

MUNICIPAL PROFILE

General

The City of Maribyrnong is changing, as Melbourne's inner western suburbs become more popular and significant new residential developments occur. In the past, the defence industries and other manufacturing industries dominated the municipality, which was once Melbourne's industrial heartland. With the closure and redevelopment of many of these industrial sites and changing economic circumstances, the municipality has experienced considerable changes to its economy, pattern of land uses and population.

Location and Regional Context

The City of Maribyrnong (the City) is a relatively small municipality situated on the Maribyrnong River, 4km to the west of the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD). The municipality comprises the suburbs of Braybrook, Footscray, Kingsville, Maidstone, Maribyrnong, Seddon, West Footscray, Tottenham and Yarraville.

The City is a 'gateway' to Melbourne's western region; sitting between Melbourne's Docklands and port and the outer western industrial and residential areas. Melbourne's western region, with its land supply, major transport routes and accessibility to the port and airports, is a significant growth area in metropolitan Melbourne. The region's population will significantly increase by 2030, as more housing is developed in growth areas in the cities of Wyndham and Brimbank.

The Port of Melbourne, situated on the eastern boundary of the city, is Australia's largest container port and is an important driver in the state and national economies.

Significant regional facilities located within the city include the Western Hospital, Victoria University, Footscray Community Arts Centre and Whitten Oval. These facilities are important to Maribyrnong's economic and community wellbeing.

Background

Settlement

The city has a comprehensive network of activity centres varying in their size, functions and roles, ranging from boutique centres like Yarraville through to regional centres like Footscray and the Highpoint Shopping Centre. This network allows residents access to a very wide range of retail and business services all within the local municipality.

Activity centres are key locations for employment, transport, retailing, businesses, community services and increasingly are locations for higher density forms of housing. The larger activity centres such as Footscray and Highpoint have potential to broaden their range of uses, particularly increasing the extent of professional offices and residential development.

For more than a decade the city's population has been steadily increasing and in 2008 was estimated at nearly 70,000 people. Forecasts expect this to increase to 103,000 by 2030 as an increasing proportion of Melbourne's residential growth occurs within established suburbs. Over the next 20 years approximately 13,000 - 16,000 additional dwellings will be needed to accommodate this growth.

Changes in global market forces together with the closure of Commonwealth defence facilities and the attraction of more suitable alternative locations have resulted in a significant reduction in the manufacturing and defence industries and associated employment within the city. This has led to many redundant and underutilised industrial sites. Consequently, over the last decade, a significant proportion of Commonwealth and industrial land has been redeveloped for residential and mixed use developments. Not all industry in the municipality will transition to residential and mixed use, with new and changing employment uses also revitalising industrial land.

Built Environment and Heritage

The changing pattern of land use and the extent of new development over the past 10 years has changed the appearance and form of the city significantly. The dominance of the industrial character and image has receded and the city's 'renewal' is bringing about a greater residential character and reputation.

The context for development varies from established residential neighbourhoods and commercial centres to large scale new estates. New development needs to be responsive to its context. The extent of new development provides opportunities to build on the qualities of the city's heritage and neighbourhood character and streetscapes whilst also introducing new forms of development that can enhance the city's role, design, image and liveability.

The City of Maribyrnong has a rich and diverse heritage. Places of Aboriginal cultural heritage, early European settlement and sites that reflect the various phases of the city's industrial, commercial and residential development can be found within the city.

Housing

Compared to the metropolitan area, the city has a culturally diverse population and has a lower proportion of younger and older age groups and a larger proportion of family age groups. The city has a higher proportion of lone person households and an increasing proportion of family households. Compared to the metropolitan area there is a relatively high proportion of public housing stock (6%) which is predominantly located in Braybrook, Maidstone and parts of Footscray.

Economic Development

Historically, Maribyrnong's industrial areas have provided a strong employment base for the city. Early industry was closely associated with shipping and primary industries. Later, the municipality's comparatively sparse settlement, large lots and established workforce proved highly suitable for the development of large manufacturing and defence industries.

Over the last few decades, the character of employment in Maribyrnong has been transitioning from a 'production focussed' economy to one more focused on services. This transition has seen many traditional 'production style' jobs disappear in the face of removal of tariffs, competition from lower cost producers from overseas and technological advances. At the same time, the proportion of service sector jobs has been steadily increasing, representing demand for a wide array of services.

Ongoing structural economic changes are likely to produce continued changes in manufacturing in Maribyrnong. A number of manufacturing sub-sectors located within the municipality will continue into the future, making a significant contribution to the City's economy. These sectors include food and beverage, publishing and other niche manufacturing sectors.

Many former industrial sites have recently been redeveloped for mixed-use and residential development. This land use trend has left a number of core employment areas: Yarraville Port; Tottenham; West Footscray; Braybrook-Ashley Street; Braybrook Ballarat Road; Yarraville Cawley, Maidstone Hampstead Road and Gordon and Mephan Street.

These areas are key industrial and commercial areas with an employment role that will need to be protected and enhanced to ensure Maribyrnong's economic future.

The Yarraville Port core employment area provides an important buffer between the inner west residential areas and the Port of Melbourne.

Transport

The City's proximity to the Melbourne CBD allows for convenient access to employment, education, retail and business services. The transport network is dominated by the major east-west arterial roads and key passenger and freight rail lines that run through the municipality and provide essential links interstate. Currently north-south road connections are limited and need upgrading to improve links between the major east-west arterial roads.

The City is generally well served by public transport, although suburbs to the north and west are not well served by rail services and are more dependent upon bus services. Areas of Northern Maribyrnong and Highpoint are connected by tram routes to Moonee Ponds and Footscray. The impact of freight truck traffic on local residential areas and activity centres is an issue.

Community and Development Infrastructure

Council and other organisations provide a range of facilities catering for the needs of the existing and future population. Major redevelopment within the city will affect community needs and the type and location of facilities. At the same time as planning for the needs of new communities, council also needs to renew existing ageing community infrastructure and adapt to changing service delivery models.

The City has additional needs due to its social disadvantage, low incomes and as a location for new arrivals. Footscray has an established role as a regional centre for many health, employment, and training providers. The Western Hospital is a major health care facility within the city.

While much of the city's open space is located along the Maribyrnong River there is a network of spaces including large recreational areas such as Braybrook Park, McIvor Reserve, Footscray Park, Yarraville Gardens and many smaller local parks. However, there are large parts of the city lacking quality open space, parklands and playgrounds.

Key facilities include Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre, West Footscray Community Recreation Centre (YMCA), RecWest, McIvor Reserve, Medway Golf Course and Whitten Oval as well as various local club based facilities and settings for more informal activities.

In established areas local physical infrastructure (drainage, roads and paths) is ageing and requires renewal but can generally support infill development. Sites for major redevelopment will require significant new infrastructure as well as upgrading the capacity of existing infrastructure. New development must also meet more sustainable infrastructure design and operational requirements.