

Mount Alexander Shire Council

# Harcourt Town Centre | Master Plan

April 2011



Mount Alexander Shire Council | **Harcourt Town Centre Master Plan**

**FINAL DOCUMENT**

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# 01

## Introduction

### background

Harcourt is situated along the Calder Highway corridor, 30 kilometres south of Bendigo. The Calder Highway formerly ran through the centre of the town, effectively bisecting the town centre. Construction of the Calder Freeway (completed in the first half of 2009) has resulted in the vast majority of traffic now bypassing the town. In addition to the economic impact of the bypass, over the last few years the community has also been buffeted by ongoing drought, changing surface temperatures which threaten traditional agricultural land use, and a series of divisive social issues.

The Harcourt community was proactive in coming together on a number of occasions prior to the completion of the Freeway bypass to discuss and progressively build a shared thinking about the challenges to be presented by the bypass, and in particular, the challenges for the local economy. As part of this process, the community identified the need for a strategic action plan to help secure Harcourt's future sustainability and prosperity. The outcome of this was the development of a report called 'Harcourt: After the Bypass – A Plan to Secure Harcourt's Future' which had a focus on three key elements:

- **A Place to Live:** strengthening the local economy through residential growth and associated growth of facilities and services
- **The Town Centre:** creating an attractive and vibrant community space
- **Tourism:** making Harcourt a destination of choice

This report was completed by SED Consultants in June 2009, some months after the Freeway opened, and is supported by Council and the MAV. After the final draft of the report was circulated for community comment, further feedback was received. This final adopted report now forms the basis of the strategic framework to guide the master planning process.

As an initial priority action arising from the report, a Reference Group has been formed. The group acts as a liaison, communication and reference group between Council and the wider Harcourt community on the ongoing implementation and review of the 2009 Harcourt After the Bypass Report.

Whilst the first and third components of the report were generally well accepted and are progressively being implemented, the preliminary concept plans for the urban design of central Harcourt, including future uses of the road space, attracted much public attention. These alternative concepts presented absolute extremes, from closing the Highway carriageway off completely, to retaining the full road space and were valuable in defining the parameters of the issue.

Council is also preparing a planning scheme amendment which will advance the recommendations of 'Harcourt: After the Bypass' Report in terms of land use planning, for not only the centre of town but around the greater Harcourt township.

## project brief

As mentioned above, the 'Harcourt: After the Bypass' Report now forms the basis of the strategic framework for this project. However, further consultation with the Harcourt community, key stakeholders and the Harcourt 2020 community committee in relation to the three urban design options included within the study has resulted in a unanimous rejection of Concept B, that is, there is strong support for the retention of a thoroughfare along the route of the old Highway. Additionally, it is important to note that all concept plans and community feedback were undertaken and received at a time before, or just after, the opening of the new road, and were therefore largely based upon conjecture and expectations. Given the passage of time, the community has now had the opportunity to experience the "life" of the town without major traffic flows through its centre and this the next stage of work will be informed by the realities of this changed experience.

Following responses to the initial concept plans, further exploration is sought to deliver increased community, environmental and visitor amenity through:

- reduction of the previous Calder Highway road reserve (whilst still retaining a thoroughfare);
  - increased parkland and natural environments, including landscaping and tree-planting;
  - potential development of new township habitats, including a wetland area to treat and manage road run off;
  - preservation and enhancement of existing natural environments;
  - improved definition of activity nodes and linkages within the township;
  - retention and growth of community services and businesses by encouraging traffic flows (whilst still retaining access to businesses and property along the previous Calder Highway);
  - creation of township arrival and entry points through road treatments and streetscape enhancements;
  - appropriate visitor amenities and information services;
- improved safe access to and management of public transport services;
  - increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - acknowledgement and celebration of the heritage and legacies of Harcourt as an international exporter of granite and as an important apple growing region.

The aim of this project is to **develop a spatial Masterplan and implementation framework** for the Harcourt Town Centre that is consistent with the Shire's strategic directions and community consultation that includes:

- an overall vision, captured in a combination of words and diagrams.
- principles of development that sets down the different layers of proposed physical change – buildings, open spaces, streets, public transport and other infrastructure such as utilities, telecoms and storm water drainage and treatment.
- shows how the area can exploit its distinctive features to give it a character of its own.
- explores, addresses and reconciles different requirements of key stakeholders and interested groups, which may have conflicting yet legitimate concerns.
- delivery mechanisms required for implementing the Masterplan in terms of programme, costs, funding and responsibility.

# 02

## ‘Harcourt: after the Bypass’

On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 the Harcourt bypass section of the Calder Freeway project opened, creating a reduction of approximately 9,000 vehicle movements through the Town daily.

In response to this, the Council, in partnership with the Harcourt community, required the development of a strategic action plan to help identify land use, infrastructure and socio-economic development and tourism options to secure the township’s future prosperity and growth over the longer term, following the opening of the bypass. Subsequently, the **‘Harcourt: After the Bypass’** Report was produced in May 2009.

This report focuses on three key elements:

- **A Place to Live:** strengthening the local economy through residential growth and associated growth of facilities and services
- **The Town Centre:** creating an attractive and vibrant community space
- **Tourism:** making Harcourt a destination of choice

## community consultation

**Likes:** strategic location (near to Bendigo, Castlemaine and Melbourne); natural and clean environment; and a friendly community.

**Dislikes:** lacks connection to natural gas; too few local services; not enough public transport; lack of investment; and not enough for young people to do.

**Community development goals:** more local services; more footpaths, bike / walking tracks; public transport options; improved CBD; environmental improvement; more sporting facilities; and residential growth.

**Community Vision:** the community are very conscious of the **peaceful and quiet nature** of the area, which is seen to be a greater 'feature' of the area in the future. People generally feel that the community is **friendly**, has **spirit** and a beautiful natural environment. Residents would like to see further **development of local services**, followed by **bike track and walking trails**, improved **transport options**, connection to natural gas and upgraded roads and township centre.

Opportunities for project stakeholders to achieve **strategically sound 'quick wins'** may reduce some community perceptions in relation to the capacity and capability of a variety of responsible bodies to manage and community based projects. There are opportunities for **local businesses to realign their retail range** to meet local rather than external need and to encourage residents to buy locally more often. Poor planning and **inappropriate over-development** were also concerns for residents but who still want to retain local services and amenities.

## existing urban conditions

- The open woodland character to the township and surrounds is **desirable and attractive** and should be maintained and enhanced where possible.
- There are **limited architectural or urban elements** that dominate and create a strong urban character although the buildings are well spaced which creates an open, relaxed atmosphere.
- The **township layout does not present well** especially for first time visitors because it lacks the convention of a typical rural township that is, a single main road and old buildings and verandahs that face onto the street and create a sense of 'place'. The Calder Highway runs along the "back" of the hotel, the ANA Hall and by-passes the service station.
- The township is **historically and physically divided by the Calder Highway** and railway line;
- The Calder Highway carries significant volumes of traffic at relative speed (70km/hr).
- **Speed and noise dominate the town centre environment.** It is difficult to cross the Highway at peak times. Traffic noise makes it difficult to hear the natural sounds of the environment.
- Traffic movement patterns alter significantly following the by-pass opening with a significant pull to the west and very little through traffic other than local and tourist traffic.
- **Highway infrastructure dominates the township centre.** The Calder Highway is very wide and includes a wide centre median sealed with gravel. Road verges are extensive gravel expanses to accommodate large vehicles for short term stopping. The Calder Highway at either end of the town (north & south) has a more appealing amenity (ie views roadside vegetation and rolling farmland) and a more intimate scale than the roadway within the town. The township centre highway has a dominating scale and limited visual appeal.

## urban design opportunities

- The township centre provides **basic facilities** (fuel, milk bar, pub, post office and limited signed information). These **facilities may extend in time as the township develops** and local and visitor demand increases.
- The High Street has an established Cedar Avenue, Memorial Park and provides **opportunities for visitors to inform and orientate themselves** as to local points of interest and out of town destinations for example the cideries and vineyards.

The Harcourt 2020 report presents three urban design concepts, developed to enable and develop the following benefits:

- Increased community, environmental and visitor amenity through:
  - scales of **reduction** of the previous Calder Highway road reserve.
  - **increased park land** and natural environments including landscaping and tree-planting.
  - potential development of **new township habitats** including a wetland area to treat and manage road run off.
  - preservation and **enhancement of existing natural environments**.
- Improved **definition of activity nodes**.
- Support the retention and **growth of community services and businesses** by encouraging traffic flows along the High Street whilst still retaining access to businesses and property along the previous Calder Highway.
- Creation of **township arrival / entry points** through road treatments and streetscaping (to the north and Warren Street to the south).
- Significantly improved safe access to and management of **public transport services**. Provide a bus interchange for commuting to Castlemaine and secure 'all day' parking for visitors.
- Increased **safety for pedestrians**, define clear simple patterns for locals and visitors to move
- **Rationalise facilities in Memorial Park** by relocating BBQ, shelter etc and reclaim part of the Calder Highway Reserve to extend the Park to the west.
- **Improve local traffic flow** by rationalising the network of roadways, with functional, simple road patterns to improve the driving experience for residents and visitors.
- Current and **future alignment** with the overall objectives of the economic and community development and **planning recommendations**.



# township centre concepts

## Concept A

- Recommends retaining part of the existing Calder Highway as a bus route and the construction of a bus stop facility (transport interchange )with shelter and all day car and bicycle parking to cater for travellers and commuters.
- Redefine the High Street as the town focus and direct local traffic and town visitors along this route. This will encourage visitation to the Heritage Centre and Museum (ANA Hall), the pub and motel and other business located in the High Street.
- Improve the amenity of the town centre by extending existing open spaces to create a linear reserve, link open spaces by shared walkways.
- De-clutter the Memorial Park by relocating facilities and such as the BBQ and shelter to broader areas.

## Concept B

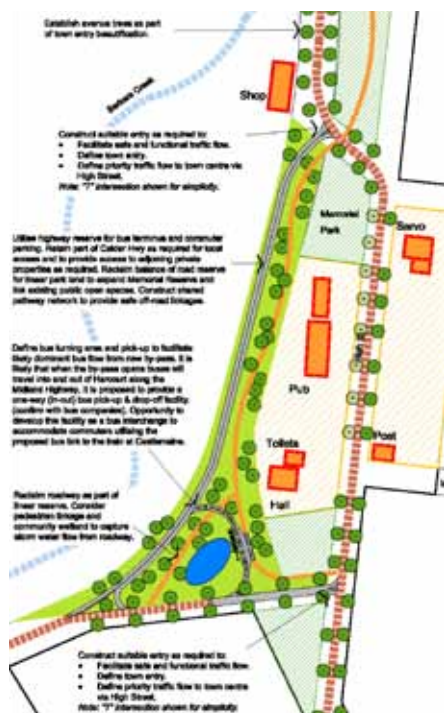
- Close the Calder Highway and develop a linear reserve linked to other reserves and Barkers Creek to the west.
- Provide limited roadway access for example court bowls or other as required to provide access to private property that adjoins the Calder Highway road reserve.
- Establish avenue of trees at entry points as part of town entry beautification.
- Define bus pick up a northern entry including shelters and nearly all day car and bicycle parking for commuters along the edge of the reserve.
- Close southern section of Calder Highway and reclaim as open space.
- Define direct access to town centre along High Street.
- Upgrade town centre as per Concept A by improving amenity, Memorial Park and street planting.



## land use and planning policy recommendations

### Concept C

- Retain part of existing Calder for local traffic only.
- Utilise Midland Highway as 'in-out' access for primary bus route on the assumption that buses will not travel along the new bypass rather than the old Calder Highway.
- Define a one-way bus drop off / pick up and return look for ease of movement.
- Future option is to develop this as a commuter interchange (bus to train) with all day parking if demand requires.
- Consider defined intersection treatments for example 'T' intersections that direct local traffic and visitors to the centre of town along the High Street.
- Define the High Street as the town focus to benefit the local businesses.
- Improve amenity of the town centre as per Concept A and B by extending open space to create a linear reserve, linking open spaces by shared walkways and de clutter the Memorial Park.



The review of the planning scheme and with consideration of the issues and recommendations presented for economic and community development and township design, the following land use and planning review were developed:

- Council initiate an amendment to the planning scheme to replace the Township Zone with other more appropriate urban zones as defined.
- Council amends the township boundary on the Harcourt Framework Plan to remove current anomalies between it and the Township Zone.
- Council ensures the township boundary is defined by either a road or lot property boundary.
- The township boundary on the framework plan be delineated by property boundaries or roads.
- The rezoning of the north east expansion area (north of Craigie Street) be deferred until significant infill development has occurred.
- Land south of Craigie Street be rezoned to Residential 1 Zone.
- The Public Acquisition Overlay over the alignment of the Calder Freeway where land purchase and construction has occurred be deleted.
- Council develops strategy to give preference to the development of Areas A – H in the planning scheme.
- When appropriate and timely, Council liaise with landowners and development stakeholders to facilitate quality development in the Harcourt area. This should be done on the basis of their willingness to develop.

## planning scheme review and recommendations

### Land Supply

State government strategy requires local governments to provide at least a 10 year supply of residential land. The current dwelling approval rate of 7 per year is expected to rise as the benefits of the town bypass and reticulated sewer are felt. For the purposes of determining current land supply a figure of 15 dwellings per year is used.

In 2008 Harcourt supported 204 dwellings. By 2011 this is expected to rise to 330 or a 61% increase in 3 years. This will not be achieved at the current rate of 7 dwellings per year or the anticipated 15 new dwellings per year and therefore these projections are too optimistic. By 2021, therefore the number of dwellings in Harcourt would be 384, not 500 shown as estimated in Table 1. For this reason the residential expansion area shown to the north east on the current framework plan should be deferred and identified as long term residential outside of the township boundary.

### Key Infill Development Sites

To encourage new residential development a number of key development sites have been identified. All sites lay within the proposed township boundary and are able to be serviced with modest extensions of the existing reticulated town water and sewer networks. Each site is described below in terms of current uses, area, constraints and preferred statutory controls. Land that has not been identified for a non residential use and is in private ownership is assumed to be rezoned to the Residential 1 Zone. These key sites should be shown on the new framework plan.

In regard to lot yield it is assumed a yield of 8-10 lots per hectare would be appropriate with an average lot size of 900-1000 square metres. Reticulated services would need to be provided for lots of this size.

- A: North of Craigie Street
- B: South of Craigie Street
- C: South of Bagshaw Street
- D: North of Mills Road
- E: South of Mills Road
- F: North of Pritchard Street
- G: South of Coolstores
- H: Central Harcourt

The area bound by High Street, Bridge Street, Urquhart Street and Bagshaw Street can be defined as central Harcourt. For the purposes of this study there is further development potential in this area but this will be primarily restricted to 2 or 3 lot subdivisions. These will be derived from lots that run from street to street and are easily sub-dividable. A potential yield of 34 new lots could be achieved.

# municipal policy update

## Residential Land Demand and Supply Analysis Report

In September 2010 the Mount Alexander Shire Council published its *Residential Land Demand and Supply Analysis Report*, which updates the information regarding land use planning and policy recommendations in the *After the Bypass Report* (summarised above).

This report has been compiled to inform and support the proposed planning scheme amendments required to implement the Shire’s growth management model, and to allow consideration of other rezoning proposals.

In responding to local issues, the Council has adopted a growth management model called ‘*Cluster Connect and Calder Corridor*’ (CCCC), whose main components relevant to this study include:

- balanced development building on existing settlement patterns, with a regional focus on Castlemaine;
- planned growth of Calder Corridor towns (Harcourt, Taradale and Elphinstone); and
- improving transport and access connections between Castlemaine and outlying towns.

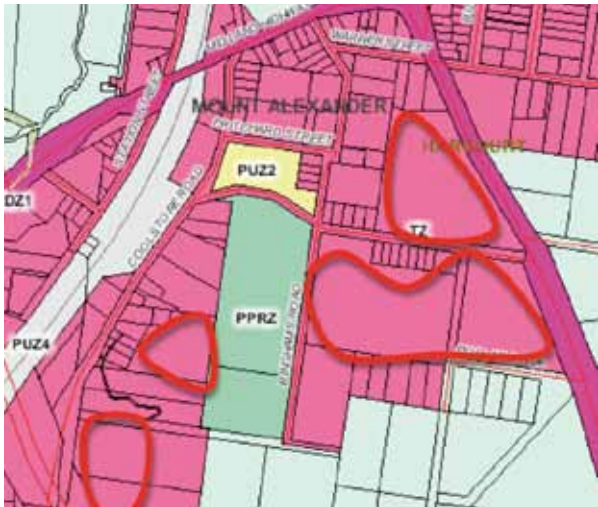
The report examines the future population and dwelling requirements of the municipality. The demand analysis undertaken found that:

- the municipality has an expected growth rate of 1.3% per annum to 2026.
- during the period 2004 to 2009 Harcourt had 6.8% of the building approvals within the municipality.
- projections indicate the construction of 3,463 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 in the municipality.
- there is an increasing number of sub-division approvals, on average 5 per year in Harcourt since 2004.

The supply analysis undertaken in to Harcourt, found that:

- landowners now have a greater opportunity to re-subdivide and developed their land to a higher density (to a standard urban residential density).
- infill development is likely to account for a significant proportion of future growth of the township.
- there are a number of larger parcels of land that have been identified for future residential development as part of the **Harcourt: After the bypass study**. All sites are located to the south of the Midland Highway, between the Calder Freeway and the Calder Highway, and are ideally located in close proximity to community facilities such as the primary school and sports fields. In total there is approximately 20ha of relatively unconstrained land spread across four different sites (some will need land amalgamation and/or land owner cooperation).

The key conclusion of this report, with relation to Harcourt, is that there is potential to increase the expected lot yield, responding to changing demographics of the area and the need for urban settlements to become more compact, connected and resilient in the future.



Harcourt potential residential growth areas (page 24)

## **‘An Integrated Response’**

This report recommends the following integrated response, relevant to this study, for the economic and community development of the Town:

### **Tourism**

- Pursue opportunities to improve overall tourism signage (both directional and interpretative) within Harcourt and the wider area.
- Establish a purpose built tourism information facility near to the ANA Hall which could include the sale of regional art and crafts.
- Develop a business case for the attraction of investment into tourism accommodation and in particular quality camping, caravan park and / or wilderness lodge type accommodation.

### **Mount Alexander Regional Park**

- Improve MARP signage (both internal and external) to increase the profile of this natural environment and to improve access and amenity for visitors.
- Investigate the options for creating greater physical connection between the MARP and Harcourt and in particular walking and cycle trails running east to west.
- Seek to increase the economic / tourism leverage off the Great Dividing Trail and the Chinese Trail.

### **Business**

- Undertake strategic planning for a community ‘store’ featuring local produce and art on the proviso that this does not create unfair competition or put at risk similar existing private commercial operations and businesses;

### **Infrastructure and services**

- With the DoT, investigate options for re-opening Harcourt station to passenger and / or tourism based rail activities and services particularly linking to Bendigo.
- Assess the service delivery and patronage for the broader retention and improvement of public transport services for Harcourt.
- Assess the development of a transport interchange in the township as recommended in the Town Centre Concepts presented in this report, providing for car and bicycle parking facilities, taxi rank, bus shelters and public transport information displays.

# 03

## Study Area Overview

### location and local context

#### Location

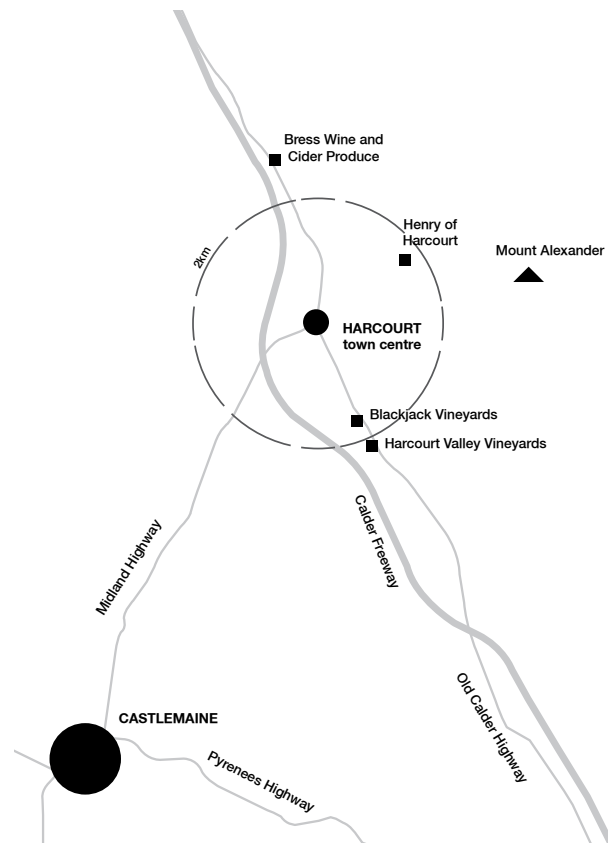
Harcourt is located in central Victoria on Barkers Creek, approximately 8km north of Castlemaine and 27km south of Bendigo, within the municipality of Mount Alexander.

#### Local Context

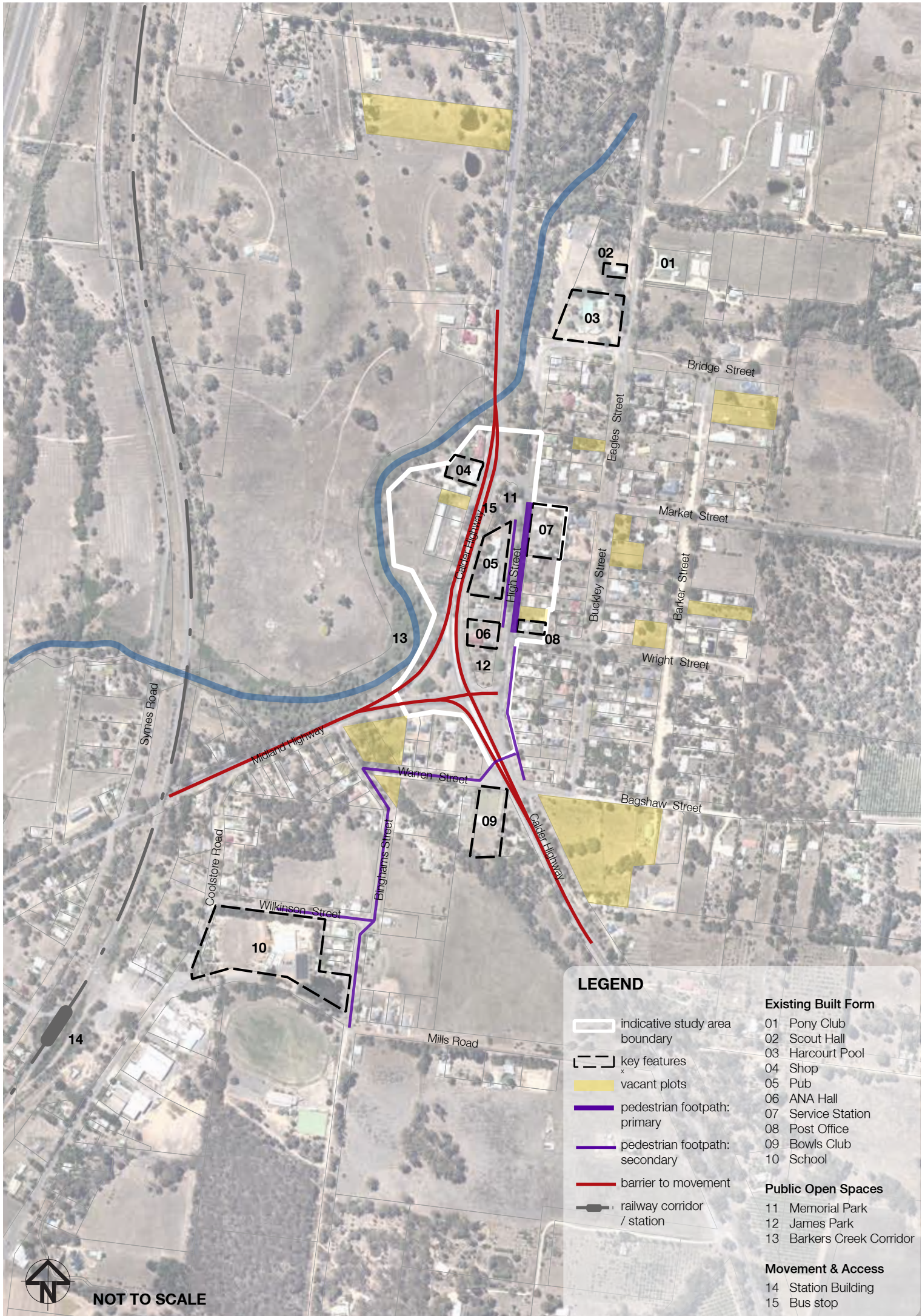
Harcourt is a long established fruit growing district, especially famous for its apple production and the extraction of granite which began in the 1860s. A prominent landmark within the area is the Mount Alexander Regional Park (MARP), located to the east of the Town.



Location of Harcourt within Victoria



Harcourt in its local context



**LEGEND**

- indicative study area boundary
- key features
- vacant plots
- pedestrian footpath: primary
- pedestrian footpath: secondary
- barrier to movement
- railway corridor / station

**Existing Built Form**

- 01 Pony Club
- 02 Scout Hall
- 03 Harcourt Pool
- 04 Shop
- 05 Pub
- 06 ANA Hall
- 07 Service Station
- 08 Post Office
- 09 Bowls Club
- 10 School

**Public Open Spaces**

- 11 Memorial Park
- 12 James Park
- 13 Barkers Creek Corridor

**Movement & Access**

- 14 Station Building
- 15 Bus stop



**NOT TO SCALE**

## Harcourt town centre

### Population

In 2001 Harcourt had a population of 420 residents (160 households). This is projected to increase to 750 residents (330 households) by 2011 and 1100 residents (500 households) in 2021.

### Land Use

Land use in the Town predominantly consists of low density, sprawling residential. There are a few local services including a school, a post office, a service station, a local shop and public pool. Land around the Town is employed for horticulture or industrial uses.

### Built Form

Built form in the Town Centre is predominantly single storey residential development, with the exception of larger properties such as the service station and pub. The ANA Hall and Post Office, both located within the town centre are both of significant local character and architectural quality.

### Transport Network

The Old Calder Freeway runs north-south through the Town and was once the connection from Castlemaine to Bendigo. This has now been replaced by the Calder Freeway Bypass which opened in April 2009 and has created a daily reduction of 9,000 vehicle movements through the Town.

### Public Environment

There are a number of designate parks and open spaces within the Town, including Memorial Park, James Park, Stanley Park, Barkers Creek, the bowls club, the recreation reserve (next to the school) and the public pool.





BARKERS CREEK CORRIDOR

Local shop

Monument

MARKET STREET

Service Station

Memorial Park

Pub

OLD CALDER HIGHWAY

HIGH STREET

Post Office

ANA Hall

WRIGHT STREET

James Park

MIDLAND HIGHWAY

NOT TO SCALE



public realm



*Facilities in memorial Park*



*Memorial Park*



*James Park*



*Footbridge over Barkers Creek*

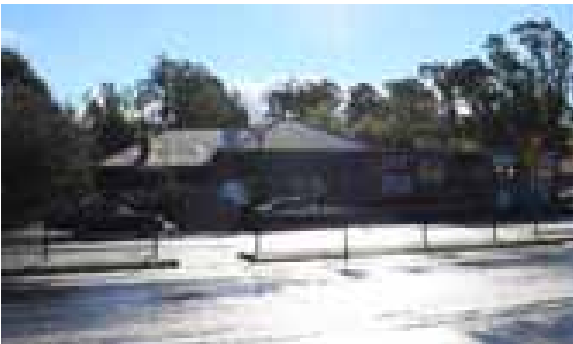


*Pedestrian footpath along the west side of High St.*

## built form



*Service Station on High Street*



*Existing shop on the Old Calder Highway*



*Post office on High Street*

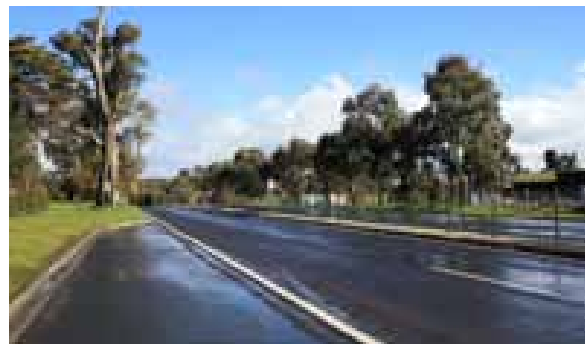


*ANA Hall*

## movement and access



*Entry to the Town Centre on Midland Highway*



*Old Calder Highway reserve*



*Existing bus stop on the Old Calder Highway*



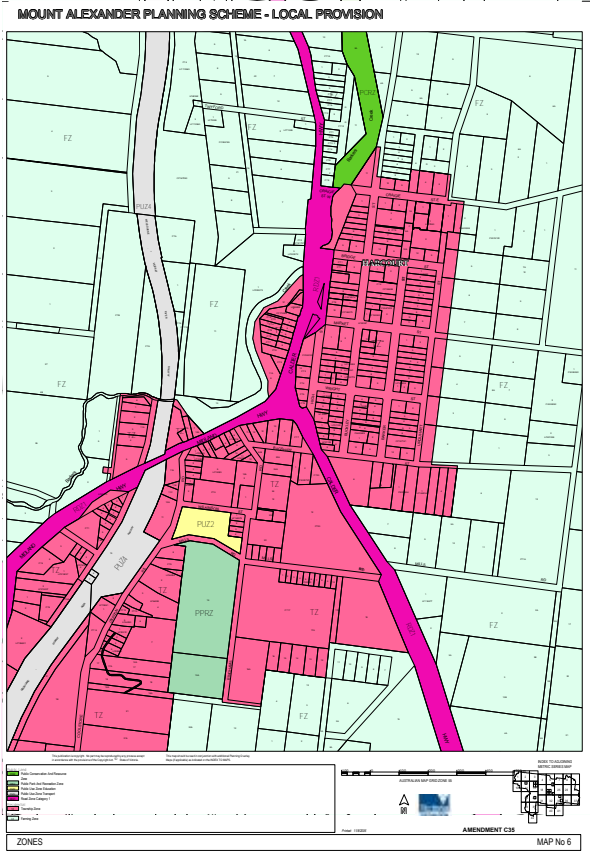
*Harcourt Station*

# Harcourt in the Planning Scheme

## Zoning

Harcourt is almost completely covered by a Township Zone, whose purpose is to provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses. Exceptions to this township zoning in the centre, is the Public Use Zone covering the school and a Public Park and Recreation Zone covering the recreation reserve.

The town is completely abutted by Farming Zones.



## Overlays

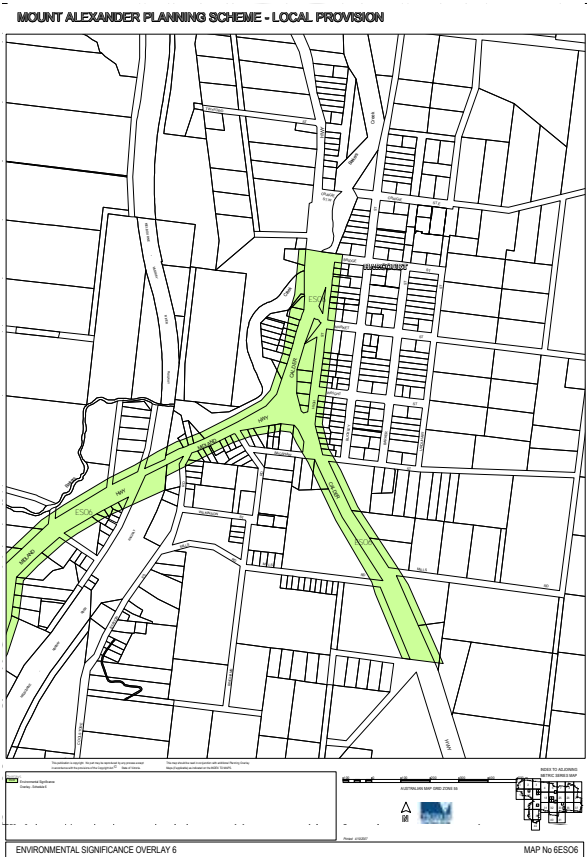
There are two overlays with direct relevance to the town centre study area:

- **Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 6)**

ESO6 is in place along the Midland Highway and the Calder Highway within the town centre. Its purpose is to ensure that new land uses and development adjacent to highways is carefully planned and regulated to avoid prejudicing the access and safety of vehicular traffic and avoid detriment to surrounding urban and non urban environments.

- **Heritage Overlay**

This overlay identifies several heritage places within the town including: ANA Hall (HO790), Harcourt Hotel (HO802), Stanley Park (HO801), the primary school (HO782), Harcourt post office (HO800) and Harcourt Uniting Church (HO785).



# 04

## Consultation

The core aim of these community consultation workshops was to raise awareness of the best practice principles of sustainable urban design and to explore how they may be applied, through stakeholder participation, to develop ideas and solutions for the future development Harcourt Town Centre.

Prior to the community workshops a full review of background documentation ('Harcourt 2020: After the Bypass' Report) was undertaken by SJB Urban (SJB Urban) to ensure that the sessions hit the ground running.

ARUP (transport and pedestrian planning) also participated to contribute and apply specific knowledge and a broader understanding to the development and implementation of the concept designs.

A structured timetable of consultation events was completed. This schedule of public consultation was undertaken as follows:

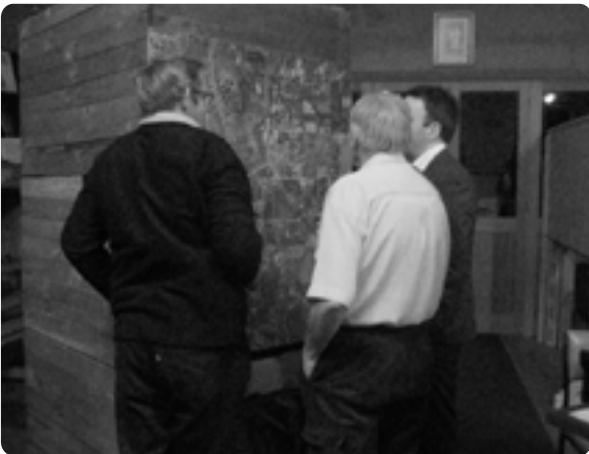
- Inception meeting with Council officers (26<sup>th</sup> August 2010)
- Community Reference Group Meeting (26<sup>th</sup> Aug 2010)
- Community Workshop 01 (26<sup>th</sup> Aug 2010)
- Community Workshop 02 (25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2010)
- Council representatives... (4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010).

## community workshop 01

This session was held at the ANA Hall in Harcourt on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2010, and attended by Council, the consultant team, the Community Reference Group and additional members of the local community.

The structure of the community workshop was designed to engage its members and to get them thinking about the Town in terms of how it could or should be in the future. As a group we discussed:

- the Town's **existing conditions**
- a **vision** for Harcourt
- **issues**
- **opportunities**



## existing conditions in harcourt

- Council not making the area sustainable – rates too high, **not enough local services**, zoning not flexible or looking to the future.
- **Business closures** (e.g. antique store, fruit stalls)
- **Loss of 34 houses and associated residents** during freeway construction, although replaced within central Harcourt which has had a positive impact on population critical mass and density.
- Doesn't look or feel like a town as there is **no main street**.
- It is **not a convenient place** for older people to live – no footpaths, not enough public transport or any medical services.
- Movement through the town has changed from north/south to east/west.
- **Access** to sporting facilities is **poor**.
- The **local population isn't sufficient** to support local services – there needs to be planned advertisement as to the provision of investment in the Town.
- Young **families are a minority**.
- An accurate traffic count needs to be undertaken, as the old counts don't reflect the current trends – there is increased east/west traffic, which is set to increase with all of the housing development occurring from Bendigo down to Sutton Grange, and also on Mt Barker.
- The **community felt dissatisfied with the consultation process for the 'After the Bypass' Report**, particularly in regards to consultation and opportunity to give feedback between seeing the first draft, and the final draft being handed into council. Harcourt would like to see more opportunity to discuss with consultants issues that may arise in the first draft.
- Existing community facilities include: play area, pool, scout hall, bowls club, Pony club, leisure centre, recreation reserve, pre-school and primary school.

## issues

The community identified the following issues of problems affecting Harcourt. The issues are categorised in three main themes:

- buildings and activities
- public environment
- movement and access

### Buildings and Activities

- There is **not enough local population** to develop or sustain businesses.
- Need to release **more land to accommodate housing** – subdivide into smaller township zones (current township zone very small).
- Zoning hasn't been well thought out based upon land capability.
- There is **no defined town centre** and no main street – need a core, a centre to attract people.
- **Poor mixed demographics of residents** –not enough young people/families.
- No access to local health services and facilities (currently accessed in Castlemaine).
- **Limited or no services** such as shops, banks, cafes etc.
- The school and recreation reserve are two **isolated focal points of the Town.**
- The **road configurations are a dividing issue** in the township.
- Limited lifestyle development – restricted by Council to protect agricultural land.

### Public Environment

- Scout Hall is currently only used by lions club, there are no scouts in town.
- The **pool is currently under-utilised** and needs to be maintained and properly managed so in tune with community needs.
- Open spaces such as Memorial Park and St James Park are compromised by drainage problems.
- James Park is **under-used, not inviting, poorly designed and too undulating.**
- Stanley Park is **unpleasant, inadequate, narrow, dominated by traffic noise.**

- Memorial Park is **too pokey, too cluttered, not dignified.**
- Public and private **land delineation is poor** – need to ascertain what public land there is along the creek.
- Street lighting exists on various corners but heavily trafficked intersections are not adequately lit.

### Movement and Access

- There is **poor traffic management and road safety.**
- **No connection from the railway station** to the Town Centre.
- **No proper footpaths** on key streets such as Market Street, Buckley Street and the link to pool on east side of High Street.
- Local trails / walking routes aren't advertised and are under-utilised.
- **Speed limits are too high** in the Township – should be lowered to 50 in the town centre.
- Traffic is predominantly east-west and no longer north/south through the Town.
- **Poor / infrequent public transport connections** – only three daily buses to Castlemaine and school buses. Other intermittent services include V-line coaches, airport transfers and the football bus.
- Currently some large vehicles pass through / use the town centre, such as fruit trucks and quarry trucks.
- The intersections of High Street / Market Street and High Street / Bagshaw Street are road safety issues for residents.
- The extension of the Midland Highway (running between the Calder Highway and High Street) needs to be reopened to traffic from the Calder Highway.
- **Lack of parking provision** along High Street and the Calder Highway.



## opportunities

The community identified the following opportunities for Harcourt. These are again categorised into three main themes:

- buildings and activities
- public environment
- movement and access

### Buildings and Activities

- Establish co-op shop area to act as a gateway to Harcourt (local produce, tourism information, ATM, etc)
- Develop and **attract business** and commercial enterprise.
- **Redevelop the timber yard for housing /** business development.
- **Create a tourist information bay** to inform visitors of local attractions.
- Develop a storage extension on Southside of ANA Hall.
- **Develop the local population** with increased numbers of young families.
- Need a **commercial hub** with shops/banking/ other services (hairdresser, supermarket etc)
- Locate an RV Dump site in town to make Harcourt a RV friendly location, possibly near the Swimming Pool, to take advantage of the sewage and water available.
- **Reclaimed part of the Calder Highway** for development, encouraging economic growth and creating a centre to the Town.

### Public Environment

- Utilise the Harcourt granite in the park features (i.e. sculptures, retaining walls, garden edging)
- **Add street lighting** along the main streets of the Town.
- **More signage** is required for visitors to navigate them to the local attractions in the area.
- Encourage better use of the footbridge across the Creek, through landscaping of the Creek corridor.

- Opportunity to expand Stanley Park to the west, extending past the Pony Club to Craigie Street East, where there is an existing walking track which is well maintained.
- Opportunity to **redesign James Park**, properly planted and inclusive (potential to relocate BBQ's from Memorial Park here)
- Build **new facilities for young people** adventure park, basketball court, rollerblading / skating / bmx areas – facilities which don't rely on economics.
- Setup permanent **public performance space** in the Town for local gatherings.
- Restore the Bridge Street bridge to a useable structure.
- Build a communal wood-fired oven as a venue for weekly bread making and communal cooking.
- **Reconfigure and landscape Memorial Park** so its de-cluttered, the War Memorial could be relocated to a more respectful area and used as a gathering space on Anzac Day, Australia Day (community breakfast), Carols by Candlelight.
- **Unify town appearance** of road reserves by having uniform planting regime.
- Look to areas behind the old Tearooms and general store, to develop into picnic areas and walking tracks that link Vick's Viaduct to the town centre.



## community workshop 02

### Movement and Access

- Create **longer term parking facilities** to encourage the use of public transport and for visitors and RV's.
- Encourage the large cycling fraternity in Bendigo and Castlemaine to come through and stop in the Town by **providing cyclist facilities and dedicated laneways**.
- **Define a clear movement route** through the Town for vehicles.
- **Reduce the width of the Calder Highway** from four lanes and a median strip, to two lanes with some parking.
- Increased road signage, especially for local attractions.
- Establish **frequent local bus services** for Harcourt to Castlemaine and Bendigo.
- Retain the airport bus and footy bus stops.
- Provide a free weekly bus service to Castlemaine (particularly for the elderly)
- Investigate **the opportunity to reopen Train Station** and connect the Town.
- Develop a **designated bus terminal** with proper bays, shelters, public toilets and parking.
- Provide footpaths along the key streets in the Town, such as Market Street, Buckley Street and extending the footpath on High Street down to Bridge Street linking the pool to the parks.
- **Establish public walking paths and trails through the Town**, with provision for links to the many walking tracks that are already in the area, connecting with local attractions.

This session was held at the ANA Hall in Harcourt on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2010, and was attended by 18 members of the local community, together with 2 council representatives and 3 members of the consultant team.

In response to the community inputs from Workshop 01, SJB Urban and Arup prepared a concept design for the town centre with supporting information, which was presented at Community Workshop 02.

This informal and interactive Workshop involved the presentation of the draft concepts and report, together with the rationale for the design and planning approach. This presentation was followed by review and discussion of the plans, and the implications for the future of the Town Centre.

This workshop sought to:

- introduce and explain the urban design principles.
- allow the participants to respond to the concept design.
- help participants to understand the development opportunities and constraints of the town centre and how the concept designs may be implemented.



## comments from the community

- Local land owners are keen to sell their farmland to help increase residential development.
- Remove landscaping in the median of the Old Calder Highway for better views across the street.
- Like the removal of the slip lane from the Midland Highway to the Old Calder Highway.
- Want confirmation as to the best use of the focal intersection of the Midland Highway and the Old Calder Highway – a roundabout, traffic signals, or maintain t-junction.
- Need to be able to accommodate large vehicles which need to use the Old Calder Highway, within road narrowing, or is there another way for them to go?
- Want recommendations as to the preferred lot sizes for new residential and commercial development.
- Is the Bridge Street bridge going to be redeveloped / upgraded?
- Need more street lighting at main road intersections.
- like the two new pedestrian crossing points identified over the Old Calder Highway, could they be zebra crossings and therefore self-sustained.
- Want to accommodate footpaths right through the town centre, connecting to important locations such as the school and recreation reserve to the south and the pool and scout hall to the north.
- Could there be a negative effect of one road access point to development west of the Creek?
- What is the likelihood of land acquisition, will it be compulsory?
- Need to look more closely at the reconfiguration of the intersection of High Street and Bagshaw Street – can it be closed off for the greater community good, can there be a change to the angle of the exit point or are there other alternatives. Community are keen for this not to connect to the Old Calder Highway at all.
- How would the staging of the Master Plan work – beginning with streetscape and public realm upgrades is good for local residents and to encourage new development.
- More detail required for northern section of town including the pool and scout hall.
- Need to consider the flood plain of the Creek with regards to any proposed new development.
- Like to illustrate the attractions of the Town out with the centre itself.
- Detail to show the connection of pedestrians and cyclists to and from the wider area – ‘goldfields track’.
- Is the town capable of the development envelopes proposed – positive support to grow the town from the centre.
- Need a feasibility study to understand the economic implications of the Master Plan.

## next steps

These concepts will be presented to Councillors, before any further work is undertaken.

SJB Urban will utilise the information and inputs from this workshop, as well as subsequent community feedback and Council inputs to further develop and refine the plans and report content.

An implementation strategy will also be prepared, for inclusion in the final Master Plan Report document, and to provide guidance towards development in and around Harcourt's town centre.

The outcomes of this Master Plan Report will inform Council's future investment in the Town and any Planning Scheme Amendments.

# 05

## The Vision for Harcourt

### community visioning

A community vision is often defined as a broad statement of how the community views itself as it moves towards its future. A community vision is an ideal and unique image of that future to transform a dream into action. The members of the workshop discussed as a group what they wanted for Harcourt in the future and a list of initiatives and opportunities were identified including:

- **capitalising upon a strategic location** – only 1½ hours from Melbourne CBD and within close proximity to Castlemaine, Bendigo and the Airport.
- more people, **increased residential population**.
- We want a **mixed residential demographic** – younger people and families.
- rationale **planning to accommodate residential, industrial and service growth** (council land use study to be undertaken after the Master Plan).
- the **railway station to be reopened** and operational.
- **attract more tourists** to the Town to help boost the local economy, with attractions such as: Mount Alexander; wineries and cideries; the local reservoirs for fishing; local architecture (bridges, telephone towers); and the local geological features of the area (granite/ stone masons).
- Harcourt to be a **commercial centre**, with a commercial basis.
- **more activities for younger people** after school – shops, play areas, a bmx track.
- **more local services** to enable the town to become self supporting – café, medical services, IT services.
- a **safe and pleasant place to live** and raise a family.
- the Master Plan to be visible, to **attract people and investment**.

## **the vision**

*By 2025 Harcourt will be larger in size and more diverse in population. Harcourt's strategic location and community dynamic will be strong, making it a place where residents and visitors are:*

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Welcome</b>    | <i>via a range of community spaces, where all people feel they belong.</i>   |
| <b>Diverse</b>    | <i>a historically and culturally rich place with an increasing mix of residents, visitors, services and experiences.</i>   |
| <b>Sustained</b>  | <i>through an active street life, strengthened transport and communications infrastructure, and a vibrant local economy of tourism, facilities and services.</i>             |
| <b>Contented</b>  | <i>a well-maintained, safe, and friendly place, that the community are proud of and visitors are impressed by.</i>   |
| <b>Accessible</b> | <i>a Town which is within reach to everyone – attractive, integrated and vibrant, a focal point for world-class tourism, dining, produce and outdoor adventure pursuits.</i> |

# 06

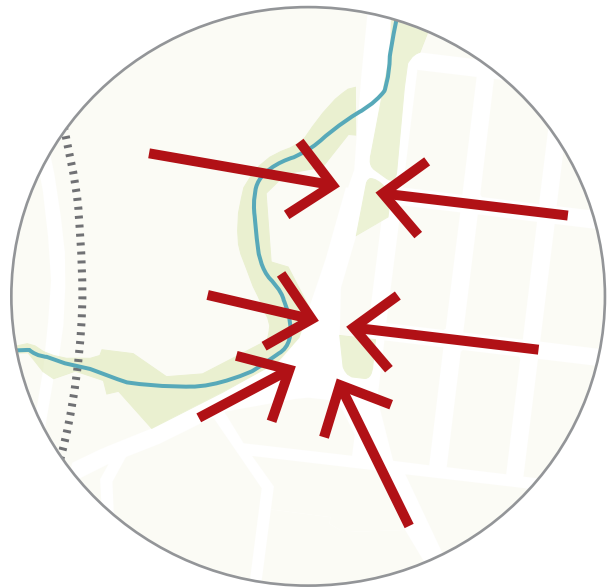
## Urban Design Principles

Through careful analysis of the project brief, the background documentation and consultation activities, together with the existing site conditions, a series of six (6) key Principles were identified, to guide the design and planning work. These Urban Design Principles are as follows:

- Principle 01: Integration and Connections
- Principle 02: Creating a Centre
- Principle 03: Facilitating Economic Development
- Principle 04: Population and Residential Growth
- Principle 05: Improving the Urban Environment
- Principle 06: Stageability

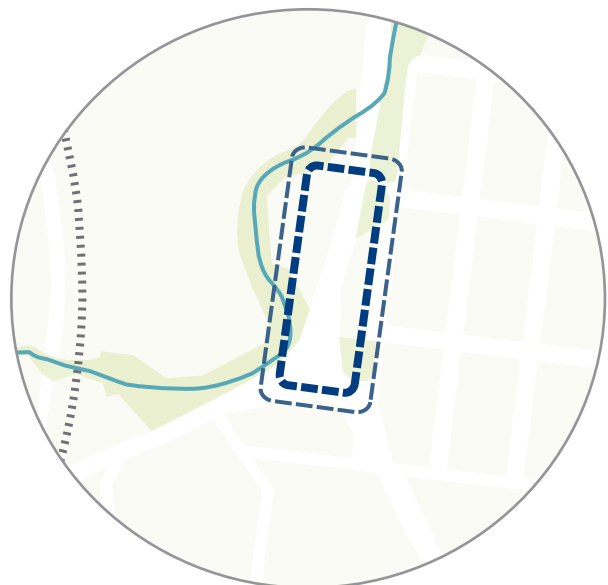
**principle 01:**  
**integration and connections**

The Town's existing character is defined by loose organisation and distribution of elements, lack of order, and expansive, underutilised spaces, creating an 'empty' feel. The dominance of the Old Calder Highway forms a physical barrier and is a constraint to movement and access. Developing initiatives to help re-integrate the urban areas on each side of the highway is a key requirement for this project. To create an active, vibrant, dynamic, exciting and safe centre for the Town, new development should focus on integration and connection, or bringing things closer together, while still providing adequate space for the various functions and activities. Public transport services and facilities are currently inadequate and infrequent, and pedestrian conditions are poor, especially at key nodes within the Town. Therefore, making substantial improvements to accessibility, especially for pedestrians, is a key objective for this project.



**principle 02:**  
**creating a centre**

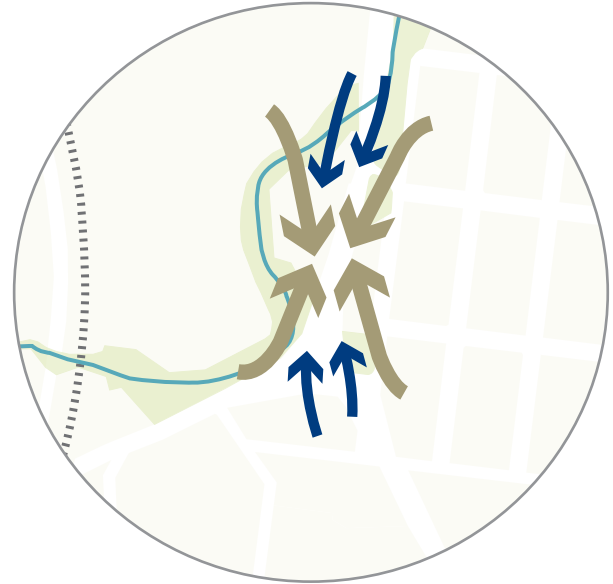
Harcourt presently lacks a defined centre or 'heart', a focal point for the urban area. An urban centre, perhaps comprising public space, community facilities shops, play area, seating and café, provides a recognisable place for meeting, social interaction and civic life (events, gatherings and meetings).



**principle 03:**  
**facilitating economic development**

Harcourt accommodates very limited business/ service activity, with only a service station, post office, corner store and pub within the Town. There is no defined activity centre or significant shopping provision (supermarket or other retail), forcing residents to travel to Castlemaine or elsewhere for this purpose. There is plentiful available land in the urban area for expansion of business activity.

Economic development can bring multiple benefits to an urban area, including improved access to shopping for food and other goods, employment opportunities, meeting and social interaction, and enjoyment. Increased business activity will make the area more active, vibrant and busy, creating a better 'feel' in the area. Facilitating and encouraging economic development is also beyond the reach of an Urban Design Framework, but this study seeks to guide the implementation of this process, which should be supported by other processes.



**principle 04:**  
**population and residential growth**

The population of Harcourt is projected to increase substantially, from 750 residents (330 households) in 2011 to 1100 residents (500 households) by 2021. To accommodate this increase over the next 10-15 years, work must be done now to reorganise land allocations and zoning to ensure that residential development occurs in a managed, coordinated manor, serving to knit the Town together (adding to its prosperity), whilst maintaining its character.

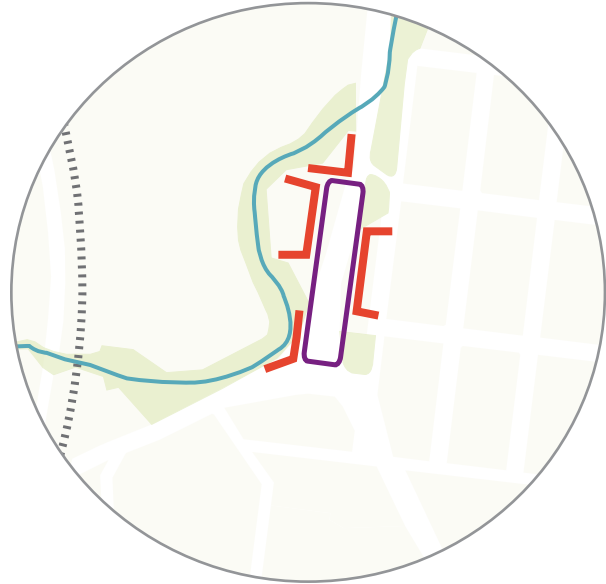




**principle 05:**  
**improving the urban environment**

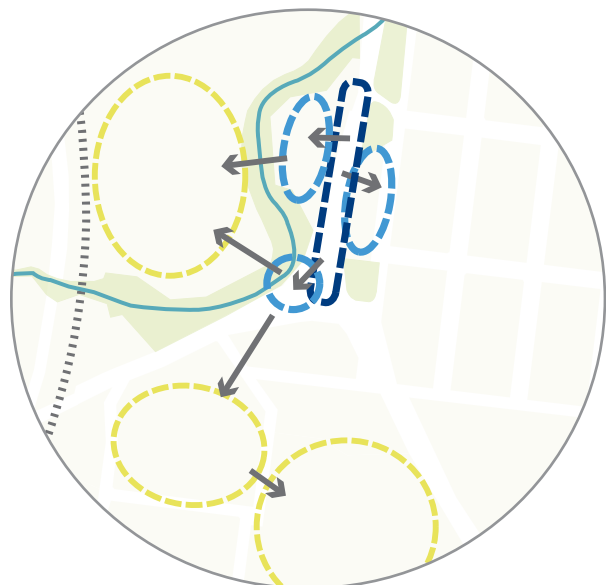
Boost the visual image and perception of Harcourt Town Centre. The Town Centre should play an important role in ‘setting the scene’ and projecting the image of Harcourt. Opportunities exist to significantly enhance this image and therefore perceptions of the town, by upgrading the built form, open spaces and landscape, and ensuring that future development opportunities attract good design outcomes.

The urban environment in Harcourt is under developed, with damaged or no footpaths and street furniture, inadequate landscaping, ill-defined edge conditions/frontages to open spaces, and mixed housing quality. This project seeks to provide a framework of modest, achievable interventions to improve the quality, amenity and appearance of the public realm environment.



**principle 06:**  
**stageability**

Plan for the Town to evolve and redevelop over time, and utilise and build upon existing assets. Master Plans must accommodate the need to implement the proposals over extended periods, as conditions change and funding becomes available, as well as providing a degree of flexibility to adapt to changed circumstances in the future. The Master Plan for the Town should reflect a series of discrete projects which can be delivered, incrementally, into the future.



# 07

# Concept Development

As part of the process for this project there are two plans for the Town, which address conceptual development at different scales:

- **Broad Development Framework Concepts**

This scale identifies the potential redevelopment opportunities of the Town at a broad scale, distinguishing sites for medium and longer term development of housing and an overall growth pattern for the Town.

- **Town Centre Conceptual Directions**

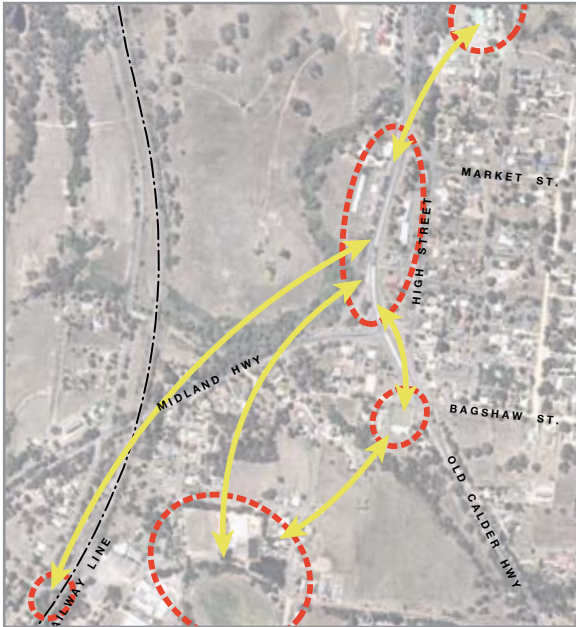
The Town Centre conceptual directions outline the key design initiatives to be built upon in the final Master Plan design.

- **Town Centre Master Plan Concepts**

The Town Centre Master Plan component will conceptually identify development parcels, land use opportunities and public realm improvements at the heart of the Town, to be built upon in the final Master Plan design.

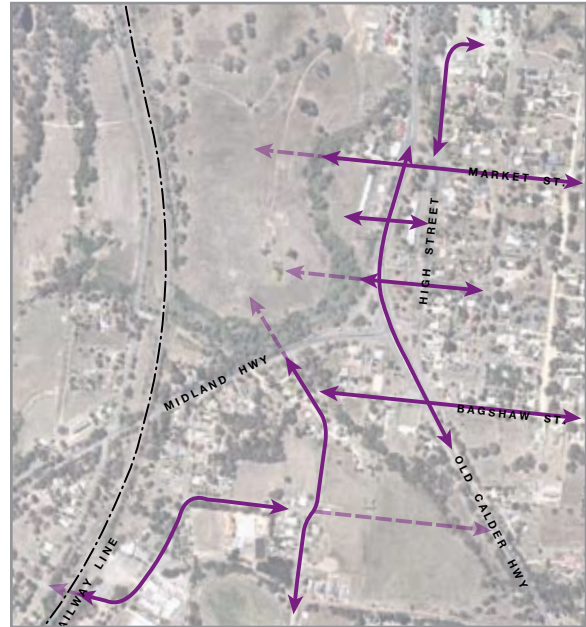
This chapter will gradually illustrate the conceptual opportunities for the development and growth of the Town.

## broad development framework concepts



### Nodes and Connections

- reconnect the town centre (High Street) with the southern precinct (school, recreation reserve, Station).



### Extended Connections

- aligning streets for legibility and integration.



### Highway Focus

- downgrading and refining the highway as the main commercial street.
- turning the highway corridor into a pedestrian-friendly streetscape environment.



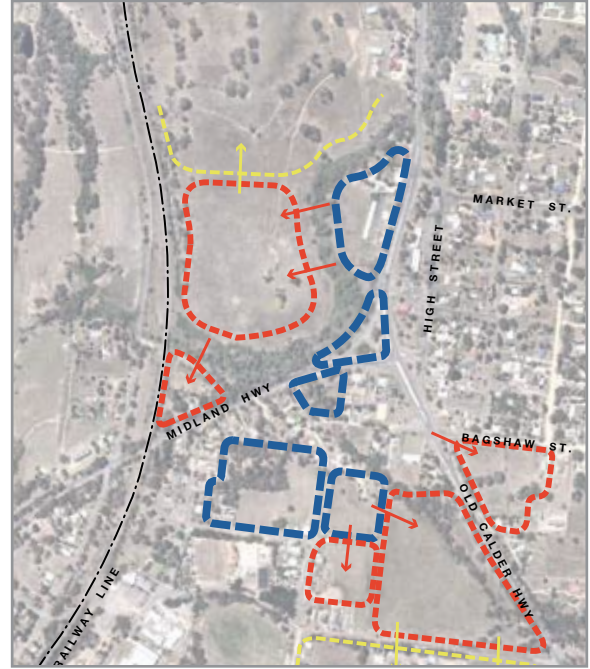
### Creek Focus

- utilising the natural landscape asset of the creek for amenity and accessibility within the town centre.
- drawing the creek corridor landscape into the town centre.



### Proposed Development Areas

- provide increased opportunities for service and commercial activity in the town centre – shops, cafes, restaurants, markets, small offices, as well as community uses.
- fill in gaps in the town centre structure.
- protecting the established residential character of the centre east of High Street.



### Potential Residential Growth Areas

- facilitating residential growth in and around the town centre, within walking distance of shops, schools, parks, transport and other community facilities, with new connections across the Creek and roads.
- protecting and retaining existing community assets – Memorial Park, James Park and Stanley Park.

## town centre conceptual directions



*proposed highway reconfiguration*



*retain, extend and enhance open spaces*



*creating a defined 'main street'*



*new open space*

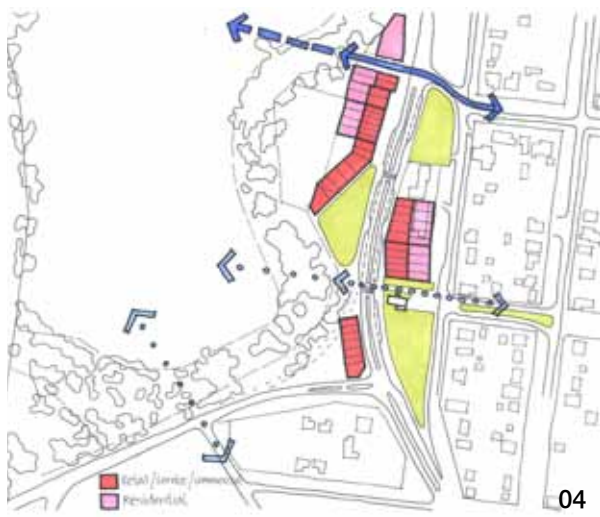


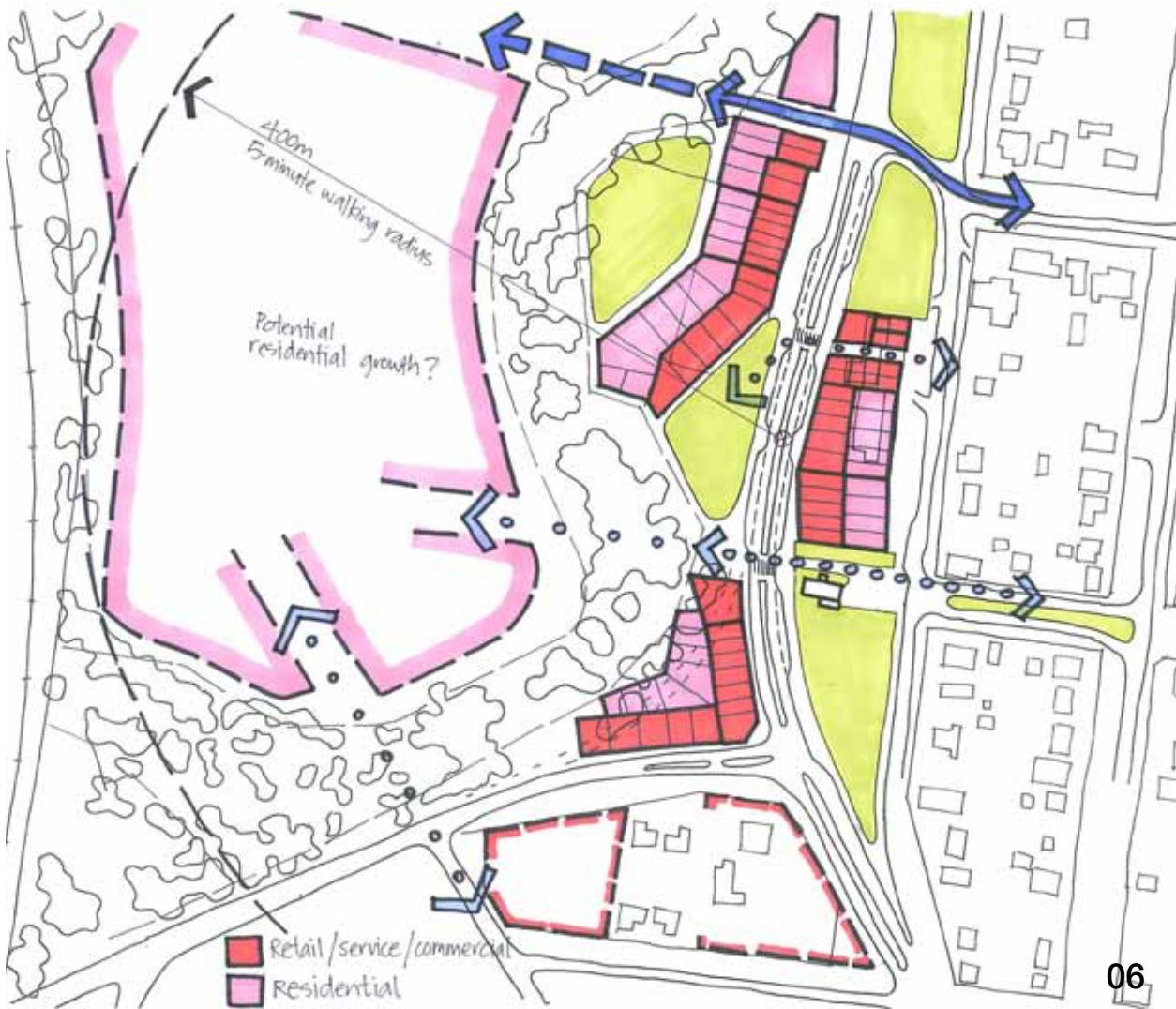
*road narrowing and new crossing points*



*built form frontages*

# town centre master plan concepts





- 01. reconnect Barkers Creek to the town through the creation of a new public space on the west of the Old Calder Highway.
- 02. following the realignment of the Old Calder Highway for one lane of traffic in each direction, built form can begin to infill the new streetscape.
- 03. continued new development along the Old Calder Highway builds up the streetscape frontage and begins to define the town centre.
- 04. reinforce east-west pedestrian connections through the town, into potential new development envelopes.
- 05. continued mixed-use development over time, to fully integrate the streetscape and public spaces.
- 06. ultimate long term potential growth of the town centre.

# 08

# Master Plan and Implementation

## design statement

The proposed Master Plan for Harcourt Town Centre integrates various inputs and drivers, including:

- directions and background contained in the *'Harcourt: After the Bypass'* report
- site analysis
- consultation inputs from community workshops and stakeholder meetings
- principles of good urban design
- concept development and design drivers during the project process

In essence, the Master Plan is about creating an active, vibrant town centre, with a key public gathering space, framed by new buildings providing active edges, enhanced movement and access provision to integrate public transport, opportunities for significant new commercial / retail, community and residential activity, and integration of existing green spaces and facilities.

The **Old Calder Highway is a principal design driver**, as the key movement route through the town, and subsequently influences the arrangement of space and built form. The realignment of the intersection with the Midland Highway and the

narrowing of the carriageway to one lane in each direction creates an enhanced, pedestrian-focussed main street experience, while retaining vehicular access at low speed.

The **'chequer-board' arrangement of green spaces** provides an integrated consistent public realm within the town centre, which accommodates the new town square / public gathering space. The town square becomes an extension of the main street and is a key strategic initiative to facilitate pedestrian movement to / from the creek corridor, effectively bringing this key landscape asset into the town centre, and focusing activity in and around the town centre.

The potential for **increased commercial and residential development** within the town centre was central to discussion at all the consultation workshops and meetings. The Master Plan accommodates new street frontages with active retail, service, community and commercial uses fronting the highway, in addition to residential development, filling the gaps in the town centre structure.

The components of the Master Plan are described in more detail in the following section.



## master plan elements

This section will outline the various components of the proposed Master Plan for Harcourt Town Centre, with descriptions categorised by theme (as used in the public consultation workshops), such as:

- public environment
- movement and access
- built form

These Master Plan elements are illustrated with precedent images to demonstrate the desired look or feel trying to be achieved.

### **Public Environment**

#### **Memorial Park and James Park**

These existing open spaces will remain, with potential for re-landscaping and 'de-cluttering' to incorporate enhanced recreational facilities, whilst maintaining significant existing natural landscape features, such as trees. A new landscape / planting strategy could be prepared for the parks overall, with local / indigenous, drought tolerant species.

#### **Barkers Creek**

The plan seeks to integrate the natural landscape asset of the creek corridor within the town centre environment and to provide direct pedestrian access to, and along the creek corridor.

#### **Pavilion**

This small proposed building in Memorial Park contains a small tourist / community information space and public toilets, with future opportunities for bicycle hire or other related facilities.

#### **Town square**

The proposed town square / urban gathering space comprises a paved area and stage / performance space, envisioned with trees, furniture and lighting.

#### **Adventure playground**

This will provide a youth-focussed recreation opportunity, integrated within James Park and adjacent to additional barbeque facilities.

#### **Barbeque facilities**

The integration of new barbeque facilities will provide a new recreational focus within the existing public green spaces in the heart of the town centre.

#### **Public art**

The reconfigured intersection of the Midland Highway and the Old Calder Highway is a prominent location for new public art (sculpture element) or landscape device, which would provide a visual gateway gesture to the town.

**Public environment precedents: adventure playground**

01. the proposed adventure park could accommodate playground facilities and a skate park. This high quality facility in Geelong provides a range of recreational opportunities for young people, and has been very well respected and looked after by those using it.



**Public environment precedents: town centre / gathering space**

02. the proposed town square could accommodate a farmers market, weekend art / crafts stalls or other temporary uses such as the Harcourt Apple Festival.

03. the proposed town square sits opposite James Park and Memorial Park, which both accommodate north facing grassed areas for meeting, gathering and relaxing.

04. the landscape of the proposed stage / performance space could be treated as a mound or deck to provide a high quality public realm space and seating opportunities.



## Movement and Access

### Realignment and reconfiguration of Midland Highway / Old Calder Highway intersection

The proposed removal of the left-turn slip-road from the Midland Highway into the Old Calder Highway (heading north), creates a more defined entry point into the town through a T-intersection, which slows traffic entering the town, and introduces a distinctly different street condition in the Old Calder Highway corridor. The existing carriageway which runs through the town will be decreased to one lane each way, with on-street parking accommodated through the town centre.

### Car parking

The realignment and configuration of the Old Calder Highway to one lane of traffic, in each direction, provides the opportunity for new on-street parking, providing approximately forty-four (44) spaces. Additionally, the potential reconfiguration of the ANA Hall car park provides an increased number of parking spaces – from the existing eight (8) to nineteen (19) spaces.



#### **Movement and access precedents: on-street car parking**

05. the proposed narrowing of the Old Calder Highway to one lane will allow on-street parking to be accommodated on both north and south bound carriageways with the provision for cycle lanes.

(Image source: <http://dcfm.org>)

### Integrated coach / bus stop

The reconfigured bus stop, located on the north east side of the Old Calder Highway, accommodates two (2) buses, a new shelter and timetable information. This designated stop in the town centre, adjacent to the pavilion with toilet facilities, will provide a potential 'break point' for Vline services and proper stop for local routes in the area.

### Pedestrian crossings

Two new pedestrian crossings will be introduced across the reconfigured Old Calder Highway / main street, at appropriate locations for ease of movement and aligned with new and existing built form and spaces.

### Potential future pedestrian bridges

The plan allows for the potential construction of new pedestrian bridges, across Barkers Creek into a potential new residential development area. Each of these bridges is located on alignment with an existing street, namely Bingham Street to the south and Wright Street to the east.



#### **Movement and access precedents: new bus stop**

06. the proposed new Vline / local bus stop could be designed to incorporate local features of the area, as this giant strawberry does in Japan.

(Image source: [www.curiousread.com](http://www.curiousread.com))

## **Built Form**

### **Retail / commercial buildings**

The highway frontage presents opportunities for future private sector development of retail and commercial buildings, residential shop-top or mixed-use development and community uses within the town centre.

### **Town centre residential development**

Future residential development in and around the town centre (including medium density) is vital for supporting local business patronage, future economic viability and enhancing activity, vibrancy and safety in the town.

# master plan implementation

The Implementation Strategy set out below provides an indicative sequence of potential actions and outcomes, based on the proposed Development Framework and Master Plan. As the plans demonstrate, there are many variables that affect development in urban centres, and many outcomes will rely on other initiatives and actions.

The key, overarching factors affecting implementation of the Master Plan include:

- **Commercial development feasibility:** the economic viability of expanding the town centres retail, hospitality and commercial offer is key to achieving a sustainable, vibrant centre as envisioned by the Master Plan. This depends on the level of support from local resident and visitor populations. It is expected that retail premises and commercial office space, will increase in viability over time in Harcourt, as the population grows.
- **Local population growth:** population increase in Harcourt is a key factor in creating a larger, sustainable support base for commercial activity in the town centre. Initiatives such as tourism promotion, marketing, investment incentives, and building on existing assets may be utilised to build the local ‘critical mass’ required to support a town centre as envisioned in this report.
- **External strategic influences:** factors such as housing demand, affordability issues, transport infrastructure developments, demographic change and the political context, can significantly alter the context for urban development.

In this context, the short-term context allows for more accurate and reliable planning of actions and outcomes, while it is more difficult to define actions in the longer term. This is reflected in the detail of the implementation strategy outlined below.

However, this strategy seeks to provide guidance on priorities for short, medium and longer-term and ultimate development potentials, in the context of the Master Plan for Harcourt Town Centre.

**Please note that all the timeframes noted throughout this strategy are indicative only, and the sequence of development proposed may occur in an order other than that indicated in the following sections.**

## short term strategy: 2011-2015

### Strategy / Approach

- Implement minor initiatives for recreational purposes, such as the re-landscaping of Memorial Park and James Park, a new adventure playground new barbeque facilities, and streetscape improvements.
- Reconfigure the Old Calder Highway within the town centre area, to change its role and to accommodate future development.
- Implement policy and zoning changes to the Planning Scheme, to accommodate future development initiatives.

### Implementation Actions

#### Planning

- Identify the current and potential **strategic role and perceptions of Harcourt** relative to nearby towns and similar-sized towns elsewhere.
- Implement **appropriate rezoning of land** to assist and accommodate development for commercial, retail, service, community and residential uses within the town centre.
- Monitor and **understand market conditions** and identify viable development opportunities in Harcourt for the current period.
- Monitor and carefully plan **new residential development and local population increases** to maximise economic support for the town centre. This includes maximising the amount of residential activity in close proximity to the centre.
- Assess current economic conditions and the potential for **new / expanded commercial, retail and service activity** in the town, and potential measures to enhance this potential in the future, through an urban economics study.
- Lobby for the **re-opening of the Harcourt Railway Station**.
- Establish and implement a **streetscape strategy**, which unifies the town centres appearance and identifies the need for new and/or replacement footpaths, lighting, street furniture and planting to better connect the destinations within the town centre, safely.

- Establish and implement a **wayfinding and signage strategy**, which helps to link the town centre with the Pool / Scout Hall precinct, Primary School / recreational precinct, train station, Baxter Creek Corridor Trail, and other key locations and destinations within Harcourt.
- Establish **development guidelines** to ensure new buildings are of good quality and appropriate to the local character.
- **'Re-brand' the Old Calder Highway** section within the town centre area as a new main street and defined 'core' to attract visitors.
- Establish and implement a strategic / environmental assessment to ascertain the **best location for an RV or recreational vehicle site** within the town, taking into account sewage and water infrastructure available.

#### Infrastructure

- **Remove the slip road** connecting the Midland Highway and the Old Calder Highway.
- **Remove the existing roadway** connecting High Street and the Old Calder Highway.
- Install **new road markings, traffic signage** and / or potential for signals at the T-intersection from the Midland Highway onto the Old Calder Highway.
- Implement the **reduction of the Old Calder Highway** to one lane of traffic, with the installation of associated road markings, through the town centre north and south bound to define a clear movement route, and manage traffic flows and road safety. The creation of this new main street through the town centre will keep large vehicles and trucks away from residential streets, and ensure they move through the town in a slower, safer manor.
- Implement **new speed limits** through the town centre, appropriate to the envisioned new urban condition.
- Install new road markings to designate the 'left-over' carriageway for **on-street parking** through the town centre, with kerb outstands at crossing locations.

- The proposed reconfiguration of the Highway corridor could initially incorporate ‘temporary’ initiatives such as kerbs, potted plants etc, or permanent **construction of new kerbs, footpaths, crossings** etc.
- Construct **new street from the Old Calder Highway to the west** for access, in line with new retail / commercial and residential development of private land.
- Create **new Vline / local bus stop** (with proper bays and shelters), next to Memorial Park
- Establish and implement a **frequent local transport service** to / from the town centre, which is clearly advertised. These local services have to account for increased provision over time, as the local population increases and should run in conjunction with train services (pending the outcome of the reopening of Harcourt Train Station).
- Establish a **road / traffic investigation** to understand how the intersection of the Old Calder Highway, Warren Street, Bagshaw Street, and High Street could be best reconfigured. Traffic from the south should be directed through the town centre on the Old Calder Highway, and not allowed to bypass the new ‘main street’ which is being created, via High Street.

#### Public Realm

- Construct **new pavilion structure in Memorial Park**, to include local tourist information about local walks / attractions, toilet facilities close to the public transport stop, and cyclist facilities to encourage a stopping point within the town centre.
- **Extend James Park** over the removed roadway connecting High Street.
- Construct **new adventure or skate park facilities** for the youth of the local community.
- Carry out a **detailed landscape Master Plan across the town centre** for the existing parks and new open spaces (in conjunction with the streetscape improvement strategy), which enhances and de-clutters the existing landscape, whilst providing new recreational facilities for local community use of these spaces, and identifies / resolves drainage issues. This Master Plan should make use of locally sourced materials, such as Harcourt granite.
- Create **new pedestrian crossings** at two points over the Old Calder Highway in the town centre.
- Create and align **a new pedestrian path** with the new pedestrian crossing to the north of ANA Hall over the Old Calder Highway, and implement associated landscaping.
- Establish **public walking paths through the town centre** and a new trail along the Barkers Creek corridor, which connect with local attractions.

#### Development

- **Discuss redevelopment initiatives**, potentials and plans with **local landowners and business owners** in Harcourt and the wider Shire area, to assess the level of interest and potential for new development in the town centre. Understand the current limitations and constraints.
- Facilitate and encourage **commercially-focused development** fronting the Old Calder Highway, within rezoned land, focussing on retail and hospitality / food and beverage activities.
- Commence new development on sites of existing local Harcourt businesses – consider potential initiatives such as a ‘shopfront’ for a local Cidery, or **new community infrastructure** in the town centre such as a community centre, which will help to catalyse further commercial, retail and service development activity.
- **Begin town centre infill / regeneration** with development of new retail / commercial premises on both sides of the Old Calder Highway.
- Facilitate and encourage **new residential development** on the east side of High Street, behind new retail / commercial premises, focussing on smaller lots and townhouse-type dwellings.
- Reconfigure the ANA Hall car park to **accommodate additional spaces**.





BARKERS CREEK CORRIDOR

New street for access to residential

Potential redevelopment of existing shop

Monument

Proposed new retail / commercial / community premises

Designated Vine / bus stop

Memorial Park

Proposed new residential dwellings

Removal of existing built form

Proposed new pavilion structure to incorporate tourist information space and public toilets

Proposed new pedestrian crossing

Pub

Proposed new on-street parking within the footprint of the Old Calder Highway

OLD CALDER HIGHWAY

HIGH STREET

MARKET STREET

Existing Service station

Indicative creek corridor trail

Proposed new retail / commercial / community premises

frontages

rear laneway

frontages

Proposed new residential dwellings

Proposed new pedestrian crossing

Existing Post Office

Proposed new pedestrian connection to High Street

Narrowing of highway width to one lane

ANA Hall

Reconfigured car park

WRIGHT STREET

Maintain existing highway median

Proposed removal of existing slip lane

Proposed new adventure playground

James Park

Proposed removal of existing street connection

MIDLAND HIGHWAY

Reconfigured signalled T-intersection

Extension of James Park

NOT TO SCALE



## medium term strategy: 2016-2020

### Strategy / Approach

- Continue to implement minor initiatives for recreational and aesthetic purposes, such as streetscape improvements and upgrades to local parks.
- Continue to facilitate and implement new development within the town centre.

### Implementation Actions

#### Planning

- **Facilitate approval** of proposed development projects through the planning system.
- Continue to monitor and **understand market conditions** and identify viable development opportunities in Harcourt for the current period.
- Continue to lobby / rationalise the need for the **reopening of Harcourt Station** (if not yet implemented).
- Re-visit the current / **emerging and potential strategic role of Harcourt** in the region and beyond, to guide further strategic and development outcomes.
- Establish and implement **a new 'brand' and marketing / positioning strategy** for Harcourt, to promote residential and visitor growth and the patronage of the local town centre.
- Facilitate and encourage the locating of **new businesses and service offer** in the town centre, such as opportunities for a specialist rural restaurant.

#### Infrastructure

- **Continue growth of development** within the town centre for residential, retail, commercial and community infrastructure.
- Begin to **replace temporary initiatives** along the Old Calder Highway, with the construction of permanent new kerbs, footpaths and crossings etc.

#### Public Realm

- Create **new park / public open space** between Barkers Creek and new residential and retail development on the west side of the Old Calder Highway.
- Implement the **planned public art installation** at the junction of the Midland Highway and the Old Calder Highway.

#### Development

- Facilitate and encourage retail, commercial and community focussed **infill development** with frontages to both sides of the Old Calder Highway.
- Continue **residential infill development** within the town centre.
- Encourage new development along the Old Calder Highway corridor to **incorporate shop-top / residential development above** active retail, commercial or community ground floor activity.



NOT TO SCALE



## longer term strategy: 2021+

### Strategy / Approach

- Expand implementation of development and growth of the town centre.
- Refine the town as a tourism destination and regional focus, with a unique role and character.

### Implementation Actions

#### Planning

- Continue to **facilitate approval of proposed development sites** through the planning system.
- Facilitate and encourage the locating of **new businesses and services** in the town centre.

#### Infrastructure

- Continue **growth of development** within the town centre for residential, retail, commercial and community infrastructure.
- Replace **all temporary initiatives along the Old Calder Highway**, with the construction of permanent new kerbs, footpaths and crossings etc, including locally indigenous planting, consistent materials and water sensitive urban design initiatives.

#### Public Realm

- Design and construct a **new town square / plaza space** between Barkers Creek and the new main street (the Old Calder Highway corridor) including performance space, seating, lighting and locally indigenous landscaping.
- Construct a **stage / performance space** for local events within the town square / gathering space.
- New **landscaping and planting** in the town square.

#### Development

- Facilitate and encourage retail, commercial and community **focussed infill development** with frontages to both sides of the Old Calder Highway.
- Continue **residential infill development** within the town centre.
- Potential **redevelopment of the existing pub** within development parcels to the immediate south of Memorial Park.
- **Complete the redevelopment** of residential, retail, commercial and community units **on the slip-lane gateway site** to the town from the Midland Highway.



NOT TO SCALE



ultimate development potential for harcourt town centre

Extend new street over the creek corridor for potential longer term residential development to the west of Barkers Creek

Proposed residential development

New park / public open space

NEW STREET

Rear laneway

Residential

Designated Vline / local bus stop

Monument

Memorial Park

Proposed barbeque area

Existing Service station

MARKET STREET

BARKERS CREEK CORRIDOR

Proposed retail / commercial / community premises

Pavilion

Potential redevelopment of existing pub

Pedestrian connection

Proposed residential development

Town square / gathering space

OLD CALDER HIGHWAY

Proposed retail / commercial / community premises

Proposed residential development

Indicative creek corridor trail

Stage / performance space

frontages

frontages

Rear laneway

Proposed pedestrian footbridge on alignment with Wright Street

Existing Post Office

Pedestrian crossing

Pedestrian connection

Maintain existing highway median

ANA Hall

Reconfigured car park

WRIGHT STREET

Longer term potential residential development

Proposed barbeque area

Adventure playground

James Park

Public art

Longer term potential retail / commercial / community development

MIDLAND HIGHWAY

Reconfigured signalled t-junction intersection

NOT TO SCALE



## wider development framework

The strategic basis for the overall development framework of Harcourt is to develop a town that is economically and socially sustainable, more self-contained, through increased residential growth. This was a key feature, highlighted throughout the consultation workshops and meetings, as a vital outcome for Harcourt. Increased local population or 'critical mass' will support the patronage of proposed new retail and commercial activities within the town centre.

The Master Plan provides strategic justification for the wider land parcels designated for future residential development within the town centre. The strategic thinking is as follows:

- getting more people living with in easy access (walking distance) of the revitalised town centre, to encourage people to use it rather than drive elsewhere
- to make better use of the creek as a valued landscape asset to the town, which is currently 'out the back' and not really a part of the town
- to encourage residential development through the visual and recreational amenity (as well as access linkages) provided by the creek.
- to establish a town centre which has a full catchment (such as west of the creek corridor), rather than a dispersed or one-sided catchment, with empty farmland.
- to facilitate linkages between different parts of the town, such as the school and the swimming pool.





Longer-term residential development

Public pool

Service station

Post office

ANA Hall

Reconfigured T-junction

Bowls club

School

Recreation reserve

NOT TO SCALE



RAILWAY LINE

CREEK CORRIDOR

NEW STREET

NEW STREET

HIGH STREET

WRIGHT STREET

CREEK CORRIDOR

MIDLAND HIGHWAY

BINGHAM STREET

WARREN STREET

WILKINSON STREET

EAGLES ROAD

BAGSHAW STREET

OLD CALDER HIGHWAY

Long-term development parcels

Pedestrian bridge

Pedestrian bridge

Infill residential development

Infill residential development

**notes**

**notes**

