

21.01 MUNICIPAL PROFILE, COUNCIL VISION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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21.01-1 Municipal profile

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Warrnambool City is Victoria's largest coastal regional city and is the fastest growing economy and population centre in southwest Victoria. The City provides support to the region in the fields of commerce, governance, social services, health, education, the arts and recreation.

Warrnambool is situated on one of the most spectacular sections of the southwest Victorian coastline and is a major tourist hub, attracting tourists travelling along routes such as the Great Ocean Road. The City is served by the Hopkins Highway, the Princes Highway and the Melbourne-Geelong-Warrnambool railway line. A public bus service also services the City.

The City is bound by Moyne Shire in the north, east and west and the Southern Ocean in the south, and is approximately 260 kilometres west of Melbourne. The City encompasses a total land area of 120 square kilometres. Much of the rural area (approximately 60% of the City's land area) is used for agriculture, particularly dairy farming. The majority of the City's population is concentrated in Warrnambool, Dennington, Allansford, Bushfield and Woodford.

Warrnambool has a steadily growing population. The estimated resident population of Warrnambool was 33,501 in 2014 and is expect to increase to approximately 40,670 people by 2031.

The City includes a diversity of land uses, including significant areas of residential, industrial and commercial zoned land.

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Key planning issues facing the City into the future are summarised below.

- **Population growth and associated needs for housing, infrastructure, community facilities, employment and services** – Given the region's ageing population, more workers are required to support the growth of existing and new industries.
- **Housing supply, choice and affordability** – Over the next two decades, Warrnambool's population is projected to age and household sizes are expected to continue to get smaller. Dwelling sizes however, are anticipated to increase. Careful planning is required to ensure future populations have access to a diverse range of housing options.
- **Community health and wellbeing** – The community's vision for a liveable city revolves largely around health and wellbeing, and the social and physical attributes that contribute to this.
- **Healthy transport** – The development of healthy transport options, including walking, cycling and public transport (for longer distance trips), between our neighbourhoods and townships will provide benefits by increasing daily physical activity levels and improved social well-being and a greater sense of community.
- **Landscape character** – Landscape character is valued by the community. This includes the ability to view the ocean, the Merri River, the Hopkins River, and surrounding rural areas, from numerous public areas and from private dwellings. Respect for the sharing of views, rather than necessarily the retention of all existing views, is an important issue to manage.

- **Access to open space** – open space is not evenly distributed throughout the City and some areas have poor access to open space. Improved access to our waterways will continue to provide important recreational opportunities.
- **Climate change** – Climate change presents a threat to the natural and built coastal environment, to the community and to economic activity. It is important that the effects of climate change are mitigated now and into the future.
- **Environmental values** – The City supports an impressive range of environmental values. Further urban development, the introduction of pest plants and animals have the potential to impact on biodiversity.
- **Economic development** – Employment strengths are in the health and community services, education, food processing, government, retail trade and tourism. The development of value-adding opportunities will play a major role in the City’s future economic development.
- **Protecting rural character and agricultural land** – It is important that rural areas are protected to ensure agricultural uses remain viable and to ensure the City’s unique rural character is protected from urban development.

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Council vision

The Council Plan sets out the overall vision for Warrnambool, as follows:

To be a thriving, culturally rich and inclusive leading regional city.

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and the *Warrnambool Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017* are key Council strategic documents that contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan.

The MSS guides Council’s decisions about development and land use planning and the *Warrnambool Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 – 2017* guides Council’s actions to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the community.

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Strategic directions

Council is committed to creating a sustainable City that allows people to walk or cycle to access their everyday needs and that contributes to opportunities for social interaction, community building and the overall health and wellbeing of the community. A sustainable Warrnambool will generally include a mix of the following key elements:

- Shops and services.
- Community facilities such as kindergartens, schools, neighbourhood houses etc.
- Employment choices.
- Housing choices.
- A network of different types of open spaces for leisure, recreation and protection of environmental values.
- Public transport options.

In order to achieve this, Warrnambool City Council has a very clear strategic direction to provide:

- An integrated network of activity centres.
- An adequate supply of land for industry.
- Access to a diverse range of housing options.
- Access to high quality open space.

- An integrated transport network.

The Warrnambool Strategic Framework Plan is shown in Figure 1 to this clause.

Activity centres

Warrnambool has an extensive activity centre network consisting of the following centres:

- Warrnambool City Centre (Principal Activity Centre) – which serves a primary retail role and is anchored by a department store and discount department stores.
- Eastern Activity Precinct (Major Activity Centre) – which includes Gateway Plaza and other retail stores, which serve a secondary retail role.
- Neighbourhood Activity Centres – Northpoint Village and Dennington, where the highest-order retail attractor is a supermarket.
- Convenience Centres – which are proposed at Allansford and within the Merri River North Growth Area, where there are no major retail stores (including supermarkets).
- Convenience Nodes – existing isolated convenience stores (e.g. milk bars) and future retail nodes ancillary to tourism developments.

Land for industry

Warrnambool boasts a strong industrial sector, functioning as the regional service centre for the south west region of Victoria.

The *Warrnambool Industrial Land Review* (Warrnambool City Council, 2010) recognised the need to address the lack of industrial land supply within the City and identified appropriate locations for new industrial land to meet demand over the next 15 years. In particular, the *Warrnambool Industrial Land Use Review* (Warrnambool City Council, 2010) identified a location for a new industrial hub location (Eastern Industrial Precinct), noting that existing industrial areas within the City were nearing capacity.

The Eastern Industrial Precinct is identified as the most appropriate location to accommodate a new industrial hub. Consisting of approximately 107 hectares, this precinct is being delivered in a staged manner that enables immediate delivery of industrial zoned land to meet current demand.

Housing

Established urban areas have potential for further residential development. Large sites within established urban areas that are no longer needed for their original purpose may be suitable for residential redevelopment. There is capacity for more intensive forms of residential development within close proximity to open space, activity centres and along public transport routes.

The development of greenfield growth areas also provide an opportunity to develop a variety of dwelling types with varying development densities. The use of smaller lot sizes and housing close to community services is particularly appropriate for the ageing and student populations.

Growth areas for housing within the municipality include:

- North East Warrnambool Growth Area
- Coastal Hopkins Growth Area
- North Dennington Growth Area
- North of the Merri River Growth Area

- East of Aberline Road Future Urban Growth Corridor
- South Dennington Growth Area.

North East Growth Area

The North East Growth area is the area generally bound by Aberline Road to the east, Mortlake Road (Hopkins Highway) to the west, Dales and Whites Roads to the south and Wangoom Road to the north. Development is anticipated to proceed in accordance with approved development plans, and lot yield is forecast at 720 lots.

Coastal Hopkins Growth Area

The Coastal Hopkins Growth Area immediately east and south of the Hopkins River is approximately 115 hectares of land with the potential to accommodate approximately 650 lots over the next 15 years. The growth area will provide a high quality residential environment, that responds to local characterises and context.

North Dennington Growth Area

The North Dennington Growth Area is an area of 160 hectares bound by the Merri River and is approximately 4 kilometres west of central Warrnambool. The North Dennington Growth Area is anticipated to accommodate approximately 1,250 new residential lots over the next 15-20 years. It will accommodate a diverse range of lot sizes and housing types.

North of the Merri River Growth Area

The area immediately north of the Merri River bound by Wollaston Road is approximately 250 hectares of land with the potential to accommodate approximately 2,200 lots over the next 15-20 years.

A key feature of the North of the Merri River Growth Area will be the creation of 5 distinct neighbourhoods which are diverse in housing densities, built form and streetscapes and supported by a local activity centre to service the local convenience needs of the community. The Merri River and its floodplain will accommodate a range of functions including drainage, active and passive recreation, walking and cycling and will preserve key environmental features.

Future Urban Growth Corridor

380 hectares of land on the eastern side of Aberline Road has been identified as a future urban growth corridor. This area is likely to contain a mix of uses, such as residential and industrial uses, subject to detailed structure planning.

North of Wangoom Road

Land immediately north of Wangoom Road is identified for longer term residential development subject to detailed structure planning.

South Dennington Growth Area

30 hectares of land in South Dennington has been identified as having potential for residential development subject to detailed structure planning.

Open space network

There are over 200 open spaces in Warrnambool, including a number of open spaces of regional significance. Lake Pertobe and the Warrnambool Foreshore are key recreational spaces that also offer substantial tourism and environmental benefits to the City.

The coastline and river corridors support an impressive range of environmental values. Areas of vegetation provide important wildlife habitat and corridors for vulnerable and threatened flora and fauna species. It is important to ensure that urban development protects and supports the City’s environmental values.

Port Fairy to Warrnambool Rail Trail provides off-road walking and cycling opportunities to residents and visitors, and is identified as a Regional Trail in the Barwon South West Regional Trails Master Plan. Important regional sports reserves include Albert Park and the Brierly Recreation Reserve.

Whilst overall provision of open space in Warrnambool is good, there are some areas where residents do not have access to open space within walking distance of home.

Connectivity between open spaces and access to off-road trails are also key areas to be improved.

Transport network

Warrnambool is well serviced by a passenger and freight rail service to Melbourne, a school bus system and a local and regional bus service. The Warrnambool Airport is located approximately eleven kilometres northwest of the City. The Warrnambool Intermodal Freight Terminal is located within the West Warrnambool Industrial Precinct.

Warrnambool residents are currently heavily reliant on personal motor vehicles for transport.

Council has adopted a Sustainable Transport Strategy to ensure a comprehensive approach is taken to both improve walking and cycling infrastructure and encourage residents and visitors to use these viable transport modes and public transport more often.

Community Infrastructure

Warrnambool has an extensive range of education, community and health services that enhance the lifestyle of local residents and serve an important regional role.

A range of issues will affect future demand for community services including: a growing population; the increased use of services by older residents; the specific needs of children and young people; increased demand for early years services; the use of Warrnambool services by people living outside the municipality; and the growing demand for administrative, meeting and program spaces.

The provision of efficient and effective community services and appropriate and flexible spaces for community activities, will be critical in maintaining liveability and a sense of community as well as supporting optimal community health and wellbeing.

Environment and Landscape Values

Warrnambool's natural environment reflects its location on the magnificent Southern Ocean Coast. The City is home to a number of threatened species of flora and fauna on land and in aquatic environments.

The coastline supports an impressive range of environmental values. Areas of coastal vegetation provide important wildlife habitat and corridors for vulnerable and threatened flora and fauna species. In addition, Warrnambool's coastline adjoins a number of ecologically important areas including the Southern Right Whale nursery off Logans Beach and the Merri Marine Sanctuary.

It is important that the impacts of urban and rural pressures are appropriately managed in coastal areas, waterways and sensitive ecosystems.

Warrnambool contains areas of great natural beauty. The community values the city's landscape character. The ocean, the Merri River, the Hopkins River, inland hilltops and ridgelines, and surrounding rural areas can be viewed from numerous public areas and private dwellings throughout the city.

The natural landscape is an important asset of the municipality that requires protection from inappropriate use and development.

Climate Change

The results of climate change, such as storm surge, inundation through sea level rise, and temperature increase pose some of the most significant threats to Warrnambool's coastline

Planning needs to take account of the risks associated with possible sea level rise in areas of known vulnerability and ensure that these risks are mitigated or avoided where possible.

Rural Character and Agricultural Land

Agriculture is an important element of the regional economy with 16 percent of the work force employed within the agriculture, fishing and forestry sector.

Appropriate management of the urban-agricultural interface will be required to protect farming operations and maintain a greenbelt around Warrnambool's settlement boundary.

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Particular issues

In addition to the strategic directions included in the MSS, Council has developed specific local planning policies to guide the exercise of discretion in relation to particular issues. The local planning policies are located in Clause 22, as follows:

- 22.01 Rural dwelling excision
- 22.02 Industrial development
- 22.03 Heritage Precincts

Figure 1 - Warrnambool Strategic Framework Plan

