



ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS

Yarra Ranges
Activity Centre Network Strategy
2012

Strategy and Implementation Plan

Prepared for

Yarra Ranges Shire



By

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1 INTRODUCTION

Yarra Ranges Council commissioned Essential Economics to prepare the *Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy 2012*. The Strategy comprises a detailed assessment of the demand and supply for retail, commercial and industrial development in the municipality, and presents recommendations to guide the future development of Yarra Ranges' activity centres and industrial areas.

The Strategy is intended to inform the review of the Yarra Ranges' Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), and will provide a framework for the ongoing development of a sustainable network of activity centres and employment areas serving residents of the municipality.

In preparing this Strategy, consideration has been given to the role and function of activity centres and how they relate to Council's strategies and plans – these include the Community Plan Vision 2020, Economic Development Strategy, Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Green Wedge Management Plan, Community Wellbeing Plan, Housing Strategy, Environment Strategy, and the Municipal Strategic Statement.

The importance of creating a municipal-wide network of sustainable activity centres that meet the needs of local residents and visitors to the municipality is fundamental in delivering Council's social, environmental and economic objectives. Vibrant and well-functioning activity centres complement Council's housing objectives to provide diverse housing close to facilities and services. Council's economic objective of creating local employment opportunities will be enhanced by focusing economic activity into the municipality's activity centres and towns. Living and working within and close to activity centres will also support Council's broader environmental and land use planning objectives. A more compact and efficient urban form will reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and will support Council's green wedge policies to protect local biodiversity and retain viable agricultural land that is located close to large population centres.

This report presents the ***Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy and Implementation Plan***, describing a Vision for the future development of activity centres and industrial areas, and providing a detailed action and implementation plan to achieve that vision.

Analysis that has been undertaken to inform the preparation of the Strategy is presented in an accompanying volume (***Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy 2012 – Background Report***).

This Strategy and Implementation Plan includes the following content:

- 1 A summary of the main **Research Findings** from the analysis undertaken through the course of the study (and with detail provided in the Background Report)
- 2 A **Vision Statement** which provides overall guidance for the future development of activity centres and industrial areas in Yarra Ranges

- 3 A description of the **Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network**, including the preferred roles of each centre type
- 4 A set of **Objectives** designed to support the Vision and provide additional guidance
- 5 A listing of detailed **Actions** which present suggested measures to achieve the objectives, and with these actions supported by associated **Implementation Plans** which identify roles, responsibilities and timing
- 6 A set of **Centre-Specific Recommendations** which provide guidance to the future development and roles of specific centres
- 7 A listing of **Assessment Criteria** against which activity centre development applications are to be assessed
- 8 A **Monitoring and Review** process.

The Strategy should be read in conjunction with other strategies and policies adopted by Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF THE BACKGROUND REPORT

The research and analysis undertaken during the course of this study (and presented in the Background Report volume) highlights a number of important issues that form the basis for the preparation of this Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Key Findings and Implications arising from the research and analysis provided in the Background Report are summarised below.

1 *Yarra Ranges activity centres and industrial areas provide facilities, services and employment opportunities for Yarra Ranges residents*

Activity centres are the primary location for a range of activities which contribute to the economic vitality of the urban and rural areas of Yarra Ranges. These centres provide residents with access to a range of retail, community, civic, health and entertainment facilities and services, while also providing business and employment opportunities.

The extent of employment associated with the retail industry provides an indication of the importance of activity centres to the Yarra Ranges economy. Retail is the industry most closely associated with activity centres, although activity centres also accommodate a wide range of other economic activities, as identified above. More than 5,000 retail jobs were located in the Yarra Ranges in 2006, or approximately 14% of total employment in Yarra Ranges, based on ABS Census data.

Industry is also a major contributor to total employment in Yarra Ranges, providing employment for approximately 11,000 persons in 2006. Additional jobs are created in industrial estates, associated with a range of activities such as retailing (eg restricted retail), recreational activities (eg gyms), and other uses.

2 *A lack of strategic planning for activity centre development is evident since 1982*

The *Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan (RSP)* is the underlying document upon which the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme has been developed. The RSP was originally prepared by the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority in 1982 and has been rewritten to acknowledge the restructure of Local Government boundaries that occurred in 1994, and provides guidance on the future activity centre hierarchy to be applied in the municipality.

Because of recent development pressure, it is now opportune to undertake a comprehensive study of activity centres and industrial areas in Yarra Ranges, as the basis for a development framework that can be applied when assessing future development applications.

3 *Yarra Ranges has a well-functioning activity centre hierarchy*

The activity centre hierarchy in Yarra Ranges comprises:

- Two Major Activities Areas, one at Lilydale and one at Chirnside Park;
- Nine Large Neighbourhood / Town Centres, including the Seville which is anticipated to become a Large Town Centre once an approved supermarket development is constructed;
- Ten Small Neighbourhood / Town Centres; and a
- Network of local centres.

In addition, two homemaker precincts are located in the MAAs.

The network of activity centres in Yarra Ranges offers a range of retail and commercial office functions, and is also the location for a range of community, health, education, civic and entertainment services.

The Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network is successfully performing its role of providing a range of easily-accessible shopping, business and other services to the residents of Yarra Ranges. The fundamentals of the existing activity centre network – in terms of the number of centres and their roles – sufficiently caters for the current needs of residents, taking into consideration the approved retail development at Seville which will elevate that centre to a Large Town Centre.

Activity centres in Yarra Ranges contain approximately 198,400m² of retail floorspace, 22,100m² of shopfront office floorspace, and 22,620m² of dedicated office floorspace (consisting of occupied first floor office tenancies and dedicated office buildings).

4 *Opportunities for activity centre development*

Despite the successful operation of the activity centre network in Yarra Ranges, opportunities to improve the level of facilities and services in these centres have been identified. New retail development can be supported where the introduction of new facilities helps to retain spending that would otherwise be directed to centres outside Yarra Ranges. An increase in supportable floorspace is also generated through growth in population and visitor numbers and through growth in per capita spending.

Yarra Ranges' activity centres currently capture less than half of the total available retail expenditure by residents. New retail formats and improved facilities could lead to a reduction in this expenditure outflow, and would contribute to an overall improvement in the level of accessible services, improved function of the activity centre network, and an increase in local employment opportunities.

Total annual retail expenditure by local residents is forecast to grow by approximately \$790 million over the period 2011 to 2031, creating opportunities for retail development.

The analysis provided in the Background Report indicates that approximately 100,000m² of retail floorspace development could be accommodated over the next twenty or so years. Specific retail development opportunities may include the following:

- The ongoing development of Chirnside Park as a retail destination serving the region.
- The proposed expansion of the Woolworths Centre in Lilydale, including the development of a DDS.
- The approved supermarket development at Seville.
- Improved supermarket and FLG retail offer at Mooroolbark NAC, Monbulk Town Centre, Belgrave Town Centre, Warburton and Healesville Town Centre.
- Food catering and speciality non-food retailing to meet the needs of residents and visitors to Yarra Ranges.

Opportunities for new commercial office development in activity centres have also been identified, and these will be generated by increases in population and demand for business and professional services, entrepreneurial activity, and increased visitation to activity centres as their retail role evolves. Over the period 2011 to 2031, potential for approximately 25,000-50,000m² of new commercial office development is forecast for activity centres in Yarra Ranges. The majority of future commercial office development is likely to occur in the major centres at Chirnside Park and Lilydale, thereby supporting the higher-order role of these centres. Large-scale commercial office development should be encouraged at these centres. Potential for small-scale commercial office development, including shopfront office development, is also likely to emerge over time in the Neighbourhood and Town Centres.

Opportunities to improve the diversity of uses in activity centres also exist. These opportunities may involve the development or introduction of additional community facilities, an increase in residential densities surrounding activity centres, improved tourism infrastructure, and an increase in entertainment facilities.

These identified opportunities for new development apply only to the existing activity centres in Yarra Ranges, as the existing activity centre hierarchy is sufficient to meet the future needs of Yarra Ranges' residents and businesses. The need for new centres in the municipality has not been identified.

The exception is the potential future urban development of the Lilydale Quarry. Although the eventual timing of development and the mix of uses is unknown at this stage, it is anticipated that some form of residential development will eventuate. Depending on the extent of residential development and public transport linkages, opportunities for limited retail development may exist to service the local population; any commercial development should complement the existing activity centre hierarchy.

5 *Opportunities to improve the functionality and performance of existing retail precincts*

In addition to the development of new facilities and services in activity centres, potential exists to improve the provision of retail, commercial and other services and facilities, in particular by revitalising parts of activity centres that are currently under-performing. Examples include the Olive Grove Shopping Centre in Lilydale, the Terrace Shopping Centre in Mooroolbark, land within the Kilsyth neighbourhood centre, Yarra Glen Town Centre, and the Yarra Junction Shopping Mall.

6 *Yarra Ranges is not a major industrial location in the metropolitan Melbourne context*

Yarra Ranges contains a combination of well-established industrial areas in the Urban Region and smaller local industrial precincts in the townships located throughout Yarra Ranges. In total, the municipality contains approximately 320 ha of industrial zoned land. Yarra Ranges' role as a location for industrial activity is minor, accounting for only 1.3% of metropolitan Melbourne's industrial zoned land and 2.4% of employment associated with the industrial sector.

The conclusion that Yarra Ranges is not a significant location for industrial activities reflects the following three factors:

- Yarra Ranges has a finite supply of land available for industrial use and development.
- Yarra Ranges is not well located with respect to major transport routes serving metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and interstate markets, compared with the major industrial locations throughout Melbourne - for example, precincts in the municipalities of Hume, Wyndham and Dandenong.
- New industrial areas located in metropolitan fringe locations have superior transport linkages and a significant supply of industrial land, and are popular locations for industrial and associated activities.

Nevertheless, industry is still a major contributor to the Yarra Ranges economy, and this is illustrated by data for 2006 showing that 11,000 jobs are in the industrial sector.

7 *The majority of Yarra Ranges industrial labour force travel beyond Yarra Ranges for work*

Yarra Ranges has an employment self-sufficiency ratio of 0.4, meaning that 4 industrial related jobs are located in Yarra Ranges for every 10 employed residents in the industrial sector. The implication is that the majority of employed residents working in industrial sectors travel beyond the municipality for work. The low industrial job provision ratio illustrates that Yarra Ranges is not a major industrial location in the context of metropolitan Melbourne.

8 *A finite supply of industrial land*

Opportunities for significant industrial development in the future are limited due to a lack of vacant industrial land and the fact that most of the existing industrial areas are constrained by the UGB and other well-established land uses in the surrounding area.

In view of limited greenfield industrial development opportunities, future industrial development is likely to occur in infill locations and through more-intensive redevelopment of existing land, unless opportunities to expand existing industrial areas arise in the future. If alternative industrial sites cannot be identified, a high proportion of Yarra Ranges residents employed in the industrial sector will continue to travel to other municipalities for employment purposes.

A need exists to provide policy support for industrial job provision in Yarra Ranges. Because of the limited supply of industrial land, the use of industrial land should be encouraged for core industrial activities, rather than for a range of non-industrial activities such as restricted retail, recreation, personal services, and so on.

9 *Limited industrial land supply to accommodate future demand*

In a metropolitan Melbourne context, Yarra Ranges is unlikely to be a major industrial land location compared with competing industrial areas in Dandenong, Knox, Hume and Wyndham which have superior transport linkages and a significant supply of vacant, easily developable industrial zoned land. However, opportunities for modern, small to medium-sized industrial development may arise in the future to service the local and regional market.

The demand for industrial land in Yarra Ranges is low, as measured through historical permit activity and annual estimates of available supply, noting that limited land supply also limits permit activity. Thus, historical demand may under-state the true demand for industrial development because of existing land supply constraints. Latent demand may exist for additional industrial development activity, over and above the level shown by recent building activity. However, an important consideration is that Yarra Ranges is unlikely to become a prime industrial location, for reasons identified above.

According to historical take-up patterns and the available land stock, Yarra Ranges has 14 years' supply of vacant industrial zoned land. With the exclusion of land in Chirnside Park which is proposed to be rezoned to other uses, the supply of vacant industrial land is reduced to just 9 years. The majority of demand for industrial land in Yarra Ranges is for land in the Urban Region.

Where opportunities arise to expand the industrial land supply in the existing urban area, these should be investigated in order to encourage development and employment in the industrial sector. Furthermore, encouraging a greater intensity of development and the development of industrial premises that suit the needs of modern industry is also recommended. Industry is a major employer in Yarra Ranges and a significant share of local residents working in industrial sectors commute to locations beyond Yarra Ranges.

The continuing economic role of existing industrial precincts should be encouraged. This includes limiting the encroachment of conflicting land uses, and discouraging proposals that will lead to a reduction in industrial land supply in the municipality.

10 *Implications for the Strategy*

- 1 **The need to foster ongoing development (where supportable) and jobs growth in activity centres and industrial areas.** These precincts, generally in business or industrial zones, are critical in providing services to the community in a sustainable manner, and in creating local employment opportunities for municipality's residents.
- 2 **The need for ongoing strategic planning to provide certainty and create vibrant and diverse activity centres.** The municipality has experienced a general lack of strategic planning for activity centre development since the 1980s, and it is now opportune to develop an over-arching strategic policy that sets out the future vision for centres in the municipality and identifies new opportunities to raise the performance of these centres.
- 3 **An acknowledgement that Yarra Ranges generally has a well-functioning activity centre hierarchy.** The hierarchy ranges from large centres that are the focus for the delivery of higher-order retail shopping, business, community and other services (Chirnside Park and Lilydale), to neighbourhood and town centres that provide a local sense of place and support the delivery of neighbourhood level facilities and services, to local centres that provided basic day-to-day services for residents and visitors.
- 4 **The importance of accommodating future growth and development in activity centres.** Analysis shows that activity centres in Yarra Ranges can expand by improving the variety and quantum of retail floorspace provision, and by encouraging small business development at the local level.
- 5 **The opportunity for localised precinct-level redevelopment to stimulate performance in some activity centres.** New and well-planned developments in under-performing sites or precincts will improve the functionality and performance of the municipality's activity centres.
- 6 **The ongoing importance of industrial activity.** Although in a metropolitan context Yarra Ranges is not a major location for industrial activity and development, and recognising that most local residents travel outside the municipality to work in industrial sectors, the sector is still an important generator of local jobs and economic activity.
- 7 **The need to intensify industrial activity in existing zoned land.** Analysis shows that the available stock of vacant industrial land is small and will last for only the next nine or so years, and that opportunities to expand the supply of industrial land are limited. In this context, it will be important to use existing industrial land more efficiently through more intensive development and by carefully considering development applications that require consent from Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

3 VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement has been prepared in order to guide the ongoing development of activity centres and industrial areas in Yarra Ranges Shire and to provide the basis for the subsequent detailed objectives which are presented in the Action and Implementation Plans.

The Vision for future development in activity centres and industrial areas is as follows:

The Yarra Ranges activity centre network will offer a full range of experiences for locals and visitors to the municipality. Activity centres will be interesting and vibrant places of activity, where shops, businesses, community centres and other facilities provide a focus for service delivery. The centres will generate local employment, will assist in stimulating local business development and entrepreneurship, and will contribute to the resilience and sustainability of the community.

The network of activity centres will ensure the full range of facilities and services is easily accessible to all Yarra Ranges' residents, businesses and visitors.

Industrial precincts will continue to have an important function in generating economic activity, providing services to residents and businesses, and creating local jobs. More intensive use of zoned land for industrial activity will ensure that opportunities for business development and employment growth will be retained.

4 YARRA RANGES ACTIVITY CENTRE NETWORK

People have always congregated at convenient meeting points, often marked by the intersection of roads serving the local area and the surrounding hinterland. As development expands around such localities, a 'centre' emerges which becomes the focus for the local residential and business communities. Traditionally, such centres developed around produce markets and these have typically emerged as activity centres which now support a mix of facilities and services, ranging from retail and commerce to civic, entertainment and recreational activities.

As focal points for the surrounding community, it is important that activity centres serve their communities in an effective manner, and this means ensuring an appropriate mix of activities (retail, commercial, community, etc) are available in convenient locations, and with opportunities for these centres to further develop their roles and functions where appropriate.

Activity centres form part of a 'hierarchy' of centres, with different levels of the hierarchy performing different roles and functions – the larger centres perform higher-order functions in the delivery of regional and sub-regional services, while smaller centres perform functions that are typically focused at the neighbourhood or local level. Combined, these activity centres form the hierarchy of centres that provide residents and visitors with access to essential services and facilities.

The hierarchy plays an important role - for Councils, developers, investors and the wider community - in guiding the location of investment, economic activity and employment.

The existing activity centre network in Yarra Ranges is sufficient to meet the existing and future retail requirements of residents, noting that the approved retail development at Seville will elevate the role of this centre in the network. Yarra Ranges is not anticipated to experience the development of any major new communities, and therefore no further requirement for additional MAAs or Large Neighbourhood/Town Centres is required. However, the potential urban development of the Lilydale Quarry may generate the need for local convenience services; in this case, such development should have regard for the extent of population expected to reside in the area, and the implications any new retail/commercial development may have for the nearby Lilydale MAA, Chirnside Park MAA and Mooroolbark NAA.

The Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network is shown in the Table and Figure on the following pages. Although centres are categorised according to their role in the hierarchy, all centres are unique and provide varying levels of facilities and services. Encouraging centres to exhibit their 'local' characteristics is recommended in order to provide a network of centres that provides the full range of essential services, as well as providing a range of experiences for residents and visitors.

Table 1: Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network

Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Major Activity Areas</u> (Lilydale and Chirnside Park)</p>	<p>Provide a large, diverse and intensive mix of retail, commercial, entertainment, cultural and other uses.</p> <p>These centres will have strong public transport links, serve a large regional-sized catchment, and be priority locations for future private and public sector development.</p> <p>Higher density residential development is also encouraged.</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities in MAAs include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: Including one or more Discount Department Stores, a number of supermarkets, and a variety of comparison and convenience based speciality retailing. • <u>Cultural, recreation and entertainment facilities</u>: Including restaurants/cafes, performing arts centres, museums, galleries, sporting facilities, gymnasiums, aquatic centres, hotels, cinemas, etc • <u>Health</u>: Including hospitals, medical centres and allied health services (ie. dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, etc). • <u>Education</u>: Including pre-school, primary and secondary schools, university, TAFE courses and adult training and education. • <u>Community facilities</u>: Including libraries, child-care, community and youth centres, public halls, religious buildings, etc. • <u>Civic and administrative services</u>: Including Council offices and public services, such as Centrelink and training services, etc. • <u>Visitor accommodation</u>: Including hotels and motels.

Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Large Neighbourhood Activities Areas and Town Centres</u></p> <p>(Mooroolbark, Kilsyth, Mount Evelyn, Belgrave, Monbulk, Yarra Junction, Healesville, Yarra Glen, Seville – subject to construction of retail development approved under Planning Scheme Amendment C95)</p>	<p>Large Neighbourhood Activities Areas / Town Centres are smaller in floorspace terms than MAAs, and have a retail mix that is focussed on convenience and grocery shopping (although with a limited range of non-food traders); they also provide a range of community services to the surrounding communities.</p> <p>In situations where these centres are located in townships and serve a catchment that extends into the rural hinterland, they are referred to as Large Town Centres.</p> <p>Typically, these township-based centres perform a significant role in the provision of community and civic services to the surrounding community, and often provide a range of visitor activities and services</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities provided in Large Neighbourhood/Town Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: Range of convenience based retailing, with at least one large supermarket and a variety of convenience based speciality retailing. Opportunities for tourism focus retail also exists in some instances. • <u>Cultural, recreation and entertainment facilities</u>: Including restaurants/cafes, small scale arts centres/galleries, museums, local sporting facilities, gymnasiums, etc • <u>Health</u>: Including medical centres and allied health services (ie. dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, etc). • <u>Education</u>: Including pre-school, primary and secondary schools and potentially adult training and education. • <u>Community facilities</u>: Including libraries, child-care, community and youth centres, public halls, religious buildings, etc. • <u>Visitor facilities</u>: Potential for tourism infrastructure may exist for those centres with a tourism focus.

Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Small Neighbourhood Activities Areas and Town Centres</u></p> <p>(Warburton, Montrose, Mount Dandenong, Olinda, Upwey, Coldstream, Wandin North, Woori Yallock, Sassafra, Tecoma)</p>	<p>Small Neighbourhood Activities Areas or Small Town Centres have a more limited role in providing convenience retailing and community facilities for an immediate surrounding catchment.</p> <p>Usually, these centres have a small supermarket as the main anchor tenant. In some cases these centres also serve a tourist market.</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities provided in Small Neighbourhood/Town Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: Limited range of convenience based retailing, including a small limited range supermarket and a variety of convenience based speciality retailing. Opportunities for tourism focus retail also exists in some instances. • <u>Health</u>: May include medical centres and allied health services (ie. dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, etc). • <u>Education</u>: May include pre-school, primary and secondary schools. • <u>Community facilities</u>: May include a library, child-care, community and youth centres, public halls, religious buildings, etc. • <u>Visitor facilities</u>: May include tourism infrastructure in for those centres with a tourism focus. This may involve small scale visitor accommodation.
<p><u>Local Activities Areas</u></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colby Drive (Belgrave South) • Switchback Road (Chirnside Park) • Meadow Gate Drive (Chirnside Park) • Collins Place (Kilsyth) • Hawthory Road (Kilsyth) • Cardigan Road (Mooroolbark) 	<p>Local Activities Areas consist of a small group of shops that typically serve a local walk-in catchment, and provide for the daily convenience and ‘top up’ needs of local residents and passing motorists.</p> <p>Some of these small centres contain a limited number of community facilities and other uses. Numerous Local Activities Areas are located throughout Yarra Ranges, mainly in the urban region.</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities provided in Local Activities Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: Limited range of convenience based retailing, may include general store, takeaway food, café, bakery, hairdresser, etc. • <u>Health</u>: May including local doctors and/or allied health services (ie. dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, etc). • <u>Education</u>: May include pre-school, primary and secondary schools.

5 OBJECTIVES

The Vision for activity centre and industrial development in Yarra Ranges is supported by a set of seven Objectives. These objectives form the basis for more detailed actions and implementations as set out in Chapter 6.

- 1 *To support the viability of the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network so that it continues to perform the important role of providing accessible facilities and services to residents and visitors.*
- 2 *To support Chirnside Park and Lilydale as major centres with a wide variety of retail, business, civic, community and entertainment services, supported by residential development.*
- 3 *To promote appropriate retail and commercial development in activities centres where such development meets the needs of existing and future residents and visitors.*
- 4 *To encourage a diverse mix of commercially-viable activities in centres.*
- 5 *To promote high-quality residential development in centres and their surrounds.*
- 6 *To ensure that activity centres in Yarra Ranges are well-designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business, and participating in community activities.*
- 7 *To support the existing industrial areas in Yarra Ranges as suitable locations for industrial activities and employment.*

6 ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Chapter identifies a set of actions designed to implement the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy 2012. For each underlying objective, a supporting rationale is provided, together with detailed actions and an implementation plan identifying key roles and responsibilities.

The following conventions have been adopted in identifying the suggested timing for implementation:

- Short-term: Within 12 months
- Medium-term: From 1 year to 3 years
- Longer-term: From 3 years to 5 years or beyond
- On-going: An existing action that continues into the future

Action Plan No.1: Support the Viability of Yarra Ranges Activity Centres

Objective

To support the viability of the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network so that it continues to perform the important role of providing accessible facilities and services to residents and visitors.

Yarra Ranges has a well-functioning activity centre hierarchy which provides residents and visitors with a variety of retail, commercial, community, civic, health and entertainment services. Supporting the continued viability of the activity centre hierarchy, and the centres which form the hierarchy, will ensure a range of facilities, services, experiences and employment opportunities will remain accessible to Yarra Ranges residents and visitors.

It is important that these centres continue to be viable and that they maintain and enhance their particular roles in the hierarchy. In order to achieve this outcome, key stakeholders (property owners, business owners, tenants, Council) should be encouraged to contribute positively to the performance of centres by:

- Improving the amenity and appearance of individual properties and the public realm
- Improving the overall design and integration of centres
- Encouraging a good mix of tenancies which reflects the expectations of users of the centre
- Promoting and carrying out appropriate redevelopments, refurbishments, and/or expansions

- Improving the commercial viability of individual businesses by adopting best-practice retail and business techniques
- Improving the commercial viability of centres and business by supporting the roll-out of the National Broadband Network.

Any future development or redevelopment at existing centres should have regard for the role each centre performs in the hierarchy. This hierarchy needs to be recognised when planning for the future requirements of residents, particularly those who reside in the rural parts of the municipality.

In this context of municipality-wide planning, it is difficult to provide the full complement of facilities and services to residents in the small towns and rural areas due to the limited size of residential catchments for individual Town Centres and the need for businesses to operate in a commercially viable manner. Thus, the ways by which people use activity centres in the rural areas need to be considered when planning for the future of these areas.

Implementing the Activity Centre Network Strategy into the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme will reinforce the importance of the activity centre hierarchy. The Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy should replace the Regional Strategy Plan (RSP) as the guiding document for the future development of the municipality's activity centres. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Retail Assessment Criteria (refer Chapter 8) are implemented as local planning policy to provide strong strategic rationale to the decision-making powers of Council.

Action Plan

- 1.1 Adopt the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy 2012 and ensure that it is reflected in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme through changes to the MSS and local planning policy.
- 1.2 Assist property owners, centre managers, retailers, businesses and traders' associations in existing centres to improve the performance of individual businesses and centres through appropriate redevelopment and refurbishment.
- 1.3 Facilitate redevelopments and expansions of existing centres provided that they meet the objectives identified in this Strategy, contribute to a net community benefit, and do not adversely affect the operation of the activity centre hierarchy.
- 1.4 Assist businesses and trader associations in the development and implementation of marketing plans for centres.
- 1.5 Make available business development planning for individual business operators.
- 1.6 Encourage the distribution of facilities and services in activity centres in a manner that acknowledges the role which each centre performs in the hierarchy in serving Yarra Ranges and the surrounding region.
- 1.7 Support the viability of centres and businesses by encouraging the roll-out of the National Broadband Network.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
1.1	Adopt the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy 2012 and ensure the Vision, Objectives and Actions are reflected in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme through changes to the MSS and local planning policy.	Council		Facilitate the adoption and implementation of the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy 2012. Review MSS to ensure consistency. Ensure the Activity Centre Network Strategy replaces the RSP as the guiding document for the future development of the municipality's activity centres. Introduce the activity centre hierarchy, as described in the Strategy, into the MSS. Assess major retail/commercial developments against this Strategy and the Retail Planning Assessment Criteria.	Short-term
1.2	Assist property owners, centre managers, retailers, businesses and traders' associations in existing centres to improve their performance through appropriate redevelopment and refurbishment.	Council	Property owners Developers Centre managers Traders' associations Individual businesses	Encourage and assist partners to actively seek ways to improve their centres/businesses.	Ongoing
1.3	Facilitate redevelopments and expansions of existing centres provided that they meet the objectives identified in this Strategy, contribute to a net community benefit, and do not adversely affect the operation of the activity centre hierarchy.	Council	Property owners Developers	Take lead role in discussions with property owners, developers and potential investors.	Ongoing
1.4	Assist businesses and trader associations in the development and implementation of marketing plans for their centres.	Council	Traders' associations Individual businesses	Encourage and assist partners to develop and implement marketing plans	Medium-term
1.5	Make available business development planning for individual business operators.	Council	Traders' associations Individual businesses	Encourage and assist partners to develop and implement marketing plans	Short-term
1.6	Encourage the distribution of facilities and services in activity centres in a manner that acknowledges the role each centre performs in the hierarchy of centres serving the region.	Council	Property owners Developers	Ensure the network of centres is represented in the future planning for services and facilities	Ongoing

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
1.7	Support the viability of centres and businesses by encouraging the roll-out of the National Broadband Network	Council		Advocate for priority connection to the National Broadband Network	Ongoing

Action Plan No.2: Support the Role of Chirnside Park and Lilydale as Major Activity Areas

Objective

To support Chirnside Park and Lilydale as major centres with a wide variety of retail, business, civic, community and entertainment services, supported by residential development

Recognise and support the important roles performed by the Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs in the provision of retail, business, community and civic activities, and their role as key focus points for the Yarra Ranges community. In the future, these centres will be a focus for investment and development, including opportunities for retail, commercial office, community facilities and residential development.

Opportunities should also be sought to improve the integration of activities in these centres, particularly in Lilydale. The potential for any new development or redevelopment to contribute to a more consolidated centre should be strongly considered when making development/planning related decisions.

As opportunities to expand the industrial employment base in Yarra Ranges become limited due to a lack of industrial land supply, the importance of both Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs as locations for more diversified employment will increase. Council should encourage any large-scale office development seeking locations in the region, private or public, to locate within the two MAAs.

Action Plan

- 2.1 Encourage the development, and redevelopment, of key sites in Lilydale and Chirnside Park in a manner that supports their roles as MAAs, including an expansion in the range of higher-order retailing on offer.
- 2.2 Encourage non-retail development such as commercial office, community, education, and entertainment to occur in locations which adds to the overall vibrancy of centres and enhances their attractiveness as places to visit and do business.
- 2.3 Encourage higher-density residential development within and surrounding the Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs.
- 2.4 Encourage property owners to invest in upgrading the appearance and amenity of buildings and their environs, and accompany this action with appropriate investment in the public realm.
- 2.5 Support development/redevelopment proposals that will contribute to a physical consolidation of activity, particularly in Lilydale.
- 2.6 Continue the implementation of structure plans for the Chirnside Park and Lilydale MAAs.

- 2.7 Encourage development in Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs which supports private and public sector office-based employment opportunities.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
2.1	Encourage the development, and redevelopment, of key sites in Lilydale and Chirnside Park in a manner that supports their roles as MAAs, including an expansion in the range of higher-order retailing on offer.	Council	Property owners Developers	Facilitate discussions with property owners, developers and potential investors	Short-term and Medium-term
2.2	Encourage non-retail development such as commercial office, community, education, and entertainment to occur in locations which adds to the overall vibrancy of centres and enhances their attractiveness as places to visit and do business.	Council	Property owners Developers	Engage in discussions with land owners and developers.	Ongoing
2.3	Encourage higher-density residential development within and surrounding the Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs.	Council	Property owners Developers	Engage in discussions with land owners and developers.	Ongoing
2.4	Encourage property owners to invest in upgrading the appearance and amenity of buildings and the environs, and accompany this with appropriate investment in the public realm.	Council	Property owners	Engage in discussions with land owners.	Ongoing
2.5	Support development/redevelopment proposals which contribute to a physical consolidation of activity, particularly in Lilydale.	Council	Property owners Developers	Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms.	Ongoing
2.6	Continue the implementation of structure plans for the Chirnside Park and Lilydale MAAs.	Council	Property owners Developers	Ensure structure plans are implemented in the planning scheme.	Ongoing
2.7	Encourage development in Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs which supports private and public sector office-based employment opportunities.	Council	Property owners Real estate agents Developers Transport operators	Engage with property owners, real estate agents and developers. Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms. Continue to improve and promote Lilydale and Chirnside Park MAAs as places for office development and employment.	Ongoing

Action Plan No.3: Promote Appropriate Retail and Commercial Development

Objective

To promote appropriate retail and commercial development in activities centres where such development meets the needs of existing and future residents and visitors

As the resident population and visitor numbers increase, and as the needs and expectations of people change over time, activity centres in Yarra Ranges will need to adapt to these changing circumstances. This may involve new and different forms of retail and commercial development, changes in the type of tenancy mix, and changes in the ways businesses are presented to the public. For example, the potential to attract more tourists may involve the provision of new facilities and services to meet their requirements, such as dining, specialty retail, and other attractions.

Council is encouraged to work with stakeholders to retain available spending within the municipality (both residents' and visitors' spending), and this can be achieved through actions such as expanding the retail and commercial components in centres, and enhancing the range and quality of businesses.

The provision of community and recreational facilities where they meet the needs of residents and visitors is also important for the viability of centres. Improvements to the retail and commercial roles and presentation of centres will help achieve the municipality's goals for economic development and small business development, and will generate economic benefits in the form of more jobs, incomes and ongoing investment for the community.

The analysis provided in the Background Report presents a detailed assessment of the potential future supportable retail and commercial office development in the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network, and provides guidance on the locations where retail and commercial office development should be directed. The extent of development in any centre should reflect the role the centre performs in the centre hierarchy and the characteristics of the surrounding area. Centre specific recommendations are provided in Chapter 7 of this Strategy.

Action Plan

- 3.1 Encourage development within activity centres where a demonstrable need for additional services/facilities is evident, and ensure the provision of facilities and services that reduce the reliance on residents having to travel beyond the municipality, particularly for convenience-related shopping and for business and professional services. New development should contribute to a net community benefit and reflect the characteristics of the local area.
- 3.2 Undertake structure planning for Neighbourhood and Town Centres, with these plans to build on the centre-specific recommendations presented in the Strategy.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
3.1	Encourage development within activity centres where there is a demonstrable need for additional facilities/services, and where such provision reduces the need for residents to travel beyond the municipality, particularly for convenience-related shopping and for business and professional services. New development should contribute to a net community benefit and reflect the characteristics of the local area.	Council	Property owners Developers Local community	Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms.	Ongoing
3.2	Undertake structure planning for Neighbourhood and Town Centres, with these plans to build on the centre specific recommendation presented in the Strategy.	Council	Consultants Traders' associations	Facilitate the development of Structure Plans for Neighbourhood and Town Centres.	Medium-term

Action Plan No.4: Encourage a Diverse Mix of Activities in Centres

Objective

To encourage a diverse mix of commercially-viable activities in centres

Activity centres are encouraged to become popular places where a wide and diverse range of activities takes place which attracts day-round visitation. Centres should be the primary location in the municipality for activities which include shopping, business, work, leisure, community, cultural and health and education.

The extent to which each individual centre can attract these types of uses will be determined by the role that each centre plays in the activity centre hierarchy. Higher-order centres such as Lilydale and Chirside Park have potential to generate visitors associated with the delivery of regional-level services, while smaller town centres are the focus for intensive use by a smaller local resident population. Townships in rural parts of the municipality have a special role in providing local services by virtue of their geographic separation from alternative locations for service delivery.

Important benefits can be gained from widening the mix of activities available at activity centres, including achieving more efficient use of infrastructure, reducing private vehicle trip-making, integrating the delivery of public transport, improving accessibility within centres, and generating more day-round activity.

Action Plan

- 4.1 Encourage a range of appropriate activities - serving both regional and local catchments - to locate in the major centres at Lilydale and Chirside Park.
- 4.2 Encourage a range of appropriate activities that serve local markets, and where appropriate visitor markets, to locate in Neighbourhood and Town Centres.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
4.1	Encourage a range of appropriate activities, serving both regional and local catchments, to locate in the major centres at Lilydale and Chirside Park.	Council	Property owners Developers	Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms.	Ongoing
4.2	Encourage a range of appropriate activities that serve local markets, and where appropriate visitor markets, to locate in Neighbourhood and Town Centres	Council	Property owners Developers	Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms.	Ongoing

Action No.5: Promote High-Quality Residential Development in Centres and their Surrounds

Objective

To promote high quality residential development within and surrounding activity centres

An increase in the residential population living within activity centres and in surrounding areas will contribute to the viability and vitality of businesses and community facilities.

Development formats which are typical for in-centre and edge-of-centre residential development include townhouses, units/apartments, shop-top dwellings, and as part of new mixed-use developments comprising ground floor retail/commercial uses and residential development on the upper levels.

The extent and format of residential development in and around activity centres needs to be commensurate with the role of the centre, and should make a positive contribution to the character of the centre and the surrounding area. Significant multi-storey developments are likely to be restricted to the Major Activities Areas.

Action Plan

- 5.1 Encourage appropriate higher-density residential development within centres and their surrounds.
- 5.2 Ensure planning policies and provisions support higher-density residential development in activity centres, where appropriate.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
5.1	Encourage appropriate higher-density residential development within centres and their surrounds	Council	Property owners Developers	Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms.	Ongoing
5.2	Ensure planning policies and provisions support higher-density residential development in activity centres, where appropriate	Council		Review relevant planning policy and documentation.	Medium-term

Action Plan No.6: Promote High-Quality Design

Objective

To ensure activity centres in Yarra Ranges are well-designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business, and participating in community activities

Successful and sustainable activity centres are most often characterised by high levels of amenity, an attractive public realm, and investment in property by individual property owners. These urban design features should also be accompanied by high-quality planning which emphasises pedestrian amenity, accessibility, and integration of uses and activities.

The features described above encourage return visits from shoppers and other visitors to the centres, and contribute to the level of in-centre activity, thus supporting the viability of centres and their activities.

Action Plan

- 6.1 Encourage new development which contributes positively to the amenity, appearance, accessibility of centres and the community in general, through appropriate planning tools such as structure plans and urban design guidelines.
- 6.2 Encourage a high-quality public realm through appropriate investment in street furniture, signage, plantings and other physical works and initiatives which add to the appeal of centres.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
6.1	Encourage new development that contributes positively to the amenity, appearance, accessibility of centres and the community in general, through appropriate planning tools such as structure plans and urban design guidelines.	Council	Property owners Developers Local community	Engage in discussions with land owners and developers to encourage appropriate design of new centres.	Ongoing
6.2	Encourage a high-quality public realm through appropriate investment in street furniture, signage, plantings and other physical works and initiatives that add to the appeal of centres.	Council	Traders associations Local community	Engage with traders' associations to identify and implement appropriate investments to public realm.	Medium-term

Action Plan No.7: Support Economic Activity and Employment in Existing Industrial Areas

Objective

To support the existing industrial areas in Yarra Ranges as suitable locations for industrial activities and employment

Industrial-related sectors account for in excess of 10,000 jobs, mainly located on land zoned for industrial purposes. These sectors represent an important source of business activity and wealth creation, and serve the needs of local residents and businesses, as well as those located further afield.

Importantly, although industrial job provision in the municipality represents only 40% of the total industrial employment demand from local residents, analysis shows that this employment ratio has not changed over the period 2001 to 2006, and the number of local jobs in industrial sectors has increased over this time.

The available stock of vacant industrial land in Yarra Ranges is small, and is forecast to only meet demand over the next nine or so years. Opportunities to expand the supply of industrial land are severely limited due to surrounding land uses and the commitment of State and Local Government policies supporting urban containment within the Urban Growth Boundary. Moreover, the stock of industrial land is expected to decline, with some rezoning to other uses, particularly around Chirnside Park.

In this context, it will be important to use the remaining industrial land more efficiently through more intensive development of vacant land, and to encourage the redevelopment of existing occupied land for more intensive activities which reflect modern industrial requirements.

The availability of industrial zoned land also needs to be a factor that is properly considered when responding to planning permit applications in industrial zones for uses that require planning consent (ie Section 2 uses as specified in the use tables for industrial zones). Council should discourage the use of industrial land for activities that might otherwise be more suitably accommodated in other zones.

Action Plan

- 7.1 Provide strategic support for the ongoing role of industrial precincts to provide jobs and services to the local economy, and incorporate into relevant economic development goals and strategies.
- 7.2 Encourage efficient use of industrial land by promoting more intensive development and redevelopment in industrial areas.
- 7.3 In responding to applications to amend the zoning applicable to existing industrial land, require the proponent to undertake a detailed economic analysis of the implications of such zoning on

local industrial activity and journey to work patterns, in the context of a net community benefit assessment.

- 7.4 Where permits are sought for uses within industrial zones that require planning consent (ie Section 2 uses as specified in the use tables for industrial zones), Council should consider the potential effect of such applications on the amount of available industrial land, the effect on the ongoing operation of industrial businesses, and the potential for such uses to locate in other zones.
- 7.5 Investigate opportunities to expand the industrial land supply into land surrounding existing industrial estates in the urban areas.
- 7.6 Monitor developer interest in industrial areas in the non-urban parts of the municipality in order to ensure local populations are adequately provided with service-based industry and to encourage continued economic growth.

Implementation Plan

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
7.1	Provide strategic support for the ongoing role of industrial precincts to provide jobs and services to the local economy, and incorporate into relevant economic development goals and strategies.	Council		Ensure the importance of industrial activity in the municipality is reflected in Council's strategic documents.	Short-term
7.2	Encourage efficient use of industrial land by promoting more intensive development and redevelopment in industrial areas.	Council	Property owners Developers	Encourage more intensive development in industrial areas that meets modern industrial standards.	Ongoing
7.3	In responding to applications to amend the zoning applicable to existing industrial land, require the proponent to undertake a detailed economic analysis of the implications of such zoning on local industrial activity and journey to work patterns, in the context of a net community benefit assessment	Council	Property owners Developers	Request proponents to undertake a detailed economic analysis of proposed changes in industrial zones.	Short-term
7.4	Where permits are sought for uses within industrial zones that require planning consent (ie Section 2 uses as specified in the use tables for industrial zones), Council should consider the potential effect of such applications on the amount of available industrial land, the effect on the ongoing operation of industrial businesses, and the potential for such uses to locate in other zones	Council	Property owners Developers	Request a detailed economic analysis from proponents where planning consent is required that assesses the effect of the proposed use on industrial land and activity. Consider, using the analysis presented in this Strategy, to strengthen policy support for industrial land.	Short-term
7.5	Investigate opportunities to expand the industrial land supply in existing industrial estates in the urban areas	Council	Property owners Developers	Continue to investigate opportunities for VicRoads-owned land to form part of the Kilsyth industrial estate.	Short-term
7.5	Monitor developer interest in industrial areas in the non-urban areas of the municipality in order to ensure local populations are adequately provided with service based industry and to encourage continued economic growth,	Council	Property owners Developers Real estate agent Industrial businesses	Regularly liaise with the industrial sector to gauge interest in non-urban industrial areas.	Ongoing

7 CENTRE-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the *Objectives* and the *Action and Implementation Plan* described in the previous Chapters, the following identifies a series of *Centre Specific Recommendations* which contribute to the overall performance of the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network and the viability of individual centres in the future.

The recommendations provided below are based on the analysis presented in the *Background Report* and the *Activity Centre Profiles*. Opportunities to further refine these recommendations may arise through more detailed structure planning for each centre.

Lilydale Major Activity Area

- 1 Encourage improved integration between the major land uses in the centre (i.e. main street retailing, the Woolworths Centre, train station, etc.)
- 2 Investigate the potential for the development and redevelopment of the Olive Grove Shopping Centre and surrounding land, including Business 4 Zone land located to the south of Hardy Street, near the intersection with Hutchinson Street. Any future development/redevelopment should have regard for the connectivity of the site with surrounding land uses (including Maroondah Highway, the train station and the Woolworths Centre), and investigate the potential for a mix of retail, commercial and residential outcomes. The appropriateness of the Business 4 Zone to land to the south of Hardy Street should be investigated.
- 3 Continue to improve streetscaping and amenity throughout the centre, and encourage private investment, particularly in the improvement in the presentation of buildings.
- 4 Investigate opportunities for health-related services, tertiary education, and office development.

(Also, refer Chapter 6: *Action Plan No.2: Support the Role of Chirnside Park and Lilydale as Major Activity Areas*)

Chirnside Park Major Activity Area

- 5 Encourage the development of community, health and recreation uses in the centre, together with appropriate retail and other commercial uses.
- 6 Continue to improve public transport linkages to the centre.

(Also, refer Chapter 6: *Action Plan No.2: Support the Role of Chirnside Park and Lilydale as Major Activity Areas*)

Mooroolbark Neighbourhood Activity Area

- 7 Continue to implement the actions identified in the *Mooroolbark Structure Plan* (March 2011).
- 8 Investigate opportunities for the provision of a larger supermarket in the centre; this may be incorporated with a redevelopment of The Terrace Shopping Centre or the existing Coles supermarket site.

Kilsyth Neighbourhood Activity Area

- 9 Encourage the development of land located between the Coles shopping complex and the Churinga Shopping Centre in order to contribute to improved integration between the two centres.
- 10 Investigate opportunities to improve the integration between the retail components of the centre with the community and allied health land uses in the surrounding areas.
- 11 Encourage an upgrade of the Coles supermarket.
- 12 Prepare a Structure Plan for the Kilsyth NAA.

Mount Evelyn Neighbourhood Activity Area

- 13 Continue to develop Mount Evelyn as a visitor location, building on its links with the Warburton Trail and the provision of tourist-based retailing.
- 14 Encourage an improved food and grocery retail offer.
- 15 Investigate development opportunities for the large parcel of consolidated Business 1 Zone land with access to Wray Street and Station Street.
- 16 Prepare a Structure Plan for the Mount Evelyn NAA.

Belgrave Neighbourhood Activity Area

- 17 Encourage an improved food and grocery retail offer, including the potential to expand the existing supermarket offer.
- 18 Improve integration between the main street and the Puffing Billy railway station.
- 19 Investigate opportunities for the redevelopment of the Belgrave Motors site on the corner of Monbulk-Road and Belgrave-Hallam Road.
- 20 Investigate opportunities for the redevelopment of the Belgrave Arcade in order to improve the link between the main street and the largest car park in the centre.
- 21 Implement recommendations of the Belgrave Town Centre Study.

Monbulk Town Centre

- 22 Investigate opportunities to expand and improve existing supermarket facilities.
- 23 Continue to promote Monbulk as a tourist location.
- 24 Improve streetscaping and amenity throughout the centre.
- 25 Prepare a Structure Plan for the Monbulk Town Centre.

Yarra Junction Town Centre

- 26 Encourage medium density housing in close proximity to the centre.
- 27 Encourage retail development that will improve the food and grocery and tourist-based retail offers.
- 28 Investigate opportunities to improve the presentation and function of the Yarra Junction Mall.
- 29 Continue to support Yarra Junction as a civic and recreation hub serving the Warburton Corridor.
- 30 Prepare a Structure Plan for the Yarra Junction Town Centre.

Healesville Town Centre

- 31 Investigate opportunities to improve the integration of the different components of the centre, including the eastern and western parts of the centre; the tourist-related development in the eastern part of the centre (ie, Beechworth Bakery, White Rabbit Brewery and Innocent Bystander) and Queens Park; and the pedestrian linkages between the tourist-related development in the eastern part of the centre on either side of Maroondah Highway.
- 32 Investigate the potential for an expansion of supermarket facilities; tourist-related retail in the form of cafes, restaurant and speciality shops; and visitor accommodation.
- 33 Investigate the potential for the hardware building supplies store on the corner of Maroondah Highway and Church Street and the French's laundry site adjacent to the Healesville Walk Shopping Centre as future development sites.
- 34 Continue to support Healesville as a civic, cultural, entertainment and recreation hub serving the residents and visitors to the Yarra Valley.
- 35 Maintain the primacy of the 'main street' shopping strip along Maroondah Highway as the 'core' retailing area in the Healesville Activity Centre.
- 36 Prepare a Structure Plan for the Healesville Town Centre.

Yarra Glen Town Centre

- 37 Develop a strategic plan for the centre in co-operation with local businesses, residents, and tourism operators. The plan should identify a vision for the centre, a centre theme, marketing opportunities, and potential niche markets.
- 38 Invest in streetscape and amenity improvements throughout the main street, which are reflective of the vision and theme for the centre.
- 39 Continue to promote Yarra Glen as a tourist location.
- 40 Improve signage from the bypass to the town centre so as to encourage passing motorists to visit the centre.
- 41 Continue to encourage and invest in tourism infrastructure in and surrounding the town.
- 42 Improve the integration of the Yarra Glen Shopping Centre with adjoining open space and the racing centre.
- 43 Encourage, where appropriate, residential development in the town of Yarra Glen.

Seville Town Centre

- 44 Facilitate the development of the approved supermarket development.
- 45 Once the approved supermarket development is constructed, investigate the opportunity for additional community facilities that would benefit from additional exposure generated by the approved development.
- 46 Investigate opportunities for linking the Seville Town Centre with the Warburton Trail.

Coldstream Town Centre

- 47 Prepare a Structure Plan for the Coldstream Town Centre which builds on the opportunities identified below:
 - Potential for improved appearance of the existing retail areas.
 - Opportunities for the introduction of community facilities/services to the centre.
 - Potential for an improved tourism focus, building on the success of the Coldstream Brewery and the location of the centre at the 'Gateway' to the Yarra Valley.
 - Potential may exist for a number of businesses with a focus on local produce situated in the local centre in the Gateway Estate (approximately 400 metres to the south of the town centre) to be represented in the town centre.
 - Potential future development of the vacant Mixed Use Zoned land, and the land currently occupied by a landscape supplies business, which surrounds the centre.

Warburton Town Centre

- 48 Continue to develop the tourism role of the centre, including potential for limited retail development focused on tourists, improved signage, and amenity. Build on the natural features of the Yarra River and Warburton trail.
- 49 Potential for expanded supermarket facilities should be considered further. The proposed IGA development would significantly enhance the food and grocery offer in Warburton and could provide an impetus for improved convenience retailing in the eastern precinct.
- 50 Investigate development opportunities, including residential and/or tourism-related, on key development sites in and surrounding the centre. These sites include the former Warburton Hospital and the former Sanitarium factory.

Other Small Town Centres

- 51 Continue to support the viability and local convenience, community, health and tourism roles performed by the following Small Town Centres:
- Montrose Town Centre
 - Mount Dandenong Town Centre
 - Olinda Town Centre
 - Upwey Town Centre
 - Tecoma Town Centre
 - Sassafras Town Centre
 - Wandin North Town Centre
 - Woori Yallock Town Centre.
- 52 Investigate opportunities for Wandin and Woori Yallock to capitalise on their proximity to the Warburton Trail.

Local Activities Areas

- 53 Continue to support the viability of Local Activity Areas in Yarra Ranges and the role these centres perform in providing day-to-day convenience services for residents and visitors, particularly in light of an increasingly competitive environment for centres of this type. These centres include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Two centres on Colby Drive (Belgrave South)
 - Switchback Road (Chirnside Park)
 - Meadow Gate Drive (Chirnside Park)

- Collins Place (Kilsyth)
- Hawthory Road (Kilsyth)
- Cardigan Road (Mooroolbark)
- Centella Place (Launching Place)
- Warburton Highway (Wesburn and Millgrove)
- Monbulk Road (Kallista)
- Mount Dandenong Tourist Road (Kalorama)
- Currawong Road (Montrose).

54 Continue to support the tourism role performed by local centres in the Dandenongs, Yarra Valley and Warburton Corridor regions of the municipality.

8 RETAIL PLANNING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Retail Planning Assessment Criteria have been prepared as a reference point for Council officers when assessing development proposals for new or expanded provision of retail floorspace. The Criteria can also be used by developers for guidance in terms of information required by Council in order to facilitate the planning approvals process.

The Criteria consist of three components:

- A listing of the main considerations when assessing retail development proposals.
- A listing of information which an Applicant should provide to Council in order to facilitate the planning approvals process; and
- A checklist of issues to be addressed when assessing major retail development proposals.

In assessing a development proposal, reference should be made to the application of various other aspects of this Strategy. In practice – due to the limitations of the planning scheme – the requirement to provide this information is likely to be limited to planning applications seeking a change in use.

8.1 Considerations for Retail Development Proposals

In assessing retail development proposals, Council will have regard for how the proposal addresses the *Vision, Objectives* and *Actions* described in the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy. In addition, a proponent will be required to show how the proposal addresses the following key considerations:

- 1 Is there demand for additional retail facilities, and how does the proposal meet this demand?
- 2 How will the proposed development impact on the role of the centre, and on the viability of other activity centres in the hierarchy?
- 3 What are the anticipated benefits to the community (measurable and non-measurable)?
- 4 Will the proposal contribute to employment (in both construction and retail operation)?
- 5 Will the proposal provide an overall contribution to net community benefit?
- 6 Does the proposal adhere to local and State policies for planning and urban design?

8.2 Information Applicants must provide when Seeking Planning Approval for a Retail Proposal

- 1 Address of the subject site and Title particulars

- 2 Details of the proposed retail component
 - Amount of retail floorspace (in square metres)
 - Number of retail tenancies and sizes
 - Type of retail floorspace (eg, supermarket; discount department store, specialty stores, etc)
 - Car parking (if applicable).
- 3 Details of any other (non-retail) component where applicable, including office floorspace, entertainment uses, residential component, etc.
- 4 An economic impact report is required for major new retail developments (at the discretion of Council), but generally comprising those proposals involving 5,000m² or more of retail floorspace, or the provision of a key major tenant such as supermarket, etc). The report should provide the following information:
 - Supporting evidence of retail demand
 - Assessment of any potential impact on existing or planned (ie approved) retail facilities
 - Impact the proposed development would likely have on the role of the centre and the wider activity centre hierarchy
 - Description of anticipated benefits to the community (measurable and non-measurable)
 - Estimated contribution to employment (in both construction and retail operation), and noting the indirect flows (although these generally accrue to a wide area, including the State and national economies)
 - Overall contribution to net community benefit.
- 5 Council will decide on the extent of supporting economic impact information required of the applicant on the basis of the size of the retail floorspace component for which approval is being sought. While a brief statement is sufficient for a development of up to 5,000 m² (and depending on the place in the hierarchy of centres and the main retail tenant), Council would require a more detailed feasibility assessment if the proposal involves the development of a major shopping facility. Prospective developers should discuss their proposals with Council officers prior to formal submission of a Planning Permit Application or rezoning request so that the extent of supporting information required by Council can be ascertained. Council reserves the right to request additional information on economic impact from the applicant, if required.
- 6 The proposal should be accompanied by an analysis of the development in the context of relevant planning policies, including State and local policies.

8.3 Information Required for Major Retail Development Applications

The following considerations are provided as guidance in assessing applications for retail development in Yarra Ranges. These considerations are provided also as guidance to proponents in terms of the level of information required to support major development applications.

Note that the level of information required to support an application will be at the discretion of Council.

Retail demand

- 1 The application/proposal must show a need or demand for new or expanded retail floorspace provision to serve the catchment.
- 2 A retail feasibility assessment is required for major development proposals, or those with a key tenant (such as new supermarket), as determined by Council.
- 3 The application or retail assessment must indicate the current trade area or catchment population level, and the current and forecast population and retail spending growth for the next five and ten years.
- 4 The application/assessment must show the extent to which the proposal would be expected to draw trade from beyond the catchment, or from passing trade.
- 5 Indicate whether the new retail provision - if proposed for an existing centre - would lead to an expansion in the size of the catchment served by that centre.

Retail supply

- 1 Indicate the existing supply of retail floorspace serving the catchment.
- 2 Give details of any other proposals for new or expanded retail development in the catchment or beyond, which could have an effect on the viability of what is presently proposed.
- 3 Indicate the main features of the existing hierarchy of centres which serve the catchment, and show where the proposed new or expanded retail provision would fit within this hierarchy.
- 4 Provide evidence as to whether the existing supply of retail floorspace is or is not adequate to meet existing and foreseeable demand levels (say, over the next five to ten years).
- 5 Indicate whether any retail gaps exist in merchandise/services which the proposal will fill.
- 6 Provide details as to the existing level of vacant retail premises in the catchment and in any other affected centres, and assess whether these premises are suitable to accommodate modern retail needs.
- 7 Provide details as to alternative sites to that proposed, and show the extent to which the proposal represents a preferred site.

Escape spending

- 1 Indicate the amount of residents' spending that currently escapes to other, more distant shopping centres located beyond the catchment.

- 2 Show forecasts of the levels of escape spending if there is no increase in retail facilities to serve the catchment.
- 3 Provide details as to the retail categories that are featured in the escape spending, and indicate the share of this escape spending that could reasonably be retained by the proposed new or expanded retail facilities.

Impact on existing retail facilities/hierarchy

- 1 Prepare an analysis of the effect on total retail sales levels (expressed in dollars and as a percentage of total sales) at existing retail facilities if the proposal for new retail floorspace is approved.
- 2 Show how the trading performance of existing facilities (expressed in terms of sales per square metre of retail floorspace) would be affected by the introduction of additional retail floorspace.
- 3 Show the extent to which the proposal is expected to lead to an overall improved provision of retail facilities to the catchment - and especially with consideration to any adverse trading impacts on existing centres.
- 4 Prepare an analysis of the employment impact of the proposed new or expanded retail facilities, including the potential loss in employment at centres negatively impacted by the proposal.
- 5 Show how the proposal will contribute to an improved level of services provided by the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Hierarchy.

Urban design issues

- 1 The application must meet site planning and other requirements specified in the planning scheme or in other planning policy documents.
- 2 The planning application must include - where requested by Council - an assessment of the proposed development in the context of relevant urban design policies.

Net community benefit

- 1 The planning application must provide an indication of the development proposal's contribution to Net Community Benefit (NCB), in terms of:
 - Employment generation (or loss) during construction and operation
 - Impact on retail choice and availability of goods and services
 - Impact on overall levels of vibrancy and sustainability
 - Contribution to levels of public transport use
 - Contribution to liveability, social interaction, and other community-related goals.

- 2 The application must specify how the proposed development contributes to NCB, including consideration of the following factors:
 - Potential positive factors, including: increased choice in retail goods and services available to the community, increased retail competition, retention of a share of escape spending, increased employment and multiplier effects, increased contributions to Council rates, etc; and
 - Potential negative factors, including: loss of sales at existing shops/centres, loss of employment, possible business closures, possible vacant shops, possible multiplier effects associated with these potential negative outcomes, etc.
- 3 For larger projects, as determined by Council, the proposal must also consider non-retail impacts such as traffic circulation and parking demand, environmental effects on adjoining activities, local character and amenity impacts, and so on.

9 MONITORING AND REVIEW

An important part of the implementation process for the Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy is to ensure that the strategy remains relevant as circumstances change and as new opportunities arise.

Monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Strategy will be important, and this will allow proper assessment as to how the Strategy is performing and whether or not changes are warranted as a result of new and emerging trends.

Monitoring also enables the Council and the community to judge how well and how efficiently the Strategy is being implemented. It is important, however, that speed of implementation should not be the sole criterion for success. Most communities seek good quality planning outcomes and, with a little patience, will be pleased to see on-the-ground results which ensure viable activities and attractive, competitive activity centres.

Council must ensure, therefore, that the Strategy is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, and this is likely to be at least every five years and possibly sooner if important changes are identified in market and other conditions.

Suggested indicators for monitoring and review purposes would be those listed in the Table on the following page. These indicators are based on readily available and relatively inexpensive data, including official data, Council planning approvals and commencements data, land use/floorspace surveys, and reference to consultant reports.

Indicators for Monitoring Process

Indicator	Source	Comment
1. Activity Centre Floorspace	Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy, floorspace surveys, Council data for planning and building approvals.	Implement retail/commercial floorspace survey in order to allow an up-to-date estimate of total and the mix of retail/office floorspace. The floorspace survey presented in the Background Report will serve as the base-year survey. Alternatively, Council planning and approvals data could be added to the floorspace data presented in this Strategy.
2. In-centre surveys	In-centre surveys	Undertake, in cooperation with business associations, a series of short in-centre surveys of businesses and customers in each of the main centres on a regular basis (eg every two years). The survey could cover issues such as the local community's views on the centre, changes in people's perception of the centre as a place to visit, views on competing centres, issues they identify and actions that need doing, trends in employment levels, etc. The surveys should be a helpful reference point in assessing potential impacts of the initiatives contained in the Strategy.
3. Property development proposals and projects	Council records	Track development applications, proposals, and completions.
4. Retail trading performance	Consultant reports; Property Council	Especially track official sources of data. Note numbers of new businesses and estimate of new jobs on an annual basis
5. Increased floorspace provision for shops and services, as well as increased value of buildings and works	Council data for planning and building approvals, and building completions	This measure uses regular and up-to-date data, and is therefore very useful. Can indicate change in use from shop to other use and vice-versa.
6. Vacancy rates for retail and commercial floorspace (vacant m ² expressed as a % of total m ²)	Land use and floorspace surveys	Can be undertaken at any time. As a guideline, the average retail floorspace vacancy rates are around 4-6% of total retail floorspace for strip shopping centres. Planned under-cover modern shopping centres usually have zero vacancies due to good management of tenant mix. These measures provide a useful indication of general health of a centre.
7. Changes in land use patterns (incl. retail, service, office, community, etc)	Regular land use surveys	Inexpensive means of monitoring land use and activity changes. Important to show new roles and functions served by centres.
8. Changes in property values and rates	Council rate records; data from Victorian Valuer-General	Useful indicator, especially as a relative indicator (eg different rate valuations for between centres).
9. Viewpoints on health of centres as expressed in property industry, real estate and those in retail industry	Regular contact with real estate agents, property owners, developers retail industry, other businesses, business associations, and the wider community.	Annual forum organised by Council as a venue for information exchange between property and retail industry, local traders, other businesses and stakeholders, Council and other community representatives.

Source: Essential Economics Pty Ltd