

# mildura housing and settlement strategy

prepared by hansen partnership

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A	Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy preliminary draft	30.09.13	JK	n/a
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# introduction



The *Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy* (MHSS) has been prepared on behalf of the Rural City of Mildura. It is intended to put in place a strategic framework and associated guidelines for decision makers to inform resolutions about where rezoning should occur to provide an appropriate amount of land for development. It also seeks to ensure that the types of neighbourhoods and housing developed within the municipality will meet the current and future needs of the community. The project is not just looking at where the next greenfield development should occur, but more holistically at how Mildura can be best positioned to meet the challenges, and make the most of the opportunities, likely to arise in the coming decades.

The MHSS provides a framework for the overall structure of settlements across all of Mildura, with a particular focus on the north-eastern area of the municipality where most of the growth has been occurring. It covers the full range of housing policy, from greenfield development, to infill and consolidation, as well as looking at how neighbourhood design, housing diversity and other related matters can be improved within a local context. In considering housing within Mildura the Strategy seeks to provide clear guidance around some of the key issues, identified through this and other recent projects, around the provision of 'rural' or 'lifestyle' residential development and the delivery of infrastructure.

Decisions made now in relation to housing and neighbourhood design will have significant impacts on the health, economic prosperity and well-being of the Mildura community for many generations to come. Council has a key role to play as a decision-maker, facilitator, educator and advocate in ensuring the delivery of appropriate housing in Mildura. The MHSS is only a starting point, and the implementation of policy, as well as careful monitoring and review will be critical in achieving the aims outlined in this document.

The MHSS has been developed through a process involving a range of key stakeholders and the community and has been targeted particularly at the issues of most relevance to Mildura. It is not a generic document that could be applied to other municipalities but a carefully considered response to local issues relating to housing and settlement. This Strategy document represents the final stages in a four stage process that also included a *Key Issues Paper* and a *Background Report*.

The *Key Issues Paper* identified a range of issues relating to housing and settlement that were relevant to Mildura. These were:

- Regional considerations; such as the distance from major centres and the proximity to New South Wales.
- Aging population; Mildura's population, as with the rest of Australia's, is aging and the needs of the community will therefore change over time.
- Macroeconomic trends and drivers; impacts of wider economic systems on Mildura's economic development and employment trends.

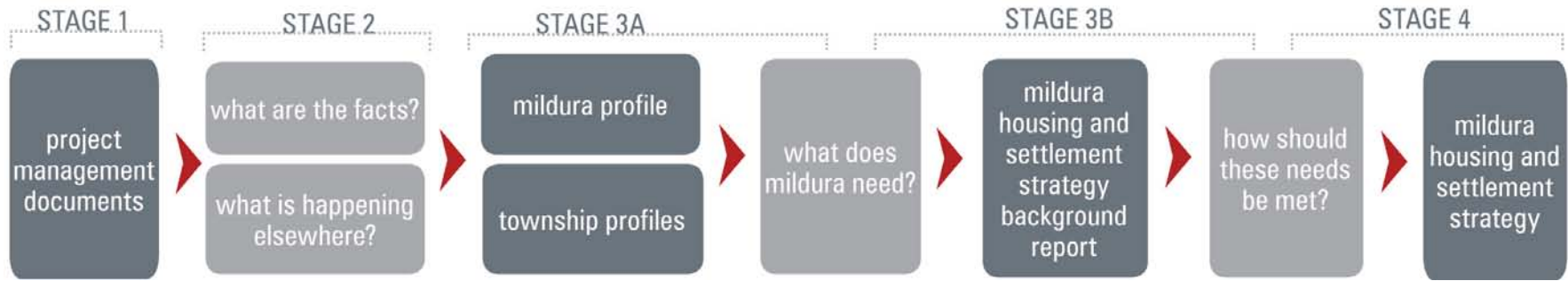


figure 1: project process



- Climate change impacts; which will see Mildura's climate become hotter and drier and which may also be associated with more severe storm events.
- Older irrigation areas and water rights; which have led to significant and unplanned development of dwellings in agricultural areas.
- Role and function of small rural settlements; given declining populations, services and facilities, as well as issues around local identity are highlighted.
- Environmental influences; The Murray River and the surrounding mallee scrub and its unique species are important considerations.
- Community health and well-being; has not been at the forefront of planning previously but is becoming an increasingly important area of focus.
- Affordable and diverse housing; is a fundamental consideration in planning for Mildura's housing and settlement future.
- College lease land; large parcels of land within Mildura remain undeveloped as a result of a historic leasehold system.
- Mildura-Irnyple interface area; while this area is planned to remain as a 'break', development has been, and will continue to, occur within this area.
- Connectivity and movement; the ability to move between and through different settlements will have a strong influence on settlement patterns.
- Decision-making frameworks; the processes that are used by Council to guide planning related decisions.
- Proposed new zones; which have subsequently been introduced to the Mildura Planning Scheme.
- Urban structure; the recent development activity in the Fifteenth Street Activity Centre must be considered in terms of access to services and facilities.

Following exhibition and consultation to confirm the issues, the MHSS *Background Report* was prepared. This significant body of work was prepared in two parts. The first part (Part A) presented 'facts and figures' in relation to all aspects that are relevant to the preparation of a housing and settlement strategy for the Rural City of Mildura, including demographics, infrastructure, context and policy, as well as a profile of each

of Mildura's settlements. This part of the report was tested with the community and key stakeholders through consultation before Part B was undertaken. The township profiles that were prepared as part of the Background Report will be updated as part of the MHSS to include the key recommendations and will be available as stand-alone brochures for residents and relevant stakeholders of each settlement. The second part (Part B) of the report provided a series of recommendations on the basis of the work undertaken in Part A. The *Background Report* was exhibited and further consultation undertaken before the document was adopted by Council (subject to the removal of one recommendation and some changes proposed in response of submissions). The adopted directions and recommendations of the *Background Report* provides the basis for the MHSS outlined in the following chapters.

## key directions

The following 'key directions' were part of the adopted *Background Report* and formed the basis for the 39 adopted 'specific' directions which can be found at Appendix 1 and which underpin this Strategy:



1. *Avoid ad-hoc development in urban and rural areas in favour of carefully planned and orderly outcomes.*
2. *Ensure that sufficient land to meet projected needs across a range of residential housing types is provided in appropriate locations.*
3. *Recognise the need to provide opportunities 'rural living' and 'low density' residential opportunities and direct these to specific areas where they will not compromise long term agricultural production.*
4. *Enhance and celebrate unique township identities.*
5. *Support smaller settlements, specifically those with an existing school and general store, where appropriate.*
6. *Improve the diversity of housing on offer in both urban and rural areas.*
7. *Encourage residential consolidation in Mildura, particularly proximate to the CBD.*
8. *Improve community health and sustainability outcomes in urban areas through improved neighbourhood and building design.*
9. *Improve provision of appropriate housing for older persons.*
10. *Improve access to services and facilities, particularly by active transport.*

More broadly, the key aims of the MHSS are as follows:

- To ensure an adequate supply of residential land.
- To improve the quality and sustainability of future residential development.
- To provide for diverse and affordable housing options.
- To promote a pro-active approach to the development of housing.
- To support the overall health, well-being and quality of life for Mildura's residents.
- To improve the process and timeframes associated with the delivery of residential growth areas.



This report is structured to provide an overview of the settlement structure of the municipality before providing more detailed discussion around the future settlement patterns of each urban / residential area of Mildura. It then provides more specific direction related to other aspects of housing and neighbourhood design, as follows:

**overall settlement structure** – identifies the role of townships and outlines some of the key drivers and underlying principles of the settlement pattern. It provides a definition for each of Mildura’s settlements which are then explored in more detail in the following chapters.

**urban development (main urban area)** – addresses the key development matters in this main urban area which comprises Mildura, Nichols Point and Irymple, including the identification of a second growth area, consolidation and staging of development.

**urban development (other settlements)** – provides an overview and key directions for other settlements within the municipality

**rural living and low density development** – outlines the principles and preferred areas of development on larger lots and in rural areas, including proposals for new development areas.

**sustainable suburbs** – outlines policy direction relating to neighbourhood and building design to ensure the ongoing health and well-being of the Mildura community.

**diversity and affordability** – outlines approaches to ensure a range of housing is provided to meet the needs of all Mildura’s residents, including matters related to development density and specialised housing needs.

**infrastructure** – addresses issues including how the provision of infrastructure in growth areas could be managed into the future and options around staging and standards.

**implementation** – provides direction on the implementation of the Strategy, as well as outlining proposed approaches to new residential zones and monitoring of housing.







## overall settlement structure



Mildura is a municipality with a range of settlement types, all of which play a vital role in supporting the communities that live in the region. The vast majority of the population of Mildura live within a small area to the north-east of the municipality, with this area accommodating over 80% of the population. The facts and figures about these settlements are documented within the *Background Report* which preceded this Strategy, and these have influenced the overarching settlement patterns identified in Figure 2 (opposite). The MHSS does not seek to define a strict hierarchy of settlements, which is often problematic in the provision of services and the identity of individual communities. Rather, it has sought to recognise the differing roles played by the settlements to ensure that these can inform decision making. Where settlements are already functioning as a 'community' rather than as individual townships (such as is occurring in the rural areas of the municipality) this is explicitly acknowledged in this Strategy.

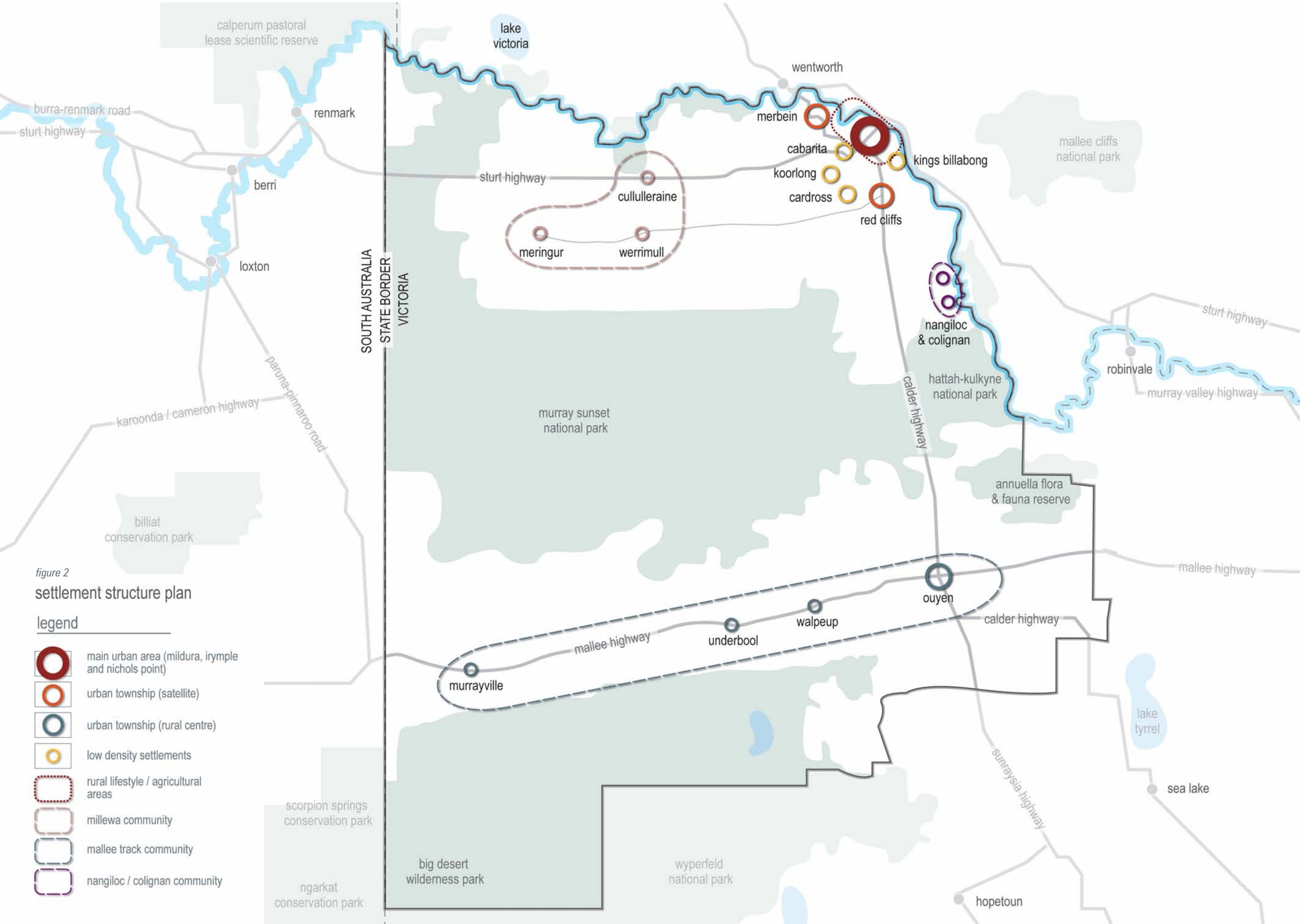
### settlement pattern

Within the Rural City of Mildura, the 'main urban area' and the location of a significant majority of anticipated growth, is the settlement of Mildura proper, but also including the townships of Irymple and Nichols Point. This main urban area is supported both by the 'urban townships' of Merbein and Red Cliffs to the west and south, as well as low density settlements at Koorlong, Cabarita, Kings Billabong and Cardross. While the 'urban townships' have a very strong relationship to the main urban area, they also play an important role as rural service centres for the surrounding communities and each has its own distinct identity. In addition, the MHSS recognises that growth within the 'main urban area' is also supported by some rural residential living that is occurring in the surrounding farming areas. This was previously primarily associated with farming of the land but this connection is increasingly tenuous in many areas. While this proliferation of dwellings in agricultural areas must be very carefully managed, this Strategy does identify some areas where conflict with agricultural land uses (which remain the priority in these Farming zoned areas) can be more easily managed. The recognition of existing and future rural living opportunities is intended to allow Council to provide

clearer guidance on where the development of dwellings in rural areas will be supported to strengthen the protection of future agricultural production, which is a fundamental component of Mildura's long term growth.

Outside the north-eastern part of the municipality, growth rates have been slowing and in most cases, the populations in settlements declining. The populations in rural areas around these settlements has also been declining as improvements in agricultural production and consolidation of farm holdings reduces the amount of people living on the land. To the north, these rural settlements have come together to form the 'Millewa community', which comprises the settlements of Meringur, Werrimull and Lake Cullulleraine. To the east, the twin settlements of Nangiloc and Colignan will continue to function as an integrated community servicing the newer irrigation areas. To the south, the townships of Murrayville, Underbool, Walpeup and Ouyen form the 'Mallee Track community'. Ouyen itself plays critical role in the provision of higher order services and facilities for this community and functions more as an 'urban township', but one with perhaps an even stronger role as a rural service centre than the more northern 'urban townships'.







economic development considerations

In defining the overall settlement pattern for Mildura, the role of the main urban centre, and what will drive continued growth in the municipality must be recognised. For Mildura to continue to thrive there must be opportunities for economic development. Without access to jobs and opportunities, the population will remain stable or reduce. As such, while the main focus of this Strategy has been to address matters relating to housing and settlement patterns, a fundamental consideration in providing directions around settlement planning in particular, has been the potential impact on Mildura's economic development.

The importance of agriculture and its role in underpinning Mildura's ongoing growth cannot be understated. While recent trends have indicated that Mildura is continuing to grow as a service centre and employment opportunities associated with these sectors is rising, a significant proportion of businesses within Mildura rely on agriculture either directly or indirectly. In addition, a noteworthy project known as the Sunraysia Modernisation Project is underway to improve

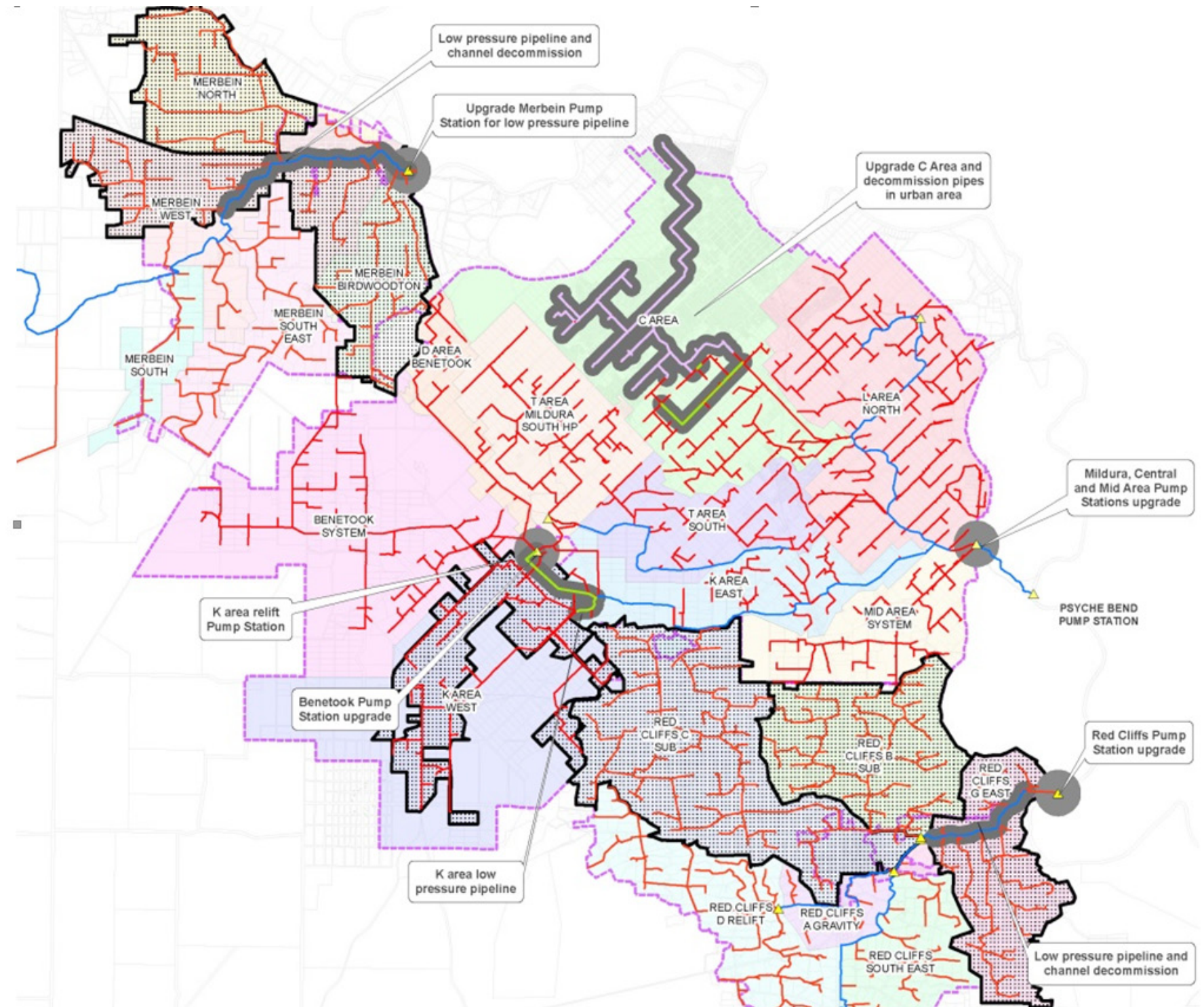


figure 3: sunraysia modernisation project 'areas' of benefit



infrastructure associated with agriculture in the areas known as the Mildura Older Irrigated Areas (MOIA). Initial documentation released in relation to this project has identified what are referred to as 'areas of benefit'. These areas are those which are likely to experience the highest level of positive changes as a result of the project and area shown as hatched areas in Figure 3 (opposite). The MOIA has been, and continues to be, under significant pressure for the development of housing. The proliferation of housing in agricultural areas is fundamentally at odds with the continued development and growth of agricultural production, not only from increased land prices, but also through constraints on operations and increased conflict from competing land uses. Modern agriculture is an industry, with the same off-site impacts from noise, dust etc as could be expected with other industries.



As such, development of dwellings in agricultural areas, unless carefully managed, has the capacity to undermine sustainable long term economic development of Mildura. The past decade of drought has had a significant impact on the profit margins of many farmers in the area, and many have seen opportunities to subdivide their land to provide 'rural living' lots as a 'right' that can address their financial difficulties. However, recent trends have been towards increased production in light of the end of the drought, and the modernisation project must also be considered. Furthermore, while the ability to subdivide agricultural land for housing may potentially provide some landowners with an immediate gain, it has longer term implications for Mildura's growth which may lead to longer term 'pain' for the wider community. Also relevant are the implications on demand for more appropriately sited rural lifestyle properties, having regard to the market which remains relatively limited in comparison to the potentially available land.

In addition to the agricultural sector, the overall settlement strategy has also sought to recognise one of the other key factors in the on-going growth of Mildura, the Mildura Airport. Given the relative isolation of Mildura, its tourism market and its growing role as a base for fly-in / fly-out workers, the airport plays a critical role in the ongoing growth of the municipality. While the airport has undergone a recent upgrade and there are no current plans for further expansion, it is also important in looking at settlement patterns to ensure that any longer term potential future expansion is not compromised by decisions made through this process.

Essentially, this Strategy adopts a 'precautionary principle' in relation to the protection of the airport and therefore seeks to draw a clear line in the sand at Seventeenth Street and explicitly discourage the provision of further dwellings in the areas around the airport. This is in keeping with the recent federal government report on regional airports which identified the importance of these assets and the threat posed by increased residential development.

To avoid future land use conflicts, this Strategy has also looked at the current and potential future locations for industrial land, particularly within the 'main urban area'. While retail and other commercial development can be developed in an integrated manner with residential growth, industrial development is often associated with off-site amenity impacts which mean the provision of appropriate buffers to residential land are preferable. In looking at the longer term growth patterns a reduction in potential longer term conflicts is clearly preferable.





Beyond the existing land available for industrial development, the Strategy presumes that future industrial uses will occur in the following locations:

- Along the Benetook Avenue bypass route (noting that these would be anticipated to be more service related industries in line with the existing zoning).
- In the large Thurla industrial estate to the south of Koorlong.
- Through the expansion to the south of the Irymple industrial area.

Given the limited capacity to utilise additional land for industrial purposes in Mildura proper and the acknowledgment with the MHSS of Irymple as part of the 'main urban area', the protection of the longer term expansion opportunities associated with Irymple's industrial area was a key consideration. The protection of these economic development opportunities was recognised and endorsed through the following key directions:

1. *Identify and protect appropriate opportunities for the longer term expansion of retail and industrial land within Mildura from unplanned residential development, in order to provide job and economic development opportunities.*
2. *Acknowledge the vital importance of Mildura airport to the municipality's future and ensure that urban (residential) expansion do not constrain the potential future operation or expansion of the airport. Use the Calder Highway (17th Street) as clear and fixed demarcation to stop urban development encroaching towards the airport to the south-west.*
3. *Acknowledge the route of the proposed bypass around the city of Mildura and ensure land uses adjoining the bypass maximise economic development opportunities.*

The following figure (Figure 4) formed part of the adopted *Background Report* and identifies the overall settlement patterns for the north-eastern part of the municipality.

Following that (Figure 5) is a refined version of the key directions plan which provides a framework for development in Mildura's north-eastern area.

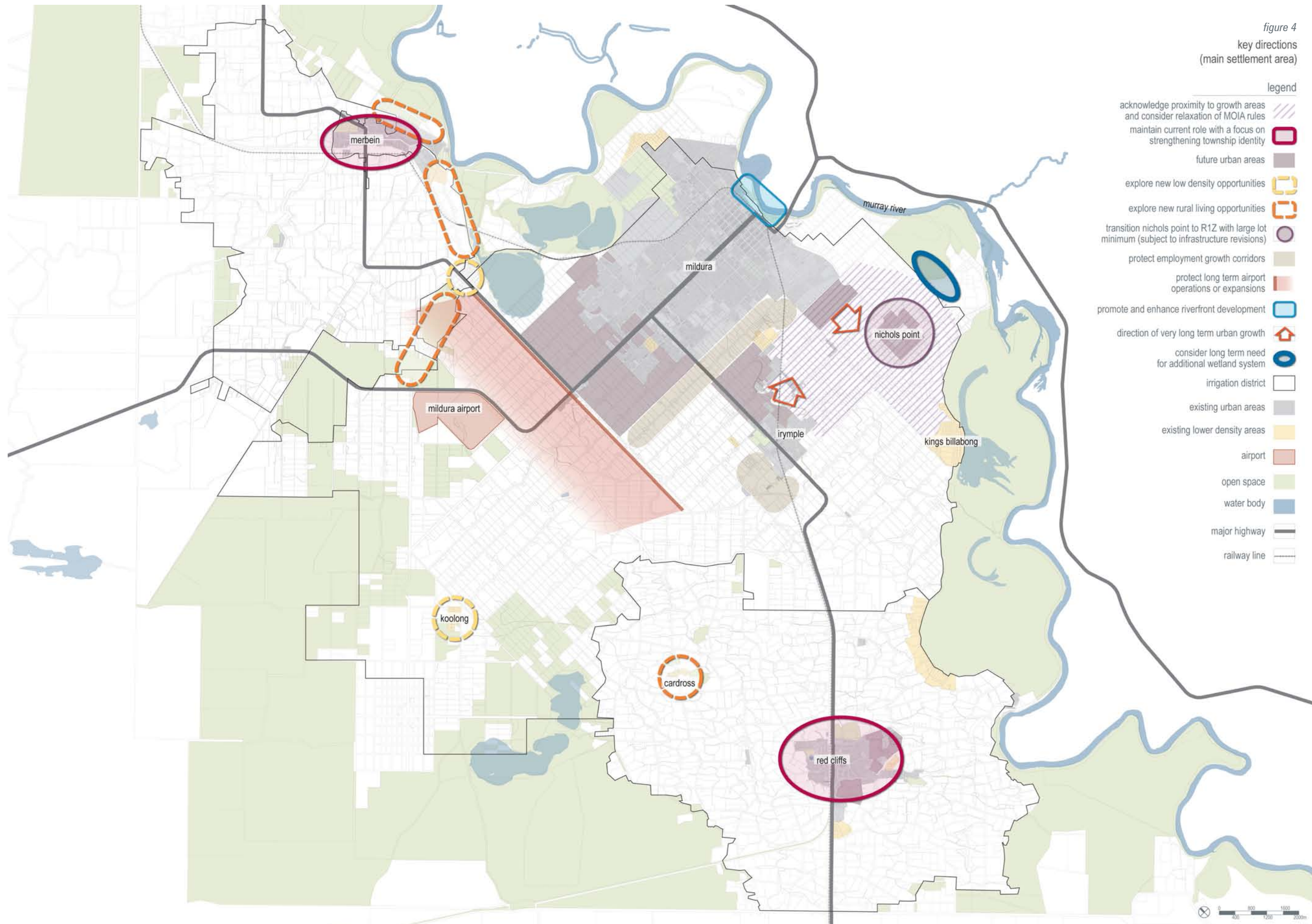
### ACTIONS

- *Prepare and implement an amendment to the Mildura Planning Scheme*

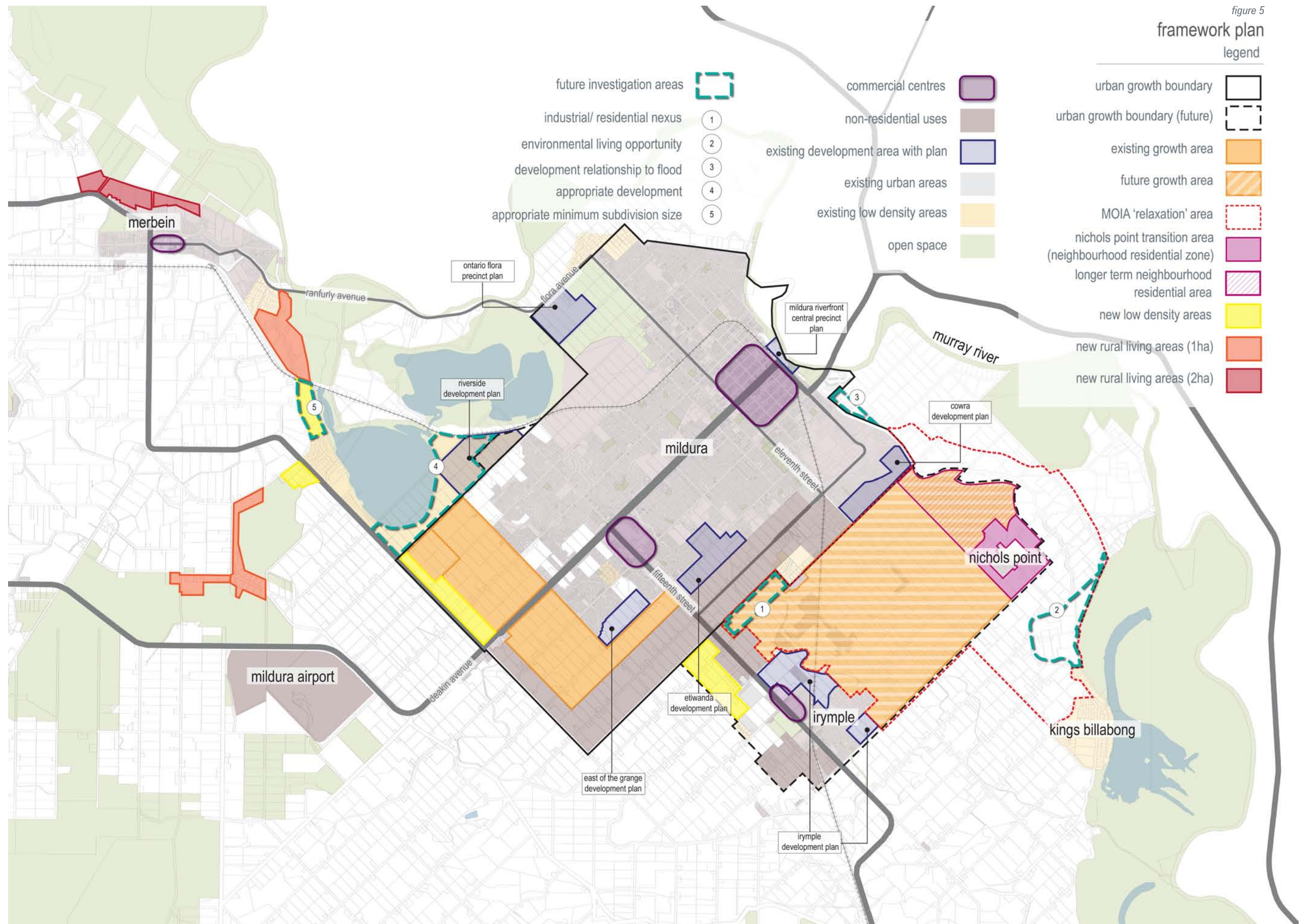
### POLICY CHANGES

- *Changes to the MSS to include:*
  - *Inclusion of background information and key issues where relevant and not currently identified*
  - *Identification of new settlement structure*
  - *Identification of link between residential development and importance of protecting airport, agricultural areas and industrial areas with explicit reference to discouraging urban growth below Seventeenth Street and where it would compromise longer term expansion of industrial areas in Irymple or adjoining bypass.*
  - *Inclusion of new framework plan, including identification of growth areas, rural residential and low density areas, and 'relaxation area'.*













## urban development: main urban area



As identified in the preceding figure, the 'main urban area' of Mildura will, in the much longer term, comprise not only Mildura, but also Irymple and Nichols Point. Given the constraints posed to the south by the Mildura Airport, and to the north and west by the Murray River, if Mildura continues to grow in the longer term, growth to the east is inevitable, no matter how efficiently land with the existing urban area is used. Due to the proximity of Irymple and Nichols Point to Mildura City, this area and its communities will inevitably be impacted by the longer term growth. As such the *Mildura Housing and Settlement Strategy* (MHSS) acknowledges this upfront to allow for development in the intervening areas to be carefully planned to ensure that decisions are not made in isolation, but consider the impacts and benefits for all three communities through any planning processes.

Growth in the 'main urban area' will occur through three different outlets. These are the existing Mildura South growth area (which is between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Street), the identification of a new development front to Mildura's east, as well through consolidation and renewal of the existing urban area.

Planning for Mildura South growth area is already underway, with a Precinct Structure Plan and a Development Plan for the first stage (between Deakin Avenue and Lake Hawthorn) already in progress.

### irymples

While current policy seeks to maintain a 'break' between Mildura and Irymple, this is principally expressed along Fifteenth Street, where commercial and community development is proposed to occur in a 'campus' style incorporating significant vegetation and signalling the transition between the two settlements. Beyond this, current plans identify that the two urban centres will join to the north of Fifteenth Street through residential development at a 'range of densities'. The MHSS does not suggest any changes to the development proposed along Fifteenth Street under current policy, which is fundamental to the sense of a 'break'. Allowing retail development to stretch along this area between Mildura and Irymple is still strongly discouraged. As such the MHSS is not seeking to fundamentally shift the existing policy. However, recognising the importance of proximity to the Fifteenth

Street Activity Centre, and the range of services and facilities available in this area, the MHSS acknowledges that there is benefit in not restricting the density of development beyond the key frontage of Fifteenth Street to the north. To the south of Fifteenth Street there is no current policy position. The MHSS does not support the development of this land at urban densities, given the land available to the north of Fifteenth Street, however, opportunities for a lower density of development in this area are discussed further in the relevant section of this Strategy. It is also noted that there are some additional isolated parcels of land to the south of the Irymple town centre which will form a logical inclusion to the township in the longer term (such as the lot between the existing aged care facility and the school on Karadoc Avenue). The further development and investment in the creation of a strong town centre for Irymple (as outlined in the *Irymple Structure Plan 2010*) is of fundamental importance to the maintenance of a distinct local identity for Irymple. The role of signage and 'branding' in defining distinct urban areas and the involvement of local communities in identifying 'symbols' for their settlements is also worth consideration.

### nichols point

The area around Nichols Point has traditionally provided a high quality 'low density' living option. Existing lots in Nichols Point within a Residential 1 Zone average around 2500sqm, and incorporate generous landscaping, creating a distinct neighbourhood character. Planning to date for the areas has sought to supplement this existing residential area with new low density development. These low density areas have been rezoned but not yet developed, as a Development Plan process has been undertaken to ensure they are developed in a coordinated manner. This process has identified some significant issues with the level of services required to develop the area to an appropriate standard, particularly having regard to the issue of drainage management, and the available lot yield. This has hindered the development of this area and there had been advocacy for a reduced lot size. The recent changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions (specifically the Low Density Residential Zone or LDRZ) has provided this opportunity. However, the work undertaken as part of the Development Plan process has only considered a



density of development at 4000sqm lots. As such, the amended zone itself does not resolve the issue and a new Development Plan would be needed to ensure that the drainage and other infrastructure was properly provided.

In light of the above, and the broader strategic aims in relation to the long term settlement pattern of Mildura (outlined in the previous section of the Strategy), it is considered that development in Nichols Point should not be considered as isolated from other development adjoining Mildura and Irymple. This is particularly the case in relation to the provision of drainage and sewerage, where there may be opportunities to ensure that long term planning in that area is coordinated. To assist in facilitating development of this area in line with the longer term strategic objectives of Mildura, the existing LDRZ area around Nichols Point should be rezoned to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone. However, the unique character of the Nichols Point area, which underpinned the use of the LDRZ should be retained. In particular this relates to the size of the lots within the area, which should be a larger size than conventional residential development. As the existing lots are in

the order of 1200-3500sqm, a minimum lot size of 1800sqm should be pursued. This higher density and considerations in regards to a wider drainage system (detailed in later sections of this Strategy) should inform the updating of the *Nichols Point Development Plan*. The key focus in the development of Nichols Point should remain the protection of its unique character, but also on active transport connections through to the Mildura CBD and other key services and facilities. Issues around the Development Plan process are discussed further in the final section of this Strategy.

In addition, a secondary area has been identified within the Mildura East growth area, between Nichols Point and the existing urban area, on both sides of Fifth Street. This area should be considered through the development of the Precinct Structure Plan for a second stage of 'neighbourhood residential' development, extending the distinct character of larger, vegetated lots and providing a transition to the rural lots in the 'relaxation' area and floodplain, as well as to the existing Nichols Point township. The northern boundary of this area has been carefully considered and no extension should be supported. North of Nichols Point, there is a distinct topography that slopes down towards the river from the identified boundary. Development of these slopes would have a significant impact on the 'rural' experience along Cureton Avenue which adds value and amenity to the housing stock and future agri-tourism opportunities within this area.



## development fronts

Within Mildura, the majority of growth in recent years has occurred in the area known as Mildura South, which comprises two main precincts. The land between Fifteenth and Sixteenth Streets has mostly developed with only isolated pockets remaining, while the land between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Streets represents the next major growth front of Mildura. A significant amount of work has been undertaken in the area to determine the infrastructure requirements for this growth area, most notably in the form of drainage and stormwater infrastructure which has been designed and documented and addresses the needs both sides of Sixteenth Street.

While there has also been a number of smaller areas identified for growth to the east (Etiwanda, East of the Grange and Cowra Avenue) these areas have not seen the same level of growth and development. Although a number of factors have influenced this slower growth, one of the key constraints to the development of this land has been the requirements for infrastructure and the staging of development. There has been no overall assessment of development to the east, with the relevant plans (such as the *Etiwanda Development Plan*) looking at smaller areas in isolation, unlike the broader consideration given to the Mildura South area.

One of the key concerns expressed throughout consultation events was the potential for growth in Mildura to be significantly constrained through the overemphasis on one growth area, which can lead to inflation of land prices or a halt to development should an unforeseen delay arise. This has been the case most recently in Mildura South as Council has sought to resolve issues around the location of required active recreational facilities for the growth area, and associated land acquisition.

Avoiding an overreliance on one area to provide for long term greenfield growth is an ambition that is supported by this Strategy. As such, a formal designation of a second growth area is proposed to Mildura's east. The extent of this area is shown in the following figure (Figure 6).



It is important to make clear that development on the Mildura South growth area should remain the outlet for growth in the short to medium term. The planning for this area is well advanced and should be pursued by Council as a priority. However, a framework plan should be prepared for the Mildura East growth area to establish the main elements of development in accordance with the dot points below:

- The area identified on Figure 6 is indicative only and should be confirmed through the framework plan process.
- Any framework plan should establish key characteristics such as drainage catchments for the area and use these to identify different 'precincts' to be planned at the next level. Within these larger 'precincts' sub-precincts should be established if necessary to undertake orderly planning of the broader precinct.
- Confirm the staging development of identified sub-precincts to ensure planning commences in accordance with the broader objectives and infrastructure needs.
- Recognise and support the need to protect the identity of Irymple as separate settlement and stage development between Mildura and Irymple from Irymple to Mildura, rather than from Mildura to Irymple to ensure that growth is through the expansion of Irymple rather than Mildura.
- Recognise the larger lot characteristics of Nichols Point and ensure that these are protected and extended towards Mildura in the longer term to maintain a diversity of settlement areas within the 'main urban area'.
- Establish clear direction for the establishment of activity centres, meaningful areas of open space and active transport connections in accordance with the aims of the MHSS.

Preceding (or in conjunction with) the preparation of this framework plan, a drainage strategy for the area should also be undertaken to determine the overall long term needs for the whole area and allow consideration of these in the more detailed planning for the area, including Irymple and Nichols Point. This matter is dealt with in more detail earlier in this section and in section 5 of this document. While no development in this area should commence prior to the preparation of a framework plan and drainage strategy, these two projects should commence in the shorter term to allow consideration of staging to provide guidance about the first stages of the Mildura East growth area.









## consolidation and regeneration

While the early identification of greenfield land to allow the commencement of planning processes is a key element of the MHSS, it is important to emphasise the critical need for land within Mildura City to be used efficiently. While issues of diversity are addressed further in later parts of this document, the concentration of services and facilities within this main urban centre means that providing increased opportunities for residents to live within easy access of these facilities and services is crucial. As well as the imperatives for the community, using the existing urban land more efficiently reduces further sprawl and the associated cost imposition on Council. The efficient use of the existing urban area is anticipated to occur through four main avenues:

- The identification and development of 'remnant' land or zoning anomalies at the 'urban edges'.
- The development of major urban renewal opportunities and the Mildura CBD.
- Appropriate infill across the broader urban area, primarily in the northern parts of the City.
- The resolution of issues around College Lease land to facilitate additional infill.

### urban edges

There are a number of areas around the urban edges of Mildura where isolated pockets of Farming zoned land remain. Where this land has a future use that is likely to remain agricultural in the longer term the retention of the Farming Zone is appropriate. However, in areas where the use of the land is not anticipated to match the zoning of the land, a rezoning of the land to facilitate efficient use of the land is proposed. Around Mildura the identified areas that were considered in greater detail and the proposed approach in those areas is outlined below. These are documented on the following figure (Figure 7):

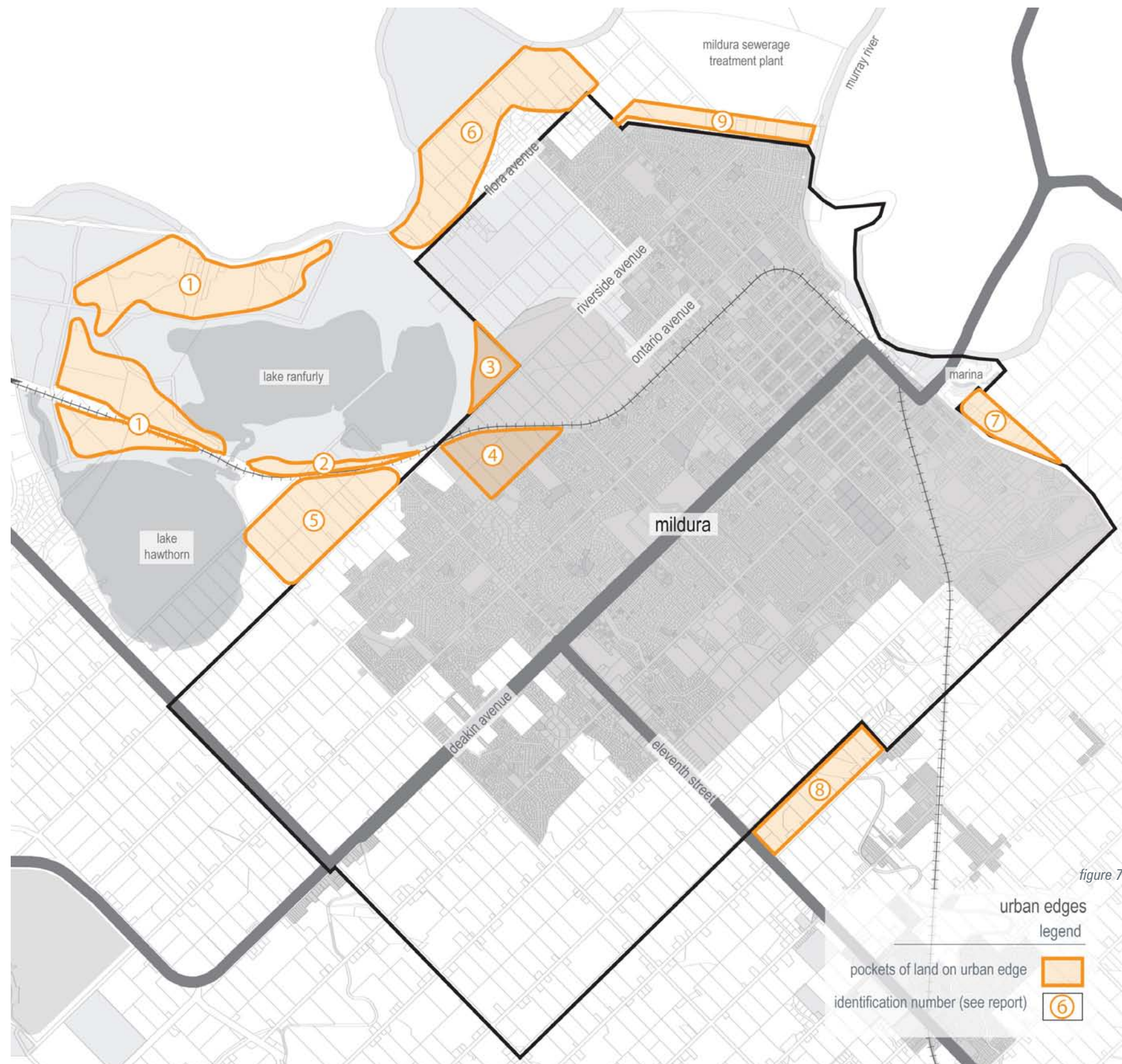
1. Land between Lake Hawthorn and Lake Ranfurly (currently Farming Zone): This land is not considered suitable for urban development and remains under vines and therefore no change is proposed to the use or zoning of this land.

2. A thin strip of farming zoned land between the railway line and Lake Ranfurly (currently Farming Zone): This strip remain part of the Lake Ranfurly environs and as such, no change is proposed. If a rezoning to a conservation related zone (given the presence of endangered species such as the Hooded Scaly-foot) was requested by a landowner this may be appropriate, pending more detailed consideration.
3. A triangle of land north of Riverside Avenue, adjacent to Lake Ranfurly (currently Farming Zone): This land was identified through an earlier study (*Ontario-Flora Land Use Vision and Urban Design Framework*) as land which should be rezoned to a conservation zone. Depending on the land ownership, the land is therefore recommended to be rezoned to either the Public Conservation and Resource Zone or to the Rural Conservation Zone.
4. A triangle of land south of Riverside Avenue and the railway line (currently Farming Zone): This land appears to be used for an industrial purpose of some description, as well as a dwelling. There is no evidence of agricultural activity on the land or in the vicinity. Given its location adjoining a railway line and water treatment plant, rezoning to support residential uses is not appropriate. As such, a rezoning to Rural Activity Zone is proposed to provide greater flexibility for the use of the land.
5. Land to the west of Riverside Avenue between Lakes Hawthorn and Ranfurly (currently zoned Low Density Residential): This land is within the *Riverside Development Plan* area. Much of the area covered by the *Riverside Development Plan* is 'college lease' land, but a portion to the north-east remains freehold land. It is considered that this freehold land, which is contiguous with existing urban areas, could be rezoned to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone, similar to the response proposed for Nichols Point. Ensuring the land remains in larger lots while increasing the capacity for development in this area is preferred, noting a connection to the sewer for this land would then be required and a new Development Plan would need to be prepared. Design guidelines to reflect the proximity to Lake Ranfurly should also be considered. The remaining LDRZ land which remains in College leasehold, is discussed later in this section.

6. Land to the river side of Flora Avenue, and a small area to the north of Lake Ranfurly (currently Urban Flood Zone, Special Use Zone and Farming Zone): This land was recommended for rezoning as part of an earlier study. The *Ontario-Flora Land Use Vision and Urban Design Framework* identified that, given the combination of the proximity to the important environments of the lake and river, and a desire to allow a wider range of activity to occur in the area a Rural Conservation Zone should be applied. It is important to note that where this zone was proposed to replace the Urban Flood Zone, a Floodway Overlay was recommended for application as no intensification of built form was supported. If a Floodway Overlay is applied, it should be based on the recently updated mapping prepared by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA) for the area.







7. Land to the east adjacent to the marina (currently Urban Flood Zone): Recent modelling by the MCMA has indicated this land is still subject to significant potential for overland flow events and as such, a rezoning of this land is not supported at this point in time. The implications of the relationship between this land and the marina are not fully understood, particularly given some landfill which has occurred in the area. However, the land is in a strategic location given its relationship to the marina and proximity to the Mildura's CBD. As such, it is considered some further investigation is appropriate to be undertaken for land within this area to determine both the impacts of any additional cut and fill on flooding in the area and the relationship to the marina site, but also the most appropriate response to Mildura's urban form. It is noted that any resolution to allow urban development in this area may require a change to the identified Urban Growth Boundary.
8. Within the Mildura East growth area, there is a strip between existing Industrial 3 zoned land (which remains undeveloped) and Cowra Avenue. While this land is identified as being considered as part of planning for the growth area, feedback has indicated that the development of the industrial land is being constrained by drainage costs. As such, while no rezoning of this land is proposed at the present time, it is recommended that some further investigations be undertaken to determine the nexus between the infrastructure required to develop the industrial land fronting Benetook Avenue and any residential development of this strip of land. If there is a clear correlation then consideration should be given to allowing this land to develop in the shorter term (with appropriate contributions to the wider community and other infrastructure for the Mildura East growth area).
9. This small strip of Farming zoned land forms a buffer to Lower Murray Water's sewerage treatment plan. As such, no rezoning of the land is identified. However, should a rezoning be proposed to allow a new use which is not considered 'sensitive' and would not impact on the operations of the treatment plan (to the satisfaction of the water authority) this would be supported by the Strategy in line with the objective of using land within the main urban area more efficiently.



infill development

More broadly across the urban area, the development of infill housing is supported, provided that it is responsive to the particular context in which it is proposed. No areas within Mildura are proposed for rezoning to the Residential Growth Zone, given the scale of infill supported in Mildura is likely to be accommodated within the General Residential Zone. The grid pattern of subdivision and the relative size of lots and houses mean that some infill in the form of dual occupancies is more likely in the northern parts of Mildura. This ‘low impact’ infill is supported but retention and restoration of the existing traditional dwelling stock is preferred.



the mildura CBD and riverfront

One of the parts of the existing urban area of Mildura where significant residential development is encouraged is around the CBD and waterfront area. The introduction of higher density housing in this area should be a priority of Council. Not only will the incorporation of higher density housing within this area provide a meaningful diversification of the housing offer of the municipality, but it will also support viability of the Mildura CBD in light of the continued growth of the Fifteenth Street Activity Centre. More people living in the immediate vicinity of the CBD has the potential to influence on the amount of activity and vibrancy in this area, and have a corresponding influence the viability of businesses. In addition, the amenity offered by the Mildura Riverfront can be associated with much higher quality housing and a high degree of ‘livability’ for residents, providing high standards of design are maintained. The Mildura Riverfront project should remain a Council priority from a housing and settlement perspective, as well as from an economic development viewpoint. The re-connection of the CBD to the riverfront is a critical part of this.

In addition to the major redevelopment of the Mildura Riverfront, Council should also pursue the integration of additional residential development within the CBD area. While increased residential density is encouraged in the *Mildura CBD Plan 2007*, the potential barriers to this type of development remain key issues. Given the benefits of increased residential populations around the CBD, for traders, residents and the broader settlement of Mildura, some further examination of how housing in this area could be facilitated should be pursued. A study which examines what would attract residents to this area, the existing disincentives and the planning or regulatory barriers from a development perspective, would provide a solid evidence base for some pro-active measures by Council to facilitate this type of residential development through a ‘City Living Strategy’.

college lease land

Within the urban area of Mildura, many of the remaining undeveloped parcels of land are ‘College Lease’ parcels. The availability of this land as only leasehold, rather than as freehold, is often a disincentive for development. As much of this land is zoned for residential uses, it has previously contributed to some distortion an understanding of the land available for development, as well as impacting of the urban form of the City. Council should continue to pursue discussion with the relevant departments and the College Lease Land Beneficiaries Committee to resolve to best use of land within the main urban area (particularly in light of the apparent failure of land to generate income as intended). However, a different approach should be taken to the large area of Low Density Residential land adjoining Lake Hawthorn. Much of this land may not be suitable for residential development given the extent of the lake, and other environmental and servicing considerations. It is therefore recommended that some further investigations should be undertaken in relation to this land, assessing both the development capabilities and the preferred future of this area given the relationship to the Mildura South growth area. For example, it may be that maintaining a sense of connection between the growth area and the lake is a preferred outcome which would not be supported by the current zoning of the land. Pending the outcomes of those investigations, a rezoning of this land to better reflect its preferred future use should be pursued.



## staging

The timing and staging of the release of land within this main urban area must be clearly articulated. Along with a robust monitoring of subdivision and development, having a clear understanding of the staging of development is critical to Mildura's on-going growth. An understanding of the longer term staging of development minimises ad-hoc decision making and allows for the planning of key infrastructure in advance of urban growth. It not only assists Council's decision making but also other authorities, government departments and NGOs who have a role to play in providing facilities and services for Mildura's residents.

The long timeframes between the identification of an area for urban development and the construction of housing, which can take up to 10 years, means that early identification of land is desirable. While the identification of land may increase landowner speculation, a clear staging framework for development should reduce this speculation. The rates at which land is rezoned and developed will depend on Mildura's rate of growth, and should be carefully monitored by Council. However, the order in which different parcels of land or areas are developed should be guided by careful planning. While new urban areas should develop contiguous with existing urban areas, in Mildura, the areas which develop first will also be guided by the most efficient provision of drainage infrastructure. For example, the establishment of Mildura East will likely require the development of a second 'Etiwanda' style wetland. Planning for this to ensure that development occurs in a pattern which supports the early development of this system will be important.

Staging of development in the 'main urban area' is outlined in the following figure (Figure 8), as follows:

The first stage of development (short to medium term) should include:

- Existing residential zoned land in the Mildura South growth area;
- Rezoning and infill of remnant infill lots at Mildura's urban edges;
- Existing residential zoned land in Mildura East;
- Existing residential zoned land in Irymple; and
- On larger lots in Nichols Point.

The *Background Report* identified that Mildura has enough residential zoned land available to meet the identified demand over the next 20 years based on current growth trends. In addition, land within both the Mildura South and the Mildura East growth areas has already been identified as accommodating future growth. Therefore, there is no need to identify any future land for conventional residential development in Mildura in the short to medium term.

The second stage of development (medium to long term) should include:

- The remainder of the Mildura South growth area; and
- The first stages of the Mildura East growth area, according to the framework plan to be prepared for that area.

The third stage of development (very long term) should include:

- The remaining part of the Mildura East growth area.

In addition to the greenfield development documented above, consolidation and regeneration as outlined previously should also be pursued. This is particularly important in light of the very long term constraints to Mildura's urban area which support the pursuit of a more compact urban form.

Given the timing outlined above, it is recommended that the first stages of planning for the Mildura East growth area commence shortly. An added imperative to this is the crossover of the drainage planning that may be required in this area with any new assessment of the drainage requirements associated with development of Nichols Point at a density lower than the current 0.4ha lots identified in the existing Development Plan. Given the identified importance of drainage infrastructure in Mildura, an understanding of the requirements at an early stage to allow for the initial design and indicative costing is vital to the timely completion of calculations around development contributions following any Development Plan process. For the Mildura East growth area, a drainage strategy should be the driving factor in determining which areas develop first.

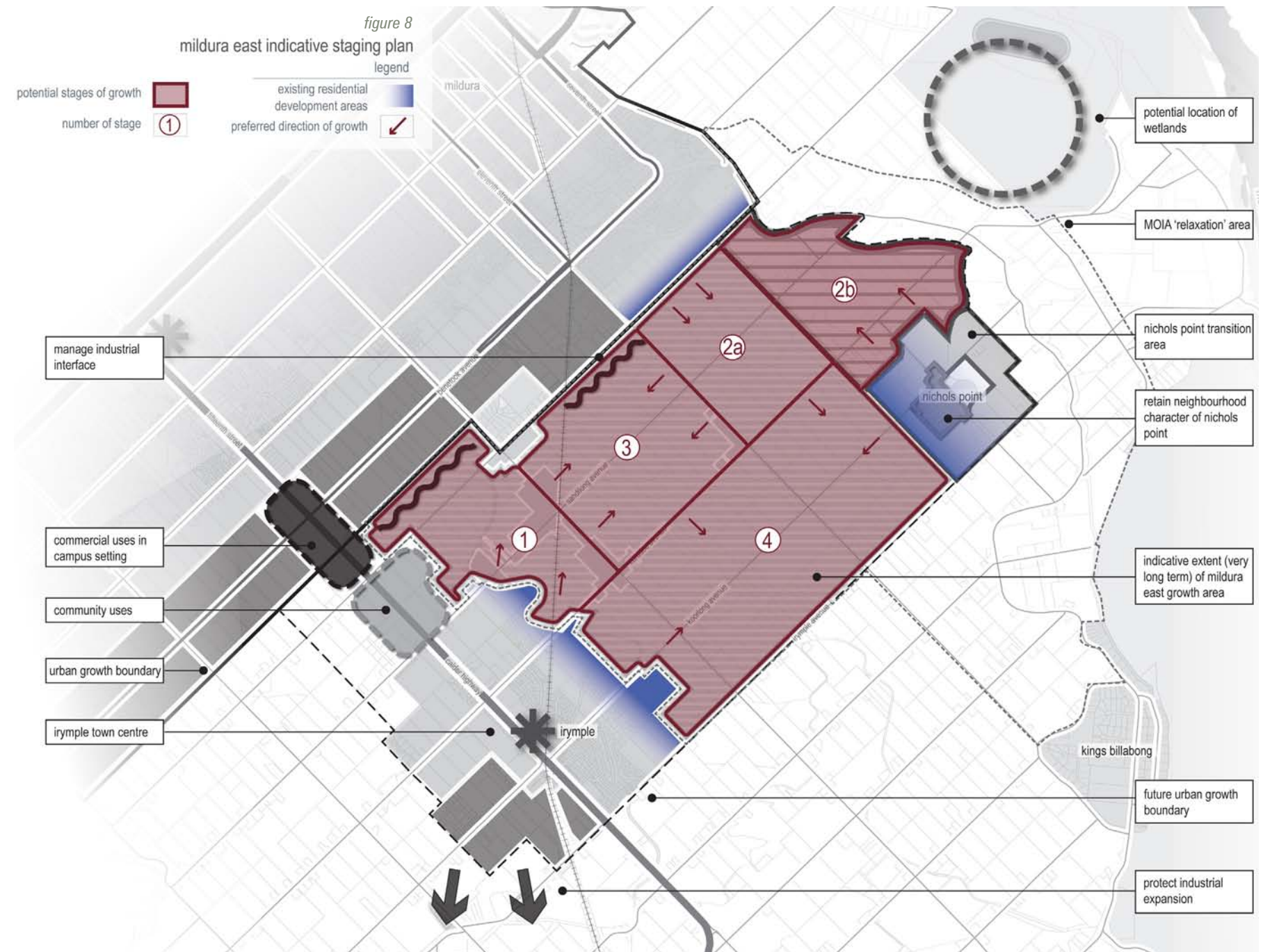
## ACTIONS

- *Resolve issues around recreation facilities in Mildura South and proceed with planning and development of this area*
- *Commence the preparation of a drainage strategy for the Mildura East growth area*
- *Prepare a framework plan for the Mildura East growth area*
- *Revise the Development Plan for Nichols Point, and rezone land in the settlement*
- *Prepare a town centre plan for Irymple to provide clear actions for public realm improvements, design guidelines and development facilitation*
- *Rezone land (and apply associated overlays) as identified at Mildura's urban edges*
- *Undertake further investigation of land adjoining the Marina site to determine suitability for future development given flooding constraints*
- *Continue to pursue the development of the Mildura Riverfront including higher density residential components*
- *Consider undertaking a 'City Living Strategy'*
- *Undertake further investigation of land currently zoned Low Density Residential adjoining Lake Hawthorn to ascertain the realistic development potential and rezone as appropriate*
- *Investigate the nexus between residential development of identified Cowra Avenue area and industrial development and consider appropriate action to facilitate.*
- *Update relevant parts of the Mildura Planning Scheme*



### POLICY CHANGES

- Introduction of specific policy regarding areas where future development will be supported in line with the framework plan, including the staging of development
- Introduction of the NRZ and associated schedule
- Introduction of policy in relation to Irymple and Nichols Point within the 'local areas' sections of the MSS
- Introduction of policy identifying the preferred uses and any other parameters for the 'urban edges' of Mildura given discretion that may be available through proposed rezoning
- Introduction of policy around the consolidation and regeneration of existing areas to ensure this is supported but managed appropriately, including areas for further investigation
- Introduction of additional policy around residential development close to the CBD and riverfront





## urban development: other settlements



This section provides direction for future development within the remaining settlements of the Rural City of Mildura. Given the proportion of development and growth which occurs within what has been identified as the 'main urban area', the scale of change within these other settlements will remain modest. However, there are a number of recommendations which formed part of the adopted directions that seek to increase the resilience of these settlements and address issues identified through the background stages of this project.

One of the key themes which emerged from the background stages of this project was the importance of connectivity for the on-going growth of settlements. Acknowledging the more limited services that can be provided in smaller settlements means there must be a corresponding focus on improving connections to ensure these communities still have the ability to access the services provided in larger centres. Mildura's mid-sized settlements provide attractive alternatives for living beyond the main urban area for those who prefer a more intimate township, and the municipalities smaller settlements have already shown great resilience in forming communities to provide a critical mass of population to support services and community events.

## red cliffs

Red Cliffs will continue to grow and develop as a separate 'urban township' that, while enjoying a close relationship to the main urban area of Mildura, will be a self-contained settlement which plays a key role in supporting a surrounding rural community, as well as local residents. Red Cliffs will offer a range of housing opportunities, including providing an affordable lifestyle option within easy reach of the main urban area. The development of larger scale employment opportunities associated with agriculture or renewable energy projects which establish to the south may increase the attractiveness of Red Cliffs as a base for those working outside the main urban area. The presence of highly regarded institutions such as the Red Cliffs Secondary College may also draw new residents to the township. The township currently has sufficient residential land (and an approved Development Plan) and housing development is underway in the township. Opportunities for low density development are provided to the south of the township, and conventional residential development to the east. In the much longer term, once existing zoned land has been developed, residential growth should be focused as close to possible as the town centre.

The role of the settlement could be strengthened through a number of strategic interventions. These include assessment of the potential future role of the industrial land to the west of the township in supporting local industry and employment opportunities. While the development of better transport connections to Mildura may lead to more 'out-of-centre' spending, it is considered that the overall benefits of improved connections for Red Cliffs will outweigh any potential detriment. These improved connections should include not only increased bus services, but





also advocating duplication of the road between Red Cliffs and Mildura and, the establishment of an attractive and safe shared 'greenway' between Red Cliffs and Irymple / Fifteenth Street. 'Greenways' are attractive landscaped paths suitable for use by pedestrians and cyclists and are described in more detail on page 34 of this Strategy. Perhaps most importantly for the township, a revitalisation of the town centre should be undertaken. The role of a well-considered and vibrant town centre in attracting people to a settlement should not be underestimated, and Council can play a key role in this through the funding of streetscape and other public realm improvements. The Red Cliffs centre, while it continues to support two supermarkets and other facilities and services, is relatively disjointed from a pedestrian perspective and fails to generate the most benefit from the generous streets and surrounding parkland.

## merbein

As with Red Cliffs, Merbein is anticipated to continue to develop at a steady pace as a self-contained 'urban township'. The settlement is located very close to Mildura and offers some very high quality public facilities for a town of its size. It offers an affordable option for those who want to live outside of the main urban area, but still within easy reach of the higher level services available there. The *Background Report* identified that there was no need for additional 'conventional' residential land within Merbein as sufficient land was either zoned to the north, or available through re-subdivision in the town to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years. While Merbein offers decent quality housing in close proximity to Mildura and good services and facilities (particularly for young families), growth in the township is impacted by perceptions of the settlement. These perceptions are at odds with the sentiment of local residents which include a strong sense of pride and of community identity.

As such, the focus for the MHSS in relation to Merbein has been to not only recognise the quality of life that is available within the settlement, but to promote actions which may have an impact on perception of the township. While recent investment by Council has led to a high quality community facilities on Merbein's main street, the town centre remains relatively run-down. Investments in improvement to the main street (both with the town core and on approach) will be critical to beginning to adjust the reputation of the township as a less desirable location than Mildura, rather than the attractive alternative lifestyle opportunity it offers. There is also potential for the linear park at the 'entrance' to the township (between Reilly Street and Channel Road), including the existing open channel, to

be further developed into landmark open space, celebrating the town's identity and the irrigation infrastructure which has played such an important part in the settlements history.

In addition to streetscape improvements, the MHSS seeks to diversify the types of housing available around Merbein and introduce additional residents to the area through the introduction of some Rural Living land in proximity to the township. The potential relocation of the sewerage treatment plant offers further opportunities to capitalise on the attractive outlooks and amenity offered by the township. The topography and landscape of the area are clearly distinguishable from many other parts of the municipality where the relationship to environmental features is less apparent. In the longer term it is suggested that land to the south of the township (beyond the rail line and existing drainage channel) will be the most appropriate area for conventional residential growth, noting that this is not supported at the current time. As such, development should be avoided in this area to protect these longer term growth opportunities.





## nangiloc and colignan

Nangiloc and Colignan are integrated communities with no defined town centre but a range of services and facilities provided across the two settlements. As their names imply, the settlements function as a single community and will continue to do so under the MHSS. The continued protection of the existing services such as the recreation areas and the primary school will be important. The most important outcome for the ongoing resilience of these settlements will be the provision of improved transport connections to the main urban area. Consideration should also be given to the potential development of a high quality caravan park in this area, both to promote a focus on this area as the 'northern gateway' to the Hattah Lakes (one of Mildura's key tourism destinations). Any new site should be located close to the riverfront of other area of higher amenity and should be responsive to any environmental sensitivity.



## mallee track community

The southern belt of townships within Mildura are known collectively as the Mallee Track and includes Murrayville, Walpeup and Underbool, as well as Ouyen. These settlements have mostly small populations, and many of these are declining. However, the townships provide an important part of Mildura's settlement fabric. In seeking to increase the resilience of these smaller townships, the community is considered as a consolidated settlement, with a range of different services and facilities provided in the different townships, recognising that each settlement on its own cannot sustain a full range of community infrastructure. What will be most important for these settlements in the future will be a focus on the provision of multi-purpose community hub within each township to maintain services for residents. Providing a multi-purpose facility will allow a wide range of community groups to use these spaces and for their adaptation over time as the demographics of the townships change. These hubs could also be used to promote tourism by proving a central point for information and services within each township. However, the most critical investment in the longer term resilience of the small townships of the Mallee Track will be in more frequent transport connections to improve access to services and facilities. Within Murrayville, it is considered that there may also be some scope to investigate the development of some supported accommodation for older residents to allow aging farmers and residents of the western areas of the district to remain closer to their local community.



## ouyen

While Ouyen forms part of the Mallee Track community, its size and its location on the Calder Highway and railway line mean it also plays a critical role as the service centre for the southern parts of the municipality. The presence of a hospital in Ouyen as well as other higher order services mean it is the logical location for many of the older residents of the region to relocate to once they leave their farms or can no longer live independently. However, the range of services available at the hospital and the current shortage of appropriate accommodation types means that many older residents have no choice but to relocate to the main urban area of Mildura, necessitating a move away from family and friends. Anecdotally, the financial implications of having to sell and move to a major urban centre is also difficult for some and the need for supported accommodation within the local area is important. Ouyen has sufficient land zoned to accommodate anticipated urban development, however there is a need to diversify the type of housing stock being developed in this township, in recognition of the demographic shift which is occurring. One clear opportunity for this is the potential redevelopment of the redundant primary school site as a medium density 'village', and opportunities to facilitate such as development should be investigated.





### millewa region community

As with the smaller southern townships, the northern rural settlements of Meringur, Werrimull and Lake Cullulleraine form a wider community known as the ‘Millewa’ region. It is important to also acknowledge that these smaller settlements not only support the residents of each township but often provide a vital link for the rural areas around them. As with the Mallee Track, the key recommendations to support this community will be in acknowledging the integrated nature of these settlements, while ensuring that each settlement has access to one local hub to maintain a point of connection to services for residents and to retain the individual identity and history of each settlement. Also, as with the Mallee Track, connections between settlements and to the main urban area will be important, particularly as the community in this area ages.



#### ACTIONS

- Undertake town centre plan for Red Cliffs, to identify urban design and public realm improvements
- Advocate for the duplication of the Calder Highway between Red Cliffs and Irymple
- Develop a ‘greenway’ between Red Cliffs and Irymple to promote active transport connections
- As a priority undertake a town centre plan to facilitate revitalisation of Merbein’s main street
- Develop a masterplan for Merbein’s ‘entrance’ park
- Rezone land to Rural Living Zone to the north and south-east of Merbein
- Investigate potential development of a caravan park at Nangiloc / Colignan
- Investigate ways to facilitate medium density development in Ouyen, suitable for older residents
- Undertake a ‘transport audit’ of existing connections for the communities of the Millewa Region, Mallee Track and Nangiloc / Colignan and advocate or provide additional services as required
- Identify or provide a central community ‘hub’ in smaller township and focus delivery of services and information to these townships at these locations
- Update relevant sections of the Mildura Planning Scheme

#### POLICY CHANGES

- Introduction of policy in relation to each of the townships within the ‘local areas’ section of the MSS, including areas for current and future growth and key areas for redevelopment or future planning
- Updates to any existing structure plans within the planning scheme to ensure consistency
- Introduction of the Rural Living Zone and associated schedule





## rural living and low density development



The *MHSS Background Report* identified that, while Mildura has sufficient land available for conventional residential development, there is a need for additional land to be provided to meet the anticipated demand for dwellings on larger lots. Through the MHSS, growth in rural living and low density development will be accommodated in clearly defined nodes where they can support a local community. These will primarily be areas where there is access to both a local shop and school, and where they will not compromise ongoing agricultural development. To this end the Strategy identifies four additional Low Density areas. These additional areas are at Koorlong and Cabarita and, in the longer term, at the southern 'edges' of Mildura and Irymple. In addition to the Low Density areas proposed, a new zone, the Rural Living Zone will be introduced into the Mildura Planning Scheme. This zone will be applied in Cabarita, Merbein and Cardross. The existing settlement of Kings Billabong will also continue its role as a low density settlement.

While the existing availability of Low Density Residential land allows for some assessment of the anticipated future demand, the lack of Rural Living zoned land within the municipality means an assessment of the demand for this type of housing is not possible. Complicating any assessment of demand, much of the current demand for larger lot development is occurring on lots within the Farming Zone. As identified earlier in this Strategy and through the *Background Report*, this is not a sustainable long term option and ensuring that planned areas are provided to meet demand is necessary. The transition of Nichols Point from a Low Density Residential Zone to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone will also reduce currently available low density land. Given the significant overlap in the market for low density and rural living development and the current uncertainty in demand, the introduction of a comprehensive monitoring system will be vital. Importantly, in considering the available land, areas within the MOIA should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a single market for the areas around the main urban centre, having regard for the need to maintain some diversity in available locations.

## low density residential development

Recent changes to the Low Density Residential Zone mean land connected to the sewerage system are able to be subdivided down to a lot size of 0.2ha. For most areas within Mildura, if land is identified as LDRZ it is generally land which is not anticipated to connect to a sewer line and would therefore be anticipated to have a minimum subdivision size of 0.4ha, although there are a few exceptions to this, such as Nichols Point.

Existing areas of low density development in Mildura are outlined below:

- Nichols Point: Approximately 70ha, proposed for rezoning to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone through the MHSS.
- Kings Billabong: There is still the potential for further development of this settlement and this should continue in line with market demand. However, given the presence of a low capacity sewer line to Kings Billabong, it will be important that a schedule is introduced to the LDRZ zone to maintaining the previous minimum lot size of 0.4ha.
- Lake Hawthorn: 110ha of principally 'College Lease' land that should be subject to further investigation (see previous section).
- Additional Low Density residential land is available in Merbein, and in Red Cliffs.

Where Low Density areas are contiguous to an urban area and the developer or landowner are willing to bear the costs associated with any required upgrades or extensions to existing systems, the 0.2ha minimum size should apply to land. However, in other Low Density areas not contiguous with one of the existing urban areas, where there are character or environmental issues or where the area is intended to provide a 'transition between urban and rural areas, the existing minimum of 0.4ha should continue to apply.

Areas where additional low density land is proposed are also outlined within this section, as follows.



koorlong

The small settlement of Koorlong, with its school, recreation facilities and shop has seen recent quality low density development at the Bushland Rise estate. Given the presence of these facilities and the take-up of almost all available land in the area, additional rezoning of land to facilitate further low density development in this settlement is proposed by the MHSS. While Koorlong is within an area affected by the Sunraysia Modernisation Project, it forms a discrete area which will not compromise longer term agricultural production. It is acknowledged that a concurrent proposal to rezone land in this area is being undertaken. The preferred area for rezoning is the triangle of land between the school and shop and Twenty-first Street closest to existing development, which would provide an additional 26ha of low density land. However, an additional area to the north of Twenty-First Street proposed through Amendment C84 should also be included (subject to Council's response to the Planning Panel) taking the area to approximately 34ha. The land beyond this parcel is not used for agricultural purposes so no conflict is anticipated. Development in this area should facilitate both the construction of Twenty First Street but also a clear through-block link from Benetook Avenue to Twenty-first Street. It is also important that future low density residential development in this settlement is in keeping with existing character, particularly in regard to fencing and public realm treatments and both the design treatments and key linkages should be required through any subdivision process. This character should also be recognised by Council in any streetscape or facility upgrades to assist in developing a distinctive identity for the settlement.

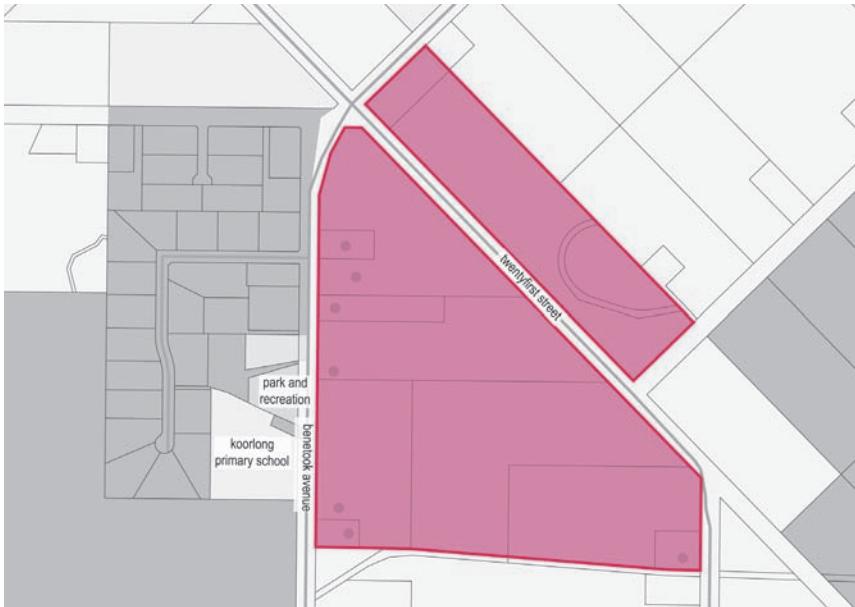


figure 9: proposed rezoning area: koorlong (34ha)

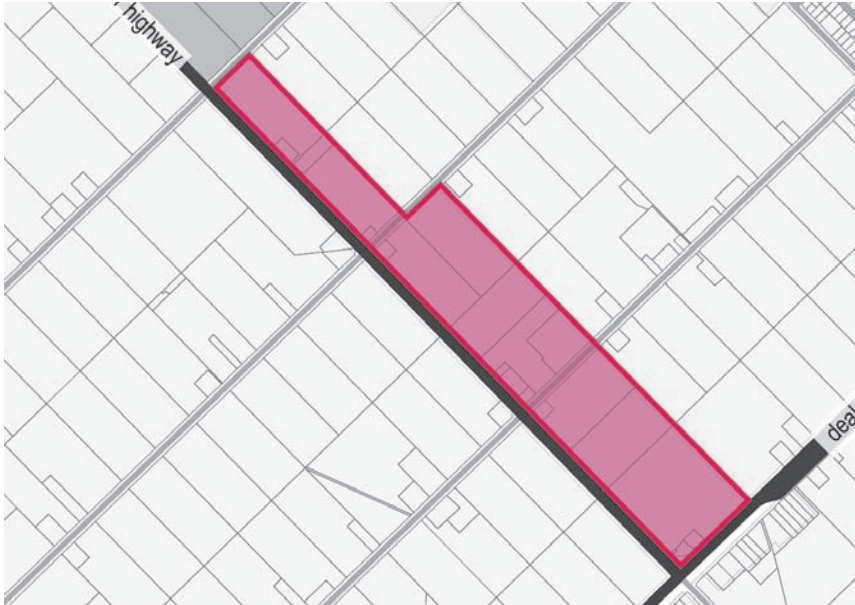


figure 10: proposed rezoning area: mildura (46ha)

mildura

In general, Low Density residential development is not the preferred form of residential development within the 'main urban area' of Mildura. While it is acknowledged that there will be demand for larger lots, these should be provided within the General Residential Zone as part of the diversification of lot sizes. Larger lots of 2000sqm and above are considered to be better located where the establishment of this type of development can support other settlements which may otherwise not attract new residents and where servicing constraints means larger lots are necessary. The exception to this is where there are specific areas where Low Density development can provide a transition at an urban edge or acts as a 'buffer'. No further rezoning is proposed in the 'main urban area' as part of the initial implementation of the MHSS. However, an area between the Mildura South growth area and the Calder Highway (to the west of Deakin Avenue) has been identified for rezoning to Low Density Residential Zone when it can be demonstrated there is a need for additional Low Density land. Rezoning in this area should be staged to either be contiguous with development occurring within the Mildura South growth area, or from the Riverside Avenue area, where it adjoins an existing area of Low Density land. Any interface with the Mildura South growth area should be separated by a road, and consideration must be given to the Calder Highway corridor and any future requirements in relation to that important main road to ensure development does not compromise wider transportation needs.





### cabarita

Cabarita currently accommodates some of Mildura's most desirable 'low density' development. However, Cabarita is in a strategic location where unconsidered development has the potential to impact in the longer term on both the Mildura Airport and the Sunraysia Modernisation Project. As such, any additional development in the vicinity must be in areas where the impacts are minimal. Notwithstanding this, two additional areas in Cabarita are proposed for rezoning. The first area is relatively modest but is considered appropriate, given the other recommendations of the MHSS. The area identified south of the Calder Highway is a defined pocket that has been primarily developed for residential uses already. While the land in question is close to the area where development is discouraged to protect the Mildura Airport, the rezoning of this small pocket is considered to have limited impact given the existing development in the area. Any additional development towards the airport in the longer term is not supported. The rezoning will allow some re-subdivision of existing residential blocks and better reflect the existing use and subdivision of the land.

In addition, a second area, extending north between McEdwards Street and Lake Hawthorn to the railway line is also proposed for rezoning. This area is contiguous with the existing area and is clearly separated from the agricultural areas. While the Strategy supports a Low Density rezoning, this is only subject to investigations to confirm the ability of the area to appropriately manage sewerage and drainage at this density. If the area is found to be unsuitable for a higher density, the original recommendation of a Rural Living Zone with a minimum subdivision size of 1 ha should



figure 11: proposed rezoning area: cabarita (35ha)

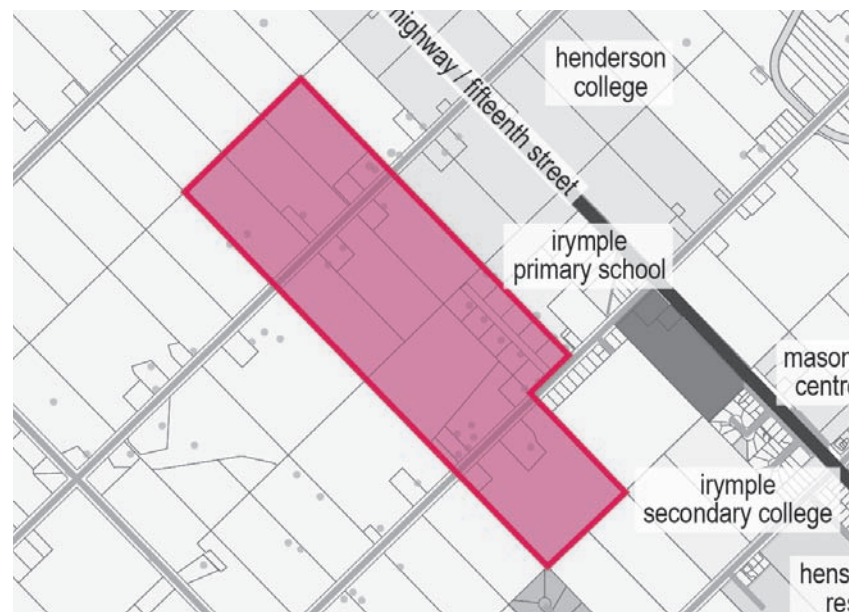


figure 12: proposed rezoning area: irymple (50ha)

be pursued. Even if connection to the sewer system are pursued lots of under 0.4ha are not supported, in order to ensure that sufficient open space is retained on lots and respect the character of the existing settlement. Development in this area (around 20ha) would yield a maximum of 42 dwellings, and would need to be carefully planned to ensure appropriate access to and protection of the lake environment. A Development Plan should therefore be applied which (at a minimum) identifies the minimum lot size, formalisation of Robertson Road along the lake interface and improvements to the pedestrian / cycle trails in the area, as well as considering the opportunities to improve biodiversity outcomes through landscaping treatments in this area. These should be sought even if a Rural Living Zone is found to be more appropriate.

### irympole

An area is also proposed for low density residential uses at the south-western extent of Irymple. Given growth of Irymple is expected to occur to the north-east, the inclusion of some additional land (approx 50ha) in this area is considered appropriate and will add to the diversity of housing available around the settlement, without compromising longer term growth. The area identified essentially 'connects' existing isolated subdivisions and proposed development to the south of Irymple, and includes the existing low density subdivision around Angel Grove in a more suitable zone. It also allows the development of a clearer urban edge along this interface. To ensure the objective of creating a more connected and coherent settlement pattern in the southern part of the Irymple township, including a clear boundary between the township and agriculture areas to the south, a Development Plan should be prepared. This should identify a minimum lot size of 0.4ha to ensure a clear distinction in the character between this area and the urban township, and a road boundary between the low density and farming areas. Consideration should also be given to applying this Development Plan to other areas south of Fifteenth Street.



## rural living

Within the suite of zones applicable in Victoria, the Rural Living Zone is not currently used in Mildura, despite the presence in the municipality of a large amount of development which fits the description of the zone (see boxed text). To date, this type of development in Mildura has been largely accommodated in the Farming Zone. This is contrary to a Ministerial Direction and led to a Ministerial intervention, resulting in the inclusion of the *Mildura Older Irrigation Areas Incorporated Document* within the Mildura Planning Scheme (see *Background Report* and *Key Issues Paper* for more details). It is important in the context of a sustainable agricultural industry that rural living opportunities be provided in a considered manner to decrease land use conflicts but equally, this important and valued component of the residential market should be accommodated. It is difficult to quantify the demand for this type of residential opportunity given the current lack of availability, but the quantity of lots being accommodated within the Farming Zone is indicative of a latent demand for this type of residential development. Rural Living lots are generally around 2-6ha, with a current default minimum lot size of 2ha. Demand for Rural Living lots is often highest where there is some form of environmental feature or interesting landscape which creates a higher level of amenity.



### ‘RURAL RESIDENTIAL’ DEVELOPMENT

*Rural residential development refers to land in a rural setting, used and developed for dwellings that are not primarily associated with agriculture. Some agriculture may take place on the land, however, it will be ancillary to the use for a dwelling. It is likely to be carried on for ‘lifestyle’ reasons and is unlikely to provide a significant source of household income.*

*Rural residential land is typically also used for non-agricultural home occupations or for large gardens. These lots are larger than typical residential lots, but are usually too small for agricultural use.*

*Because of its primarily residential function, rural residential development requires access to most of the normal services and infrastructure provided in urban settlements. Typically it also generates urban residential amenity expectations.*

source: rural residential development, november 2013

### THE RURAL LIVING ZONE

*This zone provides for residential use in a rural environment. It is designed to cater for lots in a rural setting that are large enough to accommodate a dwelling and a farming use. The farming use is likely to be carried on for reasons other than the need to provide a significant source of household income.*

*In this zone:*

- *It is not essential that a dwelling be genuinely associated with a farming use of the land.*
- *Some farming may take place on the land, however this will not always be the case.*
- *Residents have a reasonable expectation that their amenity will be protected.*
- *A wider range of tourism, commercial and retail uses may be considered in the zone.*

source: applying the rural zones practice note, november 2013



### merbein

The township of Merbein currently has two areas of Low Density Residential land (to the north-east and south-west) but there are additional opportunities to provide some Rural Living land close to the township. The provision of additional land for rural living purposes is for two key reasons; the first is that the landscape and environmental features to the north and the south-east of the settlement provide some of the more interesting conditions but it is also considered that the settlement itself could benefit from a diversification of the housing market available. Fundamental to the identification of areas for rezoning is that the areas in question (while close to the areas proposed for modernisation) have clear and definED boundaries. The first area connects the existing Low Density areas to the south-east of Merbein to the Low Density areas of Cabarita. Importantly, given the identification of this area as an 'area of benefit' through the Sunraysia Modernisation Project, rezoning is only provided to the west of the railway line. A Rural Living Zone is considered appropriate in this area to ensure that a sense of a 'rural' break is maintained between Mildura and Merbein and in recognition of the environmental sensitivities of the location adjoining Lake Hawthorn, including endangered fauna. Allowing subdivision down to 0.4ha would potentially compromise both these aspirations. Land to the north of Merbein is also proposed for rezoning to Rural Living Zone. Similar to land in the south-east, this is a discrete area between an existing Low Density area and the township which is not contiguous with the broader agricultural areas. It also provides opportunities to live close to the Murray River corridor which are not present in many other areas of the municipality.

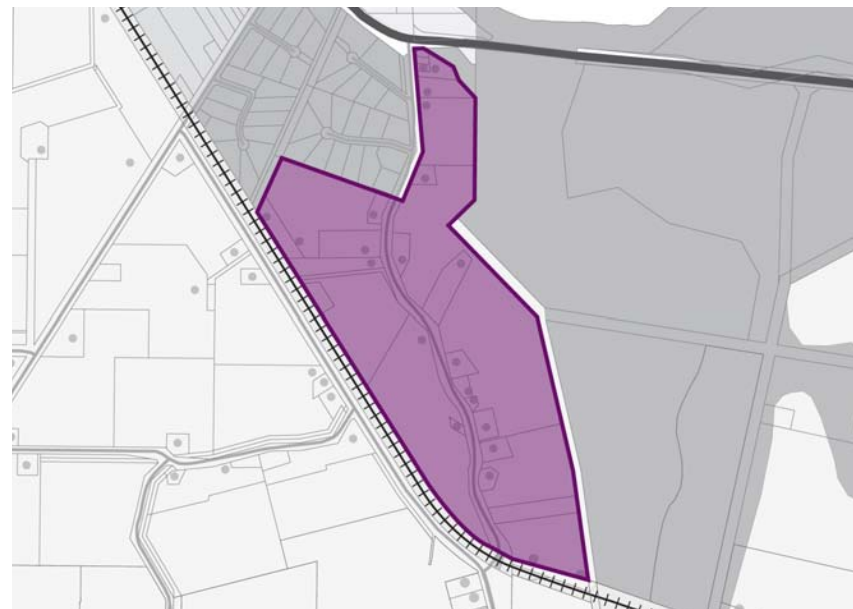


figure 13: proposed rezoning area: merbein (south-east) (48ha)

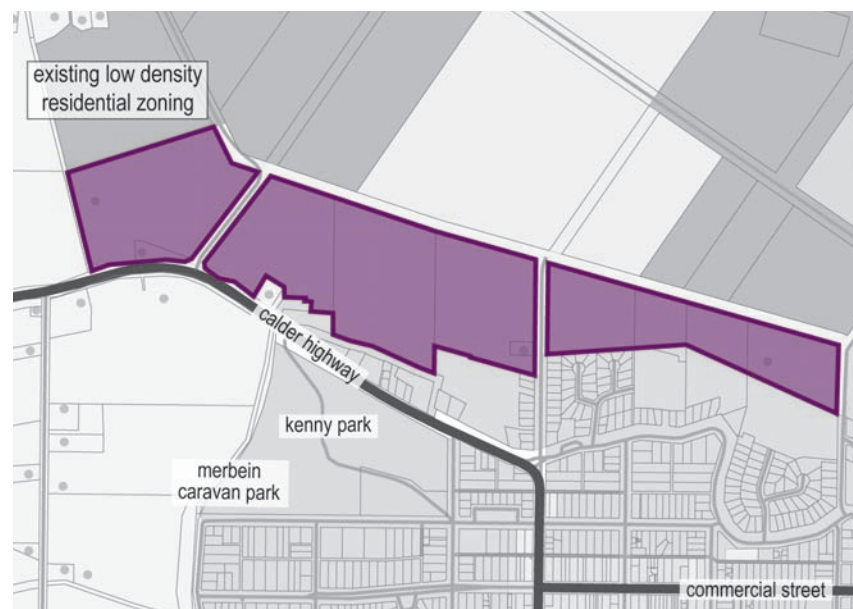


figure 14: proposed rezoning area: merbein (north) (45ha)

### cabarita

In addition to the Rural Living opportunities proposed around Merbein and the small pocket proposed for rezoning to a Low Density Residential Zone, another clearly defined area is proposed to be rezoned to Rural Living in Cabarita. This area has significant amounts of residential development already present and the land proposed for rezoning is, again, located in an area where the development of dwellings will not compromise existing or potential future agricultural development. Specifically, this land is between a road and areas of conservation land or the adjoining golf course and will not therefore have any potential impact on the opportunities associated with the modernisation project.





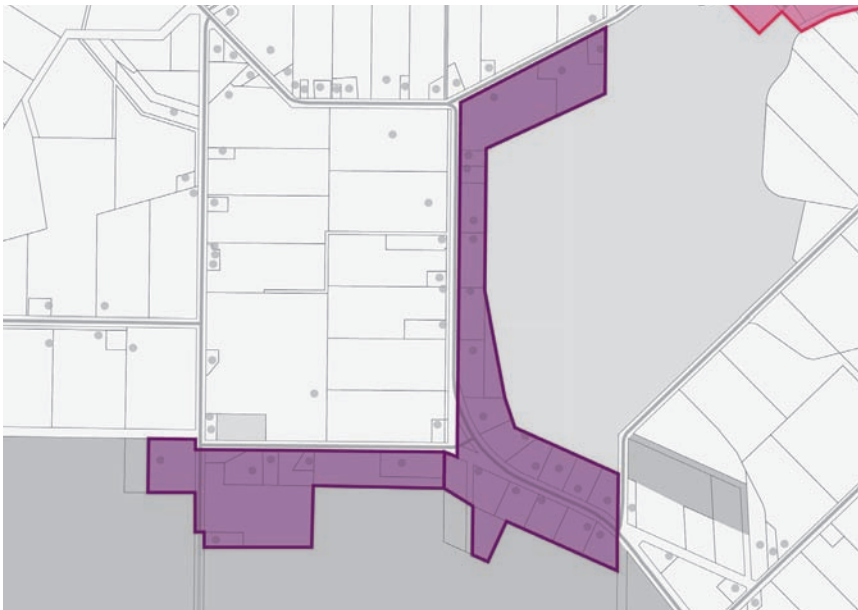


figure 15: proposed rezoning area: cabarita (south) (50ha)



figure 16: proposed rezoning area: cardross (23ha)

**cardross**

Away from the main urban area, another area of Rural Living land is proposed around the township of Cardross. The relatively small township of Cardross is an attractive rural hamlet with quality recreation facilities, a local shop / post office and a primary school. Servicing constraints in Cardross mean expansion of the existing Township Zone or the introduction of a Low Density Residential Zone would not be supported. Allowing some Rural Living development provides additional population to support the township while also providing opportunities for this style of residential development in the southern part of the MOIA. The potential for flooding to the north of the township (around the recreation reserve) means that land proposed for rezoning is only to the south of the township.



**other areas of rural residential development**

It is important to also acknowledge that in addition to the existing Low Density areas identified earlier in this section there are also a couple of other area within Mildura (existing and proposed) which provide an opportunity for ‘rural residential’ style development. The first of these is the Woorlong Wetlands area along the river corridor between Red Cliffs and Kings Billabong. This area allows subdivision into lots of between 1 and 3ha with an average of 1.5ha, subject to additional design and siting controls in recognition of the environmental context. There remains the potential for additional development within this area with a number of larger lots which could be further subdivided, and a number of already subdivided lots which have not yet been developed. Between them these provide a theoretical potential of 29 additional dwellings.

In addition, the Strategy supports a previous recommendation to support some additional land to the north of Flora Avenue to a Rural Conservation Zone. While a relatively large area is proposed for rezoning, the presence of significant flooding impacts in this area, means only limited areas will be available for development (around 30h). The majority of this land is also subject to a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay which may also restrict residential development opportunities. Of the 30h available, only around 12ha is unconstrained. A minimum subdivision size of 2ha is recommended for this area, and there is therefore only likely to be potential for between 6 and 15 additional dwellings within this area (noting that residential development opportunities were not the driver for the proposed rezoning).

Another area within the ‘relaxation’ area to Mildura’s east has also been identified as having potential to be a focal point for rural residential development, in this case, with an emphasis on ‘environmental living’. North of Kings Billabong is another clearly defined area which is primarily used for residential purposes (see figure 5). Given the relationship to Kings Billabong, a planned settlement with stringent requirements for improved environmental outcomes should be investigated further, in conjunction with the Catchment Management Authority.





### supply and demand for rural residential development

The anticipated demand to 2032 based on high growth scenarios trends for rural lifestyle lots around the main urban area of Mildura is in the order of 490 lots. This includes dwellings in the Farming Zone and the Low Density Zone in Mildura, Nichols Point, Kings Billabong, Koorlong, Cabarita and Irymple.

The MHSS has identified a generous amount of land for rural lifestyle development in recognition of the both the demand documented through the *Background Report* on the basis of previous approvals, but also in recognition of the latent demand that may exist in other areas where land has been unavailable. The additional dwellings that would be theoretically available within areas proposed for rezoning are identified on table 1. It is important to note that these figures are indicative only, and do not include consideration of matters such as the need to provide road connections etc, or the desire of landowners to develop their land. The MHSS also proposes changes which encourage the provision of larger lots within the general residential areas of Mildura which may also affect demand for larger lots outside this area.

The current restriction of available land in some areas has also been considered in the identification of land within a wide range of contexts, allowing a broadening of the market. While the supply proposed through this Strategy is above what would usually be contemplated in meeting identified demand, the particular characteristics of the low density market within Mildura, and the relationship of this market to the development of dwellings in the Farming Zone mean that a unique approach is required.

Given the potential number of new dwellings that could be developed in the Farming Zone through any future changes to the MOIA document (on the basis of the existing lot pattern) and the wide ranging implications of this, decisions made in regard to this matter will have a strong impact on the ability of the MHSS to achieve the sustainable settlement pattern sought. Once a position on the provision of rural lifestyle lots has been confirmed, the on-going monitoring of this market will be critical, particularly given the introduction of a new zone (the Rural Living Zone) and relatively recent introduction of a comprehensive tracking system for permits.

The table below identifies where land is proposed for rezoning. While this represents a generous supply of land for rural residential development, in some areas there will be more limited capacity for additional dwellings than indicated by the land area due to existing development as well as the factors mentioned previously.

However, when considered in conjunction with the larger lots the Strategy seeks to make available within the urban area, and existing available lots, as well as those which are likely to be taken up within the ‘relaxation area’ discussed in the following section, there will be little justification for any rezoning beside that identified below over the life of the Strategy unless there is a demonstrated need through take up of identified land within the similar areas demonstrated by the monitoring system.

area	size (approx)	zone	minimum subdivision size	potential new dwellings
cabarita	35ha	low density residential	0.4ha	61
cabarita	50ha	rural living	1ha	18
merbein	52ha	rural living	1ha	33
merbein	45ha	rural living	2ha	14
irymples	50ha	low density residential	0.4ha	78
koorlong	34ha	low density residential	0.4ha	77
cardross	23ha	rural living	1ha	12
mildura south (following development of stage 1 of the mildura south growth area)	46ha	low density residential	0.4ha	77
TOTAL (short term)			293 dwellings	
TOTAL (longer term)			370 dwellings	

table 1: potential additional dwellings



## rural residential development in the MOIA

One of the unknowns in the identification of land for rural residential development is the number of dwellings which may continue to be provided within the Farming Zone of the Mildura Older Irrigated Areas (MOIA). It is understood that a parallel process of review of the MOIA policy, in light of recent changes to the Farming Zone and current operational issues, is being undertaken by Council. As such, the MHSS makes only the following recommendations and observations.

The ability of landowners to provide dwellings in the Farming Zone should not be viewed on a 'case-by-case' basis. Given many claims for the development of dwellings refer to the current difficulties associated with agriculture that some portions of the farming community are experiencing, the assumption is that the vast majority of dwellings sought in the MOIA are for 'lifestyle' dwellings for sale to support the landowner rather than in association with agricultural use of the land. The emphasis on excision of lots reinforces this, as do many of the submissions made in response to the exhibition to the MHSS *Background Report*. As such, the ability to develop lots within the MOIA should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a wider consideration of a rural lifestyle residential market.

The MHSS has made clear recommendations that there is net community benefit in this type of housing being provided in carefully planned and considered estates where they can support existing services and facilities and will not compromise existing or future agricultural use of the land. As such, any consideration relating to the issue of permits for dwellings, or subdivision of lots in the MOIA should also consider the potential impact on the demand for more well-located rural lifestyle development, given a finite market for rural lifestyle lots.

Notwithstanding the discussion above and the identified supply and demand outlined earlier in this section, in a practical sense the MHSS acknowledges that there are some areas of the MOIA where, in the longer term, the agricultural use of the land is unlikely to continue. This area was identified that though MHSS *Background Report* as shown on Figure 4 (pg9). This area (referred to as the 'relaxation area') is, on one hand, not affected by the Sunraysia Modernisation Project, but on the other, is significantly affected by its proximity to the 'main

urban centre'. Much of this land is also within the identified Mildura East growth area. While there remains on-going investment in agricultural pursuits in this area, in the longer term, the constraints posed by urban growth and the relative containment of the area are likely to constrain commercial agricultural production. However, while this is recognised by the MHSS, it is still considered that significant opportunities remain in this area for agricultural activity both in providing niche markets that benefit from close proximity to the urban centre, but also for tourism related agriculture as well as 'hobby' farms. As such, the Farming Zone remains an appropriate zone. In light of the anticipated longer term transition of much of this land to residential uses, and the relative impacts on land to the north (between the growth area and the Murray River), a 'common sense' approach to allowing some additional dwellings in this area has been proposed. It is important to note that this 'common sense' 'relaxation' of the existing MOIA controls is only proposed within a designated area. This is in response to the identified land supply issues



touched on above where a wholesale relaxation of the MOIA may compromise the viability of with other (planned) rural lifestyle developments, and potentially even the on-going growth within the 'main urban area'. The location of the designated 'relaxation' area means that any new dwellings in the area would be in relatively close proximity to services and facilities, and in many cases, would be well-connected to the main urban area through a range of shared paths and other transport corridors.

As such, new policy should be introduced into the Mildura Planning Scheme that provides more specific guidance on the discretion that will exist in these areas. This may be most easily achieved through a modification of the existing MOIA Incorporated Document to identify the 'relaxation' area and the controls associated with it, but this will depend on the approach taken through the parallel review. This discretion should be guided by a series of overarching principles and provide clear direction on the matters which would need to be considered. These are as follows (noting these are not exhaustive and other principles may also need to be considered).

As a matter of principle, any new dwellings with this area:

- Should not compromise the continuation of an existing horticultural use on a lot; and
- Should not affect on-going agricultural use of adjoining land; and
- Must not compromise the ability to achieve preferred urban design outcomes in future growth area.



The following are suggested areas and associated parameters, where, provided the above principles are applied, an application for a dwelling within the Farming Zone could be considered.

1. Where there is a 'row' of existing dwellings can be considered as 'infill' within this row. A 'row' is defined as where there are 5 or more dwellings along a street frontage within 400m, set within 50m of the street frontage
2. Dwellings cannot be considered at the edges of the existing row except in two circumstances:
  - a) the proposed site for the dwelling is on a contiguous corner, or
  - b) the lot is under 1ha (dependant on servicing considerations).
3. Any application for a dwelling within a 'row' must be accompanied by a proposed building envelope which must identify siting within 50m of the street frontage and should not be associated with further excision of the land.



4. Where a proposed dwelling is the only dwelling on the lot and a building envelope demonstrates the dwelling will be located adjacent to a school or other sensitive, non-residential use, a permit may also be considered.
5. Any new dwelling must also provide an appropriate landscape buffer between the proposed dwelling and any agricultural land, to minimise conflict, as a condition of permit. Where the proposed dwelling is on a different lot to the agricultural use, this buffer should be provided on the residential lot.
6. Within the identified Mildura East growth area, applications must also demonstrate how urban development of the land could occur around the proposed dwelling and, where necessary, an easement or setbacks to ensure longer term connections through future urban areas should be considered as a condition of permit.
7. Consideration should also be given to the need for proposed new dwellings in the Farming Zone within the Mildura East growth area to contribute to future infrastructure costs. This should be considered in light of the existing Development Contributions Plan Overlay which affects the area by the working group on development contributions (see pg50).

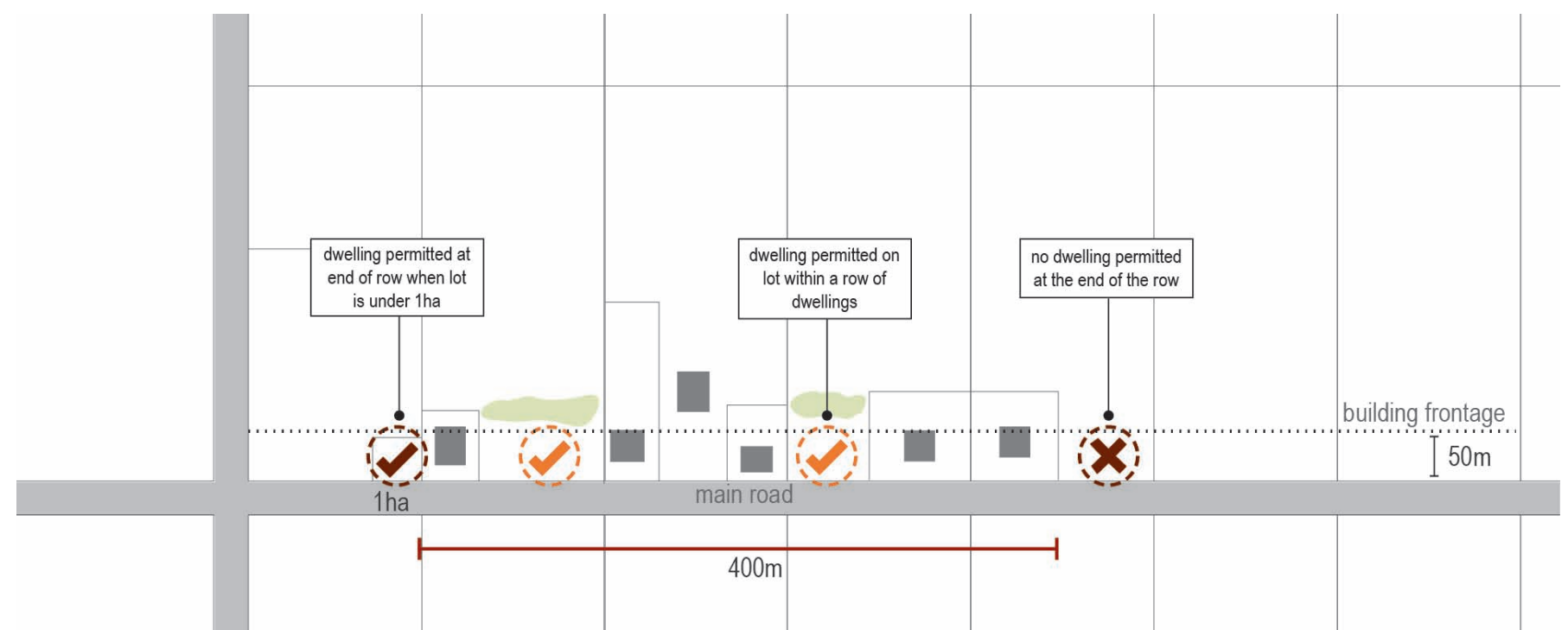


figure 17: indicative dwelling flexibility in 'relaxation area'



Figure 17 opposite provides an indication of the areas where dwellings in the ‘relaxation’ area may be considered. While recommendations regarding the future operation and controls of the MOIA incorporated document are beyond the scope of this project, it is recommended that the document be amended to clearly identify this designated transition area and either include guidelines similar to those outlined above or reference a local policy to the same end. It is also recommended that Council prepare a ‘fact sheet’ detailing exactly where new dwellings will be considered (including illustrative diagrams), information about the types of landscape buffers that will be required, and application requirements. As identified in the *MHSS Background Report*, it is also considered that a further study to consider innovative ways of encouraging sustainable land management practice, ensuring on-going maintenance of unused blocks and providing incentives for the amalgamation of lots would be of benefit in reducing the pressure for housing in these areas and the associated impacts on the ability to implement a sustainable settlement pattern.



**ACTIONS**

- *Rezone land to Rural Living in Cardross, Cabarita and Merbein*
- *Rezone land to Low Density Residential in Cabarita and Irymple*
- *Investigate suitable minimum subdivision size for land south of railway line in Cabarita*
- *Introduce a schedule to the Low Density Residential Zone to retain a 0.4ha minimum subdivision size in Kings Billabong, Cabarita and Irymple.*
- *Amend the MOIA incorporated document to recognise the flexibility in the ‘relaxation’ area and associated policy*
- *Prepare a ‘fact sheet’ for landowners regarding changes to policy in these areas*
- *Update the Mildura Planning Scheme to include relevant policy*

**POLICY CHANGES**

- *Rezoning of land as identified*
- *Application of Development Plan Overlay to low density areas proposed for rezoning in Cabarita and Irymple*
- *Clear identification of required design treatments or road alignments in the settlements of Koorlong, Merbein and Cardross*
- *Amendment of the MOIA Incorporated Document or introduction of a Local Planning Policy to include clear direction on the decision guidelines and parameters for any application within the ‘relaxation’ area.*





## sustainable suburbs



Sustainable suburbs and healthy communities are closely linked and this section provides direction on how Mildura's suburbs can provide for better neighbourhood design. Many of the principles and directions outlined within this chapter have begun to be introduced into Mildura through a variety of planning policies, though changes to the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and in particular through more recently prepared Development Plans. However many of these policies are not explicitly articulated within the Mildura Planning Scheme or are contained within various reference documents. As a guiding document, it is important for the MHSS to bring these consideration to the fore and enshrine them within the Mildura Planning Scheme.

Consultation held in the preparation of this Strategy clearly outlined a widespread dissatisfaction with the standard of recent development within Mildura and a desire to see development adopt an approach that is more reflective of local conditions and provide for improved community connections. Given the wide breadth of issues that contribute to the overall sustainability of suburbs, the MHSS has focussed on two key areas of neighbourhood design to support healthy communities and on 'cooling the suburbs' to reduce the impacts of higher temperatures. It should be noted, however, that these key areas also have significant crossover and should be pursued alongside to other aspirations relating to energy efficiency, water sensitive urban design and the protection of biodiversity outlined within the SPPF.

## healthy neighbourhoods

The urban form and structure of our communities has an impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. Subdivision design and infrastructure planning and delivery can directly influence accessibility and the desire of residents to pursue active and passive forms of activity, both on a planned and an incidental basis. There are clear links between physical activity and mental and physical health. Preventing health problems is far more cost effective and beneficial than treatment. Given the influence the built environment can have on levels of physical activity, there is a clear role for Council to play in ensuring that both new and existing development supports the creation of healthy neighbourhoods and a healthy,

active community. Good design can also have a significant influence on the social health of a community through fostering engagement and interaction between residents. Council has an obligation to develop a Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan which seeks to improve the lives of its residents. While such a plan needs to be multidisciplinary and also relates to infrastructure and facilities provision, a significant contribution can be made through the delivery of sustainable, walkable, healthy communities. This is best addressed at the planning stage to ensure a broad, coordinated approach to residential development. It provides the ability to ensure that best practice design principles are applied with the aim of achieving healthy communities.

The form of a healthy neighbourhood is multifaceted. At its core, it must be walkable, but healthy neighbourhoods also have access to healthy food, accessible active transport, and a design and layout that is both safe and perceived to be safe. These matters are explored in more detail through this section of the MHSS.





*Planners play an essential role in planning, designing and regulating the environments in which we live. Well-planned neighbourhoods can increase the number of people who walk or cycle to shops, schools, parks, services, facilities and public transport. This supports healthier lifestyles for local residents, a more socially vibrant local neighbourhood and brings with it associated economic and environmental benefits.*

*Australia is a car dependent society. Policies and planning to accommodate car use consumes our built environment. A high level of car travel has serious consequences for personal health and community well being. "Australians may be 'building in' car dependency into our children, making our problems much worse in the future" (Australian Greenhouse Office, quoted in Cregan 2003).*

*The need for healthy urban planning is becoming increasingly important. In Australia, the annual, direct healthcare costs attributable to physical inactivity are about \$400 million. More than 8,000 deaths are associated with physical inactivity each year, representing an estimated 77,000 premature potential years of life lost because of inactivity. Engaging in regular physical activity reduces the risk of diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, osteoporosis, colon cancer, obesity and injury. In addition, physical activity has been shown to alleviate depression and anxiety and increase social interaction and integration (Bauman et al. 2002). Overweight and obesity is, in part, a consequence of physical inactivity. Obesity in Australia has more than doubled in the past 20 years – over seven million adult Australians are overweight or obese (AIHW 2001). The obesity epidemic is common at all ages, in all parts of Australia and throughout all population groups (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing 2003).*

*For health benefits, the National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommend that people of all ages accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week (AIHW 2001). Despite this recommendation, about one-half of Australian adults are insufficiently active for health gain (Bauman et al. 2002) and levels of physical inactivity have increased in recent years (AIHW 2002).*

*When 'health' is integrated into planning, the choice for people to be active becomes more convenient, easy, safe and enjoyable. Providing convenient, easy-to-access built environments that encourage people to be 'out and about' on a daily basis will contribute to a more active and vibrant society.*

*quote from the 'healthy by design' guidelines prepared by the Heart Foundation*

## active transport

Walkable neighbourhoods have a role to play in reducing incidence of social isolation, promoting incidental physical activity, improving sustainability and assisting in the creation of a sense of place and community. A walkable neighbourhood is not just one that includes the provision of footpaths, although this is essential. The walkability of a neighbourhood will be influenced by the residential layout, the attractiveness of the streets, by their perceived safety, and by the places that can be readily reached within a reasonable walking distance and time frame.

A curvilinear subdivision based on curving roads and with numerous court bowls is not an ideal walkable form. It requires much greater distances to be covered to reach a destination, does not provide a clear legible route to destinations. It lacks structure, form and intensity to be able to provide well located cycle and pedestrian paths that form part of a transport network. A more traditional grid based form that is adapted to respond to topography and natural features forms a more suitable basis for walkability. This provides for optimum legibility and permeability, which assists in connectivity between uses. To deliver this structure and form of development, there will be a greater need for integration between subdivision developments, with a focus on connectivity and provision of local neighbourhoods.

Areas should be designed to ensure a high level of pedestrian permeability. This is to ensure that pedestrian connectivity is maximised. A focus on an integrated network connecting open spaces, shops and community facilities, schools and public transport (bus stops) is needed. Connections should be both on the street, and through the provision of a network of dedicated cycle and pedestrian paths (such as the greenways / blueways that have been included in recent Development Plans - see next page for a more detail description of 'greenways' and 'blueways') that form important linear links between nodes of activity.

Streets must be of suitable width to provide footpaths on both sides, and benefit from landscaping to ensure a high amenity, high quality environment. This increases the desirability of people to use their streets. In addition the perceived safety of the

street and the visual interest provided will also influence how the community feels about walking and cycling. These matters are addressed independently below.

The provision of a built form that encourages walking must also have regard to the location of key land use functions that the community may wish to walk to. A mixed use neighbourhood that provides convenient retail, civic, community, recreational and residential uses will encourage residents to be 'out and about' on a daily basis, and will assist in the creation of a more active, socially connected, and healthy community. New residential areas must therefore be planned to ensure the equitably spatial distribution of retail and community / civic facilities for future communities. Such facilities; including parks and a network of cycle and pedestrian paths, and particularly public transport infrastructure, needs to be provided in the early stages of development. This assists in forming part of the travel and use patterns for new residents.





### safe, diverse and interesting

To encourage people to walk and cycle through their neighbourhoods, the journey should be as safe, diverse and visually interesting as possible. To enhance the liveability of residential areas, the provision of a healthier, more accessible design and physical form should be developed. This is to be socially inclusive; and accessible for all.

The network of streets and paths created within a community must be safe, and perceived to be safe, in order to be utilised by the community. The perception of safety has a huge role to play in the desirability to use our streets and paths. It therefore has a direct influence on how successfully we can achieve healthy, walkable neighbourhoods. The safety of our neighbourhoods is informed by matters such as passive and active surveillance of spaces, paths and streets, street lighting, levels of activity and by construction matters (well-constructed paths, no steps, accessible for all etc.)



Neighbourhoods can maximise the safety of their public spaces and streets through good design. This includes by:

- Designing residential lots to face the street frontage, have windows to the street, and have low or no front fences. This will increase the level of passive surveillance and the perception of safety for street users. Dwellings which are dominated by garages (such as the one shown in the photo below) prohibit interactions between the street and residences creating a sense of disconnection.
- Providing a variety of housing forms and densities. This has broad benefits of providing housing diversity to meet the needs of the community, while providing opportunities to located higher density housing nearer to local or neighbourhood centres. This increases activity, which in turn assists with safety.
- Providing public open spaces and parks in areas where they are overlooked by uses, or partly contained by uses (eg: public plaza space with active uses fronting, parks with residential frontages adjacent), while providing clear definition between public and private space.
- Providing a mix of uses in local centres and areas that encourage activity at different times of the day.
- Providing high quality lighting to streets and along well defined cycle and walking paths. Pedestrian and cycle paths should link attractive, well used spaces, including new and existing parks and the river corridor with residential settlements. This provides visual interest and links diverse places. Lighting ensures that paths can be used for a longer period of the day without a feeling of insecurity.
- Designing landscaping and other features to not visually obscure pathways. This ensures good lines of sight and assists with a feeling of safety.
- Ensuring buildings in local and neighbourhood centres follow principles of safety in design, avoiding hiding places, inactive frontages and provide clear entrances.

### greenways

*Greenways are roadways which, in addition to carrying vehicular traffic, also have a very strong focus on active transport. To facilitate this they incorporate generous footpaths, and substantial canopy tree and other vegetation along them. They also have a generous number of 'pause places' and appropriate street furniture such as bike racks and drinking fountains at relevant destinations. They are also often associated with water sensitive urban design and have a focus on safe pedestrian crossing point. Greenways not only connect key destinations but provide opportunities for informal exercise and socialising within neighbourhoods*

### blueways

*While blueways are similar to greenway in their function in active as connective open space, that facilitate active transport choice, blueways, in Mildura also incorporate water channels, making a design feature out of the irrigation infrastructure which has played such a strong role in the development of Mildura and its cultural identity. Where greenways are generally associated with road corridors, blueways are not necessarily.*



Safer neighbourhoods have the potential to be more active neighbourhoods. The best way to increase safety is through the community feeling safe to use their streets and public spaces, which positively reinforces the safety of their streets and places. An emphasis on achieving walkable, sustainable mixed use neighbourhoods will therefore have positive benefits for community safety as well as lifestyle and health benefits.

Another key factor in increasing decisions to walk will be the introduction of ‘pause places’ along key routes, to ensure that any journey by foot can be broken up at convenient locations. In recognition of Mildura’s climate, these ‘pause places’ should also include canopy vegetation to provide shade, as well as (ideally) a drinking fountain for water. In addition to providing places to pause, a comprehensive system of street and wayfinding signage is also critical. In particular, ensuring that signs to key destinations are provided which indicate the distance and average time it would take to walk or cycle to the next destination.

**access to healthy food**

Physical activity can improve people’s health, but equally as important is access to healthy food. Dispersed residential areas with poor provision for supermarkets, and with limited public transport availability can make it more difficult for parts of the community to access healthy food.

Small shops often find it more difficult to sustain a supply of affordable perishable goods. Residential areas require access to a supermarket to ensure that a wide range of goods are available throughout the communities, and choice can be exercised in relation to food purchasing. The location of these shops and the ability to access them by public or private transport is important. Supermarkets provided within 1 kilometre of residential housing will assist in ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of shopping facilities. Public transport routes and cycle and pedestrian routes to such local nodes of activity should be clearly provided to encourage alternative means of transport.

Consideration should also be given to incorporating ‘non-planned’ community space within new development areas to allow communities to develop uses for

these spaces once they are established. There is often a lack of ‘free’ space in new development areas which can compromise the ability for communities to come together and pursue goals and outcomes for their local community which may not have been envisaged at the planning stage. One of the key barriers to establishing local food production such as community gardens is the lack of available space. While the development of this ‘non-planned’ space as a community garden may not be the eventual outcome, ensuring that the potential is retained at the planning stage is critical to allowing these more localised food production systems to establish. Leaving ‘non-planned’ space until a community establishes also empowers the new community by allowing them to make decisions about their local priorities.

**public transport**

Healthy and sustainable communities are assisted by the provision of a range of transport modes, including public transport. Such transport needs to be considered and implemented in the early stages of residential occupation to



ensure the greatest take up of the service. Designing for walkable neighbourhoods with an emphasis on connections, including to cycle and pedestrian paths and public transport which connects with nodes of neighbourhood activity will assist in making non car-based transport more accessible and relevant to the local population. In addition, there is a need to recognise the importance of public transport as a means of increasing social and economic inclusion and wellbeing. In doing so, it is important to acknowledge the constraints and impacts on bus service provision that result from subdivision design, and seek to reduce barriers to efficient and effective transport provision.

Council has an obligation to the community to advocate strongly for public transport provision at a timely stage in the development process. The *Transport Integration Act 2010* clearly recognises the links between transport provision and social and economic inclusion, economic prosperity (for individuals and communities) and environmental sustainability. The Act seeks to facilitate better access to transport within local communities, and to minimise barriers to access.

Transport within the confines of the Act includes dedicated cycle and pedestrian paths, as well as the provision of public transport and planning for private transport (roads). The present network of ‘greenways’ and ‘blueways’ in Mildura provides a good starting point for the extension and enhancement of a shared cycle / pedestrian paths. This should build on the proposed ‘greenway’ along Sixteenth Street and the recent shared path links through the broader Mildura area. The network should be developed to link recreation nodes and spaces, the riverside, local centres, and Mildura CBD. Opportunities to link Mildura to Red Cliffs and Merbein via a shared trail should be investigated and would see benefits accrue to communities in both areas.

In the area covered by Mildura Rural City Council, the disparate nature of rural development and lack of density within some existing settlements means that there is an inherent difficulty in providing an efficient public transport network. There is a link between development density and patterns of development, and the ability to effectively serve a community with public transport. As such, there is both a need to acknowledge the benefits of density within urban areas, but also



to investigate alternate and innovative ways of ensuring transport connections for smaller settlements.

A key factor in the effectiveness of bus services relates to timely provision. Routes will not be put in place prior to residential occupation, but need to be in place early in the establishment of the community. This is needed to ensure that transport is provided while movement patterns are being established by residents, as this will ensure maximum patronage. There needs to be discussions with bus companies at Precinct Structure Plan stage to ensure any requirements for transport provision are adequately planned for. In addition, an agreed trigger point for implementation needs to be derived. The trigger point, once established, needs to be put into Council's monitoring and implementation programme. Once the threshold has been reached, the service provision should commence. Leaving discussions between developers and transport providers until a critical threshold is reached will lead to delays with provision. Once car dependency is established, it is much more difficult to change development patterns and achieve any sustainability outcomes sought by the *Integrated Transport Act*.

Given the nature of development within the region, it is clear that reliance will remain on bus provision as the main mode of public transport. This is important in serving local areas and to link settlements – and also to provide much relied upon links to Mildura itself. Bus services will be enhanced through the provision of additional local services and facilities within newly developed areas – thus providing a focal point for bus trips and reducing travel distance for many every day functions. Despite this, the broader regional area will still be highly reliant on the services provided within Mildura. Daily bus services to Mildura are required to provide access to key services and facilities such the hospital and specialist health facilities. Such facilities cannot be provided effectively within small settlements, but are critical to the health and wellbeing of residents within the broader region. In addition to transport within the region, consideration needs to be given to sustainable transport between the region and neighbouring areas, and to Melbourne. While it is acknowledged that bus services will remain the main and most critical mode of transport, there should also be advocacy for the return of passenger rail services serving the region.

To facilitate the changes sought through the MHSS, a new local policy on neighbourhood design should be prepared to clearly articulate requirements around streetscape design and other guidelines to provide a locally specific response and to strengthen existing policy within this area, such as Clause 56. In addition, these matters must also be incorporated in any new Development Plan.

### cooling the suburbs

As identified previously, one of the endorsed directions of the MHSS was to improve community health and sustainability outcomes in urban areas through improved neighbourhood and building design. A focal point for this is responding to a change in natural systems known as the 'urban heat island effect'. Outcomes to combat this effect have spin off benefits in achieving other sustainability goals but can provide a clear focus for change. Many of the measures to address this effect are relatively simple and inexpensive, they just require consideration in the early stages of development, and thus the Mildura Planning Scheme is a suitable tool in responding to this change. The urban heat island effect (UHIE) is commonly



recognised and accepted (see the Bureau of Meteorology, [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)), and many larger cities are beginning to take action to address this in light of the changing climate. A summary of the urban heat island effect is provided below.

*The Urban Heat Island Effect is localised warming due to the increase in the large amounts of paved and dark coloured surfaces like roads, roofs and car parks as a result of urban development. The sun's heat is absorbed not reflected and causes the surface and ambient temperatures to rise. Anthropogenic heat production, such as the heat produced through car engines and air conditioners also contribute to the Urban Heat Island Effect. On hot summer days, cities can be several degrees hotter than their rural surrounds.*

Climate change will increase this effect further still, and lack of a moderating sea breeze will also affect the extent to which Mildura's urban areas are affected. Climate change is currently tracking in line with high change scenarios. Having regard to the modelling undertaken for the Mallee region by the CSIRO, by 2070, there will be a potential increase in temperature of 2.8 degrees, an 11% decrease in rainfall and a 7% increase in potential evaporation. More pertinently, the current trend of 6 days over 40 degrees will increase to 18, the 32 days over 35 degrees will increase to 59, and the 81 days over 30 degrees will increase to 123. This means that in Mildura potentially 200 of the 365 days of the year will be over 30 degrees.

It is imperative that the planning and development of Mildura's urban areas recognises this trend in increased temperatures and the associated intensification of the urban heat island effect, particularly as it will disproportionately affect vulnerable groups in the community. While the UHIE is linked to detrimental environmental impacts, it is also strongly linked to impacts on the health and well-being of communities. Reduction in air quality, increased rates of heat stress and other illness, as well as increased rates of car and energy usage as people seek to keep cool (with the associated cost of living implications) are just some of the impacts if this effect is not managed.



Given the principal causes of the UHIE are associated with the storage of heat in parts of the urban fabric such as roads and buildings (and the associated release of this heat), making minor changes to neighbourhood design and the fabric of buildings can mediate the release, and even lessen the initial absorption of heat. Policies that address the causes of the UHIE can have a real and measurable impact in lowering temperatures at a local level. These include:

- Increasing tree cover as street trees, in backyards and as broad scale revegetation.
- Increasing the amount of water retention within urban areas.
- Reducing the amount of dark coloured impervious surfaces within urban areas.
- Minimising energy use, especially at peak periods.

In a hot dry climate, such as Mildura, the Australia Bureau of Meteorology identifies shade, pale surfaces and trees as the most effective approach. All of the above aims are also associated with other outcomes in the overall sustainability of urban areas, and crossover with the outcomes outlined in the previous chapter are also noted.

As such, the MHSS seeks to introduce policy to the Mildura Planning Scheme outlining the following strategies which will inform the preparation and assessment of development and subdivision plans, as well as capital works and should be considered in addition to the requirements of Clause 56.

1. Increase the amount of vegetation in Mildura's urban areas through the following means:

- Seek to protect existing remnant patches of vegetation where these can be integrated into urban areas as a first priority.
- Seek to create green linkages or urban vegetation corridors through growth areas and encourage additional vegetation in the private realm.
- Emphasise the provision of vegetation around any water bodies, creeks or channels where vegetation growth can be maximised.

- Ensure provision for generous areas of public open space within any new growth area and maintain and enhance existing 'left over' spaces through revegetation.
- Seek to minimise the provision of hard surfaces in public open spaces, and where hard surfaces are provided, break these up with vegetation.
- Seek to provide street trees planting in every new street in Mildura and develop a 'street tree planting guide' to identify trees that provide the greatest level of shade, while being suitable to the Mildura climate.
- Introduce street tree planting to existing streets where there is capacity to do so.
- Support the development of innovative responses which introduce additional vegetation to urban areas, such as green roofs or movable gardens.
- Introduce policy regarding the provision of vegetation associated with new dwellings to avoid the use of astroturf.
- Develop supplementary guidelines to raise awareness of appropriate plant species to reduce impact of inappropriate plant species selection in new development areas.

2. Reinforce existing WSUD principles through local policy and ensure all new development responds to these, including:

- Ensure that planning at the precinct stage considers opportunities of the integration of water sensitive urban design in larger scale drainage system.
- Seek to integrate more localised on-site retention of water through the introduction of rain garden or similar treatments within the public realm.
- Consider the relationship between the retention of stormwater within urban areas and the introduction of additional vegetation.
- Increase the amount of permeable surfaces in both the public and private realm.

- Promote the introduction of water tanks in new development, as required by the BCA and ensure they are appropriately sited.
- Seeking to capture and reuse water within public spaces, for instance, for watering open spaces.

3. Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces in urban areas through:

- Investigation and identification of a preferred public realm treatment which replaces current standards for the development of footpaths and roads and which emphasis light colours and permeable surfaces.
- Require any new areas of at-grade car parking providing more than 10 car spaces to incorporate canopy trees or other shading mechanisms and to include permeable areas.
- Recognise the ability of larger lots to accommodate additional vegetation and reduced hard surfaces.





- Increase the default required percentage of permeable surfaces.
4. Seek to minimise energy use and therefore reduce heat emissions within urban areas through subdivision and building design, as follows:
- In street design, recognise that east / west oriented street floors are exposed to sunlight all day, while on north / south oriented streets; buildings shade the street from radiant heating but received limited winter sun. Acknowledge north-west / south-east and north-east / south-west oriented streets are a good compromise.
  - Promote the use of lighter coloured roofs to reduce heat absorption.
  - Reinforce passive solar design and insulation standards to reduce reliance on air conditioners and artificial heating.
  - Require the provision of eaves on all new buildings to reduced heat absorption.
  - Encourage the introduction of vegetation to the east, west and northern side of dwellings to block solar radiation.

The preparation of a local policy to provide clear guidance on these and other energy efficiency measures should be undertaken. The preparation of any policy should have regard to the findings of the upcoming Ministerial Advisory Committee assessment of proposed local policies on Energy Efficient Design proposed by the Cities' of Banyule, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse and Yarra. Direction in relation to the above matters should also be provided through a revised MSS.

### **ACTIONS**

- *Introduce new local policy on neighbourhood design to inform both Development Plans and subdivision design*
- *Create a guide to provide locally relevant guidance on appropriate street tree species as well as other vegetation that is well suited to Mildura's climate.*
- *Update relevant section of the Mildura Planning Scheme*
- *Facts sheet series of sustainable housing design and long terms costs of poor design, to encourage design to go beyond basic requirements in addressing sustainability*

### **POLICY CHANGES**

- *Introduction of clear policy around the key elements and issues around healthy neighbourhood design into the MSS*
- *Requirement for building envelopes to be identified at subdivision stage identifying maximum building footprint (which must be related to the lot size), location of garages and main living area.*
- *Local requirements to supplement more generic requirements of Clause 56 reflecting the contents of this section, in particular, guidelines for street widths and treatments, inclusion of water sensitive urban design treatments, distribution of open space, greenways and blueways, allowance for 'unplanned' spaces, provision of canopy vegetation and permeable surfaces.*
- *Require grid networks, not cul-de-sacs and individual subdivision road layouts to provide easements for future connections. Where cul-de-sacs are unavoidable pedestrian connections must be provided where necessary to provide direct access to services and facilities.*
- *Require a clear network of cycle and pedestrian paths with suitable amenity and shade must be provided, along with associated 'pause places'.*
- *Pending the outcomes of the current Ministerial Advisory Committee on the matter, an efficient design policy should also be considered to address energy efficiency in building design more broadly (see pg 42)*
- *Consider introducing a DDO which sets out minimum requirements for cross-ventilation, the provision of eaves or other shading devices and permeability to trigger a planning permit when basic requirements are not met by single dwellings.*





## diversity and affordability



### lot sizes and dwelling diversity

One of the key factors in both the provision of diverse housing types, and in the affordability of housing (often associated with smaller dwellings) is the size of lots provided through the subdivision stage of development. Mildura is experiencing the same trends in demographic change being felt across Australia in the aging of the population and the increase in single person or sole parent households. All these groups are associated with a demand for smaller dwellings which is not being met by the current provision of housing. Given these trends are expected to continue in the future it is vital that Mildura's current development trends, which are overwhelmingly geared towards traditional family homes, respond. For many within the development community, medium density is seen as high risk enterprise and is avoided where possible as the different building typologies require a reassessment of 'business as usual', which is often resisted. Conversely, feedback from both the community and estate agents identify the high level of demand for larger lots within the urban area which are also not being provided. Added to this equation is the current State level planning policy which encourages development to be provided at a density of 15 dwellings / hectare. The intent of this policy is to both improve the efficiency at which residential land is developed, reducing urban sprawl, but also to diversify the provision of dwelling types. However, within Mildura, the outcomes seen in response to this policy have been standard residential subdivisions of detached dwellings set on smaller blocks of between 350-550sqm. The size of houses provided in these lots has generally tended to maximise the available land area, leading to significant reductions in open space around dwellings, awkward configurations, poor solar orientation and the omission of eaves. Thus, while the intent of making more efficient use of land is met, it is at the expense of the sustainability of housing and quality of neighbourhood design, creating an awkward trade-off between the two policy imperatives and failing to significantly diversify Mildura's dwelling stock.

The MHSS therefore seeks to take a different approach in relation to lot sizes to provide a better balance between the diversity of lots and neighbourhood design, and the density targets currently in place. It does this through seeking to introduce new policy (as part of a Neighbourhood Design policy to provide a local context to Clause 56) that identifies that the standard practise of seeking 15 dwellings /

ha should not be the key driver in achieving the aims of the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF), but rather introduces a more targeted approach, as follows:

- Require specific percentages of larger and smaller lots sizes by setting higher and lower densities for designated areas.
- Leave the remainder of the lot sizes to the developer to determine in line with their reading of the market, provided the area is planned in a way which achieves any adopted guidelines for building or neighbourhood design.
- Provide clear guidelines as to where medium density lots should be provided (i.e. along main roads, adjoining any areas of non-residential uses such as retail, open space, schools etc).
- The policy will apply to any area proposed for development over 3ha in size. The percentage requirement will apply to net residential developable area.
- Additional sites allocated for medium density and / or sites that propose a higher density may be considered provided that sites are in strategic locations that satisfy the objectives and development principles for medium density development as outlined in any Precinct Structure Plan.
- A variety of medium density typologies is encouraged such as terrace / townhouse development, cottage lots, shared driveway housing, cluster housing as well as retirement villages / aged care facilities.

The percentage figures proposed by the MHSS are:

- 5% at 35 dwellings per hectare
- 20% at 6 dwellings per hectare

This should be confirmed through any implementation and increased if possible. The amount of land dedicated to medium density and larger lots within any development area will therefore be dependant of the size of the proposed development area. For example, theoretically on a 4ha block there would be five larger lots and a row of six townhouses. This is illustrated in Figure 18 following. The density targets consider a loss of around 20% of total land area in Figure 18 represent 'theoretical'



number of lots available from different development parcels, noting that there are a wide range of forms that could be provided to meet the required dwelling density. Furthermore, development parcels are encouraged to provide a diversity of typologies to meet the density target. For instance, a development area of 16ha may have around 0.8ha (or 8000sqm) that needs to be provided at 35 dwellings per hectare, which may be provided through the inclusion of a higher density residential land use such as a retirement village as part of the proposal.

This approach offers the following benefits:

- Ensures that density is provided through a diversified rather than standardised approach.
- Provides greater flexibility for developers in relation to the majority of their land.
- Ensures that medium density housing is provided in a range of settings and suitable areas.
- Ensures a provision of larger lots within residential areas which provides opportunities for future adaptability and change in these areas which would not otherwise be present.

Outside of greenfield areas, overarching SPPF aspirations regarding the provision of medium density development around areas of key activity with good access to transport should continue to be pursued.

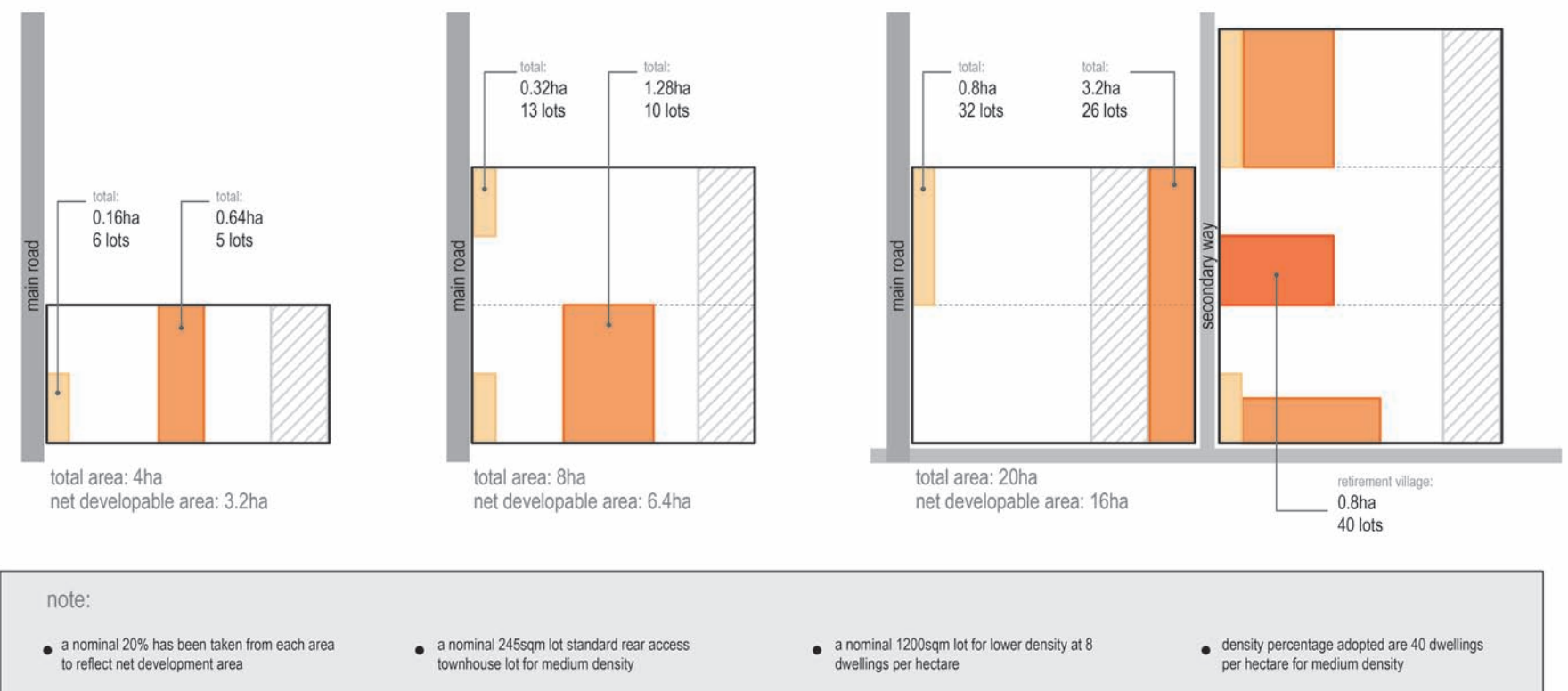


figure 18: proposed lot diversity percentages



## affordable and appropriate housing

While housing affordability remains a key political issue, and is often associated with planning and building, many of the factors influencing the affordability of housing are beyond the scope of planning. However, there are a number of measures that can be taken to ensure that housing remains affordable to the broadest spectrum of the community. Within planning there is often great confusion over what is 'affordable' housing and it is often confused with a range of other housing types. The MHSS has adopted the following definitions:

- **Affordable housing:** Housing for the broader community that allows access to the housing market for those of lower incomes. Generally 'affordable' housing is well located housing where the cost of either rent or mortgage is no more than 30% of the household income.
- **Supported housing:** which fall into two categories:
  - Social housing: Housing provided by the Office of Housing or other housing associations for range of residents, generally as rental properties.
  - Special needs housing: This is housing provided by either a government agency or community group which provides housing for a particular segment of the community associated with particular housing requirements. These might be accommodation for disabled people who may need dwellings by wheelchair, or crisis accommodation for victims of domestic violence, which may have particular requirements around security arrangements.

Given the wide range of authorities and groups often associated with the provision of the types of housing outlined above, there is an opportunity for Council to play a key role in connecting information and people between a variety of organisations that are actively involved in the provision of affordable, social or special needs housing. Having regard to the importance of affordable housing within a regional centre such as Mildura, Council should also pro-actively investigate ways that they can increase the range and quality of housing provision with an aim to documenting policy positions around provision of affordable housing with clear targets and strategies.

As a first step, the introduction of a working group on housing matters and the creation of a centralised database to track the different types of affordable and supported housing that are being provided within Mildura should be pursued. Establishing a clear central point where local matters around housing stress can be targeted, data collated and where connections to the most relevant providers can be identified will not require a significant investment on the part of Council but may be a substantial benefit in ensuring response to housing affordability and special needs are addressed most efficiently.

Generating an understanding of the needs and potential gaps in the provision of housing may also allow Council to pursue the opportunities for inclusionary zoning or the introduction of targeted incentives to improve the housing mix. For example, some Councils offer development incentives, such as reduced timeframes or development contributions, where a development includes a specific amount of housing to be managed by a housing association and provide social or supported housing.



### HOUSING WORKING GROUP

*A 'housing working group' has been suggested to bring together key Council personnel, with other key stakeholders including government agencies and NGOs involved in the provision of housing, as well as development industry representatives to seek to produce a policy paper which builds on the MHSS to:*

- *Further document the Mildura housing market including identifying localised benchmarks for affordability.*
- *Identify an effective system for the establishment of a centralised database for supported housing available within Mildura.*
- *Provide advice on the current and potential ways Council could participate in increasing the amount of affordable housing stock in Mildura.*
- *Identify mechanisms for improving communication and sharing of information regarding available housing between individual providers.*
- *Seek to identify clear aspirations for the provision of affordable housing with clear targets and strategies.*
- *Identify and relevant guidelines or controls that are necessary to protect tenants or guide development, particularly within the private housing market.*
- *Investigate mechanisms that would be most suitable for achieving identified targets or controls having regard to the local housing market, service providers and development industry.*



In establishing the working group and centralised database, Council should investigate the potential to employ a 'housing officer' to coordinate this work and act as an advocate. This role may also provide opportunities to explore options for involvement in the National Rental Affordability Scheme, whether through promotion of the scheme to local developers or in more direct involvement by Council. Where a significant gap is identified and is not being met or has little potential to be met by other agencies or groups, then a thorough investigation in the opportunities and risks associated with direct intervention could be considered. The City of Port Phillip offers an example where direct Council involvement has been appropriately managed. It may be that opportunities exist for partnerships which are low risk for Council but reduce reliance on the private market which in some cases leads to poor quality design outcomes. The development of high quality integrated housing development where a mix of private and social housing is provided is the preferred approach, and where possible, social housing should be designed to integrate with surrounding residential areas.



## older residents and special needs housing

Many of the measures outlined earlier in this section have been identified to also meet the needs of older members of Mildura's community, through the provision of greater number of smaller dwellings in areas where it is easy to access goods and services without significant travel times or walking distances.

One of the key aspiration of the MHSS is to allow older residents to remain within their local communities as much as possible, given emerging evidence base of the benefits of 'aging in place'. To this end, as well as encouraging the provision of smaller dwellings, the new policy on Neighbourhood Design is proposed to emphasise support for older people in their homes within planning policy and set out guidelines for adaptable housing. Adaptable housing benefits not only older residents but also those with disabilities or special needs, such as those requiring the use of a wheelchair.

While this is often addressed at the building stage, there is merit in also seeking to identify the issue and bring some relevant standards into the planning stage of the process. Consideration should be given to requiring a percentage of development within an area to be designed to facilitate adaptability. This may include things such as ensuring there is a ground level bathroom, that corridors and doorways are of sufficient width to accommodate wheelchairs and that there are clear pathways to the wider pedestrian network. While additional measures such as hand rails etc can often be added as required, it is important that some aspects of adaptable design are considered in the early stages of development. An indicative target of 20% of all new dwellings should be pursued with a minimum of 50% of these being medium density dwellings.

The MHSS *Background Report* also identified a significant shortfall in the current provision of aged care and retirement living within Mildura. As such, it will be important for Council to take a pro-active role in ensuring the opportunity exists to provide for larger scale residential developments to address this gap, such as independent living and aged care accommodation. Changes to local guidelines in relation to neighbourhood design will also assist in addressing issues with movement through residential areas by disabled or elderly residents by requiring footpaths, seating and shade to improve accessibility. Changes to minimum

road widths and lot sizes, and a grid of streets will also assist in matters such as enabling access by disabled taxis (for example) which currently have difficulty accessing many newer subdivisions in Mildura.

Where possible, land should be identified for these uses through the planning and development stages of greenfield residential areas. In the preparation of Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs), explicit consideration of accommodation for older residents in new growth areas should be undertaken and active engagement with providers prior to PSPs being finalised is also supported. The lot diversity policy outlined earlier in this section also provides additional incentive to accommodating retirement or aged care development within a development parcel, as the size and density of these developments can assist in meeting the required density target. Where retirement living or aged care facilities are provided they must be integrated with the surrounding community and movement networks.

In addition to the needs of older or disabled residents, Mildura also has a significant transient or temporary population which also has particular accommodation needs. This type of temporary accommodation is often associated with off-site amenity impacts, noting that these are substantially addressed through the current Budget Accommodation Policy within the Mildura Planning Scheme. Where there are not significant off-site amenity or environmental impacts Council should support the development of new caravan parks, particularly where they offer good access to services and facilities as these play an important role in providing temporary accommodation. There is also scope for these sites to be monitored by any 'housing officer' to ensure they are not over-utilised for the provision of permanent 'affordable' housing.



**ACTIONS**

- Amend the Mildura Planning Scheme to reflect the requirements for percentage based densities rather than standardised densities
- Introduce policy within the Mildura Planning Scheme through the MSS, around adaptable housing, temporary accommodation and retirement and aged care development
- Set up a 'housing working group' and a centralised record of supported housing numbers and providers
- Consider employing a 'housing officer' to manage, research and advocate for matters related to housing in Mildura
- Explore ways in which Council can actively contribute to an increased mix of housing types in Mildura

**POLICY CHANGES**

- Include relevant section within the Neighbourhood Design policy to implement the lot diversity approach outlined on page 43
- MSS aspirations around housing for older persons and adaptable design objectives
- Introduce definitions of affordable housing into the Planning Scheme, and basic objectives around the provision for affordable housing to be supplemented by any findings of the working group
- Requirements for inclusion of new areas for retirement and aged care development in PSPs



## infrastructure

As identified throughout the consultation for the MHSS, and through the *Background Report*, the provision of appropriate infrastructure is both a driver and barrier to residential development in Mildura. This section seeks to provide some guidance on how the process of infrastructure delivery could be managed in to the future. Two main themes emerged in relation to the provision of infrastructure as part of the MHSS. The first of these related to staging of development and the associated cost implications for developers where they were not the logical 'next in line'. The related concern about the potential for decisions on the part of one or two landowners to constrain Mildura's growth was also highlighted. The costs associated with the provision of infrastructure was the other key issue raised by the development industry, and was highlighted as the reason behind the failure of the Nichols Point area to develop. While there were some concerns about the cost of drainage infrastructure, for the most part these concerns seemed to relate to the overall level of expected developer contributions and the consequent impact on the profit margin of developers or landowners.

The issues identified in relation to infrastructure are a key driver of the MHSS identifying a very long term growth area. Mildura has sufficient land to accommodate projected growth within the timeframe of this Strategy. However, identifying the next stages of development early and ensuring that there is a clear staging pattern which is directly related to the provision of drainage infrastructure will hopefully avoid some of the issues which have caused delays in the past. It also allows for the early identification and acquisition of land required for larger scale community and servicing infrastructure projects well in advance of residential growth. It further allows for the costs associated with the provision of drainage infrastructure (the most costly part of development in Mildura) to be shared across a greater area and more equitably where up-front costs may be significant, but not shared by areas identified for growth at a later stage.

## drainage infrastructure

The provision of drainage infrastructure as one of the key upfront costs should be the subject of further investigation in relation to up-front provision and funding. Opportunities for Council and / or the servicing authority to play a greater role in providing interim funding for the upfront costs should be explored, provided a balance in funding of other infrastructure is achieved. Options for allowing a two stage process for the delivery of infrastructure should also be considered. This is particularly pertinent in relation to the Mildura East growth area. The MHSS recommends that a drainage strategy be undertaken for this area that will drive the staging of development, however, while the Strategy promotes a strong emphasis on WSUD mechanisms which can be incorporated into streetscape treatments and open space design, there is also likely to be a need for larger drainage infrastructure investments to prevent the proliferation of drainage basins through these areas. A second 'Etiwanda' style wetland has been proposed to provide an outlet, and could be coordinated with new 'blueways' through any future urban area. It is considered, however, that this second large scale wetland could develop in a staged process, allowing a smaller wetland to be established which is then expanded over time as development in Mildura East intensifies.

In the case of Nichols Point, it may mean that the development area currently proposed could contribute to the initial wetland and provide some 'temporary' or swale type treatment to direct stormwater to this area with an understanding that a more formal piped system may be required as the area develops. This could also reduce the up-front cost impost for early developers. Importantly, it will also ensure that the provision of infrastructure in the shorter term does not compromise (and indeed, can play a role in supporting) longer term infrastructure projects. The appropriate parameters and mechanisms to implement such as staging of infrastructure would need to be carefully considered to ensure equity but an exploration this potential is strongly encouraged. The recommended drainage strategy could explore these options, or a separate investigation may be undertaken.





streetscapes

One element of infrastructure associated with a new area of residential development often subject to ‘cost cutting’, is the streetscape. Narrower roads and less footpaths have a relationship to development costs. The MHSS has sought to highlight the myriad of issues associated with the delivery of poor streetscape treatments for the overall health and well-being of the Mildura community. The quality of the public realm is critical to the sustainability of Mildura’s new suburbs. As such, in seeking to achieve savings in the provision of infrastructure, these savings must not be at the expense of the quality of the streetscape. However, that being said, the standard at which this ‘streetscape’ infrastructure is being provided is often above that which is necessarily required for the community it is servicing. What is of most relevance to the MHSS is the provision of the appropriate *space* within new urban areas. In particular this means roads wide enough that cars do not need to be parked on the verges, verges wide enough to accommodate footpaths and canopy trees (which should be established early) and sufficient areas of active, passive, connective and incidental open space. The possibility of the development of footpaths being staged, for example, one side constructed, the other being of an informal nature should be considered in any investigation of the staging of infrastructure in new growth areas. In addition, many of the standards applied in Mildura may not reflect the local character and community expectations. There is considered to be scope to develop a more localised set of guidelines for infrastructure provision which reflect the priorities of the MHSS and meet the expectation of the community while exploring where there may be opportunities for less formal or lower cost treatments.

Crucial is a recognition that while the actual delivery of infrastructure may occur over time, the difficulty in ‘creating’ space once development has proceeded can have significant impact on the community. As such, the MHSS seeks to encourage a response which provides more flexibility about ‘when’ and ‘how’ infrastructure is provided (including through staging as discussed above) but less flexibility in relation to the provision of space to allow this.

The table below outlines the level of infrastructure provision that should be expected within each of the different zones and subdivision sizes anticipated by this Strategy. It provides an understanding of the level of ‘formality’ expected in streetscapes and the other services required. These will need to be considered alongside any specific infrastructure requirements depending on the particular context.

ZONE	PLANNING REQUIRED	INFRASTRUCTURE LEVEL	SERVICE PROVISION REQUIRED
General residential	Precinct Structure Plan, Development Plan, Development Contributions Plan	Full urban infrastructure, kerb and channel, sealed roads, community, recreation and other infrastructure	full provision of services
Neighbourhood residential	Precinct Structure Plan, Development Plan, Development Contributions Plan	Sealed roads, footpaths, kerb and channel or swale drains where appropriate, community, recreation and other infrastructure	full provision of services
Low Density residential	Development Plan, Development Contributions Plan (where appropriate)	Sealed roads, swale drains, unsealed footpaths of suitable material, community, recreation and other infrastructure	water, electricity, appropriate on-site management of stormwater and sewerage
Rural residential (1ha lots)	Development Plan	Sealed roads, swale drains, unsealed footpaths of suitable material	water, electricity, appropriate on-site management of stormwater and sewerage
Rural residential (2ha lots)	-	Unsealed roads of suitable material	water, electricity, appropriate on-site management of stormwater and sewerage

table 2: indicative infrastructure provision expectations



## funding of infrastructure

The issue of how infrastructure will be funded is also critical. Waiting for a 'critical mass' of development before infrastructure is provided can be a barrier to growth, but nor can Council (or servicing authorities) be expected to take on full responsibility for the provision of infrastructure given the financial implications. However, too great an impost on developer will mean it is no longer a financially viable proposition to develop land, which can have significant implications for the supply of residential land.

With the issue of the reforms to the development contributions process still awaiting finalisation, the MHSS has not sought to provide a definitive response to the issues around development contributions. Nonetheless, it is recommended that the following steps be taken:

- A 'fact sheet' be prepared which provides an indicative breakdown of the costs involved in development of residential land and the proportion of these costs met by Council or the developer clearly identified. This should provide a clear and agreed basis for discussion of any reforms. It will also allow an understanding of where the most significant costs to developers in the provision of infrastructure are and what the implications would be of a reduction in this contribution.
- A working group should then be formed with representatives from not only the development industry, and Council, but also community representatives.

There are a number of key questions that should be explored by the working group, including but not limited to:

- What is the highest priority infrastructure for a new community?
- What is the minimum standard for the provision of infrastructure, what is optimal standard and what is 'gold standard'?
- What opportunities are there for the staging of infrastructure (as discussed above in relation to Nichols Point)?
- How can the process of new development contributions be managed in a way that is equitable, having regard to the existing Development Contributions Plans operating in Mildura?

- Are there opportunities to create efficiencies by identifying early on in the planning process elements which are likely to require contributions from developers?
- What low risk opportunities are there for Council to seek funds to provide a greater 'up-front' contribution in initial infrastructure delivery.

### **POLICY CHANGES**

- *Inclusion of a section around the staging of infrastructure delivery and relevant standards as part of the new neighbourhood design policy*
- *Potential changes to the DCPO extent or content pending findings of the working group*

### **ACTIONS**

- *Amend the Mildura Planning Scheme to reflect the relevant matters*
- *Prepare a 'residential development infrastructure and funding' fact sheet*
- *Create a working group to assess the role and scope of development contributions and to develop a set of agreed standards and processes*
- *Consider a 'two stage' process for the delivery of infrastructure where this does not compromise long term outcomes*
- *Explore appropriate options for contributions to up-front costs*



# implementation

## implementation of the strategy

As a planning document, the MHSS will be implemented primarily through the Mildura Planning Scheme. The recent update to the Planning Scheme proposed through Amendment C64 sets out a new structure and format for the Mildura Planning Scheme in line with the current Ministerial Directions.

### the mss

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) is proposed to be restructured into the following major themes:

- 21.01 Municipal profile
- 21.02 Key influences and issues
- 21.03 Vision and strategic framework
- 21.04 Settlement and housing
- 21.05 Environment
- 21.06 Natural resource management
- 21.07 Built environment and heritage
- 21.08 Economic development
- 21.09 Transport and infrastructure
- 21.10 Local areas

The existing ten local planning policies are proposed to be reduced to two (Budget Accommodation and Mildura CBD Car Parking). This restructure has been through a Panel process which supported this approach and has been submitted to the Minister for final approval. As such, the implementation proposed in this chapter relates to the above structure.

It is considered that, given the scope of this project, there is likely to be consequential changes to almost all areas of the MSS.

Key matters identified in the *Key Issues Paper* and *Background Report* may inform changes to Clause 21.01 and 21.02.

Key direction and settlement patterns will be outlined in Clause 21.03 including new framework plans in place of the indicative Maps 1 and 2.

Updates to the existing Clause 21.04, in particular sub-clauses 21.04-2, 3, 4 and 7 (noting that there will not be significant changes to the intent of these existing clauses). Updates to policy around residential development should address affordable housing, growth areas, urban intensification and diverse housing. A greater emphasis on the relationship between the provision of transport and housing should also be included. Updates to Clause 21.05, 21.06, 21.07, 21.08 and 21.09 to reflect the intent of the MHSS will also be required, as well as updates to 21.10 to reflect the specific directions outlined by the MHSS in relation to particular settlements.

### local policy

A new local policy which provides additional direction regarding the use of discretion within the 'relaxation area' should also be prepared, if not implemented though a change to the MOIA Incorporated Document. In particular, decision guidelines regarding the parameters for development within areas slated for future urban growth will need to be integrated into the Mildura Planning Scheme.

A second local policy on Neighbourhood and Building Design should also be introduced addressing the matters outlined within the Strategy which are needed to provide further guidance around specific standards and requirements. If necessary this policy should be supported by the application of a Design and Development Overlay which triggers a permit for a single dwelling if minimum (reasonable) standards are not met.

### rezoning

The MHSS provides direction of the rezoning of a number of parcels of land, primarily to accommodate additional opportunities for development of rural living and low density development to reduce pressure on agricultural areas. In considering the need for rezoning in Mildura, the MHSS has also considered the introduction of new residential zones into the Victorian Planning Provisions. The zones considered though the MHSS are the:

- General Residential Zone



- Neighbourhood Residential Zone
- Residential Growth Zone.

In considering the application of the new suite of residential zones within Mildura, the following is noted:

- Areas currently zoned Residential 1 Zone are generally considered appropriate to be directly translated to the General Residential Zone.
- The Neighbourhood Residential Zone should be applied to Nichols Point when it is rezoned from Low Density Residential Zone in light of its existing character of larger lots and landscape character.
- Given the small number of specifically identified heritage precincts within residential areas or a neighbourhood character study, there is not considered to be current justification for applying the Neighbourhood Residential Zone in any other locations. Some further work may be needed to assess the potential application of this zone to the area to the immediate west of the CBD, where there are a number of



heritage properties (noting that there has been a substantial amount of medium density development that has already occurred around this area). Some further consideration of the area to the east of the Deakin Avenue and Eleventh Street may also be warranted.

- It is not considered that there are any specific areas within Mildura where the Residential Growth Zone should be applied. While higher density development is encouraged around the CBD, this is guided by the existing *Mildura CBD Plan* and these areas should be zoned to accommodate a mix of uses, as opposed to just a residential focus. Within the wider residential areas, it is considered the General Residential Zone is sufficient to accommodate the scale of infill development likely to be experienced within Mildura.
- It is also noted that some changes to the Low Density Residential Zone and Rural Living Zone also required acknowledgment in the implementation of the Strategy. The new default minimum subdivision size is 2ha under the Rural Living Zone. The default minimum has been adopted by the MHSS in some areas but in others the schedule will need to be amended to reflect the 1ha subdivision size sought. In addition, the minimum subdivision size in LDRZ areas has been reduced to 0.2ha where there is connections to a reticulated sewer system. This is discussed in more detail within Section 4 which addresses low density and rural living development. Given a reduction in lot size and consequential increase in density is not supported in these areas, clear policy direction on this matter will need to be included within the Municipal Strategic Statement.
- While the Township Zone and Mixed Use Zone schedules can now be modified to reflect more localised character attributes, this should only be implemented following a review of any existing structure plans for areas where there may be localised issues.

Some of the potential rezoning outlined with the MHSS are identified as longer term opportunities, but the following rezoning is proposed in the immediate term, as follows:

- Cabarita (Low Density Residential Zone @ 0.4ha and Rural Living Zone @1ha)
- Cabarita / Merbein (Rural Living Zone @1ha)
- Merbein (Rural Living Zone @2ha)
- Nichols Point (Neighbourhood Residential Zone @1800sqm)
- Koorlong (Low Density Residential Zone @0.4ha)
- Cardross (Rural Living Zone @1ha)
- Irymple (Low Density Residential Zone @0.4ha)
- Mildura urban edges (Rural Activity Zone, Rural Conservation Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone)





## development in growth areas

The current framework for the development of land in Mildura is considered to be appropriate. While it is acknowledged there have been significant concerns expressed regarding the Development Plan process (and associated contributions) these issues have primarily related to the timing of the planning stages for particular development areas, and the standard of infrastructure provision. The development community within Mildura has an understanding of the Development Plan process and it is considered that the introduction of a different mechanism (such as the Urban Growth Zone) would introduce an unnecessary layer of complexity to the development process.

One key factor that will assist in avoiding delays is the early identification and commencement of planning work for growth areas prior to the immediate need for land. This will be dependent on careful monitoring of the take-up of land to enable Council to be pro-active about the commencement of planning processes at the appropriate times. Another factor that is anticipated to reduce the potential delays in the process is the identification of a second development front for Mildura. This will not only provide for an outlet should unexpected delays occur in the development of one area, but will also diversify the land available and reduce the impact of individual landowner or developer decisions.

The staging of development in Mildura should be undertaken as follows:

- As acknowledged through the *Background Report*, drainage remains the single biggest constraint and cost to development in Mildura. The first stage in the development of any area around Mildura should therefore be the development of a higher level drainage study to ensure that drainage is provided in the most efficient way possible. A drainage strategy has already been undertaken for the Mildura South growth area and should commence for the Mildura East growth area as a priority.

- Once a higher level drainage study is undertaken, a Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) should be prepared for larger areas. This should provide the broad framework for development in the area and clearly identify the number of people expected to live within an area and the facilities and services needed for that population, as well as movement networks. The PSP should clearly articulate the staging of the precinct, including identification of areas for which individual Development Plans should be prepared. This should ensure that development occurs in a manner best suited to the delivery of infrastructure and the overall integration of the precinct.
- Following the preparation of a PSP, a Development Plan should be prepared for the smaller areas, and should provide a much higher level of detail to the development. No rezoning of residential land in a growth area should occur prior to the preparation of a PSP. A Development Plan Overlay and Development Contributions Plan Overlay should also be applied to land at the time of any rezoning.
- For smaller development areas, not subject to a PSP, a Development Plan should also be prepared where there are multiple landowners. For the development of land within a single ownership, a Development Plan is not required, however, any development of these areas should also have regard to the principles for development outlined in the Mildura Planning Scheme through the Neighbourhood Design policy.
- Following completion of a Development Plan, any Development Contributions Plan should be finalised.

## monitoring

One of the key factors in ensuring that the MHSS contributes to a sustainable settlement pattern for Mildura and meets the key aims outlined at the start of this Strategy, will be the introduction of a comprehensive system of monitoring and review.

### MILDURA EAST DRAINAGE STUDY

*The preparation of a drainage strategy for Mildura East is one of the key priority recommendations of this Strategy. The drainage strategy should consider the following:*

- *What is required for this area is not a drainage **plan** (which are likely to be developed at a precinct level) but a well considered strategy to drive the staging of residential development*
- *Large scale drainage infrastructure which would be required to effectively and efficiently manage drainage within the Mildura East growth area in the longer term, having particular regard to be economic imperatives associated with development and the environmental context, including opportunities to improve environmental outcomes (i.e. the establishment of a second wetland system)*
- *It should identify the existing catchments within the growth area, and precincts that could develop independently without compromising drainage outcomes and clearly identify those precincts, using property boundaries and road alignments where possible*
- *Identify the order in which these precincts (and, if necessary, sub-precincts within these areas) must develop to provide drainage infrastructure in the most efficient manner*
- *Clearly identify potential staging of larger scale drainage requirements and link these to the staging of precincts*
- *Identify any potential interim solutions that would be appropriate to consider, including consideration of incorporation / implications for shorter term development in Nichols Point and south Irymple*
- *Identify any other key matters that should be considered in the preparation of precinct based drainage plans to ensure appropriate co-ordination across the whole growth area*



The preparation of a detailed ‘implementation plan’ to be prepared as part of a more comprehensive internal program of implementation relating to planning projects. This includes, but is not limited to, the previous and upcoming planning scheme review, the Mildura South PSP and Development Plan and the review of the MOIA Incorporated Document. The integration of the actions identified through this document with other Council projects and process reviews will allow for areas of crossover to be identified and efficiently managed. Approaching the implementation of this project across all Council departments will also ensure that key elements are fully understood. The involvement of Council’s statutory planning department, in particular, will be vital to the successful implementation of the MHSS, but the involvement of the community planners and engineers is also critical. This implementation plan should include clear and agreed timelines and responsibilities and should be monitored to ensure issues with implementation are picked up early and their relationship and potential impacts on other areas of the MHSS are managed.



Perhaps the most informative element will be the expansion of Council’s recently introduced monitoring system for permit and subdivision applications. Given the introduction of new and amended zones, the potential distortion of dwelling demand created by the sunset clause of the MOIA document (see *Background Report*), and the identification through the MHSS of the overlap that is occurring between the housing market in different settlements close to Mildura’s main urban area, a clear evidence base of where development is occurring following the provision of new land for development will greatly assist future strategies and assessments of rezoning requests. This is important in developing an understanding of the particular demand for larger lots, in where the demand exists locationally and for what size lot – an understanding that was difficult to gain previously due to the shortage in appropriately zoned land. This system will also allow Council to gain a greater understanding of how development of dwellings within the Farming Zone may be impacting on development in residentially zoned areas. It is recommended that this system be structured to allow an understanding of the following:

- The amount of subdivision that is occurring within each zone in each settlement.
- The amount of building approvals occurring in each zone in each settlement.
- The time between the creation of a lot through a subdivision process and the issue of a dwelling approval.
- The amount of dwelling approval being granted within the Farming Zone and the location of these approvals
- The trigger for the approvals of dwellings in the Farming Zone should also be recorded to allow monitoring of any changes to the MOIA document.
- The size of lots should also be recorded for all applications.
- All application for dwellings should also be logged on Council’s GIS mapping system to assist with an understanding of spatial patterns.

The system should also seek to record the progress of development through various stages of approval that are managed, i.e. rezoning of land, lodgement of an application, approval of subdivision, planning approval (if required), building approval, any other approvals and the development. While this will require the coordination of data and the use of aerial photography or site inspections, gaining an understanding of the typical timeframes associated with development and areas where there may be scope for system improvement is a useful exercise.

In addition, it is recommended that an annual report be prepared by Council that documents the development that has been approved and has occurred within the municipality that year and provides a summary of the key issues and the sufficiency of available land within different market segments and locations.

While the initial implementation of this system will require Council resources, it is considered that the benefits in having an in-house understanding of how development is tracking is worthwhile. It will also enable Council to respond pro-actively to any distortion or gaps in the housing market, supported by a clear evidence base.

### **ACTIONS**

- *Develop an agreed internal implementation plan in conjunction with other Council projects and departments and an associated monitoring of this plan*
- *Expand and review current monitoring of applications to develop a comprehensive system underpinned by an annual report*





FACT SHEETS

- A number of ‘fact sheets’ are recommended to aid understanding of issues raised or clarified though the MHSS. These should be highly graphic and engaging, as well as employing ‘plain english’. These are:
- An outline of the overall findings of the MHSS
  - The proposed changes to the MOIA in relation to the ‘relaxation’ area
  - Residential development infrastructure and funding, including the current obligations and clear identification of who provides what and when
  - Sustainable design guidelines for individual dwellings to achieve higher standards that minimum proposed through planning scheme changes
  - Guidelines for suitable vegetation in Mildura in including street streets, plants for WSUD and other hardy and attractive plants for low maintenance gardens

area	zone	schedule	associated overlay
Cabarita (around the golf course area)	Rural Living Zone	1ha	
Cabarita (adjoining Calder Highway and north to the railway line)	Low Density Residential Zone	0.4ha	Development Plan Overlay
Irymple (south)	Low Density Residential Zone	0.4ha	Development Plan Overlay
Merbein (south to railway line)	Rural Living Zone	1ha	
Merbein (north)	Rural Living Zone	2ha	
Nichols Point	Neighbourhood Residential Zone	1800sqm	amend existing Development Plan (retain overlay)
Kings Billabong	n/a	0.4ha	
Non ‘college lease’ land between Riverside Avenue and Lake Hawthorn	Neighbourhood Residential Zone	1800sqm	amend existing Development Plan (retain overlay)
Koorlong	Low Density Residential Zone	0.4ha	
North of Flora Avenue	Rural Conservation Zone	2ha	Floodway Overlay
Triangle to west of Fourteenth Street and Riverside Avenue	Rural Conservation Zone	-	
Triangle to south of railway line and Riverside Avenue	Rural Activity Zone	-	

table 3: proposed rezoning and overlay changes (see figures 7 and 9-16 for specific areas)



action	responsibility	priority
<i>Prepare and implement an amendment to the Mildura Planning Scheme to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Incorporate the settlement structure and framework plan within the Mildura Planning Scheme and update the Municipal Strategic Statement.</i></li><li><i>Introduce new local policy on Neighbourhood Design to inform both Development Plans and subdivision design and address issues identified through the Strategy in relation to healthy communities, cooling the suburbs, lot diversity, adaptable housing, temporary accommodation and retirement and aged care development.</i></li><li><i>Amend the MOIA incorporated document to reflect the changes in the ‘relaxation area’.</i></li><li><i>Rezone land as identified, including the application of overlays and adjustments to schedules</i></li></ul>	Council	high
<i>Commence the preparation of a drainage strategy for the Mildura East growth area</i>	Council	high
<i>Resolve issues around recreation facilities in Mildura South and proceed with planning and development of this area</i>	Council	high
<i>Prepare a framework plan for the Mildura East growth area</i>	Council	high
<i>Revise the Development Plan for Nichols Point, and rezone land in the settlement</i>	Council, developers, landowners and agencies	high
<i>Prepare a town centre plan for Irymple to provide clear actions for public realm improvements, design guidelines and development facilitation</i>	Council	high
<i>Undertake further investigation of land adjoining the Marina site to determine suitability for future development given flooding constraints</i>	Council	medium
<i>Undertake further investigation of land adjoining Cowra Avenue to determine nexus between industrial and residential development</i>	Council	medium
<i>Continue to pursue the development of the Mildura Waterfront including higher density residential component</i>	Council, State Government	medium
<i>Undertake a ‘City Living Strategy’</i>	Council	medium
<i>Undertake further investigation of land currently zoned Low Density Residential adjoining Lake Hawthorn to ascertain the realistic development potential and rezone as appropriate</i>	Council, College Lease Land Beneficiaries Committee, State Government	medium
<i>Undertake town centre plan for Red Cliffs, to identify urban design and public realm improvements</i>	Council	medium
<i>Advocate for the duplication of the Calder Highway between Red Cliffs and Irymple</i>	Council	low
<i>Develop a ‘greenway’ between Red Cliffs and Irymple to promote active transport connections</i>	Council	low

table 4: action priorities





action	responsibility	priority
<i>Undertake a town centre plan to facilitate revitalisation of Merbein’s main street</i>	Council	medium
<i>Investigate potential development of a caravan park at Nangiloc / Colignan</i>	Council	low
<i>Investigate ways to facilitate medium density development in Ouyen, suitable for older residents</i>	Council	medium
<i>Undertake a ‘transport audit’ of existing connections for the communities of the Millewa Region, Mallee Track and Nangiloc / Colignan and advocate or provide additional services as required</i>	Council	medium
<i>Identify or provide a central community ‘hub’ in smaller township and focus delivery of services and information to these townships at these locations</i>	Council	low
<i>Introduce a schedule to the Low Density Residential Zone to retain a 0.4ha minimum subdivision size</i>	Council	high
<i>Prepare a ‘fact sheet’ for landowners regarding changes to policy in these the MOIA</i>	Council	high
<i>Set up a ‘housing working group’ and a centralised record of supported housing numbers and providers</i>	Council	low
<i>Consider employing a ‘housing officer’ to manage, research and advocate for matters related to housing in Mildura</i>	Council	low
<i>Explore ways in which Council can actively contribute to an increased mix of housing types in Mildura</i>	Council	low
<i>Prepare a ‘residential development infrastructure and funding’ fact sheet</i>	Council	medium
<i>Create a working group to assess the role and scope of development contributions and to develop a set of agreed standards and processes Consider a ‘two stage’ process for the delivery of infrastructure where this does not compromise long term outcomes Explore appropriate options for contributions to up-front costs</i>	Council	high
<i>Develop an agreed internal implementation plan in conjunction with other Council projects and departments and an associated monitoring of this plan.</i>	Council	high
<i>Expand and review current monitoring of applications to develop a comprehensive system underpinned by an annual report</i>	Council	high
<i>Create a guide to provide locally relevant guidance on appropriate street tree species as well as other vegetation that is well suited to Mildura’s climate.</i>	Council	medium
<i>Develop a ‘fact sheet’ to guide sustainable housing development</i>	Council	medium







# appendix 1

adopted directions









## URBAN AREAS

1. Provide a greater diversity of residential lot sizes by requiring percentages of developable land to meet differing density targets.
2. Facilitate the development of medium density infill development within existing urban areas, especially close to activities centres and public transport.
3. Document policy positions around provision of affordable housing with clear targets and strategies.
4. Ensure the opportunity exists to provide for larger scale residential developments, such as independent living and aged care accommodation, to be provided in the planning and development of greenfield residential areas.
5. Emphasise support for older people in their homes within planning policy and set out guidelines for adaptable housing.
6. Utilise partnerships to provide affordable housing that is also high quality (rather than relying on private market which can lead to poor quality outcomes) and improve data collection systems for specialised housing markets.
7. Review infrastructure and community facility standards to ensure they meet current and future needs and seek to provide clarity about the levels of service provision likely to be required in growth areas.
8. Consider the best mechanism for developing future urban land (including alternate zones such as the Urban Growth Zone) and ensure that DPOs (or other mechanisms used) provide guidance regarding how staged development can occur considering the potential for parcels to be developed individually.
9. Develop processes and review options for the financing of upfront provision of infrastructure to ensure that drainage and stormwater infrastructure is developed well in advance of development to provide certainty, and ensure minimal delays, while not preventing development from occurring due to the magnitude of infrastructure costs.
10. Provide guidelines for sustainability and liveability measures to be included in new houses and in new subdivisions to ensure healthy and sustainable communities. Ensure these are clearly articulated within the Mildura Planning Scheme rather than as separate 'guidelines'.
11. Integrate walking and cycle paths (such as the existing green and blue ways) in new development areas and provide more passive and connective recreational opportunities in residential areas, in addition to traditional 'active' recreational spaces.
12. Investigate options for the realising the use and development College Lease land, in accordance with the purpose for which it is zoned.
13. Provide clear direction about the staging for parcels of urban land around Mildura to reduce speculation and provide location choice and price competition to in the parcels available for development.
14. Rezone ad hoc pockets of Farming zoned land and Urban Flood zoned land around Mildura to reflect long term future use.

15. Promote improvements to the Mildura CBD and Riverfront to encourage additional residential growth centrally, through implementation of current plans for those areas.
16. Acknowledge that the 'interface' area between Irymple and Mildura is compromised and will experience a form of urban development in the medium to long term. The need will exist to strengthen the identity and character of Irymple in order to retain its individual identity, as despite development gradually occurring between the two towns.
17. Strengthen the identity of Merbein as a separate, well serviced township, close to and accessible to Mildura, for those seeking an alternative to living in a suburb of the larger township of Mildura.
18. Improve access between Red Cliffs and Mildura to support on-going development of the town and undertake upgrades to the town centre to refresh and strengthen township identity.
19. Pursue the provision of additional accommodation options for older residents in the Mallee Track area, specifically Ouyen and also Murrayville.
20. In the smaller townships along the Mallee Track and the Millewa Region focus on the provision of multipurpose community hubs to maintain services for residents and promote visitation.
21. Promote investment in improved transport connections to smaller settlements to improve access to services and facilities.

## EMPLOYMENT

22. Identify and protect appropriate opportunities for the longer term expansion of retail and industrial land within Mildura from unplanned residential development, in order to provide job and economic development opportunities.
23. Acknowledge the vital importance of Mildura airport to the municipality's future and ensure that urban (residential) expansion do not constrain the potential future operation or expansion of the airport. Use the Calder Highway (17th Street) as clear and fixed demarcation to stop urban development encroaching towards the airport to the south-west.
24. Acknowledge the route of the proposed bypass around the city of Mildura and ensure land uses adjoining the bypass maximise economic development opportunities.
25. Acknowledge the emergence of the Fifteenth Street spine as a major new activity centre in Mildura and the implications that will have the future urban form of the town.

## INTERFACE AREAS AND FUTURE URBAN LAND

26. Remove the provisions of the MOIA incorporated document, but retain land in a Farming Zone, affecting designated areas at the interface between and long term agricultural areas.
27. Clearly identify agricultural land designated for future urban development and

prepare a policy to prevent subdivision and the establishment of dwellings that might compromise the future orderly and proper development of such land.

28. In agricultural areas where there are existing 'rows' or 'clusters' of houses, prepare 'common sense' guidelines to allow the possibility for limited infill housing.

29. Explore other circumstances in which a 'common sense' approach might allow the possibility for limited infill 'rural residential' housing.

30. Investigate opportunities for the establishment of a second 'Etiwanda' type wetlands to service any expansion of the city to the east, in the longer term.

## LOWER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND

31. Provide additional LDRZ land (0.4h lots) in Koorlong, close to the shop and school and reflecting the standard of development established though the Bushland Rise estate.

32. Provide some opportunities for the introduction of a Rural Living Zone in Merbein, to provide lots of around 2ha, to the north and south-east of the town adjoining the environmental feature provided by the river corridor.

33. Provide rural living opportunities around Cardross in clearly designated areas to support the existing township.

34. Provide lower density residential land in Mildura itself only in specific areas where it can provide a 'buffer' with existing industrial areas or the heavy vehicle bypass, in recognition of Mildura's role as an 'urban' centre.

35. Rezone existing Low Density Residential zoned land in Nichols Point to a residential zone, subject to controls that restrict the minimise lot size permitted to around 1,500 sqm, to reflect the character and identity of the town. This may be achieved through the new Neighbourhood Residential Zone and is subject to exploration of the implications on drainage capacity.

## AGRICULTURAL AREAS

37. Revise the boundaries of the area covered by the MOIA Incorporated Document controls to exclude designated transition areas which are not considered to have very long term potential for agricultural purposes.

38. Consider innovative approaches to encourage sustainable land management practices and provide incentives for the amalgamation of lots for agricultural purposes.

39. Investigate innovative methods to assist people who need to sell their land due to ill health, age or exceptional circumstances, but who cannot find a buyer.

40. Undertake a study to investigate the potential health impacts of residential development within agricultural areas.



