



**GANNAWARRA**  
*Shire Council*

# **ATTACHMENTS**

**UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

**Ordinary Council Meeting**

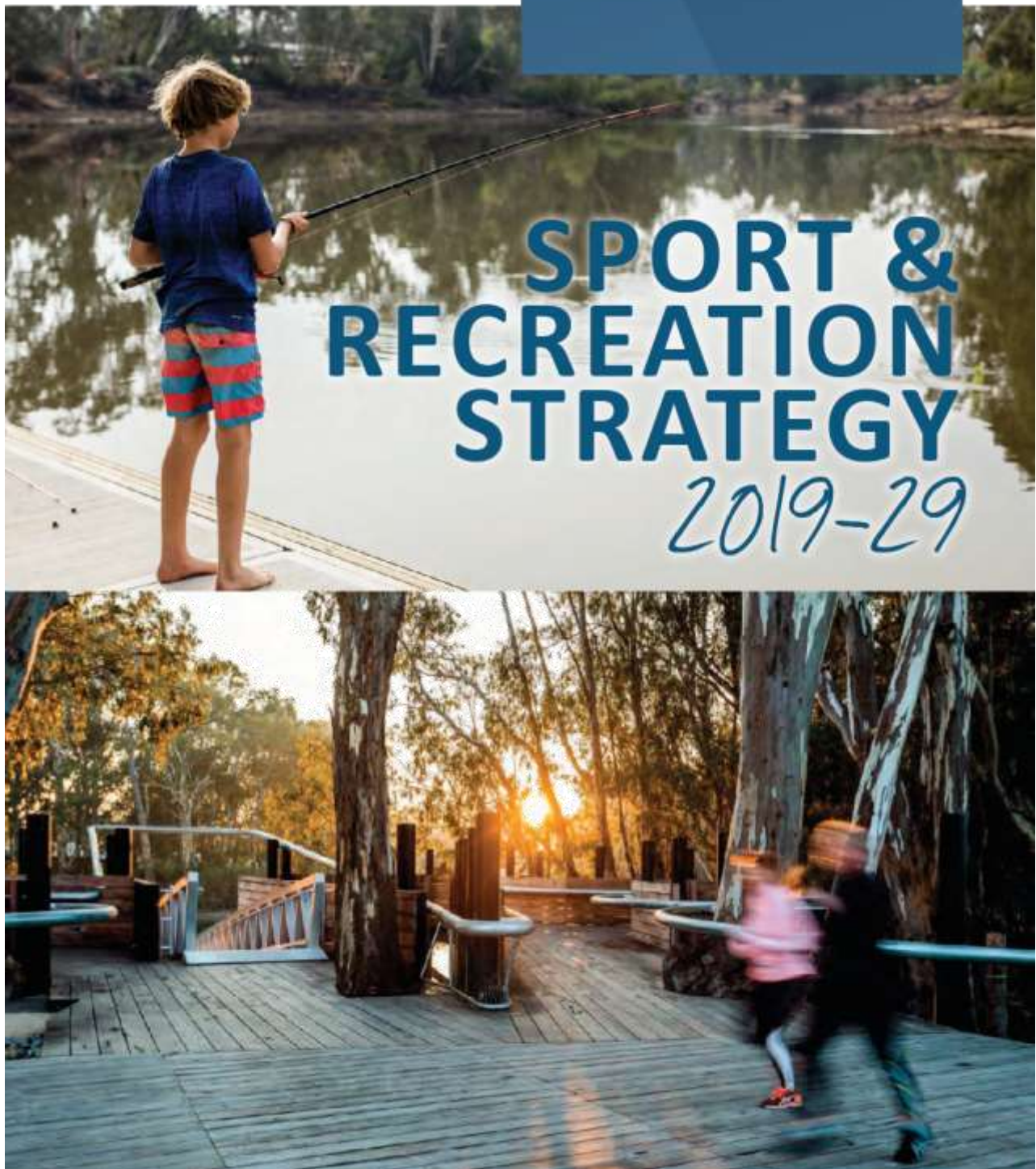
**20 March 2019**

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gannawarra Shire has a diverse range of sport and recreation facilities including informal reserves, sports grounds, aquatic facilities and parks.

These recreational reserves and facilities represent the social heart of each town across the Shire, with recognised health and economic benefits flowing to communities.

Council has invested significantly into the development of a suite of plans over a number of years. These plans articulate Council's vision for recreation reserves and facilities that contribute to the lifestyle choices of residents and attract visitors to the region.

These existing plans, when viewed collectively, have provided a 'road map' for targeted investment and effort.

The purpose of this Sport and Recreation Strategy is to consolidate the strategic direction to better facilitate long-term planning and development of sport and recreation opportunities across the Shire.

Through the development of this Sport and Recreation Strategy, it has become evident that nature-based and passive recreational opportunities like walking, using a playground or visiting a park are just as important to our communities as structured sports like football and netball.

While Council recognises the importance of structured sport to the social fabric of communities, there is a significant focus within this Strategy on passive and nature-based recreation.

This focus on passive and nature-based recreation moves recreation outside of the traditional township boundaries and into our magnificent natural environment. Focused investment on improving accessibility to our vast natural environment, along waterways, lakes and bushland is therefore a focus of this Strategy.

The Strategy also recognises that all members of our community should have access to the social and health benefits of participating in sport and recreation and improving opportunities for participation is a priority.



## ABOUT COUNCIL

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Sport and recreation plays an important part in community life within the Shire.

Community groups and clubs play a vital role in supporting the development, maintenance and sustainability of community sport and recreation assets through the dedicated efforts of volunteers.

**The high level of volunteering in sport and recreation contributes to strong ownership, self-determination and resilience of communities across the Gannawarra Shire.**

Council highly values these partnerships and will continue to support collaboration to assist in the delivery of a range of recreation opportunities for Shire residents.

Council recognises the importance of structured sport to the social fabric of communities in terms of providing important opportunities for physical activity, social connections and inclusion.

It is, however, becoming increasingly difficult for small communities to maintain sporting facilities to the standards required while also maintaining viable sporting clubs through membership numbers and players.

This Strategy encourages communities to consolidate facilities and invest in multi-purpose facilities that support wider use of formal sport and recreation facilities across the Shire. It also encourages investment into environmentally friendly initiatives that reduce running costs such as solar, shade and water savings, to ensure sustainability and viability into the future.

Sport and recreation however extends beyond formal facilities and maintained reserves. Across Gannawarra Shire there is an increasing recognition that passive and nature-based activities significantly contribute to the recreation activities enjoyed by community members.

Nature-based recreation opportunities particularly contribute to tourism opportunities and improving facilities to make our extensive nature-based assets more accessible is a priority moving forward.

Nature-based adventure sports are also becoming a significant tourism product for the Shire. This includes boating and water skiing, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding and mountain biking.





### 3 BENEFITS TO HEALTH OF SPORT AND RECREATION



Participating in regular physical activity is integral to health outcomes. It reduces levels of overweight and obesity and chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Being physically active increases life expectancy and leads to improved overall mental health by reducing levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

It increases positive self-image, confidence and development of physical skills as well as fitness levels.

Sport and active recreation brings people together and builds community cohesion, both within and between communities.

It connects people to their communities, healthcare, education, training and economic opportunities.

**Sport and recreation contributes significantly to physical and mental health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and communities.**





## 4 ABOUT GANNAWARRA

### OUR LANDSCAPE

Gannawarra is a region loaded with natural features, rivers, lakes, wetlands and forests. It is the perfect lifestyle choice and destination for relaxing on the riverbank, water skiing with friends or just soaking up the ambience walking through the majestic red gum forests.

Bordering the Murray River in Northern Victoria, Gannawarra Shire is three hours from Melbourne by road and around one hour from the neighbouring larger centres of Swan Hill, Echuca and Bendigo.

Gannawarra Shire has two main towns: Kerang (population 3,893) and Cohuna (population 2,428).

Rural townships are Koondrook (population 991), Leitchville (population 558), Quambatook (population 249) as well as Lalbert, Murrabit, Macorna, Mystic Park and Lake Charm, each with a population of less than 250.

The Shire covers 3,735 square kilometres of land.

**Boasting the Murray River and Gunbower Creek, lakes and extensive system of waterways and forests, nature-based adventure sports are emerging as a tourism product for the Gannawarra Shire.**



### OUR POPULATION

Gannawarra Shire had an estimated population at the last Census in 2016 of 10,549 people with 49.8 per cent male and 50.2 per cent female.

The Shire has an ageing population with the median age as at the 2016 Census being 49. This compares to the Australian median age of 38 years.



# 10,549\*

\*(Censusdata.abs.gov.au, 2016)

**49.8% MALE**

**50.2% FEMALE**

**MEDIAN AGE 49**

**Prioritising physical activity opportunities that promote positive ageing presents an opportunity for Gannawarra Shire.**

There is a significant drop in the proportion of residents aged between 20 to 29 years and a gradual increase in the percentage of the population from 30 to 69 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.9% of the population (165 people) with the median age being 20.

The decrease in the population of young people aged 20 to 44 is most likely due to education, training and employment opportunities not available within the Shire.

**An opportunity exists for the Shire to invest into sport and recreation opportunities to attract young adults and families.**

## 5 COUNCIL'S ROLE IN SPORT AND RECREATION



Council has historically had a strong focus on supporting a core suite of recreation facilities and infrastructure in each town across the Shire.

Communities are being asked more and more to consider their priorities to guide their overall resource allocation in order to address a key challenge, for both Council and individual communities, of effective and sustainable asset maintenance and renewal.

The demand for additional facilities for existing structured sports across the Shire is anticipated to remain comparatively low.

The main focus will continue to be ongoing maintenance and improvements to existing assets to take full advantage of usage, increase female participation and access for all abilities, maintaining safety, increasing sustainability and meeting current user expectations.

Council's role can be summarised as the following:

- Facilitating the planning and renewal of facilities, services and opportunities to address identified (current and future) community needs.
- Supporting the provision and development of facilities, services and programs to meet the needs of the current and future community.
- Working in partnership with other levels of government (including neighbouring councils), schools, clubs and community groups to ensure that facilities, programs and services meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Supporting sporting clubs, groups and communities to help themselves by assisting capacity building and community driven initiatives.
- Supporting appropriate commercial operators to provide facilities and services in response to market driven demands.
- Advocating to other levels of government and relevant stakeholders regarding issues and opportunities that are likely to impact on physical activity and leisure opportunities in the Shire.
- Providing information to the community regarding the range of leisure opportunities available to residents, including promotion of the health and wellbeing benefits of participation in physical activity.

**Council's role in sport and recreation is more than just infrastructure development and maintenance.**

## 6 REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

This Sport and Recreation Strategy will act as an overarching strategic document providing the vision, principles and objectives to guide Council when planning initiatives in sport and recreation to meet community needs.

The relationship between the Sport and Recreation Strategy and other plans is highlighted in the image below.

**The strategies sitting under the Sport and Recreation Strategy capture further detail on both formal or organised sport and passive recreation across the Shire:**





**THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF OTHER EXISTING PLANS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO SPORT AND RECREATION ACROSS THE SHIRE:**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN (GANNAWARRA 2025)**

Revitalising Gannawarra's towns into vibrant places in one of five strategic platforms. The strategy suggests investing in master plans for built environments and streetscapes, as well as ensuring health and wellness services that match demographic needs. The other relevant strategy platform is embracing environmental sustainability by various means such as restoring wetlands and developing environmental remediation and tourism opportunities.

**COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021**

The Council Plan 2017 to 2021 (which includes the statutory Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) articulates some of the high level aspirations of Council and the community. The Strong Healthy Communities priority area in the Council Plan consists of the following priority actions:

- Seek funding to improve and develop infrastructure that encourages physical and leisure activities
- Develop a framework to guide Council decision making and support community access to sport and recreation funding opportunities
- Increase and support female participation in sport across the Shire
- Advocate for free access to sport and recreation opportunities for disadvantaged children
- Develop a plan to make playgrounds across the shire all-abilities accessible
- Increase support for people with a disability to access physical and leisure activities

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, Council is required to work in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies to address the strategic priorities of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

At a local level, Council works in a formal partnership with Northern District Community Health, Kerang District Health, Cohuna District

Hospital, Victoria Police, Mallee District Aboriginal Service, Mallee Family Care, with support from the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership. This partnership group, known as Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM), has determined a number of preventative health priorities.

Of relevance to this Sport and Recreation Strategy are the priority areas of Active Living as well as Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing. In working towards these identified health priorities, a specific focus is on:

- Aboriginal health
- Vulnerable children and young people
- Gender equity

At least 23% of the total capital works expenditure over the life of the Council Plan 2017-2021 will be put to recreational facilities, parks and open spaces, mostly in the form of asset renewal, new asset expenditure and asset upgrade expenditure.



## SPORT &amp; RECREATION STRATEGY 2019 - 2029

**COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2012 - 2025**

Includes community concerns about whether cultural and recreational opportunities are adequate. The plan suggests the need to encourage non-sport activities to engage young people. There are goals within this document that align with this Sport and Recreation Strategy such as:

- Support people in making safer/healthier choices
- Link people to places by providing a great range of inclusive, safe and fun activities
- Promote 'access for all' principles

**EARLY YEARS PLAN**

For ages 0-8 years, libraries and playgrounds were both seen as important, however, walking/bike paths were seen as most important and in need of the most improvement. Priorities: improved facilities such as

toilets at playgrounds, road crossings and footpaths, particularly to schools.

**RECREATION ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011**

Provides a comprehensive look at all recreation assets and offers strategies for prioritisation. This Plan has considered all recreation assets, but focuses on those that are Council owned and operated.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH STRATEGY 2016 - 2020**

For ages 9 – 18, priorities lie with building on the development of community gyms or parks/outdoor spaces with exercise equipment, advocating for improved access to health and wellbeing supports for children, young people and their families. Emphasis is placed on sport

facilities, swimming pools, parks and playgrounds.

**SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY 2019-2023**

Reducing barriers for groups most at risk of being excluded from our community, promoting connectivity and accessibility across the Shire for all community members to fulfil their potential as equal citizens. This includes people with a disability, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), Indigenous, and who identify as LGBTIQ, young people, older people and community members facing socio-economic disadvantage.



## POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY 2016-2020

Two of the key domains of community living that help older people are outdoor spaces and buildings. Reviewing the walkability of towns was a priority. This strategy notes the importance of design and amenity of public areas to facilitate high levels of community engagement. It is also important that the programs on offer through such facilities are relevant to the interests and needs of older people.

## POOLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2009

According to this document, providing one extra indoor pool within the Shire is a long-term aspirational goal. Health and fitness gyms are also beneficial for the community but are beyond the resources of the community. A new Aquatics Facilities Strategy will be developed for the Gannawarra Shire in 2019.

## SYNTHETIC HOCKEY FACILITY FEASIBILITY STUDY 2009

Drought was a key issue for Council in considering the priorities and provision of sport and recreation facilities in the Shire in 2009. In response to this issue, Council investigated the feasibility of developing a multi-use synthetic turf playing field at Kerang Technical High School adjacent to McLeod Oval. Results from this study indicated the preferred option for a new hockey field in Kerang should be one hybrid synthetic turf field to be constructed adjacent to McLeod Oval at Kerang Technical High School and the levee bank.

## RAIL TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY 2014

The Kerang to Koondrook Tramway (approximately 22km between Kerang-Koondrook) has strong historical significance to the region and offers a number of opportunities for interpretive information and education. Furthermore, the historical role of connecting communities and providing an important transport link are no less diminished in the current day context, it is just the mode and purpose of transport that has changed.

The proposal to establish a Rail Trail utilising the former Tramway route is aimed at two key target audiences, specifically local residents for use as a recreational trail for walking, cycling and connecting townships, as well as tourists and visitors to the region, again as a recreation trail that offers historical interpretation and connection between the townships and other trails in the region. This trail is included in the Murray River Adventure Trail plan.

## COHUNA SWIMMING POOL OPTIONS STUDY 2014

The current pool complex is in an attractive natural environment, but is structurally unsound. In order to ensure the long term viability of a swimming pool facility in Cohuna, it will be important to quantify both the current and potential demand for the service and to design and provide a facility which is both proportionate to this demand and of a quality consistent with community expectations. The study concluded that a cost benefit analysis will need to be undertaken to assess the relative

merits of identified options – including the refurbishment/remodelling of the existing pool complex or the construction of a new facility at an alternative location.

Council has engaged a professional consultant and is currently undertaking community consultation and investigating options for an enhanced facility at the Cohuna pool site.

## GANNAWARRA STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN 2015-2020

The strengths of tourism in the Shire are the wealth of nature based tourism experiences across the many waterways and forests. Fishing, camping, passive recreation and water sports remain the mainstay of visitation. Emerging opportunities are evolving in adventure tourism with mountain biking, canoeing and orienteering. The Murray River, Gunbower Forest and Kerang lakes are the key environmental assets providing the base for nature based tourism.

Gannawarra Shire is seeking to attract a growing target market of the 18 – 45 age group that has a young family, is environmentally aware, enjoys quality food and wine and participates in outdoor recreation such as canoeing, bushwalking and mountain biking. These markets are also demanding higher quality, authentic experiences that connect with local culture, heritage and the natural world.



## SPORT &amp; RECREATION STRATEGY 2019 - 2029

**TRACKS AND TRAILS STRATEGY PLAN 2005**

The Gannawarra Tracks and Trails Strategy identifies the existing network of tracks and trails within the Shire, outlines the opportunities for strategic development of new networks and provides advice for their ongoing management and promotion. The strategy identifies 40 trail opportunities. Generally most of the identified trail opportunities emphasise upon waterways. Some trails have been developed. The Trails Strategy covers trails for a range of recreational users, primarily walking, jogging, road cycling and mountain biking, but also horse riding, canoeing and kayaking, throughout the Shire and at a range of abilities and experience levels. Upgrading signage to the trails and along the trails to allow visitors easier access of the trail network is also considered within the Strategy.

**DRAFT GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS 2018**

This Masterplan aims to assist Council to assess how to better utilise the natural environment of the Kerang Lakes (Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm), Murray River precinct at Koondrook and the Gunbower Creek precinct in Cohuna to maximise their tourism, recreation, commercial and residential opportunities.

This Background and Concept Plan Discussion Paper is the first report prepared for the project and is the culmination of community and stakeholder consultation, background research and market analysis to inform the preparation of concept plans for each of the waterfront precincts.

This report is intended to enable discussion on the opportunities and projects identified for each of the waterfront precincts in the concept

plan to enable these to be refined into masterplans in a Draft Masterplan Report in the next stage of the project.

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**Council has a large number of plans that detail specific sport and recreation opportunities across the Gannawarra Shire. These plans have been used to inform the strategic direction of this Sport and Recreation Strategy.**

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## 7 WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US?

In developing this Sport and Recreation Strategy, a two phase community consultation process occurred:

**PHASE ONE** targeted key stakeholders throughout the Shire. As the key stakeholders tended to be major users of recreational facilities within the Shire, this phase was seen as a preliminary observation of the usage and condition of recreation facility assets.

Face to face meetings were held with 30 of the 55 major users of sports and recreation facilities in the Shire and a short survey was completed. The feedback obtained in the Phase One survey was used to shape the questionnaire in Phase Two.

**PHASE TWO** involved open community consultation via an online survey that was accessible from 14 July to 21 August 2017. A total of 236 responses were received from a broad spectrum of respondents and, of those who responded, 89% were residents of Gannawarra Shire and 10% being tourists or visitors who use recreational facilities in Gannawarra. The remaining 1% (3 responses) did not fit into either category and were disqualified from the survey.

Our community told us that the top 12 recreational activities they enjoy, in priority order, are:

1	Walking on designated walking trails	7	Fishing
2	Walking in a township	8	Australian Rules Football
3	Visiting a park	9	Bushwalking
4	Swimming in a pool	10	Swimming in a natural waterway
5	Using a playground	11	Running
6	Netball	12	Cycling/Bike riding

There were, however, emerging opportunities for participation identified including hockey and soccer. Supporting the community to develop sound business cases for facilities that improve participation in these emerging sports will continue.

A new Swimming Pool for Cohuna was also raised as a potential project. A separate Aquatics Strategy to be developed will help to explore the place and role aquatic facilities play in our community and what management structures might look like in the future.





SPORT & RECREATION STRATEGY 2019 - 2029

## 8 WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US?


Less than a third of Australians get enough physical activity to benefit their health.

This can lead to increased risks of chronic disease and mental ill health, and has been estimated to cost the Australian economy a total of \$13.8 billion each year.

Increasing participation in physical activity has health, social and economic benefits. As well as the health gains to be made by preventing chronic disease, the benefits of physical activity include promoting mental wellbeing and social connections, increasing productivity, and positive changes to the environments that we live and play in.

**Key findings from the latest VicHealth Indicators Survey (2015) were:**

- Sport participation is highest among young children.
- Sport participation rates drop significantly during adolescence.
- Sport participation rates among females are half of those among males.



### ABORIGINAL HEALTH

In relation to Aboriginal health, Aboriginal people living in Victoria have a life expectancy 10 years lower than non-Aboriginal people. The burden of chronic disease and illness is far higher in the Aboriginal population than non-Aboriginal.

62% of 5–12 year olds identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander meet guidelines for sufficient physical activity but only 26% of children in Years 5, 8 and 11 meet the guidelines (Department of Education and Training 2015).

61% of adults identifying of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are overweight or obese, 35% are overweight and 26% are obese (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013).

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**Providing opportunities for culturally appropriate participation and inclusion in sport and recreation activities, both structured and non-structured, for Aboriginal people is a priority.**

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## FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Gannawarra Shire is an ageing community and the evidence indicates that physical activity decreases with age (though not uniformly) with a clear turning point identified in the late teen years, particularly amongst females.

Many young women face a number of additional barriers not experienced by young men. In response to this public health issue the Australian Government (through the Department of Health) has developed the 'Girls make your move' campaign. The campaign aims to establish sport and physical activity as a natural part of young women's lives.

In 2014 the Victorian Government conducted an Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. This resulted in the release of A Five Year Game Plan for Victoria in 2015. The report outlines a vision for the future, where women and girls in all roles in sport and active recreation are the norm, and where females and males have the same choices and opportunities to lead and to participate. The inquiry has resulted in a number of new State Government programs and funding to support improvement initiatives, including establishment of the Female Friendly Facilities Fund.

## EXERCISE OF CHOICE

The VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015 showed that walking for exercise, fitness or recreation remains the most popular physical activity of choice for Victorian adults (regardless of gender) with a regular participation rate approaching one quarter of the population (i.e. 24.3%).

When combined with jogging/running (7.8%), almost one third (32.1%) of all Victorian adults either walk, jog or run for exercise, fitness or recreation.

The evidence supports our own community feedback, that the most popular physical activities are dominated by informal recreation as opposed to club based sports participation.

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**32.1% of all Victorian adults either walk, jog or run for exercise, fitness or recreation.**

**The most popular physical activities are dominated by informal recreation as opposed to club based sports participation.**

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## 9 WHAT DOES THE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF OUR POPULATION LOOK LIKE?

### The latest VicHealth Indicators Survey (2015) shows that:

- A significantly larger proportion of Gannawarra residents aged over 18 years engaged in no physical activity during the week compared to the Victorian average (26.2% compared to 18.9% for Victoria).
- A similar proportion of Gannawarra residents engaged in physical activity four or more days per week compared with the Victorian estimate (38.0% compared to 41.3% for Victoria).
- A lower percentage of Gannawarra adults participated in organised physical activity compared to Victorians (20.8% compared to 28.7% for Victoria).
- A higher proportion of Gannawarra adults participated in activities organised by a sports club or association compared to Victorians (14.6% compared to 9.8% for Victoria).
- 64.6% participated in non-organised physical activity compared to 70.5% for Victoria.
- The three most popular non-organised physical activities reported in the survey were walking (50.6%) jogging or running (10.6%) and cycling (6.9%).

### The Australian Early Childhood Census (AEDC 2015) showed that:

- 13.8% of children starting school in Gannawarra in 2015 were considered vulnerable in the physical health and wellbeing domain. This is an assessment of a child's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills.

**Not all children across Gannawarra are enjoying the benefits of regular physical activity to assist their growth and development.**

**The three most popular physical activities for Gannawarra adults are walking, jogging and cycling.**



# 10 KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND TRENDS

The Australian Sports Commission released a paper titled **The Future of Australian Sport, Megatrends shaping the sport sector over coming decades** in April 2013. The paper identified six megatrends that are likely to shape the sport sector over the next 30 years:

1. **A Perfect Fit:** A rise in personalised sport and fitness activities for individual health and fitness.
2. **From Extreme to Mainstream:** The rise of lifestyle, adventure and alternative sports- particularly popular with younger generations.
3. **More Than Sport:** Increasing recognition (by Government and stakeholders) of the broader benefits of sport, including mental and physical health and community wellbeing.
4. **Everybody's Game:** Evidence of Australians embracing sport participation into old age.
5. **New Wealth, New Talent:** On an international scale, population and income growth, particularly within Asia, will create tougher competition and new business opportunities for Australians.
6. **Tracksuits to Business Suits:** Emergence of new market pressures and business models, resulting in pressure for community sport organisations to adopt more formal corporate structures and governance systems. The cost of participating in sport is also on the rise.

Industry trends also reflect an emerging desire for social outcomes rather than formal competition sports. Some examples relevant to Gannawarra are 20:20/Big Bash cricket, twilight/night tennis competitions and veterans/ masters competitions.

There is a growing range of programs designed to support participation of women and girls, including in traditional male activities like Australian Rules Football and cricket.

Peak sporting bodies are increasing opportunities for introductory programs aimed at junior development and recruitment. Auskick, Milo in2 Cricket and Net-Set-Go Netball are examples.

Declining volunteerism and increasing professionalism is a trend impacting formal sports clubs seeking to gain a competitive advantage. These factors impact on the capacity of clubs to provide participation opportunities for their own community members.

It is becoming more common for facilities to be designed to meet a variety of different needs and uses that are multi-purpose and adaptive over time. Netball courts established for tennis and basketball are examples.

Co-location and sharing of facilities is becoming more common for small communities who would have traditionally maintained a range of separate facilities individual to each sport. It is expected that this will continue as funding becomes more competitive and to maintain the viability and sustainability of communities into the future. There is also a necessary trend towards water, shade and energy conservation initiatives, both in terms of environmental awareness and cost savings.

In relation to nature-based tourism, the 2016 Nature-Based Outdoor Economy Report commissioned by Sport and Recreation Victoria revealed that nature-based outdoor activities contribute more to Victoria's economy than the AFL. Hiking in a national park, retreating into the forest for a yoga class, camping under the night sky- there are many activities that feed into Victoria's nature-based outdoor economy. (Vic Uni 16 May 2018). The trend for nature-based outdoor recreation activities is expected to increase in the future.

**Based on demographic and participation trends, the main considerations for Gannawarra Shire over the next ten years can be expected to be as follows:**

- Continued interest in participation in passive recreation
- Continued increase in structured sports participation in some towns compared to stagnation or decrease in other towns
- Continued ageing population
- Reduction of resources and increasing funding competitiveness
- Expectation of recreation activities being inclusive for all abilities



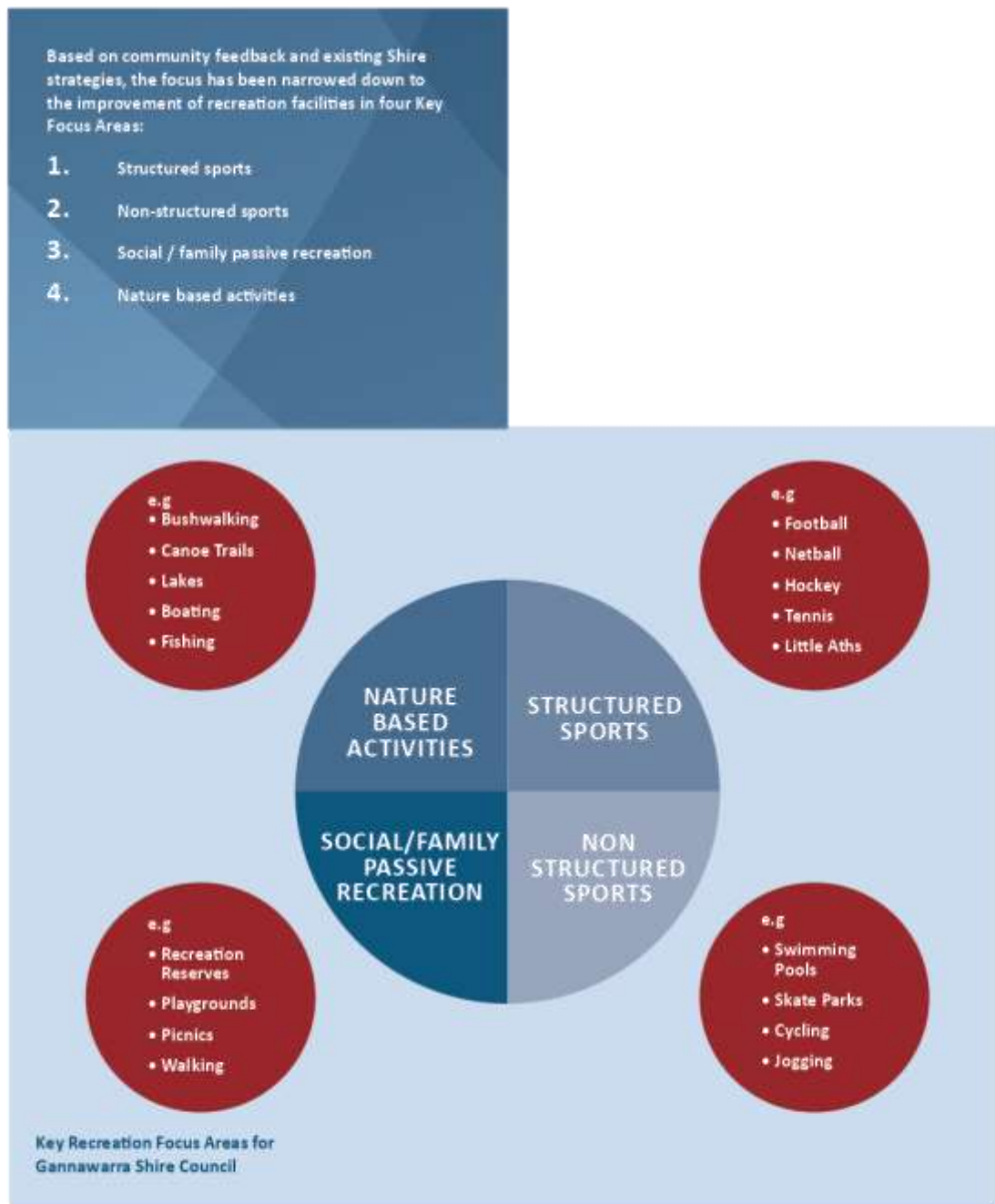
# 11 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

## **This Sport and Recreation Strategy has a number of planning implications for Council:**

- Considering opportunities that enhance informal recreation participation for those activities the community particularly enjoy including walking, cycling and running. This reinforces the importance of quality walking paths, trails and accessible open space facilities and programs.
- Supporting non-organised physical activities that help facilitate increased physical activity participation by the community, in particular by girls, women and older age groups. Opportunities to support walking, jogging and cycling should be considered a priority however improving ease of access to waterways for canoeing and boating should also be considered a priority.
- Greater consideration will need to be given to initiatives that support participation in formal sport and club based physical activities by women and girls.
- Encouraging the use of parks and open space by personal trainers in recognition of the health benefits of regular physical activity participation.
- Supporting pre-school and other early childhood environments to support increased access and opportunities for active play.
- Maximising opportunities for multi-use through asset management planning and master-planning.
- Considering opportunities to support multi-use social gathering spaces and incorporating environmental sustainability in design, development and operation when planning refurbished facilities.
- Facility development or improvement to consider Universal Design principles, including female friendly design.
- Assessing walkability to key destinations such as recreation reserves, shopping precincts, libraries, schools and early childhood facilities.
- Ensuring all-abilities access to sport and recreation facilities and programs and supporting a culture of inclusiveness to sport and recreation opportunities.
- Considering the efficiency of how assets and reserves are funded and the need for Council to prioritise assets that have a wide reach (without overlapping the catchment of a similar facility), and provide assets within district level facilities enabling efficiencies to be generated from critical mass.
- For recreation facilities that have stagnating or declining participation rates, Council should consider the funding available for these assets and if expenditure would, in fact, increase participation or membership rates.



## 12 KEY FOCUS AREAS



# 13 INVESTMENT PRIORITISATION METHODOLOGY

The prioritisation methodology below builds on the Shire's Recreation Asset Management Plan rationale and the existing suite of Council Plans to establish service levels.

## RECREATION ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN: STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN SERVICE LEVELS

- 1. Settlement:**
  - Where the asset is located (e.g. what tier is the town it is located in?)
  - Requirement for multiple recreation assets
  - Critical mass – self-sustaining creating further growth
- 2. Catchment:**
  - Local, district or regional
- 3. Functions:**
  - Recreation functions e.g. play, visual amenity, relaxation, contemplation, escape, social/family recreation, sport, off-road trail, water based recreation, building forecourt/civic gathering, memorial park, wayside stop
- 4. Landscape:**
  - Diverse range of landscape e.g. turf and natural vegetation

For the purpose of Council investment, the methodology of prioritisation should consider the following additional steps, which serve as considerations beyond service level rationale:

## COUNCIL INVESTMENT PRIORITISATION METHODOLOGY

- 1. Direct Patronage:**
  - Maintaining service levels or renewing assets that fall under direct ownership and operation by the Council, followed by assets that are owned and operated by others
- 2. Community Preference:**
  - Based on community feedback of recreational activities in which they are involved
- 3. Community Suggestions:**
  - Based on community feedback around recreational facilities





## 14 IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINES



This Sport and Recreation Strategy is an informing strategy for the next ten years which will form part of the suite of Council strategic planning documents.

The priority projects identified in the Implementation Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, with a new Strategy and Implementation Plan to be prepared in 2029.

The outcomes of the Sport and Recreation Strategy will be assessed by Council in the four year review of key documentation, along with other high level strategies such as the Council Plan.

This approach provides a reliable way of measuring performance and to ensure that the programs and projects are relevant and are able to access funding.

# 15 STATE AND FEDERAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

This Sport and Recreation Strategy has considered recreation strategies and directions from State and Federal level by referring to the following frameworks and programs:

## STATE AND FEDERAL TRENDS THAT ALIGN WITH LOCAL STRATEGIES

	FEDERAL	STATE
<b>Relevant Strategic Frameworks and Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active 2020 Strategic Plan</li> <li>- National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework 2011</li> <li>- Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure (TDDI) Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active Victoria 2017 – 2021</li> <li>- Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014 – 2024</li> <li>- Victoria's Cycling Strategy 2013–2023</li> </ul>
<b>Key Trends Aligning With Local Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting the creation and use of multi-sport and recreation community facilities which enable the sharing of resources and generate efficiencies in management and accessibility</li> <li>- Coordinating portfolios of tourism, education, planning, sport and recreation</li> <li>- Ensuring better integration and coordination of non-government provided sport and recreation assets and infrastructure with government provided assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting demand</li> <li>- Broader and more inclusive participation</li> <li>- Additional focus on passive recreation</li> <li>- Build system resilience and capacity</li> <li>- Connect investment in events, high performance and infrastructure</li> <li>- Work together for shared outcomes</li> </ul>

At a federal government level, the Active 2020 Strategic Plan for Sport and Active Recreation contains a key strategic priority to maximise sporting infrastructure. Commonwealth funding for sport and recreation facilities may be available through the Department of Infrastructure.

At a state government level, in the Active Victoria 2017 – 2021 strategic framework, promoting inclusivity across all gender, race, culture and ability is important, with an additional focus on active or passive recreation (i.e. leisure time, non-competitive, physical activity). There are several funding streams available for community sport and infrastructure, including the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund, which includes the Female Friendly Facilities Program, to build and upgrade women's change rooms and facilities.

Funding for waterfront and trails development could also be sought from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning as well as the federal government's Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure program.

# 16 PARTNERSHIPS

Council will work in partnership with the community to achieve their sport and recreation goals and aspirations. In doing so, Council will seek to develop closer partnerships with federal and state government, peak sporting bodies and other organisations to deliver the priority actions within this Sport and Recreation Strategy.



## 17 STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Based on the community feedback and the alignment with Council's existing strategies, a number of strategic projects have been identified for each of the nine identified communities across the Gannawarra Shire for progression over the next decade.

Each project will require assessment and prioritisation as well as additional information, project concepts and costings to support proposals proceeding.

**In line with the sport and recreation priority actions from the Council Plan 2017-2021 and state-wide priorities, the high level priorities focused on are the following:**

1. Multi-use facilities – to support a range of activities - this may include consolidation of facilities
2. Energy Saving initiatives – particularly water, shade and solar
3. Improving opportunities for participation- particularly for disadvantaged children and youth, females, those with disabilities, the elderly and our Aboriginal community members
4. Improved opportunities for walking and cycling
5. Waterfront development- improved access to waterways

## 18 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The 10 year implementation plan included in this Sport and Recreation Strategy has been developed from a review of Council existing strategies and documents and from consultation with our community. It takes into account identified projects as well as new and emerging opportunities.

The implementation plan details projects that have been identified as priorities by communities across the Gannawarra Shire. While some of these projects are not necessarily the responsibility of Council, we understand that these projects are important to our community and where possible partnerships will be formed to support these projects as appropriate.

Twenty three priority projects have been assessed as being projects that Council will lead as it implements this Sport and Recreation Strategy over the 10 year period. These projects include environmental improvements that create increased opportunities for our community and visitors to be active and healthy such as walking and cycling connections, activating public open spaces and swimming pools, and increasing accessibility to Gannawarra's vast natural environment. The implementation plan also includes improved availability of information on sport and recreation opportunities across the community and puts in place mechanisms for Council to better communicate and partner with sport and recreation focused community organisations.

The implementation plan provides Council with guidance and direction for achieving the vision of sport and recreation across the Gannawarra Shire of Active places, active people using evidence based planning principles:

- Community support
- Accessible and inclusive
- Sustainable
- Cost effective
- Health and wellbeing
- Equitable
- Safe









**SPORT &  
RECREATION  
STRATEGY**  
*2019-29*

# **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**





INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

The aim of the 10-year implementation plan is to prioritise the initiatives identified within Gannawarra Shire's Sport and Recreation Strategy 2019-2029, using existing community consultation data; some additional research; a workshop with key Council staff; and information contained within existing Council strategies and documents to justify any recommendations made.



## PROCESS OF DEVELOPING PROJECT PRIORITIES

The first stage of developing the Implementation Plan involved collation of all relevant recommendations contained within the Sport and Recreation Strategy 2019-29, as well as relevant recommendations provided in the following documents:

- Council Plan 2017-2021
- Major Pipeline Projects
- Asset Management Strategy 2016

- Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020
- Children and Youth Strategy 2016-2020
- Recreation Reserve Master Plans Report 2010
- Early Years Plan 2015-2018
- Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023
- Gannawarra 2025 (2010)
- Waterfront Master Plans

A workshop was then held with relevant Council staff who were given the opportunity to provide additional information about each action identified. Discussion then took place to identify whether or not the proposed project:

- Is a high priority, or essential
- Is a medium priority, or nice to have, but only if there are sufficient resources available
- The responsibility of another organisation to lead
- Already underway or completed.



## VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

# VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The vision for sport and recreation in Gannawarra Shire is

## Active places, active people

The planning principles developed to support the vision are:

### PLANNING PRINCIPLE

<b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT</b>	Wherever possible, we will encourage community involvement in our programs, services and facilities as a means to create greater ownership of our sport and recreation opportunities. Community support may include organisation of events or contribution of in-kind support to manage a sports facility, etc.
<b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b>	We will ensure that all of the programs, services and facilities provided or facilitated by Gannawarra Shire Council promote and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing (physical, mental and social).
<b>ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE</b>	We will ensure that all facilities are accessible as possible for people of all ages and abilities, using Universal Design Principles, Disability Discrimination Act and other relevant standards and legislation to guide facility design. We will also promote inclusiveness so that facilities, programs and services are welcoming and available to everyone, regardless of age, ability, gender, socio-economic status and cultural background. We will commit to reducing barriers to participation (e.g. cost and inappropriate times) and will encourage other service providers to do the same.
<b>EQUITABLE</b>	We will ensure that our programs, services or facilities are distributed equitably across the municipality, in accordance with town and population size.
<b>SUSTAINABLE</b>	We will ensure that any facilities under Council control are designed to be as sustainable as possible, using Environmentally Sustainable Design guidelines. Where possible, materials will be sourced locally and Australian made. Recycled materials will be utilised where appropriate.
<b>SAFE</b>	We will ensure that any facilities under Council control are developed according to Australian Standards and any other safety related regulations and are inspected and maintained on a regular basis to ensure ongoing safety. We will also ensure that any programs or services we offer have been thoroughly assessed for potential safety risks and measures to eliminate or minimise or reduce these potential risks are implemented.
<b>COST EFFECTIVE</b>	We will ensure that any initiatives proposed are developed in a cost-effective manner and take into consideration operating costs and whole of life costs.

## PROJECTS UNDERWAY OR COMPLETED



Since the Sport and Recreation Strategy was written, a number of projects have commenced or are complete. These include:

- Construction of new female friendly change facilities at Riverside Park Recreation Reserve, Kerang for female footballers and netballers
- Construction of pedestrian access to Gunbower Island Forest, Koondrook
- Cohuna Recreation Reserve Facade Development – will be linked to the waterfront development
- Implement all stages of the Koondrook Nature Based Tourism (NST) Hub Plan
- Support the development of a Lalbert Recreation Reserve Master Plan
- Support towards the implementation of the Macorna Recreation Reserve Master Plan – female friendly facilities upgrade



**PROJECTS THAT GANNAWARRA SHIRE  
MAY SUPPORT**

# PROJECTS THAT GANNAWARRA SHIRE MAY SUPPORT

There were a number of actions and projects identified in the Sport and Recreation Strategy that were recognised as important for the local community, however, these actions are not considered core responsibilities of Gannawarra Shire as they may be located on Crown Land (over which the Shire has very little influence) or may be the role of the private sector or other community-based organisations. It is recommended that wherever possible, Gannawarra Shire partners with the organisations leading these projects and provides support in the form of advice, letters of support and potentially in-kind or financial resources if available and appropriate. These actions and projects include:

ACTION / PROJECT	DRIVER
Establish the Park Run program in Kerang	Community members
Activation of parks in Kerang through events and festivals	Community-based organisations or private sector
Establish a fitness gym in Kerang	Private sector or community-based organisation
Upgrade facilities for the Koondrook Cricket Club, as per the Koondrook Recreation Reserve Master Plan.	Koondrook Recreation Reserve Committee of Management and Koondrook Cricket Club
Develop a Murrabit Recreation Reserve Master Plan	Murrabit Recreation Reserve Committee of Management and sports clubs
Murrabit Market Site Improvements	Murrabit community Gannawarra Shire Council (land owner)
Enhance facilities at Miss Keats Picnic Park in Murrabit	Murrabit community Parks Victoria (as land owner) Gannawarra Shire Council (boat ramp and access)
Upgrade the tennis courts at Leitchville Tennis Club	Leitchville Tennis Club
Continue to upgrade the Leitchville Recreation Reserve as per the Leitchville Recreation Reserve Master Plan	Leitchville Recreation Reserve Committee of Management and sports clubs
Undertake environmental works and install solar panels at Lalbert Golf Club	Lalbert Golf Club
Continue to upgrade the Quambatook Recreation Reserve as per the Quambatook Recreation Reserve Master Plan	Quambatook Recreation Reserve Committee of Management and sports clubs
Upgrade facilities at Quambatook Tennis Club Precinct	Quambatook Tennis Club
Activate the Quambatook Skate Park	Quambatook community FReeZA / NDCHS
Upgrade and develop new infrastructure in Quambatook at the following facilities:	Quambatook community and clubs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bowling Club</li> <li>Golf club</li> <li>Tractor Pull complex</li> <li>Swimming pool</li> <li>Fishing club</li> <li>Men's shed</li> </ul>	

There are also a number of recommendations contained within the Waterfront Priority Projects which have a component of recreation infrastructure completed. These projects will be driven by and are the responsibility of the Economic Development and Tourism team.

# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



**In addition to classifying proposed projects, workshop attendees also identified some broader issues that need to be addressed, including:**

- Clubs and organisations - how to best work with clubs and enhance their sustainability. How to ensure that they address issues such as gender equality. Need for discussions around which facilities are utilised once a football / netball / cricket club merger occurs
- Positive ageing - how to work with existing organisations or programs that service older adults, e.g. U3A, Senior Citizens and community meals to encourage them to build more physical activity into their programs
- Promotion - what is Council's role in relation to promoting physical activities provided by clubs and other organisations?
- Walking and cycling - seek ways to continue to promote active transport and ensure that safe routes to schools continue to be identified and developed. Map and promote existing trail / path networks. Improve connectivity of paths / trails
- Off leash dog parks - explore opportunities to develop off leash dog parks and dog social walking groups
- Staff resources - seek further funding to increase staff resources to assist with planning, club support and provision of grant information to the community
- Equity - ensure that there is an equitable distribution of facilities across the municipality in accordance with town and population size



## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

# HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following projects have been identified by Council staff as high priority or essential, based on initial recommendations from the Sport and Recreation Strategy. Costs are indicative only and are based on 2018/19 cost estimations. The majority of these projects will require external funding. Some projects will not occur in the year planned if resources have not been secured that year, or if other factors impact timelines. The projects are not listed in order of priority.

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel-readiness / timescale
A	Improve walking and cycling connections to and from schools, children's services and playgrounds	Sport and Recreation Strategy Footpath asset management plan Early Years Plan 2015-2018	Aligns with local and state policies such as Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plans	Improves health and wellbeing of local residents Encourages active transport use and less reliance on cars	Health and wellbeing Safe	Children may be less active and less healthy	Part of capital works – ongoing	Council	Ongoing This is an ongoing program to improve walking and cycling opportunities
B	Conduct programs, purchase equipment and develop appropriate supporting infrastructure to better activate public open spaces and swimming pools throughout the Shire	Project Management Group discussion Children and Youth Strategy Council Plan 2017-2021 Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 Early Years Plan 2015-2018 Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020	These initiatives help to justify Council's cost in providing facilities and will help to increase health, wellbeing and social connections	Will help to increase usage of public open spaces and swimming pools in the Shire Will help to increase health, wellbeing and social connections of local residents	Health and wellbeing	Facilities may be under-utilised Health, wellbeing and social connections may be less than desired	Program costs and basic infrastructure costs: \$20K annually	Council Community-based groups Private sector	Ongoing No planning has been undertaken yet, but initiatives could be developed in 2019

## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel readiness / timescale
C	Update Council's website and other communication tools to ensure that information about both formal and informal sport and recreation activities, facilities and events is made available and updated on a regular basis. Ensure that the website is widely publicised as the 'go to' location for sport and recreation information in the Shire	Project Management Group discussion Council Plan 2017-2021 Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020 Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023	Lack of information is frequently cited as a reason for non-participation in physical activity	The community is likely to be more aware of existing sport and recreation opportunities available	Accessible and inclusive	Lack of awareness of opportunities will remain and potentially lack of participation in physical activities	Staff time	Council	Ongoing No planning has been undertaken yet, but actions could occur in 2019
D	Explore opportunities to enhance open spaces through the use of new technology when upgrading, e.g. outdoor exercise bikes that charge mobile phones, modular pump parks, etc. (Shire-wide)	Project Management Group discussion	Lack of access to equipment in open spaces is cited as a reason for non-participation in physical activity	New technology is particularly attractive to younger people and may encourage greater usage of local facilities	Health and wellbeing	There may be limited sport and recreation facilities that appeal to younger people	Will be dependent on initiatives	Council	Ongoing No planning has been undertaken as yet
E	Conduct an annual workshop with sport and recreation clubs and organisations to provide information about relevant topics and to seek feedback on their needs / key issues (Shire-wide)	Project Management Group discussion Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023	A formal workshop each year will help to ensure that all clubs receive the same information and that their needs are being heard	Council will be more familiar with the needs and strategic directions of clubs Club will be more familiar with Council processes and issues such as grants Will potentially improve the relationship between Council and clubs	Community support	Council may be unaware of issues impacting clubs Clubs may not be aware of support or information that is available	Staff time	Council Sport and recreation clubs and organisations Mallee Sports Assembly	Ongoing Nothing has been planned as yet



## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel readiness / timescale
F	Instigate or facilitate programs to encourage more local residents to walk more often, e.g. add a walk to the social meals event held in local towns. (Shire-wide)	Project Management Group discussion Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020	Council Plan/ Health and Wellbeing Plan recognised the importance of walking	Improved health and wellbeing of local residents Improved social connections	Health and wellbeing	Some people in the community are at risk of social isolation and poor health	Some program funds	Council Community-based groups Neighbourhood Houses GLAM agencies	Ongoing Nothing has been planned as yet, but programs could feasibly be held in 2019
G	Kangaroo Lake (north end) Recreational and Power Boating Development (planning and development stage)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Major Pipeline Projects	This is a Regional Growth Fund priority Strong support from potential users	Support community events, sporting events and liveability	Health and wellbeing	Recreational and power boat operators may choose to take part in their activities elsewhere, thereby limiting potential economic benefits to the region	Council has allocated \$200k. A further \$250k is needed	Council	2019-2020 Design and costing stage is currently being undertaken
H	Improve playground behind Leitchville Pre-school	Sport and Recreation Strategy Early Years Plan 2015-2018	Playground is located on Council owned land Improve outdoor space available to young children and the community	The Leitchville community will have access to one much higher quality play space	Community support Health and wellbeing	Play value in existing play spaces will continue to diminish	\$50k	Council	2019-2020 Included in capital works budget
I	Prepare a sport and recreation gender strategy / program to explore ways to increase female participation in the Shire, e.g. instigate 'This Girl Can' program; Rural challenge (Women's Health Loddon Mallee); etc.	Project Management Group discussion Council Plan 2017-2021	Council Plan/ Health and Wellbeing Plan recognised the importance of gender equality	Ensuring gender equality is considered when developing programs or infrastructure improvements for sport and recreation	Accessible and inclusive	Risk not being appealing to State and Federal funding programs for new developments	Staff time and some program costs – approx. \$10k	Council Mallee Sports Assembly Women's Health Loddon Mallee VicHealth GLAM agencies	2019-2020 Planning not yet undertaken

## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel readiness / timescale
J	Seek additional funding to increase the hours available for sport and recreation planning and to provide support to clubs and organisations.	Project Management Group discussion	The sport and recreation officer is a 1.0EFT position, however this includes the supervision of Council pools which equates to 0.5EFT There is a gap in the Shire (both internally and externally) in terms of being able to provide support and information regarding grants – additional staffing hours could support this.	Clubs and organisations are likely to be more sustainable and viable The community is likely to access more grants Sufficient time will be made available to plan, implement and evaluate sport and recreation initiatives in the Shire There will be more and better-quality opportunities for the community to improve their health and wellbeing	Community support	Clubs may not be as viable as they potentially could be Potentially less projects funded in the community Sport and recreation grants from government agencies may not be easily accessed Potentially limited new or improved sport and recreation options in the community	\$30k plus on-costs	Council	2019-2020 No planning has been undertaken as yet. Expected that this could potentially be funded in the financial year
K	Work with communities to roll out the Re-spark the Park program (designed to improve and increase use of local parks)	Project Management Group discussion Children and Youth Strategy	This program has worked particularly well in other parts of the Shire	This program empowers the community to help design their local environment, to make better social connections and to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes through their increased usage of parks	Community support	Park use may be limited Social interactions may be limited Health and wellbeing outcomes may not be achieved	Some program funds may be required	Council Local communities Regional Arts Victoria	2019-2021 No planning has been undertaken as yet
L	Cohuna Skate Park Upgrade (Cohuna)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Early Years Plan 2015-2018	There is community desire for this public space to be modernised and activated	Young people in Cohuna will have access to a recreational facility where they can skate or ride scooters or BMX bikes	Health and wellbeing	The existing facility will become increasing less attractive to local young people and therefore less utilised	\$60k has been allocated in 2019, with an additional \$0.5m required in 2021	Council	2019-2021 Concept plans and allocation for this project is confirmed



## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel readiness / timescale
M	Cohuna to Koondrook Forest Trail	Major Projects Pipeline Murray River Adventure Trail Council Plan 2017-2021	Strong community support for this project Project aligns with economic development and tourism priorities	Improves existing trails to enable further development of Gannawarra's Nature Based Tourism products Connects towns via the Gunbower Forest Provides additional informal recreation facilities for local people	Health and wellbeing	The Shire may miss out on potential income from trail users who live outside the Shire  Local residents may only have a limited range of recreational opportunities	Council has allocated \$200k. A further \$200k is needed to complete the project	Council	2019-2021  This project is currently being considered but requires further detailed planning, design and consultation
N	Review the synthetic hockey feasibility study 2009 (Kerang)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Synthetic Hockey Facility Feasibility Study 2009	This proposed development was raised as part of a multi-use facility proposal in Kerang	Will determine whether or not a synthetic hockey field is required	Health and wellbeing	Talented local players will travel to other locations, e.g. Bendigo to play on synthetic surfaces	\$20k	Council and Kerang Hockey Club	2020-2021  Funds need to be sought to undertake the review.
O	Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook	Sport and Recreation Strategy	Supported by the Building Better Regions fund	Ensure a permanent body of recreation water is maintained in the Avoca River	Community support Equitable	Locals and potential visitors to the area may be inclined to participate in water-based activities in other locations, thereby limiting economic impact locally	Council has allocated \$100k  A further \$350k is needed  There may be some ongoing costs which need to be considered	Council	2020-2021
P	Develop a shire-wide municipal walking and cycling strategy	Project Management Group discussion Children and Youth Strategy Council Plan 2017-2021 Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 Early Years Plan 2015-2018 Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020	There is a need for trails to be mapped – both for local use and for visitors to the area and to improve connectivity and identify areas of accessibility	A walking and cycling strategy will enable Council to strategically develop paths / trails to link communities and to attract visitors Council will be able to map and promote trails to both local residents and visitors	Health and wellbeing Safe	Trails may be under-utilised due to insufficient knowledge of their existence  The Shire may potentially miss out on income from visitors to the region if they are unaware of the trail offerings	\$50k	Council	2020-2021  Will need to develop a brief and apply for funding



## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel readiness / timescale
Q	Development of an Aquatic Strategy for Gannawarra, including accessibility audits at Kerang Exercise Pool as well as Kerang and Cohuna outdoor pools	Sport and Recreation Strategy Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020	Broader planning Strong community support for a hoist in the Kerang Exercise Pool Demonstrated need for improving accessibility into outdoor swimming pools	To identify the role aquatic facilities play and what management structures might look like in the future Improves accessibility to the pool for people in wheelchairs Approximately 5,000 people use the Kerang Exercise Pool each year	Health and wellbeing Accessible and inclusive	Limits opportunities for communities to access aquatic facilities Access for people in wheelchairs to aquatic facilities will not exist in the Shire. Instead they will need to access the pool in Swan Hill	\$30k for development of aquatic strategy and implementation plan is required \$10-\$15k required for hoist	Council	2020-2021 More planning needs to be undertaken
R	Koondrook Waterfront Connections Project (planning and development stage)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Major Pipeline Projects Waterfront master plan Council Plan 2017-2021	Strong community support for the project The project is identified in a number of different strategies and plans	Will build on the current community and commercial investments Will better link Arbutnot, Sawmill, Koondrook Wharf, Goods Shed Restaurant, Koondrook CBD, Nature Based Tourism Hub and the tracks and trails through Gunbower Forest to Cohuna Will provide new roadway and pedestrian access along the waterfront between the Wharf and the Nature Based Tourism Hub	Community support	Limits the potential for Koondrook to become a tourism destination Limits opportunities for local people to use the waterfront for informal recreational purposes	Council has allocated \$225k. A further \$225k has been received	Council	2020-2022 The project scope has been developed and the final design and linkages will be completed prior to commencement of the works
S	Cohuna Aquatic Centre – redevelop outdoor pool precinct	Sport and Recreation Strategy Major Pipeline Projects Early Years Plan 2015-2018	Existing facility is in poor condition and needs to be upgraded to continue to service the local community effectively	Enables further development of the Gunbower Creek Waterfront Will support investment in new accommodation and tourism Will transform the Cohuna waterfront Will improve liveability	Health and wellbeing Safe	The structural integrity of the pool may fail	Total Project Estimate \$8-10m. Funding model not yet determined	Council	Project is listed in the Towards 2025 strategic projects plan



## HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

No	Recommendation	Source	Demonstrated need / community support	Benefits	Planning principle alignment	What happens if we don't do it	Resources – cost, whole of life cost, staff time	Responsibility	Priority / shovel readiness / timescale
T	Cohuna Apex Park and Cohuna Garden Park – construct an all abilities playground and supporting infrastructure	Sport and Recreation Strategy Included in waterfront master plan document Council Plan 2017-2021 Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 Early Years Plan 2015-2018	Strong community support. Included in the capital works plan	Connects the reserve to the town Considered together as a combined hub for recreation Will enable people of all ages and abilities to play together in Cohuna	Health and wellbeing Accessible and inclusive	Children with accessibility issues will have limited opportunities to play outdoors in public spaces with their peers	Playground is estimated to cost \$0.5m to replace	Council Cohuna Apex Club	2021-2022 Equipment is scheduled to be replaced in 3-5 years No planning undertaken as yet
U	Kangaroo Lake West Recreational access redevelopment waterfront redevelopment	Sport and Recreation Strategy Major Pipeline Projects	Waterfront development is supported by local residents and potential user groups	May encourage increased demand for residential development around the lake Will help to increase visitor numbers / length of stay in the region	Health and wellbeing	Kangaroo Lake may not grow as a potential place to live The Shire may miss out on potential visitor expenditure	Council has allocated \$75k. A further \$200k is needed	Council	2021-2025 In concept stage
V	Redevelopment of the Old Memorial Hall precinct into an all abilities playground (Koondrook)	Council Plan 2017-2021 Sport and Recreation strategy Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 Early Years Plan 2015-2018 Koondrook community plan	Strong community support Included in the capital works plan	Will enable people of all ages and abilities to play together in Koondrook	Health and Wellbeing Accessible and inclusive	Children with accessibility issues will have limited opportunities to play outdoors in public spaces with their peers	\$300k	Council	2020-2021
W	Upgrade Atkinson Park Kerang	Council Plan 2017-2021 Sport and Recreation strategy Social Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 Early Years Plan 2015-2018	Community support Included in the capital works plan	Will enable people of all ages and abilities to play together in Kerang	Health and Wellbeing Accessible and inclusive	Park use may be limited due to equipment becoming aged and outdated	\$500k	Council	2023-2024

## MEDIUM PRIORITY PROJECTS

# MEDIUM PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following projects have been considered by the Project Management Group as a medium priority, or 'nice to have' if sufficient resources are available. The projects are not listed in order of priority

NO	RECOMMENDATION	SOURCE	DEMONSTRATED NEED / COMMUNITY SUPPORT	BENEFITS
A	Levee bank and Back Swamp Reserve – upgrades to walking and cycling trails, improved accessibility, lighting, signage, BBQ, picnic table and benches (Kerang)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Kerang community profile (Council Plan) – community aspiration	Fishing jetties Canoe launches Some canoe launches already exist	Encourage multi-use Increase perception of safety Provides variety of passive recreational spaces
B	A walking and cycling trail connecting Atkinson Park, Riverside Park, Back Swamp Reserve and Levee Bank (Kerang)	Sport and Recreation Strategy	Walking track does exist already	Connects a range of sport and recreation facilities via active transport
C	Kerang Multi-Purpose Centre – catering for a broad range of community activities and linking to the swimming pool for a range of health and fitness activities	Major Pipeline Projects document 2019/20 Sir John Gorton Precinct Plan Councillor priority	Project is listed in the Towards 2025 strategic projects plan. Project is at the broad concept stage. Current project estimate \$2.8m Funding sources not yet known	Strengthen the local community and economy Attract new residents Improve liveability
D	Cohuna Ski Run River Reserve (Cohuna)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Tourism strategy	Relevant to the Major pipelines project	Boost multi-purpose use at this site and encourage additional tourism Natural and scenic break away from the more landscaped parks closer to town
E	Investigate opportunities for a skate park or modular pump park at Leitchville	Sport and Recreation Strategy Community profile	The community has expressed a desire for skate facilities	Provides additional informal recreation opportunities for young people
F	Further improvements and enhancements to the Leitchville Swimming Pool Complex	Sport and Recreation Strategy	Owned by Council- Section 86 committee More information is needed regarding any other works Budgeted for in Capital Works program	Improves the aquatic facility located in Leitchville and encourages the local community and visitors to utilise the facility
G	Levee Bank Walking Trail (Quambatook)	Sport and Recreation Strategy Community plan	The community has expressed desire for additional walking opportunities around Quambatook	Will link Quambatook township to Weir
H	Constructing a 22km rail trail between Kerang and Koondrook as part of the Murray River Adventure Trail	Sport and Recreation Strategy Murray Regional Tourism strategic plan	Project aligns with economic development and tourism priorities Local walking/cycling groups	Improves health and wellbeing opportunities and enables further development of Gannawarra's Nature Based Tourism products



## CAPITAL WORKS ASSESSMENT TOOL

# CAPITAL WORKS ASSESSMENT TOOL

The following capital works assessment tool has been developed to determine whether or not Gannawarra Shire Council should support a specific capital work development, upgrade or renewal, or to prioritise different capital works initiatives against each other. A from 0-3 is given against each criteria and multiplied by the weighting amount to produce a total score.

CRITERIA / SCORE	0	1	2	3	WEIGHT	TOTAL SCORE	COMMENTS
Alignment with planning	Initiative is not supported by any plans, policies or strategies.	Initiative has limited support by local plans, policies and strategies.	Initiative is well supported by local plans, policies and strategies.	Initiative is very well supported by local plans, policies and strategies.	3		
Community benefit and demonstrated need	There are no clear benefits to the community and the need for the initiative has not been demonstrated.	There are limited benefits to the community and a limited amount of need demonstrated for the initiative.	The benefits of the initiative to the community are clear and the need is clearly demonstrated for the initiative.	The benefits of the initiative to the community are very clear and the need for the initiative is very clearly demonstrated.	3		
Increases participation in physical activity and contributes to health and wellbeing	The initiative will not increase physical activity participation.	The initiative may increase physical activity participation.	The initiative is likely to increase physical activity participation.	The initiative is highly likely to increase physical activity participation.	3		
Financially viable to develop, operate and maintain	The initiative is likely to be beyond the community's resources to develop, operate and maintain.	There may be some doubt regarding the community's ability to source the financial resources required to develop, operate and maintain the initiative.	It is likely that the community will have sufficient resources to develop, operate and maintain the initiative.	It is clear that the community has the financial resource capacity to develop, operate and maintain the initiative.	3		
Increases accessibility for people of all abilities	The initiative will not increase accessibility for people of all abilities.	The initiative may increase accessibility for people of all abilities.	The initiative is likely to increase accessibility for people of all abilities.	The initiative is highly likely to increase accessibility for people of all abilities.	3		
Enhances / protects township character	The initiative does not enhance or protect the township character.	The initiative provides a minimal amount of enhancement or protection to the township character.	The initiative is likely to enhance or protect the township character.	The initiative will definitely enhance or protect the township character.	2		

## CAPITAL WORKS ASSESSMENT TOOL

CRITERIA / SCORE	0	1	2	3	WEIGHT	TOTAL SCORE	COMMENTS
Minimises environmental impact	The initiative is likely to have a negative impact on the environment.	The initiative may have a minimal impact on the environment.	The initiative is unlikely to have a negative impact on the environment.	The initiative will not have a negative impact on the environment.	2		
Provides greater diversity of opportunities	The initiative is not likely to provide a greater diversity of physical activity opportunities.	The initiative may provide a greater diversity of physical activity opportunities.	The initiative likely to provide a greater diversity of physical activity opportunities.	The initiative will definitely provide a greater diversity of physical activity opportunities.	2		
Promotes liveability of the local area	The initiative is not likely to increase the liveability of the local area.	The initiative may increase the liveability of the local area.	The initiative is likely to increase the liveability of the local area.	The initiative is highly likely to increase the liveability of the local area.	2		
Creates opportunities for social interactions	The initiative is unlikely to create opportunities for social interactions.	The initiative may create opportunities for social interactions.	The initiative is likely to create opportunities for social interactions.	The initiative is highly likely to create opportunities for social interactions.	2		
Enhances club / organisation sustainability	The initiative is unlikely to contribute to club / organisation sustainability.	The initiative may contribute to club / organisation sustainability.	The initiative is likely to contribute to club / organisation sustainability.	The initiative is highly likely to contribute to club / organisation sustainability.	2		
Addresses safety / regulations / best practice	The initiative has not addressed safety regulations or adhered to best practice.	The initiative may not have addressed all safety regulations or adhered to best practice.	The initiative has addressed all safety regulations and has considered best practice.	The initiative has thoroughly addressed all safety regulations and adhered to best practice.	2		
Supported by a club / organisation that has developed and implemented relevant policies (e.g. gender equity, healthy eating, etc) and plans and is well governed.	The club / organisation supporting the initiative has not developed and implemented relevant policies and plans and is not well governed.	The club / organisation supporting the initiative may have developed and implemented some relevant policies and plans and is reasonably well governed.	The club / organisation supporting the initiative has developed and implemented some relevant policies and plans and is well governed.	The club / organisation supporting the initiative has developed and implemented a range of relevant policies and plans and is very well governed.	2		
<b>TOTAL</b>							



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## WATERFRONT MASTERPLAN-FEEDBACK SUBMISSIONS SUMMARY

Submission No.	Name	Area of comment	
1	DELWP –Louisa Smith	ALL	
2	Kerang Lakes Community Development Committee	Lakes	
3	Cohuna Progress Association	Cohuna	
4	Glenn & Carolyn Hall	Cohuna	
5	Marilyn Flinders	Cohuna	
6	Denise Waterson	Cohuna	
7	Grant Lunghusen Cohuna Kangas FNC	Cohuna	
8	Dr Gaell Hildebrand	Cohuna	
9	George Drummond	Cohuna	
10	Glenn Stanmore	Cohuna	
11	Sandy Paterson	Cohuna	
12	Bryan Main	Cohuna	
13	Ann RH Lee	Cohuna	
14	Brenda Appleby	Cohuna	
15	Dr Peter Barker	Cohuna	
16	Friends of Treetops (George Drummond)	Cohuna	
17	Mandy Hutchinson	Cohuna	
18	Ros Dwyer	Cohuna	
19	Leah Easton	Cohuna	
20	Shirley Costello –Friends of Treetops	Cohuna	
21	X David Thompson	N/A Outside of project (Kerang)	

## DELWP Regional Planning Services LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018

### General Comments

- The masterplan is not regarded to have sufficient detail and evidence to support a planning process without additional input from relevant agencies and authorities. If the opportunity to comment on this masterplan has not been provided directly already, before finalising the plan some the following agencies should be consulted; DELWP's Land and Built Environment unit, Aboriginal Victoria, relevant traditional owners, Goulburn Murray Water and relevant CMAs.
- A large amount of background information has been collected on demographics, tourism, existing facilities and economics, however this information does not support demand for some of the increased development or directions of the draft masterplan.
- Supporting the natural environment is an objective of this plan, accordingly initiatives and opportunities should be included for the masterplan to help achieve this objective.
- Strategies in the document rely on using natural features of the waterfront sites, the masterplan should better demonstrate these features and how they are enhanced.
- Encourage more discussion on state planning policies and the implications of the Ramsar site status of Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm.
- Before identifying potential residential development opportunities in some of these areas, carefully consider state policy on focusing growth in established urban areas to provide better amenity, access to services and efficiency, issues with servicing and infrastructure and potential environmental constraints (sulphate soils, flooding)
- The plan should consider the possible future impacts of climate change and existing risk from natural hazards, particularly considering the importance of water supply to the proposed development.
- It may be useful to consider how the identified sites are linked, and possible interactions between them (for example, how do the precincts form a tourism package for the Shire to showcase to encourage repeat or longer visitation), are they offering different experiences or all the same?
- As areas of cultural heritage sensitivity, further consideration should be given to the potential significance of these places and what it may mean for implementation of the masterplan.
- Opportunities identified in the masterplan that may be appropriate for further investigation are those that leverage from existing infrastructure and investment and with fewer potential environmental and cultural heritage considerations. Directing efforts to established precincts are encouraged. Where there are potential significant constraints, revitalising existing established areas of these precincts may be more appropriate.

Page No.	Chapter	Comments
	<b>1. Introduction</b>	
Section 1.4 Pg. 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An aim of the masterplan is to assist in determining the issues in developing infrastructure around waterfront locations. To help meet this aim direct contact should be made with DELWP's Land and Built Environment unit of Forest, Fire and Regions to discuss this project and its future masterplan opportunities to identify any land management and tenure issues and approvals. The insight to reservation of land may inform the appropriateness of some key projects identified.</li> <li>• An objective for the masterplan includes supporting the natural environment, however this is not reflected in the rest of the document and its directions.</li> </ul>

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DELWP Regional Planning Services, LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018

## DELWP Regional Planning Services LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018

2. Strategic Context	
Section 2.2 Pg. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there relevant Commonwealth strategies or plans?</li> <li>Being waterfront focused, identify relevant water strategies and plans at all levels of government.</li> <li>Consider legislative requirements; for example, FFG Act, EPBC Act.</li> <li>Consider the implications of Ramsar status of Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm at this point.</li> </ul>
Section 2.5 Pg. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State and Regional Planning Policies found in the PPF of the Gannawarra Planning scheme should be included. Examples include (but not limited to);</li> <li>12.01-15 Protection of biodiversity - Objective: To assist the protection and conservation of Victoria's biodiversity. Strategy: Consider impacts of any change in land use or development that may affect the biodiversity value of national parks and conservation reserves or nationally and internationally significant sites; including wetlands and wetland wildlife habitat designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) and sites utilised by species listed under the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA), the China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA), or the Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA).</li> <li>12.03-15 River corridors, waterways, lakes and wetlands - Objective: To protect and enhance river corridors, waterways, lakes and wetlands. Strategies include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the environmental, cultural and landscape values of all water bodies and wetlands.</li> <li>Ensure development responds to and respects the significant environmental, conservation, cultural, aesthetic, open space, recreation and tourism assets of water bodies and wetlands.</li> <li>Ensure development is sensitively designed and sited to maintain and enhance environmental assets, significant views and landscapes along river corridors and waterways and adjacent to lakes and wetlands.</li> <li>Ensure development does not compromise bank stability, increase erosion or impact on a water body or wetland's natural capacity to manage flood flow.</li> <li>Facilitate growth in established settlements where water and wastewater can be managed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>16.01-5R Rural residential development - Loddon Mallee North - Strategy: Plan strategically for the most appropriate locations for rural residential growth in the hinterland areas of Mildura, Swan Hill and Echuca.</li> <li>17.04-15 Facilitating tourism - Objective: To encourage tourism development to maximise the economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the state as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination.</li> <li>17.01-1R Diversified economy - Loddon Mallee North - Strategies: Support further diversification of the primary production, service, manufacturing and tourism industries. Support emerging and potential growth sectors such as nature-based tourism, mining and renewable energy generation and protect these activities from urban encroachment.</li> <li>17.04-1R Tourism - Loddon Mallee North Strategy Support nature-based tourism and protect these activities from urban encroachment.</li> </ul>
Section 2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan (LMNRGP) may be cited under section 2.3 (Regional Plans). The LMNRGP also notes;</li> </ul>

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DELWP Regional Planning Services, LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018



## DELWP Regional Planning Services LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018

Pg. 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'There is potential future residential development pressure around some lakes. Strategic planning and clear direction are needed to protect the environmental and landscape values of these assets and to promote the continued growth of the region's agricultural export markets'.</li> <li>• There is also 'a high probability that acid sulfate soils exist in association with inland wetlands in the region, with some sites already known. These soils should remain undisturbed to prevent the serious consequences to infrastructure and human health that can result from their mismanagement. Local planning will need to consider this risk in more detail, particularly when planning for rural residential development associated with lakes and wetlands'.</li> <li>• Relevant future environment land use strategies and actions include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 'Direct settlement growth and development away from areas of high value environmental and cultural heritage assets, such as significant vegetation, waterways, scenic landscapes, and Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage places.'</li> <li>– 'Undertake strategic planning for areas under pressure for rural residential development, particularly those associated with significant wetlands and the Murray River, to protect nearby environmental assets and values, and to enhance the region's environmental credentials.'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Section 2.5 Pg. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy</i> only recommends that future rezoning <i>may</i> occur, subject to meeting the principles of the strategy and further strategic work to assess the suitability of sites is required. It should not be misled as a recommendation that supports the rezoning of land.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Residential</b>	
Section 6.1 Pg. 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy</i> recommended that development should be avoided in areas known to be environmentally sensitive or have significant environmental values – how do some of the recommendations of the draft masterplan consider environmental impacts and have regard to this advice?</li> </ul>
Section 6.3 Pg. 38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developments at Lake Boga and Cohuna have better access to services and amenities, and it may not be reasonable to compare to waterfront development at Kangaroo Lake or Lake Charm.</li> <li>• Land capability is one of many considerations to inform the appropriateness of use and development of land. If suggesting willing landowners may undertake land capability assessments to assist in determining the capability of land or redevelopment in the absence of wider investigation into housing and settlement across the Shire, this work alone is not an appropriate alternative to strategic justification for a planning scheme amendment.</li> <li>• There must be broader alignment to a municipal-wide approach to settlement planning that directs development consistent with the planning policy framework (sequential development, maximising existing infrastructure, regional growth plans, loss of agricultural production, access to services and transport network, cultural significance, environmental impacts and/or exposure to hazards). Residential land supply is considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Kangaroo Lake</b>	
Section 7.2 Pg. 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify what being a designated Ramsar Wetland means in terms of planning or approvals requirements.</li> <li>• Carefully consider the impacts of development in relation to Kangaroo Lake's status as a Ramsar Wetland.</li> </ul>

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DELWP Regional Planning Services, LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018

## DELWP Regional Planning Services LMR Comments on the Draft Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans, October 2018

Section 7.4 Pg. 44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential land to the east – ‘This would require <u>further strategic work (justification)</u> and a planning scheme amendment’.</li> </ul>
Section 7.5 Pg.48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of adequate reticulated sewerage in this area is a weakness.</li> <li>The opportunity of ‘lakefront residential development’ contradicts with the threat of ‘declining local population’.</li> </ul>
Section 7.6 Pg. 51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locating ‘Residential Subdivision Opportunities’ away from existing infrastructure does not support the intended use.</li> </ul>
Section 7.7 Pg. 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributing activity along the waterfront will lead to increased disturbance to the environment.</li> <li>The possible impacts of this development on the environment should be addressed.</li> </ul>
<b>8. Lake Charm</b>	
Section 8.7 Pg. 71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any new residential development should be located near existing settlements for access to services- carefully consider the demand for this use.</li> <li>Consider how development will affect water runoff into the lakes.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Murray River Precinct Koondrook</b>	
Section 9.2 Pg. 77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how any potential new development would respond to natural hazards in this area, particularly if locating new facilities in the LSIO or BMO.</li> </ul>
Section 9.5 Pg. 85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The threat from ‘river and creek accessibility due to low water levels’ should be explored further.</li> </ul>

## **Kerang Lakes Community Group**

### **Gannawarra Waterfront Master Plan discussion:**

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide feedback for the Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplan. We are very passionate about the Kerang Lakes as a hidden oasis that has a huge amount of potential with so many varied lakes and landscapes. We recognise the opportunity to develop links and create exciting, balanced ecotourism projects that also support our surrounding struggling townships. Making the most of tourism, business and residential development in the Kerang Lakes area will be the key to supporting the whole shire. We have many return visitors to the shire or those driving through that have no idea that the Lakes (particularly Lake Charm ) exist.

We are keen to get some projects quickly happening across the lakes but also wish to concentrate on a few major projects. With these visionary projects we also need to recognize the efforts of our small community and local volunteers. We need to work in partnership with major organisations to enable these projects to be planned, funded and developed and maintained. We need to be clear about ownership of the land around the lakes and who is responsible for maintenance, and identify simple steps to action the projects in partnership with these groups. There needs to be strategic pest, weed and maintenance plans for all the lakes. Stakeholder groups not accepting responsibility for land, budgeting for action and working in with local landholders and volunteer groups is the key issue which has stopped many ecotourism ideas in the past. It's always been too hard and therefore shelved.

The Kerang Lakes are a multi-use area and need a balanced and agreed development and management approach to minimise disagreements and frustrations. There needs to be a clarification of the short term supported process for progressing identified projects, in a balanced manner, that supports ecotourism goals. We need to look beyond politics and budgets, and open up discussions to big picture thinking and how to get there. How will funding be raised for the studies, approvals and requirements that are needed prior to further grants submissions. (seed funding)? We need to prioritise projects big and small. Quick wins are very important.

We need to enhance the existing supportive community and expand from this to include surrounding townships or a whole shire approach. We are very small in number and are capable and skill building is not the answer here but how to share the load (so not to create burnout from those hard working community members). We have successfully held major events in the area, hosted a variety of community activities, fundraised, created infrastructure and collaborated.

Will this strategy move on to a process such as *Operation Next Gen Cohuna* to empower, extend and support community leaders, to explore new business



opportunities and strengthen our community into the future? Will it step out the process and address blockers that stop the progress of the Kerang Lakes as a model of ecotourism, that supports the whole shire? We are a proactive, positive community and look forward on how these ideas will happen and that this masterplan doesn't just become another manual on the shelf.

## Appendix

- Needs to link opportunities to surrounding townships, rivers and lakes, and future development and upgrade of these sites. Ibis Rookery- significant cultural heritage, Ibis Rookery, Ramsar site in need of upgrade and ongoing maintenance- was once the shires main draw card. Mallee areas. People don't know
- Tutchewop historic bathing boxes- dry bed photography
- Bike trail from Kerang to Lake Charm via the back pathway ( not along the MVH) as identified by Kerang Progress and potentially around the back of Racecourse across the footbridge ( identified for replacement 18 years ago) to Kangaroo Lake.
- Racecourse Lake fishing platforms- maintained park and roadside stop, picnic area
- Roads to Market - Racecourse road- Kangaroo Lake
- Historic road trail, brochure with stop points, signage- many significant history spots.
- Pest and weed strategic planning for all lakes.
- Third Reedy Lake offsets- Beautification works- picnic areas, bird watching . Ongoing and planned strategic Pest and Weed control.
- Residential development needs to be supported by Council.

When was the last rezoning done in GSC?

## COMMENTS

P1 The lake is partially surrounded by farm land and is quite developed on the frontage residentially.

P1 Delete reference to the strong links with indigenous community. Maybe historically linked??

P3 Can we improve this map

P4 1<sup>st</sup> You do need to support the locals that live here. Improve the amenities for locals as well as tourists.

2<sup>nd</sup> dot point - needs to include maintaining infrastructure. Assist who?? Detailed action plan should be included.

5<sup>th</sup> dot point - Implement changes to the Planning Scheme to increase potential for residential development. Rezone potential land to GRZ.

P17 This seems ludicrous that FZ constrains residential development but allows caravan parks and other opportunities.

P17 2<sup>nd</sup> para from bottom RICER = RIVER

P18 When was the VPO identified on the eastern shores of Kangaroo Lake?

P19 Need to include residential opportunities close to water.

P19 Emerging strength ie Arts, silos, bird sculpture trail

P20 Delete Deniliquin Golf Club

P20 Why isn't there any mention of our local history??

P23 Anecdotally all these accommodation facilities attract a range of visitor types and have hosted a range of international visitors to the region.

P23 delete former Lake Charm General Store

Blue comments: Possibly add farm stay/camping for self contained travellers. "youcamp opportunities".

Key findings. Lets be more creative with the list of things to do. Why do people visit the Kerang Lakes? Why do people live around the Kerang Lakes? Permanent residents are essential for the sustainability of small rural areas like the Kerang Lakes and Kerang. Lifestyle opportunities are immense.

P36 What is a MSS? Please define.

P37 Lake Boga - Haven. A great example of what could be done in our shire.

1st para ...residential development...in the Gannawarra Shire, however there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest that there is a huge demand for lake frontage/water view properties.

3rd para Possibly review existing studies to help develop new water based residential opportunities.

4th para ...in collaboration with the GSC. We need to explore a possible group action to make this happen.

Develop a brochure for the Kerang Lakes.

.....

P40-Lathe?

P41-Need to highlight Kangaroo Lake, ( explore Lake Charm) and Racecourse Lake fishing platforms.

P42- delete last two paragraphs

P43-Palm beach area is covering the tennis court area. Mystic Park should be mentioned. Need to change area from majority farming to residential land. Very few farms have lake frontage. Andrew Peace has just purchased land behind Metic Pro to develop as well as Vic Super.

P44-need to mention about our History around KL, e.g. Sir John Gorton. Please explain "Racecourse road to the south east of Racecourse lake is also being surfaced"????

P45- no pool at Caravan Park. It should be highlighted that locals maintain the lake areas more than shire. Willow trees to stay.

P48-More opportunities for Kangaroo Lake e.g. shelters, fish platform, history, canoe, paint silos (Baulch Bros, Sir John Gorton). Unsure about changing all public furniture to be

the same. Threats-pest animals and weed control, permanent engaged population, Attraction of anti-social behaviour? Suggestion- Current boat ramp is in the wrong place. Build a boat ramp at Fogarty point.

P49-toilet block partially blocks views of Lake. Weakness really?

Lake Charm - p56. Note that Pelican Waters is privately owned as well as KL.

P57-Add in fishing platforms and the walking bridge near Racecourse. Lake Charm Sth end toilet block. Have same wording about future development on Lake Charm map as KL map. 11 kms right around. Residences at North end of lake as well.

P58-ownership is a volunteer committee, not Shire. Foreshore committee,

Crown land is run by Goulburn Murray Water around most of Lake Charm and by Parks Vic. Kangaroo has shire input/support for about half the lake. Need to know ownership and managers of the land and clarify the short term supported process for progressing identified projects in a balanced manner, that supports ecotourism goals. Clarification between groups and to decrease disagreements.

P59-Add in that South side has a picnic area. Add to Walking Trail -correct length and add Fauna/Flora bollards. Variety of lakes including Lake Kelly and Tutchewop people photographic, history and bird watching opportunities.

Opportunity for more community inclusion and health through exercise stations, 9 hole or whole in one golf course, adventure playground.

There is no cotton grown around the lake frontage.

P61-Add members to Lake Charm Power Boat club.

P62-Historic flora and fauna trail at the Info. Building.

P63-Pictures. Have same wording for here as Lake Charm. Need more ski launching points as illegal to jump start from the foreshore unless designated area.

P65-change small info. Kiosk. Strength- Community volunteers raise funds, maintain areas, host things and manage projects. Opportunities -big bird sculpture and branding- the starting point for a unique art trail across the shire. Fishing platforms, links to racecourse. Fishing platform on sth end (T jetty). Canoe launching areas? where. Community shelter and boat launch area at the yacht club site.

P66-need water /adventure playground, mini golf, camp kitchen. Threat-who is responsible for the land and managing the projects? Remove -walking trails on north side of lake: include direction signage between Foreshore CP and Yacht Club, linked to other activity precincts. Keep walking track on south side of Charm and along side Benjeroop Rd.

P67-Sth end enviro-toilet block, clean up the area, grass it, rubbish bins, shade and BBQ. Walking track. (Look at Lake Cullaraine shade sails or continue on with existing structures). Open up access spots around the lake, small beach areas, remove spiny rush.

P68 map- comments about walking track around the foreshore west side. Who would maintain it. Informally people walk along it all the time. Want to keep it as an informal walkway. No official track. Have signs to follow.

Would like a formal track on Sth side, for bikes, walking, rollerblades...



P69 map. Multipurpose centre/restaurant at Lake Charm foreshore. Walk/bike track sth end of lake.

DRAFT

## 11.2. KANGAROO LAKE

TABLE 17 KANGAROO LAKE PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority	Project Title	Overview	Location	Project Lead	Partner/ Stakeholders	Actions
1	Multi-Purpose Pavilion	New purpose multi-purpose pavilion including potential hub for visiting Victorian seasonal cattle/sheepway sales, school, kayak/ canoe hire, community function and event space. (Note: The opportunity for a Ski-racing Victoria hub is also provided for within the Lake Charm Master Plan).	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Gannawarra Shire	Attaching Victoria Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Goulburn Murray Water	Undertake feasibility study, concept design and business case
1	Foreshore Improvements	Improved foreshore presentation and amenity (seating, BBQ, car parking, shelter, playground, <i>Shed</i> , walking/cycling trail). <i>Korvick camp</i> .	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Gannawarra Shire	Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Goulburn Murray Water	Precise Architectural design / landscape plans and coatings Precise signage / coatings Aspects Shedding of larger-scale investments (i.e. brewhouse/boat moor)
1	On Water Infrastructure Improvements	Development of jetty, fishing platforms, boat moorings, boat ramp, freshwater/boat moor, lake swimming areas etc.	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Precise trial design and coatings
2	Shared Path Development	Shared path linking North and Eastern Shore destinations. <i>Link to Riddell's Hill</i> Potential future residential development opportunities	North and Eastern Foreshore See Lake Charm Kangaroo Lake and Goulburn Creek Ecosystem Strategy (2013) for required actions.	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Work with Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park to deliver water foot print Accommodation
2	Waterfront Cabin Accommodation	Development of new cabin accommodation on waterfront at Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park. (Potential to occur post completion of foreshore improvements works)	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park	Gannawarra Shire	Accommodation
2	Palm Beach and Gannawarra Point Upgrades	Amenity and infrastructure improvements (seating, water access, amenities).	Palm Beach and Gannawarra Point	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Scope improvements / upgrades

- Artwork / Sculptures  
- History trail  
- Myths Park - silos

Beck  
at Churn





Hi,

Thanks for the opportunity to feedback to the Waterfront Masterplan. Cohuna Progress has established a working group which ran sessions to capture community feedback and desires of what we wanted to be on the plan. In all we had close to 40 people provide us feedback. What have collected these and been using them as the bases of our input.

Our working group have worked through the Plan and have the following feedback:-

Many items we really like are in the plan - and if we don't specifically mention them we are in support of them.

#### APEX PARK

- To relocate the wharf area closer to the road (in between playground and Caravan park for easier access with kayak etc. include toilet (easier access for young children at playground)
- Add a camp kitchen in the park (currently Lions club have funds and desire to build something like this in the park)
- More shaded trees, landscaped areas to create spaces for more tables and chairs – but keeping the openness of the park
- Upgrade playground to include “all abilities” equipment and also teenage equipment (see visual – Playground Equip idea)

#### CURRENT RV AREA

- Add boardwalk along water edge, add restaurant to location (near bridge end) incorporating a kiosk and changing room for pool and Blandowski and cultural space
- Current health standards in Victoria don't allow for a natural swimming pool (chemical free – but still hygienic). Other countries (e.g. Canada, America and a number of European countries have Public natural swimming pools). Someone has to be first in Australia – it will be a great point of difference and may assist with funding opportunities. It could be a real beautiful asset in this area – also incorporate some form of a water park.
- Accommodation site – location of this has been questioned, although it has merit but needs to visually align with our theme of natural, sustainable and well being (needs to blend in - not stand out). A possible restaurant venue.

#### GARDEN PARK

- Add shade trees to roadside area
- Add area to gateway centre to incorporate Library and an area to showcase and sell local art.

#### ALONG CREEK TO SKI RUN

- Create areas with table and chairs for families to have picnics – linking people to our outdoors.

#### SAWMILL SITE

- Clear area and beautify area to potentially host alternate festivals such as nudist, down to earth and cultural gatherings.

OVERALL- Many of the projects from the “Cohuna Vision Plan” should be incorporated:

- Tan walks
- Creek linker nodes
- Civic Hub
- Blandowski Art Trail
- Red brick Building
- Streetscape

Please find attached pictures of our Natural Swimming pools and Play Equipment Idea that we would like to be included in the Masterplan.

If you would like further clarification on any of these points - please give me a call.

Cheers,

Jason Hensley  
CDPA - President  
0429 42 80 84















To: Gannawarra Shire Council  
Re: **Gannawarra Waterfront Master Plan**

**Councillors,**

We wish to respond to the Master Plan specifically to the **Cohuna Waterfront Concept Masterplan**.

**1. Accommodation Development:**

We recognize the severe lack of accommodation available in Cohuna and appreciate that it is an issue that needs addressing. However we are adamant that proposed site where the current RV camp is, should not be used. In fact we oppose any building along this stretch of the creek. The beauty of our town is that we have open space where we can walk, where we can appreciate the creek, the trees and the relaxed ambience of Cohuna.

We have often heard people recognize Cohuna by the unique layout with shops on one side of the main street, the other looking out over the creek and the Red Gum trees. That view is remembered. At the moment we look from the shop fronts into the distance over the sports grounds. It presents a sense of openness that we do not want destroyed.

The current situation with RV campers is that there is nothing permanent. The campers move on and others replace them, not necessarily in the same place. The view and the openness remain. In fact it is nice to be able to walk past the visitors and say "G'day" – it helps make Cohuna feel like a welcoming town.

We are also concerned about suggestions of shifting the RV site believing the current waterfront position really makes the stay in Cohuna significant. We need these tourists, the evidence is clear when talking to local businesses that they do spend money in town. We can keep Cohuna as a special place in the visitor's mind by keeping an idyllic site for their stay.

As an aside, there is no explanation in the document to explain "eco-style self-contained accommodation" and as such there is no real understanding of what future development could look like.

We recognise that the Sawmill Site provides opportunity for accommodation and needs encouragement.

**2. Caravan Park:**

We agree that there is possibility and need to develop the caravan park both with more quality cabins and extension of space however this development should not encroach further into Apex Park. This area must be kept open and available for recreational use.

**3. Wharf Area:**

Again we are opposed to permanent development along the waterfront. We can accept the need, and endorse the concept, of a wharf for passive watercraft. This seems sensible when linked with the development of a kayak/canoe trail. Our wetland, right on our town doorstep, is a great place to canoe and development of a proper signed trail, together with lots of promotion, could encourage visitors to the area just to

explore the wetlands. However the ambience must not be destroyed by "a restaurant/café, function and events space" or "facilities such as permanent storage for boat hire operators"

**4. Gunbower Pedestrian Crossing:**

We see this as a completely pointless suggestion when there are two current options viz. the town bridge and the weir. In fact we think we should be encouraging people to walk around this area and enjoy the space. The bridge would help "clutter" the ambience of the creek, as with several other suggestions in the Concept Master Plan.

We urge Council to consider these comments. Cohuna has some unique characteristics – open space, water in the town, grassland, Red Gum trees and a wetland on the doorstep. These form the character of Cohuna, something to make it stand out from other towns. We need to be very careful not to over develop our assets and lose the very thing that attracts people here. Yes, it would be good to encourage more tourists and residence but the necessary development must not destroy the asset.

Glenn and Carolyn Hall  
21 Western Rd  
COHUNA 3568  
27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Hi. I am a resident of Cohuna and have been looking at the Concept Master Plans.

I love a lot of the ideas in the proposal but feel there are a few more detrimental than benefit to the town.

1st The removal of the RV free camp back towards the football ovals would definately be a backward step for the town. One of the reasons the free camp is so popular is because it is right on the water, close to the town and shops, the information centre and toilet block.

My husband and I own a caravan ourselves and the feed back for our particular park is incredibly positive especially in all the free camp guide books.

2nd. The swimming pool is definately a priority and due for an upgrade or move to another spot. It also needs to be open more,

3rd. Gunbower pedestrian crossing is going to spoil the look of the water from the town and as there are already 2 bridges I consider it an unnecessary use of funds.

4th. Accommodation. I think we should look at the town hotel as a major area for an attractive area for new accomodation. There could be some really quality units and hotel/ restuarants

with views across to the water.

My husband and I moved here just over 2 years ago and have felt is was the best move we have ever made. We love the lifestyle and the friendlieness of the town and its people and would love to see some of the proposals implemented. I hope you will read my thoughts and take them into consideration.

Yours faithfully

Marilyn Flinders.

Victorian RV co-ordinator for the Ulysses Caravan Group.



I would like you to consider the following comments regarding the draft waterfront masterplan for Cohuna.

1. Long term reconfiguration of rec reserve : works and updates to rec reserve always welcome. If this includes a new multipurpose pavilion care needs to be taken that we are not creating a white elephant if proposed Apex Park waterfront events venue goes ahead.

2. Present oval entry point just needs to be updated, not moved.

3. Walking/Cycling track excellent idea.

4. Road expansion OK but where does it go? Loop around tennis courts?

5. RV park site would be quite good inside and to the right of existing oval entry. Still within walking distance to town centre. Many, many towns use their rec reserves/ sports ovals for free/ donation/ cheap rate camping. Provides funds to maintain the area and very popular with grey nomads.

6. Where is the proposed new site for the bowls club? If the bowls club is to be relocated, or a new pool site found, either of those present locations would be more suitable for accommodation than the one suggested.

7. Proposed accommodation site where existing RV camp is located is not appropriate (see comment above). Cohuna has a unique natural outlook from the main shopping area which should be maintained at all cost. The view across Garden Park to the oval is what sets Cohuna apart and is a relaxing and beautiful outlook for locals and visitors alike. We do not need permanent buildings to obstruct that view.

8. Electric vehicle charging site a necessity into the future.

9. Unsure about new pool site but also no suggestions for a more suitable location. Ideally a site the other side of the highway would provide safer access for our children.

10. Coffee kiosk in Gateway does not show support for existing businesses in town. Better to encourage visitors to go for a stroll down the street and support the businesses there. From experience, most travelers are happy to do that. Perhaps a couple of pieces from the existing exhibition at the existing art gallery would be OK. If people are interested in art they will search out the local gallery. I thought the Gateway was there to encourage visitors to *explore* our town, not be just a one stop shop for everything local.

11. There is no need for another pedestrian crossing over the creek. The two existing crossings are safe and more than adequate.

12. Clock certainly needs an upgrade.

13. Be careful with location of new waterfront cabins at caravan park. Local residents appreciate any views over the creek and I, for one, do not want to see our current views of the water compromised any more than absolutely necessary.

14. Flying fox great idea.

15. Canoe/kayak platform great idea.

16. Playground well used as is but probably in need of a freshen up/expansion.

17. Wharf area: There is a need for some kind of structure/jetty to allow easy access for kayakers, paddleboarders etc. While a restaurant overlooking the water sounds desirable I think existing businesses need to be supported. If a restaurant was to go ahead great care would need to be taken when selecting operators. It would be good if the beach area could be expanded. There is also a need for the grassed area adjacent to the existing beach area to be resown - at present it is full of weeds.

18. Native garden and interactive landscape space great.

19. BBQs certainly need an upgrade. They also need to be cleaned regularly. They are disgusting at present and any half health conscious person would be reluctant to use them.

20. Car parking: as drawn on the diagram the carpark does not look very safe. There would need to be some solid form of delineation between road and carpark. A proper pedestrian crossing would also make the area safer. There certainly needs to be formalised bays to make best use of space.

21. Multipurpose half court and shade/expansion/upgrade of skate park good ideas.

Cohuna is a great little town. We need tourists but we also need new residents to expand our ratepayer base. Making the most of, and maintaining the facilities we already have will perhaps encourage those visitors to think about a tree change and help keep our town vibrant and viable into the future but let's not forget the people who live here now. Not all of them dine out regularly or hire kayaks or paddleboards etc. Our unique location on the banks of the Gunbower needs to be celebrated for *all* to enjoy.

Denise Waterson.

Re - Cohuna Waterfront Plan.

GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL	
File: 3-000040	
27 FEB 2019	
Rego No.	
Referred To: JH	Copies To: RG

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to object to the positioning of the new entrance to the Cohuna Recreation Reserve/Sporting Precinct.

The original proposed new entrance site into the sporting precinct - approximately 30 metres into the grounds of the reserve, had been planned with great discussion around safety and traffic etc. and on the recommendation of Geoff Rollinson.

I have dedicated many hours of work, consulting with all users of the precinct who were prepared to invest into the project with the new entrance located 30 metres into the grounds of the reserve, including the Lions club.

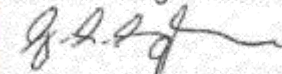
I sourced a graphic designer to draw up a virtual image depicting all sporting bodies on the entrance facade. This was viewed by Councillor Lorraine Learmonth, who was impressed with the design.

The now planned entrance opposite the Cohuna Bowling Club was never discussed in any meetings or conversations I was involved in with any Gannawarra Councillors.

I would appreciate it if we could organise a meeting or conversation between the Cohuna Kangas Football Netball Club Committee and the appropriate staff at the Gannawarra Shire Council to discuss this further before any works go ahead.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards  
Grant Lunghusen  
President  
Cohuna Kangas Football Netball Club



Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

**Feedback on the Gannawarra Waterfront MasterPlans - Draft**

I have two (2) major concerns with the draft Gannawarra Waterfront MasterPlans, (October, 2018). I'm listing them in my personal priority order, as a Cohuna resident.

**Concern No. 1:****Cohuna Island Road Car-parking, near Apex Park and Skate Park**

As a resident of Cohuna Island Road, I am well aware of the heavy vehicles and extensive traffic usage of Cohuna Island Road.

The way the car park is marked on the Concept MasterPlan for the *Gunbower Creek Precinct of Cohuna* (section 10.6) is of great concern to me, as a retired teacher/principal and as a grandparent.

It is labelled on the Concept map as "New/formalised central carparking".

Cohuna Island Road is shown as going right through the middle of this car park.

Whoever, thought up this idea, was not aware of the vehicles that will be driving through the middle of this car park... where small children will be getting out of cars to go to the playground, the skate park, possibly a future swimming pool, possibly future accommodation precinct, etc. It would be a dangerous mix of traffic and children with little traffic sense.

The following vehicles currently drive through this area:

- B-double milk tankers
- Heavy haulage trucks (e.g. logs, cattle, hay)
- School buses
- Farm trucks and tractors,
- Cars with caravans and other RVs (to Caravan Park/RV free camping/bush)
- Cars with boats on trailers (to water ski run)
- Cars to sports facilities such as ovals, bowls, tennis, swimming pool, etc.
- Local traffic to properties on Cohuna Island Road, such as ourselves.

Please ensure that this car parking is clearly designated as distinct from Cohuna Island Road (with fences) and that a pedestrian crossing is put into its middle.

**Concern No. 2:****TreeTops Campsite is not for casual drop-ins**

As a regular user of TreeTops, I am well aware that it is a beautiful and popular place for camping and functions. Sometimes we cannot get the booking for the particular days we want as it can be booked out up to a year in advance, through the Friends of TreeTops.

However, the way TreeTops is described in the text and on the Cohuna area Concept Map, it appears as though it is a casual/unplanned "stopover point for adventure travellers (walkers, cyclists, kayakers)". It is not. Bookings must be made, and paid for, in advance. This must be made clear in any future documentation.



Dr. Gaell Hildebrand  
260 Cohuna Island Rd,  
Cohuna. 3568.  
mobile: 0427 280 851  
email: hildebrand.wakeman@bigpond.com



#### Re Waterfront Development Plan

I support the thrust of the development proposals to make the waterfront more accessible to all and a more enjoyable place to be; while taking care to preserve the vista of water trees and grass which is everyone's memory of Cohuna

#### A few comments

The Swimming Pool – needs a major upgrade but I do not support moving it .A better idea would be to make a new 25m pool at right angles to the creek preserving a small pool at the base of the waterslide and turning the current large pool area to lawn and trees.

A boardwalk along the bank possibly projecting over the creek could provide access along passed the tennis court and on to walking tracks along the creek. I see no need for a road.

“Natural pool”- No one wants to swim in a dam with mud, leeches blue green algae etc which is unsafe for young children and non swimmers.

Accommodation-Eco tents are a good idea but not at the site shown. The RV's make good use of the space and make a significant contribution to the towns economy. Further planting around the site would be beneficial.

Accom including eco tents and upmarket units could go well along the creek north of the tennis courts, between the second oval and Island Rise and in the sawmill site. There is also a large site available in the old Dunn estate near the water tower that was earmarked for commercial accom of some type.

Native gardens- well laid out and with info about each plant would be a great attraction.

Apex Park- a small wharf would be good but not a kiosk/restaurant or “bathing boxes” The attraction of the area is the water and the trees not more buildings. Upgrades to toilets, skatepark, bbq's are needed.

A Gallery- incorporated the Gateway Centre would go well.

A pedestrian bridge would be an attraction. A design that was light and rose above the water in an arch would be my suggestion.

An upgrade to the walking track to the ski run and beyond is sorely needed There are many walkers on the road at the moment due to the lack of maintenance of the track and surrounding scrub.

I would like to propose a walking/cycling track along the southern creek bank from the weir past the ovals and the old mill site to a future footbridge over the Gunbower, linking to a track on the north bank which returned to Gilrue Park and the waterfront precinct. Links to forest tracks would be possible

Treetops- a stop/stops along the creek are a good idea but not in the Treetops precinct. The Treetops precinct has facilities including cabin with kitchen, showers and toilets available for hire but not for casual use.

A "wayside stop" with ecoshelters tables toilets etc would require an access track for construction and maintenance. The Treetops area is a dedicated area of native vegetation and a road is an unwanted intrusion. Treetops already has a problem with unauthorized access and camping. The proposed stop would exacerbate the problem. Alternative and superior sites can be found on the western creek bank where Spence's Bridge Rd meets the creek, or at the current boat ramp where facilities could be shared with fishermen and other creek users. The creek bank on the right immediately over Spence's Bridge would also be suitable. These alternatives are all far more accessible to support crews than the Treetops proposal.

I support the plan and hope my comments are useful

Kind regards

George Drummond

GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL	
File:	3-000040
21 FEB 2019	
Rego No:	
Referred to:	CTH Copies To: RG

PO BOX 319  
COHUNA VIC 3568  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The CEO  
Gannawarra Shire Council  
49 Victoria Street  
KERANG VIC 3579

## PART B CONCEPT MASTER PLANS

### GUNBOWER CREEK PRECINCT, COHUNA

Dear Sir,

I would like to submit the following for your consideration re the above Concept Plans.

When developing Concept Plans it not just about the future but regard should be given to both the past and the present.

I am a regular volunteer at the Gannawarra Gateway Centre where I speak to many visitors to Cohuna including those that stay at the Caravan Park, RV Park along with those who camp in the Gunbower Forrest. I also take the opportunity to make conversation with visitors who may be in the main street of Cohuna.

When discussing the RV Park **ALL** visitors rate it as either absolutely fantastic or the best in Australia. The location is the main reason they say this.

On Page 100 it is stated "Location of free RV Camping Site at prominent position of view line from Town Centre". This is incorrectly seen as a Weakness whereas it is actually a Strength.

Under Opportunities it is suggested to relocate the RV Camping Site but maintain walking distance to town. **NO WAY**. Why destroy something that in a very short time has developed into one of Cohuna's major draw cards.

I do agree that the entrance to the Recreation Ground should be moved a little way into the Ground to avoid the back up of cars trying to enter.

Another suggestion that I and the vast majority of Cohuna residents have, is to turn the existing RV Site into an Accommodation Development Site. Cohuna already has ample sites for this purpose, firstly within the Murray Sound development and a large amount of freehold creek frontage opposite the Cohuna Caravan Park. Private developers have looked at these sites and found them not to be viable due to the lack of demand.




The Gannawarra Shire Council should realize that the days of Local Government being involved in developing new commercial tourist accommodation such as caravan parks etc. has long passed.

If the Gannawarra Shire Council wanted to do something to improve the amenity of Cohuna for residents and visitors alike they could do something about the enormous amount of noxious weeds in the town. Every street, walking track, parks and recreation grounds have massive amounts of bindii, khaki weed, roly poly and bathurst burrs. These seeds were brought into Cohuna from a Shire pit west of Kerang when backfilling around footpaths that had been repaired.

Thanking you,

Your sincerely,



Glenn A. Stanmore.

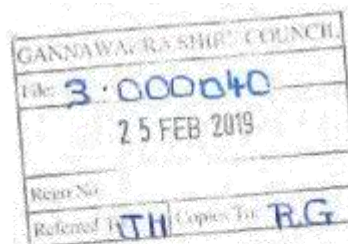
To whom it may concern,

Congratulations on developing a well thought out plan for the future of Cohuna waterfront.

Some suggestions worth considering are:

- toilet facilities are needed closer to the children's playground. As a mum of young children the existing toilets are too far for young kids & by the time they realise they need to go they don't make it all that way.
- further infrastructure needs to be put in place to support mountain bike / trail riding/ running & bushwalking activities and could be developed though the Gunbower Forest in Cohuna towards Spence's Bridge to link in to Koondrook - this way people can ride from Koondrook to Cohuna or vice versa as well as being utilised by bushwalkers / runners in each township for visitors and locals alike.
- larger car park is required for the Koondrook boat ramp area as this is not sufficient to cater for current numbers during busy periods - let alone for any future growth
- more than one viewing deck / fishing platform would be good - even 2 would be better

Kind regards  
Sandy Paterson  
64a Punt Rd  
Barham NSW



#### Comments on Draft Master Plan – GB Creek

I commend the shire for initiating such a planning report. I understand it is necessary these days before you can seek Govt funding for any project. I hope some of the initiatives come to fruition.

I have read the full plan, including the Koondrook & Spence's Bridge components.

There are number of good ideas put forward and some not practical or realistic on my opinion.

#### Cohuna Pool

There is no doubt that the pool requires replacement in the not too distant future. It is vital that a pool be maintained in Cohuna – for school activities at least. I do not support placing a new pool in the proposed location, which is right in the middle of the overall precinct. Nor do I support the 'natural' pool concept. Might be a nice and warm feeling but it is totally impractical in my opinion. The existing pool originally had creek water circulating, which proved ineffective.

The pool should be removed from the creek precinct. The area behind the 'red brick building' is the ideal place. The Ed Dept should welcome the inclusion of a pool – or make the land available. The red brick building could be retro fitted into change rooms preserving the heritage of the building.

#### RV Camp site & Accommodation

I do not believe the few locals who are against the present site understand or have ever owned a caravan. It is not hard to work out the figures of the worth to the town. Some (a few) people think we are giving away something for nothing. The report describes the RV site as large. It is in fact quite small as free camp sites go. Being crammed in and parking parallel (as they do in a park) is not what the free camper fraternity prefers.

The report says that the present site blocks the 'vista' – but then goes on to suggest building accommodation in its place, which is contradictory.

The Murray Sound subdivision allocated land for accommodation, albeit a motel, but that land is ideal for accommodation and should be utilized first.

I have no objection to moving the RV site – but not to just inside the Rec Reserve Gateway. The idea of moving the access to the reserve is silly and would lead to a lot of congestion when big crowds are at the oval (eg; footy finals) Moving the gateway would be creating expenditure just for the sake of doing something.

If it is to be moved, the RV camp would be better suited at the other end of Oval No1 – ie; between the ovals somewhere. Along the western side adjacent to the creek. Ideally move the old cattle pavilions and have the site there somewhere. Clean up the creek frontage and it would be a more natural, informal camping site. Campers would still walk to the shops etc, its part of campers psyche to wander around and fill in their day, so a bit further walk would not deter those who do walk.



The proposed 'centralised parking' near Apex Park seems to have the Island road running through the center of the parking area. This is not a practical suggestion from a safety point of view.

The idea of a wharf in Apex Park is good – and could be developed into a hub for access to the GB forest as well as the creek. The idea of a waterfront restaurant is really good – but viability of such a business would be an issue.

The idea of a pedestrian bridge is a good one and would link Garden Park and the northern precinct nicely – especially if the pool was not in the way.

Like the idea of developing the saw mill site as an eco site.

Extending the caravan park is fine as is native gardens and landscaping.

Finally

There is mention of relocating the Bowls Club. That suggestion is ill informed in my opinion. The CBC is 115 years old and will survive for a long time yet. Note that the BC land is freehold and not technically part of the Rec reserve as such. The idea that all bowlers would just move out to the GC is flawed. Travelling out to the GC would be an issue for some, as they do not all own cars. Most would simply give the game away. Any idea of affecting the CBC should be aired up front with the club. I think the advice you received is a little misleading. The future of the Golf Club itself needs to be assured before any forced amalgamations were considered.

I did not have any input to the planning exercise, so my comments may not be welcome, but last time I was at the Gateway I was asked to comment.

Overall, a good start & keep up the good work.

Regards

Bryan Main

Dear CEO and Councillors.

For many years I have been involved with the future planning of Cohuna, having been in many organisations and Planning Groups. One of these was the "Pride of Place" study which produced a report for the future development of Cohuna that was accepted by Council to continue till 2020!

Unfortunately so many of those great ideas were never implemented.

During the time that study was carried out I acted as a driver for the Consultants as well as convening some of the public meetings.

They were so impressed by the town plan of Cohuna. "It could be used for today's planning", impressed too by the "ownership" of this little town by those of us who call it home.

Perhaps you should look at that study again?

As I have given all my records to the Cohuna Progress Association I have to rely on memory.

One memory which is very clear.

When you arrive at the King George Street roundabout you can see instantly the Creek with all sporting facilities in full view. They said this is a "Sacred Site" - should never be built on!

We already have the "abomination" or more correctly, the sound shell.

Now on the Waterfront Plan there is a proposal for "holiday accommodation" to be built where the RV area is. So much for all the work we did on the Pride of Place Plan. One wonders why we bother.

Has anyone driven along Island Road?

On route to the ski run there is an area of timbered land beside the creek which I believe would be an amazing holiday accommodation site. It overlooks the creek lagoon. The Cohuna Cruises glide past, birds everywhere. I envisage holiday units, elevated as in the plan for Koondrook. This was also a recommendation in P of P. Can you imagine a restaurant there too?

As a volunteer at the Gateway to Gannawarra I am always delighted to hear our visitors speak so positively about their visit. One question which is often repeated "What river is that". Come and read the visitors book.

We have an opportunity to make Cohuna's Waterfront amazing.  
Think outside the box!

Sincerely,

Ann R H Lee.

Gannawarra Shire Council  
Re Waterfront Master Plan – COHUNA

21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2019

This is how your plan would affect me as an aging person in this community. During the summer months I attend Kaye Wilsons Aqua Classes at the Cohuna Swimming pool.

In the new plan I note that you only indicate a natural pool - not chlorinated or heated.

I use the heated exercise pool at Kerang when our pool is closed. Late last year I was told that the water of Kerang outdoor pool is also solar heated.

So Kerang gets 2 access points for warm water exercises & Cohuna gets NONE. How is this fair or with any consideration of the increasing aging community that we have here?

Retirees in Cohuna are a growth industry as well as your promotion of tourism.

Apart from how this affects me personally; I'm aware that if the Schools don't have access to a pool that meets Education Department health regulations, then all the children of the future wont be able learn water wise safety in their town.

Not everyone has a pool in his or her backyard.

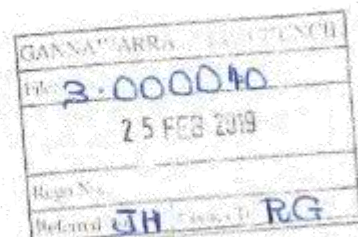
I also notice that a lot of the parking spaces have been eliminated.

I'm still trying to fathom why- perhaps due to few needing to park here because if they want to do water exercise they will be scrambling for parking spaces in the council car park at the heated pools in Kerang?

Regards

*Brenda M. Appleby*

Brenda Appleby  
61 Market Street  
Cohuna





19/2/19

Dr Peter barker

42 Lyons Rd

Cohuna

3568

Ph 0354562053

To the Gannawarra Shire Council

Comment on the Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplan Gunbower Creek precinct Cohuna

Thank you for requesting feedback on the masterplan as submitted

My comments are as follows firstly congratulations on having the foresight to have a plan for development this is a great basis for any future development

The area of the report I am commenting on is p91 to 108.

I agree with the strengths described well performing caravan park, strong destination for RV touring sites existing walking tracks a unique nature based setting and a committee of management maintaining the parks

. The weaknesses discussed limited accommodation, I will discuss later

The limited engagement with the creek through on water infrastructure like pontoons and jetties. I do not agree this is a weakness infrastructure upgrades are costly and need maintenance and insurance they add complexity to a simple environment may have an adverse effect on wildlife, cause safety issues if for example jet skis were introduced plus there may be adverse effects on water flow for the creek with a large structure lastly the creek is often reduced in height in the winter and the structure will not be usable in the winter

It is said that the main pedestrian access to the island is via island rd. and also at the weir. I do not see this as an issue there are walkways on both sides of the town bridge and access is quite simple.

No engine driven boats allowed past the caravan park and limited charter boat access. I think this is an asset not a weakness as the access to the water for canoes and swimmers in the town park is safe. Once power boats are allowed recreationally past the caravan park there are all types of

issues with navigation hazards with mud flats, disruption of the platypus and bird population and accident hazard. It is sensible to restrict the power boats to the designated ski run upstream

No leverage of the creek front through commercial opportunities. This may be considered a weakness but it is debatable. If there is free access to the creek front the unique waterfront attraction is maintained. Once a structure is placed on the creek front it breaks the continuity and nature feel. Any such structure will be not particularly attractive in the winter when the creek is down. I doubt anyone would build there unless they had good water views all year around. A more practical plan would be to provide a permit to build in the park at the current redeveloped toilet block where power and water has already be provided. Any structure placed there could have views to the skate park and the water front but not interfere with the water side access to the public. Being just set back it would be more accessible ( no road access needed ) and more attractive for year round access

I am unsure what is meant by an interface with the recreational reserve is a weakness. There is a very open interface which is easily accessible to the public

No waterfront dining opportunities I think this goes back to the point about a kiosk or café on the creek. My comment about this restricting community access and affecting the natural feel of the creek front hold. I think any café should be back from the water edge at the toilet block to have better year round access and not interfere with the natural environment

The location of the RV is in a prominent position and view from the town. This is an asset to the RV users. If it is considered detrimental to the vista a simple solution would be a creek side planting of native vegetation a simple and aesthetic option without affecting the feel of the creek front. Moving the RV from town centre will reduce its usage as the users say they love the closeness to facilities. You could survey on this if you disagreed

Limited way finding and interpretative signage. I agree this is something easily addressed. It may be a great opportunity to access North central Catchment Authority resources and local aboriginal resources to engage in signage about local wildlife, fish and history

Again the next two points mention quality dining and commercial events spaces I am a bit confused as to what is expected there. The commercial restaurants are in view of the creek and very close.

Facilities in apex park BBQs and shelters are put as a weakness. They appear to be well used assets I am unsure what is suggested as being wrong with them. There is a balance between not enough and too much development. Most people who want to BBQ in the park can there seems little

to gain from adding more park structures without crowding the layout and losing the natural feel of the park.

The local pool is mentioned as having infrastructure issues located adjacent to the creek. This is true but it answers quite a few of the previous concerns. Here is a structure on the waterfront with toilets, power and water and a unique vista overlooking the town weir with both footbridge and a road access. Development of the kiosk area into a restaurant with a view would allow development of a waterside dining and events space in the same way as such a development in the park would but without losing any of the natural environs and nature asset already present in the town park and apex park.

The pool at 33m length is sufficient for the very active swimming club and for fitness usage for locals. The parkside environs gives Cohuna a natural swimming area in the apex park and a safe swimming pool for visitor and local usage. Of course any kiosk development would face the same issue of development as the apex park proposed development - finding a private developer to partner with the shire but having infrastructure already present makes the whole process less costly and less disruptive.

Capacity issues at the ski run is an issue for short periods of time in January when the caravan park is full. There are alternate skiing areas and perhaps signage may help. It could be possible to police the area with a ranger and have a paid permit system for skiing. And a look at maximum boat numbers. In the future possibilities for clearing other areas of the creek exist but this again involves insurance risk and liability issues and may reduce rather than enhance the quality of the Creekside environment.

I will not discuss the opportunities outlined on P 100 but get to the recommendations on the masterplan of the Cohuna waterfront precinct.

On p102 and 103 there is a plan of changes working through these. The map on p 103 going down the L hand side of the map and coming up the R side.

1. long term reconfiguration of the recreation reserve and new multipurpose pavilion. This is a worthwhile aim and may enhance the pavilion use. It would obviously involve a number of organisations and need funding grants.

Potential new entry to the rec reserve. The current entry works well seems an unnecessary expense.



A new walking cycling track linked to the Gunbower state forest . The Saturday morning park run in the park utilises this area and may well have comments on the best way to do this

A future road expansion on the creek edge would be an expensive exercise the creek below the spillway is faced with high water flows it would mean destruction of the pool and kiosk has dubious access advantages and would encroach on the current netball courts and the recreation reserve . Sounds expensive with little function

Moving the RV site would remove the cricket practice nets remove parking and access to the oval and reduce achieve little in changing the vista from the street that could not be achieved by a simple plant screen

Accommodation development site at the current RV park . This would permanently destroy the natural park like environment we have on the creek side. It replaces the RV park with a permanent structure and would be a massive cost with loss of the natural environment. . if there is an issue with accommodation . there is an obvious solution . There is a town structure the local pub which I believe has become unsafe due to white ants.. It may well, be that looking a redevelopment of this asset commercially would solve the accommodation issue . I believe a consortium of local business people would be interested in such a project but this would need a regulatory input regarding the current structure and an environment where a development could be looked at

The potential 25 m swimming pool moved to near the road would be such a sad thing. A 25 m pool would mean the 100plus swim club members would no longer have an appropriate pool and community would have lost a wonderful asset. The issue of the pool needs addressing . A master plan for the pool to expand it to 50 m with a warm water pool accessible all year and a redeveloped kiosk/ resatrant health spa or gym would fit with the long term town development of providing a healthy environment to exercise in. The whole process would be multi million but you are planning for the future and having a pool master plan rather than losing it is appropriate. Personally I would be less inclined to have moved to Cohuna if there was a 25 m pool and loss of the pool would be a great disincentive to live here

Next on the L side was information centre development to incorporate a coffee shop. This is possible but would need permission from shop owners and would potentially impact on the coffee shop across the road

The nest plan a pedestrian river crossing seems superfluous when there is a pedestrian river crossing at the spill way and two walkways with the current road they are 150m apart . so further crossing would get little use and be a waste of funds

Create a crossing to the CBD and upgrade the clock. What does this mean . There is a crossing there already and clock seems appropriate . Perhaps there is a plan for a huge clock tower we

haven't seen? Seems again something you would put back to the service clubs and the progress association if there was an issue

Gateway entrance feature signage seems appropriate as part of a plan.

Skate park upgrade with a shade cover may be appropriate

Multipurpose ½ court basketball netball placed near skate park may be appropriate but is behind a hill and would need lighting and be a possible night time safety risk where planned. Perhaps that could be incorporated into a design extending the new toilet block with a kiosk

New formalised car park looks a horrible idea it is planned for both sides of the road and there is already off road parking some at apex park and some outside oval it looks costly , non functional and an eye sore without adding anything. There is a safety issue as the new plan abuts the road but presently when one parks one leaves the road with a L or Rt turn and is clear of through traffic. I don't think there has been enough thought and planning into this proposed change to parking

Proposal for sheltered BBQ . This is confusing as we have sheltered BBQs

Native garden and interactive landscape near the football ground. Any native garden and landscaping would be better Creekside as shielding for the RV park

Wharf area in garden park. Bad idea couldn't be used in the winter removes safety with swimming in the park obscures view and natural environment would need a road access and power and water to it better alternative sites set back at the toilets and or with redevelopment of swimming pool kiosk. Is actually on crown land and illegal to build within 20 m of any Victorian waterway the alternate site at the toilet block would fit the criteria

Upgrade new playground this is a debatable upgrade there is an excellent playground which is safe and functional

Canoe /kayak platforms interpretative trail that again may be a north central catchment authority / Cohuna progress association joint project.

A flying fox over the creek sounds expensive but perhaps a commercial operator could make it work it seems to be an unnecessary frill. As two towers would be needed and as it crossed water it may need a safety permit and lifesavers on site to be legal this would be cost prohibitive

Potential expansion of the caravan park to include more waterfront cabins this would be a caravan park management decision but again encroachment on to the apex park could be detrimental to the vista and natural feel of the park

In summary I am opposed to removal of the pool and replacing it with a non-functional small pool. This would significantly degrade current assets and liveability of Cohuna. Any permanent buildings at the site of the RV park would be disastrous. In town accommodation is possible if there was a rebuild of the apartments attached to the pub and the non safe areas of the pub were condemned to precipitate a pub corner plan with local developers and the owner in discussion

There is great potential to have a multifunction facility and restaurant at the pool kiosk site within the development of a pool master plan. The costing of this would be less than the costings of the accommodation complex, a new moved pool and new kiosk on the apex park and all the road works proposed in the master plan. If a further kiosk was needed then placing it back from the water at the toilet block and incorporating the basket ball area would achieve the aim of a facility without obstructing the creek or changing the environment or needing a new access road in the park

The RV park is an asset as it brings tourists but the view of it from the town is noticeable but easily dealt with a Creekside native garden appropriately planned

There seems not much to gain with moving roads and particularly putting a Creekside road through the pool site seems expensive and destructive. The proposed changing parking in the plan provided looks unsafe as current parking is off road and it does not increase capacity. A foot bridge placed in the park when there is a foot bridge 50m away seems silly.

Thank you for the chance to comment on the Gannawarra waterfront masterplan related to Cohuna. I will be more than interested to hear of the progress of this plan or to be involved with further planning of the pool complex

#### Waterfront Masterplan

The Friends of Treetops Committee [as appointed managers of Treetops Scout Camp] has discussed the plan as it applies to Treetops and makes the following points

Treetops is available for hire by canoeists hikers etc Groups often use Treetops as a base for water activities.

The committee is strongly opposed to the development of any creekside stop, eco shelter or similar structure within the Treetops precinct. Treetops is available for hire by anyone including families and school groups. The hire includes exclusive access to the fenced area including the bushland where children can safely roam. Any stop or shelter would require access which will compromise this safe area. A new road will also increase our problem with unauthorized camping

The area proposed for the stop is accessed via low ground and a small creek both of which flood when the creek is high. A causeway with a creek crossing would be required before construction of any facility could commence. The committee is opposed to another road within our bushland setting.

#### Alternative sites include

The area on the western creekbank upstream of Spences Bridge Rd There is room, easy access from Spences Bridge Rd and it is not under Parks Vic jurisdiction

The boat ramp at Spences Bridge The ramp is there and any extra facilities can be enjoyed by fishermen as well as canoeists

The area on the right immediately over Spences Bridge near the disused cattle yards This too has easy access

Friends of Treetops commends the Masterplan as it aims to improve access to and the amenity of the creek. We trust our suggestions will be helpful

Yours faithfully

George Drummond

Chairman

Friends of Treetops Committee



Dear Council,

We think the waterfront plan has lots of great elements.

Concerns include- access to Island Rd by milk tankers and timber trucks.

Suggested Additions include- contemporary Library at the Gateway along with the gallery, and kiosk.

My daughter would still like to jump in the creek from the big tree.

Kind regards

Mandy, Dom and Jemma

Sent from my iPad





**PART B: CONCEPT MASTERPLANS**

GANNAWAPRA SHIRE COUNCIL	
File: 3-000040	06 FEB 2019
Rego No:	Referred To: TH
Copies To: RG	



## 10. GUNBOWER CREEK PRECINCT, COHUNA

### 10.1. OVERVIEW

The Gunbower Creek precinct in Cohuna is located at the juncture of the commercial area of the town centre on the Murray Valley Highway and Gunbower Island. The key areas of the precinct include Garden Park, Apex Park and free RV Camping site. The precinct is generally bounded by the Cohuna Recreation Reserve in the north, the town centre in the south, the Cohuna Holiday Park in the north-east and the Murray Sound residential development site in the east.

The main street fronts the Gunbower Creek, providing striking visual amenity for the town centre. Cohuna has significant potential to grow its visitor economy and this precinct can play a key role in facilitating this growth.

A context map of Cohuna is provided on the following page.

10.1. GUNBOWER CREEK PRECINCT, COHUNA



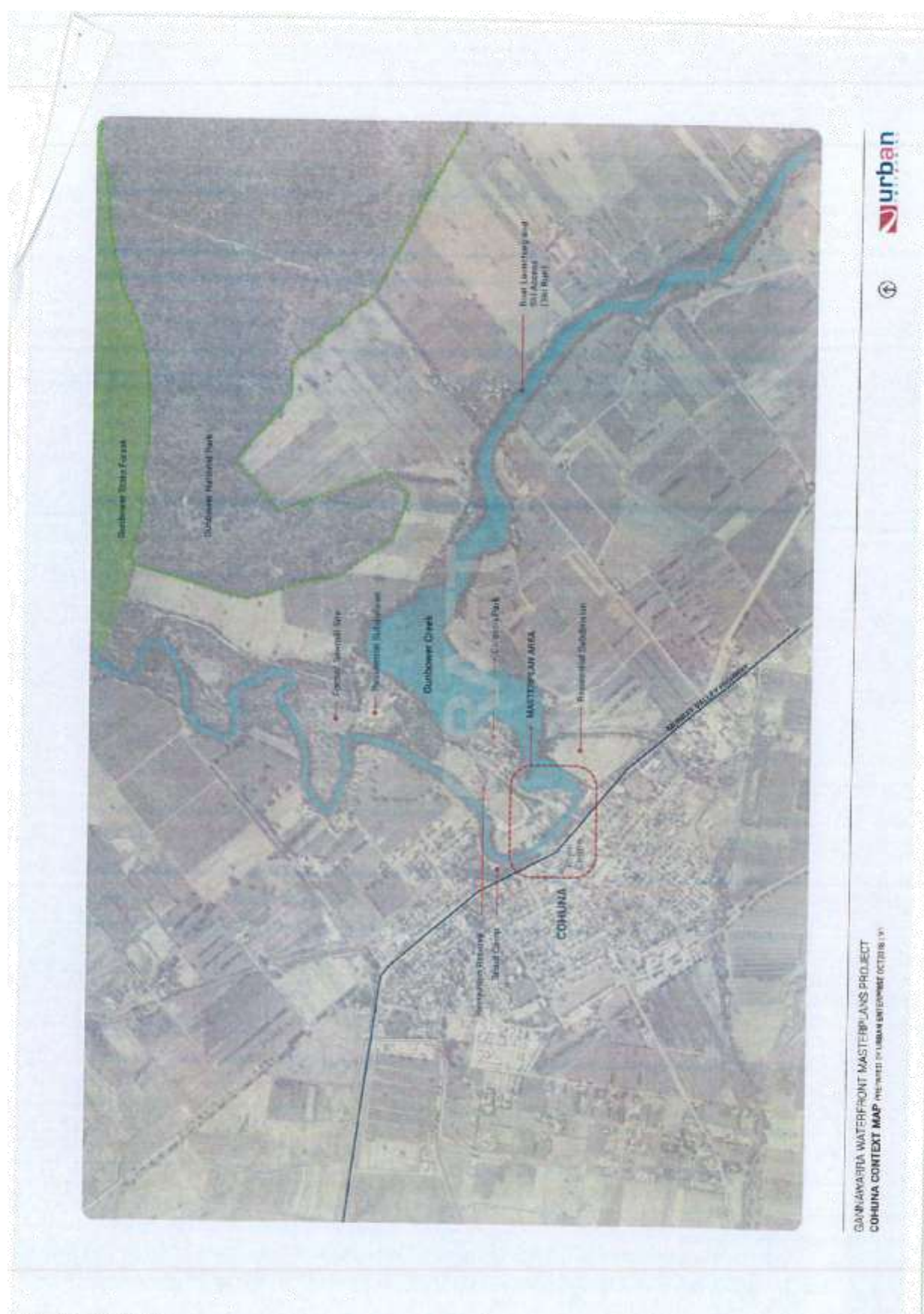




FIGURE 12 COHUNA ZONES MAP



## 10.2. PLANNING

The following provides a summary of the zones and overlays which apply to the Gurbower Creek Precinct at Cohuna.

### ZONES

The precinct is primarily subject to the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) within the Gurbower Island area. The commercial areas in town are zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). These areas are surrounded by land in the General Residential Zone (GRZ).

### OVERLAYS

The precinct is covered extensively by the Environmental Significance Overlay, including ESO1, ESO2 and ESO4. The residential development to the east of the precinct is also subject to a Development Plan Overlay (DPO).

### 10.3. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### OWNERSHIP

The majority of land in the precinct is Crown Land, particularly land north-east of the Murray Valley Highway covering the Gunbower Creek, parklands and recreation reserve.

Commercial and residential properties are in private ownership.

The Gateway to Gariwarra Visitor Centre is owned and run by Council staff.

#### MANAGEMENT

Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) own and manage the water assets relating to the Gunbower Creek in the Cohuna precinct. GMW have advised that they are actively looking at options to increase revenue from assets that they manage. For proposed uses on the waterway, GMW would need to determine whether the proposal would impact on the waterway. If there is a proposal to operate a business on the water, GMW would enter into a lease or licence agreement with the business.

Council is the committee of Management of land fronting the Gunbower Creek, including Garden Park, Apex Park and the Cohuna Recreation Reserve. Council works with Goulburn Murray Water and other departments in management of the waterfront.

DELWP manage land further north of the Recreation Reserve, including the former Sawmill Site, which is currently leased to a private operator but is not currently occupied.

*per discussion??*

### 10.4. EXISTING CONDITIONS

An existing conditions plan is provided on the following page and followed by descriptions.

**DRAFT**





### USES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Commercial Properties** – The precinct includes commercial properties located along the Murray Valley Highway. Commercial uses in this area include a supermarket, pub, tavern, café, banks, retailers and some restaurants.
- **Apex Park** – located on Gunbower Island, Apex Park includes open grassed areas, children's playground, skate park, BBQ areas, swings and walking path. This area has an impressive and extensive view across Gunbower Creek.
- **Free RV Camping Area** – This large area is located on Gunbower Island, between Apex Park and the Cohuna Recreation Reserve, fronting Gunbower Creek. It is currently utilised as an area for free RV parking. It has been used for free RV camping for approximately 18 months. It is steadily utilised throughout the year and is very popular in peak holiday periods.
- **Garden Park** – located between Gunbower Creek and the Murray Valley Highway, Garden Park includes native vegetation, seating, signage, the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre and sound shell. Garden Park is also utilised for events.
- **Cohuna the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre (Gateway Cohuna)** – Gateway Cohuna is located on the south side of Gunbower Creek. It is the official tourist information centre of Cohuna and is housed in a contemporary designed facility. The centre provides visitor information, hire of mountain bikes, fishing rods and has local produce for sale.
- **Walking Paths** – There are existing walking paths in the precinct, which loop as well as connect to tracks outside the precinct.
- **Gunbower Creek** – Gunbower Creek provides the water setting for the precinct, narrowing along the Murray Valley Highway frontage before opening to a large expanse of water to the east. The Gunbower Creek can dry out at certain times of the year, however, there are discussions of keeping the water level higher through the year.
- **Water Activities** – The area is popular for water activities including water skiing, kayaking, recreational boating and fishing.

### SURROUNDING USES AND LINKAGES

The precinct is surrounded or adjoins the following:

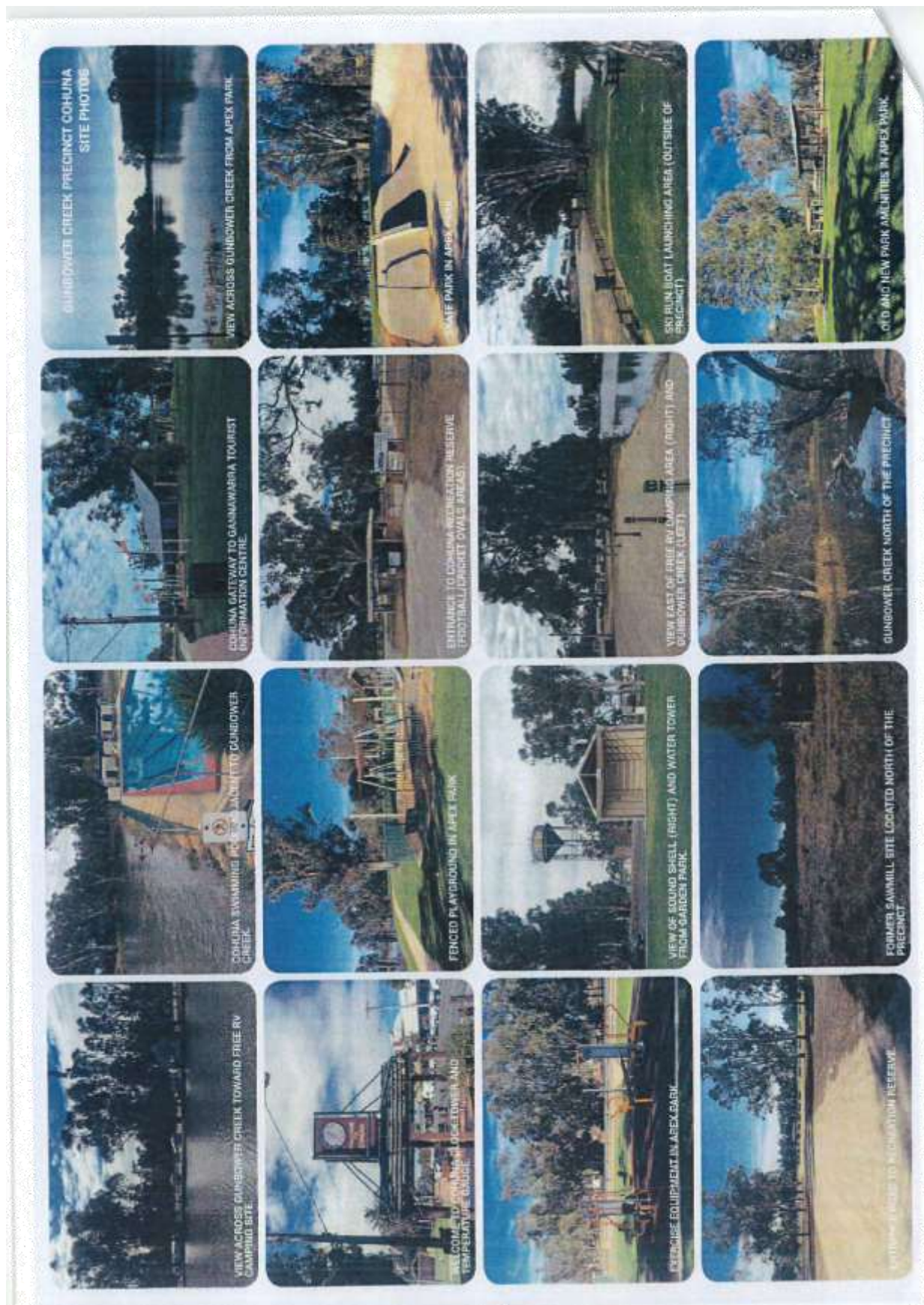
- **Cohuna Recreation Reserve** – Cohuna Recreation Reserve is located adjacent to the precinct. It includes two football/cricket ovals, bowls club, tennis club and swimming pool.
- **Cohuna Waterfront Holiday Park** – Cohuna Waterfront Holiday Park is located to the north-east of the precinct. The park includes a mix of cabins, annual sites, powered and unpowered sites. The park is well maintained. It includes a large number of annual sites, some powered sites and waterfront cabins.
- **Residential Development (East)** – There is a residential subdivision (Murray Sound) located to the east of Gunbower Creek with water frontage. The subdivision includes approximately 70 lots across the entire subdivision. There are currently 6 lots, which have been sold and houses either built or under construction.
- **Existing Residential** – The town centre is surrounded by existing residential areas.
- **Ski Run** – A boat launching area and skirun on the Gunbower Creek is located approximately 2.7 kilometres east of the precinct. This is the main boat launching area in vicinity of the precinct and is highly popular with skiers.
- **Tree Tops Camp Cohuna** – Tree Tops (Spences Bridge Road Cohuna) is located approximately 8.3 kilometres north-west of Cohuna on the Gunbower Creek and provides camping accommodation. It is strategically located between Cohuna and Koondrook. The camp includes a function space, which is regularly booked out for parties and functions.
- **Cohuna Golf Course** – Cohuna Golf Club is located approximately 3.8 kilometres north of the precinct. It is an 18-hole grass course.
- **Gunbower State Forest** – The Gunbower State Forest stretches from the north-west to the north east around Cohuna. It includes 4WD tracks, camping, fishing, swimming, boating and canoeing and scenic drives. Gunbower Forest Drive is a leisurely half day drive, starting at Cohuna, which links a number of historical, cultural and ecological sites.













### 10.5. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

The following provides a summary of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the waterfront precinct at Cohuna.

#### Strengths:

- Council is committee of management for the recreation reserve area, providing greater control over development outcomes.
- Unique nature-based setting of town, including creek and environs.
- Existing tourism information hub (Gateway to Gamawarra Tourism Information Centre).
- Well performing caravan park.
- Existing walking tracks and trails.
- Links to Gunbower State Forest and National Park.
- Existing tourism assets including Caravan Park, Ski-Run, Gunbower Creek boat tours, kayak hire (summer).
- Strong destination for RV touring visitors.

#### Weaknesses:

- Limited commercial accommodation (apart from Caravan Parks and free RV camping) that engages with the waterfront.
- Some ageing/dated accommodation stock.
- Limited engagement with creek through on water infrastructure including pontoons and jetties.
- Main pedestrian connection to Gunbower Island is via Cohuna Island Road, with secondary connection via weir.
- No engine driven boats allowed past Caravan Park. Tour and charter boats have a limited presence in town.
- No leveraging of creek frontage through commercial opportunities.
- Interface and relationship with Cohuna Recreation Reserve.
- No waterfront dining opportunities.

Big drawback  
Should be dealt  
with

Can't fall for a water park  
only for learn  
- must have pool for learn  
etc.

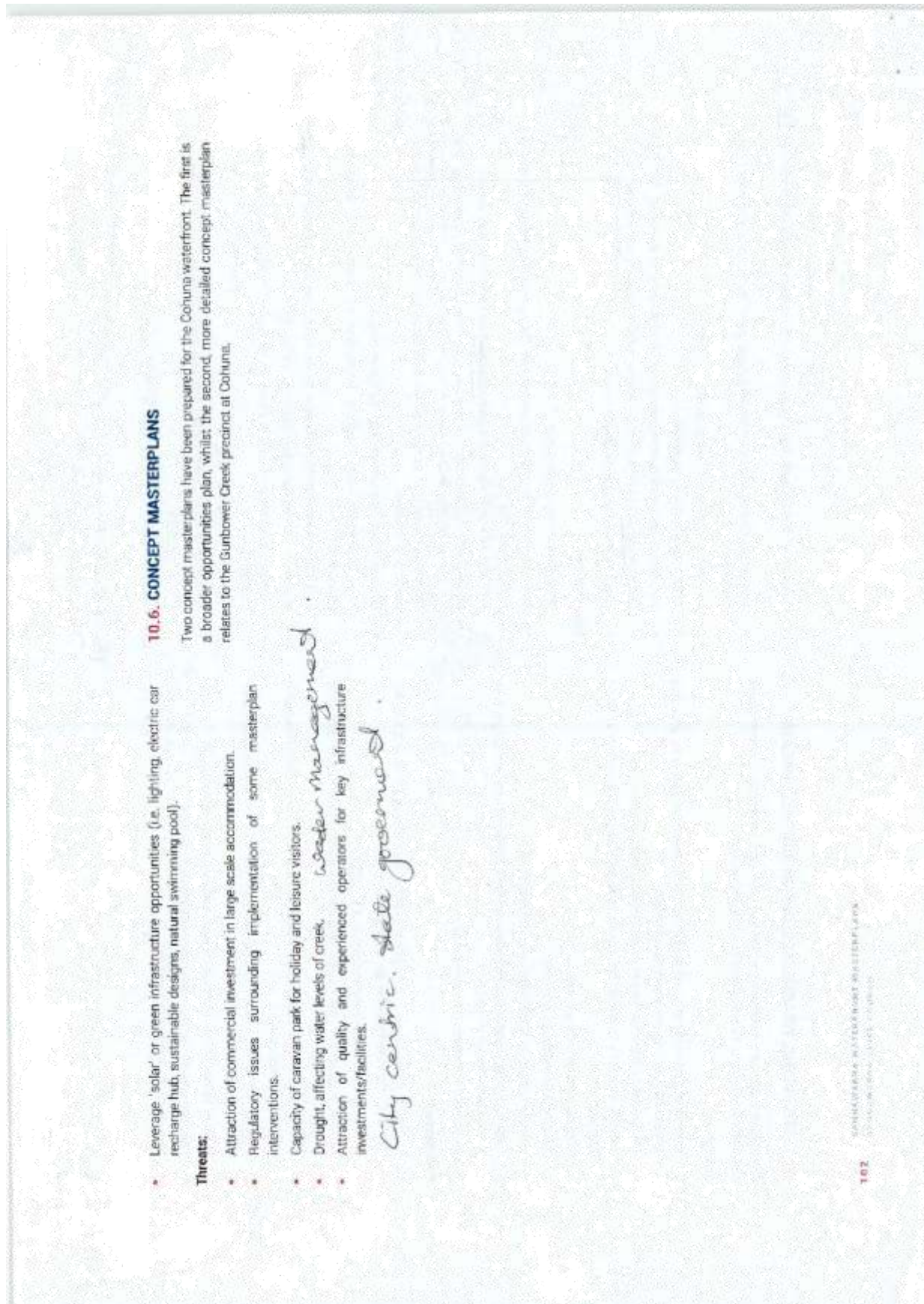
- Location of free RV camping site at prominent position of view line from town plus centre.
- Limited wayfinding and interpretive signage, particularly associated with walks from town.
- No private, commercial events space.
- Gaps in quality dining experiences.
- Facilities in Apex Park need improvement (BBQ Shelters, toilet block). Easy.
- Swimming pool has infrastructure issues, located adjacent to the Creek. !!!
- Capacity issues of current ski-run area.

#### Opportunities:

- Waterfront dining opportunities.
- New commercial accommodation on waterfront, exploring multiple potential sites and typologies.
- Potential for new replacement swimming pool for community and visitors.
- Linking and formalisation of tracks and trails, including wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Increasing capacity of existing ski-run or creation of a new ski-run to increase potential ski market.
- Gateway entrance treatments to Gunbower Island.
- New children/teenager activities (expansion of skate park, flying fox, playspaces).
- Hub for tours and operators (charter boats, kayak/canoe/paddleboat hire).
- New unique pedestrian creek crossing.
- Leverage nature based opportunities (star gazing, fishing, swimming, bird watching).
- Night time attractions.
- Relocation of RV camping site but maintain walking distance to Town.
- Accommodation.
- Linking and formalisation of walking tracks.

Food development in partnership with Govt & locals  
Discussed but never delivered













## 10.7. KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

### ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT

Cohuna has a lack of accommodation targeting some segments of the holiday/leisure market (lifestyle leaders) and business visitors. The waterfront presents the opportunity to develop unique waterfront accommodation that fills a gap in the provision of accommodation.

The concept masterplan makes provision for a site for commercial accommodation development on Council managed land. This would enable Council to control the development outcomes, ensuring a quality result for the waterfront and Cohuna.

Accommodation on this site could be eco-style self-contained accommodation, which maximises views of the Gunbower Creek to the south, east and west.

The former Sawmill site also presents as a potential opportunity for accommodation development. This is discussed further under the Sawmill site opportunity.

### SWIMMING POOL

There is opportunity to consider relocating the community swimming pool within the foreshore area. The foreshore location has a number of benefits, including attracting tourists to the foreshore area during the summer months, providing a safe swimming area and activating the precinct. A small kiosk/café could be included as part of the swimming pool redevelopment.

Relocation of the swimming pool would enable new connections to be developed to the north east, including new walking trails.

There is potential to explore the opportunity of development of the pool as a natural pool, which uses natural processes through a regeneration pond to clean the water with no chemicals being required. This precinct would provide a unique attraction for visitors as well as a required piece of community infrastructure to replace the existing pool. However, a natural pool is likely to occupy a larger area, which may limit other opportunities such as accommodation development. It is also likely that development of a natural pool would be a significant investment.

### NATIVE GARDEN AND INTERACTIVE LANDSCAPE

A native garden and interactive landscape area is proposed to be located between the potential accommodation site and the potential swimming pool site. This space is based on the location of existing native trees in the precinct. It also provides a natural connection between the precinct and maintains view lines from Apex Park through the precinct.

### WHARF AREA

The concept masterplan includes the potential opportunity to develop a small wharf area in Apex Park. A new wharf area could include a restaurant/café, function and events space, visitor amenities, boat tour point and passive waterfront (kayaks/canoe/paddle boards). The proposed location provides outstanding views north-east across Gunbower Creek and can be accessed via waterfront, which would facilitate a boat tour hub as well as hire of kayaks and canoes. This area would also be an ideal location for the servicing of events such as swimming events, kayaking/canoeing events and triathlons. Facilities such as permanent storage for boat hire operators and toilets would be required.

### RV CAMP SITE

The free RV camping area is an important asset to Cohuna and is a heavily utilised space.

The concept masterplan proposes to relocate the free RV camping area to the north, utilising land as part of the recreation reserve. This would provide a location for free RV visitors within walking distance of the town centre. A combination of plantings and timber screening could be used around the perimeter of this space to improve its appearance.

There may also be opportunity to utilise the current entrance building/kiosk at the recreation reserve as an entry point to the RV camping area.

*\* Partnering in streetscape  
stop front funding  
Veronica*



#### **FUTURE EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL AREAS / RECONFIGURATION OF RECREATION RESERVE**

The concept masterplan provides for the long term consideration of the relocation or reconfiguration of the recreation reserve (bowls/tennis) to enable future commercial development along the waterfront area. This would open up land for redevelopment, whilst providing new recreation facilities and infrastructure.

#### **CARAVAN PARK CABIN ACCOMMODATION EXPANSION**

The caravan park is a popular park and is at capacity during the peak holiday. There may be opportunity in the short term to deliver new high-quality cabin accommodation on the south end of the caravan park, fronting Gunbower Creek. This location provides excellent views across the Gunbower and would assist in providing a short term solution to the provision of additional accommodation.

#### **SAWMILL SITE ECO RESORT DEVELOPMENT**

As previously discussed, the former Sawmill Site, located 1.3km north-east of the precinct presents the opportunity for a strategic accommodation site. Cohuna currently has a significant accommodation gap. This site would enable the development of a unique resort accommodation offering in a nature-based setting close to the town centre. Different accommodation typologies could be established on this site and it has the potential to be staged. Linkages to the Sawmill site could also be improved including between the town, the State Forest and National Park.

It is likely that significant investment would be required to develop this site, including the attraction of a large operator. It is likely to be a longer-term strategic opportunity. Potential issues relating to planning, existing leaseholds and management would need to be resolved in order to facilitate development of this site.

#### **EXTERNAL LINKS**

There is opportunity for Cohuna to better link to external tourism product and experiences including the Gunbower State Forest and further afield to Koondrook. Cohuna could be strengthened as a hub by improving the connections to the

Gunbower State Forest including new linking walking and cycling paths, kayak, canoe and horse trails.

There is also opportunity for the precinct to act as a hub for trail visitors, including through the provision of appropriate infrastructure (trail heads, facilities hire, parking facilities, signage, accommodation).

Tree Tops Camp provides a midway stopping point between Cohuna and Koondrook for walkers, kayakers or cyclists. This location could include visitor eco hut accommodation and camping sites for adventure trail visitors.

Supporting Cohuna as a hub for trail visitors will assist in the potential to attract adventure sports events between Cohuna and Koondrook.

#### **KAYAK/CANOE TRAIL**

There is opportunity to enhance the kayak and canoe paddler experience on the Gunbower Creek through the introduction of on water interpretive signage and resting platforms. The on water interpretive signage could be small plaques located on tree stumps in the water. There is opportunity to explore the potential for on water resting pontoons, which could be anchored to tree stumps. These would provide a resting area and lunch spot for passive boat users. These interventions could be considered as part of canoe trails and tours, which link to Tree Tops Camp and further afield to Koondrook.

#### **RECREATION AND PLAY AREAS**

New and/or upgraded recreation spaces are proposed as part of the concept masterplan, including:

- Upgrades to the skate park, including a shade coverings and new features, as well as potential for a half-court basketball court.
- A new and/or upgraded quality playground adjacent to the wharf area.
- A new multipurpose court, which could be utilised for basketball and netball and also include a rebound wall.
- Beach Areas in Apex Park, including a sandy foreshore and temporary infrastructure such as bathing boxes.

#### GUNBOWER PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

A new creek crossing linking Gardens Park with the waterfront on the north side of the creek is proposed. This would enhance the connection of the CBD to the future accommodation development, swimming pool and RV camp site area. This could be developed as a unique design element, creating an attraction in its own right. The bridge could also incorporate contemporary lighting to activate the site at night.

There may be opportunity to incorporate the use of the bridge for events and dining into the bridge design.

#### SECOND SKI RUN

There is opportunity to increase the capacity of Cohuna to attract ski visitors, by increasing the capacity of the Gunbower Creek for skiing. The existing ski run is popular amongst skiers but is in high demand during the summer months. There is potential to implement a second ski run area beyond Daltons Bridge, which would alleviate capacity issues associated with the existing ski run. There is also opportunity to upgrade the amenity and infrastructure of the existing ski run to provide a more attractive and user-friendly space for existing and future users. There is a need to improve the safety of the creek in this area between power boats and passive boat users (kayakers/bananas). This could be achieved through the designation of paths or channels for passive boat users in high speed boat areas as well as the inclusion of signage to notify boat users that it is a shared zone.

#### OTHER

Other proposals as part of the concept plan include:

- New opportunities for the Gateway Centre, including potential for a small gallery
- New formalised car parking areas to service accommodation development, swimming pool and wharf area.
- Solar power car charging station as part of the Gateway Visitor Centre car park.
- New gateway entrance treatment and signage on Cohuna Island Bridge crossing.

- Flying fox across the Gunbower Creek to provide an activity for teenagers, this could be run as part of the caravan park.
- Improved walking paths and linkages throughout the precinct.
- New amenities and infrastructure as part of Apex Park.

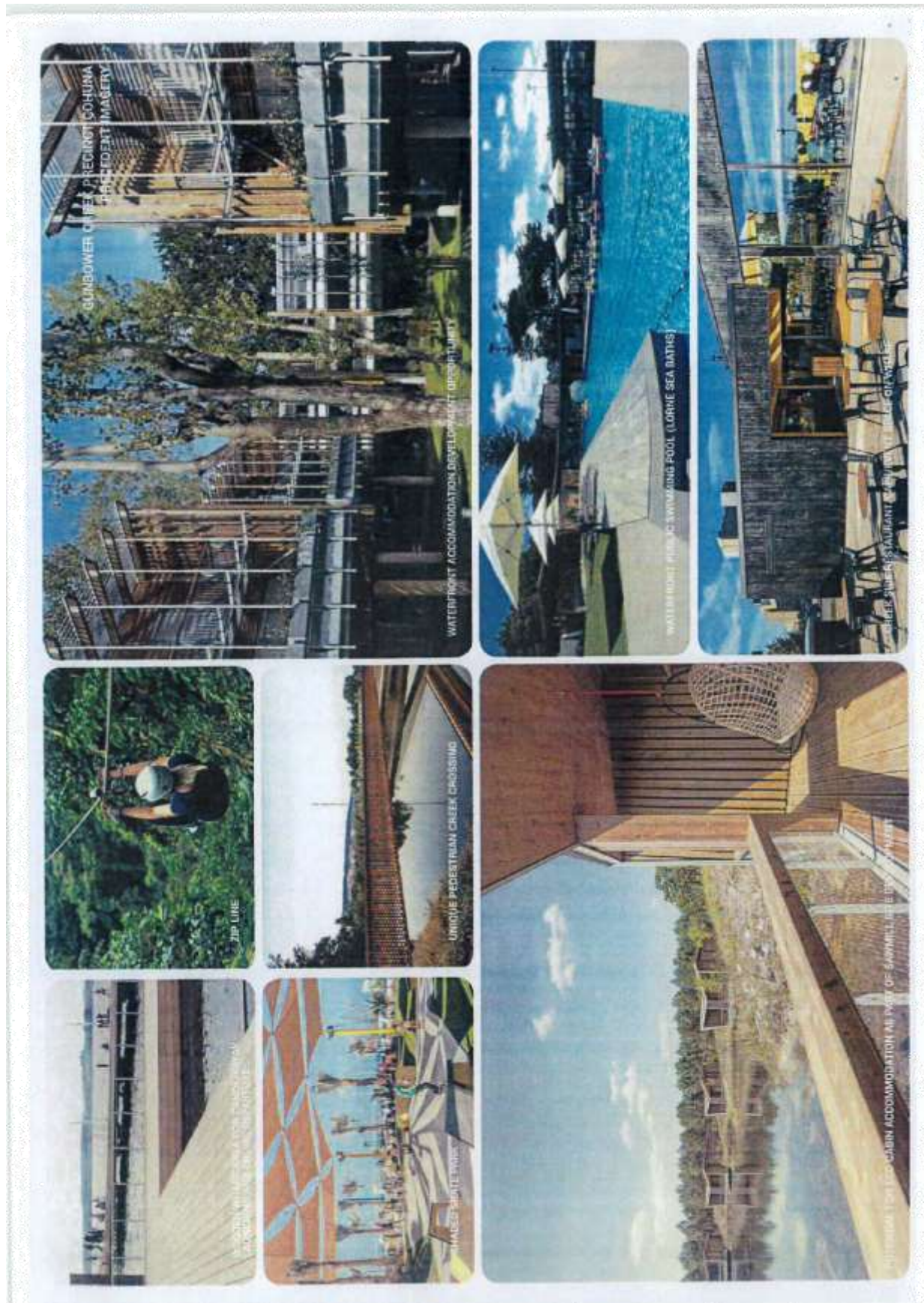
*Clock*

*New technology/lighting - foundation*

**AFT**

*Docking Station  
rechargeable.  
Bikes*







## 11.5. COHUNA

TABLE 20 COHUNA WATERFRONT PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority	Project Title	Overview	Location	Project Lead	Partners/Stakeholders	Actions
1	RV Camp Site	Relocation and development of Free RV camp site. Facilitates use of existing site for alternative purposes.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Gannawarra Shire	Scope works, prepare designs and costings
1	Accommodation Development	Development of waterfront accommodation to fill market gap.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Scoping/ Feasibility Study/ Detailed Masterplan Design
1	Swimming Pool	Relocation / development of new swimming pool	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Undertake/Update Feasibility Study, including location assessment and costings
1	Caravan Park Cabin Expansion	New high-quality cabin accommodation on the south end of Caravan Park.	Cohuna Waterfront	Caravan Park / Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Scope, prepare designs and costings
1	External Links	New linkages to Gumbower State Forest, and creation of hub in Koorndook for kayak canoe/walking/cycling trails. Potential connection to Tree Tops Camp and beyond to Koorndook.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Parks Vic.	Trail alignment design, scope required works, costings
1	Wharf Area	Wharf area in Apex Park including restaurant/cafe, function and events space, visitor amenities, kayak/canoe hire (potential to deliver as smaller scale/scope project in shorter term).	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water, Coliban Water	Feasibility Study / Designs and Costings.
1	Native Garden and Interactive Landscape	Development of native garden and interactive/sensory landscape on waterfront.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Landscape design/costings (included as part of detailed Masterplan).
2	Kayak/Canoe Trail	On water interpretation as part of a kayak trail along the Gumbower Creek, utilising Cohuna as a starting point.	Gumbower Creek	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water, Parks Vic.	Feasibility Study
2	Second Ski Run	Second ski run area beyond Dillons Bridge, which would alleviate capacity issues associated with the existing ski run.	Cohuna / Gumbower Creek	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Feasibility Study
2	Gumbower Pedestrian Crossing	New river crossing linking Garden Park with the waterfront on the north side of the Creek.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water, Coliban Water	Prepare designs and costings
3	Sawmill Site Development (Accommodation / Eco-Resort)	Development of Sawmill site for eco-resort.	Cohuna	Private Owner in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire and DELWP		Feasibility Study / Masterplan
3	Recreation / Play Areas	Recreation and play improvements (skate park, playgrounds, multipurpose courts).	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire		Prepare designs and costings

Re - Cohuna Masterplan

The overall plan for future development looks mostly positive.

However I am concerned with the swimming Pool complex plan. Whilst I am pleased to see that the swimming pool is on the priority 1 list it is very disappointing to see that a smaller pool is being considered. Our pool complex currently consists of a toddler pool, a learners pool and a 33m senior pool.

The proposed plan shows a 25 m pool and a splash pool there is no mention of our slide or a learners pool !

The school swimming sports are being run now for both primary and secondary students, the best swimmers go to compete against other schools in the finals where the pools are always 50 m why are Council planning a smaller pool than we currently have our students are already disadvantaged.

After waiting for so long for a new pool I would hope that Council gets it right.

On a positive note I agree with a natural pool.

Also the parking area seems to be too small considering that it is catering for the pool the skatepark, the new wharf area , park playground and through traffic to the Sporting grounds and new accommodation etc.

Perhaps the area set aside for Native garden and interactive landscape space should be parking if we are to encourage more people to use these areas. Not all users will be in walking distance.

I look forward to your response

Yours sincerely

Leah Easton



GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL	
File:	3-000040
05 FEB 2019	
Rego No.	
Referred To:	USH
Copies To:	BG

1 McLennan Street,  
COHUNA 3568

31<sup>st</sup> January 2019

The Chief Executive Officer,  
Gannawarra Shire Council,  
P.O. BOX 287,  
KERANG 3579

Dear Sir,

Re: Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplan

I wish to make comment with regard to the proposed Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplan, in particular with reference to the inclusion of the Tree Tops Scout Camp in your plan.

Tree Tops is a unique area within the Gunbower State Forest privately leased from DSE by the Scout Association of Victoria and administered and maintained by a group of volunteers, on behalf of Scouts Victoria, under the banner of Friends of Tree Tops.

As such Tree Tops is not an area which can be considered to be part of the Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplan. It is not open to be used by the general public.

I was involved in the initial discussions and negotiations with the Government departments when the State Forest was proclaimed a National Park. Tree Tops and the immediate surrounds were made exempt from the National Park status only by our persistent persuasion and with lease conditions imposed. It is regarded as an educational precinct and we, Scouts Victoria and the Friends of Tree Tops management committee, have been given the authority to control its use under the guidance and management of the DSE. We have a good working relationship with this department.

When groups of Scouts, Guides, school groups or family groups hire Tree Tops they also hire the surrounding area and therefore expect that it is for their exclusive use for the period of their hire. They do not expect that the general public can come into the area.

May I make a suggestion of an area which could be considered for the forest pickup, drop off area? I suggest the boat ramp and campfire site just to the left over Spencers Bridge, or the area at the end of the road which runs into the creek just short of Spencers Bridge. Both these sites would be accessible on an all-weather road. There are also many other camp fire sites along the creek within the forest that could be suitable.

Yours faithfully,



Shirley Costello

Friends of Tree Tops

CEO and Councillors

Gannawarra Shire Council

I wish to provide some feedback on the draft waterfront masterplans.

#### **KERANG**

A significant failing of the draft is that there is no masterplan for Kerang. Kerang has a waterfront which has been gradually developed over many decades and is worthy of further development.

The Kerang waterfront includes the **Kerang Regional Park** which extends from the Murray Valley Highway along the Loddon River to Kerang Weir and along the Pyramid Creek past the Murrabit Road. This area includes The Town and Back Swamps and Town Common (currently referred to as Town Swamp).

The waterfront also extends south of the Murray Valley Highway past the Kerang Caravan Park.

The areas along the Loddon have been developed over many decades with some walking tracks and footbridges. The area adjacent to Kerang is used daily by many residents and visitors for walking, jogging and birdwatching. It also contains at least two canoe trails which are used.

The area has significant tourism potential but is underutilised by tourists because of:

- a lack of directional and information signage around Kerang
- features in the area are not shown or well presented on tourist brochures
- a lack of walking and bicycle tracks to allow access to the majority of the Kerang Regional Park

#### **KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW**

1. Upgrading and extension of existing walking tracks. Some tracks also need better directional signs.
2. There is potential for the construction of additional walking tracks. This would enhance user's experience of the area. The walking tracks would provide connectivity with Kerang Township, the Caravan Park and Atkinson Park.
3. Construction of a bicycle track from the swing bridge along the Loddon River, Washpen Creek, Reedy and Middle Lakes, No 7 channel and Scott's Creek to Lake Charm. This track could be an adventure style bicycle track, mainly off road. This would provide additional connectivity between Kerang and Lake Charms waterfronts.
4. Construction of a Bird hide adjacent to the levee bank.
5. Installation of roosting logs for water birds in the town swamp wetland.
6. Establishment of a Park run.
7. Construction of a Fishing and canoe launching platform. I understand that this may be under consideration by Council and others.
8. Development and marketing of canoe trails. For example the loop trail through the town swamp wetland and Loddon river is not shown on tourist pamphlets.

#### **RELATION TO COUNCIL PLANS**

The proposed waterfront plan for Kerang as outlined in this letter, fits with THE SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN and with the SHIRE STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN by increasing accessibility to our waterways through the introduction of new infrastructure

It also fits with the aims of the draft Council WATERFRONT MASTERPLAN and therefore should be included in that masterplan.

Regards  
David Thompson  
60 Murray Street  
Kerang 3579  
Ph: 0448 041 399





## **GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS**

**FINAL REPORT | GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL | MARCH 2019**

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**Urban Enterprise** Planning / Economics / Tourism / [www.urbanenterprise.com.au](http://www.urbanenterprise.com.au)



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**VERSION:** FINAL

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Urban Enterprise would like to gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by Gannawarra Shire Council managers and staff as well as stakeholders and members of the community who provided invaluable input to the preparation of this Draft Report.

## READING NOTE

The Masterplan is not a “detailed design”, but is a document that sets out how a particular area can develop and redevelop into the future. It is a high level plan intended to set out objectives and strategies to manage development and change over time and is a process that defines what is important about a place and how its character and quality can be conserved, improved and enhanced.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. BACKGROUND

Gannawarra Shire Council is seeking to better utilise the natural environment of the Kerang Lakes (Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm), Murray River precinct at Koondrook and the Gunbower Creek precinct in Cohuna to maximise their tourism, recreation, commercial and residential opportunities. These precincts are collectively referred to in this report as the waterfront precincts.

Gannawarra Shire Council engaged urban planning, tourism and economic consultancy Urban Enterprise in 2018 to prepare concept masterplans for these precincts to guide their future development.

Gannawarra Shire is located approximately 220km north west of Melbourne CBD (approximately 3-hours' drive), on the NSW and Victoria border. Its primary towns include Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The Murray River is located on the northern border of the Shire, together with the Gunbower Creek, this area provides a significant forest and national park environment.

Gannawarra Shire is abundant in rivers, lakes, wetlands and forests. Popular tourist activities include water skiing, camping, fishing, boating and other nature-based activities.



### 1.2. THE WATERFRONT PRECINCTS

The waterfront precinct study areas include Kerang Lakes (Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm), the Murray River Precinct at Koondrook and the Gunbower Creek Precinct in Cohuna.

#### KERANG LAKES

**Kangaroo Lake** - Kangaroo Lake is one of the largest permanent freshwater lakes, supplied by the Torrumbarry Irrigation System. It lies on the western side of the Murray Valley Highway between Swan Hill and Kerang. The lake is managed by Goulburn-Murray Water.

Kangaroo Lake is a popular destination for power boating, water-skiing, fishing, swimming and general recreational activities.

The Lake is generally surrounded by farming land, with some residential properties fronting the lake, these are primarily located on the south-west side of the Lake.

The Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park provides the only formal accommodation adjacent to the Lake, located at the juncture of the Murray Valley Highway and Mystic Park East Road.

Kangaroo Lake has hosted a number of events for Ski Racing Victoria.

**Lake Charm** - Lake Charm is one of a group of natural lakes north of Kerang. Lake Charm is a part of the Victorian Mid Murray Storage system and is managed by Goulburn Murray Water.

Lake Charm has links to the indigenous community. The Lake takes its name from a former local indigenous tribal chief named Chief Cham.



Lake Charm is a popular destination for water-based activities including water-skiing, swimming, recreational boating and powerboating and fishing. It is the main lake for Ski-Racing Victoria, hosting four events a year.

Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm are part of the Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site. The wetlands system consists of 23 marshes, lakes and swamps. The Ramsar site contains black box, river red gum and tangled lignum vegetation communities and is an important breeding ground for a diverse range of waterbird species, and a habitat for indigenous flora and other native fauna species.<sup>1</sup>

The wetlands system is generally surrounded by rural agriculture, including cattle, sheep grazing, irrigated crops and pasture, vineyards and orchards.

### MURRAY RIVER PRECINCT, KOONDROOK

The Murray River Precinct is located on the north-eastern edge of Koondrook, bordering the Murray River and intersecting with the Gunbower Creek. The precinct stretches from the Arbutnot River Redgum Sawmill in the north to the proposed nature-based tourism hub on the Gunbower Creek in the south-east. The retail centre of Koondrook abuts the precinct.

The precinct is currently used for recreation, fishing, boating, camping, hospitality, tourism and commercial uses.

Council has undertaken significant work in Koondrook to develop the town as a tourism destination, which will also support new commercial and residential investment.

Recent projects include the Koondrook Wharf development, which opened in late 2016 and the proposed Nature Based Tourism hub and Gunbower Creek pedestrian crossing.

### GUNBOWER CREEK PRECINCT, COHUNA

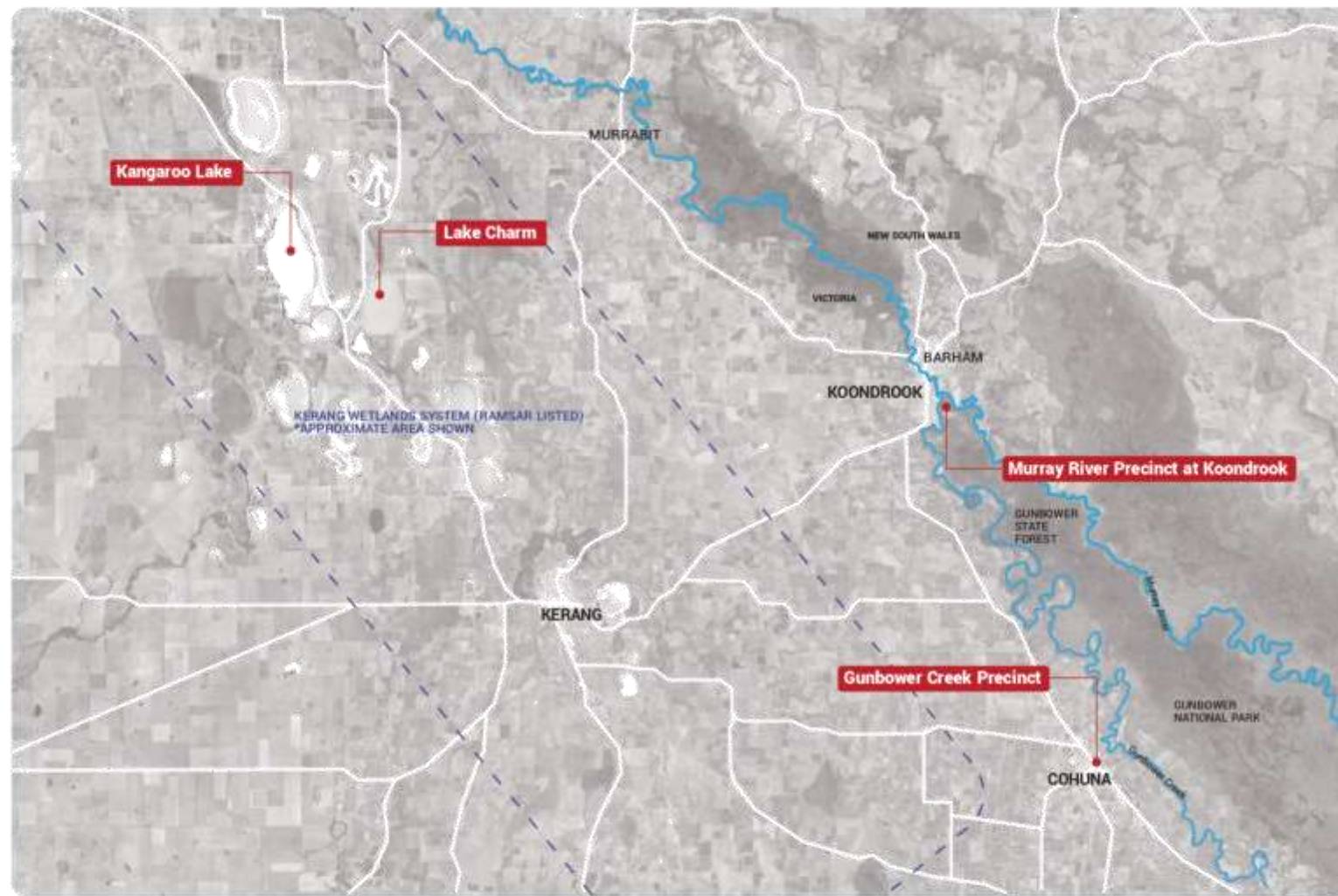
Located on the Gunbower Creek, Cohuna is a town with significant potential for increased tourism. The main street fronts the Gunbower Creek providing striking visual amenity.

Council is the committee of management for the Cohuna Recreation Reserve. The precinct has direct linkages to the Gunbower State Forest and National Park.

The precinct has significant potential to be utilised more highly for tourism, recreation and commercial purposes, including improving linkages to the town centre and tourism product outside the precinct including accommodation, trails and water skiing.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kerang Wetlands Ramsar Site Ecological Character Description 2011



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
SITES CONTEXT MAP PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT 2018 (V3)



### 1.3. AIMS OF THE WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS

A number of aims were identified at the beginning of the project and identified in the project brief, these included:

- To provide suitable infrastructure that will support a variety of tourism, recreation, lifestyle and commercial pursuits.
- Assist in determining the issues in developing infrastructure around the waterfront locations.
- Provide the basis for securing funding to construct a range of infrastructure related projects.

### 1.4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The concept masterplans prepared through this project will aim to identify projects that will lead to strong economic development outcomes for Gannawarra Shire.

The overarching objectives for the waterfront masterplans include:

- Increase visitation and visitor expenditure;
- Attract and appeal to new visitor markets;
- Attract private and public-sector investment;
- Increase and improve access and connections;
- Improve the built environment and support the natural environment;
- Attract business investment;
- Improve liveability and **employment opportunities for residents and;**
- Develop themes and a consistent brand.

The masterplans will seek to identify projects that have the greatest potential to drive realisation of the above outcomes. Given the project investigates four precincts with different contexts, characteristics, attractions and visitor markets, each precinct masterplan will respond to the above objectives in a unique way.

### 1.5. PROCESS

The preparation of this masterplan has involved the process as outlined below:

- **Phase 1: Consultation Stage 1:**
  - One on one meetings with community;
  - Workshop with Council;
  - Meetings with stakeholders;
  - Councillor presentation and workshop;
- **Phase 2: Background Work and Analysis**
  - Technical analysis including background research and analysis;
- **Phase 3: Consultation Stage 2**
  - Group meetings and community drop in sessions.
  - Further detailed site visits.
- **Phase 4: Background and Concept Plan Discussion Paper**
  - A Background and Concept Discussion Paper was prepared, which included background analysis and high-level concept plans to incite discussion. The report was consulted by Council with community members and interested parties relating to at each masterplan area and feedback was provided to Urban Enterprise.
- **Phase 5: Draft Masterplan Report**
  - The Draft Masterplan report has been prepared based on feedback of the Concept Plan Discussion Paper. A final masterplan report will be prepared based on feedback and consultation of the draft.
- **Phase 6: Final Masterplan Report (This Report)**



### 1.6. CONSULTATION

Consultation with the community and stakeholders is a key component in developing the masterplans for the waterfront precincts. The project has involved an extensive community consultation process to date. Community consultation to date has included:

- **One on one and group meetings on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of March at Kangaroo Lake, Lake Charm, Cohuna and Koondrook** – These sessions were used as an opportunity to gain a preliminary understanding of the precinct and the issues and opportunities relevant to each waterfront precinct. Consultation on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> also included one on one meetings and workshops with site users, businesses, community groups, Council and Councillors and other government agency stakeholders (Parks Victoria, Goulburn Murray Water).
- **Community drop in sessions held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of May in Cohuna (Gateway Cohuna), Koondrook (Mates Royal Hotel) and at the Kerang Lakes (Lake Charm Hall)** – These sessions were used as an opportunity to discuss the opportunities for the sites, workshop ideas for each of the waterfront precincts and prioritise opportunities.
- **Community progress group meetings held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of May in Cohuna (Gateway Cohuna), Koondrook (Mates Royal Hotel) and Kerang Lakes (Lake Charm Hall)** – These sessions were used as an opportunity to discuss the opportunities for the sites, workshop ideas for each of the waterfront precincts and prioritise opportunities.

It is estimated that approximately 100 people have been involved with the consultation process to date, including from the community, Council and government.

Consultation to date has formed an invaluable component of the study. Many exciting ideas were contributed to the project either in person, by written submission, over the phone or a combination of all of the above. The opportunities identified for each of the waterfront precincts are largely a result of ideas contributed through the consultation process.



## PART A: BACKGROUND

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## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides a review of relevant strategic planning and policy documents to assist in the preparation of the Masterplans.

### 2.2. STATE GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

#### VICTORIA'S 2020 TOURISM STRATEGY, 2013- 2016

The tourism industry is recognised as an important economic driver for Victoria, contributing an estimated \$19.1 billion to the economy and generating employment of more than 200,000 people (including both direct and indirect impacts). Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy provides a clear vision about how the tourism industry can increase its economic and social contribution to the State.

The Strategy is underpinned by the following:

- Increasing our focus on growth markets such as China in the short to medium term, and India, Malaysia and Indonesia in the medium to long term;
- Building stronger collaboration between the Victorian Government and the regions to ensure State wide priorities are met, whilst actively supporting the regional tourism industry to address local issues;
- Increasing the tourism benefit of major business events; and
- Identifying and realising key tourism investments.

#### VICTORIAN VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY, 2016

The Victorian visitor economy has been growing strongly in comparison to New South Wales and Queensland since 2010. The *Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy* (2016), prepared by the Victorian State Government highlights the key to this success

is the diversity in product on offer in Victoria and recognises the need to strengthen this diversity.

The Strategy provides an ambitious goal to grow tourism expenditure across the State by 2024/2025 to \$36.5 billion and a strong focus to achieve this is by increasing visitor nights and encouraging international guests to explore regional Victoria.

Relevant areas to this project for which the Strategy aims to support growth includes:

- Facilitating investment in tourism product and services;
- A focus on regional Victoria across all activities;
- A wider calendar of events that encourages visitor dispersal across Victoria;
- Visitor experiences tailored to the preferences of visitors from Asia;
- Investing in key public infrastructure and roads.

#### PROTECTING VICTORIA'S ENVIRONMENT – BIODIVERSITY 2037

The Plan recognises that while Victoria's nature-based tourism industry is thriving and should be further promoted, it is also highly vulnerable to the future impacts of biodiversity loss. Tourism needs to be managed to ensure that sensitive areas do not receive too many visitors, and that such areas are well managed and resilient.

#### VICTORIA'S ABORIGINAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Victoria's *Aboriginal Tourism Development Strategy 2013-23* identifies that there is a high demand for Aboriginal experiences, significant amongst international markets, particularly Western Hemisphere markets such as the United Kingdom and Europe. Aboriginal tourism is seen as a motivator for travel to Australia for these visitors. The vision is that regional Victoria will boast a growing Aboriginal tourism industry that showcases Victoria's unique Aboriginal history, cultural expression and diversity to a global audience. Visitors are seeking experiences that are positive and that highlight the unique aspects of the culture.



## 2.3. REGIONAL PLANS

### MURRAY REGION TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018

The *Murray Region Destination Management Plan* (DMP) provides a strategic approach to prioritising key tourism experiences and product development in the Murray Region. This project is identified as a priority project in the Murray DMP.

Development themes include:

<b>Theme 1: The River</b> - Promote and develop the river as the unique and essential element of the region's tourism offer, including passive, active and social uses of the river and its banks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riverfront precinct and parklands enhancements and commercial activation.</li> <li>• Boat ramps, wharves and jetties.</li> <li>• Water-based tour operators.</li> <li>• Other water-based experiences.</li> <li>• Interpretation of the Murray River.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2: Nature Based</b> - Ensure that nature-based assets deliver high quality activities and experiences through improvements to infrastructure and the development of innovative tourism products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in parks infrastructure that support nature-based tourism such as roads, picnic areas, camping sites, toilets.</li> <li>• Investment in walking and cycling trails.</li> <li>• Cultural heritage interpretation.</li> <li>• Educational tours and operators.</li> <li>• Eco and adventure tour operators.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3: Sport and Recreation</b> - Strengthen and increase the prominence of sport and recreation tourism in the Murray through facility renewal and attraction of new investment in infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in supporting golfing infrastructure such as club houses, food and beverage, and accommodation.</li> <li>• Investment in sports and recreation facilities and infrastructure.</li> <li>• Investment in sports clubs.</li> <li>• Capacity building in event managers to host/run major competitions.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 4: Food, Drink and Agribusiness</b> - Improve the Murray's food and drink offer by encouraging primary producers to develop tourism infrastructure, promoting the use of local produce and the development of diverse and unique dining experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in craft beverage (Cideries, Breweries, Distilleries).</li> <li>• Winery cellar doors and tourism facilities.</li> <li>• Destination dining businesses.</li> <li>• Quality food establishments focusing on local produce.</li> <li>• Agritourism, farm gate, and taste trails.</li> <li>• New food and wine events.</li> <li>• Capacity and workforce building in the hospitality sector.</li> </ul>

<b>Theme 5: Arts, Heritage and Culture</b> - Provide unique Murray heritage experiences through improvement and modernisation of existing heritage icons and strengthening heritage interpretation linked to Indigenous, military history, immigration, river trade and transport, pioneers and irrigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in heritage assets and improved interpretation.</li> <li>• Repurposing heritage buildings and heritage sites for tourism use.</li> <li>• Digital interpretation of heritage.</li> <li>• Investment and expansion of art galleries.</li> <li>• Investment and expansion of performance facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 6: Festivals, Events and Conferences</b> - Promote an increase in year-round visitation to the Murray through event facility investment and coordinated development and promotion of a series of events and conferences linked to the Murray's tourism strengths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events and festival infrastructure.</li> <li>• Business event venues.</li> <li>• Marketing of business events in the region.</li> <li>• Visitor accommodation targeting the business events market.</li> <li>• Development of new events and festivals, particularly outside of peak periods.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 7: Accommodation</b> - To diversify the accommodation base in the Murray Region to appeal to a range of target visitor segments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinvestment and repositioning motel accommodation to contemporary market need.</li> <li>• Reinvestment in tourist parks to cater for family markets, e.g. self-contained cabins, family facilities etc.</li> <li>• Infrastructure to ensure the ongoing sustainability of camping sites.</li> <li>• Investment in interesting and motivational accommodation such as eco-tourism and wellness accommodation.</li> <li>• Investment in large branded resorts and facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 8: Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing</b> - Ensure that the Murray provides critical infrastructure to maintain and strengthen accessibility for visitors to the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airport investment and upgrades to meet future demand.</li> <li>• Road and highway investment such as lane widening, turning lanes, access roads etc. (e.g. Murray Valley Highway).</li> <li>• Consistent signage.</li> <li>• Improved telecommunications infrastructure and addressing regional blackspots.</li> <li>• Digital infrastructure (e.g. Wi-Fi availability).</li> <li>• Township gateway improvement.</li> <li>• Township streetscape improvements.</li> <li>• Improved visitor information services.</li> </ul>

Source: Murray Region DMP

### 2.4. COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

#### GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021 (2017)

The Council Plan identifies key areas of focus for Gannawarra Shire as expressed by the Community. Waterfront development is specifically identified as a priority area for the Kerang Lakes and Cohuna, whilst riverfront development is identified as a priority for Koondrook.

Key relevant areas of focus relevant to this project include:

- Economic Diversity, Growth and Prosperity:
  - Strategy 2: Utilise the environs of the rivers, lakes and forests for development opportunities.
  - Strategy 3: Encourage accommodation options suited to a variety of target markets.
  - Strategy 6: Support the local tourism industry to provide high quality visitor experiences.
  - Strategy 7: Maximise the natural environment to deliver high quality visitor and community expectations.
- Sustainable Natural and Built Environment:
  - Strategy 3: Promote, conserve and celebrate our community's rich and diverse heritage and culture.
- Strong, Healthy Communities:
  - Strategy 2: Provide a range of opportunities that promote active and healthy lifestyles and social connectedness.

#### GANNAWARRA SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2011-2015 (2011)

The Gannawarra Shire Economic Development Strategy (EDS) is the most up to date EDS for the shire. The development of tourism product and infrastructure is noted as a key strategic direction to promote economic growth in the Shire.

#### GANNAWARRA 2025 (2010)

Gannawarra 2025 was prepared as a guiding document outlining the strategic community plan for the Gannawarra Shire to 2025. Key relevant strategic platforms include to revitalise towns into vibrant places and foster economic prosperity through diversity.

#### COHUNA VISION

The Cohuna Vision Plan lists a number of projects for the study area of the Gunbower Creek precinct in Cohuna. Projects include:

- Flora Park – a nature park attraction inspired by the Gunbower red gum forest.
- Garden Park – 'Cohuna's showroom' – a place for visitors, events, performances and activities.
- The Gateway Centre – a tourist information centre as well as a place for seminars, classes and meetings.
- Creekside Linger Nodes – New features including boardwalks, bird hides and other spaces, creek side lounges.
- Interim Recreation Vehicle (RV) Parking – An interim site for RV parking which has been implemented.
- Streetscape – Streetscape improvements including improved pedestrian access, places to sit, plantings and external merchandise.
- Crossings – Crossings on the Murray Valley Highway will be reviewed and designed to ensure safe passage for pedestrians, cyclists, 'gopher' drivers and drivers.

The Cohuna Vision is included in Appendix A.

#### CREATIVE ARTS AND ACTIVATION STRATEGY 2016-2020

The *Gannawarra Creative Arts and Activation Strategy* reflects Council's commitment to regional growth and economic development and the recognition that creative arts and activity promote innovation, entrepreneurship and attract new business, residents and visitors. Amongst the strategies to promote arts and culture in the

Shire, specific to this project includes to 'program and promote the Koondrook Wharf and River as a major venue for arts and cultural events'.

### GANNAWARRA ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2013-2016

The *Gannawarra Environmental Sustainability Strategy* identifies priorities and actions that balance the environmental, social and economic needs of the Shire.

Water is identified as providing exciting eco-tourism opportunities for Gannawarra Shire. Conservation of waterways is highlighted as key to supporting native flora and fauna and in attracting more visitors and residents to the Shire.

Pertinent Actions identified in the Strategy include:

- Introduce Water Sensitive Urban Design into the planning process to ensure new developments do not compromise water quality or deteriorate wetlands in the Shire;
- Advocate and promote the Shire's wetlands and use of waterways for tourism and water sports activities; and
- Improve access to the significant wetland areas of the Shire, whilst balancing the need to protect these assets.

In regard to Land Use, Planning and Management, Gannawarra Shire has identified the demand for residential, rural residential and tourism development throughout the Shire, particularly adjacent to lakes and waterways. It is recognised in the Strategy that such development has the potential to attract new residents to the Shire to take advantage of Gannawarra's lifestyle and environment and to stimulate and sustain rural communities and economy.

Relevant Actions in regard to Land Use, Planning and Management, identified include:

- Encourage developments to embrace environmentally sustainable design principles.
- Investigate synergies between food production and tourism opportunities to encourage diversification in key sectors.

The Strategy also recognises the rich indigenous heritage of the Shire and the importance protecting the Shires network of wetlands. In particular, Kerang Lakes is

recognised for its status of national significance for migratory birds (International Convention on Wetlands, the Ramsar convention).

### INTEGRATED COMMUNITY PLAN

The Integrated Community Plan assists in setting a framework for sustainable change in Gannawarra. It reflects the aspirations and priorities of the community and draws them together to provide an integrated community response to the challenges and opportunities facing the Shire. The Plan contains a number of projects relevant to the waterfront precincts, these include:

Relevant Projects identified for **Cohuna** include:

- Consider options for the maintenance and redevelopment of the local community swimming pool.
- Development of current and new walking and cycling tracks and trails including the installation of outdoor exercise equipment, wildlife observation platforms, bridges to create linkages and heritage signage.
- Development of local natural assets to maximise tourism opportunities i.e. Gunbower Creek Nature Cruises, Ski Run Facilities and Gunbower Forest.
- Creation of RV Friendly Township.

Projects identified for **Koondrook** include:

- Townscape and environmental upgrades to key gateways.
- Delivery of the Koondrook Wharf and associated facilities (project delivered).
- Continue to support the future development of Koondrook Memorial Hall, Historical Society and Sawmill precinct.
- Building upon natural, indigenous and heritage assets, develop the local tourism infrastructure (including targeted marketing/branding, the provision of tourist information, new signage/interpretation items and establishment of the Kerang – Koondrook Rail Trail).
- Identify opportunities for improved access to key natural assets (e.g. Gunbower Creek and Forest, Murray River and tracks and trails network) to encourage increased usage.



- Support proposals which enhance the vitality and viability of town centre uses, including new developments, public realm works, and business infrastructure improvements.
- Support existing local events (e.g. Farmers Market) and consider opportunities for new events.

Projects identified for the **Lakes** District include:

- Develop initiatives which maximise the local economic and social benefit of key natural and tourism assets (e.g. Kerang Lakes, Ibis Rookery etc.).
- Identify opportunities for arts installation and community arts projects to drive economic development.
- Identify measures to sustain and improve key local services and facilities, including new methods of delivery and improved accessibility.
- Explore opportunities for new aquatic attractions (e.g. canoe trails, boat ramps, fishing platforms, interpretive facilities etc.).
- Building on the unique place based characteristics of the area, develop a strong branding and marketing identity to raise awareness of the area and its assets to a wider audience.
- Identify projects which have the capacity to enhance the vitality and viability of the district centres, including public art, landscaping and works to key buildings and spaces.
- Support existing local events (e.g. Ski Racing Victoria Championships) and consider opportunities for new events which have the capacity to support local economic and social development.
- Work with the existing and emerging land use planning framework to advocate for new developments which will support residential and tourism activities.

### LODDON MALLEE NORTH REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The Plan identifies the important role that Kerang plays as a sub-regional service provider and the need to support growth in Kerang. Nature-based tourism and solar energy have been identified as opportunities to diversify the economy.

Cohuna is recognised as a significant tourist area, which includes significant cultural heritage places and landscapes. Cohuna will grow through development close to existing services and utilities.

Relevant Challenges for growth include:

- The uneven distribution of both population and economic growth across the region, and the need to support smaller communities ensuring land supply for employment and housing in appropriate locations.
- Adapting to the potential risks and opportunities associated with climate change.
- Protecting and enhancing the environmental, cultural heritage, social assets and natural resources of the region to grow the economy.
- Encouraging residential and commercial growth in centres throughout the region enabling residents to access employment, education and services, including from dispersed settlements.

### RECREATION RESERVES MASTERPLANS, 2010 [NEW DRAFT BEING DEVELOPED]

The Recreation Reserves Master Plan was carried out by Simon Leisure Consulting, a sports and recreation planning firm, to provide clear direction for the use and development of the Cohuna Recreation Reserve, which includes the ovals and facilities north of the study area. The Masterplan provides for \$1.5 million worth of upgrades to the Reserve, across 25 separate but interconnected projects across the reserve. Recommended improvements included an upgrade to the existing walking/jogging track around the perimeter of the reserve as well as installation of directional signage and fitness equipment.

It is understood that a new draft report is currently being developed.

### STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN 2015-2020

The *Strategic Tourism Plan* is a five-year plan to guide all tourism activities undertaken by Council to promote further growth within the local tourism industry.

In regard to infrastructure and environment the Plan highlights that nature-based experiences are the strength of tourism in the Gannawarra Shire, with fishing,

camping, passive recreation and water sports providing the driver of visitation. Further, many waterways are now hosting cruise boats, planning replica paddle steamers and seeking to develop a higher class of tourism product for the more discerning visitors. Emerging opportunities are evolving in adventure tourism with mountain biking, canoeing and orienteering. The Murray River, Gunbower Forest and Kerang Lakes are identified as the key environmental assets providing a base for nature base tourism.

A summary of the relevant tourism topics and strategic issues in regard infrastructure and environment is provided below.

Topic	Strategic Issues	Action
<b>Kerang Lakes facility upgrades</b>	There are many opportunities to improve visitor facilities at the Kerang Lakes for a range of activities, including events. Family friendly experiences should be a priority.	Develop a Tourism and Recreation Master Plan in conjunction with other authorities and stakeholders that identifies and prioritises key visitor amenities and infrastructure requirements for the lakes to meet the needs of visitors and the local community, including events. Also consider management and promotional requirements.
<b>National Park/ State Forest – Mountain biking &amp; orienteering</b>	There is an opportunity to develop a mountain bike trail in Gunbower National Park and/or Gunbower Creek.	Work with Parks Victoria and DELWP to investigate opportunities to develop a mountain bike – orienteering trail in the national park and / or state forest. Investigate opportunities for a mountain bike event- Cohuna to Koondrook, within the Gunbower forest.
<b>Koondrook Wharf</b>	Demand for a wharf at Koondrook has been driven by the communities desire to recognise the riverboat history and to provide a facility for current day commercial vessels and recreational activities.	Council to work with all stakeholders, regulatory authorities and the State Government to manage the design and construction of a wharf on the Murray River at Koondrook (project completed).
<b>Koondrook Caravan park upgrade</b>	Enhancing the amenities at the Koondrook Caravan Park will cater for a broader range of visitors seeking tourism experiences close to nature.	Develop a strategic development plan for the caravan park that provides a guide for maximising the accommodation options within the park while improving the amenities and landscaping of the park.

<b>Town-based cycle trails</b>	Koondrook Development Association has undertaken considerable work to develop cycling / walking trails along the Murray River and linking natural attractions. Further work is required to connect routes into loops.	Connect trails to establish looped routes that link key town and natural attractions. This may involve infrastructure such as bridges, signage, etc.
<b>Kerang-Koondrook Cycle Trail</b>	Establish an off-road cycle trail between Kerang and Koondrook. This would work as a feeder route to the Murray Adventure Trail at Koondrook, as well as connect the two towns.	Undertake a feasibility study to investigate the establishment of a cycle trail between Kerang and Koondrook. If feasible, secure funding. Develop and maintain the trail.

In terms of Business and Hospitality the construction of the Koondrook Wharf is seen not only as a key item of infrastructure but also as an enabler and driver of new business development. Strong interest from the commercial business sector is already evident and development of the surrounding river precinct will be a major drawcard for further tourism products and new business.

Improved food and hospitality businesses, cruise vessels on the river, the development of farm-based food businesses and new accommodation options are all recognised as priority areas to grow tourism within the Shire.

The Strategy recognises that there is opportunity for business development linked to the environment, indigenous and European history and heritage. The local tourism industry requires a strong and creative retail sector to best support tourism. Hospitality businesses need to adopt a greater food and wine presence to service the changing visitor markets, accommodation providers need to consider a wider range of options including wilderness tents and five-star cabin and unit accommodation close to nature. The tourist market is now demanding higher quality services and competition between destinations is strong.

A summary of the relevant tourism topics and strategic issues in regard Business and Hospitality is provided below.

Topic	Strategic Issues	Action
<b>Tourism businesses at Koondrook Wharf</b>	The proposed Koondrook Wharf will open up new opportunities for business ventures that require access to the river, such as an outdoor adventure hub for canoe / kayak / bike / fishing equipment hire and guided tours. Arts & culture, accommodation and dining & hospitality businesses.	Investigate and facilitate business opportunities associated with the Koondrook Wharf and seek private sector investment where appropriate. Utilise historic buildings within and close to the Wharf precinct for new business developments.
<b>Retail Precinct</b>	Cohuna has potential to further develop into a boutique shopping precinct complemented by views across to Gunbower Creek.	Prepare a retail investment prospectus to encourage the establishment of shops, galleries and cafes that meet the needs of the local community and visitors.
<b>Cruise Vessels</b>	The proposed Koondrook Wharf will open up the port to a variety of cruise vessels that are operated by private and public organisations. A number of new cruise businesses are proposed to operate in the shire providing much needed opportunities to increase length of stay and yield.	Support the establishment of new cruise businesses in the shire. Murray River & Gunbower Creek. Support cruise vessels and commercial watercraft to use Koondrook Wharf.
<b>Accommodation upgrades</b>	Lack of "designated" free camping options in some locations across the Shire. Kerang, Cohuna, Murrumbidgee, Koondrook. A need for more up-market accommodation opportunities within the major towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook.	Review the current locations available for free camping at key locations across the municipality and develop options that will encourage increased visitation. Develop a policy to support this activity. Facilitate new accommodation opportunities utilising commercial developers and existing accommodation providers in Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook and Kerang Lakes.
<b>Food &amp; Wine Culture in hospitality businesses</b>	Food and Wine is a major drawcard for tourism and the area has the opportunity to build on the	Work with the local business community to develop a greater food and wine focus across the Shire that better utilises locally grown food

	availability of local food and local wine grape growers.	products and better caters for visitor needs
<b>Family Activities Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook</b>	Very limited number of family activities in Cohuna beyond self-organised watersports. Limited activities in many tourism towns for younger age group.	Support the local community to provide family activities, such as bike hire, fishing equipment hire, free outdoor games in public areas, etc.
<b>Aboriginal Culture Visitor experience</b>	Opportunity to develop Aboriginal cultural experiences to promote the heritage of the region's first peoples, and to enhance visitor satisfaction.	Support local Aboriginal organisations and individuals to develop cultural experiences, such as tours, interpretive information, displays of artworks and artefacts, etc.

#### GANNAWARRA URBAN AND RURAL STRATEGY PLAN, 2007

The Strategy was developed to direct demand for residential and rural residential development to existing settlements, to build upon these communities and offer attractive residential opportunities. The Plan seeks to address the declining population (at time of writing) by supporting the opportunities for attractive residential development, based on one of the key assets of the municipality including waterfront development.

The Strategy notes that Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm immediate surrounds should be the focus for lakeside development (low density residential and rural living) subject to the appropriate management of effluent, protection of adjoining farming activities, protection of environmental values and landscape, and access to infrastructure.



## 2.5. GANNAWARRA PLANNING SCHEME

The following provides a summary of relevant planning policy from the Gannawarra Planning Scheme.

### CLAUSE 21.06 BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

#### Post Contact Heritage

**Objective:** To protect, maintain and enhance the municipality's local post-contact heritage including historic buildings, precincts and places.

#### Aboriginal Heritage

**Objective:** To protect, maintain and enhance the municipality's local Aboriginal heritage.

### CLAUSE 21.08 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Commercial Development

**Objective:** To provide for planned development and physical improvement in the retail centres of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook, which is integrated with existing retailing and is based on good urban design principles, to maximise levels of service, tourist visitation and trade.

#### Tourism

**Objective:** To develop and expand tourist facilities, recreational activities and accommodation facilities, while protecting and enhancing natural and built assets and strengthening the role and return from tourism development (particularly based on the area's natural and cultural heritage).

### CLAUSE 21.03 ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

#### Native Vegetation

**Objective:** – To protect and enhance remnant native vegetation and native flora and fauna habitat and promote development of linkages between areas containing remnant vegetation.

#### Natural Assets

**Objectives:** To protect and maintain natural assets including soil and water for farming, landscape values and amenity while facilitating sensitive development.

To protect and enhance areas of public land, including forests, stream environs, lakesides and reserves.

To recognise the important functions of rivers, lakes and wetland areas, including flora and fauna habitat, recreation, landscape, water supply, water filtration, water storage and drainage.

#### Murray River Environs

**Objective:** To manage the Murray River corridor's environmental values and resource capacity.

### CLAUSE 21.04 ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

#### Flooding

**Objective:** To manage flooding and floodplains so as to minimise loss and damage to property and infrastructure, and to preserve the function of floodplains to convey and store floodwater.

#### Fire Risk

**Objective:** To manage the risks of fire hazard including bushfires and grass and crop fires.

### CLAUSE 21.07 HOUSING

#### Rural Residential

**Objective:** To locate rural living development in appropriate locations identified in a strategy, so as to avoid interface conflicts with other land uses and development and environmental assets.

To manage rural residential development in farming areas in terms of its impact on commercial farming and protection from hazards.

Further strategic work included in Clause 21.07 includes the consideration of the implementation of the *Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy* by amending the Planning Scheme to provide additional land for rural residential development.

### CLAUSE 21.10 INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Renewable Energy

**Objective:** To increase energy supplies from renewable sources, particularly from solar generation of electricity, and reduce dependence in fossil fuels.

#### Community Infrastructure

**Objectives:** To meet identified community aims and objectives and ensure provision of community services where relevant to the use and development of land.

To use planning decisions to maintain and enhance the wellbeing and health of residents.

To provide a range of attractive, accessible, safe and well maintained passive and active open space and recreation facilities to cater for the needs of residents and visitors.

### CLAUSE 22.01 KOONDROOK HERITAGE

This policy applies to all buildings, sites, places and landscapes of heritage significance in Koondrook.

The places or components of Koondrook's heritage that remain include:

- The Shire tramway (including sidings, station building, platform and weighbridge).
- The wharf site (including associated shipping shed and platform).
- The sawmill.
- The shops and non-residential buildings (identified on the attached list).
- The red gum trees along the river and creek frontages.
- The lift span bridge (over the Murray River to Barham).

**Objectives:** To preserve and enhance the remaining elements of Koondrook's history, particularly the buildings, sites and objects listed in the table to this policy.

To undertake or facilitate improvements as listed below in order to preserve and enhance Koondrook's heritage values and re-instate known heritage elements which have been removed or destroyed.

### CLAUSE 21.11 LOCAL AREAS

**Cohuna** – Relevant extracts include:

- Ensure that urban development is generally consistent with the Cohuna Structure Plan.
- Encourage development of Cohuna as a tourist stopover destination by enhancing the streetscape of the town centre precinct adjacent to the riverside park; establishing the Gunbower walking trail; identifying tourist development sites near Gunbower Creek and the town centre; and improving the visual image of highway entrances.

**Koondrook** – Relevant extracts include:

- Ensure that urban development is generally consistent with the Koondrook Structure Plan.
- Ensure that all new development within the Koondrook town centre is consistent with the Koondrook Heritage Policy.
- Strongly encourage tourism development based on Koondrook's heritage, historic wharf and river location.

### CLAUSE 21.02 SETTLEMENT

**Objective:** To promote and provide attractive streetscapes and presentation in towns.

### CLAUSE 21.09 TRANSPORT

#### Personal Travel

**Objectives:** To provide a variety of tracks for pedestrians and cyclists, offering recreational opportunities as well as convenient paths of local travel.

## 2.6. ZONES AND OVERLAYS

The following provides an analysis of zones and overlays as they relate to each of the waterfront masterplan precincts, including potential constraints on land use and/or development. Each precinct contains different considerations in relation to planning constraints and opportunities.

Detailed zones and overlays maps are provided for each waterfront precinct within Part B of the report.

### 2.6.1. ZONES

Table 1 shows the zones applicable to each precinct. Relevant zones include the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ), Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), the Farming Zone (FZ), the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ), the General Residential Zone (GRZ) and the Special Use Zone (SUZ).

**TABLE 1** SUMMARY OF APPLICABLE ZONES

Precinct	PPRZ	C1Z	FZ	PCRZ	GRZ	SUZ
Kangaroo Lake			✓	✓		
Lake Charm			✓	✓		
Koondrook	✓	✓			✓	✓
Cohuna	✓	✓			✓	

#### PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION ZONE (PPRZ)

The PPRZ is primarily applicable to the Murray River Precinct at Koondrook and the Gunbower Creek Precinct at Cohuna.

The purpose of the PPRZ is:

- To recognise areas for public recreation and open space.
- To protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate.
- To provide for commercial uses where appropriate.

Potential land uses achievable under the PPRZ include informal outdoor and active recreation, retail, office and leisure and recreation. Many uses require certain conditions to be met. A summary of the table of uses for the PPRZ can be found in Appendix B.

#### COMMERCIAL 1 ZONE (C1Z)

The C1Z relates to the Murray River Precinct at Koondrook and the Gunbower Creek Precinct at Cohuna.

The purpose of the C1Z is:

- To create vibrant mixed use commercial centre for retail, office, business, entertainment and community uses; and
- To provide for residential uses at densities complementary to the role and scale of the commercial centre.

The C1Z provides significant flexibility in terms of land use and is associated with the town centres of Koondrook and Cohuna. The C1Z is particularly supportive of tourism uses, including accommodation, retail and food and beverage establishments. A summary of the table of uses for the C1Z can be found in Appendix B.

#### FARMING ZONE (FZ)

The FZ relates to the Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm precincts. Much of the land surrounding both lakes is zoned FZ.

The purpose of the FZ is:

- To provide for the use of land for agriculture;
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture;
- To encourage the retention of employment and population to support rural communities;
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.



Under the FZ some non-agricultural uses may be permitted. These include camping and caravan parks, bed and breakfast, group accommodation, leisure and recreation, hotel and restaurant. A summary of the table of uses for the FZ can be found in Appendix B.

#### PUBLIC CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE ZONE (PCRZ)

The waterbodies of Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm are covered by the PCRZ.

The purpose of the PCRZ is:

- To protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values;
- To provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes;
- To provide for appropriate resource based uses.

The zone is accommodating to water access infrastructure including boat launching facilities, jetties, pontoons and piers. Other possible tourism uses include camping and caravan parks. A summary of the table of uses for the PCRZ can be found in Appendix B.

#### GENERAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE (GRZ)

Residential areas surrounding the Murray River Precinct at Koondrook and the Gunbower Creek precinct in Cohuna are generally zone GRZ1, facilitating residential development.

#### SPECIAL USE ZONE (SUZ)

The SUZ relates to the Murray River Precinct at Koondrook, where the caravan park occupies land zoned SUZ. The purpose of the SUZ is to recognise or provide for the use and development of land for specific purposes as identified in a Schedule to the zone.

The land relating to the caravan park is subject to Schedule 4 of the SUZ. Permitted uses under the SUZ include camping and caravan park and others. Relevant uses under the zone that are possible but require a permit, include accommodation and retail premises.

A summary of the table of uses for the SUZ can be found in Appendix B.

#### 2.6.2. OVERLAYS

Table 2 shows the overlays applicable to each precinct. Relevant overlays include the Environmental Sensitivity Overlay (ESO), Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO), Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO), Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO), Heritage Overlay (HO) and Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity.

TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF APPLICABLE OVERLAYS

Precinct	ESO	RFO	LSIO	BMO	HO	VPO	Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity
Kangaroo Lake	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Lake Charm	✓	✓	✓				✓
Koondrook	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Cohuna	✓						✓

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY OVERLAY (ESO)

The ESO affects all precincts. The purpose of the ESO is to identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints and to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.

There are various schedules to the ESO which apply to different precincts.

### **RURAL FLOODWAY OVERLAY (RFO)**

The RFO applies to Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm. The purpose of the RFO is to identify areas that are at risk of flooding, ensure any development maintains free passage of floodwaters and to protect and improve waterway health.

Under the RFO a permit is required to construct or carry out works unless specifically exempt in the schedule to the overlay.

### **LAND SUBJECT TO INUNDATION OVERLAY (LSIO)**

The LSIO applies to the Murray River Precinct at Koondrook. Similarly, to the RFO, the LSIO identifies flood-prone land and ensures development maintains free passage of floodwaters and protects and improves water quality.

The LSIO requires a permit to construct or carry out works, unless specifically exempt in a schedule to the overlay.

### **BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT OVERLAY (BMO)**

The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) applies to the Murray River precinct at Koondrook. The purpose of the overlay is to identify areas where bushfires may pose a hazard to protect human life and to ensure that development is only permitted where the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level.

Under the BMO a permit is required to construct a building or carry out works associated with accommodation, leisure and recreation. Retail premises and others.

### **HERITAGE OVERLAY (HO)**

The HO applies to the Murray River precinct at Koondrook. The purpose of the HO is to conserve and enhance heritage places and ensure development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

The HO generally requires a permit for building and works affected by the HO.

### **AREAS OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SENSITIVITY**

Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity are registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places, as well as landforms and land categories that are generally regarded as more likely to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity include land within 50 metres of registered cultural heritage places, land within 200 metres of waterways and other locations as defined in the regulations.

All precincts are subject to cultural heritage sensitivity. The precincts may require the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), which is a written report, containing an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage. It outlines measures to be taken before, during and after an activity in order to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the activity area.

### **VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY (VPO)**

The eastern bank of Kangaroo Lake is covered by the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO). The VPO is in place to protect areas of significant vegetation and preserve existing trees and other vegetation. This does not apply to noxious weeds. The willow trees along the banks of the lake are classified as noxious weeds.

### 3. TOURISM PRODUCT

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides an overview of tourism product and accommodation in the Murray region and Gannawarra Shire to provide context to the masterplan precincts and identify potential tourism opportunities that could be leveraged through development of the master plans.

#### 3.2. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS

The Murray Region DMP identifies a number of strengths that define perceptions of the tourism product across the Murray region. Table 3 identifies that at a regional level, the Murray region's primary product strengths include water sports, food, wine and produce, fishing, houseboats/ river cruises, golf, festivals and events and history and heritage. The Murray Region has secondary product strengths in nature-based and business events and emerging strengths in Indigenous, arts and culture and adventure.

**TABLE 3** MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS

Watersports	Primary
Food, Wine and Produce	
Fishing	
Houseboats / River cruises	
Golf	
Festivals and Events	
History and Heritage	Secondary
Nature Based	
Business Events	Emerging
Indigenous	
Arts and Culture	
Adventure	

Source: Murray DMP 2012, Urban Enterprise 2018

#### 3.3. GANNAWARRA

Gannawarra Shire has existing primary, secondary and/or emerging strengths across the following product categories:

Primary	Secondary	Emerging
Watersports	History and Heritage	Food and Wine
Nature Based Tourism	Golf	
Adventure	Events	

An overview of the Shires key products and experiences is provided below.

##### WATER-BASED

The Shire boasts two major rivers the Loddon and Murray, creeks (Gunbower Creek) as well as 57 lakes, swamps and marshes, forming one of Australia's largest and most important wetland areas which typically changes during wet and dry seasons. The Murray River and Gunbower Creek environs, Kerang Wetlands and extensive system of waterways are a primary tourism product for the Shire and provide the setting for a number of passive nature-based and adventure sports uses.

Waterskiing, fishing, kayaking/canoeing, powerboating, recreational boating and swimming are all popular on water activities in Gannawarra Shire.

##### NATURE-BASED

The riparian environments of Gannawarra Shire including the Murray River, Gunbower Island (Gunbower State Forest and National Park) and Kerang Wetlands provide an abundance of opportunities for nature-based activities including walking, hiking, cycling, bird watching, camping, boating, 4WDing and swimming.

Key features of the natural assets of Gannawarra Shire include:



- Gunbower Island, including the Gunbower State Forest and National Park is a unique natural river redgum environment that provides an old growth river red gum forest. The area is known for its diverse native birdlife, kangaroos and emus, walking/cycling/4WD tracks, camping and on water activities.
- River Cruises. Cohuna Nature Cruises operates the Egret river cruise along Gunbower Creek. Wetlander Cruises also operate dining cruises along Gunbower Creek from Cohuna/Koondrook.
- The Kerang Wetlands system are internationally recognised through the Ramsar convention for their significance in the global migratory habits of many bird species. There is a bird hide at the Ibis Rookery at Middle Lake.

### ADVENTURE SPORTS

Gannawarra Shire has an existing and emerging adventure sports product, including:

- Fishing - Significant fishing opportunities exist including on the Murray River, Gunbower Creek and Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm.
- Boating and water-skiing – Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek are popular destinations for water skiers and power boats. Boating and water skiing is a significant driver of visitation during the warmer periods of the year.
- Canoeing, Kayaking and Paddle boarding, including tourism providers such as:
  - Cohuna Adventures hire tandem kayaks and canoes, single kayaks and stand up paddleboards;
  - Murray River Adventures (Sydney Harbour Kayaks); and
  - The Gunbower Island Canoe Trail meanders through wetlands and is home to many waterbirds, wildlife and aquatic plants.
- Free camping. There are many places to camp along the banks of the Murray and on Gunbower Island on the Gunbower Creek.
- Mountain Biking. Mountain biking is an emerging product in Gannawarra Shire, including through the tracks and trails of the Gunbower Island.

The Murray River Adventure Trail is an adventure touring route that spans from Mildura to Coryong along the Murray Valley Highway and travels by Lake Charm,

Kerang, Cohuna and the Gunbower National Park. This project provides opportunity to leverage this product, particularly between Koondrook and Cohuna.

### HISTORY AND HERITAGE

#### INDIGENOUS

There is a strong indigenous relationship to the waterways and land in Gannawarra Shire. The Barapa Barapa and Yorta Yorta groups are the traditional custodians and there remains a proud community culture and knowledge of country. Many of the place names (including the word Gannawarra) are derived from local language. Cultural heritage places of particular significance include Gunbower Island scarred trees and Kerang Lakes.

#### TIMBER PRODUCTION

The first European exploration of the area was in the Cohuna and Kerang districts by Major Mitchell in 1836, with squatters being able to take up leases in the area from the early 1840s. Koondrook was historically a bustling paddle steamer river port and sawmilling town and provides visitors with a glimpse of life on the Murray in the past. The Koondrook Barham Redgum Statue River Walk celebrates the historic importance of the local redgum industry.

#### AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

There are a number of historic buildings in Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook that reflect the historic development and major agricultural industry of the region.

#### GOLF

The Cohuna Golf Club and the Kerang Golf Club are both located within the Gannawarra Shire. Other golf clubs in close proximity to the Shire include:

- Barham Golf and Sports Club;
- Rich River Golf Club; and
- Murray Downs, Swan Hill.

### FOOD, WINE AND PRODUCE

There is an emerging café and pub culture in Gannawarra Shire, in particular in Koondrook, however there are a limited number of restaurants.

The Mystic Park hotel also provides quality pub food, servicing the Kerang Lakes Area.

The Shire is a productive agricultural region including dairy, wheat, barley, oats, canola and sheep. Local produce can be purchased at local markets.

### EVENTS

Key events for the Shire include:

- The monthly Murrabit Country market - Victoria's largest country market, attracting around 200 site holders from across the state selling diverse wares.
- State and National water skiing events and titles at Lake Charm, with some events held at Kangaroo Lake.
- The annual 'Quamby Tractor Pull' at Quambatook.
- Silo-cinema at Quambatook.
- Cohuna Events (i.e. Big Cohuna Festival, Farmers and Makers Market, Cohuna Unlocked, Bridge to Bridge Swimming event);
- Boxing Day and Easter Saturday horse racing at the Kerang Turf Club;
- Local theatre and arts events across the region.

### 3.4. ACCOMMODATION

A high level audit of accommodation providers was undertaken for the townships of Cohuna, Koondrook/Barham, Kerang and the Lakes area (Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm). The purpose of the accommodation audit is to quantify accommodation in the region by type of establishment and to ultimately identify potential gaps in the provision of accommodation in the region. The waterfront precincts may ultimately be able to serve a role in meeting identified gaps in accommodation.

The following table summarises the findings of the accommodation audit.

**TABLE 4** ACCOMMODATION AUDIT

Type	Number of Establishments	Rooms	Average Price Per Night
<b>Koondrook/ Barham</b>			
Motel / Motor Inn	6	122	\$104
Caravan Park	2	NA	NA
<b>Cohuna</b>			
Caravan Park	1	16 (Cabins)	NA
Motel / Motor Inn	2	32	\$100
Serviced Apartments	1	4	\$120
<b>Kerang Lakes</b>			
Caravan Parks	3	24 (Cabins)	NA
B&B	1	3	\$89
Camper sites	1	NA	\$20
<b>Kerang</b>			
Motel / Motor Inn	3	53	\$128
Caravan Park	2	16 (Cabins)	NA

In addition to formal accommodation establishments, there was also 7 active Airbnb rentals in Gannawarra Shire.<sup>2</sup> Across these rentals the average daily rate was \$200. The occupancy rate for Airbnb listings across the region was 52%.

Gannawarra Shire is also a highly popular area for camping, including through the Gunbower State Forest.

Overall, there is a limited supply of contemporary accommodation typologies across Gannawarra Shire, with the majority of accommodation being older style motels/motor inns or caravan parks. Generally, there appears to be gaps in higher quality self-contained accommodation, servicing both the holiday/leisure market as well as business visitors.

The following provides a more detailed overview of accommodation provision by location:

### 3.4.1. KOONDROOK / BARHAM

There was a total of 6 motels/motor inns identified across Koondrook and Barham, 5 of which are located in Barham.

The Murray Waters Motor Inn and Apartments is located in Koondrook, providing 18 rooms at an average price of \$132 per night. The Motor Inn is the most recent accommodation establishment developed in Gannawarra Shire. It includes well-presented rooms in a unique location right on the Murray River.

The majority of motel/motor inn accommodation providers are located in Barham, emphasising its relationship with Koondrook as a larger service town. The majority of motels/motor inns in Barham are rated around 3-3.5 star.

Koondrook also includes a caravan park. The caravan park is council owned, however, is leased to a private operator.

Additional accommodation in Koondrook includes the proposed glamping sites as part of the nature-based tourism hub in Koondrook, which will be located on the banks of the Gunbower Creek.

The Gunbower State Forest and National Park is also popular for camping.

Koondrook is generally well supplied with accommodation, particularly given the proposed glamping accommodation as part of the nature-based tourism hub. However, there may be opportunity for more waterfront accommodation in the future, which could be delivered as part of the Koondrook Caravan Park in the form of waterfront cabins. There may also be opportunity for self-contained eco accommodation, aligning to the nature-based setting of Koondrook.

### 3.4.2. COHUNA

There is a limited supply of accommodation in Cohuna, with only 2 motels and 1 serviced apartment establishment identified equating to approximately 32 rooms, priced at an average of between \$100-\$120 per night.

The Cohuna Caravan Park provides the greatest concentration of accommodation in Cohuna, however, the majority of the sites in the caravan park are designated as annual sites. There are 16 cabins available to the holiday market, the majority of which are located adjacent to the Gunbower Creek.

Cohuna also includes a site on the Gunbower Creek for free RV camping.

Cohuna appears to be undersupplied with accommodation, particularly accommodation targeting the holiday/leisure market, this could include self-contained hotels rooms and serviced apartments. Based on discussions with the Caravan Park manager, demand has been strong at the caravan park, particularly in the peak holiday periods. The high proportion of annual sites has meant limited availability of sites for the short-stay/holiday leisure visitor. There may be demand for an expansion of the existing caravan park to cater to more holiday/leisure visitors.

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<sup>2</sup> AirDNA



### KERANG LAKES

The Kerang Lakes includes accommodation at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake. There are two caravan parks located at Lake Charm (Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park and Pelican Waters Caravan Park), one caravan park located at Kangaroo Lake (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park) and one Caravan Park located at Racecourse Lake.

The Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park includes 48 occupied annual sites and 13 cabins.

Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park includes 85 annual sites. There are no cabins available for casual hire. Pelican Waters Caravan Park contains 48 annual sites and has 11 cabins available for rent.

There is also a bed and breakfast (Charm Lodge), located on Lake Charm. Anecdotally, this business attracts a range of visitor types and has hosted international visitors from Asia.

There is also a small caravan park located adjacent to Racecourse Lake and the Lake Charm General Store on the on the Murray Valley Highway.

Caravan Parks generally cater to repeat visitors at these locations, including annual site holders.

The Mystic Park Hotel also has hotel style accommodation, located 5-10 minutes from Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm.

There may be opportunity for more accommodation targeted to the holiday/leisure market and nature-based tourism visitors, including the provision of cabin accommodation. On farm accommodation along the foreshore areas could also be encouraged, including B&B accommodation or self-contained Airbnb accommodation rentals.

### KERANG

Although Kerang is not a location for the waterfront masterplans project, it provides important context for the overall type and supply of accommodation in the region. There were 3 motels/motor inns identified in Kerang, equating to 53 rooms, the majority of which are older style establishments. There were also 2 caravan parks identified in Kerang.

### 3.5. KEY FINDINGS

Gannawarra Shire is abundant in nature-based tourism product, driven by the Murray River environs, Gunbower Island (Gunbower State Forest and National Park) and Kerang Wetlands system. These areas provide many opportunities of nature-based activities and complementary activities including walking, hiking, cycling, camping, skiing, bird watching, fishing, power boating and kayaking/canoeing.

There is opportunity to further leverage these natural assets for increased visitation as well as complementary tourism product including hospitality, arts and culture.

Accommodation in the region primarily includes caravan parks and traditional motels and motor inns. There is opportunity for new quality accommodation which targets new visitor markets, including nature-based visitors seeking authentic and immersive experiences. The accommodation gaps in Cohuna are most evident, with limited provision of accommodation other than caravan parks and free RV camping.

Accommodation opportunities include:

**Koondrook:** Waterfront accommodation including waterfront cabins, self-contained eco accommodation, expansion of glamping.

**Cohuna:** Quality 4-star self-contained accommodation, eco-villas, caravan and camping sites, cabins and glamping sites. Waterfront locations would be preferred to provide a unique setting and driver of demand.

**Kerang Lakes:** Caravan park cabins and sites, on farm accommodation (Self-contained rentals, Airbnb, B&Bs). Mystic Park hotel accommodation.

## 4. VISITOR MARKET ANALYSIS

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides an analysis of the visitor market to Gannawarra Shire. This section utilises data sourced from Tourism Research Australia's (TRA) National Visitor Survey (NVS), focussing on the domestic visitation market.

### 4.2. DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT VISITOR MARKET

The following provides an analysis of domestic overnight visitors to Gannawarra Shire. Domestic overnight visitors are 15 years of age or over and must have stayed overnight at least 40km from home.

#### VISITATION

The Gannawarra Shire attracted an average of 56,921 annual domestic overnight visitors over the past 5 years, staying an average of 2.8 nights per visitor. This equates to an average of 159,710 visitor nights per year.

**TABLE 5** VISITATION

	Gannawarra Shire
Overnight Visitation (5 Year Average)	56,921
Visitor Nights (5 Year Average)	159,710
Average Length of Stay (5 Year Average)	2.8

Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

#### PURPOSE OF VISIT

The majority of overnight visitors to Gannawarra Shire visit for holiday purposes (46%), followed by visiting friends and relatives (42%) and 10% of visitors for business purposes. The Murray region attracts a higher proportion of business visitors compared to Gannawarra (+6%).

**FIGURE 1** PURPOSE OF VISIT

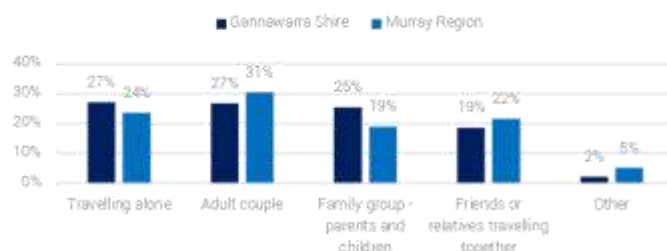


Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

#### TRAVEL PARTY

The most common types of visitors to Gannawarra Shire include people travelling alone (27%), adult couples (27%), family groups (25%) and friends or relatives travelling together (19%). There is a fairly even distribution of visitor types across Gannawarra Shire. The Murray region attracts a higher proportion of adult couples and friends or relatives travelling together when compared to Gannawarra Shire.

**FIGURE 2 TRAVEL PARTY**

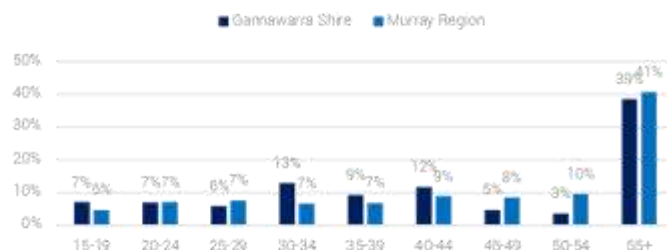


Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

#### AGE GROUP

The majority of domestic overnight visitors to Gannawarra Shire are aged over 55 years (39%), which aligns with the age profile of visitors to the Murray region.

**FIGURE 3 AGE GROUP**



Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

#### VISITOR ORIGIN

The majority of domestic overnight visitors to Gannawarra Shire originate in regional Victoria (58%), followed by metropolitan Melbourne (26%). Gannawarra Shire attracts a higher proportion of visitors from regional Victoria when compared to the Murray Region. Interstate markets are a relatively minor market when compared to Victorian markets. New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia provide an even distribution of visitors to Gannawarra Shire.

The Murray region attracts a higher proportion of visitors from metropolitan Melbourne and New South Wales.

**TABLE 6 VISITOR ORIGIN**

	Gannawarra Shire	Murray Region
Victoria	85%	67%
Regional Victoria	58%	36%
Melbourne	26%	31%
New South Wales	4%	20%
Queensland	4%	3%
South Australia	4%	7%
Northern Territory	2%	0%
Western Australia	0%	1%
Tasmania	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%

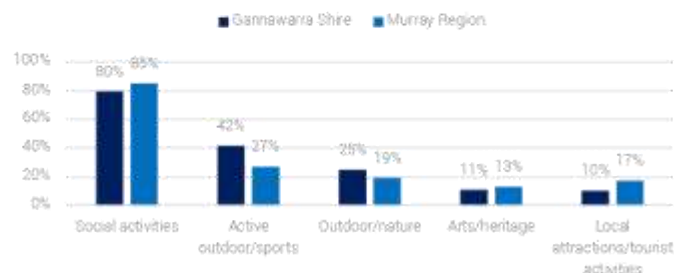
Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

#### VISITOR ACTIVITIES

The most popular activities in Gannawarra for overnight visitors include social activities (80%), active outdoor/sports (42%) and outdoor/nature activities (25%). One of the primary drivers of social activities is seeing friends and relatives, these activities therefore align to the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market. A higher proportion of visitors to Gannawarra Shire undertake active outdoor/sports and outdoor/nature activities reflecting the abundance of this tourism product in the region.



**FIGURE 4 VISITOR ACTIVITIES**



Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

A breakdown of the top 20 visitor activities undertaken by overnight visitors to the Murray region staying in commercial accommodation is provided in Table 7. The sample size for individual visitor activities was too small to report on for Gannawarra Shire.

The most common activities include eating out at restaurants/cafes (68%), going to pubs (33%), sightseeing (27%), visiting friends and relatives (20%) and going shopping for pleasure (20%).

The activities most related to the waterfront masterplans include eating out at cafes/restaurants, bushwalking/rainforest walks, fishing, charter boat or cruise, visiting national and state parks, picnics or barbecues and water activities/sports.

Many of the waterfronts already offer or provide the opportunity to leverage many of the core activities within the Murray region visitor activity profile. In particular, destinations need to be supported by a quality dining and hospitality offer. This will increase the ability to drive visitation from new market segments, including the high yielding lifestyle leader market segment.

**TABLE 7 TOP 20 VISITOR ACTIVITIES -COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION VISITORS TO THE MURRAY REGION**

	Murray Region
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	68%
Pubs, clubs, discos etc.	33%
Sightseeing/looking around	27%
Visit friends & relatives	20%
Go shopping for pleasure	20%
Visit history / heritage buildings, sites or monuments	8%
Go to markets	8%
Bushwalking / rainforest walks	7%
Visit museums or art galleries	7%
Visit wineries	7%
Golf	6%
Fishing	6%
Exercise, gym or swimming	6%
Charter boat / cruise / ferry	5%
Visit national parks / state parks	5%
Picnics or BBQs	5%
Water activities / sports	5%
Go on a daytrip to another place	4%
Attend an organised sporting event	3%
Play other sports	3%

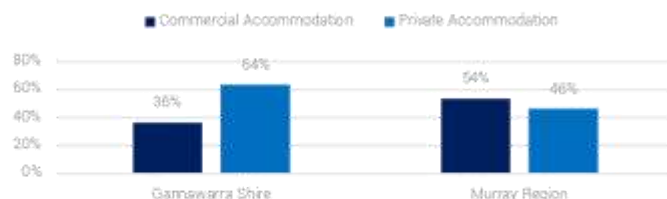
Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

## ACCOMMODATION

The majority of domestic overnight visitors to Gannawarra Shire stay in private accommodation (own property, friends or relatives property or non-commercial camping). An average of 36% of overnight visitors stay in commercial accommodation. Comparatively, over half of visitors to the Murray Region stay in commercial accommodation (54%) and 46% stay in private accommodation.

The high proportion of visitors staying in private accommodation is likely driven by the high number of free camping, particularly within the Gunbower State Forest.

**FIGURE 5 COMMERCIAL VS PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION**



Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

## COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION

Table 8 provides a profile of commercial accommodation stayed in by overnight visitors to Gannawarra Shire. The majority stay in a caravan park or commercial camping ground (56%), followed by a hotel/motel or motor inn (35%). This profile reflects the accommodation supply in Gannawarra Shire, which is predominately caravan park and motel/motor inn accommodation.

Comparatively, 64% of overnight visitors to the Murray Region stay in hotel/motel or motor inn accommodation, followed by 28% staying in caravan parks or commercial camping grounds.

This data suggests there may be an undersupply of hotel accommodation in Gannawarra Shire. Koondrook and Cohuna are key locations which could fill this accommodation typology gap.

**TABLE 8 COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION**

	Gannawarra Shire	Murray Region
Caravan park or commercial camping ground	56%	28%
Hotel/resort/motel or motor inn	35%	64%
Guest house or Bed & Breakfast	9%	1%
Rented house/apartment/flat or unit	0%	6%
Backpacker or hostel	0%	0%
Other commercial accommodation	0%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

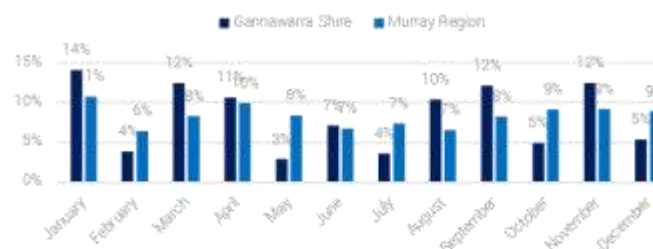
Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

## SEASONALITY

Figure 6 shows the month of the year overnight visitors returned from their trip. This provides an indication of seasonality.

The most popular months for visitation include January, March, April, August, September and November.

**FIGURE 6 SEASONALITY**



Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2013-2017 (presented as 5-year average)

### 4.3. KEY MARKETS TO THE MURRAY REGION

The Murray River DMP provides an assessment of key visitor markets to the Murray Region, including existing and emerging markets. The following summarises these markets.

#### 4.3.1. KEY CURRENT VISITOR MARKETS<sup>3</sup>

##### VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES (VFR)

The VFR market is recognised as a key visitor market, particularly for regional areas. 35% of all overnight domestic visitors to the Murray are for the purposes of visiting friends and relatives.

##### GREY NOMADS

Grey Nomads are a key market, attracted to the Murray for riverside camping and the warm climate. The region includes a number of major highways which are popular routes and stopping points for caravanners undertaking long trips. This market can be perceived as relatively low yielding; however, they are very important to smaller towns, particularly those that are RV friendly. This market is expected to increase in the future in terms of both size and spending power due to an ageing population with high levels of disposable income. This is evidenced by data indicating that Australians over the age of 55 account for 32% of the nation's gross disposable income.

##### FAMILIES

Families are a core market for the region with approximately 18% of overnight visitors travelling as a family group (parents and children). It is important that investment in family experiences and attractions is encouraged to grow this market, as well as catering to the growing population of young families in the region's major centres.

An important consideration for this market is value for money, convenience, and accessibility. The region's camping and caravan parks are an important draw for this

market, and it is important that reinvestment and improvements to the regions' parks is encouraged and facilitated.

##### BUSINESS

Business-related travel accounts for 14% of all overnight visitors to the region. The Murray includes a number of major centres and regional towns which support a large business base and facilitate high levels of business travel. Business travellers are generally considered high yielding and are particularly important for the accommodation sector in driving mid-week and off-peak occupancy. It also provides the opportunity to generate repeat visitation by encouraging business travellers to return for leisure purposes with their families.

#### 4.3.2. EMERGING VISITOR MARKETS<sup>4</sup>

##### MILLENNIALS / YOUNG TRAVELLERS

This market segment includes people aged 15–29, as well as those aged 30–34 who do not have children. Compared with other regions, the Murray currently receives a lower proportion of visitors aged under 35 years. Research undertaken by DNSW shows that there is currently low awareness of regional tourism destinations among millennials. Key factors affecting their travel choices include:

- Profoundly influenced by technology and social media.
- Seeking authentic information rather than staged advertising.
- Reliant on recommendations from friends and family, as well as social media.
- Distance is not a major barrier.
- They are seeking genuine and authentic experiences, together with a variety of active and informative ways to enjoy them. This includes experiences such as:
  - Events that allow discovery of a location in a unique way.
  - Nature and landscapes.
  - Experiences that are unique to a specific area.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Murray River DMP, 2017 – Murray Regional Tourism Board, prepared by Urban Enterprise

<sup>4</sup> Source: Murray River DMP, 2017 – Murray Regional Tourism Board, prepared by Urban Enterprise



- Food and lifestyle.
- History of a destination with a contemporary or personalised interpretation.

### INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

International visitors make up just over 1% of total visitors to the Murray. There is opportunity to grow international visitation through targeted product development and marketing, with consideration to the following segments:

- **International experience seeker/self-drive market** - is identified as a key market by Tourism Australia. Experience seekers are not characterised by nationality but seek out authentic experiences which are engaging and have an educational element. They are more likely to visit regional areas, stay longer in the region, and are less attracted to 'mass packaged tourism products'. At present they do not make up a large portion of visitation to the region, however, there is an opportunity to develop personalised experiences using the region's strengths in Indigenous culture, rural Australian character, and nature-based assets.
- **Asian visitor markets** - the Murray Region's market share of the growing Asian visitor markets is currently low. In terms of inbound arrivals, Asia is expected to continue to outperform other overseas markets, brought about by increasing prosperity and the continuing transition of millions of people into consumer oriented, middle-class populations. At the national level, the latest visitor projections are for inbound Asian markets to grow by 17.4% over the next two years alone and contribute to 64% of all international visitor growth. The number of independent and self-drive Asian visitors has increased in recent years and will provide new opportunities for regional destinations. There are a number of specific product opportunities which could leverage this market (e.g. Port of Echuca). Anecdotally, visitors from Asian markets have stayed at Charm Lodge on Lake Charm.

### LIFESTYLE LEADERS

Visit Victoria has identified Lifestyle Leaders as a segment that drives a large proportion of visitation and expenditure in the State. The preferences and behavioural characteristics of this segment have underpinned Visit Victoria marketing and promotions in recent years (e.g. Wander Victoria campaign). Lifestyle Leaders are based on a mindset, are found in all regions, ages and lifecycle groups, and represent approximately a third of the Australian population aged 18+.

Lifestyle Leaders are educated, professional and progressive individuals who enjoy seeking out new information and being the first to try new products. They have a higher level of discretionary expenditure than the general population, so they can afford to indulge more often in travel, with a particular desire to escape city life and embrace nature/outdoors and new discoveries.

The Lifestyle Leader segmentation shows that they are highly motivated by the following experiences, which are primary, secondary and/or emerging strengths across the region:

- Spectacular natural landscapes and experiences with nature.
- Walks and cycling.
- Arts, culture and events.
- High quality food.
- Wineries and cellar doors.
- Local produce and farmers markets.
- History and heritage.

#### 4.4. VISITOR MARKETS BY PRECINCT

Each precinct is unique and therefore attracts unique visitor markets. The following table provides an overview of the current visitor markets to each waterfront precinct and consideration of the potential future growth markets to each precinct achievable through appropriate product development and marketing. The table indicates the visitor markets aligning to the Murray River DMP.

**TABLE 9** VISITOR MARKETS BY PRECINCT

Precinct	Current Key Visitor Markets	Key Potential Growth Markets
Kerang Lakes (Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm)	Families Grey Nomads VFR Adventure Travellers	Grey Nomads Visiting Friends and Relatives Families Internationals (Asian Markets) Adventure Travellers
Murray River Precinct, Koondrook	Grey Nomads Families VFR Business/workers Adventure Travellers	Grey Nomads Families Business/workers VFR Lifestyle Leaders Young travellers Adventure Travellers Internationals
Gunbower Creek Precinct, Cohuna	Grey Nomads Families VFR Business/workers Adventure Travellers	Grey Nomads Families Business/workers VFR Lifestyle Leaders Young travellers Adventure Travellers Internationals

In addition to the visitor markets identified in Table 9, there are subsets of these markets to each precinct which are visiting for specific purposes. These specific visitation drivers are shown in the table below.

**TABLE 10** SPECIFIC DRIVERS OF VISITATION

Precinct	Specific Precinct Visitation Drivers
Kerang Lakes (Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm)	Water Skiing Boating Fishing Swimming Recreation Nature Based Tourism Adventure Tourism
Murray River Precinct, Koondrook	Nature Based Tourism (Murray River and Gunbower Creek, Gunbower Forest/National Park) Recreation Heritage Adventure Tourism
Gunbower Creek Precinct, Cohuna	Nature Based Tourism (Murray River and Gunbower Creek, Gunbower Forest/National Park) Water Skiing Recreation Adventure Tourism

### 4.5. KEY FINDINGS

The overnight visitor market to Gannawarra Shire primarily consists of holiday and VFR visitors, typically travelling as either lone person travellers, adult couples or family groups.

A lower proportion of overnight visitors to Gannawarra stay in commercial accommodation. Of those that stay in commercial accommodation a lower proportion stay in hotels and resorts compared to the Murray Region.

There is opportunity for Gannawarra Shire to attract a higher proportion of holiday leisure visitors seeking nature-based experiences, however, this will need to be supported by appropriate complementary product including dining and hospitality and supported by accommodation targeted to this market.

Each waterfront precinct is unique in terms of their visitor markets and their potential to grow and attract new visitor markets. The Kerang Lakes area is associated with power boating, water skiing and on water activities including kayaking. There is opportunity to further grow the current markets through these activities and attract new visitors for recreation activities (on water and land), including families, grey nomads and adventure travellers (kayaking/canoeing).

The major drawback for Koondrook is the nature-based activities on offer through the Murray River, Gunbower Creek and Gunbower State Forest and National Park. Visitor markets currently include families, grey nomads, business/worker visitors and VFR visitors. Koondrook has potential to increase its reach into new visitor markets including lifestyle leaders and young travellers through the provision of appropriate infrastructure and activities. Koondrook is relatively well supported by food and dining including the café and pub and is also supported by provision of dining establishments in Barham.

Cohuna attracts visitors for specific purposes including for water-skiing, nature-based tourism, adventure and recreation and these visitors are typically families, grey nomads, adventure travellers and VFR visitors. There are also a number of business visitors to the area. Much like Koondrook, Cohuna has the potential to attract new visitor markets with appropriate investment including the lifestyle leader market and young travellers. Cohuna needs to be supported by quality

dining, accommodation and hospitality product to improve the potential attraction of these visitor markets.



## 5. ECONOMIC PROFILE

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides a brief economic profile of Gannawarra Shire using key datasets sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing. The purpose of this section of the report is to identify relevant economic trends for consideration as part of development of the waterfront masterplans.

### 5.2. POPULATION

#### POPULATION

Gannawarra Shire reported a population of 10,549 people in the 2016 Census. The population of Gannawarra Shire declined between 2006 and 2011 at a rate of -1.7%, however, population increased between 2011 and 2016 at a rate of 0.4% per annum.

This project provides an opportunity to drive population growth through promoting tourism, improving public amenity and increasing attraction of the resident population. In particular, projects identified through the masterplan process that will drive economic growth will be most important in contributing to the sustainable economic growth of Gannawarra Shire.

**TABLE 11** POPULATION

	2006	2011	2016
Persons	11,295	10,366	10,549
Growth Rate		-1.7%	0.4%

Source: ABS - 2016 Time Series Profile, Gannawarra Shire

### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Victoria in Future (VIF) provides the official State government projections of population and households. The latest available Victoria in Future publication is from 2016. The publication shows the estimated 2016 population as 9,919 residents, which is at odds with the results of the 2016 ABS Census. The forecasts also show a continuing declining population with an estimated 9,497 residents in 2021 and 9,119 residents in 2026. Given that the 2016 Census population figures are not reflected in the VIF statistics, there is a question over the reliability of these population forecasts.

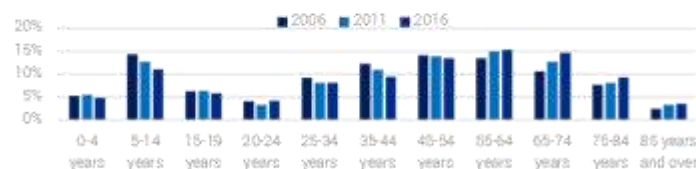
### 5.3. DEMOGRAPHICS

#### AGE PROFILE

The resident population of Gannawarra is ageing, most evidenced by the increase in the proportion of residents aged over 55 years between 2006 and 2016. People aged over 55 years represented 34% of the population in 2006, which grew to a representation of 43% of the population in 2016.

An ageing population is common in regional Victoria. It is important to promote the retention and attraction of younger residents to the Shire. The waterfront masterplans may have a role to play in attracting younger residents through improving liveability, providing new attractions and activities, residential and employment opportunities.

**FIGURE 7 AGE PROFILE – GANNAWARRA RESIDENTS -2006-2011-2016**



Source: ABS – 2016 Time Series Profile, Gannawarra Shire

## 5.4. EMPLOYMENT

### INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

The 2016 Census identified 4,196 employed persons in Gannawarra Shire. The largest industry of employment in 2016 was Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, comprising 25% of total employment. Other major industries include Health Care and Social Assistance (525 jobs), Retail Trade (458 jobs), Construction (322 jobs), Manufacturing (284 jobs).

Industries that showed the greatest growth in employment between 2006 and 2016 included Health Care and Social Assistance (+98 jobs), Mining (+25 jobs), Construction (+21 jobs), Accommodation and Food Services (+19 jobs), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (+19 jobs) and Other Services (+17 jobs).

Whilst Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing remained the largest employing industry in 2016, the industry experienced the greatest loss in jobs (-392 jobs) between 2006 and 2011, followed by Manufacturing (-170 jobs) and Retail Trade (-100 jobs).

**TABLE 12 GANNAWARRA SHIRE RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT**

	2006	2011	2016	Change 2006- 2016
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,450	1,047	1,058	-392
Mining	25	44	50	25
Manufacturing	454	341	284	-170
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	100	110	86	-14
Construction	301	300	322	21
Wholesale Trade	142	108	86	-56
Retail Trade	558	509	458	-100
Accommodation and Food Services	174	205	193	19
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	186	196	179	-7
Information Media and Telecommunications	26	22	19	-7
Financial and Insurance Services	80	75	54	-26
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	35	19	23	-12
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	104	103	123	19
Administrative and Support Services	75	77	79	4
Public Administration and Safety	217	226	219	2
Education and Training	255	242	246	-9
Health Care and Social Assistance	427	460	525	98
Arts and Recreation Services	31	30	39	8
Other Services	136	162	153	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,776</b>	<b>4,276</b>	<b>4,196</b>	<b>-680</b>

Source: ABS – 2016 Time Series Profile, Gannawarra Shire

### 5.5. KEY FINDINGS

The economic profile shows that traditional industry sectors of the Gannawarra Shire economy have been declining in terms of jobs, including Agriculture and Manufacturing. This is not necessarily unique to Gannawarra Shire, with decline in traditional manufacturing industries linked to globalisation and amalgamation of farms leading to a decline in employment in the Agriculture sector. It does however, emphasise the need to continually diversify the local economy. Tourism is a key sector of the Gannawarra Shire economy and a strategic growth sector. There were an additional 19 jobs in the Accommodation and Food Services sector between 2006 and 2016, although somewhat modest growth it was the fourth highest jobs growth sector in Gannawarra Shire for larger industry sectors (over 100 people employed). Gannawarra Shire also has some significant tourism assets, which provide significant potential for continued growth in the tourism sector over time. Growth in the tourism sector will need to be supported by appropriate product and infrastructure investment, both from the public and private sector and supported by skilled workers in tourism and hospitality.



## 6. RESIDENTIAL

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides a brief overview of the residential market in Gannawarra Shire, particularly in relation to determining potential residential opportunities for the waterfront precincts including residential waterfront developments.

There has been longstanding interest from the community in facilitating waterfront development, particularly alongside Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm. These sites were included as part of an Environs Strategy prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff prepared in 2013. This is outlined in more detail below.

#### BACKGROUND STUDIES

In 2013, Gannawarra Shire Council commissioned the preparation of the *Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy* to provide guidance and set the overall direction for future growth, development and infrastructure investments within the Lakes and Creek Environs over the next 20 years.

The study indicated potential development areas within the Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek environs.

The study included the development of principles to guide development within the Lakes and Creek environs, these are summarised below:

1. Encourage a planned approach to development, avoiding adhoc decisions.
2. Land use change and new developments must demonstrate how they will protect and enhance the existing natural, cultural, historic features, native vegetation and landscape values of the area and reinforce the character of the Lakes and Creek Environs.
3. Provide for rural-living, low-density residential and tourism development surrounding the Lakes and Creek in accordance with the Development

Framework Plans which consolidates existing development areas, taking advantage of the natural Lake/Creek rural settings.

4. Where it is proposed to locate development outside of the areas identified for "Development Potential" in the Development Framework Plans, it must be demonstrated that:
  - a. There is a demand for the development;
  - b. Infrastructural demands of the development can be provided for and met in a cost-effective manner;
  - c. The development will not jeopardise the existing or future use of suitable agricultural land;
  - d. The development proposal must meet all other development principles under this Environs Strategy.
5. Development should be avoided in areas known to be:
  - a. Subject to flooding or inundation;
  - b. Environmentally sensitive or have significant environmental values;
  - c. Culturally or historically significant or have significant values;
  - d. Subject to wildfire risks.
6. Avoid development of land which has been identified as being particularly suitable for agricultural land uses. Any development within the Lakes and Creek Environs will need to demonstrate that it will not compromise existing agricultural land uses on the subject site or on surrounding sites.
7. The wastewater, infrastructural and utility requirements of future development must be adequately met and provided for in a cost-effective manner.
8. Developments must provide attractive, safe and functional open spaces that integrate with existing developments and enhance the recreational opportunities of the existing waterbodies.
9. The management of the Lakes and Creek Environs needs to be undertaken in a coordinated manner with Council, the local community, key stakeholders and

visitors working collaboratively to protect the natural and physical features and to maximise the long term environmental, economic and social benefits of these areas.

The study included an implementation plan, including the action to introduce an **Municipal Strategic Statement** reference (or clause) and a Local Policy into the Gannawarra Planning Scheme in which the Environs Strategy is referenced.

## 6.2. DEMAND INDICATORS

### POPULATION AND AGE STRUCTURE

The analysis of population in Gannawarra Shire is included in section 5. The data showed that the population had declined between 2006 and 2011, however, the trend in declining population reversed between the 2011 and 2016 census periods, growing by an average of 0.4% per annum, showing positive signs for future population growth.

The population is ageing, with a 10% increase in the proportion of residents aged over 55 years between the 2006 and 2016 Census periods.

### SUPPLY

The ABS Census reported a total of 4,997 private dwellings in 2016 compared to 5,010 private dwellings in 2011. Occupied private dwellings are reported to have increased whilst unoccupied dwellings decreased between 2011 and 2016. This data should be relied on with caution, given the reported decline in total dwellings between 2011 and 2016.

**TABLE 13** OCCUPIED AND UNOCCUPIED DWELLINGS 2011-2016

	2011	2016
Occupied Private Dwellings	4,163	4,224
Unoccupied Private Dwellings	847	773
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,010</b>	<b>4,997</b>

Source: ABS 2011, 2016 – Community Profiles Gannawarra Shire

### HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

61% of the housing stock in Gannawarra Shire was occupied by Family Households in 2016, followed by 30% lone person households. Between 2006 and 2011, family households reduced by 298 households, lone person households increased by 148 and other households increased by 192.

**TABLE 14** GANNAWARRA SHIRE – HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Family Households	3,050	68%	2,768	63%	2,752	61%
Lone Person Households	1,222	27%	1,326	30%	1,370	30%
Group Households	89	2%	66	2%	88	2%
Other Households	103	2%	192	5%	295	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,464</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,352</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,505</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ABS – 2016 Time Series Profile, Gannawarra Shire

### DWELLING CHARACTERISTICS

The housing stock of Gannawarra Shire comprises a high proportion of separate houses, reported at 95% in 2016.

**TABLE 15** GANNAWARRA DWELLING CHARACTERISTICS

	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Separate House	4,161	93%	4,037	93%	4,285	95%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house	55	1%	65	2%	6	0%
Flat, unit or apartment	156	3%	150	4%	135	3%
Other dwelling	92	2%	97	2%	70	2%
Dwelling structure not stated	0	0%	3	0%	9	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,464</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,352</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,505</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ABS – 2016 Time Series Profile, Gannawarra Shire

#### SUPPLY OF WATERFRONT PROPERTIES

There is a limited supply of waterfront residential properties in Gannawarra Shire. Locations where waterfront development exists includes:

##### Creek and Riverfront Development:

- **Cohuna** – residential subdivisions exist along Gunbower Creek near Cohuna, including Island Rise and Murray Sound. Murray Sound is the most recent residential subdivision, consisting of a 70 lot (approx.) subdivision, with 6 lots sold. Current lots for sale (non-waterfront) are generally priced at around \$80,000 with lots generally sized at 800m<sup>2</sup>. All waterfront lots released have been sold. Anecdotally, take up of lots has generally been slow since project commencement.
- **Koondrook** – There are a number of residential properties with frontage to the Gunbower Creek in Koondrook to the south of the town centre and north of the town centre towards Barham.
- **Kerang** – There are a limited number of residential lots near the Loddon River in Kerang.
- **Quambatook** – There are a small number of residential properties on the Avoca River in Quambatook.

##### Lakes

- **Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake** – Single dwellings exist along the lake front in certain locations at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake. These are part of historical subdivisions of farming land. No new residential developments currently exist in these locations.

##### Lake Boga – Haven

A recent example of lake front residential development is 'Haven' development at Lake Boga, located 15 kilometres north-west of Kangaroo Lake and 14 kilometres south-east of Swan Hill. The masterplan includes a 61 lot subdivision. 10 lots were released as part of the Stage 1 development in November 2015. Stage 1 was sold out as of April 2018. An average of 4 lots were sold per year. These are sized at

1800m<sup>2</sup> and provide 20-22 metres of lake frontage. Lots were priced at \$265,000 per lot.

The development is fully serviced with electricity, town water and reticulated sewer.

#### PROPERTY PRICES [GANNAWARRA SHIRE]

Table 16 summarises the residential house and vacant block sales and median sales values between 2006 and 2016 for Gannawarra Shire. Median house prices and vacant block prices have generally been trending up since 2006. 2015 recorded the highest median prices, with a minor decline to 2016.

**TABLE 16 RESIDENTIAL SALES AND MEDIAN VALUES – GANNAWARRA SHIRE**

	Houses		Vacant Blocks	
	# Sales	Median Price	# Sales	Median Price
2006	143	\$145,000	39	\$50,000
2007	153	\$135,000	46	\$61,000
2008	93	\$140,000	37	\$52,000
2009	120	\$139,000	27	\$52,000
2010	109	\$145,000	48	\$52,000
2011	90	\$149,000	27	\$50,000
2012	124	\$148,500	26	\$50,500
2013	134	\$141,250	29	\$55,000
2014	148	\$145,000	31	\$54,000
2015	138	\$162,250	18	\$61,376
2016	145	\$160,000	19	\$49,500
2017	29*	\$160,000	-	-

\*Statistics for 2017 are preliminary only and based on limited sales

Source: A Guide to Property Values, Valuer-General Victoria 2016



## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING APPROVALS

Figure 8 shows the residential building approvals in Gannawarra Shire for the previous 10 years. Residential building approvals generally declined between 2007-08 and 2011-12, however began to recover in 2012-13. Over the ten-year period, there have been an average of 24 residential building approvals per annum.

**FIGURE 8** RESIDENTIAL BUILDING APPROVALS



Source: Profile id. Gannawarra Shire – ABS, Building Approvals, Australia

## 6.3. KEY FINDINGS

Headline indicators of demand for residential property including population growth and property pricing seem to indicate subdued demand for residential development.

Locations with recent waterfront subdivision (Cohuna and Lake Boga) suggest that waterfront properties are in most demand compared to those properties that do not have a waterfront siting. Waterfront properties as part of Stage 1 development of Haven (Lake Boga) were sold at around \$147 per square metre and properties in Murray Sound (Cohuna) ranged from approximately \$100-\$150 per square metre.

There may be opportunity for lifestyle residential lots in strategic locations around Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm, however, a more detailed study of demand is required beyond what is within the scope of this project.

Areas proposed for further investigation of residential subdivision are outlined in the *Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy* (2013). This area may be suited for lifestyle residential development as well as tourism development, however, a Planning Scheme Amendment would be required to facilitate development. Willing landowners who wish to develop their land will need to undertake further strategic work to assess the suitability of sites.



## PART B: CONCEPT MASTERPLANS

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## 7. KANGAROO LAKE

### 7.1. OVERVIEW

Kangaroo Lake is located 20 kilometres north west of Kerang, on the western side of the Murray Valley Highway and forms part of the Kerang Wetlands. The lake is managed by Goulburn-Murray Water and is a large, deep and permanent water storage as part of the Torumbarry Irrigation system.

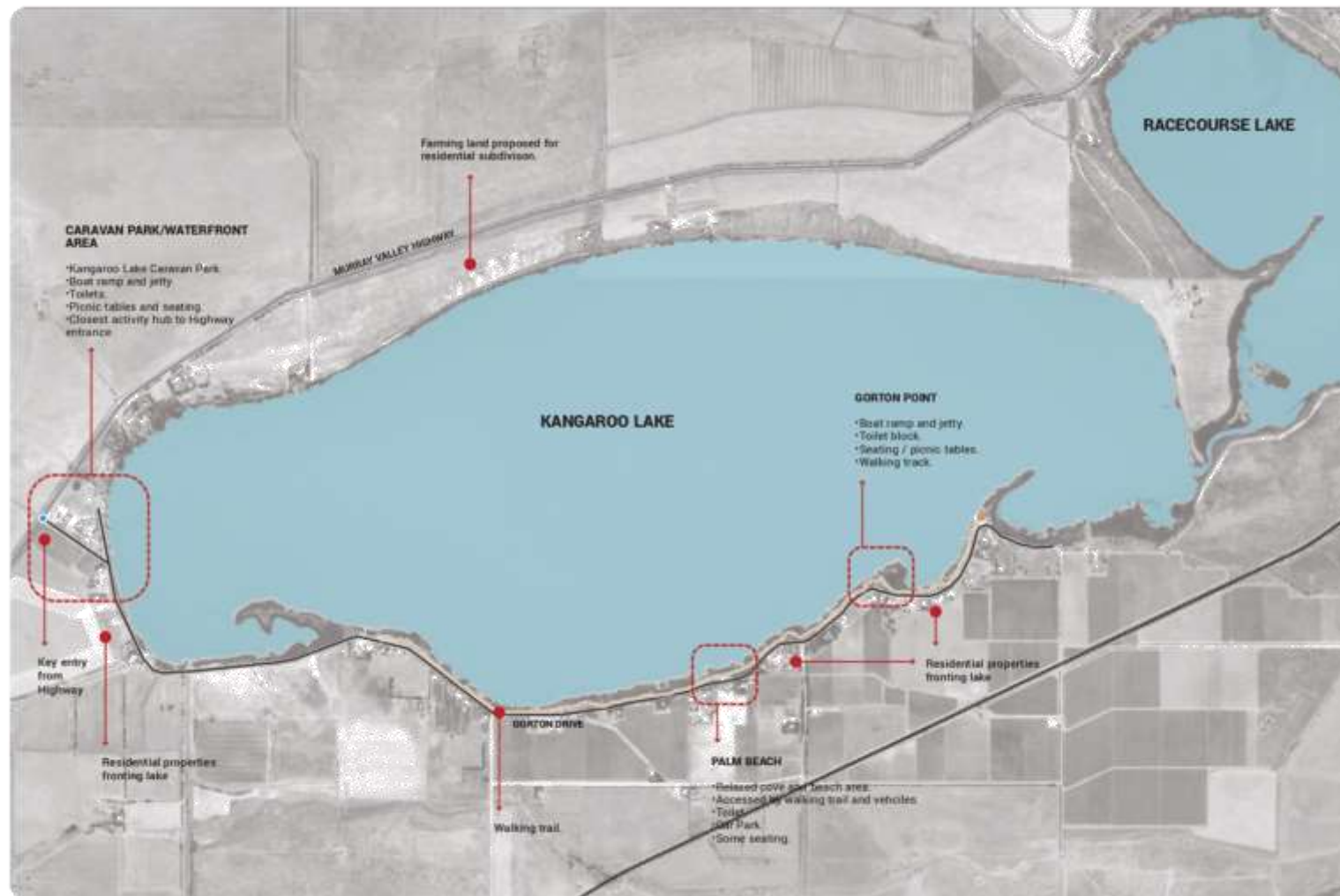
Kangaroo Lake is home to a variety of fauna and flora, including bird life and native vegetation.

Kangaroo Lake is a popular destination for power boating, water-skiing, fishing, swimming and general recreational activities.

The northern end of Kangaroo Lake is the primary area for consideration as part of the master plan. This area includes the Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park, access ramp and jetty and public toilets.

Other notable activity nodes along the western shore include Palm Beach and Gorton Point. Palm Beach is a small cove area and includes a public toilet and car parking. Gorton Point is the southernmost activity node. It includes a boat ramp and jetty, toilet block, seating and picnic tables.

A context map of Kangaroo Lake and these areas is provided on the following page.



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
KANGAROO LAKE CONTEXT MAP PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 | V1





## 7.2. PLANNING

The following provides a summary of the zones and overlays which apply to Kangaroo Lake.

### ZONES

The lake is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). The land surrounding the lake is zoned Farming Zone (FZ).

### OVERLAYS

Kangaroo Lake includes a number of overlays, including the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO4 and ESO3), Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO), Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1), Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO).

### RAMSAR

Kangaroo Lake forms part of the Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site. The Kerang Wetlands was designated as a Ramsar site under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).

The Ramsar site contains black box, river red gum and tangled lignum vegetation communities and contains important feeding and nesting habitat for a diverse array for native waterbird species. As well as its importance for waterbirds, the Ramsar site provides important habitat for indigenous flora and other native fauna species. The Ramsar site is also significant economically, culturally, spiritually and for recreation.<sup>5</sup>

The *Kerang Lakes Wetlands Ramsar Site Ecological Character Description (2011)* provides a summary of the threats to the Ramsar site, these include presence of pest plants and animals, altered watering regimes, change in surrounding land use, unsustainable recreation activities, changes to level and trend in surface water quality, climate change and bed and bank erosion.

<sup>5</sup> Kellogg, Brown and Root Pty Ltd, Kerang Wetlands Ramsar Site Ecological Character Description, 2011

FIGURE 9 KANGAROO LAKE ZONES



### 7.3. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The water and foreshore area at Kangaroo Lake are Crown Land. Goulburn Murray Water manage the water asset and associated water infrastructure whilst Council is the committee of management for the foreshore area.

There is also a parcel of Crown Land near the Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park, fronting Mystic Park East Road, two parcels of land adjacent to the Caravan Park to the east and an easement running north-south from the Murray Valley Highway to the Lake.

The Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park is owned and managed by a private operator.

### 7.4. EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### 7.4.1. KANGAROO LAKE

##### USES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Caravan Park** – The Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park is located on the northern banks of the shore, fronting Lake View Road. The Caravan Park includes a mix of annual sites and holiday sites. There are currently 48 occupied annual sites and 13 cabins. The Caravan Park has recently been purchased by new owners (September 2017). The new owners are making improvements to the caravan park, including a recently completed BBQ shelter, installation of two new cabins and upgrading the presentation of the park. The park includes a small convenience shop/kiosk, which sells some grocery items and some takeaway food and coffee. There is a function space/recreation room with an open fire, billiards and table tennis. Visitors to the caravan park come from various locations across Victoria and interstate, including some international visitors.
- **Boating and Water Skiing** – Kangaroo Lake is a popular destination for boating and water skiing. The lake has hosted a number of Ski Racing Victoria events. It is an important asset for Ski Racing Victoria for hosting events and as a back-up location for events that cannot be held at Lake Charm. Boat launching is

possible from the **North end** foreshore and Gorton Point. The lake is also used for kayaking and canoeing.

- **Fishing** – The lake is used for recreational fishing, both from boats, the shoreline and jetties.
- **Swimming** – The lake is a popular swimming destination in the warmer months of the year.
- **Walking Trails** – The lake includes a walking/cycling trail along the eastern bank servicing the residential properties fronting the lake in this location and visitors. The walking trail does not currently connect to the northern precinct.
- **Palm Beach** – Palm Beach is an existing activity node along the eastern shore. It includes an existing car park, toilet block, picnic tables, a grassed area and visitor information structure, which appears underutilised/abandoned.
- **Gorton Point** – Gorton Point is an existing activity node located at the southern end of the eastern shoreline. Gorton Point includes a jetty, boat ramp, toilets, picnic tables, open grassed areas and a walking track.

##### SURROUNDING USES AND LINKAGES

- **Farming** – The majority of land surrounding Kangaroo Lake is occupied by farms used for cropping, grazing, vineyards or orchards. The majority of vineyards are owned by Brown Brothers Winery and are located to the west of the Lake.
- **Residential properties** – There are a number of residential properties fronting the lake, primarily distributed along the western shoreline, accessed via Gorton Drive. These properties are located in the Farming Zone.
- **Lake Charm** – Lake Charm is located approximately 2.5 kilometres east of Kangaroo Lake. There are synergies between Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm including their use for boating and water-skiing. Kangaroo Lake has been used as backup for ski racing Victoria events in times when Lake Charm cannot be utilised.
- **Racecourse Lake** – Racecourse Lake is connected to Kangaroo Lake to the south.
- **Kerang Wetlands Ramsar Site** – Kangaroo Lake is part of the Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site. The Ramsar site contains 23 named marshes, lakes and swamps.

The wetlands contain black box, river red gum and tangled lignum vegetation communities and contain important feeding and nesting habitat for a diverse range of native waterbird species.

### EXISTING AND PLANNED PROJECTS

There are some existing, planned or proposed projects relating to the precinct, these include:

- **Demolition of toilet block on caravan park servicing public** – There are plans to remove the toilet block along the waterfront on the caravan park land.
- **Residential development to the east** – There have been proposals for residential development along the waterfront on the eastern side of the lake. This would require a planning scheme amendment. These opportunities are detailed in the *Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy* (2013).

### CIRCULATION

- **Access Point** – Mystic Park East Road is the main vehicle access road to the lake from the Murray Valley Highway.
- **Roads** – Lake View Road is the key road along the lake in front of the caravan park. The road is accessed via Mystic Park East Road. Mystic Park East Road travels west from the Murray Valley Highway and turns into Gorton Drive, which travels south along the western frontage of the lake, providing access to residential properties, farms, Palm Beach and Gorton Point. The roads appear to have been recently resurfaced.
- **Pedestrians/cycling** – There is a gravel walking trail along the western lake front. This track terminates near Gorton Point and does not loop back. It is not connected to the northern precinct / caravan park area.
- **Car parking** – Car parking in the northern precinct along the caravan park and boat launching precinct is informal. Anecdotally, people tend to park their car in front of their space on the waterfront or where their boat is moored. There is a formal car parking area at Palm Beach as well as an informal parking area closer

to the foreshore. The car parking at Gorton Point is informal and distributed throughout the precinct.

### VIEWS AND VISTAS

There are expansive views across the lake from the shoreline, which are only interrupted by vegetation along the lake front.

The Lake can be seen from the Murray Valley Highway and as approaching the lake from Mystic Park East Road.

### 7.4.2. CARAVAN PARK & WATERFRONT AREA

An existing conditions plan is provided for the Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park and Waterfront area on the following page.

#### BUILDINGS AND SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park**
  - **BBQ Pavilion** – A newly constructed large BBQ pavilion.
  - **Function Centre/Games and Recreation Room** – An indoor recreation room, used for functions and gatherings. The room includes a billiards table, open fire and table tennis table.
  - **Convenience/takeaway food shop** – There is a small convenience/takeaway food shop located near the entrance to the park.
  - **Amenity Block** – The caravan park includes an amenity block located near the centre of the site.
  - **Toilet Block** – There is an existing toilet block in poor condition located to the south of the caravan park site. The toilet block, although located on the caravan park site is used by the public and visitors to the lake.
- **Public Toilets** – There is a small public toilet located at the south end of Mystic Park Road, between the water and Lake View Road. This toilet block partially obstructs views to the lake as you enter via Mystic Park East Road.
- **Boat ramps / Jetties** – A boat ramp/jetty is located to the south of the caravan park, which provides water access for boating and water skiing. The boat ramp is highly utilised. When the water becomes choppy due to wind, it can be difficult to get boats out of the water, posing a safety issue. There are a number of smaller, informal jetties located along the lake front, some which appear to be private jetties servicing some residential properties along the lake.

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<sup>5</sup> DELWP, Managing Willows in Victoria, 2016

- **Picnic Tables** – There are a limited number of picnic tables located along the waterfront.

#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- **Willow trees** – There are a large number of willow trees along the lake front. These trees provide an aesthetic quality to the lakefront, provide shade and assist in erosion control along the foreshore. Various species of willow trees are considered a weed species as they can degrade the condition of rivers and riparian land, can reduce the supply of habitat and food for fish, consume large quantities of water.<sup>6</sup> Over the last 20 years, catchment management authorities have been removing willows along many Victorian waterways. However, the Willow Trees along Kangaroo Lake appear to be primarily Weeping Willows, which do not pose as significant environmental threat as other species. In any case, these trees could be replaced with native species.
- **Palm trees** – There are a large number of Canary Island palm trees located on the water's edge of Kangaroo lake. These palms are an introduced species and can often be difficult to remove. There is potential for these to be removed and relocated.
- **Open areas** – The lakefront includes some grassed areas close to the foreshore, however, the extent of the grassed areas appears to have been eroded by vehicles parking at the foreshore.
- **Native trees** – The southern border of the caravan park is lined with native trees. Native trees are also scattered intermittently along the eastern shore.





GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
KANGAROO LAKE CARAVAN PARK AND WATERFRONT EXISTING CONDITIONS PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT 2019 | V1





### 7.5. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

The following provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to Kangaroo Lake by area of interest.

#### 7.5.1. KANGAROO LAKE (GENERAL)

##### Strengths:

- Permanent water storage.
- Access from Murray Valley Highway.
- Existing tourism uses (water skiing, boating, fishing, swimming, recreation).
- Existing activity nodes.
- Water infrastructure (boat ramps/jetties).
- Views across the lake from most foreshore locations.
- Willow trees provide foreshore amenity and shade.

##### Weaknesses:

- Distance from major town centres and services.
- Seasonal visitation.
- Lack of commercial amenity.
- Ageing and declining infrastructure.
- Presentation and amenity of foreshore in sections.
- Lack of amenity and visitor infrastructure in some locations.
- Limited interpretation and directional signage.
- Poor walking/cycling connectivity in some areas.
- Public furniture is inconsistent.
- "out and back" walking track (no loop).

##### Opportunities:

- New and linked walking tracks/trails.
- New/improved visitor infrastructure.

- Further activation, establishment of activity nodes.
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Lakefront residential development (east side of Lake).
- On water events.
- Improvement of foreshore presentation.
- Improve on water safety conditions.
- Themes and branding (public art, materials, vegetation).
- Hub for kayak/canoe trails through the Kerang Wetlands system.

##### Threats:

- Bank erosion.
- Declining local population.
- No "Land On Water Management Plan".
- Vehicle speed along Murray Valley Highway.
- Attraction of anti-social behaviour.

#### 7.5.2. CARAVAN PARK AND FORESHORE AREA (NORTH)

##### Strengths:

- Caravan park with proactive owner and operator.
- Existing water access infrastructure.
- Sealed road.
- Shaded areas.
- Some public furniture (picnic trees).

##### Weaknesses:

- Informal car parking.
- Public furniture is inconsistent.
- Safety issues with boat access during extreme weather / choppy water conditions.



- Limited caravan accommodation maximising lake front views.
- Toilet block on arrival partially blocks views of Lake.
- Condition/quality of toilet block on Caravan Park site near waterfront.
- Lack of connectivity to existing walking/cycling track.
- Limited sense of arrival at a destination.
- High exposure to windy conditions.
- Presence on Murray Valley Highway.
- Presentation of foreshore.

### **Opportunities:**

- Strengthen as primary activity node.
- Cabin accommodation along lake front at Caravan Park.
- Gateway/entrance treatments.
- New commercial ventures (Ski Racing Victoria facility opportunities, realignment of caravan park café/general store).
- Formalisation/increase car parking capacity.
- New activities/zones for children.
- Improve water access safety for boats.
- Foreshore improvements.
- New activities.

### **Threats:**

- Capacity during events.
- Grassed area along foreshore eroded by vehicle parking.
- Safety issues relating to boat ramp access during rough conditions.

### **7.5.3. PALM BEACH**

#### **Strengths:**

- Existing "beach like" setting, including grassed areas.

- Formal car park.
- Existing toilet block.
- Protected 'cove' area.
- Pedestrian path access.
- Passive surveillance and caretakers (residential properties).

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Limited/consistency of public furniture.
- Ambiguous vehicle/pedestrian path access at foreshore area.
- Limited wayfinding/directional signage.
- Run down visitor information building/kiosk.

#### **Opportunities:**

- Strengthen as "relaxed" visitor activity node.
- Clarification of walking/vehicle access arrangements and car parking areas.
- Improve amenity and infrastructure.
- Improve wayfinding signage.
- Build on relaxed setting.

#### **Threats:**

- Increased degradation of existing infrastructure.

### **7.5.4. GORTON POINT**

#### **Strengths:**

- Water access infrastructure (boat ramp and jetty).
- Open grassed areas.
- Vegetation.
- Walking track access.
- Passive surveillance and caretakers (residential properties).



**Weaknesses:**

- Access and car parking arrangements/formalisation.
- Toilet block (septic tank issues).

**Opportunities:**

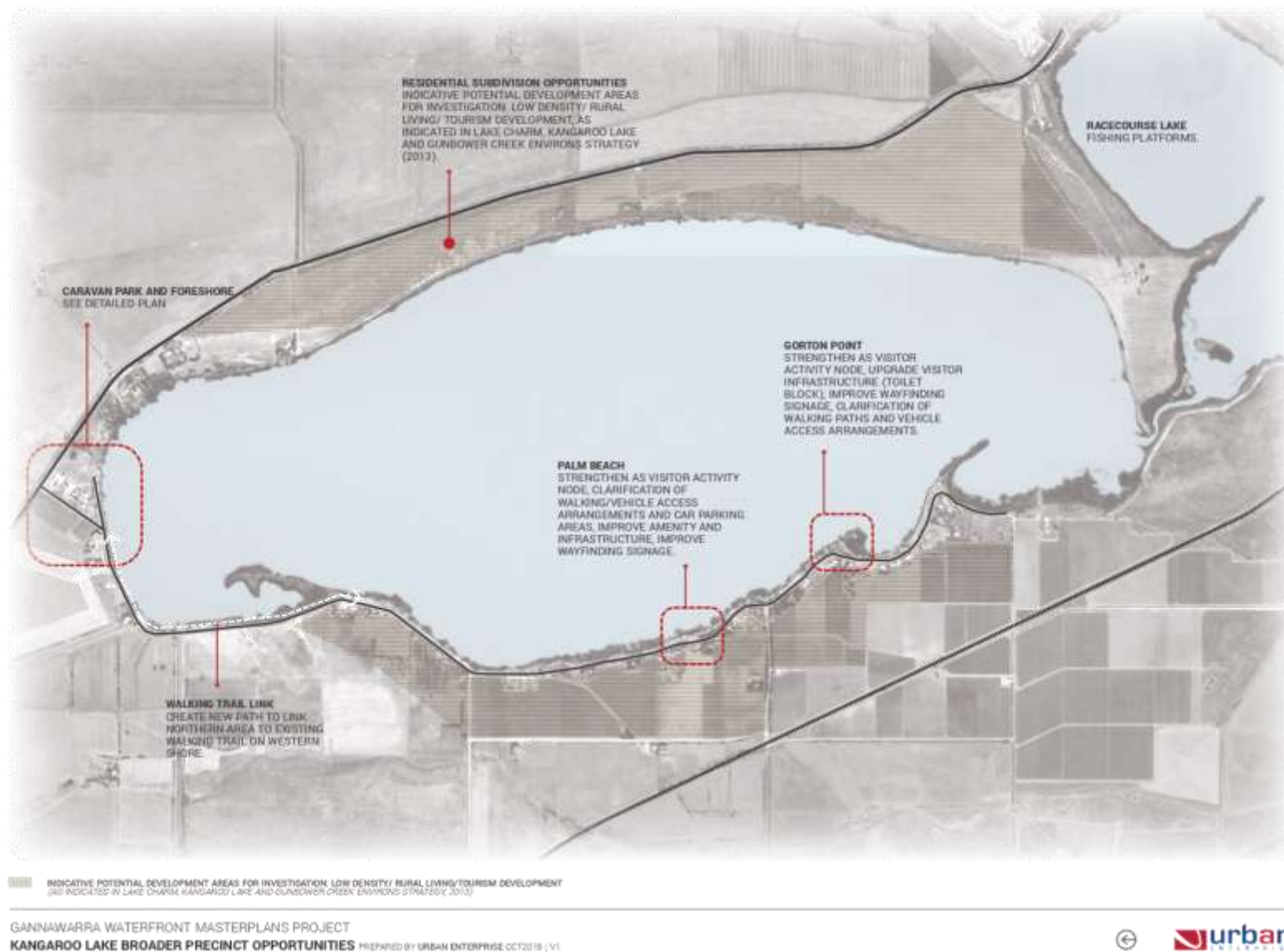
- Strengthen as "active" visitor activity node.
- Upgrade visitor infrastructure (toilet block).
- Improve wayfinding signage.
- Clarification of walking paths and vehicle access arrangements.

**Threats:**

- Increased degradation of existing infrastructure.

**7.6. CONCEPT MASTERPLANS**

Two concept masterplans have been prepared for Kangaroo Lake including a broader precinct opportunity plan and a concept masterplan for the Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park and Waterfront area.









## 7.7. KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

### 7.7.1. CARAVAN PARK AND WATERFRONT AREA

#### MULTIPURPOSE PAVILION

There is opportunity for a multipurpose pavilion to be located within the Kangaroo Lake caravan Park foreshore area, which could be utilised for a number of uses including hosting events (Ski-Racing Victoria), a seasonal café/takeaway kiosk store (which could be operated by the caravan park owners/managers) or a kitchenette for self-catering events, toilets, kayak/canoe/paddle board hire and a private function and events space that could be leased out for private and commercial events.

This hub would strengthen this precinct as a key activity node and assist in attracting other events to the Lake.

This opportunity is also provided for within the Lake Charm foreshore masterplan. Two potential locations have been provided in these masterplans to ensure the highest potential opportunity in securing a permanent space for Ski-Racing Victoria to ensure continued events in the lakes area as well as improving the facilities available to locals and visitors.

#### FORESHORE IMPROVEMENTS

The masterplan proposes a number of improvements to the foreshore area, key proposals include:

- Formalised car parking including long vehicle parking – this will assist in directing vehicles off the grassed foreshore area, allowing the grassed area to regenerate and extend north.
- New/improved seating and BBQ shelters.
- A children's playground to the east with toilets.
- Walking/cycling trail – formalised walking/cycling trail along the foreshore, which links to the existing path along the western foreshore.

#### ON WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Water access is a key driver of visitation to the lakes, improving water access and the ability for visitors to engage with the lake will increase activation of the lake. Key on water infrastructure proposals include:

- New jetties/fishing platforms/ kayak/canoe launching;
- Moorings for boats, strategically distributed along the foreshore;
- Expanded boat ramp capacity to increase access and improve safety in dangerous conditions;
- A breakwater/boat motel, which could also be utilised as a fishing platform.
- Safe swimming area – located to the east near the children's play area.

This precinct can be utilised as a hub for kayakers / canoers exploring the Kerang Wetlands system. Kayak/canoe launching areas as well as information relating to accessible areas and kayak trails could be developed to strengthen this location as a hub for this activity.

#### WATERFRONT CABIN ACCOMMODATION

The masterplan includes provision of the potential for future cabins along the foreshore at Kangaroo Lake within the Caravan Park. This location provides views across the lake. Cabin accommodation could be implemented over time in line with market demand. Cabin accommodation could be utilised by new visitors to the region as well as utilised on event days.

### 7.7.2. STUDY AREA

#### FORESHORE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There may be opportunity to develop parts of the Kangaroo Lake foreshore for low density residential/rural living and/or tourism development as noted in the *Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy* (2013). This strategy identifies key areas for further investigation and required next steps in order to more robustly define this opportunity. Some strategic sites along the Kangaroo Lake

foreshore provide excellent views across the lake, which would be favourable for potential residential or tourism development.

#### **PALM BEACH AND GORTON POINT**

Palm Beach and Gorton Point are key visitor activity nodes on the western shore of Kangaroo Lake. Infrastructure at the locations could be improved to increase the amenity and attractiveness of these locations as visitor nodes. Improvement of these areas will also distribute activity along the waterfront, freeing up infrastructure capacity at the northern precinct.

#### **SHARED PATH**

There is opportunity to explore the development of a new shared path which would connect to the existing path along the western foreshore. This would provide a continuous track for walking and cycling from the northern activity node to Gorton Point. The shared path should include directional/wayfinding signage and could include interpretive signage or interactive elements relating to local flora and fauna and indigenous history. The shared path could also include introduction of strategically located exercise stations.

The caravan park and foreshore area would provide a natural hub for commencement of walks and rides along the path.



## 8. LAKE CHARM

### 8.1. OVERVIEW

Lake Charm is located approximately 17 kilometres north west of Kerang and forms part of the Kerang Wetlands. It is also located south-east of Kangaroo Lake on the eastern side of the Murray Valley Highway.

Lake Charm is a popular destination for water-based activities including water-skiing, swimming, recreational boating and powerboating and fishing. It is one of Ski-Racing Victoria's main event lakes, hosting four events a year.

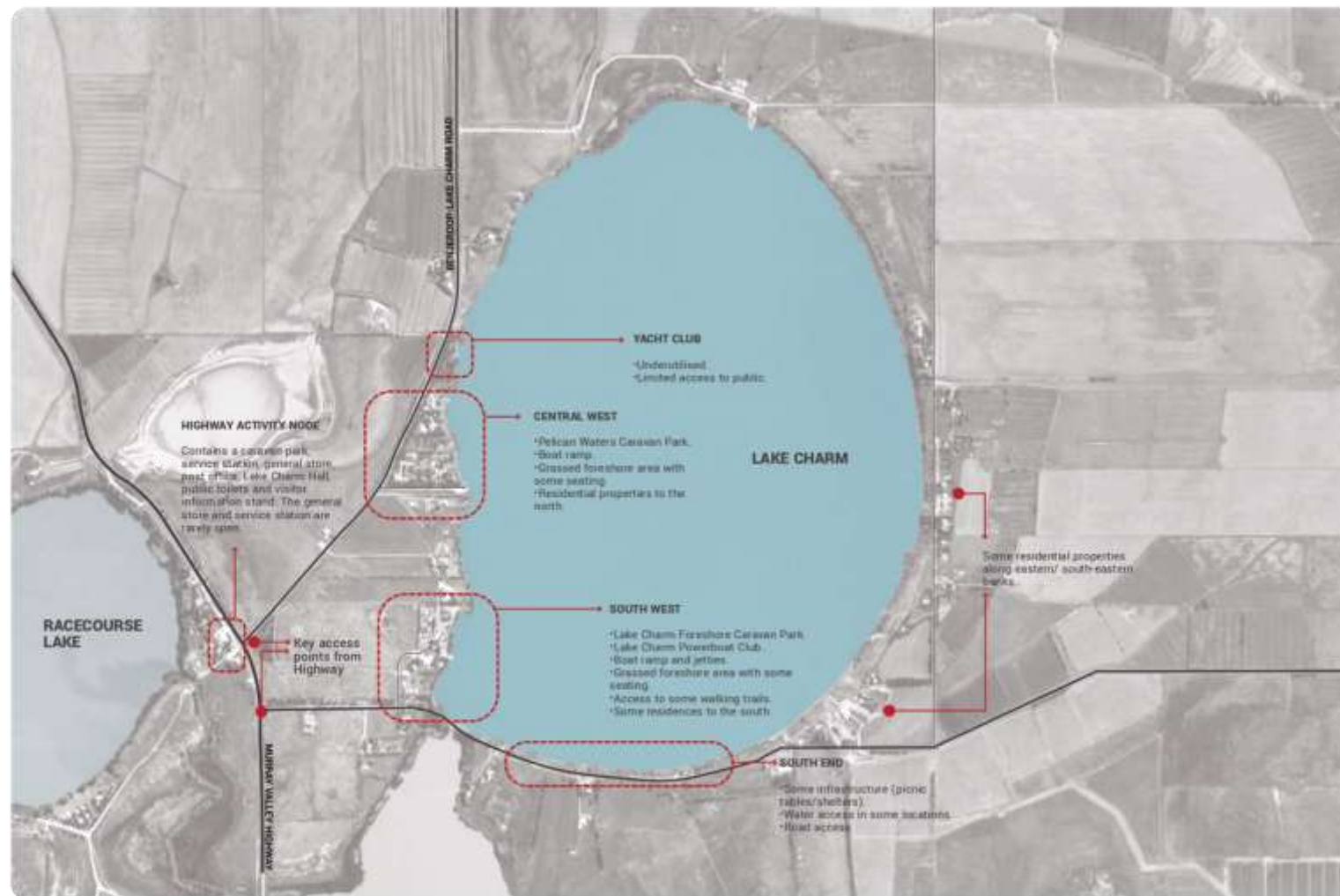
Key areas within the Lake Charm study area include the **Yacht Club**, **Central West area** (including Caravan Park, boat access and foreshore), **South-West area** (including the Lake Charm Caravan Park, powerboat club, boat ramp and foreshore) the **South End** (including accessible foreshore and some limited infrastructure such as seating) and the **Highway Activity Node** (including service centre, general store, caravan park, Lake Charm Hall, public toilets and unattended visitor information area).

The **South West area** is the current primary visitor activity node of Lake Charm. This area is a key focus for the concept masterplan. The **South End** is a key area which the community would like to see further developed for tourism uses and activities. This area is also a key precinct of focus for the concept masterplan.

There are two caravan parks located at Lake Charm, accessed via two separate roads. Pelican Waters Caravan Park is located on the western foreshore in the central area of the lake and Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park is located in the south west.

A third caravan park is located on the western side of the Murray Valley Highway, adjacent to the Lake Charm general store and town hall. These are located toward the south-western area of the lake. This area is the primary area for investigation as part of the masterplan.





GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
LAKE CHARM CONTEXT MAP PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 ( V1)



## 8.2. PLANNING

The following provides a summary of the zones and overlays which apply to Lake Charm. Maps of the zones and overlays for each precinct are provided on the following pages.

### ZONES

Lake Charm is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). The majority of land surrounding the lake is zoned Farming Zone (FZ). The Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park is in the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

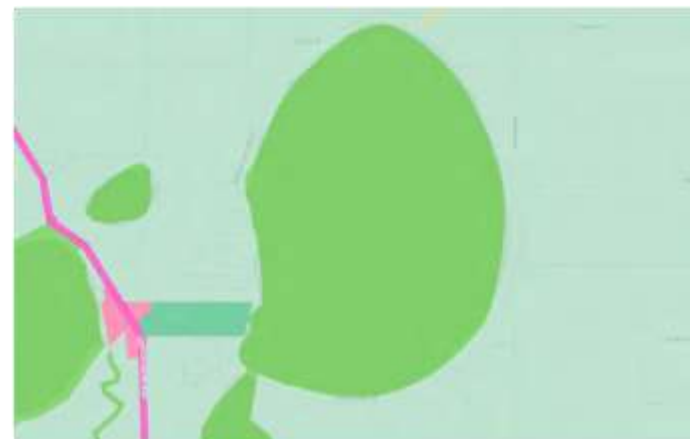
### OVERLAYS

Lake Charm is subject to the Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO) and Environmental Sensitivity Overlay (ESO3 and ESO4).

### RAMSAR LISTING

Like Kangaroo Lake, Lake Charm also forms part of the Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site.

FIGURE 10 LAKE CHARM ZONE MAP



## 8.3. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

A large portion of the South West precinct is Crown Land, including the foreshore area, caravan park and recreation reserve west of the caravan park.

The caravan park is owned by DELWP and run by the Foreshore Management Committee.

The foreshore in the Central West area is Crown Land and DELWP is the committee of management.

The South End is Crown Land and Goulburn Murray Water are the land manager.

## 8.4. EXISTING CONDITIONS

### 8.4.1. LAKE CHARM (GENERAL)

#### USES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Caravan Parks** – There are two caravan parks on the western shoreline of Lake Charm and one located on the Murray Valley Highway adjacent to Racecourse Lake. Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park is located to the south-west of Lake Charm. The park is on land managed by DELWP. There are currently 85 annual sites in the park, which are limited to 90 nights use per year. There are no casual cabins for rent. Pelican Waters Caravan Park is located approximately 500 metres north of Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park. This park contains 48 annual sites and there are 11 cabins available for rent. Both caravan parks maintain the foreshore area in front of the caravan parks. The caravan park adjacent to Racecourse Lake is a smaller park, adjacent to the general store/service station.
- **Water Skiing** – Lake Charm provides an ideal location for water skiing and Ski Racing Victoria hosts four water skiing events at Lake Charm per year. The boat ramp within the South-West precinct is used for access.
- **Boating** – Lake Charm is used widely for boating purposes both powerboating, recreational boating and fishing. Lake Charm hosts one powerboat race per year.
- **Fishing** – The lake is utilised for recreational fishing, both from the shore and from boats. The lake has also hosted fishing events.
- **Swimming** – The lake is used for swimming during the warmer months of the year.
- **Picnics** – The grassed foreshore area in the South West precinct provides an ideal environment for picnics and activities by the lakeside. The Central West area also provides this opportunity, however, is less frequented by public visitors.
- **Walking Trail** – There is approximately 2.5 kilometres of walking trails to the west of the South West precinct. This trail does not traverse the lake front, however connects to the caravan park along the northern boundary.

- **Yacht Club** – The Lake Charm Yacht Club is located north on the western bank in the northern section of Lake Charm. It is on Crown Land and provides limited access to the public.

#### SURROUNDING USES AND LINKAGES

Lake Charm is surrounded by the following land uses:

- **Farming** – The majority of land surrounding Lake Charm is used for farming purposes. Recent agricultural development includes commercial cotton growing, which is the only location in Victoria. The region also includes orchards and vineyards.
- **Residential Dwellings** – There are a number of residential properties fronting the lake. These are primarily located on the southern half of the lake on the eastern, southern and western foreshores in the Farming Zone.
- **Lake Charm Salt** – The Lake Charm Salt company is located on the primary access road into the southern precinct. They supply a range of palletised salt in large quantities.
- **Kerang Wetlands Ramsar Site** – Kangaroo Lake is part of the Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site. The Ramsar site contains 23 named marshes, lakes and swamps. The wetlands contain black box, river red gum and tangled lignum vegetation communities and contain important feeding and nesting habitat for a diverse range of native waterbird species.

#### EXISTING AND PLANNED PROJECTS

There were no planned projects of note during preparation of the Masterplan.

#### CIRCULATION

There are two key access roads to Lake Charm from the Murray Valley Highway, including via Lake Charm East Road and Benjeroop-Lake Charm Road. The access intersections off Murray Valley Highway require review to determine the need to improve safety. The Murray Valley Highway also has a speed limit of 90km per hour.

The South West area is accessed via Park Road off Lake Charm East Road. Park Road provides access to the foreshore area including the caravan park, boat launching and car parking. Park Road runs through the Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park. It is a publicly accessible road, which services the caravan park, a dwelling and a small foreshore car parking area.

There is informal car parking provided within the South West area located adjacent to the boat launching facility and a small carpark located to the north west of the caravan park.

The Central West area is accessed via Boat Ramp Road, which is located off Benjeroop-Lake Charm Road. Boat Ramp Road provides access to the Pelican Waters Caravan Park and to the boat ramp and car park. An open, informal car parking area is provided adjacent to the boat ramp on the south side of Boat Ramp Road.

The South End is accessed via Lake Charm East Road. The road is primarily unsealed, however, parts have recently been upgraded with a bitumen surface. There is no formal car parking in the South End area. Vehicles park along the roadside verges.

#### VIEWS AND VISTAS

Once on the foreshore in the South West, Central West and South End precincts, there are extensive views across Lake Charm.

On approach via Lake Charm East Road and Benjeroop-Lake Charm Road the lake is not visible. The lake cannot be seen from the Murray Valley Highway, making signage an important consideration in advertising the lake.



#### 8.4.2. SOUTH WEST AREA

##### BUILDINGS AND SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan Park** - Includes 85 annual sites, two toilet blocks located at the southern end of the caravan park, a small convenience shop and office for the caravan park.
- **Boat ramp and Jetty** - There is a boat ramp and jetty providing water access, located between the caravan park and Lake Charm Power Boat Club.
- **Car Park** - An informal car park services the foreshore and boat launching area.
- **Picnic Tables** - there are approximately 5 picnic tables along the foreshore area. These tables vary in design.
- **Playground** - A small children's playground is located along the foreshore.
- **Outdoor BBQs** - There is an electric BBQ located along the foreshore. At the time of the site visit, the BBQ was not working and was damaged.
- **Tennis Club** - The tennis club located to the west of the southern precinct includes club rooms and four tennis courts. The courts and clubrooms are currently not utilised and have fallen into disrepair.
- **Lake Charm Power Boat Club** - The Lake Charm powerboat club is located adjacent to the boat launching facility. The powerboat club includes some on site camping accommodation for members and a parking area at the rear.

##### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- **Open Grassed Areas** - The foreshore is planted with lush green grass, providing an inviting environment for relaxing, picnics and recreation activities.
- **Native Trees** - The foreshore includes native vegetation, including large trees along the foreshore.
- **Palm Trees** - The foreshore includes a row of tall palm trees, providing a beach like setting along the foreshore.

#### 8.4.3. SOUTH END

##### BUILDINGS AND SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Sheltered Seating Areas** - There are some single sheltered seating areas along the south end foreshore, including bins.

##### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- **Native vegetation and grasses** - The south end includes a mix of native trees and grasses along the foreshore. Some areas of the foreshore are inaccessible due to vegetation. Parts of the south end provide open grassed areas, which provide good locations for water access and amenity improvements.

#### 8.4.4. CENTRAL WEST

##### BUILDINGS AND SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Pelican Waters Caravan Park** - Includes 48 annual sites and 11 cabins.
- **Boat Ramp** - A boat ramp adjacent to the caravan park provides water access.
- **Car park** - A car park is provided adjacent to the boat ramp.

##### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

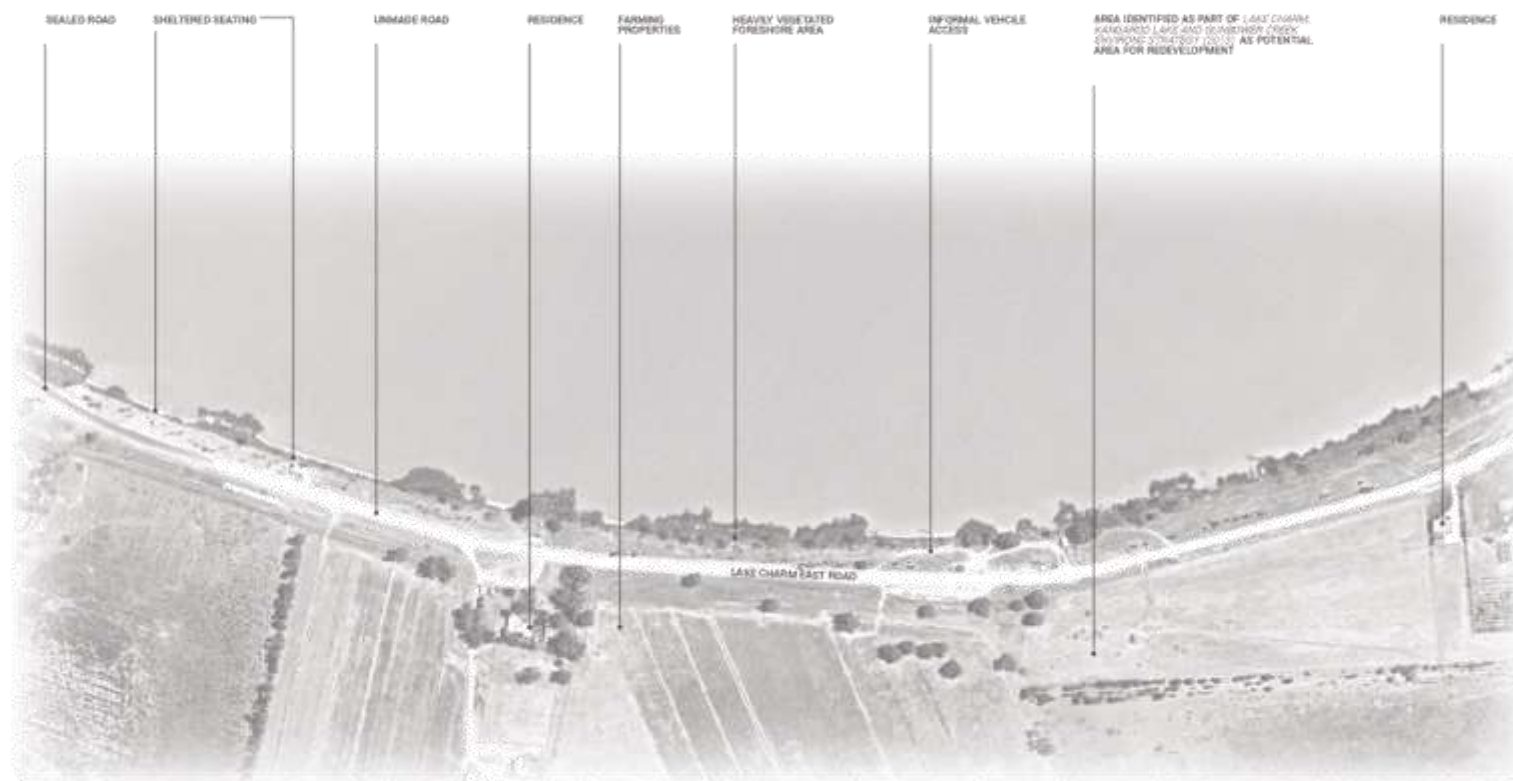
- **Native trees** - The main access road includes a row of native trees on the south side of the caravan park. This delineates the caravan park from the roadway.
- **Foreshore** - the foreshore is characterised by an open grassed area and includes scattered vegetation.

Existing conditions plans for the South West Area and South End are provided on the following pages.



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
 LAKE CHARM SOUTH-WEST EXISTING CONDITIONS PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 | V1





GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
 LAKE CHARM SOUTH-END EXISTING CONDITIONS PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 | 01









## 8.5. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

The following provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to Lake Charm by area of interest.

### 8.5.1. LAKE CHARM (GENERAL)

#### Strengths:

- Part of the irrigation network so has a permanent water storage.
- Highly popular for water skiing. Utilised by Ski Racing Victoria for events.
- Existing assets and infrastructure including caravan parks and water access infrastructure.
- Small information shelter.
- Community Hall.
- Primary School.

#### Weaknesses:

- Wayfinding and directional signage.
- Areas of the foreshore appear "private"
- Clarity around the usage of some spaces.
- No formalised tracks or trails on the foreshore.
- Limited gateway treatment or site identifier.
- Can't see lake from the Highway.
- Limited local services available (service centre and general store generally not in operation).

#### Opportunities:

- Greater utilisation of foreshore areas.
- Walking/cycling trails, linking activity areas and other lakes.
- Commercial opportunities.

- Attraction of new operator/redevelopment of Lake Charm Service Centre and General Store.
- Recreation development opportunities.
- Hub for kayak/canoe trails through the Kerang Wetlands system.

#### Threats:

- Declining local population to support commercial opportunities and community facilities e.g. primary school.
- Risk of drought affecting water storage levels.

### 8.5.2. SOUTH WEST PRECINCT

#### Strengths:

- Presentation of foreshore with large open grass areas and some public furniture (picnic tables, bench seats).
- Well maintained and presented caravan park.
- Access to walking track west of Caravan Park.
- Utilised for events.
- Water access infrastructure (boat ramp and pontoons).

#### Weaknesses:

- Lack of sites available in Caravan Park for short term stays/holiday visitors.
- Access arrangements to foreshore area, including lack of wayfinding signage.
- Road alignment.
- Delineation of car parking areas.
- Appearance of privatised foreshore areas.
- Food/beverage options.
- No formalised tracks or trails on foreshore.
- Limited BBQs / not operational.
- Caravan park toilets utilised by the public and sub-standard toilets and amenities.
- Appearance of tennis courts, degrading infrastructure and underutilised.

**Opportunities:**

- Formalisation and clarification of road access and car parking arrangements.
- Walking trails to link with key visitor nodes and existing trails to the west. Consider interpretive signage.
- Lake front multipurpose pavilion including potential kiosk/ takeaway store/kitchenette, toilets, showers, Ski Racing Victoria events, private and commercial functions and events.
- Waterfront cabins to cater to holiday and short stay visitors.
- Other accommodation opportunities (glamping).
- Upgraded, new and consistent visitor amenities and public furniture (seating/BBQs/signage).
- Utilisation of tennis courts area for improved recreation.
- Improvement and expansion to park area, create family friendly zone.
- Recreation activities and development of infrastructure.
- Bike/Walking track linking to Kerang.

**Threats:**

- Appearance of privatisation of foreshore.
- Risk of drought affecting water storage levels and ability to host a range of on water recreation activities.
- Bank erosion.

**8.5.3. CENTRAL WEST**

**Strengths:**

- Presentation of foreshore.
- Well maintained and presented caravan park.

**Weaknesses:**

- Quality of jetty from foreshore.
- Appearance of privatised foreshore.

- Limited visitor infrastructure.
- Unclear delineation of car parking areas.

**Opportunities:**

- Increase foreshore access.
- Walking trails.
- Increase short stay accommodation in caravan park.
- Upgraded/new visitor amenities and public furniture.
- New pontoons for boat ramp.

**Threats:**

- Increased appearance of privatisation of foreshore.
- Bank erosion.

**8.5.4. SOUTH END**

**Strengths:**

- Water access possible.
- Road access available.
- Not high in defined uses, providing opportunity for more recreation-based activity.
- Some existing infrastructure and amenity (sheltered picnic tables).
- Foreshore clearly appears as publicly accessible land.

**Weaknesses:**

- Unkept presentation in some areas.
- Limited directional signage.
- No defined car parking areas.
- No toilets.
- GMW land manager

**Opportunities:**

- Creation of areas for passive recreation (e.g. swimming, fishing, relaxing).
- Link to walking trails.
- Improve directional signage.
- New and consistent visitor amenity (seating, BBQs, toilets).
- Fishing platforms.
- Toilets.
- Utilise as kayak/canoe launching hub.
- Include linkages to Reedy Lake, Ibis Rookery and Lake Tutchewop.

**8.5.5. YACHT CLUB**

**Strengths:**

- Existing asset which could be more highly utilised.
- Views from higher point on lake.

**Weaknesses:**

- Limited public access. Appears as if private land.
- Lack of signage.

**Opportunities:**

- Increase public access.
- Consider linking to walking track along foreshore.

**Threats:**

- Underutilised asset by visitor markets.

**8.6. CONCEPT MASTERPLANS**

Three concept masterplans have been prepared for Lake Charm, including:

- Lake Charm Broader Opportunities Plan – providing an overview of projects proposed at a wider scale;
- South West Precinct Concept Masterplan; and
- South End Precinct Concept Masterplan.







GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
LAKE CHARM SOUTH-WEST PRECINCT CONCEPT MASTERPLAN PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 | V1





## 8.7. KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

### 8.7.1. STUDY AREA

#### RESIDENTIAL/TOURISM FORESHORE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There may be opportunity to develop parts of the Lake Charm foreshore for low density residential/rural living and/or tourism development as noted in the *Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy* (2013). This strategy identifies key areas for further investigation and required next steps in order to more robustly define this opportunity. Key areas most relevant to the concept masterplan includes the south end. The south end provides good views across Lake Charm. Future development of the south end would increase the amenity and improve conditions for investment in redevelopment.

#### SERVICE CENTRE/GENERAL STORE

The current service centre and general store is in need of activation, refurbishment or redevelopment. There is opportunity for this site to capture a greater proportion of vehicles travelling along the Murray Valley Highway, as well as provide local convenience goods to the local population and visitors.

If this site is restricted for development, Council may wish to investigate potential alternative sites for this opportunity.

#### VEHICLE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Current access arrangements to Lake Charm from the Murray Valley Highway are poor. There is no right hand turn lane to Lake Charm East Road and the right turning lane on Benjeroop-Lake Charm Road follows a bend on the Murray Valley Highway and could require modification.

There is also no left turning lane to Lake Charm East Road or Benjeroop Lake Charm Road. It is recommended these key intersections are reviewed by a Traffic Engineer.

#### SHARED PATH

A new shared path which connects key activity nodes along the Lake Charm Foreshore is proposed. This would be a shared path for both walking and cycling. A shared path along the western shoreline would increase access to the public to the waterfront and provide increased opportunity for recreation.

Key destinations to link through early works would include the South West Precinct and the South End precinct. The trail could eventually provide a looped walk/cycle around the lake.

The shared path could also be extended to other areas, including potentially linking to other lakes and towns (Kerang, Koondrook and Cohuna).

The shared path could include interpretive signage or interactive elements relating to local flora and fauna and indigenous history. The shared path could also include introduction of strategically located exercise stations around Lake Charm.

The potential location and alignment of the shared path/trail would need to be assessed in further detail.

#### SIGNAGE

Lake Charm is largely obscured from view when travelling along the Murray Valley Highway. Strategic and effective signage is required on the Highway to notify visitors of key activity / recreation nodes. This could be implemented in line with future development of key precincts.

#### RECREATION RESERVE

The recreation reserve located to the west of Lake Charm Foreshore Caravan park is a strategic piece of land which may present opportunity for future tourism and recreation development. There is currently a walking trail around the reserve, which could be improved. Other opportunities could also be explored for this piece of land such as a mountain bike park.

A golf course was mentioned through consultation as a potential opportunity for this site. An 18-hole golf course typically requires around 120-180 acres of land. The

recreation reserve has approximately 65 acres of useable land, making it insufficient for an 18-hole course. Other golfing opportunities raised through consultation include a small 9-hole course, driving range or "hole in one" course, however, these proposals would need to be commercially viable in order to be achievable, including the attraction of a willing developer and operator.

### 8.7.2. SOUTH WEST

#### MULTIPURPOSE PAVILION

There is opportunity for a multipurpose pavilion to be located within the South West Precinct, which could be utilised for a number of uses including hosting events (Ski-Racing Victoria), a seasonal café/takeaway kiosk store (which could be operated by the caravan park owners/managers) or a kitchenette for self-catering events, toilets/showers/changerooms, kayak/canoe/paddle board hire and a private function and events space that could be leased out for private functions (weddings, birthdays) and commercial events.

This hub would strengthen this precinct as a key activity node and assist in attracting other events to the Lake.

This opportunity is also provided for within the Kangaroo Lake foreshore masterplan. Two potential locations have been provided in these masterplans to ensure the highest potential opportunity in securing a permanent space for Ski-Racing Victoria to ensure continued events in the lakes area as well as improving the facilities available to locals and visitors.

There may be opportunity to explore the development of a multipurpose pavilion to also include the power boat club. This may then open up potential foreshore land for other uses such as glamping or high-quality cabin sites on the lake front. The pavilion could also be utilised as an opportunity to deliver amenities servicing the caravan park.

#### JETTY/SAFE SWIMMING AREA AND FORESHORE PARK

A jetty and safe swimming area is proposed to be located within the northern area of the precinct. This would provide a designated area for passive activities (i.e. not powerboating or water skiing). The safe swimming area would link to the open foreshore park area with a new children's playground, providing a more family friendly environment. The playground could utilise natural materials to blend with the foreshore environment and create a unique play area.

#### ACCESS AND CAR PARKING FORMALISATION

The current access and car parking arrangements within the South West precinct are not well defined. The concept masterplan provides for the formalisation of access and car parking areas, including provision of overflow car parking areas in peak periods. Signage/road markings are required to appropriately direct visitors and users to areas within the precinct.

#### RECREATION FACILITIES

The current tennis courts and cricket nets within the south west precinct are in very poor condition. The concept masterplan provides for the opportunity to reinvigorate this area for recreation use including publicly accessible tennis courts and a multipurpose court area (basketball/netball/rebound wall). Hard surfaces could be used so the areas are low maintenance. This area would provide an additional area of recreation activity for visitors to the caravan park and Lake Charm, including the family market.

There may be potential for the caravan park to assist in management of the improved recreation facilities.



**8.7.3. SOUTH END****VISITOR ACTIVITY AND SERVICING NODES**

The south end is currently limited in provision of visitor infrastructure. There is opportunity to establish visitor activity nodes along the south end foreshore which cater to more passive lake users and visitors including for swimming, BBQs, picnics, fishing, kayaking/canoeing.

Visitor activity nodes could include car parking, toilets (environmentally friendly), seating, BBQs, safe water access, and fishing platforms/kayak launching areas.

The maintenance of the foreshore should be improved to include well kept open grass areas within the activity nodes and new tree plantings along the foreshore to provide shade, improve visual amenity and improve environmental outcomes.

The south end could be serviced by a shared walking/cycling path, which links to other key destinations along the foreshore.

As is the case at Kangaroo Lake, there is opportunity for the South End to be utilised as a hub for kayakers and canoers exploring the Kerang Wetlands system in particular Third, Middle and Reedy Lakes. Kayak/canoe launching areas as well as information relating to accessible areas and kayak trails could be developed to strengthen this location as a hub for this activity.



NEW PICNIC TABLES IN FORESHORE AREAS



BOLARDS IMPLEMENTED IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS TO PROTECT FORESHORE



KAYAK LAUNCHING



ROADWAY DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE



LAKE CHARM PRECEDENT IMAGERY

MULTIPURPOSE PAVILION



NEW/UPGRADED TIMBER JETTIES



FAMILY PARK AREA WITH NATURAL PLAY ELEMENTS

## 9. MURRAY RIVER PRECINCT, KOONDROOK

### 9.1. OVERVIEW

The Murray River Precinct in Koondrook is located on the north-eastern edge of the town, bordering the Murray River and intersecting with the Gunbower Creek. The precinct stretches from the Arbuthnot Sawmill in the north to a proposed nature-based tourism hub on the Gunbower Creek in the east. The retail centre of Koondrook abuts the precinct.

Council has undertaken significant work in Koondrook to promote the town as a tourism destination, which will also support new commercial and residential investment. Recent projects include the Koondrook Wharf, which opened in late 2016 and the proposed Nature Based Tourism hub on the Gunbower Creek.

Koondrook is characterised by its heritage and river and creek environs. Its setting, character and strategic location lends itself to tourism development, particularly catering to holiday and leisure visitors.

Koondrook is strategically located adjacent to the Gunbower Island and State Park, which caters to nature-based visitors including for camping, bird watching, water-based activities (fishing/kayaking/canoeing), trail riding and hiking. The masterplan precinct therefore has a strong role in supporting and leveraging growth in these activities and associated visitor markets.

The Murray River Precinct at Koondrook has a very strong foundation to attract increased visitation and activity. The recent completion of the Wharf, impending development of the Nature Based Tourism Hub and new river crossing, proposed development of the former Goods Shed and existing infrastructure and setting make it an attractive proposition for new tourism investment. The key will be to activate the Precinct to provide a critical mass of activities to drive visitation, extended length of stay and expenditure.

A context map of Koondrook is provided on the following page.





GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
**KOONDROOK CONTEXT MAP** PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 (V1)





## 9.2. PLANNING

The following provides a summary of the zones and overlays which apply to the Murray River precinct at Koondrook. Maps of the zones and overlays for each precinct are provided on the following pages.

### ZONES

The non-commercial areas along the Murray River Precinct in Koondrook are primarily zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). Other zones include the Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), relating to the town centre, the Special Use Zone (SUZ4) relating to the caravan park and the SUZ3 relating to the Arbutnot Red Gum Sawmill. Areas surrounding the precinct are primarily residential properties in the General Residential Zone (GRZ1).

### OVERLAYS

The precinct is subject to various overlays. An Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) affects areas around the Gunbower Creek. A large portion of the precinct and the Town Centre is subject to Heritage Overlay (HO14 and HO13). The majority of the precinct is also affected by a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

FIGURE 11 KOONDROOK ZONES



### 9.3. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### OWNERSHIP

The land fronting the Murray River and land in the Gunbower Creek environs is Crown Land. Land in the south-east of the precinct forms part of the Murray River Reserve.

#### MANAGEMENT

Parks Victoria have given over responsibility to Gannawarra Shire Council to act as the committee of management for publicly owned land along the Murray River frontage in the precinct.

The Gunbower Forest is managed by Parks Victoria and DELWP.

The Murray River Reserve is managed by Parks Victoria. The reserve is required to be managed in accordance with management objectives derived from recommendations of the former Land Conservation Council (LCC), including:

- Provide opportunities for informal recreation (including camping) in a riverine environment for large numbers of people;
- Preserve and protect ecosystems to the extent that is consistent with the above;
- Apiculture be permitted;
- Allow flood mitigation and streambank protection;
- Use of existing and licensed pump and pump-line sites be permitted to continue;
- Hunting of game birds be permitted during the declared hunting period in areas specified by the land manager where conflict with other recreational users such as camping does not occur; and
- Stock access to water and grazing be permitted at the discretion of the land manager where it is compatible with zone management goals (LCC, 1985).

Importantly the Gunbower State Forest provides for greater tourism opportunities as opposed to the Gunbower National Park.

### 9.4. EXISTING CONDITIONS

An existing conditions plan for the Koondrook waterfront is provided on the following page with descriptions following.



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
**KOONDROOK WATERFRONT EXISTING CONDITIONS** PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT 2018 | V1



#### USES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Koondrook Wharf** – Completed in late 2016, the Koondrook Wharf is a significant asset on the waterfront and can be utilised for boating access, recreational fishing, a lookout point, seating, canoe/kayak launching and for special events.
- **Arbuthnot Sawmill** – The Arbuthnot Sawmill is a unique asset to the Koondrook riverfront area. The Sawmill has supplied red gum timber since 1889. A working river red gum sawmill, the operating sounds of the sawmill contribute to the heritage feel of the precinct. Visitors can undertake a guided tour of the sawmill, on a raised platform that overlooks the mill in operation. The Port of Echuca is home to a paddle steamer named after the founder of the Mill, Alexander Arbuthnot.
- **Former Railway Goods Shed** – The precinct includes a former railway goods shed. The Good Shed is not currently utilised, however, there are future plans for its revitalisation for a café/restaurant/events space.
- **Walking Track** – A walking and cycling track traverses the precinct, along the Murray River frontage. The track is part of the Koondrook Barham Red Gum Statue River Walk, which includes wood carvings of wildlife and people of significance to the region.
- **Apex Park** – Apex Park is central to the precinct, located between Punt Road to the west, the Murray River to the east, Arbuthnot Sawmill to the north and the former Railway Goods Shed to the south. It includes the following:
  - Open grassed Areas;
  - Two playgrounds (fenced and unfenced);
  - BBQ pavilion;
  - Picnic tables and seating;
  - Raised red gum platform; and
  - Outdoor exercise Equipment.
- **Accommodation** – There are two accommodation providers in the precinct including the Koondrook Caravan Park and Murray Waters Motor Inn and Apartments. The caravan park is Council owned and leased to a private operator.

The Murray Waters accommodation establishment includes 18 motel rooms. The future NBT hub will include six glamping sites.

- **Boating** – A boat ramp is located in the eastern part of the precinct, providing boat launching and trailer parking. The river and creek are used for recreational boating and fishing.
- **Fishing** – Fishing can be undertaken from the Koondrook Wharf, from the shoreline or from boats.
- **Commercial Properties** – Commercial properties located along Tramway Place, Punt Road and Main Street are included in the precinct area. These include properties occupied by the Arbuthnot Sawmill, the Murray Waters Accommodation establishment and General Store.
- **Small Houseboats** – small houseboats utilise the Koondrook waterfront, however, there are no formal mooring points.

#### SURROUNDING USES AND LINKAGES

- **Town Centre** – The precinct is a part of the Koondrook town centre. The main active commercial area is at the north end of Main Street, this area includes the Mates Royal Hotel, café, post office, general store and accommodation establishment. The town centre provides a highly important connection to the river front precinct. This includes through leveraging commercial opportunities, visitor expenditure in town as well as providing possible sites for commercial interventions.
- **Residential** – The town of Koondrook encircles the river front precinct. As of 2016, the suburb had a population of 991 people.
- **Barham** – Barham is located on the north side of the Murray River in NSW. The town centre is located approximately 1.25 kilometres north of the riverfront precinct. Barham is a larger town centre than Koondrook and includes two small supermarkets, two pubs, other speciality stores and accommodation. Barham provides a higher level of service provision to Koondrook residents than is provided in Koondrook.
- **Gunbower Island and State Forest** – Gunbower Island is situated between Torrumbarry and Koondrook and is bounded by the Murray River and Gunbower Creek. The island consists of Gunbower National Park and Gunbower State



Forest. The island is Australia's largest inland island, providing a rich natural environment and a popular destination for nature based tourists and campers. Activities include fishing, bushwalking, camping and canoeing. The area is highly important to Aboriginal people. The local Barapa Barapa tribe occupied the site for thousands of years. Evidence of Aboriginal occupation can be found in the various scar trees cooking mounds and middens.

Importantly, the Gunbower State Forest provides for potential implementation of tourism activities and infrastructure, whilst the National Park can be more restrictive to tourism development.

There are some specific notable sites within the Gunbower Island, including:

- **Tree Tops Camp Cohuna** – Tree Tops (Spences Bridge Road, Cohuna) is located approximately 12.5 kilometres south of Koondrook on the Gunbower Creek and provides camping accommodation. It is strategically located between Koondrook and Cohuna. The camp includes a function space, which is regularly booked out for parties and functions.
- **Former Stock Yards** – There is a large area of cleared land approximately 1 kilometre south-east of the riverfront, which was previously used for stock grazing.
- **Echuca** – Echuca is located approximately 76 kilometres south-east of Koondrook. Koondrook is linked to the Echuca riverfront precinct, in part due to the Arbuthnot paddlesteamer.

#### EXISTING AND PLANNED PROJECTS

- **Nature Based Tourism Hub** – A nature-based tourism hub is proposed to the south-east of the precinct, fronting Gunbower Creek. The hub will include glamping style tents, a camp kitchen and canoe platform. The project will also provide a footbridge over the Gunbower Creek, providing visitors with access to the internal tracks and trails of the Gunbower State Forest. The concept received a \$500,000 state government grant in 2017. The concept is expected to support a range of existing and new tourism initiatives, such as potential paddle steamer operation from Koondrook Wharf, kayak tours and events.

- **Goods Shed** – There is currently a proposal to convert the former Goods Shed into a restaurant/function space. This is currently in the early concept design phase.
- **Other proposals** – include an Arts Precinct, function centre and boat cruises.

#### CIRCULATION

- **Access Point** – The precinct is generally accessed via road from Punt Road and Main Street. The precinct can also be accessed on foot from the north, which takes you via the Arbuthnot Sawmill. The precinct is also accessible from the water, both at the Koondrook Wharf, along the banks and at the Koondrook boat ramp.
- **Roads** – Punt Road provides the main north south road, aligning to the Murray River frontage along Apex Park. Punt Road connects to Main Street, which is the main avenue of the town. Tramway Place also traverses the waterfront area to the east.
- **Pedestrians/cycling** – Pedestrians and cyclists can utilise the track along the river frontage (Koondrook Barham Red Gum Statue River Walk) and tracks throughout Gunbower Island, including for mountain biking/bushwalking.
- **Car parking** – Formalised on street car parking is provided on Punt Road and on Main street. There is informal car parking on Tramway Place, which services users of the boat ramp as well as fishermen.

#### BUILDINGS AND SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Koondrook Wharf** – including seating, viewing platforms and jetty.
- **Boat Ramp** – located at the juncture of Gunbower Creek and Murray River;
- **Playgrounds** – Two children's playgrounds, one fenced, one unfenced;
- **BBQ Pavilion** – large BBQ pavilion in Apex Park;
- **Arbuthnot Sawmill** – Working red gum sawmill;
- **Walking Track** – along the riverfront and through Apex Park, includes red gum carvings of local figures of historical significance and flora and fauna;
- **Former Goods Shed** – former Goods Shed located to the south of the Wharf;

- **Toilets** – public toilets, located on the south side of Arbutnot Street;
- **Red gum stage/platform** – A raised red gum timber platform in Apex Park used as a stage during events;
- **Koondrook Caravan Park** – including 8 ensuite sites, powered and unpowered caravan sites, amenities block and two electric BBQ areas.
- **Signage** – There are a number of interpretive signs throughout the precinct, however, there is no consistent theme. Other interpretive items include the sculptures as part of the River Red Gum Walk.

#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- **River Red Gums** – The precinct is overwhelmingly defined by river red gums including along the river frontage and throughout the Gunbower Island, the Arbutnot Red Gum Sawmill, the Koondrook Barham Red Gum Statue River Walk and the wharf, stage, seating and pavilions constructed in river red gum timber.
- **The Murray River and Gunbower Creek** – The Murray River and Gunbower Creek provide the water element to this precinct, dissecting the forest and providing relief and contrast to the dense forest.

#### VIEWS AND VISTAS

The most rewarding views in this precinct are those of the Murray River and Gunbower Creek. These are achieved along the river and creek fronts as well as from strategic locations, such as the Koondrook Wharf.





## 9.5. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

The following provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Koondrook river front precinct.

### Strengths:

- Existing infrastructure and tourism assets, including the wharf, Murray River, Gunbower Creek, accommodation providers, hospitality venues (pub and café), Arbuthnot Sawmill, River Red Gum Statue Walk.
- Pending tourism infrastructure investment including nature-based tourism (NBT) hub (including Creek crossing), former Goods Shed redevelopment, Arbuthnot Sawmill interest in further developing tours of the Sawmill.
- River Red Gum character and natural setting.
- Links to Gunbower Island and National Park.
- Relationship with Barham for higher order goods and services.
- Heritage character of town.
- Well maintained parkland setting.
- Quality design aesthetic of new infrastructure (Wharf development).
- Council is committee of management for riverfront area.

### Weaknesses:

- Realisation of commercial opportunities associated with wharf development. The newly constructed wharf does not contain power or sullage, which restricts the use of the wharf for commercial operations, such as overnight tours and cruises.
- Some commercial properties could be further activated, particularly along Arbuthnot Street. There may also be a need to drive additional visitation to the precinct through complementary product to the nature based and recreation activities on offer.
- Legislative requirements associated with new activities and infrastructure proposed for the Murray River and Gunbower Creek.

- Diversity of food and beverage offer.
- Directional and wayfinding signage linked to walking trails.
- Some areas of Apex Park can appear cluttered, this is a result of a number of built structures including two playgrounds, gym equipment, BBQ pavilion, red gum stage platform.
- Delineation of car parking areas near the boat ramp.
- Walking trails are 'out and back' no loops.
- There is currently no pedestrian connection to Gunbower Island in close proximity to the precinct. The nearest connection is via Island Road. This is proposed to be resolved through the Koondrook Nature Based Hub concept.
- Seasonality. The precinct, like many other tourism destinations draws its peak visitation through the holiday periods.

### Opportunities:

- Guided tours of Arbuthnot sawmill through investment in enabling infrastructure, including access and viewing platform.
- Activation and utilisation of former Goods Shed as a restaurant and events space with outdoor dining as well as potential tours and visitor servicing hub.
- Commercial activation of Koondrook Wharf for commercial operators.
- Linkages to walking and cycling tracks through Gunbower State Forest including the potential for looped tracks (short walks and long walks) and mountain bike park.
- Improved amenity and presentation in Apex Park.
- Exploration of new visitor attractions to complement existing product.
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Enhance river red gum themes.
- Activation of commercial properties and existing heritage buildings e.g. Butter Factory Border Packers.
- Extract economic benefit through local expenditure.
- Mooring points for houseboats on the Gunbower Creek and Murray River.
- Delineation of car parking areas.



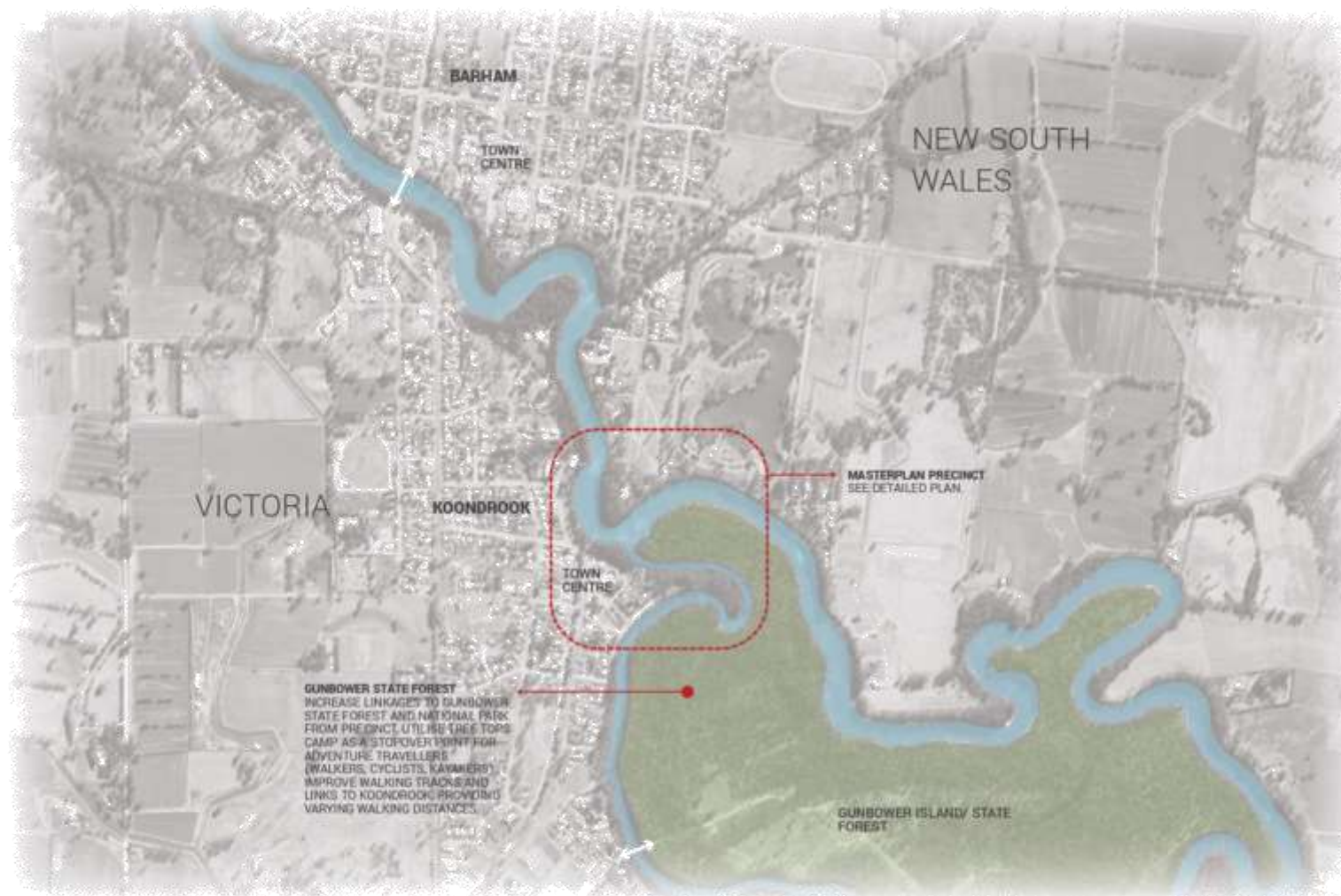
- Leverage opportunities for solar power to link to nature-based branding of Koondrook.
- Future redevelopment of caravan park and creation of strategic development sites.

**Threats:**

- River and creek bank erosion.
- River and creek accessibility due to low water levels.
- External threats (policy) to Arbutnot river red gum Sawmill operations.
- Attraction of quality and experienced operators for tourism assets, including NBT hub and goods shed redevelopment.

**9.6. CONCEPT MASTERPLAN**

Two concept masterplans have been prepared for the Murray River Precinct. The first is a broader opportunities plan, whilst the second, more detailed concept masterplan relates to the Koondrook waterfront area.



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
 KOONDROOK WATERFRONT BROADER AREA OPPORTUNITIES PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 (V1)





## 9.7. KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

### WHARF ACTIVATION

Activation of the wharf is a key project for Koondrook. The wharf was completed in 2016, however requires power and sullage to enable commercial vessels to operate from the wharf. Upgrading the services on the wharf would enable Koondrook to become a starting point or stop off point for boat tours along the Murray River, including the potential for paddle steamer tours.

### GOODS SHED REFURBISHMENT/DEVELOPMENT

The former Goods Shed presents a strong opportunity for refurbishment and development. The Goods Shed is a heritage building and is strategically located near the Wharf and at the northern terminus of Main Street.

There is potential for the wharf to be converted to a restaurant, function and events space. This could include an outdoor component, which would enhance the attractiveness as a dining and event space.

There is also opportunity for the Goods Shed to become a hub for other tourist activities in the precinct such as a servicing point for tours along the Murray, a canoe/kayak and bike hire facility and a small visitor information presence. The feasibility of this opportunity would need to be investigated in more detail. However, the Nature Based Tourism Hub may also provide an alternative location for the incorporation of a kayak/canoe hire facility.

### NATURE BASED TOURISM HUB + PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE CROSSING

The Nature Based Tourism (NBT) Hub is progressing to implementation and designs are underway for the development of a pedestrian crossing along the Gunbower Creek.

The NBT hub will deliver six glamping sites on the Gunbower Creek. This will attract new visitor markets to Koondrook and increase market opportunities for new tourism product.

The development of the pedestrian bridge crossing over the Gunbower Creek is a major piece of infrastructure that will connect Koondrook to Gunbower Island, opening opportunities for new tourism product such as walking/cycling trails, birdwatching, hiking and mountain bike park (discussed further below).

### MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL PARK AND LINKS TO EXISTING TRAILS

There is opportunity to investigate the development of a mountain bike park on the Gunbower Island/State Forest Area in Koondrook. A mountain bike park would increase the attraction of Koondrook to the cyclist and adventure tourist market and make Koondrook a hub for this activity.

The Five Mile Mountain Bike Trail in the Murray Valley Regional Park in NSW provides a good example of this product type. The trail is 7km and is a purpose built trail.

A mountain bike park on Gunbower Island could provide a loop back to Koondrook as well as link up with existing trails in the Gunbower State Forest and National Park and link to Cohuna for those riders wishing to undertake a more extensive ride.

The Tree Tops Camp in Cohuna would provide a natural stopping, servicing and rest point for riders.

There is also opportunity for riders between Koondrook and Cohuna to switch modes of travel and convert to kayaking or canoeing from Tree Tops to Cohuna.

Supporting Koondrook as a hub for cycling of different types will also assist in the potential future to develop the Koondrook to Kerang rail trail and support the potential for mountain bike and other adventure sport events between Koondrook and Cohuna.

A feasibility study would be required to progress this opportunity including assessing appropriate locations, trail design and length and development cost.

### WALKING TRAILS

The proposed pedestrian bridge crossing over the Gunbower Creek creates opportunities for new walking trails to be developed on Gunbower Island. New walking tracks could commence in Koondrook and link back to Koondrook. The



walking track could include interpretive signage of natural flora and fauna, indigenous history and interpretation (scarred trees on Gunbower Island) and settlement history.

There could be a small elevated boardwalk near the creek crossing which is above flood water level. This would create a unique attraction when the Gunbower water level is high.

There is also opportunity to incorporate viewing platforms/lookout points which bring visitors to the waters' edge of the Murray River.

#### ALL ABILITIES PLAY SPACE

An all abilities adventure playspace is proposed for the former Hall site. The hall was recently demolished, providing a piece of vacant Council owned land near the foreshore. The site is adjacent to the toilets, car parking and existing businesses.

An all abilities play space would be a good community asset and provide an activity for the family market.

The development of an all abilities play space would reduce the need for the two playgrounds on the foreshore area. Providing opportunity to increase the foreshore area to host public events such as markets, events, creation of picnic areas and development of new BBQ pavilions.

#### PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Public realm improvements are proposed for the Koondrook waterfront areas including the alignment and formalisation of roads, footpaths, car parking areas, new plantings, raised garden beds and pedestrian friendly zones.

New public realm improvements could be delivered around the Goods Shed, providing an open terrace area, with seating overlooking the Murray River and wharf area. Contemporary lighting could activate this area at night and enhance the attraction as a dining/events space.

#### APEX PARK

Improvements to Apex Park are also proposed including consolidation of the two play spaces to an all abilities playspace. There may be opportunity for a natural themed play space and improvements to amenities including seating, BBQ pavilions and open grass areas for picnics and events.

#### CARAVAN PARK

The caravan park provides opportunity for future upgrade and redevelopment, including the potential for short stay cabin accommodation fronting the creek.

There may also be a long-term opportunity to consider the creation of a future strategic redevelopment site utilising some of the caravan park land with creek frontage.

#### ARBUTHNOT SAWMILL TOURS

The Arbuthnot Sawmill is a unique attraction in Koondrook. Further promotion of the Arbuthnot Red Gum Sawmill for tourism is proposed, including through the introduction of an access ramp on the river side, connected to a new riverside track, providing access to the elevated platform within the Sawmill. This would enhance the tours of the mill, improve safety and formalise the sawmill tours in Koondrook.

#### BOAT MOORINGS

The concept masterplan provides for new moorings within the Murray River and the Gunbower Creek to cater to houseboat visitors and cruise vessels. Enabling water vessels to stopover in Koondrook is a key consideration in attracting additional stopover and overnight stays in Koondrook.

#### EXTERNAL LINKS

There is opportunity for Koondrook to better link to external tourism product and experiences including the Gunbower State Forest. Koondrook could be strengthened as a hub by improving the connections to the Gunbower, including new walking, cycling tracks, kayak/canoe trails and horse trails.

An area in the vicinity of Tree Tops Camp "area" could be considered for a halfway camp between Koondrook and Cohuna. This location could host unique accommodation options for nature based tourism enthusiasts.

Strengthening Koondrook as a hub for cycling, kayaking/canoeing and hiking with appropriate infrastructure (trail heads, car parking, signage, facilities hire businesses) will assist development of this product.



ELEVATED PLATFORM TO ARBUTHNOT SAWMILL  
CONNECTED TO RIVER SIDE TRACK



POTENTIAL FOR VIEWING PLATFORM OVER THE  
MURRAY RIVER



MURRAY RIVER PRECINCT KOONDROOK  
PRECEDENT IMAGERY

FACILITATION OF TOUR BOAT CHARTERS FROM THE KOONDROOK WHARF



POTENTIAL FOR GOODS SHED TO INCLUDE OUTDOOR  
DINING COMPONENT AS WELL AS PROVIDING AN  
EVENTS SPACE



RIVERSIDE SEATING



WAYFINDING SIGNAGE FOR WALKING TRACKS AND  
TRAILS



BOARDWALK TRAIL ABOVE FLOOD WATER LEVEL ON  
GUNBOWER ISLAND



FUTURE POTENTIAL FOR QUALITY CABINS AS PART  
OF CARAVAN PARK DEVELOPMENT



POTENTIAL MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

## 10. GUNBOWER CREEK PRECINCT, COHUNA

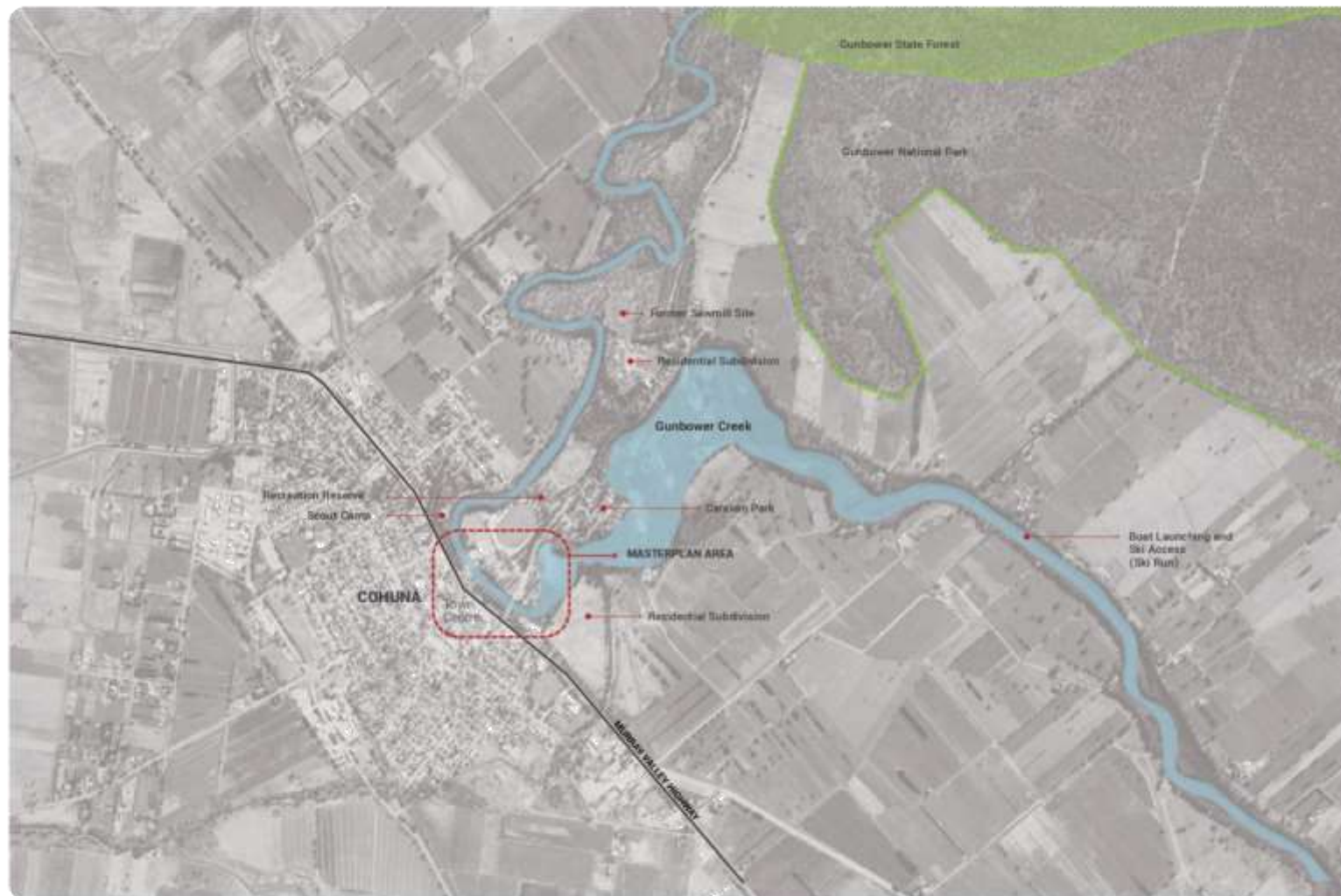
### 10.1. OVERVIEW

The Gunbower Creek precinct in Cohuna is located at the juncture of the commercial area of the town centre on the Murray Valley Highway and Gunbower Island. The key areas of the precinct include Garden Park, Apex Park and free RV Camping site. The precinct is generally bounded by the Cohuna Recreation Reserve in the north, the town centre in the south, the Cohuna Holiday Park in the north-east and the Murray Sound residential development site in the east.

The main street fronts the Gunbower Creek, providing striking visual amenity for the town centre. Cohuna has significant potential to grow its visitor economy and this precinct can play a key role in facilitating this growth.

A context map of Cohuna is provided on the following page.





GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
**COONUA CONTEXT MAP** PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 (V1)



## 10.2. PLANNING

The following provides a summary of the zones and overlays which apply to the Gunbower Creek Precinct at Cohuna.

### ZONES

The precinct is primarily subject to the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) within the Gunbower Island area. The commercial areas in town are zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). These areas are surrounded by land in the General Residential Zone (GRZ).

### OVERLAYS

The precinct is covered extensively by the Environmental Significance Overlay, including ESO1, ESO2 and ESO4. The residential development to the east of the precinct is also subject to a Development Plan Overlay (DPO).

FIGURE 12 COHUNA ZONES MAP



### 10.3. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### OWNERSHIP

The majority of land in the precinct is Crown Land, particularly land north-east of the Murray Valley Highway covering the Gunbower Creek, parklands and recreation reserve.

Commercial and residential properties are in private ownership.

The Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre is owned and run by Council staff.

#### MANAGEMENT

Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) own and manage the water assets relating to the Gunbower Creek in the Cohuna precinct. GMW have advised that they are actively looking at options to increase revenue from assets that they manage. For proposed uses on the waterway, GMW would need to determine whether the proposal would impact on the waterway. If there is a proposal to operate a business on the water, GMW would enter into a lease or licence agreement with the business.

Council is the committee of Management of land fronting the Gunbower Creek, including Garden Park, Apex Park and the Cohuna Recreation Reserve. Council works with Goulburn Murray Water and other departments in management of the waterfront.

DELWP manage land further north of the Recreation Reserve, including the former Sawmill Site, which is currently leased to a private operator but is not currently occupied.

### 10.4. EXISTING CONDITIONS

An existing conditions plan is provided on the following page and followed by descriptions.



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
COHUNA WATERFRONT EXISTING CONDITIONS PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 | V1





#### USES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Commercial Properties** – The precinct includes commercial properties located along the Murray Valley Highway. Commercial uses in this area include a supermarket, pub, tavern, café, banks, retailers and some restaurants.
- **Apex Park** – located on Gunbower Island, Apex Park includes open grassed areas, children's playground, skate park, BBQ areas, swings and walking path. This area has an impressive and extensive view across Gunbower Creek.
- **Free RV Camping Area** – This large area is located on Gunbower Island, between Apex Park and the Cohuna Recreation reserve, fronting Gunbower Creek. It is currently utilised as an area for free RV parking. It has been used for free RV camping for approximately 18 months. It is steadily utilised throughout the year and is very popular in peak holiday periods.
- **Garden Park** – located between Gunbower Creek and the Murray Valley Highway, Garden Park includes native vegetation, seating, signage, the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre and sound shell. Garden Park is also utilised for events.
- **Cohuna the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre (Gateway Cohuna)** – Gateway Cohuna is located on the south side of Gunbower Creek. It is the official tourist information centre of Cohuna and is housed in a contemporary designed facility. The centre provides visitor information, hire of mountain bikes, fishing rods and has local produce for sale.
- **Walking Paths** – There are existing walking paths in the precinct, which loop as well as connect to tracks outside the precinct.
- **Gunbower Creek** – Gunbower Creek provides the water setting for the precinct, narrowing along the Murray Valley Highway frontage before opening to a large expanse of water to the east. The Gunbower Creek can dry out at certain times of the year, however, there are discussions of keeping the water level higher through the year.
- **Water Activities** – The area is popular for water activities including water skiing, kayaking, recreational boating and fishing.

#### SURROUNDING USES AND LINKAGES

The precinct is surrounded or adjoins the following:

- **Cohuna Recreation Reserve** – Cohuna Recreation Reserve is located adjacent to the precinct. It includes two football/cricket ovals, bowls club, tennis club and swimming pool.
- **Cohuna Waterfront Holiday Park** – Cohuna Waterfront Holiday Park is located to the north-east of the precinct. The park includes a mix of cabins, annual sites, powered and unpowered sites. The park is well maintained. It includes a large number of annual sites, some powered sites and waterfront cabins.
- **Residential Development (East)** – There is a residential subdivision (Murray Sound) located to the east of Gunbower Creek with water frontage. The subdivision includes approximately 70 lots across the entire subdivision. There are currently 6 lots, which have been sold and houses either built or under construction.
- **Existing Residential** – The town centre is surrounded by existing residential areas.
- **Ski Run** – A boat launching area and ski-run on the Gunbower Creek is located approximately 2.7 kilometres east of the precinct. This is the main boat launching area in vicinity of the precinct and is highly popular with skiers.
- **Tree Tops Camp Cohuna** – Tree Tops (Spences Bridge Road, Cohuna) is located approximately 8.3 kilometres north-west of Cohuna on the Gunbower Creek and provides camping accommodation. It is strategically located between Cohuna and Koondrook. The camp includes a function space, which is regularly booked out for parties and functions.
- **Cohuna Golf Course** – Cohuna Golf Club is located approximately 3.8 kilometres north of the precinct. It is an 18-hole grass course.
- **Gunbower State Forest** – The Gunbower State Forest stretches from the north-west to the north east around Cohuna. It includes 4WD tracks, camping, fishing, swimming, boating and canoeing and scenic drives. Gunbower Forest Drive is a leisurely half day drive, starting at Cohuna, which links a number of historical, cultural and ecological sites.

- **Gunbower National Park** - The Gunbower National Park is largely located to the east of Cohuna and includes nature-based activities including camping, fishing, swimming, boating and canoeing and scenic drives.
- **Former Sawmill Site** - Located approximately 1.3km north east of the precinct adjacent to the Gunbower Creek is a site which was formerly used as a sawmill. The land is managed by DELWP and is leased to a commercial operator, however, the site is not in use. The site is primarily cleared of vegetation and includes some old remnant structures from the sawmill. The site is in the Public Resource and Conservation Zone (PRCZ), adjacent to a residential development in the General Residential Zone (GRZ). The cleared area of the site is approximately 2.5 hectares in area. The site may present a strategic opportunity as a visitor accommodation site in the medium to long term. However, potential issues relating to planning, existing leaseholds and management would need to be resolved.

#### EXISTING AND PLANNED PROJECTS

There are plans for the redevelopment/upgrade of the toilets in Apex Park, which are located beside the skate park.

#### CIRCULATION

- **Access Point** - Vehicle access to Gunbower Island is via Cohuna Island Road. This bridge also provides pedestrian access. The Cohuna Weir also provides pedestrian access across the creek to Gunbower Island.
- **Roads** - The Murray Valley Highway is the main arterial road, which separates the commercial area from the recreation area. Cohuna Island Road provides access from the town centre to Gunbower Island, as well as the caravan park and ski-run and boat launching area. Tennis Road provides access to the RV camping area, swimming pool, bowls club and tennis courts.
- **Pedestrians/cycling** - There are two walking tracks for pedestrians, one loops around Garden Park and the other around Apex Park. Cohuna Island Road bridge and the Cohuna weir provide pedestrian access across Gunbower Creek. Beyond the precinct, cyclists and walkers can use gravel roads which lead to the Gunbower State Forest and National Park.

#### BUILDINGS AND SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

Buildings and other infrastructure on site includes the following:

- **Cohuna Gateway** - A contemporary designed tourist information centre, which also incorporates toilets and outdoor seating area.
- **Sound Shell** - There is a sound shell located in Garden Park, which is utilised when events are held in Garden Park.
- **BBQ Pavilions** - There are a number of BBQ pavilions located in Apex Park, which are ageing and dilapidated.
- **Walking Tracks** - There are some existing walking tracks in the precinct, including in Garden Park and Apex Park.
- **Playground** - a fenced children's playground located at the northern end of Apex Park.
- **Skate Park** - a concrete skatepark located at the south end of Apex Park.
- **Car park** - There is on street parking along the Murray Valley Highway as well as a car park to the west of Gateway Cohuna, which also provides large vehicle bays. There is also a gravel car park servicing Apex Park.
- **Signage** - There are various signs in the precinct providing tourist information. Many are ageing and randomly located.
- **Seating** - There are various seats scattered in the precinct including picnic tables and standard bench seating.
- **Cohuna Weir** - The Cohuna weir was constructed in 2006 to replace the original weir built between 1908 and 1910. The weir controls the flow of water of the Gunbower Creek.

#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The precinct is characterised by open grass areas with tall, established vegetation, particularly along the water frontage in Garden Park, creating an avenue along the Gunbower Creek. The precinct has a distinctive natural feel alongside the urban environment of the town centre.

**VIEWS AND VISTAS**

Glimpses of the Gunbower Creek are achievable from the Murray Valley Highway, obscured by vegetation along the creek. Views are largely unobstructed alongside the creek. Views across Gunbower Creek to the east are particularly impressive from Apex Park.







### 10.5. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

The following provides a summary of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the waterfront precinct at Cohuna.

#### Strengths:

- Council is committee of management for the recreation reserve area, providing greater control over development outcomes.
- Unique nature-based setting of town, including creek and environs.
- Existing tourism information hub (Gateway to Gannawarra Tourism Information Centre).
- Well performing caravan park.
- Existing walking tracks and trails.
- Links to Gunbower State Forest and National Park.
- Existing tourism assets including Caravan Park, Ski-Run, Gunbower Creek, boat tours, kayak hire (summer).
- Strong destination for RV touring visitors.

#### Weaknesses:

- Limited commercial accommodation (apart from Caravan Parks and free RV camping) that engages with the waterfront.
- Some ageing/dated accommodation stock.
- Limited engagement with creek through on water infrastructure including pontoons and jetties.
- Main pedestrian connection to Gunbower Island is via Cohuna Island Road, with secondary connection via weir.
- No engine driven boats allowed past Caravan Park. Tour and charter boats have a limited presence in town.
- No leveraging of creek frontage through commercial opportunities.
- Interface and relationship with Cohuna Recreation Reserve.
- No waterfront dining opportunities.

- Location of free RV camping site at prominent position of view line from town centre.
- Limited wayfinding and interpretive signage, particularly associated with walks from town.
- No private, commercial events space.
- Gaps in quality dining experiences.
- Facilities in Apex Park need improvement (BBQ Shelters, toilet block).
- Swimming pool has infrastructure issues, located adjacent to the Creek.
- Capacity issues of current ski-run area.

#### Opportunities:

- Waterfront dining opportunities.
- New commercial accommodation on waterfront, exploring multiple potential sites and typologies.
- Potential for new replacement swimming pool for community and visitors.
- Linking and formalisation of tracks and trails, including wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Increasing capacity of existing ski-run or creation of a new ski-run to increase potential ski market.
- Gateway entrance treatments to Gunbower Island.
- New children/teenager activities (expansion of skate park, flying fox, playspaces).
- Hub for tours and operators (charter boats, kayak/canoe/paddleboat hire).
- New unique pedestrian creek crossing.
- Leverage nature-based opportunities (star gazing, fishing, swimming, bird watching).
- Night time attractions.
- Relocation of RV camping site but maintain walking distance to Town.
- Accommodation.
- Linking and formalisation of walking tracks.

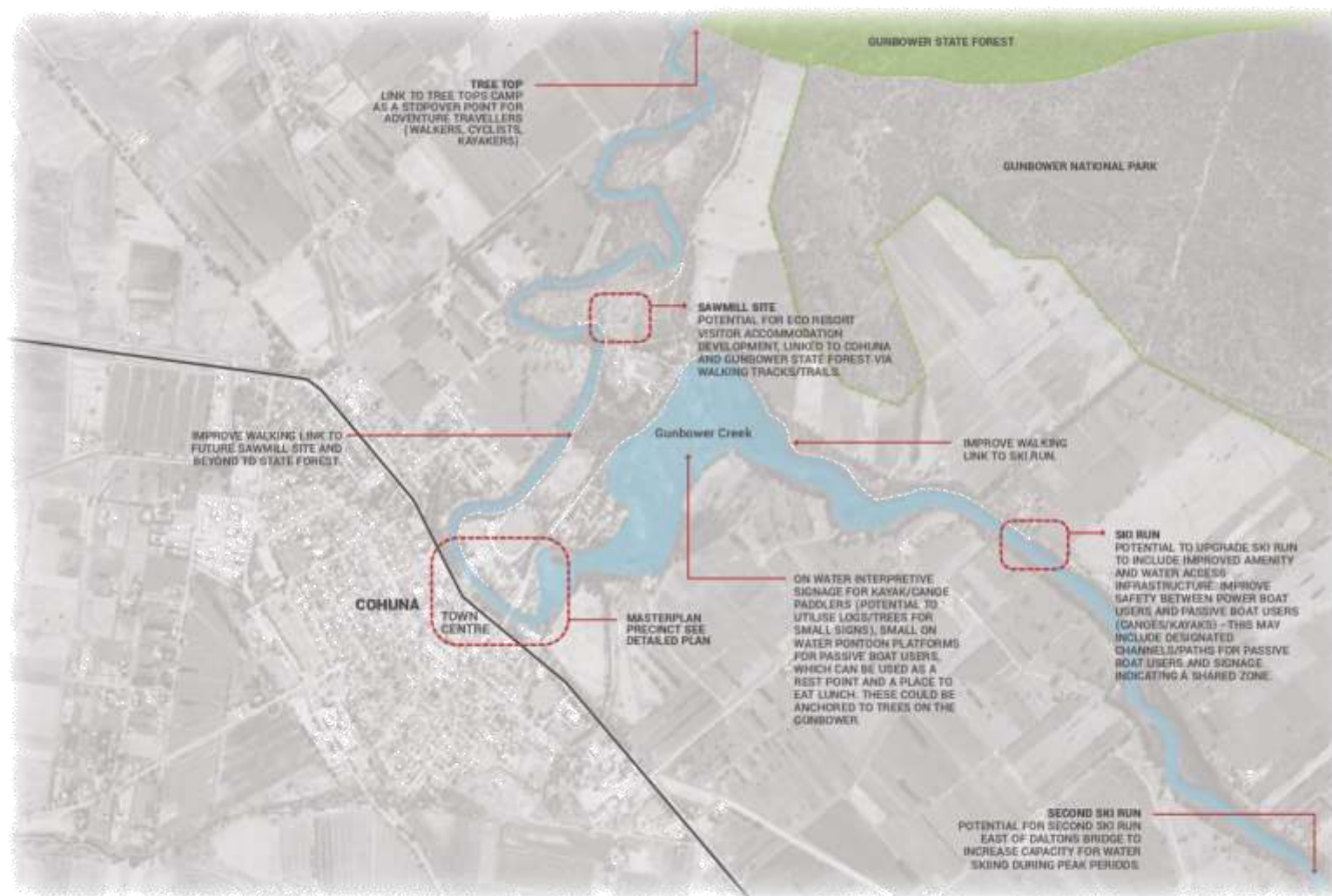
- Leverage 'solar' or green infrastructure opportunities (i.e. lighting, electric car recharge hub, sustainable designs, natural swimming pool).

**Threats:**

- Attraction of commercial investment in large scale accommodation.
- Regulatory issues surrounding implementation of some masterplan interventions.
- Capacity of caravan park for holiday and leisure visitors.
- Drought, affecting water levels of creek.
- Attraction of quality and experienced operators for key infrastructure investments/facilities.

**10.6. CONCEPT MASTERPLANS**

Two concept masterplans have been prepared for the Cohna waterfront. The first is a broader opportunities plan, whilst the second, more detailed concept masterplan relates to the Gunbower Creek precinct at Cohna.



GANNAWARRA WATERFRONT MASTERPLANS PROJECT  
COHUNA BROADER PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES PREPARED BY URBAN ENTERPRISE OCT2018 | V1







## 10.7. KEY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

### ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT

Cohuna has a lack of accommodation targeting some segments of the holiday leisure market (lifestyle leaders) and business visitors. The waterfront presents the opportunity to develop unique waterfront accommodation that fills a gap in the provision of accommodation.

The concept masterplan makes provision for a site for commercial accommodation development on Council managed land. This would enable Council to control the development outcomes, ensuring a quality result for the waterfront and Cohuna.

Accommodation on this site could be eco-style self-contained accommodation, which maximises views of the Gunbower Creek to the south, east and west.

The former Sawmill site also presents as a potential opportunity for accommodation development. This is discussed further under the Sawmill site opportunity.

### SWIMMING POOL

There is opportunity to consider relocating the community swimming pool within the foreshore area. The foreshore location has a number of benefits, including attracting tourists to the foreshore area during the summer months, providing a safe swimming area and activating the precinct. A small kiosk/café could be included as part of the swimming pool redevelopment.

Relocation of the swimming pool would enable new connections to be developed to the north east, including new walking trails.

There is potential to explore the opportunity of development of the pool as a natural pool, which uses natural processes through a regeneration pond to clean the water with no chemicals being required. This precinct would provide a unique attraction for visitors as well as a required piece of community infrastructure to replace the existing pool. However, a natural pool is likely to occupy a larger area, which may limit other opportunities such as accommodation development. It is also likely that development of a natural pool would be a significant investment.

### NATIVE GARDEN AND INTERACTIVE LANDSCAPE

A native garden and interactive landscape area is proposed to be located between the potential accommodation site and the potential swimming pool site. This space is based on the location of existing native trees in the precinct. It also provides a natural connection between the precinct and maintains view lines from Apex Park through the precinct.

### WHARF AREA

The concept masterplan includes the potential opportunity to develop a small wharf area in Apex Park. A new wharf area could include a restaurant/café, function and events space, visitor amenities, boat tour point and passive watercraft (kayaks/canoe/paddle boards). The proposed location provides outstanding views north-east across Gunbower Creek and can be accessed via watercraft, which would facilitate a boat tour hub as well as hire of kayaks and canoes. This area would also be an ideal location for the servicing of events such as swimming events, kayaking/canoeing events and triathlons. Facilities such as permanent storage for boat hire operators and toilets would be required.

### RV CAMP SITE

The free RV camping area is an important asset to Cohuna and is a heavily utilised space.

The concept masterplan proposes to relocate the free RV camping area to the north, utilising land as part of the recreation reserve. This would provide a location for free RV visitors within walking distance of the town centre. A combination of plantings and timber screening could be used around the perimeter of this space to improve its appearance.

There may also be opportunity to utilise the current entrance building/kiosk at the recreation reserve as an entry point to the RV camping area.

#### **FUTURE EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL AREAS / RECONFIGURATION OF RECREATION RESERVE**

The concept masterplan provides for the long term consideration of the relocation or reconfiguration of the recreation reserve (bowls/tennis) to enable future commercial development along the waterfront area. This would open up land for redevelopment, whilst providing new recreation facilities and infrastructure.

#### **CARAVAN PARK CABIN ACCOMMODATION EXPANSION**

The caravan park is a popular park and is at capacity during the peak holiday. There may be opportunity in the short term to deliver new high-quality cabin accommodation on the south end of the caravan park, fronting Gunbower Creek. This location provides excellent views across the Gunbower and would assist in providing a short term solution to the provision of additional accommodation.

#### **SAWMILL SITE ECO RESORT DEVELOPMENT**

As previously discussed, the former Sawmill Site, located 1.3km north-east of the precinct presents the opportunity for a strategic accommodation site. Cohuna currently has a significant accommodation gap. This site would enable the development of a unique resort accommodation offering in a nature-based setting close to the town centre. Different accommodation typologies could be established on this site and it has the potential to be staged. Linkages to the Sawmill site could also be improved including between the town, the State Forest and National Park.

It is likely that significant investment would be required to develop this site, including the attraction of a large operator. It is likely to be a longer-term strategic opportunity.

Potential issues relating to planning, existing leaseholds and management would need to be resolved in order to facilitate development of this site.

#### **EXTERNAL LINKS**

There is opportunity for Cohuna to better link to external tourism product and experiences including the Gunbower State Forest and further afield to Koondrook. Cohuna could be strengthened as a hub by improving the connections to the

Gunbower State Forest including new linking walking and cycling paths, kayak, canoe and horse trails.

There is also opportunity for the precinct to act as a hub for trail visitors, including through the provision of appropriate infrastructure (trail heads, facilities hire, parking facilities, signage, accommodation).

The area in the vicinity of Tree Tops Camp could provide a midway stopping point between Cohuna and Koondrook for walkers, kayakers or cyclists. This location could include visitor eco hut accommodation and camping sites for adventure trail visitors.

Supporting Cohuna as a hub for trail visitors will assist in the potential to attract adventure sports events between Cohuna and Koondrook.

#### **KAYAK/CANOE TRAIL**

There is opportunity to enhance the kayak and canoe paddler experience on the Gunbower Creek through the introduction of on water interpretive signage and resting platforms. The on water interpretive signage could be small plaques located on tree stumps in the water. There is opportunity to explore the potential for on water resting pontoons, which could be anchored to tree stumps. These would provide a resting area and lunch spot for passive boat users. These interventions could be considered as part of canoe trails and tours, which link to Tree Tops Camp and further afield to Koondrook.

#### **RECREATION AND PLAY AREAS**

New and/or upgraded recreation spaces are proposed as part of the concept masterplan, including:

- Upgrades to the skate park, including a shade coverings and new features, as well as potential for a half-court basketball court.
- A new and/or upgraded quality playground adjacent to the wharf area.
- A new multipurpose court, which could be utilised for basketball and netball and also include a rebound wall.
- Beach Areas in Apex Park, including a sandy foreshore and temporary infrastructure such as bathing boxes.

#### GUNBOWER PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

A new creek crossing linking Garden Park with the waterfront on the north side of the creek is proposed. This would enhance the connection of the CBD to the future accommodation development, swimming pool and RV camp site area. This could be developed as a unique design element, creating an attraction in its own right. The bridge/pontoon could also incorporate contemporary lighting to activate the site at night.

There may be opportunity to incorporate the use of the structure for events and dining into the design.

#### SECOND SKI RUN

There is opportunity to increase the capacity of Cohuna to attract ski visitors, by increasing the capacity of the Gunbower Creek for skiing. The existing ski run is popular amongst skiers but is in high demand during the summer months. There is potential to implement a second ski run area beyond Daltons Bridge, which would alleviate capacity issues associated with the existing ski run. There is also opportunity to upgrade the amenity and infrastructure of the existing ski run to provide a more attractive and user-friendly space for existing and future users. There is a need to improve the safety of the creek in this area between power boats and passive boat users (kayaks/canoes). This could be achieved through the designation of paths or channels for passive boat users in high speed boat areas as well as the inclusion of signage to notify boat users that it is a shared zone.

#### OTHER

Other proposals as part of the concept plan include:

- New opportunities for the Gateway Centre, including potential for a small gallery.
- New formalised car parking areas to service accommodation development, swimming pool and wharf area.
- Solar power car charging station as part of the Gateway Visitor Centre car park.

- New gateway entrance treatment and signage on Cohuna Island Bridge crossing.
- Flying fox across the Gunbower Creek to provide an activity for teenagers, this could be run as part of the caravan park.
- Improved walking paths and linkages throughout the precinct.
- New amenities and infrastructure as part of Apex Park.





WOODEN WHARF AREA FOR VASSEL KAYAK LAUNCH AND CRUISE DEPARTURE



ZIP LINE



SHADED SKATE PARK



UNIQUE PEDESTRIAN CREEK CROSSING



GUNBOWER CREEK PRECINCT COHUNA PRECEDENT IMAGERY

WATERFRONT ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY



POTENTIAL FOR ECO CABIN ACCOMMODATION AS PART OF SAWMILL SITE DEVELOPMENT



WATERFRONT PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL (LORNE SEA BATHS)



CREEK SIDE RESTAURANT/BARB/EVENT SPACE ON WHARF



## 11. PRIORITY PROJECTS / IMPLEMENTATION

### 11.1. INTRODUCTION

The following provides a summary of key projects identified for each of the Waterfront Precincts, including their priority level, stakeholders and required actions. Not all individual masterplan interventions are included in the table, rather projects that are most likely to achieve the highest impact in terms of visitation, revitalisation and economic development are included. This metric is also what has determined the assigned project priority level.

Priority levels relate to both importance and timing, and are as follows:

Priority 1	High/ Short Term Priority
Priority 2	Medium/ Medium Term Priority
Priority 3	Low/ Longer Term Priority

There may also be opportunity to group projects when undertaking feasibility, scoping, design or construction. The grouping of projects could be based on their spatial relationship or their operational/functional ties.

**11.2. KANGAROO LAKE****TABLE 17** KANGAROO LAKE PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority	Project Title	Overview	Location	Project Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders	Actions
1	Multi-Purpose Pavilion	New multi-purpose pavilion, that could be owned by Ski Racing Victoria on Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park land	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Gannawarra Shire	Ski-Racing Victoria Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park (KLCP) Goulburn Murray Water Community	Undertake feasibility study, concept design and business case
1	Foreshore Improvements	Improved foreshore presentation and amenity (seating, BBQs, car parking, children's playground, walking/cycling trail).	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Gannawarra Shire	KLCP Goulburn Murray Water Community	Prepare Architectural designs / landscape plans and costings
1	On Water Infrastructure Improvements	Development of jetties, fishing platforms, boat moorings, boat ramp, breakwater/boat motel, safe swimming areas etc.	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water Community	Prepare designs / costings. Assess feasibility of larger-scale investments (i.e. breakwater/boat motel)
1	Shared Path	Shared path linking North and Eastern foreshore destinations.	North and Eastern Foreshore	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water Community	Prepare trail design and costings
2	Residential Development	Potential foreshore residential development opportunities.	See <i>Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy (2013)</i> for required actions.			
2	Waterfront Cabin Accommodation	Development of new cabin accommodation on waterfront at Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park. Potential to occur post completion of foreshore improvement works.	North (Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park Foreshore Precinct)	Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park	Gannawarra Shire	Work with Kangaroo Lake Caravan Park to deliver waterfront accommodation
2	Palm Beach and Gorton Point Upgrades	Amenity and infrastructure improvements (seating, water access, amenities).	Palm Beach and Gorton Point	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water Community	Scope improvements / upgrades
1	Arts Trail		To be determined	Gannawarra Shire	Community	Scope/Feasibility
2	Bike Track to Kerang			Gannawarra Shire	Gannawarra Shire MRT	

### 11.3. LAKE CHARM

**TABLE 18** LAKE CHARM PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority	Project Title	Overview	Location	Project Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders	Actions
1	Multi-Purpose Pavilion	New foreshore multi-purpose pavilion, including potential hub for Ski-Racing Victoria, amenities block for Foreshore Caravan Park, kayak/canoe hire, community function centre and event space. This may also incorporate new facilities for the power boat club. (Note: The opportunity for a Ski-Racing Victoria hub is also provided for within the Kangaroo Lake Masterplan).	South West Precinct	Gannawarra Shire	Ski-Racing Victoria DELWP Caravan Park GMW Power Boat Club Foreshore Management Committee (FMC) Community	Undertake feasibility study, concept design and business case
1	Visitor Activity and Servicing Nodes	Visitor amenity nodes including car parking, toilets, seating, BBQs, safe water access, fishing platforms, kayak/canoe launching.	South End	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water Community	Scope works, prepare designs and costings
1	Shared Path	Shared path linking activity nodes along Lake Charm foreshore.	Lake Charm	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water Community	Prepare trail design and costings
1	Recreation Facilities	Redevelopment of recreation facilities including tennis court, multipurpose court (basketball/netball/rebound wall).	South West Precinct	Gannawarra Shire	Community	Scope, prepare designs and costings
1	Signage	Road signage on Murray Valley Highway.	Lake Charm	Gannawarra Shire Vic Roads	Community	Scope signage requirements, prepare designs and costings
1	Vehicle Access Arrangements	Improvement of road access arrangement (turning Lanes) from/onto Murray Valley Highway.	Lake Charm	Gannawarra Shire Vic Roads	Community	Undertake traffic assessment
2	Jetty and Safe Swimming Area	Designated safe swimming zone and jetty for fishing and passive watercraft.	South West Precinct	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water Community	Scope works, prepare designs and costings
2	Residential/Tourism Development	Potential foreshore development opportunities.	See <i>Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy (2013)</i> for required actions			
2	Access and car parking formalisation	Formalisation of access, car parking and signage.	Lake Charm Foreshore Public Caravan Park (LCFPCP) Boat Ramp Area	Gannawarra Shire LCFPCP Power Boat Club	Gannawarra Shire DELWP FMC	Scope works, prepare designs and costings
3	Service Centre/General Store	Activation/redevelop current service centre, alternatively seek private sector interest in new service centre.	Lake Charm	Gannawarra Shire Owner/Operator	-	Seek private sector investment
3	Recreation Reserve	Explore opportunities for reserve (Potential to include Mountain bike track/pump track, native park/habitat area).	South West Precinct	Gannawarra Shire	DELWP Community	Scope works and feasibility
1	Arts Trail		To be determined	Gannawarra Shire	Gannawarra Shire	Scope and feasibility
2	Bike Trail to Kerang				Gannawarra Shire MRT	

#### 11.4. KOONDROOK WATERFRONT

**TABLE 19** KOONDROOK WATERFRONT PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority	Project Title	Overview	Location	Project Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders	Actions
1	Wharf Activation	Improving wharf services to allow for commercial activation (tours, cruise boat access).	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Murray Darling Basin Authority, NSW Government	Scope works and cost upgrades
1	Boat Moorings	New boat moorings to enable vessel stopovers (i.e. houseboats).	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Murray Darling Basin Authority, NSW Government	Scope works and cost
1	Nature Based Tourism (NBT) Hub and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing	Delivery of NBT Hub and bridge pedestrian crossing (underway).	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Parks Vic.	Continue with implementation and construction
1	Mountain Bike Trail Park and Links to Existing Trails	Development of mountain bike park/pump track on Gunbower Island and assessment of feasibility of connection to Tree Tops Camp area and beyond to Cohuna.	Koondrook Waterfront / Gunbower Island	Gannawarra Shire	Parks Vic.	Undertake Feasibility Study
1	Walking Trails	New walking trails and associated infrastructure.	Koondrook Waterfront / Gunbower Island	Gannawarra Shire	Parks Vic.	Scope, prepare designs and costings
1	Arbuthnot Sawmill Tours	Access improvements to improve tour offer.	Koondrook Waterfront	Arbuthnot Sawmills with Gannawarra Shire	-	Scope works, prepare designs and costings
1	External Links	New linkages to Gunbower State Forest, and creation of hub in Koondrook for kayak/canoe/walking/cycling trails. Potential connection to Tree Tops Camp area and beyond to Cohuna.	Koondrook Waterfront / Gunbower Island	Gannawarra Shire	Parks Vic.	Trail alignment design, scope required works, costings
2	Goods Shed Refurbishment/Development	Development of the Goods Shed for hospitality offer. Potential servicing point for tours and hire facilities.	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire in partnership with owners/operators	-	Scope, prepare designs and costings
2	Public Realm Improvements	Road alignment and formalisation, car parking formalisation, safe pedestrian zones, raised planters, open terrace near Goods Shed.	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	-	Prepare landscape architect designs and costings
2	All Abilities Play Space	All abilities play space on former Hall site.	Koondrook	Gannawarra Shire	-	Scope works, prepare designs and costings.
3	Caravan Park	Future upgrade, delivery of waterfront cabin accommodation and long-term opportunity to create strategic redevelopment site.	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Private Operators	Prepare Caravan Park Masterplan
3	Apex Park	Amenity improvements, consolidation of play spaces, natural play elements.	Koondrook Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	-	Scope, prepare designs and costings



**11.5. COHUNA****TABLE 20** COHUNA WATERFRONT PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority	Project Title	Overview	Location	Project Lead	Partners/Stakeholders	Actions
1	RV Camp Site	Relocation and development of Free RV camp site. Facilitates use of existing site for alternative purposes.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Gannawarra Shire	Scope works, prepare designs and costings
1	Accommodation Development	Development of waterfront accommodation to fill market gap	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Scoping/ Feasibility Study/ Detailed Masterplan Design
1	Swimming Pool	Relocation / development of new swimming pool.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Undertake/Update Feasibility Study, including location assessment and costings.
1	Caravan Park Cabin Expansion	New high-quality cabin accommodation on the south end of Caravan Park.	Cohuna Waterfront	Caravan Park / Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Scope, prepare designs and costings
1	External Links	New linkages to Gunbower State Forest, and creation of hub in Koondrook for kayak/canoe/walking/cycling trails. Potential connection to Tree Tops Camp area and beyond to Koondrook.	Cohuna Waterfront / Gunbower Island	Gannawarra Shire	Parks Vic	Trail alignment design, scope required works, costings
1	Wharf Area	Wharf area in Apex Park including restaurant/café, function and events space, visitor amenities, kayak/canoe hire. (potential to deliver as smaller scale/scope project in shorter term).	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water, Coliban Water	Feasibility Study / Designs and Costings.
2	Native Garden and Interactive Landscape	Development of native garden and interactive/sensory landscape on waterfront.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Landscape design/costings (included as part of detailed Masterplan).
2	Kayak/Canoe Trail	On water interpretation as part of a kayak trail along the Gunbower Creek, utilising Cohuna as a starting point.	Gunbower Creek	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water, Parks Vic.	Feasibility Study
2	Second Ski Run	Second ski run area beyond Daltons Bridge, which would alleviate capacity issues associated with the existing ski run.	Cohuna / Gunbower Creek	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Feasibility Study
2	Gunbower Pedestrian Crossing	New river crossing linking Garden Park with the waterfront on the north side of the Creek.	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water, Coliban Water	Prepare designs and costings
3	Sawmill Site Development (Accommodation / Eco-Resort)	Development of Sawmill site for eco-resort.	Cohuna	Private Owner in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire and DELWP	-	Feasibility Study / Masterplan
3	Recreation / Play Areas	Recreation and play improvements (Skate park, playgrounds, multipurpose courts).	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	-	Prepare designs and costings

3	Future expansion of commercial areas/reconfiguration of recreation reserve	Long term consideration of the relocation or reconfiguration of the recreation reserve (bowls/tennis).	Cohuna Waterfront	Gannawarra Shire	Goulburn Murray Water	Consider as part of any future recreation reserve planning / facilities planning.
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A COHUNA VISION

Please see next page.





## APPENDIX B TABLE OF USES

**TABLE 21** PPRZ – SUMMARY OF TABLE OF USES

Use
<b>Section 1 - Permit Not Required</b>
Informal outdoor recreation, Open sports ground, Any use listed in Clause 62.01, Contractors depot, Heliport, Office, Retail premises, Store, Any other use not in Section 3
<b>Section 2 - Permit Required</b>
Contractor's depot - if the Section 1 condition is not met, Heliport - if the Section 1 condition is not met, Office - if the Section 1 condition is not met, Retail premises - if the Section 1 condition is not met, Store - if the Section 1 condition is not met
<b>Section 3- Prohibited</b>
Brothel Cinema based entertainment facility Corrective institution Display home Funeral parlour Industry Saleyard Transport terminal (other than Heliport) Veterinary centre Warehouse (other than Store)
Source: Gannawarra Shire Planning Scheme, Clause 36.02 Tables exclude conditions for each use.

**TABLE 22** C1Z – SUMMARY OF TABLE OF USES

Use
<b>Section 1 - Permit Not Required</b>
Accommodation (other than corrective institution), Art and craft centre, Child care centre, Cinema, Cinema based entertainment facility, Education centre, Exhibition centre, Home based business, Informal outdoor recreation, Office, Place of Worship, Railway, Retail Premises (other than Shop), Shop (other than Adult sex product shop), Tramway, Any use listed in Clause 62.01.

### Section 2- Permit Required

Adult sex product shop, Agriculture (other than Apiculture and Intensive animal husbandry), Industry, Leisure and recreation facility (other than Informal outdoor recreation, Major sports and recreation facility and Motor racing track) Place of assembly (other than Carnival, Cinema, Circus, Exhibition centre and Place of worship) Utility installation (other than Minor utility installation and Telecommunications facility), Warehouse, Any other use not in section 1 or 3.

### Section 3 - Prohibited

Corrective institution, Intensive animal husbandry, Major sports and recreation facility, Motor racing track

Source: Gannawarra Shire Planning Scheme, Clause 34.01

Tables exclude conditions for each use.

**TABLE 23** FZ – SUMMARY OF TABLE OF USES

Use
<b>Section 1- Permit Not Required</b>
Agriculture (other than Animal keeping, Apiculture, Intensive animal husbandry, Racing dog training, Rice growing and Timber production), Animal keeping (other than Animal boarding), Bed and breakfast, Cattle feedlot, Dependent person's unit, Dwelling (other than Bed and Breakfast), Home based business, Informal outdoor recreation, Primary produce sales, Racing dog training, Railway, Rural industry (other than Abattoir and Sawmill), Rural store, Timber production, Tramway, Any use listed in Clause 62.01.
<b>Section 2- Permit Required</b>
Abattoir, Animal boarding, Broiler farm, Camping and caravan park, Car park, Cattle feedlot, Cemetery, Crematorium, Dependent person's unit, dwelling, emergency services facility, freeway service centre, group accommodation, host farm, industry, intensive animal husbandry, landscape gardening supplies, leisure and recreation, manufacturing sales, market, place of assembly, primary school, racing dog keeping,

racetrack, dog training, renewable energy facility, residential hotel, restaurant, rice growing, sawmill, secondary school, timber production, trade supplies, utility installation, warehouse, wind energy facility, winery.

### Section 3- Prohibited

Accommodation, amusement parlour, brothel, child care centre, cinema based entertainment centre, education centre, nightclub, office, retail premises.

Source: Gannawarra Shire Planning Scheme, Clause 35.07

Tables exclude conditions for each use.

**TABLE 24 PCRZ – SUMMARY OF TABLE OF USES**

### Use

#### Section 1- Permit Not Required

Boat launching facility, Camping and caravan park, Caretaker's house, Car park, Informal outdoor recreation, Interpretation centre, Jetty, Kiosk, Marine dredging, Mooring pole, Open sports ground, Pier, Pontoon, Road, Utility installation (other than Telecommunications facility), Any use listed in Clause 62.01, any other use not in section 2 or 3.

#### Section 2- Permit Required

Emergency services facility, renewable energy facility (other than wind energy facility), wind energy facility.

#### Section 3 - Prohibited

The use in Section 1 described as 'Any other use not in Section 2 or 3' – if the Section 1 condition is not met

Source: Gannawarra Shire Planning Scheme, Clause 36.03

Tables exclude conditions for each use.

**TABLE 25 SUZ4 – SUMMARY OF TABLE OF USES**

### Use

#### Section 1- Permit Not Required

Apiculture, camping and caravan park, informal outdoor recreation, mineral exploration, mining, minor utility installation, natural systems, search for stone.

#### Section 2- Permit Required

Accommodation (other than camping and caravan park and corrective institution), Agriculture (other than Apiculture and Intensive animal husbandry), car park, mining, place of assembly (other than exhibition centre and night club), retail premises (other than adult sex bookshop), search for stone, store, utility installation.

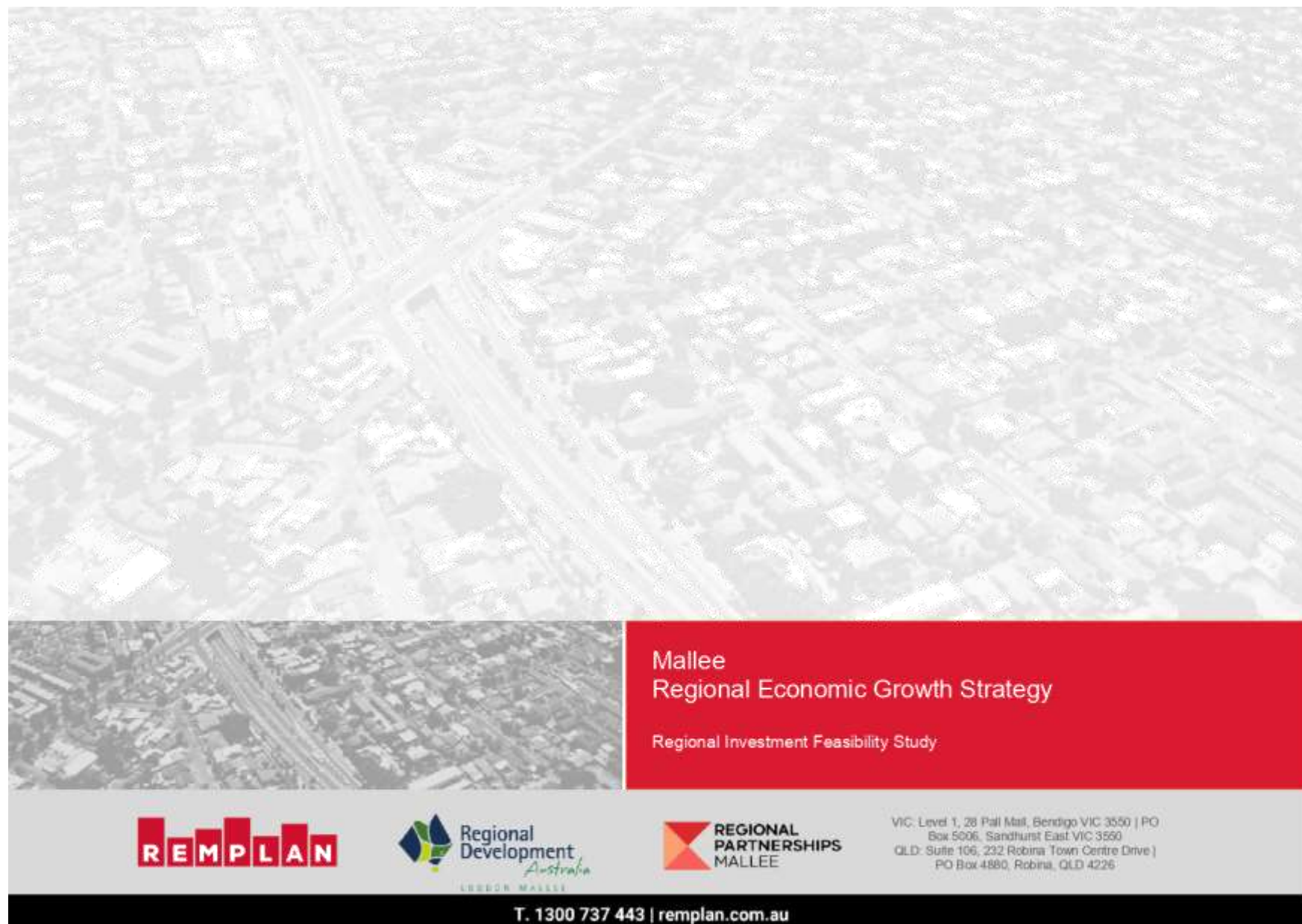
#### Section 3 - Prohibited

Adult sex bookshop, Brothel, Cemetery, Corrective institution, Fuel depot, Freezing and cool storage, Intensive animal husbandry, Motor racing track, Night Club, Shipping container storage, Transport terminal, Warehouse (other than Store).

Source: Gannawarra Shire Planning Scheme, Schedule 4 to the Special Use Zone

Tables exclude conditions for each use.







Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

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## Disclaimer

All figures and data presented in this document are based on data sourced from the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and other government agencies. Using ABS datasets, the regional economic modelling software REMPLAN, developed by REMPLAN has been applied to generate industrial economic data estimates. This document is provided in good faith with every effort made to provide accurate data and apply comprehensive knowledge. However, REMPLAN does not guarantee the accuracy of data nor the conclusions drawn from this information. A decision to pursue any suggestions mentioned in the report is wholly the responsibility of the party concerned. REMPLAN advises any party to conduct detailed feasibility studies and seek professional advice before proceeding with any action and accept no responsibility for the consequences of pursuing any of the findings or actions discussed in the document.

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Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

## Executive Summary

The Loddon Mallee Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committee in collaboration with the Mallee Regional Partnership (MRP) initiated the development of a Regional Economic Growth Strategy. To be delivered over three distinct project stages, it will develop the next significant strategic economic development framework at a regional scale.

A Regional Economic Growth Strategy is critical for the next phase of investment throughout the Loddon Mallee. The Regional Economic Growth Strategy will provide a strategic basis and rationale for priority investment and projects throughout the region.

Stage One of the project involved preparing a consolidated economic analysis outlining priority investment areas.

The Mallee region is an economic powerhouse that leverages horticultural investment and large-scale food industry production to support local prosperity. Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing and Manufacturing & Construction are the top three industry sectors, representing \$4.458 billion (43.6%) of total output in the Mallee region.

Since the last Census 17,458 new jobs were created in the Mallee region, primarily across Health Care & Social Assistance, Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, Education & Training, Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing and Administrative services.

Five regional focal investment areas underpin the success of the region, as outlined in Figure ES-01. This includes a focus on the Murray Mallee cross border economic zone, investing in the regional strength of horticulture and agriculture and attracting the right local skills across a range of sectors. In addition, the Regional Economic Growth Strategy requires investment and improvement in the areas of energy generation, mineral resources, digital connectivity, as well as tourism and associated infrastructure for residents and visitors.

Figure ES-01 Regional Economic Growth Strategy Framework



The following table summarises the regional focal investment area initiatives that will drive the economic objectives for the region and deliver broader economic benefits.

Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Table ES - 1 Summary of the Regional Focal Investment Area Initiatives

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
Murray Mallee economic region	Economic transport connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create two-lane Murray River crossings at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc capable of handling oversize and over-mass vehicles including High Performance Freight Vehicles (HPFV).</li> <li>Commence planning for a second road bridge in Mildura.</li> <li>Identify and develop a clearly defined HPFV road network that connects with the NSW and Victorian arterial road network and connects with the ports of Melbourne and Geelong.</li> <li>Progressively upgrade the carrying capacity of important freight routes within the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) that are constrained by bridges and culverts.</li> <li>Complete the Murray Basin Rail Project and support related development by logistics companies to ensure it is fully utilised.</li> <li>Commence a feasibility study of a standard gauge rail connection between Yella (near Merbein) and either Menindee or Broken Hill providing intercontinental rail connection with Darwin, Perth and Sydney.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More regional export (\$M)</li> <li>More regional employment (jobs)</li> <li>Better levels of service delivery</li> </ul>
	Increase regulatory efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the newly appointed Victorian Cross Border Commissioner (VCBC) is focused on the most important issues facing the region's economy, including, but not limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonisation of heavy vehicle rules on allowable weights and configurations of vehicles and drivers' licenses, and</li> <li>Differences in labour hire regulations between NSW and Victoria.</li> </ul> </li> <li>If proven successful, advocate to continue the VCBC role after the trial period ends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefit 1 – Streamlined regulatory and licensing requirements</li> <li>Benefit 2 – Growth in the border economies through dedicated cross border facilitation</li> <li>Benefit 3 – Reduced barriers to accessing services regardless of state boundaries</li> </ul>



Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
	Coordination and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew efforts to undertake economic development planning for the Functional Economic Zone crossing the NSW and Victorian border and establish resourcing arrangements to implement the plans.</li> <li>• Maintain efforts to coordinate via jurisdictions such as the Murray River Group of Councils, and the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum.</li> <li>• Create a Sunraysia Agrifood Network to articulate the long-term strategic vision for the horticultural industry along the Murray River. Advocate for common issues such as freight, water and biosecurity policy.</li> <li>• Consider a prospectus (or similar) to support attraction of both government and private investment in the region's industries.</li> <li>• Support investment and expenditure for key regional industry sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, construction and tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger regional population (persons)</li> <li>• Increased regional export (\$M)</li> </ul>
	Sustainable use of irrigation water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understand and engage in national water policy to ensure it encourages sustainable and productive use.</li> <li>• Investigate physical constraints to supplying water to the Mallee and what can be done to mitigate negative effects.</li> <li>• Fund infrastructure renewal in irrigation districts to achieve resource efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenario modelling of water allocations equivalent to millennium drought conditions could result in a 20 percent reduction in production and result in \$32.247 million less regional output and a contraction of 225 jobs in the local supply chain.</li> <li>• Sustainable water use implementation is required to ensure more private investment (\$M), co-ordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure, and population (persons) and industry growth (\$ Value-add).</li> </ul>

## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
<b>Business expansion &amp; innovation</b>	Export opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage momentum in Free Trade Agreements.</li> <li>• Test the feasibility of creating a Mildura inland port, with infrastructure and services to facilitate export, such as quarantine, AQIS and fumigation.</li> <li>• Ensure State and Federal government support for export businesses.</li> <li>• Ensure governments invest in regional freight infrastructure.</li> </ul>	
	Value adding opportunities and supply chain improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete supply chain analysis to understand demand for export, local value-add opportunities and farm income diversification, including opportunities to leverage current and future transport infrastructure.</li> <li>• Invest in interconnecting transport infrastructure such as intermodal sites</li> <li>• Attract new rail operators to extend value to local businesses and create a competitive freight market to access Victorian ports.</li> <li>• Pursue business opportunities, such as new services, as identified in the supply chain analysis.</li> <li>• Utilise the supply chain analysis to inform freight route planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased regional export (\$M).</li> <li>• Increased regional employment (jobs)</li> <li>• Co-ordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure to support economic development.</li> </ul>
	Attract new business investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend current government support for private businesses wishing to expand, through grants, export assistance and help with planning issues.</li> <li>• Create a Regional Capital Investment Fund (or similar) to support businesses wishing to expand and requiring access to equity.</li> </ul>	
	Regional research and development (R&D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the capability and depth of the agricultural R&amp;D and extension-focused institutions within the region, including Birchip Cropping Group, Southern Mallee Farming Systems, Mallee Sustainable Farming, Irymple Horticulture Centre, La Trobe University and SuniTAFE.</li> <li>• Realise the potential for the newly formed Mallee Regional Innovation Centre (MRIC) to drive innovation and the uptake of technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research activities drive economic benefits for the region, for example MRIC is estimated to create annual economic benefits of \$19.7 million arising from its research program.</li> </ul>

Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research investment will boost the number of local jobs in tertiary education.</li> </ul>
	Digital connectivity for agricultural systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage implementation of new technologies particularly the use of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automation</li> <li>Internet of Things (IoT)</li> <li>Data sharing and use of big data</li> </ul> </li> <li>Provide fit-for-purpose networks to allow uptake of new technologies.</li> <li>Investigate the role of government subsidies and user pays arrangements in establishing these networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better digital connectivity drives business efficiency and positions industry to leverage digital technologies to improve productivity.</li> <li>A 25% increase in productivity in blackspot areas could generate an additional \$52.038 million and support up to 303 (direct and indirect) long term jobs.</li> </ul>
Future skills for the region	Ensure school leavers are ready for work or further education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Mallee students to complete Year 12 or vocational training.</li> <li>Increase awareness amongst students of career paths available within local industries.</li> <li>Establish a Mildura based Tech School that encourages take up of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related careers and ensure the Tech School benefits students from the broader region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sustainable workforce.</li> </ul>
	Create the skilled workers required by our industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better orientate the vocational and higher education sectors to expand their course range in the Mallee to focus on the needs of industry.</li> <li>Support and encourage the dual enrolment model developed by La Trobe University and SuniTAFE.</li> <li>Undertake a Skills Demand Assessment in the dryland parts of the Mallee region and develop options to meet these needs.</li> </ul>	
	Encourage skilled migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish concierge and settlement services to encourage skilled workers to relocate to the Mallee.</li> </ul>	





Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore other options for encouraging skilled migration (both domestic, secondary and from overseas) e.g. supported visa schemes, creation of a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) and marketing job opportunities in the region.</li> </ul>	
	Provide adequate worker housing and other fundamental services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the Robinvale housing strategy and ensure its implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population growth supports economic activity and broader regional benefits. Based on the current demographic profile of the Mallee region, a general population increase of 1,000 residents would see an additional 405 working residents, 373 of which would work within the region.</li> </ul>
New energy and mining	Unlocking new energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an energy roadmap to understand how to move the region to a new energy future.</li> <li>Develop an advocacy and engagement strategy to address regulatory barriers and identify grid constraints within the system.</li> <li>Advocate to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) for a feasibility study into the duplication of the existing transmission lines in north west Victoria to unlock constrained renewable energy investment throughout the Mallee region.</li> <li>Advocate for changes to national policy to ensure decisions about grid infrastructure are based on the complete economic Cost Benefit Analysis and not a financial assessment of the transmission line.</li> <li>Advocate for changes to national policy that currently restrict movement of electricity between states.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the proposed \$2.8 billion of pent up utility scale investment was constructed over a 20 year period with annual construction totals of \$140 million, it is estimated that up to 549 jobs would be supported throughout the broader Loddon Mallee Region.</li> </ul>
	Capitalising on the Mallee's mineral sands and rare earth deposits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage further opportunities for mineral sands and rare earths mining within the region.</li> <li>Ensure the completion of the Murray Basin Rail Project to support mineral sands mining in the Lalbert area.</li> </ul>	





Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
Improving liveability in rural cities & towns	Boost our Rural Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In areas of population growth ensure that facilities grow with increasing demand:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew Swan Hill Hospital</li> <li>Build the South Mildura Recreational Centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>Complete the visions of the cities of Swan Hill and Mildura to better orientate their CBDs towards the riverfront.</li> <li>Prepare a preliminary business case for a convention centre suited to Mildura. Explore potential markets, appropriate style and scale, and audit established accommodation facilities to assess their adequacy.</li> <li>Advocate and lobby for location of a Government agency to be headquartered in Mildura or surrounds.</li> <li>Support increased numbers of international students attending tertiary institutions.</li> </ul>	
	Improved passenger services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realise the aspiration within the Regional Network Development Plan (<i>Connecting Regional Victoria</i>) of having five return passenger train services per day between Melbourne and Swan Hill.</li> <li>Noting that Mildura is the only regional city in Victoria without a passenger rail service connection to Melbourne, explore alternative ways connection to Melbourne can be facilitated, including considering airfare subsidies (such as in Queensland <a href="https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/LocalFareScheme">https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/LocalFareScheme</a>).</li> <li>Undertake a feasibility study exploring the potential of a regular commuter flight from Bendigo to Adelaide via Mildura.</li> </ul>	
	Vibrant small towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the role of co-design, place-making and citizen-led approaches to activate township renewal.</li> <li>Provide funding to stimulate amenity enhancements, community infrastructure projects and capacity building in small towns.</li> <li>Develop innovative service delivery models for primary healthcare and childcare.</li> <li>Provide improved small town transport options and digital connectivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract and retain people and businesses in small Mallee towns.</li> </ul>

Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Focal Area	Economic Objective	Economic Priority	Economic Benefit
	Infrastructure supporting the visitor economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address the lack of overtaking lanes and provide intersection treatments on major tourist routes that are shared with freight traffic, including the Sturt, Sunraysia, Mallee and Murray Valley highways.</li> <li>Seal Arumpo Road and Marna Box Creek Road (NSW) to permit all-weather access to Mungo National Park.</li> <li>Bring access roads to Lake Tyrrell and the expanding Silo Art Trail up to a safe and appropriate standard.</li> <li>Provide excellent mobile reception on all major tourist routes.</li> </ul>	
	Build the value of our tourism assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete construction of the Murray River Adventure Trail, incorporating the Kerang-Koondrook Rail Trail, the Koondrook to Cohuna Forest Trail, the Koondrook to Torrumberry Trail, and Ports of the Murray.</li> <li>Build the Swan Hill to Lake Boga Active Trail.</li> <li>Realise the potential of Lake Tyrrell and the Tchingal Trail between the lake and Birchip.</li> <li>Expand the Silo Art Trail into the Mallee LGAs.</li> <li>Encourage the development of indigenous tourism enterprises.</li> <li>Create a tourism body that provides focus and coordination of tourism opportunities for the whole of the Wimmera and Mallee dryland regions.</li> <li>Market the unique tourism offerings of this area.</li> <li>Support local tourism training for small businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modelling the potential impact of increasing the average length of stay of International and Domestic Overnight visitors by a single night is estimated to generate an additional \$91.238 million annually, creating 512 direct jobs and up to another 247 jobs across other industries in the Mallee that have exposure to the visitor economy.</li> </ul>



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Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

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## **1 Project Sponsorship & acknowledgement**

*To be finalised – proposed joint piece (Mallee Regional Partnership Chair  
and Loddon Mallee RDA Chair)*



## 2 Introduction

The Regional Economic Growth Strategy (the Strategy) outlines a strategic direction for the Loddon Mallee region to invest in skills, build capability and leverage recent and future capital infrastructure through a package of targeted and 'unique to region' investment.

The Strategy aims to increase capacity and prosperity for the residents of both the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee sub regional areas of the Loddon Mallee. The initiatives and strategic direction outlined in the Strategy are integrated and multifaceted, addressing economic focal areas of regional innovation and connection, regional manufacturing and food industry, economic resource management and forests, heritage and landscape. Throughout both regions, investing in skills and supporting relationships beyond the region are central strategies.

Regional economic strategies reflect the complexity of regional development. While the primary objective of this strategic work is underpinned by economic development, insights from practitioners, policy makers, institutional managers and senior local government staff have enabled the integration of broader policy objectives across education, housing, urban design, environmental restoration and protected areas management. The integration of these policy approaches drives success and economic prosperity of a region and its community.

The Regional Economic Growth Strategy is unashamedly focused on increased employment, growing Gross Regional Product (GRP) and improving prosperity of the region, as recognised through productivity gains, increased wages and salaries, and higher level of educational attainment.

## 2.1 Project Scope

Project work has been undertaken within the Loddon Mallee across both the Regional Partnership sub regional areas of the Loddon Campaspe and Mallee regions. The following Strategy is focused on the Mallee region.

The Mallee region is comprised of the following four Local Government Areas: Mildura Rural City, Swan Hill Rural City, Gannawarra Shire and Buloke Shire.

Figure 2-1 Mallee Region



<https://remplan.co/2QMwPDc>



Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Investment objectives for the Loddon Mallee are consistent throughout the two regions, but the strategies are unique to each region. Objectives include investment targeted to support enhancement of key areas of capital (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1 Targeted areas of investment to increase capital

Capital	Area of investment strategy
Political	Strategy & Policy Development
Human	Skills, Capability & Knowledge
Built	Regional Infrastructure Investment
Cultural	Celebrating our region and heritage
Social & Financial	Partnerships & Capacity

At a sub-regional level the Strategies are focused on the specialisation opportunities of the region and respond to the key drivers of the sub-regional economies. In the southern Loddon Campaspe region population is the driver of economic activity, demanding and supporting regional services. While in the north and the Mallee region, the overriding economic driver is production and export driven activity where rural land use provides economic return to the region through high levels of output per worker.

Of course, this simple view does not reflect the complexity of each region. However, it is fundamental in the approach to the development of the Strategy and as a result targeted investment to support sub-regional prosperity across the Loddon Mallee.

## 2.2 Project Background

The Regional Economic Growth Strategy is being delivered over three distinct project stages, as outlined in Figure 2-2. Stage One involved a consolidated economic analysis of the current situation based on evidence (data information) and targeted engagement to provide insights and identify emerging priority areas for regional economic development.

Stage Two has built on this evidence base and prepares a consolidated Regional Economic Growth Strategy utilising strategic opportunity assessment and priority project identification.

Stage Three of the project will involve the preparation of a revised and updated Investment Prospectus for the Loddon Mallee region.

Figure 2-2 Regional Economic Growth Strategy Project Method



## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

## 2.2.1 Current economic profile

The latest key economic indicators for the Mallee region demonstrate challenging population growth figures. Across the region the 20-year annual average growth rate is -0.41 percent. While Mildura Rural City is forecast to sustain over 0.7 percent, the *Victoria in Future 2016* report forecasts negative growth across the other three municipalities.

The strength of the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector is apparent. It is the most important sector within the Mallee in terms of total output, total employment and contribution to Gross Regional Product (Value-added).

In addition, the tourism sector remains an important contributor representing 7.1% of all jobs and the sixth largest industry sector in terms of total revenue (Output) generating \$474.364 million.

Table 2-3 Key Economic Profile Statistics – Mallee Region

Estimated Resident Population 92,777 (ABS)	Annual Population Growth Rate -0.41% (VIF)	Projected Population 2031 93,844 (VIF)
Gross Regional Product (GRP)(\$B) \$5.332	Per Capita GRP (\$'000) \$58.451	Per Worker GRP (\$'000) \$140.166
Total Output (\$B) \$10.222	Total Employment (Jobs) 38,038	Total Value-added (\$B) \$4.923
<u>Top 3 Sectors by Output</u> 16.5% Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 15.6% Manufacturing 11.5% Construction	<u>Top 3 Sectors by Jobs</u> 15.6% Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 13.8% Health Care & Social Assistance 12.3% Retail Trade	<u>Top 3 Sectors by Value-added</u> 16.2% Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 8.9% Health Care & Social Assistance 7.4% Construction
Tourism Output (\$M) \$474.364	Tourism Employment 2,700	Tourism Value-added (\$M) \$216.366

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Victoria in the Future*, REMPLAN.

*Note: Economic estimates above exclude Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services of which a significant component includes 'Ownership of Dwellings'. Ownership of dwellings consists of landlords and owner-occupiers of dwellings. Owner-occupiers are regarded as operating a business that generates a gross operating surplus. The imputation of a rent to owner-occupied dwellings enables the services provided by dwellings to their owner-occupiers to be treated consistently with the marketed services provided by rented dwellings to their tenants.*

### 3 Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

#### 3.1 Preferred Economic Future

*The Murray River is at the heart of Australia's most vibrant economic regions. Since 2019 decisions about the Mallee region's economy have been made without thinking that is constrained by State borders. This has enabled industry and workers to benefit from expanded opportunities.*

*The horticultural industry bordering the Murray River has prospered. The maturation of national water policy has resulted in stable and sustainable levels of water supply for both the industry and environment. Increased focus on innovation within the industry has resulted in greater productivity and increased value adding.*

*A predicted shortage of skilled workers was averted due to a coordinated response that resulted in more worker housing; migration into the area; targeted vocational training and better work readiness in school leavers.*

*Freight movement across the region has been greatly improved. Constraints to road freight movement have been fixed, river crossings are fit for purpose. The Murray Basin Rail Project has delivered the reduced cost benefits predicted and also removed much of the freight from our roads.*

*Visitation to Mildura has greatly increased with the introduction of subsidised flights to Melbourne and the opening of a Bendigo-Mildura-Adelaide route. The new convention centre has found a niche market attracting conferences from national businesses.*

*Continued investment on the riverfront has reoriented both Swan Hill and Mildura's CBD to the river creating new opportunities for each of these cities.*

*Improved digital connectivity has made huge improvements to the lives of rural Mallee residents, overcoming the tyranny of distance. Digital connectivity provides an antidote to social isolation, but also allows people to actively participate in the economy and receive the services that allow them to remain in their smaller towns.*

*Agriculture has adopted the Internet of Things and seen productivity increases as a result. Tourists are able to stay connected.*

*Cost effective, innovative services for rural areas have been tailored to suit the dispersed population. There is now equivalence in health services, education and training services, and childcare services available to rural residents. The Small Town, Big Difference fund has also brought greater vibrancy to the Mallee towns. Together these initiatives have resulted in retention and growth in the populations of the small towns, but also increased participation in the workforce.*

*Investment in the 'Ports of the Murray' and the 'Murray River Adventure Trail' have resulted in a large increase in visitation that has resulted in considerable private investment. Likewise, the investment in the tourism assets in the dryland parts of the region are having a similar impact. Investments into the Silo Art Trail and Lake Tyrrell saw a similarly large response in private investment and have raised the prominence of Wimmera Mallee tourism. Regional tourism has benefited from indigenous business ventures that have added an extra cultural dimension to the tourism offering.*

*With the shift to 50 percent renewables, Western Victoria is now powering the State. Investment in our electrical distribution networks, the increasing cost effectiveness of solar, and cheap battery storage, have unblocked the latent potential for solar farms in North Western Victoria.*

### 3.2 Investment Objectives

Identifying areas of focus is the key to the development of a Regional Economic Growth Strategy. Regional focal investment areas will help categorise priorities that best leverage existing regional strengths and address weaknesses.

The purpose of this document is not to detail or design specific investment projects, rather to outline preliminary investment logic at both a program and focal area level to support further substantiation.

Importantly, while the focal areas are targeted and proposed actions and responses have been aligned to a specific area, the proposals are often integrated and holistic in their approach. In several focal areas, a project or initiative has a positive impact on or supports a proposal in another nominated priority area.

The role of government and regional structures including *Regional Partnerships* and *Regional Development Australia* to expedite and support economic development within their region is fundamentally linked with policy. While this policy support is often expressed through advocacy and engagement, it is most commonly demonstrated through contractual agreements, financial instruments and grants.

Key partners in the region are Local Government bodies, whose regional economic development efforts are commonly directed toward capital investment in infrastructure and assets, regulatory change of land use planning, and a range of business support approaches, such as collaboration/networking, lobbying and promotion.

Central to many of these decisions is co-ordination of strategic line of sight between demonstrated business need, evidence and information, strategies and plans and business case development to unlock capital.

Each of the focal areas provides an investment summary with overview of strategic assessment. Summary material included in the Strategy has been supported through technical reporting and subject matter expert workshops.

The Strategy provides an overview of each focal area including:

- Economic objectives – why the region should target this focal area
- Economic priorities – description of investment/service need, including likely high-level solutions and priority recommended actions
- Economic benefits – preliminary assessment of regional investment benefits.

Recommended actions are aligned to the Victorian Government's role but ultimately seek to unlock private sector investment. Typically, these approaches recognise a need for partnership in the investment.





#### 4 Regional Focal Investment Areas

The Regional Economic Growth Strategy outlines priority areas that leverage strengths and address problems requiring investment to remove impediments to increased productivity and prosperity in the Mallee region.

The positive economic outcomes (increased productivity and prosperity) of the Mallee region will be structured around the success of key regional strengths.

These positive economic outcomes are fundamentally driven by a strong relationship to the attraction and capability of the region's human capital, structural policy shifts that advance future strategy and investment in the region's built and natural environment.

Forging new regional success stories, economic outcomes and positive histories links to the future with the region's significant cultural heritage. These lived experiences underpin the success of the region. Shared experience and cultural celebration is the bond that ensures economic outcome within the regions is fostered through partnership and celebration and broad regional relationships that extend beyond the immediate Mallee region.

Figure 4-1 Regional Economic Growth Strategy Framework



Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

## 4.1 Murray Mallee economic region

### 4.1.1 Economic objectives

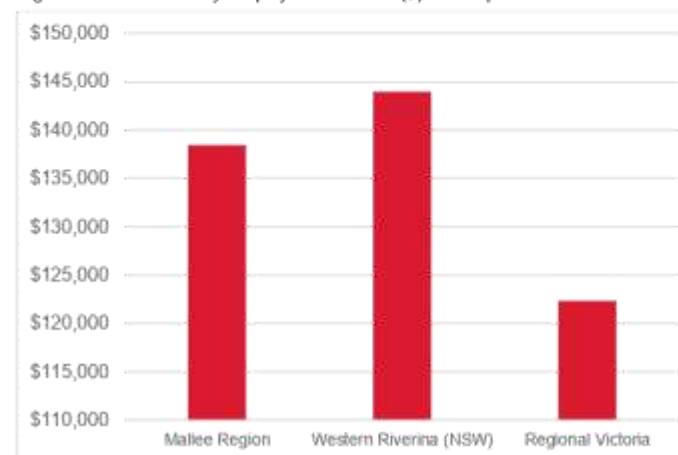
The importance of the Murray Mallee region (incorporating Central Murray NSW) requires a co-ordinated policy to drive investment to support the regions businesses, communities and long-term prosperity. Recognising the region as an economic zone will enable co-ordinated marketing, infrastructure provision, and accelerate access to export markets for local value adding.

Geography is a key influence on the region's prosperity, and accessible water from the Murray River is vital to drive productivity and a strong economy. Productivity, not population, drives the region's contribution to Gross Regional Product (GRP). Accessible and secure access to water underpins both food related industry (agriculture and manufacturing) as well as the region's visitor economy.

Establishing the Murray Mallee as a nationally significant economic region requires policy and investment that focuses on production (rather than population) and cross border connections.

Productivity per worker is higher in the Mallee region than the rest of regional Victoria. This trend extends across other resource-based food regions in the Western Riverina (NSW - including the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Balranald, Murray River and Wentworth). (See Figure 4-2).

Figure 4-2 Food Industry Employment – Value(\$)-added per workers



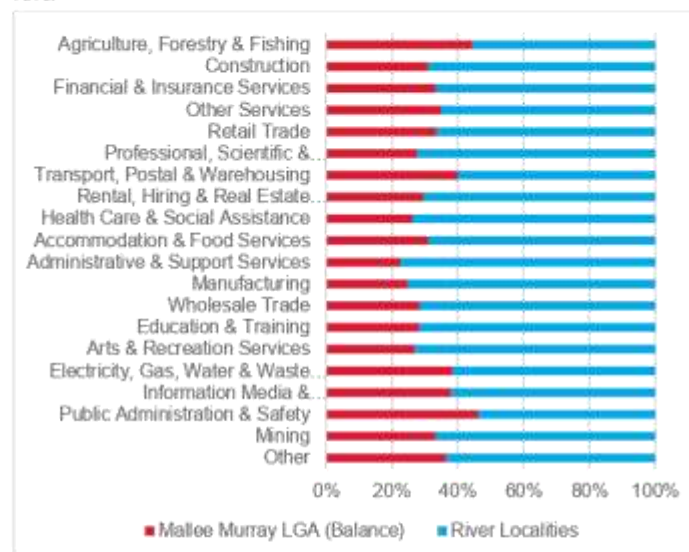
Regional economic activity naturally extends across State borders, with notable land and resource based economic activity in NSW, and a higher proportion of urban settlement and household driven economic activity in Victoria. Business activity is also concentrated toward localities that adjoin the Murray River.

Across all industry sectors, on average 67 percent of businesses located within the Murray Mallee LGAs (Central Murray) are in localities<sup>1</sup> that adjoin the Murray River. The concentration of business types includes Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Construction, Financial & Insurance Services, Other Services and Retail Trade.

<sup>1</sup> Localities are Australian Bureau of Statistics Gazetted Suburbs.

Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Figure 4-3 Murray Mallee LGAs Business by Sector, Localities adjoining Murray River



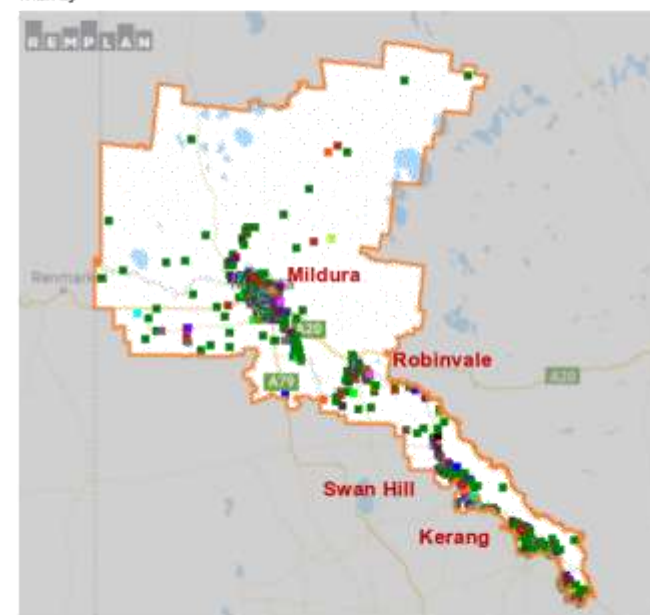
Source: REMPLAN Business Module, (map of region <https://remplan.co/2H2wvfa>)

The region's economic activity is tied to sustained levels of economic productivity associated with horticulture and dryland agriculture. Over the last five years, the Murray Mallee region has generated comparably high productivity levels, driven by primary producers investing in technology and systems to drive output and counter higher costs and limited access to local labour. The impact of economic transition and population decline in rural areas of the region has required a private sector led response to ensure ongoing economic output.

Public infrastructure investment and regulatory reform will continue to drive output (revenue \$M) by key industry sectors and support longer term prosperity for the region.

There is a need to shift funding models for the region to recognise the sustained economic output that exists in the absence of population growth to ensure higher levels of public and private investment per capita.

Figure 4-4 57% of Murray Mallee Businesses are located in localities adjoining the Murray



Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

4.1.2 Economic priorities

**4.1.2.1 Economic transport connections**

The region performs an important national role. While not associated with population growth like metropolitan or regional centres, the nationally significant contribution in the Murray Mallee region from food related industries demands an equitable infrastructure investment by government.

Critical investment to increase productivity and support improved connections from farm gate to processing facility/market/port will drive investment and increased profitability for Murray Mallee businesses.

Regional priorities have been identified in the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy (2018) that seek to improve connections for industry export, community connections and the visitor economy. Investment in regional transport infrastructure is the cornerstone to boosting productivity and economic benefit.

There is a need to identify and develop a High Productivity Freight Vehicle (HPFV) network that connects with the NSW and Victorian arterial road network, as well as the ports of Melbourne and Geelong. This freight network needs to include the Hattah to Robinvale Road, the Calder Highway Corridor, and the Sunraysia, Sturt, Mallee and Murray Valley highways.

The Transport Strategy includes a focus on freight route priorities including for first mile/last mile trips, supply chain analysis, and broader highway and road infrastructure upgrades.

The flow of goods and services throughout the region does not recognise geographic or administrative boundaries. There remains a need to improve cross border connections to support increased economic benefit. Modernising and upgrading old bridge assets would enable HPFVs to cross at Swan Hill and Tooleybuc, improving safety and industry efficiency.

Other central plans and investment includes a broader strategic assessment for a second bridge crossing at Mildura, leveraging air transport, completing the Murray Basin Rail Project with an emphasis on the Mildura to Murrayville lines, and rail connection for Mildura to the transcontinental railway.

Future investment criteria should recognise the region's increased levels of production and greater value-add contribution per worker. The region contributes significantly to Gross Regional Product, and infrastructure delivery should recognise this contribution by business and industry in the region.

**4.1.2.2 Regulatory efficiency**

The unintended consequences of regulatory structures that straddle the Murray River impact community and businesses daily. Multiple levels of government - Local and two State Governments results in additional administrative and regulatory burden for the border communities.

The role of Cross Border Commissioners requires support and information from regional leadership to support greater efficiencies that reduce costs to business. Common impacts occur for business accreditation/approvals, construction related activity triggering planning and building requirements.

The need for dual accreditation and access to training requirements often act as inhibitors to seamless economic activity within cross border communities. Two issues requiring immediate attention include the harmonisation of regulations controlling heavy vehicle crossing between NSW and Victoria, and the differences in labour hire regulations between the two states.

There are other misalignments of regulation that need to be addressed. It is important that both the NSW and Victorian Cross Border Commissioners engage with Mallee businesses to identify other high priorities.





## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

**4.1.2.3 Coordination and advocacy**

Enabling economic development to occur at a regional scale requires co-ordination between governments to drive activity.

Recognising the scale of business and community services that support the local economy will be important in targeting resources. Critical first actions should be directed towards renewing efforts to undertake economic development planning for the Functional Economic Zone crossing the NSW and Victorian border and establishing resourcing arrangements to implement the plans.

Enabling action across borders will require building a strengthened Murray Mallee region governance framework across Central Murray councils focused on economic prosperity and social/community infrastructure needs that reflect the region's needs. Consideration needs to be given to investment attraction to the Murray Mallee. Seeking both government support for related policy change and infrastructure funding, but also seeking private investment throughout the Murray Mallee Region.

Pre-existing efforts to coordinate between jurisdictions such as through the Murray River Group of Councils, the Railing Ahead advocacy group, and the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum have proven value and can lay claim to achieving funding for Murray Basin Rail and realising the Ports of the Murray projects. These sorts of forums should be valued and be well resourced.

Horticulture in the Murray Mallee is not one but several industries, each industry having its own peak representational organisation. There is no regional voice for the food industry in the Murray Mallee. It is recommended that a Sunraysia Agrifood Network is established to articulate the long-term strategic vision for the entire horticultural region along the Murray and

advocate for common issues such as freight, water and biosecurity policy change.

**4.1.2.4 Sustainable use of irrigation water**

The recent growth and prosperity in the Mallee region's irrigated horticultural base has been in contrast to the experience in other regions. And to some extent the current confidence of the horticultural industry in the Murray Mallee is masking issues that our irrigators will have to face in the future.

The growth seen in horticultural plantings has arisen from amendments to Victoria's Water Act made in the 1980s. These changes allow water to be transferred between farms. As a rule, water is sold to more profitable enterprises (that can afford to pay higher prices), and the Mallee has benefited from this trade.

Figure 4-5 illustrates the expansion seen in the region over the past two decades. Since 1997 through to 2015, increases in area of irrigable horticulture throughout the Victorian Mallee went from 39,700 to 73,000 ha. While at the same time horticultural plantings in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District have remained stable and constant<sup>2</sup>.

Whilst the area of Mallee horticultural plantings has more than doubled since water transfers became possible. The total pool of water in the Murray Darling Basin available for irrigation has reduced.

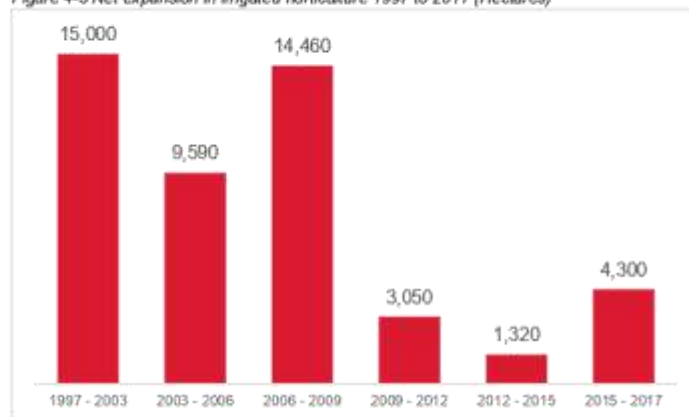
This reduction has occurred as a result of implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan which is seeking to see some of the water once used for irrigation to maintain environmental condition. The Mallee region has benefited from this shift seeing environmental water ensure the future of iconic wetlands at Hattah Lakes, Gunbower Forest and Lindsay and Wallpola Islands.

<sup>2</sup> TC&A & Frontier Economics (2017) Social & economic impact of the Basin Plan in Victoria.

## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

As the irrigators in the Mallee are now using a greater volume of water, and a greater overall proportion of the total amount of water flowing down the Murray River, there are two issues looming for the region.

Figure 4-5 Net expansion in irrigated horticulture 1997 to 2017 (Hectares)



Source: SunRCS Annual Report 2017 [Sunraysia Rural Counselling Service Inc. – SunRISE Mapping & Research Report]

The first of these is that the Mallee region is approaching the physical limit to the amount of water that can flow down the river at peak demand times. Secondly, if another drought of the scale experienced during the 'Millennium Drought' 2001 – 2009, was to occur the Mallee region will be more exposed to its impact.

The 2017, *Social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan in Victoria* report prepared by TCA and Frontier Economics for the Victorian Government has predicted that '(i)f allocations in a future drought were to drop to 32% (impact equivalent to the millennium drought), one fifth of current horticultural plantings may need to be dried off. This direct loss of production would have a significant economic and social impact throughout the region.



These challenges require us to better understand and engage in national water policy to ensure that the policy settings encourage sustainable and productive use given the climatic variations that occur. The region should continue to investigate the physical constraints to the supply of water to the Mallee and examine what can be done to mitigate against these constraints.

The region must seek investment in our irrigation distribution systems to increase the efficiency of the water supply networks (Goulburn Murray Water and Lower Murray Water). Likewise, primary producers need to be supported in adopting water efficient irrigation systems.

#### 4.1.3 Economic benefits

The horticultural sector is a major contributor to regional output for the Mallee region, contributing an estimated \$865.614 million or 8.5percent of total regional output. The sector is also an important employer, supporting over 2,700 jobs. Large reductions in the level of output generated by this sector could have potential negative effects for the economy of the region.

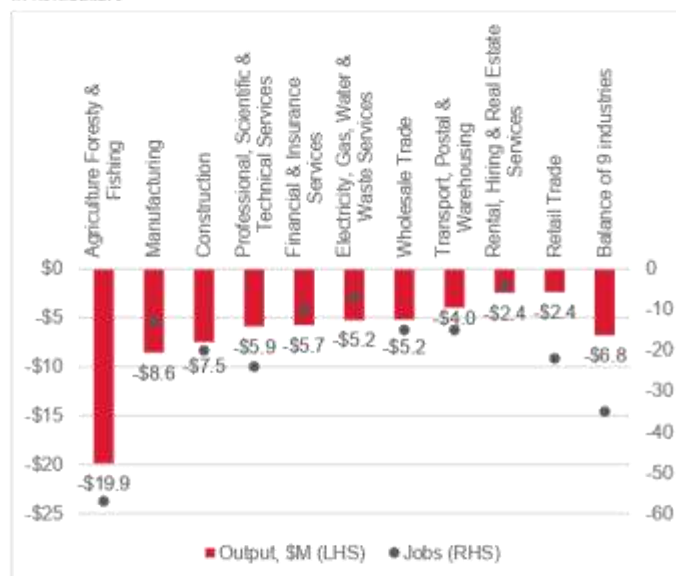
The scenario outlined above from the TCA and Frontier Economics report predicted that the impact of water allocations equivalent to that experienced in the millennium drought could result in one fifth (20%) of horticultural plantings being dried off. The flow on impact through local supply chains of a 20 percent reduction in horticultural output in the Mallee region could potentially see a total reduction in regional output of \$32.247 million accompanied by a contraction of 225 jobs in local supply chain organisations (Figure 4-6).

Cross border communities face a range of additional issues, burdens and requirements that are not present in non-cross border contexts. A Cross Border Commissioner is considered an important resource to facilitate both economic and social transformation and deliver benefits for cross border communities.

A Cross Border Commissioner is anticipated to deliver three key benefits for Victorian communities. These are outlined on the following page.

## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Figure 4-6 Impact on output and employment as a result of 20% contraction in horticulture



Source: REMPLAN Economy

## Benefit 1 – Streamlined regulatory and licensing requirements.

- Reduce the burden of differing regulatory and legislative requirements for Victorian based workers and businesses that also work or operate in NSW.
- A study shows that small businesses operating in cross border communities incur compliance costs averaging 330 hours per annum, a 74 percent greater regulatory burden than businesses operating outside cross border communities.

- Examples are provided relating to duplication or differing regulation for bus companies, construction trades and Department of Justice and Regulation

## Benefit 2 – Growth in the border economies.

- There is currently limited ability to fund projects which would deliver significant economic impact to Victoria due to them being located across the border, in whole or in part.
- The private sector would benefit greatly from a visible, dedicated resource to facilitate cross border projects.
- The benefits accrue primarily due to taking a regional perspective. When considered individually, the communities along the border may be small, but as a whole they are economic regions generating considerable levels of economic activity.
- An example is provided of a business expansion project (cross border pipeline) for a food product manufacturer that has been stalled for 20 years.

## Benefit 3 – Reduced barriers to accessing services regardless of location.

- The existing state focused service delivery model is preventing equitable access of services in cross border communities.
- This is a social benefit for people living in cross border communities. Vulnerable people in cross border communities are often physically distant from state-based services that they require in their own state, but close to the same service across the border and unable to access it.
- Examples are given relating to services provided to victims of family violence and other non-law enforcement support services.

## Other benefits include:

- Streamlining working relationships not only with NSW, but potentially SA and TAS
- Positioning border regions as well-connected communities, and
- Aligning with current policy: Regional Economic and Development Services Review 2015 and Victoria's Regional Statement 2015.

Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

## 4.2 Business expansion & innovation

### 4.2.1 Economic objectives

The Food Industry sector (made up of Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing and Food Product Manufacturing) contributes \$2,382.249 million (23.3%) of total output in the Mallee and supports over 6,950 jobs in the region.

The Food Industry provides a higher proportional share of GRP than Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction, Education & Training and Retail Trade in the region (Figure 4-7).

The region's agricultural success directly drives increased levels of regional export and demands higher levels of local regional employment.

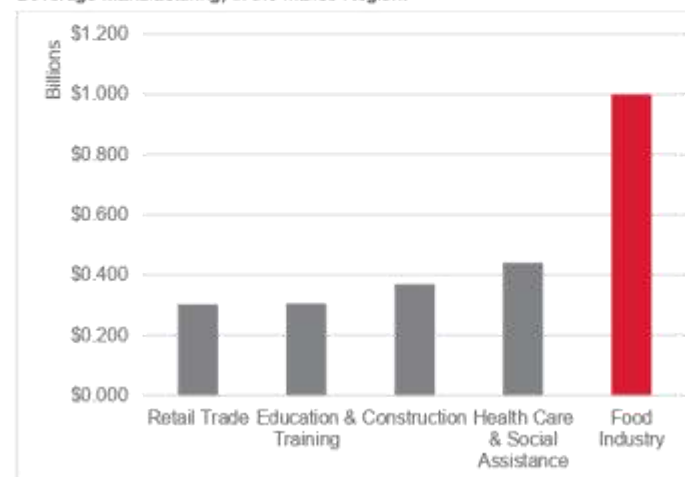
There is a need to ensure innovation drives greater efficiency and economic return rather than simply focusing on volume of production.

The future for both our irrigated and dryland agricultural industries lies in becoming more productive with available resources, adopting new technologies, adapting and implementing business level innovation to create greater efficiency and increased local value adding.

The importance of the food industry that includes representation of both primary production (Agriculture) and secondary and tertiary value-adding through local food manufacturing is strategically important for the region.

Research suggests 'unconstrained digital agriculture' could achieve a 25 percent increase in Gross Value of Production. There is clearly a need to position the region for high speed mobile network investment beyond the coverage extended by existing 3G and future 4GX networks<sup>3</sup>.

Figure 4-7 Contribution to GRP (Value Added) Food Industry (Agriculture, Food & Beverage Manufacturing) in the Mallee Region.



Source: REMPLAN Economy Analysis

Secure, reliable, cost effective and efficient digital connectivity infrastructure is fundamental to improved regional business opportunities. Put simply, current coverage and network speed is inadequate and requires adequate investment to ensure equitable provision of services throughout the Mallee region.

<sup>3</sup> CRDC (2017) Accelerating Precision Agriculture to Decision Agriculture – Enabling digital agriculture in Australia.



## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

## 4.2.2 Economic priorities

## 4.2.2.1 Export opportunities

Free Trade Agreements created over the past decade with some of our main trading partners include:

- Australia-Chile (ACI-FTA) 2009
- ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand (AANZFTA) 2010 – 2012
- Malaysia-Australia (MAFTA) 2013
- Korea-Australia (KAFTA) 2014
- Japan-Australia (JAIPA) 2015
- China-Australia (ChAFTA) 2015, and
- Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) 2018.

Agreements are expected to be ratified with Indonesia, Hong Kong, Peru and the Pacific Island nations and more free trade agreements are in negotiation with the European Union, India and the Gulf Nations.

Generally, free trade agreements help make Australia's exports more competitive enabling market access for exports in a faster and in a more cost-effective manner. But to do so requires potential exporters to act on the opportunities available.

Many Mallee region primary producers are actively exporting. \$3.2 billion<sup>4</sup> in product is exported from the Mallee each year. Approximately 60 percent of grain produced in the Mallee each year is exported. In addition, the Mallee is responsible for between 75 and 80 percent of horticultural exports from Victoria.

The scale of exports already originating from the Mallee may warrant the creation of a Mildura inland port, with infrastructure and services to facilitate export, such as quarantine, AQIS and fumigation.

There is a significant role for both State and Federal Governments and peak industry bodies to support businesses interested in becoming export ready. Governments also have a role in ensuring appropriate investment in freight infrastructure to ensure the supply chain is optimised.

## 4.2.2.2 Value adding opportunities and supply chain improvement

Much of the product exported out of the Mallee receives value adding elsewhere.

A supply chain analysis is needed to understand the potential for local value-add opportunities, such as in food product manufacturing, prior to commodities leaving the region. Often value adding opportunities allow pre-existing enterprises to diversify their income and expand their workforce.

The Murray Basin Rail Project will reduce the cost of transporting goods, it will increase the load carried per car, improve the speed of trips, expand the choice of port (Melbourne, Geelong or Portland) and increase the number of operators on the line by employing standard gauge rail. All is anticipated to reduce the cost of transporting goods.

To realise the full benefit of the Murray Basin Rail Project investment is required in interconnecting transport infrastructure development, such as intermodal sites. New rail operators must be attracted to the region to ensure value is extended to local businesses to encourage competition between the three Victorian ports.

## 4.2.2.3 Attract new business investment

Private investment is the engine room of the economy and the Mallee region needs to attract as much investment as possible.

<sup>4</sup> invest.agriculture.vic.gov.au - interactive mapped data; industries; regions



## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Both State and Commonwealth Governments have played a role in supporting businesses that wish to establish or expand in the region. Grants have been provided, as well as support to overcome planning hurdles, attract investment and establish trade opportunities.

In the 2017/18 financial year the Victorian Government granted \$1.78 million to businesses across the Mallee region. This support leveraged \$7.573 million in private investment and resulted in the creation of an estimated 108 new jobs in the region.

With greater demand for grants that help businesses expand than is capable of being met through current government programs, it is recommended government support is not increased.

It can be difficult to obtain government support for business expansion when the investment aims to increase economic output but doesn't create many new jobs. Often Mallee businesses are operating in areas with full employment, and skilled labour is not readily found. Investment in these businesses is important to ensure their ongoing profitability and protect against job losses that would occur if the business fails.

Businesses report difficulty in accessing equity to support business growth, so evidence is being collected to substantiate these concerns. If proven, there is a need to seek solutions such as developing a line of business capital through a product such as a Regional Capital Investment Fund.

#### 4.2.2.4 Regional research and development

While improvements in total revenue (output) can arise from increased scale and intensity of an operation, implementing a new process, marketing method, organisation method or product innovation will drive gains in productivity and support business growth.

Research economists estimate that 85 percent of increased productivity is due to new or innovative approaches<sup>5</sup>.

The Mallee region has a deficit in efforts to drive innovation through research and development activities. The Mildura and Swan Hill Regional City areas score poorly for 'Innovation' in the Regional Australia Institute's 'Regional Competitiveness Index'<sup>6</sup>, with the two LGAs ranked 480th and 493rd out of Australia's 563 LGAs. On the sub-indices 'Registered Research Service Providers' and 'Research and Development Managers' both LGAs were on the lowest possible ranking.

It is important to build on the capacity of our region's industries. The recent establishment of the Mallee Regional Innovation Centre – a joint venture between the University of Melbourne and LaTrobe University – is estimated to create annual economic benefits arising from the Centre's research program of \$19.7 million per year. This economic benefit arises from increased agricultural production, irrigation water savings, and cost savings in the delivery of environmental watering programs.

While regional institutions have a role in directly pursuing research, the need to ensure innovation knowledge is shared with those working in industry (through training, extension and higher education) is fundamental for the future of the region. Institutions with a focus on the Mallee food industry, such as La Trobe University, the Birchip Cropping Group, Southern Mallee Farming Systems, Mallee Sustainable Farming, the Irymple Horticulture Centre and SuniTAFE, have adopted research and extension responsibilities.

Innovation is needed to address the uncertainties and challenges facing our agricultural industries. Increasing energy and fuel prices, climate change, challenging seasonal conditions and the need to maintain profitable agricultural businesses in an increasingly complex environment are key challenges for the sector.

<sup>5</sup> Innovation and economic growth, by Nathan Rosenberg, OECD 2004

<sup>6</sup> <http://insight.regionalaustralia.org.au/> (first edition)

## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

**4.2.2.5 Digital connectivity for agricultural systems**

Smart farming is the incorporation of information and communication technologies into farm equipment, and sensors into agricultural production systems. It allows a large volume of data and information to be generated via process automation.

Smart farming relies on being able to transmit and store data remotely for analysis to aid decision making. In turn agriculture benefits from better management, monitoring and evaluation techniques to support greater economic return.

However digital connectivity in parts of the Mallee is inadequate to support many of these new technologies. Mapping of mobile connectivity (Telstra, Optus and Vodafone) across most of the Mallee was conducted in 2017 by the Loddon Mallee RDA Committee<sup>7</sup>. This mapping surveyed 5,423 kilometres of road within Buloke shire – typical Mallee grain cropping country. Ratings of 'very poor' to 'black spot' were recorded for a total of 940 kilometres on all three carrier networks, demonstrating that current mobile coverage isn't adequate to support smart farming.

Whilst some subsidies have been provided to fix mobile blackspots, the scale of funding hasn't been adequate to impact on these broadscale areas, and the funding has been weighted towards fixing blackspots in areas with more population.

The Victorian Government is currently running four 'Internet of Things' trials in key agricultural areas, covering Victoria's major agriculture sectors of dairy, broad-acre cropping, meat production and horticulture. The trials will investigate issues from the network level all the way through to end-user devices and machinery on-farm.

Ensuring fit-for-purpose networks are built to allow uptake of new smart farming technologies will be an important outcome once trials are

completed. Building these networks requires a clear understanding of the right combination of government subsidy and user pays arrangements.

While advocating for improved infrastructure is essential, the region must be ready for new opportunities, developing skills in digital literacy, and addressing industry data standards to match technology requirements.

**4.2.3 Economic benefits**

The mapping of mobile connectivity in 2017 showed blackspots covering 12 percent of the land area of Buloke, Swan Hill and Gannawarra LGAs. Many more areas had coverage from only one carrier.

With much of this area being productive agricultural land, mobile blackspots potentially limit the productivity gains that could be realised with digital connectivity.

In a scenario where blackspot areas experienced a 25 percent increase in productivity through better digital connections, this could potentially generate an additional \$52.038 million of direct output each year. This is outlined in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Economic impact of 25% productivity gains over a proportion of Mallee region

Impact	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$52.038	\$27.462	\$10.103	\$89.602	1.722
Long Term Employment (Jobs)	179	84	40	303	1.693
Value-added (\$M)	\$23.685	\$11.956	\$5.731	\$41.371	1.747

Source: REMPLAN Economy

<sup>7</sup> Digital Economy Group (2017) Regional Development Australia – Loddon Mallee, Mobile Coverage Report

## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

### 4.3 Future skills for the region

#### 4.3.1 Economic objectives

There is a disconnect between the demand for skills in the region and the skills available to support industry growth. Despite growth in regional employment, local employers continue to report difficulty attracting the right skills.

The Victorian Skills Commissioner's report, *Regional Skills Demand Profile, The Mallee (2017)*, predicts it will become even harder to find skilled workers, with up to 4400 more workers being required in the Mallee by 2020.

This skills deficit is compounded by a local workforce with a higher proportion of lower income earners. An ageing workforce and changing demographics will lead to additional demand for skills. Increasing the number of young people working or engaged in further study and/or the local workforce supports improved socio-economic performance of the region, lifting overall prosperity.

The Mallee region is experiencing demand for up to 4,350 positions requiring Certificate Level 3 or 4 in the occupations of Community & Personal Service Workers, Clerical & Administrative Workers, Sales Workers, Labourers and Managers across a range of key local sectors (Table 4-2).

Targeted skills and training development is required to support employees in the largest growth industries of Health Care & Social Assistance, Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, Education & Training, Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Administrative & Support Services and Manufacturing. This will include re-training lower skilled workers to mitigate the impact of automation and new technology<sup>8</sup>.

Table 4-2 Preliminary outlook on job growth by industry

Industry Group	Estimated FTE (circa)	Taskforce estimate of 2017-2020 workforce growth (CAGR)	Total required workforce growth (range)
Horticulture	4300	3.5% - 7.0%	600 - 1100
Other agriculture	2400	0.5% - 1.5%	100 - 200
Hospitality and tourism	2900	2.0% - 2.5%	250 - 300
Construction	2300	1.8% - 3.5%	200 - 300
Manufacturing	2300	2.5% - 4.5%	250 - 400
Transport, logistic & automotive	3300	2.6% - 4.5%	350 - 550
Retail trade	5500	1.5% - 2.0%	400 - 500
Healthcare & social assistance	6200	2.9% - 4.2%	750 - 1000

Source: (Recreated table) Victorian Skills Commissioner (2017) Regional Skills Demand Profile, The Mallee.

<sup>8</sup> Productivity Commission (2016) Digital Disruption: What do governments need to do?



Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Economic priorities

**4.3.1.1 Ensure school leavers are ready for work or further study**

The percentage of Mallee school leavers who did not complete year 12 was 63.31 percent in the Mallee compared with 33.06 percent<sup>9</sup> in metropolitan Melbourne (inner-middle).

Some 8.43 percent of 15-19-year-olds are not engaged in school or employment, compared to 4.8 percent in metropolitan Melbourne.

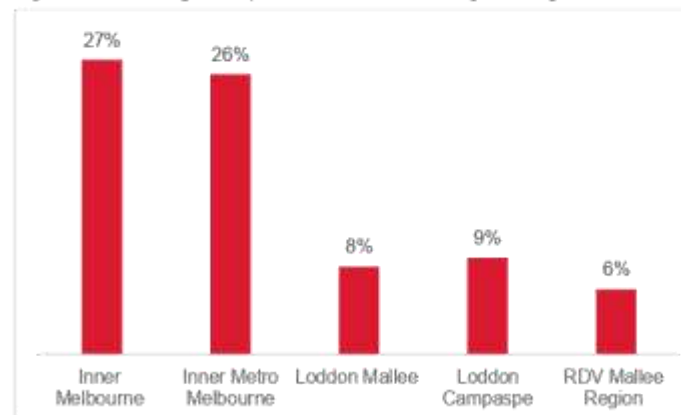
Improving student engagement and educational attainment is a complex issue, with entrenched social disadvantage and other deep-seated issues contributing to the problem.

Approaches taken in some jurisdictions to improve educational outcomes include increased attention on early years literacy, and ensuring children start school with issues such as learning difficulties and speech therapy needs being addressed. It is also important that there are safety nets in place if a child falls behind its peers.

The region's future workforce must be able to cope with increasing complexity and well equipped to deal with change. Training and education will help them prepare, yet fewer Mallee children complete higher education compared to the average for Victoria. Bachelor's degree attainment (or higher) across the regional population is below half that seen in metropolitan Melbourne (Figure 4-8).

To ensure school leavers are ready for the demands of industry demand and an increased interest in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), establishing a Mildura based Tech School to service students in the broader region is a key priority.

Figure 4-8 Percentage of Population with Bachelors degree or higher



ABS 2016, Compiled in REMPLAN Community

Ten Tech Schools have been established across the state, focused on technology rather than trades. They are well resourced and furnished with cutting edge technology designed to stimulate an interest in STEM subjects.

To ensure secondary students, parents and careers teachers know about the range of career opportunities available in the region, growing industries need to invest in increasing awareness of their industry and the employment opportunities within it.

Career mentoring programs may be one approach. The Robinvale Mentoring Project successfully engaged young people with local regional economic opportunities. Mentors with skills across trades, agriculture, horticulture and business were able to pass their knowledge and experience

<sup>9</sup> Regional Development Victoria Information Portal: <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal/regional-snapshot> - Percentage who did not complete year 12 (2016)

## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

to local students, lifting aspiration and fostering insights into the link between education and local employment opportunities.

#### 4.3.1.2 Create the skilled workers required by our industries

There is a need to better match skills requirements to local training on offer. Educational providers and professionals report students completing training programs for skills that have limited employment opportunities within the Mallee region, and yet other skills required by local industries are not being offered through training courses. Improving the link between workforce skills strategies and demand for local workforce and capability will be important.

In the *Regional Skills Demand Profile, The Mallee (2017)*, the Victorian Skills Commissioner identified the types of skilled workers needed over the next three years and the courses required to deliver these skills.

Since publication, the Skills Commissioner has maintained a presence within the region and by working with the vocational sector has made progress in improving the vocational training offering to ensure it is in line with industry needs.

In other regions collaborative industry networks have been established to support skills development, communicate future needs of the workforce and provide career advice connected to local industry. This model should be explored for the Murray Mallee region.

The work of the Skills Commissioner in assessing the skills needs of larger businesses – particularly in the Murray Mallee – has been very successful. There is a strong appetite to complete the Region Skills Demand Assessment for the Mallee by examining needs in the less populated dryland areas away from the Murray River.

Increasing the relatively low numbers of people with bachelor degrees or higher is another challenge that needs to be met. The Mildura campus of La Trobe University provides Nursing and Business degree courses and Monash University offers support for postgraduate medical education. But

other courses that relate to local industries like Agricultural Science or Engineering require an undergraduate to travel to either Adelaide, Melbourne, Bendigo or further afield. Increasing participation of students in the region will also require addressing the costs of commuting.

The capping of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) funding for domestic university students adversely affects the region. The university campuses and clinical schools in the region cannot grow in this environment, and without growth, educational attainment will not increase. Innovative programs such as the dual enrolment (degree-diploma) model delivered jointly by SuniTAFE and La Trobe University have been adversely affected by CPS capping.

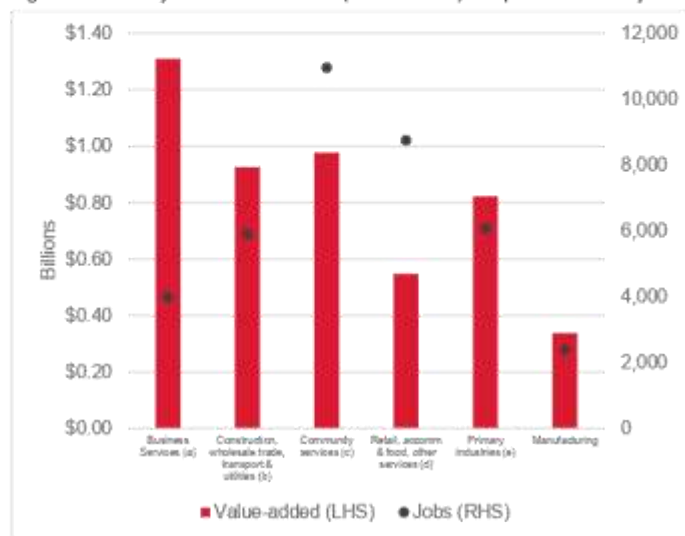
These programs have proven the ability to grow pathway opportunities for students in segments of society that have traditionally had very low participation in higher education.

This need to match skills to high performing industries is also evident when comparing industries relative to the contribution to Gross Regional Product, by Value Added, compared with local employment levels. As outlined in Figure 4-9, there is opportunity to expand employment to increase economic contributions with a focus on Business Services, Primary Industries and Manufacturing. These local sectors sustain high levels of contribution to Gross Regional Product (value-added) and have lower levels of employment than community services and service industries concentrated in retail, accommodation and food services.



## Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

Figure 4-9 Industry contribution to GRP (Value-Added) compared with local jobs



Source: REMPLAN, Mallee Region dataset.

#### 4.3.1.3 Encourage Skilled Migration

There is a need to support development of skills by immigrants to feel supported and stay locally. This has been successful in places such as Nhill (with the Luv-a-Duck business) by including support for English language learning, and access to health and education programs to support newcomers. Formalising these opportunities through a concierge and settlement service will help encourage skilled workers to relocate to the Mallee region. This service is anticipated to assist and co-ordinate arrival,

<sup>10</sup> 3300 is the population recorded during the 2016 ABS census – but it is suspected that the population is considerably higher.

entry, immigration, and local accreditation pathways through assistance with key social and community organisations.

The region should also explore other options for encouraging skilled migration (domestic, secondary and overseas). This can include supported visa schemes, creating a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) and marketing job opportunities in the region.

#### 4.3.1.4 Provide adequate worker housing and other fundamental services

Some smaller towns in the Mallee struggle to attract workers due to a lack of services. Workers are more likely to be attracted to an area with adequate housing, transport, health services, education and lifestyle opportunities.

Robinvale, population 3,300<sup>10</sup>, has a critically low stock of suitable housing, as locals and seasonal workers face lower-than-average rental vacancy rates and illegal rooming issues.

A housing strategy is currently being developed by Swan Hill Rural City to understand what can be done to alleviate housing pressure in Robinvale. The study will assist in identifying strategies to overcome issues of housing supply and preferences to support current and future workforce demand.

The dispersed and often modest scale of many townships throughout the Mallee presents a significant challenge for renewal and investment. However, investment in towns promotes pride and aspiration and is good for both visitors and residents.

There are indications that the local horticultural industry surrounding Robinvale is prepared to invest in solutions to problems found within the community, such as a housing shortage. In fact, in late December 2018 it was reported that more than 40 new rooms will be created on two on-farm

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developments that are being built at Lake Powell and on Happy Valley Road<sup>11</sup>

Employers should be encouraged to participate in solving issues in their communities as they ultimately benefit from having an available, secure and skilled workforce. There is an opportunity for co-investment by government and industry in presentation and infrastructure to improve the amenity of local towns.

#### 4.3.2 Economic benefits

Population growth is a proven economic driver. Areas with growing populations typically experience growth in service sectors such as health care, education, retail and food. Larger populations can also mean access to a larger pool of labour for employers.

Based on the current demographic profile of the Mallee region, a general population increase of 1,000 residents would see an additional 405 working residents, 373 of which would be employed within the region. These additional 373 workers would generate an estimated \$172.968 million in output annually and support an additional 268 jobs through supply chain and consumption effects.

Table 4-3 Economic impact of 1,000 new residents in the Mallee Region

Impact	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$97.936	\$42.870	\$32.162	\$172.968	1.766
Long Term Employment (Jobs)	373	139	129	641	1.718
Value-added (\$M)	\$46.888	\$18.705	\$18.244	\$83.836	1.788

Source: REMPLAN Economy

<sup>11</sup> Reported in Sunraysia Daily 05/12/2018





## 4.4 New energy and mining

### 4.4.1 Economic objectives

Unlocking the potential for large scale energy generation is a critical regional economic focal area for the North West of Victoria.

Nineteen large-scale solar projects, valued over \$2.8 billion, have received planning permission, or are either under construction or operational in the four municipalities across the Mallee. These projects have a combined energy generation of 2380 MW (Figure 4-13), which exceeds the generation from Victoria's largest coal fired power station Loy Yang A which produces approximately a third of Victoria's electricity.

Planning departments within the four Mallee LGAs are aware of a further 13 prospective solar farm developments. This additional 2950 MW would bring the region's total potential generating capacity to 5,280 MW.

The region is also experiencing recent investment in battery storage, with interest expected to accelerate. Battery storage has the capacity of providing solar electricity at times of peak demand.

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) is undertaking the planning required to adapt to a rapid increase in renewable generation. AEMO's recent work proposes the required network enhancements for Western Victoria.<sup>12</sup> Even this current report hasn't recognised the full extent of the potential for large scale solar farm development in north west Victoria. The current draft of the *Western Victorian Renewable Integration – Project Assessment Draft Report* (AEMO, 2018) does not recommend any major upgrades to the carry capacity of transmission lines in the north west of Victoria in the short to medium term. This position will effectively halt further expansion of large scale solar in north west Victoria.

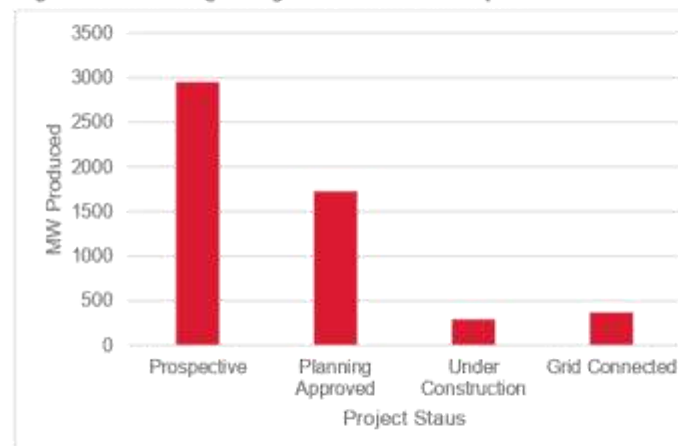
<sup>12</sup> December 2018 draft of 'Western Victoria Renewable Integration – Project Assessment Draft Report, Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)



The impacts of national renewable energy policy and global increase in gas pricing on regional businesses has led owners and company Directors to nominate both energy pricing and policy as their top two economic challenges (behind an 'ineffective' taxation system).

Despite planned and approved renewal energy projects, increased system strength within the grid is at the core of local renewable energy investment.

Figure 4-10 Mallee Region Large Scale Solar Power Projects



Source: RDV (2019) Loddon Mallee Renewable Energy Projects.

Current and projected system strength is a measure of the capacity of the local power system to respond to disturbances in the system and maintain stability. Despite recent State policy efforts to address the mix of power within the region, Victoria is behind NSW (including the ACT) in production of large-scale systems of more than 100 kW.

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Reliable access to digital connectivity continues to inhibit investment in the Mallee region. Digital infrastructure improvements are required to meet latent industry demands from agriculture, health, education and the local government sectors.

#### 4.4.2 Economic priorities

##### 4.4.2.1 Unlocking new energy

The Mallee receives more energy from the sun than the rest of Victoria. The cost of producing electricity through solar farms has reduced to such an extent that it is now competitive with conventional generation technologies. However, a 'Catch 22' situation appears to be holding back the development of renewables in the Mallee. It has been described as 'the developers won't invest where there's no transmission capacity, and transmission capacity won't be opened up until there are developers'.

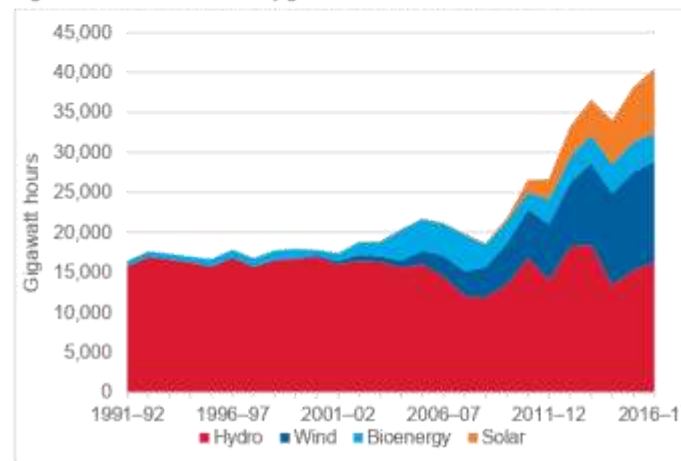
There is enough evidence to warrant national policy change to support infrastructure interventions into the national grid based on a whole-of-life cost benefit analysis that recognises both direct and in-direct economic benefits for the region.

In locations like the Mallee region where significant energy generation opportunities exist, the impact of national policy on new transmission infrastructure as well as restrictive jurisdictional trading policies inhibit local regional economic investment.

Energy generation across Australia was dominated by coal in 2016-17, however the renewable energy sector represented 16 per cent of Australia's electricity generation in the same year. This was a result of a 6 per cent increase across the solar, hydro, and wind generation mix. Solar generation

grew by 18 per cent predominantly as a result of growth in existing large-scale facilities and small-scale rooftop solar Photo Voltaic installations<sup>13</sup>.

Figure 4-11 Australian electricity generation from renewable sources

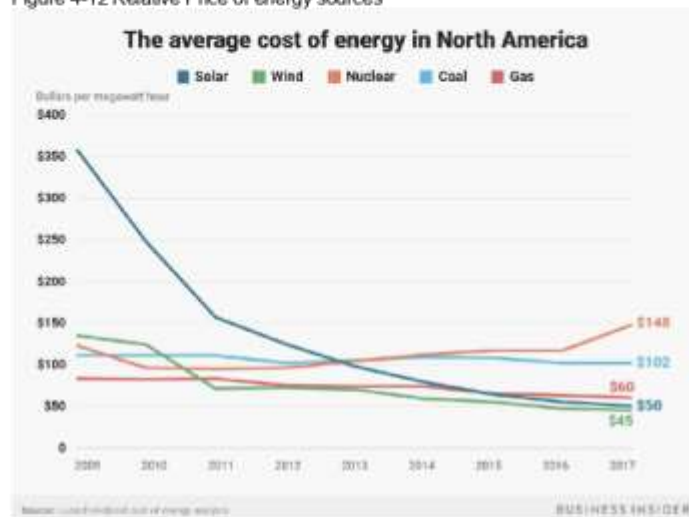


Source: Department of the Environment and Energy (2018) Australian Energy Statistics

<sup>13</sup>Department of the Environment and Energy (2018). Australian Energy Update 2018, August, Canberra.

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Figure 4-12 Relative Price of energy sources



Source: Business Insider – Derived from the Lazard Levelised Cost of Energy Analysis

The current regulatory environment for the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), in its role as national energy regulator, is limited to the consideration of financial benefits of new transmission infrastructure. The assessment is focused on revenue opportunities without considering the broader economic benefits from more dispersed energy generation in rural and regional locations.

The other necessary change is recognising the limitations of transmission costs for interstate electricity trading. This has the potential to limit access to cost competitive locally generated energy to support regional economic development where 'notional' cost of transmission may 'theoretically' include costs to a central Victorian location.

There is a need to develop an advocacy and engagement strategy to address regulatory barriers and grid constraints. The strategy will ultimately support State and Local Government policies that currently enable approval of renewable energy projects.

Opportunity exists to build additional transmission capacity between Mildura and Melbourne duplicating the existing AC transmission line. The region should advocate for the AEMO to determine the feasibility of investment into the duplication of the existing transmission lines in north west Victoria to unlock constrained renewable energy investment. There is private investor interest in building a transmission line of this nature to help accommodate forecast increase in renewable energy generation.

The feasibility study should recognise the opportunity for unlocking renewable energy generation projects within the Mallee and likely procurement models that require private investment to enable development of a new DC line.

#### 4.4.2.2 Capitalising on the Mallee's mineral sands and rare earth deposits

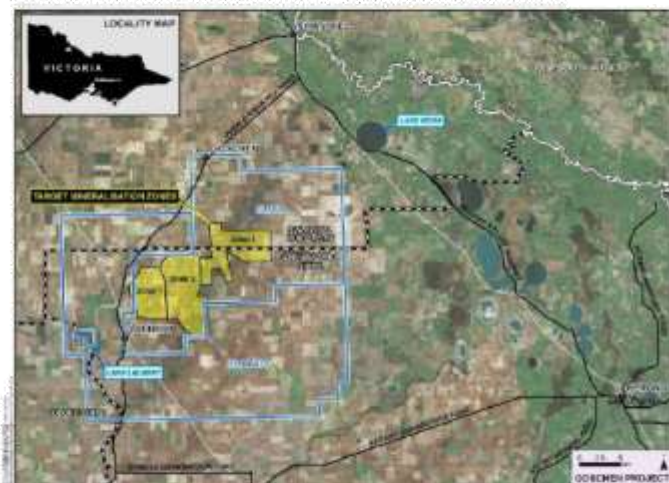
Beneath its soil the Mallee has hidden reserves of sands rich in minerals and rare earths. Minerals such as ilmenite, zircon and rutile are used in pigments, ceramics, nuclear fuel rods, catalytic fuel converters, water and air purification systems, electronics componentry and fibre optics. Rare earths are used in high technology applications such as lasers, magnets, batteries and fibre-optic telecommunication cables.

The extensive Murray Basin reserves of mineral and rare earth rich sands have been known to exist since the 1960s and have been mined since the 1980s. The minerals generally collect in long narrow 'strands' that have been mined through open cut. The Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands project is a proposal by VHM Limited to mine an area between Kerang and Swan Hill. The proposal is of considerable scale: predicted to model the benefit of up to 250 people and operate for up to 30 years.

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Cooperation with VHM in the planning phase will ensure the region realises the full benefit of the mine, including potential water pipelines that could be leveraged to support new horticultural developments in the region. Opportunities for similar operations exist across both the Mallee and Wimmera and should be encouraged.

Figure 4-13 Location of the proposed Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project



Source: <https://www.vhmitd.com.au/project/project-overview/>

The Goschen mine will also likely rely on the completion of the Murray Basin Rail Project to enable the rare earths and mineral sands to be taken to port.

#### 4.4.3 Economic benefits

Estimates of the proposed \$2.8 billion solar farm generation expenditure have been modelled over a 20 year period to estimate a typical annual benefit of solar farm construction. Assuming an equitable distribution of annual construction, this amounts to a total of \$140.000 million expenditure per annum.

Based on a typical expenditure across utility scale solar farm installations, the economic benefit for industries within the Loddon Mallee, including Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction (for roads and access), Construction Services (for installation) and Professional Services (for Planning, Engineering and Design) have been assessed for economic benefit. Technology expenditure, which typically amounts to 45% of the project, has been omitted from assessment as it is assumed most associated technology will be imported to the region from overseas suppliers.

Under this scenario, a direct annual increase of \$77 million per annum could support 241 direct jobs and up to 549 per annum when considering both direct and indirect benefits that would accrue throughout the broader Loddon Mallee region (Table 4-4).

Table 4-4 Typical Annual Construction of Utility Solar Farm

Impact Summary	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$77.000	\$57.169	\$33.872	\$168.040	2.182
Employment (Jobs)	241	179	129	549	2.278
Value-added (\$M)	\$29.249	\$22.649	\$18.719	\$70.617	2.414



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Advice from LGAs actively engaged with utility scale solar farm proponents indicate the benefit of scale of operation to ongoing employment. While the most significant benefit can be attributed to the short-term impacts of construction activity over an extended period, it is anticipated that facility operations will support direct and indirect employment within the Mallee Region.

Direct employment varies from one job to manage a 1 MW facility through to six jobs for a 300 MW site. The impact of a 300 MW site directly employing six local people could amount to over \$4 million in output and support up to 15 jobs when considering direct and flow on benefits (Table 4-5).

Table 4-5 Utility Solar Generation Facility – Typical Operational Benefit

	30 MW Facility	100 MW Facility	300 MW Facility
<b>Workers</b>	1	3	6
<b>Output (\$M)</b>	\$ 0.689	\$ 2.068	\$ 4.136
<b>Total Jobs</b>	3	7	15

The economic benefit of the proposed Goshen mine that leverages mineral sand deposits within the region is significant. Estimates of the planning, design and establishment of the mine are beyond this strategy, however preliminary assessment of the ongoing benefits of 250 jobs within the Mallee Region clearly demonstrates the broader industrial and consumption benefits throughout the economy.

The total output estimate for Mallee Region is \$10,212.707 million and Mineral Sands, or the *Non Metallic Mineral Mining* sector is estimated to contribute \$28.009 million (0.3%) of total output. The ongoing employment of 250 workers in this sector is estimated to support an increase in Gross Regional Product by \$64.407 million and a direct increase in output of \$82.379 million. Forecasts of the 250 direct jobs in the sector would have

flow on benefits. Total employment, including all direct, supply-chain and consumption effects could support an increase in regional jobs up to 425 jobs.



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## 4.5 Improving liveability in rural cities and towns

### 4.5.1 Economic objectives

Liveability underpins investment decisions and attracts not only workers but partners and families who support social and community capital in the region. The ability to attract inward migration, a strong workforce and tourism visitation is essential for the region's economy. A failure to invest in the liveability of settlements is a handbrake on economic growth.

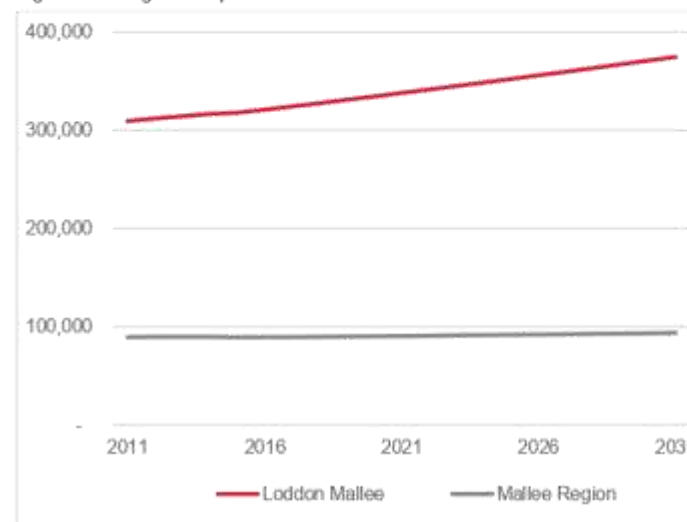
The ability to attract visitors and skilled workers is critical for all regions. However, in the absence of improved infrastructure for communities the Mallee region is disadvantaged. While economic output is driven through increased output per worker, static population growth throughout the region presents challenges to governments. Long range forecasts suggest a proportional decline in the region's population.

To secure a stable future workforce, the Mallee needs to attract new residents. Long range forecasts suggest a proportional decline in the region's population. The region is forecast to be home to 375,000 people in 2031. The Mallee is projected to decrease its proportional share of population within the RDA Loddon Mallee region to 25 percent in 2031 (Fig 4-17).

Issues of distance, poor local infrastructure and services in rural communities has affected the region's ability to attract workers. Localised market failure is constraining appropriate housing in key economic locations.

With investment to strengthen the arts and culture, and boost social capital infrastructure such as housing, schools and hospitals, liveability will increase and support regional job retention. This will also facilitate improved levels of community service and support an adequate skilled workforce for the region.

Figure 4-14 Regional Population Growth



Source: Mallee Region (VIF 2016, Compiled by REMPLAN)

Despite unprecedented levels of private investment throughout the region, evidence of regional prosperity is lacking in many of the region's small settlements and townships.

The dispersed and often modest scale of many townships throughout the Mallee presents a significant challenge for renewal and investment. However, investment in towns promotes pride and aspiration and is good for both visitors and residents.

Any investment in the improving the liveability or vibrancy of towns and cities will also benefit the visitor economy.

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Tourism in the Mallee has traditionally centred around the Murray River but there are many more attractions such as the Mallee National Parks, Lake Tyrrell and the developing Silo Art Trail, Gunbower State Forest, Kerang Lakes and abundant Indigenous culture and European heritage.

The tourism sector contributes 2555 jobs (7.1%) and \$474.364 million to the economy. International visitation to regional Victoria increased by 9.8% in 2017, however, international overnight expenditure in the Murray tourism region experienced a decrease of 42.1 percent down to \$54 million. Tourism product development leveraging the connection of the region to local indigenous groups, natural assets and stories has been identified as a significant gap in the local offering.

#### 4.5.2 Economic priorities

##### 4.5.2.1 Boost our rural cities

Mildura and Swan Hill are the largest, most populous, and only cities in the Mallee region, and accommodate most of the region's population growth.

As a Regional City<sup>14</sup>, Mildura has the most population services and employment in the region including major retailing, hospitals, university, transport interchanges, and utility services. It also services extensive communities of interest.

As a Regional Centre, Swan Hill has a large and diverse population with significant retail and employment bases that service extensive communities of interest. There is access to hospitals, education, arts and cultural facilities with well-defined commercial and industrial precincts.

Being relatively remote, it is important that Swan Hill and Mildura have an extensive range of services available to their residents. Improved services

and opportunities help attract businesses and increase population, which in turn helps to attract more services.

To accommodate current growth, there is a need to renew the Swan Hill Hospital, complete the *Mildura Future Ready* suite of projects and complete the vision for both cities of better orientating their CBDs towards the Murray River.

In Mildura a more comprehensive package of tourism opportunities is needed, including addressing the need for an appropriately scaled convention centre. A preliminary business case should be prepared that explores the potential market, style and scale of convention centre in Mildura. This study should include an audit of established accommodation facilities to assess their adequacy.

Mildura should also advocate and lobby for the relocation of a government agency such as divisions of the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) that undertake river regulation, and joint venture activities like salinity management that are funded with contributions from NSW, Victoria and South Australia. These functions would be well placed in Mildura which is near all three contributing states.

A multicultural and export-focused Mildura can build upon its global outlook and leverage connections. The new pilot academy being established at Mildura Airport has potential to expand, possibly to other regional centres.

La Trobe University's Mildura Campus has the capacity to attract and support more international students. At present the campus has approximately 100 international students but this number could rise to 300 with appropriate services in place. International students are valuable to the visitor economy with families often visiting their children.

<sup>14</sup> Definition provided within the Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan, 2014

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Mildura continues to offer a point of difference for visitors to the Mallee, with access to the Murray River, a Mediterranean climate and a rich calendar of events. It plays a key role in the region's visitor economy, with accommodation, food services and transport dominating visitor expenditure and as a result local tourism related employment. When compared with other regional cities the proportion of income associated with Arts and Recreation in Mildura clearly has greater capacity to grow.

#### 4.5.2.2 Improved passenger services

The most impactful change that can be made to improve the appeal of Mildura and Swan Hill to residents, businesses and visitors is to improve their connection to the rest of the state.

Whilst the two rural cities have a good range of services, residents must travel to larger centres to access some specialist medical services, arena scale entertainment, a wide range of university courses and other specialised services. Improving transport connections will enable better access to these services.

In Swan Hill the most important transport need is more frequent passenger trains between Swan Hill and Melbourne. The *Regional Network Development Plan (Connecting Regional Victoria)* recommends five return passenger trains each day. Investment in rolling stock, as well as line and signalling upgrades will help achieve this. Providing efficient connection to Melbourne will also enable day commuter trips to Bendigo.

Mildura is the only top ten regional city in Victoria without a passenger rail service to Melbourne. Whilst there is popular support for a passenger train between Melbourne and Mildura, the high capital and operating cost weigh against this proposal.

As an alternative, airfare subsidies should be considered. Capping the subsidy to correspond with government funding of regional rail would be

reasonable from a cost perspective and help achieve equivalence in service. Airfare subsidies are provided in Queensland in similar circumstances<sup>15</sup>.

Building on the recent introduction of commuter flights between Bendigo and Sydney, it is proposed that regional advocacy focuses on attracting a commuter flight from Bendigo to Adelaide with a stopover in Mildura. This could be supported by the Bendigo Adelaide bank headquartered in Bendigo and should be popular given the large volume of passenger cars regularly driving between Bendigo and Mildura.

#### 4.5.2.3 Vibrant small towns

The Mallee contains a high concentration of small towns, with 15 percent of the population living in settlements of fewer than 2,500 people (Figure 4-15).

Population loss and the subsequent loss of services has confronted many small Mallee towns. "You lose your football team; the town suffers and very often the town dies."<sup>16</sup> A familiar Mallee theme, but likely a symptom not the cause. There are many examples of small towns reversing the trend and retaining their vibrancy by communities working together as volunteers with a common purpose.

Approaches often used to support towns facing population decline include:

- Encouraging passing traffic to stop, thus encouraging patronage of local shops. This can be achieved by installing public toilets, painting silos, and other initiatives.
- Replacing multiple community facilities with one facility that serves multiple purposes, such as housing the CFA with the Bowls Club. This ensures more cost-effective use of available funds.
- Community buy-outs of services the community wants to keep, such as pubs, general stores or even hardware stores.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/LocalFareScheme>

<sup>16</sup> ABC Mildura-Swan Hill 10 July 2015



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- Creating community hubs to provide a range of services not found elsewhere. Often these facilities attract tenants like banks.
- Providing free housing to entice essential service providers such as doctors.

Examples of all these community driven innovations exist across the Mallee.

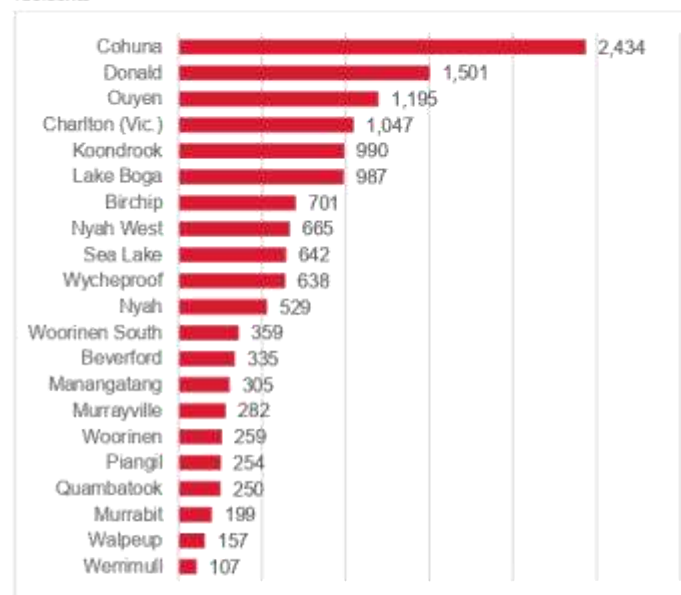
Grants provided to small towns often leverage considerable community input. Innovative funding models such as the Mallee Regional Partnership's 'Small Towns, Big Difference' fund could be employed to stimulate activity in small towns through amenity enhancements, community infrastructure projects and capacity building.

The role of co-design, place-making and citizen-led township renewal should be explored. Local government has a role in ensuring that community efforts are strategically targeted and small-town leadership and capacity building nurtured.

The local, state and federal governments that serve these communities also need to explore innovative ways to ensure services to our small towns in a cost-effective manner. Often the method of service delivery used in more populous areas is not fit-for-purpose. For instance, whilst it has been argued that there is an oversupply of GPs in metropolitan areas there are communities in the Mallee who cannot attract GPs to their towns<sup>17</sup>.

Innovative solutions need to be found. The Federal Government should support GP training models that bring more GPs to rural areas. The Federal and State Governments need to collaborate on developing alternative models for primary care services where GPs are scarce.

Figure 4-15 Population of gazetted localities in Mallee Region – > 100 to < 2,500 residents



Source: ABS (2016) Census. Compiled by REMPLAN Community.

<sup>17</sup> Kerang campaigns for GP, ABC 2 Nov 2018

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Figure 4-16 Kerang residents plea for a GP



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kff-i3FFMmw>

Similarly, childcare and early childhood programs are geared towards larger regional towns and cities and are less viable in small rural towns. This disproportionately affects rural families (particularly women) where members are consequently unable to work – either on or off-farm – while raising children. Greater compliance regulations have inhibited family day care operations, a model which has been more suited to rural communities.

Digital connectivity and small-town transport options are key to improving services. Both the private and public sectors are moving to digital platforms to deliver services, could have been a great leveller in service provision – giving rural and remote communities the same level of service as their

metropolitan counterparts. However poor digital connectivity in much of the Mallee reinforces the divide in service provision.

Apart from being important for service provision, digital connectivity allows people to participate in the economy. The number of workers telecommuting or participating in the "gig economy" through part time, temporary or contract work is increasing. The Mallee region's comparatively higher costs for a lower standard broadband service, coupled with inadequate mobile connectivity, means people in regional areas are disadvantaged when it comes to participating in this new style of working.

Digital connectivity needs to be recognised as a fundamental service for rural areas. All levels of government need to understand what level of service is appropriate and work together on a plan for how this is delivered, taking into account lower populations and the Council rates they are able to achieve.

This concern has been championed by RCV, an alliance representing the 38 rural councils in Victoria, who explored issues associated with the low rate base problem and developed an action plan. The recommendations in RCV's *Sustainability Reform Program*<sup>18</sup> need to be implemented.

#### 4.5.2.4 Infrastructure supporting the visitor economy

Infrastructure investment is required to support growth in the visitor economy.

Roads need to be improved for safer travel. On the Sturt, Sunraysia, Mallee and Murray Valley Highways, where major tourist routes are shared with freight traffic, overtaking lanes and better intersections are needed.

To encourage tourism to its 'gateway to the outback,' the Mallee region must have all-weather access to Mungo National Park by sealing Arumpo Road and Marma Box Creek Road in NSW. In addition, the roads into Lake Tyrrell

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/rural-and-regional-councils-sustainability-reform>

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and along the expanding Silo Art Trail must be brought up to a safe and appropriate standard.

Excellent mobile reception is required along all tourist routes. Tourists expect mobile connectivity that allows for 'on-demand' research, navigation and purchase of tourism-related services. They want to upload photos to social media, stay in touch with friends and be able to call for help if needed.

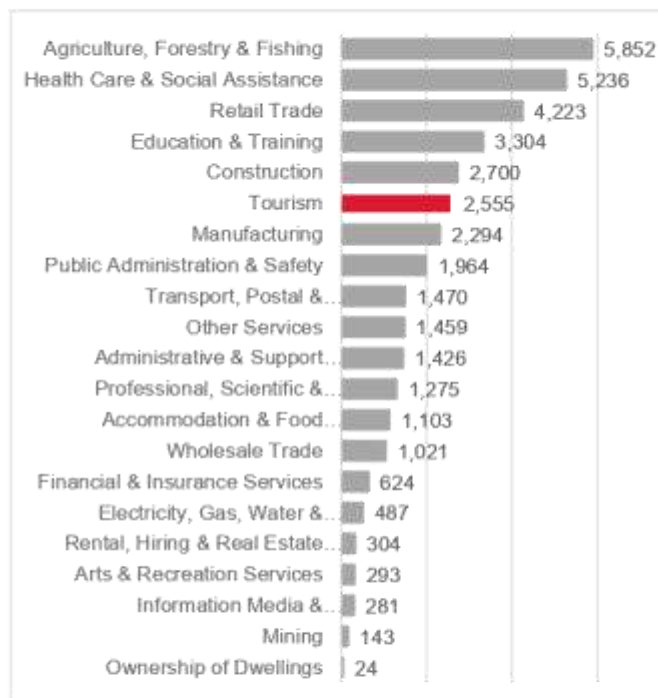
#### 4.5.2.5 Build the value of the region's tourism assets

Tourism is estimated to employ 2555 people in the Mallee region but this figure could increase by taking a coordinated approach to destination marketing and developing the existing tourism assets. Opportunities include:

- Completing construction of the Murray River Adventure Trail, incorporating the Kerang-Koondrook Rail Trail, Koondrook to Cohuna Forest Trail, Koondrook to Torrumbarry Trail, and Ports of the Murray
- Building the Swan Hill to Lake Boga Active Trail
- Realising the potential of Lake Tyrrell and Tchingal Trail between the lake and Birchip
- Expanding the Silo Art Trail into the Mallee Shires.

The current Tourism Board structure is inadequate to support tourism development in the Mallee. The region needs a tourism body that provides focus and coordination of opportunities for the entire Wimmera and Mallee dryland region (including the Mallee National Parks, the Silo Trail and Lake Tyrrell) and is resourced to effectively market this region.

Figure 4-17 Mallee Region Employment



Source: REMPLAN Tourism Analysis

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There is an urgent need for tourism training and ongoing support for local businesses. Stronger connections with local indigenous groups should be developed to ensure recognition of culturally significant traditions and landscapes and facilitate the development and promotion of tourism focused enterprises.

#### 4.5.3 Economic benefits

Current estimates of visitation in the Mallee Tourism Region<sup>19</sup> suggest total annual visitation of 1.147 million visitors. This is made up of 25,000 international visitors, 627,000 domestic overnights and 495,000 domestic day visitors.

The regional economy benefits when visitors extend their stay and increase their expenditure. Encouraging longer stays, higher value visitation and international visitors is a key target to boost regional exports.

Modelling the impact of increasing the average length of stay of International and Domestic Overnight visitors by a single night is estimated to generate an additional \$91.238 million annually. Taking into account indirect benefits, potential exists to create 512 direct jobs and another 247 jobs in industries with exposure to the visitor economy. Note that this excludes visitation to Buloke Shire, which contains two developing tourism products in the Silo Art Trail and Lake Tyrrell.

Table 4-4 Marginal economic benefit of an additional nights visitation within the region

Impact	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$91.238	\$37.149	\$30.537	\$158.924	1.742
Long Term Employment (Jobs)	512	125	122	759	1.482
Value-added (\$M)	\$40.929	\$16.376	\$17.322	\$74.627	1.823

<sup>19</sup> TRA Regional Profiles, 2015. The Mallee Tourism Region includes the Local Government Areas of Mildura (RC), Swan Hill (RC) and Gannawarra (S) but excludes Buloke (S).





## 5 Workshop Engagement

Chris Parham	Mildura Rural City Council
Chris Sounness	Birchip Cropping Group
Dean Wickham	Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council
Debbie Lane	NSW Department Premier & Cabinet
Gareth Hately	Victorian Planning Authority
Geoff Dea	SuniTAFE
Glenn Stewart	Mallee Regional Partnership
James Goldsmith	Buloke Shire Council
Jerri Nelson	Buloke Shire Council
Keith MacQueen	Bendigo Adelaide Bank
Kirsten Lloyd	Mildura Regional Development
Les Chettleburgh	NSW Department Premier & Cabinet
Leonie Burrows	Leonie Burrows & Associates
Phil Endley	Lower Murray Water
Sharon Morrell	Mildura Regional Development

