

Moorabool Planning Scheme

Amendment C115moor

Explanatory Report

Overview

This amendment implements the *Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy 2024*. It does this by updating the hierarchy of retail activity centres to reflect new and emerging residential growth areas already identified in the scheme, and updating various economic and retail guidance throughout the scheme. The amendment will ensure new residential areas are well serviced by retail centres, and that there is appropriate retail expansion in the small towns and villages. It also supports the provision of a wider range of goods and services in appropriate locations.

Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment can be inspected free of charge at the Moorabool Shire Council website at <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/> and the amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

- Moorabool Shire Ballan office, 15 Stead St, Ballan
- Lerderderg Library – Customer Service, 215 Main St, Bacchus Marsh
- Moorabool Shire Darley Civic and Community Hub, 182 Halletts Way, Darley

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at <http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection> or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

Submissions

Any person may make a submission to the planning authority about the amendment. Submissions about the amendment must be received by 30 November 2025.

A submission must be sent to: info@moorabool.vic.gov.au or PO Box 18, Ballan, Vic 3342.

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- Directions hearing: 11 May 2026
- Panel hearing: 8 June 2026

Details of the amendment

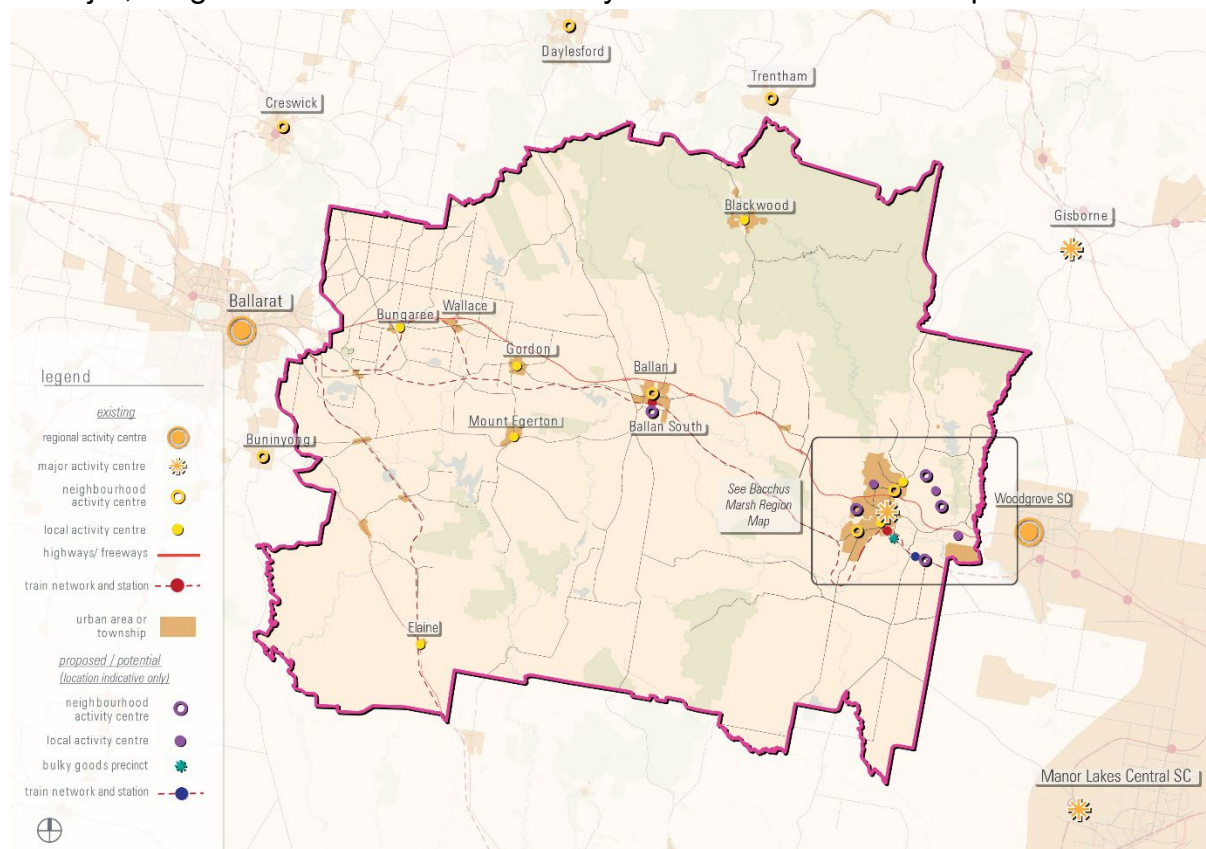
Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by Moorabool Shire Council which is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of Moorabool Shire Council.

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to the entire municipality, but focuses on commercial areas in Major, Neighbourhood and Local Activity Centres as shown in Map 1 below.



Map 1: Moorabool Retail Strategy Activity Centres

What the amendment does

The *Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy 2024* was adopted by Council on 4 September 2024. The amendment seeks to implement the statutory recommendations of the Strategy into the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

The amendment will:

- Amend Clause 02.03-1 *Strategic Directions* to describe Bacchus Marsh as a Major Activity Centre and include updates to Ballan and Small Towns and Settlements sections.
- Amend Clause 02.03-7 *Economic Development* to include minor changes to existing policy.
- Amend Clause 11.01-1L-03 *Ballan* to remove Ballan Town Centre strategies.
- Amend Clause 11.03-1L *Activity Centres* to include an updated Retail Centre Hierarchy, and add Ballan Town Centre strategies.
- Amend Clause 17.02-1L *Business* to add strategies for Bungaree and Gordon and expand on the existing bulky goods strategy.
- Amend Clause 17.04-1L *Tourism* to include local strategies derived from the Visitor Economy Strategy 2024.
- Amend Clause 18.01-3L *Sustainable personal transport* to provide support for a pedestrian-bicycle link between a future Ballan South neighbourhood activity centre and Inglis Street.
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 34.01 *Commercial 1 Zone* to update 1.0 *Maximum leasable floor area requirements* based on the Retail Strategy assessments.
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.08 *Background Documents* to include new background documents Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy 2024 (Tim Nott with Hansen Partnership, 2024), Moorabool Shire Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 (Urban Enterprise, 2024), and Moorabool Shire Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-2027 (Urban Enterprise, 2024).
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 74.02 *Further strategic work* to remove the Retail Strategy update and add an urban design framework or structure plan for Ballan town centre.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

Why is the amendment required?

The previous Moorabool Retail Strategy adopted in 2016 was based on research undertaken as early as 2014. Since 2016 Council has made numerous significant amendments to the Moorabool Planning Scheme through the Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework and Ballan Strategic Directions. These changes will result in the urban areas of Moorabool achieving significantly more population growth than projected in the 2016 Retail Strategy. Consequently, Council has prepared a new retail strategy to replace the previous 2016 strategy.

Development of the Strategy commenced in 2022 and was informed by targeted engagement with the Ballan Chamber of Commerce and the Moorabool Local

Business Advisory Committee (LBAC), Bacchus Marsh Town Centre Structure Plan drop-in sessions and meetings with retail investors and developers. The Strategy provides guidance for the development of retail activity centres in Moorabool Shire over the next 10 years, and will complement Council's existing strategies on economic development, tourism and land use planning.

The Strategy sets out Council's vision for a retail hierarchy across the Shire. As Moorabool Shire grows, new retail activity centres will be required to serve everyday shopping needs and to provide central locations which promote community interaction. Existing centres will also require support and enhancement.

Key findings and recommendations of the adopted Retail Strategy are:

- Moorabool's hierarchy of centres will need to expand as the population grows, to continue to provide excellent levels of service and employment opportunities in greenfield residential areas.
- Bacchus Marsh Town Centre, as the largest activity centre in the Shire, should be the focus of investment in higher order retailing and other services for the growing municipal community.
- The population of Ballan township is anticipated to grow from 3,000 to 11,000 or more over time, and a new small neighbourhood activity centre may become viable in Ballan South.
- A bulky goods (restricted retail) precinct of 10-12 hectares located close to Bacchus Marsh would create local employment and service residents.
- There is potential to improve the offering of services to visitors, particularly in small townships.

The strategy recommends that several changes be made to the Planning Policy Framework:

- Update Clause 11.03-1L Activity Centres to ensure alignment with the hierarchy outlined within the Moorabool Retail Strategy.
- Include a retail hierarchy map to Clause 11.03-1L Activity Centres.
- Prepare a local level retail policy for inclusion within Clause 17 Economic Development.
- Remove existing floorspace caps on shops in Bacchus Marsh Town Centre applying to C1Z areas previously zoned B2Z and increase the floorspace cap for shops in Darley Plaza.
- Support a bulky goods precinct located close to Bacchus Marsh.

For the new principles and directions to have statutory weight in the consideration of

rezoning requests and planning permit applications, it is necessary for the Retail Strategy to be included in the Moorabool Planning Scheme.

This amendment therefore gives effect to the principles and recommendations contained within the Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy 2024.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The amendment implements the objectives of planning in Victoria pursuant to Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* by providing for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable uses and development of land.

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The amendment does not directly impact on land use and development. Any 'on the ground' effects would be considered during a rezoning or planning permit application process. However, at a policy level, the amendment has given due regard in the consideration of environmental, social or economic effects in the following ways:

- Providing for convenient access to goods and services, and minimising the number, and length, of car trips.
- Encouraging walkable access to retailers of day-to-day essentials.
- Creating vibrant and inviting town and neighbourhood centres.
- Recognising the value of heritage and character in existing centres.
- Maintaining an appropriate mix of centres, that offer a wide range of retail goods and services.
- Locating restricted-retail bulky goods retailers within proximity to the largest population centre.
- Preparing structure plans or urban design frameworks for Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.

Does the amendment address climate change?

The amendment does not need to demonstrate that climate change has been considered as it does not enable non-urban land to be used and developed as urban land.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

The amendment appropriately responds to bushfire policy in Clause 13.02 of the Planning Scheme because the amendment directs retail development to low risk central locations in urban areas, and therefore will not increase the risk to life, property, community infrastructure and the natural environment from bushfire.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes under section 7(5) of the Act and Ministerial Direction 11 Strategic Assessment of Amendments as the Explanatory Report includes all requirements to be met. The amendment is also consistent with Ministerial Direction No. 15 The Planning Scheme Amendment Process.

How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The amendment takes direction from guidance and objectives contained in the Planning Policy Framework.

Clauses that are supported by the amendment include:

Clause 11.01-1S *Settlement*, Clause 11.01-1R *Settlement – Regional Victoria*, and Clause 11.01-1R *Settlement – Central Highlands*, outline strategies to promote regional development, in particular:

- Deliver networks of high-quality integrated settlements, suburbs and towns that concentrate retail, office-based employment, community services facilities and services in central locations.
- Support the development of Central Highlands' regional centres, Ararat and Bacchus Marsh, as the key service centres for each end of the region;
- Direct growth to well serviced settlements with good access to Melbourne or Ballarat, particularly Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Creswick, Clunes, Beaufort and Smythesdale.

Clause 11.02-2S *Structure Planning* on the economic use and development of urban areas, in particular:

- Provide the broad planning framework for an area as well as the more detailed planning requirements for neighbourhoods and precincts, where appropriate.
- Assist the development of walkable neighbourhoods.

Clause 11.02-3S *Sequencing of development* on ensuring services are available from early in the life of new communities, in particular:

- Define preferred development sequences in areas of growth to better coordinate infrastructure planning and funding.

Clause 11.03-1S *Activity centres*, which seeks to encourage the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres that are highly accessible to the community.

Clause 11.03-6S *Regional and local places*, includes support to integrate relevant planning considerations to provide specific direction for the planning of sites, places, neighbourhoods and towns and to consider the distinctive characteristics and needs

of regional and local places in planning for future land use and development.

Clause 15.01-1S *Urban design*, which seeks to create urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity.

Clause 17.01-1S *Diversified economy*, includes objectives to:

- Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors, including health, education, retail, tourism, knowledge industries and professional and technical services based on the emerging and existing strengths of each region.
- Improve access to jobs closer to where people live.
- Support rural economies to grow and diversify.

Clause 17.01-1R *Diversified economy - Central Highlands*, which seek to:

- Support growth through the development of employment opportunities in towns identified for population growth.

Clause 17.02-1S *Business* includes strategies to:

- Plan for an adequate supply of commercial land in appropriate locations.
- Ensure commercial facilities are aggregated and provide net community benefit in relation to their viability, accessibility and efficient use of infrastructure.
- Locate commercial facilities in existing or planned activity centres.
- Provide new convenience shopping facilities to provide for the needs of the local population in new residential areas and within, or immediately adjacent to, existing commercial centres.
- Provide small scale shopping opportunities that meet the needs of local residents and workers in convenient locations.

Clause 17.02-2S *Out-of-centre development*, includes strategies to:

- Ensure that out-of-centre proposals are only considered where the proposed use or development is of net benefit to the community in the region served by the proposal or provides small scale shopping opportunities that meet the needs of local residents and workers in convenient locations.

How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

The amendment updates the Municipal Planning Strategy in the following ways:

- Describes Bacchus Marsh as a major activity centre, consistent with the updated retail hierarchy.
- Considers the impacts of Ballan's planned growth on retail and services.
- Plans for an additional neighbourhood activity centre in Ballan South.
- Changes Clause 02.03-7 Economic Development to improve readability and emphasise economic strengths identified through strategic work.

The amendment builds on work undertaken through the Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework and Ballan Strategic Directions implemented in the Planning Scheme, by using predicted population growth and current knowledge of future residential development to provide updated retail guidance aligned with the Municipal Planning Strategy.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions by using policy to strengthen the status of the existing and proposed retail centres within Moorabool Shire, and guide decision making for planning permit applications and requests to rezone land for retail uses.

Planning for an out-of-centre bulky goods retail (restricted retail) precinct in Bacchus Marsh was previously included in the planning scheme at Clause 17.02-1L. The Retail Strategy has undertaken further supporting assessment and determined a general location, which is included in the update to Clause 17.02-1L along with strategies to assist in understanding whether a proposal would be supported.

Clause 34.01 Commercial 1 Zone provides for planning schemes outside of metropolitan Melbourne to specify maximum leasable floor areas for Shop in a schedule. The amendment will continue to use floor space caps to restrict the size of individual centres. Proposals to expand a centre beyond the size of a cap will require a planning permit for use. Updated analysis conducted as part of the Retail Strategy supports changes to floor space caps, and also supports removal of some outdated caps from the Schedule.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The amendment will be referred to relevant agencies as part of the statutory exhibition process.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The amendment will not have a significant impact on the transport system. The amendment is consistent with the objectives and decision-making principles in the Transport Integration Act 2010, in particular those contained in Section 11 – Integration of transport and land use. This section requires a focus on maximising access to residences, employment, services and recreation, and reducing the need for private motor vehicle transport and the extent of travel.

The Moorabool Shire Retail Strategy 2024 and Amendment C115moor reinforce the established hierarchy of retail centres. Relevant principles of the Strategy are to:

- Ensure residents of new communities are within walking distance of

comprehensive food and grocery provision as well as a range of other day-to-day goods and services.

- Concentrate activity in centres to make it easier to undertake multi-purpose trips and enhance the ability of residents to walk or cycle to access services in their neighbourhood.
- Locate any new Neighbourhood Activity Centres at highly accessible sites; on collector roads or close to arterial roads, serviced by public transport and at the convergence of the local trail/active transport network.

How does the amendment have regard to the principles set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong)* Act 2017 in relation to Yarra River land and other land, the use or development of which may affect Yarra River land?

The amendment does not affect Yarra River land.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The amendment is expected to reduce resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority by providing strategic clarity and reducing inappropriate applications.