

02.03

09/02/2023
C100moor

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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Settlement

09/02/2023 --/--/----
G400moor Proposed C115moor

Outward pressure from the Melbourne metropolitan area, the location of the Shire on one of the State's major regional transport corridors and proximity to the regional centres of Ballarat and Geelong will continue to reinforce the advantages of the Shire as a place to live and invest.

Bacchus Marsh has been identified in *Plan Melbourne* and the *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan* as a suitable location for growth due to its regional service centre role, its relative accessibility to Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat, its well established town centre and the availability of greenfield and infill development opportunities.

The growth potential of Ballan is also recognised in the *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan*.

An increase in community and physical infrastructure will be required to support the significant population growth projected.

Future population growth needs to be balanced with protection and sustainable use of the Shire's environmental assets which contribute significantly to the lifestyle and attraction of Moorabool Shire as a place to live, invest and visit.

Approximately two-thirds of the Shire is located in Declared Special Water Supply Catchments, including privately owned land, mainly used for agricultural purposes, or National or State Park or State Forest. Steep land, areas subject to flooding or bushfire, isolation, lack of services, and resources capable of economic extraction are also significant development constraints. In the absence of reticulated sewer, the development of the Shire's small towns and settlements is limited.

Council's strategic directions for settlement are to:

- Direct the majority of growth to Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.
- Support the sustainable development of small towns and settlements.

Bacchus Marsh

Bacchus Marsh is the largest town in the Shire and is located midway between Melbourne and Ballarat. Bacchus Marsh currently fulfills a number of important functions as a regional service centre, a peri-urban town and an increasingly popular housing destination to the west of Melbourne.

Bacchus Marsh has a wide range of services and facilities and provides the largest retail centre within the Shire. ~~However, these will need to be expanded in the context~~ As a Major Activity Centre it will continue to develop as the result of future planned growth as a regional service centre which will generate opportunities for expanded services, including restricted retail/homemaker stores.

In order to respond to metropolitan growth pressures and to meet the strategic goals for growth, three new residential growth precincts have been identified that are capable of accommodating an additional 30,000 people, while further growth will be accommodated within the existing urban area.

The town is defined by the following character elements which warrant considered design responses:

- The rural and natural gateway entries, in particular the entrance from the Western Freeway through the Avenue of Honour.
- An open feel due to the rural and low density surrounds, wider streetscapes, large open space areas, farmlands, orchards and market gardens.
- Distinctive natural landscape character and setting comprising escarpments and an irrigated river valley.
- A scenic backdrop that surrounds the town with Wombat-Lerderderg National Park, Werribee Gorge State Park and Long Forest Flora and Fauna Reserve.

MOORABOOL PLANNING SCHEME

- Werribee and Lerderderg Rivers that traverse through the town and in some places include linear walking paths and open space along the waterways.
- Networks of open space throughout residential areas and adjoining forested areas.
- Significant heritage places and trees including the Bacchus Marsh Avenue of Honour.
- A strong range of business enterprises including industrial businesses that provide local employment opportunities, particularly in the transport and the agricultural industries.

Bacchus Marsh's growth is constrained by the surrounding environmental assets, topography, mineral resources and agricultural/horticultural resources in the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District. The identified residential growth precincts combined with infill growth opportunities within the existing settlement boundary provides for a substantial amount of residential land supply to accommodate growth in the medium to long term.

There are a number of strategically important land uses surrounding Bacchus Marsh, including the Darley Sand Quarries, Maddingley Brown Coal operations (coal mining, landfill and composting), agribusiness, the airport and the Bacchus Marsh Recycled Water Plant. Such uses are inherently incompatible with residential development due to their offsite impacts.

Council seeks to:

- Provide for growth consistent with the Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework.
- Accommodate residential growth within:
 - The existing settlement boundary of Bacchus Marsh.
 - Merrimu, Parwan Station and Hopetoun Park.
- Maintain the primacy of the Bacchus Marsh Main Street Activity Centre and provide a network of supporting activity centres sufficient to meet local needs.
- Enhance the elements of Bacchus Marsh that contribute to the character of the town including the visual amenity of all key gateways into Bacchus Marsh.
- Support urban design outcomes which provide a positive contribution to the character of the town.
- Protect the highly productive Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District from urban expansion.
- Provide for employment generating industrial and agribusiness land uses within the Parwan Employment Precinct.

Ballan

Ballan is the second largest town in the Shire. It has an important role in providing for growth, secondary to the main growth fronts in Bacchus Marsh. The growth precincts to the east, west and south of Ballan are capable of accommodating 3,000 people. As growth occurs, the town's point of difference in housing, lifestyle choices and rural amenity needs to be maintained in the long term, such that Ballan does not adopt a typical suburban role in the future. ~~It's~~Its strong historical character and rural setting need to be recognised to ensure future development is planned and undertaken sympathetically.

Ballan has good services and facilities and provides the only substantial retail centre within Moorabool Shire, other than Bacchus Marsh. ~~However, these will need to be managed in the context of future planned growth for the town.~~ It is anticipated that Ballan will continue to be an important location for meeting local needs as well as serving the broader peri-urban region. The growth of retail and services will need to be managed so that the needs of future residents are met, while protecting the commercial viability and character of the existing town centre.

~~In more recent years, Ballan has also performed~~ Ballan performs a niche tourism role through a number of regular markets, annual festivals, boutique shops and gourmet cafes. ~~This role is~~ These activities and attractions are anticipated to grow and become an integral component of ~~Ballan~~ Ballan's offering in the future.

The Ballan Industrial Precinct provides for a mix of business activities including manufacturing, transport and service companies. The Precinct is located in close proximity to the residential population and is most suited to light industrial uses.

Council seeks to:

- Protect and enhance Ballan's character and sense of place as a country town, with historic built form and streetscapes, surrounded by scenic rural and natural areas.
- Provide for growth consistent with the Ballan Framework Plan.
- Retain the town centre's existing compact form and core function as the main commercial and retail precinct with supporting non-residential uses.
- Ensure that development and new commercial use responds meaningfully to the strong historic elements, streetscapes and existing amenity of the town centre.
- Plan for an additional neighbourhood activity centre in Ballan South to be delivered once the local population can support two centres

Gordon

Gordon is the third largest town in the shire and is strategically located on the Western Freeway between Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat. It has the potential for direct access to both Ballarat and Melbourne by rail with the Gordon Railway Station located less than a kilometre south of the town centre that could be re-opened to support public transport to both Ballarat and Melbourne. Availability of sewerage and the proximity to Ballarat are anticipated to drive growth.

Growth of the township will be based initially on infill development within the existing township boundary. Long term growth will be concentrated between the southern boundary of the existing township and the railway line and areas to the west on Old Melbourne Road.

Like other towns, there are significant environmental constraints within Gordon and surrounds, including bushfire risk and Declared Special Water Supply Catchments.

Council seeks to:

- Identify and manage urban growth opportunities in Gordon.
- Ensure that development within Gordon responds to, and mitigates, any identified bushfire risks.

Small towns and settlements

Small towns and settlements in close proximity within Moorabool have strong social and economic connections to each other and operate as clusters.

Many of the small towns and settlements lack the quantum of population to be considered sustainable communities ~~in the sense that they lack diversity in the provision of~~ and support local jobs, retail, public transport, other public and medical services and community infrastructure. They rely heavily on larger communities and tend to be strongly car dependent.

Bushfire risk is significant for many small towns and settlements and flood risk is not fully mapped or understood.

There are limited development opportunities in small towns and ~~settlement~~ settlements within Declared Special Water Supply Catchments ~~while other key issues include missed~~ Key areas of focus in these catchments will be enhancing opportunities for tourism and protecting the environmental value of surrounding land.

Council seeks to promote distinctive and sustainable small towns and settlements by:

- Providing for growth in Bungaree, Wallace, Dunnstown and Myrniong.
- Creating clusters of linked small towns and settlements.
- Providing adequate community and physical infrastructure to service communities.

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Environmental and landscape values

Moorabool Shire's natural environment, towns, rural landscapes and forested areas are important elements of the Shire's character.

The varied and rich topographical features of Moorabool Shire (including ranges, plains, and gorges) need to be conserved not only for their intrinsic environmental and landscape values but also as a recreational and tourism resource to the Shire.

The small towns and settlements of Moorabool Shire have a very strong rural setting and character that is defined by the local agricultural base, spectacular scenic landscapes and diverse vegetation. There is a need to ensure that these values, which draw people to the area, are protected.

Council seeks to:

- Maintain and enhance the natural environment and the Shire's rural identity and character.
- Facilitate land use and development that is compatible with the Shire's natural environment, native vegetation and places of environmental significance.
- Protect the landscape and scenic qualities of forested hill slopes, rural landscapes and bushland settings of the Shire.

Biodiversity

The Brisbane Ranges National Park, Wombat-Lerderderg National Park, Werribee Gorge State Park, Wombat State Forest, Long Forest Flora and Fauna Reserve and other bushland areas in the Shire are highly significant natural resources with nationally important flora and fauna habitat values. These values are also valuable attractors of recreation and tourism.

Human activity particularly the impacts of population growth, urban growth, and agricultural activity have contributed to the decline in biodiversity, quality and quantity of native vegetation and waterway condition.

Roadside vegetation is of great value to the Shire as it provides for flora and fauna movement corridors between State and National Parks or Forests and supports the rural character of the area.

Pest and environmental weed control are important issues within the Shire as is the revegetation of native flora along waterways.

Council seeks to:

- Positively enhance biodiversity in the Shire.

River corridors

Moorabool River, Werribee River and Lerderderg River supply water for domestic and agricultural purposes. Inappropriate development, land clearing and sediment deposition from erosion can threaten riparian environments and water quality within the catchments.

Council seeks to:

- Ensure that the riparian area along watercourses is retained, protected and revegetated.

02.03-309/02/2023
C100moor**Environmental risks and amenity****Bushfire and flood management**

Significant areas of the Shire are at risk of bushfire, particularly forested areas. Large areas of the Shire are also prone to flooding as the Moorabool, Werribee, and Lerderderg Rivers flow through the Shire.

Council seeks to:

- Minimise risk of bushfire damage.
- Minimise flood risk.

02.03-409/02/2023
C100moor**Natural resource management****Agriculture**

Agriculture is the major land use in the Shire and a significant component of the economy. The Shire is committed to facilitating sustainable agriculture and protecting the long-term supply of productive agricultural and horticultural land. Where irrigation water or higher rainfall combines with highly productive soil types, the Shire supports horticultural pursuits.

The Shire's horticultural land resources are important economically in supporting tourism and the lifestyle appeal of the area. The Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District and other highly productive areas in the west of the Shire need to be protected from the encroachment of residential development.

There is need to avoid fragmentation of land suitable for rural production by discouraging subdivision and houses that are unrelated to the rural use of the land. It is also important to ensure that farm production is not compromised or adversely affected by residents living in rural areas.

The Shire's agricultural base and attractive rural setting are important drivers in attracting people to live in Moorabool. Council supports rural living development where it does not compromise the long term productive use of rural land for agriculture, enhances environmental outcomes and provides services and infrastructure to support such development.

Council seeks to:

- Protect good quality agricultural land and support the productivity and sustainability of existing and future agricultural and horticultural activities.
- Increase productivity and investment associated with the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District.
- Ensure that subdivision and dwellings in rural areas will result in increased agricultural productivity.
- Minimise the potential for farm production to be adversely impacted by land use conflicts.

Declared Special Water Supply Catchments

Large areas of Moorabool Shire are in Declared Special Water Supply Catchments providing potable water for local and regional populations.

For public health reasons, prospects for population growth and investment are minimal for small towns and settlements that reside within a Declared Special Water Supply Catchment and lack reticulated sewerage.

Inappropriate land use and development within Declared Special Water Supply Catchment areas will compromise the ability to supply water of appropriate quality. In particular, it is critical that appropriate effluent disposal systems are used.

Council seeks to:

- Protect the quality and quantity of water produced within Declared Special Water Supply Catchments.

02.03-509/02/2023
C100moor**Built environment and heritage**

Moorabool Shire has significant natural and cultural heritage assets including historic buildings, streetscapes, trees, and landscapes. Many of these places have strong associations with gold discovery and the associated development of the transport routes between Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat. These heritage assets support tourism in the Shire.

Moorabool has numerous sites of aboriginal cultural heritage significance within the Shire including burials, rock art, occupation sites and scar trees.

Planning for development in the Shire needs to be environmentally sustainable to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment and natural resource base and should assist in creating compact, liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods.

New development must also complement the defining character elements of towns (such as the historic Avenue of Honour in Bacchus Marsh) and the open and natural landscape, while also preserving horticultural land.

Council seeks to:

- Protect and reinforce the Shire's built and natural heritage.
- Encourage residential development that enhances liveability and contributes to the creation of healthy and active neighbourhoods.
- Promote environmentally sustainable design to reduce the cost of living and improve liveability.
- Ensure development respects the existing character, landscape setting and amenity of the local area.

02.03-609/02/2023
C100moor**Housing**

A diversity of housing types is required throughout the Shire to meet the needs of existing and future residents. This is particularly important due to the ageing population and decreasing household sizes, and the likely increased demand for smaller, affordable, low-maintenance and adaptable dwellings.

Council also recognises the importance of directing housing to locations that are easily accessible to activity centres and public transport. This will assist in achieving Council's vision to create compact and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Council seeks to:

- Improve the diversity of housing stock within the municipality.
- Design housing to be adaptable for use by smaller households, older people and people with disabilities.
- To provide high amenity rural lifestyle opportunities in Bacchus Marsh while protecting irrigated horticultural land and other environmental assets.

02.03-709/02/2023
C100moor**Economic development**

There is a need to retain the benefits of a consolidated commercial centre in Bacchus Marsh and Ballan. Council recognises that centrally-located, attractive mixed-use activity centres with a densely developed inner core, will assist in reducing escape expenditure and will ensure a vibrant community and cultural hub. It is also important to ensure that the Bacchus Marsh Main Street activity centre, is supported by a network of lower order activity centres sufficient to meet local needs.

There is a need to facilitate bulky goods retail (restricted retail) investment in Bacchus Marsh, to reduce escape expenditure and to fill an identified gap in local retail services.

Council seeks to:

- Strengthen the local economy to improve local employment opportunities, meet the needs of residents and reduce escape expenditure by:
 - Providing a diverse range of retail, hospitality, personal and community services, particularly in Bacchus Marsh as an identified regional service centre.
 - Facilitating a bulky goods (restricted retail) precinct that is convenient to the Bacchus Marsh community and able to accommodate large footprint retail uses.
 - ~~Encourage~~Supporting commercial uses in Ballan ~~oriented towards generating high that generate high pedestrian~~ activity, in combination with community facilities (including local level convenience retail facilities) within or ~~proximal~~adjacent to the town centre core.
 - ~~Encourage the use of existing shops in the town centre of~~Supporting the reuse of existing commercial buildings in Ballan prior to considering the construction of new commercial buildings on the fringe of the town centre.
- Reinforce the role of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan as regional centres for employment, shopping, tourism, industry, business, and cultural services.
- Support local business and encourage ~~further~~appropriate development of industrial and agricultural businesses in small towns and settlements to generate activity and employment locally.

Industry

There are a number of state-significant natural resources and export-based industries that make significant employment and economic contributions to Bacchus Marsh, including:

- Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District.
- Darley/Coimadai sand quarries.
- Maddingley Waste and Resource Recovery Hub (including coal mine).

Bacchus Marsh and Ballan contain industrial land that has good access to transport infrastructure and is ~~in close proximity~~ to metropolitan Melbourne and the regional centres of Ballarat and Geelong. Large tracts of industrial land in Bacchus Marsh remain undeveloped due to the lack of supporting physical infrastructure and, in some cases, due to the encroachment of sensitive residential uses.

The Moorabool Agribusiness Industrial Area in Parwan provides an agricultural and employment hub that is capable of implementing best practice water management techniques and encouraging local employment opportunities to assist the growing local and regional community.

Maddingley industrial precincts to the north of Kerrs Road are constrained by residential encroachment. These precincts are therefore best suited to service industries, rather than manufacturing and other heavy industries.

Council seeks to:

- Provide an adequate supply of fully-serviced industrial land to create local employment.
- Facilitate a range of industrial development and activities in proximity to transport networks and existing infrastructure.
- Manage off-site impacts and avoid conflict with residential and other sensitive uses, environmental quality objectives and agricultural values.
- Protect existing and future industrial and agribusiness land uses from the encroachment of sensitive land uses (particularly Maddingley Waste and Resource Recovery Hub, Darley/Coimadai sand quarries, South Maddingley industrial precinct south of Kerrs Road, Parwan Employment Precinct, Bacchus Marsh Aerodrome and Bacchus Marsh Recycled Water Plant).

- Retain the industrial precinct of Ballan as a significant employer within the town while also providing a range of light industrial uses.
- Protect the long-term potential of stone and mineral resources.

Local employment

Residents are employed in a diverse range of industries that are derived from the Shire's rural environment and proximity to urban centres. The Shire has significant locational advantages for business including its proximity to Melbourne and Avalon airports, ports, major population centres and access to road and rail infrastructure that provides transport links across Victoria and into South Australia. There is a distinct commuter labour force that travels outside of the Shire for employment. A primary goal is to facilitate economic development that reduces the reliance on employment opportunities outside the Shire.

The Parwan Employment Precinct to the south of Bacchus Marsh will provide for an increasing level of local employment. This precinct benefits from accessibility to the Western Freeway, the Melbourne-Ballarat rail corridor, significant separation from sensitive uses and larger landholdings. The Parwan Employment Precinct will provide for a range of opportunities for industrial and agribusiness investment, particularly value adding enterprises that are integrated with the local agricultural sector, and which produce export products.

A network of activity centres throughout Bacchus Marsh will assist in creating a critical mass of people living and working in the town.

In Ballan, the main street activity centre and the Haddon Drive industrial precinct provide opportunities for local employment.

Council seeks to:

- Increase local employment opportunities in activity centres, industrial precincts and the agricultural/agribusiness sector.
- Facilitate the development of a regionally significant Parwan Employment Precinct.

Tourism

Tourism is a growing industry and important economic driver in the Shire that presents opportunities for economic development and diversification of the local economy and workforce. The Shire has tourism links with the Spa Region to the north and the Goldfields region to the west and north. Tourism development draws on many aspects of the Shire including recreation, leisure activities, environment, wineries, mineral springs, heritage and landscape features.

Council recognises that economic prosperity is dependent on its natural resources and seeks to:

- Facilitate economic activity from tourism that is consistent with protecting and enhancing the Shire's natural resource assets, heritage and town character.
- Promote the growth of the tourism sector in small towns and settlements.

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Transport

Road infrastructure in a number of towns and settlements in the Shire, particularly Bacchus Marsh and Ballan, has limited capacity to service the growing community without further upgrading.

Public transport requires improved levels of service and integration throughout the municipality, particularly along the Melbourne – Ballarat rail corridor, to support sustainable growth.

Improved vehicle and freight links are required between destinations within and beyond the Shire, and to address the physical division created by the Western Freeway and Ballarat Rail line, particularly in Bacchus Marsh.

Bacchus Marsh experiences regular traffic congestion, particularly due to the only north-south arterial road (Grant Street/Gisborne Road) passing through the centre of town carrying a high volume of heavy vehicle movements.

As a regional centre with a relatively dispersed settlement pattern, Bacchus Marsh will continue to have a relatively high level of vehicle dependence. Neighbourhoods, activity centres and key destinations will need to be accessible by road, which in turn need to support public transport, cycling and walking.

An efficient road network for the Bacchus Marsh district would facilitate east-west and north-south connections.

The new urban growth precincts at Merrimu, Parwan Station, and Parwan Employment Precinct will require the provision of an Eastern Link Road, with connections to Gisborne Road, Western Freeway and Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Road. This road would enable these new growth precincts to integrate with the local and regional transport network.

Council seeks to:

- Facilitate a high quality, sustainable and connected transport network within Moorabool Shire including roads, rail and air.
- Facilitate an integrated public transport network with improved coverage, accessibility and capacity.
- Develop a north-south Eastern Link Road to the east of Bacchus Marsh, including connections to Gisborne Road, Western Freeway and Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Road.
- Limit freight traffic movement through Bacchus Marsh.
- Strengthen the potential for Bacchus Marsh district road networks to manage local traffic movements.
- Facilitate active commuting by pedestrians and cyclists.
- Better utilise the Bacchus Marsh Aerodrome.

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Infrastructure

Community infrastructure

Council acknowledges the pressures that an aging population places on the social infrastructure of the Shire. Council endeavours to support the health and well-being of communities through the provision of high quality and flexible social and recreation infrastructure for people of all ages and from all areas within the Shire including open spaces, community facilities and commercial hubs. Any new urban growth precincts will need to be carefully planned to ensure provision of appropriate reticulated services, integrated transport and open space.

Council has adopted the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) (prepared by the Local Government Infrastructure Design Association) which includes guidelines for the design and construction of infrastructure, such as roads, drainage, stormwater, car parking, landscaping, access, earthworks and public lighting. The IDM complements the objectives and standards of Clause 56 for residential subdivision applications.

Council seeks to:

- Improve social and physical infrastructure in the Shire to support the growing population.
- Provide equitable and integrated open space and recreation facilities.
- Ensure that provision of education and health services matches projected demand.
- Secure long-term water supplies for urban and agricultural use.