Ballan West

Residential and Local Convenience Centre Assessment (RLCCA)

Ballan Growth Precinct 5

Prepared for Wel.Co

Ethos Urban

Prepared by Ethos Urban

14 February 2024 | 3220125

'Gura Bulga'

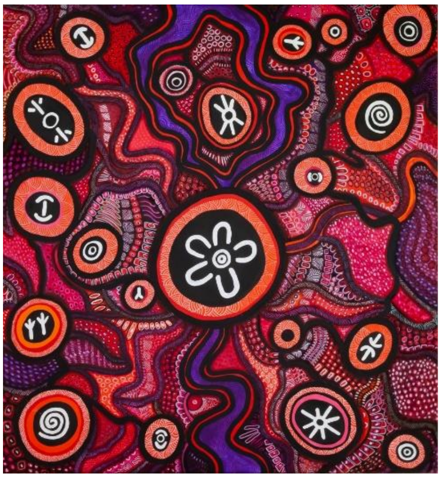
Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. Representing New South Wales.

'Dagura Buumarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing Victoria.



'Gadalung Djarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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Locational and Project Context

1. Ballan is a township located in Moorabool Shire, approximately 24 kilometres west of Bacchus Marsh and 81 kilometres west of Melbourne by road. Ballan is approximately 39 kilometres east of Ballarat.
2. The Western Freeway and the Ballarat railway line make Ballan easily accessible to both Melbourne and Ballarat.
3. The town is attractive to people seeking a rural, semi-rural or regional lifestyle that is within reasonable commuting distance of both Greater Melbourne and Ballarat.
4. Wel.Co is seeking a rezoning of the Subject Site, from Rural Living Zone (RLZ) to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ).
5. The rezoning will facilitate the development of the Subject Site of 99 hectares as envisaged by the Ballan Framework Plan and subsequently Amendment C88 to the Moorabool Planning Scheme (Clause 11.01-1L-03).
6. A concept plan for the urban development of the Subject Site has been prepared by Patch Design + Plan which provides preliminary guidance on the detailed site planning considerations. This allows for a total of 938 residential lots in a manner generally in accordance with Clause 11.01-1L-03 of the planning scheme.

Policy Context

7. As one of Moorabool Shire's key urban areas, it is important to ensure Ballan has sufficient residential land supply for a mixture of housing typologies which are available to the market in appropriate locations and which meet community need.
8. The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan also provides guidance on the future of urban development at Ballan. This includes recognising the location of Ballan in a peri-urban region with strong connections to Melbourne and Ballarat, and support for residential growth in a manner which retains rural character and environmental attributes.
9. Amendment C88 to the Moorabool Planning Scheme was adopted by Council in October 2019. According to the Planning Panel report, the expectation for ongoing population growth and demand for urban development in Ballan was accepted. In its report, the Panel noted the need to deliver economic opportunity in Ballan, and this was reflected in considerations relating to industrial land.
10. The draft Moorabool Retail Strategy outlines the need for local centres to be located where residents live beyond a comfortable walk to the nearest neighbourhood centre. In the context of Ballan and Precinct 5, the vast majority of future residents of Precinct 5 will be located beyond a comfortable walking distance (800m) to the key services provided in the Ballan Town Centre.
11. Consistent with the previous retail strategy, the draft identifies that the lowest centre in the hierarchy is defined as a Local Activity Centre (LAC) or Village Centre. A LAC is identified as typically having the presence of a single general store or small collection of day-to-day goods and services or visitor outlets. The typical size of a LAC is defined as being between 200m² to 1,000m² with a typical population served being between 1,000 to 4,000 persons. The proposed LAC for Precinct 5 aligns with these criteria.
12. The background report for the draft strategy identifies, on an indicative basis, a need for up to an additional 2,000m² of retail floorspace for Ballan by 2041, with a further 2,000m² to 3,000m² required between 2041 to 2061. As such, the potential exists for a share of this additional floorspace to be accommodated in Precinct 5 in the form of an LAC.

Residential Assessment

13. In 2022, Moorabool Shire had an estimated residential population of approximately 38,480 persons, with Ballan (or the study area) accounting for 8.3% of the Shire's population, or 3,210 residents. Between 2006 and 2022, the municipality's population increased by a total of approximately +12,400 persons, representing a +2.5% increase per annum, while Ballan has increased, at a slightly lower rate, at +2.3% per annum.
14. Id. Consultants produce population and dwelling forecasts for Moorabool Shire, and includes forecasts for the township of Ballan. The most recent forecasts were prepared in February 2023, and the growth rates for 2023

to 2036 have been adopted and applied to the current official ABS ERP release for the study area which represents a wider area compared to the id Ballan Area.

15. Forecasts anticipate a 2036 population in the study area of approximately 6,030 persons, with this figure some +2,700 persons above the Id estimate for 2023 of approximately 3,330 persons.
16. In 2036, the number of dwellings required in the study area to support forecast population is estimated to total approximately 2,720 dwellings, representing an increase of +1,200 dwellings over the 13-year period. This equates to an average requirement of +90 dwellings per year (1,200 dwellings/13yrs).
17. The increase in demand as identified by forecast Id reflects the adopted framework plan and the potential for Ballan to accommodate significant growth in the short to medium term. Noting that a previous residential assessment undertaken by the Consultant (Ethos Urban) estimated demand to be in the order of 54 dwelling per annum between 2021 and 2041 based on Forecast Id growth rates produced in 2015. Moreover, Forecast Id now anticipate an average of 81 dwellings per annum will be developed in the township area of Ballan between 2022 and 2036 (a smaller area to the study area used in this report).
18. Ballan had a median house price of $640,000 in the year ending June 2023, having increased by 26.7% since 2019. Since 2014, the median house price in Ballan has increased by an average of 7.6% per annum and illustrates strong recent level of interest shown in the local housing market.
19. Since 2014, the number of vacant land sales each year have generally been between 20 and 39 sales, with the exception of 2022 and 2023 where there was a high of 54 sales (2022) and a low of 4 sales (2023 FY to date).
20. Having regard for the variables likely to impact on the future demand for housing, two future dwelling demand scenarios for the study area have been prepared.
21. The base case scenario represents the adjusted forecast demand using id consultants' forecasts. This adjusted demand equates to approximately +90 dwellings per annum over the next 13-year period.
22. The higher growth scenario, for the purposes of the assessment, assumed the demand for dwellings equates to 115 dwellings per annum in the study area, representing a 30% increase in demand for dwellings from the base case scenario. The increase is based on the assumption that demand is not being met by the current release of new residential land in the study area, and therefore supply-led demand is possible if that supply is provided to the market (i.e. assumes presence of latent demand).
23. In total, zoned residential supply in the established areas of Ballan has the potential to accommodate 260 residential lots (rounded). This includes 150 single vacant residential lots, and a potential supply of approximately 110 lots on large subdividable sites in the GRZ4, NRZ6, NRZ7.
24. A further 1,640 lots are in the identified growth precincts of Ballan, including the yield from the Subject Site outlined in the current concept plan. The Future Investigation Area to the south of the rail line is estimated to have an indicative yield of around 950 lots, noting the exact nature of future development in this area is currently unknown.

Local Convenience Centre Assessment

25. The Subject Site represents a key growth area for the Ballan township, and is planned to accommodate 938 dwellings and in the order of 2,400 residents at full development. At present, an allocation for a Local Convenience Centre is not identified in the framework plan. However, an opportunity has been identified by Wel.Co to develop a small local convenience centre towards the eastern edge of the estate along the Werribee River.
26. Significant separation (approximately 3km driving distance) exists between the proposed Local Convenience Centre and the Ballan Town Centre which is also separated from the existing residential areas of Ballan. Therefore, the proposed Local Convenience Centre is unlikely to undermine the role and function of Ballan Town Centre as identified in the Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy, 2016.
27. The Ballan Town Centre provides a mix of retail and non-retail facilities that serve the convenience shopping needs of local residents. The Town Centre is anchored by an IGA supermarket and provides a range of other retail facilities such as fresh food shops, cafés, take-away food outlets, a pharmacy, a True Value Hardware store, multiple boutique clothing and homewares stores and a number of opportunity shops
28. Only two shopfront vacancies were recorded during a field visit in May 2022. Therefore, a very low rate of vacancy is present in the Town Centre indicating a healthy trading position.

29. The retail Catchment Area's population is forecast to reach 11,690 persons in 2036, representing a significant increase of +3,220 persons on the current population in 2023 at an average increase of +250 persons annually.

30. A small Local Convenience Centre at the Subject Site would be well-placed to serve future residents of the Ballan West growth area, catering to their very basic top-up convenience daily retail and shopping needs. Residents would still need to travel into the Ballan Town Centre and to Bacchus Marsh to undertake their weekly, or more comprehensive, shopping requirements. The Local Convenience Centre would be particularly convenient for residents within a walkable catchment, and is expected to generate the majority of its retail sales from residents within the immediate surrounding area.

31. A review of the childcare needs of the area indicates a shortfall of long day care places in the Catchment Area and a need exists for additional childcare centres. The proposed Local Convenience Centre is an appropriate location for a future childcare centre and is well-placed to serve the childcare needs of future residents of Ballan West and the wider Catchment Area.

32. The proposed Local Convenience Centre is an appropriate location for a medical centre particularly due its proximity and accessibility to a residential growth area, and that it is planned to also provide some other complementary commercial and community facilities.

33. A Local Convenience Centre with a small provision of retail uses, a childcare centre and a medical centre would effectively cater to the needs of local residents of the immediate area (i.e. within a walkable catchment), as well as some more limited sales from further afield. It would not have any adverse implications for the future of the Ballan Town Centre.

Introduction

Background

Wel.Co controls a site identified for future urban development (the Subject Site) of approximately 99 hectares which is located on the western edge of Ballan. The Subject Site represents a key opportunity for the urban growth of Ballan as identified in strategic land use policy. Preliminary analysis by Patch Design + Plan identifies the capacity for the Subject Site to accommodate in the order of 938 lots.

As part of detailed site planning, a Local Convenience Centre is being considered for the eastern edge of the Subject Site, in proximity to key open space. The local convenience centre would include some basic convenience retail and a childcare centre to meet the needs of local residents. The presence of a Local Convenience Centre is not reflected in the Ballan Framework Plan, and therefore more detailed consideration for this element of the project is required.

In May 2019, a Planning Panel hearing was held in Ballan to consider Amendment C088 to the Moorabool Planning Scheme. Amendment C088 sought to implement the Council-prepared Ballan Strategic Directions strategy aimed at guiding future urban development in Ballan.

The Planning Panel provided a preferred version of Clause 21.08 in July 2019 and in March 2020 Amendment C088 to the Moorabool Planning Scheme (Clause 11.01-1L-03) was adopted. The Subject Site is identified in the framework plan for greenfield residential development.

This economic assessment updates the residential supply and demand analysis for Ballan and assesses the implications for future development of the Subject Site, including the development of a Local Convenience Centre. This update has reference to Council comments made in December 2023 in relation to a previous version of the report dated 30 June 2023.

This Report

This report contains the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Location and Project Context

Chapter 2: Policy Context

Chapter 3: Residential Assessment

Chapter 4: Local Convenience Centre Assessment

1.0 Location and Project Context

This chapter provides an overview of Ballan, its locational context, and a description of the Subject Site.

1.1 Locational Context

Ballan is a township located in Moorabool Shire, approximately 24 kilometres west of Bacchus Marsh and 81 kilometres west of Melbourne by road. Ballan is approximately 39 kilometres east of Ballarat.

The township is easily accessible to both Melbourne and Ballarat via the Western Freeway and the Ballarat railway line (as reflected in Figure 1.1).

In recent decades, very strong population and dwelling growth has occurred in Melbourne's western urban growth areas as well as in the satellite town of Bacchus Marsh. Further, Ballarat has also experienced consistently strong urban growth and development over the same period.

Ballan can be regarded as part of a broader peri-urban area for both Ballarat and metropolitan Melbourne. The town is attractive to people seeking a rural, semi-rural or regional lifestyle that is within reasonable commuting distance of both Greater Melbourne and Ballarat. Within the Ballan Town Centre a number of coffee shops and retail operations focussed on gourmet foods are an indicator that Ballan has been 'discovered' by a residential and visitor market (see Chapter 4 for further insight). This represents a step change from Ballan's historic role as a small-town centre serving a rural hinterland.

The newly upgraded Ballan train station is well-serviced by trains on the Melbourne to Ballarat route, with a frequency of 20 minutes at peak periods. The Ballarat regional rail line has seen growing patronage over the last ten years resulting in the recently completed Ballarat line upgrade.

Figure 1.1 Ballan Locational Context

Source: Ethos Urban

1.2 Project Description

Wel.Co is seeking a rezoning of the Subject Site, from the Rural Living Zone (RLZ) to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ). This is to facilitate the development of the Subject Site, comprising 99 hectares, as envisaged in the Ballan Framework Plan and subsequently Amendment C88 to the Moorabool Planning Scheme (Clause 11.01-1L-03).

The boundary of the Subject Site is approximately 1km west of the Ballan Town Centre (Inglis Street).

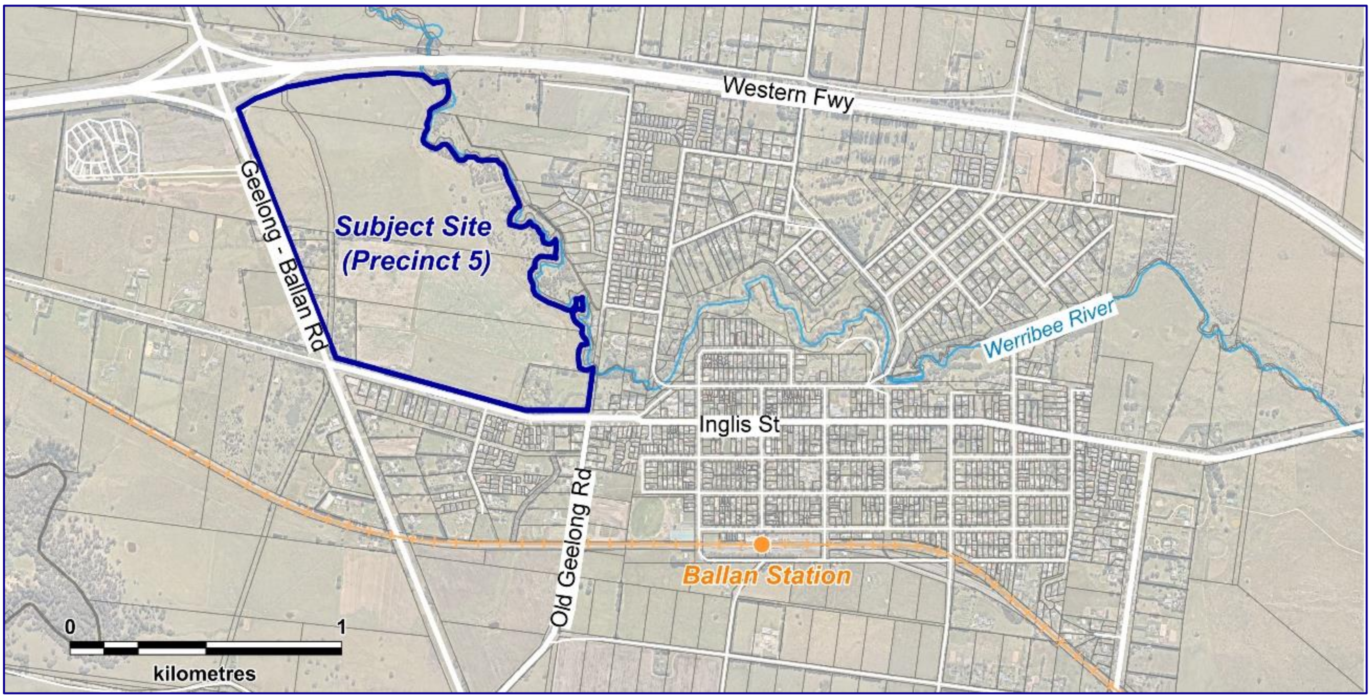
Surrounding the Subject Site is the Western Highway to the north, Werribee River to the east, Inglis Street to the south and existing rural residential allotments and the Geelong Ballan Road to the west.

A concept plan for the urban development of the Subject Site has been prepared by Patch Design + Plan which provides preliminary guidance on the detailed site planning considerations. This allows for a total of 938 residential lots in a manner generally in accordance with Clause 11.01-1L-03 of the planning scheme. That is with the exception of the now proposed Local Convenience Centre on the eastern edge of the Subject Site which was not originally identified in the Ballan Framework Plan.

Development of the Subject Site represents a direct extension of the established Ballan township area, delivering urban development on the western side of the Werribee River.

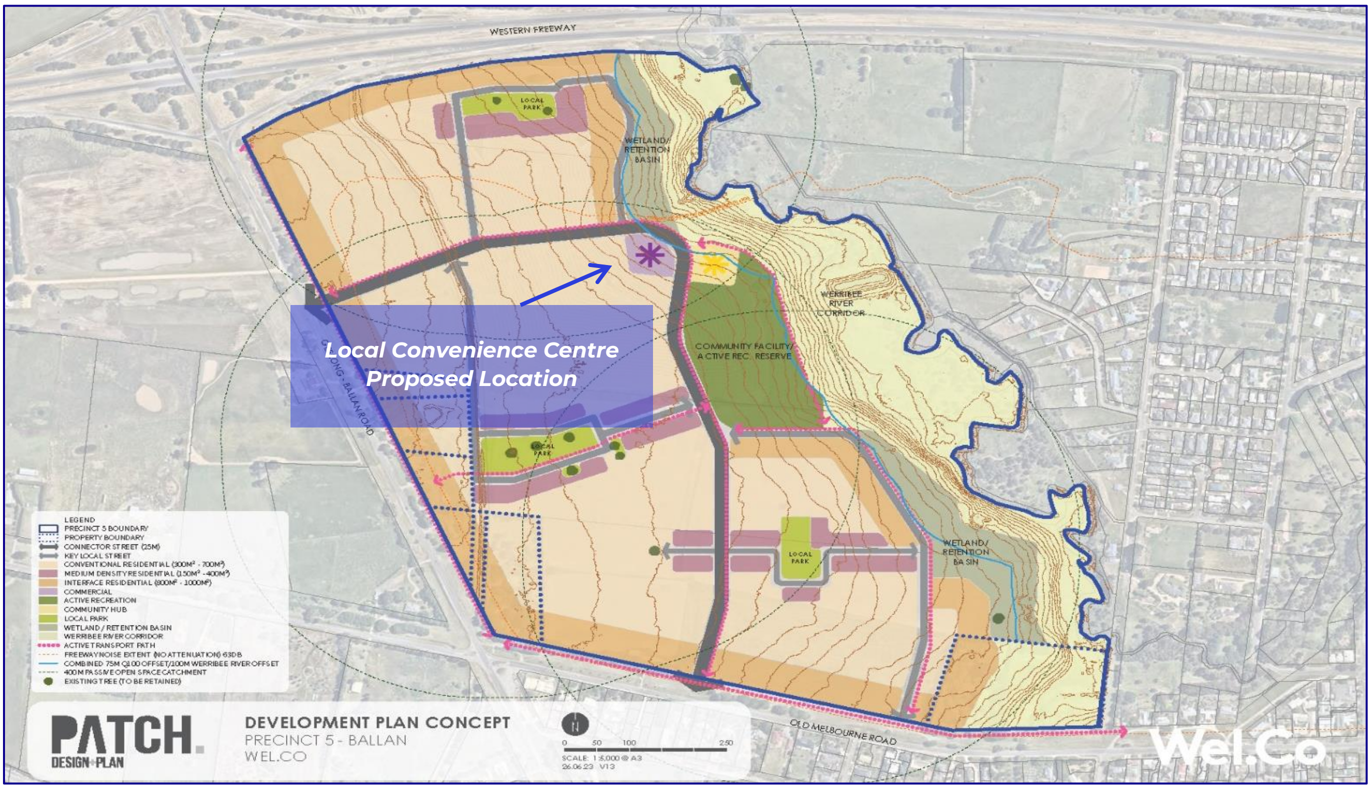
The location of the Subject Site in the context of Ballan is shown in Figure 1.2, while Figure 1.3 shows the current Concept Plan, with the proposed Local Convenience Centre location also identified.

Figure 1.2 Subject Site Local Context



Source: Ethos Urban

Figure 1.3 Proposed Concept Plan and Indicative Convenience Centre Location



Source: Wel.Co

2.0 Policy Context

This Chapter provides an overview of those elements of strategic planning policy relevant to project specific economic matters.

2.1 Growth Area Planning

State Policy

Clause 11.02-1S of the Victorian Planning Policy includes, under "Strategies", the need to:

> *"Plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period and provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur. Residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis".*

State Policy refers to the consideration of land supply at a municipal level. Some ambiguity exists as to how to interpret the adequacy of land supply at a local-level against the needs of the municipality.

The need for discrete assessments on a more localised basis is particularly relevant in many regional and rural areas where the particulars of demand and supply may vary significantly between urban areas and within the municipality.

As one of Moorabool Shire's key towns, it is important to ensure Ballan has sufficient residential land supply for a mixt of housing typologies available to the market at appropriate locations, and which meet community need.

This need is further emphasised by *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* which notes the potential for growth at Ballan.

The *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan* also provides guidance on the future of urban development at Ballan. This includes recognising the location of Ballan in a peri-urban region with strong connections to Melbourne and Ballarat, and support for residential growth in a manner which retains rural character and environmental attributes.

Importantly, the Growth Plan recognises the need to deliver services for an expanding community at Ballan and encourages the creation of local employment opportunities.

Local Policy

Amendment C88 to the Moorabool Planning Scheme was adopted by Council in October 2019.

According to the Planning Panel report, the expectation for ongoing population growth and demand for urban development in Ballan was accepted. The Panel's report for Amendment C88 considers rezoning relevant areas identified in the *Ballan - Strategic Directions* for residential.

The framework plan for Ballan was adopted within Moorabool's Planning Scheme at Clause 11.01-1L-03, identifying the Subject Site for urban development under Precinct 5: Western Growth Precinct. This includes the revision of the township boundary (that now incorporates the Subject Site) to accommodate some of the residential land required to meet the anticipated growth to Ballan. The framework plan designates Precinct 5 to include a mix of dwelling densities/lot sizes, as well as a provision of open space as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Ballan Framework Plan

Source: Moorabool Panning Scheme

2.2 Retail and Activity Centre Policy

Existing Retail Strategy - The Moorabool Shire Council Retail Strategy 2041 (2016)

The Moorabool Shire Council Retail Strategy 2041 was prepared by MacroPlan Dimasi in 2016, and supports the vision:

> That retailing in Moorabool will be the catalyst for thriving activity centres that meet the growing community's retail, services and recreation needs, providing employment opportunities for residents and engaging places for people to interact.

A key finding of the Strategy is that a significant level of retail spending equivalent to 46% of spending capacity is 'escaping' Moorabool Shire. The Strategy recognises that this represents a foregone opportunity for consumers and the local economy.

In relation to the centres hierarchy, the Strategy identifies Ballan Town Centre as a Neighbourhood Centre which:

> *cater for most daily/weekly convenience shopping needs, are typically anchored by a supermarket and including a range of supporting stores and services.*

The lowest level in the hierarchy is the Local Centre which caters for convenience shopping needs only, including local stores and some non-retail facilities.

In relation to Ballan, the Strategy recognises the strong opportunity for population growth and the subsequent potential for growth and development of the town centre. This includes *'a good opportunity for local expenditure rates to be improved'* (Strategy, page 90), including through the expansion of the town centre from just over 3,000m^2 of retail floorspace in 2016 to approximately 9,000m^2 by 2041. In addition, the Strategy notes the potential for additional civic and other non-retail uses.

As such, the Retail Strategy recognises the potential for significant expansion in the demand for, and provison of, retail and other services in Ballan.

The focus of any such future development is clearly the town centre, although the Strategy precedes Amendment C88 and did not make specific comment on the potential or otherwise for a small local convenience centre arising from the expansion of the urban footprint of the town. Were such a small convenience node to be delivered, the Strategy is clear that it would need to be subservient to the role and function of the Ballan Town Centre.

Draft Retail Strategy – Moorabool Retail Strategy, 2023

Council are in the process of finalising the Moorabool Retail Strategy, with the draft strategy prepared in October 2023. The consultation period is currently open and will close in March 2024, with the strategy expected to be finalised in 2024.

The strategy's purpose is stated as:

> "to grow and sustain a vibrant network of retail activity centres that offer the best possible range of goods and service to Moorabool residents and visitors, distributed in an equitable and efficient way" (pg. 5)

The strategy lists seven objectives, of relevance to this particular project is the objective to:

> "Ensure that the new residential areas are well-serviced by the retail hierarchy." (pg. 5)

It is stated in the purpose of the above objective that "residents of new communities should be within walking distance of comprehensive food and grocery provision as well as a range of other day-to-day goods and service" (pg. 17). Further, the strategy outlines the need for local centres where residents live beyond a comfortable walk to the nearest neighbourhood centre.

> "In places that remain beyond a comfortable walk to the nearest neighbourhood activity centre and where demand is sufficient, Council will encourage the provision of local activity centres. Such centres would provide a limited retail service, usually in the form of a general store or small supermarket, that may include services such as cafés, take-away food and hairdressing." (pg. 20)

In the context of Ballan and Precinct 5, the vast majority of future residents of Precinct 5 will be located beyond a comfortable walking distance (800m) to the key retail services provided in the Ballan Town Centre.

Consistent with the previous retail strategy, the lowest centre in the hierarchy is the Local Activity Centre (LAC) or Village Centre. The draft strategy outlines a LAC as typically including a single general store or small collection of day-to-day goods and services or visitor outlets. The general size of a LAC is defined as being between 200m^2 to 1,000m^2 with a typical population served being between 1,000 to 4,000 persons. The proposed LAC for Precinct 5 aligns with the aforementioned criteria.

The background report for the draft retail strategy identifies, in indicative terms, a need for up to an additional 2,000m^2 of retail floorspace for Ballan by 2041, with a further 2,000m^2 to 3,000m^2 required between 2041 to 2061. The potential exists for a share of retail floorspace growth in Ballan to be accommodated in Precinct 5 at an LAC, this is without undermining the potential for future development at the Ballan Town Centre for higher-order needs.

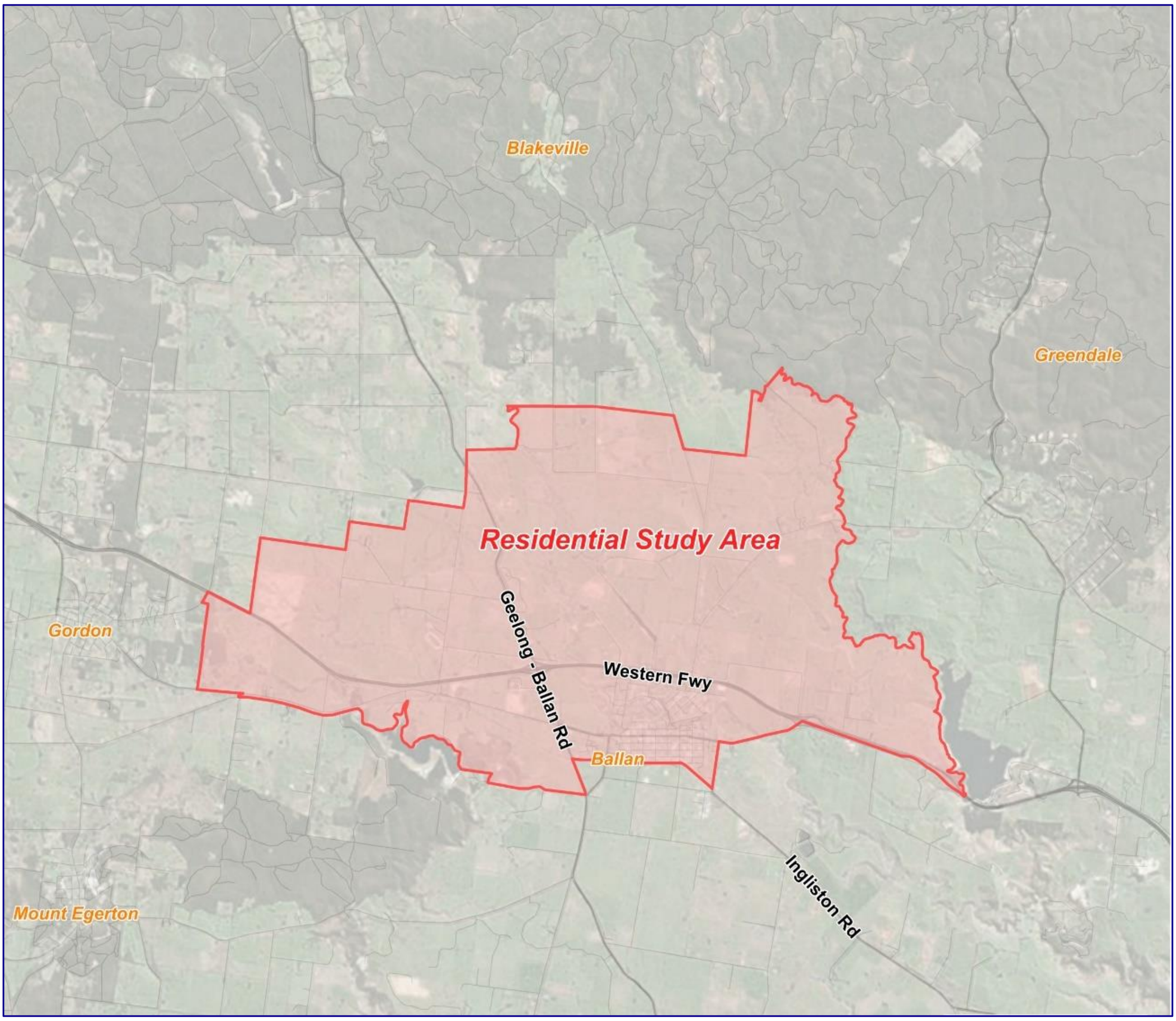
3.0 Residential Assessment

This Chapter provides an overview of the residential land supply situation in Ballan and looks to establish the potential demand for dwellings in Ballan based on a conventional approach to demographic analysis.

3.1 Residential Study Area

For the purposes of the residential analysis undertaken in this report, a study area has been identified using a combination of Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1s) areas as defined by the ABS. The study area, which incorporates the urban area of Ballan and a surrounding rural area, provides a basis for data analysis, as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Residential Study Area



Source: Ethos Urban using Mapinfo

3.2 Population Trends and Forecasts

Population Trends

In 2022, Moorabool Shire had an estimated residential population of approximately 38,480 persons. Ballan (or the study area) accounts for 8.3% of the Shire's population, or 3,210 residents. Between 2006 and 2022, the municipality's population increased by a total of approximately +12,400 persons, representing a +2.5% increase per annum, while Ballan increased at a slightly lower rate of +2.3% per annum.

Table 3.1 Population Growth Trends, 2006-2022

Area/Indicator	2006	2011	2016	2022	2006 to 2022
Study Area Population (no.)	2,240	2,590	2,840	3,210	+970
Average Annual Growth (no.)		+70	+50	+60	+60
Average Annual Growth (%)		+2.9%	+1.9%	+2.1%	+2.3%
Moorabool Shire Population (no.)	26,080	28,670	32,670	38,480	+12,400
Average Annual Growth (no.)		+520	+800	+970	+780
Average Annual Growth (%)		+1.9%	+2.6%	+2.8%	+2.5%

Source: Ethos Urban, ABS Regional Growth Cat.3218.0, ABS ERPs by SA1

3.2.1 Population Forecasts

Victoria in Future 2021 (VIF2021) represents the State Government's official population (and dwelling) projections. While they do not provide projections at a township level for Ballan, they provide population and dwelling projections at an ABS Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) and at a municipal level, offering insights into potential future population (and dwelling growth).

The VIF2021 projections anticipate population growth in the study area of approximately +50 persons annually between 2022 and 2036, based on a derived estimate for the wider Bacchus Marsh and Surrounds SA2. This indicates that average annual growth will be in line with the period 2006 to 2021, when population growth averaged approximately 50 persons per year. With regard to the newly adopted Framework Plan, the Victoria in Future 2021 projections are viewed as conservative.

Id. Consultants produce population and dwelling forecasts for Moorabool Shire, and includes forecasts for the township of Ballan. The most recent forecasts were prepared in February 2023, and the growth rates for 2023 to 2036 have been adopted and applied to the current official ABS population estimates release for the study area. Population forecasts for the study area and Moorabool Shire are summarised in Table 3.2.

The Id Consulting forecast anticipates a 2036 population of approximately 6,030 persons in the study area, increasing by approximately +2,700 persons. Id Consulting's forecast growth rates between 2023 and 2036 are notably higher compared to the VIF2021-derived projections. An average annual growth rate of +4.7% per annum, or approximately +210 persons a year over the 13-year period is forecast by Id Consulting.

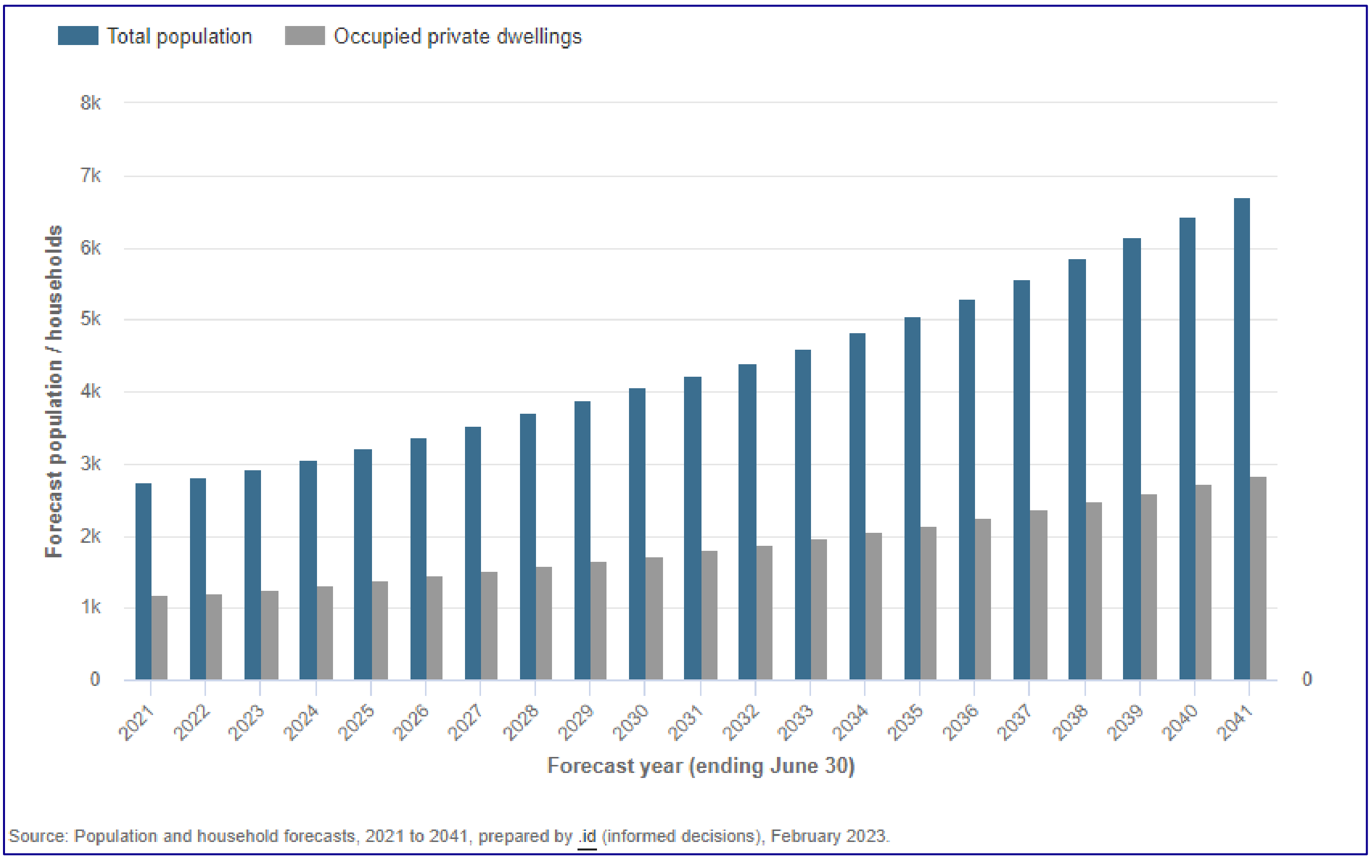
The id. Consulting 2023 forecasts are considered to represent a realistic outlook for future population growth in the study area. Ongoing demand for residential development opportunities in the study area are expected for the foreseeable future.

Table 3.2 Study Area Population Forecast – Forecast Id.

Area/ Indicator	2023	2027	2031	2036	2023 to 2036
Study Area Population (no.)	3,330	4,030	4,820	6,030	+2,700
Average Annual Growth (no.)		+180	+200	+240	+210
Average Annual Growth (%)		+3.9%	+3.6%	+3.8%	+4.7%
Moorabool Shire Population (no.)	38,230	42,610	48,490	56,010	+17,780
Average Annual Growth (no.)		+1,100	+1,470	+1,500	+1,370
Average Annual Growth (%)		+2.2%	+2.6%	+2.4%	+3.0%

Source: Forecast Id. Ballan Area, Moorabool Shire (2020), Victoria in Future (Regional Victoria)
Note: Figure Rounds, AAG = Average Annual Growth, AAGR = Average Annual Growth Rate

Figure 3.2 Forecast Id Population Growth, Ballan Area



Source: Forecast Id. (February 2023)

3.3 Forecast Dwelling Demand

Dwelling growth in the study area is based on official dwelling forecasts produced by *id. Consulting* in February 2023 which have been adjusted in order to reflect the rebased population forecasts in Section 3.2 and are presented in Table 3.3.

An estimate of 1,520 dwellings (rounded number) are in the study area in 2023, representing an increase of 50 dwellings on the 2022 level, or average growth of 3.4% per year.

In 2036, the number of dwellings required in the study area to support forecast population growth is estimated to total approximately 2,720 dwellings, representing an increase of +1,200 dwellings over the 13-year period. This equates to an average requirement for +90 dwellings per year (1,200 dwellings/13yrs).

To better establish current market demand in the residential market it is important to also assess recent dwellings approvals, residential lot sales and housing and land prices.

Table 3.3 Total Dwelling Demand in the Study Area, 2022 to 2036

Ballan	2022	2023	2026	2031	2036	2023 to 2036
Study Area Dwellings (no.)	1,470	1,520	1,750	2,180	2,720	**+1,200**
Average Annual Growth (no.)		+50	+80	+90	+110	**+90**
Average Annual Growth (%)		+3.4%	+4.8%	+4.5%	+4.5%	**+4.5%**

Source: Id. Consulting; Ethos Urban.

Note: Figures rounded.

Additionally, the increase in demand as identified by forecast Id reflects the adopted framework plan and the potential for Ballan to accommodate significant growth in the short to medium term. Noting that a previous residential assessment undertaken by the Consultant (Ethos Urban) estimated demand to be in the order of 54 dwelling per annum between 2021 and 2041 based on Forecast Id growth rates produced in 2015. Moreover, Forecast Id now anticipate an average of 81 dwelling per annum will be developed in the township area of Ballan between 2022 and 2036 (a smaller area to the study area used in this report).

3.4 Residential Market Commentary

Median House Median Price and Sales

Ballan had a median house price of $640,000 in the year ending June 2023, having increased by 26.7% since 2019. This compares to the average growth rate of 7.6% per annum since 2014 and illustrates strong recent level of interest shown in the local housing market.

Similarly, other towns in Moorabool Shire have experienced increases in house prices, with surrounding townships experiencing average annual growth rates between 5.4% and 8.2% over the same period.

Although Ballan's median house price is comparatively high compared to some towns in Moorabool, it is considered affordable in the context of metropolitan Melbourne and many other regional city housing markets. The relative affordability of property in Ballan, along with the positive lifestyle attributes of the town, are factors that are likely to drive demand for residential land in the future.

A summary of median house price trends and sales for Ballan and other major towns in Moorabool over the period 2014 to 2023 are provided in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Median House Price, Ballan and Selected Towns, 2013 to 2023 (Year Ending June)

Township	2014	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average Annual Growth 2014 to 2023
Ballan	$330,000	$505,000	$518,000	$607,000	$699,500	$640,000	7.6%
Gordon	$385,000	$555,000	$665,000	$672,000	$796,500	$780,000	8.2%
Bacchus Marsh	$347,000	$500,000	$508,000	$550,000	$620,000	$665,000	7.5%
Mount Egerton	$362,250	$465,000	$489,000	$652,750	$648,000	$600,000	5.8%
Greenvale	$530,000	$735,000	$720,000	$780,000	$890,000	$854,000	5.4%

Source: Ethos Urban, PriceFinder

3.4.1 Vacant Residential Land Median Price and Sales

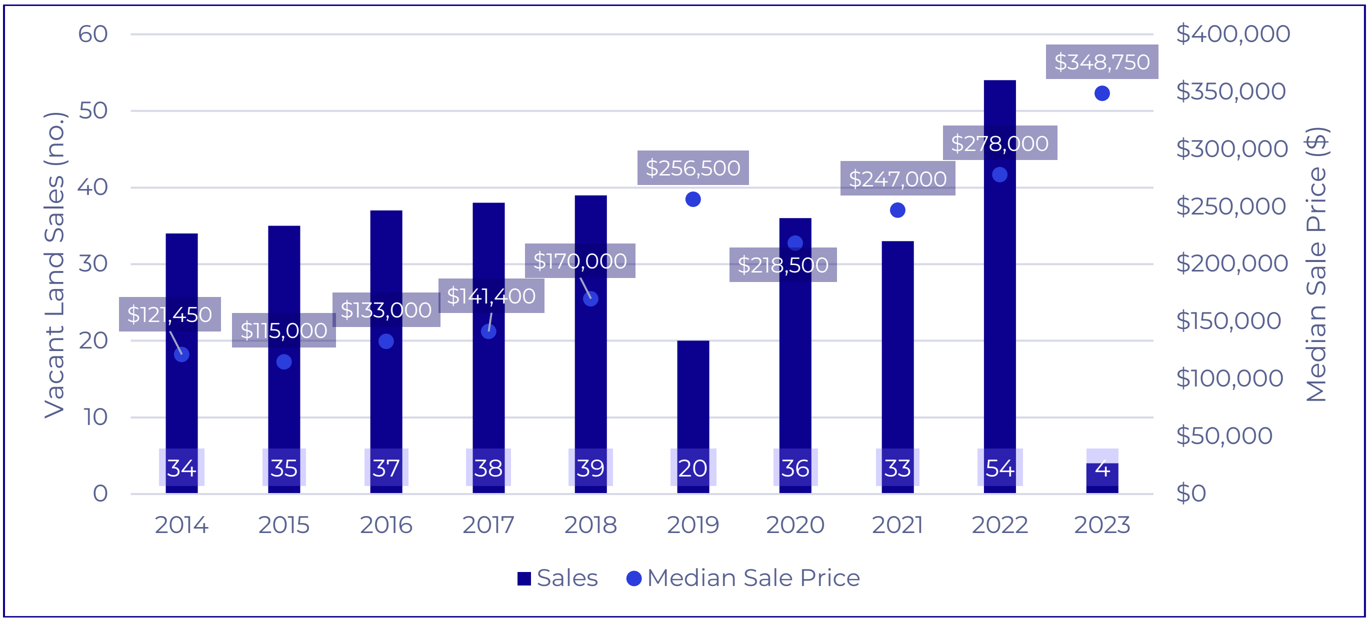
Since 2014, the number of vacant land sales each year in the study area have generally been between 20 and 39 sales. This is with the exception of 2022 and 2023 where there was a high of 54 sales and a low of 4 sales (refer Figure 3.3).

From 2016 to 2019, the median price for vacant land in Ballan consistently increased starting at $115,000 in 2015, reaching a high of $256,000 in 2019 and then decreasing to $218,500 in 2020. Most notably, 2019 experienced the largest increase in price with a 50.9% increase, this spike in price is likely associated with significant decline in sales (20 down from 39 the previous year) and therefore reflecting a constrained residential market.

The most significant spike in vacant lot sales in 2022 is likely associated with the delivery of lots and the high demand coming out the COVID-19 pandemic and desirability of Ballan for both regional and metropolitan buyers. The notable median house price decline in 2023 is understood to reflect the limited supply available in Ballan in addition to the continued interest rate rises throughout the 2023 financial year.

Note, the data shown in Figure 3.3 reflect lots that have settled. For example, a lot that has been sold from a developer although hasn't been titled will not be reflected in the data until it does title and the sale is settled. Typically, the time between buying a lot from developer and the lot receiving a title is 18-24 months.

Figure 3.3 Number of Sales and Median Price for Vacant Lots, Study Area, FY2014 to FY2023



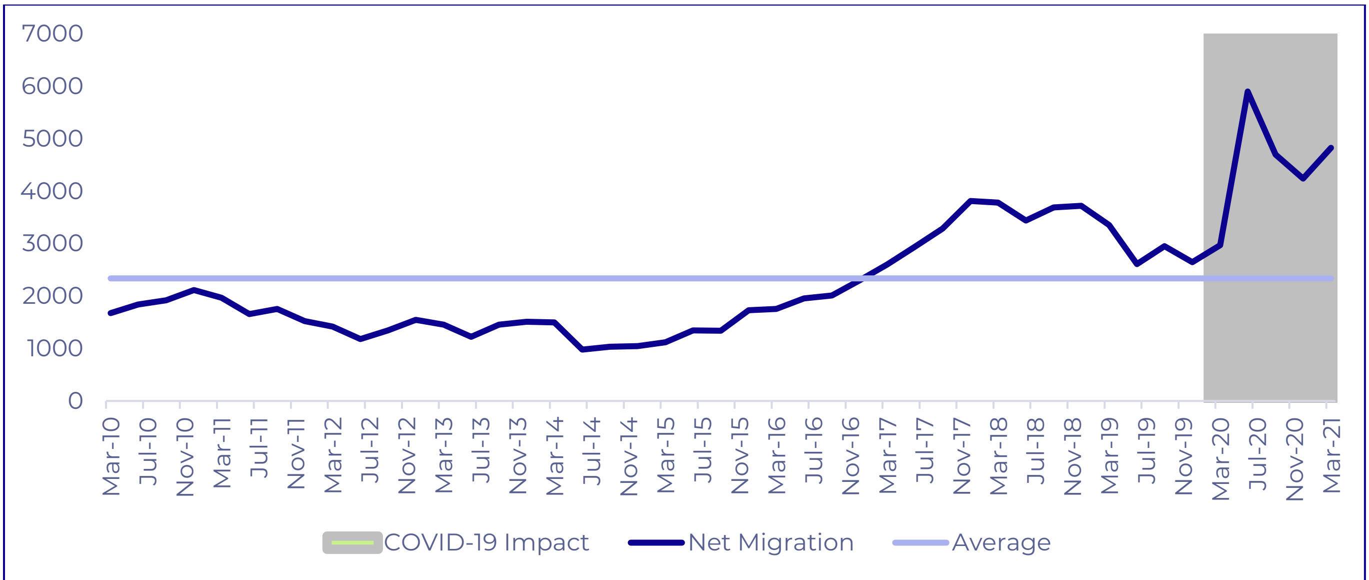
Source: Ethos Urban, PriceFinder

Regional Victorian Housing Markets

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Regional Victoria with the new working-from-home paradigm allowing workers to re-assess their need to live close to the workplace, and many are now electing to live in regional areas commuting to, for example, Melbourne when and if required, or permanently working from home. Additionally, due to reduced purchasing power of many households and individuals due the continued interest rate rises, many regional and peri urban markets reflect good value for money compared to the metropolitan market.

Similarly and related, many people are electing to pursue lifestyle alternatives to city living. Migration to Regional Victoria from Melbourne reached record levels in early 2020 and has remained above the average since March quarter 2010, as shown in Figure 3.4 based on the latest available data from the ABS.

Figure 3.4 Regional Net Intrastate Migration, Regional Victoria



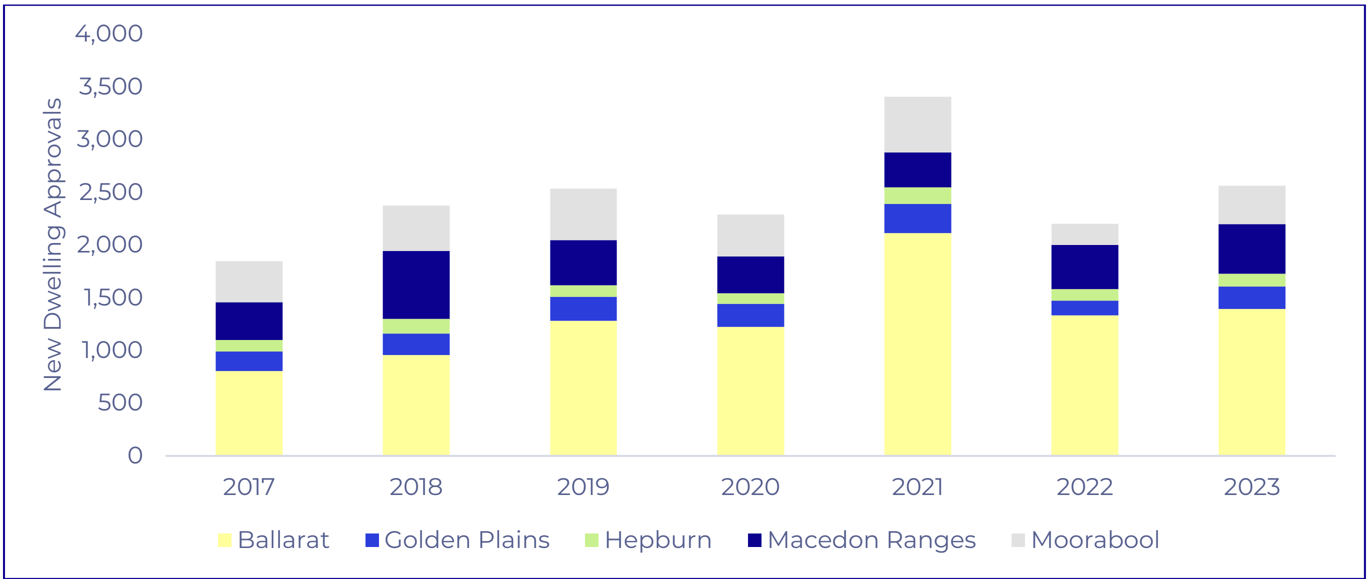
Source: ABS, Table 3. Internal migration (arrivals, departures, net), rest of state areas – intrastate, interstate and total

Surrounding Region Dwelling Approvals

Since Victoria's first major COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, dwelling approvals have progressively increased in many regional areas, Moorabool Shire and the surrounding municipalities were no different. In 2021 (after a decline in approvals in 2020) Ballarat and Moorabool both experienced the largest yearly increase for the surrounding region (+72.7% and +32.5% respectively), while Golden Plains and Hepburn (+25.7% and +61.6% respectively) also increased substantially. Macedon Ranges is the only surrounding municipality that experienced a decline in dwelling approvals following on from 2020.

Since 2021, dwelling approvals have gradually declined in all of the surrounding municipalities, likely associated with continued increase of interest rates, building costs, and a tightening of supply after the significant surge in sales volumes in 2020/2021. Although the volume of dwelling approvals has declined, the total in 2023 has increased again primarily driven by growth in Moorabool and Golden Plains (+82.9% and +52.1% respectively). This reflects that strong demand for dwellings in the region remains.

Figure 3.5 New Dwelling Approvals, Financial Year



Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0)
Note: Year to June

3.5 Local Market Commentary

Interviews have been undertaken with representatives from real estate agencies active in the Ballan residential market. The real estate agents commented that the amount of available residential land is practically exhausted with subdivisions quickly selling due to the current demand and the surge that has occurred since 2020, with one agent mentioning that new supply of residential land "is always needed". This is especially evident with one agent providing an example of the demand situation in Ballan which saw a subdivision of proximately 10-lots completely selling out in less than a day through a 'sneak-peak' advertising campaign. Generally, buyers of new lots in Ballan are looking for a size in the order of 800m² to 4,000m² with lots around 1,000m² particularly popular when available.

Local agents observed favourable selling conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 and 2021) although noting prior to the pandemic selling conditions were already strong. A clear result of the pandemic is the desire for people to live in a peri-urban or regional area such as Ballan. This is due to the positive lifestyle and locational attributes including the proximity to a major regional centre (Ballarat) 30-minutes to the west on the Western Highway, while still having accessibility to Melbourne for work, with the newly upgraded Ballan train station offering a 60-minute service to Southern Cross Station.

It was mentioned by one agent that there has been strong demand/interest from prospective buyers located in the suburbs of Metropolitan Melbourne. This demand is primarily driven by housing affordability and the comparatively cost-effective price point of Ballan compared to the outer suburbs of Melbourne, in addition to the positive lifestyle aspects.

3.6 Future Dwelling Demand

Having regard for the variables likely to impact on the future demand for housing, two future dwelling demand scenarios for the study area have been prepared. The two scenarios consider the extent to which Ballan's total dwelling demand may be driven by the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scenarios are outlined below.

Scenario 1 (Adopted Base Case)

The base case scenario represents the adjusted forecast demand using id consultants' forecasts. This adjusted demand equals approximately +90 dwellings per annum over the next 13-year period. As such, demand for dwellings over the period 2023 to 2036 is approximately +1,200 lots under the base case scenario.

Scenario 2 (Higher Growth)

The higher growth scenario is provided as a response to the recent surge in dwelling approvals and consistent level of vacant lot sales in the study area and generally in peri-urban and regional areas. Further, the higher growth scenario is based on the assumption a structural realignment has occurred in regional housing markets, including Ballan.

For the purposes of the assessment, it is assumed the demand for dwellings equates to 115 dwellings per annum in the study area, representing a 30% increase in demand for dwellings from the base case scenario. The significant increase in demand is based on the assumption that demand is not being met by the current release of new residential land in the study area, and therefore supply-led demand is possible if that supply is provided to the market. This scenario assumes latent demand for lots exists in Ballan.

In order for this higher growth scenario to be fulfilled, residential land must be continually released to the market in order to meet demand. At this higher growth scenario, demand for dwellings in the study area are estimated to be in the order of +1,495 dwellings over the 13-year period to 2036.

3.7 Residential Supply

Assessment Methodology

An assessment of residential land supply in Ballan has been undertaken based on a field visit conducted by the Consultant on 12 May 2022, in conjunction with analysis of Nearmap aerial imagery. The analysis estimates the potential supply of actual and future residential lots capable of accommodating dwellings (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6 and Figure 3.6).

For the purposes of this assessment, a residential lot is considered vacant if no habitable dwelling is evident on the lot and construction has not begun on a dwelling. The assessment has been undertaken for land in all residential areas of Ballan comprising land in the following zones as outlined in the Framework Plan:

- General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)
- Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)

Vacant land has been grouped into the following two supply categories:

- **Vacant Lots:** vacant lots refer to constructed residential lots and lots that exist as part of a subdivision but are not physically available as constructed residential lots.
- **Large Subdividable Lots**: Refers to larger residential lots that have the potential to be further subdivided. An average lot size for the relevant zone has been calculated based on occupied lots in the township boundary.

The assessment of potential land supply establishes a theoretical land supply position. The theoretical nature of the assessment is emphasised. For example, landowner intentions, in regard to individual vacant lots are unknown, as are the intentions of the owners of larger properties that could be further subdivided. In some cases, vacant lots may be held for long term purposes or not be available for dwelling construction at all. In this regard, the calculated land supply position represents an optimistic assessment of supply.

Having regard for these considerations, the actual supply of land suitable and available for development as residential lots is likely to be considerably less than the supply assessment indicates.

Current Residential Supply

In total, zoned residential supply in the established areas of Ballan has the potential to accommodate 260 residential lots (rounded). This includes areas zoned GRZ, NRZ, and LDRZ.

- 153 single vacant residential lots, comprising:
  - 77 in the GRZ4
  - 65 in the NRZ6 and NRZ7
  - 11 in the LDRZ and LDRZ1
- A potential supply of approximately 107 lots on large subdividable sites in the GRZ4, NRZ6, NRZ7.
- A further 1,640 lots in the identified growth areas of Ballan, including the yield for the Subject Site outlined in the current concept plan.
- The Future Investigation Area to the south of the rail line is estimated to have an indicative yield of approximately 950 lots, noting the nature of future development in this area is currently unknown.

A summary of the residential lot supply in the established areas of Ballan is shown in Table 3.5 and the growth area supply is shown Table 3.6, while Figure 3.6 shows the location of vacant and developable residential areas in and surrounding Ballan.

Assumed average lot sizes in each growth precinct (by growth type) are based on the minimum lot size information provided in the Ballan Framework Plan, along with a review of lot sizes in the newly developed areas of Ballan.

Table 3.5 Ballan Zoned Established Residential Land Supply, 2023

Zone/Area	Vacant Lots	Developable Area (ha)	Net Developable Area (ha)	Average Lot Size (m^2)	Estimated Developable Yield	Total Supply
GRZ4	77	2.0	1.7	800	22	99
LDRZ	1	na	na	na	na	1
LDRZ1	10	na	na	na	na	10
NRZ6	26	8.9	7.6	1,540	49	75
NRZ7	39	3.7	3.2	880	36	75
Total	153	14.7	12.5	-	107	260

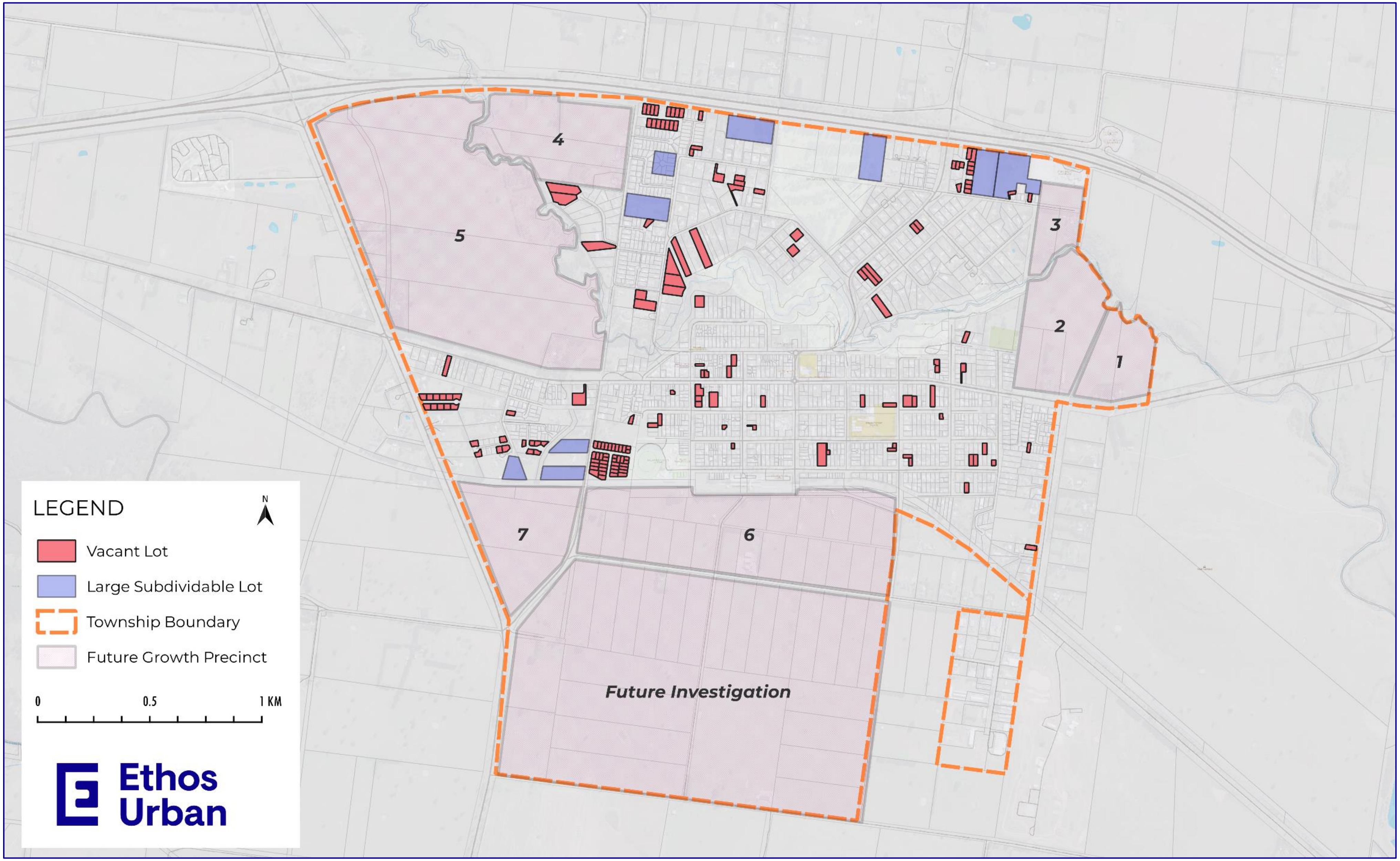
Source: Ethos Urban; Nearmap

Table 3.6 Ballan Growth Precincts Residential Land Supply, 2023

Growth Precincts	Growth Type	Assumed Average Lot Size (m^2)	Gross Land Area (ha)	Assumed Share of Developable Land	Net Development Area (ha)	Estimated lot yield from Net Developable Area (lots)
1	Greenfield Growth (Proposed Larger Residential Allotments)	1,500	2	80%	2	11
2	Greenfield Growth (Proposed Larger Residential Allotments)	1,500	1	80%	1	5
	Greenfield Growth	850	5	70%	4	41
3	Greenfield Growth	850	3	70%	2	25
4	Greenfield Growth	850	7	70%	5	61
	Greenfield Growth (Proposed Lower Densities)	3,000	11	80%	9	30
5*	Greenfield	720	99	69%	68	938
6	Greenfield	850	50	70%	35	412
7	Greenfield	850	12	70%	8	99
	Greenfield Growth (Proposed Lower Densities)	3,000	7	80%	6	19
Sub-Total Growth Precincts			197		139	1,639
Future Investigation Area	Combination	1,200	162	70%	113	945
Total			***359***		***252***	***2,584 (2,580)***

Source: Ethos Urban, NearMap, Moorabool Planning Scheme, Ballan Framework Plan
Note: (*) Precinct 5 information is consistent with most recent concept plan

Figure 3.6 Ballan Residential Land Supply, 2023



Source: Ethos Urban; NearMap

3.8 Implications for Ballan West Growth Area

The situation that Ballan's residential market is faced with at present is that the demand for land has surged. The number of small to medium scale subdivisions that are under construction, and the responsiveness of the market in purchasing greenfield lots demonstrates that a strong level of underlying demand for well-positioned peri-urban residential land exists in Ballan.

In this regard, it is appropriate to ensure an ongoing pipeline of well-presented greenfield residential land is secured to ensure Ballan can capitalise on current market conditions.

The location of the Subject Site along Geelong-Ballan Road and Inglis Street reflects a logical extension of the urban area of Ballan with favourable development conditions in order to bring a significant level of supply to the market in the short term. Further, the planning for a large-scale residential development needs to be completed in a timely manner due to the natural time lags associated between rezoning and the construction of dwellings.

Ballan's current supply of 260 zoned lots reflects a restricted level of residential land supply and lends weight to the need for the rezoning of more land for residential development at the earliest possible opportunity.

The adequacy of supply is calculated by dividing total supply (expressed in terms of available and future lots) by forecast average annual demand. Based on the demand forecasts for dwellings in the study area as established earlier in Chapter 3 it can be calculated that:

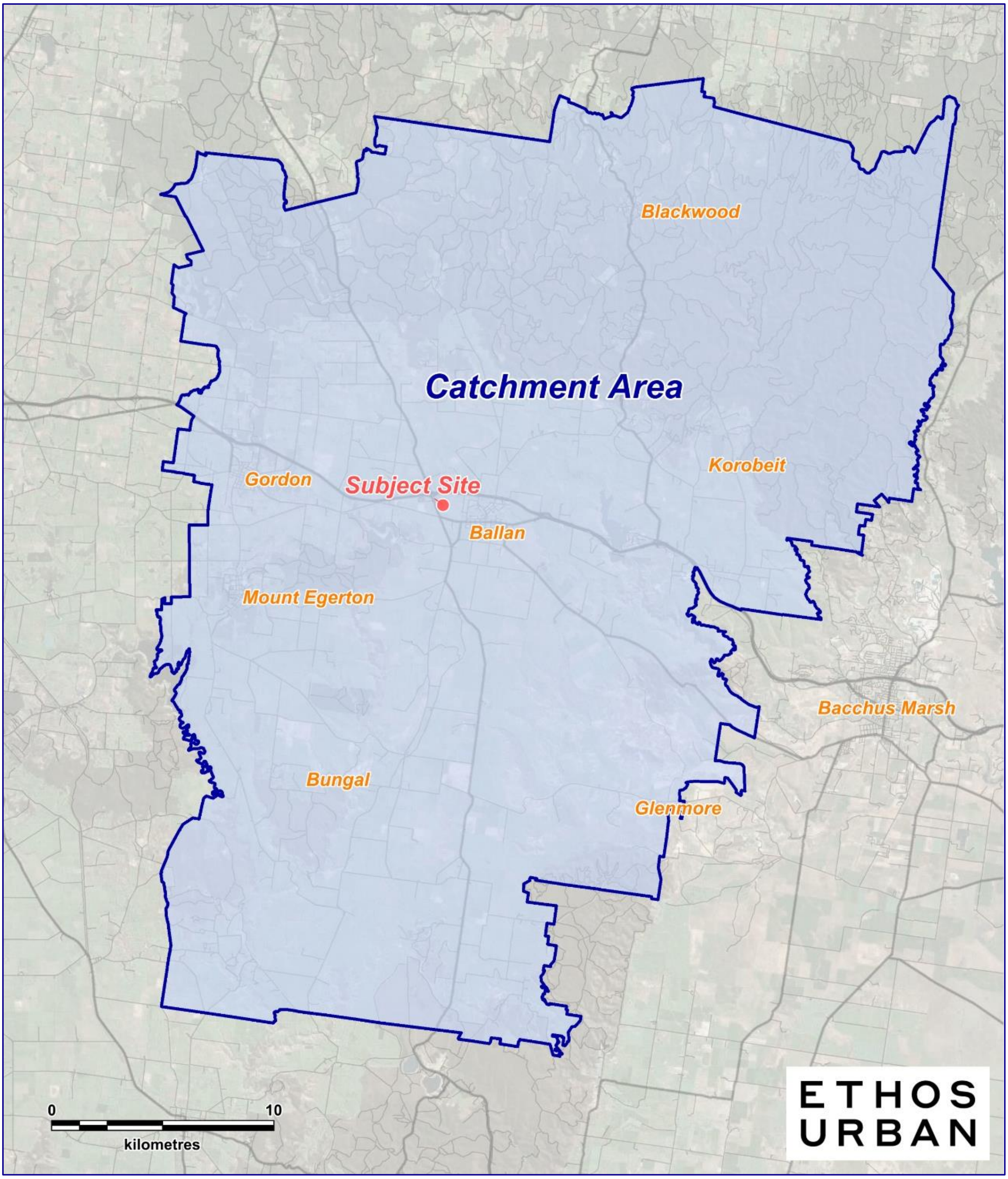
- Under the Adopted Base Case Scenario (90 dwellings per year):
  - **2.9 years supply of existing vacant and developable lots exists.**
  - Approximately 28.7 years of potential medium-longer term (Growth Precincts) supply likely exists, including the Subject Site.
- Under the Higher Growth Scenario (115 dwelling per year):
  - **2.3 years supply of existing vacant and developable lots exists.**
  - Approximately 22.5 years of potential medium-longer term (Growth Precincts) supply likely exists, including the Subject Site.

4.0 Local Convenience Centre Assessment

4.1 Catchment Area

For the purpose of this Local Convenience Centre Assessment a Catchment Area has been defined which broadly aligns with the Central (Ballan) Area used in the *Moorabool Shire Council Retail Strategy, 2041 (2016)*. This area is used for assessing population trends and forecast, supply and demand for local convenience retail, a childcare centre and a medical centre.

Figure 4.1 Catchment Area



Source: Ethos Urban

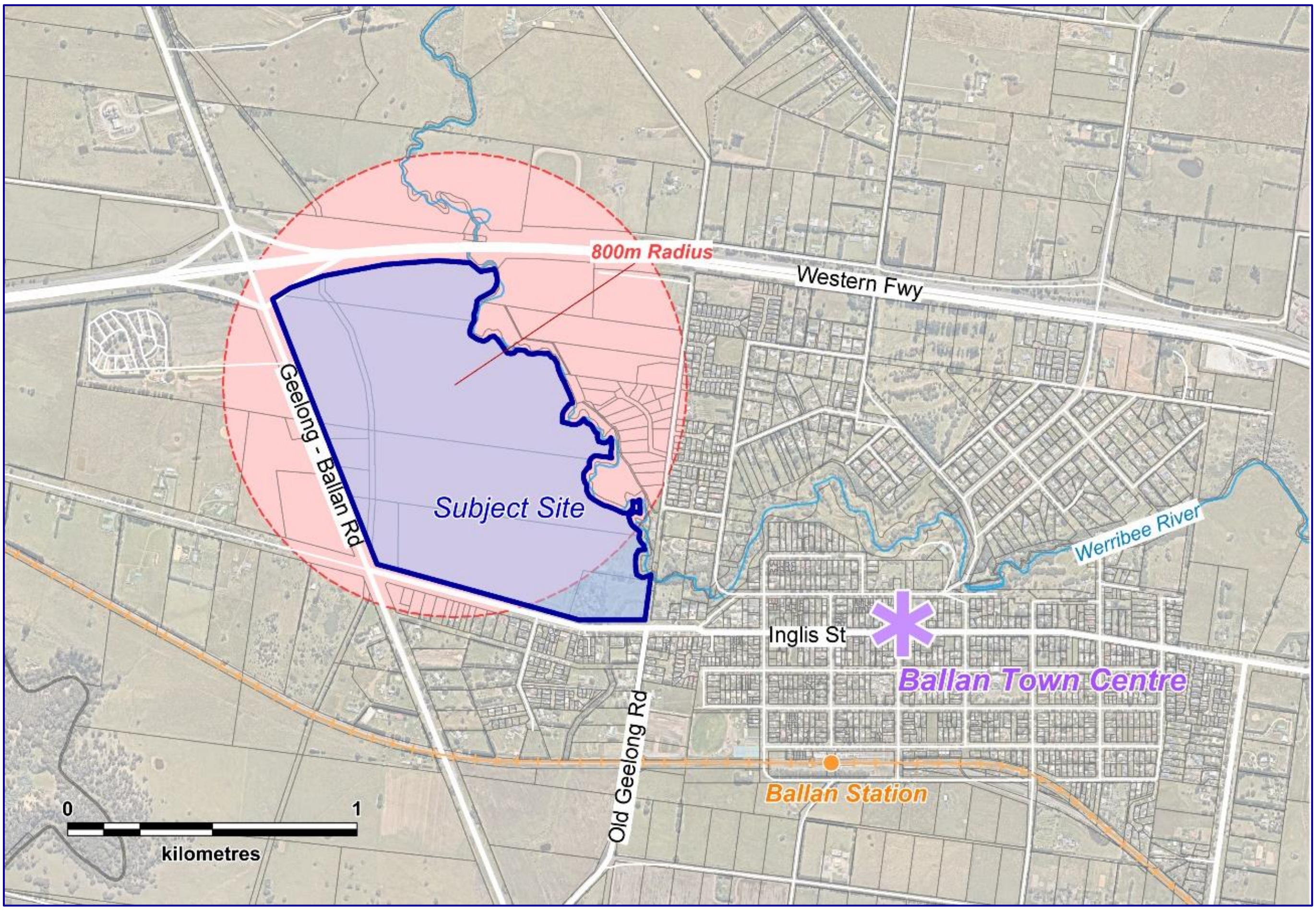
4.2 Consideration of Local Convenience Centre

The Subject Site represents a key growth area for the Ballan township, and is planned to accommodate 938 dwellings and in the order of 2,400 residents at full development. At present, allocation for a Local Convenience Centre is not identified in the framework plan; however, an opportunity has been identified by Wel.Co to develop a Local Convenience Centre towards the eastern side of the estate along the Werribee River.

The approximate location of the site represents a strategic location with convenient access to the estate's population with a significant share being within walking distance (800 meters) while also having a presence for passing trade. The presence of a Local Convenience Centre within walking distance of residents represents best practice growth area planning with the offering of the proposed estate is enhanced as a result. The general walkability of the site is reflected by an 800-meter radius and is shown in Figure 4.2.

Significant separation (approximately 3km driving distance) exists between the general position of the proposed Local Convenience Centre and the Ballan Town Centre and clear separation from the existing residential areas of Ballan. Therefore, the proposed Local Convenience Centre is unlikely to undermine the role and function of Ballan Town Centre as a Neighbourhood Centre as identified in the *Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy, 2016 and Draft Moorabool Retail Strategy, 2023.*

Figure 4.2 Local Convenience Centre Walkable Catchment



Source: Ethos Urban

4.3 Summary of Existing Centres

The Ballan Town Centre provides a mix of retail and non-retail facilities that serve the convenience shopping needs of local residents. The Town Centre is anchored by an IGA supermarket (which underwent an external upgrade including new signage and paint work in December 2020) and provides a range of other retail facilities such as fresh food shops, cafés, take-away food outlets, a pharmacy, a True Value Hardware store, multiple boutique clothing and homewares stores and a number of opportunity shops. It also includes a Bendigo Bank branch, a library, a tavern and other commercial and community uses. Only two shopfront vacancies were recorded during a field visit in May 2022 with one currently undergoing renovation with the top floor to be opened as a studio.

The Bacchus Marsh Town Centre provides the closet higher-order shopping facilities to Ballan. It is located on Main Street, the main east-west traffic route through the centre of Bacchus Marsh. The Town Centre provides a broad range of retail shops and services including numerous food outlets, apparel and homeware stores, convenience retail outlets and retail services. The Village Shopping Centre is the main enclosed shopping centre located in the Town Centre and is anchored by two supermarkets (Coles and ALDI) and accommodates a mix of food and non-food shops. A Foodworks supermarket is located in the western part of the Town Centre, while a range of community facilities also front Main Street in the eastern part of the Town Centre such as a library, visitor centre and public hall.

A very limited provision of retail shops is in the surrounding localities such as Gordon, Mount Egerton and Greendale, and these residents would travel to the Ballan and Bacchus March Town Centres for their daily and weekly shopping needs.

4.4 Retail Needs Assessment

Population forecasts for the Catchment Area draw on ABS data and data prepared for Moorabool shire by Id. Consultants. Forecast data for the Id Consultants defined areas of Ballan and Rural East have been used by applying the combined growth rate of the two areas to the most recent ABS population estimates for June 2022.

In 2016, the Catchment Area had an estimated resident population of 7,460 persons, as shown in Table 4.1. In the period 2016 to 2021, the population has increased by approximately +810 persons to a total of 8,270 persons.

By 2026, the Catchment Area's population is projected to be 9,110 persons, representing an average annual increase of +210 persons per annum over the next 3-years from 2023.

The Catchment Area's population is forecast to reach 11,690 persons in 2036, representing a significant increase of +3,220 persons on the current population in 2023 at an average increase of +250 persons annually.

Table 4.1 Catchment Area population, 2016 to 2036

	2016	2021	2023	2026	2031	2036	2023 to 2036
Catchment Population (no.)	7,460	8,270	8,470	9,110	10,250	11,690	+3,220
Average Annual Growth (no.)		+160	+100	+210	+230	+290	+250
Average Annual Growth (%)		+2.1%	+1.2%	+2.5%	+2.4%	+2.7%	+2.5%

Source: Forecast Id; Ethos Urban

The retail spending capacity of the Catchment Area population can be estimated. Estimates of retail spending have been prepared with reference to the MarketInfo retail spending model. MarketInfo is a micro-simulation model which uses data from the ABS Household Expenditure Survey (HES), the ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing, ABS Australian National Accounts, and other relevant sources.

The total retail spending capacity of the Catchment Area population is detailed in Table 4.2. It is calculated by multiplying the current and future population forecasts, with the per capita retail spending estimates of existing residents. The spending forecasts are presented in constant $2022/23, i.e. excluding the effects of price inflation, though do include an allowance for real growth in per capita spending.

Table 4.2 Catchment Area Retail Spending Capacity, 2021 – 2036 (Constant $2022/23)

Retail Category	2022	2026	2031	2036
Retail and Childcare Catchment				
FLG	$66.1m	$75.3m	$89.0m	$106.7m
Food Catering	$17.0m	$19.1m	$22.1m	$26.0m
Non-Food	$61.1m	$69.6m	$82.3m	$98.6m
Services	$4.9m	$5.6m	$6.7m	$8.0m
Total Retail	$149.1m	$169.6m	$200.1m	$239.3m

Source: MarketInfo; Ethos Urban

A small Local Convenience Centre would be well placed to serve future residents of the growth precinct, catering to their top-up convenience daily shopping needs. Residents would still need to travel to Ballan and Bacchus March to undertake their weekly shopping requirements. The Local Convenience Centre would be particularly convenient for residents within a walkable catchment of the site, and is expected to generate the majority of its retail sales from residents within the immediate surrounding area (i.e. within Precinct 5).

Examining the broader area, at 2026, the Catchment Area population is estimated to generate $170 million of retail spending. The majority of this retail spending would be directed to the Ballan and Bacchus Marsh Town Centres, as well as other higher-order shopping precincts in the broader region. A Local Convenience Centre at the Subject Site with some 700m² of retail uses, assuming an average trading level of $7,000 per m², would achieve retail sales in the order $5 million. This would reflect a market share of the total retail spending capacity of the Catchment Area of approximately 3.0% in 2026.

A Local Convenience Centre that achieves a retail market share of this scale would not have any substantive trading impact on the Ballan Town Centre. The current role and function of the Ballan Town Centre within the retail hierarchy of the region would be retained, with the Local Convenience Centre subservient to the higher-order role and function of the much larger Ballan Town Centre.

The Moorabool Shire Council Retail Strategy 2041 (2016) outlines that 1,000 residents can potentially support a foodstore of 300m² – 500 m² plus additional specialty shops. Further the draft Moorabool Retail Strategy, 2023, outlines a LAC typically serves a population of 1,000 to 4,000 persons . This indicates that the Subject Site, with a population capacity of approximately 2,400 residents, can support a small amount of retail uses to serve the shopping needs residents of the local area (Precinct 5), particularly within a walkable catchment of the Local Convenience Centre.

Overall, this analysis demonstrates that there will be the demand and need for a Local Convenience Centre in the area, and that the centre would not have any implications for the Ballan Town Centre.

4.5 Childcare Assessment

Childcare in Australia has evolved significantly over the last 20 years with an increasing number of females returning to the workforce sooner after childbirth and looking for long day care options. The proportion of children in childcare services has been increasing for many years and childcare participation rates are expected to continue to increase in the future given the ongoing increases in childcare funding implemented by the Federal Government over recent years as well as the increasing participation of females in the workforce.

Various types of childcare services cater to the varied needs and demands of parents including long day care (LDC), family day care, before/after school care and occasional care. Children in long day care forms the basis of the following analysis.

The ABS published Childhood Education and Care report provides detail on the number of children in care (ABS Catalogue Number 4402.0). Utilising this information, it is possible to derive a ratio of the number of children in long day care as a proportion of all children aged 0-4 years, referred to in this report as the childcare participation rate.

In June 2017 (latest available ABS data), the proportion of children aged 4 years and younger in long day care was 35%. This proportion has been steadily increasing over the years and was 18% in June 1999 and 28% in June 2008 (source ABS). Given the ongoing increases in childcare funding implemented by the Federal Government over recent years, together with the increasing participation of females in the workforce, it is expected that childcare participation rates will continue to increase in the future.

The Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, published the *Child Care in Australia* report for the March quarter of 2020. The report finds that during the March quarter 2020, the average weekly hours for children in centre-based day care was 30 hours. This reflects an average attendance of approximately three days per week.

Currently only one childcare centre is located in Ballan – Ballan Childcare Centre (88A Simpson Street, Ballan) – which is licenced for 50 places. Two childcare centres are approved for development in the Ballan township, the details of the approved centres are as follows:

- **80 Steiglitz Street**. Planning application has been lodged for the development of an 80-place childcare centre on vacant lot in the Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). Council have now approved this application as of November 2022.

- **14 Stead Street**. 102 place childcare centre is proposed on the site located in the General Residential Zone Schedule 4 (GRZ4). The development application was approved in June 2022 after a VCAT decision, the centre is under construction and nearing completion.

The following provides a high-level demand analysis of the likely number of childcare places supportable in the Catchment Area given the market demand and existing provision of childcare centres. The demand analysis methodology applied is as follows:

- Determine the available population. At 2022, the population of the Catchment Area is 8,320 residents, and is projected to increase to 9,110 by 2026. In 2016, the proportion of children aged 0-4 years in Ballan was 6.7%, declined to 6.0% at 2021 and is projected to increase to 7.3% at 2026 (source: .id). At 2031, therefore, an estimated 665 children aged 4 years and under are expected to reside in the Catchment Area.
- Apply an estimated participation rate for children in LDC based on the ABS benchmarks. As outlined previously, the national childcare participation rate is calculated at 35% in 2017. Childcare participation rates have been increasing for many years and this trend is likely to continue. A participation rate of 45% has been applied to the Catchment Area reflecting the recent efforts of the Commonwealth Government to further improve child care availability and demand.
- Apply an attendance rate of 60% (i.e. an average attendance of 3 days a week).
- The next step is to determine the acceptable occupancy rate for the existing/future centres in the area. It is important to note that given that children typically attend childcare on average 3 days a week on various days, it is unlikely that childcare centres are always at full capacity every day. In our experience, once average occupancy rates in an area exceeds 80% there can be a supply restriction of childcare places. It is generally accepted that an occupancy rate of at least 70% represents a reasonable balance of ensuring adequate choice and competition in an area, though also ensuring existing centres can operate viably and provide a quality service.

Based on the above, the estimated need for long day care places in the Catchment Area is estimated at 270 places at 2026. This assumes a participation rate of 45% of children using long day care, an attendance rate of 3 days per week, and an occupancy rate of 70%. As mentioned previously, only one childcare centre is currently within the defined Catchment Area providing a total of 50 long data care places with a further 182 places soon to be established from the recently approved developments.

This analysis demonstrates that the local need for long day care places in the Catchment Area at 2026 will be largely met by the current and proposed centres. However, a subsequent need will exist for an additional childcare centre in the local area to give the local families choice of care, and ultimately serve the needs of the community.

The proposed Local Convenience Centre is an appropriate location for a future childcare centre, and would be well placed to serve the childcare needs of future residents of the Subject Site and the surrounding area.

4.6 Medical Centre Assessment

Health services, including general practitioners (GPs), dental services, and diagnostic services (pathology, x-ray etc.) are required for any population, regardless of age or any other differentiating socio-economic characteristics. Ongoing population growth in Australia has resulted in the increasing demand for medical and health facilities.

GPs are the basis of any primary care health offer and are the most-frequented health service at medical centres. They are the first point of contact for any health concerns and are responsible for treating or referring patients to ensure the continued health of community members. Therefore, examining the supply and demand of GPs for an area represents a sound basis for assessing current and future demand for medical centres.

In Victoria currently, the average provision of GPs per 10,000 residents is estimated at between 13 to 14, which is based on available Medicare Benefit Scheme (MBS) data and National Health Workforce Data Survey (NHWDS) data, both provided by the Department of Health. The provision of GPs per capita has generally been increasing over time in Victoria.

There are two medical centres located in Ballan – Ballan Health and Care Services, which includes a GP clinic (Ballan Medical Clinic), allied health, telehealth and pathology services, and Lifeline Medical Centre, a small medical practice. Ballan Medical Clinic provides eight GPs, while Lifeline Medical Centre provides one GP.

The Catchment Area contains an estimated population of 8,320 residents as at mid-2022, which is projected to increase to 9,110 by mid-2026. Based on the average provision of 13 - 14 GPs for every 10,000 residents, the resident population of the Catchment Area creates the **demand for around 12 - 13 GPs at 2026**.

The proposed Local Convenience Centre is considered an appropriate location for a medical centre particularly due its proximity and accessibility to a residential growth area and that it is planned to also provide other commercial and community facilities.

Overall, a small medical centre with 2 – 3 GPs is considered supportable at the proposed Local Convenience Centre site in the short to medium term, which would be well placed to serve the increasing demand for medical services in the local area. This conclusion has regard for the locational attributes of the site, the population base of the catchment, the projected population growth of the area and the existing provision of medical centres in the surrounding area.

4.7 Conclusion

A small Local Convenience Centre positioned on the eastern side of the estate is positioned to serve future residents of the Subject Site. Demand for new housing in the area is strong and is expected to remain strong for the foreseeable future.

A range of community and community uses would be able to be accommodated at the Local Convenience Centre site such as retail uses, a childcare centre and a medical centre, and the centre would become a focus for the immediate local community.

The analysis in this report finds the following uses are supportable at the Subject Site:

- Some convenience-oriented retail uses, to serve the daily top-up convenience retail needs of local residents;
- A childcare centre, to serve the needs of young families moving into the area; and
- A medical centre accommodating around 2-3 GPs.

A convenience centre of this scale would effectively cater to the needs of local residents of the immediate area (i.e. within a walkable catchment) and would not have any adverse implications for the primacy of the Ballan Town Centre.