



ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS

Mildura
Retail Strategy Review
2018

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

DRAFT

Prepared for

Mildura Rural City Council

By

Essential Economics Pty Ltd

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background to Strategy

Mildura Rural City Council engaged Essential Economics and Tract Consulting to prepare a review of the existing Mildura Retail Strategy, prepared by Essential Economics in 2010. This review assesses the future trends informing the retail context of urban Mildura and its surrounds, and provides an updated strategy to guide retail development for the period 2017 to 2035.

This **Strategy and Implementation Plan** provides a contemporary strategic policy and implementation framework, while also reflecting the unique settlement patterns and issues relevant to the Mildura Rural City Council.

Retail Strategy Review Background

Mildura is located on the Murray River in north-west Victoria, and is the major centre servicing north-west Victoria, south-west New South Wales, and adjoining regions in South Australia.

Since the 2010 Strategy was prepared significant changes have occurred in the planning and development for retail areas in Mildura which have, in part, given rise to the need to review the 2010 Strategy.

A study area is defined for the purpose of the Retail Strategy Review 2018 and comprises urban Mildura, including the CBD, Deakin Avenue, City Gate and Fifteenth Street precincts, as well as the surrounding region, including the towns of Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs.

A **Background Report** was prepared to provide an evidence-base to support this Mildura Retail Strategy Review (2018) and included an economic analysis of Mildura's retail sector, including forecasts of trade area population and retail spending, estimates of retail turnover and market share, analysis of retail vacancies, and forecasts of retail floorspace demand. This Strategy and Implementation Plan should be read in conjunction with the Background Report.

Overview of Mildura's Retail Sector and Development Opportunities

An overview of the key aspects and issues identified in the Background Report that are relevant to the Mildura Retail Strategy Review (2018), is provided below:

- **Trade area population growth:** Mildura retailers serve a Main Trade Area (MTA) comprising a resident population of some 98,390 persons in 2017. For the period 2017 to 2035, the resident population of the MTA is forecast to increase by around +6,110 persons.
- **Existing retail floorspace supply:** The study area comprises a total of 166,220m² of occupied retail floorspace in 2017. The Mildura CBD, Fifteenth Street and Mildura City Gate precincts combine to account for more than 140,000m², and are the dominant locations for retailing in the Study area.

- **Vacant retail floorspace:** In total, the retail vacancy rate for the total study area in 2017 is estimated at 7.1%. This vacancy rate is within the expectations of a large regional retail centre such as Mildura and indicates that, as a whole, retailing is performing reasonably well. Relatively high vacancy rates are recorded in the some of the smaller centres, in particular Merbein (18.1% retail vacancy), Red Cliffs (13.3% retail vacancy) and Local Shops (11.0%).
- **Retail market shares:** Retailers in the study area are estimated to capture 62% of the \$1,313.7m of available retail expenditure by residents in the MTA. The balance of spending is directed to centres and retailers located beyond the study area, and to other forms of shopping such as internet sales.
- **Forecast retail floorspace:** The potential for retail development in the study area over the period 2017 to 2035 is estimated at approximately 33,000m² of retail floorspace, comprising:
 - Food, Liquor and Groceries: +6,200m²
 - Food catering: +2,000m²
 - Non-food: +25,000m²

Mildura Retail Centre Hierarchy

The hierarchy of activity centres in the Mildura municipality consists of the following:

- One Central Business District: Mildura CBD
- One Sub-Regional Centre: Mildura City Gate
- Neighbourhood Centres: Deakin Avenue Neighbourhood Centre and the planned Mildura South Neighbourhood Centre
- Town centres: Irymple, Red Cliffs and Merbein
- Local Centres & Stand-alone Shops: Various, located throughout the urban areas of Mildura.
- Homemaker precinct: Fifteenth Street is the primary location for large-format homemaker retailing and showrooms.

In addition to the above, the identification of the Mildura East growth area in the *Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy* (2013) identifies the future need for activity centres to serve the local convenience needs of future residents in this area in the longer-term.

Vision, Objectives and Implementation Plan

A Vision Statements and Objectives have been prepared in order to guide the ongoing retail development in Mildura, and to provide the basis for detailed objectives which are presented in the Action and Implementation Plans.

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

"Mildura is a dynamic city serving an expanding residential population and increasing numbers of tourists and other visitors. These customers will be served by a sophisticated retail sector that offers a full range of modern, well-designed and well-integrated shopping facilities that ensure choice in product and services, and which are in easily accessible locations.

Retailers and other businesses in Mildura's activity centres will remain competitive as they will continue to be innovative in the manner in which they conduct business, and in their response to continuing change in technology and consumer behaviour".

The Vision for activity centre development in Mildura is supported by the following set of nine Objectives. These objectives form the basis for more detailed actions as set out in Chapter 7.

- 1 To support the viability of existing centres in Mildura so that they continue to perform their roles in the retail hierarchy.
- 2 To respond to future retail requirements of residents and visitors to the region, having regard for forecast population growth and potential growth in tourism.
- 3 To support the Mildura CBD as the primary activity centre in the Mildura for a mix of activities including retail, business, entertainment, tourism, civic, health, education, medium-density residential development, etc.
- 4 To support the sub-regional shopping role of the Mildura City Gate Precinct.
- 5 To support Fifteenth Street as the principal location for homemaker retailing.
- 6 To support development of accessible neighbourhood and town centres where there is an identified demand for such facilities and where such development will not lead to significant adverse impacts on established centres.
- 7 To ensure activity centres in Mildura are places where people enjoy shopping, doing business, and taking part in community activities through the implementation of appropriate design guidelines.
- 8 To ensure Mildura's retailers are well equipped to maximise opportunities provided by structural changes to the retail sector, including the continued growth on online retailing and the importance of social media marketing.
- 9 To ensure the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 is reflected in the Mildura Planning Scheme and remains relevant having regard for current retailing trends.

INTRODUCTION

Mildura Rural City Council engaged Essential Economics and Tract Consulting to prepare a review of the Mildura Retail Strategy, prepared by Essential Economics in 2010. This review assesses the future trends informing the retail context of urban Mildura and its surrounds, and provides an updated strategy to guide retail development for the period 2017 to 2035.

Significant changes have occurred since 2010 which have impacted on Mildura's retail sector, including new retail developments along Fifteenth Street and in Irymple, changes to the land use zones relevant to retail development, and the continued expansion of urban Mildura in a southerly direction giving rise to the need to assess opportunities for neighbourhood level retailing in Mildura South. As a result, now is an opportune time to undertake this Retail Strategy Review.

This report is the ***Mildura Retail Strategy Review (2018) - Strategy and Implementation Plan*** (Strategy and Implementation Plan). A Vision for the future development of activity centres and commercial areas is developed in this report, and a detailed action and implementation plan to achieve that vision is provided.

Analysis that has been undertaken to inform the preparation of this Strategy Review is presented in an accompanying volume titled ***Mildura Retail Strategy Review (2018) – Background Report: Retail Assessment***.

This Strategy and Implementation Plan includes the following content:

- 1 A description of background to the Mildura Retail Strategy Review, including changes to the retail and activity centre landscape in Mildura since the Mildura Retail Strategy (2010) was prepared.
- 2 A summary of the Key Findings and Directions of the Background Report which provides the detailed analysis and research upon which this Strategy has been developed.
- 3 A review of the key considerations identified in the Background Report.
- 4 A description of the Mildura Retail Hierarchy, including the preferred roles of each centre type
- 5 A Vision for activity centres in Mildura
- 6 A set of Objectives which provides overall guidance for the future development of activity centres in Mildura
- 7 Nine Action and Implementation Plans which present measures to achieve the vision and objectives including the identification of roles, responsibilities and timing

- 8 Retail assessment criteria which provides guidance on the decision-making process relating to retail development proposal
- 9 A Monitoring and Review process.

The Strategy should be read in conjunction with other relevant strategies and policies adopted by the Rural City of Mildura.

In conjunction with the preparation of this Retail Strategy Review, Tract Consulting and Essential Economics have also been engaged by Council to review the appropriateness of the Special Use Zone 8 (SUZ8) and Special Use Zone 9 (SUZ9) located along Fifteenth Street. The analysis presented in the Background Report and directions contained in the Strategy and Implementation Plan will also inform the review of the SUZs.



Mildura CBD – Eight Street



Fifteenth Street Homemaker Precinct

1 RETAIL STRATEGY REVIEW BACKGROUND

Mildura is located on the Murray River in north-west Victoria, and is the major centre servicing the north-west Victoria, south-west New South Wales and adjoining regions in South Australia.

Relatively isolated in the Australian context, the nearest capital cities of Adelaide and Melbourne are some 4.5 hours' and 6 hours' drive from Mildura, respectively. The nearest regional cities to Mildura are Horsham (3.5 hours' drive to the south), Swan Hill (2.5 hours' to the south-east), Renmark (1.5 hours' to the west in South Australia) and Broken Hill (3 hours' to the north in New South Wales).

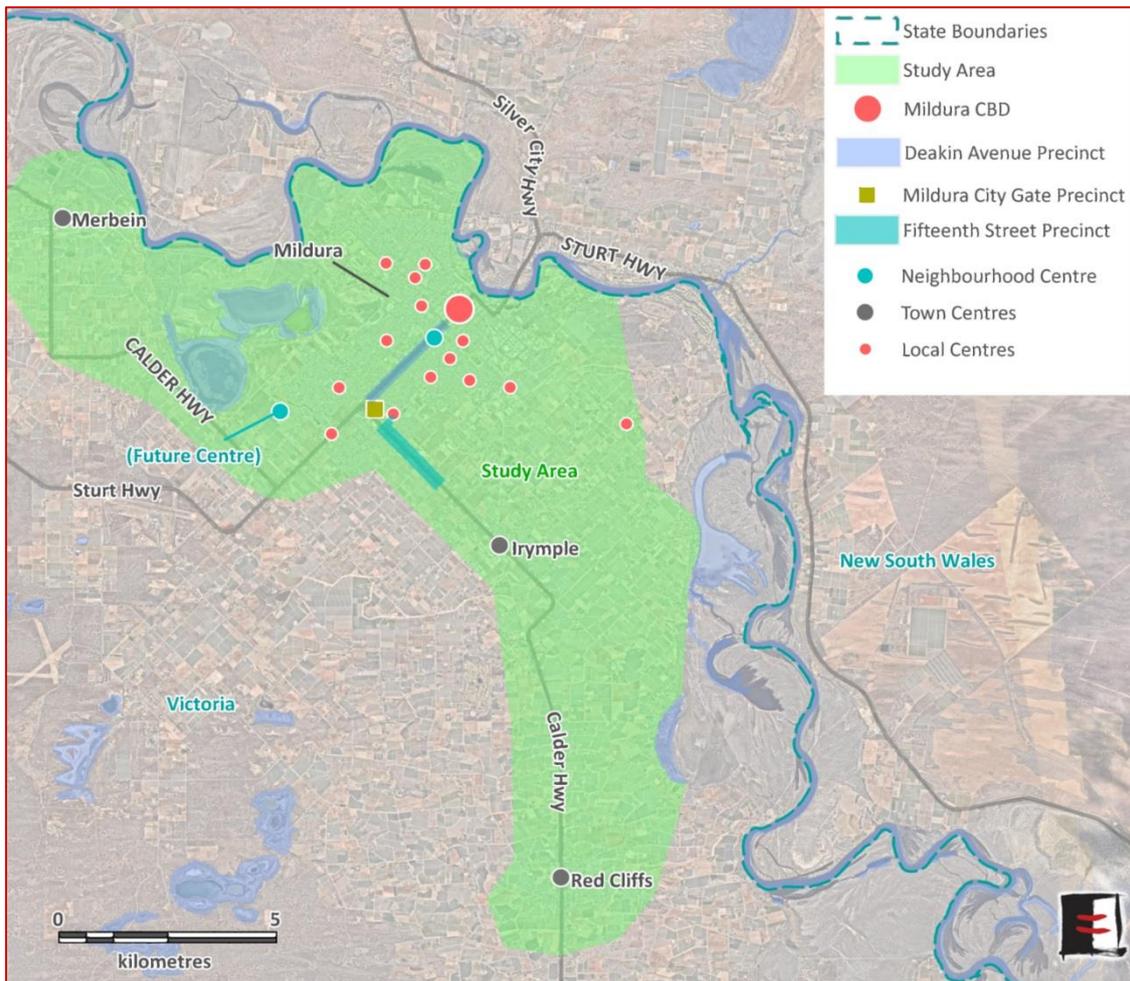
Due to Mildura's relative isolation, retailers in Mildura serve a very large and captive regional catchment which is estimated to contain a population of approximately 98,400 persons in 2017 and is forecast to increase to 104,500 residents by 2035.

The study area defined for the purpose of the Retail Strategy Review is shown in Figure 1 and contains the following:

- The Mildura Central Business District (known as 'City Heart') located just south of the Murray River.
- The Mildura City Gate Precinct containing the Mildura Central Shopping Centre, and recent adjoining retail developments including the Big W, Dan Murphy's and Coles supermarket.
- Large format retailing along Fifteenth Street.
- Town centres in Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs.
- A future neighbourhood centre in Mildura South.
- Other local retail facilities provided throughout the urban Mildura area.



Figure 1: Study Area and Local Context



Produced by Essential with MapInfo, BingMaps, StreePro & NearMap

The Mildura Retail Strategy (2010) was prepared at a time when significant development pressures were present in the Fifteenth Street area, including proposals for the now-developed Big W and Coles supermarkets, and the IGA supermarket in the Irymple town centre. The Mildura Retail Strategy (2010) was implemented into the Mildura Planning Scheme via Amendment C67 in 2011.

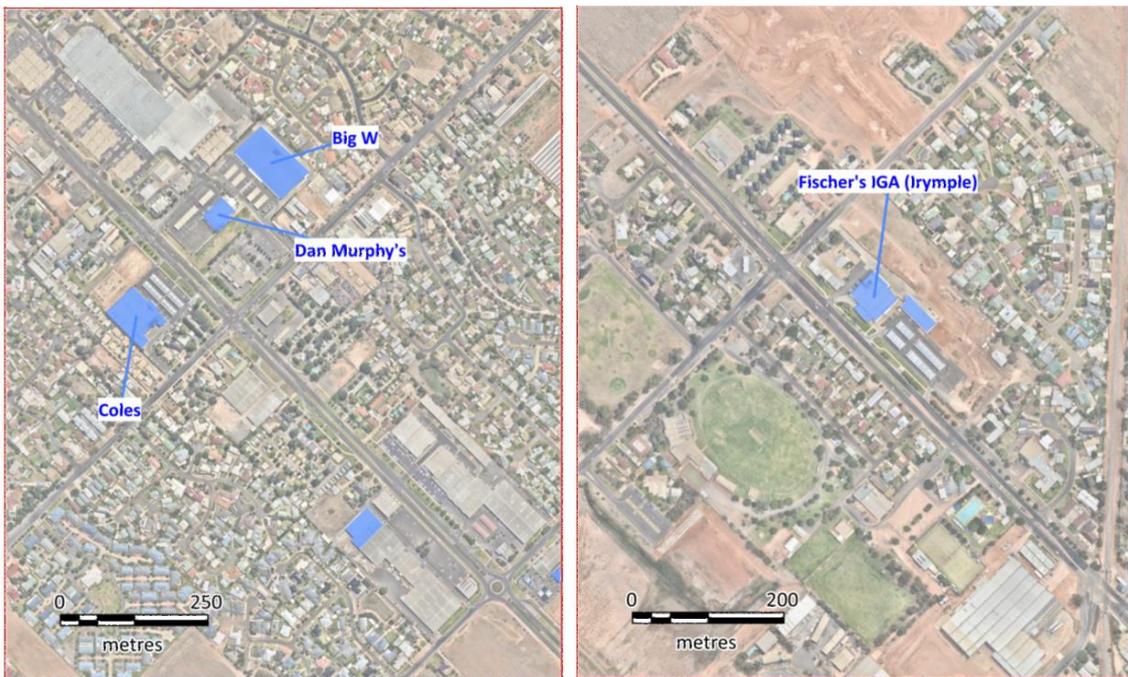
Since the 2010 Strategy was prepared significant changes have occurred in the planning and development for retail areas in Mildura and these changes have, in part, given rise to the need to review the 2010 Strategy. The changes are briefly described below, noting that further discussion on each of these aspects is provided in the Background Report:

Recent Major Retail Developments in the Mildura City Gate Precinct and Irymple

These developments are located particularly in the Mildura City Gate Precinct, along Fifteenth Street and in Irymple, as shown in Figure 2. This development has been facilitated by various planning scheme amendments and has in part addressed a number of directions outlined in the 2010 Retail Strategy, namely:

- Consolidation of the sub-regional role performed by the City Gate Centre
- Consolidation of the homemaker precinct in Fifteenth Street
- The development of a town centre in Irymple.

Figure 2: Major Retail Developments in Mildura, 2010-2017



Produced by Essential Economics using MapInfo, StreetPro, Nearmap

Planning for the Future Mildura South Neighbourhood Centre

Planning scheme amendment C75 introduced the *Mildura South Precinct Structure Plan*. This amendment included a proposal to rezone land on the southern corner of the Ontario Avenue and Sixteenth Street to the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ1) in order to facilitate the development of a Neighbourhood Activity Centre. Amendment C75 was approved in September 2016.

An Urban Design Framework or Development Plan is required for the Mildura South neighbourhood centre and surrounding areas planned for community uses prior to development occurring. At this stage, no Urban Design Framework or Development Plan has been prepared.

Introduction of New Commercial Zones into the Mildura Planning Scheme

Various changes have occurred to the planning framework for retailing, including Amendment VC 100 which introduced a set of reformed commercial zones. The key implications from these reforms for Mildura include the following:

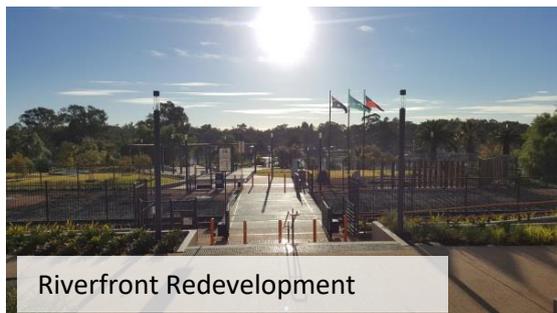
- The expansion of the 'core' retail and business areas in the Mildura CBD, providing additional opportunities for commercial development which were previously not present.
- Expansion of 'core' retail and commercial areas along Deakin Avenue in areas that accommodate a variety of uses, including visitor accommodation.
- The introduction of supermarket (up to 1,800m² in leasable area) as a 'permit required' use on Commercial 2 Zoned land.

Revitalisation Projects in the Mildura CBD

In recent years, Mildura City Council have transformed the CBD through a number of planning initiatives and public works, including improvements to streetscapes, activation of public space, and increased integration with the Riverfront precinct. Recent and current major projects in the Mildura CBD include the redevelopment of Langtree Mall, the Riverfront Development, changes to car parking hours, and the like.



Langtree Mall Redevelopment



Riverfront Redevelopment

As a consequence of the significant changes that have occurred since the Mildura Retail Strategy (2010) was prepared, it is now an opportune to undertake this review.

While the vision and a number of the objectives that form the basis of the Mildura Retail Strategy (2010) remain relevant in today's context, there is a need to ensure planning and development policy surrounding retail and commercial development takes into consideration these recent changes. In addition, it is important that retail policy in Mildura continues to reflect the latest expectations for retail development and planning.

2 OVERVIEW OF MILDURA'S RETAIL SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Background Report was prepared to provide an evidence-base to support this Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 and included an economic analysis of Mildura's retail sector, including forecasts of trade area population and retail spending, estimates of retail turnover and market share, analysis of retail vacancies, and forecasts of retail floorspace demand.

An overview of these aspects, along with the key issues the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 addresses, is provided below:

- **Trade area population growth:** Mildura retailers serve a Main Trade Area (MTA) comprising a resident population of some 98,390 persons in 2017, which includes a Primary Trade Area population of 57,750 residents. The Primary Trade Area broadly reflects the urban areas of Mildura and surrounding townships.

For the period 2017 to 2035, the resident population of the MTA is forecast to increase by around +6,110 persons. This projected net population growth in the MTA is expected to be driven primarily by the continued increase of the Primary Trade Area (PTA) resident population of +8,470 persons, with this increase accommodated mainly in greenfield areas at Mildura South, as well as areas located on Mildura's south-east fringe. Population levels in the Secondary Trade Area (STA) are estimated to decline over the forecast period.

- **Trade area retail spending growth:** Total retail spending by MTA residents is estimated to increase from \$1,313.7m in 2017 to \$1,659.0m at 2035, representing an increase in real terms of some \$345.3m across the 18-year forecast period (figures expressed in constant 2017 dollars, i.e. excluding price inflation).
- **Existing retail floorspace supply:** The study area comprises a total of 166,220m² of occupied retail floorspace in 2017. The Mildura CBD, Fifteenth Street and Mildura City Gate precincts combine to account for more than 140,000m², and these three precincts are the dominant locations for retailing in the Study area.
- **Vacant retail floorspace:** In total, the retail vacancy rate for the total study area in 2017 is estimated at 7.1%. This vacancy rate is within the expectations of a large regional retail centre such as Mildura and indicates that, as a whole, retailing is performing reasonably well.

Relatively high vacancy rates are recorded in the some of the smaller centres, in particular Merbein (18.1% retail vacancy), Red Cliffs (13.3% retail vacancy) and Local Shops (11.0%). It is apparent that for these centres a combination of factors account for high vacancy rates, including declining population catchments, lack of investment in building stock, and competition from higher-order centres such as the Mildura City Gate Precinct. The Mildura CBD has performed well in terms of vacancies since 2010, with its vacancy rate reducing from 9.2% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2017.

- **Retail market shares:** Retailers in the study area are estimated to capture 62% of the \$1,313.7m of available retail expenditure by residents in the MTA. The balance of spending is directed to centres and retailers located beyond the study area, and to other forms of shopping such as internet sales.

As indicated in the 2010 Retail Strategy, the analysis for 2017 shows that higher market shares are achieved in the PTA where retailers capture a market share estimated at 87% of available spending. This share reflects this captive retail market in the PTA, with only limited alternative retail shopping options available.

- **Forecast retail floorspace:** The potential for additional retail development in the study area over the period 2017 to 2035 is estimated at approximately 33,000m² of retail floorspace, comprising:

- Food, Liquor and Groceries: 6,200m²

A large proportion of this floorspace would be accommodated in a new neighbourhood centre in Mildura South. In addition, the development of an ALDI supermarket, either at the proposed location on Deakin Avenue and Fifteenth Street or somewhere else, would also accommodate a share of this demand.

- Food catering: 2,000m²

The CBD is likely to be the main location for a large proportion of this demand, with limited demand located elsewhere in the study area.

- Non-food: 25,000m²

Large format retailing along Fifteenth Street is forecast to accommodate approximately 10,000m², with the majority of the balance expected to be distributed between the CBD and the Mildura City Gate Precinct.

3 RESPONSE TO KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following 'key considerations' for the **Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018** were identified in the Background Report based on a review of the 2010 Mildura Retail Strategy and the up-to-date analysis of Mildura's retail sector:

- Mildura's future retail hierarchy
- Mildura South Neighbourhood Centre
- Guidance for the Mildura CBD
- Planning implications for Commercial 1 Zoned land along Deakin Avenue arising from the introduction of new commercial zones
- Implications for Special Use Zones 8 and 9
- Future of Merbein and Red Cliffs Town Centres
- The need and role of Commercial 2 Zone land in Irymple
- Guidance on supermarket development
- Review of the Retail Strategy (2010) – Vision and Objectives.

An overview of how the above 'key considerations' are addressed in the Retail Strategy Review 2018 is provided below.

3.1 Mildura's Future Retail Hierarchy

In essence, Mildura's existing retail hierarchy comprising the following components is sufficient to meet the needs of the study area residents and visitors over the next 20 or so years:

- The Mildura Central Business District (known as 'City Heart') located just south of the Murray River.
- The Mildura City Gate Precinct containing the Mildura Central Shopping Centre, and recent adjoining retail developments including Big W, Dan Murphy's and Coles supermarket.
- Large format retailing along Fifteenth Street.
- Town centres in Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs.
- A future neighbourhood centre in Mildura South.
- Other local retail facilities provided throughout the urban Mildura area.

However, the identification of the Mildura East growth area in the *Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy* (2013) identifies the future need for activity centres to serve the local convenience needs of future residents in this area in the longer-term. Consequently, it would be prudent to identify the need for future work to be undertaken at the precinct planning stage for Mildura East in order to identify the need and location of convenience-based activity centres.

A detailed description of Mildura's retail hierarchy, including the role of each centre in the hierarchy, is provided in Chapter 4.

3.2 Mildura South

The planned Mildura South neighbourhood centre is estimated to have a catchment of 10,000 or so persons once the Mildura South growth area is fully developed. Having regard for the level of competition at the nearby Mildura City Gate Precinct, this population is sufficient to support at least a mid-sized supermarket and potentially a full-line supermarket in the future.

The planned Mildura South neighbourhood centre should continue to be identified in the retail hierarchy. The masterplanning for the Urban Growth Zone 1 (UGZ1) area should progress as soon as possible in order to provide a level of certainty for land owners, developers, the community and Council in regard to the extent of retail and commercial development in Mildura South.

3.3 Mildura CBD

The performance of the Mildura CBD has improved since the 2010 Strategy was prepared, as illustrated by a declining retail floorspace vacancy rate, despite significant development occurring along Fifteenth Street. While major retail anchor tenants continue to support retail activity, a continued focus on specialty retailing, food catering and entertainment has contributed to trading improvements.

The lack of obvious development sites that could accommodate major developments – including retail, commercial and tourism uses – continues to be an issue for the CBD. However, the reformed commercial zones, as a result of Amendment VC100, now provide opportunities for core retail and commercial activities on land in the CBD that extends southwards to Eleventh Street and to the east over Deakin Avenue to Risbey Lane.

In particular, the land to the east of Deakin Avenue presents opportunities for larger scale retail and commercial development due to large properties in this area. In addition, land to the east of Deakin Avenue and which is now in the C1Z currently accommodates a range of uses that could be considered an under-utilisation of C1Z land, including car dealerships and service centres, wholesalers, furniture stores, catering equipment supplies, and the like. Redevelopment of these sites and/or the amalgamation of several sites to accommodate 'core' retail and commercial uses is encouraged.

Potential exists for a review of the Mildura CBD Plan (2007) to be undertaken which takes into consideration the changes that have occurred over the past 10 years, and which identifies

future development opportunities in the CBD. The encouragement of private sector investment in the CBD should continue to be a focus for Council.

3.4 Implications for C1Z land on Deakin Avenue

Prior to the planning scheme amendment VC100 in 2013, Deakin Avenue accommodated a stretch of Business 5 Zoned (B5Z) land from Fifteenth Street in the south to Thirteenth Street in the north. This precinct accommodates a variety of uses, including numerous motels. Land to the north of Hunter Street and Deakin Avenue was also in the B5Z. This land along Deakin Avenue is now in the C1Z. The land use zone now permits supermarket and 'core' retailing along Deakin Avenue.

The Mildura Planning Scheme Review (2014) recommended the inclusion of an 80m² cap on 'shop' uses in C1Z land along Deakin Avenue on land formerly zoned B5Z. The purpose of this restriction was to limited major retail development in this locality that may compete or undermine retail activity in nominated centres. The Retail Strategy Review supports the introduction of a cap on 'shop' floorspace as recommended in the Mildura Planning Scheme Review (2014).

3.5 Special Use Zones 8 and 9

A review of Special Use Zones 8 and 9 (SUZ8 and SUZ9) is being undertaken concurrently with this Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018. From a retailing perspective, SUZ9 is the most relevant and has the following purpose as shown in the Mildura Planning Scheme:

- *To reinforce Fifteenth Street as the 'public face' of the urban transition between Mildura and Irymple.*
- *To develop Fifteenth Street with smaller scale restricted retail and associated business services within a landscaped setting, well setback from the road.*

Having regard for the analysis presented in the Background Report, the SUZ9 provides flexibility for planning for large format retail and showroom uses. While a significant amount of C2Z land is either available for development or contained on sites which are considered to be under-utilised, the retention of the SUZ9 in the near-term (unless an alternative and more appropriate zone can be identified) provides a contingency should the following occur:

- Land identified as being under-utilised C2Z land does not become available for development. This may occur due to existing uses (e.g. caravan parks) remaining viable options for the site, or land be developed for alternative purposes (e.g. a supermarket).
- Land uses within the CBD, in particular to the east of Deakin Avenue, seek to relocate to this precinct as demand for core retail and commercial uses increases in the CBD.
- Demand for homemaker retail and other C2Z-type uses is greater than anticipated.

3.6 The Need and Role of Commercial 2 Zone Land in Irymple

Similar to the need to retain the SUZ9 for commercial uses, it is also recommended that the 3.9ha of vacant C2Z land in the western part of Irymple be retained in order to provide a level of flexibility regarding commercial land.

Caution should always be provided when considering rezoning land away from employment-generating uses as, once the land is redeveloped for another use (e.g. residential), the potential for the land to contribute to local employment is lost.

Therefore, it is recommended the vacant C2Z land to the west of Irymple be retained as C2Z at this time.

Consideration may be given to rezoning C2Z land to the east of Irymple, and which is occupied by a caravan park, to a more appropriate zone, noting that caravan parks are not a permitted use in the C2Z land. In comparison to other locations where C2Z land is provided, this land is not considered to be a prime commercial location.

3.7 Future of Merbein and Red Cliffs Town Centres

The town centres in both Merbein and Red Cliffs are experiencing difficulties associated with declining populations in their immediate catchments. For instance, the immediate catchment served by the Merbein town centre has declined from approximately 4,780 persons in 2006 to 4,570 persons in 2016. Similarly, the immediate catchment served by the Red Cliffs town centre has declined from 5,600 persons in 2006 to 5,490 persons in 2016.

Therefore, the Retail Strategy Review 2018 specifically identifies actions to assist in consolidating the future viability of these two town centres, including:

- Encouraging population growth in the town via the release of residential zoned land for development
- Continue to invest in the amenity and streetscape of both town centres
- Continue to support local events and markets held in the town centres
- Identify opportunities for temporary uses to occupy vacant and under-utilised tenancies within both centres.

3.8 Guidance on Assessing Supermarket Developments

The reformed commercial zones have given rise to the potential for supermarket development to occur in less traditional locations for supermarkets. For instance, supermarket development could potentially occur in the following locations in Mildura:

- Commercial 2 Zoned (C2Z) land, where a supermarket of up to 1,800m² is a Section 2 permit required use

- Commercial 1 Zoned (C1Z) land along Deakin Avenue (between Thirteenth and Fifteenth Streets) which was previously zoned Business 5 Zone which did not permit supermarket development. The introduction of a cap of 'shop' floorspace, as discussed in Section 3.4, would limit the opportunity for supermarket development.

Consequently, a policy framework that specifically addresses supermarket development proposals is required for Mildura.

When assessing supermarket development, a balance needs to be found between the following:

- Supermarkets are an integral part of the retailing landscape throughout Australia and account for around 70% of Food, Liquor and Grocery spending nationally. Consequently, supermarkets provide a very important service for the community and it is desirable to ensure a high level of accessibility to supermarkets.
- Creating a competitive landscape between supermarkets is important and this typically leads to lower prices and improved customer services/amenity.
- Supermarkets are also important in terms of supporting local employment opportunities and investment, particularly for new entrants to the labour force, including young people.
- Supermarkets are considered to be key anchor tenants and the viability of some centres is intrinsically linked to the performance of the supermarket(s). For this reason, the viability of the centre hierarchy (refer Chapter 4) and the specific roles of centre's need to be maintained.
- Other factors need to be considered, such as design, traffic, environmental, built form, planning and the like.

Having regard for the above, the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 advocates a **Sequential Site Test** (SST) when assessing the appropriate locations for supermarket development. The SST encourages supermarket development in locations that are appropriate, while also considering the important community and economic benefits derived from such development.

In addition to satisfying the criteria Retail Assessment Criteria identified in Chapter 8, the following framework should be applied when assessing supermarket proposals:

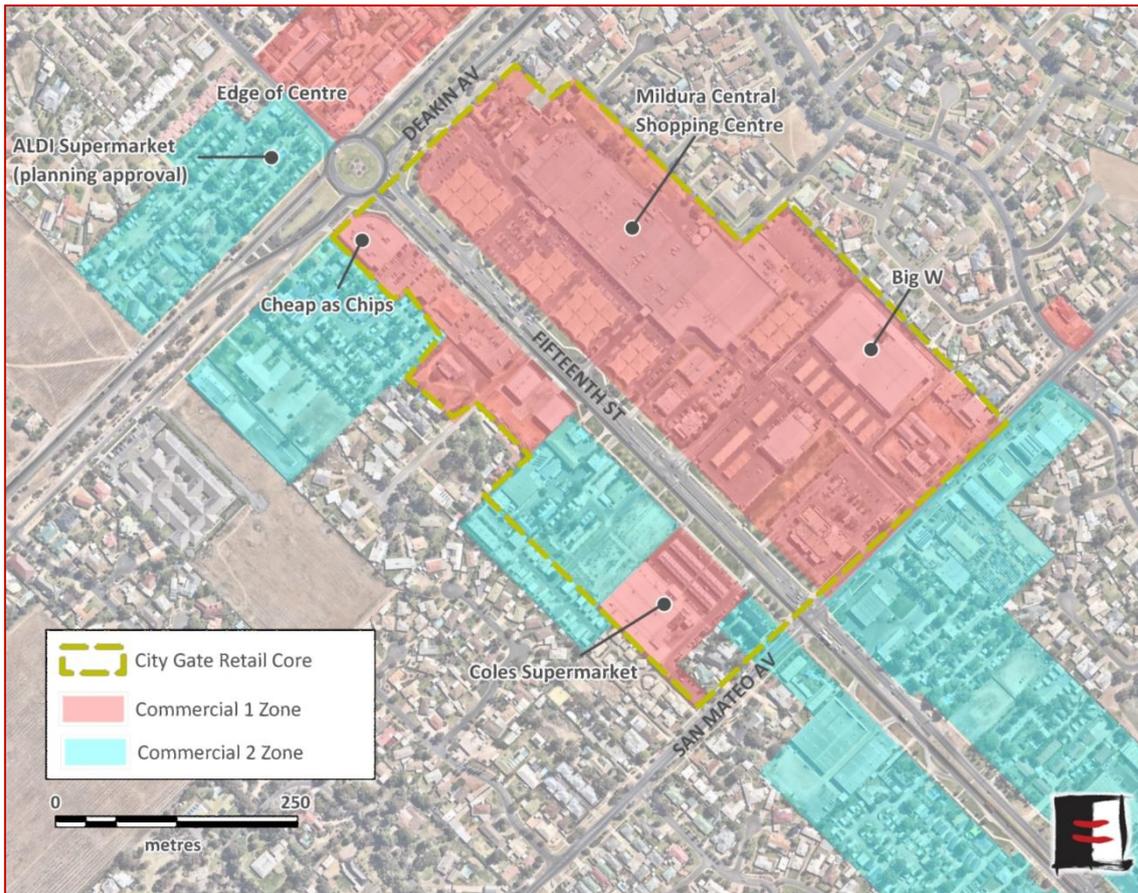
Preference 1: In-Centre Location

Supermarkets are encouraged to locate in the Mildura CBD, City Gate Precinct, Mildura South neighbourhood centre (one supermarket), Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs. The extent of these centres is defined by the following:

- Mildura CBD: The C1Z
- City Gate Precinct: The C1Z and C2Z fronting Fifteenth Street between Deakin Avenue and San Mateo Avenue (refer Figure 3)

- Mildura South: The exact area will be determined by future masterplanning for the centre
- Irymple, Red Cliffs and Merbein: The C1Z.

Figure 3: Mildura City Gate



Produced by Essential Economics using MapInfo, StreetPro and NearMap

Preference 2: Edge-of-Centre Location

Should no appropriate locations 'In-Centre' for supermarket development be available at the time of the proposal, and after sufficient effort has been made by the proponent to source, acquire and/or amalgamate sites, then an **Edge of Centre** location may be considered by Council. This may include sites in the C2Z for supermarkets up to 1,800m², providing the location is considered to be on the 'edge' of the Mildura CBD and/or City Gate Precinct.

The SST is considered to be a 'fluid' framework as the availability of appropriate sites for supermarket development may change over time. For instance, as described earlier, the expansion of the Mildura CBD core retail and commercial area (as a result of the reformed commercial zones) provides an opportunity for future supermarket development. However, this may require site amalgamation, which in turn may require the relocation of existing viable businesses. While this may be an opportunity in the future, it is also possible that these

businesses may not seek to relocate in the near-term. Under this scenario, it could be argued that at present no sites are available for development in the Mildura CBD; however, this may change in the future as site amalgamation occurs over time.

The above SST should be viewed in conjunction with the Retail Assessment Criteria described in Chapter 8.

In addition, supermarket development is not desired for C1Z land located along Deakin Avenue between Thirteenth Street and Fifteenth Street. The Retail Strategy Review supports the introduction of a 'shop' floorspace cap and restriction of supermarket development in the Schedule to the C1Z for this precinct, as identified in the Mildura Planning Scheme Review (2014).

3.9 Review of the Retail Strategy (2010) – Vision and Objectives

A review of the Vision and Objectives for the Retail Strategy (2010) was undertaken in the Background Report and it is generally considered that the Vision and many of the Objectives remain relevant today.

A revised Vision (refer Chapter 5) and Objectives (refer Chapter 6) are provided in this Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018, taking into account the key considerations described earlier in this Chapter. In addition, the revised Vision and Objectives have regard for the need to ensure Mildura's retailers are well-equipped to maximise opportunities provided by structural changes to the retail sector, including the continued growth of online retailing and the importance of social media marketing.

4 MILDURA'S RETAIL CENTRE HIERARCHY

As a community, people have always congregated at convenient meeting points, often marked by the intersection of roads serving the local area and the surrounding hinterland. As development expands around such localities, a 'centre' emerges which becomes the focus for business activities and community facilities.

Retailing is often a key driver of activity in centres and – while the Retail Strategy Review 2018 has a particular focus on 'retailing' – it is acknowledged that activity centres have emerged over-time to now support a diverse mix of facilities and services, ranging from retail and commerce to civic, community, entertainment and recreational activities.

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

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

In land use policy, an activity centre hierarchy is an effective means of:

- Providing high-level guidance in terms of the location, scale and nature of investment and land uses intended for activity centres
- Ensuring policy reflects the very different role and function of various centres within the hierarchy
- Creating a coherent network of activity centres which meet the various needs of the community at the locations where these needs can, and should, be met
- Directing the planning and provision of transport infrastructure and other aspects of urban development influenced by the role and function of activity centres.

The Mildura Activity Centre Hierarchy is shown in the Table 1 and Figure 4. Although centres are categorised according to their role in the hierarchy, all centres are unique and provide varying levels of facilities and services. Encouraging centres to exhibit their 'local' characteristics is recommended in order to provide a hierarchy of centres that delivers the full range of essential services, as well as providing a 'sense of place' and a range of experiences for residents and visitors.

The key consideration for the centre hierarchy is that centres are consistent with their intended 'role' within the hierarchy, as highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Mildura Activity Centre Hierarchy

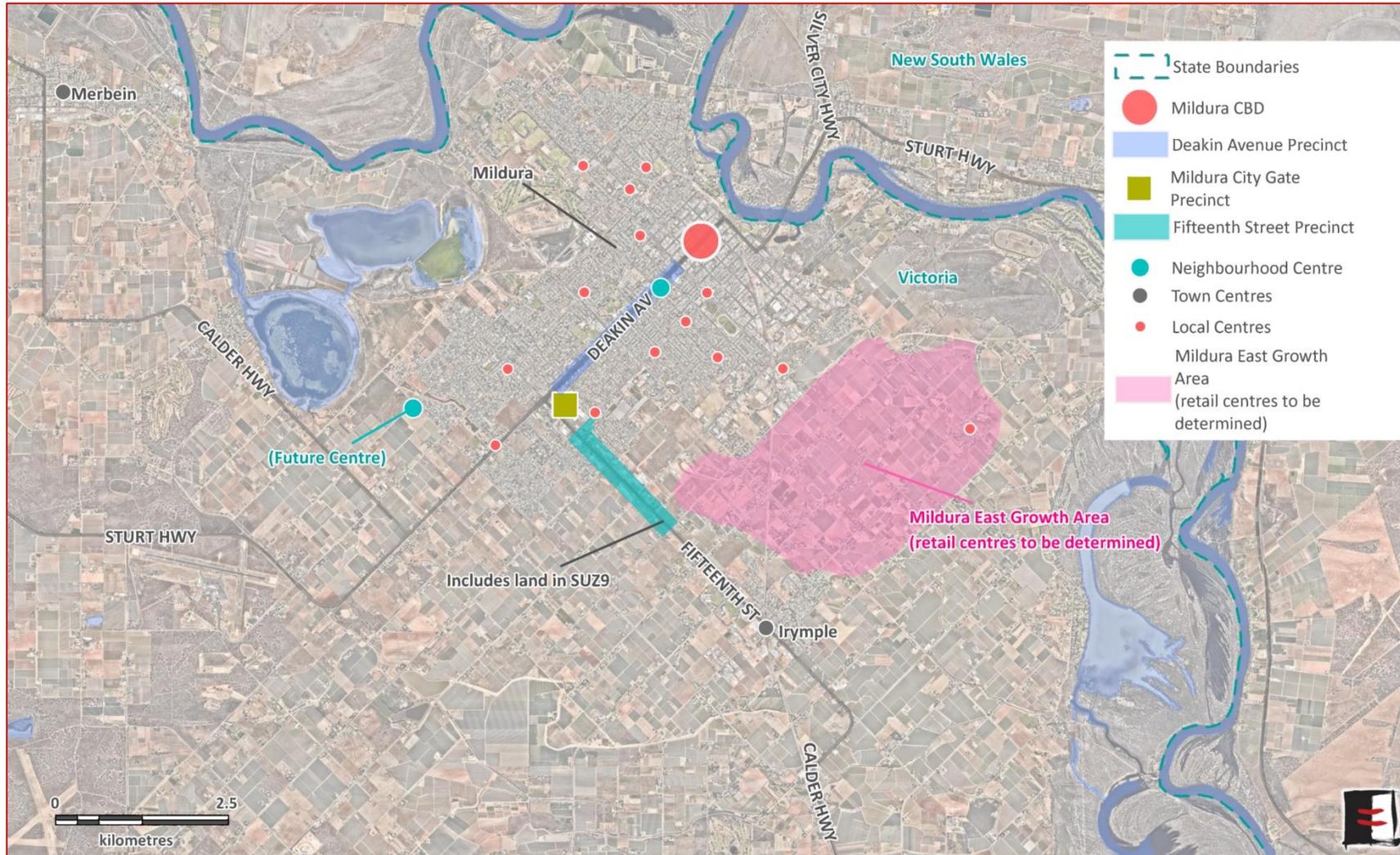
Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Central Business District</u> Mildura CBD</p>	<p>The CBD is a <u>regional centre</u> serving the wider Mildura region with retail, civic, community, business, tourism and entertainment facilities and services. The CBD also performs an important tourism role in terms of overnight accommodation, entertainment and dining.</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities to be provided the Mildura CBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: multiple supermarkets including Coles, Woolworth and Supa IGA), a discount department store (Kmart), and a variety of speciality retailing (both food and non-food). The CBD is developing a retail function informed by its finer grain of urban form that differentiates itself from retailing in Fifteenth Street. Land to the east of Deakin Avenue, now in the C1Z, will likely provide future opportunities for the establishment of larger-format operators. • <u>Cultural, recreation and entertainment facilities</u>: Including restaurants/cafes (notably the 'Feast Street' dining hub), small-scale arts centres/galleries, gymnasiums, etc. • <u>Community and civic facilities</u>: Including Council offices, libraries, child-care, community and youth centres, public halls, religious buildings, etc. • <u>Commercial services</u>: Regional and local level office accommodation (e.g. real-estate, solicitors, accounting conveyancing etc). • <u>Health</u>: Regional and local health facilities • <u>Visitor facilities</u>: Including a range of accommodation facilities (hotels, motels, serviced apartments, backpackers).

Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Sub-regional Centre</u> Mildura City Gate</p>	<p>Mildura City Gate is the sub-regional centre serving the wider Mildura region. Providing largely a retail function, City Gate is anchored by large non-food retailers (e.g. Discount Department Stores), numerous supermarkets, and a range of national brand speciality and mini-majors.</p> <p>In addition to retailing, City Gate also provides limited opportunities for commercial office and visitor accommodation.</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities to be provided at Mildura City Gate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: multiple supermarkets, including Coles and Woolworth, discount department stores (Target and Big W), and a variety of speciality retailing (both food and non-food). • <u>Commercial services</u>: Local-level office accommodation (e.g. real-estate, solicitors, accounting conveyancing etc). • <u>Health</u>: Local health facilities • <u>Visitor facilities</u>: Including a range of accommodation facilities (hotels, motels, serviced apartments, backpackers).

Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Neighbourhood /Town Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deakin Avenue Neighbourhood Centre • Mildura South (<i>Future</i> Neighbourhood Centre) • Irymple Town Centre • Merbein Town Centre • Red Cliffs Town Centre 	<p>Neighbourhood/Town Centres provide convenience retailing and community facilities for an immediate surrounding catchment.</p> <p>These centres are typically anchored by a supermarket which may range from a small to mid-sized supermarket (under 3,000m²) in a small neighbourhood centres to a full-line supermarket (over 3,000m² plus) in large neighbourhood centres.</p> <p>‘Neighbourhood Centre’ refers to centres in the urban Mildura area, while ‘Town Centre’ refers to centres in smaller towns, namely Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs. Compared to Neighbourhood Centres, Town Centres often provide a greater range of non-retail, community and entertainment (e.g. hotel) facilities due to their distance from central Mildura.</p>	<p>Examples of services and facilities provided in Neighbourhood/Town Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: Limited range of convenience-based retailing, including a supermarket and a variety of convenience-based small shops (e.g. butcher, baker, chemist). • <u>Health</u>: May include medical centres and allied health services (i.e. dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, etc). • <u>Commercial Services</u>: May include a limited range of commercial services operating out of shopfront offices (e.g. solicitor, accountant). • <u>Education</u>: May include pre-school, primary and secondary schools. • <u>Community facilities</u>: May include a library, child-care, community and youth centres, public halls, religious buildings, etc. • <u>Entertainment</u>: Town Centres may also include hotel.

Centre Hierarchy/Centre	Role/Description	Examples of Centre Features
<p><u>Local Centres & Stand-Alone Shops</u></p> <p>Urban Mildura contains a network of local shops and stand-alone shops that serve the day-to-day convenience needs of their immediate surrounding residential catchments.</p>	<p>Local Centres consist of a small group of shops (or a single shop) that typically serve a local, walkable catchment, and provide for the daily convenience and ‘top-up’ retail needs of local residents, workers and visitors.</p> <p>Some of these small centres may contain a limited number of community facilities and other uses.</p>	<p>Examples of facilities and services provided in Local Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Retail</u>: Limited range of convenience based retailing that may include general store, takeaway food, café, bakery, hairdresser, etc. • <u>Health</u>: May including local doctors and/or allied health services (i.e. dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, etc). • <u>Community</u>: May include community centres, areas of recreation and/or open space, playgrounds, etc.

Figure 4: Mildura Rural City Council Activity Centre Hierarchy



Source: Essential Economics with MapInfo and BingMaps

5 MILDURA RETAIL STRATEGY VISION

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

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

"Mildura is a dynamic city serving an expanding residential population and increasing numbers of tourists and other visitors. These customers will be served by a sophisticated retail sector that offers a full range of modern, well-designed and well-integrated shopping facilities that ensure choice in products and services, and which are in easily accessible locations.

Retailers and other businesses in Mildura's activity centres will remain competitive as they will continue to be innovative in the manner in which they conduct business, and in their response to continuing change in technology and consumer behaviour".

6 OBJECTIVES

The Vision for activity centre development in Mildura is supported by the following set of nine Objectives. These objectives form the basis for more detailed actions and implementations as set out in Chapter 7.

- 1 To support the viability of existing centres in Mildura, so they continue to perform their roles in the retail hierarchy.
- 2 To respond to future retail requirements of residents and visitors to the region, having regard for forecast population growth and potential growth in tourism.
- 3 To support the Mildura CBD as the primary activity centre in the Mildura for a mix of activities including retail, business, entertainment, tourism, civic, health, education, medium-density residential development, etc.
- 4 To support the sub-regional shopping role of the Mildura City Gate Precinct.
- 5 To support Fifteenth Street as the principal location for homemaker retailing.
- 6 To support development of accessible neighbourhood and town centres where there is an identified demand for such facilities and where such development will not lead to significant adverse impacts on established centres.
- 7 To ensure activity centres in Mildura are places where people enjoy shopping, doing business, and taking part in community activities through the implementation of appropriate design guidelines.
- 8 To ensure Mildura's retailers are well equipped to maximise opportunities provided by structural changes to the retail sector, including the continued growth of online retailing and the importance of social media marketing.
- 9 To ensure the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 is reflected in the Mildura Planning Scheme and remains relevant having regard for current retailing trends.

7 ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Chapter identifies a set of actions designed to implement the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018. For each underlying objective, a supporting rationale is provided, together with detailed actions and an implementation plan identifying key roles and responsibilities.

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

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

Action Plan 1: Support Existing Centres to Remain Viable

Objective: *To support the viability of existing centres in Mildura so that they continue to perform their roles in the retail hierarchy.*

Rationale: The use of an activity centre hierarchy is an effective means of providing high-level guidance in terms of the location, scale and nature of investment and land uses intended for activity centres. An effective and viable centre hierarchy ensures the various needs of the community are met at appropriate locations.

The Strategy will support existing centres, including centre expansions and new centres where the activity centre hierarchy is supported.

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

- Improving the amenity and appearance of individual properties and the public realm
- Improving the overall design and integration of centres
- Encouraging a strong mix of tenancies which reflect the expectations of users of the centre
- Promoting and carrying out appropriate redevelopments, refurbishments and/or expansions
- Improving the commercial viability of individual businesses by adopting best-practice retail and business practices.

Any future development or redevelopment at existing centres should have regard for the role each centre performs in the hierarchy. This hierarchy needs to be recognised when planning for the future requirements of residents and visitors in Mildura.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.1: Action and Implementation Plan 1

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
1.1	Assist property owners, centre managers, retailers and traders' associations in existing centres to improve their performance.	Council (Planning and Economic Development)	Property owners Developers Centre managers Traders Associations Retailers	Encourage and assist Partners to be actively seeking ways to improve their centre.	Ongoing
1.2	Facilitate redevelopments and expansions of existing centres providing they meet the objectives identified in this Strategy, contribute to a net community benefit, and do not adversely affect the retail hierarchy.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Take lead role in discussions with property owners, developers and potential investors.	Short-term and Medium-term
1.3	Support the introduction of a 'shop' floorspace cap on C1Z land formerly zoned B5Z between Thirteenth Street and Fifteenth Street.	Council (Planning)	NA	Implement into MSS	Short-term
1.4	Use the Retail Assessment Criteria in Chapter 8 as a basis for proposals for new or expanded retail floorspace.	Council (Planning)	Developers	Utilise Retail Assessment Criteria when assessing proposals.	On-going

Action Plan 2: Respond to the Future Retail and Activity Centre Requirements

Objective: *To respond to future retail requirements of residents and visitors to the region, having regard for forecast population growth and potential growth in tourism.*

Rationale: As Mildura's population increases and as the needs and expectations of residents change over time, Mildura's retail sector needs to be able to adapt to these changes. This may be in the form of additional retail development, changes in the type of retailing, or changes in how retailing is presented.

The planned Mildura South neighbourhood centre is considered important in order to provide accessible convenience-based retailing for the future residents in Mildura South. In addition, the Mildura South neighbourhood centre will provide an important focal point for this developing community.

Furthermore, the identification of the Mildura East growth area in the *Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy* (2013) identifies the future need for activity centres to serve the local convenience needs of future residents in this area in the longer-term. Consequently, it would be prudent to identify the need for future work to be undertaken at the precinct planning stage for Mildura East in order to identify the need and location of convenience-based activity centres.

In addition, potential exists to capture a share of the growth in the level of visitor spending in the Mildura region. This may arise via an increase in visitation and/or the ability of the region to attract higher-yielding visitors. The Mildura CBD should continue to be a focal point for the tourism industry in Mildura and the wider region.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.2: Action and Implementation Plan 2

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
2.1	Complete a master plan for the Urban Growth Zone 1 in Mildura South	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Lead master planning process	Short-term
2.2	Undertake retail and activity centre study as input to future planning for Mildura East growth area	Council (Planning)	Consultant(s)	Initiate study	Long-term
2.3	Monitor residential growth in Mildura and retail and other trends which may be relevant to Mildura's retail sector.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Maintain an understanding of residential growth trends and retail trends relevant to Mildura.	Ongoing
2.4	Monitor tourism-related developments in Mildura and facilitate tourism related retail development in the CBD.	Council (Planning and Economic development)	Property owners Developers	Take lead role in discussions with land owners, developers and potential investors.	Medium-term and Long-term

Action Plan 3: Support the Mildura CBD as the Primary Activity Centre

Objective: *To support the Mildura CBD as the primary activity centre in the Mildura for a mix of activities including retail, business, entertainment, tourism, civic, health, education, medium-density residential development, etc*

Rationale: The Mildura CBD is the primary activity centre in the region and it comprises a mix of retail, commercial, civic, community, entertainment and tourism and activities.

It is important that the CBD maintains this role and continues to attract residents from a regional catchment, together with tourists and other visitors from further afield, to undertake shopping and other activities. A significant amount of investment and employment is contained in the CBD, together with a wealth of community and historical values.

Over the past decade or so, retailers in the Mildura CBD have faced considerable competition from the development of new retailing in the City Gate Precinct and along Fifteenth Street. Analysis presented in the Background Report indicates the performance of the CBD is

improving, with a decline in vacancy rates since the 2010 Strategy was prepared. A number of factors have contributed to this improvement, including increased investment in street works and amenity, a continued focus on tourism, and a general acceptance in the expansion of the role of the CBD to include a wider range of entertainment, civic and commercial uses.

With the City Gate Precinct nearing capacity in terms of major retail development sites, together with the expansion of the core retail and commercial areas in the CBD as a result of the reformed zones, opportunities to attract major retail or commercial investments are expected to emerge in the future. These opportunities should be facilitated by Council.

The existing Mildura CBD Plan was prepared in 2007 and significant changes have occurred since that time. It is therefore recommended that a review of the CBD Plan be undertaken which identifies the future roles of different precincts within the CBD, as well as highlighting key development sites.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.3: Action and Implementation Plan 3

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
3.1	Undertake a review of the Mildura CBD Plan (2007).	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Facilitate the review	Short-term
3.2	Identify potential key development sites in the CBD that are now located in the C1Z. Liaise with land owners and businesses regarding the opportunities that changes in the zones may present.	Council (Planning and Economic Development)	Property owners	Liaise with property owners	Short-term
3.3	Encourage the redevelopment of key retail sites in the CBD and ensure they are developed in a manner which will improve the operation of retailing in the CBD.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Engage in discussions with land owners and developers.	Ongoing
3.4	Encourage land owners to invest in the improved appearance and amenity of buildings.	Council (Planning)	Property owners	Engage in discussions with land owners. Facilitate planning and development approvals (where relevant).	Ongoing
3.5	Encourage a mix of viable non-retail development in the CBD including office, tourism, community and civic activities, as well as medium-density residential, all of which will generate additional activity in the CBD.	Council (Planning and Economic Development)	Property owners Developers	Facilitate appropriate developments through the Planning Scheme mechanisms.	Ongoing

Action Plan 4: Support the Sub-Regional Role of the City Gate Precinct

Objective: *To support the sub-regional shopping role of the Mildura City Gate Precinct.*

Rationale: The Mildura City Gate precinct performs an important role in the retail hierarchy in Mildura. This precinct provides residents and visitors with a variety of convenience and comparison shopping in the one location, including two full-line supermarkets, two Discount Department stores, and a range of mini-majors (including Dan Murphy's), speciality retailing and fast-food restaurants.

In general, the Mildura City Gate Precinct is primarily a retail destination and this largely singular focus differentiates the precinct from the Mildura CBD. In terms of supporting the broader hierarchy of centres, maintaining a differential in the roles of the City Gate precinct and the Mildura CBD is important.

This Retail Strategy Review 2018 defines the core retail areas in the City Gate Precinct as land fronting Fifteenth Street between San Mateo Avenue to the south-east and Deakin Avenue to the north-west (as shown in Figure 3). The majority of land within this precinct is in the C1Z, although C2Z land is located on the southern side of Fifteenth Street which adjoins C1Z to the south-east and north-west.

A number of caravan/tourist parks are located in the City Gate Precinct on C2Z land adjoining the precinct and in the nearby Fifteenth Street Homemaker Precinct. Caravan parks are important in the Mildura context in terms of providing accommodation for tourists, seasonal workers and low-income persons. However, development pressures are resulting in the loss of caravan parks on land zoned C2Z in the general area. Incidentally, caravan parks are a prohibited use in the C2Z. Although not a direct issue relating to retail and activity centre development, it will be important in the Mildura context to understand the importance of and future demand for caravan parks, as the current zoning for a number of caravan parks encourages their redevelopment for commercial use.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.4: Action and Implementation Plan 4

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
4.1	Encourage retail development within the core retail area within the City Gate Precinct.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Liaise with property owners and developers.	Ongoing
4.2	Ensure future retail development is integrated with existing retailing in the precinct.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Liaise with property owners and developers.	Ongoing
4.3	Gain an understanding of the implications of the potential loss of caravan parks on C2Z land in Mildura.	Council (Planning and Economic Development)	Property owners	Assess future demand and implications	Short-term

Action Plan 5: Support Fifteenth Street as the Principal Homemaker Retailing Location

Objective: *To support Fifteenth Street as the principal location for homemaker retailing.*

Rationale: A significant amount of investment and development in homemaker and restricted retailing has occurred along Fifteenth Street in recent years. This development provides residents in the regional catchment with choice in retailing and has reduced the need for residents to undertake this form of shopping at other centres located further afield.

Approximately 5.1ha of C2Z land is considered to be vacant and a further 7.7ha is considered to be under-utilised in regard to development potential on C2Z land in the Fifteenth Street Precinct and nearby City Gate Precinct. This is considered to be sufficient to accommodate demand for such land over the next 15 or so years. However, this outcome would rely on land considered to be under-utilised becoming available for development, which may not occur during the forecast period for a number of reasons, as noted below.

Therefore, the retention of the SUZ9 (and C2Z to the west of Irymple) to accommodate homemaker retailing in the future in the near-term (unless an alternative and more appropriate zone can be identified) provides a contingency should the following occur:

- Land identified as being under-utilised C2Z land does not become available for development. This may occur due to existing uses (e.g. caravan parks) remaining viable options for the site, or land be developed for alternative purposes (e.g. a supermarket).

- Land uses within the CBD, in particular to the east of Deakin Avenue, seek to relocate to this precinct as demand for core retail and commercial uses increases in the CBD.
- Demand for homemaker retail and other C2Z-type uses is greater than anticipated.

Similar to Action Plan 4, understanding the implications of the demand for caravan parks on C2Z land in Fifteenth Street is also an important consideration.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.5: Action and Implementation Plan 5

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
5.1	Encourage integrated and sequenced development along Fifteenth Street.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Liaise with property owners and developers.	Ongoing
5.2	Gain an understanding and maintain a register of land owner intentions for land in the C2Z and SUZ9.	Council (Planning & Economic Development)	Property owners Developers	Liaise with property owners and developers.	Ongoing
5.3	Retain land zoned SUZ9 for the purpose of accommodating C2Z-type uses, subject to demand for alternative uses being identified.	Council (Planning)	NA	NA	Ongoing
5.4 (also 4.3)	Gain an understanding of the implications of the potential loss of caravan parks on C2Z land in Mildura.	Council (Planning and Economic Development)	Property owners	Assess future demand and implications	Short-term

Action Plan 6: Support Development of Accessible Neighbourhood and Town Centres

Objective: *To support development of accessible neighbourhood and town centres where there is an identified demand for such facilities and where such development will not lead to significant adverse impacts on established centres.*

Rationale: The planned Mildura South neighbourhood centre should continue to be identified in the retail hierarchy. The masterplanning for the Urban Growth Zone 1 (UGZ1) area should progress as soon as possible in order to provide a level of certainty for owners, developers, the

community and Council regarding key development sites and the extent of retail and commercial development in Mildura South

Furthermore, a priority for Council will be to support the Red Cliffs, Merbein and Irymple town centres to continue to serve their roles as viable and vibrant town centres.

In addition, it will be important in the longer-term to understand the implications of the Mildura East growth area in regard to the need for new activity centres in this growth area, and any implications for existing centres identified in the hierarchy.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.6: Action and Implementation Plan 6

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
6.1	Complete masterplanning for the Mildura South Neighbourhood Centre.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Lead masterplanning process	Short-medium term
6.2	Support, where practical, development opportunities (including residential) that support the viability of Merbein and Red Cliffs Town Centres.	Council (Planning & Economic Development)	Property owners Developers	Liaise with property owners and developers.	Ongoing
6.3	Continue to support initiatives identified in the Merbein and Red Cliffs Community Plans, particularly the development of business and economic development opportunities.	Council (Planning & Economic Development)	Local business and community groups	Support initiative outlined in Community Plans	Short-term
6.4	Consider the preparation of structure plans for Red Cliffs and Merbein that will drive business and commercial opportunities.	Council (Planning)	Local community and business groups	Facilitate development of structure plans	Medium-term

Action Plan 7: Well-Designed Activity Centres

Objective: *To ensure activity centres in Mildura are places where people enjoy shopping, doing business, and taking part in community activities through the implementation of appropriate design guidelines.*

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

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

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.7: Action and Implementation Plan 7

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
7.1	Encourage retail developments that adopt design guidelines that will contribute to the amenity, appearance and access to centres.	Council (Planning)	Property owners Developers	Engage in discussions with land owners and developers to encourage appropriate design of new centres.	Ongoing
7.2	Encourage a high-quality public realm through appropriate investment in street furniture, signage, plantings and other physical works and initiatives that add to the appeal of centres.	Council (Planning)	NA	Facilitate and fund public realm projects	Ongoing

Action Plan 8: Ensure Retailers are Well-Equipped to Respond to Industry Changes

Objective: *To ensure Mildura’s retailers are well-equipped to maximise opportunities provided by structural changes to the retail sector, including the continued growth of online retailing and the importance of social media marketing.*

Rationale: The retail industry is a dynamic sector that is continually evolving to meet the changing needs and desires of customers. Retailers and other businesses need to remain abreast of the latest changes in technology and consumer preferences in order to remain viable businesses.

Retailing in Mildura is critically important to the local economy in terms of the services and local employment opportunities it provides. As such, Council, local traders’ associations (i.e. City Heart) and Mildura Regional Development (MRD) have an important role in facilitating professional development opportunities for local businesses that will assist these businesses to thrive in the challenging retail sector.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.8: Action and Implementation Plan 8

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
8.1	Provide support to local traders in the form of professional development, including the provision of courses/seminars on relevant business topics (e.g. use of information technology, trends in the retail industry, social media, etc).	Council (MRD)	Local traders’ associations	Work with local traders’ associations to facilitate professional development	Ongoing
8.2	Conduct an annual ‘state of the industry’ seminar for retailers and businesses that provides an update of the latest industry trends. This may involve guest speakers on relevant topics.	Council (MRD)	Local businesses	Facilitate workshop	Ongoing

Action Plan 9: Implement and Review the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018

Objective: *To ensure the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 is reflected in the Mildura Planning Scheme and remains relevant, having regard for current and emerging retailing trends.*

Rationale: The Mildura Planning Scheme will need to be reviewed to ensure that the Mildura Retail Strategy 2018 is implemented in terms of updated parts of the MSS, and to ensure that appropriate changes to local planning policies are introduced to the Scheme.

The dynamic nature of retailing and activity centre development means that regular review of the Retail Strategy should be undertaken. Typically, review of retail and activity centre strategies are undertaken every 5 to 7 years.

Action and Implementation Plan

Table 7.9: Action and Implementation Plan 9

Action No.	Actions Required	Responsible Authority	Partnerships	Council's Role	Timeframe
9.1	Adopt the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 and ensure the Vision, Objectives and Actions are reflected in the Mildura Planning Scheme through changes to the MSS and local planning policy.	Council (Planning)	NA	Facilitate the adoption and implementation of the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018. Review MSS to ensure consistency.	Short-term
9.2	Conduct a review of this Retail Strategy in 5-7 years	Council (Planning)	NA	Conduct review of Strategy	Longer-term

8 RETAIL PLANNING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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

The Criteria consist of two components:

- A listing of information which an Applicant should provide to Council in order to facilitate the planning approvals process
- A checklist of issues associated with assessing need for a retail development.

In assessing a development proposal, reference should be made to the application of various other aspects of this Strategy.

8.1 Information Applicants Must Provide when Seeking Planning Approval for a Retail Proposal

- 1 Address of the subject site and title particulars
- 2 Details of the proposed retail component:
 - Amount of retail floorspace (in m²)
 - Number of retail tenancies and sizes
 - Type of retail floorspace (e.g., supermarket; discount department store; specialty stores; etc)
 - Car parking (if applicable).
- 3 Details of any other (non-retail) component where applicable, including office floorspace, entertainment uses, residential component, etc.
- 4 An economic impact report is required for major new retail developments (at the discretion of Council, but generally applying to those proposals involving 5,000 m² or more of retail floorspace, or the provision of a key major tenant such as supermarket, etc). The report should provide the following information:
 - Supporting evidence of retail demand
 - Assessment of any potential impact on existing or planned (i.e. approved) retail facilities
 - Description of anticipated benefits to the community (measurable and non-measurable)
 - Estimated contribution to employment (in both construction and retail operation), and noting the indirect flows (although these generally accrue to a wide area, including the State and national economies)

- Overall contribution to net community benefit.
- 5 For proposals of new supermarkets, applications must address the Sequential Site Test (SST) as outlined in Section 3.8 of the Retail Strategy Review 2018.
 - 6 Council will decide on the extent of supporting economic impact information required of the applicant on the basis of the proposed size of the retail floorspace component for which approval is being sought. While a brief statement is sufficient for a development of up to 5,000m² (and depending on the place in the hierarchy of centres and the main retail tenant), Council would require a more detailed economic assessment if the proposal involves the development of a major shopping facility. Prospective developers should discuss their proposals with Council officers prior to formal submission of a Planning Permit Application or rezoning request so that the extent of supporting information required by Council can be ascertained. Council reserves the right to request additional information on economic impact from the applicant, if required.
 - 7 The proposal should be accompanied by an analysis of the development in the context of relevant planning policies, including State and local policies.

8.2 Considerations in the Assessment of Planning Applications for Retail Development

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

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

Retail demand

- 1 The application/proposal must show a need or demand for new or expanded retail floorspace provision to serve the catchment.
- 2 A retail economic assessment is required for major development proposals, or those with a key tenant (such as new supermarket), as determined by Council.
- 3 The application or retail assessment must indicate the current trade area or catchment population level, and the current and forecast population and retail spending for the next 5 and 10 years.
- 4 The application/assessment must show the extent to which the proposal would be expected to draw trade from beyond the catchment, or from passing trade.
- 5 Indicate whether the new retail provision – if proposed for an existing centre – would mean an expansion in the size of the catchment served by that centre.

Retail supply

- 1 Indicate the existing supply of retail floorspace serving the catchment.
- 2 Provide details of any other proposals for new or expanded retail development in the catchment or beyond, which could have an effect on the viability of what is proposed.
- 3 Indicate the main features of the existing hierarchy of retail centres which serve the catchment, and show where the proposed new or expanded retail provision would fit within this hierarchy.
- 4 Provide evidence as to whether the existing supply of retail floorspace is or is not adequate to meet existing and foreseeable demand levels over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 5 Indicate whether any retail gaps exist in merchandise/services which the proposal will fill.
- 6 Provide details in regard to the existing level of vacant retail premises in the catchment and in any other potentially affected centres, and assess whether these premises are suitable to accommodate contemporary retail needs.
- 7 Provide details in regard to alternative sites to that proposed, and show the extent to which the proposal represents the preferred site. For supermarket development proposals, respond to the Sequential Site Test (SST) described in Section 3.8 of the Retail Strategy Review 2018.

Escape spending

- 1 Indicate the amount of residents' spending that currently escapes to other, more distant shopping centres located beyond the catchment.
- 2 Show forecasts of the levels of escape spending if there is no increase in retail facilities to serve the catchment.
- 3 Indicate the share of escape spending that could reasonably be retained by the proposed new or expanded retail facilities.

Impact on existing retail facilities

- 1 Prepare an analysis of the effect on total retail sales levels (expressed in dollars and as a percent of total) at existing retail facilities if the proposal for new retail floorspace is approved.
- 2 Show how the existing average level of retail sales in the existing facilities (expressed in terms of sales per square metre of retail floorspace) may be affected by the introduction of additional retail floorspace.
- 3 Show the extent to which the proposal is expected to lead to an overall improved provision of retail facilities to the catchment, and particularly in regard to any adverse trading impacts on existing centres.

- 4 Prepare an analysis of the employment impact of the proposed new or expanded retail facilities, including the potential loss in employment at centres negatively impacted by the proposal.

Urban design issues

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

Net community benefit

- 1 The planning application must provide an indication of the development proposal's contribution to Net Community Benefit (NCB), in terms of:
 - Employment generation (or loss) during construction and operation
 - Impact on retail choice and availability
 - Impact on overall levels of vibrancy and sustainability
 - Contribution to liveability, social interaction, and other community-related goals.
- 2 The application must specify how the proposed development contributes to NCB, including consideration of the following factors:
 - Potential positive factors, including: increased choice in retail goods and services available to the community; increased retail competition; retention of a share of escape spending; increased employment and multiplier effects; etc, and
 - Potential negative factors, including: loss of sales at existing shops/centres; loss of employment; possible business closures; possible vacant shops; possible multiplier effects; etc.
- 3 For larger projects, as determined by Council, the proposal must also consider non-retail impacts such as traffic circulation and parking demand, environmental effects on adjoining activities, local character and amenity impacts, and so on.

9 MONITORING AND REVIEW

An important part of the implementation process for the Mildura Retail Strategy Review 2018 is to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant as circumstances change and as new opportunities arise.

Monitoring will allow proper assessment as to how the Strategy is performing and whether or not changes are warranted as a result of new and emerging trends.

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

Council must ensure, therefore, that the Strategy is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Some indicators of progress can be readily assessed on an annual basis, while other indicators can be assessed over a longer period, or sooner if important changes are identified in the marketplace.

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

Table: Indicators for Monitoring Process

Indicator	Source	Comment
1. Retail Floorspace	Floorspace Surveys	Implement commercial floorspace survey in order to allow an up-to-date estimate of total retail floorspace.
2. In-centre surveys	In-centre surveys	Undertake a series of short in-centre surveys of businesses and customers on a regular basis (e.g. every one or two years). The survey could cover issues such as the local community's views on the centre, changes in people's perception of the centre as a place to visit, views on competing centres, issues they identify and actions that need doing, trends in employment levels, etc. The surveys would be a helpful reference point in assessing potential impacts of the initiatives contained in the Strategy.
3. Property development proposals and projects	Council records	Track development applications, proposals, and completions through Council data.
4. Retail trading performance	Consultant reports; Property Council; industry liaison	Especially track official sources of data. Note numbers of new or expanded businesses and estimate of new jobs on an annual basis.
5. Increased floorspace provision for shops and services, as well as increased value of buildings and works	Council and ABS data for planning and building approvals, and building completions	This measure uses regular and up-to-date data, and is therefore very useful. Can indicate change in use from shop to other use and vice-versa.
6. Vacancy rates for retail and commercial floorspace and/or tenancies	Land use and floorspace surveys	Can be undertaken at any time. As a guideline, the acceptable retail floorspace vacancy rates average around 5-7% of total retail floorspace for street-based centres. Vacancy rates provide a use measure of general health of a centre. Managed (or free-standing) shopping centres typically have zero vacancies as tenancies are suitably managed by the centre manager.
7. Changes in property values and rates	Council rate records; property industry	Useful indicator, especially as a relative indicator (eg different rate valuations for different centres).
8. Viewpoints on health of centres as expressed by those in property, real estate, retailing, and in other relevant industry sectors	Regular contact with real estate agents, property owners, developers, retail industry, other businesses, business associations, and the wider community.	Possible annual forum organised by Council at a venue for information exchange between property and retail industry, local traders, other businesses and stakeholders, Council and other community representatives.

Source: Essential Economics Pty Ltd