

APPENDIX 1

Legal and Policy Context

Ballarat Housing Strategy

Appendix 1

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Federal

National Housing Accord 2022

The Federal government's *National Housing Accord* notes that a successful housing market is a key component of a successful economy and our collective wellbeing. Housing supply – particularly in the rental sector – is very low and medium-term expectations that capacity in the housebuilding sector will diminish. The Accord also states that Australia governments have, historically, not invested in the housing sector. The Accord seeks to address these issues by bringing together all levels of government and the development industry. The Accord identifies a range of immediate and longer term actions designed to facilitate housing delivery, both in the private sector and in the form of social and affordable housing.

Liveable Housing Design Standard 2022 – Australian Building Codes Board

The *Liveable Housing Design Standard* (Australian Building Code Board, 2022) is a technical guide for building practitioners and represents a best practice approach to ensuring housing is designed to allow people to 'age in place'. The Standard does this by recommending new housing is designed with limited steps, ensuring corridors and openings are a suitable width, and ensuring circulation and waiting spaces are large and covered.

Victoria

Planning Practice Notes

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has published Planning Practice Notes (PPNs). PPN90 *Planning for Housing* (DTP, December 2019) and PPN91 *Using the Residential Zones* (DTP, December 2019) have informed the preparation of the Ballarat Housing Strategy. PPN43 *Understanding Neighbourhood Character* (DTP, January 2018) is also referenced.

PPN90 sets out the evidence and process the City of Ballarat should follow to establish a Residential Development Framework (RDF). The Housing Strategy is a principal component of the RDF; the Neighbourhood Character Strategy is another. The City of Ballarat are given a choice as to other strategic work that may be appropriate to undertake in support of their RDF.

Importantly, PPN90 requires the City of Ballarat to:

Plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period and provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur. Residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.

Planning for urban growth should consider:

- *Opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas.*
- *Neighbourhood character and landscape considerations.*
- *The limits of land capability and natural hazards and environmental quality.*
- *Service limitations and the costs of providing infrastructure.*

PPN91 describes how the City of Ballarat should apply the Residential Zones of the Victorian Planning Provisions to facilitate residential growth and change in a manner that reflects established needs, at a Municipal-wide level. The application of the Residential Zones, and the creation of any local policies needed to ensure particular use and development outcomes in those Zones, is undertaken through the Ballarat Planning Scheme (see below section).

The Residential Zones are:

- Residential Growth Zone
- General Residential Zone
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone
- Mixed Use Zone
- Township Zone
- Low Density Residential Zone

Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan 2014

The *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan* (Victorian Government, 2014) sets out a regional approach to land use planning across the Central Highlands. Ballarat is identified as the sole Regional City in the Plan, and from the perspective of this Housing Strategy projects Ballarat's population at 2021 as being 113,500 and at 2031 as being 130,000. It notes that the region's population is forecast to grow, and to age, significantly by 2031. Growth in Ballarat is to be actively promoted, with the following five 'Future Directions' listed:

- Support development and investment that is consistent with Ballarat's role as a regional city and the largest settlement in the Central Highlands
- Facilitate growth of the city, particularly through planned development to the west and through infill opportunities
- Encourage the development of Ballarat's Central Business District as a higher order activity centre with major employment, cultural, service and retail attractors
- Provide appropriate social, physical and transport infrastructure to support growth
- Encourage the provision of regionally significant services and ensure they are easily accessible to their regional catchment through integrated land use planning and transport provision

The Plan also highlights projected decreases in household sizes. A set of 'principles' are outlined to achieve a Vision that the Region is productive, sustainable and liveable; those of relevance to this Housing Strategy are:

- Population growth should be planned in sustainable locations throughout the region.
- The development of sustainable and vibrant communities should be supported by enhancing the level of access to key services.
- Land use patterns, developments and infrastructure should make the region more self-reliant and sustainable.
- Planning for growth should be integrated with the provision of infrastructure.

- The region's land, soil, water and biodiversity should be managed, protected and enhanced.
- Long-term agricultural productivity should be supported.
- The importance of cultural heritage and landscapes as economic and community assets should be recognised.

Victoria's Regional Growth Plans are currently undergoing a program of refresh. This Housing Strategy projects for a period beyond the furthest time horizon of the Regional Growth Plan and as such the weight given to housing and population projections will be limited. In that context, it is to be noted that the City of Ballarat has commissioned a range of evidence inputs that are more recent and Ballarat-specific than the Recommendations outlined in the Regional Growth Plan.

Infrastructure Growth Area Framework

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is leading on the Infrastructure Growth Area Framework (IGAF) project. In September 2022, the Minister for Planning requested the VPA undertake a high-level, strategic review of the housing land and potential sites for residential development in the Municipality.

The IGAF will outline population growth scenarios, identify Zoned land available for residential development, establish if there is sufficient Zoned and unzoned land to provide for fifteen years of population growth, and explore staging and sequencing of unzoned land. It is intended that the IGAF will direct growth to serviced locations and in turn identify forward planning from government bodies and infrastructure providers, as well as informing the VPA on its regional work program.

The City of Ballarat has provided inputs to the IGAF project, which is intended to provide strategic guidance on land supply and availability within the municipality. The IGAF Report will be released at a similar time to the draft Housing Strategy being placed on consultation.

Infrastructure Victoria: Our Home Choices (March 2023)

Infrastructure Victoria is an independent advisory body that advises all levels of government on evidence-based infrastructure provision and planning. Its *Our Home Choices* (Infrastructure Victoria, March 2023) report summarises a community consultation which engaged with over 6,000 households in Melbourne, Geelong, and Ballarat. The report is extensive and at the time of preparing this Housing Strategy is very new such that its recommendations remain open for consideration and debate. Although the Report's recommendations are generally aimed at State government, several offer relevant considerations for local government and – especially given the Ballarat community's role in the research – for this Housing Strategy in particular:

- *Prioritise urban renewal precincts for development, with streamlined planning approvals. Set targets in each precinct for the number, type and size of new homes. Develop suitable housing demonstration projects that specifically include 3-bedroom homes.*
- *Develop better standards for low-rise apartments (4 or fewer storeys) in the Victoria Planning Provisions. Introduce more low-rise apartments by supporting local governments to rezone more residential areas near public transport and services to the Residential Growth Zone.*

- *Reduce or remove compulsory minimum parking requirements to improve choice and affordability of new established area homes, close to good public transport. Allow homebuyers to choose how much onsite parking they want to pay for above minimum requirements.*

Many of the findings are general, meaning that not many recommendations or commentary are drawn from the Ballarat population specifically. The following are some more specific points of interest mentioned in the report:

- Just under 12% of people asked stated that if they were to move it would be to a three-bedroom detached house in Ballarat or Geelong;
- Roughly two thirds of households in Ballarat' and Geelong's Growth Areas contain children, and
- If houses in Growth Areas were to increase in price by 10%, people would switch their preference to established suburbs, to include lower density dwellings.

City of Ballarat

Ballarat Planning Scheme

The Ballarat Planning Scheme is the means through which decisions are made on planning applications seeking approval to change and develop land. The City of Ballarat is the regulatory body with the responsibility for receiving and making decisions on planning applications. Decisions are reached by assessing a proposal against the State and Local policies in the Planning Scheme.

The Minister for Planning decides what changes can be made to the Ballarat Planning Scheme. Local policies prepared by the City of Ballarat must be approved by the Minister and must be in line with State policies.

With respect to this Housing Strategy, under Clause 11.02-1S 'Supply of urban land' the City of Ballarat is required to ensure sufficient land is available to meet forecast demand for population growth over at least the coming 15 years. Assessment of forecast housing demand must be made on a municipal-wide basis. Beyond reaching decisions on submitted planning applications, the City of Ballarat does not have the ability to control when land is developed for dwellings. Planning Scheme policies can encourage a diversity of housing sizes and types. Clause 11.02-1S also requires that the City of Ballarat provides clear direction on where growth should occur. In reaching conclusions on these matters, the City of Ballarat are specifically directed to consider the following:

- Opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas
- Neighbourhood character and landscape considerations
- The limits of land capability and natural hazards and environmental quality
- Service limitations and the costs of providing infrastructure

The City of Ballarat is also obliged (by Clause 11.02-1S) to restrict rural residential development where it would compromise the delivery of residential development elsewhere at higher densities.

Clause 11.01 'Victoria' sets out expectations regarding planning for settlements generally and in the context of the Central Highlands area where Ballarat sits. These Clauses are reproduced below in full:

11.01.1S Settlement

Objective

- *To facilitate the sustainable growth and development of Victoria and deliver choice and opportunity for all Victorians through a network of settlements.*

Strategies

- *Develop sustainable communities through a settlement framework offering convenient access to jobs, services, infrastructure and community facilities.*
- *Focus investment and growth in places of state significance in Metropolitan Melbourne and the major regional cities of Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe City, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.*
- *Support sustainable development of the regional centres of Ararat, Bacchus Marsh, Bairnsdale, Benalla, Castlemaine, Colac, Echuca, Gisborne, Hamilton, Kyneton, Leongatha, Maryborough, Portland, Sale, Swan Hill, Warragul/Drouin and Wonthaggi.*
- *Ensure regions and their settlements are planned in accordance with their relevant regional growth plan.*
- *Guide the structure, functioning and character of each settlement taking into account municipal and regional contexts and frameworks.*
- *Create and reinforce settlement boundaries.*
- *Provide for growth in population and development of facilities and services across a regional or sub-regional network.*
- *Plan for development and investment opportunities along existing and planned transport infrastructure.*
- *Promote transport, communications and economic linkages between settlements through the identification of servicing priorities in regional land use plans.*
- *Strengthen transport links on national networks for the movement of commodities.*
- *Deliver networks of high-quality integrated settlements that have a strong identity and sense of place, are prosperous and are sustainable by:*
 - *Building on strengths and capabilities of each region across Victoria to respond sustainably to population growth and changing environments.*
 - *Developing settlements that will support resilient communities and their ability to adapt and change.*
 - *Balancing strategic objectives to achieve improved land use and development outcomes at a regional, catchment and local level.*
 - *Preserving and protecting features of rural land and natural resources and features to enhance their contribution to settlements and landscapes.*
 - *Encouraging an integrated planning response between settlements in regions and in adjoining regions and states in accordance with the relevant regional growth plan.*
 - *Providing for appropriately located supplies of residential, commercial, and industrial land across a region, sufficient to meet community needs in accordance with the relevant regional growth plan.*
 - *Improving transport network connections in and between regional cities, towns and Melbourne.*
 - *Integrating the management of water resources into the urban environment in a way that supports water security, public health, environment and amenity outcomes.*
 - *Minimising exposure to natural hazards, including increased risks due to climate change.*
 - *Contributing to net zero greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy infrastructure and energy efficient urban layout and urban design.*
- *Encourage a form and density of settlements that supports healthy, active and sustainable transport.*
- *Limit urban sprawl and direct growth into existing settlements.*
- *Promote and capitalise on opportunities for urban renewal and infill redevelopment.*
- *Develop compact urban areas that are based around existing or planned activity centres to maximise accessibility to facilities and services.*

- *Ensure retail, office-based employment, community facilities and services are concentrated in central locations.*
- *Ensure land that may be required for future urban expansion is not compromised.*
- *Support metropolitan and regional climate change adaption and mitigation measures.*

Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Central Highlands

Strategies

- *Support Ballarat as the main centre for regional growth, services and employment with major growth focussed to the west.*
- *Support urban consolidation, particularly in Ballarat's Central Business District.*
- *Maintain Ballarat's Central Business District as the primary focus for commercial, retail and service activity in the city and region.*
- *Support the development of Central Highlands' regional centres, Ararat and Bacchus Marsh, as the key service centres for each end of the region.*
- *Provide local and sub-regional services at Avoca, Ballan, Beaufort, Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Smythesdale to support ongoing growth, particularly closer to Melbourne and Ballarat where towns will provide a key opportunity to target growth pressure.*
- *Direct growth to well serviced settlements with good access to Melbourne or Ballarat, particularly Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Creswick, Clunes, Beaufort and Smythesdale.*
- *Limit outward growth of Daylesford to minimise environmental impacts and exposure to natural hazards.*
- *Provide adequate land and infrastructure in appropriate locations to support anticipated population growth.*
- *Maintain a clear settlement break between Metropolitan Melbourne and the Central Highlands.*

The fundamental purpose of this Housing Strategy and the associated Neighbourhood Character Strategy is to support changes to the Ballarat Planning Scheme in the context of Clauses 11.01-1S, 11.01-1R and 11.02-1S. These changes will be guided by the legal and policy context outlined in this section of the Strategy, and inspired by the specific local issues outlined in the following section.

The City of Ballarat Policies and Strategies

The Housing Strategy has drawn on a range of expert advice and the City of Ballarat's highly diverse library of corporate strategies to define a vision and targeted actions to establish a sustainable residential growth pattern for the municipality. Some actions can, subject to Ministerial approval, be delivered through the Ballarat Planning Scheme, while other actions are more focussed on advocacy and partnerships.

Council Plan 2021-2025

The *Council Plan 2021-2025* (City of Ballarat, August 2021) establishes the strategic vision for all Council activities over its period of operation. It is an expression of current community priorities and expectations. The current Council Plan has a ten-year time horizon, opening with the following community vision:

“Ballarat, Victoria’s heritage city: leading the way as a sustainable, innovative and inclusive community.

“In 2031, our city is a leader in sustainable living with ecologically sound neighbourhoods where people can meet their daily needs within a short walk, ride or bus trip.

“We have easy access to parks and gardens, community facilities and education for all ages. Our health and community services respond to community need.

“Everyone is valued and welcomed in our city. We celebrate our diversity and everyone in our community is able to participate fully in life.

“We approach challenges and opportunities with a creative and innovative approach to get the best result for our people.

“Our people work locally in the diverse range of industries that make up our solid local economy.

“We embrace our rich heritage. We continue to preserve our links to the gold rush era and recognise and celebrate our long Aboriginal history and the breadth of our cultural heritage.

“We balance the need to conserve our historical places and spaces with the need and desire to progress as a modern regional city.”

By ensuring new housing is designed to respect local character and heritage values, located near services, amenities, jobs, public spaces and public transport routes, the Housing Strategy will deliver extensively against this vision.

Today, Tomorrow, Together – The Ballarat Strategy

The *Today, Tomorrow, Together – The Ballarat Strategy* (City of Ballarat, July 2015), adopted by the City of Ballarat in 2015 with a time horizon of 2040, sets the long-term direction for how future challenges, particularly those related to land use changes and development growth, should be addressed. At nearly 300 pages, it is a wide-ranging document that reflects on an extensive community engagement process called ‘Ballarat Imagine’. It purposefully does not provide answers to all challenges, instead providing guidance as to how these could be answered in future. Some recommendations and findings from the Ballarat Strategy are in the Ballarat Planning Scheme.

Relevant actions in the Ballarat Strategy support the 10-minute city and supporting infill development in appropriate areas subject to character analysis, with further actions seeking the prevention of ad hoc greenfield residential development and advocating for the delivery of affordable housing.

This Housing Strategy sets out broad responses to these challenges. Its conclusions and recommendations will be incorporated into the Ballarat Planning Scheme. This will result in changes being required to the text and mapping in the Planning Scheme where the Ballarat Strategy is referenced.

Ballarat West Precinct Structure Plan

The *Ballarat West Precinct Structure Plan* (SMEC, October 2016) (BWSPSP) provides direction for future urban development within the Ballarat West Growth Area and sets out a vision for how land should be developed and objectives to be achieved for developers, investors, and the local community. Residential development commenced in the PSP area with the first multi-lot dwelling subdivision applications submitted in 2013.

The PSP also identifies projects that are required to ensure future residents, visitors, and workers have access to services, transport, jobs, shops, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

The Ballarat West Growth Area, which although not fully shown on the below map includes all of Lucas, is located approximately 5km west of Ballarat CBD and the associated PSP applies to approximately 1290 hectares of land, which comprises three Sub-Precincts: Bonshaw Creek (Sub-Precinct 1), Greenhalghs Road (Sub-Precinct 2) and Carngham Road (Sub-Precinct 4).

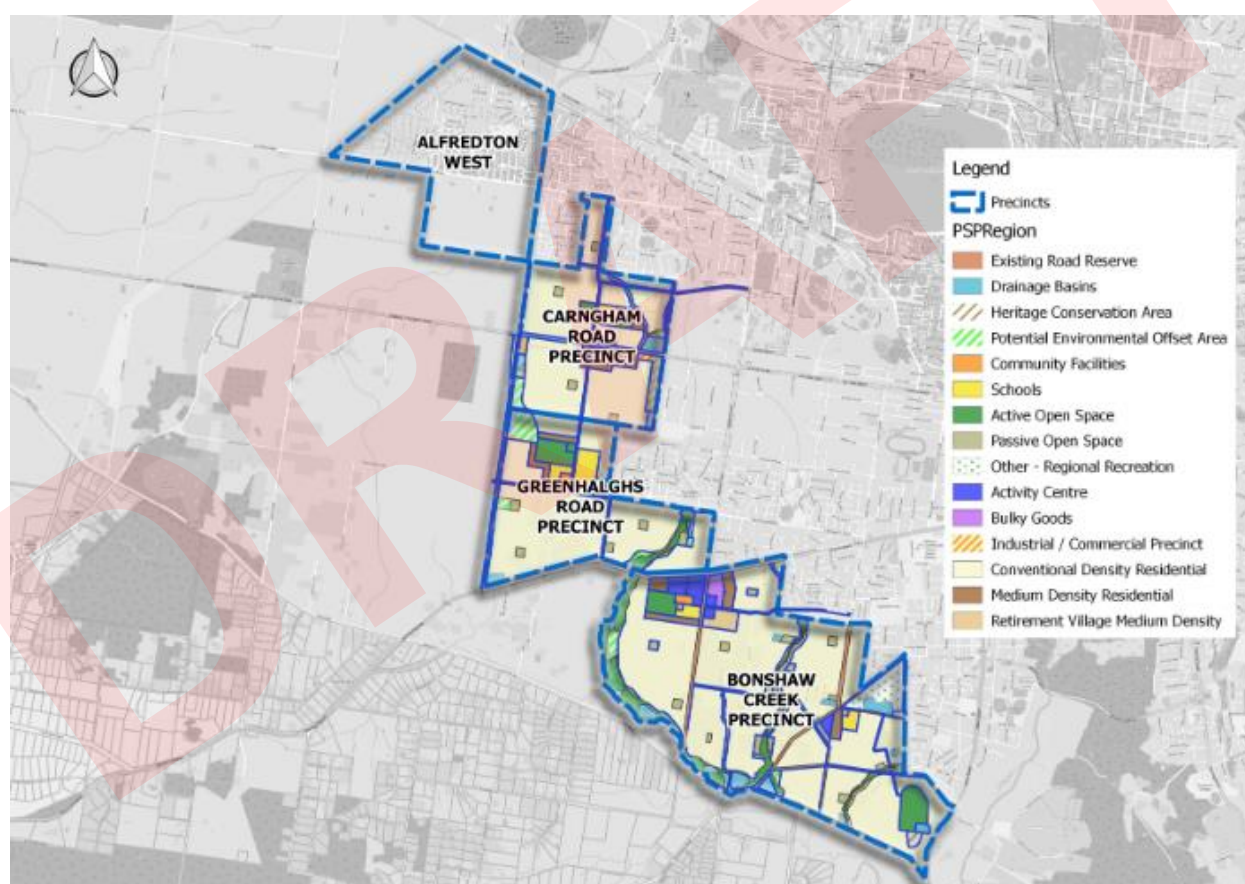


Figure A1.1: Precinct Structure Plan areas, BWSPSP, City of Ballarat

The vision for housing is supported through the objectives, planning, and design guidelines within the Ballarat West PSP. Relevant objectives for housing are as follows:

- To ensure a range of lot sizes and housing types are provided to meet the needs and aspirations of the new community and to provide for the changing needs of the community over time;

- To achieve a density of 15 dwellings per Net Developable Hectare (NDHa) throughout the Ballarat West PSP area, and
- To encourage medium density housing within walking distance of key amenities such as activity centres, community hubs and open space.

Relevant planning and design guidelines for housing in the PSP include:

- Residential development across the BWPSP must include a range of dwelling densities including conventional and medium density residential lots, and specialised housing, and
- Eliminate the need for a planning permit for small lot housing (less than 300sqm) in appropriate locations where the requirements of the Small Lot Housing Code are met.

As shown on the graph below, there is an average dwelling completion density of between 15.05 to 17.64 across Ballarat West. The current trends show that the future yield (Zoned supply) will increase based on the trend of smaller lot sizes in recent years (see below):

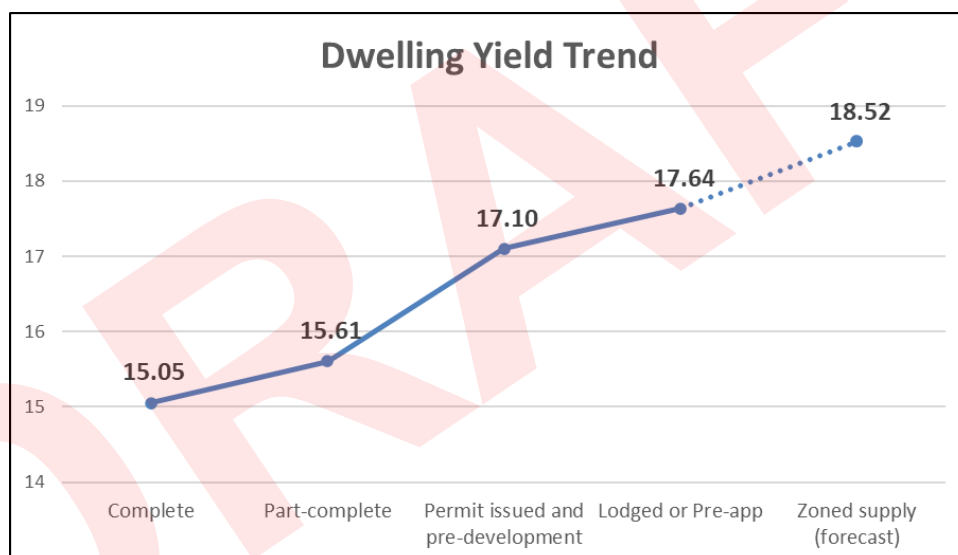


Chart A1.1: Dwelling Yield Trend. City of Ballarat, 2023

For the purposes of estimating supply, a conservative approach is appropriate. The Ballarat West Growth Area has around 9,500 identified residential lots available. While recent trends of higher density development indicate this figure is likely to increase towards 10,000 during the build-out of the Growth Area, for the purposes of this Housing Strategy the figure of 9,500 will be used.

Growth Area Framework Plan

Currently in the early preparation stages, the Growth Area Framework Plan (GAFP) for the proposed Western and North-Western Growth Areas will identify high-level infrastructure requirements and provide guidance on the sequence of future Precinct Structure Planning. Some of the technical investigations will focus on:

- Infrastructure and utility servicing plan, including:
 - Sewerage
 - Water (including flooding, stormwater management and recycled water)
 - Electricity
 - Gas
 - Telecommunications
- Road planning/Movement and Access (traffic/walking and cycling/public transport and freight)

Central to the GAFP is the determination it will make regarding the future sequencing and timing for the preparation of future Precinct Structure Plans for the proposed Western and North-Western Growth Areas. In reaching a conclusion on this, the GAFP will need to consider:

- The ability to provide servicing infrastructure. Growth should be structured and staged and remain closely aligned with trunk infrastructure rollout.
- Activity Centres and community infrastructure during early stages.
- Fragmented land ownership and how to best enable residential development to occur in line with the delivery of infrastructure.
- Locations with proximity to existing infrastructure and amenities, such as roads, retail, and community facilities.
- Zoned land supply and any unforeseen issues related to the progression of short- or medium-growth options.

The GAFP will also be informed by this Housing Strategy, specifically with respect to the spatial distribution of residential development in terms of the split between infill and greenfield land supply relative to identified need.

The GAFP will also need to consider the proposed Cambrian Hill residential development in Golden Plains Shire, which is located adjacent to the Ballarat West Precinct Structure Plan area. The anticipated lot yield from this development is approximately 3,000 lots. Although the Cambrian Hill development proposal is outside of the Ballarat municipality, in practical terms the future residents of the area – should it come forward for development – will be heavily reliant upon on the services and amenities of Ballarat for their day-to-day needs. There is no immediate clarity from State government on whether the dwellings that could be provided at Cambrian Hill will contribute to meeting our municipality's housing needs.

Local Area Plans and Township Plans

Over recent years, strategic work has been undertaken at the local level in the form of Local Area Plans for different parts of the municipality. These plans are all at very different stages:

- *Ballarat East Local Area Plan* (City of Ballarat, May 2019) (adopted by the City of Ballarat)
- *Brown Hill Local Area Plan & Infrastructure Assessment Draft Background Paper* (Tract Consultants, January 2019) (Background Paper issued for consultation)
- *The Burrumbeet Plan* (City of Ballarat August 2018) (adopted by the City of Ballarat)
- *Canadian Valley Outline Development Plan* (RPD Group, June 2005) (adopted by the City of Ballarat, incorporated in Planning Scheme)
- *The Cardigan Village Plan – Our Township Towards 2040* (City of Ballarat, August 2018) (adopted by the City of Ballarat)

- *The Learmonth Plan – Our Township Towards 2040* (City of Ballarat, April 2016) (adopted by the City of Ballarat)
- *Miners Rest Township Plan* (Hansen, November 2019) (adopted by the City of Ballarat)

The Housing Strategy will provide a strategic vision for residential development across our city and townships. With this overarching vision in place, the City of Ballarat will be able to progress work on these Plans, which will produce a land use and development framework for these townships.

The Miners Rest Township Plan is progressing as Planning Scheme Amendment C235ball following a request by a previous Minister for Planning.

The adopted Ballarat East Local Area Plan has actions for Ballarat East under the 'Settlement and Liveability' section that will be delivered through the Neighbourhood Character Strategy and Housing Strategy. In summary, the actions require a character analysis be undertaken to ensure planning controls can be applied to ensure new development reflects a preferred neighbourhood character, including reference to densities and affordable housing.

Central Business District Urban Design Framework and Structure Plan

The CBD Structure Plan will include an Urban Design Framework (UDF) with a focus on future character and built form within the Ballarat CBD that balances the need to accommodate sustainable (residential and commercial) growth, while respecting the highly valued heritage values and character within the core of the CBD. The Structure Plan will identify areas suitable for higher density residential, commercial and mixed-use development, supported by the analysis and recommendations of the UDF.

In line with PPN90, the Housing Strategy cannot explore residential development opportunities in non-Residential Zones; the CBD is within the Commercial 1 Zone. While it would be inappropriate for the Housing Strategy to be silent on the CBD, the CBD Structure Plan in any case has a broader role than housing. Care has been taken to ensure the boundaries between the two project areas are contiguous.

Making Ballarat Central the CBD Strategy Action Plan 2017-2021

Making Ballarat Central the CBD Strategy Action Plan (City of Ballarat, August 2017) seeks to make the Ballarat CBD the commercial and culture capital of the city and wider region. The Action Plan has a 20-year time horizon.

The Action Plan outlines a range of placemaking activities to enhance the character of the CBD and its prominent entrances / gateways. Associated with these are urban design outcomes sought for new development, with expectation that individual sites receive the highest quality design treatment while also protecting the heritage streetscape significance and views of landmark buildings and natural features. Environmentally Sustainable Development principles are encouraged. For the Housing Strategy, the most relevant actions from the Plan are those seeking to increase residential uses within the CBD.

Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan 2019

Bakery Hill is a key commercial and residential precinct, sitting to the east of the Ballarat CBD and is rich in both built form and cultural/social heritage and history.

The *Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan* (City of Ballarat, October 2019) identifies both built form and public realm improvement opportunities, including the Bridge Mall Streetscape upgrade project, which is in the planning stage currently. The plan also provides direction on place-making from a “place management” perspective, to ensure that businesses have the appropriate support and guidance from the City of Ballarat.

The Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan sets some ambitious targets for bringing residential activity to the area. By the year 2050, the aspiration is to have some 5,000 more people living in the Precinct, with 5% of the dwellings in which they live being affordable housing. A diversity of housing stock is also specifically targeted.

The analysis the City of Ballarat is undertaking with respect to heritage and associated built form controls will inform how these aspirations can be met. These areas are not in Residential Zones, but they can accommodate residential development; the Housing Strategy must acknowledge the potential for residential development in the municipality’s key mixed-use areas.

Ballarat Activity Centres Strategy 2012

The *Ballarat Activity Centres Strategy* (Hill PDA, 2012) establishes a hierarchy of Activity Centres across the municipality; these are, in turn, listed and mapped in the Ballarat Planning Scheme. Activity Centres are defined in a hierarchy, with Ballarat having Principal, Major, Large Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Activity Centres. Miners Rest has a Neighbourhood Activity Centre, Buninyong a Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

The Activity Centre Strategy sets out a range of implementation actions, many of which - such as rezoning, updating Local Policies in the Planning Scheme, and infrastructure delivery - have been undertaken in the decade since its adoption. The Housing Strategy will need to reflect on the location of Activity Centres when outlining preferred locations for increased residential density. Planning Practice Note 90 is clear that access to services and amenities is a key point for analysis in this respect, but also states that remoteness from services is not itself a reason to identify an area for Minimal Change.

Our People, Culture & Place: A Plan to Sustain Ballarat’s Heritage 2017-2030

The *Our People, Culture & Place: A Plan to Sustain Ballarat’s Heritage 2017-2030* (City of Ballarat, December 2017) sets out a range of measures to sustain and protect Ballarat’s built and cultural heritage. Most of these measures are not Planning-specific, with those that are primarily committing to implementing actions from already-existing other strategies. Key for the Housing Strategy is reference to delivering on priority urban renewal projects. The intention of this action is to facilitate adaptive re-use of heritage places with a view to improving social and economic vitality and liveability.

Ballarat Rural Land Use Strategy 2010

The *Ballarat Rural Land Use Strategy* (Parsons Brinckerhoff, November 2010) recommends all current Rural Living Zone be retained and further concludes no further Rural Living Zone

is required. It identifies some 26 years of supply available, as of publication date. In line with PPN90, the Housing Strategy cannot make recommendations regarding future Zoning in non-Residential Zones.

Urban Forest Action Plan 2019

The *Urban Forest Action Plan* (City of Ballarat, March 2019) outlines a range of targets relating to tree-planting, biodiversity, and urban tree management. It was prepared in recognition of the broad benefits that trees and canopy cover bring to urban environments in general. Key for the Housing Strategy is the action that supports tree-planting on private land where appropriate from a neighbourhood character perspective.

Carbon Neutrality and 100% Renewables Action Plan 2019-2025

Although it primarily exists with the goal of ensuring City of Ballarat the City of Ballarat functions are 'net zero carbon' by 2025, the *Carbon Neutrality and 100 Per Cent Renewables Action Plan* (City of Ballarat, February 2019) also includes advocacy actions regarding the implementation of Environmentally / Ecologically Sustainable Design policies for new buildings. The Action Plan also notes the importance of reducing the urban heat island effect, a result of implementing the Urban Forest Action Plan 2019.

Ballarat Net Zero Emissions Plan 2022

The *Net Zero Emissions Plan* (City of Ballarat, October 2022) is the outward-facing companion to the *Carbon Neutrality Plan* (City of Ballarat, February 2019). It sets out how to ensure the Ballarat community can transfer to net-zero carbon emissions by the year 2030. Two of the five listed outcomes directly relate to this Housing Strategy, namely:

- Net Zero Homes, and
- Net Zero New Developments

The City of Ballarat's role is identified as one of advocacy and support regarding transition from gas use towards electrification. Under the second outcome, the City of Ballarat's role is also advocacy – to ensure the Planning Scheme is capable of delivering best practice sustainability outcomes – and also one of partnership working with the Council Alliance for the Sustainable Built Environment. This latter partnership, is at the time of writing, ongoing and relates to the lodged Planning Scheme Amendment C237ball, which seeks to embed enhanced environmentally sustainable development policies into Planning Schemes across Victoria. Also under the second outcome, the development industry is tasked with actively encouraging net zero emissions and design standards in their developments.

Ballarat Open Space Strategy

The *Ballarat Open Space Strategy* (City of Ballarat, March 2018) sets out contributions that the City of Ballarat can seek from subdivision developers to spend on delivering public open space. Thresholds are set at the uplift value of the land once the subdivision has been approved, and the planning system is used to capture these contributions for expenditure

through the City of Ballarat's capital works team. The Open Space Strategy is under review at the time of writing.

Biodiversity Vision and Commitment 2022

In response to the denuding of the landscape and biodiversity values as a result of the gold rush, the City of Ballarat has adopted a Vision for the future of the municipality's biodiversity:

“Championed by an actively engaged and informed community, the natural environment is protected, restored and connected for health and resilience.”

To achieve this Vision, the City of Ballarat has also adopted a Commitment:

“Council is committed to protecting and restoring the natural environment for the benefit of all plants, animals and people that inhabit and benefit from it.”

Underlining this document is its basis for supporting a forthcoming *Biodiversity Strategy*, which will build on these ideals. Five key areas for action are identified, one of which is 'Development'. Under this heading, some six further commitments are made that, in summary, are intended to ensure the Planning Scheme actively improves biodiversity outcomes in new development proposals.

Ballarat Creative City Strategy and Ballarat Creative City Precinct Master Plan

In April 2019, The City of Ballarat released *Ballarat's Creative City Strategy* (City of Ballarat, April 2019) and the associated *Ballarat's Creative Precinct Master Plan* (MGS Architects, April 2019). The latter is exclusively focussed on a defined area of the CBD, stretching from Ballarat's rail station in the north to Grant Street in the south and largely between Doveton and Albert Streets from west to east. Geared towards supporting creativity in the municipality, the Strategy and Master Plan also contained commentary regarding development proposals and planning controls.

The Housing Strategy will focus on the residentially zoned areas of the municipality, but an exploration of the development potential of the CBD and its surroundings will be required. In this context, the Creative City Strategy indicates the historic core has a substantial potential for new growth even through incremental change. This, it claims, owes to Ballarat's historic core offering significant lot depths and three or more storeys of development – and it also outlines that a detailed built form analysis is required to reach further and more nuanced judgements and planning control outcomes.

In addition, investigation of a “Floor Area Uplift” scheme also through built form control analysis is recommended. This scheme would see increased building heights where the additional floorspace would provide for creative space and affordable housing for creative practitioners.

The Master Plan goes slightly further: it recommends exploring options for a Developer Contribution Scheme to achieve a similar outcome, with the added possibility of the raised

finances being spent on other areas, such as public art. Any decisions relating to these concepts will need to be considered through the Ballarat CBD Structure Plan, with the principle of affordable housing in well-serviced locations addressed through the Housing Strategy.

Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-2026

A goal of the *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy* (City of Ballarat, October 2022) is to ensure the municipality has "appropriate, affordable, inclusive, and accessible housing options to meet the needs of residents throughout their lives and enables people to age in place". The Housing Strategy can address this by requiring residential development proposals to comprise a mixture of housing options, and by directing increased housing density to well-serviced locations. Building Control is the key regulatory mechanism for ensuring new dwellings are internally designed to accommodate alternative needs as people age.

Active Ballarat Strategy

The *Active Ballarat Strategy* (City of Ballarat, 2019) was prepared to help improve participation in the sport and recreation sector. It notes that 1 in 7 of the municipality's residents engage in no physical activity, with over half engaging in fewer than 150 minutes of physical activity per week. The Housing Strategy can address this by encouraging new dwellings to be located within walking distance to a range of amenities, including public open space.

Traveller Experience Plan 2021-2030

Although geared towards understanding Ballarat's offer in respect of visitors / tourists, the *Traveller Experience Plan 2021-2030* (City of Ballarat, April 2021) offers touchpoints for the Housing Strategy. It notes that Ballarat was judged the most 'liveable' regional Victorian city by the RMIT Centre for Urban Research; the city scored top for access to public open space and public transport, and in the top five for access to a range of services and facilities, and also for housing affordability. The Plan also identifies Ballarat's unique point of difference as being based on "contemporary heritage" and cultural creativity, noting the city's unique architectural legacy is well-suited for accommodation purposes. The Housing Strategy should acknowledge these successes and ensure they are maintained and where possible enhanced.

Social Policy Framework

The *Social Policy Framework* (City of Ballarat) outlines a range of future policy position statements that will be prepared by the City of Ballarat to improve the Ballarat community's quality of life. An affordable housing policy position statement that will outline the City of Ballarat's current and future role is identified as a key priority – this position statement has already been adopted by the City of Ballarat and is discussed in Section 4 of this Strategy. The Housing Strategy can help the City of Ballarat reach a policy position on affordable housing.

Community Safety Strategic Statement 2017-2021

From the perspective of the Housing Strategy, the *Community Safety Strategic Statement* (City of Ballarat, 2017) identifies the importance of employing good urban design principles to minimise opportunities for criminal activity.

Ballarat Prosperity Framework

The *Ballarat Prosperity Framework* (City of Ballarat, 2020) sets out aspirations for the municipality based on the collective vision and identity of the Ballarat community. In that sense, it is a document expressing community opinions and functions as a guide for policymaking. Relevant to the Housing Strategy is the text indicating community concern that new housing lacks character and is spread in poorly serviced suburbs. One goal sees Ballarat's unique identity used to inform decisions relating to change and to ensure sustainable outcomes, another that the city is known for its green roofs and walls.

Active Women and Girls Strategy 2018

The *Active Women and Girls Strategy 2018* (City of Ballarat, 2018) offers broader recommendations than just those relating to keeping women and girls active. One action identifies the need to ensure adequate public open space is provided through the planning system, another identifies the need to continue providing safe environments for physical activity. The Housing Strategy will have a role to play in guiding outcomes in respect of public open space, with the existing and emerging Ballarat Open Space Strategies acting as the principal delivery mechanism alongside the planning system.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026

Specifically in respect of the Housing Strategy, the *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan* (City of Ballarat, October 2022) seeks to ensure the City of Ballarat's engagement activities are inclusive for people with disabilities. It also notes that people with a disability are more likely to experience inappropriate / insecure housing as well as reduced access to employment, public transport, and / or recreational places / activities.

Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-2025

The *Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-2025 Volume 1* (City of Ballarat, March 2017) establishes a 'Ballarat Cycle Network' with a view to focussing investment on infrastructure and actions that promote safe cycling. In terms of the Housing Strategy, as well as creating an action to define and create a connected cycling network in the city, the Action Plan also outlines a need to provide bike riding at origin and destination points. Although better suited to delivery through the City of Ballarat's capital works program, the Housing Strategy has a role to play in highlighting sustainable travel opportunities for delivery through the planning system.

Active projects

Central Goldfields World Heritage Bid and Historic Urban Landscape

The Central Goldfields World Heritage Bid stretches across 13 local government areas and seeks to have the region's goldfields heritage recognised as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The project area covers some 17% of Victoria, an area home to over one million people. It is not proposed to apply a blanket heritage protection to this entire area; instead, a 'Serial Listing' approach is being taken. This would see only those specific sites of value to tell the goldrush story given protection.

Preparing a World Heritage Listing proposal takes time. The Goldfields Bid has been underway in earnest since 2015, and strong political support since then has ensured continued progress with the project. Nevertheless, at present there is no realistic estimate of when the Bid will be placed before UNESCO for a decision.

The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) is a process by which the full range of features of a place – social; cultural; geographical (natural and human-made); historic - can be understood. UNESCO established the HUL concept to help regulatory bodies reach informed decisions on proposed development and land use activity in and near to World Heritage Sites. The City of Ballarat committed to the HUL concept in 2013 by becoming a UNESCO Pilot City for HUL's implementation. The HUL concept is intended to allow change to occur without affecting the identified values of a place, and as such its principles directly align with the principles of good, orderly Planning as outlined in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* under which this Housing Strategy is being prepared.

Employment Land Strategy (draft)

The forthcoming Employment Land Strategy (ELS) summarises the current economic settings in the municipality, identify barriers to growth, and opportunities associated with employment land. Employment land is defined as all land generating a commercial output – that is, industrial, retail, and offices. The ELS will also identify land use planning actions required to meet projected growth and thus provide for sufficient future local jobs and economic prosperity.

In scoping future trends and likely employment land needs, the draft ELS will identify sites required to meet future industrial employment needs as well as potentially release some well-located industrial sites to alternative uses.

Heritage Gaps Review

There exist substantial gaps in heritage protection across the municipality. Of particular focus for the Heritage Gaps Review are: Ballarat's CBD, Alfredton, Ballarat East, Black Hill, Golden Point, Nerrina, Redan, Wendouree, areas within the townships of the Learmonth, Buninyong and Miners Rest, and rural areas beyond our established settlements. The Heritage Gaps Review project will identify and document individual places and precincts that are of heritage significance within inner city, suburban, and peri-urban areas. Understanding and documenting Ballarat's significant places will help provide clear guidance around how and where infill residential development can best occur. The Heritage Gaps Review will also consider non-residential buildings.

With respect to this Housing Strategy, it is important to note that heritage protection is determined based on established criteria set out by State and Federal government

agencies¹. Heritage Overlays apply to individual buildings and to broader precincts where a collective significance has been established. It is not uncommon for an individual building to have both its own Heritage Overlay and to also be sat within a Heritage Overlay precinct.

The Heritage Gaps Review is an ongoing, multi-year project. The recommendations the Housing Strategy makes with respect to locations where future infill development will be directed will need to ensure that future Heritage Overlays can be applied without preventing those recommendations from being fulfilled. This presents a significant policy challenge. As outlined above, the presence of a Heritage Overlay does not mean that a building or property will never be allowed to change – only that its special characteristics are protected when change occurs. That being the case, planning policies that direct infill residential development to specific areas could be undermined by the application in those areas of a Heritage Overlay in the future. This is especially true of policies encouraging high density residential development. In order to provide certainty regarding development outcomes, it is important to avoid inconsistent policies.

It should be noted that, in Ballarat, the Residential Growth Zone and Heritage Overlay normally co-exist, noting the purpose of the Heritage Overlay is as a *conservation* tool and not as a *preservation* tool. This co-existence has not prevented higher density development from occurring in Ballarat to date and both policy settings can continue to facilitate residential development that is both high in density and high in architectural quality.

Ballarat Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy

The Ballarat Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (BITLUS) will provide strategic directions to guide the development of a more sustainable, multimodal, efficient and equitable transport system, aiming for a connected, compact and less car-oriented city in existing and future Growth Areas. The BITLUS and the Housing Strategy are interrelated in several ways and, combined, will contribute to create a more sustainable and liveable community in Ballarat. Improving sustainable transport provision in areas of high housing demand will increase the connectivity of these areas to facilities and amenities, enhancing residents' accessibility to key destinations and services. In addition, providing a mixture of housing options (mainly affordable) in areas that are well connected and serviced will reduce the reliance on cars and promote sustainable modes of transport.

Ballarat Biodiversity Strategy

The *Ballarat Biodiversity Strategy* will be developed in partnership with the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporations and will recommend a range of actions to identify, protect, and restore the natural environment for biodiversity gains. Identified in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, in terms of its relationship with the Planning Scheme the Strategy will feature a review of the environmentally focused planning controls and a review of the 'eastern living corridor' (generally north-south from Creswick Regional Park to Enfield State Park via Woookarung Regional Park) respectively. Outcomes from this work may influence the design of housing development in the Strategy's Study Area.

¹ In the context of the World Heritage Bid, guidance on heritage protection is provided at the international level through UNESCO, with legal protections established across a suite of Federal laws.

Other organisations

“Draft Social and Affordable Housing Victorian Local Government Position Statement” (Municipal Association of Victoria)

Issued by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) in March 2022, the Draft Social and Affordable Housing Victorian Local Government Position Statement identifies the principal social and affordable issues to be addressed through a partnership between all levels of government and the MAV. Of particular relevance are the following:

- The State has a significant shortfall in affordable housing, with homelessness a growing issue;
- Consultation across all three levels of government is required;
- The City of Ballarat supports the introduction of planning mechanisms that enable them to seek mandatory contributions towards meeting affordable housing from development proposals;
- A Victorian Housing Strategy would coordinate agencies, messaging, target generation, partnership arrangements, and legislative and policy initiatives.

The Position Statement is intended to help inform a Social and Affordable Housing Compact, on which the State government consulted in mid-2022.

“Destination Ballarat Report: Readiness for Regional Settlement” (Ballarat Regional Multicultural Organisation 2022)

In December 2022, the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Organisation (BRMC) released the *Destination Ballarat Report: Readiness for Regional Settlement*. The Report highlights Ballarat’s ongoing commitment to diversity and welcoming immigrants and refugees into the local community, reflected in Ballarat’s having received more immigrants over the past 20 years than the regional Victorian average. The report highlights the availability and affordability of housing in Ballarat as an historic driver of immigration to the area, further noting that these benefits have diminished significantly as a result of increased migration due to the pandemic. The report recommends that local consultation is undertaken to ensure new housing is “affordable, culturally appropriate, and accessible for meeting migrant needs”.

From consultation with the BRMC, the City of Ballarat understands that immigrant and refugee housing needs are multifaceted, subject to change, and occasionally markedly different to the needs of the established Ballarat community.

DRAFT



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