This includes a commitment to not making any "Major Decision" or "Significant Decisions" as specified in this policy.
- c) The Chief Executive Officer will ensure, as far as practicable, that matters of Council business requiring Major Decision or Significant Decision are scheduled for Council to enable resolution prior to the commencement of an Election Period or deferred where appropriate for determination by the incoming Council.
- d) Scope exists for Council to hold a Council meeting but only in the most urgent or extraordinary

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY



circumstances or any statutory circumstances or any statutory processes that may arise. *Refer clause 3.1.3*

3.1.1 Major Decision

- a) A 'Major Decision means any decision relating to:
 - (i) the employment or remuneration of a Chief Executive Officer, other than a decision to appoint an acting Chief Executive Officer;
 - (ii) termination or the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer;
 - (iii) committing the Council to expenditure exceeding 1% of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; and
 - (iv) enabling the use of Council's resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence, voting at the election.
- b) If Council considers that there are extraordinary circumstances where the community would be significantly disadvantaged by the Council not making a particular Major Decision, the Council will, by resolution, request an exemption from the Minister for Local Government.
- c) The prohibitions on Major Decisions apply to Special Committees and a person acting under delegation.

3.1.2 Significant Decisions

- a) Over and above the decisions specified as Major Decisions, the Council will avoid making other decisions during an Election Period that are of a significant nature and which would unnecessarily bind an incoming Council.
- b) "Significant Decisions" include:
 - (i) Irrevocable decisions that commit the Council to substantial expenditure or major actions; and
 - (ii) Irrevocable decisions that will have a major impact on the municipality or the community.
- c) The Council acknowledges that it has an ongoing responsibility to act in the best interests of the community. Therefore, where a delay in making a "Significant Decision" would result in significant detriment to the local community, or the broader community, the Council may make an exception to this procedure. In making an exception to this procedure, the Council will deal with the matter impartially, having regard to the long-term interests of the community and as transparently as possible.
- d) In the case of a decision that significantly affects the municipality or binds the incoming Council, which is not expressly prohibited, a number of factors will be considered, including:
 - (i) The urgency of the issue - could a decision be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place;
 - (ii) The possibility of financial and/or legal repercussions if it is deferred;
 - (iii) Whether the decision is likely to be controversial; and
 - (iv) The best interests of Council.

3.1.3 Council Meetings

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

Note: The Council will not hold an ordinary Council Meeting during an Election Period. This section only applies to reports for an unscheduled Council Meeting, if such a meeting is called.

In order to facilitate compliance with its commitment to ensuring appropriate decision-making during elections, Council adopts the following procedure:

- a) During an Election Period, the Chief Executive Officer will ensure that a “Caretaker Statement” is included in every report submitted to a Council meeting (if required) for a decision.
- b) The “Caretaker Statement” will specify one of the following:
 - (i) *“The recommended decision is not a “Major Decision” or a “Significant Decision” within the meaning of this policy”; or*
 - (ii) *“The recommended decision is not a “Major Decision”. The recommended decision is a “Significant Decision” within the meaning of this policy, but an exception should be made for the following reasons [insert reasons for making an exemption]”; or*
 - (iii) *“The recommended decision is to seek an exemption from the Minister because the matter requires a “Major Decision”; or*
 - (iv) *“The recommended decision is a “Major Decision”, but an extraordinary circumstances exemption was granted by the Minister for Local Government on [insert date]”.*
- c) During an Election Period, the Council will not make a decision on any matter or report that does not include one of these Caretaker Statements.

3.1.4 Delegated Committees and Advisory Committees

The operation of all Delegated Committees and Advisory Committees will be suspended upon the commencement of an Election Period.

3.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

- a) Public consultations **are best to be avoided** during an Election Period.
- b) This clause does not apply to public consultation required under any statutory provisions, including the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
- c) Consultations may be undertaken during an Election Period to facilitate the day-to-day business of Council, to ensure matters continue to be proactively managed. Consultations will avoid any express or implied links to a Council election.
- d) Consultations under statutory provisions shall only proceed after express agreement by the Chief Executive Officer and then if it relates solely to the normal day-to-day business of Council.

3.3 COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

3.3.1 Certification of Council publications during an election period

- a) The Council will not publish material with public funds that may influence, or be seen to influence, voting in a Council election.
- b) The Council will not:



ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

- (i) Print, publish or distribute; or
 - (ii) Cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed on behalf of the Council;
- any advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice during an election period unless it has been certified, in writing, by the Chief Executive Officer.
- c) This prohibition applies to all documents produced for the purpose of communicating with the community, including:
 - (i) Council newsletters
 - (ii) Advertisements and notices e.g. job advertisements, public notices of contracts etc.
 - (iii) Media releases
 - (v) Leaflets and brochures
 - (vi) Mailouts to multiple addresses
 - d) Council will avoid all publication activity during an Election Period except where essential for the conduct of Council operations. Where printing, publishing or distributing a document is deemed essential to Council business during an Election Period the Chief Executive Officer's certification is required. Publication includes electronic information and web-based productions.
 - e) The procedure for certifying publication is:

Step	Procedure
1	During an Election Period all proposed publications that are normally sent to the Communications unit and/or other Council units for publication e.g. Organisational Development for job advertisements must be sent in the first instance to the Manager Governance
2	The Manager Governance is responsible for checking that no election material is present (other than factual election process information). <i>Refer clause 3.3.5</i>
3	Should the proposed publication contain electoral material, it will be returned to the author for correction and re-submission.
4	Should the proposed publication not contain electoral material, the Manager Governance will send the material to the Chief Executive Officer for certification, by advising: <i>"This material has been checked and does not contain any electoral or electoral related matter to the best of my knowledge. Can you please certify in writing that you authorise for this material to be printed, published or distributed?"</i>
5	If the proposed publication is approved by the Chief Executive Officer, he/she will certify this in writing: <i>"I certify that the attached material is suitable for printing, publishing or distributing on behalf of Warrnambool City Council"</i>
6	The Manager Governance is responsible for maintaining the record of certification of documents and advising relevant officers of the publication approval.

- f) Councillors may publish campaign material on their own behalf, as long as the material does not originate from, or is authorised by, the Council or use Council logos.

3.3.2. Council's Online Facilities (includes Social Media)

- a) The Council website is the main corporate site; there are separate websites for some activities including Warrnambool Art Gallery, Aquazone, Lighthouse Theatre, Surfside Holiday Park and Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village. The Council also has a number of social media sites including twitter feeds and Facebook pages.



ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

- b) Council auspiced social media must not be used for election campaigning.
- c) At the start of an Election Period any online information on Council hosted sites about Councillors who are candidates will be restricted to their name and contact details.
- d) Council agendas and minutes of meetings do not require certification if they are published in the usual way on the website.
- e) Any references on Council's website to the election will only relate to the election process.
- f) Any new material published on Council's website during an Election Period that may be considered an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice must be subject to the certification process.
- g) Any publication on social media sites such as, Facebook, twitter etc. which are auspiced by Council, will require certification by the Chief Executive Officer.
- h) During an Election Period Facebook and twitter posts are to be kept to minimum, normal day-to-day activities only. No launches or announcement of any new projects, policy initiatives, or programs must be made. Where possible, the functions that permit comments and posts by the public on Council social media will be disabled during an Election Period and if so, the Council will provide an explanation via social media on this being necessitated in accordance with this Policy.
- i) No new Council You Tube videos will be uploaded during an Election Period.
- j) Council's Communications unit monitors the Council's corporate website, Facebook site and twitter feeds between the hours of 8.15am and 5.00pm on weekdays (excluding public holidays). During an Election Period monitoring will extend to after hours and weekends and will be undertaken by the Communication unit which will have the editing access to delete any material posted that makes reference to candidates or a Council election.

3.3.3 Council Publications

- a) Any current Council publication which may be potentially affected by this policy will be reviewed by the Communication unit in consultation with the Manager Governance to ensure that any circulated, displayed or otherwise publicly available material during an Election Period does not contain material that may be construed as "electoral matter".
- b) Council's City Assist unit undertake an audit of brochures and pamphlets in all Council's customer service centres and remove any which might contain electoral matter prior to an Election Period.
- c) Any references to Councillors in Council publications printed, published or distributed during an Election Period must not include promotional text.
- d) Emails that are part of the normal conduct of Council business should not require certification. However, emails with multiple addressees, used for broad communication with the community, will be subject to the certification process.
- e) Mass mail outs or identical letters sent to a large number of people by or on behalf of Council must be subject to the certification process.
- f) Council staff should not prepare Councillors' private mail or electoral correspondence and such material must not be printed on Council stationery or using Council equipment.

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

- g) Councillors may use the title “Councillor” in their election material, as they continue to hold that position during an Election Period. To avoid confusion, Councillors shall ensure that any election publication using the title “Councillor” clearly indicates that it is their own material and does not represent Council.
- h) Material printed or disseminated during an Election Period to publicise a function or event must be subject to the certification process.

3.3.4 Council Annual Report

- a) Council is required to produce an Annual Report and this generally will coincide with an Election Period. This publication is not considered an ‘advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice’ and does not require certification.
- b) The Annual Report must not include material that is electioneering or that publicises the attributes or achievements of individual Councillors.
- c) A summary version of the Annual Report is regarded as a pamphlet and must be subject to the certification process.
- d) Printed copies of the text version of the Annual Report will only be distributed upon request until the expiration of an Election Period.

3.3.5 Electoral Material

Material is definitely an electoral matter if it:

- Publicises the strength or weaknesses of a candidate;
- Advocates the policies of the Council or of a candidate;
- Responds to claims made by a candidate;
- Publicises the achievements of the elected Council;
- Publicises matters that have already been the subject of public debate;
- About matters that are known to be contentious in the community and likely to be the subject of election debate;
- Deals with Election Candidates statements;
- Refers to Councillors or candidates by name or by implicit reference.

3.4 USE OF COUNCIL RESOURCES DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

- a) Public resources must not be used in a manner that would influence the way people vote in elections. The Council commits to this principle in that it will ensure that Council resources are not used inappropriately during an Election Period. This includes a commitment to comply with the following procedures.
- b) The Council will ensure that due propriety is observed in the use of all Council resources, and staff are required to exercise appropriate discretion in that regard. In any circumstances where the use of Council resources might be construed as being related to a candidate’s election campaign, advice is to be sought from the relevant Director.
- c) Council resources, including offices, support staff, hospitality services, equipment and stationery will be used exclusively for normal Council business during an Election Period. and shall not be used in connection with any electioneering activity.

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

- d) No Council events, logos, letterheads, or other Warrnambool City Council branding can be used for, or linked in any way to, a candidate's election campaign.
- e) The Chief Executive Officer or any staff should not be asked to undertake any tasks connected directly or indirectly with electioneering.
- f) Photos or images taken by or provided by the Council are not to be used by Councillors for the purposes of electioneering or in support of their election campaign. This applies equally to images on Council websites that may be able to be copied. *Also refer to clause 3.7*
- g) No election material or active campaigning is to be conducted at Council sponsored events or to be displayed in any Council building.
- h) Staff must not undertake an activity that may affect voting in the election or authorise, use or allocate a Council resource for any purpose that may influence voting in the election.
- i) If staff that feel they are being placed in a compromising situation by a request from a Councillor they should refer the Councillor to the Chief Executive Officer for clarification.
- j) Any staff member who considers that a particular use of Council resources may influence voting in an election or provide an undue advantage for a candidate shall advise the relevant Director before authorising, using or allocating the resource. The Director in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer will decide if the use of Council resources is appropriate or not.
- k) Public events will only be organised and run if it is totally unavoidable to conduct such events during an Election Period and then only with the express permission of the Chief Executive Officer.
- l) Speeches for Councillors will only be prepared by staff in relation to events that are part of the normal services or operation of the Council and such speeches will not be circulated or available for publication.
- m) Neither the Council logo nor Council stationery will be used by Councillors in any way that relates to the election.
- n) Equipment and facilities provided to Councillors for the purpose of conducting normal Council business will not be used for campaigning purposes.
- o) Reimbursement of Councillor expenses incurred during an Election Period should only apply to costs incurred in the performance of normal Council duties, and not for campaigning and not for expenses that could be perceived as supporting or being in connection with a candidate's election campaign.
- p) Where Councillors have Council funded services, such as mobile phones, land lines and internet connections, and where it is impractical for Councillors to discontinue their use of these during the election, then Councillors will either reimburse the Council or not make a Council claim that exceeds normal usage levels for usage of those services during an Election Period.
- q) Councillors with their own private mobile phones may continue to seek reimbursement of telephone expenses incurred in undertaking Council business related calls. Councillors will be required to declare that those expenses were incurred in undertaking normal Council business.
- r) During an Election Period, Councillors shall not participate in any regional and or interstate

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

travel in their capacity as a Councillor. In circumstances where it is imperative that the Mayor (or nominee) represent Council on a delegation or forum, the Council may by resolution approve such attendance. If consideration by the Council is impractical the Chief Executive Officer may determine the issue.

3.5 ACCESSING COUNCIL INFORMATION DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

- a) The Council recognises that all election candidates have rights to information from the Council administration and that it is important that sitting Councillors continue to receive information that is necessary to fulfil their elected roles.
- b) Neither Councillors nor candidates will receive information or advice from staff that might be perceived to support election campaigns, and there shall be complete transparency in the provision of all information and advice during an Election Period.
- c) Information and briefing material prepared by staff for Councillors during an Election Period will relate only to factual matters or to existing Council services to assist Councillors in conducting normal day to day activities.
- d) An Information Request Register will be maintained by the Manager Governance commencing on the opening of nominations. The Register will be a public document (available for inspection) that records all requests for information of a non-election nature by all candidates, and the responses given to those requests.
- e) Responses to candidate's requests will only be issued through the Manager Governance. Staff in receipt of a candidate request must refer the request and any proposed response to the relevant Director and Manager Governance. Only information that can be reasonably accessed will be released.
- f) Any Freedom of Information (FOI) application lodged during an Election Period will be dealt with where possible outside of an Election Period. (the FOI Act specifies a 45-day period in providing a response)

3.6 ASSISTANCE TO CANDIDATES

- a) The Council affirms that all candidates standing for the Council election will be treated equally.
- b) Any assistance and advice to be provided to candidates as part of the conduct of a Council election will be provided equally to all candidates.
- c) All election related enquiries from candidates will be directed to the Returning Officer or, where the matter is outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer, to the Manager Governance.

3.7 COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA SERVICES DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

- a) The Council's communication systems and media services will not be used in any way that might influence the outcome of a Council election.
- b) During an Election Period, staff must not initiate any public statement that relates to an election issue. Public statements are not only formal press releases but also verbal comments at meetings, functions and events where attending as part of their Council role.
- c) Council newsletters will not be printed by the Council during an Election Period.

ELECTION PERIOD POLICY

- d) Any edition(s) of Council's C2C published within two months prior to the commencement of an Election Period will only contain general information pertaining to the election process and will not contain any photograph of a Councillor or candidate, or any statement by a Councillor or candidate. Articles will minimise references to specific Councillors and will not identify any Councillor in a manner that could promote a Councillor as an election candidate.
- e) In response to media inquiries the Chief Executive Officer, Directors or the Manager Communications will only provide a response and such information should relate only to current services and operations.
- f) During an Election Period, the Council initiated communications shall be restricted to the communication of normal Council activities.
- g) No media advice or assistance will be provided to Councillors in relation to election campaign matters.
- h) No publicity will be provided that involves specific Councillors during an Election Period.
- i) Councillors should not use their position as an elected representative or their access to staff and other Council resources or information in support of an election campaign. This includes photos or images provided by the Council for past Council activities.
- j) Any requests from Councillors for media advice or assistance during an Election Period will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.
- k) Media releases will not mention or quote any Councillor(s) during an Election Period.
- l) Contact with the local media will be restricted to the communication of normal Council activities and responding to questions not involving an election or possible election outcomes.
- m) Publicity for Council events (if any during an Election Period) will be restricted to the communication of factual material and will not mention or quote any Councillor or candidate.
- n) Councillor participation at Council sponsored events during an Election Period will not be used to gain attention in support of an election campaign.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 Policy Owner

- a) The Manager Governance shall be responsible for monitoring the currency of this Policy.
- b) Staff enquiries regarding the implementation of this policy should be directed to either Manager Governance or the relevant Director.
- c) Councillor or candidate enquires should be directed to the Manager Governance or the Chief Executive Officer.

4.2 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed no later than six (6) months prior a Council General Election.

5.2. INVESTMENT POLICY UPDATE

PURPOSE:

This report provides an update to Council's Investment Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Section 143 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides the legislative framework for which Victorian Councils can invest surplus funds.
- The Local Government Act 2020 has new sections relating to investments (section 103) which present no material change to the current legislation.
- The updated policy simplifies the table which specifies spread of investments to provide greater flexibility whilst maintaining a prudent approach to investments.
- The types of investment in which Council is permitted to invest has also been updated to align with the legislation.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Investment Policy.

BACKGROUND

Councils existing Investment Policy is due for renewal.

Section 143 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides the legislative framework for which Victorian Councils can invest surplus funds.

The Local Government Act 2020 has new sections relating to investments (section 103) which present no material change to the current legislation.

ISSUES

The current policy has been reviewed and although there are no major issues, Council has taken the opportunity to update:

- The table that specifies the required spread of investments
- Aligning the investment options to the legislation

These changes will provide greater flexibility whilst maintaining a prudent approach to investments and complying with the relevant legislation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This policy provides Council with a framework for how it can invest surplus funds whilst complying with the legislative requirements.

LEGISLATION/POLICY/COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

ATTACHMENTS

1. WCC Investment Policy 2020 [SILI] [5.2.1 - 9 pages]



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Investment Policy

APPROVAL DATE:

REVIEW DATE: August 2024

INVESTMENT POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

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INVESTMENT POLICY



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INVESTMENT POLICY



1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Act 1989 provides local Councils in Victoria with guidelines and restrictions as to the types of investments that they can make. The Warrnambool City Council has established an Investment Policy that specifies the framework within which investments will be made.

In developing the Investment Policy, Council has considered both ethical and environmental issues and given the scope of allowable investments contained within the policy, Council will not invest in any unethical or environmentally detrimental products.

1.1. Scope

This policy applies to investments made by Council Officers (Finance) in accordance with the requirements of Section 143 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) and enhances the legislative requirements by providing additional requirements in managing Council's investment activities of its surplus funds. Council's objective is to maximise the return on surplus funds whilst maintaining the purchasing power that will be required to fund projects in the future.

1.2. Definitions

Council – Warrnambool City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989.

Short term investment – For the investment market it is reasonable to consider short term to mean amounts invested less than 365 days

Long term investment – Any investment with terms greater than 365 days.

1.3. References

Nil

2. OBJECTIVES

- To maximise return on Council funds with a systematic approach while maintaining an acceptable level of risk.
- To ensure Council's investments are made in accordance with section 13 of the Local Government Act 1989.
- To establish a formal policy that provides guidelines for making decisions with respect to Council funds.
- To ensure Council has sufficient levels of funds available to service its commitments as and when they fall due.

In order to meet the above objectives the following matters need to be considered:

- i. Cash flow
- ii. Credit Rating of Institution
- iii. Existence of Guarantee and Security



INVESTMENT POLICY

- iv Interest Rate
- iv. Period of investment

2.1. Cash Flow

Prior to seeking quotes on investment options Council must consider its working capital requirements which will entail upcoming outgoings, including creditor payments, payroll and other liabilities against incoming monies such as rates, grants and cash contributions. If it is deemed that Council will have excess working capital for a sufficient period of time to invest then these funds may be invested to maximise return. Finance staff shall take a conservative approach in determining working capital requirements.

2.2. Credit Rating

Council shall consider the credit rating as set by Standard and Poor's (S & P) (or similar organisation) of a financial institution and/or product prior to investment. S & P have different ratings for short and long term investments and are conservative ratings (refer Appendix A).

Council shall only invest funds in short term investment products with a credit rating of **A3 or higher**. For long term investments Council will only invest in products with a rating of **BBB or higher**. The ratings of A3 and BBB are given to products where the financial institution is considered to have an adequate capacity to pay and are deemed appropriate across the industry.

2.3. Existence of Guarantee and Security

Council shall consider whether the investment is guaranteed by the institution. Commercial/Bank Bills although guaranteed, rank as an unsecured creditor in the event of winding up in comparison to bank accounts and term deposits which are ranked higher. Given the nature of Commercial and Bank Bills the ratings detailed in this policy must be adhered to so ensure Council funds are not exposed to unnecessary risk.

2.4. Interest Rate

Council shall consider all relevant investment products which fall within the relevant credit rating. Council shall consider all factors when deciding on an investment which may mean the highest rate is not always selected.

2.5. Period of Investment

The period of investment shall be determined following consideration of Council's cash flow requirements.

For the purposes of the Warrnambool City Council short-term investments will be for a period of no longer than 12 months. All investments greater than 12 months will be considered long-term.

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Some investments may be influenced by specific regulations or Council policy where Council is obliged to cash back a specific reserve. In this instance, Council shall consider when these specific funds are likely to be called upon and invest accordingly.

2.6. Spread of Investments

Council shall spread its investments to minimise its risk with any one bank. Council's short-term investments shall be spread the following way:

S&P Long Term Rating	S&P Short Term Rating	Investment Maximum in Portfolio	Investment Maximum in an Individual Institution
AAA	A1+	100%	40%
AA+ to AA-	A1	100%	40%
A+ to A-	A2	50%	20%
BBB+ to BBB-	A3	35%	10%

3. TYPES OF INVESTMENTS

Under section 143 of the Local Government Act 1989 Council may invest in the following:

- in Government securities of the Commonwealth; and
- in securities guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
- with an ADI; and
- with any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
- on deposit with an eligible money market dealer within the meaning of the Corporations Act; and
- in any other manner approved by the Minister, either generally or specifically, to be an authorised manner of investment for the purposes of this section.

4. INVESTMENT REGISTER

The Accountant shall be responsible for maintaining an Investment Register.

The Investment Register shall be updated following each investment and be reconciled to the ledger monthly as part of the Monthly Balance Sheet Reconciliation process.

The Investment Register shall include:

- Investment date.
- Type of investment.
- Maturity date.
- Period of investment.



INVESTMENT POLICY

- Financial institution.
- Amount invested.
- Interest rate.
- Interest received.

5. AUTHORITY TO INVEST

The Manager Financial Services shall be authorised to invest surplus funds on behalf of Council as contained within the Instrument of Delegation.

The Coordinator Financial Services or Accountant shall manage Council's cashflow and identify surplus funds available for investment and recommend investments to the Finance Manager for authorisation.

A minimum of three quotes will be sought from approved financial institutions before investing or re-investing funds.

The best possible investment rate must then be used subject to the spread of investments outlined within this Policy. These limits apply at the time of investment.

All quoted interest rates and actions taken must be recorded.

An evaluation of future cashflow needs and investment strategies will be completed prior to investing funds.

6. REPORTING

The Monthly Financial Report shall include a section addressing Treasury Reporting. This shall summarise the following:

- Total Cash Holdings (including totals of restricted cash balances).
- The Average Interest Rate held, with a comparison to the 90 Day Bank Bill Rate and the RBA Cash Rate.
- Total Investment Balances held each month end.

7. GOVERNANCE

7.1. Owner

The Manager Financial Services will be responsible for this policy and for ensuring the policy is implemented, progress is monitored and the policy is regularly reviewed.

7.2. Review

INVESTMENT POLICY



This policy should be reviewed every four years or where there is a change to legislation or a significant change to investment market conditions.

7.3. Compliance Responsibility

- 7.3.1. *Executive Management Team (Chief Executive and Directors)*
- 7.3.2. *Managers and Supervisors*
- 7.3.3. *All Employees*

7.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

INVESTMENT POLICY



8. APPENDIX A – STANDARD & POORS RATINGS LEVELS

The difference between short term and long term depends on the investment market. For the investment market it is reasonable to consider short term to mean anything less than 365 days.

Short Term

A1+	Extremely strong capacity to pay
A1	Strong capacity to pay
A2	Satisfactory capacity to pay
A3	Adequate capacity to pay
B	Speculative
C	Currently vulnerable to non-payment
D	Payment on an obligation due date is not made

Long Term

AAA	Extremely strong capacity to pay
AA	Very strong capacity to pay
A	Strong capacity to pay
BBB	Adequate capacity to pay
BB	Uncertainties or adverse conditions could lead to inadequate capacity to pay
B	Adverse conditions likely to impair capacity to pay
CC	Vulnerable to default
C	High risk to default
D	Default

5.3. PROCUREMENT POLICY UPDATE

PURPOSE:

This report provides an update to the Procurement Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Section 186A of the Local Government Act 1989 requires Council to prepare, approve and comply with a procurement policy.
- Section 186A(7) of the Local Government Act 1989 requires that at least once in each financial year a Council must review the current Procurement Policy and may, in accordance with the section, amend the Procurement Policy.
- The Local Government ACT 2020 has new sections in relation to Council procurement (sections 108 to 109). Under the transitional arrangement, these sections will be proclaimed on the 1st July 2021 with a new procurement policy required to be prepared under the new act by 31st December 2021.
- The current policy is based on the model MAV Procurement Policy which has been designed specifically for Local Government.
- The policy has been updated to include a section on collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Procurement Policy.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Section 186A of the Local Government Act 1989 Council is required to prepare, approve and comply with a Procurement Policy.

The policy establishes the procurement framework by providing guidance, governance and clarity on principles, practices and processes to be applied to all of Council's procurement.

ISSUES

Council must adopt and have a current procurement policy in place which meets its legislative requirements. The policy should cover the key principles and commitments of Council in relation to procurement and procedural detail should be contained in a procurement manual.

The update to the policy includes a new section on collaboration which will be one of the principles of the new Local Government Act 2020.

The Local Government ACT 2020 has new sections in relation to Council procurement (sections 108 to 109). Under the transitional arrangement, these sections will be proclaimed on the 1st July 2021 with a new procurement policy required to be prepared under the new act by 31st December 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Council's Procurement Policy identifies the principles, practices and processes to be applied to all of its procurement activities. The policy will direct how purchases and procurement activities occur within the organisation.

LEGISLATION/POLICY/COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

1 Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment

1.5 Educate and partner with the community on Council's sustainability initiatives

2 Foster a healthy welcoming City that is socially and culturally rich

2.8 Increase participation opportunities for disadvantaged members of the community.

4 Develop a smarter economy with diverse and sustainable employment

4.2 Encourage more sustainable local business.

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

TIMING

Section 186A(7) of the Local Government Act 1989 requires that at least once in each financial year a Council must review the current Procurement Policy and may, in accordance with the section, amend the Procurement Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Procurement Policy 2020 [SYC3] [5.3.1 - 16 pages]



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Procurement Policy

POLICY TYPE: COUNCIL

APPROVAL DATE:

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PROCUREMENT POLICY

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PROCUREMENT POLICY

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PROCUREMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

Warrnambool City Council's procurement framework, which covers contracting, purchasing and contract management activities, is designed to support the achievement of Council's strategic aims and objectives.

This policy establishes the procurement framework by providing guidance, governance and clarity on the principles, practices and processes to be applied to all of Council's procurement activities.

1.2. Scope

This Procurement Policy is made under Section 186a of the Local Government Act 1989. The Act is the key legislative framework that regulates the process of all local government procurement in Victoria. Section 186a of the Act requires the Council to prepare, approve and comply with a Procurement policy encompassing the principles, processes and procedures applied to all purchases of goods, services and works by the Council.

This policy applies to all contracting and procurement activities at Council and is binding upon Councillors and Council Staff.

The Act, the Procurement Policy and associated procedures of Council are the primary reference points for how all procurement should be performed.

1.3. Definitions

The following definitions apply to terminology used throughout this Policy.

Term	Definition
Act	Local Government Act 1989 (as amended). Local Government Act 2020
Best and Final Offer (BAFO)	A process that is utilised during a tender process which allows Council to invite shortlisted tenderers to submit their best and last technical and priced offer on the basis of the tender requirements. This process is designed to further assist in the demonstration of achieving the value for money principles.
Category Management	The strategic, proactive and organisational approach to the end to end procurement of specific categories of organisational spend.
Commercial in Confidence	Information that, if released, may prejudice the business dealings of the party (e.g. discounts, rebates, profits, methodologies and process information). It is information provided for a specific purpose that is not to be used for any other purpose than set out in the initial document.
Contract Management	The process that ensures both parties to a contract fully meet their respective obligations as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to deliver the business and operational objectives required from the contract and in particular, to provide value for money.
Council Staff	Includes full time and part-time Council officers, and temporary employees, contractors and consultants while engaged by the Council.
Conflict of Interest	Refer to section 77A of the Act.
Delegation	A power handed down by the Council or Chief Executive Officer in an instrument to enable a delegate to act on



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	Council's behalf.
Emergency	Sudden or unexpected occurrence requiring immediate action.
Environmental Sustainability	Ensuring immediate organisational needs are met whilst taking into account the needs of future generations.
e-Procurement	The use of electronic systems to acquire goods, services and works.
Ethics	The moral principles or values that guide practitioners in all aspects of procurement.
Expression of Interest (EOI)	An invitation for persons to submit an EOI for the provision of the goods, services and works which generally set out in the overview of requirements contained in the document. This invitation is not an offer or a contract.
MAV LEAP Program	A procurement continuous improvement program designed to assist organisations, regions and sectors to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Achieve and demonstrate sustainable savings and value for money; ▪Support local and regional economic development and other triple bottom line objectives; ▪Identify and pursue shared services opportunities; ▪Improve probity management and compliance; and ▪Improve organisational and sector capability.
Negotiation	The bargaining process between two or more parties. Each party has its own viewpoints and objectives, but seeks to reach an overall satisfactory arrangement.
Probity	Probity is uprightness, honesty, proper and ethical conduct and propriety in dealings. Within Government, the word "probity" is often used in a general sense to mean "good process." A procurement process that conforms to the expected standards of probity is one in which clear procedures that are consistent with the Council's policies and legislation are established, understood and followed from the outset. These procedures need to consider the legitimate interests of suppliers and ensure that all potential suppliers are treated equitably.
Probity Advisor	Commonly an observer in dealings with tenderers and the evaluation panel at presentations and interviews. The probity advisors would be available to answer questions and provide advice to the evaluation team.
Probity Auditor	Primarily reviews all processes and documentation throughout the procurement process and provides a report on their findings at the conclusion of the process.
Procurement	Procurement is the whole process of acquisition of external goods, services and works. This process spans the whole life cycle from initial concept through to the end of the useful life of an asset (including disposal) or the end of a service contract.
Purchase Order	The official Council order issued to enable payment through the Council's Financial System.
Purchasing Card	Refers to Council's Corporate Credit Card.
Request for Information (RFI)	Formal request for information to gain a more detailed understanding of the supplier market and the range of solutions and technologies that may be available. It may be used to develop documentation for a future tender.
Request for Quotation	The process of inviting parties to submit a quotation followed by evaluation of submissions and selection of a successful bidder or tenderer.
Social Procurement	Social Procurement uses procurement processes and purchasing power to generate positive social outcomes in addition to the delivery of efficient goods, services and works.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

Supplier	The organisation named in the contract as the party responsible for the performance of the contractual obligations.
Sustainability	Activities that meet the needs for goods, works and services in a way that achieves value for money on a whole of life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to Council, but also to society and the economy, while minimising damage to the environment.
Tender Process	The process of inviting parties to submit a tender by public advertisement, followed by evaluation of submissions and selection of a successful bidder or tenderer.
Thresholds	The value above which a procurement, unless exempt, is subject to the mandatory procurement processes.
Value for Money	Value for Money in procurement is about selecting the supply of goods, services and works taking into account both cost and non-cost factors including contribution to the advancement of the business priorities, non-cost factors such as fitness for purpose, quality, service and support and cost-related factors including whole-of-life costs and transaction costs associated with acquiring, using, holding, maintaining and disposing of the goods, services or works.

1.4. Treatment of GST

All monetary values stated in this policy include GST, except where specifically stated otherwise.

1.5. References

Council's procurement activities shall be carried out in compliance with the following Council policies and procedures and associated legislation:

- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
- Public Records Act 1973
- Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) Act 2011
- Competition and Consumer Act 2010
- Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guideline 2013
- Procurement Manual
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Strategy 2016-2019
- Health & Safety Policy
- Corporate Card Policy
- Gift and Benefits Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy
- Councillors Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Instrument of Delegation
- Sustainable Building Policy

Council acknowledges the MAV for the provision of the Model Procurement Policy and the Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guideline 2013 in the development of this policy.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

2. POLICY PRINCIPLES

2.1. Guiding Principles

The following nine core guiding principles for procurement underpin all procurement activities undertaken by Council:



2.1.1. Ethics

Council acknowledges the importance of ethics in procurement and is committed to ensuring ethical practices are promoted and maintained across all Council procurement activities.

Councillors and Council Staff shall at all times conduct themselves in ways that are, and are seen to be, ethical and of the highest integrity and will:

- treat potential and existing suppliers with equality and fairness;
- not seek or receive personal gain;
- maintain confidentiality of 'Commercial in Confidence' information such as contract prices and other sensitive information;
- present the highest standards of professionalism and probity;
- deal with suppliers in an honest and impartial manner that does not allow conflicts of interest;
- provide all suppliers and tenderers with the same information and equal opportunity; and
- be able to account for all decisions and provide feedback on them.

2.1.1.1. Conflicts of Interest

Councillors and Council Staff shall at all times avoid situations in which private interests conflict, or might reasonably be thought to conflict, or have the potential to conflict, with their Council duties.

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PROCUREMENT POLICY

Councillors and Council Staff involved in the procurement process, in particular preparing tender documentation, including writing tender specifications, tender opening, and tender evaluation panels, must:

- **Avoid** conflicts, whether actual, potential or perceived, arising between their official duties and their private interests. Private interests include the financial and other interests of Councillors and Council Staff, plus their relatives and close associates;
- **Declare** that there is no conflict of interest. Where future conflicts, or relevant private interests arise Council Staff must make their manager, or the chairperson of the relevant tender evaluation panel aware and allow them to decide whether the officer should continue to be involved in the specific Procurement exercise; and
- **Observe** prevailing Council, and governmental, guidelines on how to prevent or deal with conflict of interest situations and not take advantage of any tender related information whether or not for personal gain.

2.1.1.2. Gifts and Hospitality

Councillors and Council Staff shall at all times ensure compliance with Council's Gifts & Benefits Policy.

2.1.2. Value for Money

Achieving best value for money shall be the basis of all procurement decisions within Council.

Council Staff are not required to accept the lowest tender. Instead, Council Staff are required to take into account issues of quality, cost (including whole of life costs), the accessibility of the service, local business and employment benefits, and other relevant factors when assessing best value for money as part of their procurement activities.

2.1.3. Competition

Council's procurement processes have been designed to ensure the principle of competition is adequately addressed.

Council Staff shall ensure that a competitive marketplace is promoted by using the correct process for the particular procurement activity and ensuring that prospective suppliers are given an equal opportunity to participate in the process.

2.1.4. Fairness to Suppliers

Council acknowledges the importance of ensuring its procurement processes and practices promote positive supplier engagement.

Council Staff shall ensure that all prospective suppliers are treated fairly in an open and transparent manner and have access to the same information.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

2.1.5. Accountability

Council will maintain consistency in the approach to procurement across the whole organisation through coherent frameworks, policies and procedures. All procurement decisions and actions shall be accountable, defensible and withstand scrutiny.

Council Staff shall be able to account for all procurement decisions made over the whole-of-life of all goods, services and works purchased with supporting, auditable, documentation.

2.1.6. Risk Management

Council has a responsibility for ensuring that risk is adequately addressed in its procurement framework and processes and in line with Council's Risk Management framework (Policy, Strategy & Procedures).

Council's Risk Management Policy includes a detailed Risk Appetite Statement which is the foundation of the Risk Management framework.

The key determinants of risk appetite are intrinsically related to the achievement of the Council Plan. Council has low appetite for risks that foreseeably may:

- Compromise the safety and welfare of staff, volunteers, third party agents and members of the community
- Constitute a breach of regulation and legislation

Council Staff shall appropriately apply risk management at all stages of their procurement activities which will be properly planned and carried out in a manner that will protect and enhance the Council's capability to prevent, withstand and recover from interruption to the supply of goods, services and works. This risk management approach applies to Council's Occupational Health & Safety obligations.

2.1.7. Transparency

Council shall conduct its procurement processes in a fair, honest and open manner, with the highest levels of integrity and in the public interest.

Council Staff shall maintain key records of all procurement processes to be able to demonstrate transparency in their procurement decision making processes.

2.1.8. Sustainable Procurement

Council recognises it has an implicit role in furthering sustainability objectives, through its procurement of goods, services and works.

Council will maintain a procurement framework designed to support the achievement of value for money outcomes and facilitate opportunities to further organisational environmental, social and economic development objectives.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

2.1.8.1. Social Procurement

Where applicable, Council Staff will be supported to use Councils procurement processes and purchasing power to generate positive social and economic outcomes for our community.

Council will include a 'sustainable procurement' schedule in its tender documents. Sustainable procurement will be a scored tender evaluation criteria with up to a 5% weighting applied to all tender assessments.

2.1.8.2. Environmental Sustainability

Where applicable, Council Staff will consider the following sustainability considerations as part of their procurement activity:

- REFUSE – Choose not to purchase a product/service.
- REDUCE – Choose to purchase less of a given product/service.
- REUSE – Purchase a product of extended life or of multiple uses.
- RECYCLE – Purchase a product that contains amounts of non-virgin materials.
- REPLACE – Choose to replace or offset the resources purchased in a product.
- Life cycle costing principles will be applied to understand the full impact of major purchasing decisions.

Council will include a 'sustainable procurement' schedule in its tender documents. Sustainable procurement will be a scored tender evaluation criteria with up to a 5% weighting applied to all tender assessments.

2.1.8.3. Local Business Support

Council is committed to buying from local businesses where such purchases may be justified on Value for Money grounds, while remaining compliant with the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and other fair trading legislation requirements.

Council will include a 'local benefit' schedule in its tender documents. Local benefit will be a scored tender evaluation criteria with up to a 5% weighting applied to all tender assessments.

2.1.9. Confidentiality

Commercial in-confidence information received by Council shall not be disclosed and shall be stored in a secure location.

Councillors and Council Staff shall not release or discuss the following:

- information disclosed by organisations in tenders, quotations or during tender negotiations;
- all information that is Commercial in Confidence; and
- pre-contract information including but not limited to information provided in quotes and tenders or subsequently provided in pre-contract negotiations.

Tenderers are however advised that a report on a tender process may be presented at an open meeting of Council, and some information arising from the tender will be publicly available.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

2.1.10. Collaboration

Council actively pursues opportunities to collaborate and work across municipal boundaries to improve procurement outcomes, maximise savings and benefits, share better practices and achieve enhanced value for money outcomes for the community.

Council will consider whether categories of expenditure, or significant procurements which qualify for public tender, contain opportunities for collaboration, either amongst Council departments or with other organisations. It will pursue a collaborative approach to procurement provided that a value for money outcome can be achieved.

Council may utilise a procurement agent such as the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Procurement Australia (PA) or another council to conduct a tender (including itself acting as lead council in a collaborative procurements).

Council may consider a range of collaborative procurement approaches based on the value, complexity and risk profile of a project, including joint tendering or entering into a partnership with other Councils to provide shared services.

Council will also seek opportunities to collaborate internally across Departments and aggregate spending to conduct a public tender where there is likely to be significant spend across Council with the same supplier, or for the same services.

2.1.11. Procurement Model

Council currently runs a decentralised procurement model and will continue to review different operating models including a centre-led procurement model to ensure that Council is achieving value for money. If the procurement model does change this will necessitate a change to the procurement policy and manual.

3. POLICY PROVISIONS

3.1. Standards

Council procurement activities shall be carried out to the professional standards required by best practice and in compliance with:

- The Act (where applicable),
- Warrnambool City Council policies,
- Warrnambool City Council Procurement Manual,
- Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guidelines 2013, and
- Other relevant legislative requirements such as but not limited to the Competition and Consumer Act, Trade Practices Act, Goods Act and the Environmental Protection Act.

3.2. Internal Controls

- Council has installed and will maintain a framework of internal controls over procurement processes that will ensure:
- more than one person is involved in and responsible for a transaction end to end;
- transparency in the procurement process;
- a clearly documented audit trail exists for procurement activities;
- appropriate authorisations are obtained and documented; and
- systems are in place for appropriate monitoring and performance measurement.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

3.3. Responsible Financial Management

The principle of responsible financial management shall be applied to all Council procurement activities.

Council Staff shall not authorise the expenditure of funds in excess of their financial delegations.

Council funds must be used efficiently and effectively to procure goods, services and works and every attempt must be made to contain the costs of the procurement process without compromising any of the procurement principles set out in this Policy.

3.4. eProcurement

E-Procurement is integral to the overall development of procurement processes and practices.

By utilising e-procurement Council aims to:

- reduce transaction costs;
- achieve greater leverage;
- make processes more efficient;
- improve management information and visibility of spend;
- increasing control and consistency of processes; and
- improve spend compliance.

4. PROCUREMENT METHODS AND PROCESSES

4.1. Procurement Methods

Council's standard methods for purchasing goods, services and works shall be by some or all of the following methods:

- Corporate purchasing card;
- petty cash;
- purchase order following a Request for Quotation process;
- under contract following a Request for Quotation or Tender process;
- using aggregated purchasing arrangements with other Councils, MAV Procurement, Procurement Australia, Victorian Government, or other bodies; and
- other arrangements authorised by the Council or the CEO on a needs basis as required by abnormal circumstances such as emergencies.

Council may, at their discretion and based on the complexity and cost of the project, conduct one stage or multi-stage tenders.

Typically a multi-stage tender process may commence with a RFI / EOI stage followed by a tender process.

4.1.1. Emergencies

Council will enter into a contract, the value of which reaches the threshold amounts, for the provision of goods, services or works without first putting that contract to public tender, if it is resolved that the contract must be entered into because of an emergency.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

4.1.2. Ministerial Exemption

The Minister for Local Government may exercise his or her discretionary power to approve an arrangement for the purposes of the Act, a contract that Council wishes to enter into without first exposing that contract to public tender. Ministerial exemptions will only be sought in exceptional circumstances.

4.2. Procurement Processes Overview

Council's procurement processes are based on the principles listed above. Further details of the procurement processes undertaken by Council are contained in Council's Procurement Manual. Together with this policy, the Procurement Manual provides the complete procurement framework applicable to all Council's procurement activities.

All procurement processes shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the Procurement Manual and any associated procedures, relevant legislation, relevant Australian Standards and the Act.

4.2.1. Category Management

Council will establish a Category Management approach to its key categories of spend, bringing together expertise from across Council to identify and embed the most appropriate and effective category strategy in order to deliver on Council's objectives through contract arrangements.

4.2.2. Negotiation

In line with the Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guidelines 2013, Council reserves the right to conduct negotiations in its tender documentation in order to better meet / achieve its value for money objectives. This negotiation process may include undertaking a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) process.

4.2.3. Contract Management

Council shall establish an appropriate contract management framework to govern and guide its contract management activities.

Council will proactively manage key contracts with a nominated Council Staff member responsible for the delivery of the contracted goods, services or works to ensure the Council is best placed to achieve its contract objectives.

4.2.4. Supplier Engagement and Management

Council recognises that in order to achieve sustainable value, appropriate relationships must be developed and maintained with suppliers.

Council is committed to:

- managing existing suppliers, to ensure the benefits are delivered;
- developing new suppliers and improving the capability of existing suppliers where appropriate; and
- communicating to potential suppliers via its website.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

4.2.5. Probity Advisor/Auditor

Council will consider the appointment of a probity advisor or probity auditor for tender requests based on the nature and complexity of the proposed procurement.

5. PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

5.1. Minimum Spend Competition Thresholds

Any Council procurement under the threshold must comply with the Council's own policy and procedures.

The following table summarises Council's thresholds:

Procurement Value (AU\$, excl. GST)	Procurement Process	Payment Method	Agreement Type	Documentation Requirements
<\$5,000	Seek a minimum of 1 Oral Quote	Petty Cash (\$100 limit) Purchase Card Purchase Order	Purchase Order Conditions	Record Quote/s
\$5,000 - \$25,000	Seek a minimum of 2 Written Quotes	Purchase Order		
\$25,000 - \$75,000	Seek a minimum of 3 Written Quotes		Purchase Order Conditions or Contract for Quotes	Record Quotes & Delegate Approval
\$75,000-\$135,000 (Goods/Services) \$75,000-\$180,000 (Works)	Seek a minimum of 3 Written Quotes (Director approval required) or Tender Process		Contract for Tender	Record Quotes & Delegate Approval for Quotes Evaluation Report for Tender
>\$135,000 (Goods/Services) >\$180,000 (Works)	Tender Process		Contract	Evaluation Report

Notes:

- Financial values are for the total estimated cost for the procurement.
- Requirements cannot be split to circumvent the above thresholds.
- Council Officers must follow the requirements set out in the table above.

The tender thresholds shall apply for three financial accounting periods. However, should Council consider that the nature of the requirement and the characteristics of the market are such that the public tender process would lead to a better result for Council, in consultation with senior management public tenders may be called for purchase of goods, services and works for which the estimated expenditure is below these thresholds.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

Council Staff may undertake purchasing arrangements under the tendering limits outside this procedure at the discretion of the relevant Director, if the following special circumstances apply:

- The goods, service or works are of an urgent nature;
- Only a limited number of Suppliers could perform or supply the goods, service or works due to the level of specialist expertise required;
- The works, goods or service are an extension of previously approved goods, service or works and the appropriate variation has been processed;
- The works, goods or service are required as part of a grant, funding agreement, lease or similar arrangement specifically stating how the goods, service or works are to be provided or undertaken;
- Where no quotes or tenders were submitted or no quotes or tenders were submitted that conform to the essential requirements of the specification document – in this instance direct contact with the supplier of choice may be appropriate;
- Where the acquisition is of a cultural or artistic nature i.e. a live show or art piece.

All exemptions granted under this policy shall be provided to the Finance Department.

6. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

6.1. Requirement

Delegations define the limitations within which Council Staff are permitted to work. Delegation of procurement authority allows specified Council Staff to approve certain purchases, quotation, tender and contractual processes without prior referral to the Council. This enables the Council to conduct procurement activities in an efficient and timely manner whilst maintaining transparency and integrity.

6.2. Council Staff

Council shall maintain a documented scheme of procurement delegations, identifying the Council Staff authorised to make such procurement commitments in respect of goods, services and works on behalf of the Council and their respective delegations contained in the Procurement Manual.

6.3. Delegations reserved for Council

Tender recommendations where the expenditure is over the Chief Executive Officer's delegation must be approved by Council.

7. POLICY GOVERNANCE

7.1. Owner

Manager Financial Services.



PROCUREMENT POLICY

7.2. Review

Council endeavours to continually improve its procurement performance such that all relevant policies, guidance and training are continually reviewed and updated. The policy and associated procedures will be review annually in accordance with Council's requirements under the Act.

7.3. Compliance Responsibility

All Council Staff have the responsibility to comply with the provisions of this policy.

7.4. Performance Measures and Continuous Improvement

Council shall establish appropriate performance measures and reporting systems which will be used to monitor performance and compliance with procurement policies, procedures and controls.

Procurement procedures, practices and costs will be benchmarked externally. Internal service standards will be agreed within the Council and performance against these targets will be measured and reviewed regularly to support continuous improvement.

The performance measurements developed will be used to:

- Highlight trend and exceptions where necessary to enhance performance.
- Improve the internal efficiency of the procurement process and where relevant the performance of suppliers

▪

As part of Council's commitment to continuous improvement in procurement, Council will participating in and deliver on its objectives through the MAV LEAP Program.

7.5. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees.

5.4. DECLARE LAND SURPLUS TO NEEDS AT 127-135 QUEENS ROAD

PURPOSE:

This report is to provide detail for Council in respect of declaring 1563m² of Council land situated at 123-135 Queens Road surplus to needs in preparation for a potential land exchange with the owner of an adjoining parcel of land Julie Dwyer.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council has been briefed on a proposed land swap between Council and Julie Dwyer comprising part land areas at 127-135 Queens Road and 123 Queens Road Council would cede 1563m² of land but is seeking in exchange 3250 m² of land adjacent to the Merri river front and contiguous with the Queens Road reserve
 - Council may consider entering a memorandum of understanding for an exchange of land dependent on the outcomes of a public process signaling its intent to declare several parcels of land in the defined area as surplus to need
 - If adopted Council will commence the process of declaring the reserve/road reserve land at 127-135 Queens Road surplus to needs subject to a process seeking public submissions
 - It is proposed that Council would consider any submissions received at its Ordinary Council Meeting of September 7 2020 and determine on the status of the land
-

RECOMMENDATION

That Council commence statutory public consultation process around its intent to declare 1563m² of Council open space reserve/road reserve land situated at 127-135 Queens Road as surplus to needs.

BACKGROUND

At a meeting held on 20th July 2020 Council, considered a land exchange proposal between Council and Julie Dwyer. If Council were to consider entering into any agreement it would need to seek community feedback on its intention to declare the subject land surplus to need.

Council needs to begin the formal process of declaring the reserve and road reserve land as surplus to needs. The land involved as depicted on the attached Exchange Plan are reserve land areas of 1431m² (colored green) and 27m² (colored yellow) and road reserve land of 105m² (colored red).

Council is required to call for public submissions in respect of the proposal to declare land surplus to needs in accordance with Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989. Any submissions received must be considered by Council before concluding the process to declare land surplus to needs and if a submitter notifies Council in writing they are able to speak to the item at the Council meeting it is considered.

ISSUES

The proposed land swap will follow a disposal process outlined in the Local Government Best Practice Guidelines for the Sale, Exchange and Transfer of Land 2009. Under these guidelines all land subject to the offer would require survey and would need to proceed to be declared as land surplus to Council needs.

Council would then need to resolve on the status of the subject land. If declared surplus, Council could proceed to enter into a private treaty arrangement with the Dwyer's for the exchange and transfer of the land.

The land swap would enable the Dwyer's to obtain the necessary land to extend a road to service their proposed development. The land swap does not form part of any planning process approvals and this will again be clarified to the Dwyer's. However, access to this land takes away the issue of landowner consent for utilisation of this land.

Council has been briefed on a proposed land swap between Council and Julie Dwyer comprising part land areas at 127-135 Queens Road and 123 Queens Road Council would cede 1563m² of land but is seeking in exchange 3250 m² of land adjacent to the Merri river front and contiguous with the Queens Road reserve

The road once completed would again be vested with Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Council has previously been required to contribute \$110,000 to the existing roadways re-construction, this commitment was established as part of the original sale process and related to the existing length of roadway currently established. This amount is budgeted for in the capital program.

Council has spent a small amount of money in preparation of valuations in accordance with the Local Government Best Practice Guidelines for the Sale, Exchange and Transfer of land.

After direction at a Council Briefing, Council proposed a Counteroffer to the Dwyers that better reflected the strategic outcomes for open space provision in the precinct and fit with Councils Open Space Plan objectives for future linear park links and public access to our waterways.

Council has also engaged our internal Auditors Crowe's to provide probity oversight of the process at an hourly rate as a best practice measure when potentially entering into a private treaty arrangement for land disposal of Council and community assets.

The ongoing maintenance of the increased open space area would need to be absorbed into the maintenance regime of the Queens Park Reserve area.

LEGISLATION/POLICY/COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

1 Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment

1.1 Protect and enhance our waterways, coast and land

2 Foster a healthy welcoming City that is socially and culturally rich

2.4 Encourage and support participation in sport, recreation and physical activity.

3 Maintain and improve the physical places and visual appeal of the City

3.1 Enhance movement in and around the city including better connections for cyclists and pedestrians

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.3 Ensure financial sustainability through effective use of Council's resources and assets and prudent management of risk

Adherence to Local Government Best Practice Guidelines for the Sale, Exchange and Transfer of land.

TIMING

Council would proceed with the finalization of a memorandum of understanding should the land be declared surplus to need and would move to finalization of exchange of land by private treaty.

COMMUNITY IMPACT/CONSULTATION

Council needs to seek submissions from the public through a statutorily advertised process in both the declaration of land surplus to needs and the discontinuance of a section of road under the Road Management Act.

LEGAL RISK/IMPACT

Council is following guidance from the Local Government Best Practice Guideline for the Sale, Exchange and Transfer of land 2009.

Council has engaged Crowes, Council's internal Auditors to oversee the process Council is undertaking from a probity perspective.

As some of the land being sought to be transferred is also existing roadway, Council will have to look at discontinuance of road under these sections as part of the land disposal and public consultation process.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

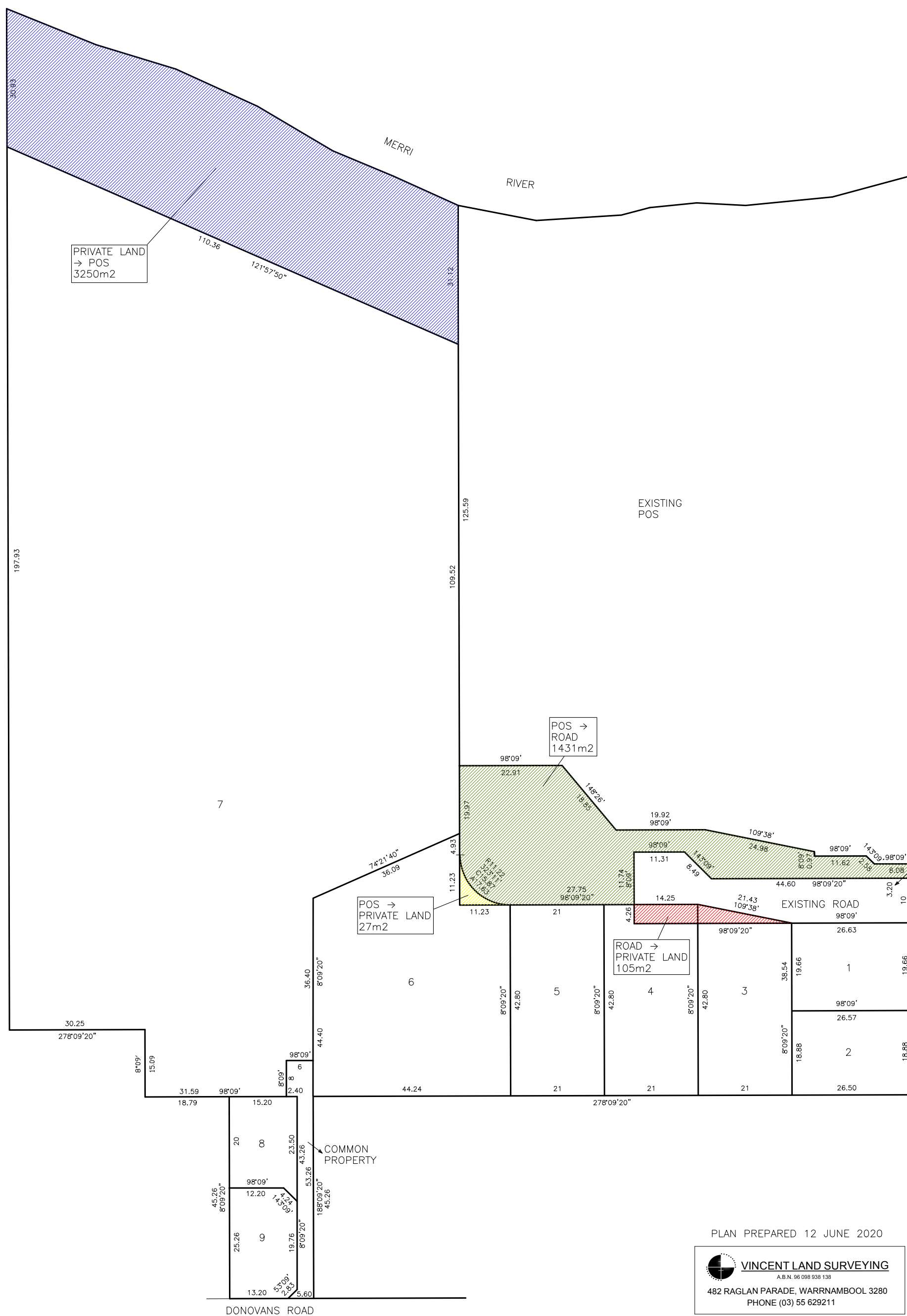
No conflict of interest

CONCLUSION

It would be strategically beneficial for Council to obtain the river front land. It would have high recreational and environmental value even if of little monetary value.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Exchange Plan- Vincent Land Surveying-12 June 2020 [5.4.1 - 1 page]



5.5. MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2020/2021 TO 2023/2024

PURPOSE:

This report advises Council of Microsoft software licensing requirements and proposed arrangements over the coming three years, seeking approval to enter into a three year agreement through the State Government Panel supplier Winc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council IT systems make extensive use of the Microsoft suite of data centre and desktop applications. The most economical way for Council to license these is via an enterprise agreement which is tendered and negotiated by MAV procurement on a 3 year cycle, which has just rolled over.

This report recommends Council switch from Office Pro Plus to Office365. It outlines the logic for deciding which staff will initially be allocated which versions of O365 and the management practices which will need to be established to allocate and alter licenses.

The cost of Microsoft licensing has increased by a little under 20% even if the contract were rolled over on the same basis as the last agreement. The cost of switching to O365 will add very little more. There is some likelihood that a further 10% growth could occur if Council decides all staff require a corporate mailbox.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council enter into a three year enterprise agreement with Microsoft (brokered by Winc) for software licensing. The cost over the three years, based on current quantities will be \$352,136.34 inc gst, and will be invoice in three equal annual installments.

BACKGROUND

Council's IT infrastructure is built on the Microsoft ecosystem.

Many of Council's line of business applications (like TechnologyOne) have the Microsoft Office suite integrated into them.

Microsoft is encouraging all their customers to move from their traditional Office suite to O365. O365 is built to facilitate;

- Working from multiple devices
- Working from mobile devices
- Collaborating with colleagues
- Communicating with colleagues
- Integration with line of business applications

The most advantageous way for Council to license these Microsoft products is via an Enterprise Agreement. MAV procurement negotiates on behalf of all Victorian LGAs in order to achieve volume discounts and appoints a panel of resellers. Council has been using Winc as our reseller for a number of years and has found this arrangement satisfactory, so will propose to continue using Winc.

At the commencement of a three year enterprise agreement, quantities for each product are agreed and an invoice is generated for the next twelve months. At the conclusion of each twelve month period, Council is required to true-up, accounting for any growth in license requirements which are added to the invoice for the next twelve months.

Council's requirement for data centre products is unchanged. However, the evolution of the Microsoft desktop productivity suite is encouraging all users to move from the licensing model Council has been subscribing to (per machine) to a per person model, known as Office 365. Office 365 (O365) accommodates users working across multiple devices, eg. desktop, tablet, phone and home computer providing a uniform user experience and access to data. It supports collaboration, communication and presence awareness. Communications extend to video conferencing. At present Council uses the Zoom platform for videoconference.

Given the change from per machine to per user licensing, a review has been undertaken to determine which users require what access to the Microsoft suite. Simon Fleming has been involved in these discussions as conditions of work will be slightly altered. This in combination with a minimum quantity of 250 licenses to qualify for the Enterprise Agreement and cost determined the final quantities we propose to order.

ISSUES

O365 comes in several versions, ranging from fully featured and unlimited capacity through to cut down features and capacity. An analysis of job roles was conducted to determine which staff would initially be allocated which versions of O365. Additionally, procedures will need to be put in place to manage O365 licensing as staff commence with Council, change roles and exit Council.

A program of training and support will be put in place to facilitate the change to O365, ensuring all staff transition to the new tools successfully making optimal use of new features.

O365 is an online tool. 2-factor authentication and geo blocking will be utilised for security.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost of this O365 licensing arrangement over three years, based on current quantities will be \$352,136.34 inc gst. One third of this amount will be billed each year in advance. Council will also need to true-up at the end of each year to accommodate any growth.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

TIMING

It is essential to resolve this licensing issue as quickly as practicable. Council is currently in an extended grace period (until the end of August 2020) with Microsoft in order the gain Council approval for this expenditure.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

Council staff will be briefed and trained regarding O365.

A pilot group will be selected for early adoption. Lessons learned with this group will be applied to the remainder of the rollout.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

Council is required to hold valid licenses for all Microsoft software which it utilises in the conduct of its business. This enterprise agreement meets that need and will be reviewed and trued up each year at the end of the financial year.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Nil

CONCLUSION

The most advantageous way for Council to license the necessary Microsoft products is via an Enterprise Agreement. MAV has recently run a tender process and established a contract which Council is able to utilise. We have analysed current requirements and received a quotation from Winc. We recommend that Council enter into a three year enterprise agreement with Microsoft (brokered by Winc). The cost over the three years, based on current quantities will be \$352,136.34 inc gst.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

5.6. SOUTH MERRI PRECINCT PLAN

PURPOSE:

This report presents the Merri River Planning Project for adoption by Council, including the Merri River Parklands Framework, South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan, and Merri River Landscaping Guidelines. Together the three documents set the foundation for the Merri River to become an important open space and green asset of Warrnambool.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- City Strategy have overseen a three-part project that looks to establish the long term value of the Merri River Corridor to the future open space network of Warrnambool. Components of the project have been undertaken in collaboration with Council's City Sustainability team, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, and using input from internal and external reference groups and the community.
- The **Merri River Parklands Framework (the Framework,)** provides an overarching guide for Council aimed at improving connections within and to the Merri River Corridor, structured under the themes of Connecting Place, Connecting Culture, Connecting Nature, Connecting Trails, Connecting Communities, and Connecting Partners.
- The **South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan (the Precinct Plan,)** provides a vision for improving and connecting seven parklands along the south side of the Merri River between Manuka Drive Reserve and St James Park.
- The **Merri River Landscaping Guidelines (the Landscaping Guidelines,)** aim to guide a consistent and strategic approach to planting along the Merri River, ensuring both ecological and social outcomes are achieved.
- Community consultation on the draft Precinct Plan provided significant community support for the plan and its overall objectives, as well as the objectives of all three parts of the project.
- The project gives effect to and is underpinned by the W2040 Community Plan and the Green Warrnambool Plan, including the Open Space Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Merri River Parklands Framework, the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan, and the Merri River Landscaping Guidelines, including its ongoing implementation.

BACKGROUND

The foundations for Lake Pertobe to become Warrnambool's premier open space were set back in the 1970s, when a vision for an adventure playground was first suggested. Today, that vision has been realised, with the significant value of the park being widely recognised.

The Merri River corridor holds similar potential in the future open space network of Warrnambool. With one third of Warrnambool's population living within a 10 minute walk of the river, and large areas to be opened up for public access through development, now is the time to plan for the significant public asset that the river corridor is likely to become.

In 2014 the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy first identified the need to develop a plan for improving connectivity and activation of waterway open space between Manuka Dr Reserve and Queens Road Reserve. The recommendation included upgrading Woodend Road Reserve with an environmental / passive recreation focus, and creating a continuous trail between open space north and south of the Merri River.

In 2018, the Green Warrnambool Plan and Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan set the goal for the Merri River becoming 'a series of connected parklands' by 2040. It sets interim 2026 goals of: 'Connectivity between parklands on the Merri has improved on 2018 levels', 'Woodend Road Reserve is being restored for environmental and recreation purposes' and 'The significance of the Merri River as an open space corridor is recognised in the Planning Scheme and Council policy'. An immediate action is to: 'Develop policy that recognises the Merri River as a significant future open space corridor.'

In 2018 the 'Connecting the Merri' project was initiated through participation in the Waterway Management Twinning Program, supported by Council. The draft framework was developed in-house by a project group from the City Growth directorate. The framework was peer reviewed through the mentoring program.

In order to further implement Green Warrnambool, combining the Framework, Precinct Plan and Landscaping Guidelines into a single and integrated project was undertaken. Utilis and Blom Design were bought on board as consultants to assist in the project.

In May 2019, the project was introduced to Council at briefing, including the draft Framework, and Issues and Opportunities report to inform the precinct plan.

In October 2019, a community survey was conducted to inform the draft precinct plan, as well as an existing conditions assessment. The draft plan was workshopped with an internal cross-directorate reference group in January 2020.

In February 2020 public consultation was undertaken to obtain community feedback on the draft Precinct Plan. Prior to public release of the draft, officers met with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, who provided content and wording advice. The draft plan was also presented to Council's Environment and Planning Advisory Committee in February.

Public consultation on the precinct plan commenced in late March 2020. COVID-19 affected a number of consultation components, including a planned community drop-in session, in-person consultation with key stakeholders, and a workshop with the Merri Alliance. Instead, the consultation was undertaken online and by virtual means. To enable adequate feedback time, the engagement period was extended. Public feedback was broadly very supportive of the plan. Submissions were considered, and a number of minor changes made to the final draft.

ISSUES

The 2014 Open Space Strategy identified connectivity as the most significant community issue in relation to open space provision in Warrnambool. It was again identified as the key issue in the Precinct Plan consultation. The precinct between St James Park and Manuka Drive Reserve provides the best opportunity to improve open space connectivity within the City. It represents the critical connection between current and planned off-road trails to the north and south of the Merri River, one day covering up to 25km of off-road trails across the City.

At present, access to regional and municipal-level open space and trails is not equal across Warrnambool. Whilst to south of the highway is well-supplied by Lake Pertobe and the Foreshore, the much larger population to the north of the highway is less provided for. This is particularly the case for one of Warrnambool's largest planning precinct population of West Warrnambool, which currently has less than adequate access to open space in the city, including access to off-road trails. Appropriate development of the Merri River open space corridor will help address this component whilst benefiting the broader Warrnambool community.

The Merri River has become an increasing focus of community interest and activity in recent years by a range of groups including, but not limited to, government, NGOs, the development community, community groups and Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The project was included within the City Strategy and Development Budget.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

1 Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment

- 1.1 Protect and enhance our waterways, coast and land
- 1.5 Educate and partner with the community on Council's sustainability initiatives

2 Foster a healthy welcoming City that is socially and culturally rich

- 2.1 Promote healthy lifestyles
- 2.2 Increase participation, connection, equity, access and inclusion
- 2.3 Increase community health and social connections.
- 2.4 Encourage and support participation in sport, recreation and physical activity.
- 2.7 Actively acknowledge local Aboriginal culture.
- 2.8 Increase participation opportunities for disadvantaged members of the community.

3 Maintain and improve the physical places and visual appeal of the City

- 3.1 Enhance movement in and around the city including better connections for cyclists and pedestrians
- 3.2 Create a more vibrant City through activating high quality public places.
- 3.3 Build Infrastructure that best meets current and future community needs.

4 Develop a smarter economy with diverse and sustainable employment

- 4.1 Grow the Cities population through local economic growth
- 4.3 Enhance the visitor experience.

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

- 5.1 Provision of opportunities for the community to actively participate in Council's decision-making through effective promotion, communication and engagement
- 5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness
- 5.3 Ensure financial sustainability through effective use of Council's resources and assets and prudent management of risk

TIMING

Routine

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

Consistent with Council's Community Consultation Policy.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

Reputational

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

CONCLUSION

The Merri River Planning Project is an integrated project that sets the long term vision for the Merri River Corridor in Warrnambool. It will have planning and operational benefits to Council. For the community, it will help provide strategic direction for a significant community asset with long term benefits to the community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Merri River Parklands Framework [**5.6.1** - 8 pages]
2. Merri River Landscaping Guidelines [**5.6.2** - 79 pages]
3. Final South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan [**5.6.3** - 52 pages]



MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

APPROVAL DATE: [DATE]
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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

Acknowledgements:

Warrnambool City Council is honoured to have an important custodian role in partnership with Eastern Maar Citizens in looking after Country. Warrnambool City Council is proud of our Maar heritage and story. We acknowledge the Maar people and celebrate their rich, diverse and ongoing contribution to us all.

This document was supported by an internal reference group from the City Growth Directorate. Contributions in the form of peer review were also made by Trent Wallis of RMCG through the Waterway Management Twinning Program, and by consultants from Utilis and Blom Design through the Merri River Planning Project. Credit for the map in Figure 1 is to Erin Marslen of Blom Design.

MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide planning and management around the public open space corridor associated with the Merri River in Warrnambool.

The policy also identifies future work to support the framework.

1.2. Definitions

Open Space	Publically owned land set aside for leisure, recreation, and nature conservation purposes. It includes pockets of natural landscape within the urban area, sports reserves, and areas of high scenic, cultural or conservation value.
Framework	A document that outlines a set of principles or objectives to guide ongoing decision making and policy development
Merri River	The central stem of the Merri River within the Warrnambool City boundary and key tributaries where they contribute to the values of the corridor (refer Figure 1 over page)
Merri River Parklands	The collection of current and future public open spaces connected along the main stem of the Merri River in Warrnambool, as referenced by this policy (refer Appendix 1 conceptual diagram).
Development	Man-made structures, features and facilities and surrounding open space, including houses, buildings, and park facilities such as barbeque shelters, toilets, roads, paths, play spaces etc.

2. REFERENCES

2.1. Internal Council Documents

- Warrnambool Open Space Strategy (2014)
- Municipal Strategic Statement
- Warrnambool 2040
- Warrnambool Health and Wellbeing Plan (2018)
- Green Warrnambool (2018)
- Any Council-adopted Master Plan, Open Space Precinct Plan, or Landscape Concept Plan relevant to the Merri River Parklands

MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

2.2. External References

- Merri River Alliance Network Vision and Objectives
- Merri Estuary Management Plan (GHCMA 2008)
- Making a Difference (MAD) for the Merri (Merri River Landcare Network)
- Glenelg Hopkins Waterway Strategy (GHCMA, 2014-2022)
- Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy (GHCMA, 2013-2019)
- Water for Victoria, Water Plan (Victorian Government, 2016)



Figure 1. The main stem of the Merri River in Warrnambool.

MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

3. POLICY

3.1. Policy Statement

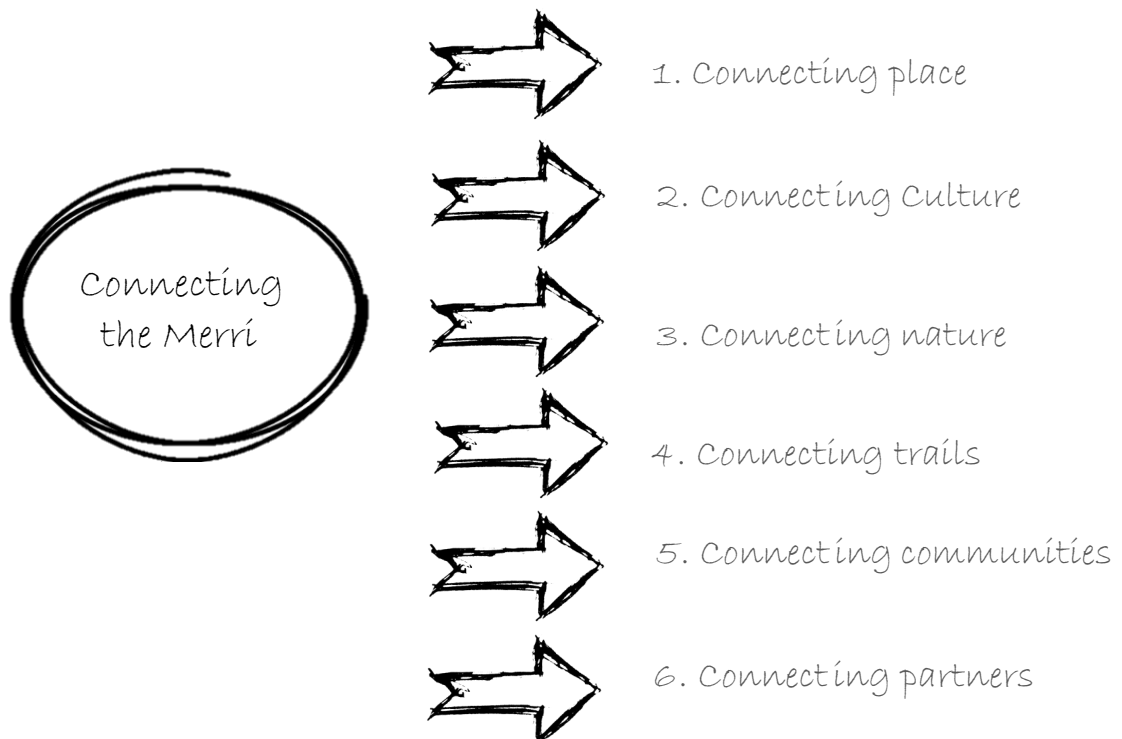
The Merri River Parklands framework recognises the important future role of the Merri River in providing a major public open space corridor in Warrnambool. It sets the vision, objectives and principles to guide future decision making in relation to the planning and management of the river corridor.

3.2. Vision

The Merri River corridor will form a series of connected and accessible parklands and trails through Warrnambool, that support the long term health of the river, as well as active river and riverside transport, nature-based recreation and events, and wildlife movement.

3.3. Objectives

The framework focuses on improving connections within and to the Merri River corridor ("Merri Connections"):



MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

The objectives of the Merri River Parklands framework are:

1. To develop an integrated network of quality public open spaces connected along the Merri River through Warrnambool *CONNECTING PLACE*
2. To support the open space needs of the growing population of Warrnambool by providing an accessible central corridor for tourism, recreation, social gatherings and connection with nature *CONNECTING COMMUNITY*
3. To value and respect the cultural landscape and connection to the river by the Traditional Owners *CONNECTING CULTURE*
4. To re-establish a 'green spine' through the city that contributes to waterway and catchment health, wildlife movement, and climate change impact mitigation *CONNECTING NATURE*
5. To develop connected riverside trails that support active transport, tourism, water-based sports, walking and cycling based events *CONNECTING TRAILS*
6. To engage in mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to the vision of this framework *CONNECTING PARTNERS*

3.4. Guiding Principles

Any development or projects associated with the Merri River and adjoining parklands will comply with the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 1: Revegetation of the river corridor must include indigenous species that reflect modelled Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) or native species known to have previously grown in the area

PRINCIPLE 2: Gaps in parkland connectivity will be actively addressed where appropriate and as the opportunities arise

PRINCIPLE 3: Development within (and adjoining) the river corridor should not detract from the river's natural, landscape, heritage and cultural values

PRINCIPLE 4: Ecological restoration of the river corridor in the urban area will be compatible with social and recreational use and consider ongoing maintenance requirements and the safety of river and parkland users

PRINCIPLE 5: Significant view lines and valued landscapes will be preserved where practical

PRINCIPLE 6: The cultural values of the Traditional Owners will be respected and considered in planning and activities undertaken along the Merri

MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

PRINCIPLE 7: The corridor will be accessible and reflect the needs of a diverse range of users

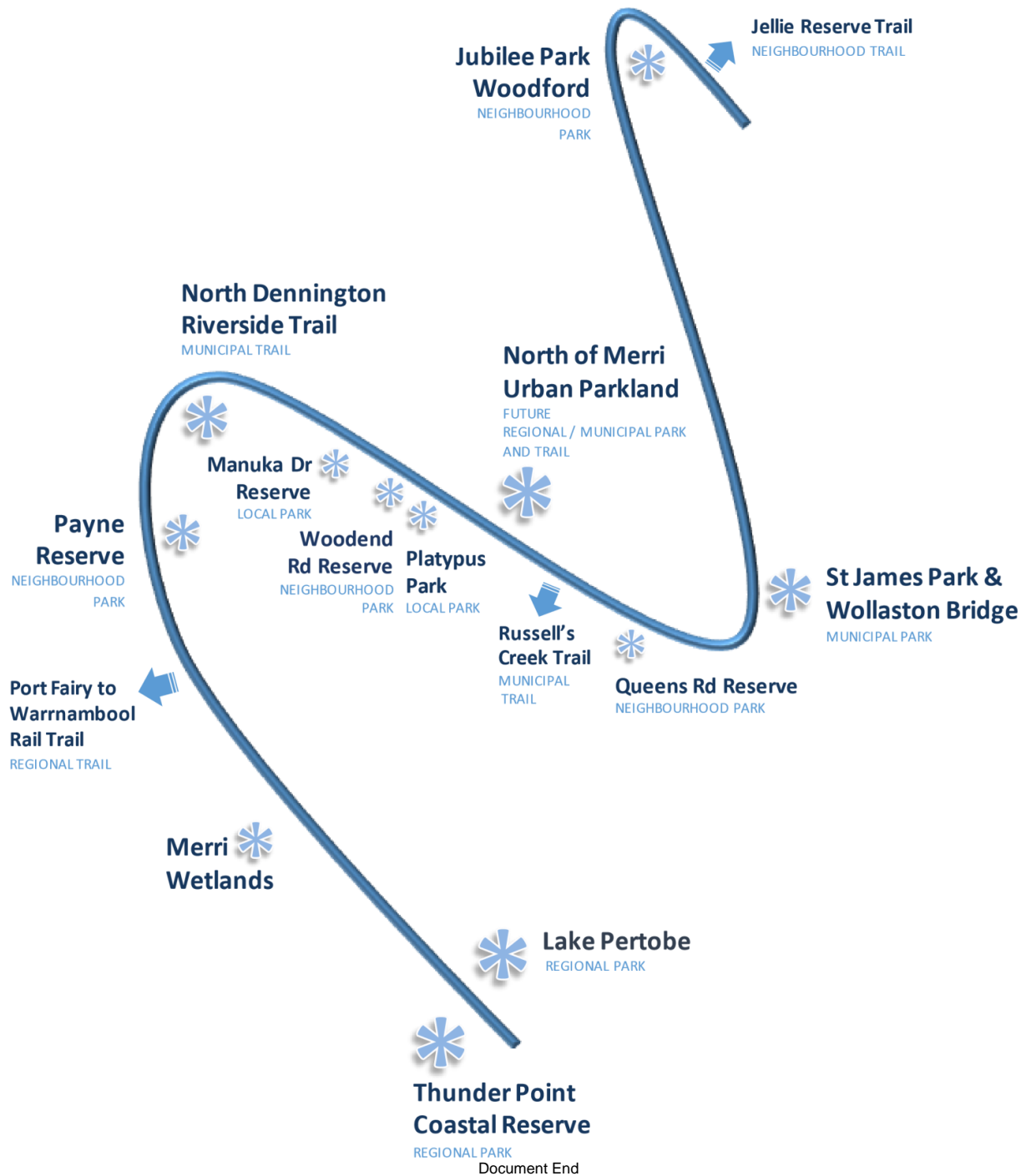
PRINCIPLE 8: Infrastructure with the river corridor should be well-designed and fit-for purpose, and considering the risks and future impacts of flooding and climate change

PRINCIPLE 9: Sensitive uses of the corridor, including recreation, events and tourism will be supported in appropriate locations within the corridor

PRINCIPLE 10: Planning decisions will be compatible with other relevant policy, including the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy, Green Warrnambool Plan, and Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan.

MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 1. Concept diagram of parklands included in the framework





WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

MERRI RIVER LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES



Merri River Landscaping Guidelines July 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of groups and individuals have contributed to the information contained in this document, including staff of Warrnambool City Council.

Council acknowledges the Eastern Maar Nation as the original custodians of the lands of this general area. Council also acknowledges the descendants of the ancestors of Aboriginal nations within the lands forming the Great South Coast and particularly the elders of the indigenous communities within both Warrnambool and this region.

DISCLAIMER

This publication may be of assistance to you, but Warrnambool City Council and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

These guidelines concentrate on the role of vegetation in the riparian zone with consideration to riverbank erosion, aesthetics and safety. A thorough site assessment is still necessary prior to planting and where required, further assessment of vegetation and fauna may be required before any landscaping is undertaken.

PREPARED BY:



utilis



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LIST OF MAPS AND PLANS

Map 1: The Study Area
Map 2: Modelled Ecological Vegetation Classes (pre-1750's)
Map 3: Character Zones
Map 4: Public Open Space Locations
Map 5: Key Views – Urban Character Zone
Plan 1: Sample Planting Plan



DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Core Riparian Zone	For the purpose of this guideline the Core Riparian Zone is defined as the extent of land set aside for public water frontage. This zone generally has a width in the range of 20 to 60 metres
Ecological Vegetation Class	<i>'Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) are the standard unit for classifying vegetation types in Victoria. EVCs are described through a combination of floristics, lifeforms and ecological characteristics, and through an inferred fidelity to particular environmental attributes. Each EVC includes a collection of floristic communities (i.e. lower level in the classification) that occur across a biogeographic range, and although differing in species, have similar habitat and ecological processes operating (DELWP, 2020³).'</i>
Direct Seeding	The sowing of seeds, either by hand or machine, directly to a revegetation area. (WCC, 2015)
Hand Planting	Using seedlings that have been raised in nursery tubes and are planted by hand at the prepared site. (WCC, 2015)
Landscaping	Landscaping is the process of improving the aesthetic appearance of an area and/or functional outcomes, which may include planting trees and shrubs for their aesthetic features. The aim of landscaping may also include ecological outcomes, such as habitat improvements.
Novel Ecosystem	Novel ecosystems are human-built. They are not naturally occurring and exist in places that have been altered in structure and function.
Revegetation	The improvement of the habitat value of existing remnant/native vegetation. This may occur through actions such as weed control, grazing exclusion, or reintroduction of missing vegetation elements. (WCC, 2015)
Riparian Zone	The riparian zone is a transition zone between the waterway and adjoining land. The riparian zone is important for maintaining the ecological functions of a watercourse and includes floodplains. There is no set distance for a riparian zone. It may be narrow or wide, up to hundreds of metres.
Toe	The river toe is the zone between the natural/ordinary water level and the top of the bank. This zone is susceptible to erosion due to water fluctuations and sometimes lack of vegetation.

ACRONYMS

AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability (used in definition of flood)
DELWP	Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
EVCs	Ecological Vegetation Classes
FO	Floodway Overlay
FZ	Farming Zone
GHCMA	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
GRZ1	General Residential Zone – Schedule 1
HO	Heritage Overlay
PCRZ	Public Conservation and Resource Zone
PPRZ	Public Park and Recreation Zone
UFZ	Urban Floodway Zone
WCC	Warrnambool City Council
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design

1. INTRODUCTION

The Merri River traverses the municipality of Warrnambool from the northern boundary to the ocean, extending approximately 26 kilometres from Woodford to Stingray Bay. The River flows through a mixture of farming, residential, rural living, industrial, recreational and coastal areas. These areas provide for a wide range of values and uses.

Ongoing revegetation and landscaping of the corridor will form an essential action in supporting and improving the environmental, social, cultural and economic values of the river. Revegetation of the corridor is collective effort by the community, local environment groups, Traditional Owners, developers, NGOs, Council, and other government agencies.

The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure a consistent and strategic approach to planting along the Merri River, ensuring that good ecological and social outcomes are achieved. The guidelines recognise that different sections of river and different contexts within a section of river require different approaches.

WHAT DO THESE GUIDELINES INCLUDE?

This document guides landscaping and revegetation along the banks of the Merri River and includes:

- Identification of character zones, ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) and context settings (eg. trails, recreation, farmland, development) along the river;
- Expected landscaping treatment for each character zone and the context settings;
- Plant species suggestions for zones, including photos; and
- Appropriate planting densities.

WHO ARE THESE GUIDELINES INTENDED FOR?

The Merri River Landscaping Guidelines has been prepared to assist staff from the Warrnambool City Council, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA), developers, community groups and other individuals/groups planning for, and undertaking landscaping works along the Merri River in Warrnambool. These Guidelines applies to existing public land adjoining the River and also new public open space created next to the river as part of urban development.

Whilst this document provides a guide to landscaping the River, it is important that those involved in landscaping and revegetation works inform themselves of available information, including current strategies, policies and legislation applicable to waterway landscaping, as these are subject to change at any given time.

WHAT INFORMED THE GUIDELINES?

The Merri River Landscaping Guidelines draws on the various strategies, frameworks and policies that have been prepared on river revegetation in recent years and combines this information with an analysis of landscape character areas and contexts to provide a simple to read landscape guide.

It is also informed by the objectives and principles of the *Connecting the Merri – Merri River Parklands Framework*, which applies to the whole river. The Framework was developed by Council utilising feedback from previous community consultation and information in relevant adopted plans and strategies. The Framework ‘sets the vision, objectives and principles to guide future decision making in relation to the planning and management of the river corridor (WCC 2020).’

Merri River Landscaping Guidelines July 2020

The relevant plans, policies, strategies and frameworks applicable to landscaping and revegetation of the Merri River include:

- Water for Victoria Water Plan – Victorian State Government
- Regional Riparian Action Plan: Glenelg Hopkins region, and Glenelg Hopkins CMA Regional Waterway Strategy – Victorian State Government
- Warrnambool Planning Scheme
- Warrnambool Council Plan 2017-2021 - WCC
- Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan – WCC
- Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2014 – WCC
- Merri River Restoration Strategy – WCC (date unknown)
- Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan 2014
- Warrnambool Coastal Vegetation Management Plan 2013
- Green Warrnambool 2018
- A Strategy for Conserving Biodiversity in the Warrnambool Plain Bioregion, Victoria 2002
- Warrnambool City Council Revegetation Policy 2015; and
- Connecting the Merri – Merri River Parklands Framework – WCC 2020

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES?

The focus of landscaping works along the Merri River is to enhance public spaces for the people who use them and to improve the natural environment and achieve better ecological outcomes for the river environs.

Aims of landscaping the Merri River:

- *To restore the watercourse.*
- *Create an adequate buffer of vegetation along the watercourse, ultimately improving water quality and helping to minimise erosion.*
- *Create wildlife corridors and increase biodiversity. Noval ecosystems and goals of the planting should be considered when developing a landscaping plan.*
- *Use local native species from the relevant EVCs. In most cases vegetation from the local EVCs should be selected, however this is not always what is present 'on the ground'. A thorough site assessment will need to be undertaken to determine which EVC is most likely. It is acknowledged that some species that are not indigenous to the riparian zone, have been approved for use by the Council and the GHCA.*
- *Ensure safety of park users, through incorporation of passive surveillance and adequate clearance beside paths.*

WHAT AREA IS COVERED BY THE GUIDELINES?

The Guidelines apply to public land or land intended to become public land in the riparian zone along the extent of the Merri River in the municipality of Warrnambool City, as shown on Map 1



MAP 1: THE STUDY AREA

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

Use these sections to help plan your revegetation project and select suitable species for planting.

1. ECOLOGY

- Use Map 2 on page 11 to work out the vegetation type (Ecological Vegetation Classes or 'EVCs') that may have previously occurred at your site.**
- The EVCs help guide appropriate species listed in the Merri River Plant List at Section 6 (pages 65 to 76).

2. CHARACTER ZONES (Pages 16 to 42)

- Use Map 3 and Map 4 on pages 17 and 18 to work out what character zone your site falls in.
- Read the associated character zone description on pages 16 to 42 which provides some site context and considerations when planning to design and carry out planting in the area.

3. CROSS SECTIONS (Pages 45 to 50)

- Refer to the cross section that matches the character zone you have identified for your site.
- This indicates an example of how a planting should look based on the context e.g. open areas next to paths, more open vegetation adjoining the river in viewlines etc.
- There may be more than one cross-section depending on whether your site includes important view-lines to preserve.

4. SPECIES SELECTION

- This section gives advice on selecting appropriate species plus a selection of photos of common species suitable for the Merri River corridor.
- Use in conjunction with the Merri River Plant List at pages 65 to 76.

5. MERRI RIVER PLANT LIST (Pages 65 to 76)

- This list guides what plants are suitable for a site based on the determined Character Zone, relevant EVCs, and whether the site includes a view-line or not.

6. LANDSCAPING AND REVEGETATION CHECKLIST

- A checklist for landscaping and revegetation proposals on public land (or land that will become publicly owned) within the Merri River corridor is provided at Appendix 1. Please make sure you have completed this checklist before submitting your proposal to Council for consideration.

NOTE ABOUT SELECTION OF EVCs:

**In many situations it will be appropriate to select more than one EVCs For example, when selecting EVCs for Woodford it would be appropriate to select EVC 53 which is shown running along the watercourse and the adjacent EVC 666. This is because there is naturally cross-over between two adjacent EVCs.

2. ECOLOGY

The Warrnambool Plain Bioregion covers most of Warrnambool City and the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion is found to the north of Dennington.

Since European settlement, the vegetation in Warrnambool City has been substantially modified and today there is limited remnant vegetation remaining.

According to the Warrnambool City Council Revegetation Policy 2015,

'there is less than 10% native vegetation remaining. Many of these areas provide necessary habitat for the regions threatened species.'

According to the State Government's modelled data (DELWP, 2020), there are seven ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) that were likely to have been present prior to the 1750s along the Merri River environs, including:

- Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 3), Swamp Scrub (EVC 53) and Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55), Riparian Shrubland/Escarpment Shrubland/Grassy Woodland Mosaic (EVC 666) in inland areas; and
- Swamp Scrub/Aquatic Herbland Mosaic (EVC720), Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 3), Estuarine Wetland (EVC 10) and Coastal Dune Scrub (EVC 160) near the coastline.

Map 2 shows the modelled location of Ecological Vegetation Classes EVCs prior to the 1750s. (DELWP, 2020) (DELWP¹, 2020).

ABOUT THE WARRNAMBOOL PLAIN BIOREGION?

"Warrnambool Plain extends along the coast from Portland to Moonlight Head. It consists of a distinctive cliffed coastline and low calcareous dune formations, dissected by rivers, inlets and swamplands. The Cainozoic sediments and volcanic deposits dominate the area giving rise to sandy soils (Calcarosols and Tenosols and Podosols) on the dunes and cliffline, Brown earths and texture contrast soils (Dermosols, Sodosols) on the flat plain, and texture contrast soils and fertile peats (Hydrosols) in the swamplands. Much of the limestone has been overlain by more recent sediments, and between the limestone dunes, areas of swamplands are characterised by highly fertile peats and seasonal inundation. The area east of Warrnambool is characterised by deeper soils of volcanic origins overlying limestone, which are dissected by streams. (DELWP¹, 2020)"

Average annual rainfall ranges from 700-1000 mm (varying across the bioregion) and falls mainly during winter and spring. The average maximum temperatures range from the about the 20°C on the coast to about 27°C inland. In winter the average maximum temperatures are about 13oC along the coast and 10oC inland.

Vegetation is dominated by Lowland Forest and Herb-rich Foothill Forest ecosystems, and in the swamplands, Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland/Damp Heathland/Damp Heathy Woodland, Damp Heathland/Damp Heathy Woodland, Damp Heath Scrub, Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland and Swamp Scrub ecosystems.

Significant wetlands include the Yambuk and Lower Merri wetlands. The bioregion also encompasses the lower portions of the Surrey, Fitzroy, Eumeralla, Hopkins and Gellibrand Rivers (DELWP¹, 2020)."



MERRI RIVER EVCs

According to the modelled pre-1750s EVC mapping, there were four EVCs that most likely lined the banks of the Merri River in Warrnambool. They include:

10 - ESTUARINE WETLAND

This EVC grows on anaerobic peat-rich muds at the edge of estuarine creeks, rivers and lagoons. The salinity of the water varies from fresh to brackish to salty depending on river flood and marine tide events.

Species typical of this EVC include graminoids and salt tolerant plants (halophytes), including Sea Rush (*Juncus kraussii* ssp. *australiensis*), Coast Tussock-grass (*Poa poiformis*), Twig-sedge (*Baumea juncea*) and Large Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*). The landward edge of this EVC is often fringed by a layer of Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*). (DELWP¹, 2020)

53 - SWAMP SCRUB

This EVC is likely to have been the most common EVC along the inland length of the Merri River. The soil types vary in this EVC including loams, silts and peats. These soils are often inundated during the wetter months.

This EVC is characterised primarily by low-medium shrubs, up to 8m tall. Although sometimes trees such as Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) may emerge.

The vegetation is dominated by either Woolly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*), Scented Paperbark (*Melaleuca squarrosa*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Manuka

(*Leptospermum scoparium*). These shrubs often form a thick impenetrable thicket, but where light does penetrate the ground, there are a variety of species, including Common Beard-Heath (*Leucopogon virgatus*), various sedges, reeds and herbs and Soft Water-fern (*Blechnum minus*). (DELWP¹, 2020)

160 - COASTAL DUNE SCRUB

This EVC grows on the secondary dunes along the ocean and bay beaches and lake shores. Vegetation in this EVC is subject to salt spray and strong winds.

The shrubs, herbs, graminoids and climbers in this EVC tolerate the siliceous and calcareous sands found on the secondary dunes. This EVC is characterised primarily by low growing vegetation, up to 3m tall, including shrubs such as Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana* ssp. *candolleana*) and Coast Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* ssp. *sophorae*) and understorey herbs and graminoids including Knobby Club-sedge (*Ficinia nodosa*) and the edible Karkalla (*Carpobrotus rossii*) and Bower Spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*). Bower Spinach is used as a valuable leaf vegetable by Traditional Owners. (DELWP¹, 2020)

720 - SWAMP SCRUB/AQUATIC HERBLAND MOSAIC

This EVC grows in and around wetlands on the landward side of the Coastal Dune Scrub. It is a mosaic of two EVCs, being Swamp Scrub (EVC 53) and Aquatic Herbland (EVC 653).

The Aquatic Herbland is dominated by sedges and/or aquatic herbs. Typical soils are fertile with a heavy clays beneath organic accumulations. Herbs commonly found in the Aquatic Herbland include Yellow Bladderwort (*Utricularia australis*) and Amphibious Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum simulans*), Jointed Twig-sedge (*Baumea articulata*).

The Swamp Scrub is typically located at the edges of the wetlands and subject to inundation. (DELWP¹, 2020)

MERRI RIVER ENVIRONS EVCs

According to the modelled pre-1750s EVC mapping, there are also a number of EVCs that were probably located in close proximity to the Merri River, including:

3 - DAMP SANDS HERB-RICH WOODLAND

This EVC is dominated by Eucalypt forest or open woodland up to 15 m tall with a large shrub and ground layer. This EVC grows on moderately fertile, relatively well-drained sand or loamy topsoils over heavier subsoils. The Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland is located close to the coastline, separating the Coastal Dune Scrub and Swamp Scrub/Aquatic Herbland from the inland Plains Grassy Woodland.

The Eucalypt overstorey generally covers up to 15% of the area and consists of Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*).

Understorey is a diverse range of shrubs, herbs and graminoids including Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale*), Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*), Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*), Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*), Tall Rush (*Juncus procerus*), Velvet

Tussock-grass (*Poa rodwayi*), Tasman Flax-lily (*Dianella tasmanica*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and many more. (DELWP¹, 2020)

55 - PLAINS GRASSY WOODLAND

This EVC is an open, Eucalypt forest. It grows on poorly drained, fertile soils at low elevations. The Eucalypt overstorey generally covers up to 10% of the area and includes Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis* ssp. *viminalis*) and Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*).

The understorey is a sparse covering of shrubs over a grass and herbaceous ground cover. The shrub mix includes Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) and Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*). The understorey includes Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*), Kidney-weed (*Dichondra repens*) and Bristly Wallaby-grass (*Austrodanthonia setacea*).

666 - RIPARIAN SHRUBLAND/ESCARPMENT SHRUBLAND/GRASSY WOODLAND MOSAIC

This EVC is found near Woodford on rocky escarpments and creeks, in steep valleys and gorges. It is a mosaic of three EVCs, being Riparian Shrubland (EVC 19), Escarpment Shrubland (EVC 895) and Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55).

The mixed overstorey ranges from between 15-40% and includes a range of large shrubs and trees, including Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis* ssp. *Viminalis*). This mosaic has a broad range of shrubs, herbs and graminoids in the understorey.

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Table 1 shows the conservation status of each ecological vegetation class.

Table 1 – Conservation status of vegetation types that occurred in the South of Merri Open Space Precinct pre-1750

ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASS (EVC)	EVC NUMBER	BIOREGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUS	CRITERIA FOR STATUS
DAMP SANDS HERB-RICH WOODLAND	3	Endangered in Warrnambool Plain	Less than 10% pre-European extent remains; or combination of depletion, degradation, current threats and rarity is comparable overall to the above. (DSE, date unknown)
RIPARIAN SHRUBLAND (PART OF EVC 666)	19	Endangered in Central Victorian Uplands*	
SWAMP SCRUB (FOUND BY ITSELF AND AS PART OF EVC 720)	53	Endangered in Warrnambool Plain	
PLAINS GRASSY WOODLAND (FOUND BY ITSELF AND AS PART OF EVC 666)	55	Endangered in Warrnambool Plain	
AQUATIC HERBLAND (PART OF EVC 720)	653	Endangered in Warrnambool Plain	
ESCARPMENT SHRUBLAND (PART OF EVC 666)	895	Endangered in Victorian Volcanic Plain and Central Victorian Uplands*	
ESTUARINE WETLAND	10	Depleted in Warrnambool Plain	Greater than 30% and up to 50% pre-European extent remains; or combination of depletion, degradation and current threats is comparable overall to the above and greater than 50% pre-European extent remains and moderately degraded over a majority of this area. (DSE, date unknown)
COASTAL DUNE SCRUB	160	Depleted in Warrnambool Plain	
*Note: Riparian Shrubland (EVC19) and Escarpment Shrubland (EVC895) are listed within mosaics in the Warrnambool Plain Bioregion, but are not listed individually in the Warrnambool Plain Bioregion.			

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IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH PLANTING

There is a great opportunity through planting along the banks of the Merri River to expand the area of habitat for native fauna and flora and increase the length of wildlife corridor throughout Warrnambool.

The Merri River supports a diverse range of birds, mammals, amphibians and invertebrate communities, including Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), Rakali or Native Water-rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), the 'vulnerable' Hairy Burrowing Crayfish (*Engaeus sericatus*), Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*), Golden Perch (*Macquaria ambigua*) and Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*) and the 'endangered' Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) (GHCMA, 2019) (WCC, date unknown).

As described in the Merri River Restoration Strategy:

'Riparian habitat has been extensively removed from along the Merri River within Warrnambool. However, if reestablished, riparian areas would enable re-colonization by a number of species no longer common within Warrnambool. The establishment of riparian vegetation will create a 'wildlife corridor' along the river attracting once common species such as the Sugar Glider (Petaurus breviceps), Agile Antechinus (Antechinus agilis) and Southern Brown Bandicoot (Isoodon obesulus) as well as smaller reptiles such as lizards.' (WCC, date unknown)

There has been a significant amount of revegetation completed along the edge of the Merri River in recent years.

'As part of the restoration of the river, Glenelg Hopkins CMA is working with landholders and community groups in Warrnambool to improve river health through riparian and instream habitat improvement (GHCMA, 2019).'

It is important that native plants are selected for landscaping and where possible, vegetation from the local EVCs should be selected.

3. CHARACTER ZONES

The Merri River offers a variety of public open space along its edges, including:

- Jubilee Park at Woodford
- St James Park, Queens Road Reserve, Platypus Park and Manuka Drive Reserve in Warrnambool
- GG Payne Reserve at Dennington; and
- Thunder Point Coastal Reserve in Warrnambool

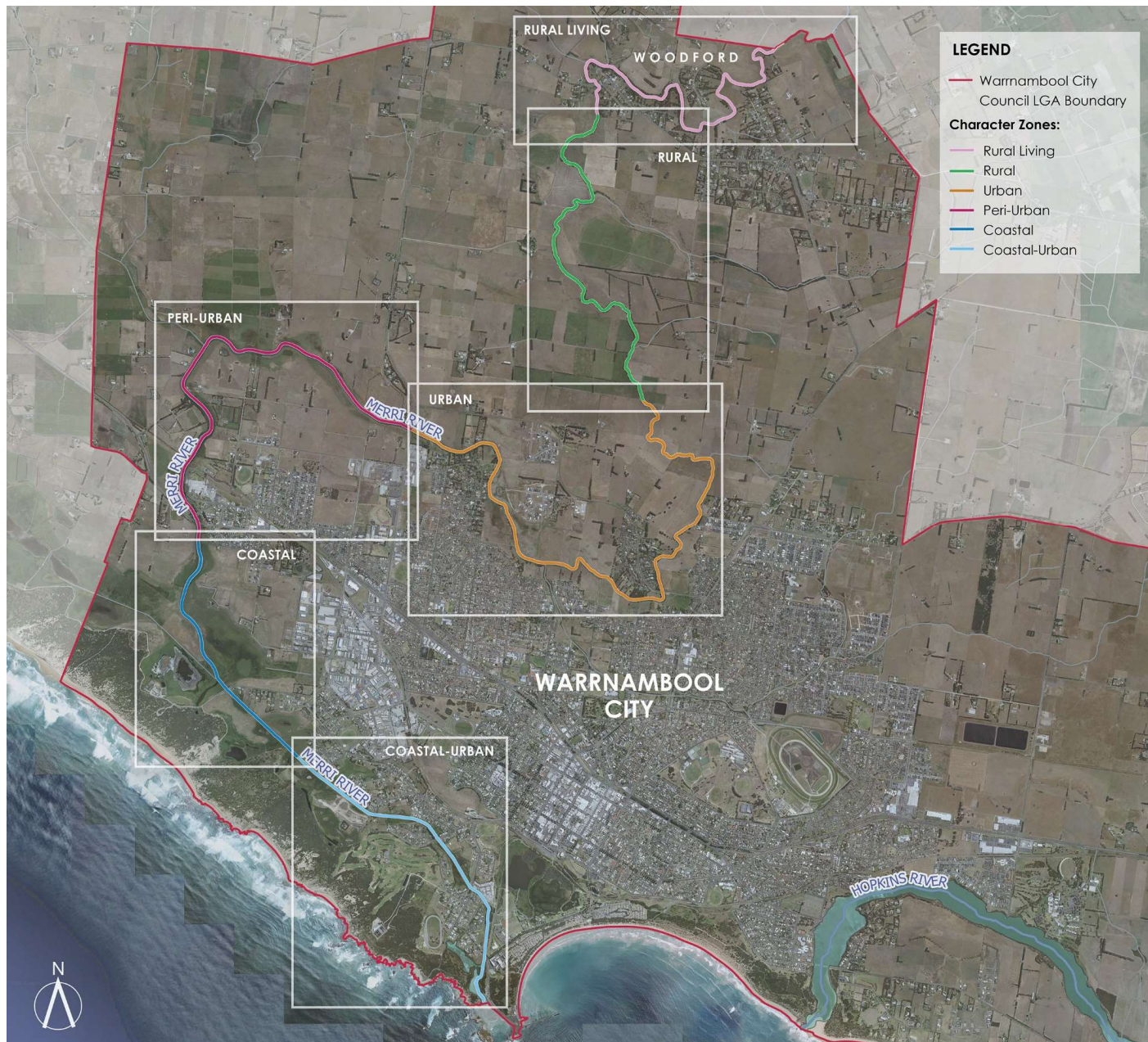
Public land along the edges of the Merri River mostly falls into the categories of Crown land water frontage (government owned public land) or public reserve or coastal reserve. Along the length of the Merri River, public water frontage land generally has a width in the range of 20 to 60 metres. However, it does widen in some southern parts of the River, such as at the estuary transition zone where it is subject to influx from tides.

To help guide future landscaping along the Merri River, the River has been divided into six character zones. They are:

1. Rural Living
2. Rural
3. Urban
4. Peri-urban
5. Coastal
6. Coastal-Urban

These six zones are based on the existing character type, landscape and adjacent land uses. The Character Zones are identified on Map 3 (page 17). The locations of nearby public open space are shown on Map 4 (page 18).

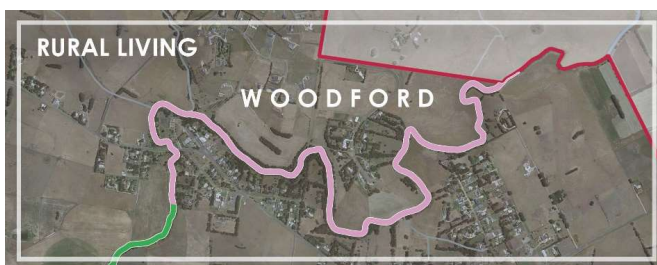




MAP 3: CHARACTER ZONES



CHARACTER ZONE 1: RURAL LIVING



In the Rural Living Character Zone, the river meanders from the south-east of Woodford to the south-west of Woodford. The natural features of this length of river make it a valuable asset and highly desirable place for local Woodford residents and visitors. The river is adjoined by low density and rural living residential lots along both sides. Jubilee Park and Jellie's Reserve are also located next to the river.

There is some well-established native revegetation along this section of river. There are also lengths of river which have very sparse vegetation.

Some of the existing vegetation is native and some is exotic vegetation. There is a significant amount of exotic vegetation located in and around Jubilee Park. There are also stands of Willows and other weed species along the river which have not yet been removed.

Any future landscaping works in this zone should consider maintaining key views to and from public roads and open space and should also consider fire risk to adjacent properties.

Local EVCs: 53 Swamp Scrub, 55 Plains Grassy Woodland (which forms part of 666) and 666 Riparian shrubland/escarpment shrubland/grassy Woodland Mosaic

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR DESIGNING NEW PLANTING AREAS IN ZONE 1 RURAL LIVING:

SELECTING PLANT SPECIES

Identify appropriate species to plant in the Rural Living Character Zone using the species selection guide at Section 5 (page 52), and Merri River Plant List (pages 65-76). The EVC map on page 11 can also help guide what EVCs may have been present on your site.

EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION

An example cross section for the Rural Living Character Zone is provided at Cross Section 2, Cross Section 2a and Cross Section 2b (pages 46-48).

DETERMINING KEY VIEWLINES

In the rural living area it is important that key viewlines from public areas are considered when designing planting areas along the river. When planting is proposed in newly developed areas a viewline analysis will need to be undertaken.

In addition to the Cross Section examples, Plan 1 on page 31 shows how key viewlines can be maintained through careful plant selection.

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Photograph 1: Jubilee Park. A combination of exotic and native vegetation. Example where revegetation works have taken place on the Jubilee Park side of the river only. The opposite side is mostly weed species. Scouring and erosion are occurring on the side where revegetation along the Merri River has not occurred.



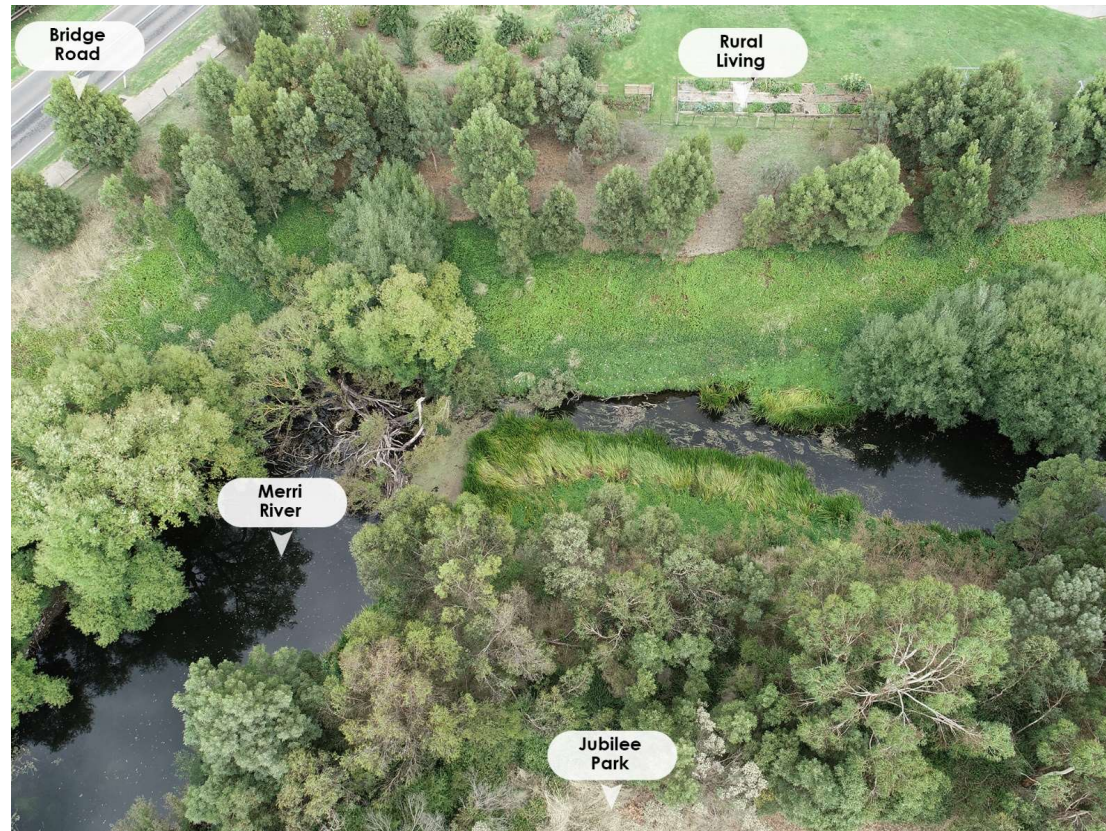
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Photograph 2: View of the Merri River running between Jellie's Reserve and Jubilee Park. A number of rural residential properties are adjacent to the river, some are developed with dwellings and others are vacant.

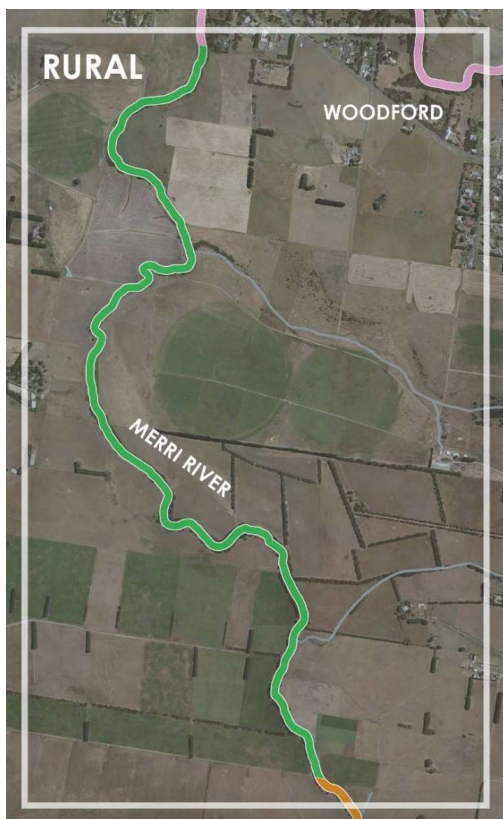


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Photograph 3: Jubilee Park Woodford. A combination of exotic and native vegetation. Many weed species remain along this stretch of river.



CHARACTER ZONE 2: RURAL



In the Rural Character Zone, the river meanders through agricultural farmland from the south-west of Woodford to the northern residential edge of Warrnambool City. Much of this section of river has previously been cleared of native vegetation.

Some revegetation work has taken place along this section of river, but there are also sections which are mostly void of vegetation and others where weed species dominate the landscape.

Future planting along this section of river should focus on revegetation of the Swamp Scrub that was likely present pre-1750's and establishing a wildlife corridor from Woodford to Warrnambool. EVC 55 Plains Grassy Woodland was likely to have occurred next to the swamp scrub and it is appropriate for species from this EVC to be planted along this length of river too.

Given the private use of the adjacent land for agriculture, preservation of views is not critical along this section of the river.

Local EVCs: 53 Swamp Scrub and 55 Plains Grassy Woodland

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR DESIGNING NEW PLANTING AREAS IN ZONE 2 RURAL:

SELECTING PLANT SPECIES

Identify appropriate species to plant in the Rural Living Character Zone using the species selection guide at Section 5 (page 52), and Merri River Plant List (pages 65-76). The EVC map on page 11 can also help guide what EVCs may have been present on your site.

EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION

An example cross section for the Rural Living Character Zone is provided at Cross Section 1 on page 45.

DETERMINING KEY VIEWLINES – Not applicable in the Rural Zone

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Photograph 4: A view of the Merri River Rural Character Zone looking south from Woodford.



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Photograph 5: A view of the Merri River Rural Character Zone looking south from Woodford from the transition of the rural living zone to rural zone. There is a visible difference between the heavily vegetated section of river near Woodford compared to the rural zone section which has sparse vegetation and few overstorey trees.



CHARACTER ZONE 3: URBAN



In the Urban Character Zone, the river meanders through the northern residential area of Warrnambool City. Typically, there is residential development occurring on both sides of the River. However, some areas identified as future residential land are not yet developed.

In this zone, the Merri River is separated from residential development by an Urban Floodway Zone buffer, which serves the purpose of carrying the active flood flows. There are also a number of large public open space reserves located adjacent to the river throughout this zone, including St James Park, Queens Road Reserve and Platypus Park.

Whilst most of this section of River has been cleared of native vegetation in the past, there is some established native revegetation along this section of river which is a result of revegetation works.

Native indigenous plants should be used along this stretch of river, but the focus should not solely be based on revegetation. Planting also needs to create people-friendly environments. Any future planting in this zone needs to balance the enhancement of natural values and biodiversity with the existing and planned residential uses.

The aesthetics and function of this section of river are important considerations. Key considerations for planting include maintaining key views to and from public roads and open space, enhancing safety of park users and minimizing fire risk to adjacent properties.

Swamp Scrub (EVC 53) was likely present pre-1750's along the river in this zone, but it is deemed appropriate that a wider palette of plant species be used in order to achieve the desired aesthetic and functional outcomes. The planting palette can be expanded to include the nearby Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55), Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 3) and any other species identified in the Merri River Plant List at Table 2.

Local EVCs: 3 Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland, 53 Swamp Scrub, 55 Plains Grassy Woodland

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR DESIGNING NEW PLANTING AREAS IN ZONE 3 URBAN:

SELECTING PLANT SPECIES

Identify appropriate species to plant in the Rural Living Character Zone using the species selection guide at Section 5 (page 52), and Merri River Plant List (pages 65-76). The EVC map on page 11 can also help guide what EVCs may have been present on your site.

EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION

An example cross section for the Urban Character Zone is provided at Cross Section 2, Cross Section 2a and Cross Section 2b (pages 46-48).

DETERMINING KEY VIEWLINES

In the urban area it is important that key viewlines from public areas are considered when designing planting areas along the river.

Map 5 on page 30, shows the key viewlines for urban land on the south side of the Merri River. These were identified during preparation of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan. The land to the north of the Merri River has not been fully developed, so it is not possible to located all key viewlines from public spaces at this time. However, the plan shows where low vegetation should be planted to ensure clear viewlines are maintained between the south and north side of the river. Plan 1 on page 31 also shows how key viewlines can be maintained through careful plant selection.

When planting is proposed in newly developed areas a viewline analysis will need to be undertaken.

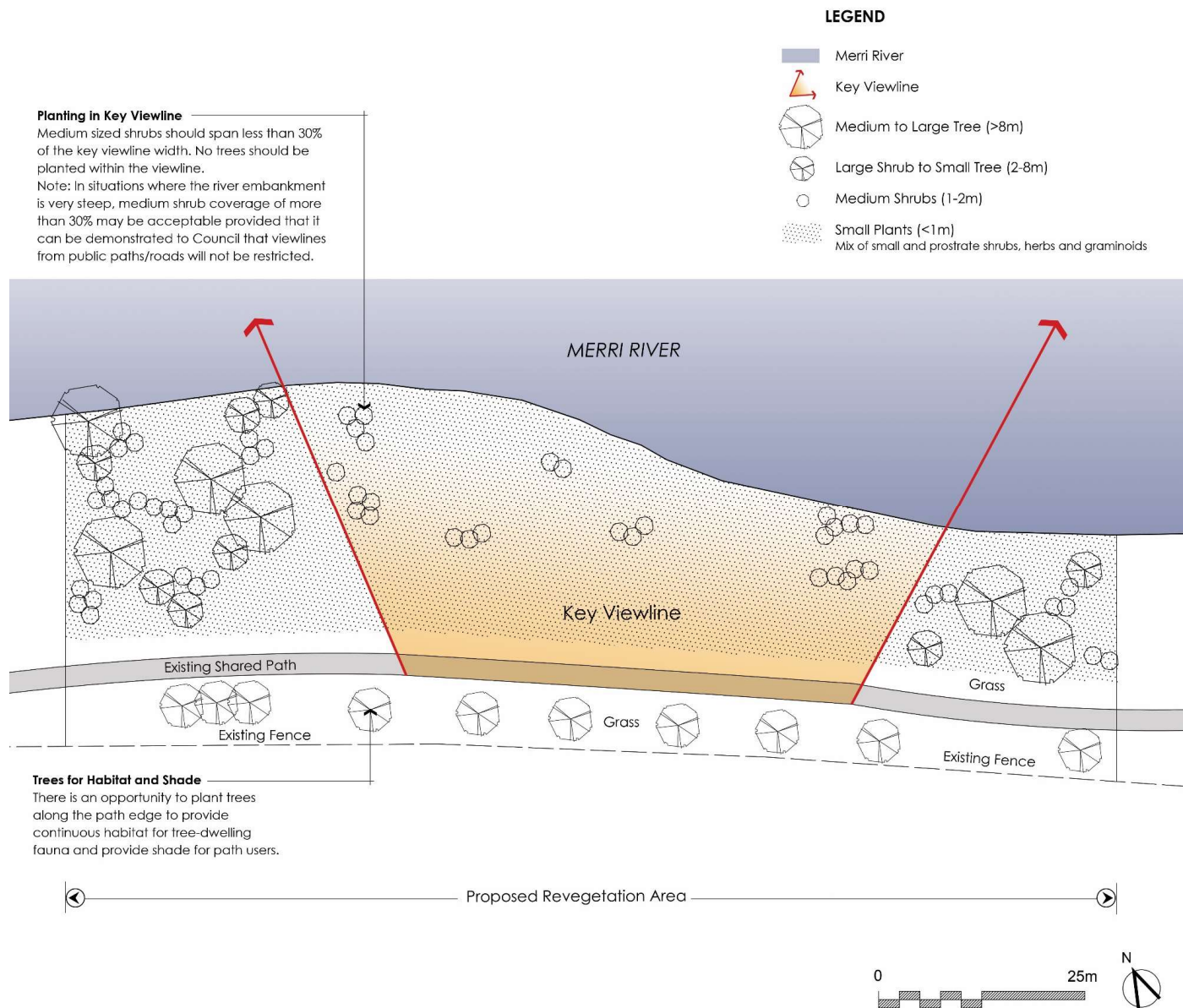
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Photograph 6: A view of the Merri River where it passes Platypus Park and residential properties.

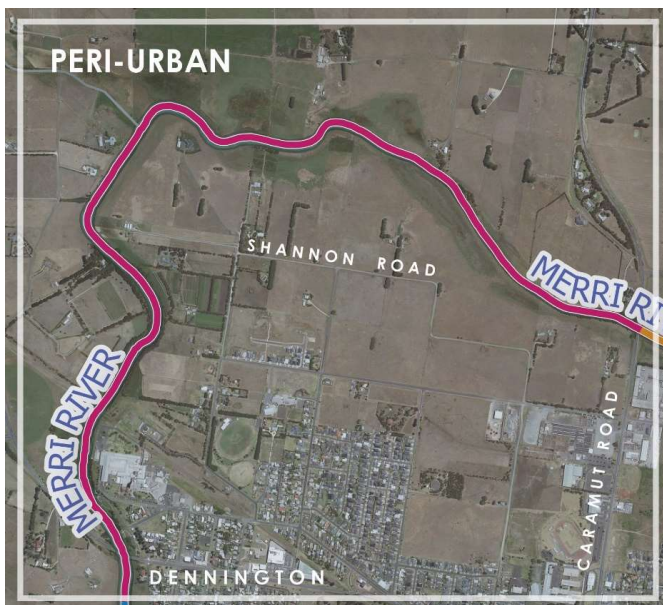




MAP 5: EXISTING VIEWS - URBAN CHARACTER ZONE



CHARACTER ZONE 4: PERI-URBAN



Here the river meanders along the north-western edge of Warrnambool City. This is an urban transition zone. Currently most of the land on both sides of the river is used as farmland. However, a significant area of land will be developed for residential purposes on the city side of the river in the future.

In this zone, the Urban Floodway Zone has been applied on the city-side of the River to provide a flood buffer between future residential development.

Similar to the urban character zone, it is important that native indigenous plants be used along this stretch of river, but the focus should not solely be based on revegetation, particularly on the urban-side of the river. Any future planting in this zone should consider fire risk to adjacent properties and existing and planned adjoining uses and maintaining key views to and from public roads and open space.

Swamp Scrub (EVC 53) was likely present pre-1750's along the river in this zone, but it is deemed appropriate that a wider palette of plant species be used, not solely Swamp Scrub, in order to achieve the desired aesthetic and functional outcomes. The planting palette can be expanded to include the nearby Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 3), Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) and a selection of other native species deemed appropriate by the GHCM and Council.

Local EVCs: 3 Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland, 53 Swamp Scrub, 55 Plains Grassy Woodland

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR DESIGNING NEW PLANTING AREAS IN ZONE 4 PERI-URBAN:

SELECTING PLANT SPECIES

Identify appropriate species to plant in the Rural Living Character Zone using the species selection guide at Section 5 (page 52), and Merri River Plant List (pages 65-76). The EVC map on page 11 can also help guide what EVCs may have been present on your site.

EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION

An example cross section for the Peri-urban Character Zone is provided at Cross Section 3 on page 49.

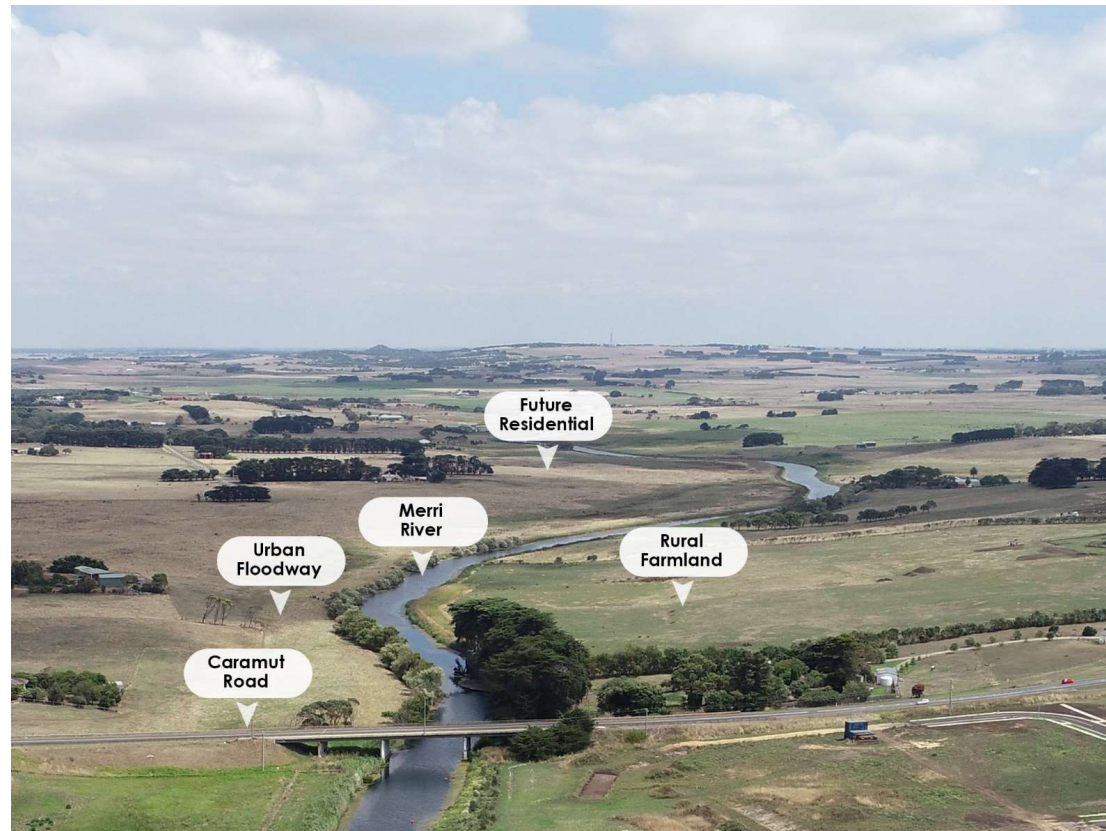
DETERMINING KEY VIEWLINES

In the peri-urban area it is important that key viewlines from public areas are considered when designing planting areas along the river. When planting is proposed in newly developed areas a viewline analysis will need to be undertaken.

In addition to the Cross Section examples, Plan 1 on page 31 shows how key viewlines can be maintained through careful plant selection.

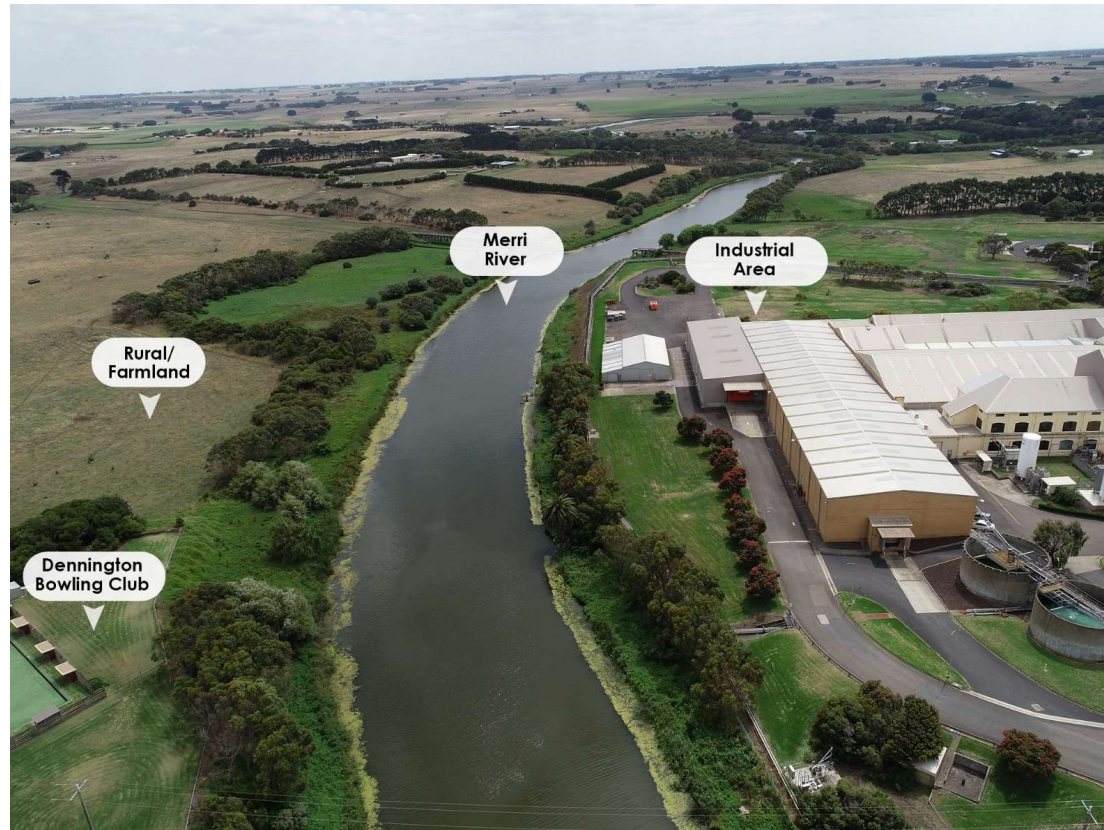
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Photograph 9: View of Merri River west of Caramut Road. Land is currently used as farming. Some land on the south side of the Merri River will remain as farming and some will transition to residential in the future.



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Photograph 10: View of Merri River looking north from the boat ramp at Dennington. Industrial development is located on the east side of the river with rural land to the west.



CHARACTER ZONE 5: COASTAL



In the Coastal Character Zone, the Merri River meanders around the south-western edge of Warrnambool City. This section of river is located away from the urban area and runs through land zoned urban floodway zone and farming zone.

It is important that native indigenous plants be used along this stretch of river, with a focus on revegetation.

Any future planting in this zone should consider fire risk to adjacent properties and existing and planned adjoining uses and maintaining key views to and from public roads and open space.

The three Pre-1750s EVCs located along this zone include Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 3), Swamp Scrub (EVC 53) and Swamp Scrub /Aquatic Herbland Mosaic (EVC720).

Local EVCs: 3 Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland, 53 Swamp Scrub and 720 Swamp Scrub/Aquatic Herbland Mosaic.

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR DESIGNING NEW PLANTING AREAS IN ZONE 5 COASTAL:

SELECTING PLANT SPECIES - Identify appropriate species to plant in the Rural Living Character Zone using the species selection guide at Section 5 (page 52), and Merri River Plant List (pages 65-76). The EVC map on page 11 can also help guide what EVCs may have been present on your site.

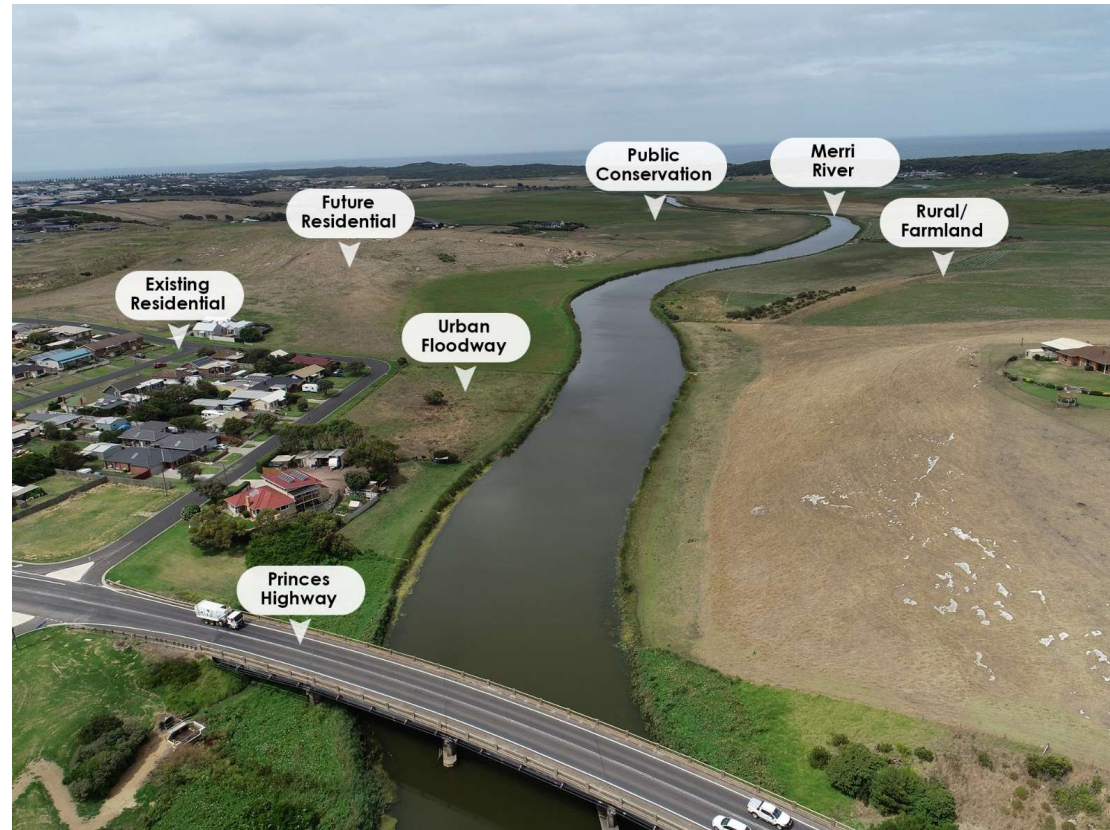
EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION - An example cross section for the Coastal Character Zone is provided at Cross Section 4 on page 50.

DETERMINING KEY VIEWLINES - In the coastal area it is important that key viewlines from public areas are considered when designing planting areas along the river. When planting is proposed in newly developed areas a viewline analysis will need to be undertaken.

In addition to the Cross Section examples, Plan 1 on page 31 shows how key viewlines can be maintained through careful plant selection.

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Photograph 11: View of Merri River
south of Princes Highway, Dennington



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Photograph 12: View north-
west from Crowes Bridge,
Swinton Street



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Photograph 13: View south-east from Crowes Bridge, Swinton Street



CHARACTER ZONE 6: COASTAL – URBAN



Here the river meanders around the southern-western edge of Warrnambool City. This section of river is located along the edge of the urban area and runs out to sea at Stingray Bay near Pickering Point.

Adjoining land use zones along this section of the River include urban floodway zone, general residential zone, public conservation and resource zone and public park and recreation zone. The Warrnambool Golf Club is located nearby.

Similar to the urban character zone, it is important that native indigenous plants be used along this stretch of river, but the focus should not solely be based on revegetation. Any future planting in this zone should consider existing uses and maintaining key views to and from roads and open space.

The three Pre-1750s EVCs located along this zone include Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 3), Estuarine Wetland (EVC10), Coastal Dune Scrub (EVC 160) and Swamp Scrub /Aquatic Herbland Mosaic (EVC720).

Local EVCs: 3 Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland, 10 Estuarine Wetland, 160 Coastal Dune Scrub and 720 Swamp Scrub/Aquatic Herbland Mosaic.

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR DESIGNING NEW PLANTING AREAS IN ZONE 6 COASTAL - URBAN:

SELECTING PLANT SPECIES - Identify appropriate species to plant in the Rural Living Character Zone using the species selection guide at Section 5 (page 52), and Merri River Plant List (pages 65-76). The EVC map on page 11 can also help guide what EVCs may have been present on your site.

EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION - An example cross section 4 for Character Zone 6: Coastal-Urban is provided at Cross Section 4A on page 51.

DETERMINING KEY VIEWLINES - In the coastal-urban area it is important that key viewlines from public areas are considered when designing planting areas along the river. When planting is proposed in newly developed areas a viewline analysis will need to be undertaken.

In addition to the Cross Section examples, Plan 1 on page 31 shows how key viewlines can be maintained through careful plant selection.

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Photograph 14: View of Merri River south of Harris Street, where the river runs through the residential area and out into Stingray Bay



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Photograph 15: Merri River and adjoining open space reserve on the western side of Harris Street. A shared trail meanders through the open space beside the Merri River.



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Photographs 16 & 17: Harris
Street reserve revegetation
and landscaping works



4. TYPICAL CROSS-SECTIONS

This section shows a number of cross-sections as typical representations for various character zones and landscape contexts. These typical cross-sections can be used as a guide to assist those designing, planning and selecting plant species for planting along the Merri River.

As discussed, there are six character zones identified along the Merri River in Warrnambool. Within these character zones there are various land uses adjoining the Merri River. For the purposes of this guideline, the land use setting within which the river sits is referred to as the landscape context.

No two cross-sections of the Merri River will be exactly the same, as the width of the river will vary, the topography and existing planting changes along the course of the river as does the land use on each side. For this reason, it is important to carry out a site analysis and complete the checklist at Appendix 1.

In all character zones, except the rural zone, it is important to identify any key views to and from public land adjacent to the river that need to be protected. Key viewlines will change over time as vegetation changes and development occurs. It is important that the site analysis nominates key shared viewlines to be protected.

Photograph 18: Shows some low planting in the reserve at the Harris Street Reserve. This low planting is ideal in public open space locations where surveillance and maintaining key viewlines are important.

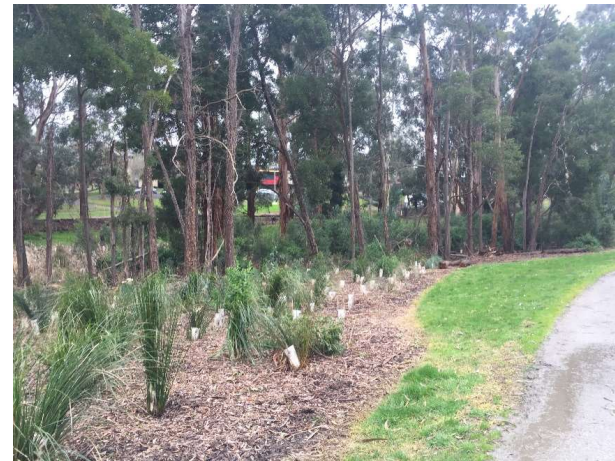


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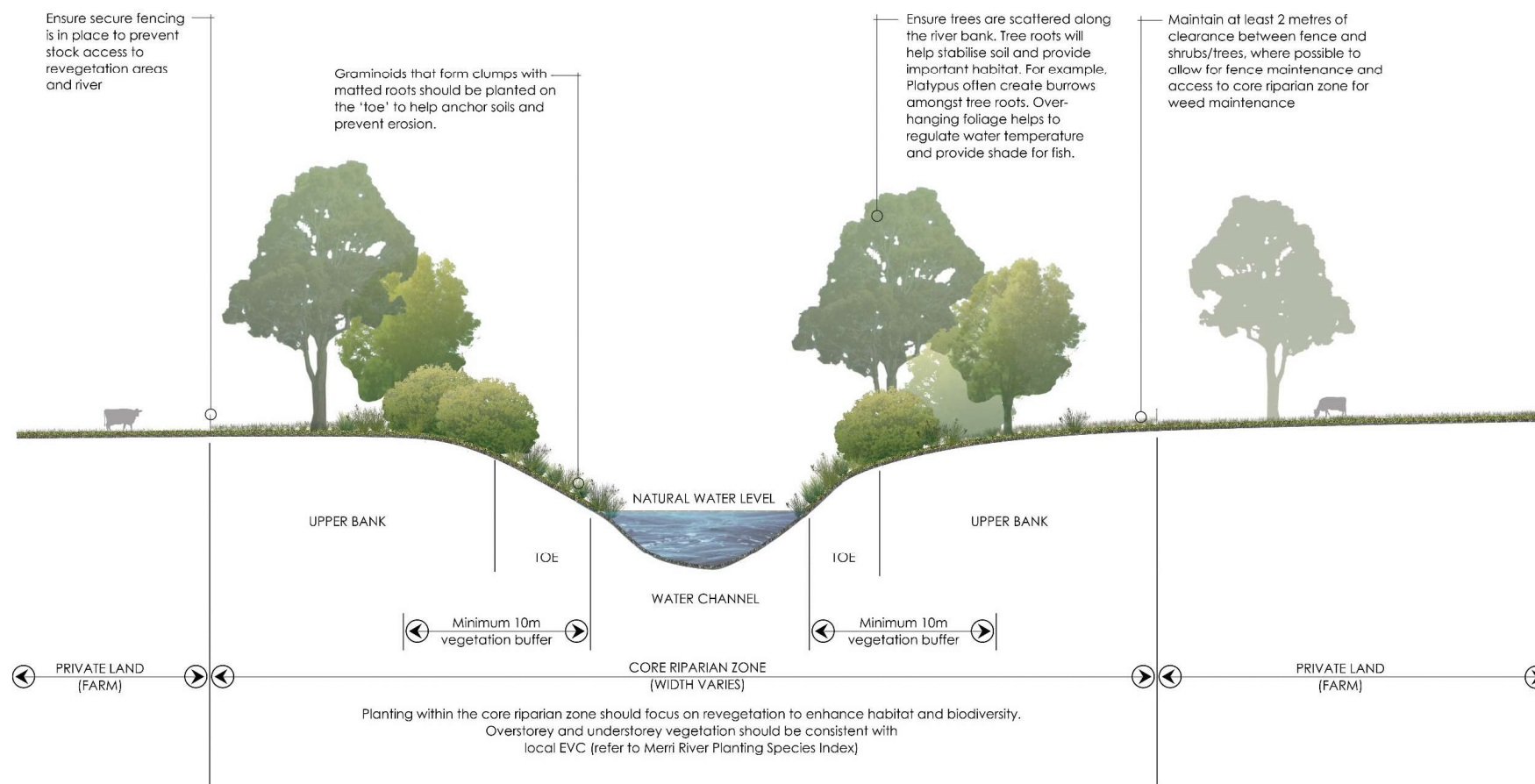
Photograph 19 (below): Shows shrubs greater than 2m in height planted densely together in close proximity to the path. Having a wall of vegetation this close to the path does not enhance the perception of safety for users, blocks viewlines and creates a maintenance issue. Ideally the species selected in urban locations will be low-growing with good separation between the path and plants to enhance the perception of safety and minimise the need for maintenance of plants near paths.



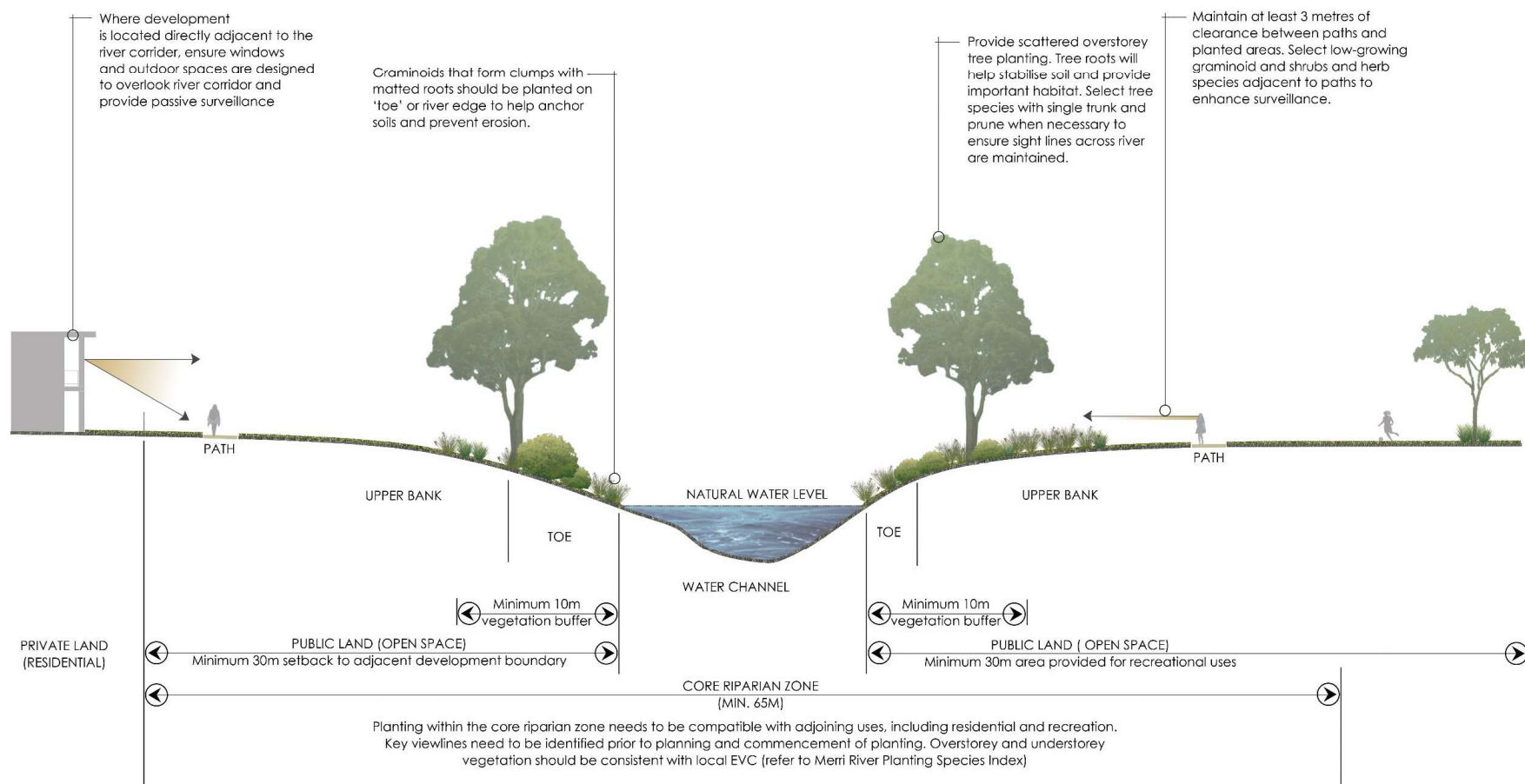
Photograph 20 (below): Shows mixture of trees, small shrubs and graminoids planted in a bed with good separation between the path and planted areas. Lower branches of trees can be pruned to allow views across to the river and ensure that there are no hidden areas, therefore enhancing the perception of safety for walkers. Note that the larger trees would not be appropriate for planting in locations where key viewlines are identified.



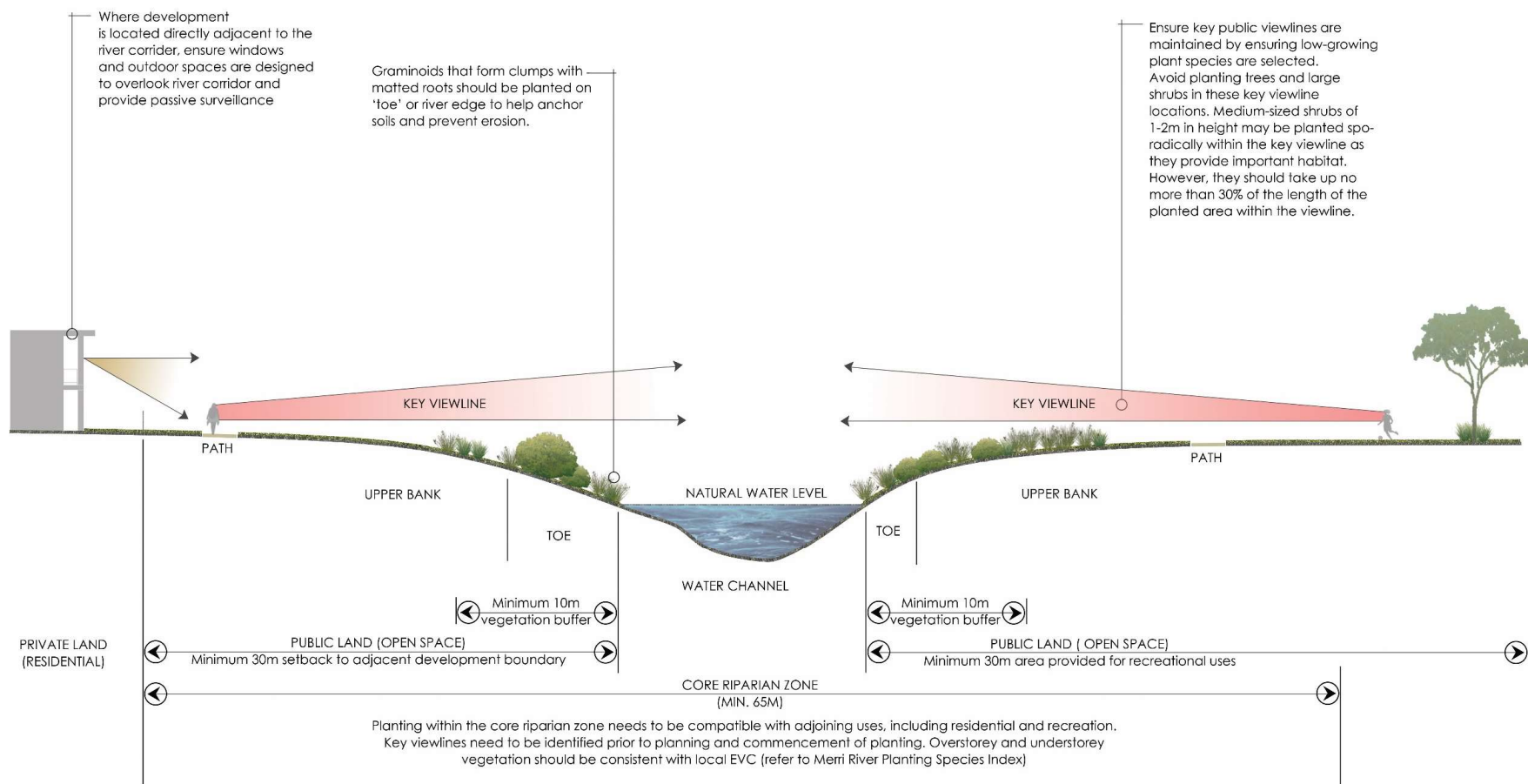
CROSS SECTION 1: RURAL



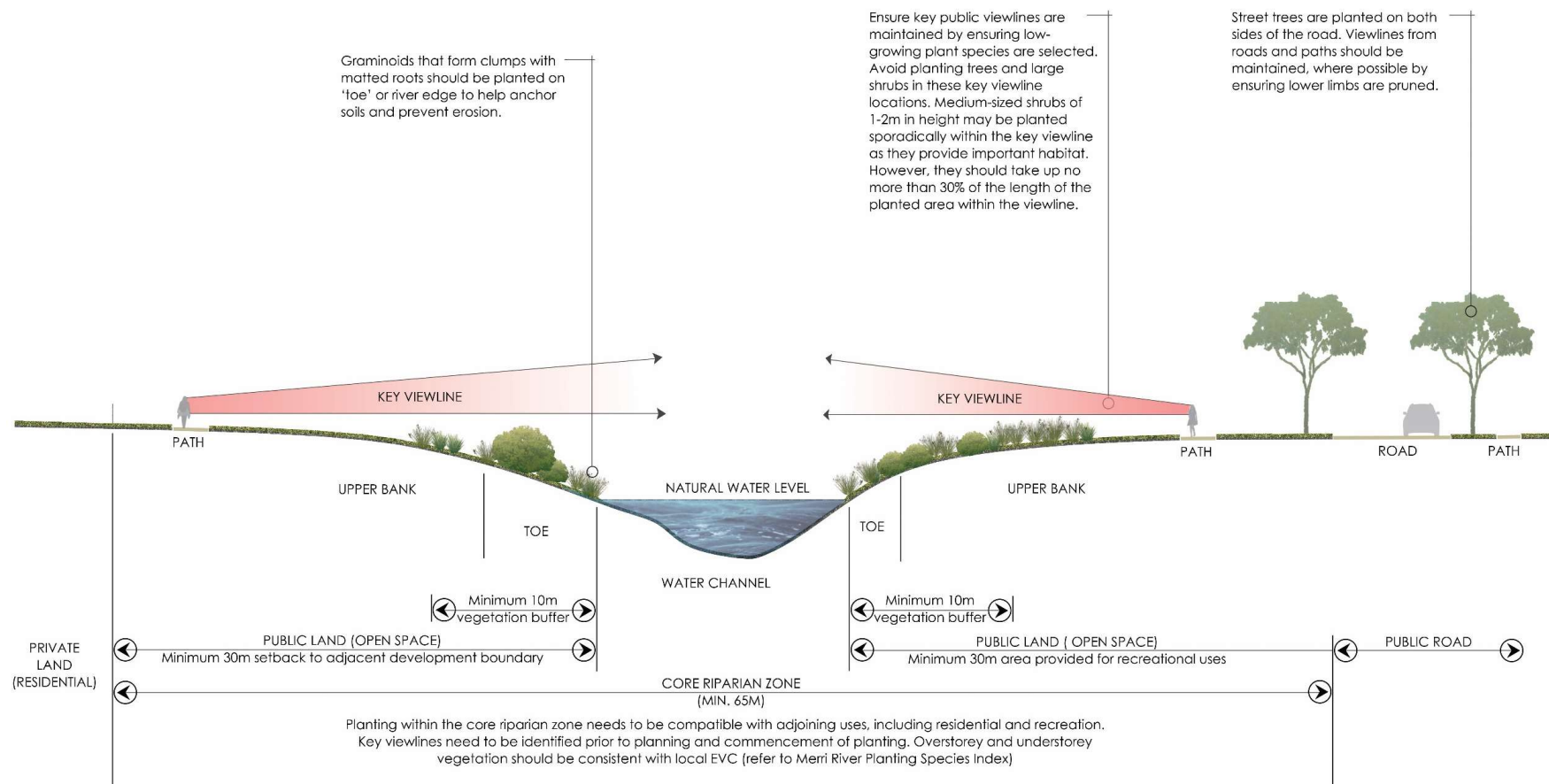
CROSS SECTION 2: URBAN/RURAL LIVING



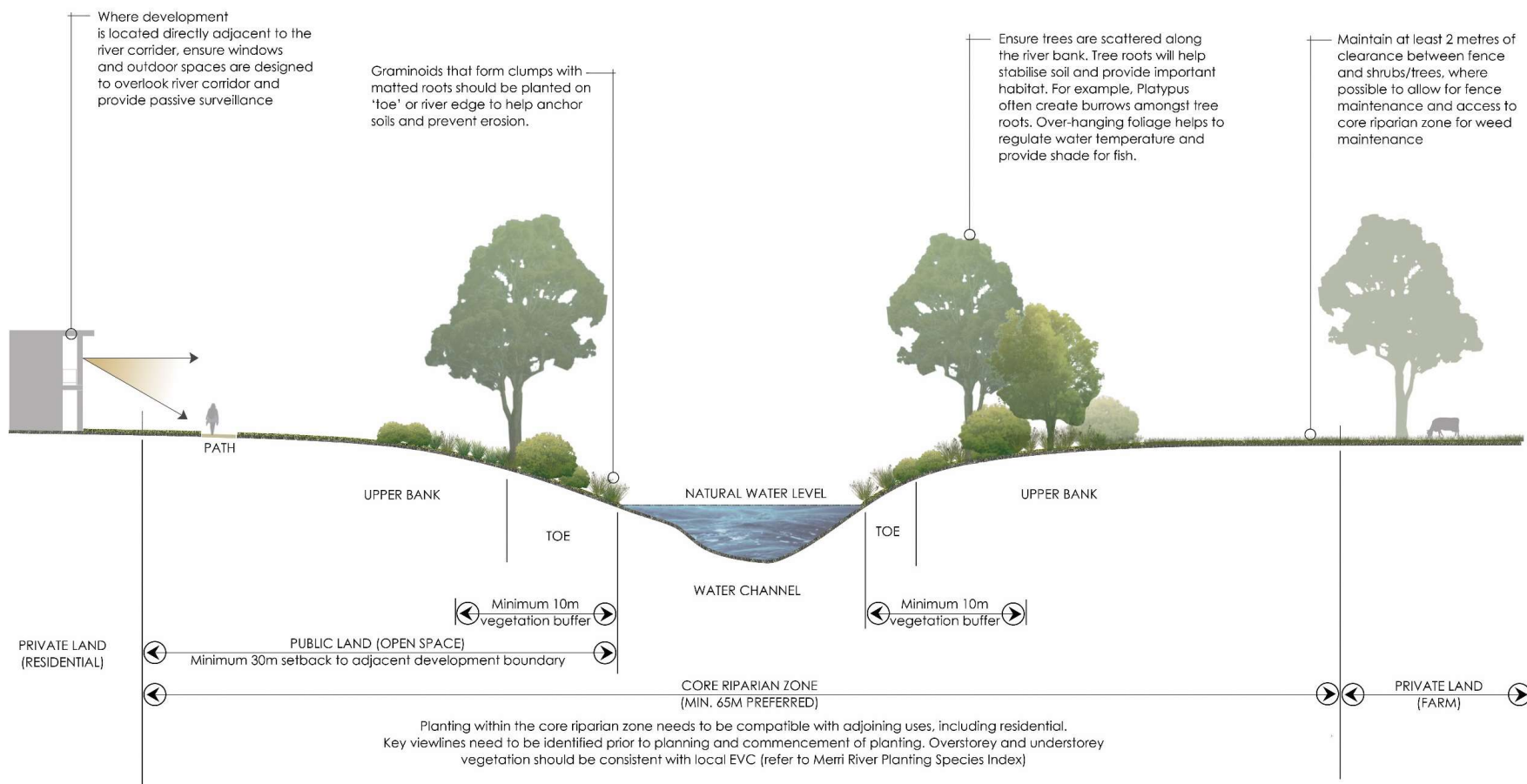
CROSS SECTION 2A: URBAN/RURAL LIVING - KEY VIEWLINE



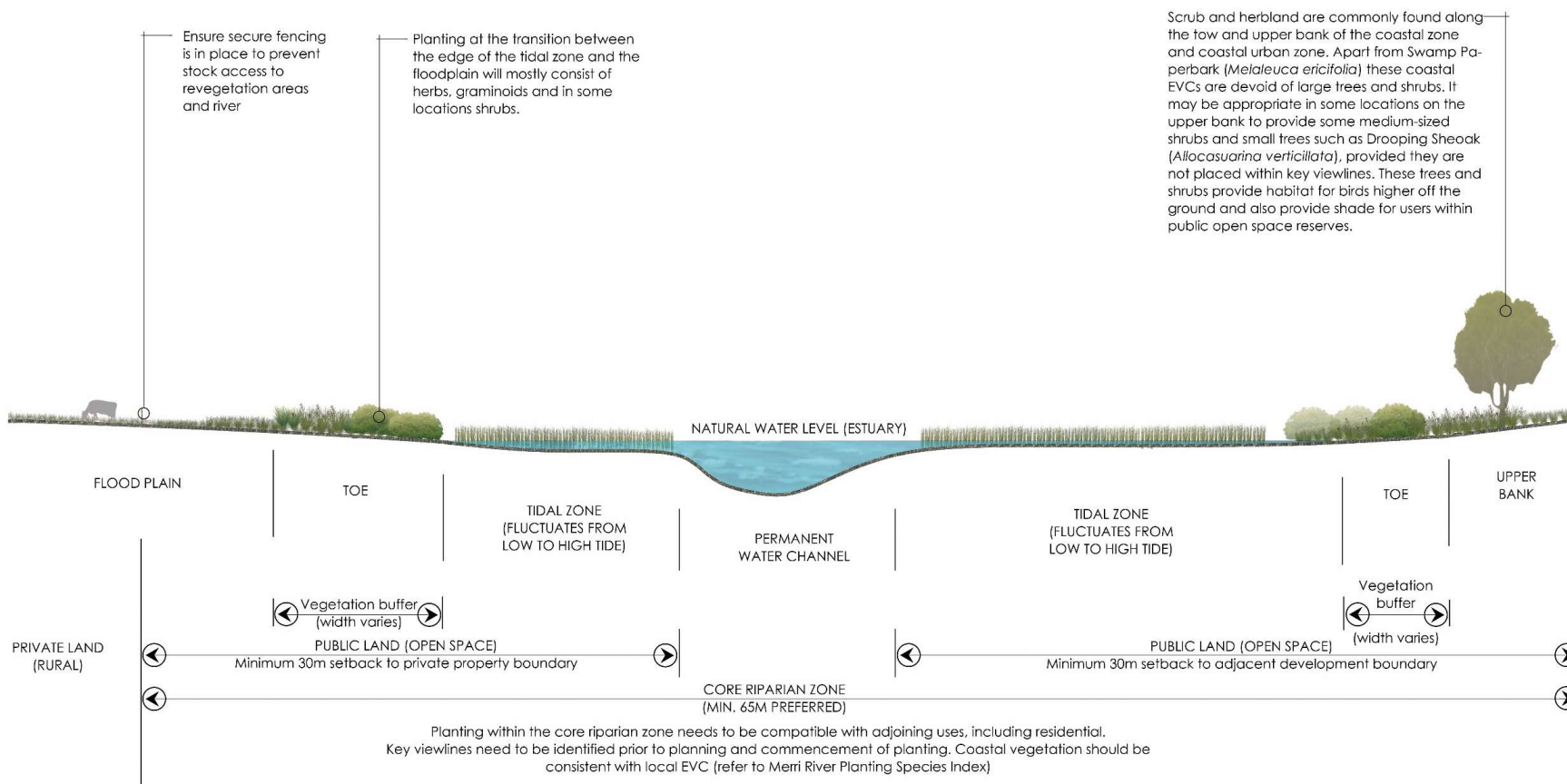
CROSS SECTION 2B: URBAN/RURAL LIVING WITH ROAD EDGE - KEY VIEWLINE



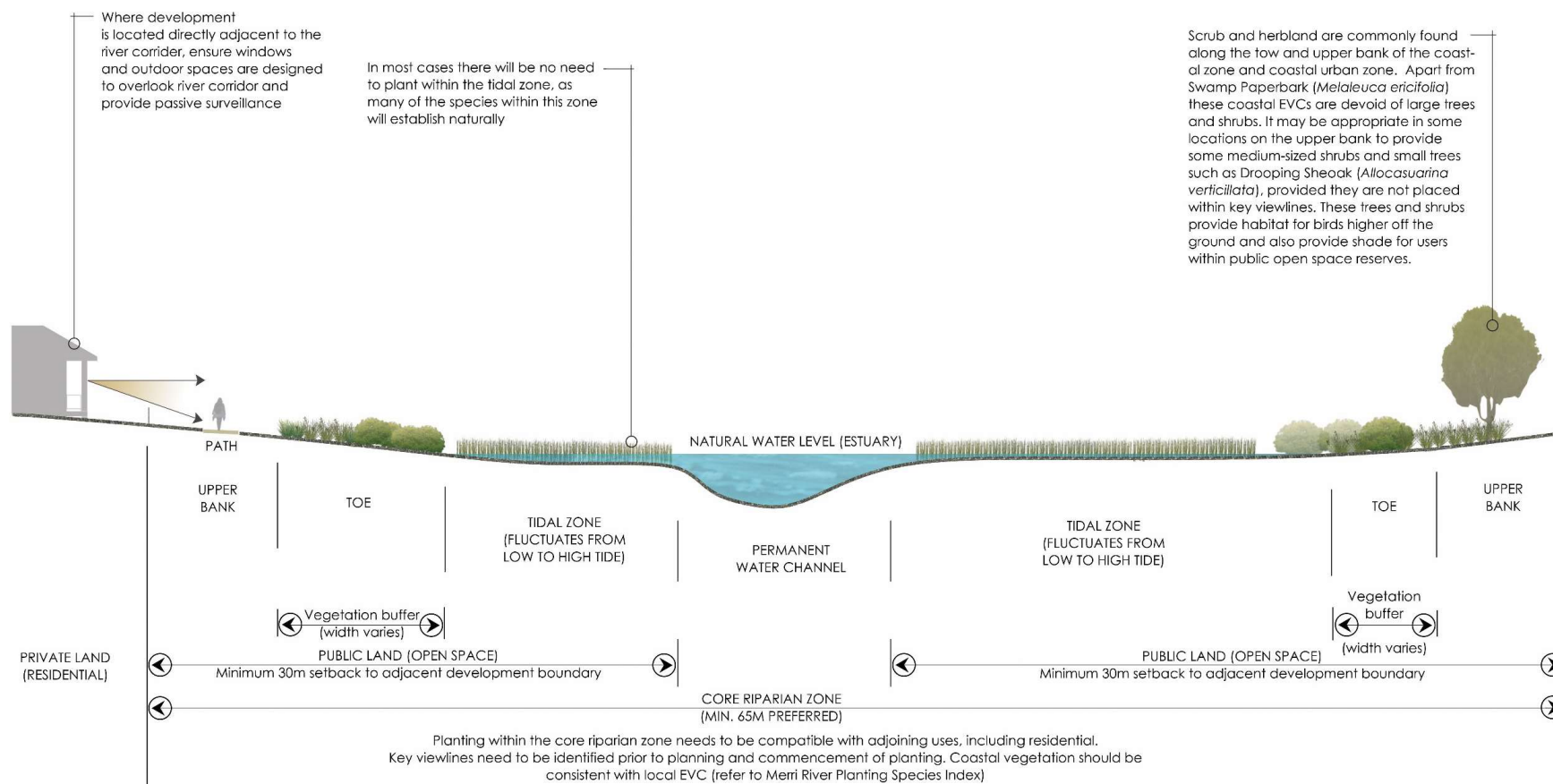
CROSS SECTION 3: PERI-URBAN



CROSS SECTION 4: COASTAL



CROSS SECTION 4A: COASTAL URBAN



5. SPECIES SELECTION

Prior to commencing the design of the area to be landscaped, a thorough assessment of all existing vegetation on and adjoining the site should be undertaken. This assessment should determine the location, significance and habitat values of native flora and fauna.

Choosing the right plants for the right place is essential if they are to grow and perform well. It is important to understand that there are many variations between different locations along the river. There can also be significant differences between the microclimates within a particular section.

A thorough site analysis of the subject site in which the plants are to be planted is the best starting point for selecting appropriate species.

Plants must not only be selected for their ability to tolerate the site conditions, they must also have other desirable characteristics that make them suitable for the zone they are planted in and the surrounding uses. For example, in urban zones they should not only provide environmental improvements but also enhance the visual appearance of the area. The following should be given consideration when selecting plants:

FUNCTION - Are there any site conditions which require plants to perform a specific function, such as erosion control/prevention?

FORM AND SIZE - Are there any shared public viewlines that should be protected?

SUITABILITY TO THE ENVIRONMENT - Consider aspect, slope, existing vegetation, existing shade/exposure, salt spray and flammability where close to houses.

HABITAT - Are there any fauna species found at the location or nearby which require particular requirements to create a safe habitat for them, ie. some bird species may need branches up off the ground for nesting, continuous groundcover encourages ground dwelling species, etc.

The Merri River Plant Species List at Section 6 (page 65) aims to make plant selection decisions easier. Many of the plants listed in the planting list are already planted along waterways and public open space in Warrnambool and are indigenous to the area. The list also indicates where the species is appropriate for use in the various zones.

Many of the plant species listed are available from local nursery suppliers, but some may need to be ordered ahead of time.

A checklist of the criteria to be used when selecting plants and designing landscaped areas along the Merri River is provided at Appendix 1.

The following list of species and photographs show some of the native indigenous species approved for planting along the Merri River. Many of these species, but not all, are found in the seven EVCs near the Merri River. Note that not all species may be commercially available for planting.

NOTES ABOUT PLANT SPECIES:

*Native species found in the Warrnambool Bioregion which are not typically found in the EVC immediately adjacent the Merri River, but are approved for use by Warrnambool City Council and the GHCM. (WCC, date unknown, p. 26)

**Native species not found in the Warrnambool Bioregion, but are approved for use by Warrnambool City Council and the GHCM. (WCC, date unknown, p. 26)

MEDIUM TO LARGE TREES (TYPICALLY >8M)



Eucalyptus ovata (Swamp Gum)

A medium-sized, evergreen tree up to 20m high. Bark is smooth to rough and varied in colour. Tolerates a range of soil conditions but mostly found in moist soils. (RBGV, date unknown)

The juvenile leaves are ovate and the adult leaves are ovate to lanceolate. Has white flowers.

Found in most EVCs along the Merri River, including EVCs 720, 3, 53, 55 and 666.



Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood)

A medium-sized fast-growing evergreen tree typically 12-15m high, but can grow up to 30m.

Prefers well-drained soils with lots of organic matter and does not like compacted soils. Grows best in a moist sheltered position.

Leaves are green, phyllodineous. Leaf blades about 8-13 cm long. A small gland is normally present on the upper side of the leaf blade-petiole junction. Mass of pale yellow flowers from late winter to early spring.

The hard wood of this wattle made strong spear-throwers, boomerangs, clubs and shields in parts of Victoria. (ANBG, date unknown)

Found in EVC 3 Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland and EVC 53 Swamp Scrub.

MEDIUM TO LARGE TREES (TYPICALLY >8M)



Eucalyptus viminalis (Manna Gum)

A tall evergreen tree growing between 30 and 50 metres high. Grows in a range of soil conditions.

The bark sheds in long ribbons during summer months. This shedding reveals smooth bark in the upper trunk and branches with rough bark remaining at the base of the trunk and larger branches. Leaves are up to 20 cm long. The small flowers are cream in colour and usually in a cluster of three. (ANBG, date unknown)

Found in EVC 3 Damp Sand Herb-rich Woodland which also forms part of EVC 666 Riparian Shrubland/Escarpment Shrubland/Grassy Woodland Mosaic.

LARGE SHRUBS AND SMALL TREES (TYPICALLY 2-8M)



Acacia paradox
(Hedge Wattle)

A medium-sized shrub growing approximately 2-3m high by 3-4m wide.

Prefers well-drained soils, but tolerates a range of soil conditions. Responds well to pruning and is a good hedge species.

Has small phyllodes up to 3cm with undulate margins. Stems have spines. The small flowers are yellow balls.

(ANBG, date unknown)

Found in EVC 55 Plains Grassy Woodland



Allocasuarina verticillata
(Drooping Sheoak)

A small evergreen tree which typically grows 5-8 metres high, but sometimes taller. Grows in sandy dry soils and tolerates salt spray.

Trees have long, pendulous branchlets of green foliage. Provides an effective screen. (ANBG, date unknown)

Is a food source and habitat for birds.

Traditional owners used hard wood for making various implements.

Found in EVC 895 Escarpment Shrubland, which forms part of EVC 666 Riparian Shrubland/Escarpment Shrubland/Grassy Woodland Mosaic.

LARGE SHRUBS AND SMALL TREES (TYPICALLY 2-8M)



Banksia marginata (Silver Banksia)

A small evergreen tree which typically grows anywhere from 2-8 metres high and occasionally taller.

It is a relatively fast-growing and long-lived Banksia. It tolerates a wide variety of environmental conditions and prefers a sunny position. It grows well in well-drained soils, but can tolerate some waterlogging.

Yellow flowers can occur throughout the year. (ANBG, date unknown)

Found in EVC 3 Damp Sand Herb-rich Woodland



Bursaria spinosa
(Sweet Bursaria)

A large shrub from 5-8 metres high and occasionally taller. Often multi-stemmed with a rhizomatous root system.

It grows in most conditions, but may require watering during establishment when conditions are dry. In moist conditions it has the potential to become invasive and may outcompete other species planted in close proximity, particularly due to its rhizomatous root system which sprouts after disturbance.

Small obovate leaves between 1-5cm. White to cream flowers appear in spring to summer on mass. Flowers are showy and fragrant. The seed capsules that appear after flowering contain seeds which rattle in the wind, which is also why it is sometimes referred to as the Castanet Bush. Often has spines on stems.

Found in EVC 666 Riparian Shrubland/Escarpment Shrubland/Grassy Woodland Mosaic. (ANBG, date unknown)

LARGE SHRUBS AND SMALL TREES (TYPICALLY 2-8M)



*Melaleuca lanceolata***

(Moonah)

A large shrub or small tree from 3-8 metres high. It is a highly ornamental plant with an abundance of white to cream bottlebrush flowers in Spring to Summer.

Can be pruned to maintain a hedge or lower branches can be pruned to promote as a clean stemmed small tree.

(Botanic Gardens of SA, date unknown)



Ozothamnus ferrugineus

(Tree Everlasting)

A large shrub growing approximately 2.5-5m high by 2-3m wide.

Widespread throughout Victoria and common in moist soils. Widespread and common through moist lowland environments in much of the State and regenerating prolifically after disturbance, such as fire.

Leaves are 1.5-6.5cm long and creamy/white flowers appear in Summer to early Autumn. (RBGV, date unknown)

Found in EVC 55 Plains Grassy Woodland

LARGE SHRUBS AND SMALL TREES (TYPICALLY 2-8M)



Leptospermum lanigerum (Woolly Tea Tree)

A large shrub growing up to 3m high. Provides good habitat for small birds.

They have a spreading habit, with grey-green leaves to 2cm and small white flowers.

EVC 53 Swamp Scrub and EVC 720 Swamp Scrub/Aquatic Herbland Mosaic.

(Photo credit: Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority)

MEDIUM SHRUBS (TYPICALLY 1-2M)



*Atriplex cinerea***
(Coastal Saltbush)

A medium-sized shrub growing approximately 1-2m high by 2m wide.
Can be erect or spreading.

Tolerates a wide range of soil types, including front-line coastal dunes. Good for stabilising sandy soils.

Silver to grey-green leaves up to 8cm long and 2.5cm wide.

(PlantNET, date unknown)



Leptospermum continentale
(Prickly Tea-tree)

A medium-sized shrub growing approximately 2m high by 2m wide.

Grows in a range of soil conditions and tolerates poorly drained soils.
(ANBG, date unknown)

Leaves are up to 1cm long. The small flowers are white or pale pink in colour and appear in late spring to early summer.

Found in EVC 3 Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland.

MEDIUM SHRUBS (TYPICALLY 1-2M)



*Olearia axillaris***
(Coast Daisy-Bush)

A medium-sized shrub that grows up to a height of 1-2m high and wide. Can be lightly trimmed to maintain a tidy habit.

Prefers a sunny site with well-drained soil, tolerates coastal exposure, strong winds and salt spray.

Dense, small, grey-green foliage and light cream to yellow flowers.



Rhagodia candolleana ssp. candolleana
(Seaberry Saltbush)

A medium-sized shrub growing approximately 1m high by up to 2m wide.

Grows in coastal locations on soils with good drainage. Responds well to pruning.

The green flowers are followed by small dark red berries.

Good food source and habitat for small birds and mammals.

Found in EVC 160 Coastal Dune Scrub.

SMALL SHRUB AND PROSTRATE SHRUBS (TYPICALLY <1M)



*Leucophyta brownii**
(Cushion Bush)

It is a perennial coastal shrub that grows up to 1m in height.

It has silver-grey foliage and yellow button-like flowers from late spring to summer.

Is a common species along the south-coast of Australia's mainland.

(ANBG, date unknown)

HERBS (TYPICALLY <1M)



Carpobrotus rossii
(Karkalla or Pigface)

A perennial succulent groundcover. It grows approximately 0.2-0.4m high and can spread up to 3m wide.

Grows in coastal areas and tolerates drought and salt.

Pink flowers appear in spring and summer.

The pulp of the flowers is edible.

Found in EVC 160 Coastal Dune Scrub.



Acaena novae-zelandiae
(Bidgee Widgee)

A prostrate, spreading herb. Spreads up to 4m wide.

Tolerates a wide range of soils and grows in full-shade, part-shade and full-sun.

Has bright green pinnate leaves up to 4cm long with 7-11 toothed leaflets. Roots from leaf nodes.

Balls of greenish-white flowers. Flowers are followed by balls of reddish fruits covered in burrs. Flowers October to January.

Useful plant for erosion control through soil binding.

Found in EVC 55 Plains Grassy Woodland and EVC 666 Mosaic.

(Cardinia Shire, 2020)

GRAMINOIDS (TYPICALLY <1M)



Dianella tasmanica (Tasman Flax-lily)

A rhizomatous, perennial herb. Grows up to 1m in height.

Leaves are leathery and long. The flower stalks rise above the foliage on tall stems. Flowers are deep blue to purple. Filaments are yellow and anthers are yellow. The fruit are blue to purple and usually longer than wide. (ANBG, date unknown)

Grows in a range of soil conditions, but prefers partly-shaded moist conditions.

Found in EVC 3 Damp sand Herb-rich Woodland and EVC 666 Mosaic.



Lomandra filiformis (Wattle Mat-rush)

A compact, rhizomatous perennial herb. Grows up to 50cm.

Leaves are green and flat. Each leaf is tipped with one to three tiny light brown points. Clusters of flowers are cream to light yellow appear most commonly from October to November.

Grows in a range of soil conditions generally found in open forest and woodland areas . *Lomandra filiformis* tolerates drier conditions than *Lomandra longifolia*. (ANBG, date unknown)

Found in EVC 3 Damp sand Herb-rich Woodland.

GRAMINOIDS (TYPICALLY <1M)



*Lomandra longifolia*** (Spiny Headed Mat-rush)

A rhizomatous, perennial herb. Grows up to 1m.

Leaves are glossy green and flat. Clusters of flowers are straw-coloured and have a spike-like structure. Flowers can attract pollinating insects.

Grows in a range of soil conditions including sandy soils, swamps and creek banks. Can tolerate occasional flooding.

Base of leaves used as indigenous food source. (ANBG, date unknown)



Ficinia nodosa (Knobby Club-sedge)

Formerly known as *Isolepis nodosa*.

Rhizomatous perennial sedge with an upright habit up to 0.8m.

Found in coastal locations. It can tolerate exposure to ocean winds. Responds well to pruning every 2 to 3 years.

Brownish/cream flowers in spring and summer.

Found in EVC 160 Coastal Dune Scrub.

6. MERRI RIVER PLANT LIST

		ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASS							CHARACTER ZONE – SUITABLE LOCATION						VIEWLINES
SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland	Swamp Scrub	Plains Grassy Woodland	Riparian Shrubland (EVC 19) /Escarpment Shrubland (EVC 895) /Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) Mosaic	Swamp Scrub (EVC53) /Aquatic Herbland (EVC653) Mosaic	Estuarine Wetland	Coastal Dune Scrub	Rural Living	Rural	Urban	Peri-Urban	Coastal	Coastal - Urban	Species suitable for use where views are to be retained***
MEDIUM TO LARGE TREES (TYPICALLY >8M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✗
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	Drooping Sheoak				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗

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MEDIUM TO LARGE TREES (>8M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	Swamp Gum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> <i>ssp. viminalis</i>	Manna Gum	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✗
LARGE SHRUBS AND SMALL TREES (2-8M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✗
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✗
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Allocasuarina paludosa</i>	Swamp Sheoak	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✗
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✗
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	Woolly Tea-tree		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Melaleuca decussata</i>	Totem-poles		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	Swamp Paperbark						✓						✓	✓	✗
<i>**Melaleuca lanceolata</i>	Moonah								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>	Scented Paperbark		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Myoporum insulare</i>	Common Boobialla	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<i>Ozothamnus ferrugineus</i>	Tree Everlasting			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✗

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MEDIUM SHRUBS (TYPICALLY 1-2M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle Wattle		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Adriana quadripartita</i>	Coast Bitter-bush							✓					✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>**Atriplex cinerea</i>	Coast Saltbush												✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i>	Prickly Currant-bush				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓ 30% Max
<i>**Daviesia breviflora</i>	Leafless Bitter-Pea								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>**Daviesia latifolia</i>	Hop Bitter-Pea								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Epacris impressa</i>	Common Heath	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Hedycarya angustifolia</i>	Austral Mulberry				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓ 30% Max

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MEDIUM SHRUBS CONT'D (TYPICALLY 1-2M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Hymenanthera dentata</i> <i>s.l</i>	Tree Violet				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓ 30% Max
<i>Leptospermum</i> <i>continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Leptospermum</i> <i>scoparium</i>	Manuka		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Leucopogon parviflorus</i>	Coast Beard-heath							✓					✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
** <i>Melaleuca gibbosa</i>	Slender Honey-myrtle								✓		✓	✓			✓ 30% Max
<i>Olearia axillaris</i>	Coast Daisy-Bush							✓					✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Rhagodia candolleana</i> <i>ssp. candolleana</i>	Seaberry Saltbush							✓					✓	✓	✓ 30% Max
<i>Rhagodia parabolica</i>	Fragrant Saltbush				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ 30% Max

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SMALL SHRUBS AND PROSTRATE SHRUBS (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Cranberry Heath	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	Honey-pots	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Bossiaea prostrata</i>	Creeping Bossiaea			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Correa alba</i> var <i>pannosa</i> 'Western Pink Star'	Western Pink Star Correa							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Correa reflexa</i> 'Granny's Grave'	Granny's Grave Correa							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i> var. <i>tomentosa</i>	Ruby Saltbush				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hibbertia stricta</i> s.l.	Upright Guinea-flower	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>**Kunzea pomifera</i>	Muntries								✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>	Common Beard-heath		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>*Leucophyta brownii</i>	Cushion Bush										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Pimelea humilis</i>	Common Rice-flower		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Zygophyllum billardierei</i>	Coast Twin-leaf							✓					✓	✓	✓

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HERBS (TYPICALLY <1M)****		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Acaena echinata</i>	Sheep's Burr			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	Bidgee Widgee			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			
<i>Apium prostratum</i> <i>ssp. prostratum</i>	Sea Celery							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Carpobrotus rossii</i>	Karkalla or Pigface							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney-weed		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Einadia nutans</i> <i>ssp. nutans</i>	Nodding Saltbush				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Euchiton collinus</i> s.l.	Creeping Cudweed				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	Stinking Pennywort	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hydrocotyle pterocarpa</i>	Wing Pennywort		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	Small St John's Wort	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lagenophora stipitata</i>	Common Bottle-daisy	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Leptinella longipes</i>	Coast Cotula						✓						✓	✓	✓

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HERBS (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Myriophyllum simulans</i>	Amphibious Water-milfoil					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Oxalis exilis</i>	Shady Wood-sorrel	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grassland Wood-sorrel			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Persicaria decipiens</i>	Slender Knotweed		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Potamogeton tricarlinatus</i> s.l.	Floating Pondweed					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Samolus repens</i>	Creeping Brookweed						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Sarcocornia quinqueflora</i> ssp. <i>quinqueflora</i>	Beaded Glasswort						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Senecio glomeratus</i>	Annual Fireweed	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Senecio odoratus</i> var. <i>odoratus</i>	Scented Groundsel		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Senecio pinnatifolius</i>	Variable Groundsel							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Solenogyne dominii</i>	Smooth Solenogyne	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Stackhousia spathulata</i>	Coast Stackhousia							✓					✓	✓	✓

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HERBS CONT'D (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Threlkeldia diffusa</i>	Coast Bonefruit							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Urtica incisa</i>	Scrub Nettle		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Utricularia australis</i>	Yellow Bladderwort					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Wahlenbergia communis</i> s.l.	Tufted Bluebell				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Wahlenbergia gymnoclada</i>	Naked Bluebell	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

GRAMINOIDS (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Apodasmia brownii</i>	Coarse Twine-rush						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Amphibromus sinuatus</i>	Wavy Swamp Wallaby-grass					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Austrostipa bigeniculata</i>	Kneed Spear-grass				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>*Austrodanthonia penkillata</i>	Slender Wallaby-grass								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>*Austrodanthonia Procera</i>	Tall Wallaby Grass								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Austrodanthonia racemosa</i> var. <i>racemosa</i>	Stiped Wallaby-grass			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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GRAMINOIDS CONT'D (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Austroanthonia setacea</i>	Bristly Wallaby-grass			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Austrostipa bigeniculata</i>	Kneed Spear-grass			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Austrostipa mollis</i>	Supple Spear-grass			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Baumea articulata</i>	Jointed Twig-sedge					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Baumea rubiginosa s.l.</i>	Soft Twig-rush	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Baumea juncea</i>	Bare Twig-sedge						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Large Bindweed						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tall Sedge		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Deyeuxia quadriseta</i>	Reed Bent-grass	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>*Dianella revoluta</i>	Spreading Flax-lily or Black Anther Flax-lily								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Dianella tasmanica</i>	Tasman Flax-lily	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Distichlis distichophylla</i>	Australian Salt-grass						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Elymus scaber</i> var. <i>scaber</i>	Common Wheat-grass			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Ficinia nodosa</i>	Knobby Club-rush							✓					✓	✓	✓

Merri River Landscaping Guidelines July 2020

GRAMINOIDS CONT'D (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Gahnia clarkei</i>	Tall Saw-sedge		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Gahnia filum</i>	Chaffy Saw-sedge						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>	Red-fruit Saw-sedge		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Gahnia trifida</i>	Coast Saw-sedge		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Isolepis fluitans</i>	Floating Club-sedge					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Juncus kraussii</i> ssp. <i>australiensis</i>	Sea Rush						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Juncus procerus</i>	Tall Rush	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lachnagrostis billardierei</i> ssp. <i>billardierei</i>	Coast Blown-grass							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i> (perennial variety)	Wetland Blown-grass					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i>	Common Blown-grass					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Lepidosperma laterale</i>	Variable Sword-sedge					✓							✓	✓	✓
<i>Lepidosperma longitudinale</i>	Pithy Sword-sedge	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	Wattle Mat-rush	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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GRAMINOIDS CONT'D (TYPICALLY <1M)		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>*Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny Headed Mat Rush								✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i> <i>var. stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Panicum effusum</i>	Hairy Panic				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>**Patersonia occidentalis</i>	Long Purple Flag								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Poa ensiformis</i>	Sword Tussock-grass				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>*Poa labillardierei</i>	Common Tussock-grass			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Poa poiiformis</i>	Coast Tussock-grass						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Poa rodwayi</i>	Velvet Tussock-grass	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Schoenoplectus pungens</i>	Sharp Club-sedge						✓						✓	✓	✓
<i>Schoenus lepidosperma</i>	Slender Bog-sedge		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Schoenus nitens</i>	Shiny Bog-sedge							✓					✓	✓	✓
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo Grass	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Triglochin procerum s.l.</i>	Water Ribbons					✓							✓	✓	✓

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CLIMBERS		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Clematis microphylla</i> var. <i>microphylla</i>	Small-leaved Clematis				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Comesperma volubile</i>	Love Creeper	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Convolvulus</i> <i>erubescens</i> spp. agg.	Pink Bindweed				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Muehlenbeckia adpressa</i>	Climbing Lignum		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Pandorea pandorana</i>	Wonga Vine				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>	Bower Spinach							✓					✓	✓	✓
FERNS		EVC3	EVC53	EVC55	EVC666	EVC720	EVC10	EVC160	RL	R	U	P-U	C	C-U	VIEWLINES
<i>Blechnum minus</i>	Soft Water-fern		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Calochlaena dubia</i>	Common Ground-fern				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Cheilanthes distans</i>	Bristly Cloak-fern				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Soft Tree-fern				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Polystichum proliferum</i>	Mother Shield-fern				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Austral Bracken				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Todea barbara</i>	Austral King-fern				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

Notes: *Native species found in the Warrnambool Bioregion which are not typically found in the EVC immediately adjacent the Merri River, but are approved for use by Warrnambool City Council and the GHCMa.

**Native species not found in the Warrnambool Bioregion, but are approved for use by Warrnambool City Council and the GHCMa. (WCC, date unknown, p. 26)

References: Warrnambool Plain Bioregion EVC list (DELWP¹), Merri River Restoration Strategy (WCC, date unknown), Australian Plants Society – Warrnambool and District Group Inc Pty Ltd (APS, 2020) and Plants of the Great South West (Sparrow, K. 2013). ***Planting in viewlines. In situations where the river embankment is very steep, medium shrub coverage of more than 30% may be acceptable provided that it can be demonstrated to Council that viewlines from public paths/roads will not be restricted. ****Herbs will be difficult to establish, except in mulched garden beds.

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APPENDIX 1: MERRI RIVER LANDSCAPING AND REVEGETATION CHECKLIST

Steps for planning landscape and revegetation projects along the Merri River:

☐ **STEP 1 – SELECT THE CHARACTER ZONE**

Determine which character zone the area falls within. This helps to determine what species will be appropriate for the location.

☐ **STEP 2 – LOOK AT THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT**

Determine what the landscape context is of the site. Determining the landscape context involves identifying the current/future use of the land adjacent to the river and ensuring the design and plants selected will be compatible with the land use and also achieve good ecological and/or social outcomes, depending on the location.

☐ **STEP 3 – COMPLETE A SITE ANALYSIS**

Carry out a thorough site analysis, including identification of any key viewlines to and from public land adjacent to the river that need to be protected. Map 5 shows key viewlines from the public open space reserves in the Urban Zone on the south side of the Merri River.

☐ **STEP 4 – PREPARE THE PLANTING PLAN**

Prepare a plan of the length to be landscaped. Show a plan drawn to scale showing, site orientation, surface levels (where known), edge of River, existing vegetation to be retained/removed, proposed plant species including densities, locations of existing/proposed paths, mulching details, and any other relevant information.

☐ **STEP 5 - FILL IN THE WARRNAMBOOL CITY REVEGETATION PLAN TEMPLATE - CHECKLIST**

Attached to the Warrnambool City Council Revegetation Policy.

☐ **STEP 6 – SUBMIT THE PROPOSAL TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL***

***Note:** the Landscape Guidelines and checklist can also be applied to development applications requiring the submission of a Landscaping Plan for public open space adjoining the river. However, the assessment process for such applications would need to follow the normal planning assessment process, with landscaping plans endorsed by the planning department.



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan



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ACRONYMS

AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability (used in definition of flood)
DELWP	Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
FO	Floodway Overlay
GHCMA	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
GRZ1	General Residential Zone – Schedule 1
HO	Heritage Overlay
PCRZ	Public Conservation and Resource Zone
PPRZ	Public Park and Recreation Zone
UFZ	Urban Floodway Zone
WCC	Warrnambool City Council
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of groups and individuals have contributed to the information contained in this document, including staff of Warrnambool City Council from Recreation and Culture, Asset Management, Parks and Gardens, City Sustainability and Environment, City Strategy, and the Warrnambool Art Gallery, including the Eastern Maar Gallery.

Thank you to all community members who provided feedback through the community survey, submissions, and other meetings and workshops. Of partucular note are the members and groups represented in the Merri Alliance (Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Wannon Water, Fishcare Victoria, OzFish, MAD for the Merri, Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network, Friends of Wollaston Bridge, Friends of Platypus Park, Eastern Maar, and Volunteer Connect). Special thanks for Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation for their contribution to this plan.

Warrnambool City Council is honoured to have an important custodian role in partnership with Eastern Maar Citizens in looking after Country. Warrnambool City Council is proud of our Maar heritage and story. We acknowledge the Maar people and celebrate their rich, diverse and ongoing contribution to us all.

DISCLAIMER

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PREPARED BY:



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MAYOR’S FOREWORD

*The Merri River offers enormous potential as a major open space corridor for Warrnambool.
It’s a much-loved river but in some ways the river and the parks beside it are a hidden gem.*

*We can do more to make most of the Merri River in terms of conservation and in the
provision of access to allow residents and visitors to enjoy more of the Merri as it winds its
way through Warrnambool.*

The South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan aims to address these challenges.

*The aims of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan align with the goals outlined in
Warrnambool’s key strategic planning documents – the Council Plan, Warrnambool 2040
and Green Warrnambool Plan.*

*Each of these plans identify a goal for the Merri River corridor to become a "connected series
of parklands that support active transport, nature-based recreation and wildlife movement"
by 2040.*

*The precinct to the south of the Merri River also has an underdeveloped connection
between future trails north of the Merri and the current Russell’s Creek Walking Trail.*

*Late last year a survey asking people about their priorities for south of the Merri River drew
more than 200 responses.*

That feedback was used to inform a draft precinct plan.

*A second consultation on the draft drew a positive response, with 60 submissions and strong
support for the overall plan.*

*Warrnambool City Council is pleased to present the final South of Merri Open Space Precinct
Plan, which sets the vision for a connected parklands trail in a restored, natural environment.
We look forward to working with the community and partners in progressing this vision.*

Cr. Tony Herbert, Mayor



EASTERN MAAR WELCOME

Eastern Maar still to provide an 'Eastern Maar Welcome', which will be inserted here.



Rakali Photo Credit:
Carolyn Hall

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Merri River is one of Warrnambool’s best natural assets. Nearly one third of Warrnambool’s population lives within a ten minute walk of the river, which is expected to increase with future developments. Alongside the foreshore and Lake Pertobe precinct, the Merri River has the potential to become an important open space corridor for the city. The river will play an increasingly important future role in the liveability of Warrnambool, as a corridor for leisure, social meeting places, events, recreation, a place for reflection, and nature.

The Merri River is a valued part the cultural landscape of the Eastern Maar Nation. A principle of the Eastern Maar is ‘treading lightly on Country’, with a focus the protection and restoration of the natural and cultural landscape.

The seven parklands between Manuka Drive Reserve and St James Park on the South side of the Merri River (the ‘South of Merri Precinct’) represent an important opportunity for improving access to the Merri River within the established residential area of Warrnambool. With development occurring to the north, the precinct represents an important connection between new and established communities north and south of the river, and to the Russell’s Creek shared trail.

The South of Merri Precinct Plan (the ‘Precinct Plan’) has been developed to guide the development of the precinct over the next 10 to 15 years. It helps implement recommendations of the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy (2014), Green Warrnambool Plan (2018), Active Warrnambool Strategy (2019) and Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan (2019), as well as being consistent with the Warrnambool Planning Scheme and State government policy.

A comprehensive community consultation was undertaken by Council in 2019 to inform the Plan. It resulted in 208 survey responses and email submissions, over 50 comments through social media, 2,906 through-plays of the project video, 5 newsletter mentions, 11 workshops and meeting discussions, and a media article in the Warrnambool Standard.

The key messages from the consultation were that the community value the natural assets of the precinct and being able to access the river, and would like to see improvements in connected walking and cycling paths/trails, restoration of the natural environment, protection of important views, infrastructure to support passive recreation on and beside the river, and better recognition of the culture of the area. Survey respondents indicated they would visit the precinct more if improvements were made.

A second round of consultation was undertaken by Council in 2020, to seek feedback on the draft Plan. It resulted in 60 submissions. The majority of submissions supported the plan and wanted the overall concept to be retained. There was overwhelming support for the environmental focus, wetland restoration and support for the shared path. There were also suggestions to modify some details of the plan and in response, some changes have been made in this final version. Some of the suggestions included more consideration and discussion around universal access, prioritisation of pedestrian links to and from the South of Merri Precinct and opportunities for the Precinct to connect into the broader path and path network.

The Precinct Plan is made up of four parts:

PART 1: The Precinct Plan (this document), which summarises the objectives and recommendations of the plan. It can be read as a stand-alone document.

PART 2: Existing Conditions - Appendix 1. The first background report that informed the Precinct Plan. The report considers existing recreation assets, environment, flooding, cultural values, post-European settlement heritage, access, and key views.

PART 3: Community Consultation Summary – Appendix 2. The second background report informing the Precinct Plan, based on the first and second round of community consultation undertaken in 2019 and 2020 (summarised in the Precinct Plan at sections 4 and 5).

PART 4: Issues, Opportunities and Constraints report – Appendix 3. The final background report informing the precinct plan, including a demographic analysis, policy review, constraints assessment, and identification of key issues and opportunities. Key issues and opportunities are themed into: Connecting Place, Connecting Culture, Connectivity Community, Connecting Nature, Connecting Trails, and Connecting Partners. The issues and opportunities report also takes into consideration the Existing Conditions and Community Consultation Summary and forms the basis for the final Precinct Plan in Part 1.

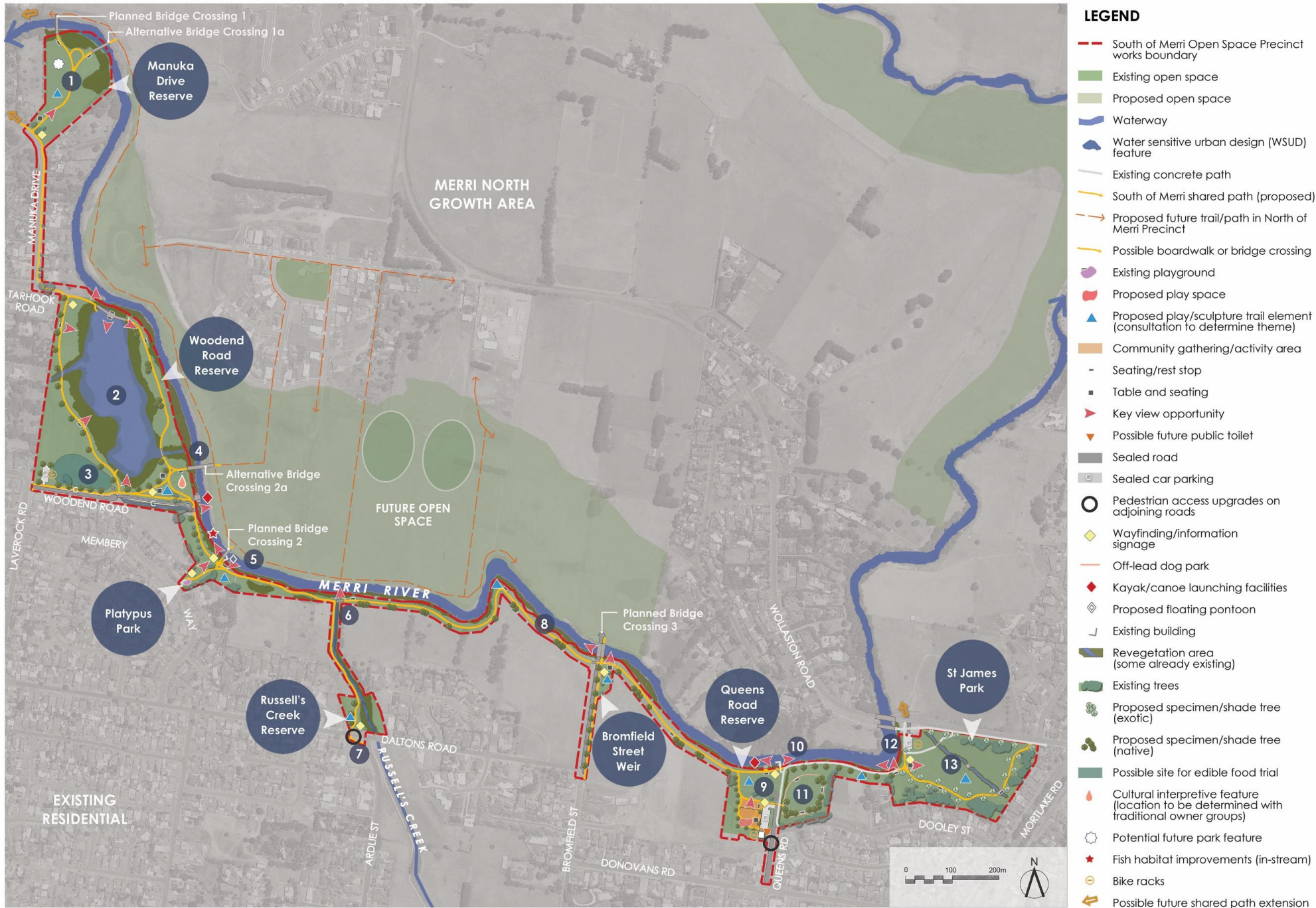
OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Precinct Plan were developed based on community feedback and the issues and opportunities report. They are:

1. *To improve pedestrian access to the Merri River and provide a pleasant and safe shared path network connecting existing and future open spaces.*
2. *To respect and promote the Precinct’s cultural values and connection to the river by the Eastern Maar Nation.*
3. *To increase utilisation of open space areas and encourage active participation and positive health and wellbeing.*
4. *To support an expanded range of informal recreational activities including play and access to nature opportunities.*
5. *To provide accessible entry points ensuring convenient access for all users and transport modes at strategic locations throughout the Precinct.*
6. *To promote a sense of place and protect key view lines within the Precinct and along the Merri River, and allow space for reflection.*
7. *To respect the flood function, cultural flows, and waterway health values of the Merri River.*
8. *To enhance and restore native habitat for biodiversity.*
9. *To encourage climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.*
10. *To work in collaboration and support partnerships to see the plan implemented*

Key recommendations of the Precinct Plan are shown in the adjoining map and descriptions.

SOUTH OF MERRI OPEN SPACE PRECINCT PLAN



NUMBER KEY (refer over page for further details in expanded key): 1. South of Merri Shared Path, 2. Wetland Restoration, 3. Indigenous Food Growing Trial Site, 4. Merri River Bridge Crossings, 5. Floating Pontoon, 6. Russell's Creek Bridge Crossing, 7. Improved pedestrian safety upgrades to and from surrounding roads, 8. Linear connections and riverside revegetation, 9. Community activity area/gathering space, 10. Kayak and canoe launching facilities, 11. Dog off-lead park, 12. Car park, 13. WSUD opportunities.

EXPANDED KEY FOR PRECINCT PLAN:

1 SOUTH OF MERRI SHARED PATH

Establish a new South of Merri shared path from Manuka Drive Reserve to St James Park, with connections to the Russell's Creek Trail and future shared paths north of the Merri River. The shared path will loop around St James Park taking in views of Wollaston Bridge, travel west along the edge of the Merri River and loop around the rehabilitated wetland at Woodend Road Reserve, ultimately ending at Manuka Drive where it will cross the river to provide access to the North of Merri residential area.

The South of Merri shared path will provide interesting and interactive experiences with the natural environment as well as new infrastructure and a play/interactive sculpture trail along the way.

2 WETLAND RESTORATION

Rehabilitate the wetland in the reserve at the end of Woodend and Tarhook roads. New vegetation will be planted around the wetland to improve habitat and water quality. The new South of Merri shared path will loop around the wetland with rest stops at key viewing points. There are also opportunities near the wetland to reflect on Eastern Maar values through art/sculpture, infrastructure, and/or culturally informed landscape planting.

3 FOOD GROWING TRIAL SITE

A site of approximately 0.66Ha in size has been set aside for a trial nursery growing indigenous food plants. The proposal is to relocate the site from the end of Woodend Road further west onto higher ground which is less prone to flooding. The site can be accessed from Woodend Road. In the event that the trial site is not required, the land can be converted to public park space.

4 MERRI RIVER CROSSINGS

There are three planned Merri River crossings connecting to the North of Merri Precinct, to be provided through the development process. In the North of the Merri Structure Plan, pedestrian crossings are nominated at Manuka Drive Reserve and Platypus Park with one combined vehicle and pedestrian crossing at Bromfield Street Weir. The Precinct Plan shows a potential alternative location for the Platypus Park and Manuka Drive crossing. The alternative location for Platypus Park is located a short distance away from Woodend Road. The benefit of this alternate location would be closer proximity to the car parking at Woodend Road and improved visibility to and from the crossing for users. It would also connect with one of the future planned access paths in the North of Merri Precinct which links to the existing Witham playground reserve. The alternative crossing at Manuka Drive would provide a more direct link to the playground and planned open space areas north of the river.

5 FLOATING PONTOON

Establish a small floating pontoon at Platypus Park, with consideration given to any potential platypus habitat in the vicinity. This fishing pontoon is positioned near the instream fish habitat improvements in a location that is well-suited for fishing. The proposed pontoon at Platypus Park will complement the existing pontoon at Queen's Road reserve and will provide an alternative fishing place for anglers downstream of the Bromfield Weir. Education signs on fishing practices that minimise impacts on the platypus should be associated with the pontoon.

6 RUSSELL'S CREEK CROSSING

A new footbridge across Russell's Creek will form a key pedestrian link, connecting the eastern and western ends of the South of Merri shared path.

7 IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN SAFETY UPGRADES TO AND FROM SURROUNDING ROADS

Pedestrian safety will be enhanced in the Precinct by ensuring safe crossing points near park entries and access to and from adjoining streets is provided. Improvements are proposed at Queens Road (new path/pedestrian access improvements and crossing point), Daltons Road (crossing point and new path) and Manuka Drive (new path).

8 LINEAR CONNECTIONS & RIVERSIDE REVEGETATION

The linear spaces provide important connections between the parks within the precincts. It is proposed that these linear connections will provide passive recreation opportunities, with revegetation works, shared path and shade trees. There will be rest stops provided at regular intervals, and some linear spaces will incorporate play/art elements for added interest.

Extensive lengths of the Merri River have already been revegetated. The Plan shows the full length of the river being revegetated on the south side. This revegetation is important in providing a continuous wildlife corridor as well as improving water quality health and minimising erosion. It is important that the revegetation works also consider the recreational use of the Precinct and are designed appropriately with park users in mind. This means providing gaps in tall vegetation to retain key views of the river, ensuring any trees will not create limb-drop issues for users of the shared path and ensuring there is sufficient space between the shared path and the revegetation works areas for maintenance vehicle access.

Merri River Landscaping Guidelines have also been developed alongside this plan, and can be used to further guide revegetation works.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

9 COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE

Queens Road Reserve is ideally suited to a community gathering space and potential events space, offering a range of experiences. This Reserve also contains an area of land which sits higher than the remainder of the reserve above the 1 in 100 year flood extent. This makes it an ideal location for constructed infrastructure, such as a play space, as the infrastructure will not impede water flows and the infrastructure will not be subject to flood damage as regularly as other locations in the Precinct. A playspace and scooter/pump park are proposed. Features of the activity area/community gathering space could include a seating area, bocce/petanque courts/basketball half court and shade trees. There is an existing building which could possibly be repurposed in the future to provide tourism opportunities, such as kayak/canoe hire, bicycle hire and/or café, and to support events. This space would also be an appropriate site for public toilets due to the existing service infrastructure in place and access from the car park. Opportunities to reflect the values of the precinct in the design of the space can be explored further, such as Eastern Maar values, and the history of the site.

10 KAYAK AND CANOE LAUNCHING FACILITIES

There are two proposed non-motorised sport launching sites for kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, etc. One is proposed at the end of Woodend Road, which is currently used informally, and one at Queens Road Reserve. A transfer point would need to be provided at Bromfield Weir to allow non-motorised water sport users to get out of the river and put their craft back in the water above or below the weir. Woodend Road and Queens Road reserve will have car parking provided for those transporting their kayaks/canoes in vehicles. It is intended that the launching facilities would be low-key ramps, with a non-slip surface positioned at the water's edge.

11 DOG PARK

Dogs off-lead present a threat to local fauna, including Platypus. It is important that dog on-lead and dog off-lead areas throughout the precinct are clearly identified. The Plan identifies one large off-lead area in Queens Road Reserve. This site is ideally suited to a dog park as it is located opposite the car park and activity area/community gathering space and is located well away from riverside habitat and revegetation areas.

12 CARPARK UPGRADES

Visitor car parking locations include:

1. Woodend Road Reserve. This reserve is likely to become a destination for many visitors due to the location of the wetlands and fishing pontoon. There are opportunities at Woodend Road to provide formalised on-street car parking as well as off-street car parking.
2. Queens Road Reserve. It is proposed to retain the existing off-street car park.
3. St James Park. There is an informal gravel car park near Wollaston Bridge where visitors currently park. It is proposed that this parking site near the bridge be formalised and sealed, as was originally proposed in the St James Landscape Masterplan.
4. Bromfield Street. Opportunity to provide on-street car parking when the road is sealed and a vehicle connection across the river is provided in the future. In the longer-term there is opportunity for off-street parking if the need arises.

13 WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN (WSUD) OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous opportunities throughout the Precinct to provide water sensitive urban design features at a local scale. The following opportunities are identified throughout the Precinct:

1. Woodend Road wetland
2. Woodend Road swale
3. Queens Road swale
4. St James park swale

The three swales are intended to be small open drainage swales planted with tussocks and rushes and other low-growing plants that have good water-filtering qualities. Where possible, these will be realigned slightly to provide a more natural appearance. They are currently straight, open drains at present.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

PART A

BACKGROUND, PRECINCT CONTEXT & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

1. BACKGROUND

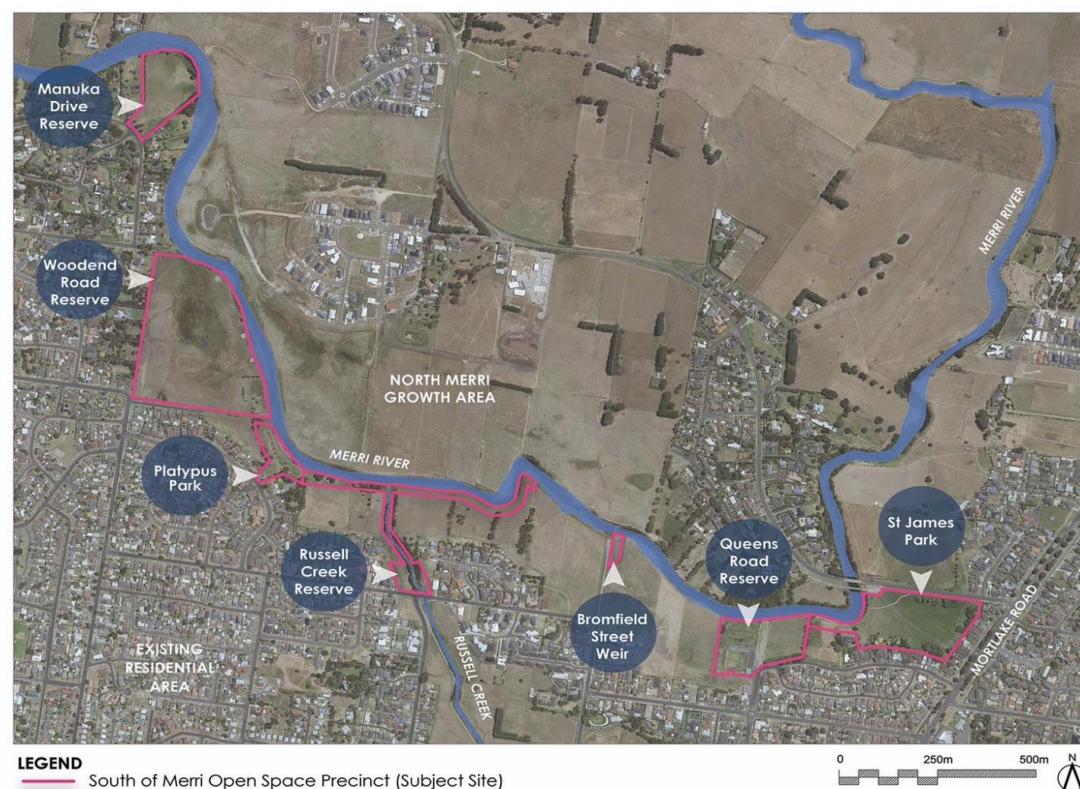
SUBJECT SITE

The South of Merri Open Space Precinct is located on the south side of the Merri River 1.7 kilometres north-west of the Warrnambool City centre. The Precinct contains approximately 23 hectares of public land along the edge of the Merri River. The Precinct is mostly undeveloped and has a series of informal walking paths along some sections of river edge. The Precinct consists of seven public open space reserves:

- Manuka Drive Reserve – 2.7Ha
- Woodend Road Reserve – 10.8Ha
- Platypus Park – 1.1Ha
- Russell's Creek Reserve – 2.4Ha
- Bromfield Street Weir – 0.2Ha
- Queens Road Reserve – 2.7Ha
- St James Park – 4.8Ha

Plan 1 shows the location of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct subject area.

Plan 1 – South Merri Open Space Precinct Subject Area (public open space reserves)



PURPOSE

Open space plays an important role in the health and well-being of Warrnambool residents and visitors. The South of Merri Precinct is underdeveloped at the moment, yet has great potential to become a popular recreational asset forming a major open space corridor for the city.

Development of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan was a recommendation of the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy (2014). In this Strategy, the Warrnambool Open Space Framework Plan (2014, p 7) recommends preparation of a plan:

'for improving connectivity and activating the waterway open space between Manuka Drive Reserve and the Queens Road Reserve including upgrading Woodend Road Reserve with an environmental/passive recreation focus, and creating a continuous trail between open space north and south of the Merri River.'

The Green Warrnambool Plan 2018 and Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan also provide recommendations for the Merri River corridor. The Merri River corridor will be:

'a connected series of parklands that support active transport, nature-based recreation and wildlife movement' by 2040.

The South of Merri Open Space Precinct has many amazing features and natural assets. The features and assets of the Precinct and opportunities and constraints are summarised in the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Existing Conditions report (Appendix 1) and the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan Issues, Opportunities and Constraints report (Appendix 3).

The natural beauty of the Merri River, surrounding landscape and peacefulness of the Precinct draw many visitors to it - whether it be for walking, dog walking, bird watching, informal play, fishing or other activities. However at present, the Precinct contains minimal infrastructure which limits its use for recreational activities.

There is great potential to upgrade and connect all seven open space reserves to make effective use of the open space and ensure the Precinct becomes a highly valued recreational asset for local residents. There is also an opportunity to create better linkages between the Precinct and nearby residential areas and existing recreational facilities to provide more accessible recreation opportunities for all users.

Planning for the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan is an important step in ensuring the space becomes a highly-valued open space corridor in the future. The development of the Precinct Plan provides an opportunity to create an open space corridor that:

- Provides passive recreation opportunities that respond to the community's needs.
- Respects and promotes the Merri River cultural landscape and connection for the Eastern Maar people.
- Provides infrastructure that is well-integrated with Council's other assets in the area.
- Respects and enhances the site's natural features, including flora and fauna habitat.
- Balances recreational uses with flood function.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

- Improves visual and physical connectivity to and within the Precinct.
- Responds to the opportunities and constraints of the Precinct; and
- Draws on previously completed plans relevant to the area, including:
 - Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan – Warrnambool City Council
 - Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2014 – Warrnambool City Council
 - Green Warrnambool Plan 2018 – Warrnambool City Council
 - Connecting the Merri – Merri River Parklands Framework (Draft) – Warrnambool City Council
 - Water for Victoria Water Plan – Victorian State Government
 - Glenelg Hopkins CMA Regional Waterway Strategy – Victorian State Government
 - Warrnambool Planning Scheme
 - Warrnambool Council Plan 2017-2021 – Warrnambool City Council
 - North of Merri Structure Plan 2011 – MESH
 - Merri River Restoration Strategy – Warrnambool City Council
 - St James Park Master Plan 2010 – Warrnambool City Council
 - Queens Road Reserve Management Plan – Community project
 - Merri Alliance Network Vision and Direction 2017/18 – Merri Alliance

The South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan Issues, Opportunities and Constraints background report (Appendix 3), details how these plans and policies relate to future planning for the Precinct.

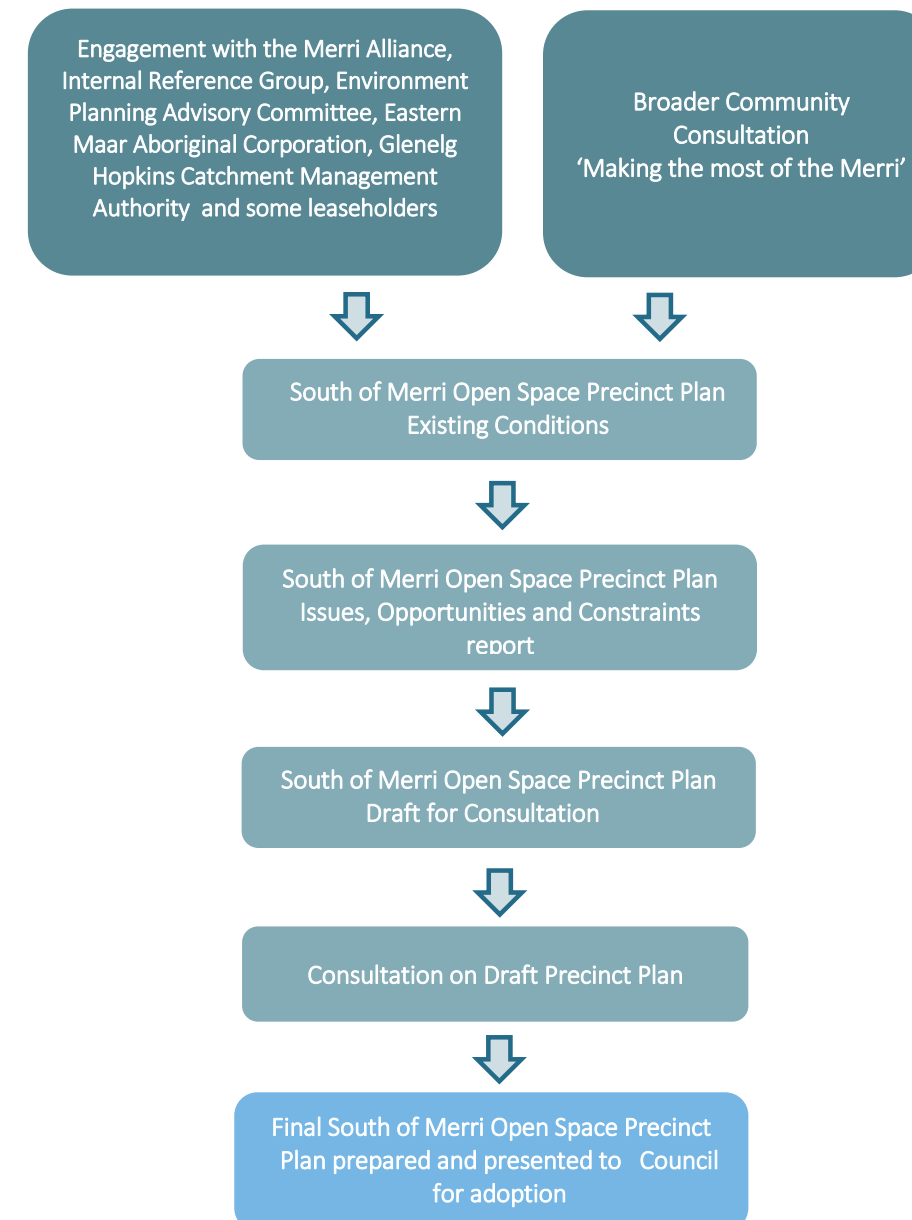
THE PRECINCT PLAN PROCESS

This Plan outlines a future vision for the South of Merri Open Space Precinct to establish it as an important recreation destination for Warrnambool. Figure 1 shows the stages in the development of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan.

Council sought community feedback during consultation on the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan in September and October 2019. The 'Making the most of the Merri' consultation asked residents how the South of Merri Open Space Precinct should be developed in the future. Section 4 provides a snap-shot of the consultation feedback from the Community Consultation Summary background report. Common themes and popular ideas raised during consultation have informed the objectives and recommendations for the Precinct Plan.

The draft Precinct Plan was placed on public exhibition through Council's Yoursay website in April and May 2020. This consultation gave the community the opportunity to review and provide comment on the Plan's recommendations and design, and test community support for the Precinct Plan. Workshops were undertaken with an internal reference group, Council's Environment and Planning Advisory group, and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. However a planned community drop-in session and workshop with the Merri Alliance had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community consultation instead relied on letters to residents, magazine publication, social media, emails to key stakeholders, and the Yoursay Warrnambool page. Final changes were then made to the Plan. Once adopted, implementation and sourcing of funding for the Plan can commence.

Figure 1 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan Development Process



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

2. PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

The Merri River has important environmental values, providing habitat for local flora and fauna. The natural environment within and adjoining the river has been severely modified, resulting in a 'poor' to 'very poor' environmental rating in the 2010 Index of Stream Condition (Victorian Government 2010). Since 2010, a significant amount of weed removal and revegetation works have been carried out along the banks of the Merri River by local community groups, individuals and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority. (GHCMA, 2019) In 2018 the 'Merri Alliance' was formed to help support a collaborative approach to restoration of the river corridor.

It is important that revegetation works are extended along the banks of the Merri River, in both urban and rural areas. Additional revegetation will help to help mitigate the impacts of urban development, population growth, and agricultural activities and improve the short and long-term ecological health of the River, increase biodiversity and create a healthy river suitable for recreational use.

There is a major flood path alongside the Merri River and a number of parks within the precinct are low-lying and subject to flooding on a regular basis. The Woodend Road Reserve also contains a wetland, which provides an important flood storage function. Much of the land within the precinct is recognised as being a high hazard flood area and is zoned Urban Floodway. The Flood Overlay also applies to a large portion of land within the precinct.

Flood resilient design is critical in urban locations subject to inundation. It is important that recreation uses and flood function are balanced to ensure the Precinct becomes a functional recreation space. The use of the space for recreation also needs to be balanced against the need to maintain and enhance flora along the Merri River and management of the Precinct's significant fauna.

There is an existing playground and seating area provided at Platypus Park, but generally, there is limited infrastructure and paths throughout the seven open space reserves. According to the recent community survey, informal recreation uses that are popular in the Precinct include walking, dog-walking, fishing and kayaking. Due to the limited recreational facilities and infrastructure the Precinct is generally underutilised as a recreation asset.

Enhancements to this Precinct will ensure this open space provides important connections for residents in the north-west, north and north-east of Warrnambool, including improved access to existing and future sporting assets and extension of the popular Russell's Creek Trail.

It is envisaged that with some improvements, the South of Merri Open Space Precinct will become a highly valued open space corridor by residents and visitors.

Plan 2 shows the location of the Precinct study area in relation to the City centre and the four public open space precincts. The location of the seven open space reserves are shown on Plan 2. They include:

1. Manuka Drive Reserve
2. Woodend Road Reserve
3. Platypus Park
4. Russell's Creek Reserve
5. Bromfield Street Weir
6. Queens Road Reserve
7. St James Park

There are other important sites adjoining the public open space reserves within the Precinct. These sites are crucial in order to form path links between the seven reserves. They include:

- Manuka Drive
(on-road path required to form a connection between Reserves 1 & 2)
- A & B - Privately owned land
(required to form a connection between Reserves 4 & 5)
- C & D - Privately Owned Land
(required to form a connection between Reserves 5 & 6)

Figures 2 to 8 shows drone photographs of each public open space reserve in the Precinct.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Plan 2 – South Merri Open Space Precinct Locality Plan
(Precinct names are taken from the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2014)

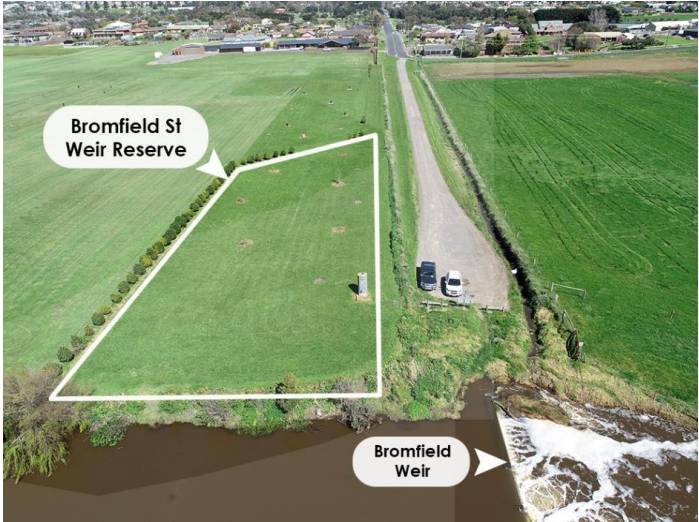
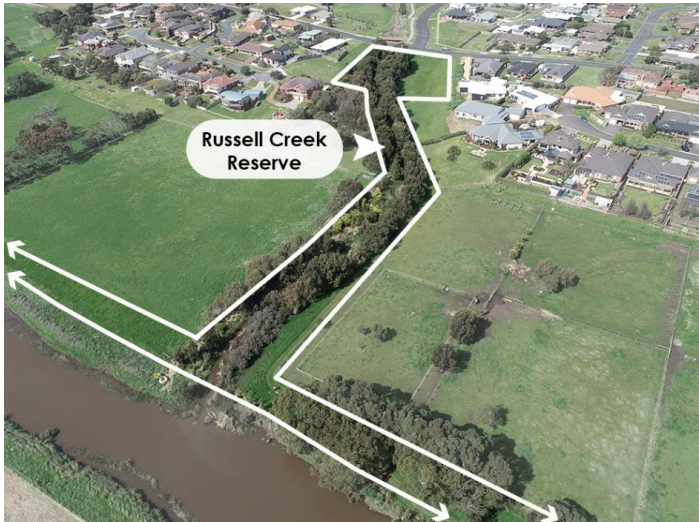


Figures 2 - 4 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Reserve Locations (Drone Views)



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Figures 5 - 8 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Reserve Locations (Drone Views)



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

3. SOCIAL CONTEXT

‘Warrnambool is Victoria’s largest coastal City outside Port Phillip Bay and is the fastest growing economy and population centre in the Great South Coast (WCC², 2019).’

The planning precincts surrounding the South of Merri Open Space Precinct include North of Merri, West, Botanic and North (refer to Plan 3). The West, Botanic and North are well established residential areas which will see some population growth in the next 20+ years, but it will be the new growth area of North of Merri which will see the most growth with an expected population increase of 2,755 residents.

Summary of population forecasts (Profile id, 2019):

- 2017 Warrnambool Population – 34,571
- 2036 Warrnambool Population – 46,210
- Growth is forecast in all age categories (refer Figure 9).
- The forecast age structure of Warrnambool shows an increase in an ageing population, but it is not as pronounced as the regional average.
- *‘The combined projected population for the four precincts is 15,085 by 2036, an increase of 3,698 or 32% on the 2019 population.’*

As described in the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan Issues, Opportunities and Constraints Report (Appendix 3), the following key demographic considerations apply to the South of Merri Open Space Precinct:

- *A large proportion of Warrnambool’s current and future population will live close to the precinct, so it could attract high levels of use.*
- *The precinct will need to cater for a range of age groups.*
- *The precinct needs to be accessible to everyone.*

Plan 3 – Projected Population of Warrnambool Planning Precincts by 2036
Source: profile.id, modified by WCC

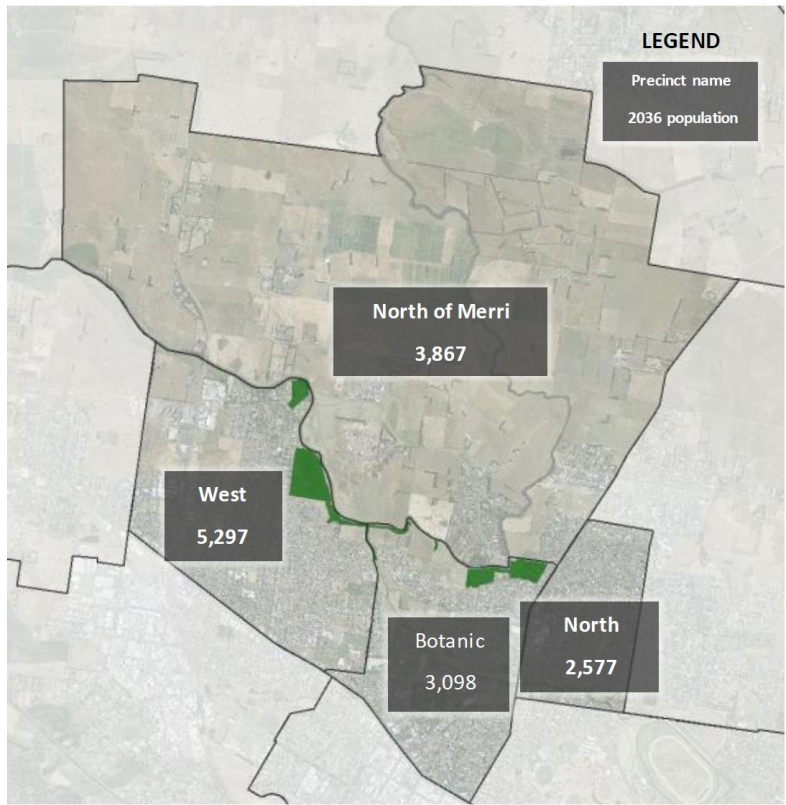
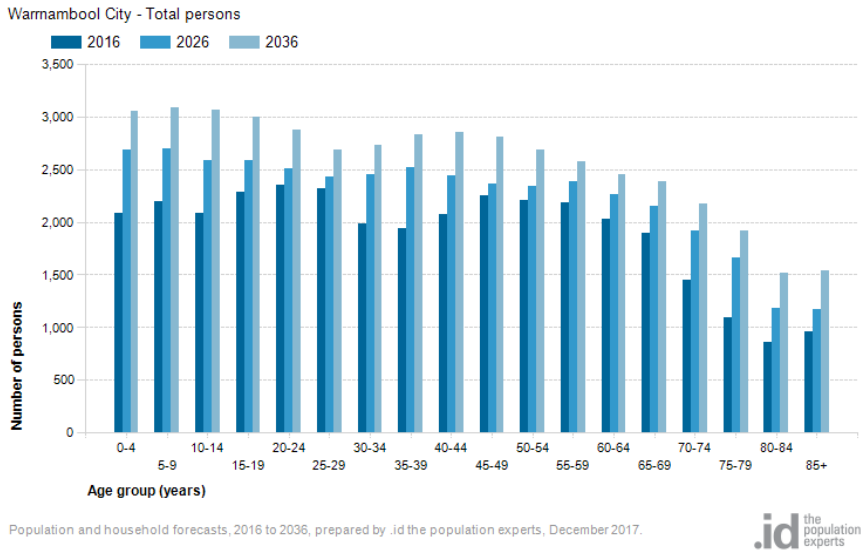


Figure 9 – Forecast age structure – 5 year groups (WCC³, 2019)



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

4. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES – ROUND 1

Community consultation on the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan was carried out by Warrnambool City Council during September and October 2019. The ‘Making the Most of the Merri’ consultation received a strong response from the community with over 200 responses. There was good representation of local residents, with well over 100 responses from North Warrnambool and West Warrnambool residents.

The purpose of the consultation was to find out how visitors currently utilise the space, barriers or reasons why people don’t visit the space and how the community would like to see the Precinct developed in the future.

A media article about the project and consultation was printed in the Saturday Warrnambool Standard and Council published a webpage on their website with a link to the survey. The ‘Making the Most of the Merri’ consultation received:

- 205 survey responses and 3 email submissions
- 54 Facebook comments on 16 Facebook posts
- 2,906 through-plays of online video

Council also held 11 workshops/meetings with key stakeholders and partners. Key stakeholders and partners included Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, the Merri Alliance and its member groups (including the Glenelg Hopkins CMA, OzFish, Wannon Water, Council, Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network, MAD for the Merri, Fishcare), Warrnambool Art Gallery (including Eastern Maar Gallery), internal Council staff and Councillors, Council’s Environment and Planning Advisory Committee, and leaseholders (Worn Gundidj).

Figure 10 lists the key issues and opportunities identified during the consultation. Further detail is found in the ‘Making the Most of the Merri’ Community Consultation Summary, which was used to inform this plan. The following provides a brief summary of some of the key findings and themes raised during the consultation:

Visitation

Current visitation to the Precinct ranged from ‘never’ through to ‘daily’, with ‘a few times a year’ being the most

common. The three main reasons for not visiting the Precinct were ‘walking trail stops’, ‘no formed walking trails’ and ‘no reason to visit’.

Many residents said they would use the precinct more if improvements were made to the space, with many saying they would use the space weekly, two to three times per week or even daily, which is a substantial increase compared with current use.

Values

Multiple values were mentioned by respondents. The number one value listed was ‘natural environment’, with 128 respondents nominating this as what they valued most in the Precinct.

Other values, included pleasant scenery, open space, somewhere to walk/run, access to the river for recreation, fresh air, wildlife, space to walk the dogs, Wollaston Bridge, the playground at Platypus Park and cultural connection.

When asked ‘what you wouldn’t change’ about the Precinct, the number one response was access. The top seven responses were that people don’t want to lose access, open space, natural character, native vegetation, walking access, access for dogs, habitat or views in the Precinct.

Activities

The most popular current activities carried out in the Precinct are walking and dog walking, followed by appreciating the amenity and bird watching. Walking was mentioned nearly twice as much as the next closest response.

Requested Changes and Prioritisation of Improvements

The number one request for change was for ‘connectivity’ (ie. formed trails, loop trails, river crossings, wayfinding), with over 100 responses citing this as the issue that most requires improvement. The next most frequently mentioned improvements were environment (i.e. revegetation, wetland restoration, stormwater management), river access (i.e. fishing pontoon, improved fish habitat, kayak launching facilities) and facilities (i.e. for recreation, picnic areas, seating, basketball, toilets, playgrounds).

Figure 10 – Key issues and opportunities identified in Making the Most of the Merri consultation



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

5. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES – ROUND 2

Community consultation on the draft South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan was carried out by Warrnambool City Council during April and May 2020. The consultation on the draft received a strong response from the community with 60 written responses plus additional social media feedback.

The purpose of the consultation was to find out if the draft plan aligns with the community's vision for the Precinct, as identified during the 'Making the Most of the Merri' consultation.

The COVID-19 situation impacted a number of planned face-to-face activities which had to be cancelled in the interest of community safety. The consultation still reached a broad audience via promotion in the Promenade magazine, letters to over 2000 residential properties within proximity to the precinct, an extended Yoursay Warrnambool consultation period including availability of the draft plan and a feedback question, emails to Merri Alliance members, emails to residents requesting contact from phase 1, phone consultation, and a social media campaign. Promotion was undertaken in a way that was sensitive to the challenging time during early COVID lockdown.

Despite the impact of COVID on the consultation, a strong and positive response was still received, comparable to similar previous open space plans:

- 50 Yoursay submissions and 10 written submissions
- 47 Facebook shares, 28 comments, 340 positive responses
- Workshops with internal reference group and external council Environment and Planning Advisory Group

Prior to the consultation, a meeting was also held with Eastern Maar who made contributions and wording suggestions. Additional contributions were made to the final plan.

Figure 11 lists the items which were supported and some of the requested changes. There was strong support for the plan, including 37 submissions indicating overall support for the plan. Strongly supported elements included the balance between natural values and recreation use, walking trails,

cross-river trail connectivity, the dog off lead enclosure, watercraft/fishing access points, and wetland restoration.

The following provides a brief summary of some of the concerns raised during the consultation and how they were addressed:

Path material

A variety of views came through in the consultation relating to path materials, including concrete, asphalt and gravel/sand. There are positives and negatives to using each of these path materials in terms of economic, social and environmental impacts.

Following further discussion, the shared path material is proposed to be concrete throughout the precinct. Due to the relatively regular flooding in the Precinct gravel/sand is not considered to be a suitable surface as it washes during heavy downpours and floods and requires a significant level of maintenance to keep it at an appropriate standard for high levels of use.

Concrete is the preferred material for longevity and requires less maintenance than gravel or asphalt over its lifespan. A concrete path surface also provides a smooth surface that is accessible to the widest range of users, including those using wheelchairs and walking frames, and is a material that meets universal access design requirements.

Concrete paths are not suitable for horse riding. Therefore, horse riders will need to find another location for riding outside of the Precinct.

Dogs off leash/on leash

There were multiple comments regarding dogs off-leash and dogs on-leash in the precinct. Comments included no need for any dog off-leash area as there are others in the town, off-lead dog areas should be provided near the river so that dogs can swim, the river is dangerous for dogs as it is difficult for them to get out in some sections, and dogs should not be allowed near the river as they can cause harm to fauna and habitat.

The recommendation is that the South of Merri Open Space Precinct incrementally transitions to a dog on-lead area along the length of the shared path network, except in the proposed designated dog off-lead area at Queens Road Reserve.

Bromfield Weir

There were a number of comments regarding the future of the Bromfield Weir, with some supporting its removal and others wanting it retained. The scope of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan does not include recommendations for the future of the Bromfield Weir. The North of the Merri Structure Plan shows a future vehicle crossing point over the river at the site of the weir. The Precinct Plan shows the crossing point in this same location.

The recommendations of the Precinct Structure Plan for Bromfield Weir Reserve will be achievable in all scenarios, whether the weir remains or is removed.

Queens Road Reserve Kayak/Canoe launching facility

There was a request that the kayak/canoe launching facility at Queens Road be moved closer to Wollaston Bridge near the bend in the river. The placement of the launching facility is discussed in further detail at Section 21. Park Design Recommendations – Queens Road Reserve.

Wetland access

It was suggested that access to the wetland be provided for taking in views and in order to undertake monitoring and other activities.

The plan has been amended to include a wider boardwalk area with seating, as well as two additional access points to the restored wetland.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Figure 11 – Response to comments and requests identified in feedback on draft Open Space Precinct Plan



Items to be retained in Plan

- Overall concept
- Riverside trail/shared path along the Merri River
- Public toilets at Queens Road Reserve
- Recognition and focus on environmental and cultural features
- Protection of natural environment and habitat
- Diverse range of facilities for various users
- Cross-river connectivity
- Integration of recreation features
- Play elements
- Dog on-lead area at Queens Road Reserve

Key changes to the Plan

- Additional access point to wetland for education and monitoring
- More commentary on current river health
- Opportunity for lighting of Wollaston Bridge
- Incorporation of turning area for vehicles in Queens Road Reserve
- Added bollards along park and car parking edges to keep unauthorised vehicles out of Precinct
- Clarification of existing privately owned land within the Precinct
- Identification of how the Precinct fits into the broader shared path network

Further work

- Further consideration of pedestrian/cyclist bridge crossing locations
- Further investigation/more detailed design for next phase of wetland restoration
- Drainage improvements across the precinct
- Greater consideration to universal access
- Further consideration of kayak/canoe launching site location upstream of Bromfield Weir



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

PART B

PRECINCT ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

6. ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS

The South of Merri Open Space Precinct represents the best opportunity for north and west Warrnambool residents to access the Merri River and is a key area for improved connectivity along the waterway. It is the connection between future paths north of the Merri and the current Russell's Creek trail.

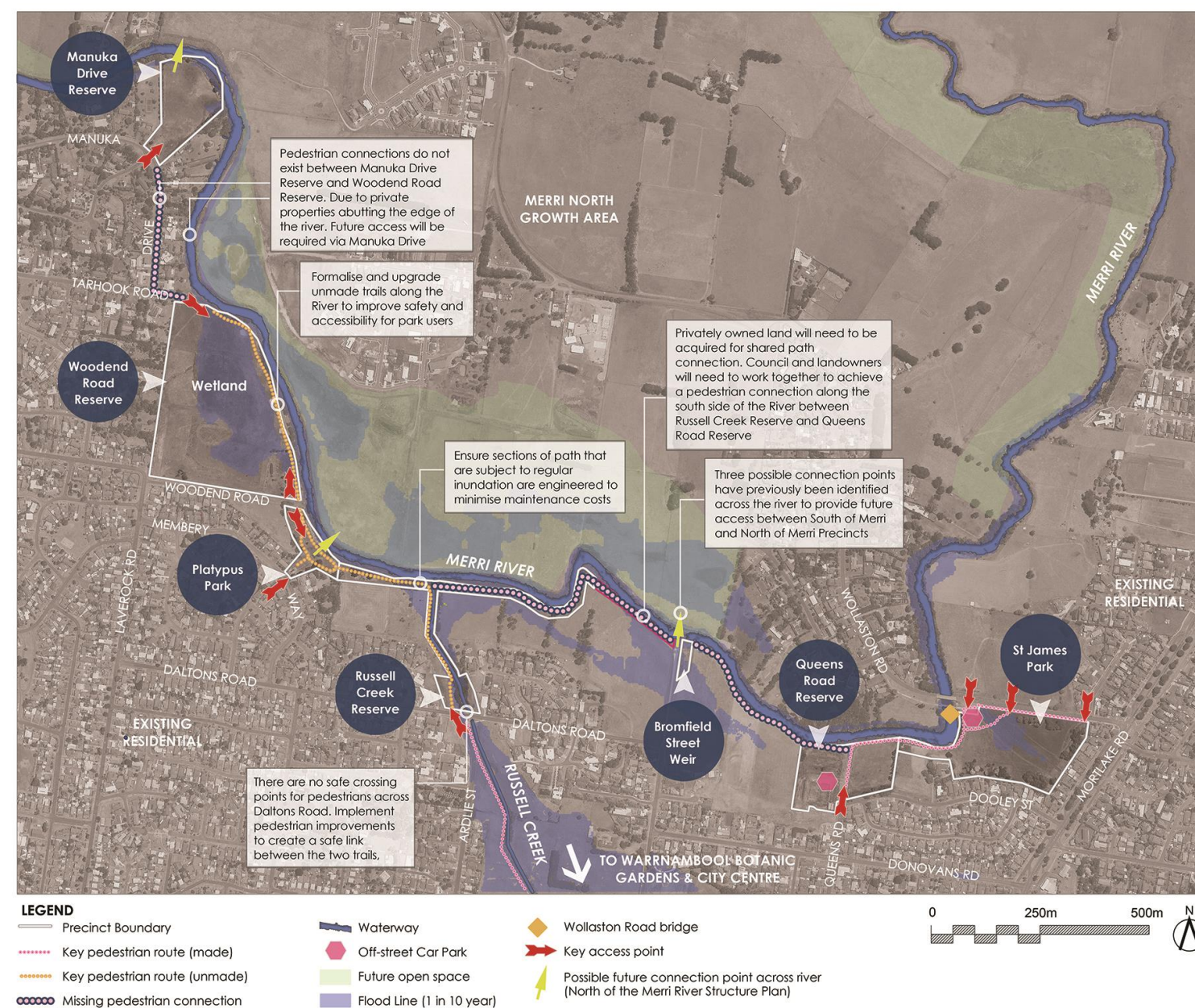
Limited pedestrian and bicycle ('shared') access throughout the seven reserves is currently one of the biggest constraints of the Precinct. The limited access and connectivity was mentioned on numerous occasions in the consultation feedback. Key points to note regarding shared access include:

- There is an existing concrete shared path network in St James Park and Queens Road Reserve and a small section of path at Platypus Park near the playground. Apart from these, there are no other constructed paths.
- There is an opportunity to create a linear shared path network in the South of Merri Precinct which extends the full length of the Precinct. This would need to be a combination of on-road and off-road paths and requires acquisition of some private land.
- There is an existing trail along Russell's Creek to the south of Daltons Road. A safe pedestrian and cyclist crossing point is required at Daltons Road in order to connect the Russell's Creek and South of Merri shared path.
- Passive surveillance of the Precinct is important to ensure visitors feel safe. There are some areas in the Precinct which currently have poor surveillance, including a section of shared path in St James Park between the River and residential lots and along the edge of Russell's Creek.
- New river crossings will be built through the development process for the North of Merri growth area. These will create important physical connections for residents on the south side of the river to access existing and future open space on the north side.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate universal design principles in the development of the Precinct to provide safe and equitable access for all community members regardless of the user's ability.

There are informal parking areas at the end of Woodend Road, Bromfield Street and in the north-west corner of St James Park. The only constructed car park is located at Queens Road Reserve. If the Precinct is to become a popular recreation destination, including river access for kayaking, car parking arrangements need to be reviewed to ensure convenient parking is provided at both ends of the Precinct.

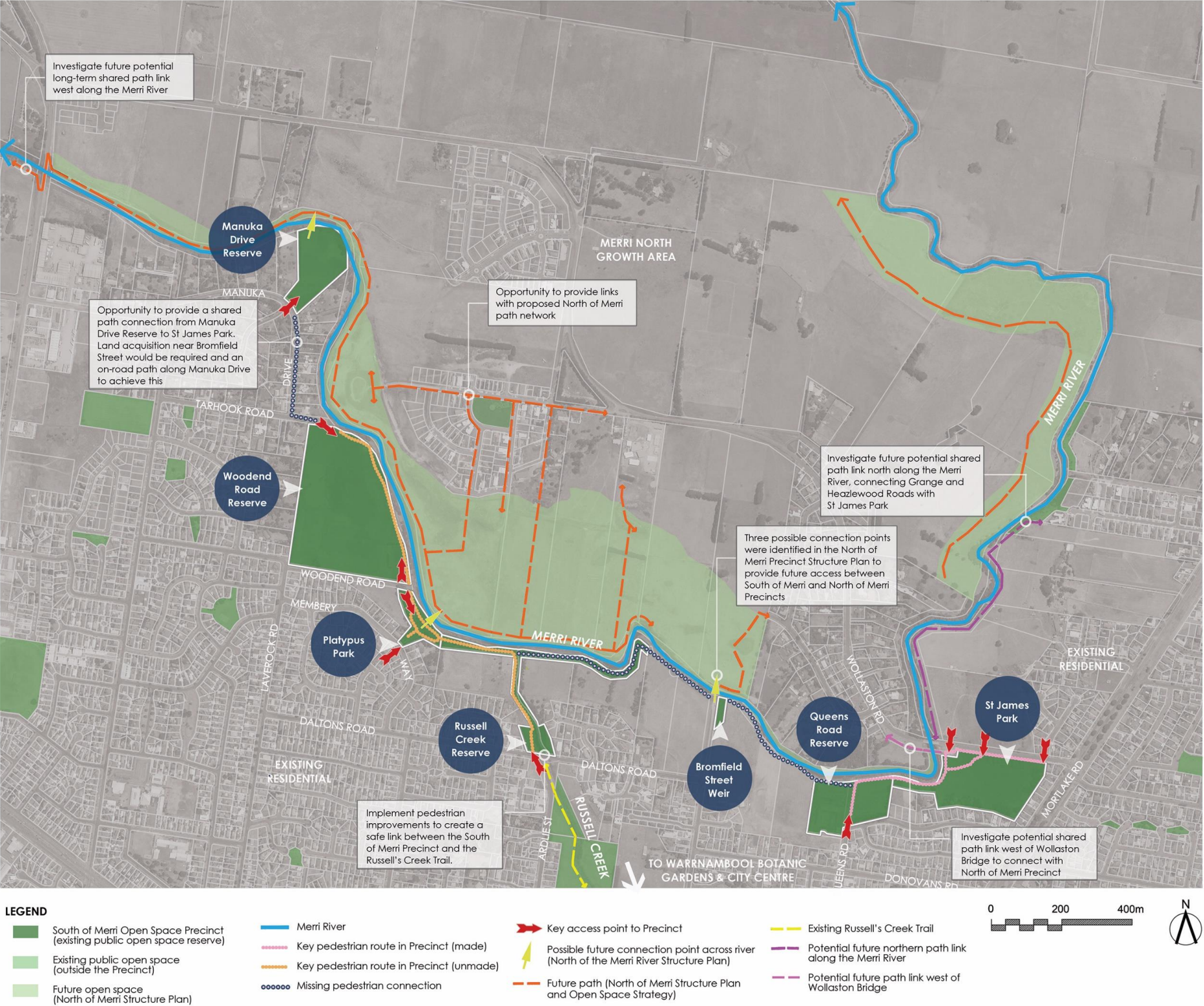
Plan 4 shows existing access to, from and within the Precinct and Plan 5 shows the Precinct in the context of the broader shared path network.

Plan 4 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Access



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Plan 5 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct – Broader Shared Path Network



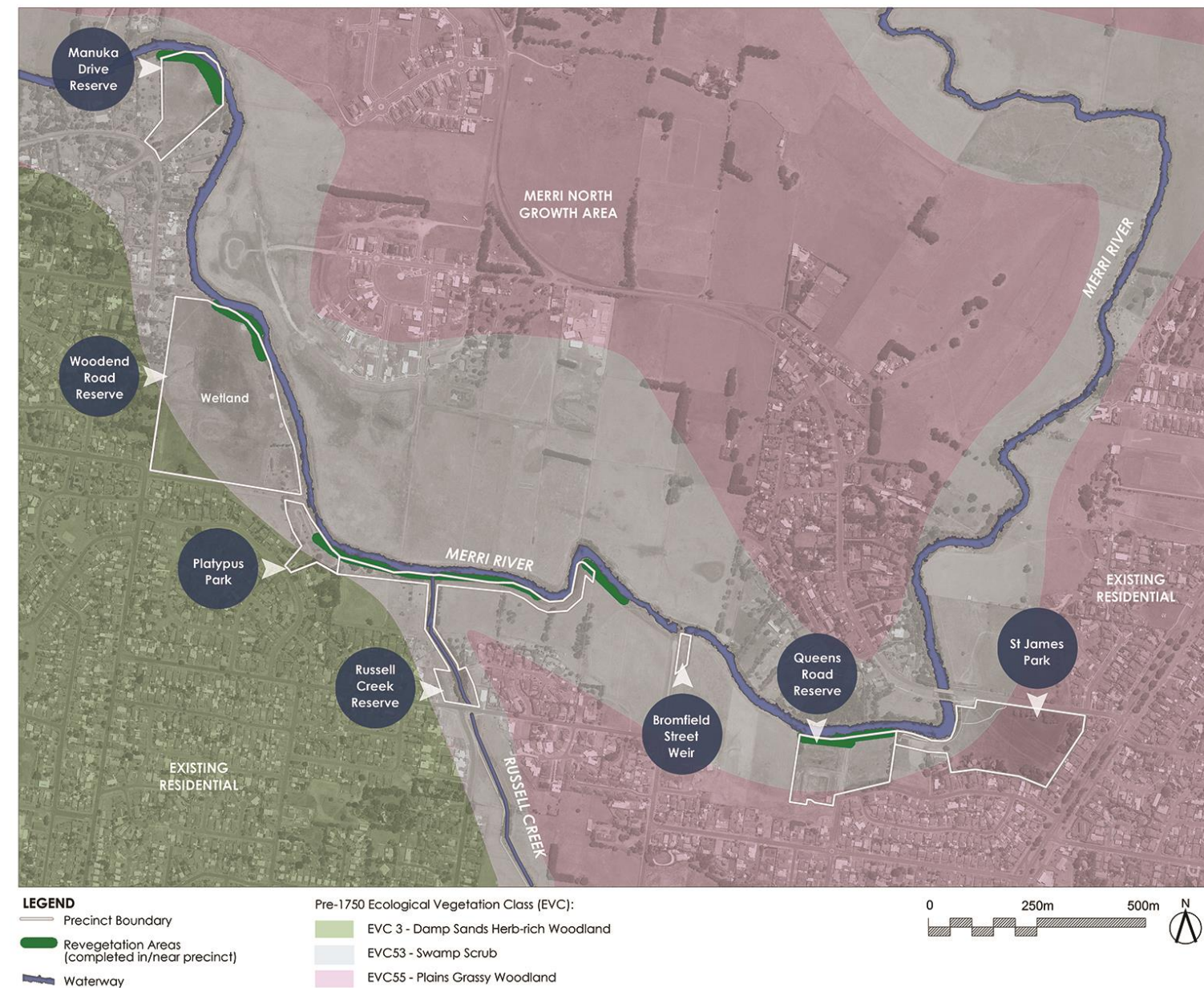
South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

7. ENVIRONMENT

The Merri River and its tributaries are highly valued by the community. They support a range of flora and fauna and include important wildlife corridors. Key points to note include:

- The Precinct supports a diverse range of fauna, including Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), Rakali or Native Water-rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) and the Hairy Burrowing Crayfish (*Engaeus sericatus*) (GHCMA, 2019). Residents report seeing a wide range of bird species, and Lathams' Snipe have been recorded in the precinct. Recent in-stream and revegetation works by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA and their partners have significantly improved Black Bream (*Acanthopagrus butcheri*) and Estuary Perch (*Macquaria colonorum*) habitat.
- There is a mixture of grasslands and more densely vegetated areas along the waterway, which play an important role in floodplain maintenance by stabilising the river bank.
- Modelled vegetation prior to 1750 in the precinct include Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland (EVC3), Swamp Scrub (EVC53) and Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC55). Refer to Plan 6.
- Since European settlement, vegetation has been substantially modified, with limited remnant vegetation remaining. In 2005, EVC modelled mapping showed only Swamp Scrub (EVC53) present in the Precinct. It is important that local indigenous vegetation is selected when planting in the Merri River and Russell's Creek riparian zones. Species selection can be further informed as new information comes to light.
- Substantial areas of weed removal and revegetation has occurred. Plan 6 shows some of these revegetation locations. There is an opportunity to continue weed removal and revegetation activities along the river throughout the Precinct.
- Weeds are a constant threat, coming from neighbouring properties and further afield (airborne or introduced by animals). Weeds compete with native vegetation and reduce success of seedling growth in revegetation areas. Working in partnership with local community groups and educating local residents about ways to minimise weed spread may help to combat the weed problem.
- The condition and health of the river is closely connected to the value of the Precinct for public use and recreation and is a key driver to protect and restore its natural values. Threats to river health include poor water quality, invasive fauna and flora, urban development and subsequent increases in stormwater. (Estuary Watch, 2015)
- The placement and design of assets and park infrastructure must be carefully considered to ensure river health and habitat for flora and fauna is maintained and, where possible, improved.

Plan 6 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Environment showing modelled EVCs



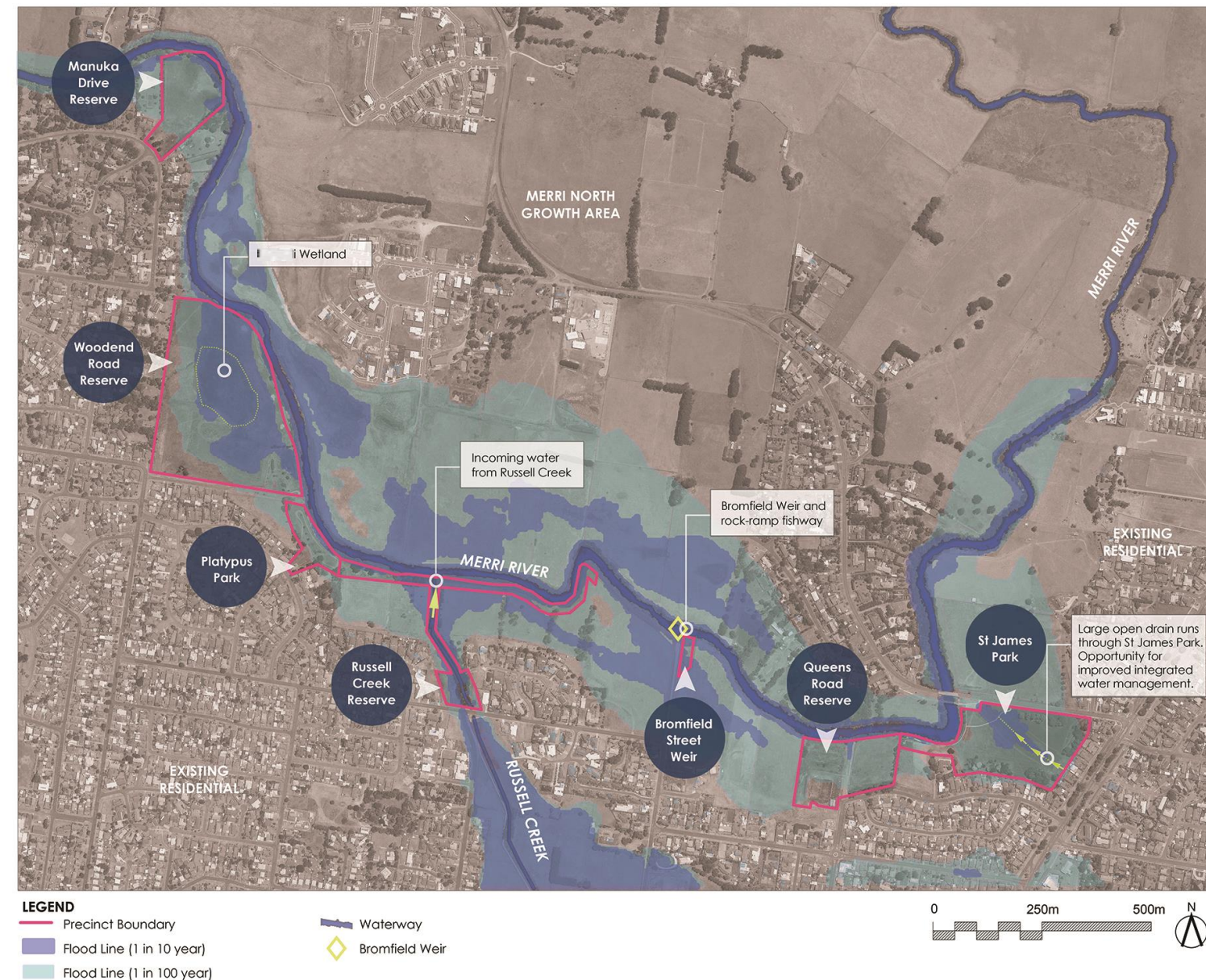
South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

8. FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

The Merri River floodplain through Warrnambool is well defined through the Precinct area. The Precinct areas are regularly inundated and even minor events can cause disruption. Key points to note include:

- The Merri River and Russell's Creek waterways often flood simultaneously which causes road and open space path closures. It is not unusual for flooding to inundate the precinct areas for up to two days as the flood peak passes through.
- There is currently no formal flood warning service for the Merri River at Warrnambool. Weather Warnings and Flood Watches are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, which provides some information about when flooding may occur.
- The 10% AEP (or 1 in 10 year) flood event is generally considered a minor flood event causing minor damage and disruptions to the Precinct areas. The 1% AEP (or 1 in 100 year) event is considered a major flood scenario that can cause major damage and disruption. The 10% AEP and 1% AEP are shown in Plan 7.
- A flood regime remains an important environmental consideration within the Precinct areas.
- Woodend Road Reserve shows signs of environmental value that may form an important consideration in the overall Precinct Plan.
- The post-flood environment has some positive aspects. While floods can be disruptive, they also promote growth of vegetation and can provide a positive overall input to waterway health. A healthy waterway creates an amenity that attracts passive and active users including walkers, anglers and a range of other users.
- A healthy waterway has positive economic benefits due to its attraction of not only users, but also through land values. However, flooding causes widespread damage to roads and other infrastructure and is estimated to cost Warrnambool on average \$500,000 per annum (Cardno, 2010).
- Any future works in the precinct, including paths, require careful engineering consideration to ensure erosion risks are minimised, floodwaters are not impeded, new maintenance issues are avoided and Precinct users are safe.

Plan 7 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Flooding



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

9. CULTURE

The Merri River is a valued part of the cultural landscape of the Eastern Maar Nation. The Eastern Maar people are the traditional custodians of the lands of this general area. Key points to note include:

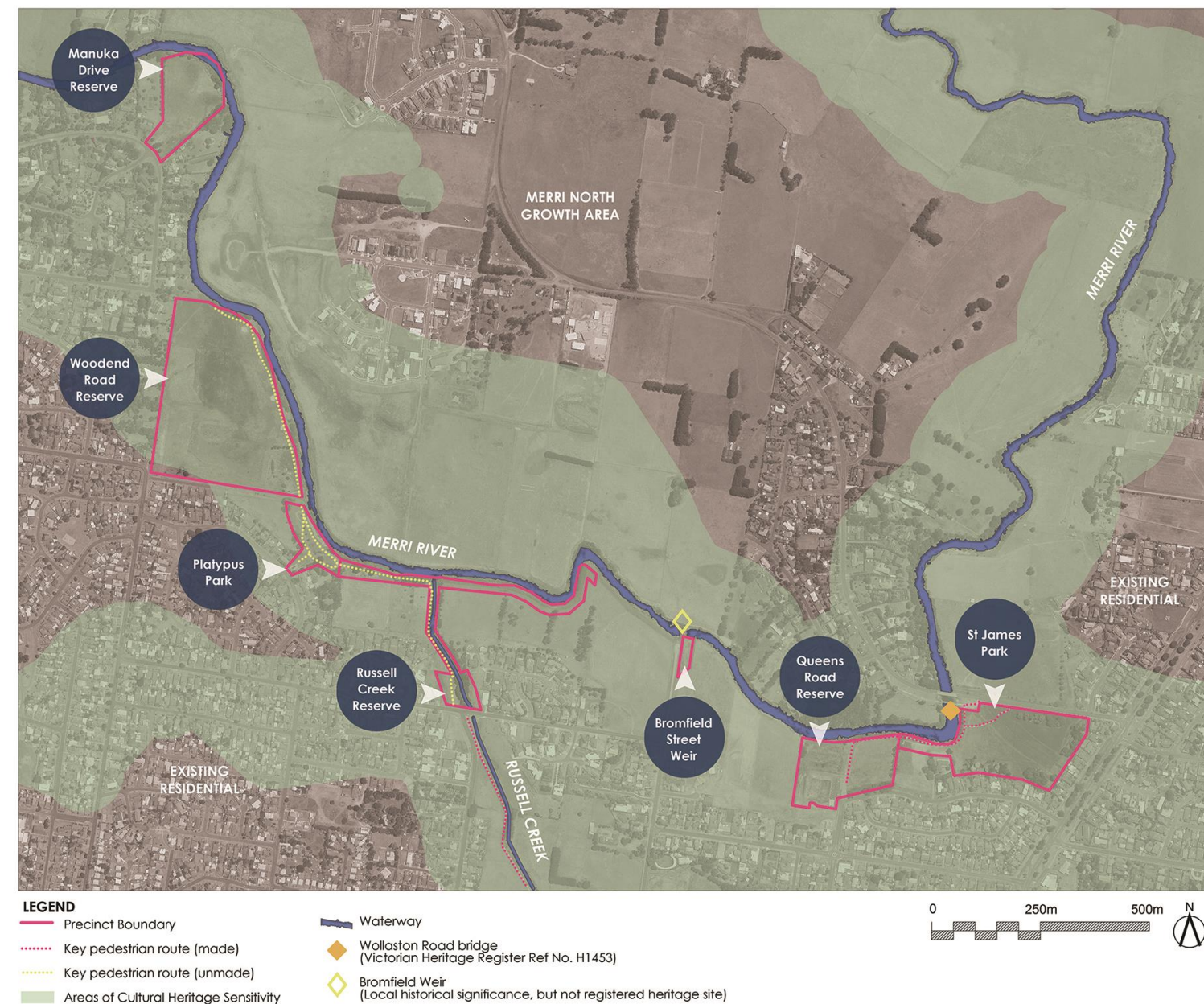
- Knowledge surrounding the cultural landscape within which the precinct sits continues to be revealed through discussions with Eastern Maar and grounds surveys.
- There is an opportunity to reflect on Eastern Maar values by incorporating references through infrastructure, such as art/sculpture and cultural landscaping work.
- Many of the public open space reserves in the precinct are officially unnamed and there is an opportunity to name public open space reserves and/or park features using Maar language.
- The Rakali is an important species associated with this part of the cultural landscape.

10. HERITAGE

Heritage considerations within the precinct include:

- All land within the Precinct is identified within the Cultural Heritage Sensitivity mapping area (ACHRS, 2019), as shown on Plan 8.
- Any future development of land considered to be a high impact activity and likely to have a significant impact on any Aboriginal cultural heritage will require the preparation and approval of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).
- The Wollaston Bridge adjacent to St James Park is a well-known suspension bridge which is covered by a Heritage Overlay and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (Ref No. H1453) and the National Trust (DELWP 2019).
- The bluestone weir at the end of Bromfield Street is noted as having historical significance, although it does not have a heritage overlay applying to it. (MESH, 2011)
- Queens Road Reserve has a varied history since European settlement, including as part of the City's water supply, the YMCA facility, market garden, and BMX track. Remnants of these uses still exist on site, including a retaining wall and the pump shed.
- Remnants of agricultural use of the precinct at the Russell's Creek junction, including a windmill and milk cans(also used contemporarily as a geocache).

Plan 8 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Heritage



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

11. VIEWS

The land rises up away from the Merri River towards the residential houses and surrounding streets. There are many good viewing points from within the Precinct and there are a number of short and long-range vistas. Some of the best views are at bends in the river, where the views of the river and landscape beyond can be viewed in both directions.

The pleasant scenery in the Precinct is considered an important value by visitors and a number of respondents noted that they would not want to see views from the Precinct impacted as a result of improvements. The South of Merri Open Space Precinct Views plan (Plan 9) shows the key viewing points in the precinct. These key views are discussed in detail in the South of Merri Open Space Precinct Existing Conditions report (Appendix 1). Figures 12 and 13 show two key views of the Merri River.

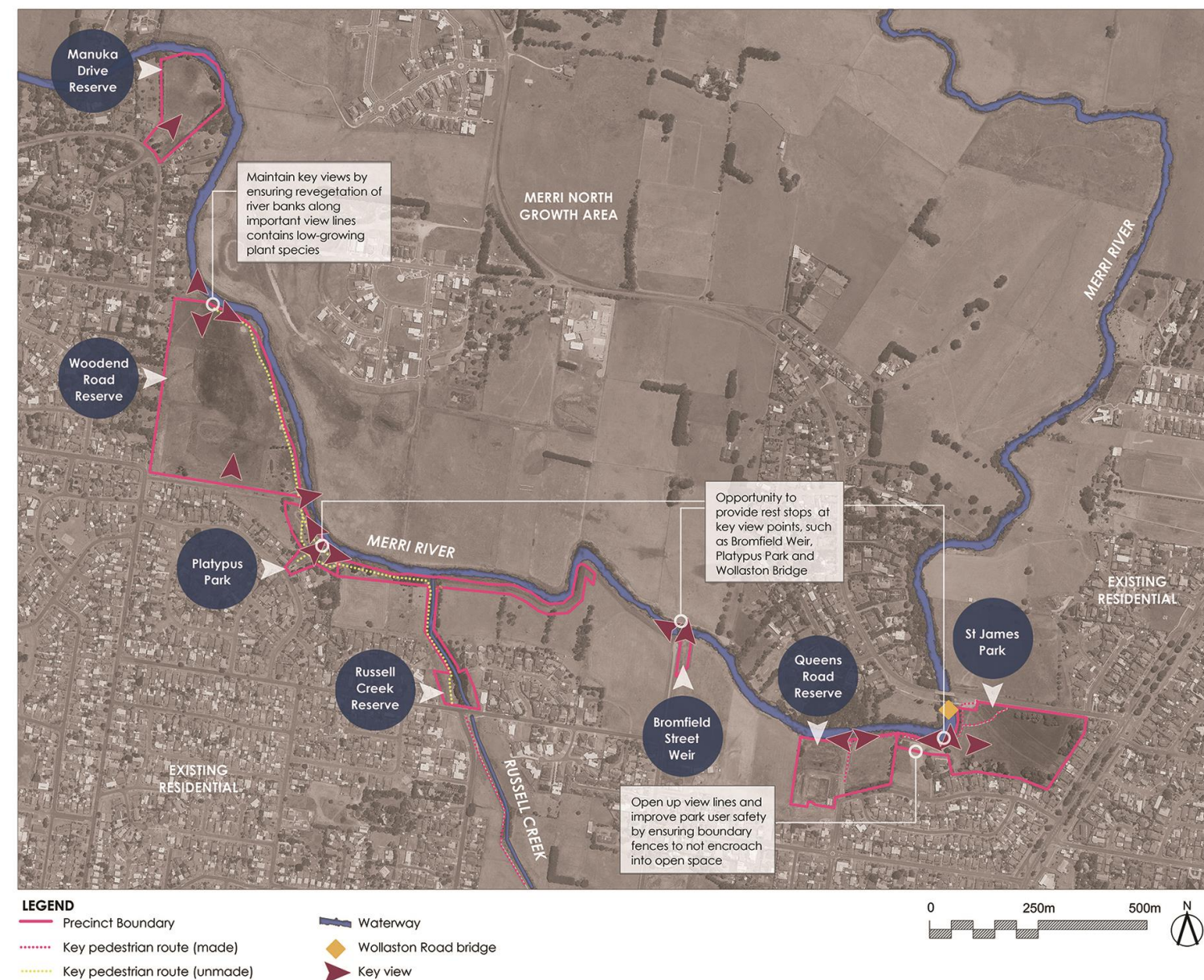
Figure 12 – A key view of the Merri River looking east from the end of Woodend Road



Figure 13 – A key view of the Merri River looking east from the walking path in Queens Road Reserve.



Plan 9 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Views



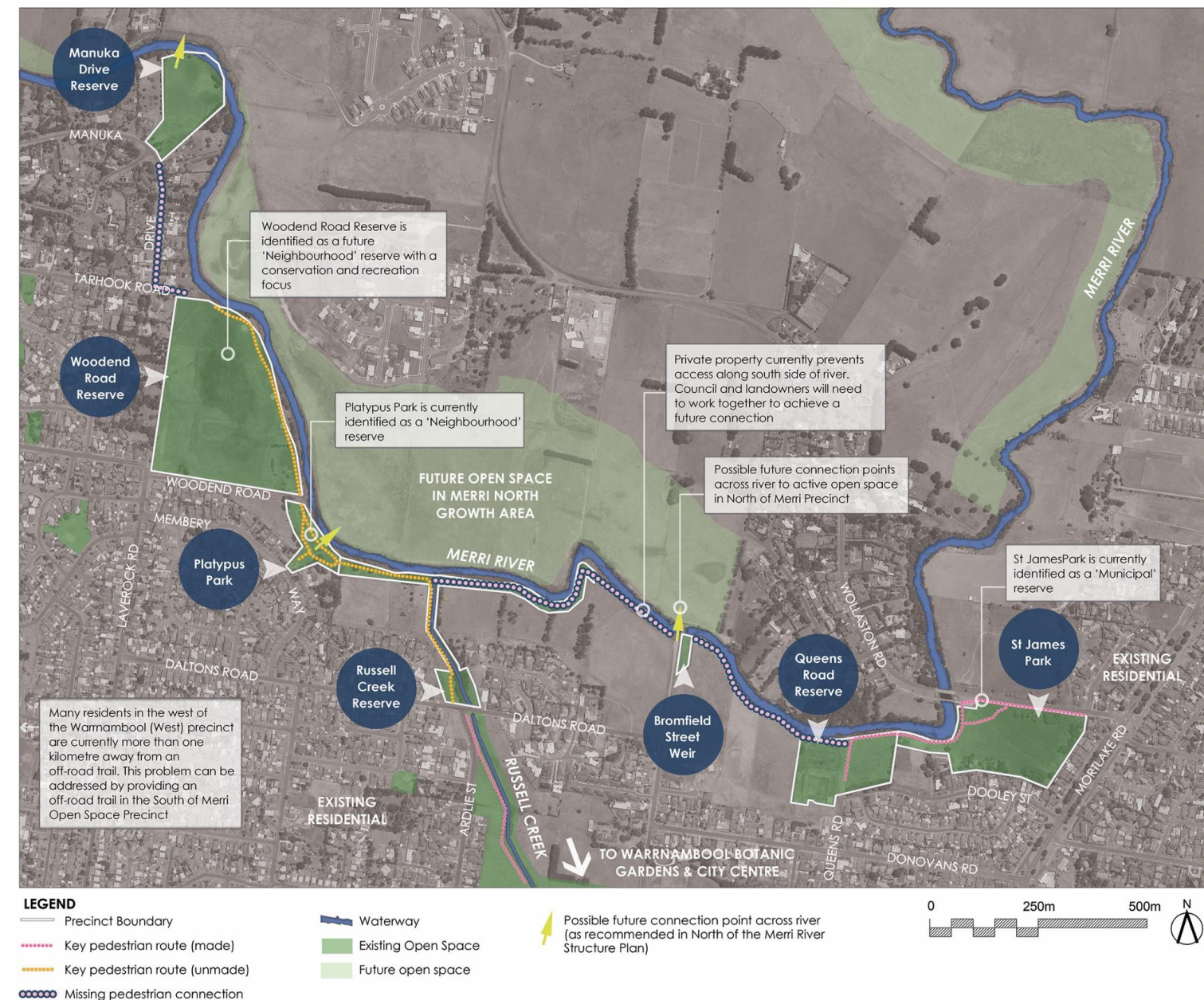
South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

12. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The South of Merri Open Space Precinct currently offers a range of informal recreational experiences (Plan 10). Key points to note include:

- There are few constructed paths within the seven open space reserves. The inadequate access to and throughout the Precinct areas, combined with the lack of park infrastructure, results in the Precinct being underutilised as a recreational space.
- The Precinct has great potential to provide linkages and recreation opportunities for surrounding residents and visitors as well as providing important connections with the recreation facilities and future sporting facilities that will be provided in the North of Merri Growth Area.
- The community consultation revealed that a range of recreational experiences are had by visitors including walking, dog walking, appreciating the amenity, fishing, playing, kayaking and bird watching. Walking was the most common activity.
- The Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2014 (pp. 58-68) has a park classification system with four classifications, being Regional, Municipal, Neighbourhood and Local. Not all reserves within the precinct are included in the classification table, possibly because they are undeveloped. St James Park is identified as a higher level 'Municipal' reserve, Platypus Park (also referred to as Membery Way Reserve) is identified as a 'Neighbourhood' reserve and Woodend Road Reserve is nominated as a 'Neighbourhood' park once improvements are made. The remaining public open space reserves are most likely to fall into the classification of 'Local' reserve. However, there is an opportunity for municipal reserve facilities to be shared across St James Park and Queens Road Reserve due to their neighbouring location.
- The open space strategy focuses on eight key principles, including **Accessible, Adaptable, Connected, Diverse, Efficient, Equitable** and **Protective of the Environment**. This Open Space Precinct Plan provides an opportunity to create a Precinct which better achieves these principles. The Precinct is located within the Warrnambool (West) and Warrnambool (Botanic) open space precincts. The South of Merri Open Space Precinct currently falls short in achieving some open space principles.

Plan 10 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Recreation and Open Space



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

PART C

PRECINCT RECOMMENDATIONS



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

13. SOUTH OF MERRI OPEN SPACE PRECINCT PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES

The Precinct Plan seeks to guide the development of the Precinct to create a space with a local theme that reflects the vision of the surrounding community and that of the City. The Plan seeks to enhance the natural beauty of the Precinct, respect the cultural landscape and natural environment and encourage increased participation and use of all seven public open space reserves.

The Precinct Plan recommendations seek to achieve nine key objectives. These objectives are detailed in Figure 14. The objectives have been developed following site visits and site analysis, input from Council, and feedback from the community and partners about how the Precinct should be developed in the future.

Figure 14: Key Objectives of the Precinct Plan



14. PRECINCT DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the design recommendations discussed below are illustrated as an overall concept plan – refer Plan 11.

1. IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

There are opportunities in all seven parks to significantly improve pedestrian access. According to the community consultation feedback, the primary reasons for underutilisation of the Precinct are that the existing shared path terminates at Queens Road Reserve and that there are no formed paths in the other sections of the Precinct.

Some of the key improvements to access through the Precinct will include:

- South of Merri Shared Path - a new shared path extending throughout the Precinct designed to allow visitors to walk from St James Park to Manuka Drive Reserve.
- Loop paths, providing circuits for walking and cycling at the wetlands in Woodend Road reserve and St James Park, and across the Merri River incorporating planned paths to the north.
- Three new pedestrian crossings providing access over the Merri River to the north side will be provided through the North of Merri development process. The requirement for these crossings was determined during preparation of the North of the Merri Structure Plan. Crossing points were identified in the North of the Merri Structure Plan at Manuka Drive, Platypus Park and Bromfield Weir. The Open Space Precinct Plan proposes an alternative option at Woodend Road reserve to the Platypus Park crossing and an alternative crossing point in Manuka Drive. These alternative locations are shown on Plan 11.
- Safety improvements to pedestrian access in Queens Road, and near the intersection of Daltons Road and Ardlie Street to provide a safer pedestrian access.

Once implemented, the shared path network in the South of Merri Precinct will provide approximately 5.5 kilometres of shared path within the precinct, as well as the potential to connect up to 25km of future off-road shared paths/trails across the City. In accordance with Council's path standards, concrete is recommended as the construction material due to its longevity and minimal maintenance requirements.

2. RESPECT AND PROMOTE CULTURAL VALUES

The Eastern Maar are the traditional custodians of the lands in the Precinct. There is a strong connection of the Eastern Maar and the Merri River. Works to improve the South of Merri Open Space Precinct will involve ongoing collaboration with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation to ensure works are sensitive to the cultural values of the area. The following opportunities have been identified for the Precinct:

- There is an opportunity to promote Eastern Maar values by incorporating references through infrastructure, art/sculpture and/or cultural landscaping work
- Consideration of 'treading softly' to works occurring in the precinct, where possible. For example, low intervention works and natural materials should be used where possible.
- Utilise native vegetation along all sections of the Merri River bank and in most plantings throughout the precinct. Native vegetation is proposed in all of the seven public open space

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

reserves. The only public open space reserve where exotic vegetation is proposed to be retained is in St James Park. Further investigative work may help inform suitable species.

- Many of the reserves in the precinct are officially unnamed and there is an opportunity to name parks and/or park features using Maar language.
- There may be potential for the Precinct to play a role in employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, such as management of the natural environment, the incorporation of culture into infrastructure, and tourism.

3. ENCOURAGE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

There are numerous opportunities to incorporate healthier design considerations into planning for the Precinct. Some of the key changes which will help to encourage active participation with positive health and wellbeing outcomes include:

- Support active living by providing a connected network of shared paths, particularly for walking and cycling.
- Support active living by providing a range of recreational opportunities including play and water sports, such as kayaking, canoeing and paddle-boarding. There is potential for the Precinct to become part of a broader kayak/canoe trail for recreation and tourism.
- Create stimulating and attractive routes, providing shade trees and convenient rest stops throughout the Precinct to make it a comfortable experience for users as well as plenty of interesting play opportunities and landmarks.
- Safety can be a barrier to participation and use of recreation facilities (Heart Foundation, 2004). Pedestrian safety can be enhanced in the Precinct by ensuring new development proposals adjacent the Precinct provide good surveillance of the Precinct through appropriate orientation of buildings and windows and discouraging high, solid fencing along reserve edges. Paths should also have good clearance on each side to improve surveillance to and from the path and of the path ahead. And, safe crossing points should be provided at park entries, including the southern entry to Russell's Creek Reserve which links to the Russell's Creek trail.
- To provide a range of possible shared path/trail distances to support different abilities, build fitness and provide the potential to host future running/walking/cycling events.

4. EXPAND THE RANGE OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Improvements to the infrastructure provided in the Precinct is required in order to encourage participation and use of the Precinct.

In deciding on what facilities to provide in the Precinct it is important to recognise the nearby recreational experiences on offer, including existing and planned activities. The future recreation facilities on the north side of the Merri River in the new growth area will offer both passive and active open recreation opportunities, likely including sporting grounds. There is no need to replicate formalised sporting activities on the south side. The focus of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct will instead be on experiencing the natural environment and encouraging informal recreation and opportunities for play and access to nature.

Feedback during community consultation in response to the question 'why don't people currently visit' included varied responses, with comments such as; 'no facilities', 'no formed walking trails',

'no reason to visit', 'nothing for kids to do' and 'there are better places to visit' relating to infrastructure and activities within the Precinct. With these responses in mind, the Precinct Plan identifies a number of new infrastructure items which will seek to resolve the lack of facilities and make it a place people want to visit. Through the proposed upgrades to the Precinct, a range of land and water-based activities will be available, including walking, dog-walking, cycling, running, play, bird and fauna observing, fishing, kayaking, canoeing and paddle-boarding. In order to encourage these uses, the following changes are recommended to park facilities and infrastructure within the Precinct:

- New paths with sufficient width to provide for the shared use of walkers, runners, dog-walkers and cyclists. These shared paths will provide a diverse range of experiences, passing along the river's edge, looping around St James Park and the wetland and providing access to the various features, such as play spaces and river crossings, throughout the precinct.
- Designated off-leash dog walking/playing area away from fauna habitat locations.
- New playspace and community activity area/gathering space provided at Queens Road Reserve.
- A 'Nature Play or Sculpture Trail' with a local theme, e.g. reflecting the natural environment and/or references to the cultural landscape
- Scooter area/pump track. Upgrading the existing hard-stand area (disused car park) at Queens Road Reserve for children to use their scooters and bikes
- Kayak, canoe and paddle-board launching facilities. These non-motorised water-craft launching facilities are proposed in two locations along the Precinct, with one above the Bromfield Weir at Queens Road Reserve and one below the Bromfield Weir at Woodend Road Reserve. There will need to be a place at Bromfield Weir where kayakers and canoeists can get out of the water and relaunch on the other side of the weir.
- Increased habitat by extending revegetation areas. Ensuring a diverse mix of native vegetation is provided to encourage birdlife and other local fauna.
- New wayfinding signage, to make it clear what recreational facilities are provided and where they can be found in the Precinct.

5. IMPROVE ACCESS FOR ALL USERS AND MODES OF TRANSPORT

Universal Access

There is a need to provide safe and equitable access to all infrastructure for all community members. Universal design should be considered at project initiation, design and delivery phases for all aspects of infrastructure, including, but not limited to: car parking, paths, public toilet facilities, playspace, activity areas, the pontoon, seating, road crossing points, signage, etc.

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking facilities, including places for people to lock their bikes, should also be provided for those wanting to ride to the shared path and walk sections of it, or those wanting to stay and play or utilise community facilities. Bicycle parking facilities are proposed at Woodend Road Reserve, Queens Road Reserve and St James Park near the proposed car parking areas.

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Vehicle Parking

There is currently one constructed car park existing at Queens Road Reserve and one small informal car park at St James Park. The Precinct Plan identifies four opportunities to incorporate car parking in the Precinct. The proposed changes are to formalise the parking that exists and to expand the number of spaces to accommodate the anticipated increase in visitor numbers as the Precinct develops and becomes a more popular place to visit. The four parking locations include:

Queens Road Reserve and Woodend Reserve

The existing Queens Road Reserve car park, which provides 30 spaces, including 2 disabled bays, has an all-weather surface and is positioned mostly outside the 1 in 100 year flood line, making it an ideal site for parking. The Plan shows this car park as being retained in its current location and configuration, with a few additional spaces.

Kayak, canoe and paddle-board launching sites are proposed at both Queens Road Reserve and Woodend Road Reserve. It is important to provide convenient car parking near these launching facilities. There is space at Woodend Road Reserve to provide a few spaces for car and trailer parking for those with watercraft on trailers.

It is recommended that Woodend Road Reserve be upgraded to a sealed surface along its full extent towards the river and the turning area and sealed indented car parking spaces provided for visitors to the wetlands, shared path users and kayakers and canoeists.

St James Park

Car parking is a desirable feature in Municipal parks, such as St James park, and in accordance with the adopted St James Concept Plan, a formalised car park could be provided here at the eastern end of the precinct as the starting place for those wanting to walk on the shared path and for visitors to the Wollaston Bridge. The entry point near Wollaston Bridge and the exact location of the car park will be determined during detailed design.

Bromfield Street

Another opportunity to provide some formalised car parking is at Bromfield Weir. In the event that a vehicle bridge is constructed at the end of Bromfield Street to connect with the North of Merri residential growth area, some car parking could be provided at the edge of the road, in the form of indented or angled parking.

6. RETAIN KEY VIEWS

As described in section 9 and the Existing Conditions report, there are many key views through the Precinct. The pleasant scenery is considered an important value by residents and a number of respondents noted that they would not want to see views impacted on as a result of improvements. There are a number of recommendations in the Plan which seek to ensure key views are retained and there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy these key views. They include:

- Providing rest stops and seating areas that allow visitors to enjoy the views.
- Ensuring revegetation works involve the selection of low growing species in the key view areas to maintain views for visitors.

- Enhancing key view lines by improving the appearance of the landscape within the viewline. Weed management will also assist in improving viewlines, as will providing path access to areas that are currently inaccessible, such as Russell's Creek Reserve, where new views of the river may be provided. One major improvement to key views in the Woodend Road Reserve will be the removal of agricultural fencing and rehabilitation of the wetlands, including new planting.

7. RESPECT FLOOD FUNCTION AND PROVIDE FLOOD-RESILIENT DESIGN

The Precinct is regularly inundated in several sections during minor and major flood events, sometimes resulting in the closure of sections of open space paths and roads. Recognising the Precinct plays an essential flood plain and flood storage function in Warrnambool is important in planning for the future of the Precinct. Flood risk management in the Precinct will involve working with natural processes. The Plan makes the following recommendations in relation to flooding:

- Rehabilitating the existing wetland in Woodend Road Reserve (Figure 15). This wetland is currently fenced-off from public access and used as a grazing paddock. Through rehabilitation and revegetation of the wetland, there is scope to provide additional habitat, food and breeding grounds for local fauna and provide a unique environmental feature along the South of Merri shared path for people to visit. The wetland will also help to improve stormwater quality before entering the Merri River. This wetland will be temporarily covered by water, and is not intended to be a permanent water body year-round.
- Integration of signage and features that educate visitors on flooding and integrated water management within the Precinct.
- Incorporate new integrated water management features, by redesigning some open drains, such as Woodend Road Reserve, Queens Road Reserve and St James Park (Figure 16). Water-holding capacity of these drains could be increased slightly through the design of more naturally aligned, vegetated swale drains. The aim of redesigning these drains to vegetated swales is to improve the appearance, improve stormwater quality before it enters the Merri River and slow the rate of flow of stormwater into the river to help reduce scouring and erosion at the river outlet. Integrated water management options regarding stormwater will be investigated during the next phase of wetland restoration and works related to drainage in each reserve.
- Paths and infrastructure will be designed to suit their location. For example, where possible large infrastructure items, including the playspace and activity area/community gathering space are located above the 1 in 10 AEP flood level.
- Surfaces and finishes will be selected to be flood-resilient.
- Reduce erosion of the river banks by extending rehabilitation of the riparian zone along the river.

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Figure 15 – The wetland at Woodend Road Reserve (drone view)



Figure 16 – Constructed, open drainage channel in St James Park



8. ENHANCE HABITAT FOR FLORA AND FAUNA AND BIODIVERSITY CORRIDORS

The Merri River and Russell's Creek support a range of flora and fauna and some sections function as important wildlife corridors. The following opportunities have been identified to help improve habitat and biodiversity in the Precinct:

- Continue rehabilitation of the Merri River riparian zone. This will provide an important continuous biodiversity corridor along the south side of the river.
- Rehabilitate the wetland in Woodend Road Reserve. The rehabilitation of this wetland will significantly improve habitat for flora and fauna and will extend the biodiversity corridor into the park. Careful design of shared paths to provide set back and buffers for particular species (e.g. snakes) is required.
- Plant local indigenous vegetation when planting in the Merri River and Russell's Creek riparian zones to provide habitat and food for local fauna.
- All revegetation activities can be designed to ensure that other key objectives of the Precinct are still achieved. ie. ensuring tall vegetation is not planted along the full extent of the river. It is possible to alternative higher and lower vegetation to retain key views and allow visitors many opportunities to appreciate the beauty of the river and wetlands and to create an open and safe environment for park users.
- Incorporate environmental education such as information about Rakali, Platypus, native fish and importance of revegetation works. Education will help visitors to gain a better appreciation of the local habitat and biodiversity corridors. Signage should also mention the importance of keeping dogs on leads along the shared path for the protection of local fauna, including platypus. Signs to inform appropriate fishing behavior to minimise impacts on the platypus are also recommended.
- Incorporate interpretive signage/sculpture/interactive features which provide information and/or reminders and links to the natural environment features of the Precinct.

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9. ENCOURAGE CLIMATE-CHANGE RESILIENT DESIGN AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION MEASURES

In the Southern Slopes (Victoria West), including Warrnambool, climate change projections include: increasing average temperatures, more hot days and warm spells, generally less rainfall in the cool season and increased intensity of extreme rainfall events, mean sea level will continue to rise and it is likely there will be a harsher fire-weather climate (CSIRO, 2016).

These climatic changes and associated alterations to meteorological cycles may result in plant deaths and changes in plant communities, encourage invasive weed species and change habitats for native fauna. The risks associated with climate change should be mitigated through careful planning and design. Many of the recommendations which will help to achieve other objectives of the Plan will also help to mitigate against the impacts of climate change. They include:

- ‘Greening’ the precinct with new tree planting will help to enhance the cooling effects (i.e. micro-climates) of green spaces and increase carbon storage.
- Selecting local indigenous plants suited to the local environment will ensure habitat for native fauna exists in the future.
- The South of Merri shared path provides important links for residents using non-motorised vehicles which helps to reduce fuel consumption. For example, North of Merri Residents will be able to cross the river on bicycles or by foot to travel into the Warrnambool City centre for work.
- Utilising natural materials, where possible, such as timber.
- Incorporation of WSUD features for the wetland and revegetation works along the Merri River will help to minimise the detrimental impacts of flooding.

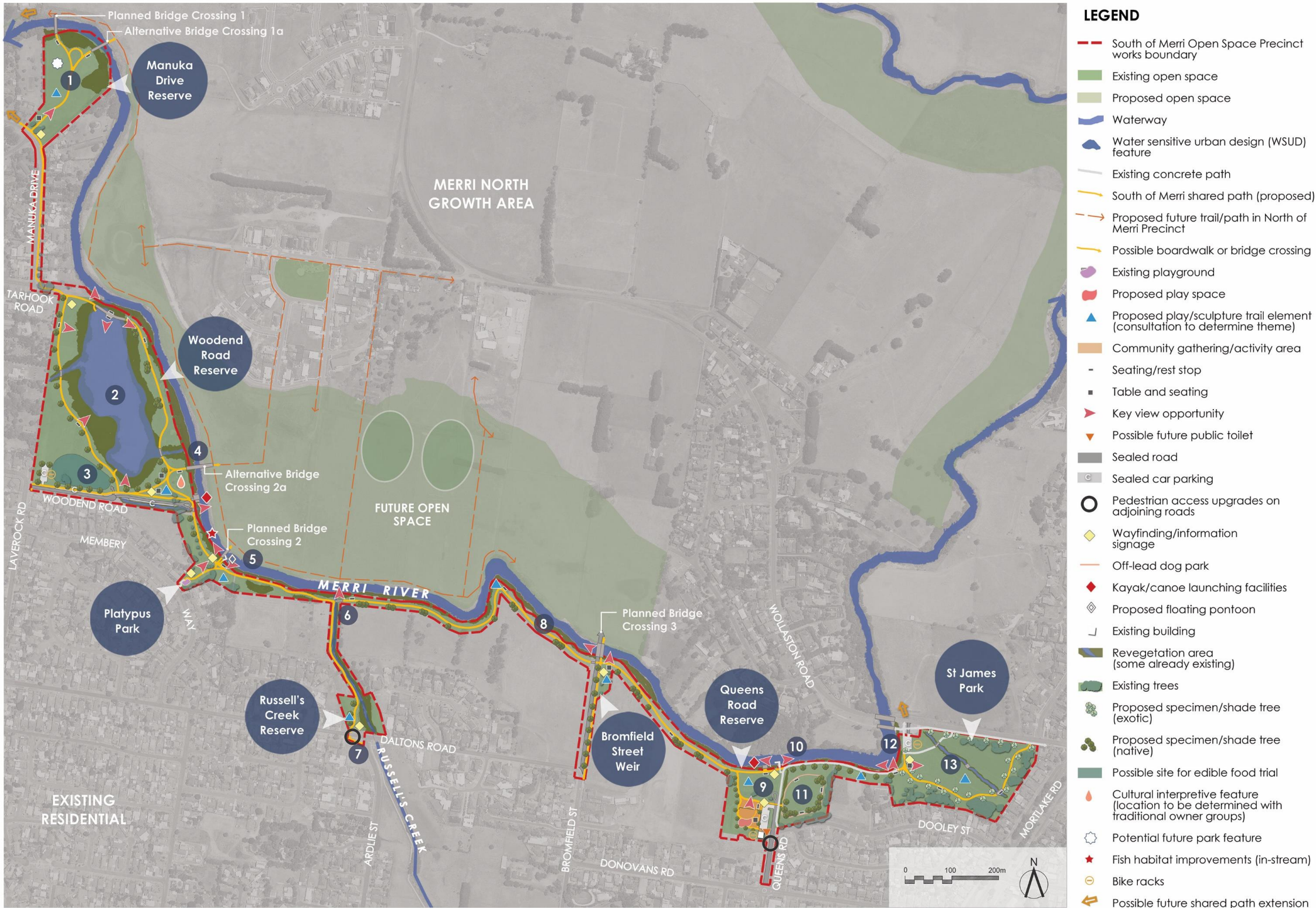
10. TO WORK IN COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS TO SEE THE PLAN IMPLEMENTED

The formation of partnerships will support positive changes in the Precinct and neighbourhood. Partnerships may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Traditional owners, represented by the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. Council will continue to collaborate with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
- Groups within the Merri River Alliance, such as Friends of Platypus Park, MAD for the Merri, Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network, Friends of St James Park, Fishcare Victoria, Ozfish, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and Wannon Water.
- Local residents, local developers and local landowners.
- Other partners as opportunities arise.

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Plan 11 – South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan



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SOUTH OF MERRI OPEN SPACE PRECINCT PLAN – PLAN 11 KEY ELEMENTS

1 SOUTH OF MERRI SHARED PATH

Establish a new South of Merri shared path from Manuka Drive Reserve to St James Park, with connections to the Russell's Creek Trail and future shared paths north of the Merri River. The shared path will loop around St James Park taking in views of Wollaston Bridge, travel west along the edge of the Merri River and loop around the rehabilitated wetland at Woodend Road Reserve, ultimately ending at Manuka Drive where it will cross the river to provide access to the North of Merri residential area.

The South of Merri shared path will provide interesting and interactive experiences with the natural environment as well as new infrastructure and a play/interactive sculpture trail along the way.

2 WETLAND RESTORATION

Rehabilitate the wetland in the reserve at the end of Woodend and Tarhook roads. New vegetation will be planted around the wetland to improve habitat and water quality. The new South of Merri shared path will loop around the wetland with rest stops at key viewing points. There are also opportunities near the wetland to reflect on Eastern Maar values through art/sculpture, infrastructure, and/or culturally informed landscape planting.

3 FOOD GROWING TRIAL SITE

A site of approximately 0.66Ha in size has been set aside for a trial nursery growing indigenous food plants. The proposal is to relocate the site from the end of Woodend Road further west onto higher ground which is less prone to flooding. The site can be accessed from Woodend Road. In the event that the trial site is not required, the land can be converted to public park space.

4 MERRI RIVER CROSSINGS

There are three planned Merri River crossings connecting to the North of Merri Precinct, to be provided through the development process. In the North of the Merri Structure Plan, pedestrian crossings are nominated at Manuka Drive Reserve and Platypus Park with one combined vehicle and pedestrian crossing at Bromfield Street Weir. The Precinct Plan shows a potential alternative location for the Platypus Park and Manuka Drive crossing. The alternative location for Platypus Park is located a short distance away from Woodend Road. The benefit of this alternate location would be closer proximity to the car parking at Woodend Road and improved visibility to and from the crossing for users. It would also connect with one of the future planned access paths in the North of Merri Precinct which links to the existing Witham playground reserve. The alternative crossing at Manuka Drive would provide a more direct link to the playground and planned open space areas north of the river.

5 FLOATING PONTOON

Establish a small floating pontoon at Platypus Park, with consideration given to any potential platypus habitat in the vicinity. This fishing pontoon is positioned near the instream fish habitat improvements in a location that is well-suited for fishing. The proposed pontoon at Platypus Park will complement the existing pontoon at Queen's Road reserve and will provide an alternative fishing place for anglers downstream of the Bromfield Weir. Education signs on fishing practices that minimise impacts on the platypus should be associated with the pontoon.

6 RUSSELL'S CREEK CROSSING

A new footbridge across Russell's Creek will form a key pedestrian link, connecting the eastern and western ends of the South of Merri shared path.

7 IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN SAFETY UPGRADES TO AND FROM SURROUNDING ROADS

Pedestrian safety will be enhanced in the Precinct by ensuring safe crossing points near park entries and access to and from adjoining streets is provided. Improvements are proposed at Queens Road (new path/pedestrian access improvements and crossing point), Daltons Road (crossing point and new path) and Manuka Drive (new path).

8 LINEAR CONNECTIONS & RIVERSIDE REVEGETATION

The linear spaces provide important connections between the parks within the precincts. It is proposed that these linear connections will provide passive recreation opportunities, with revegetation works, shared path and shade trees. There will be rest stops provided at regular intervals, and some linear spaces will incorporate play/art elements for added interest.

Extensive lengths of the Merri River have already been revegetated. The Plan shows the full length of the river being revegetated on the south side. This revegetation is important in providing a continuous wildlife corridor as well as improving water quality health and minimising erosion. It is important that the revegetation works also consider the recreational use of the Precinct and are designed appropriately with park users in mind. This means providing gaps in tall vegetation to retain key views of the river, ensuring any trees will not create limb-drop issues for users of the shared path and ensuring there is sufficient space between the shared path and the revegetation works areas for maintenance vehicle access.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

9 COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE

Queens Road Reserve is ideally suited to a community gathering space and potential events space, offering a range of experiences. This Reserve also contains an area of land which sits higher than the remainder of the reserve above the 1 in 100 year flood extent. This makes it an ideal location for constructed infrastructure, such as a play space, as the infrastructure will not impede water flows and the infrastructure will not be subject to flood damage as regularly as other locations in the Precinct. A playspace and scooter/pump park are proposed. Features of the activity area/community gathering space could include a seating area, bocce/petanque courts/basketball half court and shade trees. There is an existing building which could possibly be repurposed in the future to provide tourism opportunities, such as kayak/canoe hire, bicycle hire and/or café, and to support events. This space would also be an appropriate site for public toilets due to the existing service infrastructure in place and access from the car park. Opportunities to reflect the values of the precinct in the design of the space can be explored further, such as Eastern Maar values, and the history of the site.

10 KAYAK AND CANOE LAUNCHING FACILITIES

There are two proposed non-motorised sport launching sites for kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, etc. One is proposed at the end of Woodend Road, which is currently used informally, and one at Queens Road Reserve. A transfer point would need to be provided at Bromfield Weir to allow non-motorised water sport users to get out of the river and put their craft back in the water above or below the weir. Woodend Road and Queens Road reserve will have car parking provided for those transporting their kayaks/canoes in vehicles. It is intended that the launching facilities would be low-key ramps, with a non-slip surface positioned at the water's edge.

11 DOG PARK

Dogs off-lead present a threat to local fauna, including Platypus. It is important that dog on-lead and dog off-lead areas throughout the precinct are clearly identified. The Plan identifies one large off-lead area in Queens Road Reserve. This site is ideally suited to a dog park as it is located opposite the car park and activity area/community gathering space and is located well away from riverside habitat and revegetation areas.

12 CARPARK UPGRADES

Visitor car parking locations include:

5. Woodend Road Reserve. This reserve is likely to become a destination for many visitors due to the location of the wetlands and fishing pontoon. There are opportunities at Woodend Road to provide formalised on-street car parking as well as off-street car parking.
6. Queens Road Reserve. It is proposed to retain the existing off-street car park.
7. St James Park. There is an informal gravel car park near Wollaston Bridge where visitors currently park. It is proposed that this parking site near the bridge be formalised and sealed, as was originally proposed in the St James Landscape Masterplan.
8. Bromfield Street. Opportunity to provide on-street car parking when the road is sealed and a vehicle connection across the river is provided in the future. In the longer-term there is opportunity for off-street parking if the need arises.

13 WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN (WSUD) OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous opportunities throughout the Precinct to provide water sensitive urban design features at a local scale. The following opportunities are identified throughout the Precinct:

5. Woodend Road wetland
6. Woodend Road swale
7. Queens Road swale
8. St James park swale

The three swales are intended to be small open drainage swales planted with tussocks and rushes and other low-growing plants that have good water-filtering qualities. Where possible, these will be realigned slightly to provide a more natural appearance. They are currently straight, open drains at present.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

15. PRECINCT DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS – ILLUSTRATED EXAMPLES



Rakali Photo Credit: Con Boekel

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

16. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS- MANUKA DRIVE RESERVE

Manuka Drive Reserve is a medium-sized park of 2.7Ha in size. This reserve is the western-most park in the Precinct.

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

- New shared path in the centre of the reserve with a loop in the lower portion of the reserve.
- New directional signage at the reserve entry.
- Installation of nature play trail/interpretive sculpture feature.
- Potential to incorporate a new park feature, the design of which is to be determined following additional consultation as the park design implementation progresses.
- Additional revegetation opportunities along Merri River riparian zone, extending into the reserve.
- New seating and picnic table to take in views and provide rest stops along the shared path.
- Install 'management only' bollards along the park edge with Manuka Drive to stop unauthorised vehicles from entering.
- New shared path on the north side of Manuka Drive extending to Tarhook Road. This will provide an important connection between Manuka Drive Reserve and Woodend Road Reserve.
- New shared pedestrian/cycling bridge across the Merri River, providing access to future paths and open space in the North Merri precinct. This is to occur via the North of Merri development process.

Note: A pedestrian bridge crossing over the Merri River was identified in the North of the Merri Structure Plan (Option 1). An alternative crossing point was identified during the preparation of the Precinct Plan (Option 1a). The alternative link provides a more direct connection with the proposed residential neighbourhood and open space reserves provided within the new development area north of the river. It is recommended that the final location of the bridge be determined pending further discussion with the development community and more detailed studies to inform the bridge design. The provision of the loop park will ensure that either of the bridge options can be connected to the shared path via a link with the shared path loop.

Plan 12 - Manuka Drive Design Recommendations



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Figure 17 – Shared path concept for Manuka Drive



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

17. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS- WOODEND ROAD RESERVE

Woodend Road Reserve is a large reserve of 10.8Ha located towards the western end of the South of Merri Open Space Precinct. Much of the area is privately leased.

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

- Formalise the existing unmade path along the river between Tarhook Road and Woodend Road into a constructed shared path.
- Restore the wetland and provide a new circuit or 'loop' path around the wetland.
- Provide access points to the wetland for water quality testing, water bug monitoring and education.
- Revegetation opportunity along the riverbank and wetland. Provide low-growing planting in key view lines.
- New seating positioned to take in views.
- Incorporate nature play trail/interpretive sculpture.
- Pipe small section of open drain at end of Tarhook Road (approx. 90 metres length) and connect into wetland to minimise maintenance and improve water quality before entering the river.
- A site of approximately 0.66Ha in size is set aside for an edible food trial nursery (current size is 0.64Ha) leased by the Worn Gundidj enterprises. The proposal is to relocate the site from the end of Woodend Road further west onto higher ground which is less prone to flooding and better suited for the species being trialled. The site can be accessed from Woodend Road. In the event that the trial site is not required, the land can be converted to public park space, or potentially another community use such as a community garden, if there was demonstrated demand.
- Formalised on-street car parking along Woodend Road and potential future off-street parking at the top end of Woodend Road. Ensure some spaces are provided for vehicles with kayak/canoe trailers along the edge of Woodend Road.
- New kayak and canoe launching facilities near the end of Woodend Road.
- WSUD – swale drain with planting along the existing open drain next to Woodend Road. Continued overpage...

Plan 13 - Woodend Road Reserve Design Recommendations



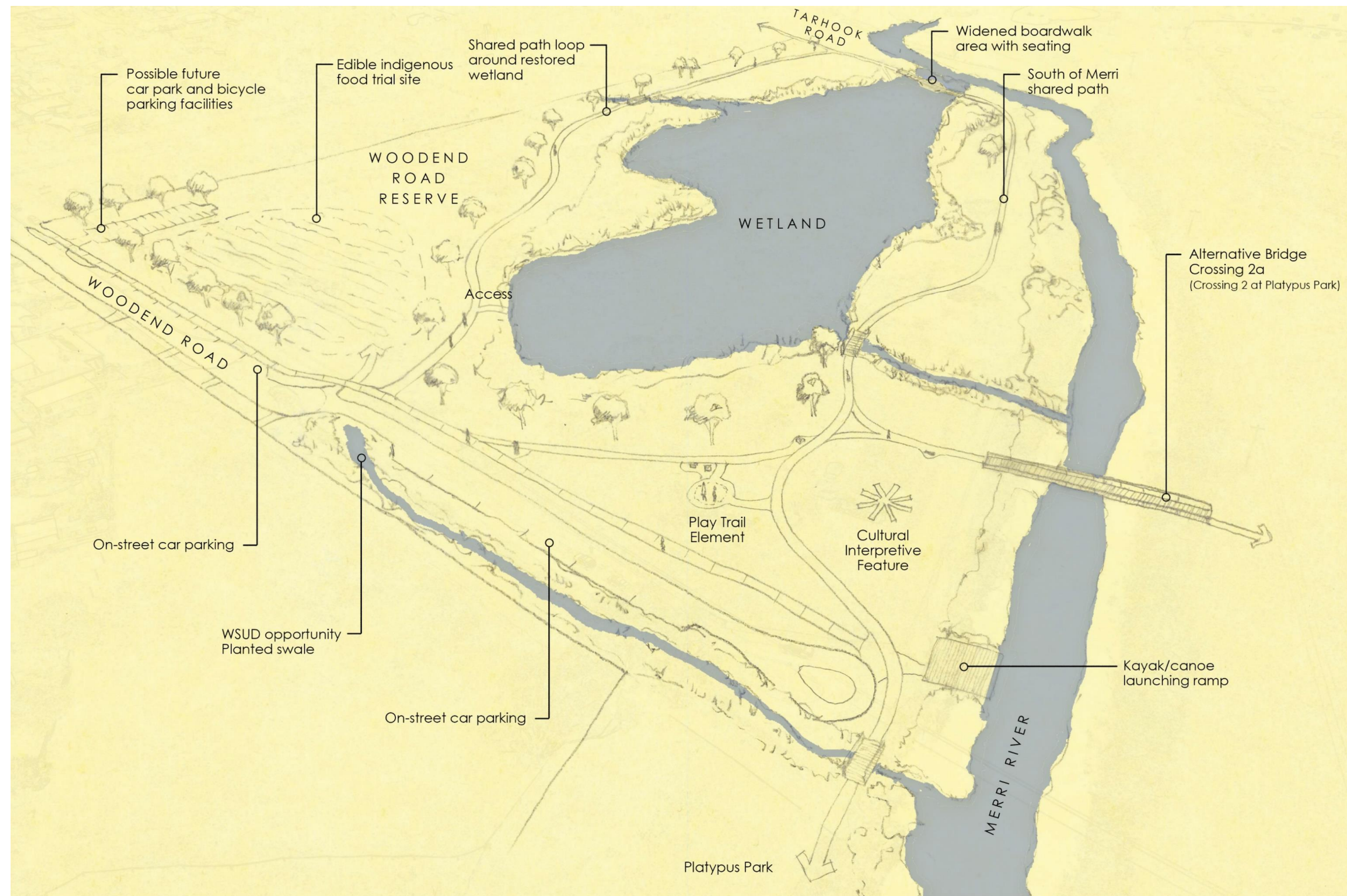
South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

- Install ‘management-only’ bollards at Tarhook Road entry around the car park and along the edge of Woodend Road and the proposed turning area to deter unauthorised vehicles from entering park.
- New shared pedestrian/cycling bridge across the Merri River, providing access to future paths and open space in the North Merri precinct. This is to occur via the North of Merri development process.

Note: The North of Merri Precinct Structure Plan identified a pedestrian/cyclist bridge crossing point in Platypus Park (Option 2). However, with the proposed changes to Woodend Road Reserve as part of this Open Space Precinct Plan, an alternative option to Platypus Park bridge crossing has been identified at Woodend Road (Option 2a). The bridge crossing point at Woodend Road has better passive surveillance and a more direct link to the proposed path network leading up to the playground in the North of Merri Precinct. It is recommended that the final location of the bridge is determined pending further discussion with the development community and more detailed studies to inform the bridge design. The shared path network has been designed so that either of the bridge options will be able to connect in with the path network.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Figure 18 – Woodend Road Reserve Concept Sketch



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

18. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS- PLATYPUS PARK

Platypus Park is a small park of 1.1 hectares in size. It is located on the north side of Membery Way.

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

- Retain formal playground near the Membery Way entrance.
- New shared path extending from Membery Way to the main path along the edge of the river.
- New directional signage near the playground to provide information about the South of Merri shared path.
- New fishing pontoon upstream of the in-stream fish habitat improvements.
- Provide information signage near the pontoon about fish hotels and snags which have been placed in the Merri River adjacent to Platypus Park. Provide information about Platypus habitat and importance of keeping dogs on leads near the river to avoid disturbing platypus and other fauna.
- Platypus Park has a number of residential properties adjoining its boundary. Ensure any future development requiring a planning permit provides good passive surveillance of the reserve (ie. through low and/or transparent fencing and building windows orientated towards the reserve).
- Incorporate nature play/sculptural trail feature in the Park, possibly relating to the platypus.
- Extend riverside vegetation into areas that have not yet been revegetated.
- The North of Merri Precinct Structure Plan identified a pedestrian/cyclist bridge crossing point in Platypus Park (Option 2). However, with the proposed changes to Woodend Road Reserve as part of this Open Space Precinct Plan, an alternative option to Platypus Park bridge crossing has been identified at Woodend Road (Option 2a). Refer to Design Recommendations for Woodend Road (Section 17).

Plan 14 - Platypus Park Design Recommendations



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19. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS- RUSSELL'S CREEK RESERVE

Russell's Creek Reserve is a T-shaped reserve which follows both the Merri River and Russell's Creek. It is located on the north side of Daltons Road and has a size of 2.4 hectares.

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

- New shared path along the edge of the river, and extending to Daltons Road along the western side of Russell's Creek.
- Council to negotiate land acquisition with neighbouring property owner to ensure future link can be provided with Bromfield Weir Reserve.
- The narrow section of reserve on the western side of Russell's Creek has an enclosed feeling due to vegetation and close proximity of residential properties. Lower branches of existing trees along Russell's Creek should be pruned where possible to improve surveillance from one side of the creek to the other.
- A new boardwalk and bridge is to be constructed over Russell's Creek to provide east-west connection for the South of Merri shared path.
- Russell's Creek has a number of residential properties adjoining its boundary. Ensure any future development requiring a planning permit provides good passive surveillance of the reserve (ie. through low and/or transparent fencing and building windows orientated towards the reserve).
- New directional signage near the entry to the reserve from Daltons Road.
- Incorporate nature play/sculptural trail feature near the entry to the Reserve.
- Investigate options to improve the Daltons/Ardlie Street intersection to achieve pedestrian/cyclist priority and safety improvements.

Note: The location of the crossing point at Daltons Road on Plan 15 is indicative only. The final location and design of the crossing upgrade and the safety measures to be implemented will be determined through further engineering and detailed design looking at site lines, vehicle turning movements, speed limits, etc.

Plan 15 - Russell's Creek Reserve Design Recommendations



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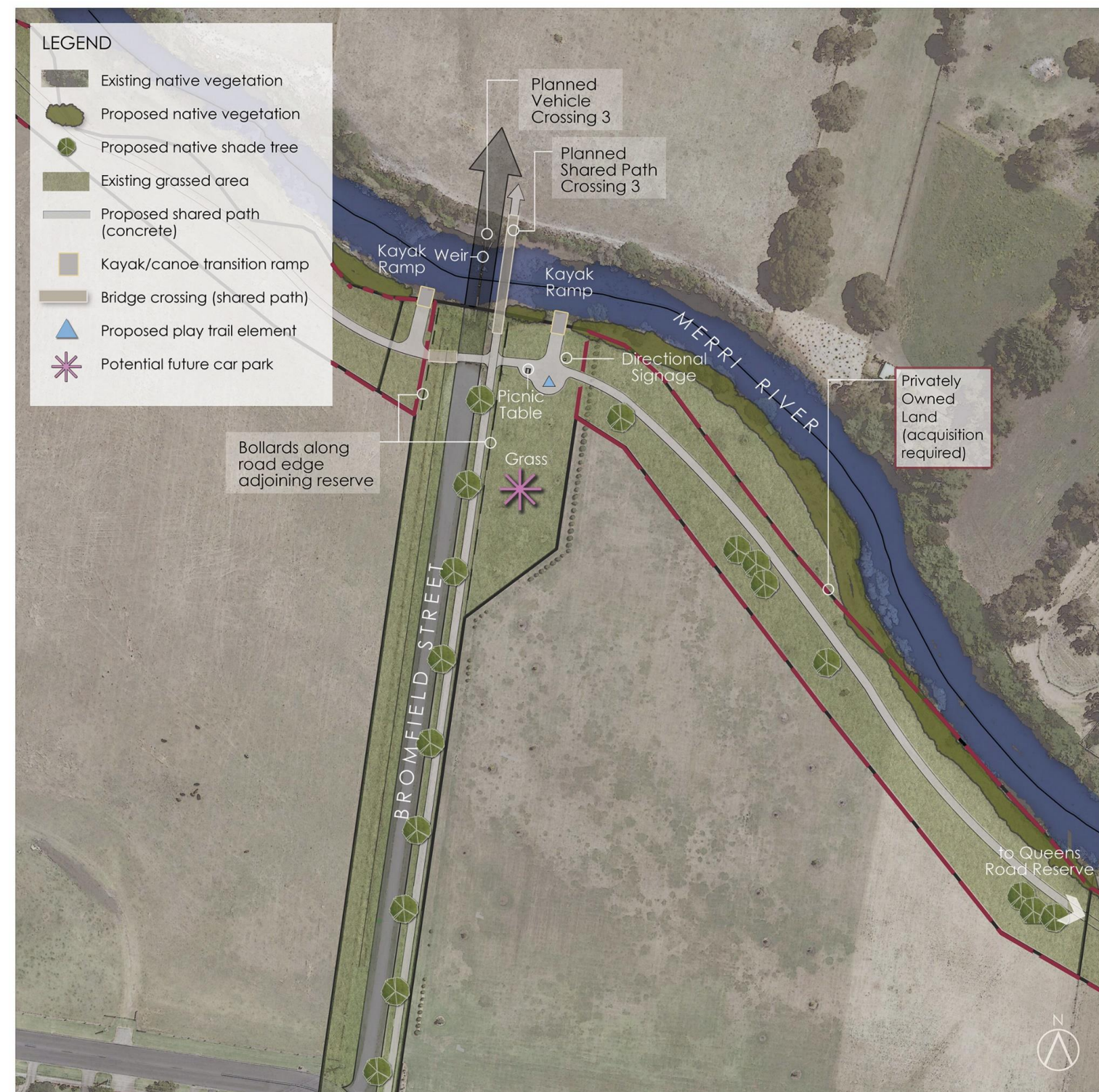
20. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS - BROMFIELD STREET WEIR

The reserve at Bromfield Street Weir is located at the end of Bromfield Street. It is a small, narrow reserve with a total area of approximately 2,030 square metres (0.20ha).

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

- New shared path along the edge of the river.
- There are no direct path connections from Bromfield Street Weir Reserve to Russell's Creek Reserve or Queens Road. Council will need to engage with property owners of private land on the south side of the Merri River in order to acquire land for incorporation into the Precinct. This could potentially occur via the development process as the opportunity arises.
- New directional signage in the reserve to provide information about the South of Merri shared path.
- Incorporate nature play trail/interpretive sculpture feature in the Reserve.
- Construct infrastructure at edge of river to allow kayakers and canoeists to get out of the water and transfer their watercraft to the other side of the weir.
- Potential for small off-street car park if the bridge is constructed over the river and there is sufficient demand for car parking.
- Install 'management-only' bollards to deter unauthorised vehicles from entering park.
- Provide new pedestrian connection across the Merri River from the end of Bromfield Street or reserve. The North of the Merri Structure Plan 2011, identified a possible future road connection across the Merri River from the end of Bromfield Street. If the proposed bridge and road connection remains a planned infrastructure item for the City, there is scope to incorporate the pedestrian crossing along with the vehicle bridge. This vehicle connection would require Bromfield Street to be upgraded and sealed. There would be an opportunity to provide on-street parking along the newly sealed section of Bromfield Street as there is currently no formal car parking at this reserve. Note: In the event that a vehicle crossing is not provided, there is an opportunity for Bromfield Street to be upgraded and terminate with a vehicle turning area at the end, with the provision of a shared path crossing over the river.

Plan 16 - Bromfield Weir Reserve Design Recommendations



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21. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS- QUEENS ROAD RESERVE

Queens Road Reserve is a medium-sized reserve. It is bounded by vacant land and St James Park to the east, vacant land to the west, the Merri River to the north and vacant land and Dooley Street to the south. The total area of the park including the road reserve is approximately 2.7 hectares.

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

- Community gathering space/activity area offering a range of experiences for a range of age groups. Future use to be determined pending further consultation and design. Potential uses may include: bocce/petanque courts, seating area, basketball half court, etc.
- Design and construct new playspace for a range of ages.
- Construct a flat sealed area with a scooter track/pump park for younger children next to the activity area.
- Potential reuse of the existing building. The building could be repurposed as a community gathering place, café, kayak/canoe/bicycle hire venue, etc.
- Construct a kayak and canoe launching ramp. The plan identifies the launching ramp at the end of Queens Road reserve. At this location there is good surveillance, relatively low river embankment and it is in close proximity to the proposed car park at Queens Road Reserve. Through the Round 2 consultation, there were requests for this launching facility to be provided further east of Queens Road Reserve closer to the bend in the river at St James Park. In response to community consultation feedback, it is recommended that the final location of the kayak and canoe launching facilities should be determined following further investigation and consultation. The following matters should be taken into consideration when determining the location: flooding and potential impact on infrastructure, accessibility from car parking facilities where kayaks/canoes will need to be carried from, cost of construction (ie. steepness of embankment, ramp design requirements, etc) and potential impacts on habitat, including platypus. Continued overpage...

Plan 17 - Queens Road Design Recommendations

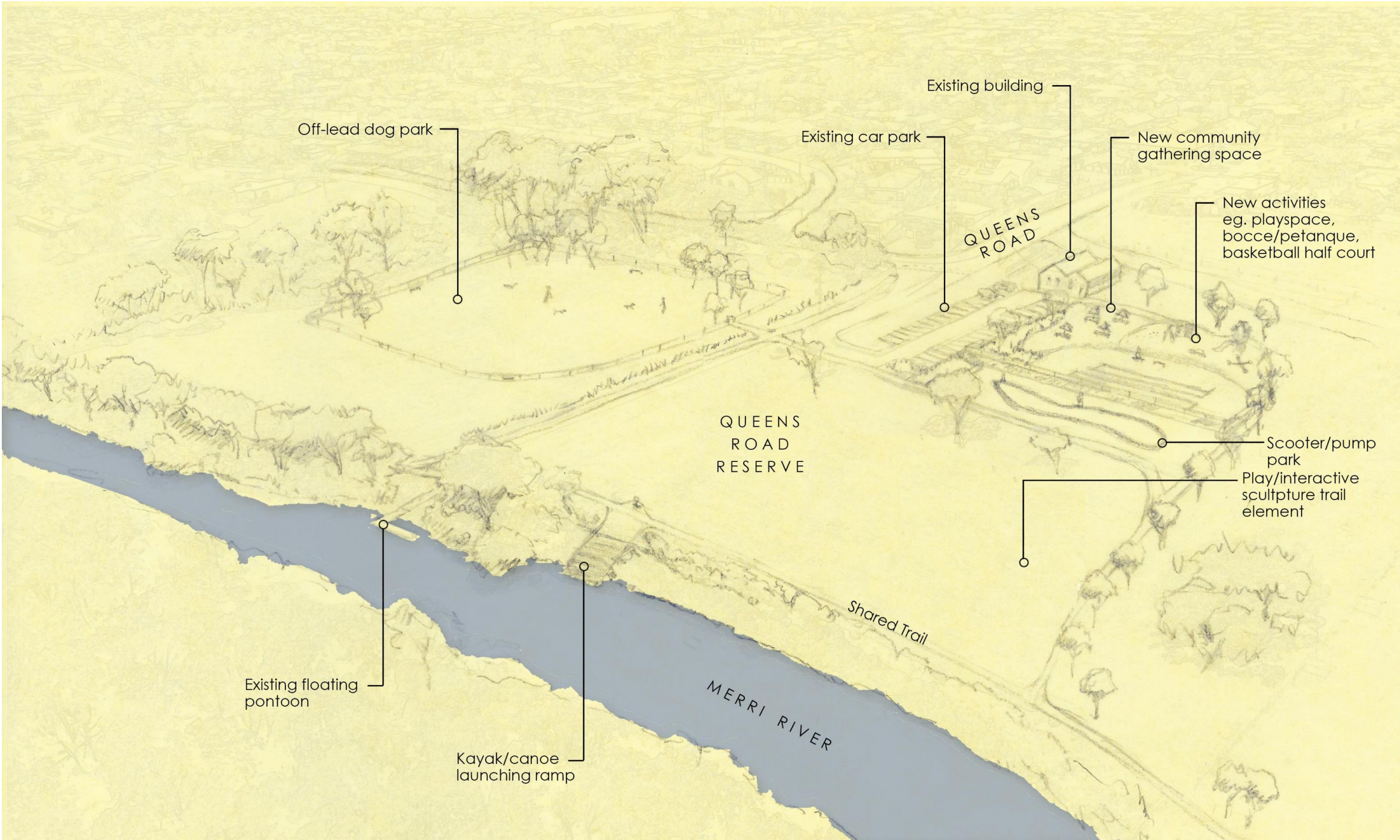


South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

- Incorporate indigenous shade trees throughout park.
- Investigate integrity of existing retaining wall and undertake works to rectify any identified structural issues. There is potential for the retaining wall to become a blank canvas for artwork.
- Public toilet facilities could be provided near the existing building, where there is good access from the car park.
- WSUD opportunity. Redesign open drain along the edge of Queens Road reserve to have a more natural appearance and indigenous planting each side.
- A safe pedestrian connection will need to be provided on Queens Road between Dooley Street and Donovans Road.
- New directional signage in the reserve to provide information about the South of Merri shared path.
- Provide information signage near the existing pontoon about Platypus habitat and importance of keeping dogs on-lead to avoid disturbing Platypus and other fauna.
- Leave an open grassed area for picnicking and to provide an events space
- Incorporate nature play/sculptural trail feature to the north of the community gathering space, but not impeding the open grassed area.
- Retain car park, which provides 30 spaces including two disabled bays. Potential for at least two extra spaces.
- Provide a vehicle turning area.
- Inclusion of an off-lead dog park. Dogs off-lead present a threat to local fauna, including Platypus. This site in Queens Road reserve is ideally suited to a dog park as it is located opposite the car park and activity area/community gathering space and is located away from riverside habitat and revegetation areas.
- Extend revegetation works along river edge and other areas.
- Install 'management-only' bollards around car park and along edge of Queens Road and the proposed turning area to deter unauthorised vehicles from entering park.

South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Figure 19 – Queens Road Concept Sketch



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

22. PARK DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS - ST JAMES PARK

St James Park is a medium-sized park of approximately 4.8 hectares in size. It is located at the eastern end of Wollaston Road near the intersection with Mortlake Road.

A number of design opportunities were identified during the site visit and preparation of existing conditions plan. The feedback from the community reaffirmed the following recommendations:

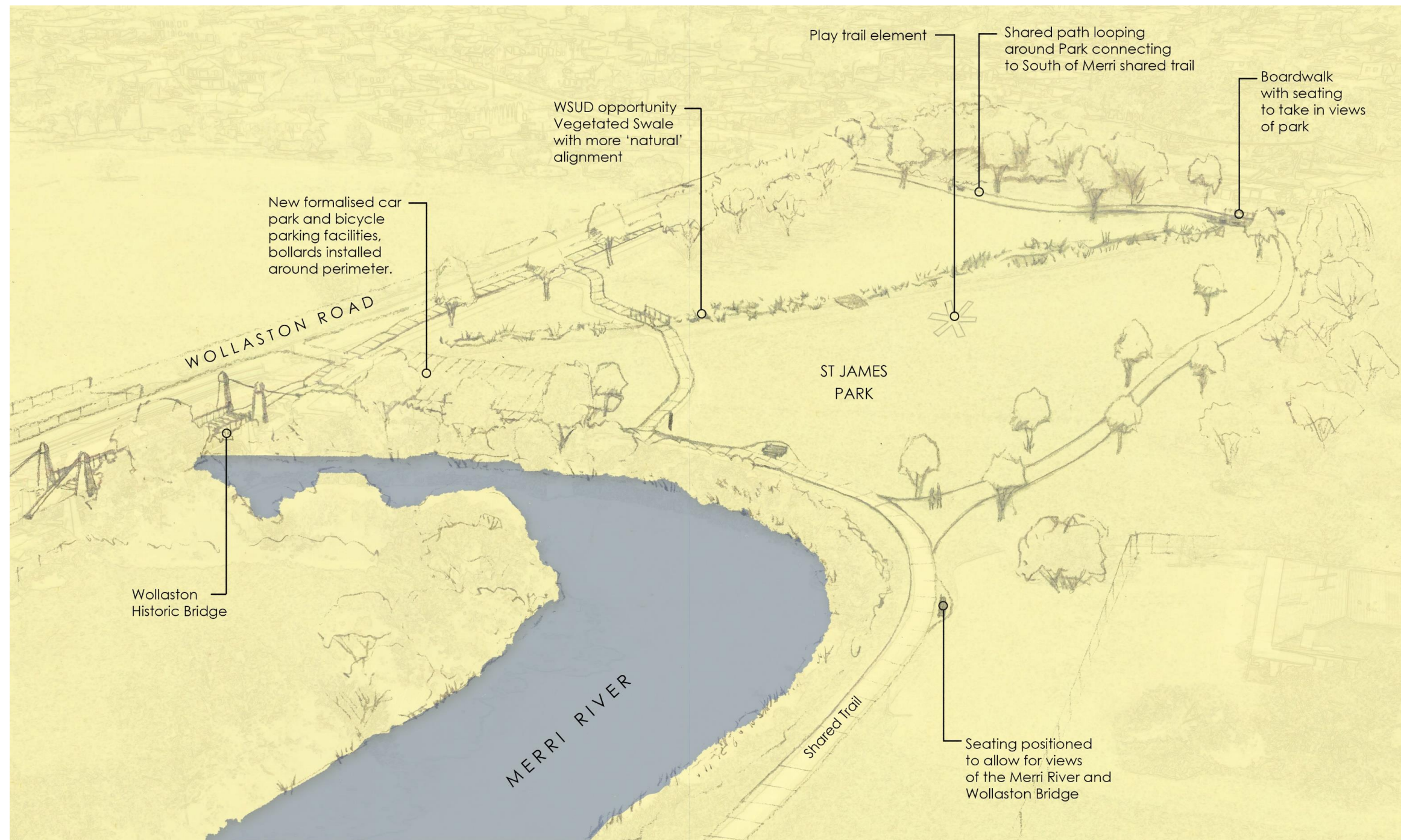
- Construct a new 'loop' path around the park to improve access and increase functionality of the space.
- Plant colourful deciduous shade trees along the shared path to complement existing exotic vegetation.
- Opportunity for Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD). Redesign open drain through the centre of the reserve to have a more natural appearance with indigenous planting each side.
- Incorporate nature play trail/interpretive sculpture feature on the south side of the WSUD swale.
- Construct a new car park for visitors to the park and Wollaston Bridge, accessed from Wollaston Road. Include bicycle parking facilities. Exact location and design of car park to be determined during detailed design phase.
- Install new directional signage in the reserve near the car park to provide information about the South of Merri shared path.
- Install new seating along the shared path, providing convenient rest stops. Position seats to take in views of the park, Merri River and Wollaston Bridge.
- Extend revegetation works along the edge of the river.
- Install 'management-only' bollards around car park and along park perimeter to deter unauthorised vehicles from entering park.
- Investigate future opportunity for shared path connection to the north of Wollaston Road.
- Opportunity for feature uplighting and/or overhead lighting to highlight the historic Wollaston Bridge.

Plan 18 – St James Park Design Recommendations



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

Figure 20 – St James Park Concept Sketch



South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

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South of Merri Open Space Precinct Plan

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Existing Conditions

APPENDIX 2: Community Consultation Summary

APPENDIX 3: Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

5.7. SOCIAL HOUSING PLANNING PROJECT

PURPOSE

This report provides Council with information on the Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project, and recommends that the final report be adopted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project has been finalised. The project provides information to understand the social housing needs of Warrnambool.
- The project provides a demand/supply evidence base, and focuses on mechanisms to grow social housing stock in Warrnambool.
- Social housing can be described as a subset of Affordable Housing and includes public housing (owned and usually managed by the State Government) and community housing (owned and/or managed by community housing organisations).
- The data indicates a demand for social housing in Warrnambool 2020 is 1,430 households.
- The project and associated data provides Council with a solid underpinning for future opportunities to contribute to social housing provision.
- The project has been funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and has been undertaken by Rachel Hornsby of Hornsby Consulting.
- The next step for the project is to develop a prioritised action / implementation plan for opportunities to provide social housing.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project final report and endorse the next step to develop a prioritised action plan for opportunities to provide social housing within Warrnambool.

BACKGROUND

Council was successful in obtaining funding from the Department of Health & Human Services Social Housing Investment Planning (SHIP) Grant Program to deliver the Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project. The project will inform the social housing needs of Warrnambool, by providing a demand/supply evidence base, and focusing on mechanisms to grow social housing stock in Warrnambool.

Stage 1 of the project provided the demand/supply evidence base of Social Housing needs in Warrnambool over the short to medium term and a description of the current market (including current parties, relationships and their capacity to grow).

Stage 2 focuses on strategic planning (land use) considerations to grow Social housing stock in Warrnambool, and an appraisal of how the supply of Social Housing can be increased in Warrnambool over the short to medium term to meet current and forecast needs.

ISSUES

Homelessness is a hidden and significant issue in Warrnambool. Homelessness impacts disproportionately on women, single persons, sole parent families, younger and older residents, people with mental illness and people with a disability.

Even people who are not homeless may need social housing if their rental costs are a high proportion of their household income.

The number of low-income households in Warrnambool City increased by 561 between 2011 and 2016. The largest increase was in lone person households, up to 226 households. The impact of Covid-19 is likely to result in a significant increase in low-income households due to increased unemployment.

While the private market in Warrnambool is lower-cost than the average for Victoria, the private market is not providing adequate housing options for the Warrnambool community. There has been a significant tightening of the rental market with increased demand for rental properties due to large infrastructure projects in the region.

The results from the 2016 census showed that 5.2% of Warrnambool City's households were renting their dwelling from a government authority (also known as Public Housing) compared to 3.3% in regional Victoria.

The provision of Social Housing in Warrnambool has not kept pace with growth in housing overall, dropping from 7.6% in 1991 to 6% in 2011 (this has dropped further to 5.2% in 2016, suggesting the rate of decline is increasing.)

The current need for social housing can be estimated as the number of low-income households in rental stress (1,247) plus the number of people experiencing homelessness (149). On that basis the **unmet demand for social housing is 1,396 dwellings**.

The increasing population and tightening of the private rental market will mean demand has grown since the 2016 census and could be more accurately estimated at an additional **1,430 households in 2020**. That number, together with the existing social housing stock, would represent just over **14% of all households**, significantly higher than 5.2% - the existing proportion of social housing in Warrnambool.

By 2036, the population of the City of Warrnambool is forecast to grow to 46,210 people. Working on the basis of an average household size of 2.3 people per household, and need for 14% of households to be social housing, it is estimated there will need to be **2,812 social housing dwellings in Warrnambool in 2036**, almost four times the existing number of social housing dwellings.

The City of Warrnambool has seen a significant tightening of the private rental market. This has the flow on effect of creating a bottle neck so that people are no longer able to move out of transitional housing and into the private market. The result is that fewer people are able to access transitional housing, and they end up in overcrowded or unsafe situations.

Another unique challenge that Warrnambool faces is that, other than DHHS, none of the social housing providers have an office within-in the municipality. This presents challenges for people who want to access their services but it also likely to affect the potential to attract grant funding to the area.

There are significant challenges to increasing the amount of social housing in the City of Warrnambool but there are also opportunities. The key opportunities are:

- Use of Council or government land to develop new social housing
- Reconfiguration or redevelopment of existing social housing sites to deliver additional social housing
- Potential divestment by Council of its housing assets to a community housing organisation providing for more effective tenancy and property management

- Incentives to one or more community housing organisation to locate their offices to Warrnambool, increasing the presence and focus of housing services in Warrnambool
- Partnership projects with the companies who are constructing wind farms to deliver housing they need now, and then can be used for social housing in the future
- Increasing private market housing supply through the strategic planning work being undertaken by Council and the VPA
- Securing social housing through the planning system through voluntary negotiations

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project was fully funded by the Department of Health and Human Services through its Social Housing Investment Planning (SHIP) Program.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

2 Foster a healthy welcoming City that is socially and culturally rich

2.2 Increase participation, connection, equity, access and inclusion

2.3 Increase community health and social connections.

2.8 Increase participation opportunities for disadvantaged members of the community.

3 Maintain and improve the physical places and visual appeal of the City

3.3 Build Infrastructure that best meets current and future community needs.

3.4 Maintain and enhance existing Council infrastructure

3.5 Advocate for better regional connections

4 Develop a smarter economy with diverse and sustainable employment

4.1 Grow the Cities population through local economic growth

4.5 Create stronger links between education providers, business and industry.

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.1 Provision of opportunities for the community to actively participate in Council's decision-making through effective promotion, communication and engagement

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

5.4 Deliver customer-focused, responsive service

TIMING

The Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project commenced in July 2019 and is due for completion by 30 June 2020.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

Engagement with relevant stakeholders, development industry and community housing providers was undertaken in accordance with the Consultant's Engagement Strategy. The key findings of the stakeholder engagement was used to identify the key challenges and opportunities relating to Social Housing provision. An Engagement Report is included as an Appendix to the final report.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

The Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project is not expected to have any legal risk/impact to Council.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

CONCLUSION

The current demand for social housing in Warrnambool far exceeds the supply, in the order of approximately 1,430 dwellings. There have been increasing pressures on the private rental market leading to more people experiencing housing stress and housing uncertainty or homelessness. It is estimated there will need to be 2,812 social housing dwellings in Warrnambool in 2036, almost four times the existing number of social housing dwellings.

The consultation and engagement with stakeholders has provided an important opportunity to bring housing organisations and service providers together to identify existing gaps and also to discuss how housing and service providers can work together.

The stakeholders and demographic data has highlighted challenges and opportunities specific to Warrnambool that relate to the supply of social housing.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Warrnambool City Council Social Housing Planning Project FINAL and edited [5.7.1 - 90 pages]



Warrnambool City Council Social Housing Planning Project

Funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services

Prepared for Warrnambool City Council by Hornsby & Co.

June 2020



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1.0 Executive summary

Warrnambool City Council is undertaking strategic planning work to identify and respond to housing needs in Warrnambool.

To build an understanding of the current housing policy landscape and inform their strategic work, Warrnambool City Council has engaged Hornsby & Co. to identify the current and future social housing needs of the City of Warrnambool (stage 1) and identify issues and opportunities of how the supply of social housing can be increased over the short to medium term to meet current and forecast needs (stage 2). This background paper forms part of the work delivered as part of the Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project (WSHPP).

The City of Warrnambool has a growing population. It has an estimated residential population of 35,000, which is forecast to grow by more than 5,000 people by 2036. Warrnambool serves as a centre for a regional population of about 120,000 people.

At the 2016 census there were 6,541 people in low-income households living in Warrnambool. The number of low-income households in Warrnambool increased by 561 between 2011 and 2016. The largest change in types of low-income households was in lone-person households, up to 226 households from 2011.

Of all low-income households in Warrnambool, 41.5 per cent were renting, which was a significant increase compared to in 2011 (an increase of 238 households). In 2016, 31.6 per cent of Warrnambool's renting households were experiencing rental stress.

Homelessness is a hidden and significant issue in Warrnambool. Homelessness impacts disproportionately on women, single persons, sole-parent families, younger and older residents, people with mental illness and people with a disability.

It is estimated that in 2016, there were 149 people in Warrnambool who were homeless. This includes people who were living in severely overcrowded dwellings, people in supported accommodation for the homeless, people who were staying temporarily with other households, or were living in boarding houses.

While the private market in Warrnambool is lower-cost than the average for Victoria, the private market is not providing adequate housing options for the Warrnambool community.

The *12th International Housing Affordability Survey* by Demographica (2016) categorised Warrnambool as 'severely unaffordable' (listed as a median house price of 5.1 or above times the median household income – Warrnambool is 5.5). This has risen from 1995 when the median house price was just under three times the median household salary.

The results from the 2016 census showed that 5.2 per cent of Warrnambool's households were renting their dwelling from a government authority (also known as public housing) compared to 3.3 per cent in regional Victoria.

The provision of social housing in Warrnambool has not kept pace with growth in housing overall, dropping from 7.6 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent in 2011 (this dropped further to 5.2 per cent in 2016, suggesting the rate of decline is increasing).

The current need for social housing can be estimated as the number of low-income households in rental stress (1,247) plus the number of people experiencing homelessness (149). On that basis the **unmet demand for social housing is 1,396 dwellings**.

The increasing population and tightening of the private rental market will mean demand has grown since the 2016 census and could be more accurately estimated at an additional **1,430 households in 2020**. That number, together with the existing social housing stock, would represent just over **14 per cent of all households**, significantly higher than 5.2 per cent - the existing proportion of social housing in Warrnambool.

By 2036, the population of the City of Warrnambool is forecast to grow to 46,210 people. Working on the basis of an average household size of 2.3 people per household and need for 14 per cent of households to be social housing, it is estimated there will need to be **2,812 social housing dwellings in the City of Warrnambool in 2036**, almost four times the existing number of social housing dwellings.

Warrnambool has seen a significant tightening of the private rental market. This has the flow on effect of creating a bottle neck so that people are no longer able to move out of transitional housing and into the private market. The result is that fewer people are able to access transitional housing and they end up in overcrowded or unsafe situations.

In addition to the need for additional housing dwellings there is also need for a greater presence of community housing organisations in the municipality, to drive collaboration and advocacy, and to drive the development of new social housing in the region.

A unique challenge that the City of Warrnambool faces is that, other than the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), none of the social housing providers have an office within the municipality. This presents challenges for people who want to access their services. It also likely to affect the potential to attract grant funding to the area.

The key opportunities for improving social housing outcomes in the City of Warrnambool are:

- Use of Council or government land to develop new social housing
- Reconfiguration or redevelopment of existing social housing sites to deliver additional social housing
- Potential outsourcing by Council of its housing assets to a community housing organisation, providing for more effective tenancy and property management
- Incentives to one or more community housing organisations to locate their offices in the City of Warrnambool, increasing the presence and focus of housing services in the municipality
- Partnership projects with companies which are constructing wind farms, to deliver housing they need now, which can then be used for social housing in the future
- Increasing private market housing supply through the strategic planning work being undertaken by Council and the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)
- Securing social housing through the planning system through voluntary negotiations.

2.0 Introduction

The Warrnambool Social Housing Planning Project (WSHPP) is part of the important strategic planning work Council has underway to identify and respond to housing needs in the City of Warrnambool.

The project was delivered in two stages. The first stage determined the demand/supply of social housing needs in the City of Warrnambool over the short to medium term and provided a description of the current market (including current parties, relationships and their capacity to grow). It also outlined the requirements, types and models of Affordable Housing, an overview of the role and constraints of the statutory planning system in the provision of Affordable Housing, the federal and state policy setting and the outcome of a review of relevant council documents. That work is sections 1 to 9 of this report.

The second stage identified the challenges and opportunities for increasing the supply of social housing in the City of Warrnambool. This included an assessment of potential sites for social and Affordable Housing in the municipality. Council-owned and State Government-owned land was identified, and desktop analysis of the sites was undertaken to determine their suitability.

This report combines the findings of both stages to provide a comprehensive assessment of demand and recommended responses to increase the supply of social housing.

2.1 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The research for this report was undertaken and delivered in the middle and second half of 2019 and is based on the information available at the time.

From March 2020, Victoria, Australia, and the rest of the world were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The full impact of the pandemic is likely to be felt in the second half of 2020 and beyond. There is expected to be a large increase in the number of people who are unemployed or under-employed and who will struggle to meet their housing costs.

It is also anticipated there will be a significant drop-off in the number of new houses being constructed as the demand for (private market) housing reduces due to reduced immigration and reduced income for many people.

The demand for social and Affordable Housing will rise. The Victorian Government has announced it will invest almost \$500 million to build and upgrade community and public housing as part of the Building Works package dedicated to creating jobs and boosting Victoria's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic (Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

It is possible that funding may be used to build or improve social housing in the City of Warrnambool, but that detail is not available at this stage.

3.0 What is Affordable Housing?

There is no nationally accepted definition of Affordable Housing. This can make discussion and policy development around the topic difficult. Across Australia Affordable Housing includes public housing and community housing (together referred to as social housing) and also includes discounted rental, discounted purchase, and shared equity schemes.

Under the *Planning and Environment Act (1987)*, Affordable Housing is one of three types of housing:

- public housing
- housing provided by an agency regulated by the Victorian Housing Registrar under the *Housing Act (1983)*
- a broad range of other possible housing types that are not public housing or provided by a regulated agency but are 'appropriate to the needs' of very low, low and moderate-income households, including clear eligibility and allocation processes to ensure an Affordable Housing outcome is achieved.

It should be noted that the terms 'social housing' and 'Affordable Housing' both have colloquial meanings in policy discussions and legal meanings in the *Planning and Environment Act (1987)* and *Housing Act (1983)*.

In the colloquial sense, social housing is often understood to be a synonym for rental housing generally provided to very low-income households, either by a not-for-profit organisation (community housing) or by the government (public housing). It is commonly assumed that social housing is restricted to very low-income households and that moderate-income households are not eligible. This is not the case.

A moderate-income household in regional Victoria comprising a couple and three dependent children on an annual income of \$95,000 is eligible for social housing. However, very few if any of these households apply for social housing and fewer still are allocated social housing due to people with greater need applying.

By definition, all Affordable Housing is for people within the eligible household income ranges. To ensure housing reflects the definition of Affordable Housing there should be an eligibility test and allocation process. Within the Affordable Housing sector, there are different terms to describe Affordable Housing reflecting different rent-setting models, funding models, or the specific needs of residents.

Social housing is a subset of Affordable Housing and includes public housing (owned and usually managed by the State Government) and community housing (owned and/or managed by community housing organisations).

In Victoria, social housing makes up the largest component of the Affordable Housing sector. Rents in social housing are set as a proportion of household income (usually between 25-30 per cent of income). The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Annual Report showed there were 85,626 social housing dwellings in Victoria in 2018/19 (Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Public housing is a subset of social housing and provides long-term rental accommodation managed by the State Government. Public housing currently makes up approximately three-quarters of all social housing stock in Victoria.

Community housing is also a subset of social housing and is an integral part of the housing system. It provides a housing option that is affordable, secure, responds to local community needs and supports tenant participation.



The majority of social housing is provided as long-term rental accommodation, but the sector also offers the following housing programs:

Crisis accommodation

For people at risk of homelessness. Accommodation may be provided for only one night at a time or for up to six weeks.

Transitional housing

Supported short-term accommodation designed to help people move to more permanent housing in public housing, community housing, or the private rental market. People using this type of housing have often experienced a significant change in circumstances. People in transitional housing are provided with further advice and planning as they actively work with a support provider to apply for long-term housing.

Co-operative housing

Offers long-term rental accommodation that gives tenant members the opportunity to participate in the running of the co-operative. Depending on the co-operative, this could include the day-to-day running of the co-operative or could be more focused on strategic issues such as prioritisation of maintenance and tenant selection.

Rooming houses

Often the only accommodation that many vulnerable or disadvantaged singles can access due to the demand for Affordable Housing far exceeding the supply. The community housing sector offers rooms targeted at singles with access to shared facilities as well as self-contained rooms which have a bathroom and kitchenette.

The above list illustrates the breadth of provision of social housing. The sector is complex with different funding streams and mechanisms for sourcing the housing. This snapshot cannot reflect all of that complexity.

It is noted that private rooming houses also operate across Victoria. They have no household income eligibility criteria or allocation process to ensure the housing is provided to those who need it. Moreover, they do not have rent-setting policies that ensure the rent is affordable to very low, low, or moderate-income households. Private rooming houses are not considered Affordable Housing as they do not adequately respond to the matters set out in the Ministerial Notice which planning authorities must have regard to when deciding whether housing is appropriate for very low, low, and moderate-income households.

It should also be noted that in addition to the terms used within the sector, the Victorian Planning Provisions also have specific definitions for rooming house and community care accommodation that are relevant for planners assessing planning permits.

While social housing makes up the majority of Affordable Housing in Victoria, there are also affordable rental and affordable homeownership models.

Affordable rental housing is provided by not-for-profit organisations and also through private providers, which may receive some form of concession in return, such as was the case for the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). For affordable rental housing, the rent is generally set at a discount from market rent (for example rent is set at 75-80 per cent of market rent) and is generally targeted at moderate income households.

The NRAS is an example of affordable rental housing where the government provided a subsidy for landlords to rent their property to eligible households at discounted rent. The subsidy was available for 10 years only, after which time the property can revert to market housing. Rent must not exceed 80 per cent of market rent to retain the NRAS subsidy.

Affordable homeownership (delivered with or without an external subsidy) may be through the allocation and sale of low-cost housing to eligible households or opportunities for shared-equity homeownership. Shared-equity is when a person owns part of a dwelling, and the other part is owned by a second party (for example government or a community housing organisation). Shared equity enables a household to buy a property that they otherwise could not afford, helping them step onto the path of homeownership.

Due to the higher rents or mortgage payments, affordable rentals and affordable homeownership are usually out of the financial reach of very low and low-income households. It is generally only a viable option for moderate-income households.

3.1 The difference between Affordable Housing and housing affordability

The term 'housing affordability' refers to the relationship between expenditure on housing (prices, mortgage payments or rents) and household incomes. The concept of housing affordability is different to the concept of 'Affordable Housing'.

In Australia there has been a lot of discussion about housing affordability. Over the past 30 years there has been a significant increase in the cost of housing, but the increase in household incomes has not kept pace. This means that people are spending more on housing both in absolute terms and as a proportion of household income.

As a result, the cost of housing is an issue for many people - there is a housing affordability issue. The term 'Affordable Housing' is often incorrectly used to describe lower-cost housing (purchase or rental) because lower-cost housing is within the financial means of more people, that is, it is 'more affordable' to them. Smaller dwellings, apartments rather than freestanding homes, or homes in more remote locations or further away from services will often cost less than larger homes in desirable locations and may be described as 'affordable'.

It is important to keep in mind that this kind of market housing, that does not have any eligibility requirements or allocation process, does not meet the definition of Affordable Housing. To avoid confusion, it should be referred to as 'lower cost housing'.

Table 1 Affordable Housing models, resident cohorts, rent setting and funding sources

Housing model		Tenant / resident cohort	Rent / purchase price	Construction Funding*	Comment
Emergency shelter and crisis accommodation		People experiencing or at risk of homelessness Very low income households	A nightly payment (approximately \$25)	State Government	
Transitional and supported housing		People living with disability People moving out of homelessness Very low income households Low income households	25% of household income Sometimes more for specialised housing e.g. housing for older people may charge 75% of income and include some meals, all utilities etc.	State Government	May be delivered through a "head lease" arrangement where tenants pay 25% of household income, increasing to market rent over a 24 month period, and State Government tops up the difference between tenant rent and market rent. Examples include Wombat Housing and Support Services and Maribyrnong Youth Accommodation Program (MYAP)
Social Housing Rental	Public housing	Priority Access Register of Interest Very low income households Low income households	25% of household income	State Government	Tenants are not eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance
	Community housing	Priority Access Register of Interest Very low income households Low income households	25% of household income Plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance	Grant funding Philanthropy Cash reserves (from rent received, sale of property)	Property may be owned by State government and managed by community housing organisation Examples include Launch Housing,
Affordable Rental		Moderate income households Low income households	80% of market rent Not capped at 30% of household income	Private sector Grant funding Federal Government State Government	Examples include: - NRAS model - Affordable Rental SEPP in NSW (no equivalent in Victoria yet) May be managed by a community housing organisation or by the private sector
Affordable home ownership	Shared equity	Moderate income households Low income households	Usually about 70% of purchase price	State Government Private sector	The remaining share of the house is owned by government, a community housing organisation, or a commercial interest Examples include: - Buy Assist (part of a not-for-profit consortia) - Opening Doors (Western Australia Government – no equivalent in Victoria yet)
	Lower-cost purchase price	Moderate income households Low income households	Purchase price set by government each year	Private sector	Examples include: - Affordable Homes (South Australia Government – no equivalent in Victoria yet)

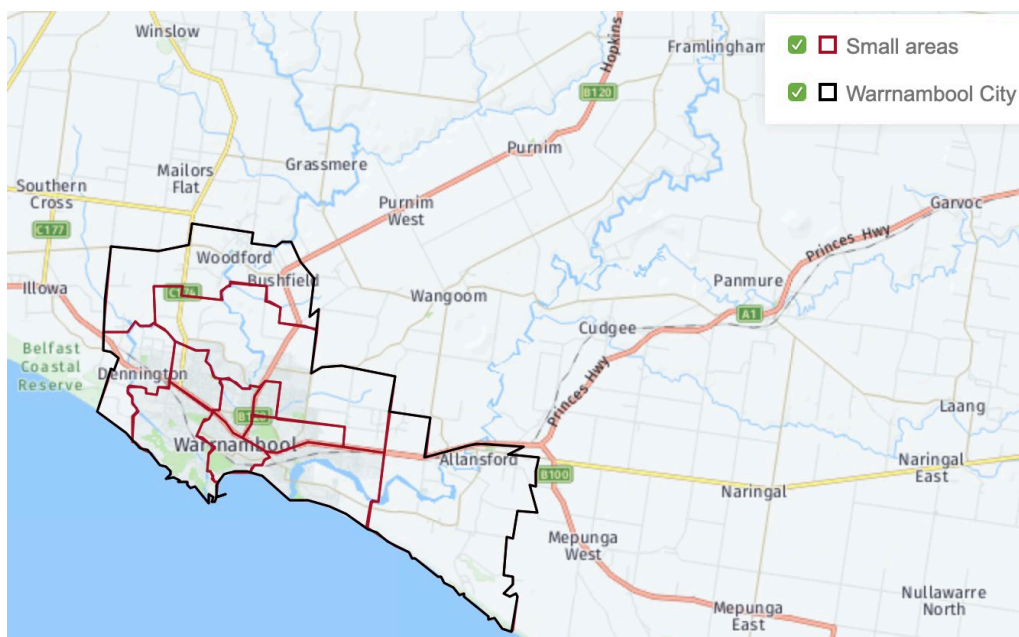
*(Noting there has been very limited investment over the past 30 years).

4.0 An overview of the City of Warrnambool

The City of Warrnambool covers 121sqkm in Victoria's South West and is about 260km from Melbourne. The municipality includes the city of Warrnambool and the towns of Allansford, Woodford and Bushfield.

Map 1: City of Warrnambool geographic boundary

Note: Warrnambool City Council boundary marked in black



Warrnambool has a growing population and attracts people seeking a sea change and people seeking professional and educational opportunities.

Warrnambool serves as a centre for a regional population of about 120,000 people. It contains a TAFE college, a Deakin University campus including a School of Medicine and a base hospital which is part of South West Healthcare. St John of God Hospital also serves the region.

Warrnambool's major employment sectors are health care and social assistance, retail, manufacturing, education and training, accommodation and food services, professional services and construction.

The region features some of Australia's most fertile agricultural land, primarily dedicated to dairy and beef production. Major dairy manufacturers and a large meat processor are situated in and around Warrnambool and provide a significant source of employment.

The Great South Coast region features significant visitor attractions including the 12 Apostles, Tower Hill and Budj Bim National Park.

In 2019 an Ipsos Life in Australia study announced Warrnambool and the South West as Australia's most liveable region. This research considered factors including health and education services, access to natural attractions and housing affordability.

5.0 Demographic drivers of housing demand

In any location the demand for housing is a product of the number of people and household size. Larger populations and smaller household sizes lead to a greater demand for housing.

Other factors such as household income and housing tenure (ownership or rental) dictate people's ability to access and secure housing.

These different aspects of the population, and importantly the trend or change in each aspect, provides a comprehensive picture of demand for housing in the City of Warrnambool.

Demographic data can be quite dense and, even with the use of graphs, can be difficult to wade through. For that reason, the data has been provided as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1). The data has been sourced from .id (.id, 2019). The key points are summarised below.

The Warrnambool City Estimated Resident Population for 2018 is 34,862. The population is forecast to grow to 46,210 by 2036 – a 26 per cent increase in population.

About 75 per cent of the City of Warrnambool's annual net population growth comes from domestic migration, particularly from Great South Coast municipalities and Melbourne. Domestic migration comprises mostly young families (35-44 years) and those who have retired or are reaching retirement age (55 years and over). This illustrates Warrnambool's role as a service centre and catchment for the surrounding area, with people relocating to Warrnambool for better access to services (education and health) and to access employment opportunities.

People also commute into Warrnambool to access employment. At the 2016 census, 15,724 people were working in Warrnambool. Of these people, 12,738 lived in Warrnambool, 2,337 lived in the Moyne Shire, and 302 lived in the Corangamite Shire.

Some of the population growth is from overseas. Warrnambool is home to people from 33 countries. The most significant growth from 2011 - 2016 was from people born in China, Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand. At the 2016 census, 2,731 people living in Warrnambool were born overseas. Of these, one in four arrived in Australia in the five years leading to Census 2016. Of the total population, four percent speak a language other than English at home – a significant increase of 526 people between 2011-2016.

The number of residents who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the Census (2011-2016) increased by 10% from 495 to 556. People in Warrnambool who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander have a much lower rate of homeownership and much higher rate of private rental compared to people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander across regional Victoria.

As with other regional cities, Warrnambool has an ageing community. While one in five residents are under 15 years old, that proportion is decreasing, and one in five residents are aged over 65 years, with that proportion increasing.

At the 2016 census, there were 15,188 dwellings in Warrnambool. The average household size was 2.36 people. The number of households in Warrnambool increased by 968 between 2011 and 2016, with most of the increase occurring in one and two-person households (+390 and +227 respectively).

In addition to changes in housing size, there have been changes in housing tenure in Warrnambool. Analysis of the housing tenure of households of the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a smaller proportion of households who owned their dwelling; a smaller proportion purchasing their dwelling; and a larger proportion who were renters. The largest changes in housing tenure categories for the households in the City of Warrnambool between 2011 and 2016 were mortgage (+279 households) and renting - private (+237 households).

Rental payments can be a better measure of the cost of housing in Warrnambool than mortgage repayments because they are not contingent on length of occupancy or equity in the dwelling. Analysis of the weekly housing rental payments of households in Warrnambool compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a smaller proportion of households with low rental payments (less than \$250 per week). This indicates there are fewer low-cost rentals available within the City of Warrnambool.

In 2016, 5.2 per cent of the City of Warrnambool's households were renting social housing, compared to 3.3 per cent in regional Victoria.

While the City of Warrnambool had a higher proportion of social housing households, this varied across the municipality. Proportions ranged from a low of zero per cent in rural balance to a high of 13.9 per cent in Warrnambool (East - Racecourse). The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Warrnambool (East - Racecourse) (13.9%)
- Warrnambool (West) (7.2%)
- Warrnambool (Central) (7.1%)
- Warrnambool (South - Merrivale) (7.0%)
- Warrnambool (North) (4.0%)

Some people did not have any form of housing tenure. The number of homeless people in the City of Warrnambool grew from 122 in 2011 to 149 in 2016. A person is considered homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable
- does not allow them to have control of and access to space for social relations.

In addition to data around housing tenure, data about household income provides an insight into the extent to which households are likely to experience housing stress or financial pressure.

In 2016, there were 6,541 people in low-income households living in the City of Warrnambool.

More than 46 per cent of low-income households were lone-person households, followed by couples without children (22 per cent) and one-parent households (17 per cent). The number of lone-person, low-income households increased by 226 households between 2011 and 2016.

Analysis of the housing tenure of low-income households in the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a smaller proportion of low-income households who owned their dwelling, a smaller proportion purchasing their dwelling and a larger proportion who were renters. Renting is also the housing tenure that has seen the largest increase (+283 households) for low-income households.

Rental stress is defined as per the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) model as households in the lowest 40 per cent of incomes, who are paying more than 30 per cent of their usual gross weekly income on mortgage rent.

As at the 2016 census there were 1,247 low income households experiencing rental stress in Warrnambool. This represents 31.6 per cent of all rental households and 9.2 per cent of all households in the municipality.

People who are renting can be vulnerable to changes in rental cost and to increased demand for rental properties. The demographic data for the City of Warrnambool illustrates:

- an increasing population in the City of Warrnambool
- an increasing proportion of renters compared with home ownership
- an increasing number of low-income households who are renting
- an increasing number of lone-person and two-person households
- increasing cost of rent.

Together these elements indicate there will be increasing housing pressure for low-income households leading to a greater demand for either lower-cost rentals (unlikely to be provided due to housing market economics) or an increased demand for social and Affordable Housing.

6.0 Estimate of social housing need

The demographic data in section 5 paints a picture of a regional city where house prices and rents are increasing, the population is growing (largely through domestic migration) and more and more people are experiencing housing stress. This is against a backdrop of little to no increase in the number of social housing dwellings, resulting in a shrinking proportion of housing available for low-income and vulnerable households.

DHHS has provided some data specific to the Warrnambool local government area (Appendix 2). Some of the data is confidential and to ensure it is not accidentally released it has been provided as a separate document. Without breaching that confidentiality, it can be noted there has been a steady increase in demand over the past two years, with the largest demand being for one and two-bedroom dwellings. It is also noted that there is a growing mismatch between demand (for one and two bedroom properties) and existing supply (a large proportion of three-bedroom properties).

The publicly available data shows the waiting list for people seeking to access social housing in the Western Division was 14,315 as at 31 December 2019. There were also 2,202 people already in social housing seeking a transfer within the Western District.

Within the Wimmera South West (Portland, Warrnambool) the numbers were 691 applicants and 112 seeking transfer.

The current need for social housing can be estimated as the number of low-income households in rental stress (1,247) plus the number of people experiencing homelessness (149). On that basis, the unmet demand for social housing is 1,396 dwellings.

The increasing population and tightening of the private rental market will mean demand has grown since the 2016 census and could be more accurately estimated at 1,430 households in 2020. If enough dwellings were constructed to meet the current demand, together with the existing social housing stock, social housing would represent just over 14 per cent of all households, significantly higher than 5.2 per cent - the existing proportion of social housing in Warrnambool.

By 2036, the population of the City of Warrnambool is forecast to grow to 46,210 people. Working on the basis of an average household size of 2.3 people per household and need for 14 per cent of households to be social housing, it is estimated there will need to be 2,812 social housing dwellings in the City of Warrnambool in 2036, almost four times the existing number of social housing dwellings.

7.0 Policy context

7.1 Australian Government's Affordable Housing policy environment

Funding of \$1.535 billion for the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) started in July 2018. The NHHA covers money previously allocated through the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (the National Affordable Housing Agreement) of \$1.360 billion in 2017/18 and the Homelessness National Partnership payments of \$117.2 million in 2017/18.

The NHAA for Victoria is available at

www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/housing_homelessness_agreement.aspx

That agreement sets out that together the Federal and State Governments will:

- explore ways that both parties can support an increase in housing supply (including affordable rental properties) and boost homelessness services
- work together to identify ways of optimising assistance for people on low incomes who are renting in Victoria
- explore ways in which employment services can best support those who are homeless and sleeping rough in Victoria
- work together to identify opportunities for how mainstream services can better support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- explore ways of improving data sharing to support improved client outcomes and service delivery.

The 2019 Federal Budget included funding for social impact investment trials under National Partnerships for Affordable Housing, plus \$5 million to establish a taskforce to examine the Commonwealth's role in the Social Impact Investment market so that such investments can provide solutions for entrenched disadvantage. Other funding was primarily for remote housing.

The First Home Loan Deposit Scheme is an Australian Government initiative to support eligible first home buyers purchase a home sooner. Under the Scheme, part of an eligible first home buyer's home loan from a participating lender will be guaranteed by the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC). This is aimed at enabling first home buyers to purchase a home with a deposit of as little as 5 per cent. It works by allowing first home buyers to borrow 15 per cent of the value of their home from the Federal Government (through NHFIC) so that they do not need to save such a large deposit. The other 80 per cent would need to be financed by commercial lenders (banks). The scheme is available to 10,000 first home buyers (there are an estimated 110,000 first home buyers each year). The proposal is not likely to have any meaningful impact on the demand for social and Affordable Housing.

7.2 Victorian Government's Affordable Housing policy environment

The Victorian Government takes on several roles in providing or facilitating the provision of Affordable Housing in Victoria.

The Victorian Government directly provides Affordable Housing in the form of public housing and through grants and subsidies to community housing providers. It also uses the planning system as a mechanism to maintain a supply of new private market housing, although those dwellings can generally only be purchased by moderate and high-income households.

The planning policy framework for housing affordability in Victoria sets out to improve housing affordability by:

- ensuring land supply continues to be sufficient to meet demand
- increasing choice in housing type, tenure and cost to meet the needs of households as they move through life cycle changes and to support diverse communities
- promoting good housing and urban design to minimise negative environmental impacts and keep down costs for residents and the wider community
- encouraging a significant proportion of new development, including development at activity centres and strategic redevelopment sites to be affordable for households on low to moderate incomes
- increasing the supply of well-located Affordable Housing by:
 - facilitating a mix of private, affordable and social housing in activity centres and strategic redevelopment sites
 - ensuring the redevelopment and renewal of public housing stock better meets community needs.

The Victorian Government funds and manages public housing. In 2015 Victoria had 64,822 public housing dwellings and also provided support and regulation to the non-government social housing sector which managed approximately 18,500 affordable homes (Transforming Housing, Melbourne School of Design, 2016).

The Victorian Government is planning to increase social housing by 6000 homes (Victorian Government, 2018) through:

- a \$1 billion Social Housing Growth Fund to support partnerships with community housing sector, private developers, not-for-profit organisations and local government
- low-cost government loans to community housing associations
- the transfer of management of existing public housing to registered community agencies
- facilitating a renewal program for public housing
- creating a social housing pipeline program to deliver social housing through development, fast purchasing and renewal.

In the 2019/20 Budget, the Victorian Government committed \$209 million to public housing properties to deliver 1,000 new homes for people escaping family violence and homelessness. The Victorian Government also announced \$103.5M in matched funding through the NHHA to provide funding for 48 agencies that deliver services to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness (Victorian Government, 2019).

Plan Melbourne (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning, 2017) recommends government can increase the supply social and Affordable Housing with four key policies:

- utilise government land to deliver additional social housing
- streamline decision-making processes for social housing proposals
- strengthen the role of planning in facilitating and delivering the supply of social and Affordable Housing
- create ways to capture and share value uplift from land rezoning.

Government policies for increasing the supply of Affordable Housing in Australia envisage a greatly increased role for the community housing sector. The Victorian Parliamentary Enquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program cites there are 82,000 people on the public housing wait list in Victoria and there were 648 new social housing dwellings in 2017/18 (Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Issues Committee, 2018).

7.2.1 MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In September 2019 the Minister for Planning appointed an advisory committee to provide advice on the possible models and options to facilitate the supply of Affordable Housing through the Victorian Planning System (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning, 2020).

The Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) delivered its advice to the Minister for Planning in late 2019. The MAC proposed a reconsideration of the current voluntary framework for affordable housing and a move towards a more consistent and uniform approach to support affordable housing development.

Recent events have turned the Government's focus towards efforts that will support Victoria's recovery through the COVID-19 pandemic. Consideration of the MAC's findings have been deferred at this time. In the meantime, the Minister for Planning has requested that work continue to investigate options that would enable a more consistent and uniform approach that could be considered at an appropriate time.

7.3 The statutory planning system and social housing

7.3.1 THE STATUTORY PLANNING SYSTEM

The *Planning and Environment Act (1987)* sets the legal framework for the planning system. Developers are required to work within that system. Each municipality in Victoria is covered by a planning scheme that regulates the use, development and protection of the land.

Planning schemes set out the planning rules - the state and local policies, zones, overlays and provisions about specific land uses that inform planning decisions.

Planning schemes are the primary tool to enable state and local government land use planning policies to be implemented and effect positive change to the built environment. The efficiency and effectiveness of planning schemes is important to Victoria's economy and liveability. Each year the planning system processes around 55,000 planning permit applications, which represents around \$30 billion of future investment in Victoria.

Zones are the primary tool for guiding the fair and orderly use and development of land. A zone sets expectations about what land use and development activity is or may be acceptable. Each zone broadly deals with a particular predominant land use theme, such as residential, commercial, industrial or public land uses. The zoning of land may be changed through a formal planning scheme amendment process – a process which may be led by a council or by a proponent (usually the landowner).

Opportunities to negotiate Affordable Housing contributions are created by and must occur within the requirements of the planning framework. The process to change the zoning for a piece of land is generally undertaken when there is the greatest potential for an increase in the value of the property. It is also the point at which the council or other planning authority can consider and decide how and where to provide for housing in their municipality.

Undertaking negotiations for Affordable Housing at this point in the planning system provides the greatest opportunity for securing an Affordable Housing contribution, but it may be many years before that contribution is realised. The process to amend a planning scheme can take two years or more and the development of the land itself can take another two to five years or more depending on market forces.

7.3.2 CHANGES TO THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT (1987)

On 1 June 2018 changes to the *Planning and Environment Act (1987)* (the Act) came into effect. The key change is a change to the objectives of the Act, which will now include an objective:

“to facilitate the provision of Affordable Housing in Victoria.”

The Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning has prepared information and guidance on the changes.

The Act includes a definition that Affordable Housing is housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low, and moderate-income households.

Having an objective in the Act to enable the facilitation of the provision of Affordable Housing may eventually remove a significant hurdle for councils who were seeking to facilitate Affordable Housing through planning mechanisms. However, as with any objective in the Act, a Responsible Authority (council) must undertake appropriate strategic land use research and policy development. The changes to the Act do not remove the need for a strategic basis for a position reached by a Responsible Authority.

In the short-term, the changes to the Act have helped by providing a definition for Affordable Housing and provided councils with a chance to include Affordable Housing in rezoning and permit discussions. However, any Affordable Housing contribution will be made on a voluntary basis by the landowner.

In the medium to long-term, the changes to the Act are likely to increase the supply of Affordable Housing. However, so long as the provisions are voluntary (not mandatory) there will be sufficient uncertainty and ambiguity to make it difficult for developers to factor in the cost of Affordable Housing. As a result the amount of Affordable Housing being delivered is likely to be small, particularly when compared to the demand and therefore council may want to consider additional mechanisms to facilitate Affordable Housing. Even *Plan Melbourne* notes that:

“The planning system alone cannot address all of the issues related to the provision of social and Affordable Housing. A range of programs and measures across all levels of government are required, but it is important that the planning system makes it easier — rather than harder—to deliver social and Affordable Housing.”

7.3.3 CONSTRAINTS OF THE STATUTORY PLANNING SYSTEM

Planning staff are responsible for negotiating Affordable Housing agreements through the planning system. It may be as part of a proposal to rezone land, or as part of a planning permit application.

In either case, it is important to remember that a council cannot compel a developer to enter into negotiations or to agree to an Affordable Housing contribution – it must be agreed on a voluntary basis.

The negotiations may centre around value-sharing or incentives, or both.

In a value-sharing approach, the council recognises the value created through the planning process and seeks to share some of that value with the community by way of an Affordable Housing contribution. Value is created for the landowner when land is rezoned through a planning scheme amendment and/or when a planning permit is issued. The planning scheme amendment process results in the greatest uplift in land value and provides the greatest opportunity to seek to share that value, but a value-share approach can also be adopted in a planning permit process.

Because the provision of an Affordable Housing contribution is voluntary, it is difficult for a landowner/developer to know exactly how much it will cost them to make that contribution. Usually a developer will calculate all the costs and likely profit for a project and that feasibility modelling will help them determine what they are willing to pay for a site. If their costs are higher and profit margin falls below the rate that financiers require to lend them money, they will need to offer less for the land. Because developers are competing with each other to purchase a site, a developer that factors in the cost of an Affordable Housing contribution may be outbid by a developer who decides not to factor in an Affordable Housing contribution.

Incentives may be offered by a council to help a developer offset the cost of an Affordable Housing contribution. There may be some overlap with the concept of value-sharing but is more likely to be where a council makes a concession or an exception in order to facilitate an Affordable Housing contribution.

Incentives may take the form of increased yield of development, a reduction in carparking requirements, a trade-off with public open space contributions, a fast-track process, or other incentives that translate to monetary value to the developer. Council staff will need to carefully weigh up and balance the other objectives of the planning scheme so that the provisions of Affordable Housing do not sacrifice the amenity and liveability of the neighbourhood.

7.4 Relevant Council policy documents

7.4.1 WARRNAMBOOL COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

The *Warrnambool Council Plan* is the feature document in Council's suite of strategic planning documents, formulated to guide the work of Council. Approved in 2017, it was revised in 2019. The Council Plan represented a significant shift in focus for the Council, with a vision for Warrnambool to be a 'Cosmopolitan City by the Sea'.

For the first time Council also devised a theme for the Council Plan, 'Growing Pride and Confidence in the City', which emphasises the need to celebrate and promote the city, its attributes and its appeal to those in the region and beyond.

Five objectives support the Council's vision.

1. Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment
2. Foster a healthy, welcoming city that is socially and culturally rich
3. Maintain and improve the physical places and visual appeal of the city
4. Develop a smarter economy with diverse and sustainable employment

5. Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management.

Objective 3 includes strategies to ensure that the City of Warrnambool is a great place to live and work and access to affordable appropriate housing falls within those strategies.

7.4.2 WARRNAMBOOL 2040 COMMUNITY PLAN

Warrnambool 2040 (W2040) outlines the community's long-term visions and goals for the environment, economy, place and people. A key goal is that 'Warrnambool is an affordable and accessible place to live for all people' (p9). It includes the following progress measures by 2026:

- as a proportion of all housing, more affordable and social housing is available than in 2017
- housing types and sizes are more diverse than in 2017
- rates of homelessness have halved from 2017 levels.

To achieve this, the Community Plan states that Council will endorse and implement the Housing Diversity Strategy and Social Housing Planning Project, implement them into the Planning Scheme policy, and advocate for and support the development of diverse, social and Affordable Housing that exceeds previous provision.

7.4.3 WARRNAMBOOL A HEALTHY CITY 2017 - 2021

Warrnambool – A Healthy City 2017-2021 is the Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan. An extensive process to develop *Warrnambool – A Healthy City* in 2013 confirmed the priority health and wellbeing issues to be addressed over time. The Plan endorsed eight priorities to be addressed. These align with state policy and local priorities and remained in the 2017–2021 revision and update. The priorities for action are:

- physical activity
- healthy eating
- harmful use of alcohol and other drugs
- smoking
- violence against women and children
- mental (social & emotional) wellbeing
- access to programs and services
- educational attainment and life-long learning
- employment (economic participation).

While the Plan does not specifically reference housing or social housing it is worth noting that without access to safe, secure, Affordable Housing it is almost impossible for a person to achieve the physical and mental wellbeing or the educational or economic participation that the Plan strives for.

7.4.4 HOUSING DIVERSITY AND A COMPACT CITY

In 2016 a background paper was prepared with a view to developing a strategic response to the issue of housing diversity. The potential to take a holistic approach and look more broadly at liveability and a compact city model could see this work picked up again in 2020/21 (subject to budget approval).

In relation to social housing and affordability, the background paper found that:

- being a regional centre, the City of Warrnambool provides a greater proportion of social housing than surrounding municipalities
- the provision of social housing in Warrnambool has not kept pace with growth in housing overall, dropping from 7.6 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent in 2011 (this has dropped further to 5.2 per cent in 2016, suggesting the rate of decline is increasing)
- The median house price in Warrnambool rose 30 per cent between 2005 and 2015
- The 12th International Housing Affordability Survey by Demographica (2016) categorised Warrnambool as 'severely unaffordable' (listed as a median house price of 5.1 or above times the median household income – Warrnambool is 5.5). This has risen from 1995 when the median house price was just under three times the median household salary.

7.4.5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY (2012)

The *Warrnambool City Council Affordable Housing Policy* is in Appendix 3. It outlines Council's objectives and approach to addressing housing affordability in the City of Warrnambool, which focuses on four objectives: community health and wellbeing, sustainable housing design and supply, liveability and economic development.

It defines council's roles as: advocacy, partnership development, advice, research, urban planning, community development, service provision and regulation.

7.4.6 GREAT SOUTH COAST REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN (2014)

The *Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan* covers the municipalities of Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool, and identifies Warrnambool as the Major Growth Centre for the region. It shows that in 2014 around one third of the region's population lived in Warrnambool, and around 40 per cent of jobs were in Warrnambool.

It forecasts that Warrnambool will accommodate 50-60 per cent of the region's population growth in the next 25 years. A such, social housing needs to be considered across a wide catchment area.

7.4.7 WARRNAMBOOL CITY-WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY (2013)

The *Warrnambool City-Wide Housing Strategy* outlines Council's plan to meet the changing household needs of its growing population. It confirms that the City has enough land supply until approx. 2040, and a further 20+ years land supply can be provided within future greenfield growth areas.

The Strategy identifies the need for greater housing diversity within the City's greenfield growth areas, and the need to investigate the provision of Social Housing across the municipality.

These designated greenfield growth areas are:

- North Dennington Growth Area
- North of the Merri River Growth Area
- North East Growth Area
- Coastal Hopkins Environment Growth Area
- East of Aberline Precinct (in progress with the VPA) – approximately 360 hectares of land.

7.4.8 WARRNAMBOOL PLANNING SCHEME

The *Warrnambool Planning Scheme* is a statutory document that sets out objectives, policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land in the municipality. The planning scheme regulates the use and development of land through planning provisions to achieve those objectives and policies.

The Local Planning Policy Framework (Clause 21.07-1) provides local content to support Clause 16 (Housing) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

It has the following objectives:

- to locate new housing within close proximity to existing and/or planned transport corridors, activity centres and open space
- to provide housing diversity to meet community needs
- to provide opportunities for affordable housing.

The third objective is supported by a policy statement that notes:

"Access to Affordable Housing is a basic human right and a determinant of community health and wellbeing. The impacts of unaffordable housing are unevenly distributed across the community with sole parents, single people, young people, older people (>65 years) and children of sole parents experiencing the worst outcomes.

Affordable Housing also has significant impacts on the liveability and economic prosperity of the community. A lack of Affordable Housing has a negative impact on workforce attraction and is a barrier to attracting tertiary students to the City."

The provision of social housing is an emerging issue that needs to be considered by the relevant agencies in future growth area planning.

The strategies to respond to the objective are:

- Strategy 1.1 Provide more affordable accommodation opportunities through the designation of a range of housing styles as well as higher density housing such as townhouses, aged persons accommodation and commercial accommodation
- Strategy 1.2 Ensure adequate land supply is available for residential development
- Strategy 1.3 Provide a diversity of housing types and lot sizes in locations that support appropriate access to employment, education, cultural, recreational, health and social services.

Future strategic work is also identified

- investigate methods for addressing the availability of Affordable Housing in the municipality
- identify opportunities and mechanisms to provide additional social housing.

The *Warrnambool City Council Social Housing Planning Project* (this report) responds to the second of those points.

8.0 Community and stakeholder feedback

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken for the development of stage 1 of the project. The process and outcomes of that engagement is detailed in an engagement report prepared by Activate Consulting (Appendix 4). The key findings of that report have been used to identify the key challenges and opportunities (see section 10).

Council has previously undertaken policy development or community engagement projects where housing affordability or Affordable Housing has been raised as a topic. That feedback is included in the engagement report.

9.0 Housing and service providers in Warrnambool

The housing and service providers operating in the City of Warrnambool were identified to enable data collection and stakeholder engagement for this background report.

Within Warrnambool there are three organisations that have a significant number of social housing dwellings available for long-term rental. They are:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria
- Haven; Home, Safe

The City of Warrnambool is also an owner and manager of housing, with 13 dwellings. These dwellings were constructed on council-owned land using State Government funds.

In addition to long-term social housing rentals, there are several organisations that provide crisis accommodation and transitional housing. The key organisations are:

- SalvoConnect Western
- Emma House
- Brophy

These organisations also provide support services or connect clients to other providers who provide support services.

The stakeholder engagement report (Appendix 4) provides a list of all organisations that were contacted as part of the development of the engagement report. Not all organisations took up the opportunity to engage. This is most likely due to the limited in-house capacity and resources. Many smaller organisations don't have staff time available to engage about the work they are doing as their focus is on delivering the service for their community.

The information supplied by DHHS in Appendix 2 has been provided as a separate attachment to ensure no confidential data is released. It sets out the number of social housing dwellings in the City of Warrnambool.

DHHS also provided publicly available information that shows that in 2018/19 DHHS acquired six houses and two medium density dwellings in the Wimmera South West (the local area of the Western Division in which Warrnambool municipality is located). That data also showed that eight dwellings were acquired by community organisations within Wimmera South West in that same period.

10.0 Challenges and opportunities

Stage 2 of the project identified the challenges and opportunities to increasing the supply of social housing in the City of Warrnambool. This included a desktop assessment of Government-owned and Council-owned land that might support social housing.

10.1 Challenges

The City of Warrnambool is facing many of the same challenges that metropolitan and regional communities are facing in relation to social housing:

- population growth
- changing household size, with a greater proportion of smaller households and a mismatch between the configuration of available housing stock and household size
- escalating increases to housing costs (purchase price and rents)
- stagnant wage growth and no increase for statutory incomes (e.g. Job Seeker)
- historical and ongoing underinvestment in social housing
- people presenting with more complex issues
- increased rates of family violence.

In addition, the City of Warrnambool faces some specific challenges which are putting pressure on housing and/or making it more difficult to increase the supply of social housing:

- an influx of workers for major projects (wind farms, roads)
- a seasonal population influx – the ‘AirBnB effect’ where landlords opt for summer holiday lets rather than long term rentals
- the ‘end of the line’ effect where people are catching the train as far as they can, disembarking in Warrnambool and end up sleeping rough
- Warrnambool acts as a service centre for the surrounding area and people will move off rural properties into Warrnambool if rural living no longer meets their needs due to old age, or if they require access to education, employment or health services.

The effect of all of these challenges is a tightening of the private rental market. This has the flow-on effect of creating a bottle neck so that people are no longer able to move out of transitional housing and into the private market. The result is that fewer people are able to access transitional housing and they end up in overcrowded or unsafe situations.

Another unique challenge that Warrnambool faces is that, other than DHHS, none of the social housing providers have an office within the municipality. This presents challenges for people who want to access their services but it also likely to affect the potential to attract grant funding to the area. There is a huge demand for social housing in all locations and staff and board members may be more likely to focus new development opportunities in areas where they are located. Being located out of the area also makes it more difficult for social housing providers to build connections with local service providers.

10.2 Opportunities

There are significant challenges to increasing the amount of social housing in the City of Warrnambool but there are also opportunities. The key opportunities are:

- Use of Council or government land to develop new social housing
- Reconfiguration or redevelopment of existing social housing sites to deliver additional social housing
- Potential outsourcing by Council of its housing assets to a community housing organisation providing for more effective tenancy and property management
- Incentives to one or more community housing organisation to locate their offices in the City of Warrnambool, increasing the presence and focus of housing services in Warrnambool
- Partnership projects with companies which are constructing wind farms, to deliver housing they need now, which then can be used for social housing in the future
- Increasing private market housing supply through the strategic planning work being undertaken by Council and the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)
- Securing social housing through the planning system through voluntary negotiations

10.2.1 ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND COUNCIL LAND

To determine to what extent Government-owned or Council-owned land provided an opportunity for additional social housing in the City of Warrnambool, a desktop assessment was undertaken of land parcels. The parcels were identified through the rates database as Crown land (Government-owned) or Council-owned. For Council-owned land only freehold land was included, noting the process to change the status of reserve land can take a significant amount of time. To narrow down the list to the most suitable sites, assessment was undertaken on the following:

Zone

Is the zoning of the site facilitative of residential development? Would it be relatively straightforward to obtain a planning permit for residential development on the site?

Sites with the following zoning were removed from the list:

- Farming Zone
- Low Density Residential Zone
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone
- Public Park and Recreation Zone
- PUZ1 – Service and Utility
- PUZ5 – Cemetery / Crematorium
- Rural Living Zone
- Urban Floodway Zone.

Land size

Is the land of a sufficient size to accommodate at least two dwellings on the site? This is to maximise efficiencies of redeveloping a site rather than focusing on smaller sites that could only accommodate one dwelling. Sites less than 1,000m² were removed from the list.

Location

The location of social housing is important as some residents are not able to access private transport and/or need to access services more frequently. Sites that were remote or in non-residential areas were removed from the list.

Incompatible uses

An assessment was made of the existing uses to identify sites that had an existing use that would make it more difficult to develop residential buildings on the site. That may be because of incompatible land uses (e.g. road reserves, former tip sites) or likely community concern about the change of use (memorials). The spreadsheet of sites (Appendix 5) sets out the specific uses that were considered incompatible.

Existing development

Using the description in the rates database of the use of the site, together with a desktop assessment of the building (aerial and street level photography) the list was further refined and the sites were scored 1, 2, or 3. Sites with a score of 1 were vacant land or carparks. Sites with a score of 2 were existing residential buildings, and score 3 had buildings on the site that, if they were redeveloped at some point in the future, might be able to include social housing. Some government sites contained insufficient information to make a robust assessment. They were given a score of 4.

10.2.2 POTENTIAL SITES FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

The assessment of land (Appendix 5) contains confidential information and has been provided separately. Within the spreadsheet, there are instructions on how to access a map of the properties.

The desktop assessment indicated there are potentially 25 Council-owned sites that might be suitable for social housing, but it should be noted that most of these sites have existing buildings on them, only providing an opportunity if or when the site is redeveloped.

However, there are five carparks in the town centre that could provide an opportunity for development above the carpark, allowing the carparking to remain with a residential building above it.

For Government-owned land, there is one vacant site of about 1,000m² in a residential area that provides good potential for the development of three or four social housing dwellings. There are also five residential sites that could provide potential for additional houses if they were to be redeveloped. There are an additional 14 sites that have existing government

buildings on them, plus an additional 17 sites for which there was insufficient information to make an assessment.

10.2.3 REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING SOCIAL HOUSING

There are approximately 200 sites within the City of Warrnambool that are owned by DHHS and contain social housing. There is also a mismatch between the demand for one and two-bedroom properties and the existing three and four-bedroom housing stock owed by DHHS.

This provides a significant opportunity to reconfigure existing housing stock to better meet the needs of people on the waiting list.

The benefit of this approach is that the government already owns the land and the cost of redeveloping would be significantly less than a development where the land had to be purchased.

10.2.4 COUNCIL'S HOUSING ASSETS

Warrnambool City Council owns 13 dwellings that were constructed on Council-owned land using State Government funds a considerable time ago. The tenancy and property management of the dwellings is undertaken by Council staff and is supposed to include a process to allocate the properties to single parent families or other people in need.

The management of the properties is not cost-neutral, or cash-flow positive, meaning rates revenue is being used to manage and maintain the properties.

To provide better social housing outcomes the Council could:

- **outsource** the management of the properties to a community housing organisation on a fee-for-service basis. Council would still be liable for the maintenance costs and would continue to receive the rent, less a service fee
- **transfer** the management of the properties to a community housing organisation. The liability for maintenance would also transfer to that organisation but Council would no longer receive any rent
- **dispose** of the properties to a community housing organisation. This would require the Council to follow the statutory process for the sale of council land. Given the age of the properties and large maintenance liability that is likely to exist, the Council will need to offer the properties at a significant discount if they want them to remain as social housing.

10.2.5 A COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANISATION IN WARRNAMBOOL

The research and engagement for this project identified that without having a community housing organisation located within the City of Warrnambool, it is more difficult to keep a focus on Warrnambool when opportunities arise for advocacy, funding and new developments.

Warrnambool City Council could consider incentives to encourage a community housing organisation to establish an office or a presence in Warrnambool. That opportunity could be tied to the management of the Council-owned housing and/or could include access to office or commercial space.

The community housing organisations with the largest presence in Warrnambool are Aboriginal Housing Victoria and Haven; Home, Safe and these would be a good starting point for discussions.

10.2.6 PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE COMPANIES

There are large infrastructure and energy projects underway in the region that are placing increased demand on rental housing stock in the City of Warrnambool. To meet their social responsibility commitments, companies are looking for ways to contribute to local communities.

In addition, there are existing landowners and developers in Warrnambool who are part of the community and are keen to deliver meaningful outcomes for residents in an economically sustainable way.

There is scope to bring these parties together and broker an arrangement where the infrastructure and energy companies provide housing for their staff in the short to medium term on the land of willing developers, and the housing is then sold to community housing organisations once the projects are completed.

The contractual arrangements would need to be such that the proposal is economically viable and sustainable for all parties. It is not reasonable to expect the private sector to gift the houses, nor can the community housing sector pay full market price.

10.2.7 PLANNING MECHANISMS

Warrnambool City Council can continue to influence the supply of market housing through the strategic planning work being undertaken by Council and the VPA.

Council can also seek to secure social housing through the planning system through voluntary negotiations as part of rezoning proposals or planning permit applications. Council staff have already attended a training session on negotiating voluntary agreements and will continue to seek opportunities to increase the amount of social housing in the City of Warrnambool.

10.3 Conclusion

The current demand for social housing in the City of Warrnambool far exceeds the supply, in the order of approximately 1,430 dwellings. There have been increasing pressures on the private rental market leading to more people experiencing housing stress and housing uncertainty or homelessness. It is estimated there will need to be 2,812 social housing dwellings in Warrnambool in 2036, almost four times the existing number of social housing dwellings.

The consultation and stakeholder engagement process has provided an important opportunity to bring housing organisations and service providers together to identify existing gaps and also to discuss how housing and service providers can work together.

This report has highlighted that in addition to the need for additional housing dwellings there is also need for a greater presence of community housing organisations in Warrnambool to drive collaboration and advocacy, and to drive the development of new social housing in the region.

Warrnambool City Council can improve social housing outcomes by better utilising the social housing stock it owns. The simplest way to do this would be through a fee-for-service arrangement for the management of the Council-owned houses. However, if Council truly wants to build the capacity of the community housing sector within Warrnambool, it could transfer the management of the houses to a community housing organisation or sell the properties to a community housing organisation (following the appropriate statutory process).

Council could also seek to advocate for or broker partnership arrangements with the private and community housing sector and encourage a community housing organisation to locate in Warrnambool.

Together, these actions would help build the capacity of the community housing sector within the City of Warrnambool and should result in an increase in the amount of social housing in the municipality.

The Council should advocate to State Government for the redevelopment of existing social housing to better match housing configuration to demand, leveraging the existing DHHS land assets to deliver additional social housing outcomes.

11.0 References

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12.0 Appendices

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A1.0 Demographic and housing data overview

Table 2: Demographic summary for the Warrnambool City Council, 2016 (profile.id)

Demographic Summary	City of Warrnambool	Regional Victoria
Median age (atlas.id)	40 years	43 years
Gender		
Females:	52.0%	50.9%
Males:	48.0%	49.1%
Aged below 15 years old	18.2%	18.2%
Aged 50 years old and above	38.1%	31.1%
Speak languages other than English at home	4.2%	6.0%
Couples with children	25%	25%
Employed	94.7%	94.0%
Median weekly household income	\$1,180	\$1,124
Housing structure - separate house	78.7%	87.9%
SEIFA Index of Disadvantage (ABS SEIFA)	986.0	977.0

The Warrnambool City Estimated Resident Population for 2018 is 34,862, with a population density of 2.89 persons per hectare. The population is forecast to grow to 46,210 by 2036 – a 26 per cent increase in population.

At the 2016 census, there were 15,188 private dwellings with an average household size of 2.36 people.

The City of Warrnambool's median age is 40 compared to the regional Victorian median age of 43 and the Australian median age of 38.

As with other regional cities, Warrnambool has an ageing community. One in five residents are under 15 years old (a proportion which is decreasing), and one in five residents are aged over 65 years (a proportion which is increasing).

About 75 per cent of the City of Warrnambool's annual net population growth comes from migration – domestic (particularly other Great South Coast municipalities and Melbourne) and overseas.

Babies born in the city represent 25 per cent of population growth. Domestic migration comprises mostly young families (35-44 years) and those who have retired or are reaching retirement age (55 years and over).

Warrnambool is home to people from 33 countries. The most significant growth from 2011-2016 was from people born in China, Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand.

At the 2016 census, 2,731 of people living in the City of Warrnambool were born overseas. Of these, one in four arrived in Australia in the five years leading to Census 2016. Of the total population, four per cent speak a language other than English at home – a significant increase of 526 people between 2011-2016.

The number of residents who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the Census (2011-2016) increased by 10 per cent from 495 to 556.

At the 2016 census, 15,724 people were working in Warrnambool. Of these people, 12,738 lived in the City of Warrnambool, 2,337 lived in the Moyne Shire, and 302 lived in the Corangamite Shire.

A1.1 Population

There are a number of different ways of measuring the population of an area, all of which give an insight into the size of the place and its rate of growth over different time periods.

The Census counts people where they are on the night of the Census (enumerated population) and also by where they usually live (usual residence). The usual resident population of the City of Warrnambool in 2016 was 33,655.

However, the most accurate count of the total population is Estimated Resident Population, which factors in an estimate of those missed in the Census and those who were overseas on Census night. It is usually higher than either Census count and is also updated annually after the Census, providing preliminary estimates for up to five years.

The estimated residential population in the City of Warrnambool in 2018 was 34,242.

Table 3: Population summary for the Warrnambool City Council, 2016 (profile.id)

Warrnambool City - Total persons	2016			2011			Change
	Population	Number	%	Population	Number	%	
Estimated Resident Population		34,242			32,667		+1,575
Enumerated Population		33,035			31,691		+1,344
Usual Resident Population		33,655			32,028		+1,627

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011 and 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#), the population experts.

A1.1.1 AGE STRUCTURE

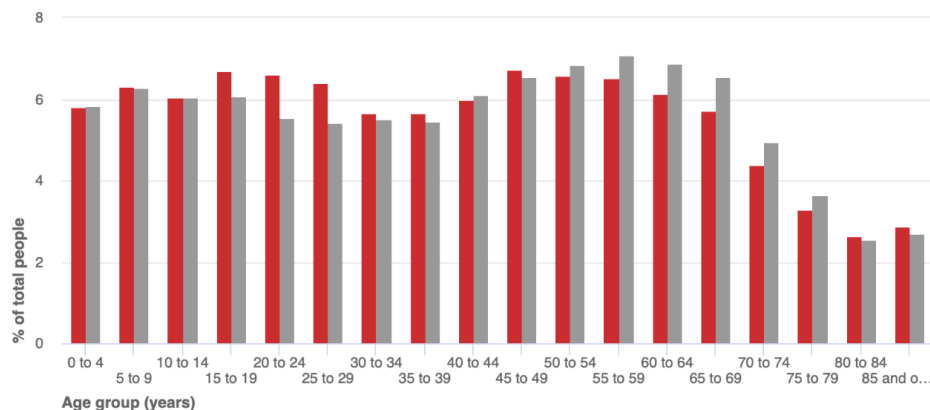
The age structure of the City of Warrnambool provides key insights into the level of demand for age-based services and facilities such as childcare. It is also an indicator of the City of Warrnambool's residential role and function and how it is likely to change in the future.

Analysis of the five-year age groups of the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was an equal proportion of people in the younger age groups (under 15) (18.2 per cent) and a higher proportion of people aged over 50. Overall, 21.4 per cent of the population was aged between 0 and 15, and 18.2 per cent were aged 65 years and over, compared with 18.2 per cent and 20.4 per cent respectively for Greater Melbourne.

Age structure - five year age groups, 2016

Total persons

■ Warrnambool City ■ Regional VIC



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

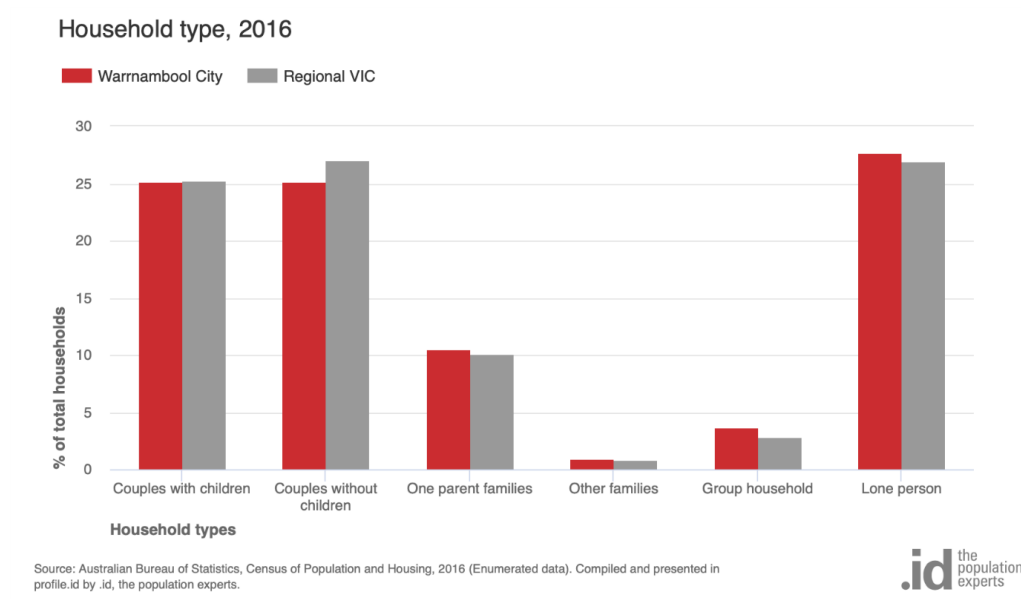
.id the population experts

A1.1.2 HOUSEHOLDS

The City of Warrnambool's household and family structure is one of the most important demographic indicators. It reveals the area's residential role and function, era of settlement and provides key insights into the level of demand for services and facilities, as most are related to age and household types.

Analysis of the household/family types in the City of Warrnambool in 2016 shows that it is pretty well-aligned with the household/family types across regional Victoria. Overall, 25.2 per cent of total families were couple families with children, and 10.5 per cent were one-parent families, compared with 27.1 per cent and 10.1 per cent respectively for regional Victoria.

There were a similar proportion of lone person households and a lower proportion of couples without children. Overall, the proportion of lone person households was 27.7 per cent compared to 27 per cent in regional Victoria while the proportion of couples without children was 25.3 per cent compared to 27.1 per cent in regional Victoria.



A1.1.3 INCOME

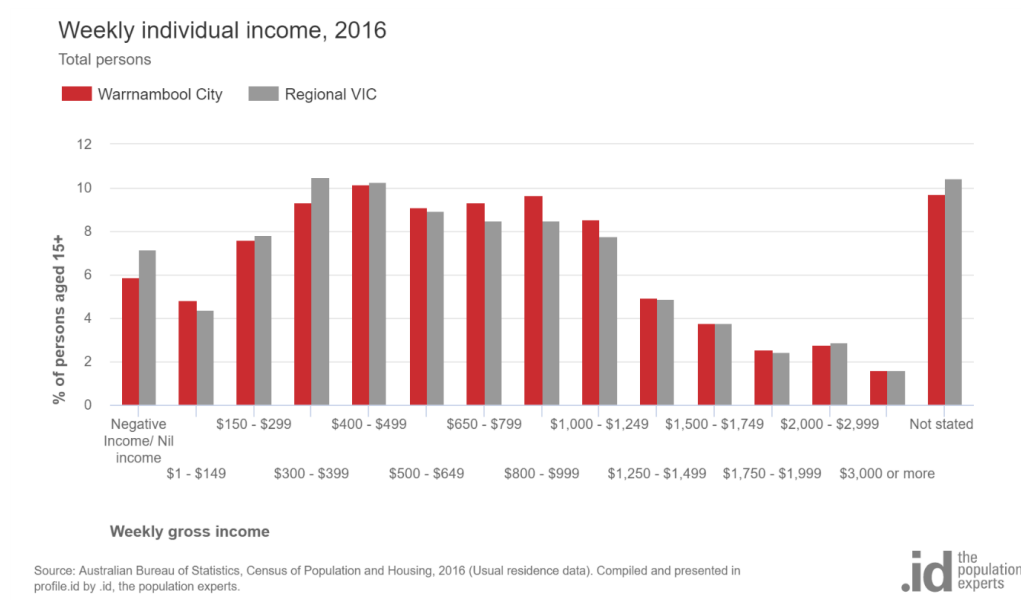
In the City of Warrnambool, 6.9 per cent of the population earned an income of \$1,750 or more per week in 2016.

Analysis of individual income levels in Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a similar proportion of people earning a high income (those earning \$1,750 per week or more) and a lower proportion of low-income people (those earning less than \$500 per week).

Overall, 6.9 per cent of the population earned a high income, and 37.9 per cent earned a low-income, compared with 6.9 per cent and 40.2 per cent respectively for regional Victoria.

The major differences between Warrnambool's individual weekly incomes and regional Victoria's individual weekly incomes were:

- a larger percentage of persons who earned \$800 - \$999 (9.7 per cent compared to 8.5 per cent)
- a larger percentage of persons who earned \$650 - \$799 (9.3 per cent compared to 8.5 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of persons who earned negative income/nil income (5.9 per cent compared to 7.2 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of persons who earned \$300 - \$399 (9.3 per cent compared to 10.5 per cent).



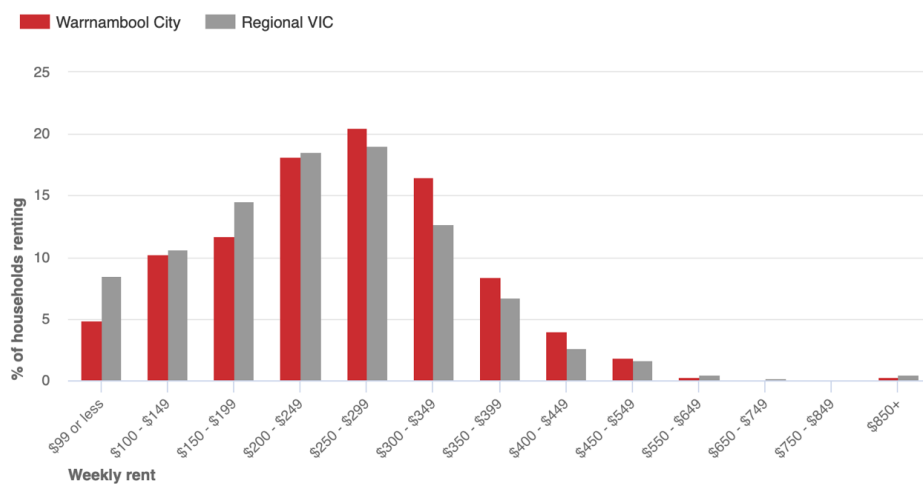
A1.1.4 WEEKLY RENTAL PAYMENTS

Rental payments can be a better measure of the cost of housing in the City of Warrnambool than mortgage repayments because they are not contingent on length of occupancy or equity in the dwelling.

Analysis of the weekly housing rental payments of households in Warrnambool compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a similar proportion of households paying high rental payments (\$450 per week or more) and a smaller proportion of households with low rental payments (less than \$250 per week).

Overall, 2.5 per cent of households were paying high rental payments, and 45.0 per cent were paying low payments, compared with 2.9 per cent and 52.2 per cent respectively in regional Victoria.

Weekly housing rental payments, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id
the population experts

A1.1.5 CHANGES IN POPULATION

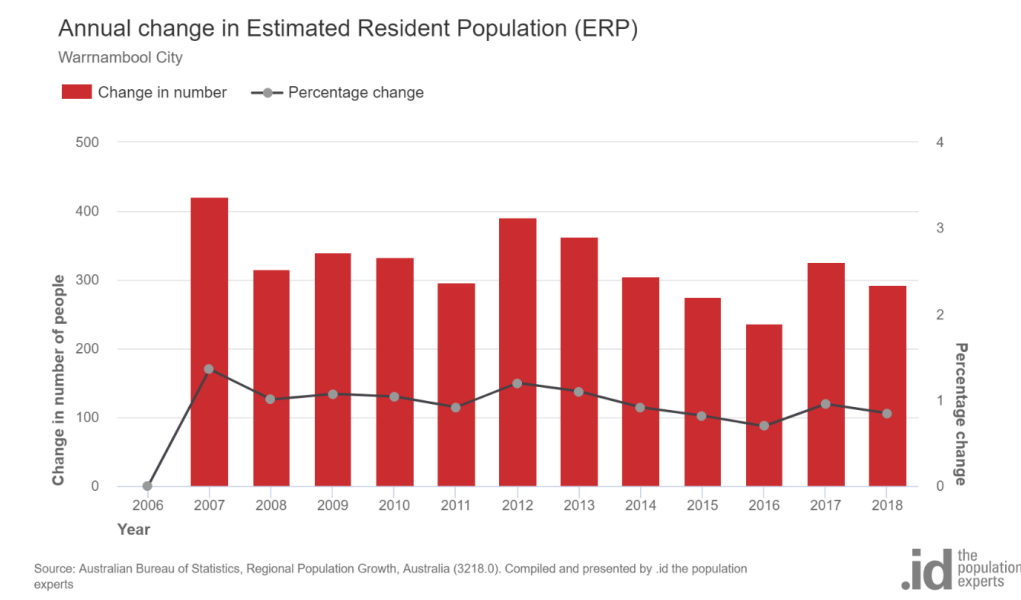
Populations are counted and estimated in several ways. The most comprehensive population count available in Australia is derived from the Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) every five years.

The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the official population for 2018. For areas within the Warrnambool municipality, the ERP is not an official count but an experimental estimate which is subject to review after the next Census.

The Census count is generally an underestimate of the actual population, due to people missed in the Census and people overseas on Census night.

To provide a more accurate population figure, which is updated more frequently than every five years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics also produces an ERP for Warrnambool City Council.

The City of Warrnambool's ERP for 2018 is 38,462 people, a change of approximately 1 per cent.



A1.1.6 POPULATION FORECAST

Between 2016 and 2036, the population for the City of Warrnambool is forecast to increase by 11,966 persons (34.95 per cent growth), at an average annual change of 1.51 per cent.

This rate of annual change is slightly higher than in recent years (1.36 per cent in 2007, 1.4 per cent in 2010, 0.82 per cent in 2015).

Table 4: Warrnambool City Council's population forecast (profile.id)

Warrnambool City		Forecast year				Change between 2016 and 2036	
Area	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Total change	Avg. annual % change
Warrnambool City	34,243	37,225	40,323	43,304	46,209	+11,966	+1.51
Allansford - Rural East	1,264	1,310	1,363	1,409	1,475	+211	+0.78
Bushfield - Woodford	937	1,000	1,058	1,116	1,193	+256	+1.21
Dennington area	2,028	2,324	2,676	3,065	3,402	+1,374	+2.62
Warrnambool (Botanic)	2,795	2,877	2,943	3,024	3,098	+302	+0.51
Warrnambool (Central)	3,828	4,019	4,107	4,163	4,219	+391	+0.49
Warrnambool (East - Racecourse)	3,694	3,696	3,763	3,867	3,981	+287	+0.37
Warrnambool (North East)	4,013	5,094	5,986	6,523	7,027	+3,014	+2.84
Warrnambool (North of Merri)	917	1,311	1,908	2,880	3,867	+2,950	+7.46
Warrnambool (North)	2,585	2,594	2,703	2,770	2,823	+238	+0.44
Warrnambool (South - Merrivale)	3,499	3,697	3,862	4,005	4,192	+693	+0.91
Warrnambool (South East - Hopkins)	3,938	4,405	4,852	5,252	5,636	+1,698	+1.81
Warrnambool (West)	4,744	4,899	5,102	5,231	5,297	+552	+0.55

Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2036, prepared by [id.](#), the population experts, December 2017.

A1.1.7 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Census population of the City of Warrnambool in 2016 was 550, living in 261 dwellings.

In Warrnambool, 43 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households earned \$1,000 or more per week.

Analysis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household income levels in Warrnambool in 2016 compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household income levels in Victoria shows that there was a smaller proportion of high-income households (those earning \$2,500 per week or more) and a higher proportion of low-income households (those earning less than \$650 per week).

Overall, 7.8 per cent of the households earned a high income, and 24.6 per cent were low-income households, compared with 14.2 per cent and 21.5 per cent respectively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Victoria.

The major differences between weekly incomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Warrnambool and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Victoria were:

- a larger percentage of households who earned \$650 - \$799 (11.2 per cent compared to 8.0 per cent)
- a larger percentage of households who earned \$1,000 - \$1,249 (11.6 per cent compared to 8.9 per cent)
- a larger percentage of households who earned \$500 - \$649 (8.2 per cent compared to 5.6 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of households who earned \$2,500 - \$2,999 (2.6 per cent compared to 5.3 per cent).

A1.1.8 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HOUSING TENURE

Analysis of the housing tenure of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Victoria shows that there was a smaller proportion of households who owned their dwelling, a smaller proportion purchasing their dwelling, and a larger proportion who were renters.

Overall, 10.5 per cent of the population owned their dwelling, 21.5 per cent were purchasing, and 68.4 per cent were renting, compared with 14.2 per cent, 29.1 per cent and 51.7 per cent respectively for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Victoria.

The major differences between housing tenure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Warrnambool and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Victoria were:

- a larger percentage of households who were renting (68.4 per cent compared to 51.7 per cent)
- a larger percentage of households who were renting social housing (23.8 per cent compared to 12.9 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of households who were purchasing their dwelling (21.5 per cent compared to 29.1 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of households who owned their dwelling (10.5 per cent compared to 14.2 per cent)

A1.2 Dwellings

A1.2.1 DWELLING SUMMARY

At the 2016 census, there were 15,188 dwellings in the City of Warrnambool. A larger proportion of these dwellings were privately occupied (89.2 per cent) as compared to regional Victoria (83.6 per cent). There was also a lower number of people living in each dwelling in the City of Warrnambool (two) compared to regional Victoria (2.4).

Table 5: Warrnambool City Council's dwelling summary (profile.id)

Dwellings							
Warrnambool City - Households (Enumerated)		2016		2011		Change	
Dwellings	Number	%	Regional Victoria %	Number	%	Regional Victoria %	2011 to 2016
Total dwellings	15,188	100.0	100.0	13,982	100.0	100.0	+1,206
Occupied private dwellings	13,548	89.2	83.6	12,580	90.0	83.3	+968
Population in non-private dwellings	1,050			1,250			-200
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	2		2.4	2		2.4	0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011 and 2016 (Enumerated).
Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#), the population experts.

A1.2.2 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING APPROVALS

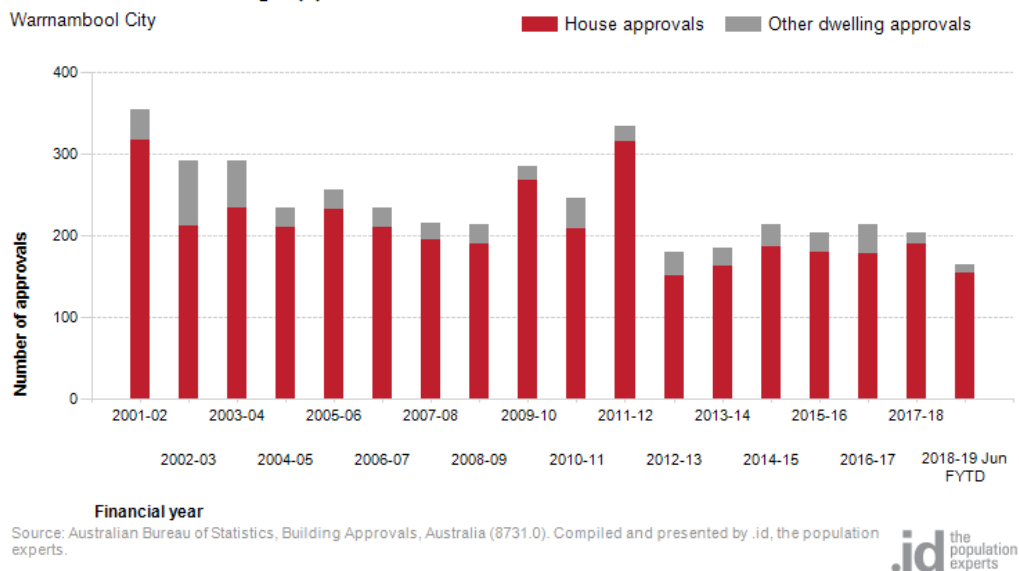
In the City of Warrnambool 164 residential buildings were approved to be built in the 2018/19 financial year.

The City of Warrnambool's building approvals are used as a leading indicator of the general level of residential development, economic activity, employment and investment.

Residential building activity depends on many factors that vary with the state of the economy, including interest rates, availability of mortgage funds, government spending and business investment.

Large financial changes or shocks, such as the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09 can be observed in the data. However, the number of building approvals can fluctuate substantially from year to year simply as a result of the short-term nature of many construction projects and the cyclical nature of the industry.

Residential building approvals

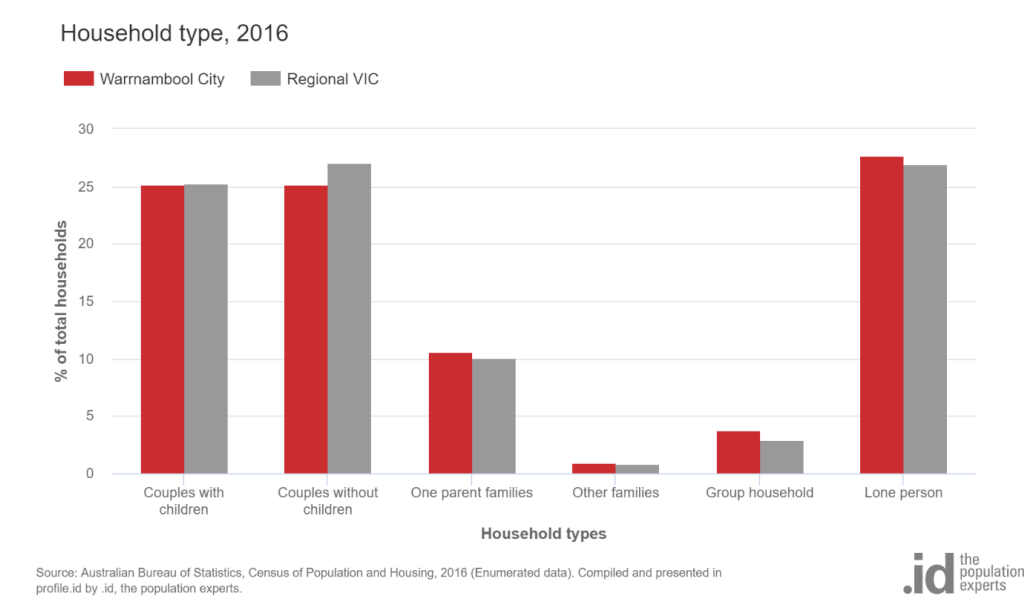


A1.3 Households

A1.3.1 HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Warrnambool City's household and family structure is one of the most important demographic indicators. It reveals the area's residential role and function, era of settlement and provides key insights into the level of demand for services and facilities as most are related to age and household types.

In Warrnambool City, 25.2% of households were made up of couples with children in 2016, compared with 25.3% in Regional VIC.

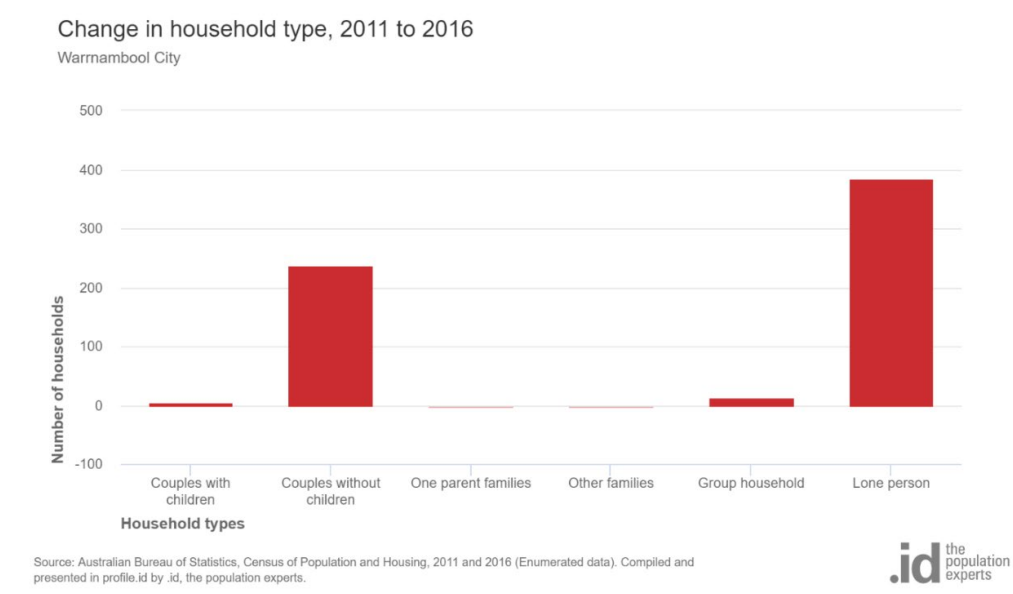


A1.3.2 CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD TYPES

The number of households in the City of Warrnambool increased by 618 between 2011 and 2016.

Changes in the number of persons usually resident in a household in the City of Warrnambool between 2011 and 2016 were:

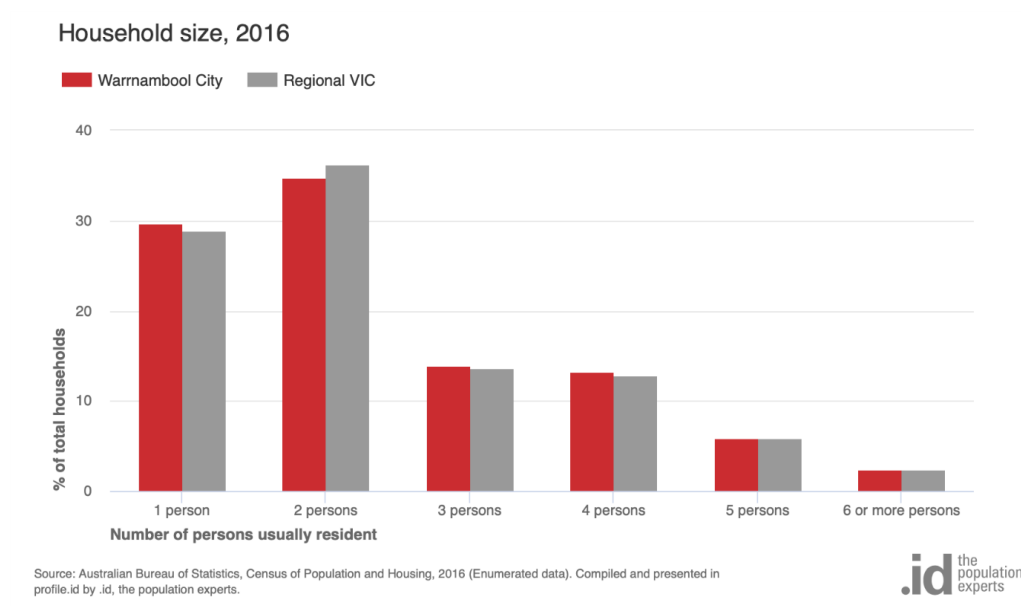
- 1 person (+390 households)
- 2 persons (+227 households)
- 4 persons (+62 households)
- 5 persons (-51 households)



A1.3.3 HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Generally the size of households follows the lifecycle of families. Households are usually small at the stage of relationship formation (early marriage) and then increase in size with the advent of children. They later reduce in size again as these children reach adulthood and leave home. Household size can also be influenced by a lack (or abundance) of Affordable Housing. Overseas migrants and indigenous persons often have a tradition of living with extended family members, which significantly affects household size.

In 2016, 30% of households in Warrnambool City contained only one person, compared with 29.0% in Regional VIC, with the most dominant household size being 2 persons per household.



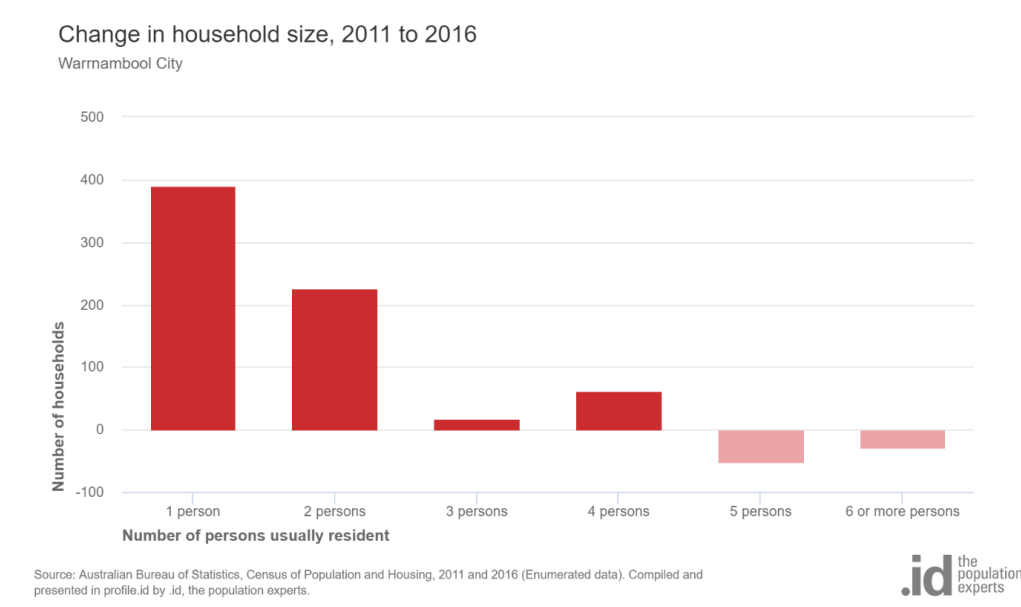
A1.3.4 CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The major difference in the household size for the City of Warrnambool and regional Victoria was a smaller percentage of households with two persons usually resident (34.8 per cent compared to 36.2 per cent).

The largest changes in the number of persons usually resident in a household in Warrnambool between 2011 and 2016 were:

- 1 person (+390 households)
- 2 persons (+227 households)
- 4 persons (+62 households)
- 5 persons (-51 households)

Warrnambool's declining household size may indicate children leaving the area when they leave home, an increase in retirees settling in the area, or an attraction of young singles and couples to the area.



A1.4 Housing tenure

A1.4.1 HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is not just the result of too few houses. Its causes are many and varied. Domestic violence, a shortage of Affordable Housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia. Homelessness is not a choice. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community and one of the most important markers of social exclusion.

While homelessness itself is not a characteristic that is directly collected in the Census of Population and Housing, estimates of the homeless population may be derived from the Census using analytical techniques based on both the characteristics observed in the Census and assumptions about the way people may respond to Census questions.

The ABS definition of homelessness underpins the methodology used to compile the ABS estimates of homelessness. An overview of the definition is provided in 'Appendix 1: Definition of Homelessness', available from the 'Explanatory Notes' tab of this publication. Under the ABS definition, a person is homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable
- does not allow them to have control of and access to space for social relations.

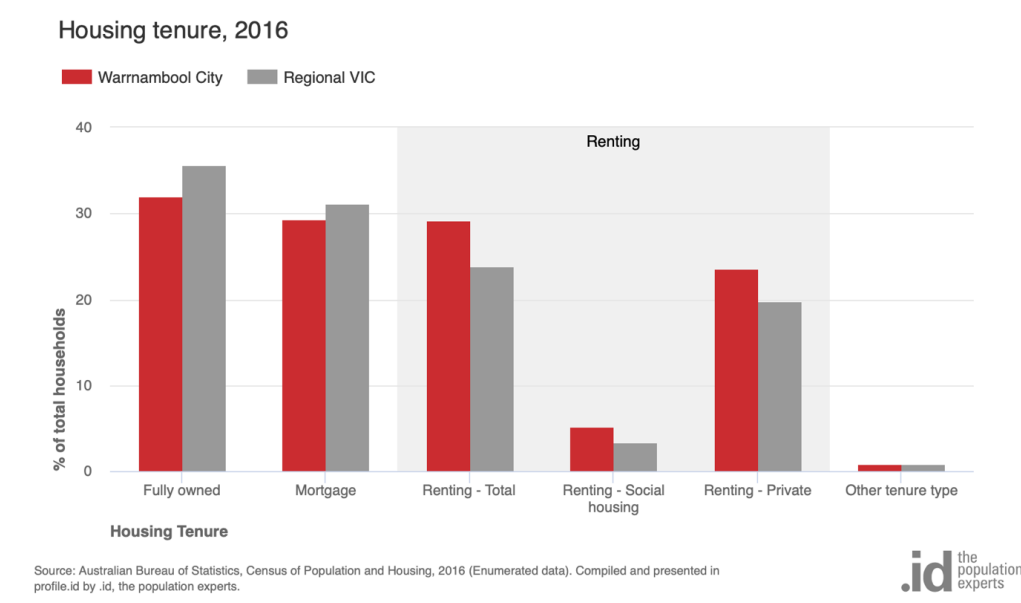
In 2016, It was estimated that there were 149 people experiencing homelessness in the City of Warrnambool (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

A1.4.2 HOUSING TENURE

The City of Warrnambool's housing tenure data provides insights into its socioeconomic status as well as the role it plays in the housing market. For example, a high concentration of private renters may indicate a transient area attractive to young singles and couples, while a concentration of home owners indicates a more settled area with mature families and empty-nesters. In conjunction with other socioeconomic status indicators in the City of Warrnambool, tenure data is useful for analysing housing markets and housing affordability as well as for identifying public housing areas.

Analysis of the housing tenure of the population of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a slightly smaller proportion of households who owned their dwelling and significantly larger proportion of people renting (29.1 per cent compared to 23.9 per cent for regional Victoria), including a larger proportion of people living in social housing (5.2 per cent compared to 3.3 per cent for regional Victoria).

Overall, 32.0 per cent of households owned their dwelling; 29.3 per cent were purchasing, and 29.1 per cent were renting, compared with 35.7 per cent, 31.2 per cent and 23.9 per cent respectively for regional Victoria.



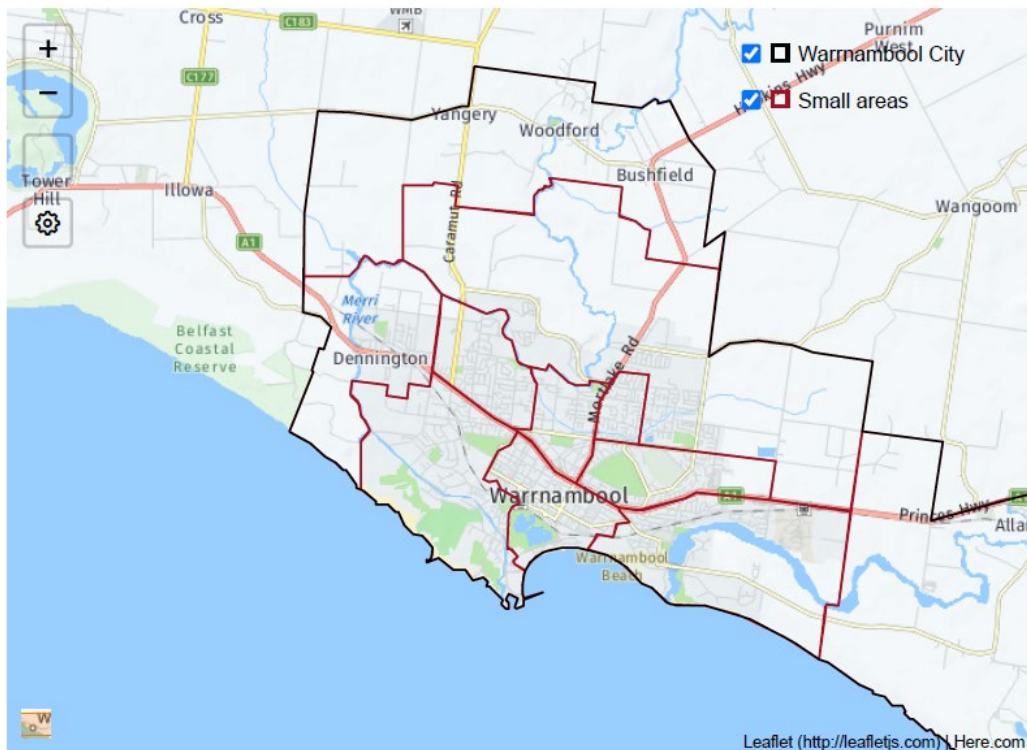
Rental tenure

In 2016, 23.5 per cent of Warrnambool's households were renting their dwelling from a private landlord or estate agent, compared to 19.8 per cent in regional Victoria.

While the City of Warrnambool had a higher proportion of households who were renting privately, this varied across the municipality. Proportions ranged from a low of 11.3 per cent in rural balance to a high of 34.1 per cent in Warrnambool (Central). The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Warrnambool (Central) (34.1%)
- Warrnambool (East - Racecourse) (29.1%)
- Warrnambool (North) (24.0%)
- Warrnambool (West) (23.1%)
- Warrnambool (South - Merrivale) (22.9%)

The map below shows the boundaries of the small areas used for the collation of demographic data. Unfortunately the area labels are not shown here because they could not be exported, but they are available on the website: <https://profile.id.com.au/warrnambool>.



Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Social Housing

In 2016, 5.2 per cent of the City of Warrnambool's households were renting their dwelling from a government authority (also known as public housing) compared to 3.3 per cent in regional Victoria.

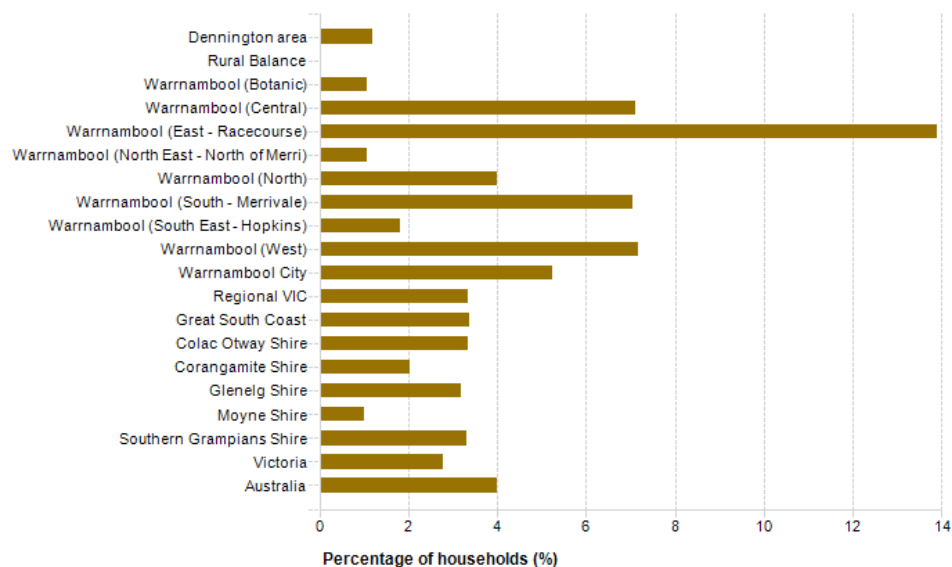
While the City of Warrnambool had a higher proportion of households who were renting from a government authority, this varied across the municipality. Proportions ranged from a low of zero per cent in rural balance to a high of 13.9 per cent in Warrnambool (East - Racecourse). The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Warrnambool (East - Racecourse) (13.9%)
- Warrnambool (West) (7.2%)
- Warrnambool (Central) (7.1%)
- Warrnambool (South - Merrivale) (7.0%)
- Warrnambool (North) (4.0%)

This data includes all dwellings that are rented from a State Government housing authority and households renting from a housing co-operative, community organisation or church group.

Households renting social housing, 2016

Warrnambool City



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.



Housing loan repayments

In the City of Warrnambool, 8.7 per cent of households with a mortgage were making high loan repayments of \$2,600 or more per month in 2016.

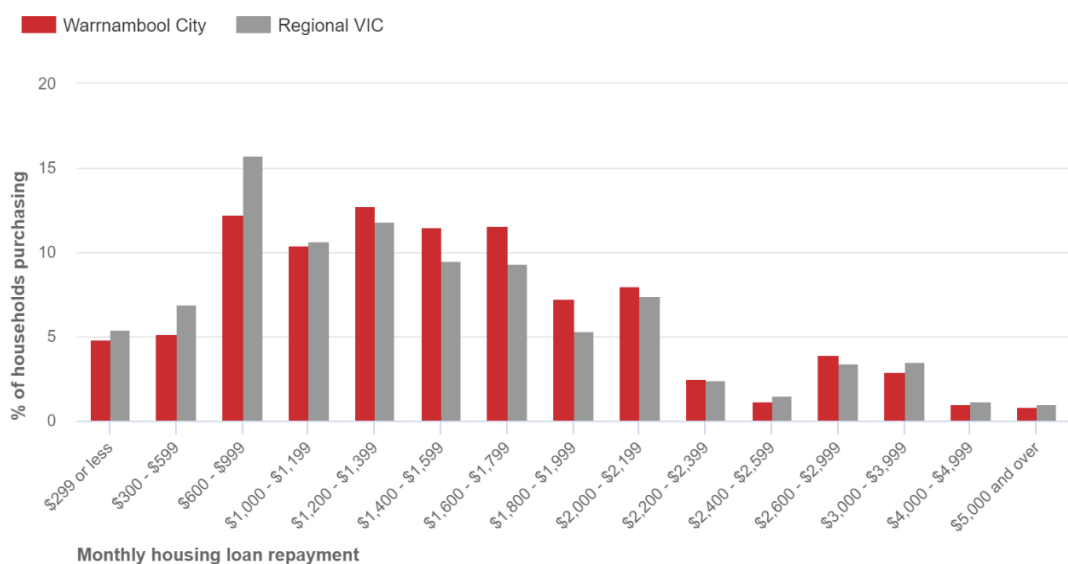
Mortgage repayments are directly related to house prices in Warrnambool, length of occupancy and the level of equity of home owners. When viewed with household income data it may also indicate the level of housing stress households in the community are under.

In mortgage belt areas it is expected that households will be paying a higher proportion of their income on their housing compared to well-established areas. First home buyer areas are also likely to have larger mortgages than upgrader areas where households move in with equity from elsewhere.

Analysis of the monthly housing loan repayments of households in the City of Warrnambool compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a similar proportion of households paying high mortgage repayments (\$2,600 per month or more), and a smaller proportion of households with low mortgage repayments (less than \$1,200 per month).

Overall, 8.7 per cent of households were paying high mortgage repayments, and 32.7 per cent were paying low repayments, compared with 9 per cent and 38.8 per cent respectively in regional Victoria.

Monthly housing loan repayments, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

Housing rental payments

In the City of Warrnambool, 2.5 per cent of renting households were paying \$450 or more per week in rent in 2016.

Rental payments can be a better measure of the cost of housing in Warrnambool than mortgage repayments because they are not contingent on length of occupancy or equity in the dwelling.

High rental payments may indicate desirable areas with mobile populations who prefer to rent, or a housing shortage, or gentrification. Low rental payments may indicate public housing or areas where low-income households move by necessity for a lower cost of living.

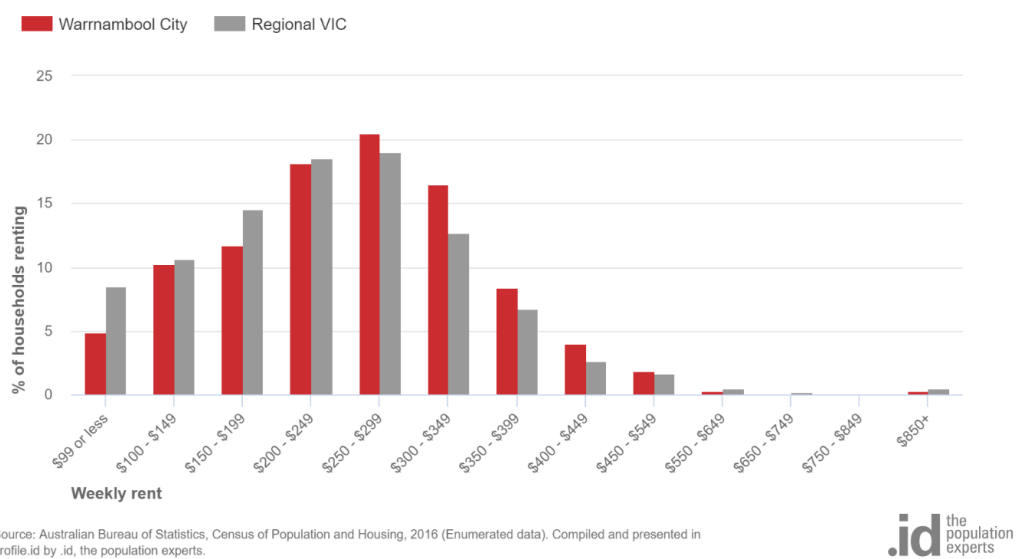
Analysis of the weekly housing rental payments of households in the City of Warrnambool compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a similar proportion of households paying high rental payments (\$450 per week or more), and a smaller proportion of households with low rental payments (less than \$250 per week).

Overall, 2.5 per cent of households were paying high rental payments and 45 per cent were paying low rental payments, compared with 2.9 per cent and 52.2 per cent respectively in regional Victoria.

The major differences between the weekly housing rental payments of the City of Warrnambool and regional Victoria were:

- a larger percentage of \$300 - \$349 (16.5 per cent compared to 12.7 per cent)
- a larger percentage of \$350 - \$399 (8.4 per cent compared to 6.7 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of \$99 or less (4.8 per cent compared to 8.5 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of \$150 - \$199 (11.8 per cent compared to 14.6 per cent).

Weekly housing rental payments, 2016



Rental quartiles

It is difficult to analyse rental payments over time as these are highly influenced by inflation. However, by using rental payment quartiles as a measure it is possible to compare relative rental liabilities (costs) over time independent of inflation.

The rental payment quartile measure looks at the distribution of rents among rented households in the City of Warrnambool relative to Victoria.

This is achieved by creating rental quartiles for Victoria by ranking all renting households from the lowest payments to the highest payments and then dividing the list into four equal groups or quartiles. By definition, in Victoria 25 per cent of persons fall into each category.

This method is repeated for each Census period, which means the quartiles are represented by different rental payment costs for each census period. The table shows the payment categories for Victoria for each quartile in each Census period.

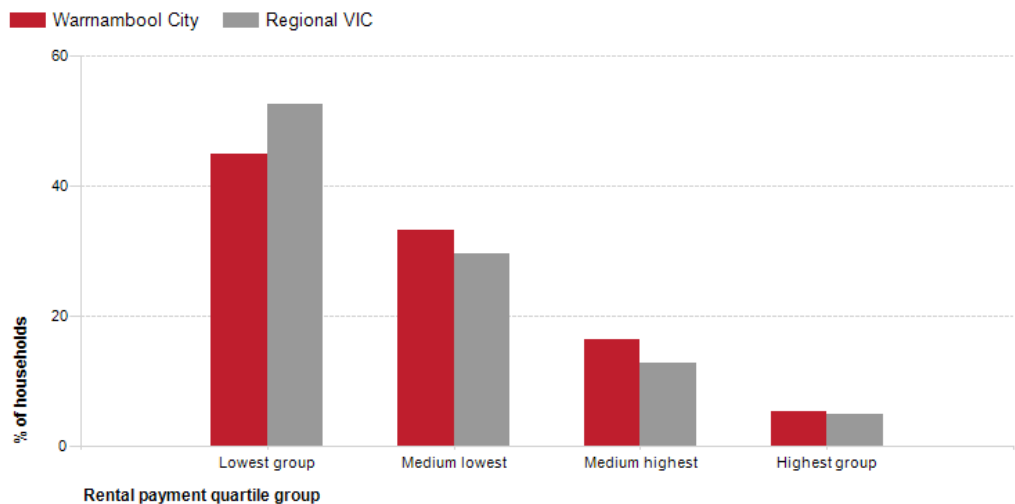
Table 6: Quartile group dollar ranges (housing rental payments). Source: id.

Calculated from rental payment data for Victoria	Weekly housing rental payments by Census year					
Household income ranges	2016	2011	2006	2001	1996	1991
Lowest group	\$0 to \$245	\$0 to \$190	\$0 to \$133	\$0 to \$109	na	na
Medium lowest	\$246 to \$330	\$191 to \$279	\$134 to \$190	\$110 to \$156	na	na
Medium highest	\$331 to \$416	\$280 to \$362	\$191 to \$252	\$157 to \$205	na	na
Highest group	\$417 and over	\$363 and over	\$253 and over	\$206 and over	na	na

Using the rental payment quartile method shows the number and proportion of renting households in the City of Warrnambool that fall into each of the four quartiles. This gives a clear picture of how rents in Warrnambool compare to that of Victoria.

In the City of Warrnambool, 44.9 per cent of rental households fell within the bottom category and only 5.4 per cent in the highest, which indicates that Warrnambool has proportionally more people paying low rents relative to the state, and less high rent payers. This data is comparable to the data for regional Victoria, as depicted below.

Housing rental quartiles for 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

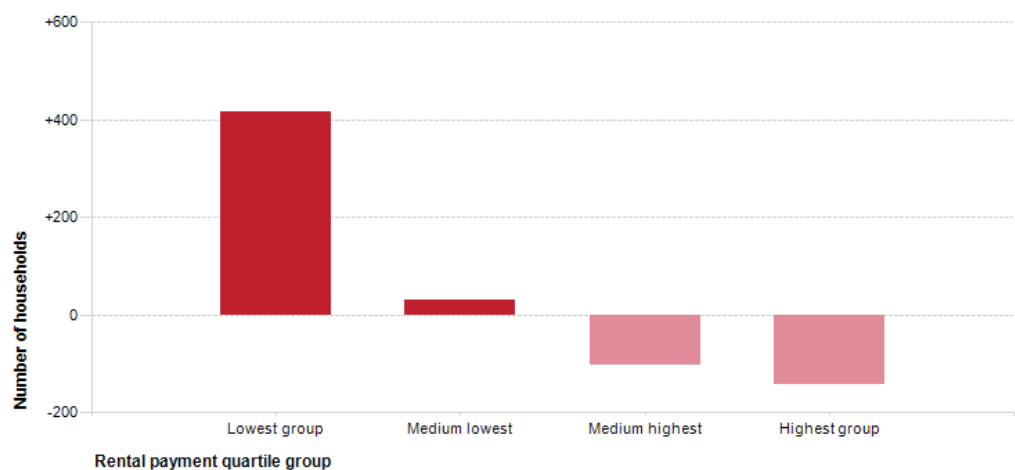
Emerging groups

The total number of households renting their dwelling in the City of Warrnambool increased by 198 between 2011 (3,642 households) and 2016 (3,840 households).

The most significant change during this period was within the rental payment lowest quartile, which showed an increase of 418 households.

Change in housing rental quartiles, 2011 to 2016

Warrnambool City



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

A1.5 Low-income households

In 2016, there were 6,541 people in low-income households living in Warrnambool.

Those on low incomes may have quite different characteristics and living arrangements from the total population, and many Local, State and Federal Government services are targeted at those with limited financial means, so it is an important group to understand.

Low-income households for the purposes of the communities of interest profiles are defined as households falling into approximately the bottom 20 per cent of equivalised incomes across Australia. For 2016, this includes the range of households under \$500 per week, while for comparison in 2011, the cut off of \$400 per week is used. It is necessary to use a whole income range to define this. Despite inflation, the 2016 cut-off includes slightly more households (about 22 per cent of all households) than the 2011 figure. Overall numbers are therefore likely to increase in most areas.

Table 7: Warrnambool City Council's low-income households summary (profile.id)

Key statistics							
Warrnambool City - Low-income households	2016			2011			Change
	Number	%	Regional Victoria	Number	%	Regional Victoria	2011 to 2016
Total Population	6,541	100.0	100.0	5,408	100.0	100.0	+1,133
Males	2,854	43.6	46.2	2,338	43.2	45.5	+516
Females	3,689	56.4	53.8	3,074	56.8	54.5	+615
Total households	3,239	100.0	100.0	2,677	100.0	100.0	+562

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011 and 2016. Compiled and presented by [.id](#), the population experts.

A1.5.1 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD TYPES

The City of Warrnambool's household and family structure is one of the most important demographic indicators. It reveals the area's residential role and function, era of settlement and provides key insights into the level of demand for services and facilities as most are related to age and household types.

This topic breaks down household and family type specifically for those households on low incomes (relative to national averages). There may be correlations with specific household types. For example, an area with many pensioners on low incomes is likely to have a large number of couples without children and lone-person households.

It is important to note that household income is connected to household size - the potential for a lone-person household to have a high income is less than for a household containing five adults. This may skew the results a little to the smaller household types when comparing to the total population, but should not affect geographic comparisons.

Analysis of the household/family types of low-income households in the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a lower proportion of couple families with children as well as a higher proportion in one-parent families.

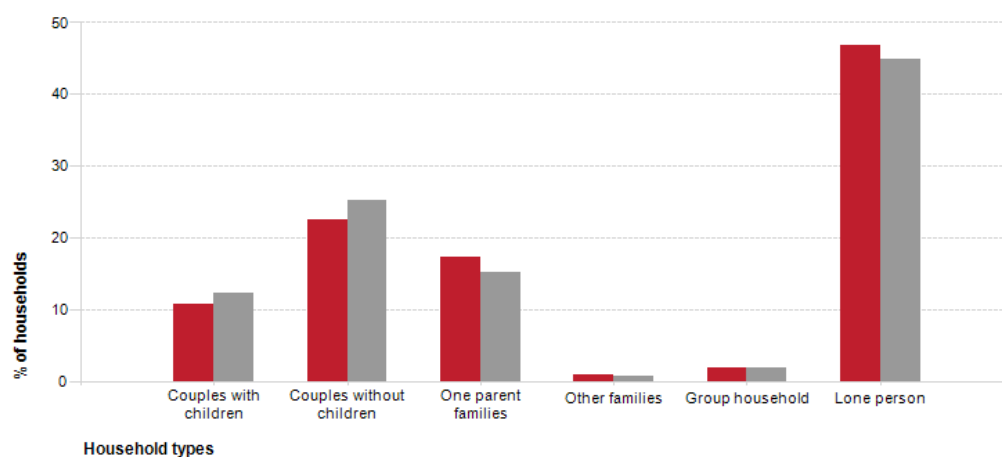
Overall, 10.8 per cent of low-income households were couple families with children and 17.2 per cent were one-parent families, compared with 12.2 per cent and 15.2 per cent respectively for regional Victoria.

There were a higher proportion of lone-person households and a lower proportion of couples without children with a low income. Overall, the proportion of low-income lone-person households was 46.7 per cent, compared to 44.9 per cent for regional Victoria, while the proportion of couples without children was 22.6 per cent compared to 25.1% for regional Victoria.

Household type, 2016

Low income households

■ Warrnambool City ■ Regional VIC



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented by .id, the population experts.

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the population experts

A1.5.2 CHANGE IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD TYPES

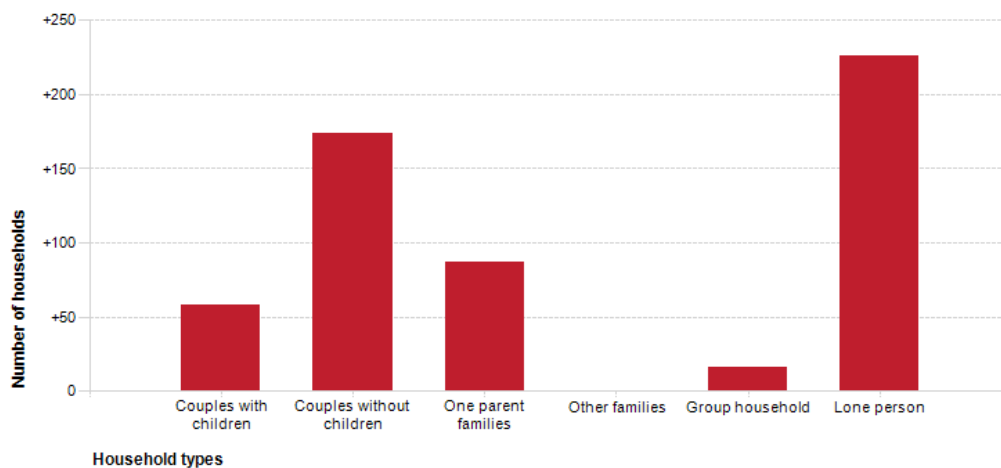
The number of low-income households in the City of Warrnambool increased by 561 between 2011 and 2016.

The largest changes in family/household types of low-income households in the City of Warrnambool between 2011 and 2016 were:

- lone person (+226 households)
- couples without children (+174 households)
- one-parent families (+87 households)
- couples with children (+58 households)

Change in household type, 2011 to 2016

Warrnambool City - Low income households



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented by .id, the population experts.

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the population experts

A1.5.3 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD TENURE

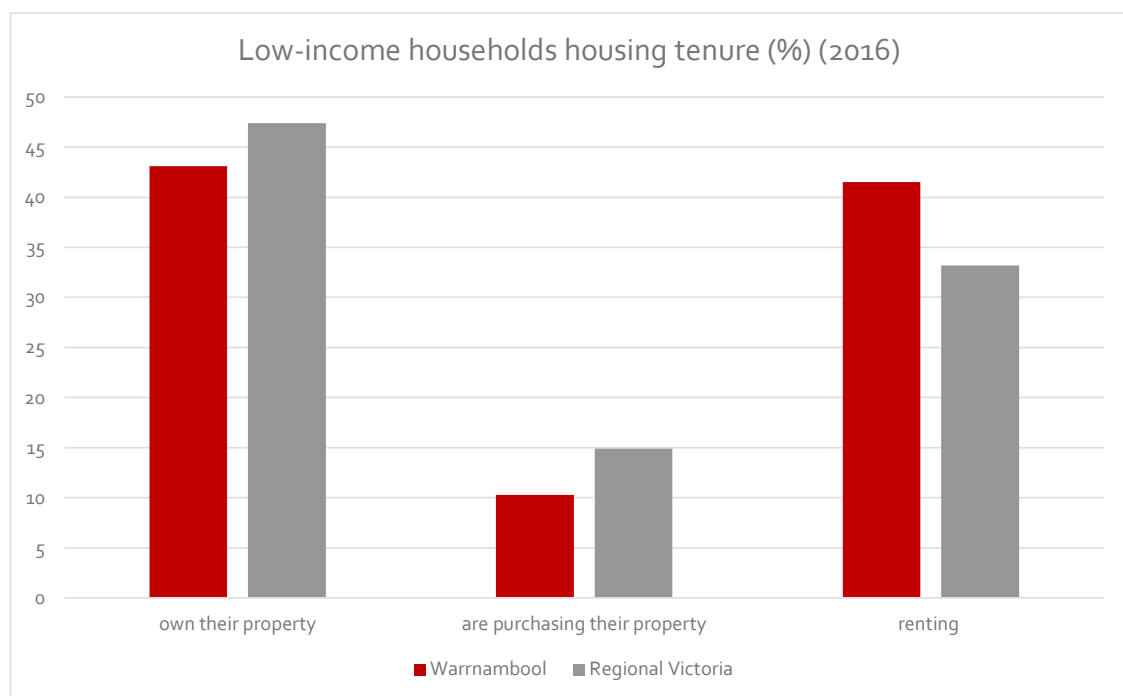
The City of Warrnambool's housing tenure data provides insights into socioeconomic status as well as the role tenure plays in the housing market.

This topic restricts the view of housing tenure to low-income households in Warrnambool. This can differentiate between housing markets, which may be unclear when looking at the overall picture. For instance, if there are a lot of renters in the private rental market among low-income earners, it may be due to housing being unaffordable for those on below-average incomes.

In many areas, social housing plays a role in accommodating low-income households. Housing tenure can answer questions such as whether the housing market is changing and squeezing out those on low-incomes.

Analysis of the housing tenure of low-income households in the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a smaller proportion of low-income households who owned their dwelling, a smaller proportion purchasing their dwelling, and a larger proportion who were renters.

Overall, 43.1 per cent of low-income households owned their dwelling, while 10.3 per cent were purchasing and 41.5 per cent were renting, compared with 47.4 per cent, 14.9 per cent and 33.2 per cent respectively for regional Victoria.



A1.5.4 CHANGE IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD HOUSING TENURE

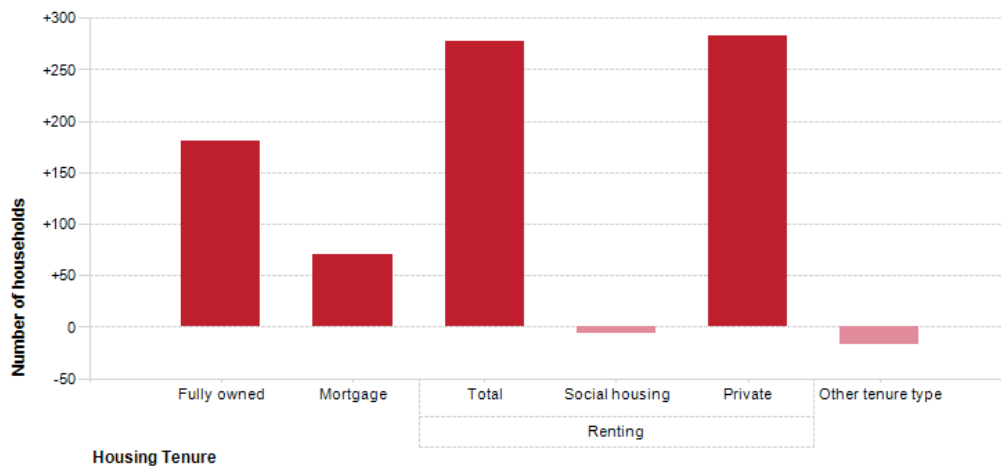
The total number of low-income households in the City of Warrnambool increased by 573 between 2011 and 2016.

The largest changes in housing tenure categories for low-income households in Warrnambool between 2011 and 2016 were:

- Renting - private (+283 households)
- Fully owned (+181 households)
- Mortgage (+70 households)

Change in housing tenure, 2011 to 2016

Warrnambool City - Low income households



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented by .id, the population experts.



A1.5.5 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD DWELLING TYPES

Dwelling type is an important determinant of the City of Warrnambool's residential role and function.

A greater concentration of higher density dwellings is likely to attract more young adults and smaller households, often renting.

Larger, detached or separate dwellings are more likely to attract families and prospective families.

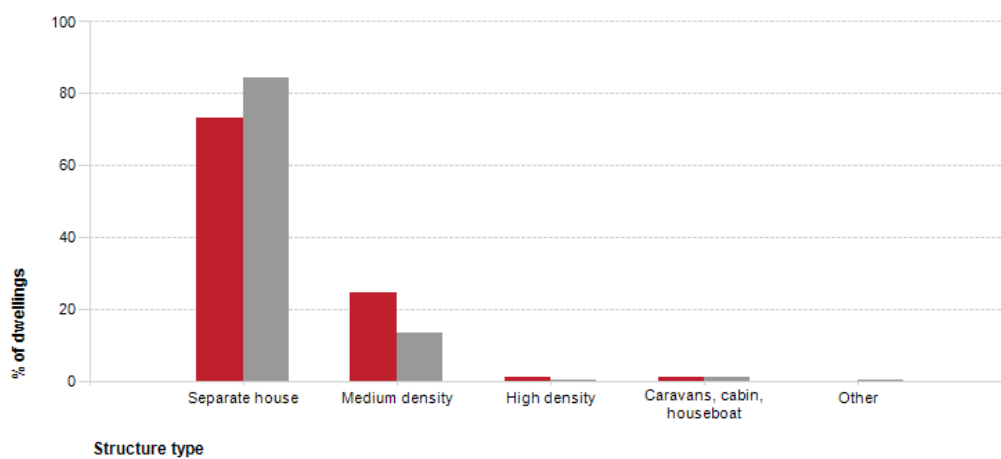
The residential build form often reflects market opportunities or planning policy, such as building denser forms of housing around public transport nodes or employment centres.

For low-income households, dwelling types may reflect the types of housing which are more affordable or are available as social housing. If low incomes are related to retirees, they may indicate the type of housing preferred by retirees, or those dwellings in which they have aged in place.

Dwelling structure, 2016

Low income households

■ Warrnambool City ■ Regional VIC



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

A1.5.6 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD DWELLING SIZE

The number of bedrooms in a dwelling is an indicator of the size of dwellings, and when combined with dwelling type information, provides insight into the role Warrnambool City Council plays in the housing market.

For low-income households, affordability may be an issue, and it may be that households can only afford to occupy (rent or buy) relatively small dwellings. However, this is also related to household size – low incomes are often associated with one or two-person households, particularly retirees and students, so the number of bedrooms data below should be viewed in conjunction with household type data to get an indication of whether particular housing sizes indicate the presence of overcrowding and housing affordability issues.

Analysis of the number of bedrooms in dwellings for low-income households in the City of Warrnambool in 2016 compared to regional Victoria shows that there was a higher proportion of households in dwellings with two bedrooms or less, and a lower proportion in dwellings with four or more bedrooms. Overall, 35.1 per cent of low-income households were in dwellings with two bedrooms or less and 13.1 per cent in four-or-more-bedroom dwellings, compared with 30.1 per cent and 16.5 per cent for regional Victoria respectively.

The major differences between the number of bedrooms per dwelling for low-income households in the City of Warrnambool and regional Victoria were:

- a larger percentage of households in two bedrooms (28.3 per cent compared to 23.3 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of households in four bedrooms (11.1 per cent compared to 14.2 per cent)
- a smaller percentage of households in three bedrooms (48.1 per cent compared to 50.6 per cent)

The largest changes in the number of bedrooms per dwelling for low-income households in the City of Warrnambool between 2011 and 2016 were:

- three bedrooms (+230 households)
- two bedrooms (+150 households)
- four bedrooms (+85 households)

Number of bedrooms per dwelling, 2016

Low income households



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented by .id, the population experts.



A1.6 Housing stress

Rental stress is defined as per the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) model as households in the lowest 40 per cent of incomes, who are paying more than 30 per cent of their usual gross weekly income on rent.

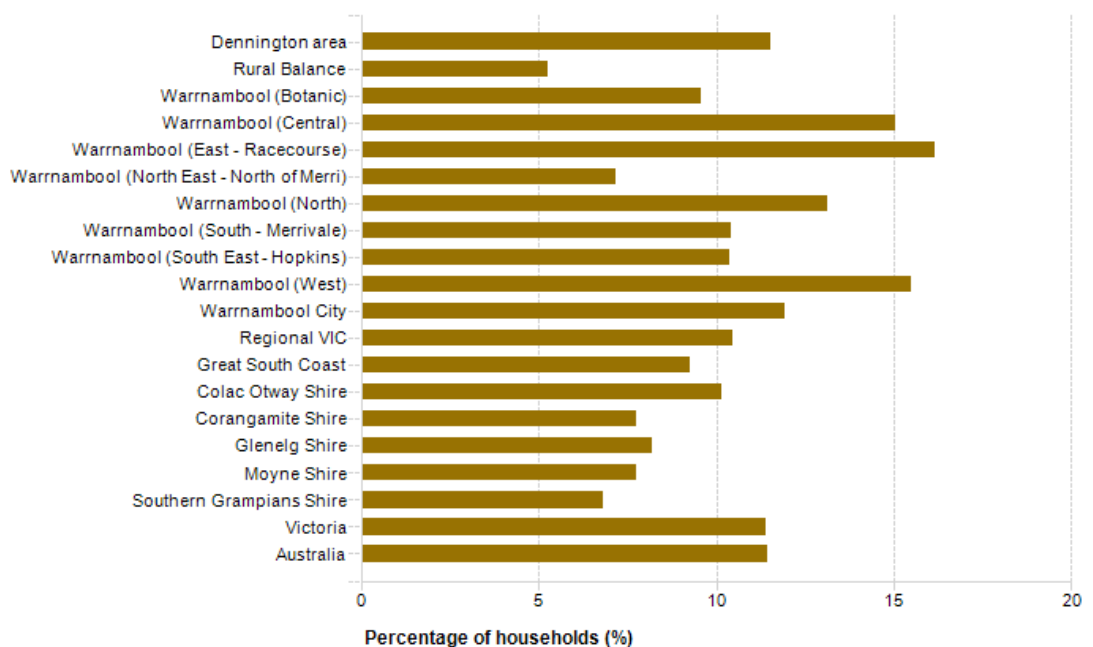
In 2016, 11.9 per cent of the City of Warrnambool's households were experiencing housing stress compared to 10.5 per cent in regional Victoria.

While the City of Warrnambool had a higher proportion of households experiencing housing stress, it is important to note that this varied across the municipality. Proportions ranged from a low of 5.2 per cent in rural balance to a high of 16.2 per cent in Warrnambool (East - Racecourse). The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Warrnambool (East - Racecourse) (16.2%)
- Warrnambool (West) (15.5%)
- Warrnambool (Central) (15.0%)
- Warrnambool (North) (13.1%)
- Dennington area (11.5%)

Housing stress, 2016

Warrnambool City



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

A1.6.1 RENTAL STRESS

As at the 2016 census there were 1,247 low-income households experiencing rental stress in the City of Warrnambool. This represents 31.6 per cent of all rental households, higher than 30.3 per cent in regional Victoria.

In 2016, Warrnambool (North) had the highest proportion of people experiencing rental stress in the City of Warrnambool.

Housing affordability has become a significant social and economic problem in recent years and between 2006 and 2011 rents across Australia increased by close to 50 per cent.

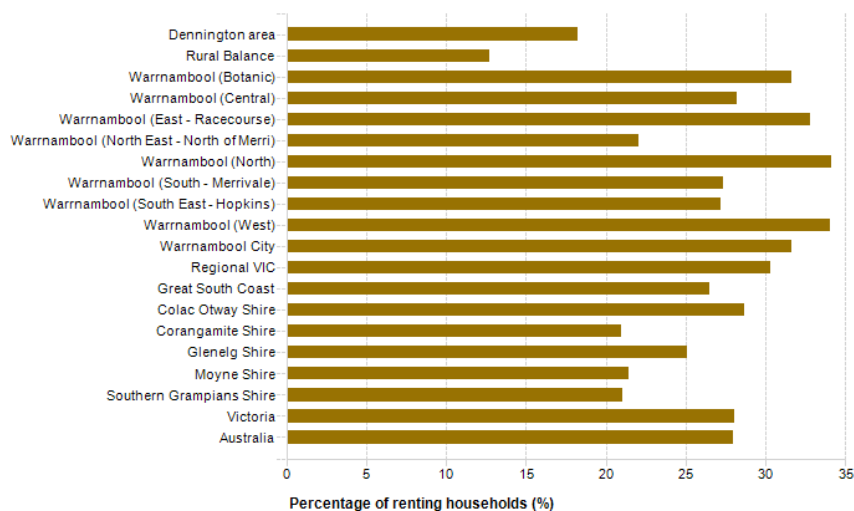
While stress can be very dependent on individual circumstances, using Census data to analyse this provides a good indication of the areas in the City of Warrnambool where households may be having problems meeting their housing commitments.

While Warrnambool had a higher proportion of households experiencing rental stress compared with regional Victoria, it is important to note that this varied across the municipality. Proportions ranged from a low of 12.7 per cent in rural balance to a high of 34.1 per cent in Warrnambool (North). The five areas with the highest percentages were:

- Warrnambool (North) (34.1%)
- Warrnambool (West) (34.1%)
- Warrnambool (East - Racecourse) (32.8%)
- Warrnambool (Botanic) (31.7%)
- Warrnambool (Central) (28.2%)

Rental stress, 2016

Warrnambool City



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

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Appendix 2 Data provided by DHHS

This data may include some confidential information and has been provided as a separate document to ensure it is not accidentally released to the public.

Appendix 3 Warrnambool City Council Affordable Housing Policy



AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	<i>Affordable Policy</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Council</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>Community Development</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Director, Community Development</i>
Document Status:	<i>Approved</i>
Approved By:	<i>Council</i>
Adopted Date:	<i>March 2012</i>
Review Date:	<i>March 2015</i>

AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY



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AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The estimated resident population of Warrnambool is currently 33,900 (June 2011). This is forecast to increase to more than 44,000 by 2030. This population growth is largely being driven by economic growth across the region which in turn has impacted negatively on housing affordability. In 2000 the median property price in Warrnambool was \$128,000. By 2010 this had risen almost 250% to \$322,000. This is mirrored in the residential rental market, with Warrnambool having amongst the highest prices across all regional cities in Victoria.

The 2009 – 2013 Council Plan outlines the strategic objectives of Council, these include:

- A leading regional city;
- An environmentally sustainable city;
- A liveable city; and
- A city of growth

Council recognises that these objectives have the potential to compete, an example being the need to keep housing affordable during periods of significant economic growth. Council committed in the 2009 – 2013 Council Plan to “facilitate the development of affordable housing policy in Warrnambool”. This policy fulfils that obligation.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide the community and Council staff with an understanding of the Warrnambool City Council objectives and approach to addressing housing affordability in Warrnambool.

1.2 Definitions

Affordable housing	Housing that is both affordable and appropriate for resident household. Housing is affordable when it does not demand so much of a household's income as to leave them with insufficient money to meet other household needs.
Appropriate housing	Housing that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides security of tenure• Is appropriate for that household in terms of size, quality, accessibility and location• Is integrated within a reasonably diverse local community• Minimises costs relating to maintenance, utilities and transport
Mortgage / rental stress	Experienced by low income households (80% median income) when more than 30% of gross household income is expended on rent or 35% on mortgage payments.

2. REFERENCES

2.1 Internal Council Documents

- WCC Council Plan
- WCC Health & Wellbeing Plan

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Policy Type: Council | Responsible Branch: Community Development | Approved Date: March 2012 | Review Date: March 2015

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY



- WCC Planning Scheme

2.2 External References

- Victorian Homelessness Action Plan

3. POLICY

- 3.1 Warrnambool City Council (Council) recognises that access to affordable housing is a basic human right and a determinant of community health and wellbeing. It acknowledges that the impacts of unaffordable housing are unevenly distributed across the community with lone parents, single people, young people, older people (>65 years) and children of lone parents experiencing the worst outcomes.

Affordable housing also has significant impacts on the liveability and economic prosperity of the community. A lack of affordable housing has a negative impact on workforce attraction and is a barrier to attracting tertiary students to the City.

Council will work hard with other stakeholders within the community to achieve the following objectives:

Objective 1: Promote community health and wellbeing

Advocate for a sufficient supply of social and public housing to prevent homelessness and social isolation and meet community needs.

Objective 2: Sustainable housing supply and design

Support best practice urban planning and design that results in a diverse, safe and sustainable housing supply that responds to the needs of local residents.

Objective 3: Maintain a liveable community

Ensure that residential housing strategy supports appropriate access to employment, education, cultural, recreational, health and social services.

Objective 4: Promoting economic development

Ensure that access to affordable housing is not a barrier to future economic development.

3.2 Council's role in working to achieve affordable housing for the community includes:

Advocacy

- Influencing State and Federal Government policy
- Advocating for additional government funds for social and public housing
- Highlighting changes in demographics and household types to ensure new housing stock responds to trends in household type and size.
- Encouraging investment in diverse and appropriate housing types by developers
- Supporting individuals experiencing problems with navigating government housing services

Partnership development

- Facilitating partnerships with government, developers and the community to develop new cooperative solutions and initiatives to meet local housing needs

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Policy Type: Council | Responsible Branch: Community Development | Approved Date: March 2012 | Review Date: March 2015

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY



Advice

- Raising awareness of government schemes and incentives and facilitating access where appropriate
- Providing advice to the public on best practice urban design and residential development, environmental sustainability etc..

Research

- Providing contemporary data on housing trends and issues in Warrnambool and across the nation
- Keep pace with potential new opportunities and initiatives

Urban planning

- Efficient and timely planning decisions
- Ensuring adequate land supply
- Planning controls
- Promoting diversity of housing type, block sizes and quality residential environments in all developments.

Community development

- Work with the community to develop innovative housing solutions

Service provision

- Currently as a provider of social housing
- Providing community services to people experiencing housing stress

Regulation

- Statutory planning and public health regulation – rooming houses

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 Owner

The Director, Community Development is responsible for monitoring the currency and viability of this policy and updating it when required.

4.2 Review

The Director, Community Development will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than three years after its formulation or after the last review.

4.3 Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

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Page 6 of 6

Policy Type: Council | Responsible Branch: Community Development | Approved Date: March 2012 | Review Date: March 2015

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Appendix 4 Engagement report



Engagement Report

Social Housing Planning Project

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL

Prepared by:

ACTIVATE CONSULTING and HORNSBY & CO

27 March 2020

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PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN RELATION TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Before designing and implementing an engagement plan, a review of the output of previous Council engagement was undertaken. A summary of the feedback that relates to Affordable Housing that was received through those engagement processes is provided below.

Affordable Housing policy

In developing Warrnambool City Council's Affordable Housing Policy, it was recognised that access to Affordable Housing is a basic human right and a determinant of community health and wellbeing.

The policy identified that the impacts of unaffordable Housing are unevenly distributed across the community with lone parents, single people, young people, older people (>65 years) and children of lone parents experiencing the worst outcomes.

Council is committed to working with other stakeholders within the community to achieve the following objectives:

- **Objective 1: Promote community health and wellbeing**
Advocate for a sufficient supply of social and public housing to prevent homelessness and social isolation and meet community needs.
- **Objective 2: Sustainable housing supply and design**
Support best practice urban planning and design that results in a diverse, safe and sustainable housing supply that responds to the needs of local residents.
- **Objective 3: Maintain a liveable community**
Ensure that residential housing strategy supports appropriate access to employment, education, cultural, recreational, health and social services.
- **Objective 4: Promoting economic development**
Ensure that access to Affordable Housing is not a barrier to future economic development.

Housing Diversity Strategy

The Background Paper prepared for the Housing Diversity Strategy suggests a mismatch between location and type of available housing stock and household size.

Warrnambool City- Wide Housing Strategy

The Warrnambool City-Wide Housing Strategy (2013) recommends the need to 'identify opportunities and mechanisms to provide additional Social Housing...' This recommendation is in addition to the recommendations made in the Warrnambool Housing Diversity Strategy.

A recent review of the City-Wide Housing Strategy reinforced a recommendation around Social Housing as a priority for action.

North Dennington Housing Affordability Program

Council has also recently wound up its North Dennington Housing Affordability Program. This program was an innovative housing scheme targeting low to moderate income earners to enter home ownership.

Over the period 2013-2018 the program assisted 51 individuals/families on low to moderate income, average age 31, average gross disposable income (\$55k). Council expended \$800,000 on this program and leveraged \$2.5 million from the Federal Government to construct enabling infrastructure in this residential growth area.

The project was awarded a National Economic Development Award – Community Partnership by the National Economic Development Association in 2015.

The Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan

The Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan (2014) identified Warrnambool as the Major Growth centre for the Great South Coast. The plan identified the need for Warrnambool to accommodate up to 60% of future population growth in the region. It was recognised that Social Housing needs will need to be considered across a wide catchment area.

The Plan identified housing affordability as critical to both population and workforce attraction, economic growth and maintaining high levels of liveability. Warrnambool, as Victoria's most liveable regional city (according to IPSOS Life in Victoria survey 2017) has excellent provision of health, education and community services, excellent recreational and leisure infrastructure, quality cultural and arts opportunities and unsurpassed access to the natural environment.

In order to sustain growth and support a strong regional centre role, the plan identified Warrnambool as in need of increased Social Housing provision to ensure it remains a socially cohesive, and prosperous city where everyone can thrive.

Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan

Community consultation (long survey analysis) undertaken to inform W2040 found that in relation to housing:

- 36% of over 60s who plan to move in the next one to five years are looking to downsize
- Only 52.2% of Warrnambool residents rated the availability and accessibility of Affordable Housing as 'good' or 'excellent'. The rate was even lower (39.2%) for those living in the broader region
- Housing affordability is the most important factor influencing where Warrnambool residents live, across all age groups
- Backyard and house size were the biggest difference between housing preference of younger and older age groups
- Residents rating of 'walkable facilities' varies by location. Thirteen percent more residents in Central Warrnambool rated 'walkable facilities' as good to excellent than those living in outer growth precincts
- Different age groups are looking for different things in housing

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH SOCIAL HOUSING PLANNING PROJECT

Background

Warrnambool City Council engaged the services of Hornsby & Co to help prepare Council to better facilitate the delivery of positive social housing outcomes that meet community needs.

The project involved two key stages:

- Stage 1: establishing the demand/supply evidence base of social housing needs in Warrnambool over the short to medium term and description of the current market (including current parties, relationships and their capacity to grow).
- Stage 2: strategic planning (land use) considerations to grow social housing stock in Warrnambool, and market appraisal of how additional Social Housing investment might be facilitated in the City of Warrnambool.

A significant component of the work involved targeted consultation and research with key stakeholders (other government agencies, developers, key stakeholders and local community organisations) and Council (Council and internal departments).

This engagement report outlines the approach and findings of the engagement, and provides an evaluation.

Engagement purpose and objectives

The **purpose** of the engagement was to seek input from key stakeholders to inform the project objectives.

The engagement **objectives** were to:

- Ensure all identified stakeholders had the opportunity to provide input
- Gain the involvement of key stakeholders in the project
- Gather sufficient data and local intelligence to inform the project deliverables
- Build relationships with key stakeholders and gain their buy-in and support for final recommendations

Engagement approach and methods

Overall a targeted and personalised engagement approach was undertaken, acknowledging that:

- The complex and strategic nature of this project and the data to be collected lends itself to discussion and dialogue
- Many of the key stakeholders are time-poor, operating with tight resourcing and operating in a competitive environment (thus 'going to them' will engender greater participation)
- The geographical scale of the catchment area and key stakeholder locations means requests that require additional travel/meetings may limit participation
- Many other municipalities were also doing similar work and competing for stakeholder time.

The engagement consisted of the following activities undertaken between 14 August 2019 and 13 January 2020:

- Meetings (face-to-face/ via telephone) x 18
- Presentations/attendance at existing group meetings x 3
- Workshops x 2
- Direct email/phone contact
- Consultant working from Council offices (when in Warrnambool)

PARTICIPANTS

The table below outlines the breadth and number of participants engaged over more than 30 hours of consultation.

Stakeholder group	Engagement method	Number of activities	Participants	Total hours
Landowners/developers	Meetings	2	2	2
Service providers/NFP	Meetings	9	11	11
	Meeting with existing group	1	8	2
	Workshop	1	15	3
Government agencies/other	Meetings	4	6	4
	Workshop	1	12	3
Internal to Council	Meeting with existing group	2	9	4
	Meetings	3	4	3
		23 activities	67 participants	32 hours

Stakeholders engaged

Almost all pre-identified stakeholders were successfully consulted:

Stakeholder	Role/ reason for engaging	Engaged?
Councillors	Decision makers and community representatives, want to be actively part of project	Yes (through regular staff / councillor discussion, and quarterly updates in the Corporate Reporting system)
Project control group	Decision markers, oversee process and project	Yes
Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee	Provide advice to Council on the development, review and implementation of the Warrnambool City Health and Wellbeing Plan and associated Action Plans. Made up of community, Councillors and staff	No (the group did not meet during engagement period)
Key Council departments	Planning, Community development, Economic Development, and Capacity Access and Inclusion, Property, Recreation planning, Parks	Yes
DHHS – local office and Melbourne office	Set policy direction, funding partner (SHIP)	Yes
VPA	Currently working with Warrnambool City on housing diversity on future residential land supply	Yes
DELWP	Set policy direction, planning scheme	Yes
Moyne Shire	Surrounds City of Warrnambool, within planning catchment area	Yes
Other surrounding councils	Glenelg, Southern Grampians, and Corangamite Shires, within catchment area	Yes
Key local builders/ developers	Directly involved in the development of housing in the local area	Yes

Stakeholder	Role/ reason for engaging	Engaged?
Key local landowners	Potential sites for rezoning	Yes
Real Estate Agents	Specific knowledge about local housing supply	Noted their comments in the local paper
Community housing agencies, social housing providers	Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Active Community Housing, BAYSA Ltd, Centacare Housing Services Ltd Directly involved in provision of social housing	Yes
Barwon South West Homelessness Network	Local network involving: DHHS, Salvation Army, Emma House, Brophy Family and Youth Services, churches Works with funded agencies around coordination of homelessness support and structural advocacy	Yes (now SWHAG)
Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative	An independent community based not-for-profit Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. Primary provider of social, health and cultural services in the region	No (but were contacted)
Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation	The professional organisation that represents the Eastern Maar People of South West Victoria and manages their Native Title rights and Interests.	Yes
Deakin University/ South West TAFE	Specific knowledge about student housing needs and supply	Yes

Forum participation

Two special workshops were held as part of the engagement activities, as detailed below.

- Housing and service providers workshop (28 November, 2019)

This workshop drew together 11 housing and service providers to draw out their key challenges/observations over the previous 12 months, and brainstorm potential solutions and opportunities.

The workshop was attended by representatives from:

- Brophy Family and Youth Services
- Bethany Community Support
- Emma House Domestic Violence Service
- Statewide Children's Resource Program
- South West Local Area Services Network (SWLASN)
- SalvoConnect Warrnambool
- Heaven; Home, Safe
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Warrnambool City Council
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria
- Uniting Church Heatherlie Homes

- Inter-Council workshop and development session (7 October 2019)

Given the catchment area for this social housing planning project extends beyond the Warrnambool City Council area, this session sought to develop relationships with senior planning staff from surrounding municipalities. The session was an opportunity to build skills and gather regional input into the project.

The workshop was attended by representatives from:

- Warrnambool City Council
- Moyne Shire Council
- Glenelg Shire Council
- Corangamite Shire Council
- Southern Grampians Shire Council

KEY THEMES AND INSIGHTS

This section presents a summary of the key insights drawn from notes taken at each consultation activity. A copy of the notes is available on request.

The City of Warrnambool faces some specific challenges which are putting pressure of housing and/or making it more difficult to increase the supply of social housing:

- An influx of workers for major projects (wind farms, roads)
- A seasonal population influx – the “AirBnB effect” where landlords opt for summer holiday lets rather than long term rentals
- The “end of the line” effect – people are catching the train as far as they can, disembarking in Warrnambool, and end up sleeping rough
- Warrnambool acts as a service centre for the surrounding area and people will move off rural properties into Warrnambool if rural living no longer meets their needs due to old age, or if they require access to education and employment.

The effect of all of these is a tightening of the private rental market. This has the flow on effect of creating a bottle neck so that people are no longer able to move out of transitional housing and into the private market. The result is that fewer people are able to access transitional housing, and they end up in overcrowded or unsafe situations.

Another unique challenge that Warrnambool faces is that, other than DHHS, none of the social housing providers have an office within the municipality. This presents challenges for people who want to access their services but it also likely to affect the potential to attract grant funding to the area. There is a huge demand for social housing in all locations and staff and Board members may be more likely to focus new development opportunities in areas where they are located. Being located out of the area also makes it more difficult to build connections with local service providers.

There are significant challenges to increasing the amount of social housing in the City of Warrnambool but there are also opportunities. The key opportunities are:

- Use of Council or government land to develop new social housing
- Reconfiguration or redevelopment of existing social housing sites to deliver additional social housing
- Potential divestment by Council of its housing assets to a community housing organisation providing for more effective tenancy and property management
- Incentives to one or more community housing organisation to locate their offices to Warrnambool, increasing the presence and focus of housing services in Warrnambool
- Partnership projects with the companies who are constructing wind farms to deliver housing they need now, and then can be used for social housing in the future
- Increasing private market housing supply through the strategic planning work being undertaken by Council and the VPA
- Securing social housing through the planning system through voluntary negotiations

ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION

Evaluation against established criteria

The table below provides an assessment against the nominated evaluation criteria identified in the Engagement and Project Plan.

Criteria	Comments	Rating
Breadth of stakeholders that have provided input into the project	A total of 67 people from more than 10 organisations were reached through the engagement period, equating to over 30 hours of consultation. The consultation reached the following stakeholder groups: landowners/developers, service providers/NFP, Government agencies and other local government, and internal Council stakeholders.	Achieved
Whether the involvement of critical key stakeholders has been achieved	All pre-identified stakeholders were invited and had the opportunity to participate in the engagement. All, but two were successfully involved.	Achieved
Evidence of new, strengthened relationships with key stakeholders involved in the facilitation of social housing	The workshop between housing and service providers was well received and there was good sharing of information and exchange of contacts. For that relationship to be strengthened, a regular bringing together of stakeholders may be required.	Achieved in part

Consultant feedback

Reflections on the overall project:

- **Positives/surprises:** People were keen to connect with professionals from outside their own service or housing sector.
- **Frustrations/concerns:** The workload and resourcing of housing and service providers means there is little scope for them to add a regular forum / engagement to their schedule. It is also not clear who would lead that process.

Reflections on the consultation process:

- **Worked:** Contacting people directly and providing them an opportunity to participate in different ways (telephone, in-person, at a forum) provided a good insight into their key concerns and ideas.
- **Didn't work:** It was difficult to engage with some of the smaller housing and service providers. The timeframes also meant it was difficult to engage in a culturally appropriate way with the Aboriginal service providers.

Lessons:

- **Could do different next time:** Having a more intense period of consultation, rather than stretched over a length of time, may provide more targeted responses and momentum for individuals to pick up the strengthening between stakeholders rather than them waiting for an external facilitator of a forum.

Appendix 5 Analysis of Government and Council-owned land that may be suitable for social housing

This data may include some confidential information and has been provided as a separate document to ensure it is not accidentally released to the public.

5.8. CONTRACT 2020071 - STREET LIGHTING HARDWARE PROCUREMENT

PURPOSE:

This report is to inform Council of the tenders that were received for Tender No. 2020071 – Street Lighting Hardware Procurement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- During the 2019/20 financial year, Council commenced the preparation and design work for a Street Lighting LED replacement program.
- 903 Street Lights are proposed to be replaced with LED technology. The new lights will improve energy efficiency and operating costs, and in most cases, will improve existing lighting levels across the City.
- Council has sought quotes for the supply of LED street lighting hardware using the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Vendor Panel.
- Two (2) tender submissions were received and considered by the Tender Assessment Panel in accordance with the evaluation criteria.
- Following a detailed evaluation of the tender submissions it is considered that this tender should be awarded to Schreder Australia Pty Ltd on value for money grounds.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Accept the tender submission from Schreder Australia Pty Ltd for Tender No. 2020071.**
 - 2. Authorise the CEO to sign, seal and vary the contract as required.**
-

BACKGROUND

During the FY 19/20 Council allocated \$1.4 million for the replacement of street lights with LED. The design works required has been completed in order to determine the amount and type of lights that will require replacement ensuring that the lighting levels will be either maintained or improved.

Council sought quotes for LED replacement of 903 Street Lights which can be classified as below:

- 103 – 80W Mercury Vapour.
- 610 – 150W High Pressure Sodium/ 250W Mercury Vapour
- 187 – 250W High Pressure Sodium
- 3 – 400W High Pressure Sodium

Street Lighting upgrades under the Powercor network are classified as non-contestable works which means only Powercor approved hardware and installers can be used.

Currently, Powercor is seeking quotes for installation services which will be presented to Council for approval at a later date.

ISSUES

There is currently only two (2) lighting suppliers which are Powercor approved for standard LED fittings.

The total amount of lights might have changed since the tender was advertised as result of Powercor ongoing maintenance program. The total number of lights will be reviewed prior enter into the agreement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Tenderer's price with the highest value for money ratio is \$419,624 excluding GST. The implementation of the Street Lighting Project has been provided for within the 2020/21 Financial Budget.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

1 Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment

1.2 Commit to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2040.

1.5 Educate and partner with the community on Council's sustainability initiatives

3 Maintain and improve the physical places and visual appeal of the City

3.3 Build Infrastructure that best meets current and future community needs.

3.4 Maintain and enhance existing Council infrastructure

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.3 Ensure financial sustainability through effective use of Council's resources and assets and prudent management of risk

TIMING

The contract will commence upon award and conclude once all the lights are received at the agreed location.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

The community will be informed of the Street Lighting LED upgrade project throughout the duration of the works.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

The risks associated with the contract has been addressed using the MAV vendor panel and through the completion of all the required design works.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

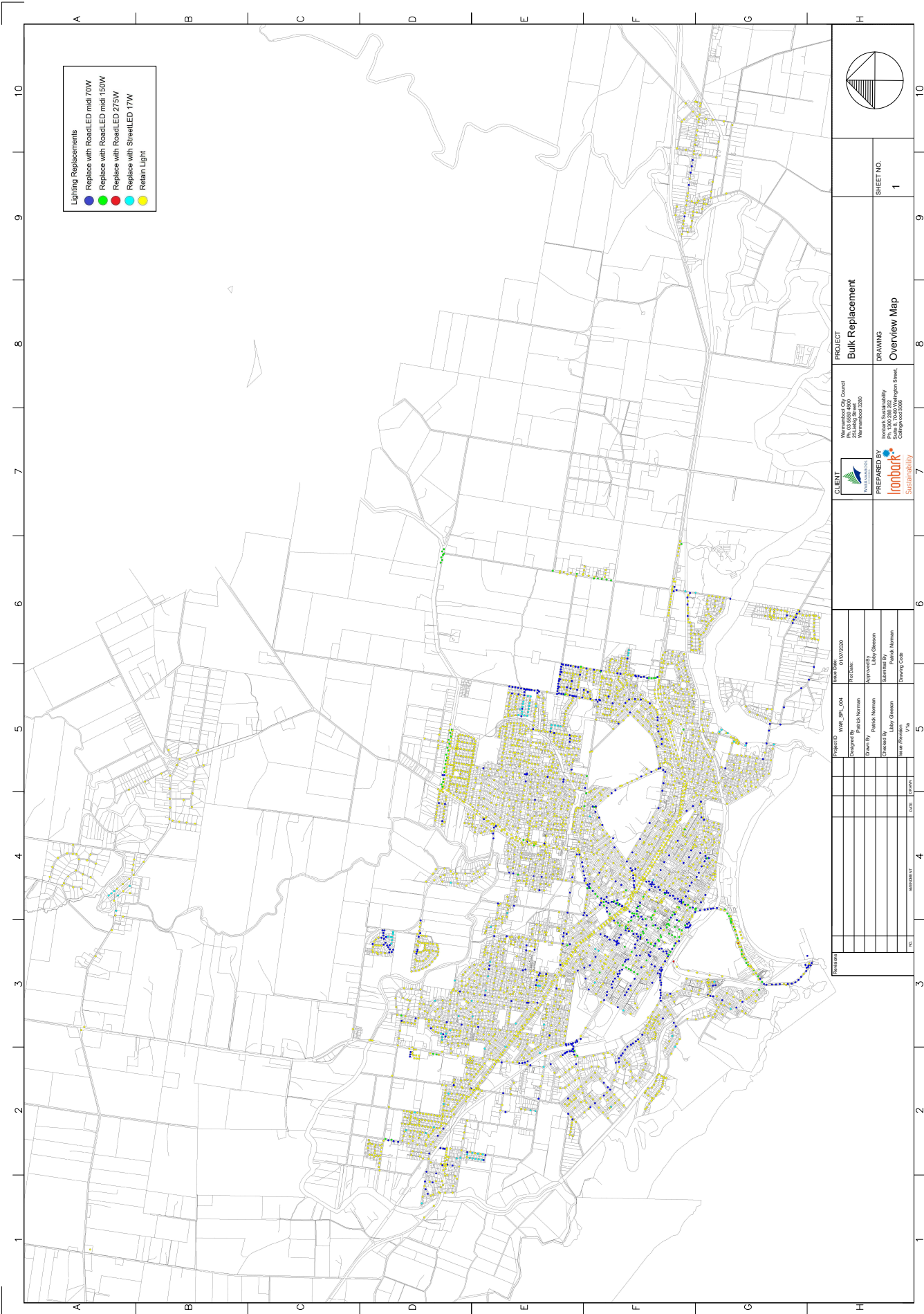
No member of the Evaluation Panel has declared any conflicts of interest and all members have signed the Conflict of Interest Declaration. Each member of the panel has also completed a Confidentiality Agreement.

CONCLUSION

The Tender Evaluation Panel formed the view that the tender from Schreder Australia Pty Ltd be accepted to ensure the delivery of the Street Lighting Hardware can commence as soon as possible.

ATTACHMENTS

1. WAR SPL 004 Bulk Lighting Replacement Overview Map V 1 a [5.8.1 - 1 page]



5.9. CONTRACT 2020063 - ANIMAL SHELTER SERVICES TENDER AWARD

PURPOSE:

This report seeks Council approval to award tender 2020063 Provision of Animal Shelter Services to RSPCA Victoria for an initial contract period of 3 years, plus potential extensions of 2 x 1 years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- An open tender was advertised from 9 May 2020 to 5 June 2020 via eProcure. One tender submission was received which was from RSPCA Victoria.
 - Following receipt of the current tender, the tenderer RSPCA Victoria were invited to provide a best and final offer (BAFO). The BAFO has been received.
 - The BAFO did not result in a change to the tender price.
 - This confirms that this tender is the best available price in the market place at the current time.
 - The key issues in operating the animal shelter are considered to be, value for money for Council and ratepayers, high service levels and animal welfare.
 - The tender from the RSPCA demonstrates all 3 principals.
 - The RSPCA has managed the animal shelter in Braithwaite Street on behalf of Council for over 25 years.
-

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Awards tender 2020063 Provision of Animal Shelter Services to RSPCA Victoria for an initial contract period of 3 years plus potential extensions of 2 x 1 years.**
 2. **Council notes the in all-inclusive tendered prices for the contract being:**

Year 1 \$432,800.04

Year 2 \$443,620.04

Year 3 \$454,710.54
-

BACKGROUND

The RSPCA has managed the animal shelter in Braithwaite Street on behalf of Council for over 25 years.

An open tender was advertised from 9th May 2020 to 5th June 2020. One tender submission was received which was from RSPCA Victoria.

ISSUES

The key issues considered in assessing this tender were value for money, high service levels and animal welfare.

The tender offer from the RSPCA demonstrates all 3 principals.

Value for money

The RSPCA is a not for profit organisation.

An open tender process was undertaken to explore what providers were available and interested in operating the shelter on Council's behalf. As is the case with this tender, and previous tenders for this service, only the RSPCA submitted a tender.

Following receipt of the current tender, the tenderer RSPCA Victoria were invited to provide a best and final offer.

The tender from the RSPCA is an all inclusive monthly charge irrespective of the number of animals in the shelter. This is an improvement on the current contract as the number of animals is capped, for which extra costs are charged if the cap is exceeded.

The RSPCA has an extensive list of volunteers (2,210 in Victoria and 40 in Warrnambool) and donors which helps minimise running costs which would potentially not be available to Councils.

The RSPCA have negotiated discounted veterinary services rates with discounts passed on to the community.

High level of service

The shelter is open to the public 7 days a week on the following hours:

10am until 4pm Monday to Saturday

Sundays and public holidays by appointment.

The RSPCA are renowned for their care of animals service to the community, and provide an extensive network of shelters for other councils and an excellent animal adoption service.

Animal welfare

Warrnambool City Council has comparatively very low rates of animal euthanasia. From Councils Domestic Animal Management Plan the following rates are provided for information;

Warrnambool City Key Statistics	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019
Council:		
Population.	35,000	35,400
Area.	120sqkm	120sqkm
Rate paying properties (approx. tenements)	18,000	18,500
Domestic Animal Businesses.	2	3
Dogs:		
Registered.	4204	4297
Reported attacks.	29	16
Declared Menacing (ongoing total)	24	17
Declared Dangerous (ongoing total)	3	2
Declared Restricted Breed	0	0
Nuisance Complaints	233	210
Impounded RSPCA by:		
Council	228	137
Public	122	137
Returned to owner.	207	143
Rehoused.	118	102
Euthanized.	18	16

Cats:		
Registered.	1603	1681
Impounded RSPCA by:		
Council	70	66
Public	423	445
Returned to owner.	33	28
Rehoused.	348	268
Euthanized.	83	109

Animals are kept in the shelter until they are rehomed. Only animals that are unfit for rehoming are euthanased. This comes at a cost as animals are fed and cared for sometimes for extended periods until a new owner is found.

The RSPCA is highly respected for its education, advocacy, animal care and protection, working with schools, community groups, animal rescue groups and emergency services.

The RSPCA in conjunction with relevant State Government agencies have developed high standards and guidelines for the operation of Shelters and Pounds.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The annual cost to operate the animal shelter is covered within the budget of City Amenity.

In the 2020-21 annual budget \$450,000 was allocated to operate the shelter.

The annual cost to operate the shelter as an all-inclusive charge over the proposed term of the new contract is:

- Year 1 \$432,800.04
- Year 2 \$443,620.04
- Year 3 \$454,710.54

Previous contracts with the RSPCA have included a cap in animal numbers of animals using the shelter. If the cap is exceeded extra charges apply. This tender does not include a cap on numbers.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

This report responds to the following Council Plan Objectives:

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.3 Ensure financial sustainability through effective use of Council's resources and assets and prudent management of risk

5.4 Deliver customer-focused, responsive service

TIMING

The current contract expires in October 2020. The new contract should be awarded to coincide with the expiry of the current contract. As the RSPCA are the incumbent, there are no transitional arrangements required.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

Community consultation is not required through a public tender process.

Council's Domestic Animal Plan (the Plan) sets out Councils approach to domestic animal management within the Municipality. The Plan which is updated annually and publicly consulted prior to Council adoption.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

The risks are assessed as being reputational and financial.

As the tender was undertaken using a public tender process in accordance with Council's Procurement Management Policy, reputational risks have been minimised.

Contract documents have been prepared by Maddocks Lawyers to minimise financial risks.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

CONCLUSION

This report recommends Council awards tender 2020063 to RSPCA Victoria for an initial contract period of 3 years plus potential extensions of 2 x 1 years.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

5.10. CONTRACT 2020051 - JET VAC DRAINAGE TRUCK

PURPOSE:

To award Contract 2020051 for the purchase of a Jet Vac Truck to Barry Maney Hino for \$511,609.55 Excl. GST.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A 'Jet Vac Drainage Truck' is a Medium Rigid Truck with a specialised mounted Drainage Unit consisting of a, '*High pressure water Jetstream*' that can forcibly clear blockages in drainage pits and storm water pipes together with a, '*High suction vacuum*' that can mechanically remove and clean all debris from pits and storm water pipes from operator controls above ground.
- Council has allowed \$530,000 excluding GST in the 2019/2020 Heavy Plant Capital Budget for the purchase of a Jet vac drainage truck. The additional capital budget was sourced after consolidating other heavy plant assets and rolling over others into future years.
- The removed debris will be cleaned and screened at Councils municipal depot and reused at suitable open space locations.
- Council received 9 submissions to Contract 2020051.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **That Contract No. 2020051 – Purchase of a Jet Vac Truck, be awarded to Barry Maney Hino / Hino Australia, 199 Jubilee Highway, West Mount Gambier, South Australia, 5290, for the tendered amount of \$511,609.55 excluding GST, registration and on road costs, for the Hino long tray 320HP cab chassis and Spout Vac body.**
 2. **Authorise the CEO to sign and seal the Contract.**
-

BACKGROUND

Changing legislation requires maintenance staff to have confined space certification when entering drainage pits of different shapes, sizes and depths. Additional safety requirements include mandatory gas detectors and harnesses for Council personnel or contractors entering side entry pits over 1.5 metres in depth. The Jet Vac Truck will eliminate the need to enter pits for the vast majority of operational and maintenance activities and increase efficiency in completing these tasks.

ISSUES

The current process of cleaning drainage pits is outdated and available technology provides a safer and more effective and efficient process to carry out maintenance tasks.

Council's Asset Management Plans for built assets, identify future pressures in capital replacement timeframes. Options to improve the longevity of drainage assets would be more frequent cleaning and maintenance, a Jet Vac drainage truck would provide benefits in assisting Council maintenance teams achieve this.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Available funds for this Contract under Council's Heavy Plant Capital Budget is \$530,000 Excl. GST. The recommended tender to award is less than the available budget at \$511,609.55 Excl. GST.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

This report responds to the following Council Plan initiatives:

1 Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment

- 1.1 Protect and enhance our waterways, coast and land
- 1.4 Review options for managing waste

3 Maintain and improve the physical places and visual appeal of the City

- 3.3 Build Infrastructure that best meets current and future community needs.
- 3.4 Maintain and enhance existing Council infrastructure

4 Develop a smarter economy with diverse and sustainable employment

- 4.3 Enhance the visitor experience.

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

- 5.3 Ensure financial sustainability through effective use of Council's resources and assets and prudent management of risk
- 5.4 Deliver customer-focused, responsive service

CURRENT STATUS

Council has more than 11,100 side entry drainage pits and these built asset numbers are increasing on average 200 per year with new developments. The current maintenance resources do not provide the support required into the future, without looking at introducing different methods and technology.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Over the last couple of years within the Depot Operations maintenance activities, there has been a shift from large road construction projects to more road, path and drainage maintenance. The usage demands of the 2 large construction trucks has decreased and the truck size and accessibility of these large trucks is not as efficient in maintenance activities as smaller task specific assets.

Replacing the 2 large trucks with a Jet Vac drainage truck for the Depot Operations maintenance team provides improved maintenance capabilities without a significant increase in total capital outlay.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

Council is responsible to ensure all roads, paths and open space areas are clear of obstacles and debris including storm water as much as practicable.

Potential risks of flooding during high rainfall events when Council pipe networks become blocked or do not provide storm water to flow freely, may contribute to potential increases in reputational and/or financial risks to Council. Risks to maintenance staff and/or contractors who are repetitively bending twisting and climbing into pits to clean.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No officers involved in this report have any declared interest and all have signed a probity form.

CONCLUSION

Council delegate approval to the Chief Executive Officer to approve the purchase of the preferred Jet Vac drainage truck.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

5.11. CONTRACT 2020064 - SUPPLY OF FOGO LINERS

PURPOSE:

This report seeks Council approval to award Tender Number 2020064 – Supply of FOGO Liners for a contract period of 3 years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- An open tender was advertised from 16 May 2020 to 12 June 2020 via eProcure. Six tender submissions were received from four companies.
- Two tenders were for the supply of Australian made FOGO liners (both made by Biobag World Australia). Four tenders provided prices for the supply of FOGO liners made in China.
- Following receipt of the tender submissions, the tenderers were invited to provide a best and final offer (BAFO). A BAFO was received from all four tenderers.
- The BAFO resulted in a saving of \$19,602 from the preferred Tenderer. There was no price decrease from the other tenderers.
- The key issues in the supply of FOGO liners are the quality of the liners and the ease with which manufacture and supply can occur.
- The tender from Biobag World Australia Pty Ltd offered a good quality liner with reliable and shorter timeframe for supply and delivery. The liners are manufactured in Adelaide, South Australia.
- Council has used the Biobag World liners and provided them to residents, who have been satisfied with the quality of the bag. Supply of the bags was also efficient and customer service from the company was excellent.
- Preferred Tenderer reference checks reinforced Council's experience with Biobag World Australia's FOGO liners.
- Procurement of Australian made liners supports circular economy principles and Australian jobs and decreases Council's reliance on overseas manufacture. Buying Australian made liners also bypasses any potential custom issues, with increased certainty of supply and shorter manufacture and delivery timeframes.
- FOGO liners are currently seen as an integral tool for the FOGO service, in capturing food waste and diverting it from landfill. In the future however, it is planned to wean the community off Council supplied bags when there are enough suppliers in the City and / or the community are comfortable with either not using a liner or making their own (eg: from newspaper).

RECOMMENDATION

Draft Council Report Recommendations

- 1. That Contract No. 2020064 –Supply of FOGO Liners be awarded to Biobag World Australia Pty Ltd for the tendered amount of \$392.330 excluding GST.**
 - 2. That a letter of acceptance be forwarded to the successful tenderer.**
 - 3. That a letter of thanks be sent to unsuccessful tenderers.**
-

BACKGROUND

The FOGO collection service has now been in place across the whole municipality for just over one year. The service is very popular with residents and has provided a convenient way for residents to dispose of their garden waste in a responsible manner.

Residents have also embraced using the service for disposal of food waste, diverting 800 tonnes of food waste from landfill in the first year of the service. Integral to this food waste diversion is the Council supplied FOGO kitchen caddy liners. Over the course of the year the importance of these liners has been made clear by the number of residents enquiring where they can get more and if more will be supplied by Council.

They are important to the diversion of food waste because combined with the kitchen caddy they provide a convenient way of capturing food waste at its source (in the kitchen). They also help to alleviate the 'ick' factor which is a major barrier in other municipalities to capturing significant amounts of food waste and finally when provided by Council they reduce the incidence of contamination caused when residents are capturing their food waste in plastic bags.

Six tenders were received from four companies. Four of the tenders submitted were for liners manufactured overseas and two tenders provided Australian manufactured liners.

ISSUES

A best and final offer process was pursued and the preferred tenderer was able to offer a better price through this process.

Whilst the liners manufactured in Australia are slightly more expensive than some of the overseas manufactured options, referee checks and previous experience with the company and their liners is deemed beneficial.

The benefits of the Biobag World offer include providing Australian manufacturing and jobs combined with increased certainty of supply and shorter manufacture timeframes.

Excellent referrals from other Councils, proven reliability and quality of their liners combined with excellent customer service, outweighed slightly lower costs submitted by other tenderers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost of three year's supply of compostable FOGO liners to Warrnambool households is \$392,330 excluding GST.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

1 Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment

1.4 Review options for managing waste

TIMING

Liners will arrive in Warrnambool in the October of the next three years, allowing for the annual supply to be delivered in November and December.

Procuring liners manufactured overseas may impact this timeframe due to import and customs issues.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

There was no community consultation required for evaluation of this tender.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

The preferred tenderer provides certified compostable liners manufactured in South Australia. Procuring liners from within Australia alleviates any risk of timeframes being extended due to potential issues with import and customs.

The panel identified that to ensure the contract is implemented successfully (regardless of who was successful), an average level of contract administration and supervision resources will be required.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared by officers involved in the evaluation of the tenders.

CONCLUSION

That Contract No. 202064 is awarded in accordance with recommendations outlined at 1. Council Draft Report Recommendations.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

5.12. POLICY REVIEW - PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE:

This report seeks approval to seek public comment of the Project Management Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In November 2016 the Executive Management Team (then referred to as Management Executive Group) approved the Project Management Policy.
- The Policy was due for review in November 2019.
- The Project Management Policy was an operational policy that did not require approval of Council, however with the changes within the Local Government Act 2020, it is considered appropriate the Project Management Policy becomes a Council Policy.
- The Policy remains current and continues to align with how project management is undertaken at Warrnambool City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:-

- 1. Agrees to advertise the draft Project Management Policy for public comment for a period of not less than 28 days.**
 - 2. Receives a further report to adopt the draft Project Management Policy which summarises any submissions and amendments made to the document, following the consultation period.**
-

BACKGROUND

In November 2016 The Executive Management Team (then referred to as Management Executive Group) approved the operational Project Management Policy. The policy sets out Councils the intent to implement an overarching Project Management Framework that;

- Provides a consistent Council wide framework for managing projects.
- Aligns projects with Council's strategic plans.
- Increases project transparency and visibility to enable effective decision making regarding the optimal use of resources.
- Delivers services through improved project management capability.
- Improves the efficiency and consistency in project delivery.
- Defines roles and responsibilities, performance measures and accountability for success.
- Identifies and manages project risks.
- Supports the capability development of staff managing projects.
- Supports process improvement, staff development and learning.

The Policy was due for review in November 2019.

The Policy was reviewed by the Facilities and Projects department and deemed to remain current and relevant. As such no material change is proposed except for extending the period of review from three (3) years to four (4) years. This is recommended as it aligns the operational policy review period with the typical review period for Council Policies and will align with Councilor terms.

ISSUES

The Project Management Policy remains current and relevant to the way in which Warrnambool City Council undertakes the management of projects.

There are no identified issues in the approval for the minor changes as proposed to the Project Management Policy and extending the review period to four (4) years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As the revised policy remains largely unchanged there is no change to financial impact associated with the management of projects across Council.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

The Project Management Policy aligns with the following Council objectives and actions;

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

TIMING

The revised policy will come into effect immediately following the approval by Council. Operationally, Council will continue to operate under the current Policy until the document is presented and approved by Council.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

It is proposed to seek public feedback on the Policy for a period of four (4) weeks.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

The revised policy will come into effect immediately following the approval by Council. Operationally, Council will continue to operate under the current Policy until the document is presented and approved by Council.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No officer declared an interest during the review or preparation of the revised Project Management Policy.

CONCLUSION

The Project Management Policy sets a sound and consistent expectation for the organisation relating to the delivery of projects. It is considered reasonable to adjust the review timelines for this policy to better align with Council Policy review periods that typically align with Council terms.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Management Policy (Approval November 2016 - Review November 2019) [5.12.1 - 7 pages]
2. DRAFT - Project Management Policy [5.12.2 - 7 pages]



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Project Management Policy

POLICY TYPE: MANAGEMENT

APPROVAL DATE: NOVEMBER 2016

REVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 2019

PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	<i>Policy</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Management Policy</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>Infrastructure Development & Projects</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Manager Infrastructure Development & Projects</i>
Document Status:	<i>Initial Draft</i>
Approved By:	<i>Management Executive Group (MEG)</i>
Adopted Date:	November 2016
Review Date:	November 2019

PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



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PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

For Council to develop, maintain and implement an overarching Project Management Framework that:

- Provides a consistent Council wide framework for managing projects.
- Aligns projects with Council's strategic plans.
- Increases project transparency and visibility to enable effective decision making regarding the optimal use of resources.
- Delivers services through improved project management capability.
- Improves the efficiency and consistency in project delivery.
- Defines roles and responsibilities, performance measures and accountability for success.
- Identifies and manages project risks.
- Supports the capability development of staff managing projects.
- Supports process improvement, staff development and learning.

1.2. Scope

The Project Management Framework applies to all Council staff responsible for delivering any Council project.

The framework will take into account the nature and size of different projects to determine the complexity of the required documentation and reporting requirements.

If a project requires any exemption from, or variation to, the processes and documentation in this framework, prior approval must be obtained from the relevant Director in order for the project to proceed.

Publication, relevant training and review of the framework will follow Council's Policy and Procedure Framework.

1.3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Major Project	Total value of the project is greater than \$1,000,000. OR The project has been assessed as having a Significant or High risk to Council as defined in Council's Risk Management Framework.
Project	A temporary endeavour that is undertaken to meet a goal or particular aim of Council. It must have a defined start and end, can be either capital or non capital in nature, and can be construction or business related.
Program	In some circumstances it is acceptable for a group of similar projects to be combined for delivery at a program level. Under this arrangement the program of works are considered to be the project.
Project Sponsor	The Project Sponsor as appointed by a Director has the responsibility to overview the project and is often a Service Manager primarily responsible for

PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



	the provision of the Council service benefiting from the project.
Project Manager	The Project Manager is the person responsible for leading the project as appointed by the Project Sponsor. Their role includes but is not limited to the planning, execution and managing the people, resources and scope of the project.
Project Management Framework	Is the set of components that provide the foundations of project management (policy, procedures and supporting documents) that guides a project and continuous improvement for project management throughout the organisation.
Stakeholder	An individual, group or organisation who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity or outcome of the project.

1.4. References

Local Government Act 1989

2. POLICY

Council's Project Management Framework provides and is to promote a systematic, consistent and corporate wide approach to managing projects.

2.1. Policy Statement

Council strives to continually improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its performance in the provision of works and services for its community and stakeholders. As Council has a wide range of business areas delivering a variety of projects, the following principles guide the how projects will be managed.

2.1.1. Principles

Key principles of effective management of projects are:

- Project decisions are integrated with corporate strategic planning.
- Project investment decisions are based on Investment Logic Maps, Business Cases or similar with documented understanding of the project considerations, evaluation of alternatives, incorporation of 'life cycle' costs, benefits and risks of project deliverables.
- An effective internal control structure is established to manage the projects.
- Review of project outcomes and documentation of learnings

This Project Management Framework addresses these principles by providing guidance for employees about matters that need to be taken into account when managing a project related to policies, procedures, templates and relevant checklists, to facilitate:

- effective and consistent project management across the organisation
- appropriate project governance
- effective change, communication and risk management
- improvement to Council's project methodology through the use of post implementation reviews.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

Director City Infrastructure assisted by Manager Infrastructure Development & Projects.

3.2. Review

A review of the policy for any necessary amendments will be undertaken no later than three (3) years after its formulation or after the last review.

3.3. Compliance Responsibility

3.3.1. Management Executive Group (Chief Executive and Directors)

The success of a particular project is dependant and the support and guidance of the Director and their input at strategic stages of the project to:

- Ensure the project aligns with Councils strategic intent
- Oversight the project from inception to completion
- Negotiate and influence stakeholder
- Approve the project at key hold points, throughout its lifecycle
- Ensure the Council financial plan, provides for the Whole of life costs of the new assets created including the long term operating and maintenance costs

The Director appoints a Project Sponsor for each project in their area of responsibility.

3.3.2. Managers and Service Managers

Managers and Service Managers undertaking the Project Sponsor role are to:

- Development an Investment Logic Map, Business Case or similar process
- Identify and document outcomes and objectives
- Development of project scope, concept plans and cost estimates
- Develop and implement funding strategies
- Develop and implement community engagement strategies
- Appoint a Project Manager and Project Team
- Maintain an overview the project, and review project status reports

A Project Sponsor may act as a Project Manager if the Director considers that the required project management disciplines and experience are appropriate, however the two roles have distinct differences.

3.3.3. All Employees

Any employee that has been appointed as a Project Manager shall take ownership of the project outcomes collaboratively with the Project Sponsor to achieve a holistic solution.

Project Managers are responsible for:

- Review and acceptance of project brief
- Development of a Project Plan
- Facilitating project development and delivery
- Liaison with and obtaining stakeholder approvals
- Monitor and seek approval for any changes to project scope, budget and timing
- Prepare project progress reports throughout the project and as requested
- Project closures and handover

PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



3.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Project Management Policy

POLICY TYPE: ~~MANAGEMENT~~COUNCIL

APPROVAL DATE: 30 JUNE2020

REVIEW DATE: JULY 2024

PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	<i>Policy</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Management Policy</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>Facilities and Projects</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Manager Facilities and Projects</i>
Document Status:	<i>Approved</i>
Approved By:	Executive Management Team <u>Council</u>
Adopted Date:	30 June 2020
Review Date:	<i>July 2024</i>

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



	the provision of the Council service benefiting from the project.
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1.4. References

Local Government Act 1989

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Council's Project Management Framework provides and is to promote a systematic, consistent and corporate wide approach to managing projects.

2.1. Policy Statement

Council strives to continually improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its performance in the provision of works and services for its community and stakeholders. As Council has a wide range of business areas delivering a variety of projects, the following principles guide the how projects will be managed.

2.1.1. Principles

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- effective and consistent project management across the organisation
- appropriate project governance
- effective change, communication and risk management
- improvement to Council's project methodology through the use of post implementation reviews.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

Director City Infrastructure assisted by Manager Facilities and Projects.

3.2. Review

A review of the policy for any necessary amendments will be undertaken no later than four (4) years after its formulation or after the last review.

3.3. Compliance Responsibility

3.3.1. *Executive Management Team (Chief Executive and Directors)*

The success of a particular project is dependent on the support and guidance of the Director and their input at strategic stages of the project to:

- Ensure the project aligns with Council's strategic intent
- Provide oversight to the project from inception to completion
- Negotiate with and influence stakeholders to achieve the project outcomes
- Approve the project at key hold points, throughout its lifecycle
- Ensure the Council financial plan provides for the Whole of life costs of the new assets created including the long term operating and maintenance costs

The Director appoints a Project Sponsor for each project in their area of responsibility.

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Managers and Service Managers undertaking the Project Sponsor role are to:

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- Appoint a Project Manager and Project Team
- Maintain an overview the project, and review project status reports

A Project Sponsor may act as a Project Manager if the Director considers that the required project management disciplines and experience are appropriate, however the two roles have distinct differences.

3.3.3. *All Employees*

Any employee that has been appointed as a Project Manager shall take ownership of the project outcomes collaboratively with the Project Sponsor to achieve a holistic solution.

Project Managers are responsible for:

- Review and acceptance of project brief
- Development of a Project Plan
- Facilitating project development and delivery
- Liaison with and obtaining stakeholder approvals
- Monitor and seek approval for any changes to project scope, budget and timing
- Prepare project progress reports throughout the project and as requested
- Project closures and handover

PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY



3.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

5.13. POLICY REVIEW - SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY

PURPOSE:

This report seeks approval to seek public comment of the Special Charge Scheme Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In August 2017 Council approved the Special Charge Scheme Policy
- The Special Charge Scheme Policy is due for review in June 2020.
- The Policy remains current and continues to align with how special charge schemes can be applicated within the Warrnambool City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:-

- 1. Agrees to advertise the draft Special Charge Scheme Policy for public comment for a period of not less than 28 days.**
 - 2. Receives a further report to adopt the draft Special Charge Scheme Policy which summarises any submissions and amendments made to the document, following the consultation period.**
-

BACKGROUND

In August 2017, Council approved the Special Charge Scheme Policy, and set a review of the policy by June 2020. The policy sets out the principles for the use of Special Rates & Charges schemes by Council, for the provision of infrastructure.

The Policy was due for review in June 2020.

The Policy was reviewed by the Infrastructure Services Department and Facilities and Projects Department and deemed to remain current and relevant. As such no material change is proposed except for extending the period of review from three (3) years to four (4) years. This is recommended as it aligns the Council policy review period with the typical review period for Council Policies and will align with Councilor terms.

It is noted the policy references the current Local Government Act 1989, and with the change to the Local Government Act 2020 imminent, it is recommended an administrative review take place to update the references to the Act when this comes into effect.

ISSUES

The Special Charge Scheme Policy remains current and relevant to the way in which Warrnambool City Council undertakes projects that may be applicable to the raising of a special charge or rate to facilitate the upgrading or provision of new infrastructure.

There are no identified issues in the approval for the minor changes (administrative to make current) as proposed to the Special Charge Scheme Policy and extending the review period to four (4) years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As the revised policy remains largely unchanged there is no change to financial impact associated with the implementation of special charge schemes across Council.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

The Special Charge Scheme Policy aligns with the following Council objectives and actions;

5 Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management

5.2 Develop policies, strategic plans and processes to address local and regional issues, guide service provision and ensure operational effectiveness

TIMING

The revised policy will come into effect immediately following the approval by Council. Operationally, Council will continue to operate under the current Policy until the document is presented and approved by Council.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

It is proposed to seek public feedback on the Policy for a period of four (4) weeks.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

There are no legal implications or identified organisational risks associated with the approval of the Special Charge Scheme Policy.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No officer declared an interest during the review or preparation of the Special Charge Scheme Policy.

CONCLUSION

The Special Charge Scheme Policy sets a sound and consistent benchmark for the application and implementation of Special Charge Schemes to enable contributions to upgrades or new infrastructure. It is considered reasonable to adjust the review timelines for this policy to better align with Council Policy review periods that typically align with Council terms.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Special Charge Scheme Policy (Approval August 2017 - Review June 2020) [5.13.1 - 7 pages]
2. DRAFT Special Charge Scheme Policy [5.13.2 - 7 pages]



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Special Charge Scheme Policy

APPROVAL DATE: 8 AUGUST 2017

REVIEW DATE: 30 JUNE 2020

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	<i>Special Charge Scheme Policy</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Council</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>Infrastructure Services</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Manager Infrastructure Services</i>
Document Status:	<i>Adopted</i>
Approved By:	<i>Council</i>
Adopted Date:	<i>8 August 2017</i>
Review Date:	<i>30 June 2020</i>

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



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SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles for the use of Special Rates & Charges schemes by Council, for the provision of infrastructure.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to the provision of “new” and “upgrade” infrastructure where it can be demonstrated that special benefit can be applied to a property.

The special rate and charge process broadly includes the following:

- Community consultation.
- The special benefit test.
- The relevant legislation and precedent.
- Scheme preparation and apportionment.
- Council processes leading to the scheme determination.

1.3. Definitions

Definitions are in accordance with Section 163 of the Local Government Act, 1989 and “Special Rates and Charges” Ministerial Guideline, Local Government Victoria.

1.4. References

Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Government Act 1989• Planning and Environment Act 1987
Standards or Guidance Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Rates and Charges Ministerial Guidelines including worked examples – September 2004• Various determinations by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and other Courts• The Macquarie Special Rates and Charges Manual
Related Policies/Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Engagement Policy• Community Engagement Guidelines and Tool Kit• Special Charge Scheme Community Consultation Guidelines• Debt Management Policy & Procedure• Records Management Policy

2. POLICY

2.1. Policy Statement

Council is committed to the improvement of infrastructure and services to the community.

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



Consideration of a Special Charge Scheme will apply to situations from which a special benefit is derived to properties in residential, rural residential (lower density areas), industrial and commercial areas for infrastructure including but not limited to roads, pathways, bridges, drainage and recreation.

Council will consider the implementation of a Special Charge Scheme to defray expenses associated with the cost of infrastructure deemed to provide a special benefit to properties.

Section 163 of the Local Government Act (the Act) provides Council with the ability to recover reasonable contributions from people who will derive special benefits from particular works.

The following are the key principles that Council will apply to the consideration and development of Special Rates and Charges Schemes:

- i. Council will consider requests to implement schemes that originate from the property owners, Councillors or Council Officers.
 - Property owners are encouraged to initial and build support for schemes prior to consideration by Council.
- ii. Prior to commencing the statutory processes, Council Officers will consider and determine the rationale applicable to each proposal, including the basis of benefit determination, standard of works and the proposed apportionment of cost. Council will ensure fairness and equity by formally assessing the proportion of the benefits of proposed works that will provide special benefits for the properties included in the scheme.
- iii. A database of Special Charge Schemes, including the status of the scheme to assist in long-term infrastructure planning will be maintained, and schemes prioritised using the following criteria in order of precedence:
 - a. Council Plan;
 - b. Service Strategies (i.e. Stormwater Drainage Strategy, Road Safety Strategy);
 - c. Service Plans (i.e. Stormwater Management Plan, Road Hierarchy Plan);
 - d. Asset Management Plans;
 - e. Identified through operational reviews (i.e. Road Safety Audits, Risk Assessments);
 - f. Included in Council's annual budget; and
 - g. Support from property owners receiving special benefit.
- iv. Council funding of the Special Charge Scheme is to be based on the calculated "community benefit" and where budget has been allocated.
 - a. Where Council is contributing less than one third of the total cost of the scheme and receives objections from property owners receiving special benefit in respect of the majority of the rateable properties included in the scheme, then the scheme will be abandoned.
 - b. Where Council is contributing more than one third of the total cost of the scheme and receives objections from property owners receiving special charge in respect of the majority of the rateable properties included in the scheme, then Council has the ability to determine if the scheme will proceed. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



- v. Council will contribute to the cost of the works only where there is a community benefit that can be calculated. Before calculating the benefit ratio, Council must consider if the proposed works or services will provide community benefits as not all schemes have community benefits and Council may, on a case by case basis increase this contribution where it is considered to be appropriate.
- vi. In accordance with Section 163 of the Act, Council Officers will maximise opportunities for participation and consultation on proposed schemes. The opportunity for submissions either supporting or objecting to the scheme will be provided as part of evaluation process.
- vii. Construction will comply with Council's standards and construction practices.
- viii. Administration, design, supervision and project management costs shall be based on 15% of the total cost of works included in the declared scheme, and will be included in the costs to be apportioned.
- ix. Where there is a variation between the preliminary cost estimates and actual final costs, Council is empowered under the Act to vary a Special Charge in relation to the amount to be paid. Variations to the scheme will be conducted in accordance with Sections 165 and 166 of the Act, as outlined at the time of declaration.
- x. To limit the need to vary schemes which exceed preliminary cost estimates, a minimum of 10% contingency is to be included in the total cost of works.
- xi. Develop schemes on behalf of the community which address gaps in infrastructure networks, and fully fund potential schemes where:
 - a. The scheme is not able to include more than two (2) property owners; and
 - b. The total cost of the scheme is less than \$15,000 inclusive of GST.
- xii. A minimum 4 year instalment plan will be made available to contributors. Applicable interest will be set at 1% above Councils borrowing rate at the time.
- xiii. Significant consultation is required to be undertaken with affected property owners to comply with Special Charge Scheme legislation, and the ability for the general public to comment on proposals is also required. This may include survey letters, public meetings and hearings for objectors if necessary.
- xiv. Where survey letters are issued and a response not received, Council will consider that the property owner is supportive of the scheme proposal.
- xv. Council will provide for open and transparent processes, encourage contributor input, and provide a fair, reasonable and equitable basis for apportioning costs.

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

Manager Infrastructure Services

3.2. Review

The Owner will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than three (3) years after its formulation or after the last review.

3.3. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Special Charge Scheme Policy

APPROVAL DATE: ~~8 AUGUST 2017~~

REVIEW DATE: ~~30 AUGUST 2024~~ 30 JUNE 2020

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	<i>Special Charge Scheme Policy</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Council</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>Infrastructure Services</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Manager Infrastructure Services</i>
Document Status:	<i>Adopted</i>
Approved By:	<i>Council</i>
Adopted Date:	<i>8 August 2017</i>
Review Date:	<i>30 August 202430 June 2020</i>

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



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This policy applies to the provision of “new” and “upgrade” infrastructure where it can be demonstrated that special benefit can be applied to a property.

The special rate and charge process broadly includes the following:

- Community consultation.
- The special benefit test.
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SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



Consideration of a Special Charge Scheme will apply to situations from which a special benefit is derived to properties in residential, rural residential (lower density areas), industrial and commercial areas for infrastructure including but not limited to roads, pathways, bridges, drainage and recreation.

Council will consider the implementation of a Special Charge Scheme to defray expenses associated with the cost of infrastructure deemed to provide a special benefit to properties.

Section 163 of the Local Government Act (the Act) provides Council with the ability to recover reasonable contributions from people who will derive special benefits from particular works.

The following are the key principles that Council will apply to the consideration and development of Special Rates and Charges Schemes:

- i. Council will consider requests to implement schemes that originate from the property owners, Councillors or Council Officers.
 - Property owners are encouraged to initial and build support for schemes prior to consideration by Council.
- ii. Prior to commencing the statutory processes, Council Officers will consider and determine the rationale applicable to each proposal, including the basis of benefit determination, standard of works and the proposed apportionment of cost. Council will ensure fairness and equity by formally assessing the proportion of the benefits of proposed works that will provide special benefits for the properties included in the scheme.
- iii. A database of Special Charge Schemes, including the status of the scheme to assist in long-term infrastructure planning will be maintained, and schemes prioritised using the following criteria in order of precedence:
 - a. Council Plan;
 - b. Service Strategies (i.e. Stormwater Drainage Strategy, Road Safety Strategy);
 - c. Service Plans (i.e. Stormwater Management Plan, Road Hierarchy Plan);
 - d. Asset Management Plans;
 - e. Identified through operational reviews (i.e. Road Safety Audits, Risk Assessments);
 - f. Included in Council's annual budget; and
 - g. Support from property owners receiving special benefit.
- iv. Council funding of the Special Charge Scheme is to be based on the calculated "community benefit" and where budget has been allocated.
 - a. Where Council is contributing less than one third of the total cost of the scheme and receives objections from property owners receiving special benefit in respect of the majority of the rateable properties included in the scheme, then the scheme will be abandoned.
 - b. Where Council is contributing more than one third of the total cost of the scheme and receives objections from property owners receiving special charge in respect of the majority of the rateable properties included in the scheme, then Council has the ability to determine if the scheme will proceed. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



- v. Council will contribute to the cost of the works only where there is a community benefit that can be calculated. Before calculating the benefit ratio, Council must consider if the proposed works or services will provide community benefits as not all schemes have community benefits and Council may, on a case by case basis increase this contribution where it is considered to be appropriate.
- vi. In accordance with Section 163 of the Act, Council Officers will maximise opportunities for participation and consultation on proposed schemes. The opportunity for submissions either supporting or objecting to the scheme will be provided as part of evaluation process.
- vii. Construction will comply with Council's standards and construction practices.
- viii. Administration, design, supervision and project management costs shall be based on 15% of the total cost of works included in the declared scheme, and will be included in the costs to be apportioned.
- ix. Where there is a variation between the preliminary cost estimates and actual final costs, Council is empowered under the Act to vary a Special Charge in relation to the amount to be paid. Variations to the scheme will be conducted in accordance with Sections 165 and 166 of the Act, as outlined at the time of declaration.
- x. To limit the need to vary schemes which exceed preliminary cost estimates, a minimum of 10% contingency is to be included in the total cost of works.
- xi. Develop schemes on behalf of the community which address gaps in infrastructure networks, and fully fund potential schemes where:
 - a. The scheme is not able to include more than two (2) property owners; and
 - b. The total cost of the scheme is less than \$15,000 inclusive of GST.
- xii. A minimum 4 year instalment plan will be made available to contributors. Applicable interest will be set at 1% above Council's borrowing rate at the time.
- xiii. Significant consultation is required to be undertaken with affected property owners to comply with Special Charge Scheme legislation, and the ability for the general public to comment on proposals is also required. This may include survey letters, public meetings and hearings for objectors if necessary.
- xiv. Where survey letters are issued and a response not received, Council will consider that the property owner is supportive of the scheme proposal.
- xv. Council will provide for open and transparent processes, encourage contributor input, and provide a fair, reasonable and equitable basis for apportioning costs.

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME POLICY



3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

Manager Infrastructure Services

3.2. Review

The Owner will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than ~~three-four~~ (43) years after its formulation or after the last review.

3.3. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

5.14. DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

PURPOSE:

Adoption of the Warrnambool City Council (WCC) Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) updated 2020-2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In accordance with the Environment Protection Act 1970, each Council in Victoria is required to produce a DWMP (the Plan) every 5-years, detailing how they will manage and mitigate impacts of unsewered developments and domestic wastewater systems. The plan is attached – **refer Attachment 1.**
- Warrnambool City Council (WCC) has responsibilities for the orderly planning and development within the Warrnambool Local Government Area (LGA), and for the protection and promotion of public health and the environment.
- The plan provides detailed information on areas in Warrnambool which are unsewered and provides an action plan on how to mitigate the risks posed by onsite wastewater systems.
- If Council is to complete the actions within the Action Plan, Council will need to review the required resources and requisite education programs to improve community awareness of landowner obligations in relation to domestic wastewater system
- The purpose of the Plan is to, identify current responsibilities, practices, procedures and obligations for domestic wastewater management, identify the public health and environmental risks associated with onsite domestic wastewater management systems and to identify strategies to improve wastewater management.
- The updated Plan is attached **refer Attachment 2.** Ordinarily, the old Plan would be shown with track changes, however the Plan has been rewritten.
- The Plan was consulted with key stakeholders such as Wannon Water, The Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, Environmental Protection Authority and Department of Environment Land Water and Planning and also the wider community. Only Wannon Water made a submission. **Refer Attachment 3.**
- The consultation period inviting submissions was conducted on Council's website from 11/5/20 to 30/6/20 with adverts placed in the Warrnambool Standard. Two submissions were received.
- Council is now asked to adopt the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- i. **Notes that following the consultation period, 2 submissions only were received, being from Wannon Water and DELWP.**
- ii. **Adopts the draft Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (2020-2025) inclusive of submissions and amendments made to the document, following the consultation period.**

BACKGROUND

Warrnambool currently has approximately 998 onsite wastewater systems (OWS). Many of these systems were installed at a time when there was very little regulation or requirement to obtain a permit or maintain the system.

This has led to a significant backlog of work for Council to address these issues in consultation with individual landowners and relevant State Government Agencies.

Reticulated sewerage is currently provided to Warrnambool, and part of the Allansford and Dennington localities. The remainder of the municipality is unsewered, including the Wangoom Road area, parts of Allansford and Dennington, Hopkins Point Road, Bushfield, and Woodford.

ISSUES

Making decisions about onsite wastewater system (OWS) selection, sizing and siting, needs to be based on site-context and localised environmental conditions, rather than adopting a 'one-size-fits-all approach' to minimum lot size or wastewater land application type and sizing. This Plan advocates an approach whereby all wastewater systems are designed to match intrinsic site conditions.

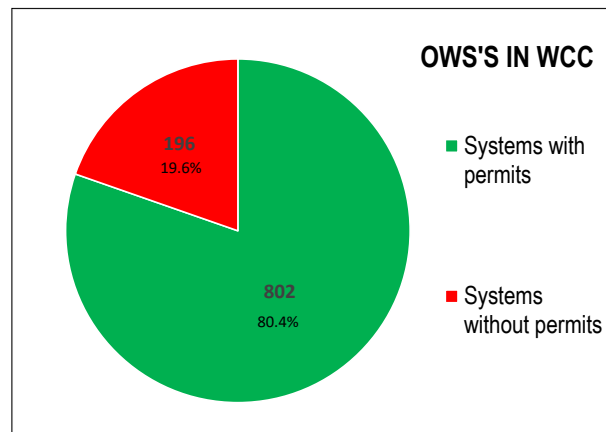
The key issues within the Plan include:

- Ensuring stormwater runoff does not impact on the receiving environments and waterways;
- Increasing numbers of vulnerable populations and low-socio-economic groups living in unsewered dwellings;
- Increasing population pressure placing greater demands on infrastructure;
- Adaptation of policies and programs to changing demographic groups;
- Small lots, aged, non-permit, and unmaintained systems;
- Challenging soil textures in areas of small unsewered lots;
- All wastewater generation and/or discharges are seen to be a threat with potential harm to human health or damage to the receiving environment.

Key findings:

- WCC has knowledge of 998 OWS's within its boundaries. Of these (as per attachment 2 and the pie-graph below):
 - 19.6% (196) non-permit systems (installed pre-1995, when permits became mandatory) exist in key areas of constraint such as Bushfield, Woodford, Allansford. These include typically aged systems (>25-years old), situated on reduced size lot sizes (<2000m²), and within watercourse setbacks; and,
 - 80.4% (802) have permits (which is 40% higher than the Victorian LGA average), with a proportion of these influenced by similar constraints listed above, and with a proportion of these systems due for upgrade.
- Legacy systems (OWS within sewer area but not connected to sewer): Within sewer areas such as Allansford, Dennington, and Warrnambool require attention due to the potential impact of failing OWS's within the potable water coverage area.
- Small lots: The potential for sustainable OWS is dependent on the amount of adequate area available for treatment and disposal after infrastructure footprint is removed.
- Aged OWS's: With a suggested typical lifespan of 25-30 years, most OWS's in the WCC LGA are aged, reflected by the number of non-permits (pre-1995), and based on WCC database data. Areas such as Allansford, Bushfield, Woodford, and north Wangoom contain elevated dwelling numbers with aged OWS's requiring future upgrade, and subsequent increased direction and regulation by Council.

Many small lot systems have a non-baffled septic tank, and an undersized and non-functioning trench system. Such situations can be managed however may require costly system replacement and/or modification.



- **Upgrade challenge:** With potentially 50% of OWS's in the LGA requiring upgrade, it is critical a transparent and evidenced-based approach to such a challenge is used. Upgrades on small lots (<2000m²) should be prioritised, in addition to targeted education material and advice.
- **Cumulative impacts:** The impact of OWS on the local environment is increased by the concentration of wastewater disposed to land. The number of houses per square hectare becomes an important consideration when assessing the current conditions within a particular township area. Current research suggests a threshold of >40-50 OWS's per square kilometre begins to impact groundwater. Areas such as Woodfield and Bushfield are already at this threshold point requiring conservative wastewater planning into the future.
- **Lack of system knowledge and maintenance:** Lack of education and reduced system owner knowledge is known to contribute to OWS problems. Within the WCC LGA and beyond in Victoria there is extensive non-compliance with permit conditions, specifically maintenance of systems.
- **Systems inside watercourse setbacks:** Within the WCC LGA there are significant numbers of dwellings and their OWS's situated within either of the critical 30m and 60m watercourse/wetland setbacks, and the 1 in 20-year flood setback. Detecting and auditing all non-permit systems within setbacks must be a first priority of this plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Current resources within the Environmental Health Unit of City Amenity consist of 2.0 EFT. There is significant workload if Council is to achieve all actions identified within the Action Plan, and to address both environmental and public health risks associated with defective systems.

While a number of the actions in year 1 of the plan will be achieved within the current budget of Environmental Health, completion of all actions within the Plan will require additional budget allocation.

LEGISLATION / POLICY / COUNCIL PLAN CONTEXT

This report responds to the following Council Plan (2017-2021) initiatives (relating to onsite wastewater):

Objective 1: *Sustain, enhance and protect the natural environment;*

1.1 *Protect and enhance our waterways, coast and land - Complete a Domestic Wastewater Management Plan;*

1.3 Ensure all septic tanks meet EPA guidelines and requirements.

Objective 5: *Practice good governance through openness and accountability while balancing aspirations with sound financial management*

5.1 Provision of opportunities for the community to actively participate in Council's decision-making through effective promotion, communication and engagement Provide community engagement opportunities relating to Council projects as required and funded.

TIMING

It is recommended that implementation of the DWMP is undertaken as soon as practicable to capitalise on the extensive works completed within the Plan.

COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONSULTATION

Consultation was undertaken with all stakeholders, by inviting them to make a submission to the Plan i.e. State Government Agencies (e.g. CMA, EPA, DELWP) and Wannon Water.

The consultation period inviting submissions was conducted on Council's website from 11/5/20 to 30/6/20 with adverts placed in the Warrnambool Standard. xx submissions were received from the community. Submissions were received from Wannon Water...

Extensive consultation/collaboration will be required with landowners who have systems without permits, defective systems and/or insufficient maintenance programs.

There will also need to be ongoing community education programs to inform affected landowners of their obligations in respect of onsite wastewater systems.

LEGAL RISK / IMPACT

Council has a reputational and financial risk if the Plan is not adopted and implemented.

Domestic wastewater is typically high in nutrients and human pathogens. Wastewater poses a public health, environmental, legal, and economic risk.

Warrnambool is a city that prides itself on its natural assets as well as living amenity. Poor wastewater management threatens these values and undermines the municipality's ability to attract more residents, businesses, and tourists to the area.

OFFICERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

CONCLUSION

WCC plans to improve its regulation of key issues relating to domestic wastewater management via the implementation of its 2020-25 DWMP. This Plan builds upon the work achieved by the previous DWMP released in 2013 and has 9 strategies designed to address these issues.

Various options are provided within this Plan to sustainably fund its implementation over the next five years. Much needed modifications to policies, procedures, and enhanced permit conditions, will provide a framework for key strategies to increase whole-of-LGA OWS maintenance.

The Plan is intended to deliver a coherent approach to increasing coverage of the OWS database, educating stakeholders and engaging with the community, supporting increased system maintenance, and improving the process by which OWS permits are issued.

Council and Wannon Water should work closely to develop a transparent, equitable, and efficient process to maximise connect to sewer, and increase collective system maintenance via application of ISO30001-related risk management, to support future sustainable growth of Warrnambool's unsewered areas.



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2020-2025



www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au



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Acknowledgment of traditional owners

Council acknowledges the Eastern Marr people as the original custodians of the lands of this general area. Council also acknowledges the descendants of the ancestors of Aboriginal nations within the lands forming the Great South Coast and particularly the elders of the indigenous communities within both Warrnambool and this region.

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but Warrnambool City Council and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

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Wannon Water
Environment Protection Authority
Southern Rural Water
Department of Health and Human Services
Glenelg Hopkins CMA

Acknowledgements:

Peter Mason Plumbing (audit consultancy)
Residents (as part of DWMP sample audit of systems within setbacks)

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Acronyms

AS: Australian Standard

AWTS: Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems

CA: Certificate of Approval for an onsite wastewater system (EPA Victoria)

Conventional Sewerage: Use of sewers to collect sewage

DELWP: Department of Environment, Land, Water, Planning

Desludging: The removal of sludge and sediment from the wastewater treatment system

Domestic Wastewater: wastewater arising from a domestic dwelling Domestic wastewater can comprise of blackwater (toilet waste) or greywater (sullage waste from bathrooms, laundry and kitchen appliances), or a combination of both

DWM: Domestic Wastewater Management

DWMP: Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

EHO: Environmental Health Officer

EH Unit: Environmental Health Unit (WCC)

Effluent: Liquid flowing out of a treatment process

Effluent reuse: Effluent reuse is a process where treated wastewater is recycled for useful purposes and is not discharged to a natural waterway. The treated water may be used by industry or for watering of golf courses or other recreational facilities, agroforestry, pastures and food crops.

EPA: Environmental Protection Authority

Greywater: Domestic wastewater from sources other than toilets - for example, water from washing machines, dishwashers, showers and basins.

GIS: Geographic Information System

Groundwater: Water that is found below the surface, usually in porous rock or soil or in underground aquifers

Legacy sites: OWS's persisting after sewer has been provided to an area

LCA: Land Capability Assessment - A method used to assess the capability of land to manage on-site wastewater disposal, which recommends whether effluent can be adequately treated and retained on site (process is outlined in detail in EPA publication 746, Code of Practice 891.6).

GHCA: Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority

MAV: Municipal Association of Victoria

Non-potable reuse: The use of treated wastewater for purposes that do not require water of a drinkable standard.

Onsite wastewater treatment system: a treatment system that treats up to 5,000 L/day of wastewater on the allotment where it was generated.

OWS: Onsite Wastewater System.

Percolation: The filtration of liquid through soil

Permeability: The rate at which water moves through a soil profile. Fast permeability rates will not allow for adequate remediation, slow rates may give rise to soil waterlogging

Rhizopod: Containment treatment and effluent system based on reed-bed principles but a sealed unit with aeration and effluent recycling through the system.

Runoff: Water that flows across the land surface and does not soak into the ground.

SEPP: State Environment Protection Policy

Septic tank: Underground tank used for treatment of wastewater through bacterial activity.

Sewage overflow: A release of sewage from a designed relief point to avoid sewage flowing back into houses.

Sewage: the waste and wastewater produced by residential, commercial and industrial sources and discharged into sewers

Sewerage: The entire system of sewage collection, treatment, and disposal.

Sludge: Solid matter that is removed during wastewater or water treatment. It can be processed into a material to be beneficially used (biosolids).

SRW: Southern Rural Water

SS: Suspended Solids

Sullage: domestic wastewater other than that which comes from the toilet.

VCAT: Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Wastewater: Another name for sewage.

Wannon Water (WW): Potable and sewer reticulation retailer.

WCC: Warrnambool City Council.

WCC LGA: Warrnambool City Council Local Government Area.

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Executive Summary

Under *Section 29* of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters), Councils that manage onsite wastewater systems (OWS's) within its municipality are required to develop a DWMP in consultation with the local water authority and community. Further to this, the policy requires Council to prioritise risks and set out strategies for responding to risks within the DWMP.

Warrnambool City Council has well-established responsibilities for orderly planning and development within the Warrnambool Local Government Area (LGA) and for the protection and promotion of public health and the environment. It has legislated powers and responsibilities in relation to the control of on-site domestic wastewater systems (septic tank systems), where flow is less than 5000 litre/day. Above this threshold, the Victorian EPA is the responsible authority. Reticulated sewerage systems are the responsibility of local water authorities such as Wannon Water.

The Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) (2020-2025) has been developed under the requirements of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) (SEPP), a subordinate policy to the Environment Protection Act 1970.

The DWMP has been prepared to recognise, respond, and link with current legislation, regulation, and the relevant direction of the State Regulatory Authorities and Council policies and plans. The DWMP identifies key stakeholders and discusses recent drivers and trends relating to domestic wastewater management.

The DWMP describes the current situation relating to domestic wastewater management in the Warrnambool LGA and identifies a range of strategies and related actions Council to implement the Plan.

This DWMP identifies several challenges that impact effective wastewater disposal in the Warrnambool LGA including:

- Population growth and development pressure;
- Ageing population with greater susceptibility to infection and illness;
- High rainfall;
- Challenging soil textures (medium clays and coastal sands); and
- Reduced lot sizes for effective effluent disposal.

The plan identifies a number of threats impacting on community values including:

- Lack of owner knowledge about wastewater systems resulting in insufficient maintenance;
- Lack of Council monitoring of wastewater systems;
- Older settlements with inadequate lot sizes for wastewater treatment resulting in high concentrations of wastewater systems with potential impact to surface and ground waters;
- Non-permit systems where information on system is non-existent; and
- Proximity of wastewater systems to key local watercourses.

Chapter 7 provides township and area plans, which identifies current issues faced by townships with current wastewater prescriptions and requirements. Advice and guidance is provided around upgrade and improvement recommendations for systems within key unsewered townships.

Chapter 8 sets out tools, administrative procedures, and responsibilities required to support implementation of this Plan.

Chapter 9 sets out the key *Strategies* and related actions identified throughout the DWMP, in addition to details regarding action implementation timelines, responsibilities, and the cost to Council of this Plan.

The recommended Strategies (actions) for Council to implement within this DWMP are summarised as follows:

Strategy 1: Address data gaps, audit high-risk sites, and connect legacy sites to sewer

Strategy 2: Increase owner knowledge and maintenance of their onsite wastewater systems

Strategy 3: Develop policies and procedures

Strategy 4: Investigate enhanced Permit Conditions to increase maintenance compliance

Strategy 5 - Source funding for DWMP implementation and/or wastewater management officer

Strategy 6: Performance Review and Risk Management

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Strategy 7: Work with Planning Unit and Risk Mapping outputs to enhance unsewered growth development

Strategy 8: Enhance data collection and reporting systems

Strategy 9: Increase engagement with Wannon Water to enhance OWS management across the LGA

1. Introduction

1.1. What is Domestic Wastewater?

Domestic wastewater is wastewater derived from household activities including toilet, bathroom, kitchen, and clothes washing, typically containing high levels of microorganisms, organic matter, and chemicals capable of causing illness and impacting upon the environment. This material would ordinarily be deposited in a sewer.

When failing onsite wastewater systems overflow during heavy rain or as of a result of damage, failure, non-maintenance, and surge loads, wastewater can leak from failed systems into local waterways and the environment.

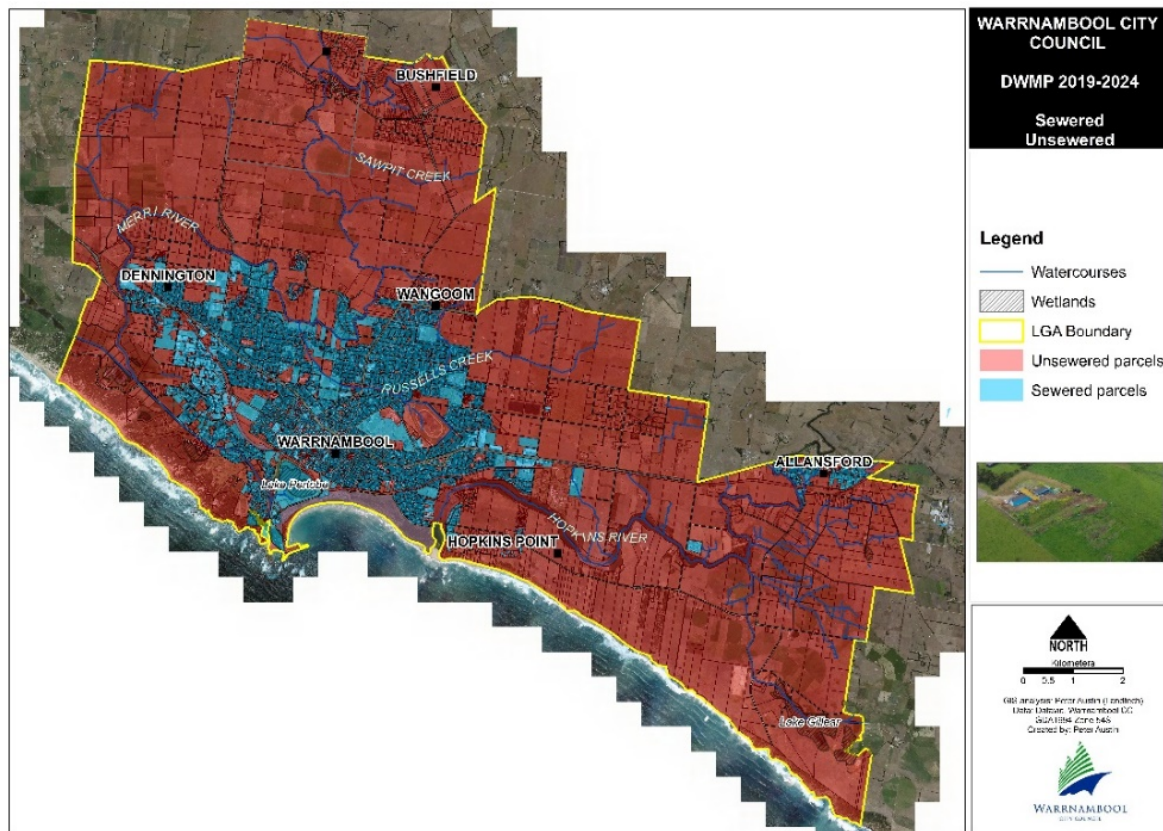
There are approximately 998 Onsite Wastewater System's (OWS's) in use within the Warrnambool LGA that includes a number of systems which are failing to deliver satisfactory performance and a number of systems without OWS permits.



Figures 1-3 – Examples of failed and surface discharging wastewater systems.

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The environmental impacts associated with domestic wastewater are due to the many pollutants it contains. Human waste, food and beverage waste, bacteria, viruses, lint, greases, and oils, along with chemicals derived from detergents and other cleaning products, can impact greatly on the environment. These pollutants can build up in the soil, damaging its structure, altering soil pH balances, and hindering plant growth. Failed septic tank systems can result in effluent discharge at ground level resulting in odour, nuisance, attracting vermin, mosquito breeding and the potential for disease transmission.

Warrnambool LGA properties have been serviced by a variety of wastewater management systems since early settlement in the 19th century. The legislative framework regulating domestic wastewater management systems have since changed.

Council is responsible for overseeing domestic wastewater management within its municipal boundary, including the issuing of approvals for the installation of an OWS.

1.2 What is a Domestic (onsite) Wastewater System?

Wastewater for the majority of the population is typically managed in urban sewerage systems, with treatment at a centralised wastewater treatment plant (with disposal via discharge to waterways or land application).

In areas where a centralised sewerage system cannot be provided, wastewater is managed on-site at each individual lot. On-site domestic wastewater is generally managed by a variety of treatment systems (primary/secondary), including but not limited to:

- Septic Tanks (see *Figures 6 & 7*);
- Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS) (see *Figures 8 & 9*);
- Composting Toilet Systems (see *Figures 10 & 11*);

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- Sand Filters (with septic tank) (see *Figures 12 & 13*);
- Reedbed (with septic tank) (see *Figures 14 & 15*); and
- Fabric/Biological Filter System (see *Figure 10*).

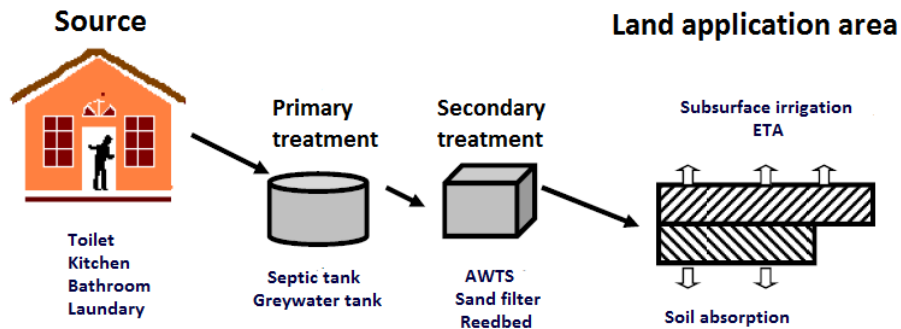
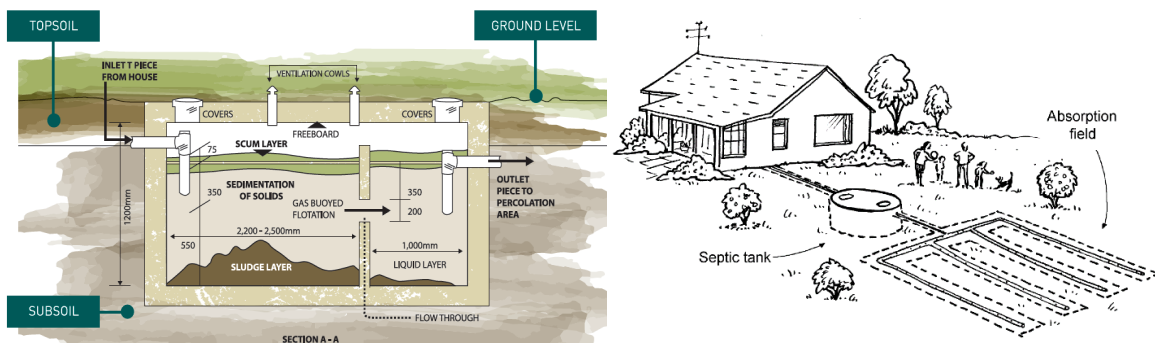
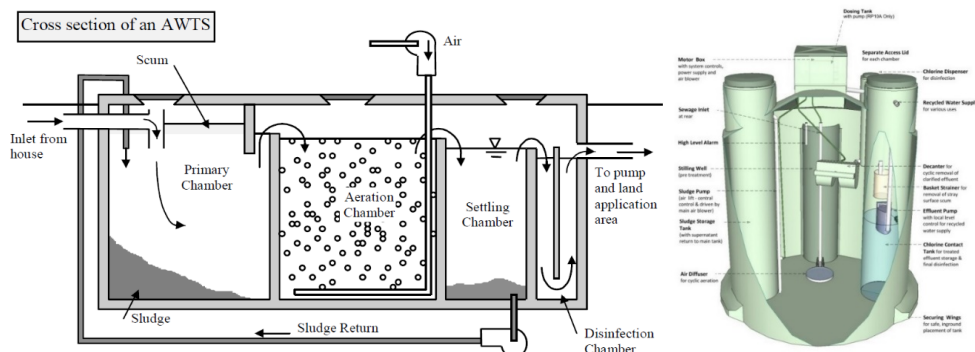


Figure 5 - Primary and Secondary Treatment options (Source: Latrobe University, 2014).

Across the Warrnambool LGA the two most common methods of onsite wastewater treatment are primary treatment using a septic tank (see *Figures 6 & 7*) and secondary treatment using an Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS), (septic tank and) sand filter, or (septic tank and) reed-bed system. Septic tanks have a three-yearly maintenance cost as opposed to quarterly maintenance for AWTS's (sand filter/reed-bed – annual maintenance).



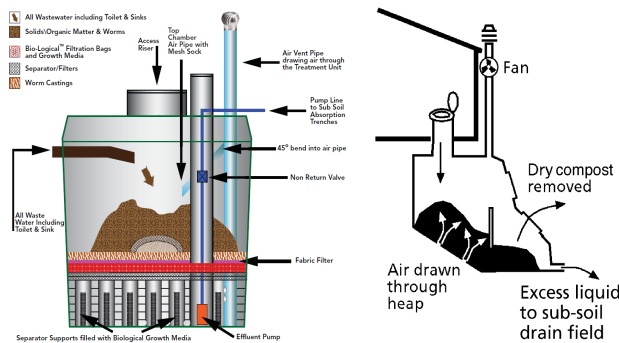
Figures 6 & 7 - Cross-sectional view of a typical septic tank (Source: Latrobe University, EHPA); A typical conventional primary treatment wastewater system (NSW Department of Local Government 2000).



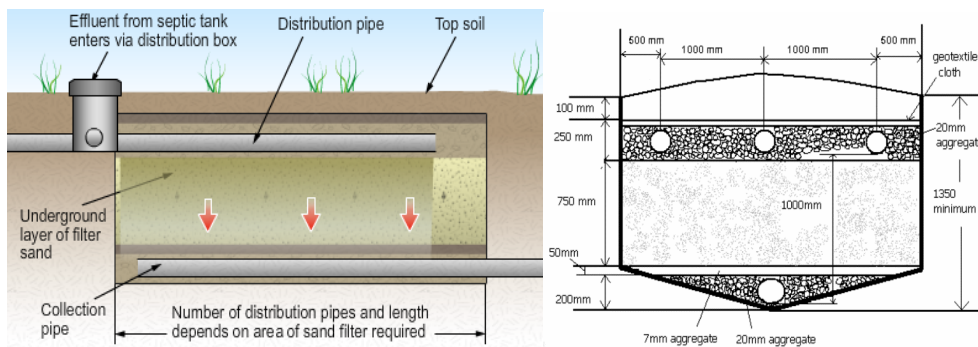
Figures 8 & 9 – Cross-sectional view of an aerated wastewater treatment system (Source: EHPA 2015, OzziKleen 2018).

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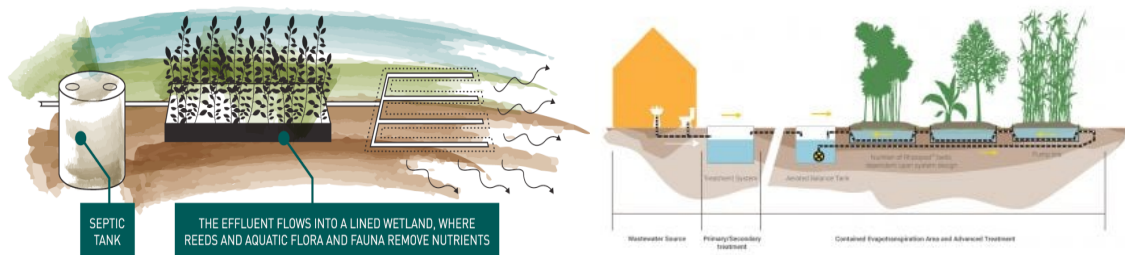
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Figures 10 & 11 – Wet (worm) & Dry composting treatment systems (Source: Worm Smart, Sydney Catchment Authority 2015).



Figures 12 & 13 – Sand Filter System components (Source: Golden Plains Shire Council 2015, EPA 2016).



Figures 14 & 15 – Reedbed Systems – secondary treatment of wastewater (Source: EHPA); Rhizopod system supporting upgrade options on small lots where the Rhizopods are added post-septic tank to reduce effluent disposal area required (Source: Arris Wastewater Technologies 2019).

Following treatment, depending on the type of system used, the effluent is then disposed of on-site by absorption trenches, evapotranspiration beds, subsurface irrigation, or through sand mounds within what is known as the Land Application Area (or LAA). Protection of this area is critical to long-term and effective operation of effluent disposal systems.

Effluent disposal methods include:

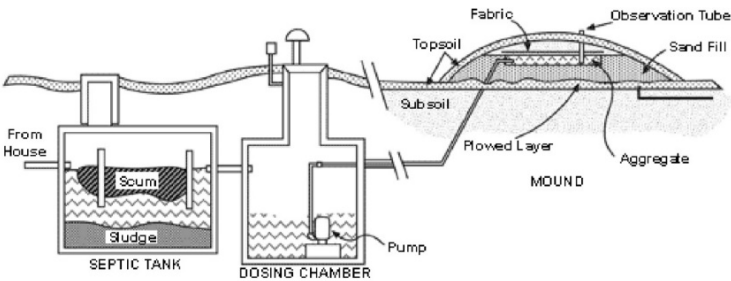
- Soil Absorption Trenches (see Figure 19);
- ETA Beds and Trenches (see Figures 17 & 18);
- Subsurface Irrigation (pressurised) (see Figure 16);
- Sand Mound (see Figure 20);
- Amended Soil Mound (see Figure 20);
- Rhizopods (see Figure 15).

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Figures 16-18: ETA beds can be used with septic tanks to reduce and concentrate affluent disposal area; another useful upgrade option for small lots and aging systems (Source: Hydroscape 2019, William Cromer 2019, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council 2015).



Figures 19 & 20: Latter stages of installation of soil absorption trenches (Source: Civcon 2019); soil mound effluent disposal (SCA 2019).

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2. Purpose, Objectives & Management Responsibility

Under Section 29 of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters), Councils that manage domestic wastewater treatment systems (OWS's) within its municipality are required to develop a DWMP in consultation with the local water authority and community. Further to this, the policy requires Council to prioritise risks and set out strategies for responding to risks within the DWMP.

The **purpose** of the Warrnambool DWMP is to:

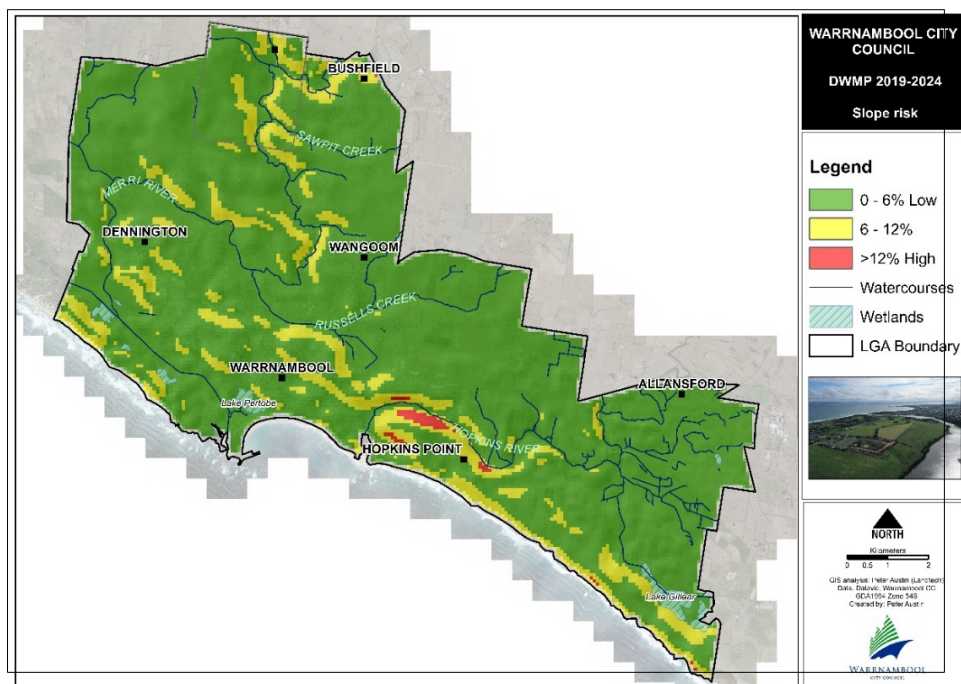
1. Identify current responsibilities, practices, procedures and obligations for domestic wastewater management
2. Identify the public health and environmental risks associated with onsite domestic wastewater management systems;
3. Identify strategies to improve wastewater management.

The **objective** of the Warrnambool DWMP is:

To provide a framework to reduce the public health, environmental, and economic risk to Council and the community posed by domestic wastewater.

The DWMP will provide WCC with:

- a strategic planning tool to allow long term strategies to be developed for wastewater system management;
- a framework for making decisions about individual OWS's;
- a framework for enforcement and compliance options;
- a framework for resource management for wastewater management within the municipality; and
- a framework for liaison between Council, the community, Water Corporations, and Catchment Management Authorities.



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2.1 The Management Responsibility of the DWMP

WCC has responsibility for implementation and monitoring of the DWMP. WCC is proposing to work collaboratively with the EPA and Wannon Water as part of this management plan.

It is proposed that the management strategies and action plans in the DWMP be established for a period of 5 years. This is consistent with the requirement in the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) for a review of a DWMP every 5 years.

3. Domestic Wastewater Management



Figure 22 – Careful coastal planning is required to protect groundwater from rapidly draining coastal sands within the Hopkins Point area.

3.1. What is Domestic Wastewater Management?

Domestic wastewater management is the process by which landowners, occupiers, and local government manage OWS's.

Owners of houses in Victoria that are not connected to reticulated sewerage must, by law, treat and dispose of their domestic wastewater within the boundaries of their property.

3.2. Policy and Legislative framework

This section provides the legislative framework, regulations, definitions, and risks associated with domestic wastewater in Victoria.

All Councils have a legislative responsibility to protect the health of residents, visitors, and those working in the municipality, recognised in the WCC Council Plan.

The Department of Land Environment Water and Planning (DELWP), Wannon Water, as well as the Environment Protection Authority (EPA),¹ play a lead role in the strategic management of domestic wastewater in Victoria.

There is a comprehensive policy and legislative framework around domestic wastewater management which includes several State Acts and subordinate legislation, along with Guidelines, Codes, Australian Standards, and local Policies. These are outlined in *Tables 1-4* below.

¹ Victorian Environment Protection Agency (2016). EPA Code of Practice 891.4; Accessed from: <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/-/media/Publications/891%204.pdf>

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Table 1 – Key legislative and regulatory standards associated with domestic wastewater management.

Victorian State Legislation	
Environment Protection Act 1970	Describes the regulatory framework for managing OWS's. This is achieved by reference to supporting documents such as the Victorian Land Capability Assessment Framework January 2014 and the EPA Code of Practice for Onsite Wastewater Management (EPA Publication 891.4 July 2016).
Water Act 1989	Section 183 of the Water Act 1989, provides the Water Corporation with the power to inspect and monitor existing septic tank systems within their sewerage district, and if the system does not comply with the Environment Protection Act 1970 and the Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008, then the Water Corporation can require the owner to connect to sewer where it is available under Section 147 of the Act.
Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008	<p>The objective of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 is to impose a duty on Councils to achieve the highest attainable standard of public health and wellbeing by investigating and remedying conditions that are liable to be dangerous to health or offensive, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting public health and preventing disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death • Promoting conditions in which persons can be healthy • Reducing inequalities in the state of public health and wellbeing
Local Government Act	The Local Government Act empowers councils to enact local laws and set special charges for council activities. Councils could use these powers to develop local regulations for wastewater management provided these regulations are consistent with State policy and legislation, and to raise revenue for its wastewater management programs.
Planning & Environment Act	<p>The key legislation relating to land development in Victoria is the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The Act requires that all land use and development take place in accordance with the planning scheme for the municipal district.</p> <p>The two objectives of the planning framework under the Act are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable land use development and planning policy to easily integrate with environmental conservation and resource management policies; and • To ensure that the effects on the environment are considered when decisions are made about the use and development of land.
Catchment & Land Protection Act	<p>The Catchment & Land Protection Act 1994 requires Catchment Management Authorities to prepare and implement a Regional Catchment Strategy which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of long-term requirements and the prioritisation of these requirements; • Identification of threats to environmental, economic, and soil values; and • Identification of opportunities for improving natural resource management processes.
Building Act	<p>The Act also requires property owners to take reasonable steps to protect the catchment with particular regards to water resources, avoid soil disturbance, weed growth and pests.</p> <p>The Building Act 1993 and Building Regulations 2006 require the report and consent of the relevant Council must be obtained to an application for a building permit that requires the installation or alteration of a septic tank system.</p>



Figure 23 - Wannon Water has sewered two new estates within the Hopkins Point precinct providing a future connection framework for the area.

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Table 2 – Subordinate legislation, Policies, Codes, Strategies and Guidelines.

Subordinate Legislation, Policies, Codes, Strategies, and Guidelines	
State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) (Waters) (2004)	<p>SEPP Waters aims to ensure that all residential subdivisions are provided with reticulated sewer access at the time of subdivision. Where this is not possible each lot must be capable of treating and retaining the domestic wastewater within the boundaries of the proposed allotments.</p> <p>The policy directs councils to use the EPA's Septic Tanks Code of Practice, to assess the ability of proposed developments to retain wastewater within allotment boundaries.</p> <p>The State Environment Protection Policy – Waters of Victoria requires;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occupiers of premises with an on-site domestic wastewater system need to manage that system in accordance with permit conditions and the Code of Practice – Septic Tanks On-site Domestic Wastewater Management (2016) as amended. Occupiers also need to regularly assess the performance of their system against permit conditions. 2. Municipal Councils to develop and implement a DWMP.
EPA Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management (891.4) (July 2016)	<p>This Code of Practice (EPA 2016) outlines the measures which are required to sustainably manage household wastewater to minimise public health and environmental impacts.</p> <p>This Code is not limited to domestic wastewater systems; it also applies to systems at other premises including small scale commercial systems. The Code outlines planning requirements, system selection, and system maintenance following installation. The Code will need to be followed for all aspects of the system design, approval, installation and long-term system maintenance.</p>
Victorian Land Capability Assessment Framework (January 2014)	<p>This document outlines the LCA process to be undertaken when assessing a site for its suitability for onsite DWM management. An LCA must be prepared for some sites and submitted to Council with an "Application to Install" or with an application for a Planning Permit.</p>
VCAT Decisions & Precedents	<p>The main role of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) is to provide affordable, timely and quality access to justice for civil matters including wastewater issues. VCAT hears approximately 83,000 cases per year, 60-70% of which are solved during mediation. An additional role of VCAT is to reduce pressure on the courts. It hears small matters that otherwise would create a backlog in the courts.</p>

Table 3 – National Standards relating to domestic wastewater treatment.

National Standards	
AS/NZS 1547: 2012 On-site domestic wastewater management	<p>AS/NZS 1547:2012 provides standardised guidance for the sizing, design, and construction of land application areas.</p> <p>If there is an inconsistency between an Australian Standard (2012) and the Victorian Code of Practice (2016), the Code takes precedence. Where the Code of Practice (2016) is silent on a topic, the relevant Australian Standard (2012) should be followed.</p> <p>The Standard will be used for land application area sizing and in the selection of a suitable land application area type, i.e. trenches, beds, irrigation or mound systems.</p>
JAS-ANZ	<p>Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand is an accreditation authority and framework, with the purpose to enhance national, trans-Tasman and international trade via accreditation to achieve international recognition for the excellence of Australian and New Zealand goods and services.</p>

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Australian Standards have relevance to the construction and design of septic tank systems. The EPA requires that systems meet these standards as part of its approval process. The primary standard with respect to septic tank system design has relevance to the construction and design of systems.

AS/NZS 1547:2012	On-site Domestic Wastewater Management
AS/NZS 1546.1	On-site Domestic Wastewater Treatment Units – Septic Tanks
AS/NZS 1546.2	On-site domestic wastewater treatment units - Waterless composting toilets
AS/NZS 1546.3	On-site Domestic Wastewater Treatment Units – Aerated wastewater treatment systems
AS/NZS 1546.4	On-site domestic wastewater treatment units – Domestic grey water systems
AS/NZS 3500	National Plumbing and Drainage – Domestic Installations

Table 4 – Warrnambool City Council related Strategic Plans and Policies.

Warrnambool City Council Strategic Plans and Policies	
Warrnambool Planning Scheme ²	<p>The Warrnambool Planning Scheme (WPS), approved under the Planning & Environment Act 1987, sets out the planning policies for the municipality, and contains information about zones, overlays, and other provisions which affect how land could be used and developed in Warrnambool LGA.</p> <p>The WPS identifies triggers for planning permit applications and outlines application requirements and decision guidelines for the use, development, and subdivision of land in different zones.</p> <p>On land where an OWS is required, a planning application may need supporting information such as a Land Capability Assessment (LCA) to show the system can accommodate the development.</p> <p>The WPS identifies the need to undertake a sewerage and effluent management strategy for Bushfield and Woodford, examining options and making recommendations regarding the more effective and cost beneficial way to enable growth to occur without environmental degradation.</p>
Council Plan 2017-2021	Sets out a vision for Warrnambool City Council and specifically <i>Objective 1. Sustain and enhance the natural environment</i> ; Ensure all septic tanks meet EPA guidelines and requirements;
Warrnambool Health & Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 (Warrnambool A Healthy City 2017-2021)	The Victorian public health and wellbeing outcomes framework provides a basis for monitoring and reporting progress in our collective efforts to achieve health and wellbeing. Health 2040: advancing health, access and care presents a clear vision for the health and wellbeing of Victorians and for the Victorian healthcare system.
Warrnambool 2040	Goal 14 of Warrnambool 2040 relates to the management of OWS. It suggests 'We will care for and regenerate our waterways, our coast and marine environment and support a natural water cycle. We will carefully use rainwater to contribute to the amenity of the city by bringing water management and green infrastructure together. Water conservation and water sensitive urban design, including improved stormwater systems, will improve our waterway and marine health. We will capture rainwater and reuse stormwater to reduce our reliance on depleting water sources'.
Green Warrnambool 2018 ³	Warrnambool citizens will be environmentally informed, and ethically motivated consumers of goods and services. Goal 2040 includes no wastewater or waterway pollution by 2040.
Warrnambool Floodplain Management Strategy 2018-2023	Appendix 4: Floodplain Management Planning Policy - State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF): <i>Clause 11.11-6 Environmental Assets</i> : Protect waterways from the effects of urban and rural land use change and facilitate growth at established settlements where water and wastewater can be managed. <i>Clause 21.05-2 Water Strategies</i> : Defer growth within Bushfield and Woodford pending resolution of sewerage and effluent management options; Encourage the re-use of wastewater and stormwater run-off within greenfield growth areas.
Logan's Beach Strategic Framework Plan 2017 ⁴	As a result of community input (Section 3.1) to this framework many of the respondents were interested in further subdivision of their properties if given the opportunity and suggested:

² Warrnambool Planning Scheme, 21.10-3 22/09/2016 C93 Development Infrastructure Water supply, sewerage and drainage, Accessed from: https://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/warrnambool/ordinance/21_mss10_warr.pdf

³ Warrnambool City Council Green Warrnambool 2018; Accessed from:

https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/council/plans_strategies/Green%20Warrnambool%20FINAL%20adopted%203%20September%202018.pdf

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Larger lots should be allowed to subdivide; and- Improvements to current sewerage, electricity and gas services. <p>Wannon Water have stated that existing services can be augmented should additional development be supported by Council. In all scenarios, DELWP advises that development within 100 metres of the coastal reserve should be avoided in order to direct stormwater and sewerage management away from the coastline.</p>
Moyne Warrnambool Rural Housing and Settlement Strategy 2010⁵	<p>The section regarding Established Infrastructure and Settlements suggests that the established patterns of larger settlements, with their range of services, which most importantly include reticulated sewer, are an important influence in identifying where growth should be directed.</p> <p>The evidence of inadequate performance of septic services in some locations where the size and density of lots and the attributes of soils do not enable effective absorption is a clear warning regarding the unsustainable development that have characterised the recent past.</p> <p>While it is not necessary that all new housing in rural areas be connected to reticulated services, it is desirable that it occur in areas where conventional residential densities are encouraged (such as Township or Residential 1), and where the soils and existing conditions on land zoned Low Density and Rural Living warrant this level of service. Such are the circumstances of Bushfield and Woodford to nominate some of the more acute circumstances.</p>

3.3. Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders in ensuring that OWS's are EPA approved systems that are installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the relevant EPA Code of Practice and Certificate of Approval, to protect the environment from the potential source of pollution and unplanned development.

3.3.1. Property Owners or Occupiers

Property owners or occupiers must ensure the OWS on their property is operated, maintained, and monitored in accordance with the relevant Council permit, Certificate of Approval requirements (CA-EPA), & the Code of Practice Onsite Wastewater Management (currently 891.4; 2016), and site-specific Land Capability Assessment requirements. It is the owner's responsibility to meet the costs of any maintenance and servicing, and to provide reporting as required to the responsible authority.

Landowner's responsibilities include:

- Connect to the mains sewerage system where it is available (where the existing OWS does not meet EPA standards at the time the sewer became available);
- In unsewered areas, obtain a permit to install an OWS before building permit issued;
- Obtain a permit/certificate to use the system once installed;
- Operating, maintaining and monitoring the OWS by following specified maintenance requirements and checks for the system; and
- Keeping Council informed of all maintenance.

3.3.2. Councils Role

Council is responsible for assessing OWS permits and ultimately the installation of systems in accordance with the EPA-approved system list. It is Council's responsibility to ensure that all on-site wastewater systems are:

⁴ Warrnambool City Council, Logan's Beach Strategic Framework Plan 2017; Accessed from:

<https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/property/planning/Logans%20Beach%20191117%20Report%20V8.pdf>

⁵ CPG Australia, Moyne Warrnambool Rural Housing and Settlement Strategy 2010; Accessed from:

<https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/property/planning/strategies/FINAL%20Rural%20Housing%20and%20Settlement%20Strategy%20Report.pdf>

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- Operated and maintained in accordance with the State Environment Protection Policies (SEPP's), Code of Practice Onsite Wastewater Management, and the EP Act 1970;
- Providing education and advice regarding OWS's to the community;
- Installed and operated in compliance with Section 173 agreements that may relate to required OWS permit conditions,
- Ensuring that the conditions of any approved permit are met, including monitoring the system to ensure that the OWS's are maintained in accordance with relevant permit conditions, EPA codes, and Australian standards; and
- Collating and submitting information in relation to OWS's to the EPA on an annual basis (as required under the EP Act 1970).

3.3.3. Plumbers Role

Plumbers are required to stay abreast of onsite wastewater industry requirements as they would for urban plumbing activities. Council should provide specific LGA-related prescriptions, education, information on approvals/upgrade processes, and system advice to plumbers on an ongoing basis.

Plumbers are therefore required to stay updated of Code changes via mail-out, workshop, and/or meeting-based approach to information provision based on best-practice wastewater management. OWS's can only be installed by a licensed plumber.

3.3.4. Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders and referral authorities that have a direct or indirect impact on development and therefore wastewater treatment.

Table 5 – Key stakeholders influencing domestic wastewater management within the LGA.

Internal stakeholders (WCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Department • Environmental Health Department • Infrastructure Department • Assets and GIS • Planning Department
Wannon Water	Water and sewerage services within the City are provided by Southern Rural Water (wholesaler) and Wannon Water (retailer). This DWMP covers areas where sewer is not provided to a premise, by any of these water corporations. However, the water corporations have interest in protecting the drinking water catchments impacted by OWS's.
Department of Environment, Water, Land, Planning (DELWP)	The State Government has responsibility for the natural and built environment providing an oversight role in domestic wastewater management and involved in the referrals process when required by Clause 66 of the Warrnambool Planning Scheme.
Department of Health (DoH)	The Department of Health (DoH) is responsible for ensuring that all Victorians have access to services that protect and enhance the community's physical, mental and social well-being. They are responsible for water quality standards including drinking water, irrigation water and reuse. DoH have no direct impact on domestic wastewater management.
Environment Protection Authority	The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for ensuring that the environment is protected from adverse impacts resulting from human activities. The EPA produces a list of approved technologies for the treatment of wastewater within allotment boundaries
Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority	The Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) is responsible for ensuring on-site treatment facilities do not / will not have adverse impacts on their water supply catchments, in addition to assessing all referred applications from Council in relation to water supply catchments and protection of natural resources.
Southern Rural Water	Rural Water Corporations provide water services comprising non-potable water supply, drainage, and salinity mitigation services for irrigation and domestic and stock purposes. Water Corporations provide potable and non-potable water supply and sewerage services to urban customers within their respective service districts such as Wannon Water. Both Rural and Urban Water Corporations have a responsibility for assessing and responding to all referred applications under Clause 66 of council planning schemes for Declared Water Supply Catchments as listed in schedule 5 of the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

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VCAT	VCAT is a tribunal by which civil disputes, administrative decisions and appeals can be heard before Judge or member. It provides a dispute resolution service for both government and individuals within Victoria.
MAV	Has developed a model LCA report and procedures for undertaking LCA to assist land capability assessors and regulators; and has developed this in accordance with EPA Codes and AS/NZS 1547:2012.
Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC)	Licenses all plumbers, drainers and septic tank installers across Victoria; and regulates the installation of all plumbing works including internal plumbing works on septic tank systems.



Figure 24 – Potential accelerating sea-level rise increases the required compliance and maintenance for these systems.

3.4. Current and Future Drivers

3.4.1. Community Expectations

The level of expectation across the community regarding wastewater management standards has increased. The Warrnambool community has placed a high value on the protection and preservation of the waterways.

This was highlighted in the development of Council's Green Warrnambool Plan where the community supported the goal to eliminate wastewater pollution. This expectation contributes to a reduced tolerance for old and failing septic systems.

3.4.2. New State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) Waters amendments

The suite of OWS requirements in the new SEPP Waters is more specific than the previous SEPP (Waters of Victoria) requiring Council to undertake a more comprehensive process in developing, adopting, and implementing their DWMP.

The new SEPP (Waters) ensures that Victoria has a contemporary statutory policy for the protection and management of surface water and groundwater in Victoria. This is achieved by establishing in law the uses and environmental values to be protected, defining the level of environmental quality required for their protection, and setting rules and obligations to ensure management actions are taken to protect water quality.⁶

⁶ <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/rivers-estuaries-and-waterways/state-environment-protection-policy>

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SEPP (Waters) updates and replaces two previous SEPPs to provide a single instrument to guide water quality management in Victoria and improve protection of our waterways, bays and coastal waters. It provides environmental quality objectives which better reflect conditions of our water environments and is based on extensive monitoring data, the latest scientific understanding and relevant national standards. It also more clearly identifies rules for decision makers and obligations on industry to guide the protection and management of water quality in Victoria.

By approving the new SEPP (Waters), the Victorian Government is confirming policy positions on a range of issues as well as setting new environmental standards based on contemporary science. This will provide a streamlined transition to the new regulatory framework following the commencement of the Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018 in mid-2020.

3.4.3. Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018

A new general environmental duty, which will require individuals conducting activities posing a risk to human health and the environment, to understand those risks and take reasonable steps to prevent or minimise them.

Included is a new funding model recommended to the EPA and catchment authorities based on a new licencing scheme (as is used in NSW) and introduced under an amended legislative framework. In such a scheme, system owners will be required to demonstrate system compliance or civil and criminal penalties can result.

Funds generated from the licensing scheme would be used for such activities as mandatory inspections and licencing renewal programs. This model reflects what is currently in place to manage licenced activities that deliver food safety and public health compliance programs. Inevitably political will is required to accept this required change, with details not expected until 1 July 2020.

The EH unit and Council must advocate, with support of stakeholders and industry associations, for amendments to the EP Act, supporting improved council management and enforcement of OWS's, including retrospective Permits (non-permit systems) and retrospective Permit conditions, requirements to maintain systems, and connect to sewer requirements.

As a result of such amendments the EH Unit should seek advice from DELWP, EPA, and WCC legal sources regarding the opportunity to retrospectively amend existing permits, issue permits to non-permit systems, or introduce a local law to add conditions requiring regular maintenance and replacement of systems after 30 years (all permits). This should concur with outcomes of the updated EP Act in 2020.

3.4.4. Findings and recommendations of the VAGO Report

Some of the most recent statements by DELWP and EPA regarding domestic wastewater may be found in Appendix A and B of the recently released report: *Managing the Environmental Impacts of Domestic Wastewater* (19 September 2018), and used to inform this Plan (see <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>). The report summary is detailed below:

Effective treatment and management of domestic wastewater generated by kitchens, laundries, and toilets is integral to managing the public health and environmental risks posed by this waste. This done either by treating the waste on site or connecting to sewer if available.

Traditionally, sewerage has been the preferred option for managing high-risk townships and properties. However, for remote townships, or those with challenging topography and/or soils, providing sewer may not be the most cost-effective option.

In these situations, water authorities must explore other wastewater treatment options that deliver similar environmental and human health benefits, such as contemporary onsite systems. Councils oversee the installation, use, and management of onsite systems by property owners. They also ensure property owners install an onsite system approved by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA).

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Owners are responsible for regularly servicing and maintaining the system so that their wastewater is treated and contained within the boundaries of their property.

In Victoria, the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria) (SEPP WOV) requires Councils to develop a domestic wastewater management plan (DWMP) where they identify that an unsewered township is high risk due to either the number of unsewered properties or the risk posed by properties unable to contain their wastewater on site.

When developing their DWMP's, Councils must assess risks from properties unable to contain their wastewater on site, identify strategies to manage them, and refer high-risk, unsewered townships to water authorities so they can be connected to either a sewer system or an alternative service.

Water authorities are responsible for determining the most cost-effective, fit-for-purpose domestic wastewater treatment option for an unsewered, high-risk township. They must consider community and other stakeholder views, costs, and environmental health benefits in their decisions. In the 2006 (VAGO Vic) audit report 'Protecting our Environment and Community from Failing Septic Tanks', it was found that agencies were not effectively protecting the environment from poorly-performing onsite systems.

Since then policy has evolved, priorities for water authorities and community views have changed, and Councils and water authorities have implemented a range of new initiatives to better understand and manage domestic wastewater risks.

3.4.5. VAGO expectations that Council conducts auditing activities to address wastewater information gaps

The Victorian Auditor General's Report Managing Impacts from Domestic Wastewater⁷ was pointed in its emphasis on the universal need for Council's to audit their existing OWS database/records to identify information gaps.

Once the gaps in wastewater information have been identified, the auditing process must extend into the field to locate and verify previously unknown system locations and configurations.

Key recommendations (as detailed in Table 6 below) of the Victorian Attorney General's Department considered in this Plan provide a useful guide on which to base OWS management planning.

Table 6 – VAGO recommendations relating to DWM in WCC LGA includes:

Recommendation 1	Consult with water authorities, the EPA, DELWP and other key stakeholders in undertaking integrated water cycle management planning processes for their municipalities, so that the management of domestic wastewater risk is not planned in isolation of the management of stormwater, floods, alternative water supplies, and drinking water supplies.
Recommendation 2	Implement a rolling annual program of compliance inspections in high risk properties and townships to bring onsite systems in line with permit and/or policy requirements and follow up non-compliance.
Recommendation 3:	Develop and implement a data management plan to collect accurate information on the number, location and performance of onsite wastewater systems. Data collection should be prioritised using a risk-based approach to identify areas for collection based on highest to lowest risk.
Recommendation 4:	Develop an education plan to inform property owners of their responsibilities and requirements to maintain and upgrade their onsite systems as required, which must include an evaluation framework to assess its effectiveness.

3.4.6. Scientific and Merits-based Decision-making

Making decisions about wastewater system selection, sizing, and siting, needs to be based on intrinsic site conditions, rather than adopting a 'one size fits all approach' to minimum lot size or wastewater land application area requirements.

This DWMP advocates an approach whereby all wastewater systems are designed to match intrinsic environmental conditions. This approach should ensure that future unsewered rural residential development within each study area only

⁷ Victorian Government 2018, Victorian Attorney General's Department. Managing Impacts from Domestic Wastewater. Accessed from: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>

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proceeds on land that has an acceptable capacity for on-site wastewater management and effluent assimilation within lot boundaries.

4. PROFILE

WARRNAMBOOL CITY PROFILE

The current Warrnambool City Council (WCC) area was created in September 1994 after Council amalgamations throughout Victoria. The City encompasses a total land area of approximately 120.7 km², located in the south-west coastal and volcanic plain region of Victoria, 257 kilometres west of Melbourne.

Framed by the Moyne Shire to the west, north, and east, and the Southern Ocean to the south, the WCC LGA includes the urban foot-print of Warrnambool City, within rural agricultural landscapes, including small hinterland townships, villages, and rural-residential areas such as Woodford, Bushfield, Allansford, and Dennington.

Rural land is generally fertile and therefore used largely for mixed agriculture including dairy, sheep and cattle grazing, and mixed crop growing. The urban precinct includes a dynamic education, health, food processing, and recreational opportunities within a region attracting families for an improved lifestyle from across Australia.



Figure 25 – Location of Warrnambool City to the south-west of Melbourne (Source: MAV 2019)

Land use zoning shown below illustrates the dominance of Farm Zone areas with variable zoning in the townships and settlements within the LGA.

The WCC has a strong environmental focus and keen desire maintain and enhance the natural values of the City which attract both residents and visitors alike.

Deloitte Access Economics and *Ipsos* has revealed that Warrnambool is considered Australia's most liveable city.⁸ WCC is significant in being located in the lower Hopkins and Merri River catchments which converge on urban coastal areas of the City, before entering the Southern Ocean.

Reticulated sewerage is provided to Warrnambool, Allansford and Dennington. The remainder of the City is unsewered including the Wangoom Road area, parts of Allansford, Dennington, Hopkins Pont Road, Bushfield, and Woodford.

⁸ Warrnambool City Council 2019; Australia's Most Liveable City, *Deloitte Access Economics* and *Ipsos*. Accessed from: <https://warrnambool.vic.gov.au/news/australias-most-liveable-city>

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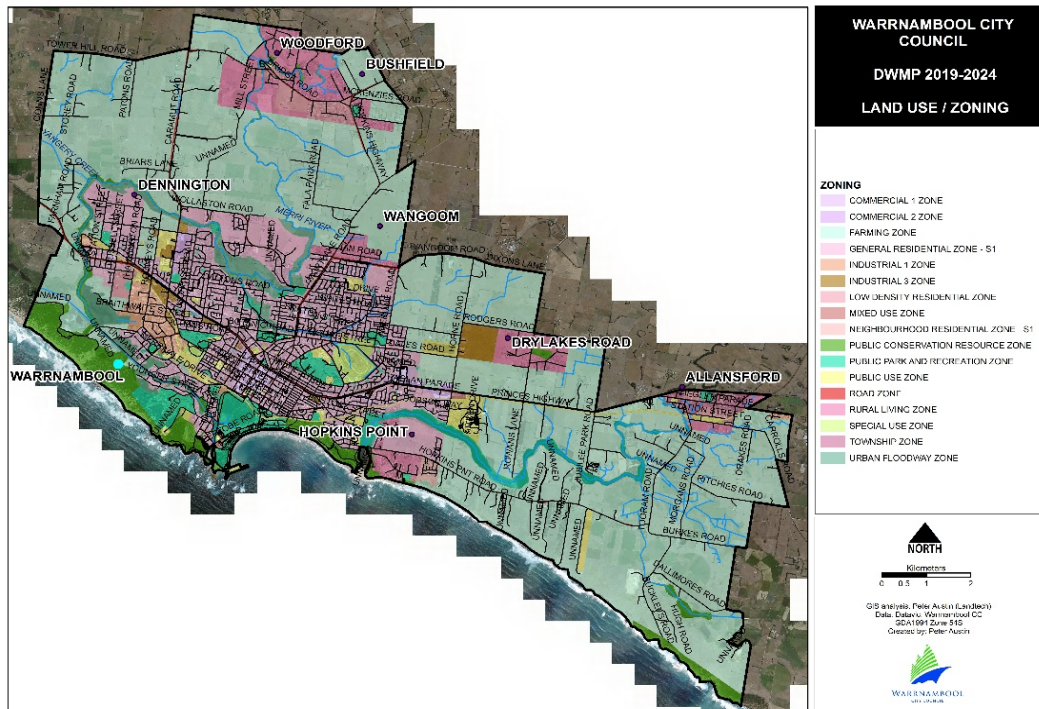


Figure 26 – Land-use zoning through the Warrnambool City LGA.

4.1. Catchments and Waterways

The Warrnambool LGA has two major catchments, including the Merri Catchment (comprising the Merri River) and its tributaries, including Russell's Creek, Yangery Creek, and Saw Pit Creek, and the Hopkins River Catchment (comprising the Hopkins River) (see Figure 27, below).

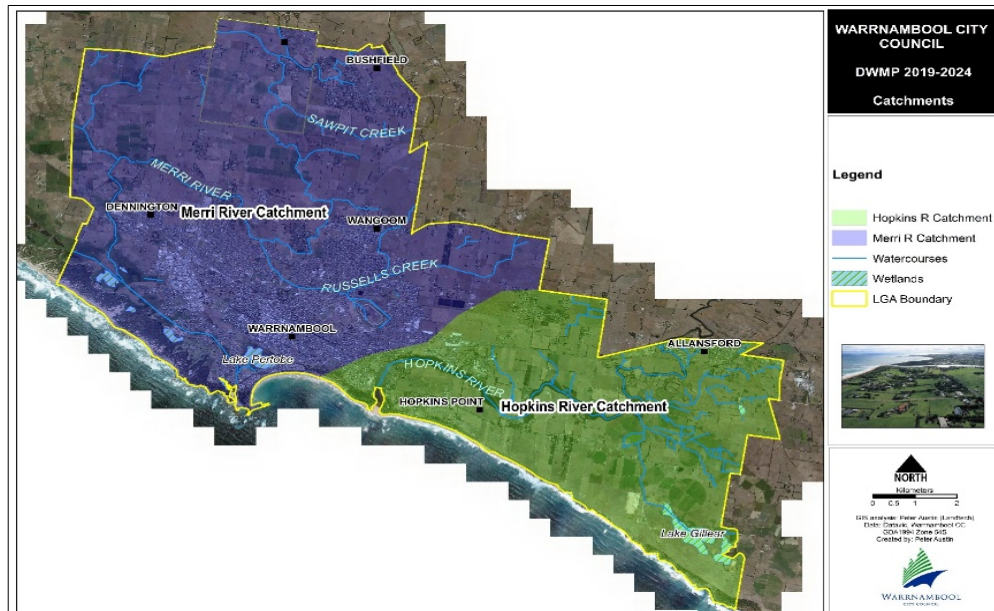


Figure 27 – Map depicting the extent of the two key catchments influencing impacts to the two key river systems.

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The two catchments contain areas of great natural beauty and ecological and cultural significance, with unique landscapes and a diversity of aquatic riverine ecosystems. These are highly valued for fishing, boating, camping, swimming, picnicking, conservation, and agricultural water supply.

Stormwater runoff from the municipality discharges into these two major receiving environments. OWS's that are poorly located and/or not performing to a satisfactory standard can contaminate stormwater and harm receiving environments that are highly valued by the community. The map below shows the location of the above two catchments within including the rivers and tributaries within them.

4.2. Population

Children and the elderly are at significantly greater risk from wastewater-related illnesses than the general population. A total of 29% of persons within the Warrnambool LGA will be of vulnerable age (under 4 & over 60 years), and by 2030 (31%) an increase of 2% on 2011 numbers.⁹

Further to this, the wider population of the Warrnambool LGA is expected to rise, placing greater demands for improvements to infrastructure, services, and for increased development and population density. Such demands have implications for wastewater management.

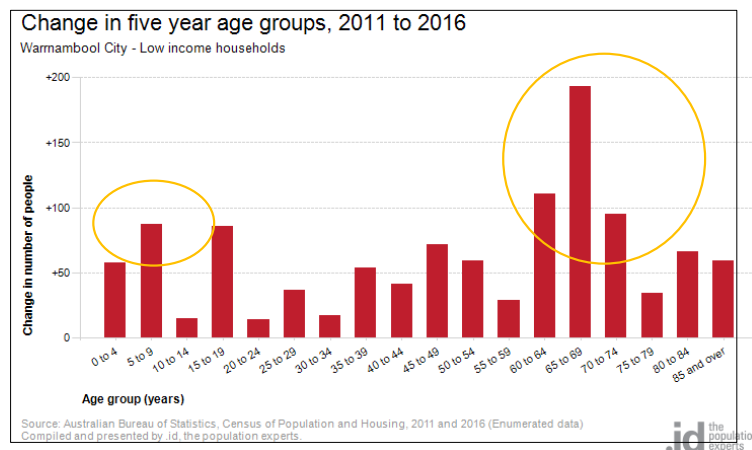


Figure 28 – Vulnerable persons population change 2011 to 2016 within low income groups (Source: .id 2019).

Population growth (1.51% annual growth) is expected to occur in the established urban footprint of Warrnambool City, the townships, and agricultural areas.

Between 2016 and 2026, the age structure forecasts for Warrnambool City indicate a 25.2% increase in population under working age, a 29.1% increase in population of retirement age, and a 12.3% increase in population of working age.

4.3. Household size and types

Household size and type can have a significant impact on the amount of wastewater generated. For example, two or more persons showering consecutively, or many washing loads completed within a short timeframe, could impact the OWS.¹⁰

The majority of dwellings in the unsewered townships of Bushfield and Woodford and rural areas adjoining are three or more bedroom dwellings occupied by families. The figures below indicate a dominance of 2 to 4 bedroom dwellings

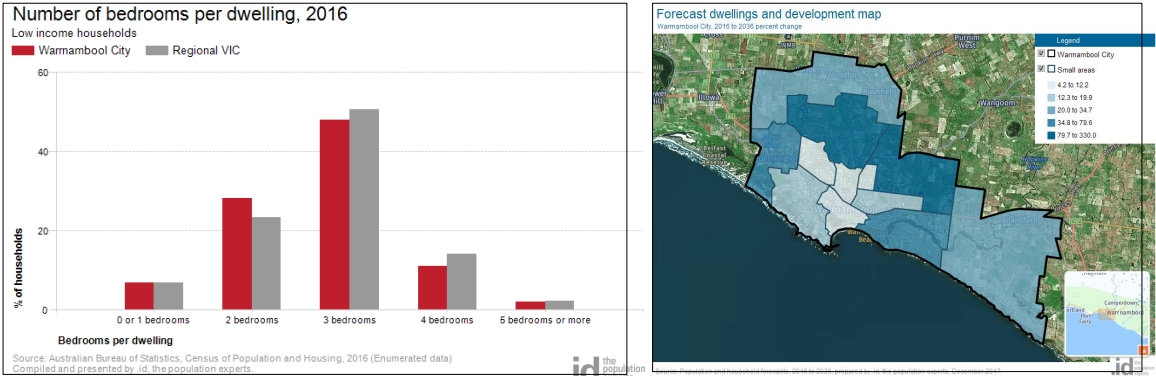
⁹ Australian Government (2019); ABS Quick Stats Census Data Warrnambool City LGA. Accessed from: https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/UCL212005

¹⁰ .id (2019). Population Statistics data, Forecast map of dwellings and development; Accessed from: <https://forecast.id.com.au/warrnambool>

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placing pressure on unsewered areas with recent five-year development growth increased in areas such as Hopkins Point, Dennington, and southern parts of Bushfield; all unsewered areas.



Figures 29 & 30 – Increased 2-4 bed dwellings, increased development in unsewered areas.

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4.4. Climate

Warrnambool has a temperate climate with a warm to hot summers and cold winters. The WCC LGA experiences an average annual rainfall of 743mm (Warrnambool) and an average of 166.7 rain days per year mostly falling during winter-spring months. Annual pan evaporation is taken as 1714.5mm.¹¹

Climate, specifically rainfall and evaporation play a significant role in determining the appropriate loading rates of effluent and associated sizing of land application areas for OWS. The city has high seasonal (winter) rainfall when evaporation rates are low, creating adverse conditions for treatment and disposal of wastewater throughout the Warrnambool LGA.

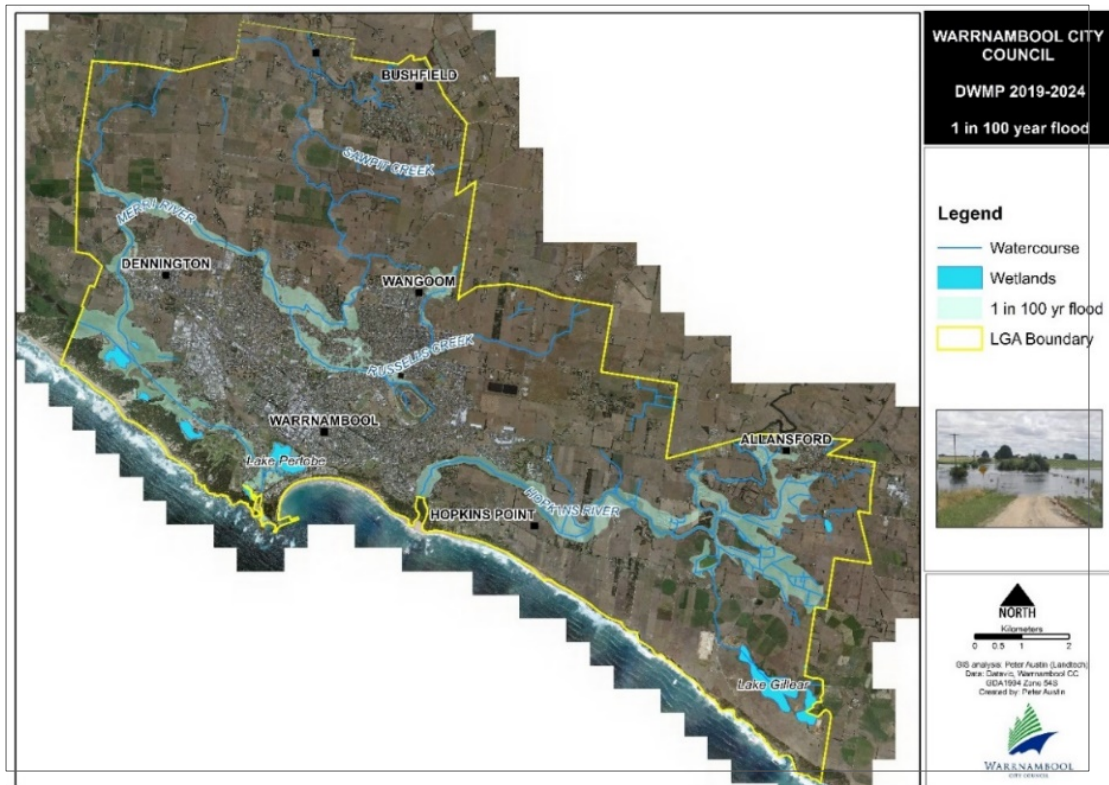


Figure 31 – Although data coverage for 1 in 100-year flood is not complete (no Bushfield, Woodford data), what exists provides a guide to impact of flood inundation.

4.4.1. Climate Change

Increased frequency and intensity of rainfall events¹² will increase pressure on Onsite Wastewater Systems (OWS/septic systems), increasing the risk of surface and groundwater contamination. The DWMP 2020 – 2025 includes steps to address such challenges:

- Supporting new Wannon Water sewerage programs;
- Continued education of residents and businesses on correct wastewater management;
- Development of a compliance and enforcement process to address failing wastewater systems, developed in conjunction with residents and the local wastewater industry;

¹¹ Bureau of Meteorology (2017); Climate Data (Warrnambool). Accessed from: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>

¹² Mornington Shire Council 2019. Adopted Wastewater Management Plan 2019. Accessed on 9.10.2019 from <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/new-website-documents/about-us/strategies-and-plans/docs/wastewater-management-plan-2018.pdf>

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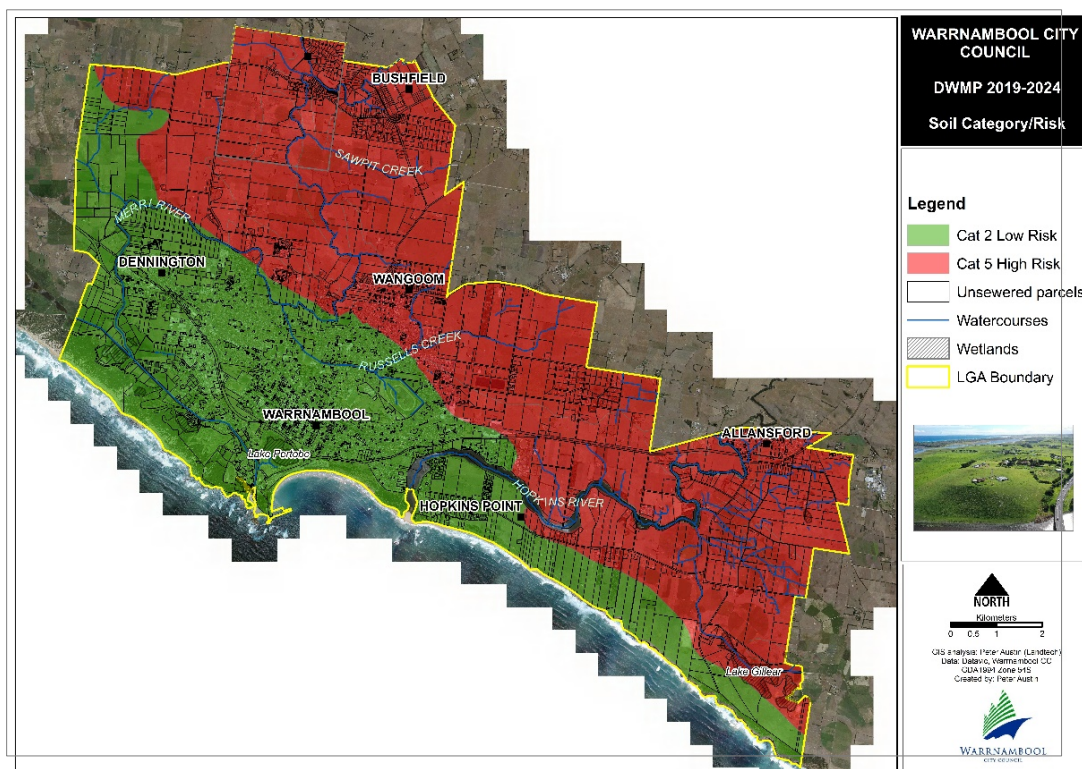
- Planning for the impact of storm events and flooding on septic systems (diversion drainage, education, use of vegetation buffers etc.);
- Increasing the reuse of treated wastewater via sub-surface irrigation to support water resource management in rural areas; and

4.5. Soils

Soils of the WCC LGA have been mapped and described in the *Port Campbell Embayment* (8365) (1:100 000) map (Geological Survey of Victoria) and Geological Survey of Warrnambool Report 86 (Geoscience Victoria 1986) and belong to the Basalt Land Unit.¹³ Soil geological origins are based on Quaternary (Pleistocene) (Qvn) Newer Volcanics,¹⁴ consisting of 'undifferentiated lava flows, lava ridges and valley floors'.¹⁵

The Victorian Western Plains are made up of low-lying undulating plains formed on both volcanic and sedimentary lithologies. The landscapes of this geomorphological unit are formed on some of the youngest rocks of Victoria. Soils on the Western Plains reflect the underlying lithology and age of the rocks. The youngest landscapes, the stony rises, have skeletal uniform or gradational soils, whereas the earlier lava flows have deeper soils varying from friable gradational to strongly texture contrast soils.

The soils developed on the **Pliocene** sand plains are often sandy, sometimes ferruginised or podsollic (sands with **coffee rock** or sand over clay) soils. Further south on the marls and limestones, the soils vary from clay-rich (medium or heavy textured) gradational to strongly texture contrast soils and generally heavy (uniform) clays. Much of the area is a natural grasslands plain, bounded by the Western Uplands (WU) to the north.



¹³ Victorian Government (2017). Victorian Resources Online: Glenelg-Hopkins Land Units map. Accessed from: <http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/doi/vro/glenelg-hopkins-landunits-sm.pdf>
¹⁴ Edwards, J., Tickell, S.J., Abele, C., Willocks, A.J., Eaton, A.R., Cramer, J.J., King, R.L. & Bourton, S., 1994. Port Campbell Embayment 1:100 000 geological map. Geological Survey of Victoria. Accessed from: <http://earthresources.efirst.com.au/product.asp?plD=214&clD=18&c=3449>
¹⁵ Edwards, J., Tickell, S.J., Abele, C., Willocks, A.J., Eaton, A.R., Cramer, J.J., King, R.L. & Bourton, S., 1994. Port Campbell Embayment 1:100 000 geological map. Geological Survey of Victoria. Accessed from: <http://earthresources.efirst.com.au/product.asp?plD=214&clD=18&c=3449>

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Associated soil types are predominantly black and brown sodic mottled, heavier textured subsoil horizons, and texture contrast soils such as Brown Sodosols, Black Chromosols, and Sodosols.¹⁶

Maier and Martin¹⁷ classified soils (which includes the LGA) into soil profile classes suggesting the study area soils consisted of soils with strongly developed hard-setting surface horizons, over mottled clay subsoils that are yellow or yellow-grey. Soils with acid, neutral and alkaline soil reaction trend to occur throughout the region along with indications of intermittent waterlogging.

The A1 (uppermost) horizon typically consists of fine very dark greyish brown to dark brown sandy clay loams, silty clay loams, but more commonly clay loams, 20cm thick, and ranging from 5-30cm.

The A2 horizon similarly consists of sporadically bleached light grey dry, dark brown moist fine sandy clay loams, silty clay loams, but more commonly medium to heavy clays, 20cm thick, and ranging from 10 - 35cm. Moderate to abundant levels of ironstone gravel or buckshot are usually concentrated in the lower portion of this horizon.

4.6. Challenges

The challenge to long-term sustainable wastewater management within the LGA depends on balancing the preference for lifestyle acreage lots on the City's unsewered edge and environmental sustainability and amenity protection.

The following section summarises key OWS issues within each key township within the WCC LGA.

- Ensuring stormwater runoff does not impact on the receiving environments and waterways;
- Increasing population pressure placing greater demands on infrastructure;
- Adaptation of policies and programs to changing demographic groups;
- Small lots, aged, non-permit, and unmaintained systems;
- Challenging soil textures in areas of small unsewered lots.

5. Risk Assessment

5.1. Risks Associated with Domestic Wastewater

The DWMP needs to assess the potential threats from domestic wastewater and the values of the receiving environments within a risk assessment process that has regard for both issues. All wastewater generation and/or discharges are seen to be a threat with potential harm to human health or damage to the receiving environment.

Domestic wastewater is typically high in nutrients and human pathogens.¹⁸ Wastewater poses a public health, environmental, legal, and economic risk. Warrnambool is a city that prides itself on its natural assets as well as living amenity. Poor wastewater management threatens these values and undermines the municipality's ability to attract more residents, businesses, and tourists to the area.

Wastewater risks and threats that need to be considered, their cause, and key impacts are described below.

Table 7 – Potential risks associated with inadequately managed wastewater.

Public Health Drinking and Recreational Water	<p>Drinking water supplies becoming contaminated with chemicals and bacteria from effluent as a result of poorly drained soils; small lot sizes; high usage; ageing septic tanks; and lack of proper maintenance of septic tanks.</p> <p>Illnesses that are contracted from effluent contaminated water include Gastroenteritis, Shigellosis, Giardiasis, Cryptosporidiosis and Hepatitis.</p> <p>Statistically significant risk of illness if people come into contact with contaminated water used for</p>
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¹⁶ Victorian Government (2017). Victorian Resources Online; Geomorphology of Victoria - Tier 2. Accessed from: http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/doi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/grg_vic_tier2

¹⁷ Maier J & Martin J (1934). Soil and Landforms of South-Western Victoria Part 1: Inventory of Soils and Their Associated Landscapes. Research Branch, State Chemistry Laboratory Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Melbourne.

¹⁸ Victorian Environment Protection Agency (2016). EPA Code of Practice 891.4; Accessed from: <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/~media/Publications/891%204.pdf>

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	recreational purposes. Illnesses include ear and eye infections and respiratory infections.
Environmental	Septic tanks contribute high rates of nitrogen and phosphorous to water catchments due to surface runoff. Septic tanks create direct bacterial contamination of the environment stimulating algal and weed growth.
Economic	From an economic perspective, rectifying environmental contamination is costly. Management should be focused on prevention. In the event of contamination of ground and other waters there is the cost of advising residents, the effect on visitors and tourists to the area, managing community anxiety and the indirect costs associated with the perception that the area is unsafe. For the owner/occupier the cost of replacing wastewater systems can be expensive.
Legal	Council has quite clearly established statutory duties under the provisions of the <i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i> and <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> . Council has a duty to exercise its enforcement powers where it knows there is a breach of the legislation and there is a likelihood of injury.

Table 8 – Key threats and impacts of onsite wastewater management systems.

Threat	Cause	Key Impacts
Failed systems with off-site discharge LOW	Damaged effluent disposal drains/trenches Increased loading from extensions to dwellings Design criteria not complied with Faulty installation New works and activities impacting on disposal envelope Age of septic system Septic tank full Poor maintenance	Nutrients Pathogens Odour Visual amenity Oxygen depleting material Local land degradation Pollution of watercourses Pooling of water causing mosquito breeding
Treated off-site effluent discharge LOW	Permitted system	Pollution of watercourses Local visual amenity
Untreated off-site greywater discharge LOW	Poorly maintained system with sand filter not functioning, sand filter bypassed to stormwater, septic tank full	Nutrients and pathogens Odour Visual amenity Oxygen depleting material
Treated on-site effluent discharge HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permitted system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution of groundwater Local visual amenity
Ineffective regulation HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to comply with permit conditions Ineffective database Non-connection to sewer Unclear regulatory responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liability Increased incidence of preventable pollution and environmental degradation Increased risk to public health

6. Assessment of current situation

6.1. Overview of unsewered/sewered issues within the LGA

The existing onsite wastewater situation in Warrnambool City Council mirrors that of surrounding rural and coastal-rural City's further afield in Victoria.

Compliance with relevant wastewater management policy and legislative framework is possible with constructive minor modifications to EH Unit OWS management process, while reducing the environmental and public health impacts of OWS's, and meeting compliance with *ISO 30001 Risk Management* standard.

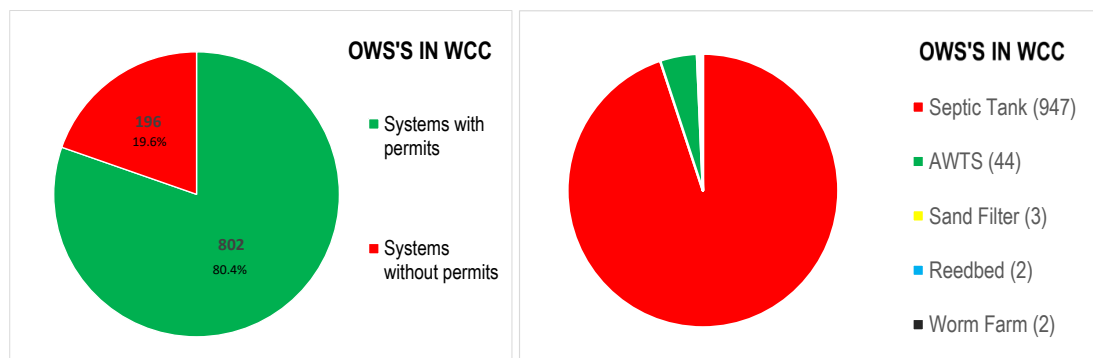
Findings:

- WCC has knowledge of every parcel in the LGA with an OWS, and has 80.4% system knowledge coverage, 40% higher than the Victorian LGA average.

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- Currently 998 OWS's exist within Council boundaries. Of these 998 systems, 196 non-permit systems (19.6%) exist in key areas of constraint such as Bushfield, Woodford, Allansford etc., that are typically aged systems (>25-years old) situated on reduced size lot sizes (<2000m²), and within watercourse setbacks (see Figure 33).
- A further 802 systems have permits, with a proportion of these influenced by similar constraints listed above, and with a proportion of these systems due for upgrade. This is a significant issue highlighted by Jago (2018)¹⁹ where reduced knowledge of existing system location, age, management, and impacts LGA-wide system performance. With 80.6% of the systems already known, the compilation of high-coverage system data is therefore a key requirement of this DWMP.
- Legacy systems (OWS within sewer area not connected to sewer) within sewer areas such as Allansford, Dennington, and Warrnambool are also a key issue requiring attention due to the potential impact of failing OWS's within the potable water coverage area. Such systems can only remain if they include an existing secondary treatment system where monitoring, management, and reporting are key components of retaining such devices. Unsewered areas within the LGA include western fringes of the city such as Dennington and Yarrpturk, Woodford, Bushfield and Wangoom to the north, Allansford to the east, and Hopkins Point to the south. Parts of Dennington and Hopkins Point contain in some cases excessively-draining sand-based soils, whilst all other areas include medium-clay subsoils with reduced subsoil depths. Sewered areas include parts of Allansford and the greater Warrnambool urban area.
- Various OWS types are utilised within the LGA, dominated by septic tanks and soil absorption disposal systems, however recent changes to EPA Codes of Practice have increased the use of secondary treatment systems (see Figure 34). Like all other Victorian Council's, maintenance of all system types is severely lacking and must be addressed across Victoria into the future.



Figures 33 & 34 – Status of OWS (permits v non-permits) within the Warrnambool LGA; types of treatment systems used.

6.2. Small lots

The potential for sustainable OWS and determination of suitable OWS system options is dependent on the amount of adequate area available for the OWS. This useable lot area for effluent management broadly refers to available (i.e., not impacted by infrastructure footprints) where the OWS will not be unduly constrained by site and soil characteristics.

The smaller the lot, the more difficult it is to treat and retain wastewater onsite in accordance with current EPA Code of Practice requirements (see below). A properly sized land application area provides long term, sustainable effluent loading rates that match the assimilative capacity of the soil and vegetation systems. Conversely, improperly designed or undersized land application areas are more likely to fail and lead to potential adverse impacts on both human health and the environment.

Using cadastral data, slope and soil characteristics, there are some parcels that will struggle to contain effluent within lot boundaries if systems fail (see Figure 35 below). These parcels are located concentrated in Bushfield, Woodford, and Allansford, which have a relatively large number of small lots less than 2,000m² and 5,000m². Clay-based soils on small

¹⁹ Victorian Government 2018, Victorian Attorney General's Department. Managing Impacts from Domestic Wastewater. Accessed from: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>

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lots don't have the repeated assimilation capacity especially in winter to support trench-based systems on lots less than 2,000m².

The EPA Code (2016 - Section 2.3.5) suggests; the principles of efficient resource use should also be applied when considering the options for all onsite wastewater management. This is especially the case for homes on small lots of land (<4,000m²) in unsewered areas which, to contain (recycle) all wastewater onsite, must minimise the amount of wastewater generated.

Through the planning process, the feasibility of providing a reticulated sewerage system should be seriously considered for the subdivision/development of small lots. In allotments smaller than 10,000m² (1 hectare), this area should not be seen as a minimum lot size but as a risk threshold, as lots smaller than 10,000m² may be unable to retain all wastewater onsite.

Treating greywater and 'blackwater' separately, and recycling a portion of the greywater effluent indoors for approved household uses, is one way of reducing the volume of wastewater discharged to the land, even though the nutrient and salt loads applied to the dispersal area remain the same. Retrofitting septic tanks if 3200L with sand filter or Rhizopods can reduce land application area footprint and provide enhanced wastewater treatment.

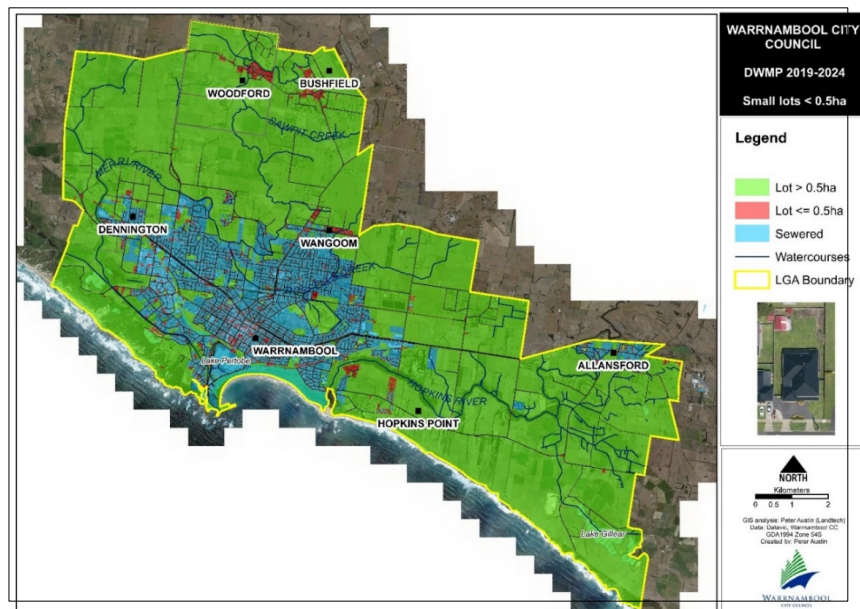


Figure 35 – Image depicts the predominance of small lots through Woodford, Bushfield and older parts of the LGA, increasing required management.

Findings:

Small lots will require special consideration as they generally do not meet the broad design objective of this DWMP. The first priority with restricted sites is to protect public health and deal with hydraulic load. This usually involves the secondary treatment of the wastewater, and in some cases the installation of a compost toilet to reduce the hydraulic load. With upgrades on small blocks it is sometimes necessary to place the LAA (i.e. disposal area) inside buffers. In such cases it is usual practice that if the buffers cannot be met, secondary treatment is required and depending on site constraints, disinfection may be required.

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6.3. Aged systems

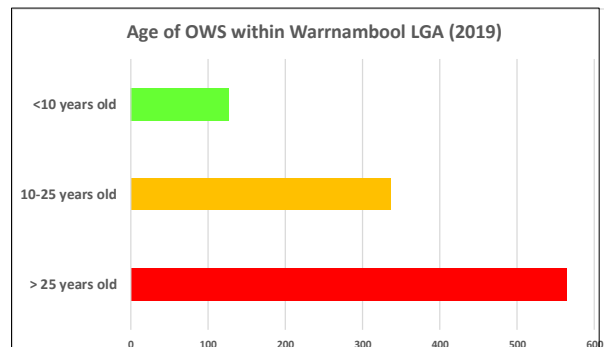


Figure 36 – Existing permits vs non-permits (pre-1995) and age of the current WCC wastewater systems.

With a suggested typical lifespan of 25-30 years, most OWS's in the WCC LGA are aged, reflected by the number of non-permits (pre-1995), and based on WCC database data collection periods (see *Figures 36-37*).

With age comes system failure due to few or many integrating factors such as lack of maintenance, system abuse, effluent disposal area compaction, lack of septic tank pump-out or AWTS maintenance. This has significant potential, via intense rainfall events and background failure, to impact surface water quality and reduce public health outcomes.

Findings:

- Some home owners are unaware of maintenance requirements and thus performance. System performance is the key indicator of OWS health and functionality that typically reduces as systems age.
- Areas such as Allansford, Bushfield, Woodford, and north Wangoom contain elevated dwelling numbers with aged OWS's requiring future upgrade, and subsequent increased direction and regulation by Council.
- These dwellings are on reduced-sized lots, have a non-baffled septic tank, and an undersized and non-functioning trench system. Such situations can be managed however may require costly system replacement and/or modification.

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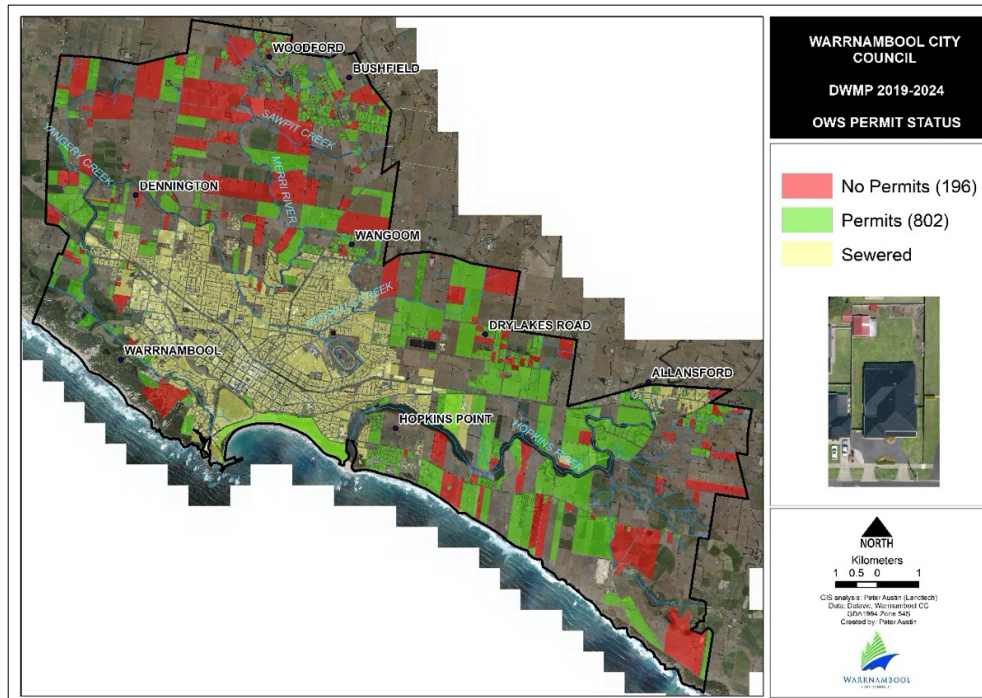


Figure 37 – Map depicts parcel-based permit vs no permit which shows permits are lacking in aged and unsewered parts of the LGA.

6.4. Upgrade challenges

With potentially 50% of OWS's in the LGA requiring upgrade (see Figure 36), it is clear a transparent and evidenced-based approach to such a challenge is used. Increased system maintenance requires continued behaviour change via targeted education, increased engagement and enforcement, with the promotion of both cost-effective and useful owner information required.

Potential upgrade requirements have been analysed at desktop level reflected by approximate (indicative) systems without permits (pre-1995 and >25 years old) in each area, such as shown in figure 38.

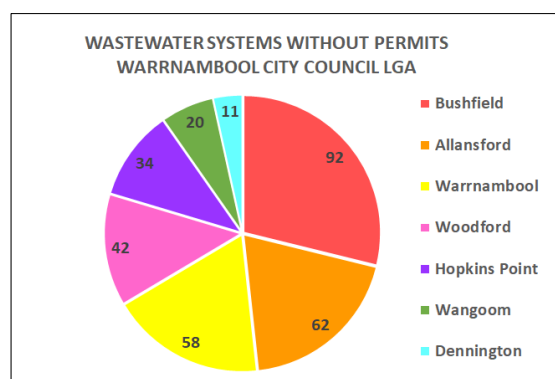


Figure 38 – Graph and table depicts the current number of non-permit systems within various unsewered areas.

Findings:

- Council must provide clear and effective wastewater regulation that is pragmatic to not only the needs of the community, but also to environment and public health protection.

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- Systems requiring upgrade should be inspected by Council EHO's who should assess each site based on site context, hydraulic load, owner's future extension plans, and socio-economic limitations. Abrupt upgrade of systems (system failure/surface discharge/nuisance) requires immediate attention from the EH Unit, owner/occupier, and plumber, typically via a site meeting.
- Upgrades on small lots (<2000m²) should be prioritised, in addition to targeted education material and advice.
- Lots 2000m² to 5000m² should then be next inspected, with owners encouraged to view the real importance of their OWS to their hip pocket when systems are not maintained.
- Bushfield, Allansford, Warrnambool, and Woodford will require increased attention from the EH Unit based on the potential upgrade requirements ahead of it. Council should implement equitable development approvals and upgrade guidelines, to work with existing owners in achieving effective public and environmental health outcomes. This DWMP details an upgrade process, which will provide a clear and transparent upgrade assessment process. In some instances, system pump-out and trench renovation may be enough to extend the life and compliance of a particular OWS.
- Other systems will require more extensive modification works which may include for example on small lot's; septic tank (with baffle) retained and pumped-out, with pump-well and Rhizopod system installed on reduced foot-print (and with treatment to secondary quality 20:30:10 and higher). These systems are said to produce no effluent output and may be a cost-effective system renovation option for the large number of small lot/upgrades required throughout unsewered Victoria.

6.5. Operational performance unknown

Based on the information regarding extent of aged systems and upgrade requirements, it could be suggested that operational performance is currently unknown within the LGA. The commencement of an Operational Risk (OR) rating program for each system (via inspection) is required, to manage collective OWS performance, a key part of this Plan.

Findings:

- Septic tank pump-out compliance within most Victorian LGA's is generally low influencing system operational performance and therefore system and risk management failure. Enforcement of permit conditions is a challenging regulatory environment for Council, requiring simple and flexible enforcement tools.
- Septic pump-out can be increased through targeted education as owners realise the cost-impost of replacement of trench areas after the system has passed solids to the effluent field. This clogs the field requiring expensive and inconvenient repair works.



Figures 39-42 – Systems within watercourse setbacks evidenced during DWMP audit; all locatable, managed, and maintained therefore reducing operational risk.

- AWTS's also require quarterly maintenance which is completed by approximately 1 in 7 AWTS owners throughout Victoria. Cost impediments and lack of local plumbers willing to service systems further reduces system maintenance and collective LGA-wide system performance. Increased post-treatment sampling (testing) is required and must include output performance of systems based on TSS/BOD/E.coli parameters.
- Owners of AWTS's, including commercial-sized businesses, are required to submit annual wastewater samples for analysis and reporting to Council. This occurs in a third of cases and where cost-restrictive quarterly service impediments strain socioeconomic groups across the LGA. Innovative options such as RTO-based owner service training may be a solution to low service of AWTS's within the LGA and across Victoria.

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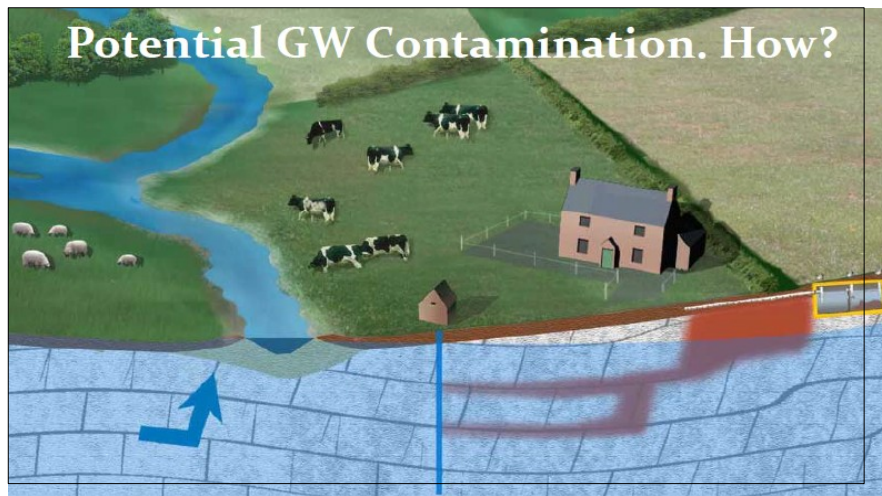


Figure 43 - Potential groundwater contamination pathways for onsite wastewater effluent
(Source: Latrobe University 2014).

6.6. Cumulative impacts

"The impact of OWS on the local environment is increased by the concentration of wastewater disposed to land. The number of houses per square hectare becomes an important consideration when assessing the current conditions within a particular township area. Current research^{20 21 22} suggests a threshold of 40-50 OWS's per square kilometre and above begins to impact groundwater due to concentration of septic tanks.

Findings:

- Areas such as Woodfield and Bushfield are already at this threshold point (see Figure 53), requiring conservative wastewater planning into the future. Section 1.6 of the current EPA Code of Practice suggests: To minimise the cumulative impact of wastewater, effluent must be contained onsite within the boundaries of the allotment. This aims to prevent the transport of nutrients, pathogens and other pollutants to surface waters and to prevent any negative impacts on 'groundwater beneficial uses' within the catchment (Clause 32, SEPP Waters of Victoria 2003).
- OWS are not recommended for high density allotments. *Figure 44* shows the septic density throughout the Warrnambool LGA, showing significant potential impacts in the townships of Woodford and Bushfield and the Wangoom Road and Hopkins Point areas.
- Assessment of allotment density (used instead of dwelling density for future planning purposes) is a significant consideration during township land capability assessment.
- Assess existing block density in unsewered areas and investigate options to reduce density to sustainable levels.
- Develop clear policy guidelines for future developments in unsewered areas and for unsewered allotments.
- Review Planning Scheme and other relevant Council policies to identify opportunities for improvements to wastewater management clauses and/or policies.
- Continue to investigate and upgrade appropriate design standards for high risk areas so as to inform any future improvement plans.

²⁰ Whitehead JH, Geary PM (2000) Geotechnical aspects of domestic on-site effluent management systems. Australian Journal of Earth Sciences 47, 75-82.

²¹ Edis R (2013). Approaches For Risk Analysis Of Development With On-Site Wastewater Disposal In Open Potable Water Catchments, Prepared for Mansfield Shire Council.

²² Urban Groundwater Pollution: IAH International Contributions to Hydrogeology 24, edited by David Lerner.

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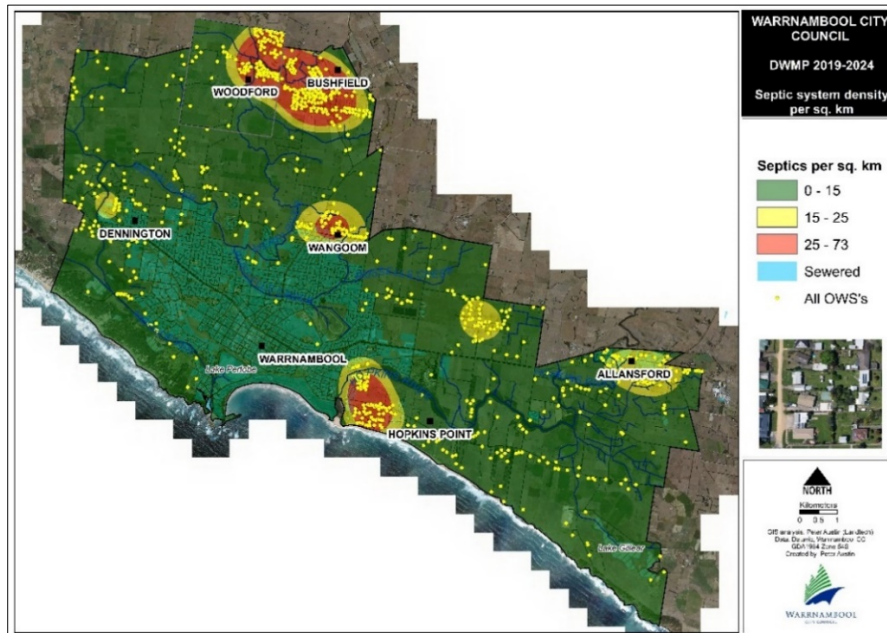


Figure 44 – Septic density throughout the LGA includes significant potential impact in Woodford, Bushfield, and Hopkins Point areas.

The West Australian Water Authority has set a limit of 25 septic tank and trench systems per square kilometre where there are significant potable water supplies from groundwater.¹ Other references suggest a density of 15 septs/ km² which has often been 'rule of thumb' and commonly used with the caveat being implications of soil type, system maintenance, and the age of septic tank systems. This is similar to a US Environment Protection Authority recommendation that more than 15 septic tank and trench systems per square kilometre have the potential to contaminate groundwater. Studies of on-site system density and surface and groundwater quality in five sensitive coastal catchments in New South Wales and Tasmania demonstrate some direct linkages between on-site system performance, system density and receiving water quality.

6.7. Awareness of alternative systems

Wastewater management policy and legislative framework continues to evolve, requiring plumbers to stay up-to date. This is easier said than done. Council understands that time off-site for plumbers means lost revenue.

Local plumbers require transparent onsite wastewater installation options which will contribute to OWS best-practice and environmental benefit.

6.8. Agency support for connect to sewer

More support is always needed from water authorities such as Wannon Water with connect to sewer provisions, monitoring of 'legacy' systems, and supporting small township schemes for additional unsewered areas of Allansford, and new planning for Bushfield, and Woodford.

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6.9. Systems inside watercourse setbacks

Within the WCC LGA there are significant numbers of dwellings and their OWS's situated within either of the critical 30m and 60m watercourse/wetland setbacks, and the 1 in 20-year flood setback. The main areas containing systems within setbacks includes Woodford, Dennington, Bushfield, Hopkins Point, and Allansford. Detecting and auditing all non-permit systems within setbacks must be a first priority of this plan.



Figure 45- High-risk effluent disposal adjoining (within 30m setback) the Merri River. Excessive weed growth within adjoining parts of the river provide a clue to this system's sustainability and reason to connect to sewer.

Findings:

- Whilst this is not an optimal outcome, it was evident from targeted recent audit that system owners (within such areas) were aware of setback risk and with direction from previous Council EHO's had well-located, designed, and maintained systems.
- Inside setbacks typically require a higher level of treatment, with disinfection and effluent disposal fields located above or outside setbacks.
- Pumping to such fields (as evidenced in Woodford, Bushfield, and Dennington) is not optimum, but due to past planning intricacies must be EH-Unit audited if use.

7. Township Wastewater Challenges and Solutions

7.1. Woodford

Woodford is a key unsewered township 5 km to the north of Warrnambool and includes rural and residential-type lifestyle lots including varied age dwellings, and therefore varied-age onsite wastewater systems.

Riverine and floodplain landscapes dominate this area especially proximal to the village precinct (primary school) with flood and setback constraints, in addition to sloping sites proximal to the Merri River and tributaries.

The Woodford precinct is dominated by ex-volcanic and highly weathered clay-based light to medium soil textures, forming part of constraints that include slope, lot/parcel size, and setback constraints.

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A number of properties from 2019 audit exist within the 60m and 30m watercourse (Merri River) setback and pump effluent away from watercourses. This is not an optimum management option however with monitoring can be effectively managed.

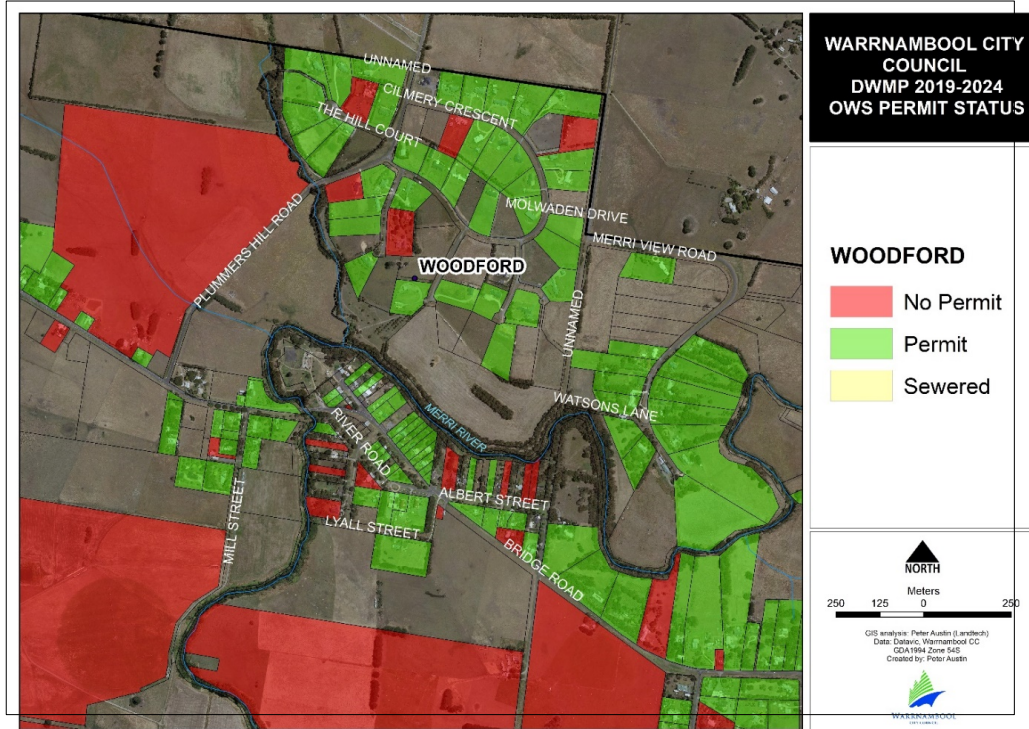


Figure 46 – As can be clearly seen, the Woodford/Bushfield study areas have an issue with many unknown system status and performance via not having an existing OWS permit.



Figure 47 – Watercourse setback is a feature of this part of Woodford, looking toward the Woodford Primary School.

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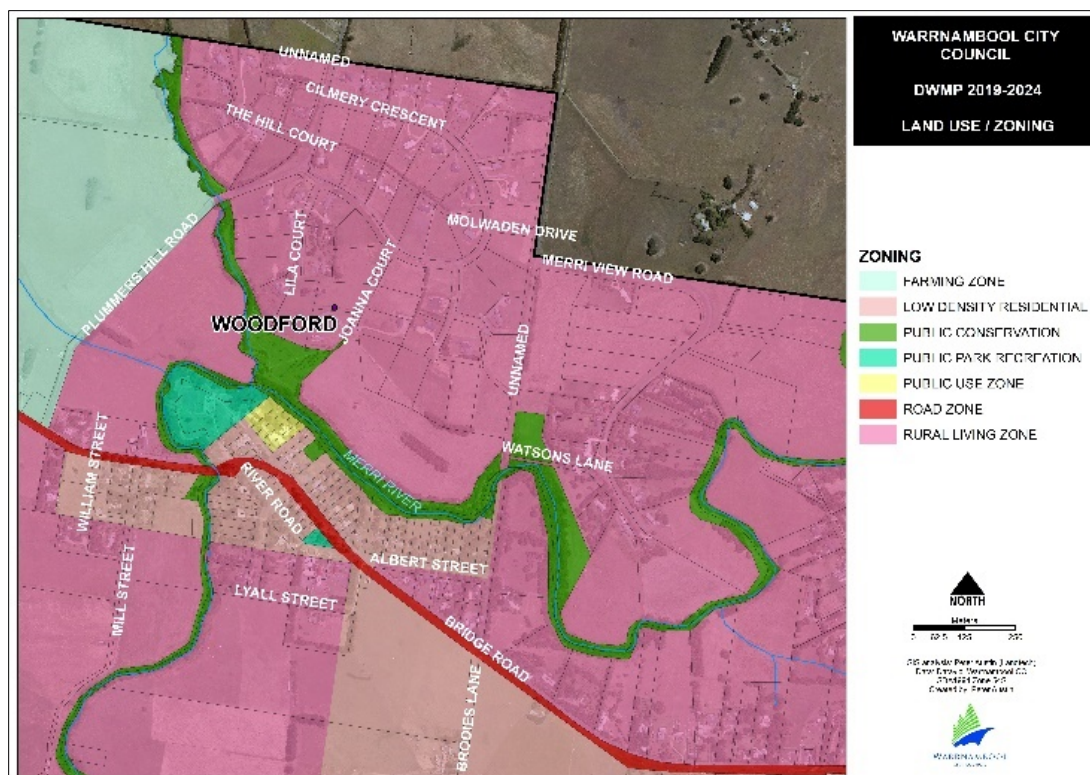
Parcels exist within watercourse setbacks, some on small lots (<0.5ha), with a number of lots inside the 1 in 20-year flood inundation coverage (contravening the EPA Code).

Historic small lot titles contribute to highly constrained lots within the floodplain section proximal to the Woodford Primary School and Jubilee Park.

Many of these lots have no OWS permit, with aged septic tank-based primary systems now requiring upgrade.

The same lots are within Merri River watercourse setbacks and 1 in 20-year flood inundation levels. Such areas require close scrutiny until entire upgrade of the area is completed. Risk mapping outcomes within this area reflects the varied constraints influencing such sites (see Figure 46).

Risk-based wastewater performance monitoring is therefore suggested for the Woodford area reflecting its overall higher risk-rating.



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The *RHHS*²³ suggests both Woodford and Bushfield are poorly served with utility and convenience services, and that given the waste management issues (wastewater) it is questionable whether the purpose of the Low-Density Residential Zone can continue to be met.

The report suggests that '*constraints on development include a lack of services, in particular the provision of a sewer service, the inability of soils to carry much further growth in septic services, and the topography of the river environs*'.

Deferred growth pending early resolution of sewer servicing options should be considered which might include changing the minimum lot sizes in various parts of the settlement.

Council would be aware that considerable opportunities for growth in both Low Density and Rural Living housing.

Council and water agencies should place a priority on supplying connection to a sewer or other waste treatment before facilitating further major growth or infill.

Sustainability of onsite wastewater management within the Woodford area is strongly influenced by housing age, therefore due to much recent-decade development.

Evidence of this is contained within the Cilmerly Crescent subdivision which although constrained by slope, includes more recent secondary treatment systems within large Rural-zoned lots.



Figure 49 – Older sections of Woodford contain small lots <2000m² on often medium clay soil textures.

Recommended improvement options

-Assess existing block density and investigate options to reduce density to sustainable levels. Develop clear policy guidelines for future developments within the township.

-Stormwater quality should be monitored to assess impacts to the adjacent waterways, including the Merri River. This should be conducted in addition to audits of septic tank systems that will provide further information on the types of systems installed and their suitability.

²³ CPG Australia, Moyness Warrnambool Rural Housing and Settlement Strategy 2010; Accessed from:
<https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/property/planning/strategies/FINAL%20Rural%20Housing%20and%20Settlement%20Strategy%20Report.pdf>

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-It is possible that in the future the community may support the development and implementation of a sewerage service to the township. The investigation of a sewerage scheme including a new Wastewater Management Treatment facility should be considered if evidence of significant risk is discovered and sufficient community interest is shown.



Figure 50 – Climery Crescent Woodford contains some slope-constraining lots managed via terracing, secondary treatment, and upslope diversion drainage.

7.2 Bushfield

Adjoining Woodford to the east, Bushfield also consists of a dominance of historic-title-based small lots (<0.5ha) within Low *Density Residential* zoned areas, with the more optimum *Rural Living* zoned areas, separated by the Merri River. Both Bushfield and Woodford are continue to emerge as one discernible settlement whilst sharing similar OWS constraints.

Bushfield is specifically more residential in character and subject to recent growth and development as an alternative housing choice and environment to Warrnambool. It is said to have a distinctive village character and sense of retreat, valued by the local community.²⁴

Bushfield includes a mix of parcel sizes (zoning) influencing lot size constraint, and therefore sustainable wastewater treatment. Constraining such lots further is the influence of highly weathered volcanic soils with a high clay fraction, compacted via years of intensive dairy farming.

²⁴ CPG Australia, Moyne Warrnambool Rural Housing and Settlement Strategy 2010; Accessed from: <https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/property/planning/strategies/FINAL%20Rural%20Housing%20and%20Settlement%20Strategy%20Report.pdf>

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Figure 51 – Bushfield from an OWS perspective is a contrast of the old small lots near the football ground and better-planned rural allotments further west.

Bushfield contains Farming (FZ), Rural Living (RLZ), and Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) lots significantly influencing wastewater treatment and disposal. Bushfield includes the earliest subdivisions in the area with constrained lot sizes adjacent to the Mortlake Highway, with larger lots to the west along Bridge Road toward Woodford. Farming Zone lots surround the settlement providing potential for future subdivision and rezoning.

The area based on the east-west (Bridge Road) ridgeline includes north-sloping riverine areas proximal to the Merri River. Soil depth become constrained on such ridgelines with most areas dominated by impermeable clay-based soils.

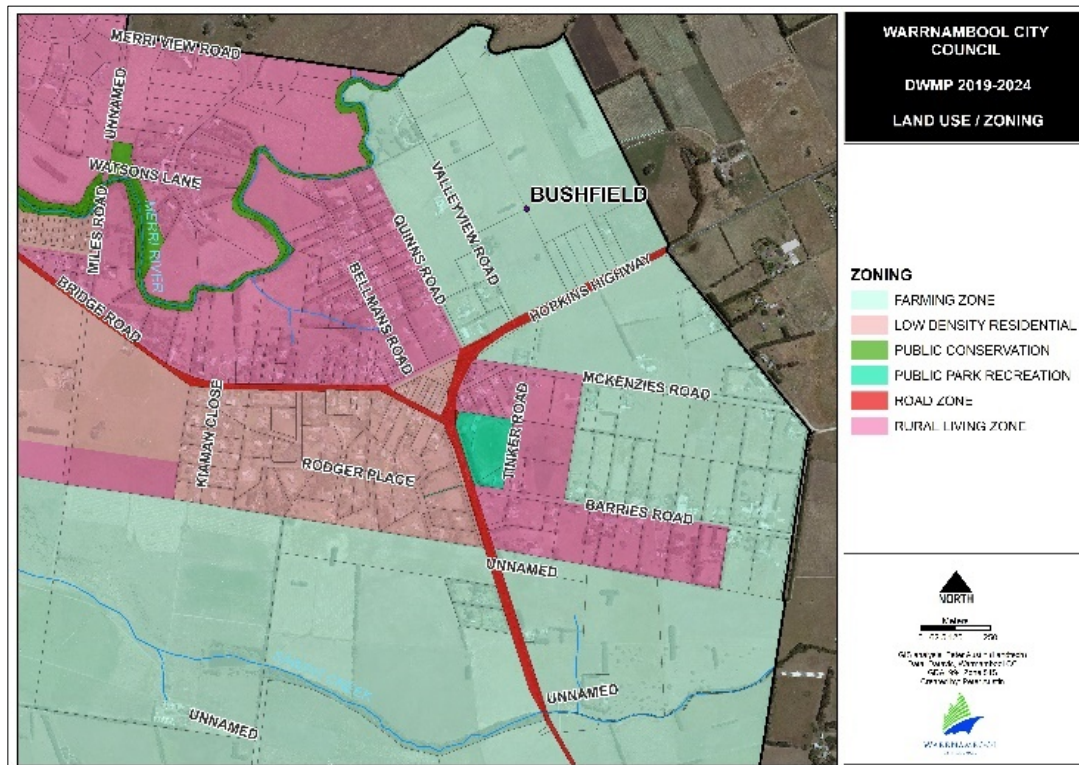
Flatter sites such as those areas of Bushfield close to the recreation reserve/football ground (Hopkins Highway) are dominated by small lots, medium clay soils, and aged wastewater systems (without an OWS permit).



Figure 52 – A dominance of small lots exist in some cases bordering a key watercourse in the Woodford/Bushfield study area.

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Risk mapping outcomes within this area reflects the varied constraints influencing such sites.

Risk-based wastewater performance monitoring is therefore suggested for the Bushfield area reflecting its relative high-risk rating.

Lot size, soil texture, slope, and watercourse setback constraints exist within the Bushfield study area that contains relatively level to sloping ex-dairy farm landscapes including compacted topsoil profiles. The Merri River environs area is covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay.



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Figure 54 – Reduced lot sizes within the older part of Bushfield constrains effective onsite wastewater management.

The lack of services is constrained further by in particular the provision of a sewer service, inability of soils to carry further growth in septic services, influenced by the topography of the river environs.

Within the Low Density Residential Zone a minimum lot size of 0.4ha applies, compounding wastewater issues within the Bushfield study area.

The RHHS suggests²⁵ that 'given waste management issues it is questionable whether the purpose of the Low-Density Residential Zone can continue to be met' (in Bushfield, Woodford).

The RHHS suggests deferring growth pending early resolution of sewer servicing options which might include changing the minimum lot sizes in various parts of the settlement.



Figure 55 – Well-planned area within Bushfield although consisting of lots able to be subdivided to 0.4ha.

The same report suggests a 'do-nothing' approach is not a sustainable response to the planning issues presented by the combined settlements. They suggest that before facilitating infill and major growth that connection to sewer should be prioritised.

A balance needs to be struck between character/amenity protection issues and the growth and maturity of the combined settlements as they move towards a more sustainable community.

The objective should be to offer environmental protection and effective management of wastewater; a broader range of housing choices, while retaining the predominant character as a rural village.

Recommended improvement options

-Stormwater quality should be monitored to assess impacts to the adjacent waterways, including the Merri River by relevant authorities. This should be conducted in addition to audits of septic tank systems that will provide further information on the types of systems installed and their suitability.

-It is possible that in the future the community may support the development and implementation of a sewerage service to the township. The investigation of a sewerage scheme including a new Wastewater Management Treatment facility should be considered if evidence of significant risk is discovered and sufficient community interest is shown.

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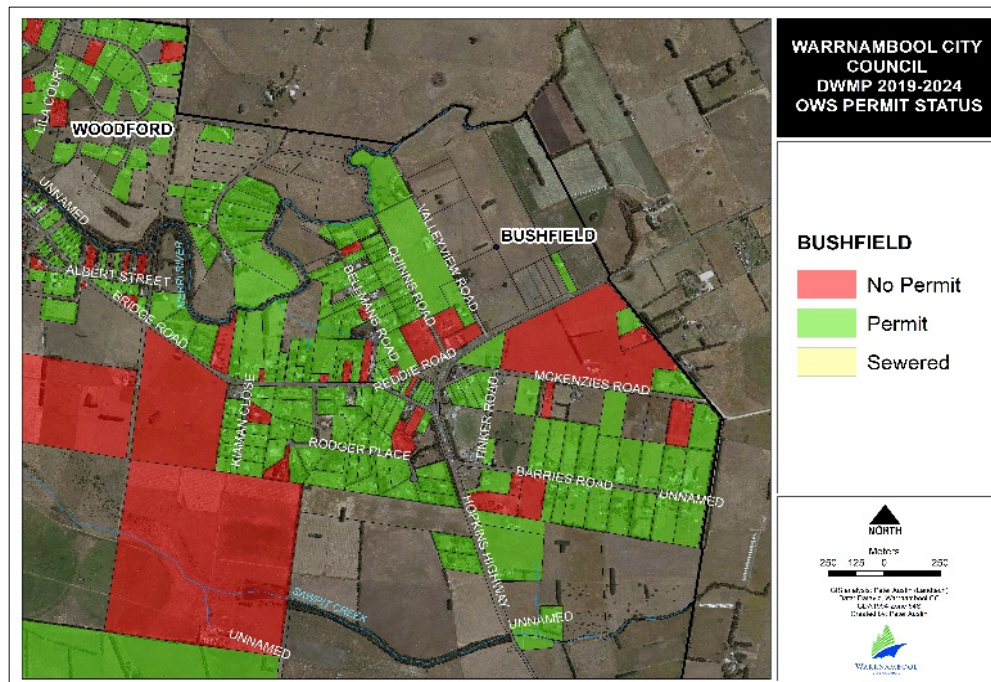


Figure 56 – The challenge ahead for WCC is to increase knowledge of systems throughout unsewered areas as is the case for Woodford/Bushfield.

7.3 Allansford

Located on the Princes Highway 15km to the east of Warrnambool, Allansford consists of floodplain and river-proximal sites, grading to larger rural-residential living within larger Farm-zoned lots.

Established in the 1860's the Allansford study area comprises the old town, rural living subdivisions, and Farm Zone areas surrounding the township. Sewer reticulation is provided for the central parts of the established township (see Figure 57).

The Hopkins River traverses the west of the site with some sandstone-based subsoils through the Tooram area constraining OWS's.

Allansford is identified in the Victorian Coastal Strategy as having moderate growth capacity with some pockets of heritage significance and areas of Environmental Significance adjacent to the Hopkins River.

Limestone geology of parts of the Allansford renders significant areas of land seemingly suitable for growth, but unsuitable for development, particularly to the south and east of the town. Issues exist such as flooding of the Hopkins River and the lack of drainage infrastructure and appropriate servicing.

The study area more generally consists of ex-volcanic medium clay soil textures, compacted from past agricultural use, giving rise to winter-ponded clay-based soils within mostly flat sites.

Unsewered areas have historically included an industrial precinct to the north of the Allansford township managing wastewater on lots <2000m². The township area is mostly sewerage however includes aged dwellings and related aged wastewater systems (legacy sites) on lot sizes in some cases <4000m².

Significantly for OWS management, land zoning/minimum lot size within the Allansford area includes Farm Zoned, Rural Living, Township, and Low Density Residential zoned lots.

More recent development includes Rural Living Zone lots that have ample land left for sustainable and long-term onsite wastewater treatment options.

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The Allansford study area includes 'legacy sites'; properties without sewer connection after sewer connection became available. Such sites must connect to sewer unless they have a secondary treatment system that is serviced, maintained, and reported on to both Council and Wannon Water. Some legacy sites include small parcel industrial lots.



Figure 57 – Lots <0.5ha lacking an existing permit and therefore reduced means for WCC EH Unit to enforce permit conditions.

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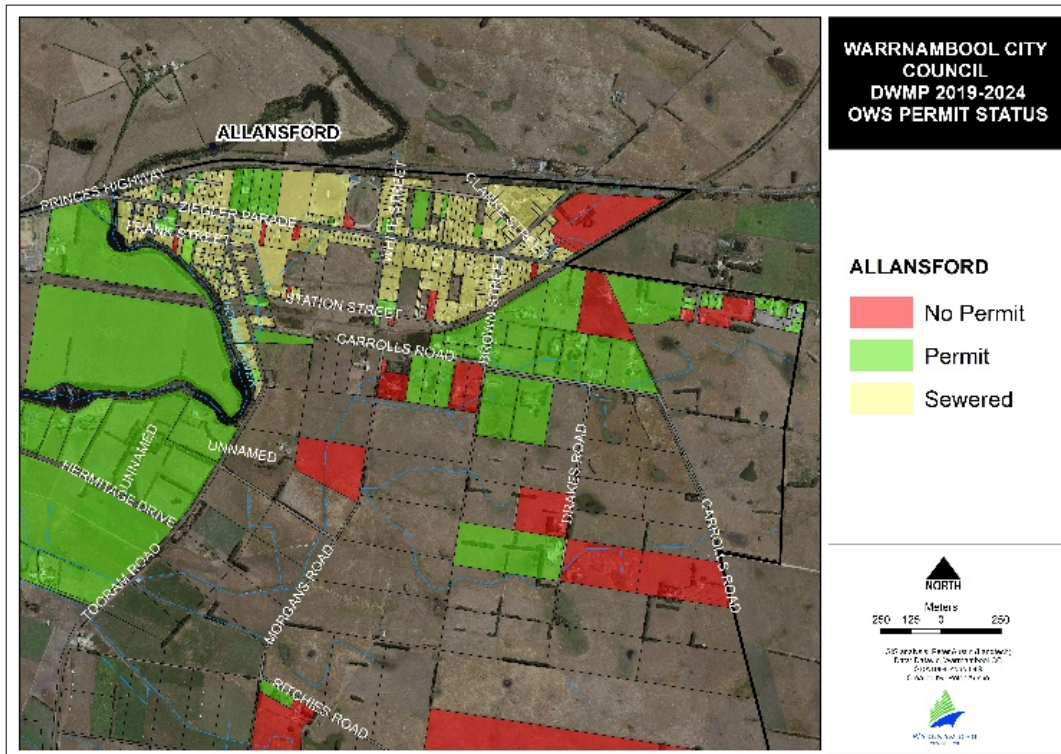


Figure 58 – Parcel-based permit vs no permit comparative map (Allansford).

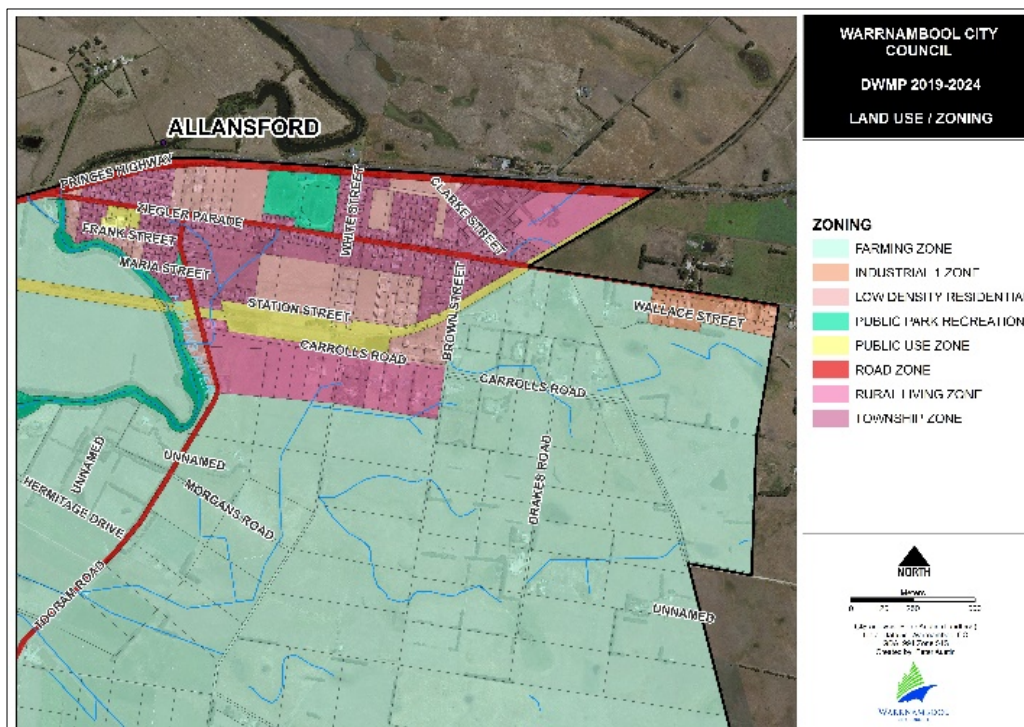


Figure 59 – Mixed lot sizes and zoning within the Allansford precinct.

Recommended improvement options

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- Council will work with Wannon Water to ensure that all properties within the sewerage district that cannot adequately treat and contain wastewater within their boundaries are connected to sewer as soon as possible.
- All rezoning and subdivision in the township are to be provided with sewer.

7.4 Hopkins Point/Logan's Beach

The Hopkins Point/Logan's Beach (HPLB) study area includes the entire coastal strip of land south of the Hopkins River as it flows toward Allansford in the east.

Fortunately for wastewater provision, the HPLB area has retained large relative parcel sizes including Farm Zone (40ha minimum), Rural Living, and General Residential Zones recently sewerred.

However, most farming zoned properties in the Hopkins Point area are below 40ha. The biggest allotment is 23 ha and the average would be less than 15ha. Under the Warrnambool Planning Scheme, lots of 15ha can be created in the Farming Zone. There is pressure in the Farming Zone area for house-lot excisions and boundary re-alignments to create opportunities for additional housing.

Small relative lot sizes in the Banksia Drive area, with minimum lot sizes (0.4ha), constrain wastewater disposal options in some instances within watercourse (Hopkins River) setbacks.

Soil types consist of ancient dune systems adjoining fertile lava flow areas resulting from recent volcanism. Sites within this area however are typically dominated by sandy loam soil textures, with soils increasing in clay fraction further east.

Rapid infiltration of effluent constrains wastewater application however mitigatory measures are used such as secondary treatment, use of water saving devices, use of subsurface irrigation and disposal area evapotranspiration techniques.

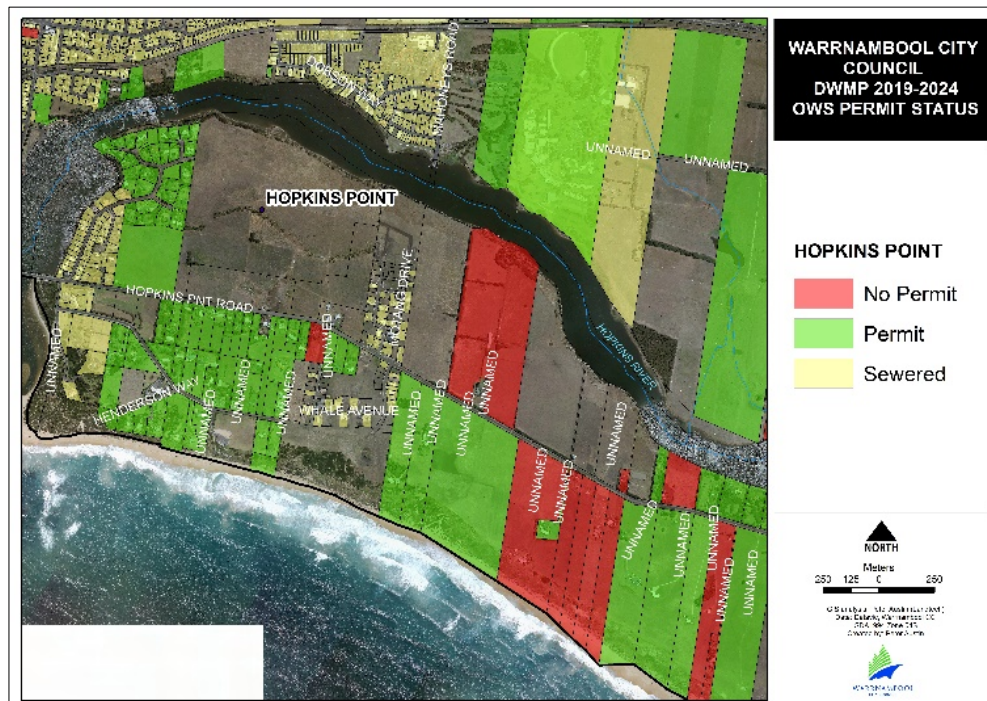


Figure 60 – Large coastal lots to the east of the Hopkins River mouth with many sites elevated and optimum sandy loam soil textures; some with permits, some not.

In the most part, distance to groundwater is not a constraining thus reducing restrictive OWS mitigatory measures required.

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A Significant Landscape (SLO) and Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) forms much of the area requiring the retention of as much effluent transpiring vegetation as possible. Coastal Acid Sulphate soils, not amenable to onsite wastewater systems are restricted to the eastern part of the study area, adjoining in the west, the Hopkins River.

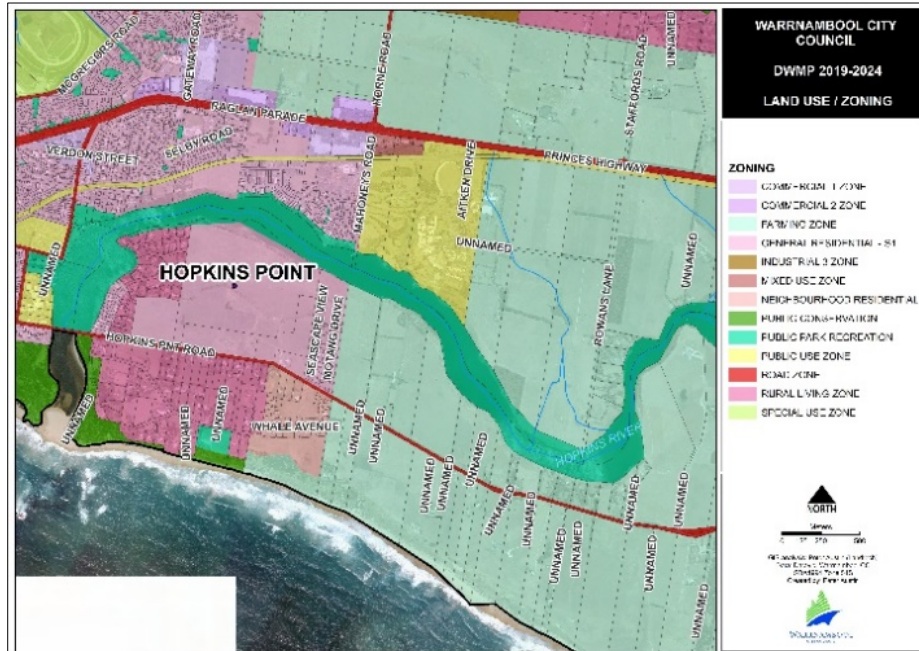


Figure 61 - The Hopkins Point and Logan's Beach area dominated by Farm Zoned, Rural Living, and Low Density Residential zoned lots. With increased lot sizes and the incremental distribution of sewer, much of this area includes existing sustainable wastewater patterns. This may not however remain the case due to future owner subdivision intentions.

Lot size is however the key to all contexts and maximum default lot size should support future sustainable outcomes in areas such as HPLB.

7.5 Dennington/Illowa

The western Dennington/Illowa study area takes in urban/rural land parcels predominantly west of the Merri River where sewer extension has not reached, and includes ex-intensive agricultural soil influences, in addition to reduced areas further south on shallow sandstone-based soil types

A cluster of Farming Zone lots south of the Princess Highway and west of the Merri River on shallow fast-draining sandstone soils provide key wastewater challenges for the EH Unit.

Sandstone-based parcels include high infiltration rates, however conducive sandy loam soil textures, and in few cases groundwater proximity. This requires increased system surveillance and specific design considerations when approving new wastewater systems.

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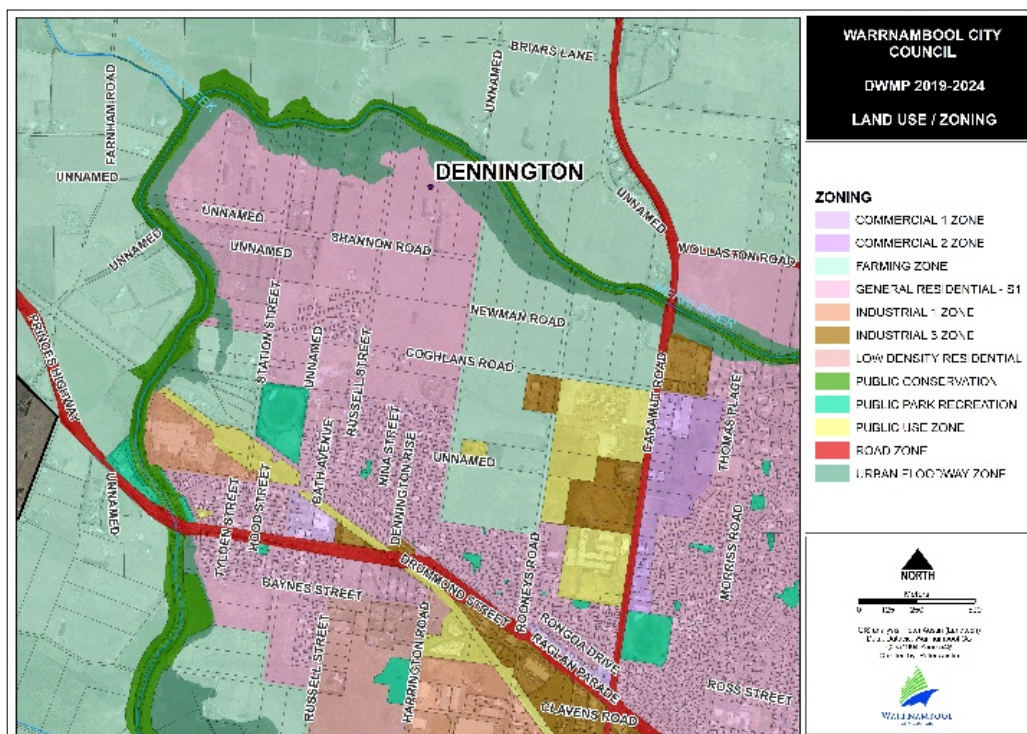
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Figure 62 - West Dennington; an area identified for infill growth and where sewer should follow.

The larger proportion of the study area includes volcanic-based, medium to light-clay soils, with reduced permeability in winter. More optimum light-clay soil textures dominate areas of historic deposition within watercourse and floodplain areas to the east of the Merri River.

Parcels within the Dennington/Illowa area vary in size based on zoning, some within 30-60m watercourse setbacks, and the 1 in 100 and critically 1 in 20-year flood cycles.



A recent audit of high-risk sites within setbacks confirms an awareness of homeowners of the risk of their systems, which in most cases have been designed away from critical watercourse setbacks.

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Figure 64 - The LGA consists of many dwellings within both 30m and 60m setback requirements with many having to pump higher to effluent fields due to choice of dwelling location.

The Dennington study area includes reduced numbers of legacy sites; current OWS requiring connection to sewer. Such sites will form part of WCC's priority strategy to connect all legacy sites to the reticulated sewer network.

Again, as in other study areas selected, Dennington generally includes large relative lot sizes, and improved soil textures for sustainable OWS management. This may however change with future planning intentions.

7.6 Wangoom

The Wangoom area is typical of many urban-rural edge type settlements where reticulated sewer has generally not been made available, and which therefore requires careful planning of future onsite wastewater management.

The North Wangoom site lies 3km north-north-east of the Warrnambool CBD. The study area includes a history of intensive agricultural activities reflected in the lack of indigenous vegetation and compacted soil profiles.

The study area includes 51ha of both Farm Zone and *Rural Living Zone* lots. The question of current and future zoning proposals must take into consideration minimum lot sizes for sustainable future domestic wastewater practice.

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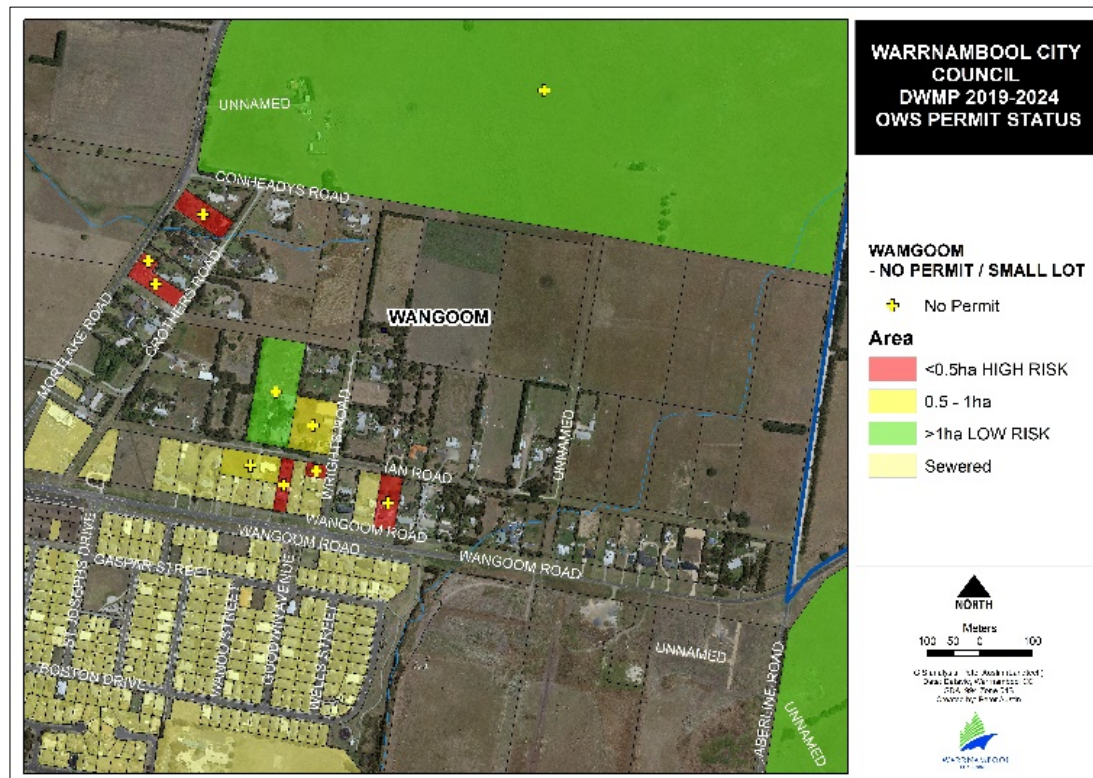


Figure 65 – The north Wangoom study area displays a high number of both constraining small lots and a lack of permit coverage.

Soil texture, permeability, and depth are critical factors required at optimum parameters to support sustainable domestic wastewater management.

From a land use and development perspective the study area consists of lightly-sloping terrain and uniform shallow-topsoils over heavy expansive and poorly-draining medium-clay soils (Category 5/6; EPA CoP 891.4).

The study area drains to both the Merri River (north-west of site) and Russell's Creek (east of site), becoming significant in terms of wastewater during and after intense rainfall events. The site has a number of lots within watercourse setbacks (Farm Zone), and where future lots may also be within such setbacks.

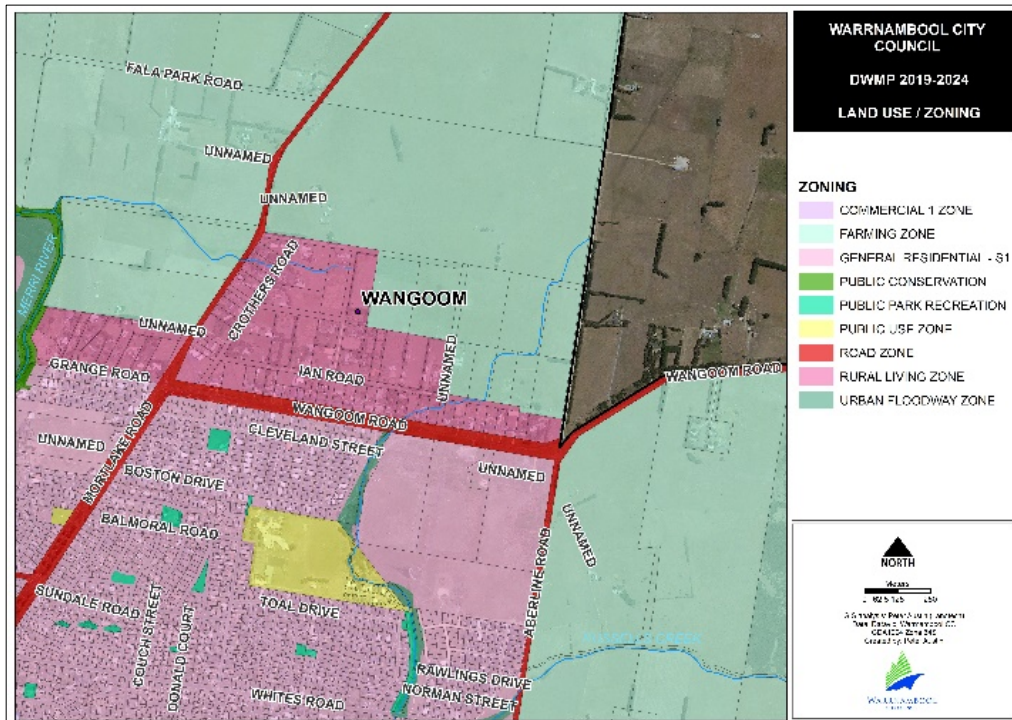
Drainage stormwater assets remain significantly limited. Wangoom Road is sealed and has kerb and channel while minor roads are unsealed. There are no underground drains, while the main open drains fall to the Russell's Creek tributary in the south, and to a land depression in the north.

The site includes an area surrounding the Merri River tributary in the north-west of the study area, which is locally steep (to 12%).

This provides an unmanaged drainage site in high intensity rainfall events, discharging into properties below (Hopkins Highway to the west of study area).

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The study area has a high relative number of smaller lots (<0.5ha and potential for creation of further lots to 0.4ha) and significantly already has a high septic system density of 25-60 systems compared to accepted thresholds (25-40 per km²) for the relatively young age of the subdivision.



A small portion of the study area is currently serviced by a sewerage pump station that discharges to the reticulated system south of Wangoom Road.

Wannon Water has expressed the view that sewerage lots larger than 2000m² to be economically not feasible, therefore onsite wastewater systems are used and required in all other study area sites.

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7.7 Drylakes Road

Low elevation areas on medium-heavy clay soils typifies the Drylakes Road area. Waterlogging of this and adjoining areas in winter is a feature of this area.

Therefore planning for future subdivision must address this and additional critical wastewater issues discussed below.

In addition to clay-based soils is the lack of topsoil depth, often the optimum soil texture to treat and evaporate wastewater. OWS's in areas such as this must raise effluent disposal areas if in winter waterlogging zones for effective treatment and mitigation of wastewater to the environment.

Such water-logged parcels should be mapped in winter to assist future land parcel unsewered development proposals.

This area should be the focus of moderate to high-risk actions due to the relatively high number of systems without a permit (as seen below). Many of these same land parcels shown in red also exist in winter waterlogged zones.

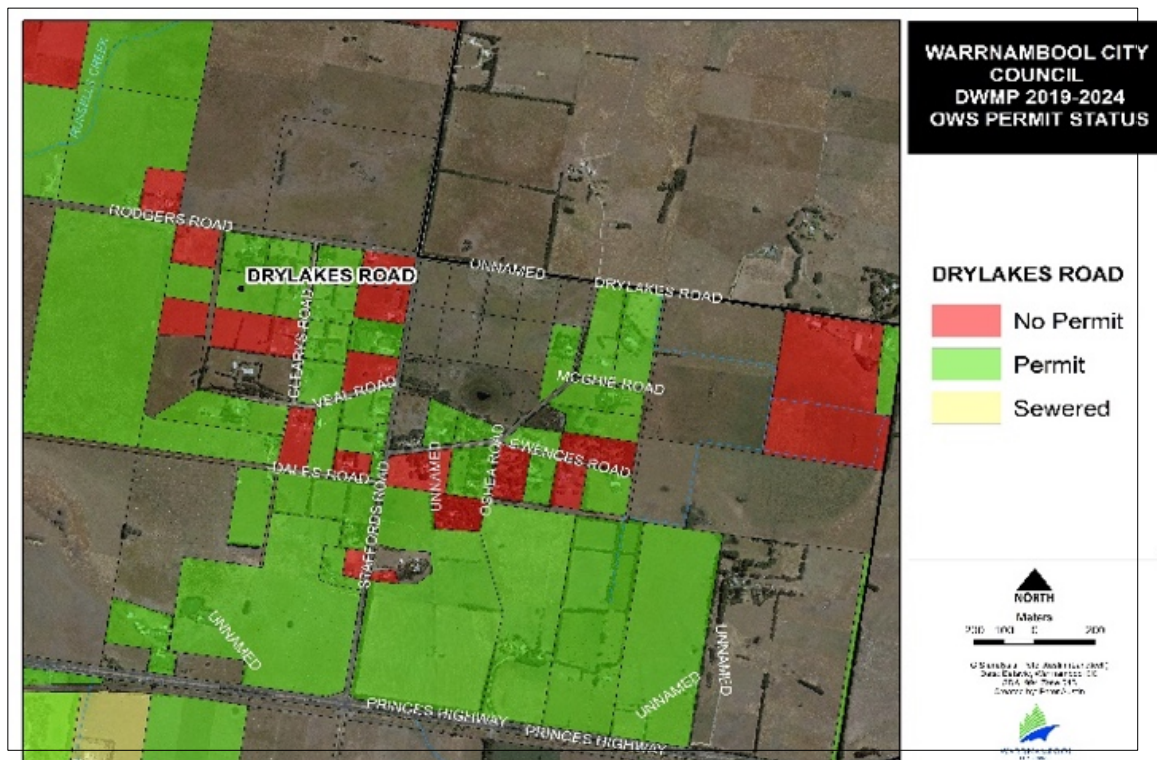


Figure 68 – Properties lacking OWS permits although on currently moderate risk-sized lots for effective treatment and disposal.

The entire area is part of low elevation landscapes and wetland basins with increased fragility due to information regarding the area including subterranean sandstone/limestone cave and spring system linked to Maam Reserve. Until the recent decade, some properties along Drylakes Road used Maam Reserve for primary treated disposal of effluent.

Future subdivision intentions must take into account the three key area issues; poor soil drainage, winter waterlogging, and potential reduced lot size (as can be seen from Figure 73).

The Drylakes Road area would therefore benefit from being sewer or the development of a centralised system of some kind. There may be some future potential for extension to sewer from Arborline Road or Allansford.

All 50 land parcels are zoned Rural Living Zone with most lots between 1-3ha in size, with lots from 0.8ha to 19.6ha in size.

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Figure 69 – Maam Water Reserve with key vegetation areas shown for significant fauna species such as the White-footed Dunnart.

The current septic density is at threshold of accepted 15-25 septs per square kilometre, therefore future planning must take such data into consideration.

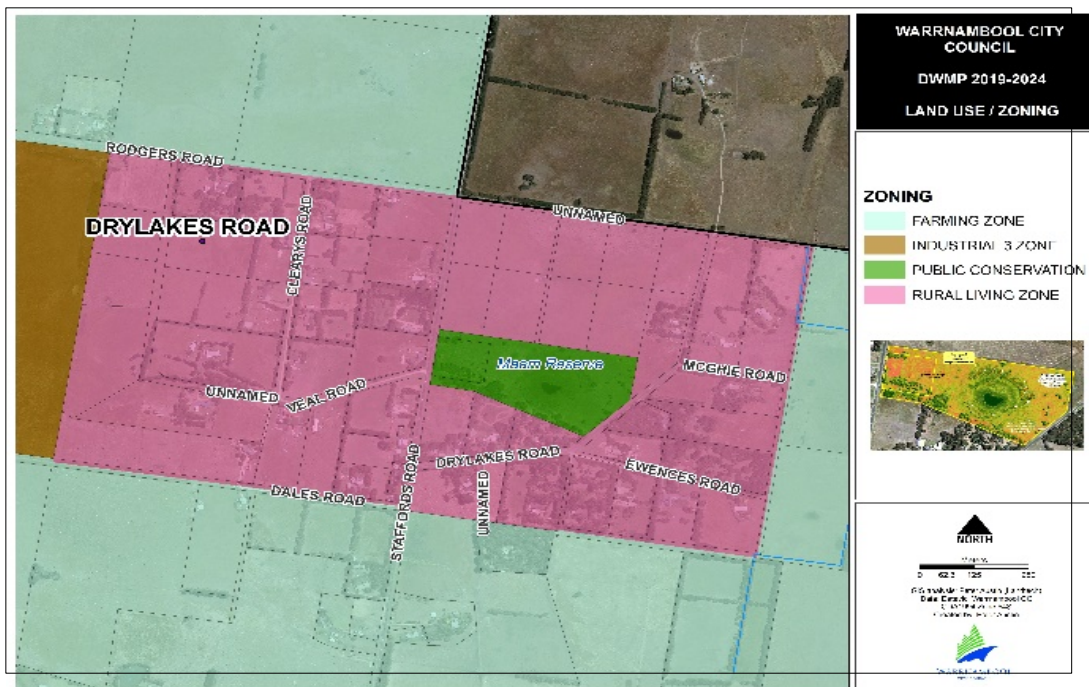


Figure 70 – All lots apart from Maam Reserve zoned Rural Living.

Recommended improvement options

- Effluent disposal areas should be raised in low elevation, Winter waterlogged sites;
- Lot sizes should remain above 1ha for optimum and reduced risk OWS treatment and disposal;
- Drylakes area should be case study focus due to water-logging and high non-permit status with inspections encouraged;
- Improved flood data must be collected for this site to assist future planning.

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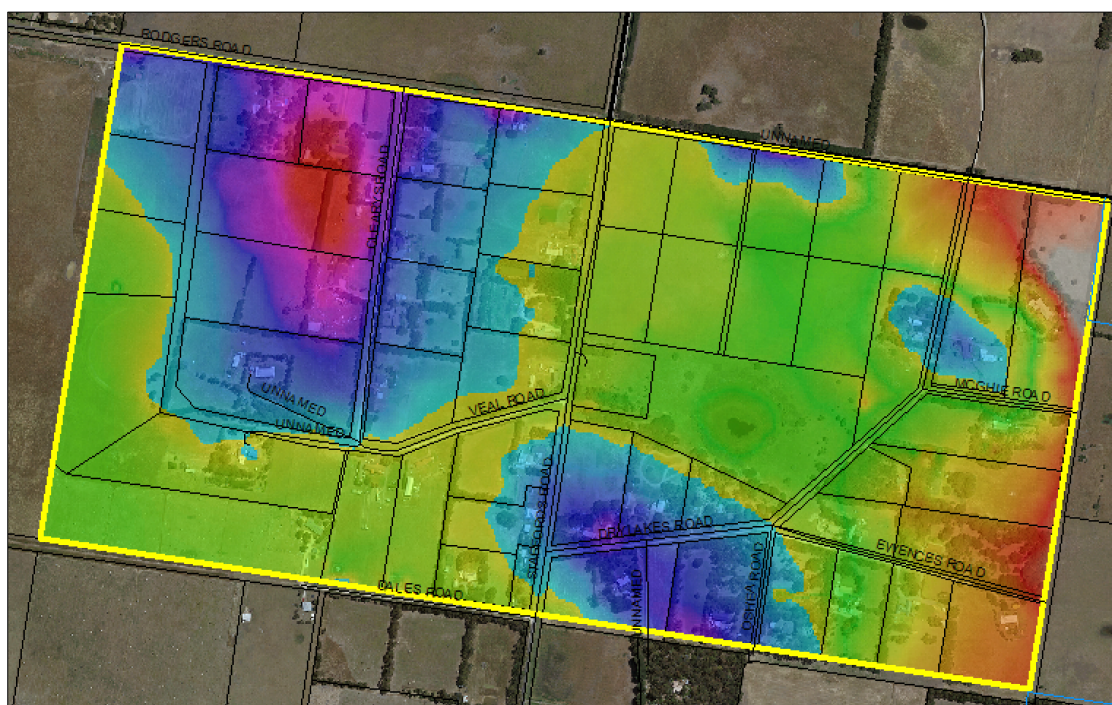


Figure 71 – Lower elevation areas in green impacted most by winter waterlogging.

8. Implementation of priorities for DWMP

Previously, the effectiveness of wastewater management in the City has been limited due to lack of resources, staffing, and recent overarching financial restrictions such as rate-capping. However there are a number of priorities which have been identified during review of the former 2013 DWMP which should be addressed in this *Action Plan*.

Key strategies/priorities include:

- Strategy 1:** Address data gaps, audit high-risk sites, and connect legacy sites to sewer
- Strategy 2:** Increase owner knowledge and maintenance of their onsite wastewater systems
- Strategy 3:** Develop policies and procedures
- Strategy 4:** Investigate enhanced Permit Conditions to increase maintenance compliance
- Strategy 5:** Source funding for DWMP implementation and/or wastewater management officer
- Strategy 6:** Performance Review and Risk Management
- Strategy 7:** Work with Planning Unit and Risk Mapping outputs to enhance unsewered growth development
- Strategy 8:** Enhance data collection and reporting systems
- Strategy 9:** Increase engagement with Wannon Water to enhance OWS management across the LGA

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8.1. DWMP implementation

Implementation will be undertaken by Council's Environmental Health Unit in accordance with the level of resourcing available. Without resourcing, the DWMP will be a strategic document outlining Council's intentions. Potential funding options are detailed in *Strategy 5*.

8.2. DWMP audit and review

The implementation of the DWMP will include progress reporting. The key stakeholder Wannon Water will receive a copy of these progress reports. Other stakeholders will be provided reporting where interest is shown to do so.

In accordance with *Clause 29 (6) of the SEPP Waters 2018*, Council will conduct an audit to assess progress of the DWMP at least every three years and publish the report on its website.

Council will review this DWMP at least every five years per the requirements of *Clause 29*.

8.3. DWMP stakeholder engagement

Council (Landtech Consulting) produced a draft DWMP (2020-2025) for dissemination amongst stakeholders who were invited to provide feedback during a four-week consultation process.

The key stakeholder is Wannon Water who are responsible for the management of sewer infrastructure. Other stakeholders include:

- Owners or users of OWS's;
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority;
- Environment Protection Authority;
- Department Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP);
- Land Developers, Building Designers, Town Planners, Surveyors, and Civil Engineers; and
- Plumbers.

8.4. Existing OWS management in WCC

Making decisions about wastewater system selection, sizing and siting, needs to be based on site-context and localised environmental conditions, rather than adopting a 'one-size-fits-all approach' to minimum lot size or wastewater land application type and sizing. This DWMP advocates an approach whereby all wastewater systems are designed to match intrinsic site conditions.

This approach should ensure that future unsewered rural residential development within each study area only proceeds on land that has an acceptable capacity for on-site wastewater assimilation and management.

The current situation with domestic wastewater in Warrnambool City is summarised below.

- The existing onsite wastewater situation in WCC mirrors that of surrounding rural and coastal/hinterland LGA's in Victoria. However WCC has performed well with 80.6% of systems including a current permit. With suggested actions in this Plan the EH Unit could aim for >95% database coverage into the future and increased OWS management effectiveness.
- Compliance with *ISO 30001 Risk Management* is possible notwithstanding minor data gaps, and therefore increased future effective management of the environmental and public health impacts of OWS's.
- Unsewered areas within the LGA include west south-west fringes of the city such as Dennington and Yarpurk, with Woodford, Bushfield, and Wangoom to the north, Allansford to the east, and Hopkins Point to the south. Warrnambool is fortunate not to exist within potable water supply catchments where OWS prescriptions and regulatory measures are typically increased.

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Figure 72 – Skeletal sandy loam soils within watercourse setbacks require careful monitoring of such systems within the Banksia Drive area.

- Currently 998 OWS's exist within Council boundaries and require both EH Unit-based management and enhanced system maintenance, system monitoring and performance for effective OWS outcomes.
- There are 196 non-permit OWS's (no compliant permit in place) in key constraint areas such as Bushfield, Woodford, Allansford etc., with many on reduced size lots (<2000m²), within watercourse setbacks, and with aged systems (>25 years old) (see Figure 73 for unsewered area lot size summary).
- A further 802 systems have permits, again a proportion of these have similar constraints listed above. Jago (2018)²⁶ and others highlight the importance of maximising knowledge of existing system location, age, maintenance history, and performance. The compilation of high-coverage system data is a key requirement of this Plan and detailed in *Strategies 1 and 8*.
- Sewerage planning should take into account the existing stock of OWS's, particularly within and on the boundary of regional cities. These zones often contain higher population densities and small (reduced <0.5ha) parcel sizes, amplifying health risks from wastewater systems.
- Approximately 42 'legacy systems' (dwelling within sewer network not connected to sewer) within sewered areas exist such as Allansford, Dennington, and Warrnambool; a key issue requiring attention due to the potential impact of failing OWS's within the reticulated water coverage area.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that a key barrier to building sewer infrastructure is distributing capital cost obligations in an equitable manner. It is usually impossible to broker voluntary agreements between the mix of existing households with OWS's of varying levels of performance and time since installation, and the property developer who is typically seeking to minimise construction costs.
- What has been observed in practice is that each party act in their own economic interest and often seek to avoid making payment if legally able to do so, even when they gain benefit from the group provision of sewer. The other parties then understandably do not wish, or are simply not able, to pay for the entire sewer scheme and the proposal does not progress further.²⁷

²⁶ Victorian Government 2018, Victorian Attorney General's Department. Managing Impacts from Domestic Wastewater. Accessed from: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>

²⁷ Ballarat City Council 2018. Ballarat City Council Domestic Wastewater Management Plan; Accessed from: <https://mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/43478/documents/98324>

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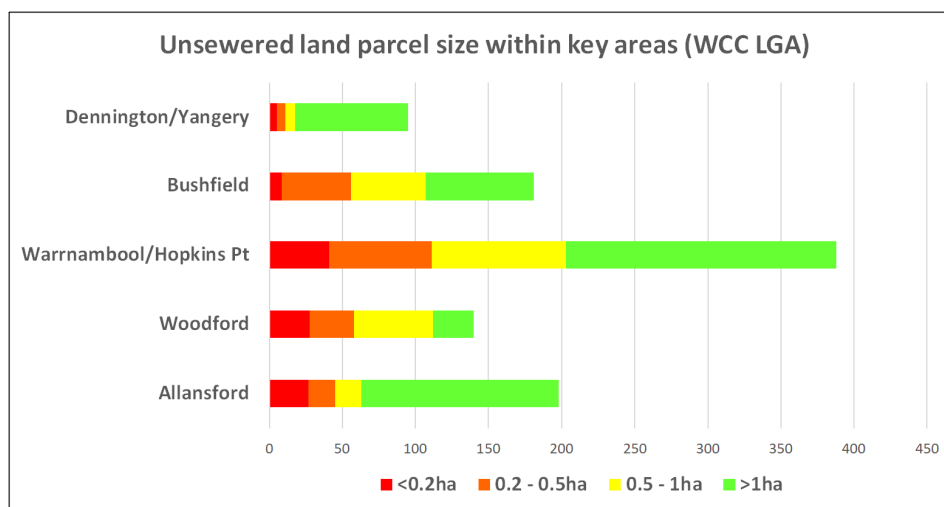


Figure 73 – As with most unsewered areas in Victoria, optimising lot size for effective wastewater treatment is a key aim for sustainable onsite wastewater management.

9. ACTION PLAN

9.1. DWMP Strategies

This Plan has identified 9 key strategies for the management of onsite wastewater.

Strategy 1: Address data gaps, audit high-risk sites, and connect legacy sites to sewer

A comprehensive assessment of onsite wastewater systems within the LGA would establish the basis for a coherent, efficient, and cost-effective approach to planning and the provision of sewer infrastructure for a growing regional coastal city.

A complete OWS dataset would support Environmental Health Unit (EH Unit) efficiency and has the potential to improve collective system management, reduce the time and cost of complex septic installations, provide efficient system location data to owners (plumbers, and builders), and supporting components of *ISO 30001 (Risk Management)*.²⁸

The aim should be to increase logged and mapped location and operational performance information of the approximate 226 OWS's with no permit, of unknown age, operational risk, and maintenance history. The end goal is to have all 998 OWS's accurately mapped, and with a known operational risk (OR) status logged into the system database.

The wastewater database will be enhanced by transfer of archived permits, increased location and performance data, and requiring minor modifications to the wastewater component of the *TechOne* system to achieve this.

Table 9 – Strategy 1.

Strategy 1	Actions	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Address data gaps (non-permit systems)	<p>-Collate existing archived data sources to locate and determine non-permit system type and age (for follow-up inspection/permit creation/and/or upgrade);</p> <p>-Aim for entire coverage of wastewater systems, their locations, land capability (LC risk) and operational risk* required to support ISO 30001.</p>	Dec 2024	EHO IT GIS Officer Admin staff	<p>Increase in database coverage</p> <p>Operational Risk ratings</p>

²⁸ Towong Shire Council 2015. TSC Domestic Wastewater Management Plan; Accessed from: [https://www.towong.vic.gov.au/planning-rules-payments/planning-building/planning/images/DWMP_Working_Draft_September_2016\(2\).pdf](https://www.towong.vic.gov.au/planning-rules-payments/planning-building/planning/images/DWMP_Working_Draft_September_2016(2).pdf)

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	-Implement permits for located/mapped non-permit systems; -Apply/upgrade Operational Risk rating to inspected systems;			logged
Audit high-risk sites	-Audit/Inspect high-risk sites to locate, map, assess risk, and determine maintenance/upgrade requirements: Lots <2,000m ² with no permit, inside watercourse setbacks; Lots <2,000m ² with permit, inside watercourse setbacks; Lots 2,000m ² to 5,000m ² with no permit, inside watercourse setbacks; Lots 2,000m ² to 5,000m ² with permit, inside watercourse setbacks; Lots 2,000m ² to 5,000m ² with no permit, outside watercourse setbacks;	Dec 2024	EHO IT GIS Officer	Numbers of systems without permits located, upgraded, and issued permit Number high risk sites inspected, and risk mitigated
Connect (82) legacy sites to sewer	-Utilise connect to sewer options process created within this DWMP; -Negotiate with Wannon Water regarding inspection and resourcing a connect to sewer program (see <i>Strategy 9</i>);	Dec 2023	EHO IT GIS Officer Wannon Water	Number legacy sites connected to sewer

*Operational Risk generated using key parameters.

Strategy 2: Increase owner knowledge and maintenance of their onsite wastewater systems

Regular maintenance of OWS's often does not occur due to lack of owner knowledge. Ensuring owners (and occupiers/renters) of unsewered properties have the education to better understand their responsibilities in the operation and maintenance of their systems, is key to reducing impacts from OWS's.

Meetings with owners to explain current regulations and requirements for maintenance is identified to be a powerful way of raising awareness, increasing maintenance, and educating system owners around system function, however is resource intensive.

Low AWTS maintenance throughout Victoria must be addressed, however current system warranty and EPA maintenance requirements (quarterly – approx. \$90-\$300 per service) become cost prohibitive for most owners, and where the EPA should be lobbied to accept twice-yearly service to increase 'real' levels of maintenance compliance and desired performance outcomes.

As the database of OWS increases in coverage and becomes more accurate and refined, relevant messaging will become easier and more effective to deliver to system owners.²⁹ Reports can be auto-generated from *TechOne* targeting specific user groups, locations, system types, and maintenance requirements, providing simple tools to actively manage communications.

Table 10 – Strategy 2.

Strategy 2	Actions	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Increase owner knowledge and their maintenance of OWS's	Targeted communication actions to increase owner's system maintenance (to understand system requirements, location, type, and owner maintenance responsibilities); Utilise <i>manual & automated reporting</i> from TechOne for targeted mail-out/bulk email/phone/site meetings etc., to communicate education information and maintenance alerts (enforced) based on priority OWS's such as:	Dec 2023	EHO Admin support IT	Number systems maintained above 2019 background level Number education

²⁹ Victorian Government 2018, Victorian Attorney General's Department. Managing Impacts from Domestic Wastewater. Accessed from: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>

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Utilise enhanced wastewater database for automated maintenance and education communication alerts for system owners, transferred properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-permit property owners (system details, promote inspection, deliver education resources); Permit-based primary systems within setbacks on lots (<5,000m²); All AWTS, secondary systems to encourage regular system maintenance; All other primary systems regarding general system operation, problems with septic systems, pump-out frequency, basic maintenance actions; and New owners, persons moving into unsewered dwelling, estate agents, owners of unsewered dwellings with tenants, owners upgrading systems etc. 			packs sent to property owners, stakeholders
	Amend WCC vendor statements to include wastewater status.	Dec 2023		Number systems upgraded as result of increased education
	Enhance Council OWS resources to include website, factsheets, installation guide, DWMP, approvals process, connect to sewer information, community-based workshops, short-video, guest plumber video, articles in local media, social-media, other community engagement platforms etc;	Ongoing		Number workshops and community wastewater forums held annually for plumbers and community
	Plumber information provision should be increased (enhance knowledge of alternative system install techniques and operation and changed legislation/guidelines) via information dissemination; and,	Ongoing		
	Complete Onsite Wastewater Installation/Maintenance Guide.	Dec 2022	EHO Admin support	Guide completed and numbers posted / viewed

Strategy 3: Develop policies and procedures

Effectively-considered *policies and procedures* should be prepared to provide a framework from which to guide OWS management within the City, including techniques for managing non-compliance. This includes a procedure for effective internal maintenance and management of WCC-operated systems in sewerage areas at risk of causing environmental impact.

Most procedures are required to be developed such as but not limited to non-permit to permit process, new system approvals procedure, and upgrade approvals processes for aged and failing systems. The development of a strategy to prioritise sewer connection is required with input from Wannon Water to connect legacy sites to sewer.³⁰

Table 11 – Strategy 3.

Strategy 3	Actions	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Develop policies and procedures (to include permit conditions, new system approvals, and upgrade of aged/failing systems)	Develop the following procedures to become policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New system approvals process; Upgrade approvals process; Connect to sewer process; Permit condition changes; Non-permit to permit process; 	June 2021	EHO Admin support	Number procedures completed and implemented
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCA assessment process; Approved LCA assessors list/process; Audit/Inspection process; System location data collection/transfer process; Operational Risk ranking process; 	June 2023		Systems upgraded through utilising upgrade and enforcement procedures

³⁰ Mansfield Shire Council 2014. Mansfield Shire Council Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, Accessed from: <https://www.mansfield.vic.gov.au/residents/building-and-planning/septic-tanks/domestic-wastewater-management-plan>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enforcement (failing/aged/non-maintained systems) process;• EHO training procedure;• Domestic Wastewater process (policy);• Transferring OWS permits when property subdivided process;• Develop process for cancelling permits when sewer is connected via a link with Wannon Water.	June 2024		
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Strategy 4: Investigate enhanced Permit Conditions to increase maintenance compliance

Currently OWS permit conditions restrict the ability of Council to enforce non-compliance of system maintenance and upgrade (30+years old systems). The permit system (via the EP Act 1970) is the key method of enforcement and must be a focus of this DWMP (currently under legislative review with information expected from the Victorian EPA by June 2020).

Permit conditions must be strengthened to both assist with increased system maintenance, upgrade, and compliance with permit conditions.

The EH Unit should seek advice from DELWP, EPA, and WCC legal sources regarding the opportunity to retrospectively amend existing permits, issue new permits, or introduce a local law to add conditions requiring regular maintenance and replacement of systems after 30 years on all permits etc. This should concur with outcomes of the updated EP Act in 2020.

Table 12 – Strategy 4.

Strategy 4	Actions	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Investigate enhanced Permit Conditions to increase maintenance compliance	Seek legal advice (and liaise with EPA) as to current <i>Permit to Install/Use</i> conditions to assist in increased maintenance compliance and enforcement processes such as:	June 2022	EHO Senior WCC management Legal sources	Number properties increase in maintenance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements to service (maintenance frequency based on system type and risk); Connect to sewer; Retrospective Permit conditions (systems currently without permits, current permit holding systems); Upgrade requirements stated; <i>Enforcement process</i> (failing/aged/unmaintained systems) (detailed in Permit conditions); Establish permit conditions for retrofitting septic tanks to achieve improved treatment efficacy in upgrade situations; Consider introduction of 2-yearly owner-instigated OWS 'condition report' requirement (on a timed or EHO-directed basis); Annual secondary treatment effluent quality sampling and reporting conditions; A requirement for activated alarms to be fitted to pumps and operable and monitored at all times; A requirement that risers be fitted to all system components and all access openings brought to ground level for permanent system location; 			Number properties connect to sewer
				Number properties upgraded
				Number permit conditions changed, positive OWS outcomes
	Permit conditions included for commercial-sized activities to have pre-treatment (e.g. grease trap) as per Wannon Water trade waste requirements.	Dec 2022		Change in permit conditions
	Consider waiving 'alter' fee for self-identified upgrades.	June 2022		Action accepted

Strategy 5: Source funding for DWMP implementation and/or wastewater management officer

The income derived from existing statutory fees and charges for OWS management within WCC EH Unit will not adequately resource a DWMP inspection or implementation program. The sourcing of funding for the implementation of, for example, a connect to sewer project, high-risk inspection program, retrospective permit issue program, could fund a part-time OWS management officer to complete such actions.

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A large regional Council recently (2018) suggested³¹ that the approximate cost for a full-time authorised officer is in the order of \$80-90,000 per annum (400-600 inspections). This equates to an ongoing cost per septic tank of less than \$91 per annum for the 998 operational systems within the LGA.

The case for DWMP implementation may be more achievable if the officer was employed part time (0.4 EFT etc.) to audit high-risk OWS's, perform strategic education activities, and improved data recording.

Consideration of innovative funding and resourcing measures are required and may include application to varied-level government agency funding sources and by using programs such as the EPA OPLE (Officer for Protection of the Local Environment) program or Swinburne/Flinders University Environmental Health student or contract options could be considered for implementation of parts of this Plan.

Table 13 – Strategy 5.

Strategy 5	Action	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Sourcing funding for wastewater audit/enforcement officer	Investigate options for funding for audit/enforcement officer from the options explored:	Ongoing	EHO Wannon Water GHGMA WCC EPA Vic Govt. Legal sources Wastewater system inspection contractor	Funding options considered and enacted
	Option 1: Septic tank fee for service			Funding raised each financial year
	Option 2: Joint funding from key stakeholders			
	Option 3: Pump out levy model			Time-fraction OWS management officer employed
	Option 4: Funding through the general rate base			
	Option 5: Government licencing programs			
	Investigate resource options such as EPA OPLE program, EHO Technician, wastewater contractor, or student placement options.	Dec 2022		

Strategy 6: Performance Review and Risk Management

Managing the risk posed by OWS's and understanding performance outcomes resulting from such actions will support efficacious OWS management within the LGA.

Targeted system inspections must be risk assessment-based and coupled with compliance action in accordance with the *Enforcement Procedure* (see *Strategy 3*). The development of an *Operational Risk* (OR) profile should provide ongoing data for strategically targeting future wastewater inspection, education, and upgrade actions.

Based on the requirement for this DWMP to address ISO30001 Risk Management Standard, Council should quantify gains in environmental outcomes as a result of actions within this plan.³² The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Audit (2018) recommended³³ key improvements to OWS management within Victoria which guide this Plan.

Reporting, audit, and review of this Plan are detailed in *Appendix 3* and support iterative and effective enhancements to this Plan.

³¹Ballarat City Council 2018. Ballarat City Council Domestic Wastewater Management Plan; Accessed from: <https://mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/43478/documents/98324>

³² International Organization for Standardization, ISO 30001 Risk Management. Accessed from: <https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/store/en/PUB100426.pdf>

³³ Victorian Government 2018, Victorian Attorney General's Department. Managing Impacts from Domestic Wastewater. Accessed from: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>

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Table 14 – Strategy 6.

Strategy 6	Actions	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Performance Review and Risk Management	Generate data and analyse performance of OWS's through quantitative means such as reporting the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies/procedures completed and implemented; • Systems upgraded utilising education and enforcement; • Systems maintained above 2019 background level; • Education packs sent to property owners; • Workshops and community forums held annually; • Legacy sites connected to sewer; • High-risk systems inspected; • Systems without permits located/upgraded/issued permit; • Catchment-based sampling process instigated (GHCMA, WW); • Improvement in stormwater quality standards (from background level) within high risk areas; 	Ongoing	EHO Wannon Water GHCMA Community groups	Trends showing wastewater management outcomes increasing within the City Operational Risk reduction trends across the system 'fleet'
	Conduct EH Unit strategic sampling of various type OWS's (AWTS, Sand Filters – 20:30:10 & 10:10:10) to assess compliance with EPA treatment standards and inform OWS management direction.	Annual		
	Design and implement environmental monitoring strategy in collaboration with EPA, WW, GHCMA, to include industrial areas, high-risk localities, stormwater and groundwater etc. for environmental contaminants (e.g. nutrients and pathogens), including seeking funding sources for such activities.	2023		
	Identify and collate relevant existing environmental data for the WCC LGA to quantify wastewater impacts on waterways, groundwater, public health, and climate change (add data to Exponaire framework where possible).	2023		
	Engage with agencies and community groups for a shared online portal for collection, storage, analysis, and sharing of environmental data results for monitoring impacts of OWS's.	2023		

Strategy 7: Work with Planning Unit and Risk Mapping outputs to enhance unsewered growth development.

The EH Unit and Wannon Water should actively engage with the WCC planning unit to ensure land capability and wastewater constraints are considered at the earliest possible planning stage within unsewered developments.

Integrated actions such as those listed below should be supported by land capability risk data, maps, and overlays generated for this Plan. Such data will require periodic update by WCC's GIS officer.

Table 15 – Strategy 7.

Strategy 7	Action	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Work with Planning Unit and Risk Mapping outputs to	Integrate with Planning Unit at strategic planning and subdivision developmental stages to ensure sustainable OWS options are planned into future unsewered growth areas and continued referral to EH Unit continues;	Ongoing	EHO Planning Unit Engineering Unit GIS Officer (support)	Input into sustainable wastewater growth outcomes, outcomes

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enhance unsewered growth development	Approvals processes and alternative OWS prescriptions, minimum standards workshops with Planning staff, to increase system awareness and suggest changes to the approvals process;	6-monthly		achieved
	Meet with Planning Unit and Wannon Water annually to discuss sewer programs, future unsewered planning proposals, updates to EPA Codes, legislative and regulatory change regarding OWS's;	6-monthly		
	Provide LC risk map and Exponaire (wastewater) page training to EH and Planning staff;	Annual		
	The EH Unit should support transparent approvals, upgrade, connect to sewer, and strategic education approaches and a reduced need to obtain LCAs. This reduces processing time and cost of obtaining an OWS permit.	Ongoing		
	In instances where the proposed site has identified constraints or other complexities, Council reserves the right to require an LCA at the EH Unit's discretion.	Ongoing		
	It is proposed that the EH Unit develop a wastewater installation guide with approvals, upgrade, and system maintenance guidelines, to assist in reducing the cost of installing and operating an OWS, and providing planners, owners, plumbers, and additional stakeholders key OWS information.	June 2022		
	Investigate sewer option for these settlements.	June 2022		

Strategy 8: Enhance data collection and reporting systems

The current wastewater database is in the process of being migrated from *Health Manager* to *TechOne* which is an opportune time to revamp database use and function to support key priorities of this Plan such as increased education and system maintenance actions.

The aim of an effective wastewater database is to enhance customer service, provide rapid access to system information for EHOs/stakeholders, provide a repeatable data collection and system location process, and providing a specific wastewater *Exponaire* platform, supported by risk mapping and land capability risk assessment data.

Table 16 – Strategy 8.

Strategy 8	Action	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Enhance data collection system to include new system location and digitisation process, dedicated OWS Exponaire	Utilise actions in <i>Strategy 1</i> to aim for complete database coverage and integration of archival paper-based and non-permit records;	Dec 2024	EHO Plumbers Service agents Admin support IT	Numbers of service reports lodged on online system
	New and upgraded TechOne interface for enhanced system information, system location, maintenance actions, transfer of data process etc.;	Dec 2023		Number service reports above background level 2019
	Develop Exponaire wastewater page/platform to include all land capability (LC) risk layers, including total risk layer for EH, Planning, and Assets department use;	June 2022		

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platform, online service reports from plumbers and system owners.	Automated system reporting (and mail-merge) as in <i>Strategy 2</i> to be created for time-interval and risk-based system communications not limited to:	June 2022		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer report – new owners, tenants of unsewered properties; AWTS quarterly maintenance, 3-year septic pump-out, Sand Filter/Worm Farm annual maintenance (email where possible); Plumbers annual workshop regarding changed approvals, alternative system install and EPA regulatory processes; Connect to sewer compliance information; Service/maintenance completed annually across LGA; Specific system types (for audit); High-risk, within setback, small lot, aged system reports for targeted inspection and education; Owners of rental properties within unsewered areas. 			
	Implement modifications to <i>TechOne</i> to record inspections, service events, system maps, pump-outs, building age, upgrade history etc;	June 2022		
	Develop system component GPS location process including added <i>TechOne</i> field via <i>Mapit GIS</i> or other mobile data collection process to include key attribute data during new, alter, upgrade, or inspection stage;	Dec 2022		
	Develop simple online maintenance/service reporting system such as <i>Google Forms</i> , <i>Intramaps</i> , <i>Crisisworks</i> , or <i>SepticTrack</i> integrated with <i>TechOne</i> for plumbers and owners;	Dec 2022		
	EHO's to receive training using <i>Google Earth</i> (or other simple) GIS program to digitise final location of system components using <i>MapIT GIS</i> data and enter LC and OR risk data (requires GIS Officer to periodically update/upload to <i>Exponaire</i>);	Dec 2022		
	Ensure 'legacy system' Wannon Water sewer connection data is updated regularly on GIS / <i>Exponaire</i> ;	Dec 2022 (then ongoing)		

Strategy 9: Increase engagement with Wannon Water to enhance OWS management across the LGA

Council will continue to engage with Wannon Water (WW) regarding planning of sewerage services and to encourage the community to connect to reticulated sewer where available.

WCC should establish an agreed-criteria with Wannon Water to assess risk and drive feasibility assessment of alternatives to OWS, including whole of community costs.

Table 17 – Strategy 9.

Strategy 9	Actions	Delivery date	Person responsible	How measured
Increase engagement with Wannon Water to enhance WCC OWS management across the LGA.	Engage with Wannon Water regarding their ongoing and future planning of sewerage services.	Twice year	EHO	MOU's signed
	Both WCC and WW to support and encourage the community to connect to sewer via education, inspection, and enforcement processes.	Ongoing	Wannon Water GHCMA	Funding arrangements developed
	Collaborate with Wannon Water, DELWP, and GHCMA to establish an evidence base for measuring the impact of domestic wastewater within the City's catchments.	Annual meeting		Workshops staged and attended

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	Liaise with industry associations, WW, and State (EPA/DEWLP) agencies to fund and develop materials (e.g. You Tube videos) for generic on-site wastewater education, annual newsletter, school education, fact sheets for wastewater industry etc.	Dec 2023	Information shared between agencies
	Review outcomes of EP Act review/changes due in June 2020 regarding enhanced permit wording, renewal processes, and introducing/enforcing fees.	Dec 2022	
	Develop process/procedure to review Commercial properties (<5000L/day in unsewered areas) (restaurants, cafes, bowling clubs, schools) regularly to ensure ongoing compliance. This could be addressed by integrating the monitoring of these systems into other EH Unit inspections (e.g. Food Act inspections).	June 2022	
	Commercial properties in unsewered areas with EPA Works Approval (systems >5000L/day) systems. Establish information exchange process between the EH Unit and the EPA to have an awareness of commercial systems operating within the LGA.	Dec 2022	

9.2. Conclusion

Warrnambool City Council plans to improve its regulation of key issues relating to domestic wastewater management via the implementation of its 2020-25 DWMP. This Plan builds upon the work achieved by the previous DWMP released in 2013 and has 9 strategies designed to address these issues.

Various options are provided within this Plan to sustainably fund its implementation over the next five years. Much needed modifications to policies, procedures, and enhanced permit conditions, will provide a framework for key strategies to increase whole-of-LGA OWS maintenance.

The Plan is intended to deliver a coherent approach to increasing coverage of the OWS database, educating stakeholders and engaging with the community, supporting increased system maintenance, and improving the process by which OWS permits are issued.

Council and Wannon Water should work closely to develop a transparent, equitable, and efficient process to maximise connect to sewer, and increase collective system maintenance via application of ISO30001-related risk management, to support future sustainable growth of Warrnambool's unsewered areas.

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Figure 74 – Rural Living/Farm-zoned land-use with OWS's in the foreground within watercourse setbacks (Hopkins River)

From: [Glenn Reddick](#)
To: [Guy Price](#)
Cc: [Stephanie Bant](#)
Subject: RE: feedback for Warrnambool City Council's DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN closes 30 June 2020
Date: Tuesday, 30 June 2020 4:52:38 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.gif](#)
[image003.gif](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.jpg](#)

Thanks Guy.

Steph please attach the last two emails to the report.

Many thanks.

From: Guy Price <GPrice@warrnambool.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2020 4:08 PM
To: Erica Kuhle <Erica.Kuhle@epa.vic.gov.au>
Cc: Glenn Reddick <greddick@warrnambool.vic.gov.au>
Subject: RE: feedback for Warrnambool City Council's DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN closes 30 June 2020

Good afternoon Erica, and thank you for writing.

If there are no items in the Plan that have resulted in a response then Council will not ask for any further feedback on this.

Regards,

Guy Price
Ph. 03 5559 4933

From: Erica Kuhle <Erica.Kuhle@epa.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2020 4:03 PM
To: Guy Price <GPrice@warrnambool.vic.gov.au>
Subject: RE: feedback for Warrnambool City Council's DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN closes 30 June 2020

Dear Guy

Thank you for your email about the feedback for the Warrnambool City Council's Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). EPA do not generally comment on these plans. Please advise if there's any specific advice you require from EPA on the plan.

Regards

Erica Kuhle
Team Leader - Compliance & Enforcement
South West Region

Environment Protection Authority Victoria
South West Office - Geelong
☎ 0396952680 | E erica.kuhle@epa.vic.gov.au | www.epa.vic.gov.au

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From: Guy Price <GPrice@warrnambool.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 3:15 PM
Subject: feedback for Warrnambool City Council's DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN closes 30 June 2020

Dear stakeholder.

This email is to advise you that feedback for Warrnambool City Council's DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN closes 30 June 2020.

The plan is accessible at - <https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/news/draft-domestic-wastewater-plan-out-public-comment> and we ask that you please send comments on the plan to:

1. contact@warrnambool.vic.gov.au or,
2. write to Co-ordinator Environmental Health, Warrnambool City Council, PO Box 198, Warrnambool 3280.

Guy Price | Coordinator Environmental Health | Environmental Health

Warrnambool City Council | Warrnambool 3280 | P.O Box 198 Warrnambool 3280

T: +61 355594933 | M: +61 436365822 | F: +61 355594900 | E: gprice@warrnambool.vic.gov.au

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In reply please quote: [Click [here](#) and type trim reference ie C2009/00951]
Enquiries to: Jessica Quinlivan

01/06/2020

Warrnambool City Council
25 Liebig St
Warrnambool 3280

Dear WCC,

RESPONSE TO WCC DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Congratulations on putting together the WCC Domestic Wastewater Management Plan. From reading through it, it is a very informative document regarding the current state of on-site wastewater systems in the Warrnambool region and is transparent on where the gaps in knowledge are. Below are some comments that have been collated from across the various parts of Wannon Water who would be interested in the outcomes of the management plan.

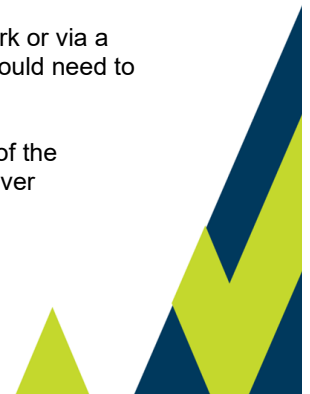
- It is encouraging to see strategies outlined within the document around broader community education and further understanding the internal permit processes for on-site systems.
- Similarly, it's good to see that there's an extensive knowledge bank with minimal data gaps in the current map of OWS.
- We are concerned, through the recurring suggestion of sewerage areas of high density OWS, that an expectation will be built that Wannon Water will be or is currently looking into developing sewer in zones of concern. We do not plan for septic areas to be provided with sewer as we assume the areas are being managed adequately to allow OWS's to sustainably perform into the future. Our sewer planning is around urban growth areas around Warrnambool and Allansford. To remove expectations, we request that the wording be changed from the single solution of sewerage these areas, to a more robust exploration of solutions being needed.
- You have highlighted in the actions section of the plan that it is a document of intent and subject to funding. Additionally, you have highlighted an action to secure funding in collaboration with stakeholders. We are open to discussions and engagement around developing plans, however we are not in a position to fund programs outside the scope of urban growth and already sewerage areas.
- If sewer is available through an extension from the existing gravity network or via a private pump and pressure main, we are here to facilitate that. Council would need to be using their powers to force this to happen and drive the process.
- It should not be mentioned in the report that Wannon Water formed part of the engagement for the development of this plan, as Wannon Water were never

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Phone 1300 926 666

Email info@wannonwater.com.au
DX 28029

wannonwater.com.au

ABN 94 007 404 851





contacted. Wannon Water remain ready to be engaged when council can resource this activity.

- The proprietary product Rhizopod is referenced in the document, we suggest using a more generic term for evapotranspiration pods to remove any perceived bias toward one solution.
- The last two paragraphs in section 3.4.4 should be changed. The second last paragraph should decouple to ensure that the water authority is not linked in with the VAGO reports findings of agencies that are responsible for OWS. Similarly, the last paragraph reads factually incorrect, as water authorities are not responsible for managing onsite domestic wastewater systems (OWS).
- In the “Findings” section of 6.4 I think it would be more accurate to warn that evapotranspiration pods can fail and will fail if the correct level of ongoing maintenance is not applied. Wannon Water would like to see ongoing compliance monitoring applied to these systems as the maintenance and upkeep required is extensive. A water balance, vegetation assessment and Risk Management framework should be applied before these types of systems are permitted.
- In section 6.8, we recommend you remove the assertion that Wannon Water is responsible for monitoring of legacy systems.
- Section 8, strategy 9 needs to be corrected. Wannon Water does not manage OWS.
- Strategy 6, Table 14 lists Wannon Water as “Person responsible” - A more fitting column of “stakeholder” would be more accurate.

I am happy to be contacted if you have any questions regarding the feedback Wannon Water has supplied. We understand that it is unfortunate we weren't engaged in the development of the plan but hope you will take our comments in this letter on board.

Kind regards,

Jessica Quinlivan
Planning & Development Professional

Address PO BOX 1158 Warrnambool VIC 3280
Phone 1300 926 666

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Email info@wannonwater.com.au
DX 28029





Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

Our ref: SP469131
30 June 2020

Mr Guy Price
Coordinator Environmental Health
Warrnambool City Council

contact@warrnambool.vic.gov.au

State Government Offices
Cnr Fenwick & Little Malop Streets
PO BOX 103 GEELONG VIC 3220
bsw.planning@delwp.vic.gov.au
Tel: (03) 5226 4667
DX 216048

Dear Mr Price

PROPOSAL: Warrnambool City Council – Domestic Wastewater Management Plan
2020-2025
ADDRESS: Warrnambool City Council municipal boundary

Thank you for your correspondence dated and received on 26 June 2020, in respect of the above-described Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) 2020-2025.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has considered the above strategic document and provides the following comments for your assistance:

- This response represents the perspective of the DELWP Barwon South West (BSW) region and considers matters relevant to areas of policy for which the region is responsible, including Crown land, waterways, mapped Current Wetlands, native vegetation and biodiversity matters.
- The DWMP 2020-2025 sets out strategies to manage domestic wastewater within the Warrnambool City Council municipal boundary. Although the DWMP doesn't document direct impacts to Crown land, on-site domestic wastewater management is likely to generate indirect impacts. Particularly, the Merri River and Hopkins River, as well as significant waterbodies – namely Lake Gilleard – are Crown land and are likely to support native vegetation and other biodiversity values. Sites that are located in close proximity to water frontages are therefore of particular interest to DELWP and identification of these sites by Council may be a useful prompt for engagement with DELWP BSW region.
- DELWP BSW welcomes further consultation and engagement opportunities as the DWMP progresses, as outlined in Strategies 4 and 9 in the DWMP. Strategy 9 in particular offers opportunities to 'Collaborate with Wannon Water, DELWP and GHMCA to establish an evidence base for measuring the impact of domestic wastewater within the City's catchments' that DELWP BSW region would be pleased to participate in.
- As detail emerges, DELWP BSW region would be interested in reviewing site-specific elements, including where there may be implications for adjoining Crown land, waterways, mapped Current Wetlands, native vegetation or biodiversity matters.

If you have any queries regarding this matter, please contact Sarah Hall on telephone 0436 349 221.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Brooks
Program Manager Planning Approvals
Land and Built Environment
Barwon South West Region

Privacy Statement

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorised by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to the Privacy Coordinator, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, PO Box 500, East Melbourne, Victoria 8002



Warrnambool City Council response to comment on 2020-2025 DWMP (Version: 9.7.2020)

Wannon Water

Letter reference: C2009/00951

Wannon Water: Jessica Quinlivan

Letter date: 01/06/2020

Warrnambool City Council would like to thank Wannon Water for responding to the draft DWMP 2020-2025. Council through the Plan has the intention of increased positive and innovative engagement with Wannon Water as a key stakeholder within the LGA.

Strategy 9 clearly details this proposed engagement which has the potential to benefit both stakeholders, and the public health of the local community.

The following responses to feedback is provided below:

Bullet point 1

'It is encouraging to see strategies outlined within the document around broader community education and further understanding the internal permit processes for onsite systems. Similarly, it's good to see that there's an extensive knowledge bank with minimal data gaps in the current map of OWS'.

→ Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.

Bullet point 2

'very informative document regarding the current state of onsite wastewater systems in the Warrnambool region and is transparent on where the gaps in knowledge are'.

→ Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.

Bullet point 3

'We are concerned, through the recurring suggestion of sewerage areas of high density OWS, that an expectation will be built that Wannon Water will be or is currently looking into developing sewer in zones of concern'.

→ Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.

→ The report in now way suggests any additions to the sewer network now and into the future as a default position. WCC understands the inherent cost to water authorities in providing new sewer connection to unsewered areas and therefore it is not suggested within the report that this is the case.

'We do not plan for septic areas to be provided with sewer as we assume the areas are being managed adequately to allow OWS's to sustainably perform into the future. Our sewer planning is around urban growth areas around Warrnambool and Allansford. To remove expectations, we request that the wording be changed from the single solution of sewerage for these areas, to a more robust exploration of solutions being needed'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water and notes the focus on Warrnambool and Allansford for future sewer intentions.
- The Plan does not refer to the requirement for Wannon Water to sewer any parts of the LGA. It reports the current state of onsite wastewater system management and legislated regulatory requirements for Victoria.
- The Plan does refer to other sources such as the *Moyne/Warrnambool Rural Housing and Settlement Strategy Report (2010)* which suggests the current unsewered state of parts of Woodford and Bushfield are unsustainable. WCC referenced such sources which is the opinion of *CPG Australia* (the consultant) at the time.

Bullet point 4

'You have highlighted in the actions section of the plan that it is a document of intent and subject to funding. Additionally, you have highlighted an action to secure funding in collaboration with stakeholders. We are open to discussions and engagement around developing plans, however we are not in a position to fund programs outside the scope of urban growth and already sewerage areas. Council would need to be using their powers to force this to happen and drive the process'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.
- Council has never had expectations of suggested programs within the Plan to be funded by Wannon Water or any other party.
- Strategy 5 details potential funding options to increase regulatory compliance which does not include an expectation of funding from Wannon Water.

Bullet point 5

'If sewer is available through an extension from the existing gravity network or via a private pump and pressure main, we are here to facilitate that'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.

Bullet point 6

'It should not be mentioned in the report that Wannon Water formed part of the engagement for the development of this plan, as Wannon Water were never contacted. Wannon Water remain ready to be engaged when council can resource this activity'.

- Wannon Water were emailed on the 10th September 2019 along with other stakeholders '(DELWP, Glenelg-Hopkins CMA etc) with the subject heading:

Briefing Paper (key issues) - Warrnambool City Council - Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2019-2024;

-this was regarding being involved in the development of this Plan, however no response was received.

- After not receiving a response from Wannon Water the DWMP contractor and WCC fully intended to provide integration of Wannon Water feedback at the later draft stage.

Bullet point 7

'The proprietary product Rhizopod is referenced in the document, we suggest using a more generic term for evapotranspiration pods to remove any perceived bias toward one solution'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water and will make the required changes.

Bullet point 8

'The last two paragraphs in section 3.4.4 should be changed. The second last paragraph should decouple to ensure that the water authority is not linked in with the VAGO reports findings of agencies that are responsible for OWS. Similarly, the last paragraph reads factually incorrect, as water authorities are not responsible for managing onsite domestic wastewater systems (OWS)'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.
- WCC has quoted directly from the VAGO report (2018) which was a landmark investigation into the current state of onsite wastewater management throughout Victoria (link: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Managing-the-EnvironmentalImpacts-of-Domestic-Wastewater.pdf>).
- Further to this, the Plan makes it clear throughout that 'the key stakeholder is Wannon Water who are responsible for the management of sewer infrastructure', and not OWS management.

Bullet point 9

'In the "Findings" section of 6.4 I think it would be more accurate to warn that evapotranspiration pods can fail and will fail if the correct level of ongoing maintenance is not applied.'

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water however believes the detail provided in the Plan is accurate and not meant to be a detailed coverage of evapotranspiration pods or any other treatment system'.
- The WCC EH Unit has extensive experience with the assessment of various types of onsite wastewater systems throughout its unsewered LGA areas. This has provided cumulative evidence as to onsite systems that are effective in various sites and the constraints to effective disposal.
- Other proximal regional Councils, in similar high rainfall zones (and utilise evapotranspiration pods), require solutions to replace failed and aged wastewater systems on lots <2000m², and on non-conductive soil textures. Evidence to date suggests such systems are highly effective on sites lacking adequate land application areas.
- WCC would be happy to make changes if Wannon Water can provide researched evidence that such systems have an issue with failure.
- The Plan makes clear that all treatment and disposal options must be considered throughout an LGA with such varied constraints.

'Wannon Water would like to see ongoing compliance monitoring applied to these systems as the maintenance and upkeep required is extensive. A water balance, vegetation assessment and Risk Management framework should be applied before these types of systems are permitted'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.
- WCC does not agree that maintenance requirements are increased with the use of evapotranspiration systems with evidence suggesting the contrary.
- The WCC Environmental Health Unit utilises MAV and EPA-compliant water balance calculations and models to calculate land application areas.
- WCC requires further information regarding the need for a vegetation assessment which is not within EPA Code of Practice (891.4) compliance requirements.
- A risk assessment is performed for new and installed systems when a Land Capability Assessment is required for the proposed wastewater permit but not for systems not requiring one.
- It should be noted that WCC are not funded to perform compliance monitoring and have no inclination to raise additional fees by creating a Local Law or by raising Council rates. The WCC EH Unit are regulated to respond to public health complaints within the LGA which is typically how failed onsite wastewater issues are reported only.
- It should be noted that system owners are bound by maintenance, use, and Council reporting prescriptions, within *Permit to Use* and *Permit to Install* conditions (and the requirements of the Environment Protection Act 1970).

Bullet point 10

'In section 6.8, we recommend you remove the assertion that Wannon Water is responsible for monitoring of legacy systems'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water.
- Section 6.8 of the Plan (as detailed below) does not suggest in any way that Wannon Water is responsible for the monitoring of legacy systems.

6.8. Agency support for connect to sewer More support is always needed from water authorities such as Wannon Water with connect to sewer provisions, monitoring of 'legacy' systems, and supporting small township schemes for additional unsewered areas of Allansford, and new planning for Bushfield, and Woodford.

Bullet point 11

'Section 8, strategy 9 needs to be corrected. Wannon Water does not manage OWS'.

- Section 8 of Strategy 9 describes aims and objectives only, and in no way suggests that Wannon Water manages OWS's. Strategy 9 describes such actions as:

'engage with.....'
'WCC and WW to support and encourage the community to connect to sewer.....'
'collaborate with.....'
'liaise with industry associations.....'
'review outcomes of EP Act.....'
'develop process/procedure to review Commercial properties.....'
'establish information exchange process between the EH Unit and the EPA.....'

- WCC has reviewed the section and finds no reference to Wannon Water being responsible for the management of OWS's.

Bullet point 12

'Strategy 6, Table 14 lists Wannon Water as "Person responsible" - A more fitting column of "stakeholder" would be more accurate'.

- Council acknowledges the comment above from Wannon Water and will make the required changes.

Final paragraph

'I am happy to be contacted if you have any questions regarding the feedback Wannon Water has supplied. We understand that it is unfortunate we weren't engaged in the development of the plan....'

- Council again appreciates the work completed by Wannon Water in providing feedback to this draft DWMP.
- WCC advised Wannon Water on the 10th September 2019 (email evidence can be provided) of an invitation to participate in the DWMP process, but a response was not received.
- WCC would also suggest that throughout the Plan the intention is to increase and enhance engagement with key stakeholders such as Wannon Water, who have valuable technical and experiential expertise to integrate with the Plan, to continue sustainable onsite wastewater management throughout the respective management areas.

5.15. ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

PURPOSE

This report contains the record of one Advisory Committee meeting.

REPORT

1. Environment & Planning Advisory Committee – 22 July 2020 – refer **Attachment 1**.

ATTACHMENTS

1. EPAC Minutes July 2020 [5.15.1 - 2 pages]

RECOMMENDATION

That the record of the Environment & Planning Advisory Committee meeting held on 22 July 2020, be received.



Environment & Planning Advisory Committee Meeting Record

Date	Wednesday 22 July 2020	Time	04:30 PM to 6:00 PM	Location	Zoom Online Platform
Committee Members	Chair Cr. David Owen, Glenistair Hancock, Bruce Campbell, Trish Blakeslee Apologies – Leanne Williams, Fiona Golding, Steve Myers				
Council Officer Invitees	Andrew Paton, Director City Growth, Jodie McNamara - Manager City Strategy & Development, Lauren Schneider - Co-ordinator Natural Environment, Juan Donis – Sustainability Officer, Jacqui Balazs – Natural Environment Officer				
No	What				Who
1.	Welcome & Apologies				Chair
2.	Zero Waste Events Policy – Presentation by Lauren Schneider & Juan Donis – feedback provided				JD/LS
3.	Sustainable Council Buildings Policy – Presentation by Lauren Schneider & Juan Donis – feedback provided				JD/LS
4.	Native Vegetation Precinct Plan - Presentation by Lauren Schneider & Jacqui Balazs – feedback provided				JB/LS
5.	Wild Coast Landscape Master Plan - Presentation by Lauren Schneider & Jacqui Balazs – feedback provided				JB/LS
6.	Warrnambool Plant Selector Tool - Presentation by Lauren Schneider & Jacqui Balazs – feedback provided				JB/LS

7.	General Business Update : Green Wedges around Warrnambool – next meeting	
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5.16. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS REPORTS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the record of any assembly of Councillors, which has been held since the last Council Meeting, so that it can be recorded in the Minutes of the formal Council Meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Local Government Act provides a definition of an assembly of Councillors where conflicts of interest must be disclosed.

An Assembly of Councillors (however titled) means a meeting of an advisory committee of the Council, if at least one Councillor is present, or a planned or scheduled meeting of at least half of the Councillors and one member of Council staff which considers matters that are intended or likely to be-

a) the subject of a decision of the Council;

or

b) subject to the exercise of a function, duty or power of the Council that has been delegated to a person or committee-

but does not include a meeting of the Council, a special committee of the Council, an audit committee established under section 139, a club, association, peak body, political party or other organization.

The requirement for reporting provides increased transparency, particularly the declarations of conflict of interest.

REPORT

Section 80A(2) of the Local Government Act 1989 requires the record of an Assembly of Councillors be reported to the next practicable Ordinary Meeting of Council.

The record of the following Assembly of Councillors is enclosed:-

- Monday 20 July 2020 – refer **Attachment 1**
- Monday 27 July 2020 – refer **Attachment 2**

ATTACHMENTS

1. Assembly of Councillors Record 20 July 2020 [**5.16.1** - 1 page]
2. Assembly of Councillors Record 27 July 2020 [**5.16.2** - 1 page]

RECOMMENDATION

That the record of the Assembly of Councillors held on 20 and 27 July 2020, be received.

Assembly of Councillors Record

Written record in accordance with Section 80A(l) Local Government Act 1989

Name of Committee or Group (if applicable):	Councillor Briefing	
Date of Meeting:	20 July 2020	
Time Meeting Commenced:	3.45pm	
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr. T. Herbert, Mayor/Chairman Cr. R. Anderson Cr. S. Cassidy Cr. K. Gaston Cr. M. Neoh Cr. D. Owen Cr. P. Sycopoulis from 4:00pm	
Council Officers in Attendance:	Vikki King, Acting Chief Executive Officer Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Andrew Paton, Director City Growth Scott Cavanagh, Director City Infrastructure Glen Reddick, Manager City Amenity Alison Kemp, Manager Recreation & Culture Peter McArdle, Co-ordinator Local Laws Traffic Fire & Animal Control Julie Glass, Co-ordinator City Strategy Jodie McNamara, Manager City Strategy & Development	
Other persons present via Zoom Conferencing:	Rachel Hornsby, Hornsby Consulting	
Apologies		
Matters Considered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance Rules• Chief Executive Employment Matters Committee• Queens Road land• Proposed erection of bollards at 11 Dunvegan Court• Animal Shelter Services Tender• Special Charge Scheme Policy• Port of Warrnambool Reference Group minutes	
Other Matters Considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reid Oval Update• Mid Field CO-Vid Update• River Cruise Boat Mooring licence• Lake Gilleard Childers path GORT priorities• Senior Citizen Centre Signs• Race Club update• Cloud roof house	
Councillor Conflicts of interest Disclosures:		
Councillor's Name	Type of Interest	Item
Cr Neoh	Direct association	Reid Oval Update - Cr Neoh left the meeting at 5:20pm
Meeting close time:	5.35 pm	
Record Completed by:	Peter Utri Director Corporate Strategies	

Assembly of Councillors Record

Written record in accordance with Section 80A(I) Local Government Act 1989

Name of Committee or Group (if applicable):	Councillor Briefing	
Date of Meeting:	20 July 2020	
Time Meeting Commenced:	3.15pm	
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr. T. Herbert, Mayor/Chairman Cr. R. Anderson Cr. S. Cassidy Cr. K. Gaston Cr. M. Neoh Cr. D. Owen Cr. P. Sycopoulis	
Council Officers in Attendance:	Vikki King, Acting Chief Executive Officer Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Andrew Paton, Director City Growth Glenn Reddick, Acting Director City Infrastructure – Via Zoom Luke Coughlan, Manager, Infrastructure Services Paula Gardiner, Contractor, City Infrastructure Jodie McNamara, Manager, City Strategy & Development	
Other persons present via Zoom Conferencing:		
Apologies	Nil.	
Matters Considered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy & Procedures Review• Microsoft Enterprise Agreement• 127-135 Queens Road• Investment Policy• Procurement Policy• Domestic Wastewater Management Plan• Purchase of Jet Vac Drainage Truck• Off Kepler Street land purchase• Supply of FOGO liners tender• South Merri Precinct Plan• Street Lighting Hardware Procurement Tender• Horses on Lady Bay• Dogs on Leads• Building Victoria’s Recovery Taskforce – 69-75 Mortlake Road• Project Management Policy	
Other Matters Considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concrete pad failing at Moyjil lookout• Solar Light at harbour	
Councillor Conflicts of interest Disclosures:		
Councillor’s Name	Type of Interest	Item
Meeting close time:	5.50 pm	
Record Completed by:	Peter Utri Director Corporate Strategies	

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING FOR SECTION 66 IN-CAMERA CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

7.1. RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be adjourned to consider in-camera confidential items.

8. RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING

8.1. RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING

RECOMMENDATION

That in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the meeting be closed to members of the public.

9. SECTION 66 (IN CAMERA)

9.1. ADOPTION OF CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETING OF 23 MARCH 2020

9.2. CONFIDENTIAL PERSONNEL MATTER

**9.3. ADOPTION OF CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF CLOSED MEETINGS OF COUNCIL OF 6
AND 13 JULY 2020**

9.4. CONFIDENTIAL CONTRACTUAL MATTER

10. RESOLUTION TO RE-OPEN MEETING

10.1. RESOLUTION TO RE-OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be re-opened to members of the public.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

