



# AGENDA

## ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 16 December 2014

To be held Swan Hill Town Hall Council Chambers  
McCallum Street, Swan Hill  
Commencing at 7:00 PM

**COUNCIL:**

Cr CM Adamson – Mayor

Cr JN Katis

Cr GW Norton

Cr GI Cruickshank

Cr JA Kiley

Cr LT McPhee

Cr JB Crowe

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**SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

- **Open**
  
- **Acknowledgement to Country**
  
- **Prayer**
  
- **Apologies**
  
- **Confirmation of Minutes**
  - 1) Ordinary Meeting held on 18 November 2014
  
- **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**
  
- **Receptions and Reading of Petitions, Memorials, Joint Letters and Deputations**
  
- **Public Question Time**

## **SECTION B – REPORTS**

### **B.14.91 ROAD CLOSURE – RAYMOND STREET AND LANEWAY CLOSURE SECTION A, SWAN HILL**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-04-04  
**Attachments:** Nil

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

Council has been approached by landowner at 18 Ashton Street, Swan Hill enquiring about the closure of Raymond Street abutting their property, and possibility of them purchasing the land.

This report provides Council with the results of the consultation with the surrounding land owners.

The report also provides an option for Council to close and sell land and the land that is currently laneway between Ashton and McCallum Streets, Swan Hill.

#### **Discussion**

##### **Raymond Street closure -**

Northern section of Raymond Street was closed about 30 years ago and consequently sold some time later as it was deemed not reasonably required as road for public use.

The southern end remains open and is known as Raymond Street. This is an unformed road and is currently used by residents as a continuation of the laneway between Ashton and McCallum Streets for ease of accessing the rear of their properties. The laneway can also be accessed off Murlong Street to the east.

The area of land occupied by the unformed road that has been requested to be discontinued and sold is 1912m<sup>2</sup> and zoned as Low Density Residential with an indicative price of \$80,000.

##### **Laneway closure –**

Some laneways were constructed by Council in the 1900's when they were set out for the sole purpose of night-soil removal. These laneways are not included in Council's Public Roads Register and receive minimal maintenance, usually fire

preventative actions only. They are generally unkept, grafittied and can be deemed as a public safety risk.

Laneway between Ashton and McCallum Streets is not on Council's Public Road Register.

### **Consultation**

Initial investigations and consultation with adjacent landowners has been carried out by Council staff. In this process, the adjacent landowners were asked whether they would be in favour of the road closure.

Simultaneously the opportunity was taken to consult with same landowners regarding the possibility of closing the laneway at the rear of their properties between Ashton Street and McCallum Street, Swan Hill.

In this process, they were asked whether they would be in favour of the lane closure and whether they were interested in purchasing the land located at the rear of their properties and having it consolidated into their titles.

Responses have not been favourable to any of the options proposed in the consultation process.

If Council was to proceed with an option to close either the laneway or Raymond Street, a public notice will be published in the Guardian newspaper.

### **Social Implications**

Road closure strategy –

As the portion of land (Raymond Street) is not reasonably required by Council as a road and has not been constructed as part of the road reserve, Council and the public will not be disadvantaged in anyway.

Lane closure strategy –

As the portion of land to be sold and consolidated is already utilised by the abutting landowners and has not been constructed as part of the road reserve, Council and the public would not be financially disadvantaged in anyway.

### **Financial Implications**

Abutting landowners wanting to purchase land adjacent to their properties are to pay all associated costs including advertising, surveyor and title office fees.

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

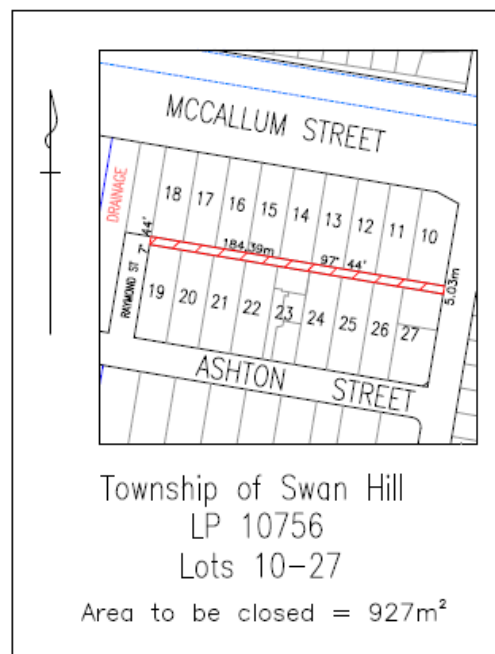
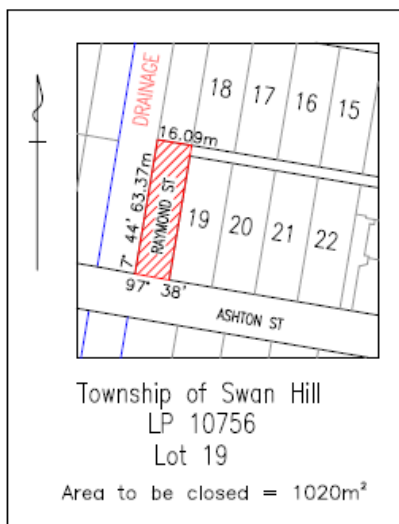
***Maintaining a safer community*** - In partnership with other agencies, we seek to ensure the everyday safety of our community.

### Options

1. Close Raymond Street and sell to abutting landowners.
2. Retain Raymond Street.
3. Close laneway and sell to abutting landowners.
4. Retain laneway.
5. Subdivide Raymond Street, retain 5m easement for vehicular access of residence abutting laneway and sell remaining land via Private Treaty.

### Recommendation

**That Council retain both Raymond Street and the laneway adjacent to properties on the northern section of Ashton Street.**



**B.14.92 ROAD CLOSURES & PROCLAMATION – PARISH OF COONIMUR,  
BUSHLAND RESERVE**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-04-01  
**Attachments:** Nil

**Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

**Summary**

A request has been received from Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) requesting road closures of government roads intended to be included in Coonimur Bushland Reserve and also a road alignment to be given road status.

**Discussion**

DEPI is in the process of implementing Victorian Environment Assessment Council designation of Crown Land in the parish of Coonimur as Bushland Reserve.

Land coloured red on attached plan is government road for closure and it is intended that these roads be closed under Section 349 of the Land Act 1958 for inclusion in the existing Bushland Reserve. Also, the land coloured yellow on the plan contains a formed and used road alignment and it is proposed that the land be given government road status.

Council consent is requested for the closure of roads by DEPI and agreement is sought for the road proclamation coloured yellow on plan.

**Consultation**

Consultation will be carried out by DEPI in accordance with Section 349 of the Land Act 1958.

**Social Implications**

As these roads are not constructed and remain unused, Council and the public will not be disadvantaged in anyway.

**Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

**Infrastructure** - We seek to ensure appropriate infrastructure is available to continue our economic growth.

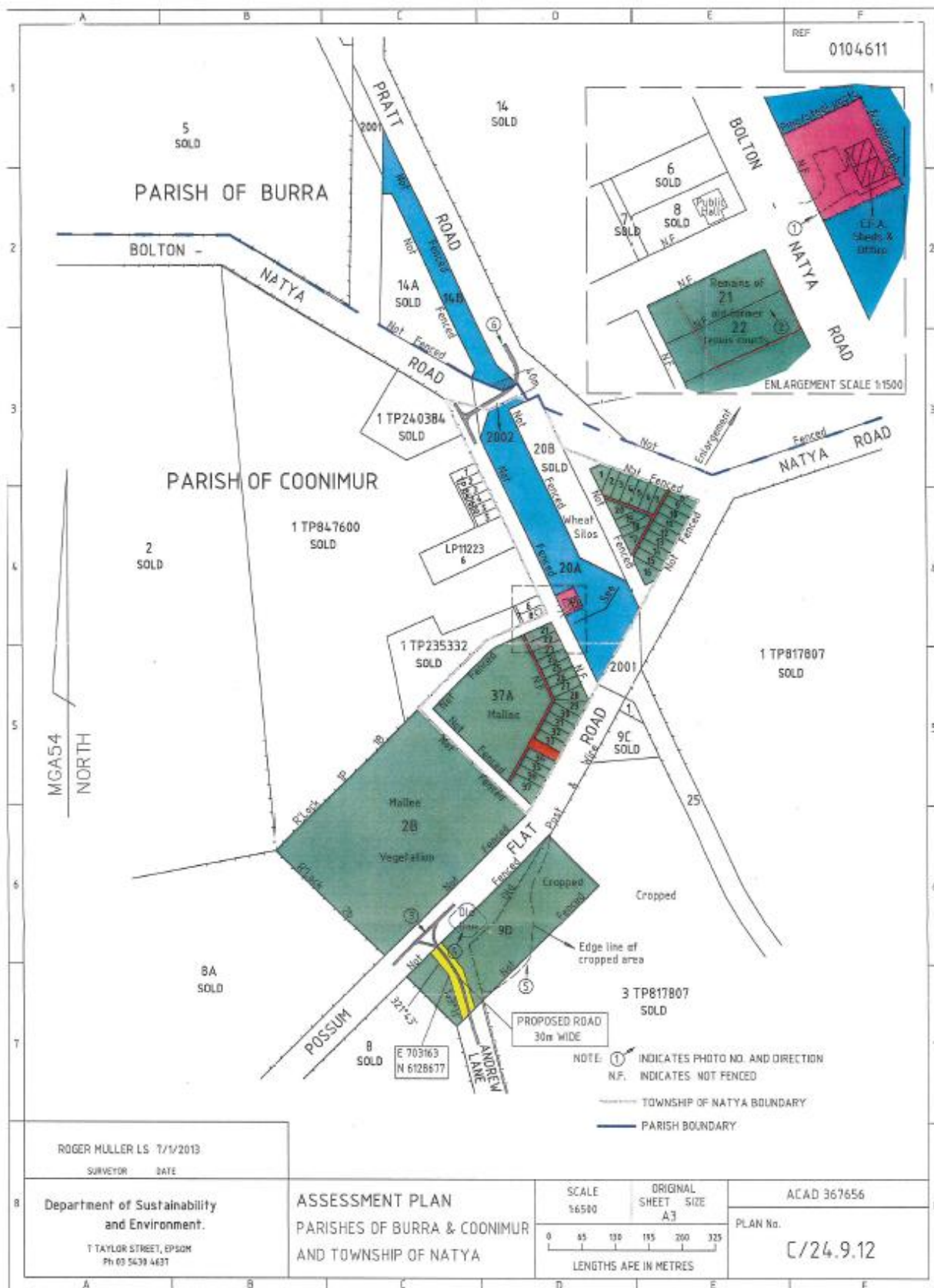
### **Options**

1. Allow DEPI to close roads and include area in Bushland Reserve.
2. Retain roads status.
3. Allow DEPI to proceed with road proclamation.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council allow DEPI to close the roads at the Parish of Coonimur Bushland Reserve and proclaim the highlighted section of Andrew Lane as a government road under section 349 of the Land Act 1958 and include the land of the closed roads into the Bushland reserve.**





### **B.14.93 ROAD CLOSURES – TOWNSHIP GOSCHEN, PARISH OF KOOEM**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-04-01  
**Attachments:** Nil

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

A request has been received from Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) requesting road closures of government roads intended to be included in Goschen Bushland Reserve.

#### **Discussion**

DEPI is in the process of implementing Victorian Environment Assessment Council designation of Crown Land in the township of Goschen as Bushland Reserve.

Land coloured blue on attached plan is government road for closure and it is intended that these roads be closed under Section 349 Land Act 1958 for inclusion in the existing Bushland Reserve.

Council consent is requested for the closure of roads by DEPI.

#### **Consultation**

Consultation will be carried out by DEPI in accordance with Section 349 of the Land Act 1958.

#### **Social Implications**

As these roads are not constructed and remain unused, Council and the public will not be disadvantaged in anyway.

#### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

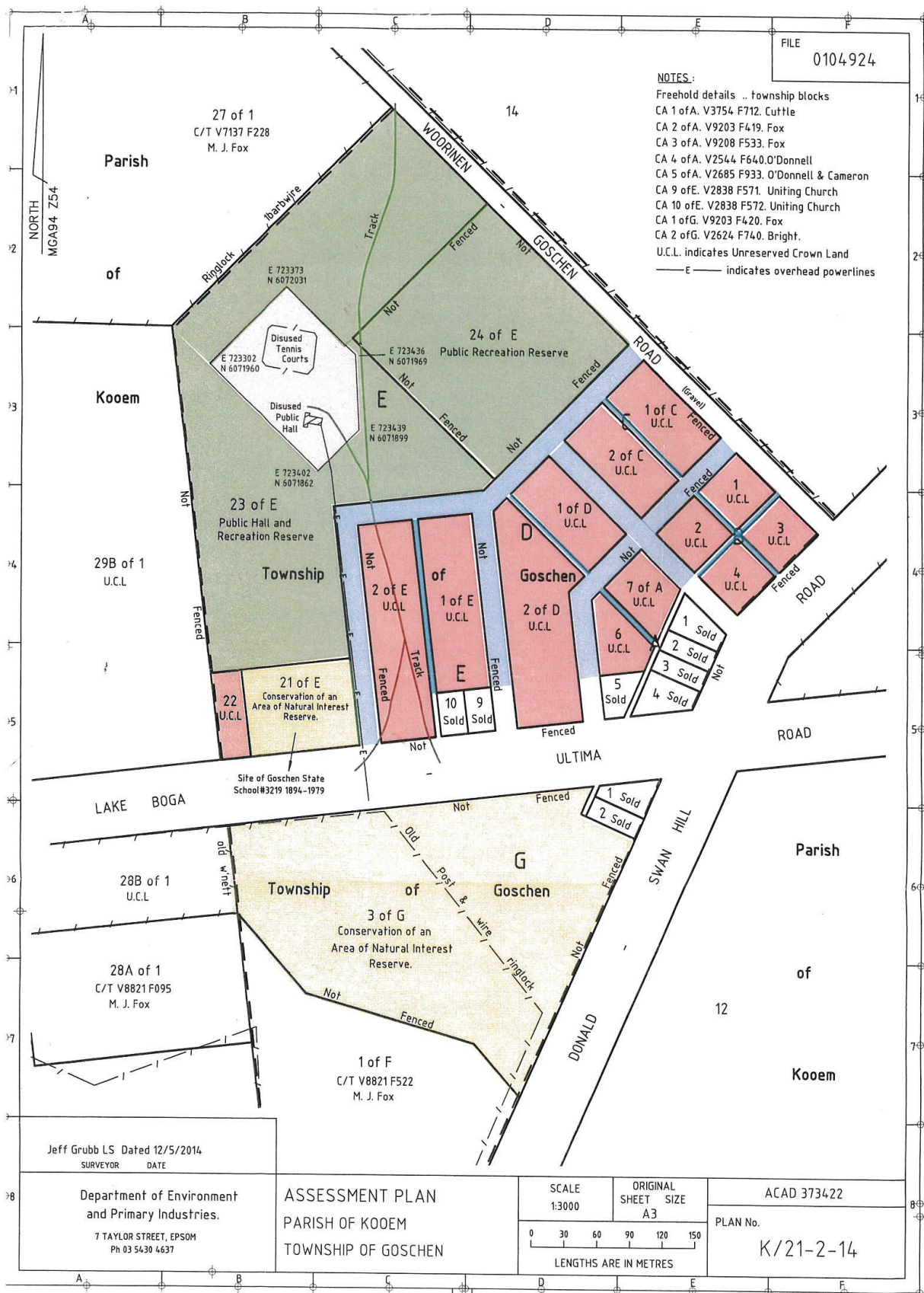
**Infrastructure** - We seek to ensure appropriate infrastructure is available to continue our economic growth.

#### **Options**

1. Allow DEPI to close roads and include area in Bushland Reserve.
2. Retain roads status.

**Recommendation**

**That Council allow DEPI to close the roads at Goschen under section 349 of the Land Act 1958 and include the land into the Bushland reserve.**



## **B.14.94 ROAD CLOSURES & PROCLAMATION – KOOLONONG BUSHLAND RESERVE**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-04-04  
**Attachments:** Nil

### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

A request has been received from Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) requesting road closures of government roads intended to be included in Kooloonong Bushland Reserve and also a road alignment to be given road status.

### **Discussion**

DEPI is in the process of implementing Victorian Environment Assessment Council designation of Crown Land in the Parish of Mirkoo as Kooloonong Bushland Reserve.

Land coloured red on attached plan is government road for closure and it is intended that these roads be closed under Section 349 Land Act 1958 for inclusion in the Bushland Reserve. Also, the land coloured yellow on the plan contains formed and used road alignments and it is proposed that the land be given government road status.

Council consent is requested for the closure of roads by DEPI and agreement is sought for the road proclamations coloured yellow on plan.

On 19 November, 2013 this same matter went to Council and a resolution was carried to close the roads under the Local Government Act at Council's cost. Since this, DEPI have approached Council and offered to carry out closures under the Land Act which would have no financial implications to Council.

### **Consultation**

Consultation will be carried out by DEPI in accordance with Section 349 of the Land Act 1958.

### **Social Implications**

As these roads for closure are not constructed and remain unused, Council and the public will not be disadvantaged in anyway.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

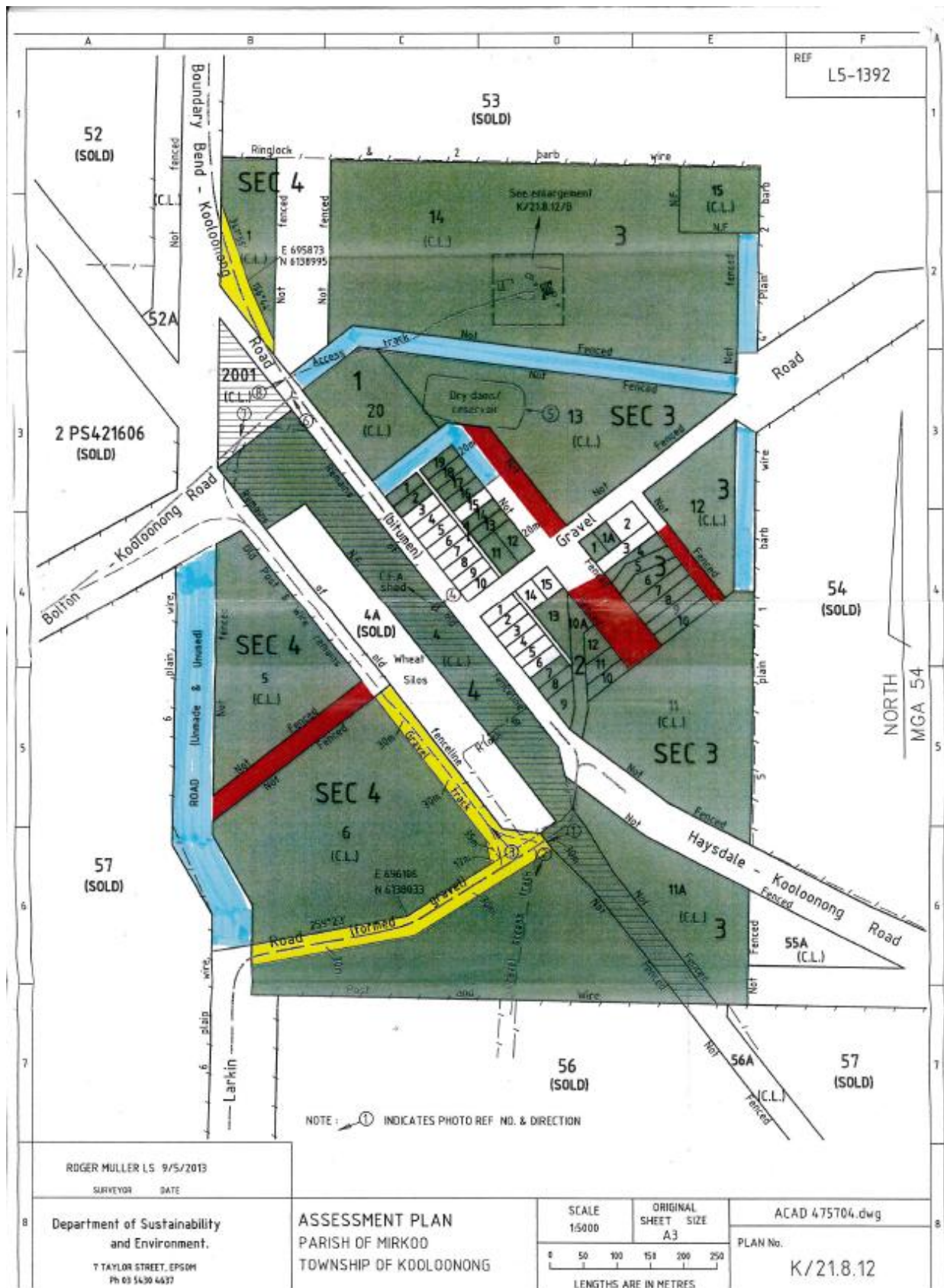
***Infrastructure*** - We seek to ensure appropriate infrastructure is available to continue our economic growth.

### **Options**

1. Rescind standing Council resolution.
2. Allow DEPI to close roads and include area in Bushland Reserve under Land Act.
3. Retain roads status.
4. Allow DEPI to proceed with road proclamation.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council allow DEPI to close the roads at Kooloonong under section 349 of the Land Act 1958 and include the land into the Bushland reserve.**



**B.14.95 ROAD CLOSURES – TOWNSHIP PIRA, PARISH OF TYNTYNDER WEST**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-04-01  
**Attachments:** Nil

**Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

**Summary**

A request has been received from Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) requesting road closures of two government roads intended to be included in Bushland Reserve, Township of Pira.

**Discussion**

DEPI is in the process of implementing Victorian Environment Assessment Council designation '1.283 – Bushland Reserve' in respect to the Crown land shown by red border on following assessment plan.

There are two government roads between parts of this land as coloured blue and it is intended that these roads be closed under Section 349 Land Act 1958 for inclusion in the Bushland Reserve.

Council consent is requested for the closure of roads by DEPI.

**Consultation**

Consultation will be carried out by DEPI in accordance with Section 349 of the Land Act 1958.

**Social Implications**

As these roads are not constructed and remain unused, Council and the public will not be disadvantaged in anyway.

**Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

**Infrastructure** - We seek to ensure appropriate infrastructure is available to continue our economic growth.

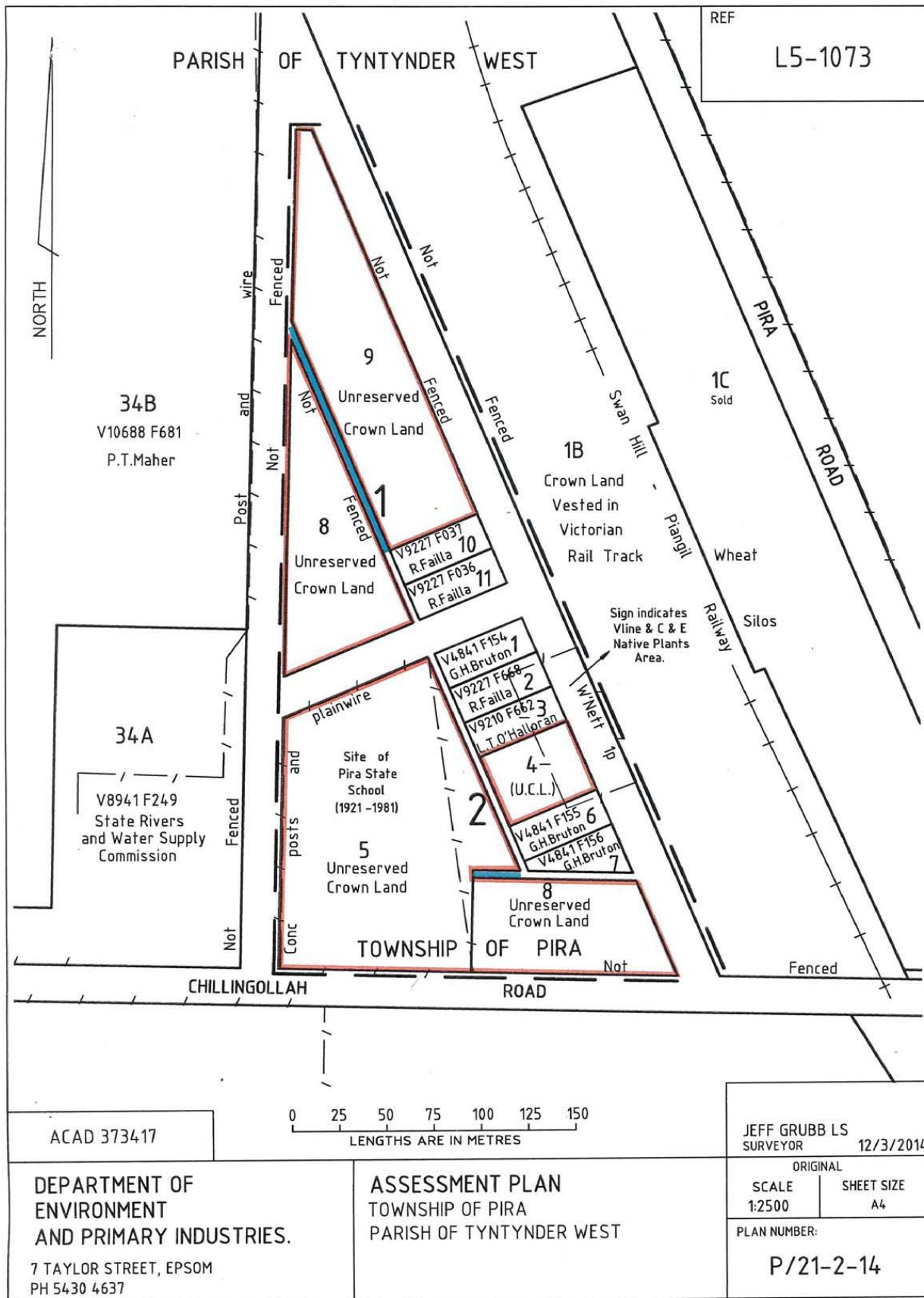
**Options**

1. Allow DEPI to close roads and include area in Bushland Reserve.
2. Retain roads status.



**Recommendation**

**That Council allow DEPI to close the roads at Pira under section 349 of the Land Act 1958 and include the land into the Bushland reserve.**



## **B.14.96 ROAD PROCLAMATION – PARISH OF WAITCHIE**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-04-01  
**Attachments:** Nil

### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) have requested a road alignment to be given road status.

### **Discussion**

DEPI is in the process of implementing Victorian Environment Assessment Council designation of Crown Allotments 42C and 43A Parish of Waitchie as Flora and Fauna Reserve, land coloured red on plan.

A recent survey report has identified a need for the widening of the Sea Lake–Swan Hill Road through this reserve and DEPI are in discussions with VicRoads on this matter.

The survey shows that Brydon Road, a well formed road running north from the Sea Lake-Swan Hill Road and through Allotment 42B, does not have government road status.

As part of the process that section of land shown yellow on the plan can be designated as government road with the concurrence of Council.

### **Consultation**

Consultation will be carried out by DEPI.

### **Social Implications**

As this land is already formed and used as a road, Council and the public will not be disadvantaged in anyway.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

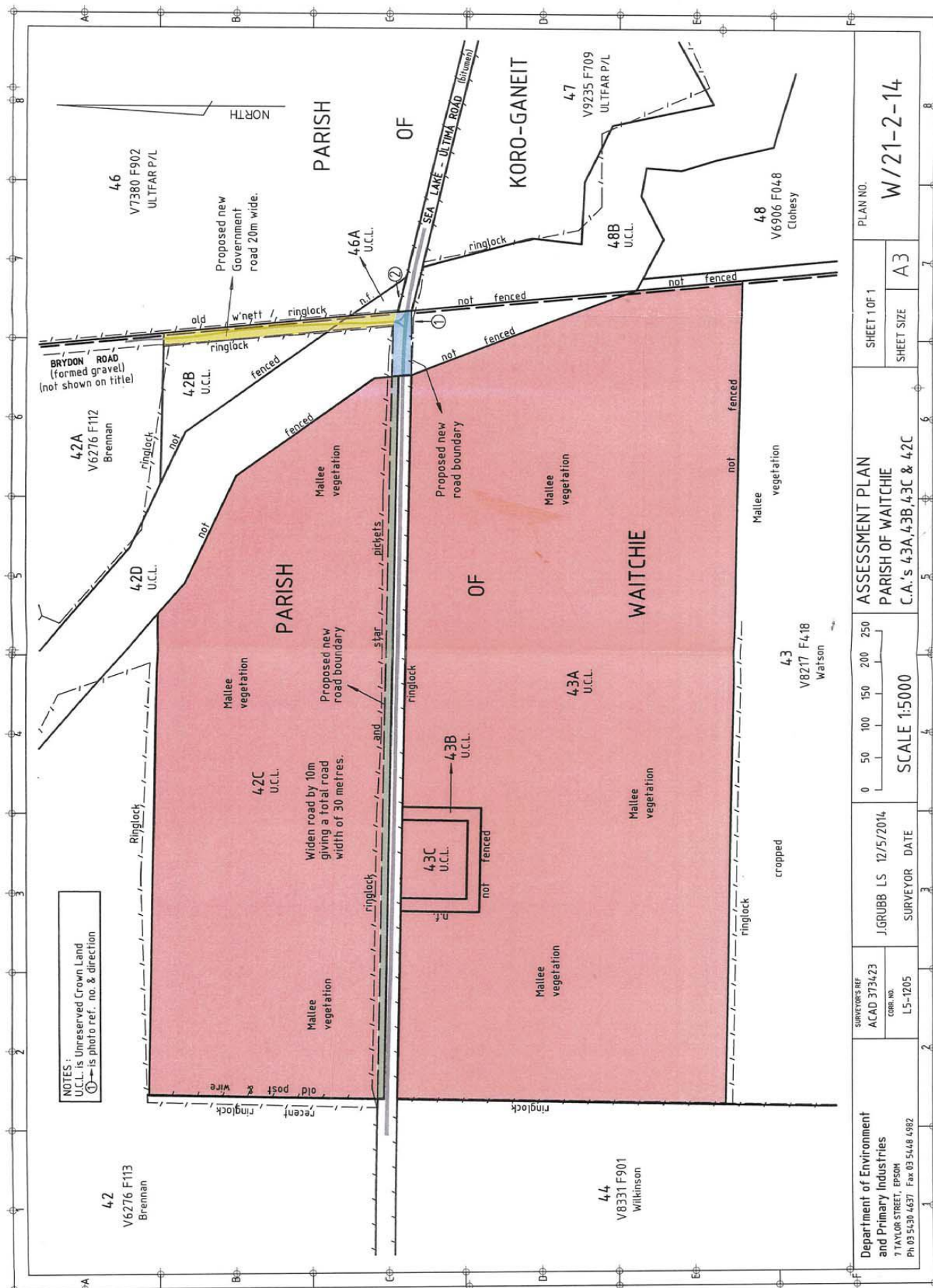
**Infrastructure** - We seek to ensure appropriate infrastructure is available to continue our economic growth.

**Options**

1. Allow DEPI to close roads and include area in Bushland Reserve.
2. Retain roads status.
3. Allow DEPI to proceed with road proclamation.

**Recommendation**

**That Council allow DEPI to create government road status for the section of Brydon Road adjacent to Allotment 42B under section 349 of the Land Act 1958.**



NOTES:  
 U.C.L.'s Unreserved Crown Land  
 ① → is photo ref. no. & direction

SURVEYOR'S REF ACAD 3734/23 CORR. NO. L5-1205	ASSESSMENT PLAN PARISH OF WAITCHIE C.A.'s 43A, 43B, 43C & 42C		PLAN NO. W/21-2-14
	SURVEYOR J.GRUBB LS 12/5/2014	DATE	SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEET SIZE A3
Department of Environment and Primary Industries 7 TAYLOR STREET, EPSOM Ph 03 5430 4637 Fax 03 5448 4982		SCALE 1:5000	

## **B.14.97 SWAN HILL BUS SHELTERS**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure  
**File Number:** 84-28-00  
**Attachments:** 1 Swan Hill Bus Shelters

### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Leahy - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

The following report is a summary of the investigations into the establishment of a program to install shelters at designated bus stops within Swan Hill.

### **Discussion**

The public transport bus service within the city of Swan Hill is operated by Swan Hill Bus Lines on behalf of Passenger Transport Victoria (PTV). The service runs Monday to Friday (full days) each week and Saturday mornings.

For many people within Swan Hill the bus service is their primary form of transport and it also caters for visitors to the city.

Requests from passengers of the service and a number of residents for shelters to be placed at stops have been received over the past 2 years. As a result of these requests Council staff has undertaken some research into the best possible solution to the issue. The investigations have included travelling on the 2 bus routes, speaking with the drivers of the buses and surveying passengers.

The passengers that were surveyed included regular users of the services, visitors to Swan Hill and some first time users. All of the people surveyed suggested they would welcome shelters at certain stops as they are sometimes required to wait in excess of 10 minutes in what can be extreme weather conditions.

Attached to this report is the investigation report into the most suitable type of shelter and the best locations for them to be placed. The intention is to have easy to install units placed onto the existing concrete slabs at the current stops.

It should also be noted that Swan Hill Bus Lines have been successful in attaining grant funds to have bus stops upgraded and shelters installed at the Swan Hill Cemetery and at the Alcheringa facility at Tower Hill. Council engineering staff will work with Swan Hill Bus Lines to assist where ever possible with the project.

## **Consultation**

A Council Projects Officer travelled the bus routes and discussed the options with passengers and the drivers. A standard survey of the passengers and drivers was also completed.

The consultation results were used determine the prioritised list for shelters.

## **Financial Implications**

Quotes for the purchase and delivery of shelters indicate a cost of \$9,950 (+GST) per unit. An annual maintenance / cleaning cost of approximately \$1,200 p.a. would also apply to each unit.

Quotes for "Transit Shelters" (larger shelters) were also received and the cost is \$19,750 (+GST) per unit. Due to the size and potential location of any transit shelters, the annual maintenance / cleaning costs will be higher at approximately \$2,000 p.a. for each unit

Installation costs for the standard shelters is approx \$2,500 and \$3,500 for the large transit shelters.

## **Social Implications**

The installation of shelters at selected bus stops will have a positive social impact on the community and could potentially encourage more people to utilise public transport.

## **Economic Implications**

Whilst there will be a minor ongoing maintenance cost associated with the installation of shelters it is not likely to be a major burden.

## **Environmental Implications**

Nil

## **Risk Management Implications**

Risk assessments will be completed at the various suggested locations.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Facilitate and provide services for health and wellbeing*** - We will provide or facilitate a range of services that maintain community health, and provide opportunities and infrastructure that contribute to the educational, recreational, cultural and leisure needs of our community.

### **Options**

1. Refer the project to Major Projects Plan process
2. Not go ahead with the project
3. Lobby PTV for the state government to undertake the installation

### **Recommendation**

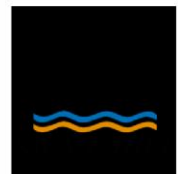
**That Council refers the installation of bus shelters at selected bus stops to the 2015/16 Major Projects Plan**





# Swan Hill Bus Service

## Bus Shelter Report



## Bus Shelter Report – Infrastructure

### Overview

Swan Hill Bus Lines operates the Swan Hill bus service throughout Swan Hill in two zones – North and South. The service runs Monday – Saturday, starting and finishing from the Campbell Street bus terminal outside the Westpac bank. This service caters for all types of people from the elderly, school students, unemployed, families, the disabled and tourist. It is an important service and the number one source of transport for many people.

Swan Hill Bus Lines follow a route set out by Public Transport Victoria (PTV). A report undertaken by Council officers in 2006 highlighted the need for improvements to be made to the bus stops within Swan Hill. In the last two years, Public Transport Victoria have upgraded a number of bus stops along the North and South bus route throughout Swan Hill, installing new raised concrete platforms and restored existing. They also installed TGSi – Tactile Ground Surface Indicators at most stops.

A Survey was conducted on the 10 of September 2014, of the bus drivers and passengers on bus routes. Information given, clearly identified that bus shelters and seating needs to be addressed within Swan Hill. A majority of the bus users are elderly, young school children, disabled persons and young families. Most have a waiting period of up to 5-10 minutes for the bus and with Swan Hill's climate varying in extremes it is essential that some sort of shelter is provided.

The size and style of the bus shelters used would have to be consistent throughout and be of a design that would not date and be easily maintainable. Due to standard installation requirements such as wind rating and footing depths, an investigation would need to be done to identify the depth of the concrete slabs already installed by PTV. The cost of installing the shelters would vary depending on the location and footings required.

Swan Hill Bus Lines have applied for funding from Public Transport Victoria (PTV) which they hope to pass on to Council to use for the installation of two bus shelters along the Swan Hill bus route. The two stops they are focusing on are the proposed bus stop for Boree Drive outside the Alcheringa aged care facility and the bus stop outside the front entrance of the Swan Hill Cemetery. Both sites require a concrete slab, Tactile Ground Surface Indicators, signage and shelters with seating.

The following information is an indication of which bus stops require shelters, need removing or where a new installation is required. This information was obtained as a result of a survey undertaken and research conducted by Council staff.

## Bus stops proposed to have shelters installed:

### Campbell Street – Main city bus terminal



**Photo:** - Campbell St Bus Stop  
– September 2014

As part of the CBD Master Plan it was proposed that the bus stop in Campbell Street be relocated to allow for improved street amenity and allow for transit movements in other locations. It has been identified that bus movement in and out of the bus stop, which is close to the pedestrian crossing in Campbell St is difficult and sometimes dangerous with traffic failing to give way. As part of any potential roll out of shelters across the 2 routes, Council staff will work with PTV staff on a suitable location for the CBD stop.

There is no shelter or seating at the actual bus stop, a shelter is required to protect waiting passengers, sometimes 10 or more from the elements. Passengers currently huddle in the Westpac Bank door way to keep out of the wind and rain, which then blocks customers entering and exiting the bank. Timetable signage is also in need of replacement as it is old and very dirty.

The Cost for the purchase and installation of this bus stop shelter and seating would depend on whether it stays in the same location or is moved to another location. Size and style would have to fit with the CBD Master Plan.

Approximate cost to install shelter: Qty 2: \$ 17,950 + GST each **Supply, Deliver & Install**

Approximate cost to relocate bus stop and shelter: \$3,000

**McCrae St – on the corner of Splatt and McCrae St. (near the medical centre)**

The bus drivers are very happy with the bus stop at this location. But there is a need for seating and shelter, as many people use this bus stop to access the medical clinic and the hospital. As you can see from the below photos, this stop is well used and is in need for seating and a shelter.



**Cost:** \$9,950.00 + GST approximately (Supply and deliver)

Installation costs: \$ 2,500

### Coronation Avenue – Cemetery entrance

This bus stop which is less than 40m from the main entrance of the cemetery is in need of an upgrade with a concrete platform and seating / shelter required. This stop is used regularly by residents, many elderly and tourists wanting to visit the cemetery. PTV upgraded a bus stop a further 580m north of this bus stop, but it has no shelter or seating and is too far away from the main entrance for many elderly and invalid people to use.

Due to there being no formed platform some passengers find exiting the bus difficult. Also as there is no kerb or gutter, the passenger is left to negotiate a large step onto the bus. This is impossible for wheelchair passengers.



**Cost: Cost:** \$9,950.00 + GST approximately. Supply, deliver

Estimated costs for installation of shelter and constructing a raised / level platform to PVT standards \$ 5,000 approximately.

**Swan Hill Bus Lines has received funding from PTV for this bus stop and a new one at the Alcheringa Aged Care Centre at Tower Hill. Council will work with the funding body to implement this project.**

**Thurla Street - opposite the Byrnes Street intersection**

This is a very popular bus stop with the elderly and young families. Seating and a shelter is required.



**Cost:** \$9,950.00 approximately. Supply and deliver  
Installation costs: \$ 2,500

**Yana Street – near the corner of Yana and Harrison Crescent.**

This bus stop is used by a wide variety of people from school children, the elderly, school groups and young families. Buses also use this stop to drop off and pick up children that have been visiting the Specialist School.



**Cost:** \$9,950.00 approximately.(Supply and deliver)  
Installation costs: \$ 2,500

**Chapman Street opposite the Public Housing Units**

This is a very popular bus stop for the elderly and requires a shelter and a seating upgrade.



**Cost:** \$9,950.00 approximately (Supply and deliver)  
Installation costs: \$ 2,500

**Palaroo Street – in the front of the Aged units.**

There are a lot of elderly people that wait for the bus at this stop. A seat and shelter is required.



**Cost:** \$9,950.00 approximately (Supply and deliver)  
Installation costs: \$ 2,500

**The following is a new bus stops location that has been identified as being needed.**

**Werril Street – Murray Valley Highway intersection.**

This area has been identified as requiring a bus stop as the drivers drop off and collect a large number of passengers at this location. This location is close to the Southern business precinct which includes the VIC Roads outlet.



**Cost:** \$9,950.00 approx  
Supply, deliver

Install slab and shelter \$3,500.00

Cost to install slab and  
TGSI – Tactile Ground Surface Indicators  
\$3,500.00

**Maintenance:**

Ongoing maintenance cost would be minimal. Cleaning would need to be conducted on a monthly basis.



**The following bus stop was highlighted by drivers as needing to be removed due to safety issues.**

**Naretha St – just over the railway line in Federal Square**

Due to its position on a corner and close to an intersection, this bus stop is unsafe for both the bus and traffic coming over the railway line. If a bus is stopped it blocks the road. The centre line marking is a solid white line, making it illegal for vehicles to pass. This bus stop needs to be removed or relocated.

**#Note:** A letter needs to be sent to Public Transport Victoria to request that this bus stop be removed as it is not used and the drivers feel it is a hazard whilst bus is stopped.



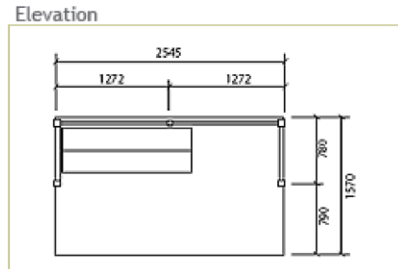
Removal of bus stop sign \$60.00

### Example of bus shelter that could be installed throughout Swan Hill

#### Bell Bus Shelter – Polite Enterprises Corporation Thomastown VIC



Length – 3m Height – 2.2m  
Depth – 900mm  
¾ Length seat  
10mm toughened acrylic  
sides and back  
Colourbond roof



#### Supply & Deliver only

1-2 \$9,950.00+GST

3-4 \$9,550.00+GST

5+ \$9,150.00+GST

#### Supply, deliver & install

1-2 \$10,650.00

3-4 \$10,250.00+GST

5+ \$9,850.00+GST

(FOOTINGS NOT INCLUDED)

**Bell Bus Shelter  
Transit Bus Shelter**



6m long x 2.2 high x 900mm sides  
3/4 length seat  
10mm toughened acrylic sides and back  
Colourbond roof  
Capacity: 10+ people

**Price  
Supply & Deliver Only**

Qty 1: \$18,500.00+ GST each  
Qty 2+: \$ 17,950. 00+ GST each






**Supply, Deliver & Install**

Qty 1: \$20,250.00+ GST each  
Qty 2+: \$19,750.00+ GST each

## Landmark – Victoria Bathurst Series | K703



### Material Specifications

<p> <b>Engineering</b></p> <p> <b>Tray</b></p> <p> <b>Installation</b></p>	<p>Wind classification N3-W41N standard (C3-W60C cyclone rating available upon request).</p> <p>316-Grade Stainless steel</p> <p>Cast in-ground to concrete footings or bolt to slab.</p>	<p> <b>Steelwork</b></p> <p> <b>Hardware</b></p>	<p>Hot-dip galvanised and powder coated to selected colour.</p> <p>Galvanised or stainless steel hardware, including anti-vandal fixings as appropriate.</p>
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<sup>35</sup><sub>17</sub> (x1) **K703** - Bathurst Bus shelters, all steel & powder coated, lexan panels, Bolt down - \$8,360 + GST. (Includes delivery)  
Optional - (x2) all aluminium bench seat, Bolt down - \$775 + GST. (Includes delivery)

<sup>35</sup><sub>17</sub> (x1) **PCS** Bus shelters, all steel & powder coated, lexan side panels, Bolt down - \$7,950 + GST (includes seat).  
Freight - (x1) **PCS** Bus shelters (pre-assembled) - \$1,100 + GST

### Map of current bus route.

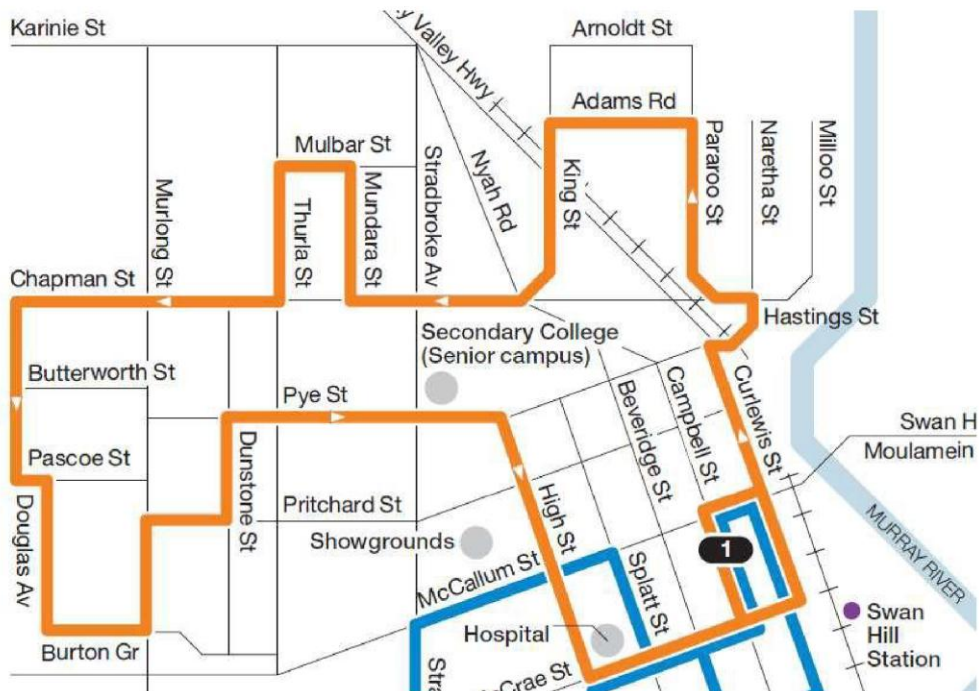
The following is the current bus route through Swan Hill. The route is currently under review by Swan Hill Bus Lines who are considering changing the direction of some parts and possibly expanding the route.

As you can see the route starts at the town Terminus in Campbell St which is indicated by a number 1. The map does not indicate where the current bus stops are located along the route.

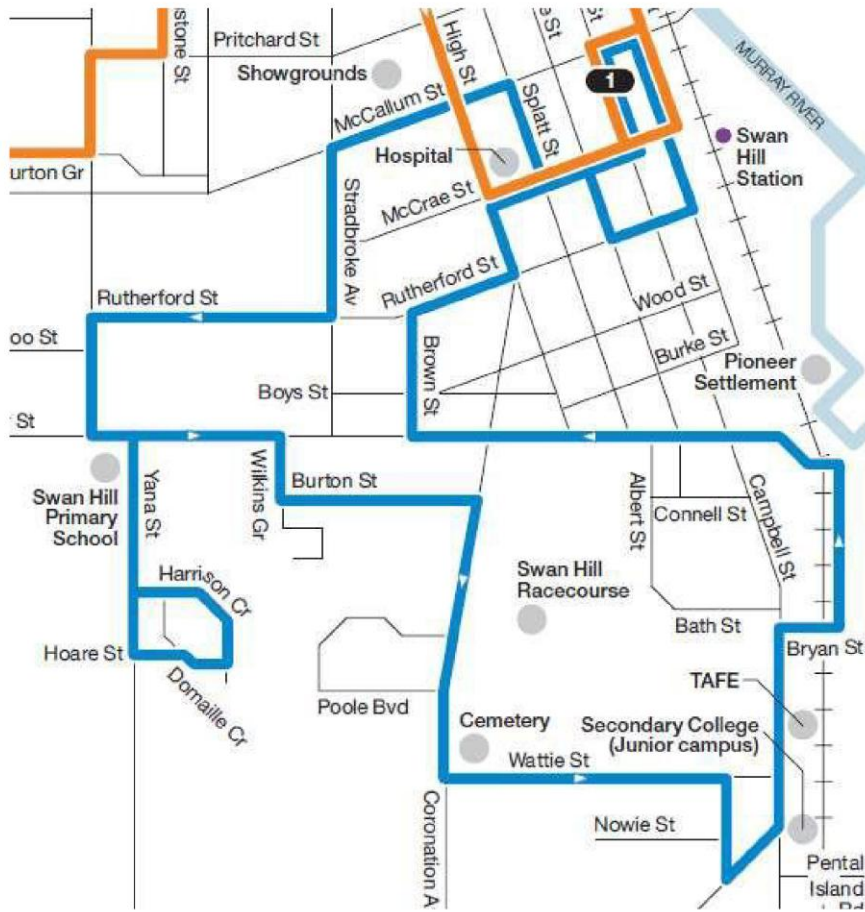
The map's information is out dated; it states Secondary College – Junior Campus and TAFE where the Police Station is now situated on the southern map.

Current Bus routes as shown on the Public Transport Victoria website.

### Map – Route 1 North (Orange)



### Map – Route 2 South (Blue)



## Survey

### Survey conducted with Drivers

<b>What are your busiest bus stops?</b>	The busiest stops are Campbell St, McCrae St, Thurla St, Pritchard St, Chapman St (near shops) and Yana St. But it does depend on the day of week and time of day.
<b>Are you happy with the locations of the current bus stops</b>	Both Drivers stated they were happy with the locations and access. But felt the Campbell St stop would be better located in McCallum St or McCrae St. There also needs to be a stop at Werril Street (near Murray Valley Highway)
<b>Is there a need for shelters at the bus stops and if so at which stops would they be needed most.</b>	Yes  Both drivers agreed that shelters were needed at – Campbell St, McCrae St, Thurla St, Palaroo St, Coronation Avenue (near Cemetery entrance), Yana St, Chapman St and Boree Drive ( out front of Alcheringa) and Werril St
<b>Are there any locations that are not used?</b>	Yes. The bus stop at Naretha St is in a dangerous location. If the bus does stop it blocks the flow of traffic, as the stop is on a bend with no pull in area and close to an intersection. The drivers prefer to ask passengers to wait further along the route on Palaroo St.
<b>Is there any location where a bus stop is needed / required?</b>	A bus stop is required close to the intersection of Werril St and the Murray Valley HWY. This is a popular drop off point as it is close to Vic roads.  Coronation Avenue - there is no formed concrete bus stop at the bus stop located near the entrance of the cemetery. This is a popular stop with the elderly and visiting tourist. There needs to be a shelter and a concrete slab for safe entry and exit of the bus. Currently the edge of the road has no kerb and is sloping away from the road.

## Survey

### Survey conducted with Passengers

<p><b>How often do you travel on the Swan Hill Bus service?</b></p>	<p><b>15</b> – Regularly. It's our main form of transport.</p> <p><b>4</b> – First time. We are staying at caravan park and thought it would be a good way to see the town.</p> <p><b>5</b> – Once a week.</p>
<p><b>Are you happy with the locations of the current bus stops?</b></p>	<p>Yes - 23</p> <p>Yes &amp; No - Would like to see a stop located in Werril St</p>
<p><b>Is there a need for shelters at the bus stops?</b></p>	<p>Yes – 24.</p> <p>“Most of the people using the bus have prams and small children or are old. When it's raining or extremely hot we usually use taxi's which cost more.”</p>
<p><b>Which bus stops need shelter most?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campbell St</li> <li>- McCrae St.</li> <li>- Pritchard St</li> <li>- Thurla St</li> </ul>



## **B.14.98 INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Corporate Services  
**File Number:** 72-35-54  
**Attachments:** 1 Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation  
(Planning and Environment Act 1987)

### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

Many of the functions and powers of Council staff stem from their appointments as Authorised Officers. Trent Goodman has recently commenced employment with Swan Hill Rural City Council as a temporary Planning Officer for up to 12 months to fill a maternity leave vacancy and requires the authorisation of Council in order to fulfill his role.

### **Discussion**

There is a basic distinction between a delegation and authorisation. A delegate acts on behalf of the Council, exercising the Council's powers. A person who is appointed as an Authorised Officer has the powers of that position.

Council's Chief Executive Officer has the power to authorise various members of Council staff under his instrument of delegation issued by Council. However, advice from Council's solicitors recommends that the Council appoint Planning Officers as Authorised Officers under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

### **Consultation**

Not required for this item.

### **Financial Implications**

Nil

### **Social Implications**

Nil

### **Economic Implications**

Nil

### **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### **Risk Management Implications**

The appointment of Mr Goodman as an Authorised Officer will ensure he has the appropriate powers to fulfil his role.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Responsible management of resources*** - We will continually improve the management of our finances, assets, systems and technology to achieve and maintain Best Value in our operations.

### **Options**

Nil

### **Recommendation**

**That Council appoint Mr Goodman as an Authorised Officer in accordance with the attached instrument effective upon signing and sealing, and remaining in force until varied or revoked.**

**Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation  
(Planning and Environment Act 1987)**

In this instrument "officer" means -

Trent Goodman

**By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Swan Hill Rural City Council -**

- 1. under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* - appoints the officer to be an authorised officer for the purposes of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the regulations made under that Act; and
- 2. under section 232 of the *Local Government Act 1989* authorises the officer generally to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

**It is declared that** this instrument -

- (a) comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- (b) remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Swan Hill Rural City Council on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

THE COMMON SEAL )  
 SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL )  
 Was hereunto affixed in the presence of: )

.....Councillor

.....Councillor

.....Chief Executive Officer

## **B.14.99      AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Responsible Officer:**            **Director Corporate Services**  
**File Number:**                    **42-02-03**  
**Attachments:**                    Nil.

### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

Council's Audit Committee met on 4 December 2014 and this report summarises the items that were discussed at the meeting.

### **Discussion**

The Audit Committee met on 4 December 2014 and as well as the usual procedural items the Agenda items included:-

1. Presentation from the Organisational Development Department.
2. Internal Audit Update on health inspections. All recommendations are now implemented.
3. Internal Audit National Competition Policy progress report. All recommendations are now implemented.
4. Internal Audit of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Update. Final recommendation is expected to be completed during March 2015.
6. Internal Audit 2015 Program

### **Consultation**

Not relevant to this item.

### **Financial Implications**

The recommendation in the report will not affect existing resource allocations.

### **Social Implications**

Nil

### **Economic Implications**

Nil

### **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### **Risk Management Implications**

The Audit Committee helps to oversee Council's Risk Management Practices. Internal and other Audits are routinely done to reduce the risk to Council.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Councillor and Staff accountability*** - We will represent the interests of our community and will conduct our affairs openly and with integrity, reflecting high levels of good governance.

### **Options**

Nil

### **Recommendation**

**That Council note the contents of this report.**

### **B.14.100 STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL REGION'S RETAIL INDUSTRY**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Development and Planning  
**File Number:** 42-52-246  
**Attachments:** 1 Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

Brett Luxford - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

The '*Strengthening Swan Hill Region's Retail*' Industry project was made possible through Regional Development Victoria's Putting Locals First program.

The project aims to increase the profitability of retailers in the Swan Hill region and create additional employment by providing targeted assistance to build resilience, implement strategies and grow business opportunities in a challenging environment.

This report seeks a Council resolution to endorse the Swan Hill Region Retail Strategy to allow Council and Swan Hill Incorporated to proceed with implementing actions from the strategy.

#### **Discussion**

The need for a Swan Hill Region Retail Strategy was identified in 2013 with Council noting a number of long-term commercial vacancies in the CBD and an overall need to plan longer term for the development of the Swan Hill Retail Centre. Council's Economic Development Unit had also undertaken Business Visits to a number of local retail businesses during 2013 and findings indicated doubt amongst retailers in the long term health of the region's retail industry despite strong growth in other sectors of the local economy.

Through Regional Development Victoria's, Putting Locals First funding, Swan Hill Rural City Council was provided a grant to allow for a Retail Strategy to be produced.

With the overarching aim to increase the profitability of retailers and create additional employment, the strategy was to look at the changing nature of the retail industry and guide Swan Hill Region retailers through a difficult period in the sector.

Consultant Essential Economics was appointed to produce the strategy, in partnership with MM Creative Business, who undertook the role of identifying digital opportunities for the region. The strategy identifies a number of actions that complement the recent CBD redevelopments and helps to retain and revitalise a valuable industry to the local economy.

## **Consultation**

The consultant interviewed over twenty local retailers, met with the Swan Hill Incorporated Retail Committee, as well as numerous Councillors and key Council staff.

Consultation also included an online survey of attendees of the free digital workshop held as part of the project, to determine the level of digital presence amongst retailers in the region.

The draft strategy was reviewed by a range of stakeholders, including retailers, Council staff and a Councillor representative, Swan Hill Inc retail committee members and Regional Development Victoria before the final strategy was completed.

## **Financial Implications**

Council will seek funding from a range of external sources to assist with the implementation of the Swan Hill Region Retail Strategy. Key strategies and identified actions will be considered and implemented by the Economic Development Unit and Swan Hill Incorporated, in accordance with their priority and funding availability.

## **Social Implications**

The implementation of the Swan Hill Region Retail Strategy will have a positive social impact on the community as the focus of the strategy is to drive foot traffic to the retail precincts and create a sense of place through place making and events.

## **Economic Implications**

The retail strategy will assist with increasing the profitability of retailers and creating employment by supporting retail in the region as a whole, with strategies and actions designed to build economic resilience.

## **Environmental Implications**

Nil

## **Risk Management Implications**

Nil

## **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Existing business support*** - We will support existing businesses and encourage expansion through building business capacity.

**Options**

Council can choose to endorse the retail strategy, seek further work to be undertaken in relation to the strategy or not endorse the strategy at all.

**Recommendation**

**That Council endorse the Swan Hill Region Retail Strategy as a guide to strengthening retailing in the region.**





ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS

## **Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014**

### **Strengthening Swan Hill's Retail Industry**

Prepared for

Swan Hill Rural City Council

by

Essential Economics Pty Ltd

and

MM Creative Business

**October 2014**

**Authorship**

Report stage	Author	Date	Review	Date
Draft report	Nick Brisbane Andrew Rossiter	1 September 2014	John Henshall	2 September 2014
Final report	Nick Brisbane	3 October 2014	John Henshall	3 October 2014

**Disclaimer**

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material and the integrity of the analysis presented herein, Essential Economics Pty Ltd accepts no liability for any actions taken on the basis of the contents of this report.

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Our Reference: 14107

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- 1 **Project Background:** Swan Hill Rural City Council has commissioned Essential Economics Pty Ltd (in conjunction with MM Creative) to prepare the Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014: Strengthening Swan Hill's Retail Industry (the Strategy). The Strategy is part funded by Swan Hill Incorporated (Swan Hill Inc).

The retail industry is an integral part of the Swan Hill regional economy in that it generates significant employment opportunities, attracts investment to the region, supports the local tourism industry, supports the overall function of the Swan Hill CBD and other town centres, and provides essential services and merchandise for local residents and businesses.

- 2 **Context Analysis:** A review of policy and strategies relevant to retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill, Swan Hill's regional location and recent trends impacting the retail sector was undertaken with the key findings including the following:
- Swan Hill is a regional service centre that serves a regional catchment extending beyond the boundaries of the municipality.
  - Swan Hill is situated in a relatively competitive context in terms of its proximity to other regional cities that provide a strong offer of retail and other facilities and services.
  - Retailing is a significant sector in the context of the Swan Hill regional economy, employing more than 1,000 persons and representing approximately 5% of the municipality's regional output.
  - The retail industry is a dynamic industry that is continually responding to changing consumer trends, shopping patterns and new forms of retailing.
- 3 **Retailing in Swan Hill:** Swan Hill is the main retail location serving residents and visitors to the municipality, and includes approximately 46,600m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace. The Swan Hill CBD accounts for the majority of this floorspace and includes major retailers in Coles, Woolworths and ALDI supermarkets, and a limited-range Target Discount Department Store. In addition, a Bunnings Warehouse is planned to be constructed in the near future.
- 4 **Shopfront vacancies:** Based on a floorspace survey of shopfronts in Swan Hill, the overall vacancy rate is 7% of shopfront floorspace. This is slightly higher than the vacancy rate of between 4-6% which is typically considered consistent with a comfortably-performing centre. Although in percentage terms the extent of vacant floorspace is considered reasonable, a number of vacant shopfronts in the core parts of the CBD have been vacant for a considerable period of time, in some case more than two years.

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- 5 **Retail Trade Area:** The Main Trade Area (MTA) served by retail facilities in Swan Hill comprises the following:
- **Primary Trade Area (PTA),** which extends across both sides of the Murray River and generally includes areas within a 30 to 60-minute drive of Swan Hill.
  - **Secondary Trade Area (STA),** which generally includes those areas within a 60 to 90-minute drive of Swan Hill.
- 6 **Main Trade Area Population:** The Swan Hill MTA contains an estimated population of 37,420 persons in 2014, and this includes 22,540 persons in the PTA and 14,880 persons in the STA. Over the period 2004 to 2014, the MTA experienced a population decline of 2,690 persons, which occurred at an average rate -0.7% pa.
- Over the next 20 years (2014-2034) the MTA population is forecast to increase by +580 residents, increasing from 37,420 residents in 2014 to 38,000 residents by 2034. It is expected that the urban areas of Swan Hill will experience moderate population growth, while the surrounding rural areas are expected to experience population decline.
- 7 **Retail Market Shares:** Retail spending by MTA residents in 2014 is estimated at approximately \$468 million. Retailers in Swan Hill achieve the following market shares based on an analysis of retail turnover performance:
- 67% of retail spending by PTA residents
  - 24% of retail spending by STA residents
  - 50% of total retail spending throughout the whole of the MTA.
- 8 **Retail Development Opportunities:** Over the next 20 years, potential exists for additional retail development in the order of 6,000m<sup>2</sup> to 16,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace in Swan Hill. Identified gaps in the Swan Hill retail sector that may be able to contribute to future retail development in Swan Hill include Discount Department Store retailing, a dedicated homemaker/restricted retailing precinct, national brand retailers and tourism-based retailing.
- 9 **Swan Hill's Digital Market Presence:** A review of trends in how people and businesses use the internet and IT was undertaken, in addition to a review of the existing use of digital media by Swan Hill retailers. Key findings from this review include the following:
- The internet is increasingly becoming part of the daily way of life for both consumers and businesses, as illustrated by increases in the share of households and business with access to the internet, increases in the share of people undertaking online activities, the number of people using social media is increasing as is the amount of online retail sales.
  - Swan Hill has a relatively high level of internet representation; however, many of these businesses may not actually know that they have a web presence as details of their businesses are being captured through 'web crawlers'.
  - Compared to other industries, retailers appear to understand the importance of having a web presence.

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- Issues associated with costs and technical expertise are other reasons why retailers do not have a web presence.
  - Opportunities exist for Swan Hill retailers to improve their existing web presence, increase the overall number of retailers with a web presence, increase the use of social media, and improve the overall function of IT activities (e.g. online sales, ordering, stock control, etc).
- 10 **Other Important Considerations for the Strategy:** The research and analysis also identified a number of other factors that need to be considered in the development of the Retail Strategy, these include the following:
- The importance of Event and Place Management for retailers
  - The importance of continued economic development in the region for retailers
  - Swan Hill has experienced limited investment in new and existing retail tenancies
  - The potential to 'fill' long-term vacant tenancies through innovative methods such as 'pop-up' shops or 'empty spaces' programs
  - Opportunities for, and the benefits of, extended retail trading hours
  - The potential implications of the new Commercial 1 Zone on the Swan Hill CBD
  - The future of retailing in small towns including Lake Boga, Nyah, and Nyah West.
- 11 **Swan Hill Retail Strategy - Vision:** The Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014 includes the following Vision Statement which is intended to guide the ongoing development of the retail sector in Swan Hill:
- "Swan Hill will be the pre-eminent retail location serving residents and visitors to the Rural City of Swan Hill and surrounding areas. The retail sector will provide a genuine choice in merchandise and service, and will continue to make a significant contribution to the local and regional economy.*
- The Swan Hill retail industry will be renowned for its customer service and will use modern technologies to seek opportunities to expand its market, its employment base, and its level of service to the Swan Hill community and visitors."*
- 12 **Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014 – Objectives:** The following objectives underpin the Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014:
- To support Swan Hill as the pre-eminent retail location serving residents and visitors to the Rural City of Swan Hill
  - To support the continued viability of existing retailers
  - To support the development of land to the south of Swan Hill as the main location for highway-based retailing
  - To improve and enhance the built environment in the Swan Hill CBD
  - To support retailers in smaller towns so that they continue to serve as important focal points for their communities

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- To promote the integration of the Swan Hill CBD with the Riverfront
- To support the retail industry through the continued development of the local and regional economy
- To support retail through the development of 'place management' and an events program.

## INTRODUCTION

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### Background

Swan Hill Rural City Council has commissioned Essential Economics Pty Ltd (in conjunction with MM Creative) to prepare the Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014: Strengthening Swan Hill's Retail Industry (the Strategy). The Strategy is part funded by Swan Hill Incorporated (Swan Hill Inc).

The retail industry is an integral part of the Swan Hill regional economy in that it generates significant employment opportunities, attracts investment to the region, supports the local tourism industry, supports the overall function of the Swan Hill CBD and other town centres, and provides essential services and merchandise for local residents and businesses.

Consequently, the continued strengthening of the local retail industry is important to the overall development of Swan Hill and the region.

This Retail Strategy provides overall guidance for the ongoing development of the retail industry in the Rural City of Swan Hill, including recommendations on how retailers can improve their digital presence which is important in view of the implications of the internet on the retail sector.

The Strategy focuses on retailing in the township of Swan Hill as the regional centre, and also provides guidance for the retail industry in other centres in the municipality.

### Project Outcomes

The Retail Strategy is intended to assist in creating the following benefits for the Rural City of Swan Hill:

- Increased profitability and sustainability of local businesses
- A stronger understanding of consumer needs and behaviours
- Increased business confidence and the encouragement of new retail investment
- Creation of additional retail employment
- Addressing the issue of vacant shops
- Increased benefits for retailers from events held in the region
- Increased foot traffic to the retail precinct across the region
- Encourage retailers to improve their online presence and use new technologies to increase sales.



## Report Format

This report is in two parts. **Part A** provides the background retail assessment, while **Part B** sets out the Retail Strategy.

### **Part A: Background Analysis**

Part A presents detailed background analysis to inform the preparation of the Strategy and is organised into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Context Analysis  
Overview of the context within which retailing in Swan Hill is situated, including a description of relevant planning policy background, overview of the importance of retailing, and a summary of relevant trends in the retail sector.
- Chapter 2: Overview of Retailing in Swan Hill  
Overview of the Swan Hill retail sector, including estimates of current floorspace, retail development trends and the role and function of Council and Swan Hill Inc in supporting the local retail industry.
- Chapter 3: Swan Hill Retail Economic Analysis  
Detailed analysis of trade area population and spending, retail turnover and market share, retail gaps analysis and retail development opportunities.
- Chapter 4: Swan Hill's Digital Marketing Presence  
Overview of Swan Hill retailers' digital market presence and the implications of online retailing and social media for retailers.
- Chapter 5: Place Management and Events  
Overview of existing events in Swan Hill and how they can further contribute to retailing in Swan Hill.
- Chapter 6: Other Considerations  
Discussion of other considerations for the retail industry identified throughout the analysis and consultation.

### **Part B: Swan Hill Retail Strategy**

Part B presents a Retail Strategy to guide future strengthening of the Swan Hill retail industry, based on the detailed analysis presented in Part A. The Strategy is organised into the following components:

- Chapter 7: Introduction
- Chapter 8: Vision
- Chapter 9: Objectives
- Chapter 10: Actions and Implementation
- Chapter 11: Monitoring and Review

## Terms and Definitions

### Retail Activity

Retail activity is defined in this report according to the industry classifications used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in the preparation of the 1991/92 Retail and Services Census, but modified to exclude garden supplies, marine equipment and motor vehicle and related trade. The classification broadly follows the latest Australia and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) for 2006.

The definition used in this report is consistent with other approaches in undertaking retail-economic analysis in Australia.

A range of non-retail uses often operate in conjunction with and/or adjacent to many retail traders, including cinemas, offices, travel agencies, lotto and gaming outlets, banks and other financial institutions, equipment hire and garden supplies, and so on. For the purposes of this Strategy, these non-retail functions are not explicitly assessed; however, their presence and association with the retail sector is recognised where appropriate in the analysis and recommendations.

### Retail Categories

In the Strategy, retail floorspace and retail expenditure is divided into three broad product categories and a number of sub-categories. These categories and sub-categories are defined as follows:

- **Food retailing**, including the following sub-categories:
  - **Food, liquor and groceries (FLG)**, which comprises household spending on take-home food, groceries and liquor. This type of spending is usually directed to retail stores including supermarkets, fresh food stores, bakeries, butchers, etc.
  - **Food catering**, which includes household spending at cafes, restaurants and take-away food outlets.
- **Non-food retailing**, including the household spending on apparel, leisure and general merchandise, bulky merchandise and homewares.
- **Retail services**, which comprises household spending on services such as hair dressing, dry cleaning, video hire, and optometry.

### Terminology

As identified earlier, this Strategy focuses on retailing in the township of Swan Hill as the regional centre, and also provides guidance for the retail industry in other centres in the municipality. Where 'Swan Hill' is referenced in this Strategy it refers to the township of Swan Hill, unless otherwise stated.

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

## **PART A: BACKGROUND ANALYSIS**

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Essential Economics Pty Ltd

4

## 1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

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This Chapter provides a discussion of the context within which retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill is situated and includes the following:

- A description of Swan Hill's regional location
- An overview of the importance of retailing to the Rural City of Swan Hill
- Overview of retail trends, including the implications of the internet on retailing
- A description of the broader policy and planning context.

### 1.1 Regional Context

The Rural City of Swan Hill forms part of the Mallee region, situated in Victoria's north-west, approximately 340km north of Melbourne. Located on the Victorian side of the Murray River, the municipality includes approximately 500km of Murray River frontage, and is renowned for its agricultural sector. Approximately 20,870 (2013 estimate) persons live in the municipality.

Swan Hill is the regional city serving the municipality and the surrounding region, including areas to the north of the Murray River in New South Wales. A significant proportion of the municipality's population (52% according to ABS data for 2013) live in the Swan Hill township and immediate surrounding area. Swan Hill is the main location for retailing in the municipality and also provides a wide range of commercial, community, health, entertainment and civic facilities and services to the local population and visitors.

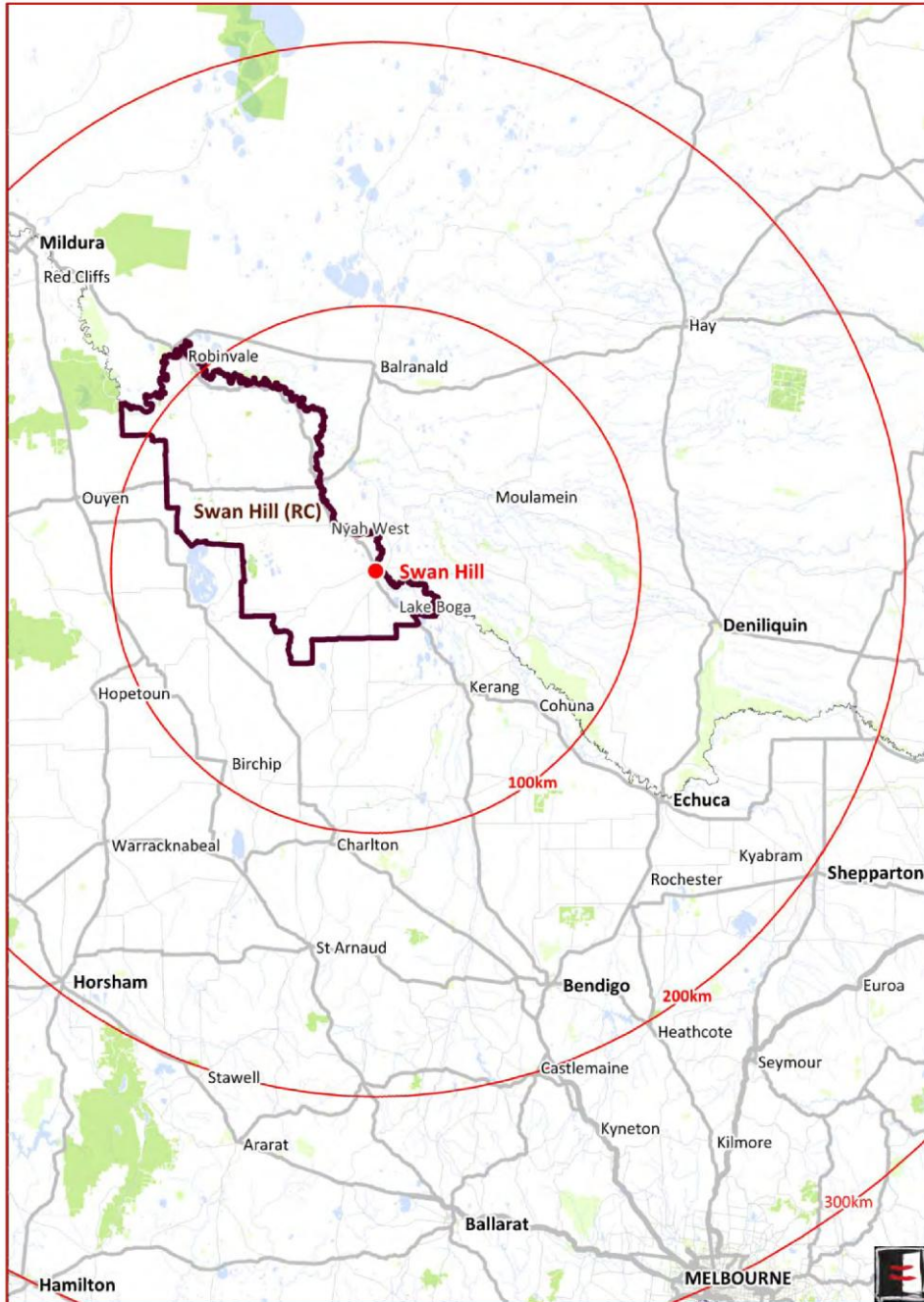
Smaller townships located throughout the municipality also provide a range of retail merchandise and services, mainly based on meeting the needs of the surrounding local and visitor populations. These townships include Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah and Nyah West.

Swan Hill is situated in a relatively competitive context in terms of its proximity to other regional cities that provide a strong offer of retail and other facilities and services. For instance, Bendigo is located approximately 175km (direct distance) to the south of Swan Hill and provides a greater choice of retail and other services. Other regional cities that provide a level of competition to Swan Hill include Kerang (60km to the south), Mildura (175km to the north-west), Echuca (140km to the south-east) and Horsham (200km to the south-west).

Figure 1.1 shows the regional location of Swan Hill.

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

Figure 1.1: Swan Hill – Regional Context



Source: Essential Economics with MapInfo and StreetPro

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

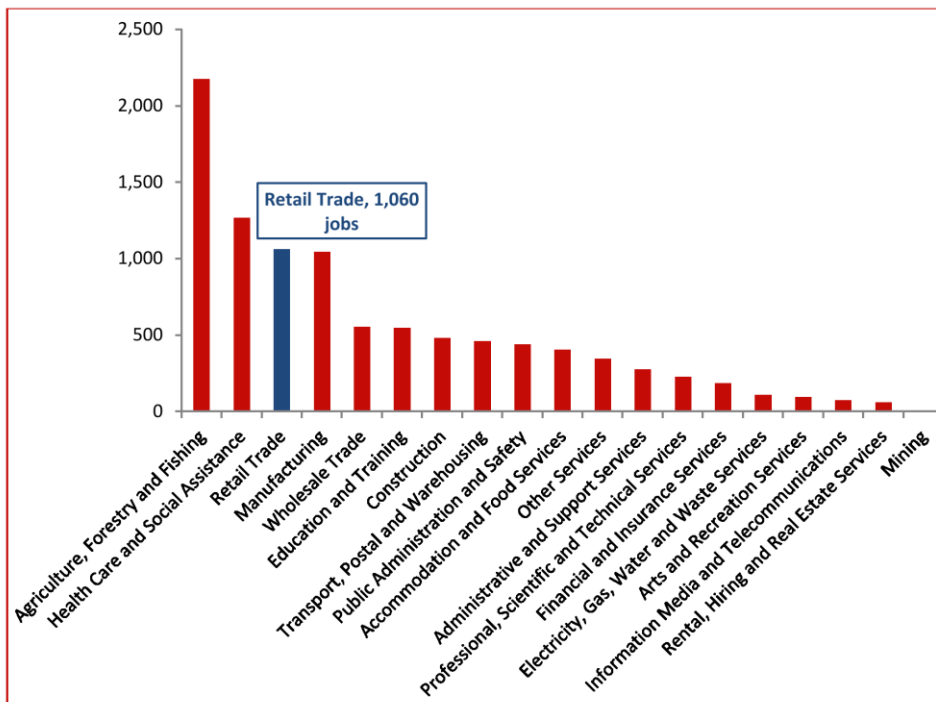
**1.2 Importance of Retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill**

The retail industry is important in terms of the national economy; it accounts for approximately 4.5% share of gross domestic product in Australia (ABS, Cat. No. 5206.0), and generates the highest amount of employment of any industry in Australia, employing around 1.3 million persons (ABS, Cat. No. 8155.0).

Retailing is also of significant importance to the Rural City of Swan Hill's economic, social and community fabric. From an economics perspective, retailing is the third largest employing sector in the municipality, providing employment opportunities for approximately 1,060 persons (refer Figure 1.2), and accounts for approximately 5% of regional output.

Importantly, retail is a significant employer of young people and provides many opportunities for young persons to enter the workforce. An estimated 31% of people employed in the Rural City of Swan Hill retail sector were aged 15 to 24 years in 2012/13 (NIEIR).

**Figure 1.12 Employment by Industry in the Rural City of Swan Hill, 2012/13**



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) compiled by id Consulting

Retailing is also a significant contributor to levels of activity and investment in town centres. For instance, approximately 40,250m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace (refer Chapter 3) is located in the Swan Hill CBD, providing residents visitors and businesses access to food and groceries,

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SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

clothing, household items and retail services etc, all of which are required for the ongoing operation and maintenance of local households and businesses.



Retailing contributes significantly to the viability and vibrancy of the Swan Hill town centre. In addition to providing goods and services, the retail sector provides a focus for communities and encourages social interaction in Swan Hill, and is the location for a wide range of social, community, education and health services.

### 1.3 Overview of Relevant Retail Trends

#### *Continuing Change in the Retail Industry*

Retail is one of the most diverse of industries, with individual retailers ranging from single owner-operators to family businesses, medium-scale operations, national chains, large supermarket and department store corporations, big-box/bulky goods retailers, and the like. A well-functioning and efficient retail sector that meets the needs of consumers can make a substantial contribution to an area's economic strength, in addition to enhancing the general lifestyle, interests and well-being of a community.

While the diversity of retailing is likely to continue, fundamental shifts are occurring in the structure of the retail industry that need to be taken into account. In particular, a trend over the past 20 years has been for smaller operators to lose market share to the retail 'giants' which include supermarket chains, department stores, category killers (large stores selling particular ranges of goods, such as Officeworks or Dan Murphy's), and big-box retailers in bulky goods merchandise. These larger operations do not always seek locations in the traditional shopping strip – they generally prefer an enclosed shopping centre or free-standing site with good exposure. This trend is occurring throughout Australia and overseas, and is likely to continue into the future.

However, signs exist that traditional strip centres are re-capturing some market share through re-focused and improved marketing, as well as an increasing preference by consumers for 'main street' style shopping.

#### *Consumer Behaviour and Demographics*

The shopping public are continually redefining their demand for goods and services in terms of types of retail in demand and their allocation of expenditures on particular retail items, and adapting to new ways in which retailing is conducted in the marketplace.

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For example, since the mid-1990s a general shift has taken place in retailing which now places increased focus on entertainment and leisure merchandise and services, rather than traditional household items, clothing and the like. More recently, a trend towards 'organic' food has had an influence on the product offering of retailers.

Customers are also increasingly attracted to places where a mix of retail and entertainment is presented at the one location.

### ***Technological Change and Internet Retailing***

A number of ongoing advances in information technology are affecting the way in which retailing is undertaken, including - most importantly - the increasing use of the Internet as a purchasing medium, as well as other changes which affect how retailers operate, such as point-of-sales systems.

Potential exists for local retailers to lose market share as households undertake a greater proportion of their shopping through the Internet and other information media. The extent to which internet sales are likely to affect the existing retail industry remains uncertain, although it is apparent that particular retail sectors are well-suited to purchases by Internet, including music, books, wines, etc. The Internet market share for food shopping (especially in dry produce) may also increase over time. In recent years, the growth in Internet retailing has accelerated and Internet spending is now approaching 7% of retail sales, according to recent industry estimates.

Internet retailing is not as prevalent in regional areas than it is in metropolitan areas. Per capita spending on the internet in regional areas is around -7% below that of residents in metropolitan areas. Regional Victoria in particular has a low level of internet spending per capita and is approximately -11% below the national average (NAB, Online Retail Sales Index, monthly).

In many respects, the Internet is used in conjunction with traditional retail outlets. For example, consumers are increasingly using the Internet to research prices and products before going to stores to purchase items. As a result, many retailers see the Internet as part of their overall sales and marketing strategy. In other cases, the consumer views the merchandise in-store for size and price, and then goes home and purchases the item/s on-line if the price is cheaper than in-store.

Importantly, the Internet presents significant opportunities for local retailers to expand their market significantly, including the potential to export to a worldwide market. This opportunity is more pronounced for specialty retail or niche shops which otherwise do not have an extensive store network.

In a demographic context, Internet retailing is increasingly dominated by younger users, with around 45% of internet spending undertaken by persons in the 24-44 years age bracket (NAB, Online Retail Sales Index, monthly). As the broader population becomes more computer literate, the market penetration of Internet retailing is expected to increase over time.



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Other new forms of technology may be developed in the future that may affect 'traditional' bricks and mortar retailing. For instance, mobile phone applications are being developed that can scan barcodes and allow the user to purchase products through their smart phones. These continual changes in technology will require some form of adaptation by traditional retailers.

The extent to which the Internet and other sales media (eg, telemarketing, smart phones, etc) can capture retail market share is likely to be largely limited by the community and entertainment-related aspects of shopping. Thus, while some retail purchases are likely to be made over the internet, for the foreseeable future the majority of shopping will continue to be undertaken at shopping centres or individual stores as this form of 'traditional' shopping provides an opportunity for social interaction and browsing, which, of course, cannot be experienced online. This social aspect is recognised as a key strength of traditional 'bricks and mortar' retailing.

### ***Trends in the Development of Regional Centres***

Regional centres are increasingly becoming the focus for investment, including investment in commercial, retail, residential and community development. In general terms, populations in the urban areas surrounding regional centres are expanding, although a decline in populations in more rural areas is also occurring.

Population growth in regional centres is attracting the interest from larger national brand retailers, and this coincides with the expectation of many regional Victoria (and Australian) residents for an expanded level of retail choice.

As regional centres expand, varying forms of retail development are becoming evident and include the following:

- Development of sub-regional shopping centres beyond the CBD and which accommodate a range of retailers, including Discount Department Stores (DDS). In many cases, strong demand for this form of retailing and a lack of appropriate sites within CBDs has been the genesis for the development of these centres in sub-regional localities.
- Development of neighbourhood shopping centres to serve the convenience needs of growing populations on the fringes of regional cities.
- Development of homemaker centres or precincts in locations beyond the CBD where the retailer has the benefit of good exposure to major highways.

Larger regional centres including Bendigo, Ballarat, Shepparton, Mildura and Warrnambool have all experienced pressures for this form of retail development. This type of development is yet to eventuate in Swan Hill, although it can be expected to eventuate as population growth continues and as the region's economy continues to prosper.

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### ***Trends in the Development of Small Rural Town Centres***

While population growth is occurring in regional centres, population decline is taking place in the rural areas and smaller townships. This factor, together with increased competition from other retail formats and regional centres, combined with a general lack of investment, has had an adverse impact on the viability of retail and other commercial businesses in small rural town centres.



### **1.4 Swan Hill Policy and Retail Development Planning Context**

A review of various strategic policy and planning documents has been undertaken to inform this Strategy. The key themes arising from these documents, as they relate to retailing, are described below.

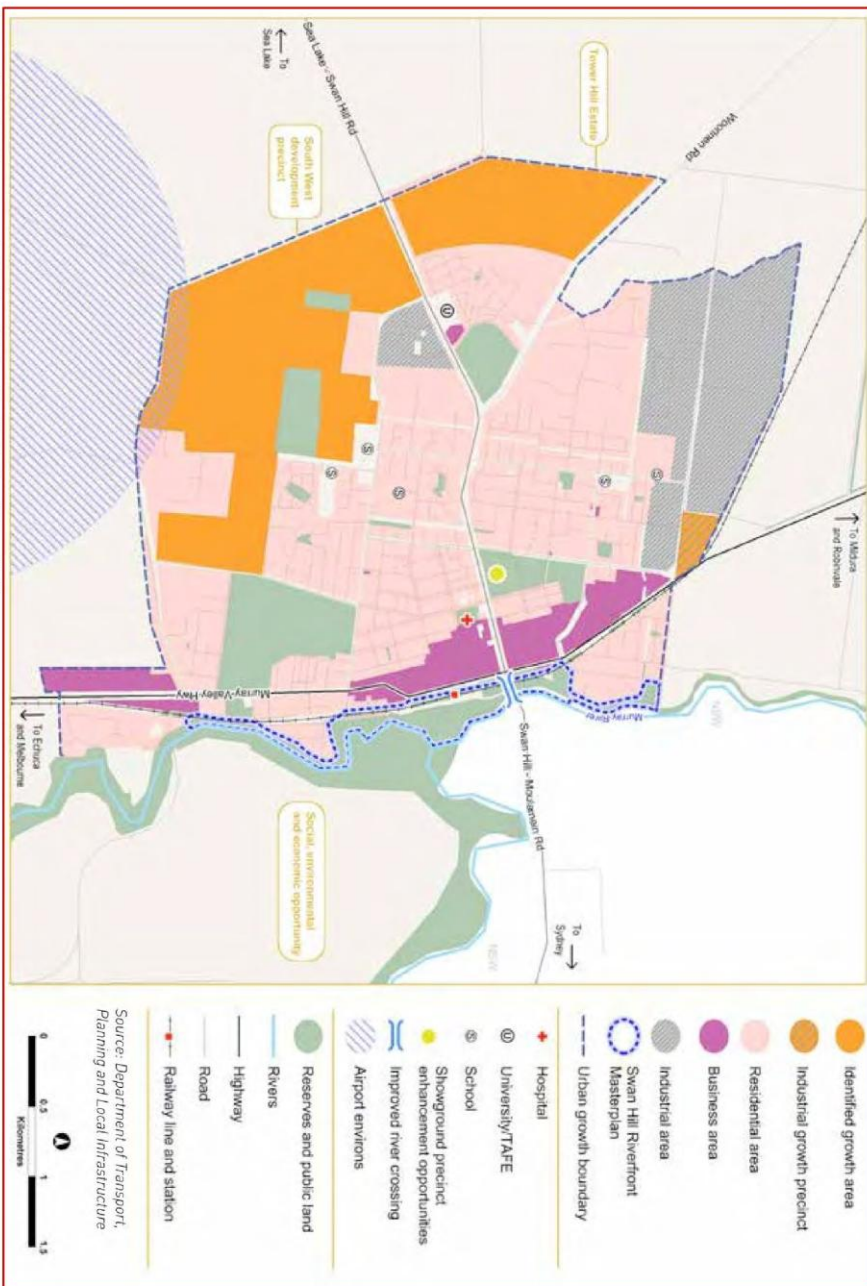
#### ***Swan Hill is a regional centre that serves the surrounding region***

The *Loddon-Mallee North Regional Growth Plan* (May, 2014) identifies Swan Hill as a 'regional centre' in a network of towns, regional centres and regional cities. Echuca is also identified as a regional centre, while Mildura is identified as a regional city. These centres "*will continue to provide higher order services*" and account for the majority of future population growth in the region.

The Growth Plan states the Swan Hill regional economy will continue to be reliant on agriculture and associated processing, manufacturing and services. Health, tourism, transport and logistics, and renewable energy are identified as important sectors for the future.

The Swan Hill Framework Plan as shown in the *Loddon-Mallee North Regional Growth Plan* is reproduced in Figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.3: Swan Hill Framework Plan



Source: Victorian Government, Loddon-Mallee North Regional Growth Plan

### **Attracting new investment and supporting existing businesses**

The importance of attracting new investment to the Rural City of Swan Hill and supporting existing businesses is highlighted in the *Swan Hill Rural City Council Economic Development Strategy, 2011-2016* (October, 2011). Two of the five Strategic Themes in the Economic Development Strategy are 'Attracting New Business Investment' and 'Supporting Existing Businesses to Grow'.



The need "to provide for growth of business and commerce" is also identified as an Objective in the Swan Hill Planning Scheme (Clause 21.08-1).

### **Developing the Swan Hill's tourism profile and market**

The *Swan Hill Rural City Council Tourism Strategy, 2010-2013* identifies the importance of tourism to the local economy, and this includes local retailers. The Tourism Strategy identifies the target market segments and provides an action plan aimed at increasing visitation to the municipality. The Tourism Strategy is now being reviewed by Council and will align with Swan Hill Inc and Murray Regional Tourism Board strategies.



Retail performs a significant role in the provision of services to visitors to the Swan Hill region, ranging from food services (cafes, restaurants and takeaway food) to convenience retail (chemist supplies, newspapers and the like), gifts and souvenirs.

### **Swan Hill CBD Development Planning Context**

The Swan Hill Planning Scheme (Clause 21.10-1) provides guidance to the future development of the Swan Hill CBD and seeks to encourage a precinct-based approach to development, based on the following precincts which are shown in Figure 1.4:

- Precinct 1: Retail, including a 'core retail area'
- Precinct 2: Office and Institutional
- Precinct 3: Peripheral Sales
- Precinct 4: Tourist Accommodation and Retail.

In addition to the above precincts, land located to the south of the Swan Hill CBD has been identified in the *Swan Hill Highway Business Zones Strategy* (2011) as the future location for highway-based retailing.

Of particular importance is the *Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan* (Tract, 2013). The Masterplan provides a vision for the future development of the Swan Hill Riverfront and identifies opportunities for retail, tourism and community facilities. Importantly, the Masterplan seeks to provide an increased level of connectivity between the Swan Hill CBD and the riverfront.

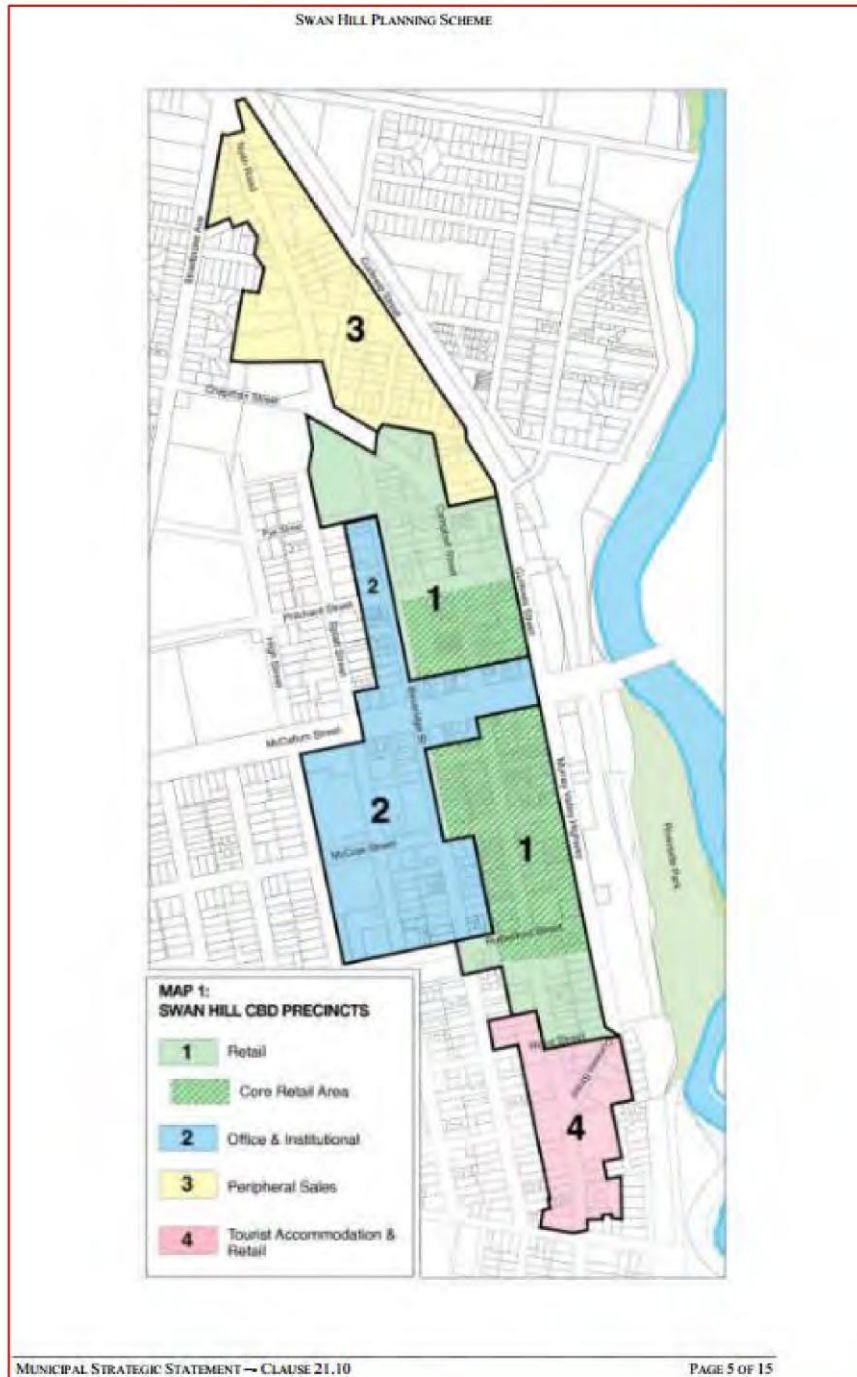
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A key area for development in the Swan Hill CBD is the former North Park Reserve located on the north-west corner of Beveridge Street and Pye Street. This site was recently rezoned via Amendment C40 to the Swan Hill Planning Scheme to the Commercial 1 Zone (or Business 1 Zone at the time of the Amendment). Bunnings have recently purchased the site and are planning the development of a Bunnings Warehouse, which is likely to open in 2015.

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Figure 1.4: Swan Hill CBD Precincts



**Planning Context for Other Town Centres in Rural City of Swan Hill**

The Swan Hill Planning Scheme also provides guidance relating to the retail sector and development in the following locations:

- **Robinvale (Clause 21.10-2):** “Robinvale is the second largest urban centre in the Rural City of Swan Hill” and the Planning Scheme seeks to “reinforce the strong retail sector by providing for retail expansion and encouraging the retention of the compact retail centre”.
- **Lake Boga (Clause 21.10-3):** “Lake Boga is an attractive, lakeside village and tourist town” and includes a small town centre. The Planning Scheme encourages the development of highway commercial uses along the southern entrance to the town.
- **Nyah (Clause 21.10-4):** Nyah is a small settlement located 25km to the north of Swan Hill and contains limited retail and town centre services. The Planning Scheme seeks to “establish an identified town centre and introduce improvements to convenience and function of the centre”.
- **Nyah West (Clause 21.10-5):** Nyah West is a small settlement located 3km to the west of Nyah. “The Nyah West town centre comprises a fine collection of substantially intact inter-War buildings which are collectively protected by the Monash Avenue Heritage Overlay Precinct. This intact commercial streetscape is unique in the municipality, and its retention, restoration and interpretation will greatly enhance its tourism potential.”

The Planning Scheme seeks to ensure new development in the town centre complements and enhances the existing streetscape.

**Recent Changes to Business Zones in Swan Hill**

The Victorian Government introduced new Commercial Zones to the Victoria Planning Provisions on 15 July 2013.

The five existing business zones have been consolidated into two new commercial zones:

- The Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) replaces the Business 1, Business 2 and Business 5 Zones
- The Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z) replaces the Business 3 and Business 4 Zones.

Prior to the introduction of the new Commercial Zones, the Swan Hill CBD could be broadly identified by land that is within the Business 1 Zone between Gray Street in the south and Nyah Road in the north.

However, a significant area of Business 2 Zone land was also located to the north of Nyah Road and which mainly comprised a mix of peripheral sales and light industrial activities. This area, containing approximately 17ha of land, is now in the C1Z. The land is identified as ‘CBD North’ in Figure 1.5.

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The purpose of the C1Z, as described in the Swan Hill Planning Scheme (Clause 34.01), is as follows:

- To create vibrant mixed use commercial centres for retail, office, business, entertainment and community uses.
- To provide for residential uses at densities complementary to the role and scale of the commercial centre.

In general terms, the introduction of the new C1Z to land in the Swan Hill CBD provides an increased possibility of the development of 'CBD-types' of uses on C1Z land to the north of Nyah Road (or 'CBD North', refer Figure 1.5) and, consequently, creating a significant expansion of the Swan Hill CBD.

Figure 1.5 (on the following page) shows the new Commercial Zones in the Swan Hill CBD, including areas previously zoned Business 2 Zone.

### 1.5 Implications for the Strategy

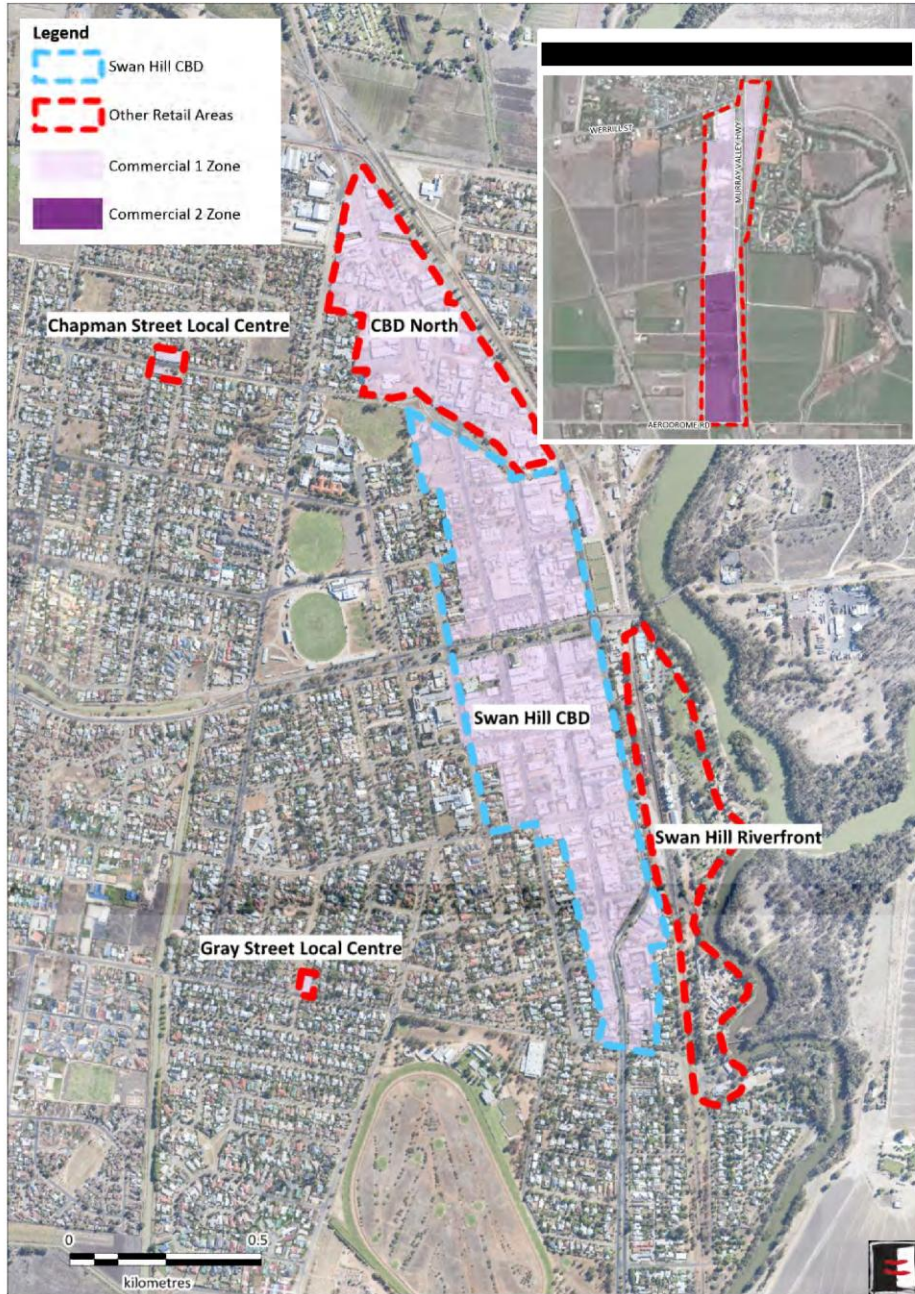
The main implications for the Strategy arising from this overview of Swan Hill include the following:

- 1 **Swan Hill is a regional service centre** that serves a regional catchment extending beyond the boundaries of the municipality.
- 2 **Swan Hill is situated in a relatively competitive context** in terms of its proximity to other regional cities that provide a strong offer of retail and other facilities and services. These centres include Bendigo, Mildura, Horsham and Echuca.
- 3 **Retailing is a significant sector in the context of the Swan Hill regional economy**, employing more than 1,000 persons and representing approximately 5% of the municipality's regional output.
- 4 **The retail industry is a dynamic industry** that is continually responding to changing consumer trends, shopping patterns and new forms of retailing. The increasing reliance on technology and the internet is now presenting retailers with new opportunities and challenges.
- 5 The recent introduction of **new Commercial Zones** to the Swan Hill Planning Scheme has the potential to permit the development of 'CBD-type' activities to the north of the Nyah Road (or CBD North, refer Figure 1.5), an area that was not previously identified as part of the CBD.



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Figure 1.5: Commercial Zoned Land in Swan Hill CBD



Produced by: Essential Economics with MapInfo and Nearmap

## 2 OVERVIEW OF RETAILING IN SWAN HILL

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This Chapter provides an overview of the retail sector in the Rural City of Swan Hill and includes the following:

- Description of the main retail locations in the Rural City of Swan Hill
- Description of the main competing centres
- Overview of relevant economic trends as they relate to the local retail industry
- Description of the role and function of Council and Swan Hill Inc in supporting the retail industry.

### 2.1 Retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill

The Swan Hill CBD is the main retailing and commercial location in the Rural City of Swan Hill. Categorized as a 'regional centre' in the *Loddon-Mallee North Regional Growth Plan* (May, 2014), the Swan Hill CBD currently contains approximately 40,250m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace (refer Chapter 3).

A range of commercial, business, entertainment, civic, community and tourism facilities and services are also provided in the Swan Hill CBD that service residents and visitors to the Rural City and beyond. A number of other smaller retail locations are also located in the township of Swan Hill, including limited retailing along the riverfront, limited homemaker retailing in the area identified as a 'peripheral sales' precinct in the Planning Scheme (refer Figure 1.4), and local centres on Chapman Street and Gray Street.

In addition, approximately 37.5ha of land located to the south of the Swan Hill CBD is currently zoned C1Z and C2Z (refer Figure 1.5). This land has direct frontage to the Murray Valley Highway and has been identified for highway-based retailing. A significant proportion of this land remains vacant and available for development. Existing uses include trade supplies, outdoors and recreation retailing at the Southern Precinct development, motor vehicle showrooms, equipment hire, etc. The former Technical School site, located with frontage to Murray Valley Highway and to the north of Pental Island Road, has been earmarked for a significant hardware or homemaker retail development, although no development application for the site has been lodged.

Figure 1.5 on page 18 shows the main retailing locations in Swan Hill.

In addition to Swan Hill, a number of town centres of varying sizes also serve the day-to-day convenience retail and service needs of the municipality's residents, including the following:

- **Robinvale:** Located approximately 110km to the north-west of Swan Hill, the Robinvale Town Centre serves a catchment containing approximately 4,200 residents. The centre contains approximately 100 commercial premises (Swan Hill Rural City Council,

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*Robinvale Economic Development Strategy, 2012-2017*) and is anchored by a Fischer's IGA supermarket.

In addition, Robinvale also includes a variety of speciality retailers, including food stores, take-away food, cafes and restaurants. The centre contains a mix of business and professional services, including banks, real estate agency and horticultural and agricultural business support services.

- **Lake Boga:** A small local centre servicing the convenience retail needs of the local population and visitors. The centre contains approximately 320m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, in addition to the Commercial Hotel.
- **Nyah:** Contains approximately 240m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, including General Store and a takeaway shop a located in a small strip of commercial zoned land (1.8ha) on the Murray Valley Highway.
- **Nyah West Town Centre:** Contains approximately 940m<sup>2</sup> of occupied retail floorspace including an IGA plus liquor store, a pharmacy, a takeaway shop and a small hardware store. An additional 1,430m<sup>2</sup> of shopfront floorspace is vacant.
- **Ultima:** Containing the Ultima Café which provides the town with basic convenience retailing and a Post Office.

The location of the main retail facilities in the Rural City of Swan Hill and the main competing centres (refer Section 2.2) are shown in Figure 2.1 on page 21.

Based on discussions with Council officers, the only significant retail development that is proposed and approved in Swan Hill is the development of a Bunnings Warehouse.

## 2.2 Competitive Context

Swan Hill competes with a number of regional centres for a share of spending by residents and visitors, particularly in relation to higher-order retailing including large-scale purchases and comparison shopping. The following centres are of particular competitive relevance to Swan Hill.

### ***Echuca***

Located along the Murray River, Echuca is a tourism-orientated 'border-town', approximately 150km (by road) south-east of Swan Hill. Echuca provides a range of retail, commercial, community and civic services, as well as providing a range of entertainment and tourist activities. The CBD contains an estimated 35,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, with major tenants including a Big W DDS, Target Country, Bunnings Warehouse, and Woolworths (Safeway), Coles and ALDI supermarkets.

**Bendigo**

Bendigo is located approximately 190km (by road) south-east of Swan Hill. The Bendigo CBD contains approximately 125,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, according to the 2005 *City of Greater Bendigo Commercial Land Strategy*. Bendigo is the main administrative and commercial centre for an extensive region covering central and northern Victoria and parts of southern NSW. Major retailers include a Myer department store; Big W, Kmart and Target DDSs; and Coles, Woolworths (Safeway) and ALDI supermarkets.

**Mildura**

Mildura is located approximately 220km (by road) north-west of Swan Hill and provides a range of services to a large regional catchment which includes parts of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

The Mildura CBD has approximately 65,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, with a further 18,800m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace in a shopping centre located approximately 3km to the south of the CBD (Essential Economics, *Mildura Retail Strategy*, 2010). Major retailers include Kmart, Big W and Target DDSs; Bunnings; and Woolworths, Coles and Supa IGA supermarkets.

**Horsham**

Located approximately 230km (by road) west of Swan Hill, Horsham is a regional centre servicing the wider Wimmera Region. Providing a range of commercial, civic and community functions, the Horsham CBD comprises approximately 60,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace (Essential Economics floorspace survey, March 2013). Major retailers include, Kmart, Target, Bunnings, Woolworths (Safeway), Coles and ALDI supermarkets.

**Ballarat**

Ballarat is a large regional centre located approximately 290km (by road) south of Swan Hill and is a key administrative, commercial and retail centre serving an extensive region in western Victoria.

The Ballarat CBD contains approximately 145,000<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, according to the 2010 *City of Ballarat Interim Activity Centres Strategy*, and contains major retailers including a Myer department store; Kmart, Big W and Target DDSs; and Coles, Woolworths (Safeway) and ALDI supermarkets.

Although all of the centres identified above are located more than 150km from Swan Hill, they provide an attractive choice in higher-order retailing, particularly in national brand, department store and DDS retailing. Due to the lack of such stores in Swan Hill, these centres attract customers from the Swan Hill region. In many cases, regional catchment boundaries overlap.

**Other Centres**

Other centres located in the surround region that serve the basic convenience retail and service needs for the local population include the following:

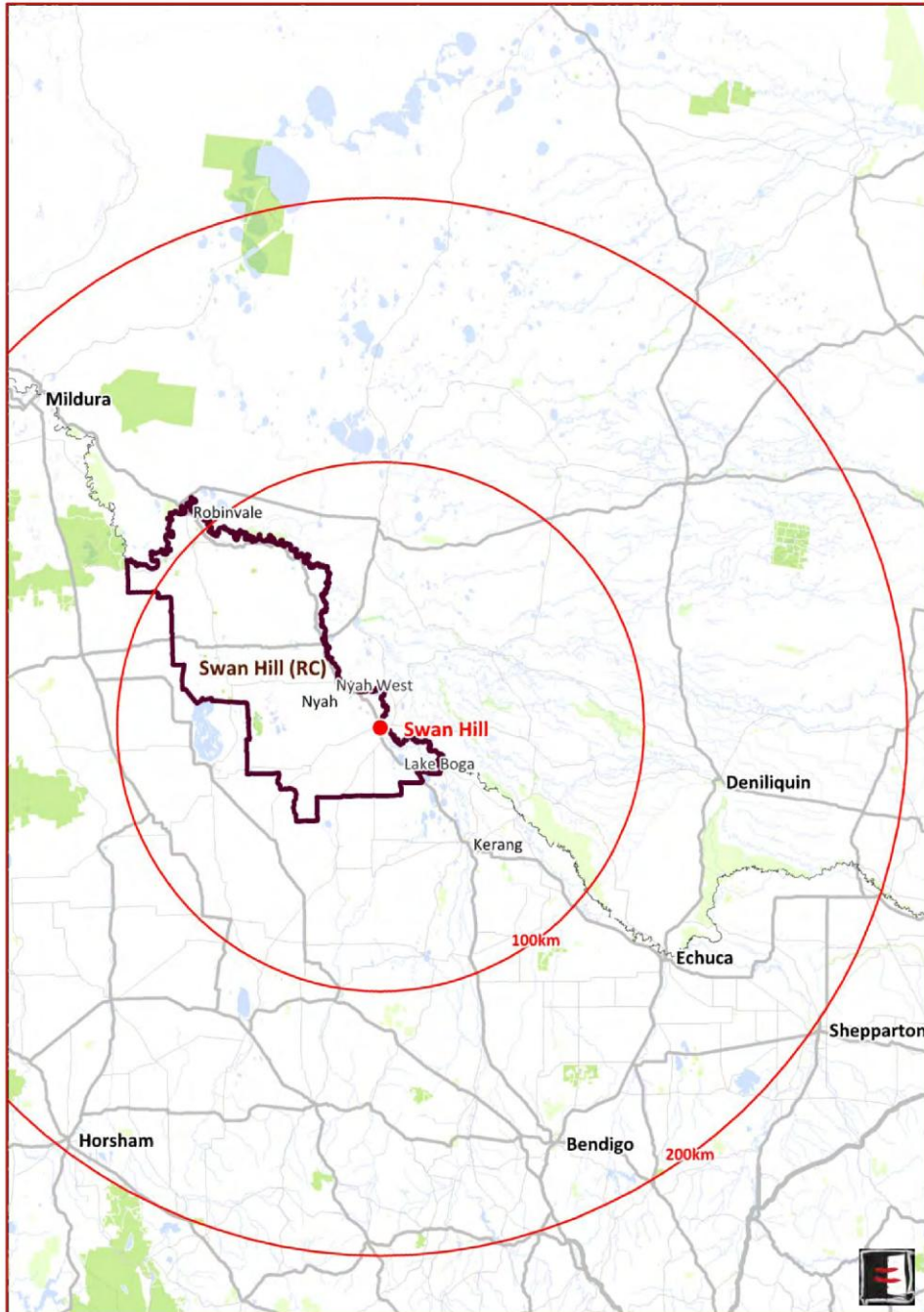
STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- Kerang: Located approximately 60km (by road) south-east of Swan Hill, Kerang provides largely convenience-based retailing to the residents in Kerang and the surrounding areas. The retail component is anchored by a large Woolworths (Safeway) supermarket of approximately 4,000m<sup>2</sup>, an IGA supermarket and a Target Country store.
- Deniliquin: Located in rural NSW, approximately 175km (by road) east of Swan Hill, Deniliquin is anchored by a full-line Coles Supermarket and a small Target Country store.

The location of competing centres is shown in Figure 2.1.

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SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

Figure 2.1: Retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill and Competing Centres



Produced by Essential Economics with MapInfo and StreetPro

### 2.3 Economic Overview of Swan Hill's Retail Industry

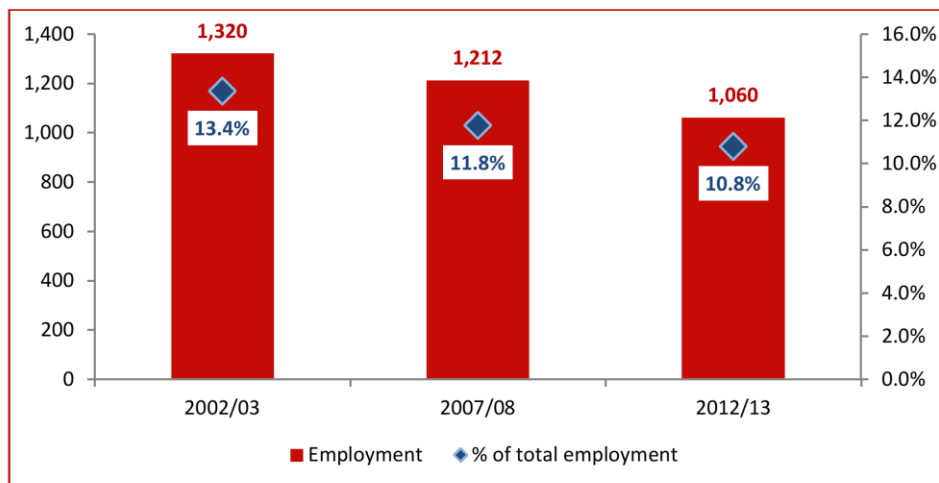
As discussed in Section 1.2, retailing contributes significantly to the local and regional economies of Swan Hill. An overview of recent retail employment and development trends is provided below. Information on the local labour force employed in the retail sector is also provided.

#### Employment Trends

Approximately 1,060 persons were employed in the retail industry in the Rural City of Swan Hill in 2012/13, according to analysis undertaken by NIEIR and compiled by id consulting. Retail accounts for 10.8% of jobs in the municipality and this illustrates the importance of the retail sector as a significant contributor to the region's economy.

However, retail employment in the Rural City of Swan Hill has declined over the past 10 years or so. In 2002/03, approximately 1,320 jobs existed in the retail industry and this accounted for 13.4% of total employment in the Rural City of Swan Hill.

Figure 2.2: Retail Employment Trends in Rural City of Swan Hill, 2002/03 to 2012/13

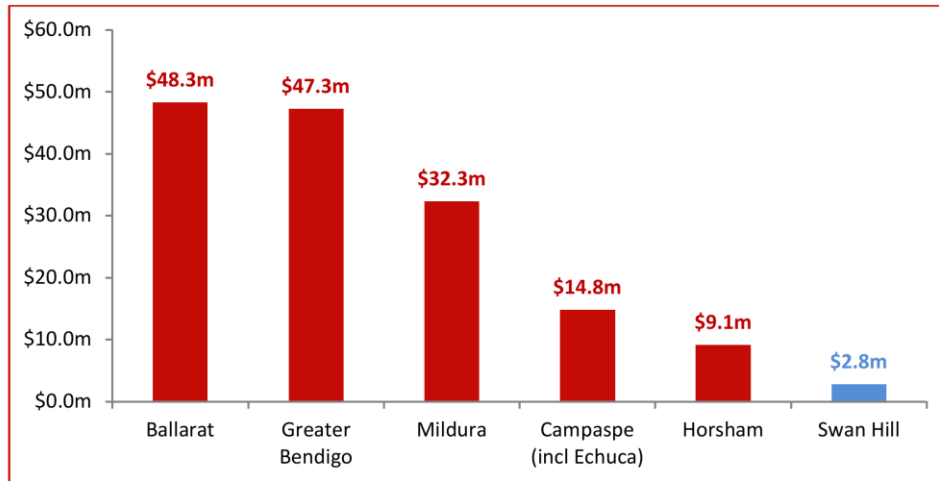


Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2014. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id the population experts

#### Retail Development Trends

Swan Hill, compared to other regional cities in the Victoria's north and west, has experienced very limited investment in the retail sector. Between 2008/09 and 2012/13, building permits for new retail buildings in the Rural City of Swan Hill amounted to \$2.8 million and this was significantly less than that experienced in competing regional cities, as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Value of New Building Retail Building Permits, 2008/09 to 2012/13



Source: Victorian Building Authority

**Work Force Characteristics**

Retail has traditionally provided flexible employment opportunities for younger persons, including opportunities for casual, part-time and full-time employment. The following summarises the key characteristics of the retail work force in Swan Hill, based on ABS Census data compiled by id Consulting:

- 31% of persons employed in retail in Swan Hill are aged 15 to 24 years, while a further 14% are aged between 25 and 34 years
- 51% are full-time employees, while 49% are employed on a part-time or casual basis
- 70% have no formal qualifications
- 59% are female.

**2.4 Role and Function of Swan Hill Incorporated and Council**

Swan Hill Rural City Council and Swan Hill Incorporated (Inc) currently perform important roles in marketing the Swan Hill region, including the retail and tourism sectors, and in providing opportunities for professional development.

**Swan Hill Incorporated**

Swan Hill Inc is responsible for marketing and promoting the Swan Hill Region and is funded by a Special Rate levied on businesses located in a large proportion of the Rural City of Swan Hill (refer Figure 2.4).





STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
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The following four strategies are identified in the Strategic Plan:

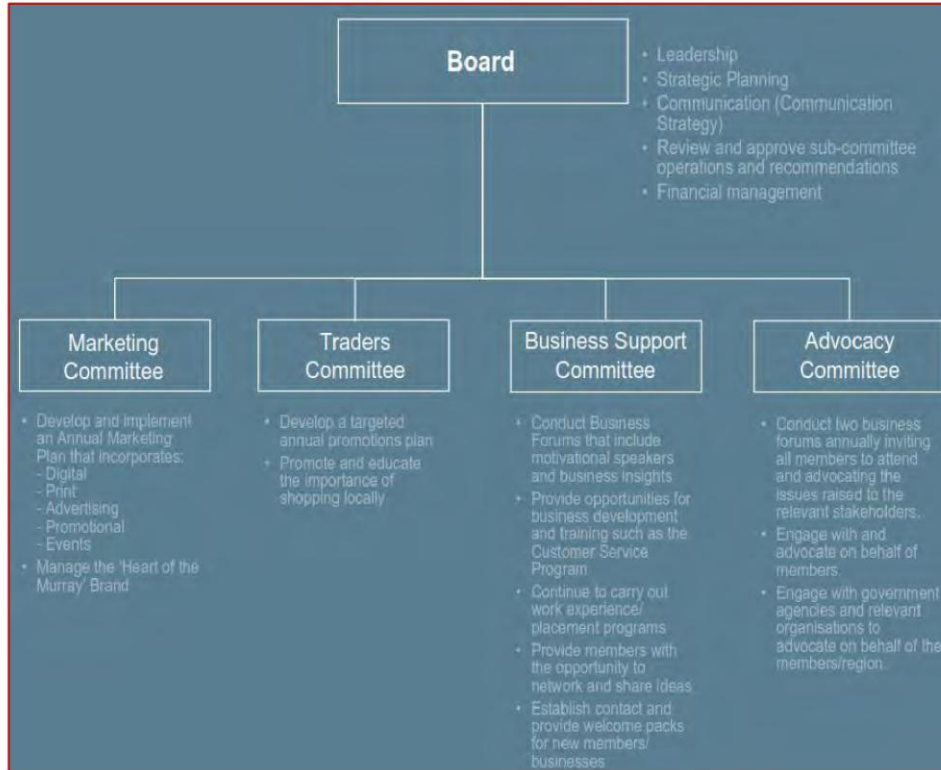
- 1 **Visitation to the Region:** Increase visitation by specifically marketing the Swan Hill region as a place to visit and enjoy
- 2 **Shopping in the Region:** Specifically market the Swan Hill region as a place to shop and encourage the provision of quality service
- 3 **Advocacy:** Engage with and advocate on behalf of members
- 4 **Business Support:** Provide support and direction to members.

While all of the above strategies are relevant to retailing in Swan Hill, 'Strategy 2 – Shopping in the Region' specifically relates to retailing. The key initiatives and priority actions identified by Swan Hill Inc in relation to this Strategy 2 are shown in Figure 2.6.

Swan Hill Inc perform an important role for retailers in Swan Hill in providing opportunities for business and professional development, and organising events and marketing for the retail sector. Furthermore, Swan Hill Inc performs an important role in terms of leadership for the local retail sector. Retailing is constantly facing challenges, both global and local, and so it is important that Swan Hill Inc and the Traders Committee provide leadership for the local retailers in how to respond to these challenges.

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Figure 2.5: Swan Hill Inc Organisational Structure and Roles



Source: Swan Hill Inc

Figure 2.6: Swan Hill Inc - Strategy 2 – Shopping in the Region

**Strategy Two – Shopping in the Region**  
Specifically market the Swan Hill region as a place to shop and encourage the provision of quality service.

Key Initiatives	Priority Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and educate the importance of shopping locally.</li> <li>• Develop a targeted annual promotions plan.</li> <li>• Establish a strong research base for all activities.</li> <li>• Support and participate in the 'Strengthening Swan Hill Region's Retail Industry' project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a targeted annual promotions plan that provides traders with the opportunity to leverage off key seasons, holidays and events.</li> <li>• Create an educational and promotional campaign targeting locals which highlights the economic benefits of shopping locally supported by statistical data.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a 'Made in the Swan Hill Region' campaign that identifies products that are produced in our region.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a Buy Local campaign.</li> <li>• Appoint 1-2 members to a steering committee of Swan Hill Rural City Council's 'Strengthening Swan Hill Region's Retail Industry' project.</li> </ul>

Source: Swan Hill Inc

### ***Role of Swan Hill Rural City Council***

Council performs a significant role in encouraging business development and attracting new businesses and retailers to the municipality that will enhance the overall level of services for local residents and visitors, and will improve the competitiveness of retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill.

The Building and Planning department, through the implementation of land use planning policies, is integral to ensuring development opportunities exist in appropriate locations that will contribute positively to the local economy and the level of service to local residents.

In addition, Council's Economic Development department is important in working with retailers to improve their businesses.

## **2.5 Implications for the Strategy**

The main implications for the Strategy arising from this overview of retailing include the following:

- 1 **The majority of retailing in the Rural City of Swan Hill occurs in the Swan Hill township**, which provides convenience and comparison shopping opportunities for the wider region.
- 2 **Convenience retailing that serves the surrounding local population is also provided in Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah and Nyah West**. While these townships are not the key focus of this Strategy, they perform an important role in providing services to local residents and will be considered in the analysis and development of the Strategy.
- 3 **Retailers in Swan Hill are situated in a relatively competitive context**, particularly with larger regional centres in the surrounding region which include Echuca, Bendigo, Ballarat, Horsham and Mildura.
- 4 **Retailing in Swan Hill is a significant employer**; however, employment in the retail sector in Swan Hill has been declining over the past 10 years. Employment growth in Swan Hill's retail sector is constrained by limited investment in new retail development in recent years.
- 5 **Swan Hill Rural City Council and Swan Hill Inc perform important roles** in marketing the Swan Hill region, including the retail and tourism sectors, and in providing opportunities for professional development. It is important that the land use planning, economic development and marketing of the Swan Hill region are integrated.

### 3 SWAN HILL RETAIL ASSESSMENT

This Chapter describes the current role and operation of retailing in Swan Hill and includes a summary of the results of a detailed floorspace survey undertaken as input to this Strategy. An assessment of the current performance of the retail sector in Swan Hill is also provided, as well as highlighting economic opportunities for Swan Hill to generate additional retail sales and accommodate new retail development over coming years.

#### 3.1 Retailing in Swan Hill

A comprehensive retail and commercial floorspace survey of Swan Hill township was undertaken by Essential Economics in July 2014. The survey ensures that the analysis and conclusions in this report are informed by the latest available information on current trading conditions in Swan Hill.

Swan Hill contains a total of 46,610m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace and 22,020m<sup>2</sup> of commercial office floorspace (including both shopfront and dedicated office floorspace).

Table 3.1 summaries the existing provision of retail floorspace in Swan Hill and provides a breakdown of the retail floorspace by retail category (as earlier described at p3) in the CBD and in nearby commercial areas.

**Table 3.1 Retail Floorspace, Swan Hill, July 2014**

Retail Category	Retail Floorspace			Share of Floorspace		
	Swan Hill CBD	Swan Hill - Other	Total Swan Hill	Swan Hill CBD	Swan Hill - Other	Total Swan Hill
Food, Liquor, Groceries	11,020m <sup>2</sup>	960m <sup>2</sup>	<b>11,980m<sup>2</sup></b>	27%	15%	<b>26%</b>
Food Catering	4,160m <sup>2</sup>	400m <sup>2</sup>	<b>4,560m<sup>2</sup></b>	10%	6%	<b>10%</b>
Non-Food	21,340m <sup>2</sup>	4,700m <sup>2</sup>	<b>26,040m<sup>2</sup></b>	53%	74%	<b>56%</b>
Services	<u>3,730m<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>300m<sup>2</sup></u>	<b>4,030m<sup>2</sup></b>	<u>9%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Total Retail Floorspace</b>	<b>40,250m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6,360m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>46,610m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Essential Economics

Note: Figure may not add due to rounding

Table 3.1 shows that retail floorspace is concentrated in the CBD, with a total of 40,250m<sup>2</sup>, or 86% of Swan Hill's total retail floorspace provision. Key features of the retail floorspace mix in the Swan Hill CBD include:

- A strong focus on **non-food retailing** (21,340m<sup>2</sup>), which is representative of the regional role performed by the centre. Apparel accounts for 53% of non-food retail floorspace, with major tenants including Target, Best & Less and Jay Jays.

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- **Food Retailing** (11,020m<sup>2</sup>) accounts for approximately 27% of total retail floorspace. Three supermarkets, including a strong performing Coles, Aldi and Woolworths, account for 7,800m<sup>2</sup>, or 71% of food related floorspace.
- **Food catering** accounts for approximately 4,160m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, including a cluster of cafes, restaurants and takeaway shops along Campbell Street, in the southern area of the CBD. The survey identified seven cafés, restaurants and takeaway shops located between McCrae Street and Rutherford Streets, which is developing into a 'dining precinct'.

An additional 6,360m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace is located elsewhere in Swan Hill, including the following locations:

- **CBD North**, which provides a mix of light industrial related and trade supply activities, but includes approximately 3,560m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace comprising a Mitre 10 (1,250m<sup>2</sup>) and a Harvey Norman (1,550m<sup>2</sup>). It is understood Mitre 10 are in the process of selling the property in the CBD North and are assessing the potential to operate from alternative locations in Swan Hill.
- **Swan Hill South – Highway-based Retail Precinct**, comprising the strip of commercial land (zoned C1Z and C2Z) located on the southern fringe of Swan Hill, along the Murray Valley Highway, and containing a mix of auto sales and visitor accommodation. Approximately 1,180m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, including an outdoor recreation store and convenience retailing, is located in the northern part of this precinct.
- **Chapman Street Local Centre** is a convenience-based local centre located on Chapman Street, approximately 1km north-west of the CBD. Approximately 660m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, including a milk bar, takeaway, butchers, bakery and a hairdresser, are located in the centre.
- **Gray Street Local Centre** is a small convenience centre located at the intersection of Gray Street and Brown Street. The centre contains approximately 590m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace including a Lucky7 convenience store, butcher, hairdresser and laundrette.
- **Swan Hill Riverfront**, contains limited retailing (approximately 370m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace) and includes a restaurant, café and giftware tenancies.

### 3.2 Vacancy Rates in Swan Hill

An indicator of the relative 'health' of a centre is the level and share of vacant shopfront floorspace, with 'shopfront' typically incorporating a mix of both retail and non-retail traders.

At present, Swan Hill contains approximately 55,570m<sup>2</sup> of shopfront floorspace, of which 46,610m<sup>2</sup> is occupied retail, 5,130m<sup>2</sup> is occupied shopfront office and 3,830m<sup>2</sup> is vacant, as shown in Table 3.2. This represents an overall vacancy rate for Swan Hill of 7%, which is slightly higher than the vacancy rate of between 4-6% which is typically considered consistent with a comfortably-performing centre.

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The vacancy rate in the Swan Hill CBD is slightly higher at 7.3%, while in the balance of Swan Hill the vacancy rate is 4.2%.

Although in percentage terms the extent of vacant floorspace is considered reasonable, a number of vacant shopfronts in the core parts of the CBD have been vacant for a considerable period of time, in some case more than two years. This is considered an issue as the presence of long-term vacancies does not reflect well on the trading vibrancy and viability of the CBD. This issue is discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

**Table 3.2: Vacant Shopfront Floorspace, Swan Hill, July 2014**

Category	Swan Hill CBD	Swan Hill - Other	Total Swan Hill
Vacant Shopfront Floorspace	3,550m <sup>2</sup>	280m <sup>2</sup>	3,830m <sup>2</sup>
Occupied Shopfront Floorspace	45,290m <sup>2</sup>	6,450m <sup>2</sup>	51,740m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Shopfront Floorspace</b>	<b>48,840m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6,730m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>55,570m<sup>2</sup></b>
Vacancy Rate	7.3%	4.2%	6.9%

Source: Essential Economics

### 3.3 Commercial Leasing Rates

Consultation with real estate agents in Swan Hill and other regional cities indicates in general terms, commercial rents in the core areas of the Swan Hill CBD are broadly in-line with similar locations in other regional cities. Overall commercial rents are typically in the order of \$200-270/m<sup>2</sup> in the core areas of the Swan Hill CBD and this compares to the following commercial rents in other regional cities:

- Echuca: approximately \$250-300/m<sup>2</sup>
- Mildura: approximately \$250-\$300/m<sup>2</sup>
- Shepparton: approximately \$200-250/m<sup>2</sup>
- Horsham: approximately \$200-\$250/m<sup>2</sup>
- Bendigo: approximately \$350-\$400/m<sup>2</sup>

Campbell Street was the original 'main street' in Swan Hill, with the majority of activity occurring in the area known locally as the 'Golden Mile' located between McCrae and McCallum Streets. Commercial rates are traditionally higher in the Golden Mile than the balance of the Swan Hill CBD.

### 3.4 Retail Trade Area

A trade area is the geographic area from which a centre generates a high share of its sales and visitation. The extent of a trade area is influenced by a number of factors including:

- The range and nature of retail and other facilities in the centre

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- The location and composition of competing centres
- Accessibility to the centre via the surrounding road network including consideration of travel times
- Presence of physical barriers such as National Parks, rivers and lakes
- The location of nearby towns and residential areas.

Based on these aspects, a trade area for Swan Hill has been defined and is shown in Figure 3.1. The trade area comprises the following components:

- **Primary Trade Area (PTA)**, which extends across both sides of the Murray River and generally includes areas within a 30 to 60-minute drive of Swan Hill. The PTA contains a large proportion of the Rural City of Swan Hill (excluding Robinvale) and extends south-east beyond the municipal boundary to include the townships of Tyrrell, Myall, Sea Lake and Turriff East.

In New South Wales, the Swan Hill PTA comprises parts of the Balranald and Wakool municipalities. It extends as far as Balranald in the north-east and to Moulamein in the east.

- **Secondary Trade Area (STA)**, which generally includes those areas within a 60 to 90-minute drive of Swan Hill. The STA extends south and east of Swan Hill to include parts of the Gannawarra, Wycheproof, Yarriambiack and the Mildura municipalities. In NSW, the STA includes the eastern parts of the Wakool municipality, as well as parts of the Hay and Conargo municipalities.

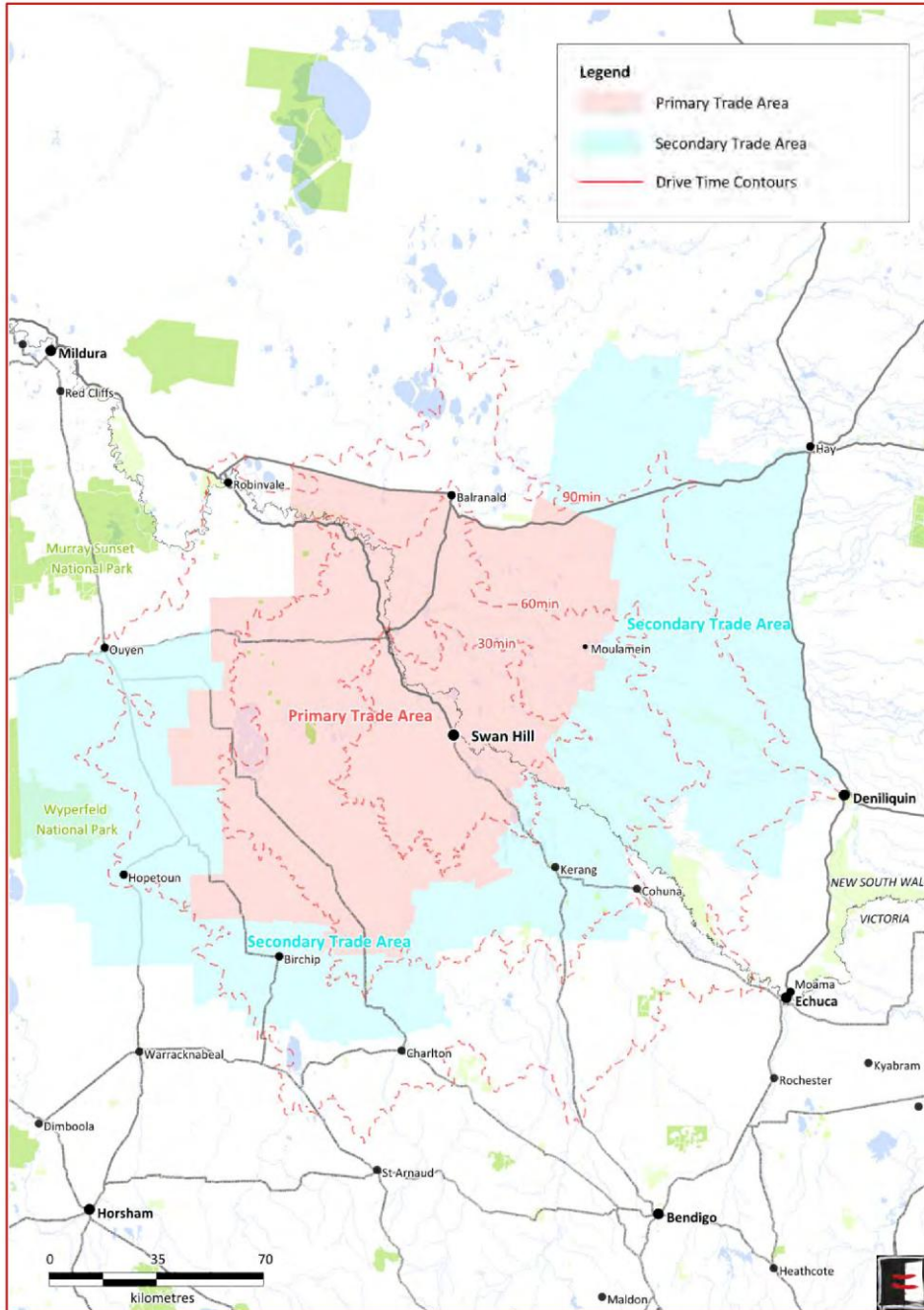
Together, these areas constitute the Main Trade Area (MTA). The MTA is particularly important from an analytical point of view as it represents the geographic region in which the Swan Hill competes for a share of retail spending by residents and visitors.

Residents of the PTA are likely to visit the Swan Hill more frequently, compared to residents of the STA who are likely to visit Swan Hill on a less frequent basis.



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Figure 3.1: Swan Hill Main Trade Area, 2014



Produced By: Essential Economics with MapInfo and StreetPro

### 3.5 Population Trends and Forecasts

#### *Main Trade Area Population*

The Swan Hill MTA contains an estimated population of 37,420 persons in 2014, and this includes 22,540 persons in the PTA and 14,880 persons in the STA.

Over the period 2004 to 2014, the MTA experienced a population decline of 2,690 persons, which occurred at an average rate -0.7% pa. This overall decline included a decline in PTA population by 700 residents, or -0.3%pa, as well as a decline in the STA population by 1,990 residents, or -1.2%pa.

Over the next 20 years (2014-2034) the MTA population is forecast to increase by +580 residents, increasing from 37,420 residents in 2014 to 38,000 residents by 2034. Over the period, it is expected that the urban areas of Swan Hill will experience moderate growth, while the surrounding rural areas are expected to experience population decline, as illustrated by the following:

- PTA population is forecast to increase by +1,690 residents, at an average annual rate of +0.4%pa
- STA population is forecast to decline by -1,110 residents, at an average annual rate of -0.4%pa.

Population estimates and forecasts are shown in Table 3.3 and have been prepared with regard to official Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) population estimates and the latest forecasts (2014) prepared by the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI), and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

These population trends are representative of typical population trends across regional Victoria, where regional centres such as Swan Hill are experiencing modest population growth, with the surrounding rural areas experiencing declining population levels.

#### *Regional Population Context*

As discussed above, Swan Hill serves a MTA population of approximately 37,420 residents which is significantly smaller compared to MTA populations of other regional centres in Victoria, as show in Table 3.4. Based on previous work undertaken by Essential Economics, Table 3.4 highlights the potential challenges faced by Swan Hill in attracting new retailers to the region in the context of the large size of trade areas served by other regional centres.

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**Table 3.3: Swan Hill Main Trade Area Population, 2004 to 2034**

Trade Area	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029	2034
<b>Population (No.)</b>							
Primary Trade Area	23,240	22,900	22,540	22,600	23,050	23,630	24,230
Secondary Trade Area	<u>16,870</u>	<u>15,870</u>	<u>14,880</u>	<u>14,340</u>	<u>14,030</u>	<u>13,870</u>	<u>13,770</u>
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>40,110</b>	<b>38,770</b>	<b>37,420</b>	<b>36,940</b>	<b>37,080</b>	<b>37,500</b>	<b>38,000</b>
<b>Average Annual Growth (No.)</b>							
Primary Trade Area	-	-70	-70	+10	+90	+120	+120
Secondary Trade Area	-	-200	-200	-110	-60	-30	-20
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	-	<b>-270</b>	<b>-270</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>+30</b>	<b>+80</b>	<b>+100</b>
<b>Average Annual Growth (%)</b>							
Primary Trade Area	-	-0.3%	-0.3%	+0.1%	+0.4%	+0.5%	+0.5%
Secondary Trade Area	-	-1.2%	-1.3%	-0.7%	-0.4%	-0.2%	-0.1%
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	-	<b>-0.7%</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>+0.1%</b>	<b>+0.2%</b>	<b>+0.3%</b>
<i>Regional Victoria</i>	-	<i>+0.8%</i>	<i>+1.0%</i>	<i>+1.3%</i>	<i>+1.3%</i>	<i>+1.2%</i>	<i>+1.1%</i>
Source:	DTPLI Victoria in Future, 2014; NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, NSW Local Government Area Population Projections, 2014; ABS, Regional Population Growth, Cat No: 3218.0; Essential Economics						
Note:	Totals Subject to Rounding						

**Table 3.4 Main Trade Area Resident Populations, Selected Regional Cities, 2014**

Location	Main Trade Area Population No. Persons
Swan Hill	<b>37,420</b>
Horsham	44,740
Echuca	62,000
Mildura	95,240
Shepparton	167,640

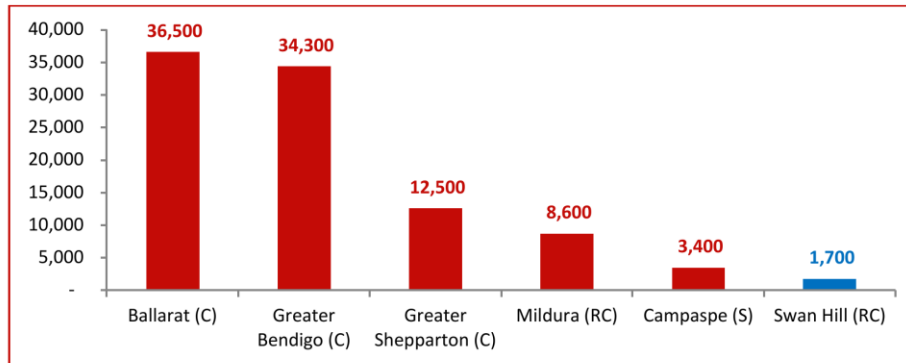
Source: Essential Economics, ABS, Regional Population Growth, Cat No: 3218.0

Furthermore, Swan Hill is forecasts to experience only modest population growth compared to other competing regional areas.

Figure 3.2 illustrates that over the next 15 years (2014 to 2029) total growth in the Rural City of Swan Hill (+1,700) is significantly lower than other regional municipalities, including Campaspe (+3,400 persons), Mildura (+8,600 persons), Greater Shepparton (+12,500 persons), Greater Bendigo (+34,300 persons) and Ballarat (+36,500 persons). This limited forecast population growth in Swan Hill can be considered to be a critical challenge in attracting new retailers to the region.

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**Figure 3.2 Forecast Population Growth, Selected Local Government Areas, 2014 to 2029**



Source: DTPLI Victoria in Future, 2014

### 3.6 Socio-Economic Characteristics

The socio-economic characteristics of residents in the MTA are summarised in Table 3.5 and are based on ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing data.

In general, the socio-economic characteristics of the PTA and STA reflect the dynamics of a regional centre surrounded by rural areas. Therefore, many of the socio-economic variables shown in Table 3.5 are broadly in line with the averages for regional Victoria.

The data reveal the following:

- **Household Income** – median household incomes in the MTA are approximately -12.4% lower than regional Victoria, and this includes median incomes in the PTA which are -7.8% lower and the STA which are -18.9% lower than regional Victorian median.
- **Age profile** – the MTA has a slightly older age profile (median 43 years) compared to regional Victoria (median 41 years); however, the PTA is slightly younger (median 40 years), while the STA is older (median 47 years)
- **Managers and Professionals** – the MTA has a high proportion of employed residents working as managers & professional (41.1%) compared to regional Victoria (32.6%).
- **Home ownership** – A greater proportion of homes are owned outright in the MTA (46.2%) compared to regional Victoria (39.6%).
- **Housing costs** – are lower in the MTA compared to regional Victoria, for instance, median monthly mortgage repayment are -22.7% lower than regional Victoria, while median weekly rents are -26.3% lower than regional Victoria.
- **Internet connectivity** – the MTA has a smaller proportion of occupied dwellings connected to the internet (66.6%) compared to regional Victoria (73.2%).
- **Car ownership** – car ownership rates relatively high, indicating that residents have a reliance on private motor vehicles to access retail and other services.

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Table 3.5: Socio-Economic Characteristics, Swan Hill Main Trade Area, 2011

Category	Primary Trade Area	Secondary Trade Area	Main Trade Area	Regional Victoria
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Median individual income (annual)	\$24,940	\$22,010	\$23,780	\$25,740
Variation from regional Victoria	-3.1%	-14.5%	-7.6%	0.0%
Median household income (annual)	\$45,430	\$39,970	\$43,160	\$49,270
Variation from regional Victoria	-7.8%	-18.9%	-12.4%	0.0%
Median Age (years)	40	47	43	41
<b><u>Country of Birth</u></b>				
Australia	91.4%	94.4%	92.5%	88.8%
Other Major English Speaking Countries	2.4%	3.2%	2.7%	5.4%
Other Overseas Born	6.2%	2.4%	4.8%	5.9%
<b><u>Dwelling Structure (Occupied Private Dwellings)</u></b>				
Separate house	88.5%	94.6%	90.9%	88.9%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	2.7%	1.1%	2.1%	4.0%
Flat, unit or apartment	7.0%	3.0%	5.4%	6.1%
Other dwelling	1.8%	1.3%	1.6%	1.1%
Average household size (persons)	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4
<b><u>Tenure Type (Occupied Private Dwellings)</u></b>				
Owned outright	41.6%	53.4%	46.2%	39.6%
Owned with a mortgage	30.5%	24.0%	28.0%	34.3%
Rented	27.3%	21.5%	25.0%	25.2%
Other tenure type	0.6%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%
<b><u>Housing Costs</u></b>				
Median monthly mortgage repayment	\$1,100	\$870	\$1,020	\$1,320
Variation from regional Victoria	-16.7%	-34.1%	-22.7%	0.0%
Median mortgage as a share of median household income	29.1%	26.1%	28.4%	32.1%
Median weekly rents	\$150	\$110	\$140	\$190
Variation from regional Victoria	-21.1%	-42.1%	-26.3%	0.0%
Share of occupied dwellings connected to the internet	67.3%	64.7%	66.3%	73.2%
<b><u>Car Ownership per Dwelling</u></b>				
None	7.4%	5.9%	6.8%	6.7%
One	32.8%	32.2%	32.6%	34.8%
Two	38.9%	36.9%	38.1%	38.7%
Three or more	20.8%	25.0%	22.5%	19.8%
<b><u>Occupation</u></b>				
Managers & professionals	38.2%	45.9%	41.1%	32.6%
Clerical & sales workers	29.0%	23.6%	27.0%	32.2%
Technicians & trades workers	13.1%	11.2%	12.3%	15.7%
Machinery operators & drivers	6.7%	7.3%	6.9%	7.0%
Labourers & related workers	13.0%	12.0%	12.6%	12.5%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011

Note: MESC Major English Speaking Countries - Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, UK, USA

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### 3.7 Retail Spending

#### *Per Capita Retail Spending, 2014*

Estimates of per capita retail spending by trade area residents have been prepared with reference to the *MarketInfo* retail spending model. *MarketInfo* is a micro-simulation model which uses data from the ABS Household Expenditure Survey, the ABS Census of Population and Housing, ABS Australian National Accounts, and other relevant sources.

Table 3.6 presents estimates of average per capita retail spending in 2014 for trade area residents, and compares these with the regional Victorian average. A detailed breakdown of the average per capita retail spending by PTA and STA residents is also shown.

Average per capita retail spending by MTA residents in 2014 is estimated at \$12,549 pa, which is approximately -6% below the regional Victoria average, and comprises:

- \$5,700 pa on Food, Liquor and Grocery (FLG)
- \$940 pa on food catering
- \$5,440 pa on non-food merchandise
- \$410 on retail services.

**Table 3.6: Average Per Capita Retail Spending, 2014 (2014 dollars)**

Trade Area	Food, Liquor and Groceries	Food Catering	Non-Food	Services	Total
<b>Average Per Capita Retail Spending, 2014</b>					
Primary Trade Area	\$5,700	\$940	\$5,440	\$410	\$12,490
Secondary Trade Area	<u>\$5,780</u>	<u>\$930</u>	<u>\$5,430</u>	<u>\$420</u>	<u>\$12,560</u>
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>\$5,790</b>	<b>\$940</b>	<b>\$5,430</b>	<b>\$410</b>	<b>\$12,510</b>
<i>Regional Victoria</i>	<i>\$5,790</i>	<i>\$990</i>	<i>\$6,040</i>	<i>\$420</i>	<i>\$13,240</i>
<b>Variation from Regional Victoria</b>					
Primary Trade Area	-1.6%	-5.1%	-9.9%	-2.4%	-5.7%
Secondary Trade Area	<u>-0.2%</u>	<u>-6.1%</u>	<u>-10.1%</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>-5.1%</u>
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>-5.1%</b>	<b>-10.1%</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>	<b>-5.5%</b>

Source: MarketInfo; Essential Economics. Figures rounded

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### **Total Retail Spending, 2014 to 2034**

In 2014, total available retail spending by MTA residents is estimated at \$468.3 million, which includes:

- Food, Liquor and Groceries: \$214.2 million
- Food catering: \$35.0 million
- Non-food: \$203.7 million
- Services: \$15.5 million.

A total of \$281.5million or 60% of available retail spending by the MTA residents in 2014 is generated by people living in the PTA.

Forecasts of spending have been prepared for the period to 2034, with the application of real growth in spending per capita based on historical growth rates in retail spending over the past 20 years as derived from ABS Australian National Accounts data and which reflect an average growth rate of 1.2% pa. Therefore, while forecast population growth in the MTA is limited, an increase in the total retail spending of MTA residents is forecast to occur. This growth in available retail spending will contribute to future retail development opportunities in Swan Hill.

Total retail spending by residents in the MTA is forecast to increase to \$608.5 million by 2034, at an overall increase of 1.3% pa. In 2034, total retail spending by MTA residents is forecast to comprise \$388.1 million from PTA residents and \$220.4 million from STA residents.

As described above and shown in Table 3.7, in 2034, total available retail spending by MTA residents is estimated at \$608.5 million, comprising of:

- Food, Liquor and Groceries: \$243.2 million
- Food catering: \$46.4 million
- Non-food: \$300.2 million
- Services: \$18.7 million.

All figures are represented in constant 2014 dollars and therefore the effects of price inflation are excluded from the analysis.

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**Table 3.7: Total Retail Spending, Main Trade Area, 2014 to 2034 (constant 2014 dollars)**

Retail Category	2014	2019	2024	2029	2034	Average Annual Growth, 2014-2034
<b>FLG</b>						
Primary Trade Area	\$128.5 m	\$132.5 m	\$139.0 m	\$146.5 m	\$154.5 m	0.9%
Secondary Trade Area	<u>\$86.0 m</u>	<u>\$85.2 m</u>	<u>\$85.6 m</u>	<u>\$86.9 m</u>	<u>\$88.7 m</u>	0.2%
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>\$214.6 m</b>	<b>\$217.7 m</b>	<b>\$224.6 m</b>	<b>\$233.4 m</b>	<b>\$243.2 m</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Food Catering</b>						
Primary Trade Area	\$21.2 m	\$22.7 m	\$24.8 m	\$27.2 m	\$29.8 m	1.7%
Secondary Trade Area	<u>\$13.8 m</u>	<u>\$14.2 m</u>	<u>\$14.9 m</u>	<u>\$15.7 m</u>	<u>\$16.6 m</u>	0.9%
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>\$35.0 m</b>	<b>\$37.0 m</b>	<b>\$39.6 m</b>	<b>\$42.8 m</b>	<b>\$46.4 m</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Non-Food</b>						
Primary Trade Area	\$122.5 m	\$134.9 m	\$151.2 m	\$170.3 m	\$191.8 m	2.3%
Secondary Trade Area	<u>\$80.7 m</u>	<u>\$85.4 m</u>	<u>\$91.7 m</u>	<u>\$99.5 m</u>	<u>\$108.4 m</u>	1.5%
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>\$203.3 m</b>	<b>\$220.3 m</b>	<b>\$242.9 m</b>	<b>\$269.7 m</b>	<b>\$300.2 m</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Services</b>						
Primary Trade Area	\$9.2 m	\$9.7 m	\$10.4 m	\$11.1 m	\$11.9 m	1.3%
Secondary Trade Area	<u>\$6.2 m</u>	<u>\$6.2 m</u>	<u>\$6.3 m</u>	<u>\$6.5 m</u>	<u>\$6.8 m</u>	0.5%
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>\$15.4 m</b>	<b>\$16.0 m</b>	<b>\$16.7 m</b>	<b>\$17.7 m</b>	<b>\$18.7 m</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Total Retail</b>						
Primary Trade Area	\$281.5 m	\$299.9 m	\$325.3 m	\$355.1 m	\$388.1 m	1.6%
Secondary Trade Area	<u>\$186.8 m</u>	<u>\$191.0 m</u>	<u>\$198.5 m</u>	<u>\$208.6 m</u>	<u>\$220.4 m</u>	0.8%
<b>Main Trade Area</b>	<b>\$468.3 m</b>	<b>\$490.9 m</b>	<b>\$523.8 m</b>	<b>\$563.7 m</b>	<b>\$608.5 m</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

Source: MarketInfo; Essential Economics. Figures rounded

### 3.8 Retail Turnover and Market Share Analysis

Estimates of retail turnover and market share for Swan Hill retailers are provided below. This analysis provides background in regard to the market share that Swan Hill retailers capture (ie, the share of available spending of MTA residents) and assists in identifying existing gaps in the provision of particular types of retail in Swan Hill.

#### **Estimated Retail Turnover**

Retail turnover for Swan Hill in 2014 is estimated at \$258 million and this represented an average trading level of \$5,540m<sup>2</sup> (expressed in 2014 dollars and inclusive of GST).

Estimates of turnover by retail category are shown in Table 3.8, which shows that FLG accounts for 47% of total turnover and achieves an average trading level of \$10,280/m<sup>2</sup>; this level of turnover reflects the relatively strong trading performance of the three supermarkets in the Swan Hill CBD (i.e. Woolworths, Coles and ALDI).



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Conversely, Non-Food retailing accounts for 40% of turnover and is estimated to generate a much lower average trading level of \$4,000/m<sup>2</sup>. This level of reflects the following:

- a relatively high number of lower trading tenancies such as bulky merchandise retailers and mini majors (Dimmeys, Reject Shop and Sam's Warehouse), and op-shops; and
- a comparatively low number of national brand retailers.

The turnover estimates have been prepared with the application of appropriate average trading levels (turnover per square metre) to the retail floorspace estimates presented in Section 3.1. The turnover estimates are based on published sales data (where available) and on information on likely trading performance gathered from floorspace surveys conducted by the consultant. The retail turnover figures should therefore be regarded as a fair and reasonable approximation of existing trading conditions for retailers in Swan Hill.

Importantly, these estimates refer to total retail turnover in the Swan Hill, including turnover that is attributable to MTA residents, tourists, workers and other visitors.

**Table 3.8: Retail Turnover Estimates for Swan Hill, 2014**

Category	Food, Liquor and Groceries	Food Catering	Non-Food	Services	Total
Retail floorspace	11,980m <sup>2</sup>	4,560m <sup>2</sup>	26,040m <sup>2</sup>	4,030m <sup>2</sup>	46,610m <sup>2</sup>
Average trading level	\$10,280/m <sup>2</sup>	\$4,590/m <sup>2</sup>	\$3,950/m <sup>2</sup>	\$2,760/m <sup>2</sup>	\$5,540/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total turnover</b>	<b>\$123.2m</b>	<b>\$20.9m</b>	<b>\$102.8m</b>	<b>\$11.1m</b>	<b>\$258.0m</b>
<i>Share of turnover</i>	48%	8%	40%	4%	100%
Source:	Essential Economics; industry sources				
Note:	Figures are in constant 2014 dollars				

### Market Share Analysis

Table 3.9 shows the extent to which turnover at retail facilities in Swan Hill are attributable to trade area residents. This analysis is based the consultant's estimates of the trading patterns of varying retailers in Swan Hill and previous research prepared for the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

In 2014, it is estimated that \$235 million (or 91%) of retail turnover in the Swan Hill is captured from MTA residents. This includes \$189 million (or 73%) from the PTA and \$46 million (or 18%) from the STA.

The balance of 9% of turnover is derived from non-residents, including tourists and other visitors to the centre, and purchases by trades and businesses. These sales account for \$23 million of turnover in 2014.

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**Table 3.9: Retail Turnover Attributable to Trade Area Residents, 2014**

Category	FLG	Food Catering	Non-Food	Services	Total
Estimated retail turnover (\$m)	\$123.2m	\$20.9m	\$102.8m	\$11.1m	\$258.0m
<u>Share of turnover to:</u>					
PTA	77%	70%	69%	72%	73%
STA	15%	15%	21%	24%	18%
<b>MTA</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>91%</b>
Beyond	8%	15%	10%	4%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<u>Retail turnover (\$m) derived from:</u>					
PTA	\$95.0m	\$14.7m	\$71.1m	\$8.0m	\$188.9m
STA	\$18.5m	\$3.1m	\$21.4m	\$2.6m	\$45.7m
<b>MTA</b>	<b>\$113.5m</b>	<b>\$17.9m</b>	<b>\$92.5m</b>	<b>\$10.7m</b>	<b>\$234.5m</b>
Beyond	\$9.7m	\$3.1m	\$10.3m	\$0.5m	\$23.5m
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$123.2m</b>	<b>\$20.9m</b>	<b>\$102.8m</b>	<b>\$11.1m</b>	<b>\$258.0m</b>
Source:	Essential Economics; industry sources				
Note:	Figures are in constant 2014 dollars				

Table 3.10 summarises the market share performance for retailers in Swan Hill in 2014, having regard for the above analysis and the estimated retail spending of trade area residents (refer Table 3.7).

Swan Hill retailers capture an estimated 50% or \$235 million of the \$468 million of available retail expenditure by MTA residents (figures rounded). The balance of \$234 million in MTA spending is directed to local centres and individual shops in the Rural City of Swan Hill and to centres located further afield and to internet purchases.

While a market share of 50% of MTA retail spending is considered reasonable for a regional centre like Swan Hill, opportunities to address gaps in the retail market exist which, if filled, have the potential to improve the market share performance of retailers in Swan Hill (refer Section 3.9). For the purpose of comparison, Mildura is estimated to achieve a market share of 58% of its MTA retail spending (Essential Economics, Mildura Retail Strategy, 2010) and the Horsham Central Activities District (excluding retailers beyond the CAD) is estimated to achieve a market share of 45% of MTA retail spending (Essential Economics, Horsham Central Activities District Strategy, 2013).

The market share achieved by retailers in Swan Hill is higher for the PTA (67%) than the STA (24%). This reflects the role of the Swan Hill as the main shopping location for PTA residents for most day-to-day food and convenience items and a greater level of choice for STA residents in terms of other centres to visit for shopping.

Retailers in Swan Hill capture an estimated 67% of PTA spending, including relatively high market shares in the FLG (74%), food catering (70%) and retail service (87%) sectors; these high market shares reflect the convenience nature of these items (ie, shopping on a day-to-day basis) and the adequate provision of local retailers in these sectors.

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Conversely, Swan Hill achieves lower retail market shares for the PTA in the Non-Food (58%) sector, indicating potential may exist for both an improved performance and potential development of new stores in the Non-food sector. The lower market share in these categories indicates competition for Swan Hill from other regional centres.

**Table 3.10: Retail Market Share Analysis, 2014**

Category	FLG	Food Catering	Non-Food	Services	Total
<b><u>Retail spending, 2014</u></b>					
PTA	\$128.5m	\$21.2m	\$122.5m	\$9.2m	\$281.5m
STA	\$86.0m	\$13.8m	\$80.7m	\$6.2m	\$186.8m
<b>MTA</b>	<b>\$214.6m</b>	<b>\$35.0m</b>	<b>\$203.3m</b>	<b>\$15.4m</b>	<b>\$468.3m</b>
<b><u>Retail turnover derived from:</u></b>					
PTA	\$95.0m	\$14.7m	\$71.1m	\$8.0m	\$186.7m
STA	\$18.5m	\$3.1m	\$21.4m	\$2.6m	\$45.3m
<b>MTA</b>	<b>\$113.5m</b>	<b>\$17.9m</b>	<b>\$92.5m</b>	<b>\$10.7m</b>	<b>\$232.0m</b>
<b><u>Market share</u></b>					
PTA	74%	70%	58%	87%	67%
STA	21%	23%	27%	43%	24%
<b>MTA</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>50%</b>

Note: Figures are in constant 2014 dollars  
Source: MarketInfo; Essential Economics; industry sources

### 3.9 Retail Gaps Analysis

The turnover and market share analysis presented in Section 3.8 indicates gaps exist in the provision of non-food retailing in Swan Hill, which achieves a market share of 45% of MTA spending on non-food merchandise. This is considered a relatively low market share compared to that achieved by other regional centres in Victoria.

Having regard for the distance to other regional centres and research undertaken by Essential Economics for other regional centres in Victoria, it would be expected that Swan Hill could achieve a non-food retail market share in the order of 50-60% of MTA spending.

In addition to non-food retailing, the provision of retailing that caters for visitors to the region has also been identified.

The potential retail gaps in Swan Hill which, if filled, would assist in consolidating Swan Hill's role as a regional centre, are discussed below.

#### ***Discount Department Store***

Swan Hill currently has a limited-range Target DDS of approximately 2,950m<sup>2</sup> in floorspace; this is less than half the size of a typical DDS, which generally ranges in size from approximately 5,000 to 8,000m<sup>2</sup>.

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The lack of a full-line DDS places Swan Hill at a competitive disadvantage to other regional centres. Table 3.11 summarises the provision of DDSs in competing regional centres in north-western Victoria.

**Table 3.11: DDSs in Competing Centres, 2014**

Centre	Distance from Swan Hill (by road)	DDS Floorspace			
		Big W	Kmart	Target	Total
Swan Hill	-	-	-	2,950m <sup>2</sup>	2,950m <sup>2</sup>
Echuca	150km	4,530m <sup>2</sup>	-	-	4,530m <sup>2</sup>
Bendigo	190km	7,785m <sup>2</sup>	6,505m <sup>2</sup>	6,010m <sup>2</sup>	20,300m <sup>2</sup>
Mildura	220km	6,350m <sup>2</sup>	5,550m <sup>2</sup>	7,041m <sup>2</sup>	12,591m <sup>2</sup>
Horsham	230km	-	7,705m <sup>2</sup>	3,100m <sup>2</sup>	7,705m <sup>2</sup>
Ballarat	290km	6,510m <sup>2</sup>	7,831m <sup>2</sup>	7,164m <sup>2</sup>	21,505m <sup>2</sup>

Source: Property Council of Australia, "Shopping Centre Directory 2011", 2011; Essential Economics  
Note: Myer Department Stores are also located at Ballarat and Bendigo  
Target Country stores are not considered to be a DDS

Typically, a population for 35,000-40,000 residents is required to support a full-sized DDS. While this may vary depending on the level of competition and demographics in any particular area, it is considered throughout the retail-economic industry to be a general benchmark for the provision of DDSs.

Having regard for the MTA population of 37,400 in 2014 (refer Table 3.3), potential may exist for the development of a full-sized DDS in Swan Hill in the future, although it is acknowledged the limited-range Target DDS in Swan Hill does serve a proportion of DSS requirements of residents.

Such a development would assist in retaining retail spending in Swan Hill that would otherwise be lost to other centres. In this regard, consultation indicates that BigW in Echuca attracts Swan Hill residents to Echuca who also undertake shopping at other stores while they are in Echuca.

The attraction of a DDS to Swan Hill has the potential to provide positive benefits to nearby retailers, provided that such a store is appropriately located in proximity to the majority of retailers in the Swan Hill CBD.

### ***Dedicated Homemaker Centre/Precinct***

Swan Hill contains a number of homemaker and bulky goods retailers selling goods including carpets, whitegoods, furniture and hardware that require large format display areas. However, these retailers tend to be scattered throughout Swan Hill.

In the past 20 years, homemaker precincts, either located on one site or adjoining sites to form a 'precinct', have developed nationally and have enabled traders to benefit from co-locating, thus generating higher levels of customer traffic and sales. In this context, Swan Hill has the opportunity for the development of a homemaker or bulky goods precinct on land located to

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the south of the Swan Hill CBD. The attraction of a Bunnings Warehouse to Swan Hill (and which is planned to begin construction in the near future, albeit on a site located in the Swan Hill CBD) indicates interest among large format retailers in locating in Swan Hill.

### ***National Brand Retailers***

Swan Hill has a limited presence of national brand retailers in the non-food speciality sector, particularly in the apparel merchandise sector. Based on the floorspace survey undertaken by the consultants in July 2014, national brand apparel retailers in the Swan Hill include the following:

- Target
- Jay Jays
- Jeans West
- Rockmans
- Sussan
- Best & Less
- Dimmeys.

It would be expected that a greater representation of national brand apparel retailers would be located in a centre the size of the Swan Hill. National brand apparel retailers that are located in other nearby region centre but are not located in Swan Hill include the following:

- Cotton-On (Echuca, Mildura, Bendigo, Shepparton and Horsham)
- Rivers (Echuca, Mildura, Bendigo, Shepparton and Horsham)
- Just Jeans (Echuca, Mildura, Shepparton and Bendigo)
- Katies (Mildura, Shepparton, Horsham and Bendigo)
- Factorie (Echuca, Mildura, Shepparton and Bendigo)
- Pumpkin Patch (Mildura, Shepparton and Bendigo).

### ***Tourism-based Retailing***

According to Tourism Research Australia data, approximately 176,000 domestic overnight visitors spent a total of 523,000 nights in Swan Hill in 2012/13. In addition, the region also attracts a share of international and day trip visitors. This tourism market provides an opportunity for retailers.

With a number of notable exceptions, Swan Hill does not contain a wide range of retailing that benefits from, or leverages off, visitors to Swan Hill. Although retailers are primarily orientated

towards serving MTA residents, an opportunity exists for businesses to cater also to visitors to Swan Hill.

An additional factor reducing retail turnover potential in Swan Hill is the reluctance of many retailers to operate outside of 'normal' trading hours, even when major events are underway and which bring additional visitors (and their potential spending) to the town. This issue is discussed in Chapter 6.

The Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan presents a significant opportunity that will enhance the region's tourism offering by providing a link between the Swan Hill CBD and the Murray River. Potential exists for new retail opportunities to leverage off any future development arising from this Masterplan.

### 3.10 Future Retail Development Opportunities

Forecast growth in retail spending of MTA residents over the next 20 years will generate opportunities for both an increased level of performance for existing retailers, as well as creating new retail development opportunities.

Table 3.12 provides an analysis of the demand for retail development over the 2014 to 2034 period in Swan Hill, and is based on the following three scenarios:

- Scenario 1: Existing market share, whereby Swan Hill retailers maintain their existing market share of 50% of MTA retail spending
- Scenario 2: Moderate increase in market share to 55% of MTA retail spending
- Scenario 3: Significant increase in market share to 60% of MTA retail spending.

The analysis assumes existing retailers will also improve their retail performance and assumes the average real turnover level (i.e. in constant 2014 dollars) for Swan Hill retailers will increase by 0.75%pa. In addition, the analysis assumes 10% of retail turnover would be derived from beyond the MTA.

The analysis is intended to be indicative only and illustrates the following potential for new retail floorspace over the next 20 years under each scenario:

- Scenario 1: Existing market share: +6,000m<sup>2</sup> of new retail floorspace
- Scenario 2: Moderate increase : +11,000m<sup>2</sup> of new retail floorspace
- Scenario 3: Significant increase: +16,000m<sup>2</sup> of new retail floorspace.

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**Table 3.12: Indicative Demand for Retail Floorspace in Swan Hill by Scenario, 2014-2034**

Category	Scenario 1 Existing Market Share	Scenario 2 Moderate Increase	Scenario 3 Significant Increase
Existing retail floorspace	46,610m <sup>2</sup>	46,610m <sup>2</sup>	46,610m <sup>2</sup>
Assumed market share of MTA retail spending	50%	55%	60%
MTA retail spending, 2034	\$608.5m	\$608.5m	\$608.5m
Estimated total turnover (including turnover from beyond the MTA)	\$338.6m	\$371.9m	\$405.7m
Supportable retail floorspace (@ an average of \$6,400/m <sup>2</sup> )	52,900m <sup>2</sup>	58,000m <sup>2</sup>	63,000m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Indicative demand for new retail floorspace (rounded)</b>	<b>+6,000m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>+11,000m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>+16,000m<sup>2</sup></b>

Source: Essential Economics

Note: Figures are rounded and in constant 2014 dollars

The proposed Bunning Warehouse at North Park is intended to comprise a warehouse of approximately 2,160m<sup>2</sup> plus a nursery and trade/building supplies area of approximately 3,450m<sup>2</sup>.

Although demand for new retail development is likely to occur in Swan Hill over the 20 or so years, ensuring appropriately sized development sites exist is likely to be an issue that may limited the extent of retail development. For instance, if a DDS operator was seeking to locate in Swan Hill, no sites large enough currently exist in the traditional CBD area.

However, land to the north of Nyah Road (identified as CBD North in Figure 1.5) and which is now zoned C1Z (due to the recent changes in commercial zones) may present an opportunity for such a retailer. The implications of encouraging 'core' retail uses in this area will need to be investigated. This issue is discussed in Chapter 6.

The availability of C1Z and C2Z zoned land located to the south of Swan Hill and identified for highway-based uses presents as an opportunity to accommodate retailers that would benefit from a highway location and that require larger areas to display merchandise. Potential for these types of uses (e.g. furniture retailers, car yards, hardware stores, etc) that are currently located in the Swan Hill CBD to relocate to this location may exist, and this would 'free-up' significant sites in the Swan Hill CBD for new retailers and other development.

Land to the north-west of the Campbell Street and Pritchard Street intersection presents as an example of a potential location within the Swan Hill CBD that may be able to accommodate a more intensive form of retail development. This area includes the Swan Hill Regional Library which has been identified as having potential to relocate to the Swan Hill Riverfront, and two car dealerships which, depending on the preferences of the individual businesses, may be suited to a location identified for highway based retailing located to the south of Swan Hill. This area would be suitable for a DDS retail development provided that sites within this area can be amalgamated.

In addition, the planned Riverfront Masterplan will also present opportunities for expanded tourism-based retailing.

### 3.11 Implications for the Strategy

The main implications for the Strategy arising from this retail economics analysis are as follows:

- 1 A number of **vacant shopfronts** are located in the core parts of the CBD and have been vacant for a considerable period of time. This is considered an issue as the presence of long-term vacancies does not reflect well on the trading vibrancy or viability of the CBD.
- 2 **Swan Hill serves a regional catchment that is forecast to experience only very limited population growth** over the next 20 years. Approximately 37,400 residents live in the Swan Hill Main Trade Area in 2014 and this is forecast to reach 38,000 by 2034.
- 3 **Swan Hill retailers capture a market share of 50% of total retail spending** of Main Trade Area residents, including only 45% of retailing spending on non-food merchandise. Potential exists to increase this market share. Gaps in the Swan Hill retail market include Discount Department Store retailing, homemaker retailing, national brands and retailing with a tourism focus.
- 4 **Potential exists for demand for between 6,000m<sup>2</sup> and 16,000m<sup>2</sup> of new retail floorspace** in Swan Hill over the next 20 or so years, depending on the extent to which the CBD can expand its share of available spending from the MTA.



## 4 SWAN HILL'S DIGITAL MARKET PRESENCE

This Chapter provides an overview of the importance of the internet and a digital market presence for retailers in Swan Hill.

### 4.1 Background and Context

According to ABS data, the share of households throughout Australia with access to the internet at home increased from 79% in 2010/11 to 83% in 2012/13. More than three quarters (77%) of all households had access to the internet via a broadband connection.

ABS data, shown in Table 4.1, also shows that total internet connection by households in the Rural City of Swan Hill in 2011 was 61%, significantly below the national average of 79% and the average for regional Victoria of 68%. The share of households in the Rural City of Swan Hill connected via a broadband-connection (53%) was also below the average for regional Victoria (61%).

**Table 4.1: Rural City of Swan Hill, Household Internet Connections, 2006-2011**

Connection type	2006			2011			Change 2006 to 2011
	Number	Share	Regional Victoria Share	Number	Share	Regional Victoria Share	
<b>Total internet connection</b>	<b>3,550</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>4,869</b>	<b>60.8%</b>	<b>68.4%</b>	<b>+1,319</b>
<b>including:</b>							
<i>Broadband connection</i>	1,910	23.9%	27.4%	4,287	53.5%	60.9%	+2,377
<i>Dial-up connection</i>	1,588	19.9%	23.8%	273	3.4%	3.6%	-1,315
<i>Other connection</i>	52	0.7%	0.6%	309	3.9%	3.9%	+257
<b>No internet connection</b>	<b>3,771</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>-1,313</b>
<b>Not stated</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>+6</b>
<b>Total households</b>	<b>7,996</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,008</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+12</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#), the population experts (Enumerated data)

Importantly, internet connectivity in the Rural City of Swan Hill increased significantly between 2006 and 2011, with an additional 1,320 households being connected to the internet, representing a total increase of 37% over the five-year period.

This upward trend in internet connectivity is expected to be supported in the future by increased internet speeds (particularly with the introduction of the National Broadband Network (NBN)), less expensive computer hardware and software, more competitive network provider services, increased use of the internet for online shopping by households, and increased use of free online government and other services (e.g. banking, travel, Centrelink, etc).

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Currently, the level of internet spending per capita through regional Victoria is approximately 11% below the national average, according to the NAB, Online Retail Sales Index. It is likely that the amount of spending by regional Victorians, including those in Swan Hill, on internet purchases will increase in the future, as more local business offer online products and as consumers become more 'trusting' of the online retail sector.

#### 4.2 National Business Use of Information Technology

Key indicators of business use of Information Technology (IT) nationally include internet access, the use of broadband, web presence and internet commerce (i.e. the placing and receiving of orders via the internet), and internet income.

In recent years the majority of these measures indicate an increase in the use of IT in the wider business community, as indicated in Table 4.2. The Table summarises selected indicators for the use of IT by Australian business (ABS, *Summary of IT Use and Innovation in Australian Business, 2012-13*), with the key points including the following:

- A high share of businesses have an internet connection (92.6% in 2012/13).
- Less than half of business have a web presence in 2012/13 (47.2%), although this has increased since 2010/11(43.1% ).
- Strong growth in the share of businesses with a social media presence occurred between 2011/12 and 2012/13, increasing from 18.1% to 26.1% of businesses surveyed.
- Strong growth in internet income has occurred in recent years, increasing from \$188.7 billion in 2010/11 to \$246.4 billion in 2012/13.

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**Table 4.2: National Figures for Business Use of Information Technology, 2010-2013**

		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Estimated number of businesses(b)	'000	764	776	770
Businesses with:				
internet access	%	91.2	91.9	92.6
web presence(c)	%	43.1	44.6	47.2
social media presence(d)	%	-	18.1	26.1
Businesses with internet access:				
broadband as main type of connection	%	99.1	99.2	99.6
Businesses that:				
placed orders via the internet	%	50.8	55.3	53.4
received orders via the internet	%	28.0	27.8	30.2
Internet income(e)	\$b	188.7	237.1	246.4

Source: ABS, Summary of IT Use and Innovation in Australian Business, 2012-13 (Cat No: 8166.0)

Notes: - nil or rounded to zero; (a) Proportions are of all businesses; (b) Business counts are provided for contextual information only, and the total may not sum to the total of the components due to rounding; (c) From 2012-13 the proportion of businesses that reported a web presence explicitly excludes social media presence. (d) The proportion of businesses that reported a social media presence was first collected in reference to 2011-12. Data prior to this are not available.

### 4.3 Internet Access in Swan Hill

Like many regional areas in Australia, internet availability (and in particular the delivery of fast internet speeds) in Swan Hill is subject to the priorities the telecommunication providers. In addition, development of the government's NBN will hopefully deliver better internet services and faster speeds to regional Australia.

The NBN is not expected in the Swan Hill region in the first rollout and it is estimated that it will not be available until 2016. Currently, some infrastructure works to support the NBN have been undertaken at Tower Hill in Swan Hill and this is to be continued in the future development of the estate, allowing the works to be ready when Swan Hill does eventually get the rollout. However, broadband internet speeds do not seem to be a problem for retailers in the Swan Hill CBD, but this is an issue for many rural households who still have slow internet speeds and often encounter service problems.

### 4.4 Retail Digital Presence in Swan Hill

It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of businesses in Swan Hill, and more specifically retail businesses, that have access to the internet. However, a Google search of businesses in Swan Hill and a Google search of "retail Swan Hill" suggests a high level of internet connection exists.

The search reveals that a large number of businesses have an email address and a web presence. The web searches also reveal that a small number of businesses are using social media and also have links to platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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Google searches of "Retail Swan Hill" and "Swan Hill Retail" showed the following:

- True Local lists 94 businesses with telephone number and links to email and web site
- Local Store lists 75 businesses with telephone number and links to email and web site
- Yellow Pages lists 176 business with telephone number and links to email and web site
- Google+ page search listed 73 businesses with their location shown with 'map id', including some with photographic representation of their 'bricks and mortar' presence

These are all free listings and have either been captured through a web crawler such as Google or through business-owners providing information to the various information services.

#### 4.5 Web Presence of Businesses and Retailers

Random Google searches of businesses mentioned in Section 4.4 reveal that many retailers in Swan Hill do have a web presence. Interestingly, many businesses may have a web presence without actually knowing it. That is, a retailer's name and address may have been picked up from the internet by a web crawler, or information may have been taken from hard copy information or listings and posted in various online directories.

Many of the websites observed in the random search seemed very basic and may need to be modified, particularly if retailers want to sell product online and also incorporate links to new social media platforms.

Also, website design has changed dramatically in the past few years, with software programs now enabling designers to create extremely dynamic and engaging sites. Since the advent of social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest, which are pictorially-based, website design has become more concentrated on images rather than words, with consumers wanting information to be delivered to them instantly and in a visually interesting way. For example, customers now like to see images of the actual shop and the people who run it. This is provided free by Google+ (<https://plus.google.com/>) where a street view of the premises, a map id and directions to the premises are provided.

In an ABS national survey (ABS, *Business Use of Information Technology, 2011-12*, Cat No: 8129.0), all businesses that reported having access to the internet but no web presence were asked to identify the reasons why this was the case. Businesses were provided with a list of options and could select more than one reason. This is the first time data on reasons for not having a web presence have been collected.

Overall, the most common reason reported by all businesses was that they 'had no need for a web presence' (accounting for 64% of businesses without a web presence). A lack of technical expertise was the next most common reason for not having a web presence (23.4% of businesses).

However, it is evident in the survey results that a greater share of businesses in the retail industry identify the need for a web presence, with only 43.6% (compared to 64.5% of all businesses) stating that 'no need for a web presence' as the reason why their business does

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not have a web presence. Issues associated with costs and technical expertise appear to be more relevant for retailers, as shown by the following:

- Lack of technical expertise, accounting for 34.2% of retailers (c.f. 23.4% for all industries)
- Ongoing maintenance and updating costs too high, accounting for 28.2% of retailers (c.f. 13.5% for all industries)
- Set-up costs too high, accounting for 25.4% of retailers (c.f. 17.9% for all industries)

Table 4.3 summarises the results the ABS survey.

**Table 4.3: Reasons for not having a Web Presence, by Employment Size, 2011-12**

Reason	0-4 persons	5-19 persons	20-199 persons	200 or more persons	All Industries	Retail
Lack of customer demand	19.3%	20.5%	<sup>^</sup> 29.9%	7.3%	20.0%	21.0%
Set up costs too high	18.2%	16.7%	20.2%	Np	17.9%	25.4%
Ongoing maintenance and updating costs too high	13.6%	13.2%	13.5%	-	13.5%	28.2%
Lack of technical expertise	21.6%	28.0%	28.2%	6.2%	23.4%	34.2%
Other	3.1%	3.1%	2.5%	10.5%	3.0%	4.7%
No need for a web presence	66.1%	61.2%	<sup>^</sup> 53.8%	78.9%	64.5%	43.6%

Source: ABS, Business Use of Information Technology, 2011-12 (Cat No: 8129.0)

Note: <sup>^</sup> estimate has a relative standard error of 10% to less than 25% and should be used with caution  
- nil or rounded to zero  
np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated  
(a) Proportions are of those businesses with internet access but no web presence in each output category  
(b) Businesses could identify more than one reason

Having regard for the ever increasing number of web-based searches for products and services, even in a regional context like Swan Hill, it is important that retail businesses have a web presence and a dedicated website or page for their business.

Also, for many businesses a website now offers a total business solution for both the seller and the customer. It provides links to other sites like blog sites and other social media platforms that support the product offer displayed on the website. It can also act as an online store, enabling products to be sold through the website and providing ways for the seller to do many of their own business transactions online with their manufacturers, suppliers and other business services.

#### 4.6 National Internet Usage, Online Shopping and other usage

In 2012/13, over three quarters (76%) of Australia's 15.4 million internet users made a purchase or order over the internet, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, Household Use of IT, Australian, 2012-13).

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The most popular types of purchases were travel, accommodation, memberships or tickets of any kind, accounting for 72% of male shoppers and 76% of female shoppers.

Regarding the online shopping patterns of females, the second most popular online shopping items were clothes, cosmetics or jewellery (accounting for 59% of female shoppers), while the second most popular purchases by males were CDs, music, DVDs, videos, books or magazines (accounting for 50% of male shopper).

The two most popular activities performed on the internet at home were paying bills or banking online, and social networking. Social networking was more common for younger people, with 90% of 15 to 17 year olds and 92% of 18 to 24 year olds involved in this activity.

#### **4.7 Reason for Not Making an Online Purchase or Order for Goods and Services**

Almost a quarter (24%) of internet users did not make an online purchase or order in 2012/13 (ABS, *Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, 2012-13*, Cat No: 8146.0). The three most commonly reported reasons for not making an online purchase or order were the following:

- Has no need (33%)
- Prefers to shop in person / see the product (24%)
- Security concerns / concerned about providing credit card details online (12%).

One of the key reasons for not purchasing online is that customers prefer to see, and in some instances, touch the product. Some customers also prefer the overall experience provided by shopping in real time in a real shop; it provides an important social connection.

In regional areas like Swan Hill, 'going to town' for shopping and other social, sporting or cultural activities is an established part of life. Even for people who live outside of Swan Hill in smaller towns or rural areas, 'going to town' to shop is an established ritual that occurs on a regular basis.

While some shopping activities (and other activities) can be replaced with an online capability, it can be assumed that online activity, including online shopping, will never totally replace 'bricks and mortar' experiences. The extent to which online shopping will consistently outpace the 'bricks and mortar' retail experience will only be borne out in time, as the online experience is really still in its infancy.

#### **4.8 Online Retail Compared to 'Bricks and Mortar' Retail**

A comparison between Australian 'bricks and mortar' retail sales and online sales is provided by the NAB monthly Retail Sales Index. According to the June 2014 NAB Retail Sales Index, the following was revealed in relation to the relationship between 'bricks and mortar' and online retail:

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- Online retail increased sales by +9.5% compared to a year ago.
- Traditional retailers, as reported by the ABS, increased sales by 3.9% compared to a year ago.

NAB estimate that Australians spent \$15.5 billion on online retail in the 12 months to June 2014 and that this is equivalent to 6.6% of spending at traditional 'bricks and mortar' retailers as measured by the ABS (excluding cafés, restaurants and takeaway food, in order to create a like-for-like comparison) in the 12 months to May 2014.

Growth occurred in online sales in almost all retail categories in the year to June 2014, including the following:

- Electronic Games (+22%)
- Groceries & Liquor (+19%)
- Department & Variety Stores (+10%)
- Fashion (+8%)
- Homewares & Appliances (+8%).

#### 4.9 Online Shopping: The Swan Hill Experience

Currently, no specific data is available on either the provision of online shopping facilities for retailers in Swan Hill or the level of online purchases, where online shopping is available. However, anecdotally it would appear that very few local businesses currently have an online facility, with the exception of some of the larger retailers like Target and Coles.

During this study, many businesses interviewed suggested that they were thinking about creating an online facility, recognising the many opportunities of online selling and also recognising the growth in online sales, both nationally and internationally.

Many retailers interviewed recognised that online selling does not necessarily see the need to stockpile goods for online sales but that they can use a 'delivery on demand' concept with potential suppliers and, in some instances, can even have the supplier send the products directly to the consumer while maintaining their own branding. This presents a whole new and more economically viable approach to supply chain management and stock control for small retailers compared with traditional management practices.

Both the ABS and the NAB data indicate that while growth is occurring in online shopping, 'bricks and mortar' shopping is here to stay. This is evidenced by many of the new big brand retailers like Zara, H& M and the Emporium entering the market in major cities, including Melbourne. However, it is recognised that most new retailers support their 'bricks and mortar' shopping with an online shop. Also, many of the traditional retailers like David Jones and Myer have, or are implementing, an online shop to support their 'bricks and mortar' retail.

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Many retailers in regional centres like Swan Hill would be well advised to consider establishing an online shop to support their bricks and mortar business. They could provide goods, via orders placed on the internet, to people who live on the outskirts of town or on farms and have difficulty getting into town. This is particularly important with an ageing population. An online shop can also be established for a relatively low cost.

As technology develops and as the ease of purchasing online goods and services becomes more user-friendly and seamless, it can be expected that the demand for online goods and services will continue to increase.

However, all the elements of the online experience will need to work together to support the overall experience. So, the actual selection and purchase of a good or service on the internet will need to be made customer-friendly, provide a seamless 'product search to check out' experience, and satisfy the online purchaser that the actual delivery of the goods will be consistent with the guarantee made by the seller.

Much debate has taken place concerning the delivery part in the supply chain of online goods, and many businesses are seeking both cost effective and totally reliable delivery services (and often competitors to Australia Post) to ensure that they can guarantee delivery dates and times. This could be of particular importance in delivering goods to shoppers who live in remote rural and regional locations.

The key for retailers is to ensure their online offering complements and supports their core business. Successful retailers are providing their customers with alternative ways to shop. In return, the retailer can generate additional sales activity not based on store-wide heavy discounting. Retailers are also adopting live inventory management techniques (i.e. simultaneous tracking of inventory via a web-based program) to fulfil sales and enhance stock turnover.

#### **4.10 Digital Communication and Social Networking**

Digital communication has revolutionised the way people communicate. Initially, email revolutionised and often replaced both personal and business letter writing, and more recently social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have revolutionised the way people create new relationships and find new products and services.

Business has been quick to recognise the value of social media in prospecting for new customers and have developed social media plans and strategies to achieve product exposure, customer testimonials and word-of-mouth referrals for their products. Many businesses have also recognised that communication using social media platforms is integral to their Customer Relationship Management programs.

On Facebook, the main social media platform, this has been achieved by building a fan base off the back of the 'friends' base. This is also known as digital network marketing.

Furthermore, social media is generally free to use, although many businesses are now taking advantage of paid advertising on social media sites to support their promotional strategies.



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In Australia, as at June 2014 (Vivid Social Research, June 2014), the numbers of people using key social networks were as follows:

- Facebook: 13,200,000 users
- YouTube: 12,700,000 users
- WordPress.com: 6,150,000 users
- Tumblr: 4,800,000 users
- LinkedIn: 3,500,000 users
- Blogspot: 2,800,000 users
- Twitter: 2,500,000 active Australian users
- Instagram: 1,600,000 active Australian users

In Australia, recent ABS data (ABS, *Summary of IT Use and Innovation in Australian Business, 2012-13*, Cat No. 8166.0) indicates that the larger a business, the more chance that it has a social media presence. For instance, 19% of businesses with 0-4 persons employed have a social media presence and this contrasts with 64% of businesses with 200 or more persons employed. Business with less than 200 employees are more likely to not have a social media presence.

In terms of using social media as a promotional tool, businesses need to recognise that it requires modifications to the way business is undertaken, both strategically and operationally. For businesses to engage with social media as part of their overall promotional strategy, they must engage in regular posting of products and services on social media sites and blogs, writing engaging written pieces which are different from traditional advertising, and developing a two-way communication with customers to deal with enquiries and complaints.

Retail businesses in Swan Hill would be wise to consider using social media platforms to promote their products, given the increasing numbers of people using social media. In the first instance, this could be as simple as establishing a Facebook fan page and posting product images and product descriptions. This will also allow current customers to comment on the product offer and provide feedback to the business.

#### 4.11 Implications for the Strategy

The main implications for the Strategy arising from this discussion on Internet and IT matters include the following:

- 1 **The internet is increasingly becoming part of the daily way of life for both consumers and businesses**, as illustrated by the following:
  - The share of households and business with access to the internet is increasing.

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- The extent to which people undertake online activities, including shopping, is increasing.
  - The number of people using social media is increasing.
  - The amount of online retail sales is increasing.
- 2 **Swan Hill has a relatively high level of internet representation**; however, many of these businesses may not actually know that they have a web presence as details of their businesses are being captured through 'web crawlers'.
  - 3 **Compared to other industries, retailers appear to understand the importance of having a web presence**, with a lower share (44%) of retailers stating that they had no need for a web presence compared to the total for all industries (65%).
  - 4 **Issues associated with costs and technical expertise** are other reasons why retailers do not have a web presence.
  - 5 **Opportunities exist for Swan Hill retailers** to improve their existing web presence, increase the overall number of retailers with a web presence, increase the use of social media, and improve the overall function of IT activities (e.g. online sales, ordering, stock control, etc).

## 5 PLACE MANAGEMENT AND EVENTS

Place Management is a relatively new approach to ways of addressing a wide range of issues and challenges in town centres. It's a way of gaining community support for a town centre and its businesses, and the 'management' aspect can be applied to an actual 'place' (in this case centres in Swan Hill), as well as to events and other activities that contribute to positive economic and social outcomes for business and the community at large. Examples of events or activities that can bring life into main town centres may include street parties, farmers markets, school holiday activities, and the like.

The Victorian Government through the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) describes Place Management as the mechanism for managing the wide range of issues, challenges and opportunities that face a town centre every day. It is a management approach that enables issues to be pursued in an integrated, coordinated way to achieve the economic, social and environmental potential of an activity centre or town centre.

Currently, Swan Hill does not have a Place Management Plan or Strategy, based around DTPLI's definition. It also does not have an Events Strategy.

This Chapter assesses the existing Events program in Swan Hill and the implications for the retail industry.

### 5.1 Current Events in Swan Hill that Support Retail

Council does not have a dedicated Events Strategy; however, it does have an annual calendar of events that are supported by Council. Council also has a part-time Events Coordinator who supports these events, which include the following:

#### Hallmark Events:

- Swan Hill Region Food & Wine Festival – March
- Swan Hill June Racing Carnival – June
- Tour of the Murray Cycle Event – July/August



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**Other Events:**

- Country Week Tennis – February
- Swan Hill Speedway – Monthly, December-June
- Swan Hill Bowls Easter Carnival – March/April
- Swan Hill Easter Tennis Tournament – March/April
- Lake Boga Easter Regatta – March-April
- Flying Boat Museum Splashing – Bi-annually, March
- Easter at the Pioneer Settlement (egg hunts & activities) – March/April
- Rotary Market – Monthly
- Fairfax Festival/YESFest – September
- Swan Hill Eisteddfod - September
- Murray Downs Pro Am PGA Golf Event - September
- Market Day – October
- Manangatang Races – October
- Swan Hill Agricultural and Pastoral Society Show - October
- Massive Murray Paddle (formerly Murray Marathon) – November
- New Year's Eve at Riverside Park – December
- Australian Jazz Convention – December.

In terms of events that support retail in Swan Hill, general agreement exists between Council and Swan Hill Inc that the *Swan Hill Food and Wine Festival* and the Markets held in Campbell Street are the two most effective current events at supporting retail. However, thus far no attempt has been made to measure the success through surveys or other data gathering.

At the time of writing, plans were underway to hold a street party to celebrate the upgrade to Campbell Street and the installation of the new sun shades and street paving.

Other activities identified by Council that may also support retailing include School Holiday activities, Christmas Celebrations, Easter Activities, Farmers Market and an expansion of existing Market Day in October.

These events would be held in the main and adjoining streets, and in a manner that ensures activities occur at regular intervals throughout the year. The events would be specifically designed to encourage activity in the main shopping precinct, thus supporting increased spending on retail.

## 5.2 Why Have Events?

Events form a part of a town or place's identity. Many towns are strongly associated with the events they hold, particularly hallmark events such as major festivals. In some instances, major events can also have considerable social and economic benefits.

The economic and social benefits associated with attracting visitors to towns and encouraging additional spending through holding events have long been acknowledged by Local, State and Federal Governments. For these reasons, significant Government funding is provided to both attract and hold events in particular locations. It is also for these reasons, that it is important to measure the economic and social impact of events, as noted later in Section 5.3.

Some events and activities (including a number of those identified in Section 5.1) are specifically designed to support retail, by being organised around the retail precinct and are intended to encourage shopping. Larger events, like festivals, that take place over a number of days can have broader economic impact for the area and can attract people from further afield.

Some events in regional Victoria manage to attract people from Melbourne and even interstate. Wangaratta's Jazz and Blues Festival, the Ballarat Begonia Festival, and the Castlemaine Festival are examples of events that attract visitors from large geographic areas.

Although Swan Hill does not have a major festival such as these, the Swan Hill Food and Wine Festival does attract visitors from the wider region and potential may exist to further build the profile of this event.

It is interesting to note that the current Swan Hill Food and Wine Festival is listed as a 'Highlight' event in the Murray segment of Tourism Victoria's jigsaw campaign. However, 'The Mildura Jazz, Food and Wine Festival' achieves the top listing for the Murray region. Mildura is also listed as the key tourism destination for the Murray region.

It is recommended that Council, potentially with assistance from Swan Hill Inc, consider the opportunity to build the current Swan Hill Food and Wine Festival into a key event for the region and work closely with Tourism Victoria on how this might be best progressed.

## 5.3 Measuring the Economic and Social Benefits of Events

Where events are intended to provide economic benefit and generate additional income for local businesses (including retailers), it is important to measure what impact such events are having. This may include an assessment of the following:

- Where people are coming from for the current suite of activities and events?
- How long they are staying in Swan Hill?
- What type of activities they are undertaking in addition to attending the event?
- How much additional expenditure are they providing for local businesses?

Events and activities that are purely designed for the local community, as well as supporting local retailers, are also important for community capacity building. The greater the level of engagement at each of these events or activities, the more likely they are to succeed and then possibly expand into larger events that might also have economic as well as social benefits.

Therefore, Council needs to give consideration to what it wants to achieve out of its events program, and this can only be done by developing an Events Strategy that might include consideration of the development of some current events into major events, or a signature festival for Swan Hill.

#### **5.4 How an Events Program Best Supports Retail**

In order to maximise the benefit of an events program for local retailers, the following actions are required:

- Common agreement by retailers of opening hours during events, including extended trading hours on weekends and public holidays.
- All retailers agreeing to retail promotions to promote the events, both leading up to and during events. This could include developing themed decorations or window displays and offering special discounts or deals during the events.
- Events program championed and supported by the Swan Hill Inc.

#### **5.5 Ways that Events can Support Overall Economic Development**

When considering how larger events that take place over a number of days can best support retail and overall economic development in the region, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

- The ability of the event to attract people from further afield than the Swan Hill region, so that Swan Hill is attracting expenditure from beyond the region.
- Availability and quality of accommodation where the event is more than a day-long event and there is an aim to attract people from long distances.
- Availability of restaurants and cafes, opening times and general availability of a variety of food for different tastes and nationalities.
- Possibility for extended retail opening hours during the event.
- Possibility for extended opening of amenities, clubs and tourist attractions.
- Availability of different transport options to and from the event.

## 5.6 Implications for the Strategy

Based on the discussion presented in this Chapter, recommendations for Strategy include the following:

- 1 Undertake a major survey of the Food and Wine Festival and seek input from participants regarding ideas for improving and expanding the Festival.
- 2 Ensure that surveys are undertaken at all events in order to assess the success of the event, from both a participant's point of view and a retailer's point of view. This may involve the training of a volunteer group who can assist with surveying.
- 3 Conduct an economic impact assessment of the Food and Wine Festival, as input to assessing the value of further developing the Festival.
- 4 Consider developing and building on the current Food and Wine Festival as Swan Hill's signature event and seek the support of Tourism Victoria to support the initiative
- 5 Undertake a full review of Swan Hill's Events Program.
- 6 Develop an overall Events Strategy based on agreed criteria for each event and the purpose of each event.
- 7 Seek support from PTPLI to implement a Place Management Strategy for Swan Hill.
- 8 Develop a 'think tank' to workshop ideas for new events and festivals, which may include:
  - A Bush Poets Festival in the Pioneer Settlement
  - The Big Fish Festival of Fishing
  - A Drag Racing Festival (as well as regular drag racing events) that can use the new drag racing strip
  - An Annual Film Festival based around an agreed theme that that fully utilises the Swan Hill cinema.

## 6 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STRATEGY

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A number of 'other considerations' relevant to retailing in Swan Hill were identified through the analysis undertaken as part of preparing for the Strategy and through consultation with local traders and businesses, the Swan Hill Inc Traders Committee and Council officers.

These 'other considerations' are discussed below.

### 6.1 Economic Development and Implications for Retailing

As discussed in Chapter 3, the MTA served by retailers in Swan Hill contains 37,400 residents and this population level is forecast to remain relatively stable over the next 20 or so years. Compared to competing regional centres, this relatively low population level and low prospects for population growth are likely to limit the ability of the region to attract new retailers and businesses which rely on a critical mass of population.

Therefore, the continued economic development of the Swan Hill region is critically important to the continued success and development of the Swan Hill retail industry. Attracting investment, creating jobs and increasing the local population base, all contribute to an increase in the trade area population and retail spending base upon which Swan Hill retailers rely.

Council is supporting a number of economic development initiatives which include the Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan, the development of the Chisholm Motor Sports Complex, redevelopment of the Pioneer Settlement, continued development of the Tower Hill residential estate, redevelopment of the Swan Hill Hospital, and other initiatives. The implementation of these projects, as well as other major projects in the region, can be expected to have a positive effect on retailing in the municipality.

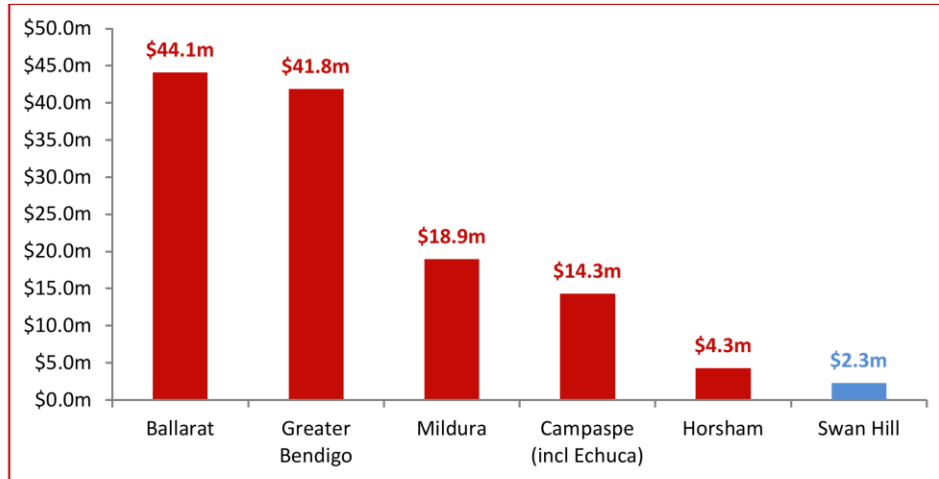
### 6.2 Limited Investment in New and Existing Tenancies

Swan Hill has experienced only limited investment in new retail buildings in recent years (refer Section 2.3), and only limited investment in the existing retail building stock. Between 2008/09 and 2012/13 the total value of building permits associated with the re-erection, extension and alteration of retail buildings amounts to \$2.3 million, and this is significantly less than which has occurred in other competing region areas, as shown in Table 6.1.

Council recently completed a series of streetscape improvements throughout the Swan Hill CBD; however, continued investment and improvements in existing shopfronts is required in order to ensure retail tenancies in the municipality meet the expectations of modern retailers and businesses. It is understood, through discussions with local businesses, that many landlords are 'passive' investors and are reluctant to invest in existing shopfronts.



**Table 6.1: Value of Retail Building Permits Associated with the Re-erection, Extension and Alteration of Retail Buildings, 2008/09 to 2012/13**



Source: Victorian Building Authority

### 6.3 Vacant Shops and the Use of ‘Pop-up’ Shops

Many shopfronts in Swan Hill have been vacant for long periods of time, with examples of some prominent shopfronts being empty for more than two years.

Reasons for long-term vacancies vary and may include any combination of an unwillingness on the part of landlords to negotiate on leases, poorly presented shopfronts, and a general lack of demand for retail space. Long-term vacancies, indeed vacancies in general, reflect poorly on a centre and can result in a variety of negative implications for a centre, including the following:

- Encouraging a negative perception of a centre, which in turn can have negative implications on investment attraction
- Decrease in activity levels, which in turn impacts other retailers and businesses in the vicinity
- Declining amenity and security.

Clearly, significant benefits can be derived from filling these long-term vacancies. However, this will require co-operation from landlords.

The concept of ‘pop-up’ stores using these vacant tenancies has been identified. Pop-up stores typically involve retailers undertaking short-term leases and using this space as a way to test the market, with a view to potentially undertaking a longer-term lease in the future. Other forms of pop-up retailing involve on-line retailers using a short-term lease to further market their products (and on-line store), or retailers using a short-term lease to sell discounted, end-of-season stock.

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In general terms, using long-term vacancies as 'pop-up' stores could have a positive impact on retailing in Swan Hill. It would provide landlords with rental income, create a level of interest and increased activity within the centre, and would provide residents with an overall improved level of retail choice. While it is unlikely that Swan Hill (at this point in time) would experience significant levels of demand for short-term leases from 'pop-up' store retailers compared to centres in a metropolitan context, they should not be discounted as a way of filling long-term vacancies.

The incidence of long-term vacancies is an issue for many regional centres. Mildura is an example where the existence of long-term vacancies has resulted in the development of the 'Empty Spaces Project Inc' which aims to "match fledgling entrepreneurs with currently empty commercial spaces in central business districts across the Mildura local government area, on free thirty day rolling access licenses".

The Empty Space Project Inc is operated by volunteers and, in general terms, acts as a conduit between start-up businesses requiring some space to display their goods, and landlords with vacant tenancies.

While landlords decide on who will occupy their tenancy, it is stipulated that these 'pop-up' businesses present new and innovative ideas, rather than compete with existing businesses in the centre. Facilitating the development of a similar concept for Swan Hill is worth considering.

Other options for long-term vacancies, and which would again require co-operation from landlords, include the following:

- Offering subsidised leases for start-up businesses, with the view to leasing the premises at a full commercial value in the future.
- Using the space for arts or cultural displays.
- Using the display areas on the exterior of buildings for exhibition of public notices.

All of the above options require some provisions on behalf of landlords, for instance, providing leases below market rates. Depending on the views and circumstances of the landlord, Council (or Swan Hill Inc) may be required to facilitate a positive outcome. This may involve Council liaising with landlords to gain an understanding of their current and future intentions for their properties.

In summary, significant benefits can be derived from occupying long-term vacancies, including benefits for landlords, creating new and existing businesses, and providing new levels of retail service for the wider community.

#### **6.4 Extended Retail Trading Hours**

Extended retail trading hours, in particular on the weekend, was raised in consultation with Swan Hill Inc, Council and local traders. Currently, only a limited number of retailers are open on Saturday afternoons.

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It is evident that the views of the local business community are evenly split on the issue of extended trading hours on weekends. For instance, Swan Hill Inc undertook a traders' survey of 49 businesses which indicated 49% of businesses would not consider opening on Saturday afternoon, 29% would consider opening, and 22% may consider opening. This diversity of views was also evident in consultation with local businesses.

A variety of reasons for not entertaining extending trading hours on weekends were identified, and include the view that the weekend is considered family time, difficulty in staffing weekend shifts, no-one is in town during the weekend, football and sport is played on Saturday afternoon, increase in costs to the business without evidence that it will generate increased sales, etc.

Although the views of businesses appear to be split, it is evident in a customer survey undertaken by Swan Hill Inc that the majority of customers (almost 80%) would support retailers in Swan Hill by shopping on Saturday afternoons.

Extended shopping hours on weekends has the potential to provide benefits for the region, including an improved level of service for local and regional residents and for visitors, which is important when marketing the region as a tourism location.

Extended trading hours responds to the changing needs of families and the community. For instance, families are increasingly becoming 'time-poor' due to longer working hours and an increasing incidence of families where both parents work. The need for the retail industry to compete with other forms of 'entertainment' is also cited as a reason for extended trading hours.

However, despite the benefit that would be derived for the local community, retailers need to also experience a benefit, namely in the form of increased sales. An increase in sales for Swan Hill retailers will only be realised if a sufficient mass of retailers are open at the same time. This would encourage customers to visit the centre (rather than one or two shops) and create a level of activity that would encourage customers to spend more time in the centre, creating additional opportunities for retail sales.

Furthermore, it will take a period of time to change the shopping patterns of Swan Hill residents. For many years, Swan Hill residents have grown accustomed to not shopping on weekends and it may take time for these shopping habits to change.

In essence, any trailing of extended shopping hours needs to be supported by the majority of retailers and needs to occur over an extended period of time if positive outcomes are to be achieved.

## 6.5 Implications of the New Commercial 1 Zone

As discussed in Section 1.4, recent State-wide changes to business zones have resulted in approximately 17ha of land located to the north of Nyah Road (referred to as 'CBD North' in Figure 1.5) in Swan Hill now being zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). The C1Z is the land use zone that will typically occupy the core part of regional centres, as in the case in Swan Hill. The main purpose of this zone is:

- To create vibrant mixed use commercial centres for retail, office, business, entertainment and community uses.
- To provide for residential uses at densities complementary to the role and scale of the commercial centre.

Consequently, potential exists for 'CBD-type' retailers, including supermarkets and DDSs, to establish themselves in the C1Z area to the north of Nyah Road. This part of the town centre is disconnected from the core part of the centre and potential may exist for any such development to attract trade away from the established parts of the centre.

Potential for an alternative commercial zone, or the introduction of schedules to the existing zone that limit the extent of retail or office floorspace, may exist. It is recommended Council consider in greater detail the potential implications of the new C1Z in the areas located to the north of Nyah Road.

## 6.6 The Future of Retailing in Small Towns

Retailing in small towns throughout Australia, and in the Rural City of Swan Hill, will continue to face challenges associated with limited catchment populations, limited or declining population growth, declining employment prospects, and competition from larger centres.

For example, the township of Nyah West contains approximately 680 residents in 2013 and this number has declined from approximately 720 residents in 2001, based on ABS Estimated Resident Population data. The township of Lake Boga is of a similar size, containing approximately 720 residents and having remained relatively constant since 2001.

This level of population is sufficient to support only a very minimal amount of retail, and the prospects for retail development in these towns are limited due to a decline in these population levels.

The continued provision of retail and other services in towns such as Nyah, Nyah West, Ultima and Lake Boga are important for the local community. Therefore, continued efforts in economic development – and with the aim of increasing population levels – in these towns is important as this will enhance the opportunity for the operation of viable businesses. This may involve supporting a sustainable level of residential development by encouragement to tourism and other employment opportunities. Assisting existing retailers where possible is also recommended, and this is noted in the Strategy. This may involve continuing to provide professional development opportunities.

Although Robinvale is considered a larger town which serves a catchment of approximately 4,200 residents, retailers in Robinvale will also benefit from continued efforts to promote economic development in the town and surrounding region.

## 6.7 Implications for the Strategy

Implications for the Strategy include the following:

- 1 The continued **economic development** of the Swan Hill region is critical to the continued success and development of the Swan Hill retail industry. Attracting investment, creating jobs and increasing the local population base all contribute to an increase in the trade area population and retail spending base upon which local retailers rely.
- 2 Swan Hill has experienced relatively limited **investment in existing retail tenancies**. Continued investment and improvements in existing shopfronts is required in order to ensure retail tenancies in the municipality continue to meet the expectations of modern retailers and businesses.
- 3 A number of **long-term vacancies** exist in Swan Hill and significant benefits could be gained by filling these vacancies. It is likely that either Council, Swan Hill Inc or some other organisation (such as that which is at work in Mildura) will need to work with landlords to encourage a productive use of these vacant tenancies.
- 4 While the views of the business community are split in relation to **extended trading hours**, evidence suggests the local community would welcome longer trading hours. However, it is important that any trialling of extended trading hours is supported by the majority of traders and is undertaken over a sufficient period of time to allow a thorough assessment of the outcomes.
- 5 **Recent State-wide changes to business zones** have resulted in approximately 17ha of land located to the north of Nyah Road in Swan Hill now being zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). This raises the opportunity for the development of 'CBD-type' retailers, including supermarkets and DDSs, to establish in this location which is separated from the established parts of the CBD.
- 6 **Retailing in small towns** throughout the Rural City of Swan Hill will continue to face challenges associated with limited catchment populations, limited or declining population growth, declining employment prospects, and competition from larger centres.

STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

**PART B: SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY:  
STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL  
INDUSTRY**

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Essential Economics Pty Ltd

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## 7 INTRODUCTION

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Part B presents the Swan Hill Retail Strategy: Strengthening Swan Hill's Retail Industry 2014, which provides guidelines for future retail development and improvement of the Swan Hill retail industry. The Strategy comprises:

- A **Vision** Statement
- **Objectives** for the strengthening of Swan Hill's retail industry
- A set of **Actions** and associated **Implementation** plans
- A **Monitoring and Review** process.

## 8 VISION

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The Vision Statement guides the ongoing enhancement and development of the retail sector in Swan Hill, and is the basis for the subsequent recommendations in the Retail Strategy.

The Vision Statement is as follows:

***Swan Hill will be the pre-eminent retail location serving residents and visitors to the Rural City of Swan Hill and surrounding areas. The retail sector will provide a genuine choice in merchandise and service, and will continue to make a significant contribution to the local and regional economy.***

***The Swan Hill retail industry will be renowned for its customer service and will use modern technologies to seek opportunities to expand its market, its employment base, and its level of service to the Swan Hill community and visitors.***



## 9 OBJECTIVES

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The Vision is supported by the following Objectives:

- 1 To support Swan Hill as the pre-eminent retail location serving residents and visitors to the Rural City of Swan Hill
- 2 To support the continued viability of existing retailers
- 3 To support the development of land to the south of Swan Hill as the main location for highway-based retailing
- 4 To improve and enhance the built environment in the Swan Hill CBD
- 5 To support retailers in smaller towns so that they continue to serve as important focal points for their communities
- 6 To promote the integration of the Swan Hill CBD with the Riverfront
- 7 To support the retail industry through the continued development of the local and regional economy
- 8 To support retail through the development of 'place management' and an events program.

## 10 ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

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This Chapter identifies a set of actions designed to implement the Swan Hill Retail Strategy 2014. For each underlying objective, a set of detailed actions and an implementation plan identifying key roles and responsibilities are provided.

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

- Short-term: Within 12 months
- Medium-term: From 1 year to 3 years
- Longer-term: From 3 years to 5 years or beyond
- On-going: An existing action that continues into the future

### **Objective 1: To support Swan Hill as the pre-eminent retail location serving residents and visitors to the Rural City of Swan Hill**

Swan Hill is located within a highly competitive context with regard to accessibility to retailing and other services at competing regional centres. Therefore, Swan Hill needs to provide a full-range of retail merchandise and services in order to be the pre-eminent location for retailing serving residents and visitors to the Rural City of Swan Hill.

#### **Actions**

- 1.1 *Prepare a Structure Plan for the Swan Hill CBD that clearly identifies the preferred location for retail, commercial, community and civic development. The Structure Plan should assess the implications of Commercial 1 Zone land to the north of Nyah Road and identify large sites suitable for retail development.*

Timeframe: Medium-term      Responsible Authority: Council

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- 1.2 *Develop a strategy to address long-term vacant tenancies in the Swan Hill CBD. This will involve engaging with property owners and the property industry, and may involve the development of a similar 'empty spaces' program such as that which has recently commenced in Mildura, encouraging 'pop-up' shops, subsidised rents, etc.*

Timeframe: Short-term      Responsible Authority: Swan Hill Inc / Council

Partnerships: Property owners, property industry, volunteer groups

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STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- 1.3 *Liaise with major and national brand retailers that are not located in Swan Hill but are located in competing regional centres concerning their future intentions and their requirements for locating in Swan Hill.*

Timeframe: Ongoing Responsible Authority: Council

Partnerships: Large and National brand retailers, property industry

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- 1.4 *Maintain and update the 'retail' fact sheet shown on Council's website as a means of providing up-to-date information on potential opportunities for new retailers to establish in Swan Hill.*

Timeframe: Ongoing Responsible Authority: Council

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- 1.5 *Continue to liaise with local traders about the opportunity for a trial of extended hours on Saturday afternoons. The trial would require the majority of traders to be involved and would need to occur over an extended period of time to allow for a thorough assessment of outcomes from the trial.*

Timeframe: Ongoing Responsible Authority: Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Local traders

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**Objective 2: To support the continued viability of existing retailers**

Existing retailers in Swan Hill currently provide for a large proportion of the retail needs of residents and visitors to the Swan Hill region, and contribute significantly to the local economy in terms of jobs and the provision of required goods and services.

**Actions**

- 2.1 *Continue to provide support to local traders in the form of professional development, including the provision of courses/seminars on relevant business topics (e.g. customer service, use of information technology, trends in the retail industry, social media, etc).*

Timeframe: Ongoing Responsible Authority: Council/Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Council, local traders

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- 2.2 *Continue to develop the "Welcome to the Heart of the Murray" App, incorporating a greater level of retail content and interaction.*

Timeframe: Short-term Responsible Authority: Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Local traders, IT consultants

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STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- 2.3 *Continue to support local retailers in their endeavours to improve their digital marketing presence. Many retailers would like to have such presence, but they have concerns regarding the time and expertise required to implement and maintain this function.*

Timeframe: Short-term                      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Local traders, IT consultants

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**Objective 3:            To support the development of land to the south of Swan Hill as the main location for highway-based retailing**

A significant area of Commercial 1 Zone and Commercial 2 Zone land is located to the south of Swan Hill and is intended to be developed for the purpose of highway-based retailing. This includes homemaker retailing, bulky merchandise retailing, showroom uses and other restricted retailing uses.

The development of this precinct will contribute to Swan Hill's ability to provide a full-range of retail merchandise and services, and may involve attracting new retailers to the region or the relocation of existing retailers who may be suited to a highway location.

**Actions**

- 3.1 *Assist prospective developers and tenants with planning and building applications.*

Timeframe: Short-term                      Responsible Authority: Council

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- 3.2 *Liaise with the local business community regarding future opportunities for existing businesses to relocate to this highway-based retail precinct (and thus freeing-up properties for new or expanded shopfront retailing in the established part of the centre).*

Timeframe: Ongoing                      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Local traders, property owners, developers

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STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

**Objective 4: To improve and enhance the built environment in the Swan Hill CBD**

Council has recently invested in improvements to street works in the Swan Hill CBD. However, only limited investment by the private sector has taken place in regard to improvements to existing buildings. This lack of investment may be a contributing factor to some of the long-term vacancies in the Swan Hill CBD.

**Actions**

4.1 *Continue to encourage property owners to invest in the appearance and amenity of buildings. This may involve highlighting examples where investment in shopfront tenancies has contributed positively to the financial returns of property owners.*

Timeframe: Ongoing                      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Property owners

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**Objective 5: To support retailers in smaller towns so that they continue to serve as important focal points for their communities**

**Actions**

Retailing in small towns in the Rural City of Swan Hill will continue to face challenges associated with limited catchment populations, limited or declining population growth, declining employment prospects, and competition from larger centres. However, these retailers provide important services to local communities and often provide a valued community focal point. A program of retail and professional development would assist these businesses in meeting challenges in the marketplace.

5.1 *Assist retailers in small towns with business and professional development.*

Timeframe: Ongoing                      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc

Partnerships: Local traders

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STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

**Objective 6: To promote the integration of the Swan Hill CBD with the Riverfront**

A significant share of the marketing efforts of Council and Swan Hill Inc are focussed on the 'Heart of the Murray' branding; however, at present accessibility between the riverfront and the Swan Hill CBD is limited.

**Actions**

6.1 *Continue to support the implementation of the Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan.*

Timeframe: Ongoing                      Responsible Authority: Council

Partnerships: Property owners

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**Objective 7: To support the retail industry through the continued development of the local economy**

The continued economic development of the Swan Hill region is critically important to the continued success and development of the Swan Hill retail industry. Attracting investment, creating jobs and increasing the local population base, all contribute to an increase in the trade area population and retail spending base upon which Swan Hill retailers rely.

**Actions**

7.1 *Continue to promote the Swan Hill region as a place to live, work and visit by implementing the Swan Hill Economic Development Strategy.*

Timeframe: Ongoing                      Responsible Authority: Council

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**Objective 8: To support retail through the development of 'Place Management' and Events Strategies**

Place Management is a way of gaining community support for a town centre and its businesses, and the 'management' aspect can be applied to an actual 'place' (in this case centres in Swan Hill), as well as to events and other activities that contribute to positive economic and social outcomes for business and the community at large.

Events and activities have the potential to attract visitors to Swan Hill and the region, providing an opportunity to 'show case' the region's strengths and generate significant economic and social benefits.

**Actions**

8.1 *Undertake a major survey of the Food and Wine Festival and seek input from participants regarding ideas for improving and expanding the Festival.*

Timeframe: Short-term                      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc

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STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

- 8.2 *Ensure that surveys are undertaken at all events in order to assess the success of the event, from both a participant's point of view and a retailer's point of view. This may involve the training of a volunteer group who can then assist with surveying.*  
Timeframe: Ongoing      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc
- 8.3 *Undertake a full review of Swan Hill's Events Program, including identifying opportunities for new events and festivals*  
Timeframe: Short-term      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc
- 8.4 *Develop an overall Events Strategy based on agreed criteria for each event, the purpose of each event, and the outcomes that are anticipated in terms of contributions to Swan Hill's retailers and the community.*  
Timeframe: Medium-term      Responsible Authority: Council / Swan Hill Inc
- 8.5 *Seek support from DTPLI to implement a Place Management Strategy for Swan Hill.*  
Timeframe: Medium-term      Responsible Authority: Council

## 11 MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

Monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Strategy will be important, and this will allow proper assessment as to how the Strategy is performing and whether or not changes are warranted as a result of new and emerging trends.

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

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

Indicators for monitoring and review purposes are listed in Table 11.1 on the following page. These indicators are based on readily available and relatively inexpensive data, including official data, Council planning approvals and commencements data, land use/floorspace surveys, and reference to consultant reports.



STRENGTHENING SWAN HILL'S RETAIL INDUSTRY  
SWAN HILL RETAIL STRATEGY

**Table 11.1: Indicators for Monitoring Process**

Indicator	Source	Comment
1. Activity Centre Floorspace	Swan Hill Retail Strategy, floorspace surveys, Council data for planning and building approvals.	Implement retail/commercial floorspace survey in order to allow an up-to-date estimate of total floorspace and the mix of retail/office activities. The floorspace survey presented in the Retail Strategy will serve as the base-year survey. Alternatively, Council planning and approvals data could be added to the floorspace data presented in this Strategy.
2. In-centre surveys	In-centre surveys	Undertake, in cooperation with Swan Hill Inc, a series of short in-centre surveys of businesses and customers on a regular basis (eg every one or two years). The survey could cover issues such as the local community's views on the centre, changes in people's perception of the centre as a place to visit, views on competing centres, issues they identify and actions that need doing, trends in employment levels, etc. The surveys would be a helpful reference point in assessing potential impacts of the initiatives contained in the Strategy.
3. Business survey of retailers digital market presence	Business surveys	Undertake, in cooperation with Swan Hill Inc, a short survey of retailers and other business concerning their digital market presence. Undertake this survey on a regular basis (eg every year) to measure progress of the retail industry in adopting a digital market presence.
4. Property development proposals and projects	Council records	Track development applications, proposals, and completions.
5. Retail trading performance	Consultant reports; Property Council	Especially track official sources of data. Note numbers of new businesses and estimate of new jobs on an annual basis.
6. Increased floorspace provision for shops and services, as well as increased value of buildings and works	Council data for planning and building approvals, and building completions	This measure uses regular and up-to-date data, and is therefore very useful. Can indicate change in use from shop to other use and vice-versa.
7. Vacancy rates for retail and commercial floorspace (vacant m <sup>2</sup> expressed as a % of total m <sup>2</sup> )	Land use and floorspace surveys	Can be undertaken at any time. As a guideline, the average retail floorspace vacancy rates are around 4-6% of total retail floorspace for strip shopping centres. Planned under-cover modern shopping centres usually have zero vacancies due to good management of tenant mix. These measures provide a useful indication of general health of a centre.
8. Changes in property values and rates	Council rate records; data from Victorian Valuer-General	Useful indicator, especially as a relative indicator (eg different rate valuations for between centres).
9. Viewpoints on health of centres as expressed in property industry, real estate and those in retail industry	Regular contact with real estate agents, property owners, developers retail industry, other businesses, business associations, and the wider community.	Annual forum organised by Council at a venue for information exchange between property and retail industry, local traders, other businesses and stakeholders, Council and other community representatives.

Source: Essential Economics Pty Ltd

### **B.14.101 COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Development and Planning  
**File Number:** 26-36-00  
**Attachments:** 1 Community Garden Policy

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

Brett Luxford - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

The '*Community Garden Policy*' provides the framework to support and encourage the development of community gardens within our municipality. This report recommends Council adopt the '*Community Garden Policy*'.

#### **Discussion**

Approximately seven years ago local communities, with the support of Swan Hill Rural City Council, developed the Swan Hill Specialist School Community Garden and the Robinvale Munatunga Aboriginal Community Garden. Both these gardens are well established, considered successful and are very different from each other.

Since then a number of communities in our rural areas have developed with the support of Council their own unique gardens. These have included the Boundary Bend's Bush Tucker Garden, Manangatang's Mallee Garden, Robinvale's Community Garden located at the P-12 College and more recently the George Lay Park vegetable garden.

Our past experiences with our communities have laid the foundations to ensure other groups find it easier to plan, establish, and manage a community garden. Community gardens provide the opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to share ideas and build rapport in an informal setting.

The benefits of community gardens to local communities are well recognised across the world and they are now considered as a way to connect communities. The attached Community Garden Policy recognises community gardens as a valuable public recreational asset that can contribute to the improved health and well being of the community through environmental, social and health education.

The policy is supported by a procedure and guidelines which highlight Council's role in developing community gardens is to provide advice and support which enables local communities to take the lead role in developing and maintaining the garden.

## **Consultation**

Consultation has occurred informally with a variety of community groups who have been involved in creating their own community gardens. This journey over the past seven years has provided the information to create the Community Garden Policy and Procedure.

## **Financial Implications**

Nil

## **Social Implications**

Community gardens are a great catalyst for bringing people together for social interaction. This can only be seen as a positive social outcome for our community groups and members who participate.

## **Economic Implications**

Nil

## **Environmental Implications**

Nil

## **Risk Management Implications**

The policy and the procedure allow Council to provide guidance and advice to groups wishing to set up a community garden. This will help minimise and mitigate any risk that could be faced.

## **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Building community capacity*** - We seek to connect members of our community and to provide leadership to bring people together to find solutions to community problems.

## **Options**

Council can adopt the Community Garden Policy, request further work to be done on the policy or refuse to adopt the policy.

## **Recommendation**

**That Council adopt the Community Garden Policy.**

**POLICY TITLE            COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY**

**POLICY NUMBER        COMM/POL813**

**PURPOSE**

To provide a framework to support and encourage the development of community gardens within the Swan Hill municipality.

**BACKGROUND**

*Community Gardens – Definition*

Community gardens are gardens created and maintained on public or private land by residents who come together to learn about and participate in gardening; and share the community benefits of localised food production and socialisation.

Council recognises community gardens as a valuable public recreational asset that can contribute to the improved health and well being of the community through environmental, social and health education.

The management and function of community gardens should rest with engaged residents, however Council advice and support is available to ensure sustainable and consistent development of community gardens.

Advice and support can include identifying appropriate sites, insurance requirements, weed management, asset management, community engagement, dispute resolution, health and safety.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all community garden projects undertaken by, or in partnership with, Council.

**POLICY**

Council will encourage, support and offer assistance to any individual or group that approach Council with the intention of creating a community garden within the Swan Hill municipality.

**RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Public Participation - POL/GOV010  
Sustainable Living Strategy  
Resilience Action Strategy

**RELATED LEGISLATION**

Local Government Act 1989  
Planning and Environment Act 1987

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mayor**                      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **B.14.102 COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY REVIEW**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Development and Planning  
**File Number:** 69-12-99  
**Attachments:** 1 Community Grants Policy

### **Declarations of Interest:**

Brett Luxford - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

Council has a range of policies that guide how Council delivers services and engages with the community. These policies are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are still applicable.

The '*Community Grants Policy*' has been reviewed with changes listed below. The policy is now presented for adoption by Council.

### **Discussion**

The '*Community Grants Policy*' is presented for the approval of Council. The review process has resulted in the following changes:

The categories, formerly known as Category One and Category Two have been renamed to Community Development Fund and Community Support Fund, respectively. This is to better reflect the purpose of the grants.

The Community Pride category has been removed and all aspects of that category are now included within the Community Development Category.

The policy also now also states that projects linked to the Council Plan or Community Plan will be a priority, and projects that support local businesses where purchases are required will be looked upon favourably.

The policy is supported by a procedure that details how the grants are administered and assessed. The assessment criteria is available for all applicants so that they can ensure their project meets the funding guidelines.

### **Consultation**

The program has been running for a number of years and is altered in consultation with Council and the community to ensure it still meets the needs of the community.

### **Financial Implications**

The Community Benefit Grants Scheme is already an adopted function of Council and included in Council's Annual Budget. Council determines the allocation to the fund during the adoption of the budget each year.

### **Social Implications**

The community grants support a range of projects each year that add to the social outcomes of groups and the local community.

### **Economic Implications**

Projects and programs undertaken through the Community Grant scheme often use local trades and supplies to implement their projects which assists the local economy.

### **Environmental Implications**

The Community Grants scheme helps supports projects that add to the environmental sustainability of the area.

### **Risk Management Implications**

Nil

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Building community capacity*** - We seek to connect members of our community and to provide leadership to bring people together to find solutions to community problems.

### **Options**

Council can choose to adopt the policy, request further work on the policy prior to adoption or refuse to adopt the policy.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council adopt the Community Grants Policy.**

**POLICY TITLE            COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY**

**POLICY NUMBER        POL/COMM805**

### **PURPOSE**

This policy provides guidance for allocation of grants to the community.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to grants made by the Council to community organisations for the purpose of encouraging and supporting community development within our municipality. This includes cultural, heritage, recreational and environmental activities which aim to improve community identity, pride, cohesion and economic development.

### **POLICY**

Council will consider giving grants for any project or program that complements the Council Plan, and enhances the health, wellbeing and/or economic benefit of the community.

Council provides three separate financial assistance schemes, namely:

- 1. Community Development Fund** – Funding for organisations to assist with operations generally up to \$2,000.
- 2. Community Support Fund** – Assistance of generally up to \$200 to community based groups for minor/non-recurrent projects.
- 3. Major Events Support Scheme** – Funding for organisations to assist in the development and promotion of major events in the municipality as provided annually in the budget.

### **RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Community Empowerment – POL/GOV001

Council Loan Support – DIR/CORP202

Management of GST–Community Organisations – DIR/CORP208  
Public Policy – Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services – POL/COMM800

### **RELATED LEGISLATION**

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mayor**                      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **B.14.103 CONTROL OF DAMAGE TO COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE AT BUILDING SITES POLICY REVIEW**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Development and Planning  
**File Number:** 69-12-99  
**Attachments:** 1 Control of Damage to Council Infrastructure at Building sites Policy

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

Brett Luxford - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

Council has a range of policies that guide how Council operates to deliver services and its dealings with the community. These policies are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are still applicable.

The '*Control of Damage to Council Infrastructure at Building Sites Policy*' has been reviewed with no change to the intent of the policy.

#### **Discussion**

The intent of this policy is to guide Council in its approach to dealing with building works that may cause damage to Council's Infrastructure.

#### **Consultation**

All members of the Leadership Team has reviewed the Policy.

#### **Financial Implications**

The policy ensures that Council can protect its assets and recover costs of damage from developers.

#### **Social Implications**

Nil

#### **Economic Implications**

Nil

#### **Environmental Implications**

Nil



### **Risk Management Implications**

Nil

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Responsible management of resources*** - We will continually improve the management of our finances, assets, systems and technology to achieve and maintain Best Value in our operations.

### **Options**

Council may choose to make changes to the policy or approve the policy as presented.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council adopt the Control of Damage to Council Infrastructure at Building Sites Policy.**

**POLICY TITLE            CONTROL OF DAMAGE TO COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE AT BUILDING SITES****POLICY NUMBER    POL/INFRA509****PURPOSE**

This policy allows Council to recover costs where damage is caused to Council infrastructure by a builder, developer, owner or any other party.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all building and development works carried out within the municipality that may have an impact of Council's physical infrastructure.

**POLICY**

Council will take all the necessary and practical steps to recover the cost of damage to its infrastructure from the party that caused the damage.

Council will ensure that the condition of its assets that may be affected by building works are monitored throughout the life of the building works. This will involve an inspection prior to works commencing followed by a closeout, or finalisation inspection once works are completed.

Infrastructure that may need monitoring includes, but is not limited to:

- Stormwater channels
- Kerb and guttering
- Vehicle crossings
- Footpaths (paved/unpaved)
- Trees
- Nature strips
- Drainage pits
- Roads
- Signs
- Balustrade
- Street furniture (seats, bins, etc)

**RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Footpaths in Road Reserves and Parks Policy – POL/INFRA506

**RELATED LEGISLATION**

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mayor**                      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **B.14.104 PUBLIC POLICY – RECREATION, CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES**

**Responsible Officer:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** POL/CULT705  
**Attachments:** 1 Recreation, Culture & Leisure Services Policy

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

Dean Miller - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

This report recommends Council remove the Public Policy – Recreation, Culture and Leisure (POL/CULT705), as it is no longer relevant to Council.

#### **Discussion**

The Policy in question was developed during preparation for the introduction of Best Value in 2004-05, and sought to outline the grouping of Council services and responsibilities requiring future development of Quality and Cost Standards.

The Public Policy – Recreation, Culture and Leisure was produced to briefly outline what a particular grouping of services was, and how they would be reported in relation to Quality and Cost Standards.

The Policy did not and does not provide Council with direction regarding its broad responsibilities in relation to the provision of any services, nor does it relate to how Quality and Cost Standards are reported.

The Council Plan sets Council's direction, and various service-specific policies also indicate that this Policy is no longer relevant.

The Policy was due for review in late 2102, with the intention of removal from Council's policies; however due to Council elections this did not take place.

During the latest round of Policy reviews, this oversight was discovered and the Policy was referred to the Executive Leadership Team for review.

#### **Consultation**

This Policy was reviewed internally in November 2014 and discussed with Councillors at an Assembly, and it was determined that the same circumstances existed for removal of the Policy as during the previous discussions in late 2012.

### **Financial Implications**

Nil

### **Social Implications**

Nil

### **Economic Implications**

Nil

### **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### **Risk Management Implications**

Nil

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Responsible management of resources*** - We will continually improve the management of our finances, assets, systems and technology to achieve and maintain Best Value in our operations.

### **Options**

Nil

### **Recommendation**

**That Council delete the Public Policy – Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services.**

**POLICY TITLE** PUBLIC POLICY – RECREATION, CULTURE & LEISURE SERVICES

**POLICY NUMBER** POL/CULT705

**PURPOSE**

To identify Council’s policy in the provision of recreation, culture and leisure services.

**APPLICATION**

This policy applies to recreation, culture and leisure services provided by the Swan Hill Rural City Council, both as direct service delivery or through facilitation (ie provision of parks and sports grounds) or through third parties (agencies, sponsored community groups or contractors).

**POLICY**

It is Council Policy that:

- A range of opportunities and facilities will be provided throughout the municipality.
- Whenever refurbishment or redevelopment of a facility is undertaken, disabled access to the facility will be considered and if practicable, implemented.
- All recreation culture and leisure facilities shall be available for a wide range of days (both weekdays and week-ends) and hours (both in and outside of business/school hours), as allowed for in the available budget.
- Council will subsidise a range of its recreation, culture and leisure services in order promote access to target groups and support community identity and cohesion.

**RELATED POLICIES**

Community Empowerment Policy – POL/GOV001

National Competition Policy

**RELATED LEGISLATION**

Signed: Greg Cruickshank

Mayor

Date: 16/12/09

## **B.14.105    PROCUREMENT POLICY**

**Responsible Officer:**            Director Corporate Services  
**File Number:**                    69-12-99  
**Attachments:**                    1    Procurement Policy

### **Declarations of Interest:**

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

### **Summary**

Council has a range of policies that guide how Council operates to deliver services and its dealings with the community. These policies are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are still applicable.

Council is required to review its procurement policy annually.

The Procurement policy details the guidelines for procurement of goods, services and works.

### **Discussion**

The Procurement policy is presented for the approval of Council. The review process has resulted in the following changes:

#### Procurement Policy and Procedure

- Procurement Directive DIR/CORP 212 removed.
- Program Managers changed to Managers
- EMT changed to ELT
- RMO changed to Risk Management and OHS Officer
- Petty Cash reimbursement limit increased to \$100
- Conflict of Interests amended to include Appendix 4 Conflict of interest declaration
- Table of contents removed from procedure
- Commercial in confidence definition amended
- Confidentiality definition inserted.
- Local employment included into local benefit and effect.

#### Tendering Directive and Procedure

- Table of contents removed from Procedure
- Conflict of interest declaration included.
- Purpose and Directive paragraphs amended in Directive

- Clause 2.9.1 amended to read major building construction with minor changes to clause.
- Clauses 2.9.2 and 2.9.6 amended with minimum security deposit increased to \$4,000.
- Incorporated the use of electronic tendering systems and processes.

### **Consultation**

All members of the Executive Leadership Team, Finance Manager, Organisational Development Manager and Commercial Services Coordinator have reviewed the policy.

The documents were also reviewed at a Councillor Assembly resulting in some minor changes that are reflected in the Directives and Procedures.

### **Financial Implications**

The Policy will ensure Council achieves best value for money throughout its Procurement practices and complies with relevant legislation.

### **Social Implications**

Promote and provide opportunities for social procurement.

### **Economic Implications**

Provide opportunities for the growth of local businesses.

### **Environmental Implications**

Improved environmental outcomes through better use of sustainable products and practices.

### **Risk Management Implications**

The Policy is an important component of Council's risk management processes.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Responsible management of resources*** - We will continually improve the management of our finances, assets, systems and technology to achieve and maintain Best Value in our operations.

**Options**

Council may approve the policy as recommended or make changes.

**Recommendation**

**That Council adopt the Procurement Policy.**



Date Adopted	November 2009
Date Reviewed	November 2014
To be Reviewed	November 2015

Fully compliant with Victorian  
Charter of Human Rights and  
Responsibilities Act 2006



**POLICY TITLE**      **PROCUREMENT**

**POLICY NUMBER**    **POL/CORP 229**

### **PURPOSE**

To provide a framework and a consistent approach to Procurement across Council.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Procurement activities undertaken for or on behalf of Council.

### **POLICY**

Council's Procurement Procedures and Practices will:-

1. Comply with all Legislative Requirements
2. Be aimed at achieving Best Value for money procurement for Council and the Community
3. Treat all potential suppliers who respond to quotations or tenders in a fair manner
4. Be administratively efficient
5. Be clearly documented and, subject to the need for confidentiality, available for inspection
6. In assessing Best Value for major purchases give preference to Suppliers and products which will enhance achievement of Council objectives such as sustainable and socially responsible procurement; provide bottom-line cost savings, support the Municipal economy and achieve innovation.

Employees are to exercise appropriate care in the expenditure of Council funds in consideration of budget allocations and this Policy.

### **RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Tendering Directive (Corp 217)  
Delegations of Financial Authority Directive (DIR/CORP 206)  
Risk Management Policy (Corp 216)  
Occupational Health and Safety Directive (DIR/STAFF 107)  
Fraud Control Policy (POL/CORP 226)  
Financial Investments Policy (POL/CORP 227)  
Corporate Credit Card Directive (DIR/CORP 203)

### **RELATED LEGISLATION**

Local Government Act 1989  
National Competition & Competitive Neutrality Policy  
Trade Practices Act 1974  
Goods and Services Tax (GST)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION C – DECISIONS WHICH NEED ACTION/RATIFICATION**

### **C.14.16 COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES - RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA ITEMS**

**Responsible Officer:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** 22-13-12  
**Attachments:** 1 Councillor Assemblies Attendance and Agenda

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

Dean Miller - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

The Local Government Act 1989 requires that the details of Councillor Assemblies be reported to Council meetings on a monthly basis.

#### **Discussion**

The State Government has amended the Local Government Act 1989 which requires Council to report on Councillor Assemblies.

Whilst Minutes do not have to be recorded, Agenda items and those in attendance must be, and a report presented to Council.

An assembly of Councillors is defined as a meeting that is planned or scheduled at which at least half of the Council and one Officer are in attendance, and where the matters being considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

No formal decisions can be made at an assembly but rather direction can be given that is likely to lead to a formal decision of Council.

Details of the most recent assemblies of Council are attached.

#### **Consultation**

Nil

#### **Financial Implications**

Nil

#### **Social Implications**

Nil

### **Economic Implications**

Nil

### **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### **Risk Management Implications**

Nil

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Councillor and Staff accountability*** - We will represent the interests of our community and will conduct our affairs openly and with integrity, reflecting high levels of good governance.

### **Options**

Council must comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1989.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council note the contents of the report.**

**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**  
**25 November 2014 at 1pm**  
**TOWN HALL (COUNCIL CHAMBERS), SWAN HILL**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Youth Strategy
- Policies
- Tour and discussion on the Heartbeat of the Murray project

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Jessie Kiley
- Cr John Katis
- Cr Jim Crowe
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Gary Norton
- Cr Michael Adamson
- Greg Cruickshank

Apologies

- 

Officers

- Dean Miller, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Services
- Brett Luxford, Director Development and Planning
- David Leahy, Director Infrastructure
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Jan McEwan, Family Youth & Children's Services Manager
- Steve Matthews, Economic & Community Development Manager
- Erin Raggatt, Community Planning Officer

Other

- 

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA  
2 December 2014 at 1pm  
TOWN HALL (COUNCIL CHAMBERS), SWAN HILL**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Road Closures
- Swan Hill Bus Shelter information
- Major Projects and Budget Overview
- Council Plan Review
- Procurement and Tendering Policy

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Jessie Kiley
- Cr John Katis
- Cr Jim Crowe
- Cr Gary Norton
- Cr Michael Adamson
- Greg Cruickshank

Apologies

- Cr Les McPhee

Officers

- Dean Miller, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Services
- Brett Luxford, Director Development and Planning
- David Leahy, Director Infrastructure
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Warren Snyder, Finance Manager
- Helen Morris, Human Resources Manager
- Ken Symons, Commercial Services Coordinator
- Kimmy Johnston, Projects Officer
- Gaye Catajar, Technical Officer

Other

- 

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA  
9 December 2014 at 1pm  
TOWN HALL (COUNCIL CHAMBERS), SWAN HILL**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Policies
- Swan Hill Bridge Legal Advice
- Aquatic Facilities Management Contract
- Community Garden Policies
- Reconciliation and Aboriginal Partnership Strategy
- Swan Hill South West Development Precinct

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Jessie Kiley
- Cr John Katis
- Cr Jim Crowe
- Cr Gary Norton
- Cr Michael Adamson
- Greg Cruickshank
- Cr Les McPhee

Apologies

- 

Officers

- Dean Miller, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Services
- Brett Luxford, Director Development and Planning
- David Leahy, Director Infrastructure
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Steve Matthews, Economic & Community Development Manager
- Fiona Gorman, Community Planning & Development Officer
- Erin Raggatt, Community Planning Officer
- Verna Eade, Aboriginal Community Planning Officer
- Vige Satkunarajah, Development Manager

Other

- 

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

## **SECTION D – NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **D.14.4 CITIZENSHIP TESTING IN SWAN HILL**

Having given due notice, **Councillor Gary Norton MOVED that: Council writes to Mr Andrew Broad, Member for Mallee and to Hon. Mr Scott Morrison, Minister for Immigration, expressing Council's and the community's concern over the removal of citizenship testing in Swan Hill.**

#### ***Preamble***

The Swan Hill region has developed into a culturally-diverse community, with in excess of 2,000 residents from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

There are approximately 45 languages spoken, and this large group of new residents provide a significant percentage of the local horticultural workforce.

The removal of citizenship testing from Swan Hill will create barriers for those wishing to take the next steps towards Australian citizenship. For example, this group is not well represented with access to personal transport, and if the nearest testing centres are Bendigo or Mildura, this will preclude many from undertaking the test as a priority.

As many undertake manual employment during normal business hours, they are less likely to be available to travel and attend appointments to Bendigo and/or Mildura.

This further creates a longer-term issue of people not registered for taxation purposes, basic social and health benefits and forced to exist in the region illegally.

#### **D.14.5      INSTALLATION OF PROTECTED TURNING LANES**

Having given due notice, **Councillor Gary Norton MOVED that: Council writes to VicRoads, requesting an urgent investigation into installation of protected turning lanes on the Murray Valley Highway at McLean Lane and River Road at Vinifera.**

##### ***Preamble***

Following the most recent serious accident at the junction of River Road and the Murray Valley Highway, where the driver of a stationary vehicle was seriously injured, there has been a considerable amount of community discussion around traffic management at the site.

The community in the vicinity is most concerned about the fact that they have witnessed many accidents and even more near misses both at the River Road and McLean Lane Junctions. Many of the accidents have been “minor scrapes” that may well have gone unreported, which will not show up in any crash statistics reports.

They feel that the highway lacks an area for vehicles to pass any turning vehicles and this has resulted in a number of incidents. The tyre marks at the two junctions are a clear indication of the risks these junctions pose.

The land directly adjacent to McLean Lane and River Road is irrigated agriculture which necessitates the movement of farm machinery at times from McLean Lane to River Road and vice versa.

Whilst the two junctions are staggered in their meeting points with the Murray Valley Highway, which is the preferred configuration, their proximity to each other poses issues also with a number of vehicles requiring access to both roads multiple times during each day.

It should also be noted that River Road provides an alternative access point to the Nyah Township.

I believe that the rationale provided in this report supports the recommendation to engage with Vicroads officers to develop a solution to risks associated with these junctions.



**SECTION E – URGENT ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN AGENDA**

**SECTION F – TO CONSIDER & ORDER ON COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

## **SECTION G – IN CAMERA ITEMS**

### **Recommendation**

**That Council close the meeting to the public on the grounds that the following report include contractual matters.**

### **B.14.106 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**