

PYRENEES  
— S H I R E —



# Waubra

Township Framework Plan 2018

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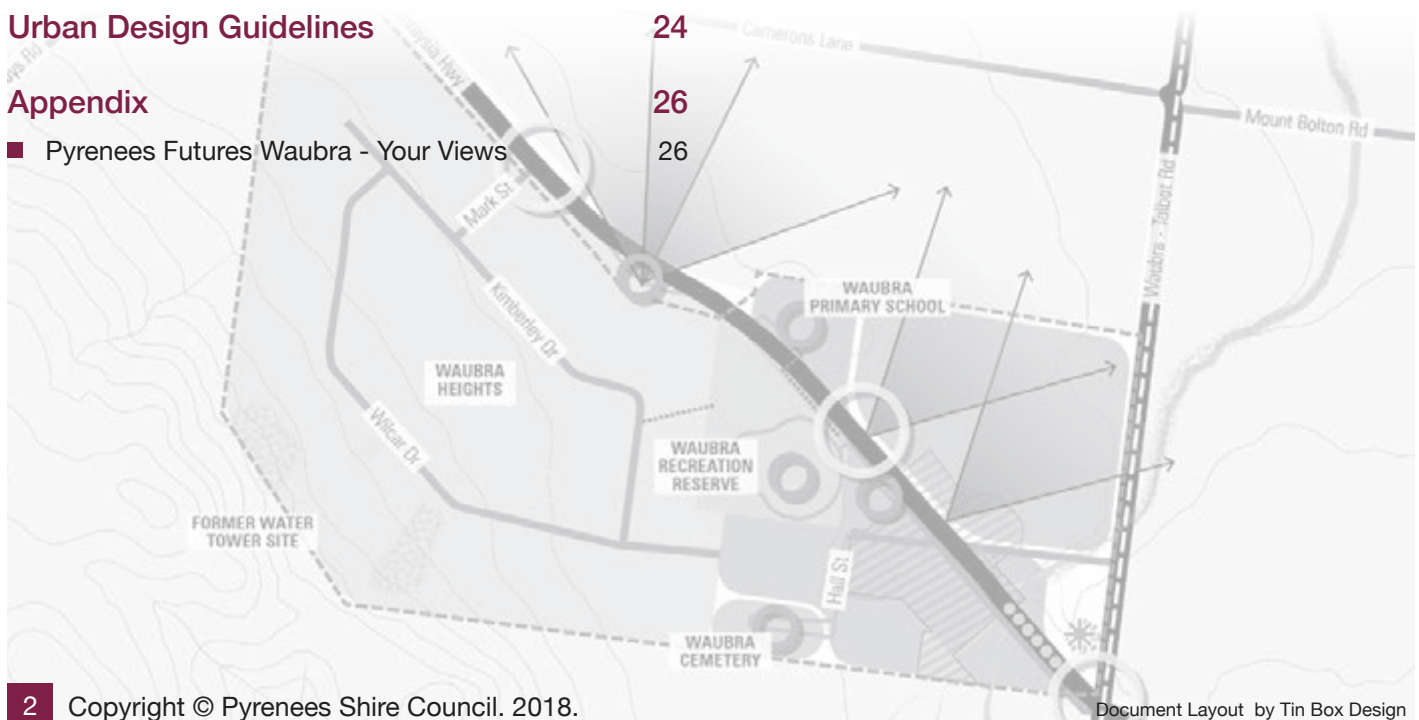
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# A Story of Place

Nestled between the rugged Mount Bolton, Mount Misery, Quoin Hill and Big Hill, Waubra sits in a landscape formed by rich volcanic soils, granite outcrops and abundant water. The Burrumbeet Buluk clan of the Wathaurong people, the traditional owners of the land, focused much of their activity around Lake Burrumbeet to the south, but nearby swamps and the springs on which Waubra was originally founded would have provided abundant resources.

The region marks a point of transition between Wathaurong and Dja Dja Wurrung country to the north, and it is thought that the name “Waubra” is derived from Aboriginal language in reference to a crooked watercourse (Tully 1997).

The first Europeans to explore the area came via Geelong around 1838, searching for new pastures on which to graze sheep. Farming in the area intensified in the mid-1850s as miners who toiled unsuccessfully in surrounding districts turned their focus to farming. Those who looked north-west of Ballarat found rich soil, fresh water, an ideal place to grow crops such as potatoes, wheat and barley as well as grazing including sheep and cattle for dairy and beef.

Despite economic restructuring hitting the local agricultural sector, farming remains an integral part of Waubra’s life with large-scale cropping and grazing continuing close to the town centre. Farming families retain strong links with the town centre as a focal point for social, sporting and community activity.

After the start of farming, an early township known as The Springs formed at the junction of the Ballarat-Lexton and The Springs-Talbot Roads. The first housing subdivisions were gazetted around 1864.

Many of the town’s significant heritage buildings date from this period, along with the opening of the cemetery in 1860, which continues to operate today.

A railway line running to Ballarat opened in 1888, running passenger and freight services until 1931 when it became freight only, before closing in January 1968. The imprint of the rail line is still visible in the landscape south-east of the township.

Soldier settlement after World War 1 contributed to population growth, and around the mid-20th century Waubra hosted a range of services including two hotels, a mechanic, supply stores, bakery, blacksmith’s shops and bank branch. These businesses mostly closed by the end of the 20th century.



*Today a General Store remains, which, along with the Recreation Reserve forms the heart of the town.*

Thanks to the topography and climate, the area has become known for hosting one of Victoria’s first large-scale windfarms.





# Urban form

Waubra's landscape is dominated by the surrounding hills that provide dramatic viewlines from the town, through verdant pastures. The topography has made the area attractive for wind power, and the turbines surrounding the town have become a significant landscape feature. The viewlines from Waubra's town centre are integral in understanding the town's story and connection to the surrounding landscape, characterized by rich volcanic soils and rolling hills.

South-west of the main town centre, focused on the junction between the Sunraysia Highway and Waubra-Talbot Road, is the spring that gave the township its original name. This is currently unmarked and mainly visible because of vegetation growth in the area. An ephemeral creekline also winds east from the spring under the Sunraysia Highway.

Waubra's urban form is distinctive and defined by its split into three distinct precincts along the Sunraysia Highway, generally focused around the Waubra Recreation Reserve. These precincts include:

- A core township area including a cluster of housing on blocks of around 1000m<sup>2</sup>-2000m<sup>2</sup>. This includes a core of heritage buildings including former churches, a former Mechanics' Institute and the former Springs Hotel, which are mostly in residential use. Many of these houses and buildings are on the western side of the Sunraysia Highway. Civic infrastructure such as the Primary School, General Store and cemetery are concentrated in this area.
- The Waubra Heights Estate, to the north-west of the Recreation Reserve. This triangular estate comprises blocks of around 1ha in size built around a looped road network that connects directly to the Sunraysia Highway, north of the town centre.
- A section of the township south-east of the town centre within the City of Ballarat. This comprises a wedge-shaped portion of land including a mixture of small Farming-Zoned lots (<2ha), some of which include dwellings; and a larger lot used for grazing.

Despite their proximity and shared edge with the Waubra Recreation Reserve, the town centre and Waubra Heights have evolved with little connection through roads or paths. This has brought about a number of issues; and one of this plan's most important tasks is to work towards "knitting" these areas together in a more coherent way. There is also opportunity to work with the City of Ballarat to ensure zoning controls in its portion of Waubra better reflect existing patterns of land use, particularly on small lots in the Farming Zone.

Aside from Waubra's landscape setting and the spatial separation between its two distinct precincts, Waubra's relationship with the Sunraysia Highway presents a third defining characteristic. The Sunraysia Highway is particularly wide, and is designed with little indication of the presence of a township. The highway travels through town with a speed limit of 80km/h, and the town's southern entrance is best defined by the start of a service road on the Sunraysia Highway and an impressive grove of exotic trees including redwoods, conifers and oaks. The town's northern entrance is largely defined by the wind farm viewing area on VicRoads land, in the middle of the Sunraysia Highway. This lack of clear threshold and speed limit creates road safety issues that this plan will also seek to address.

The main nodes of activity in the township are formed by the War Memorial, with its stunning grove of trees including particularly prominent California redwoods; the General Store to the north and the Waubra Recreation Reserve, which has an emerging role as the heart of the town given its central location.



# Heritage

Waubra's landscape and built form have a number of significant elements, some of which are recognised in the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study (2001). The study identifies a defined heritage precinct around the town centre, including buildings and places that are listed under the Heritage Overlay in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. The precinct is set around the intersection of the Sunraysia Highway and Waubra-Talbot Road, and they generally encompass buildings from the 1860s to the inter-war era including churches, the former Waubra Mechanics Institute and the former Springs Hotel. Most of these places are now used for housing.

Several potential heritage places are listed in the study. These include groves of trees in the Sunraysia Highway median strip around the war memorial, and an avenue of pines to the north of the township, which are particularly important to the town's character. Despite thousands of years of Aboriginal settlement and relationship to landscape, these indigenous stories remain largely untold in Waubra's landscape today. Important opportunities exist to tell these stories in the landscape.





# Why do we need this plan?

Waubra, and the broader Pyrenees Shire, are becoming increasingly attractive places for people to live. They are also changing places, influenced by environmental, social, economic and geographical factors.

The Waubra Township Framework Plan is aimed at generating a partnership between community, Council and government agencies to own this change. It seeks to do this by engaging community aspirations and building from place-based research to achieve:

- Reform to policies in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme that guide the town's future development over the medium-long term.
- Short-to-medium term improvements in the town's design, put in place through an implementation plan included on page 21.

This plan takes a place-based approach, which recognises and seeks to foster Waubra's unique character and attributes into the future. These elements are valuable in further forming a proud, distinctive community.

This framework plan is vital in ensuring that growth and change does not overwhelm the town's character or its fabric, but rather contributes to it.

## The plan's structure is based around:

- Five themes identified through community engagement in Waubra;
- An "ecological framework" that Council is using for settlement planning as part of the Pyrenees Futures project. This framework recognises the multi-dimensional nature of our townships and seeks to respond to five overlapping factors that influence a town's dynamics: resilience, character, prosperity, wellbeing and connectedness. The framework provides a means for analysis of existing conditions and identify areas that planning needs to address.

## Each of the plan's actions are formed around the five themes identified through community engagement. These actions are grouped around:

- Planning policy reforms (also known as "statutory actions") that will lead to reform of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme, inform future land use and development decisions.
- Urban design interventions that relate to how Waubra looks, feels and works as a town.



# What's driving change?

**Changing function of the town:** The nature of Waubra's role as a service centre for the surrounding farming districts has changed significantly over the last century. This is reflected in the closure of the rail link to Ballarat and the progressive use of former shops and civic buildings as housing. Ballarat's growth to the north and west, towards Waubra, has the potential to further influence this change, forming Waubra as more of a residential dormitory. However, farming communities in the area still retain strong links to the township, particularly as a social gathering place.

**Climate change:** While Waubra's location at the south of the Great Dividing Range will mean it will likely remain cooler and receive more rainfall than much of the Pyrenees, climate change can be expected to bring more extreme temperatures and weather patterns. Climate modeling completed for the broader Pyrenees Shire completed as part of the Future Landscapes (2016) project suggests that:

- Mean annual temperatures will rise between 2°C (low emissions scenario) and 3.2°C (higher emissions scenario) by 2070. The increases in temperature will be higher in summer than winter, reflecting the potential for more extreme weather conditions.
- Rainfall is likely to increase slightly across the Pyrenees by 2030, but may decline substantially by 2070 under a high emissions scenario. Rainfall in spring and winter will likely decline, with summer and autumn falls less certain.
- Most pasture species and wheat will remain viable around Waubra.

Climate change exacerbates the need to provide shelter around the town centre. Vital to this is more tree planting along main thoroughfares and in public spaces.

## **Population and demographic fluctuation:**

Waubra has a number of demographic factors that influence its urban form and reaffirm the importance of developing the town centre as a social anchor point. Nearly one-in-three Waubra residents is aged 50-64 (above Victorian average of 17.8%) and 52% of households are couples without children (as opposed to a 36.5% Victorian average). Waubra also has a higher-than-average rate of volunteerism, with more than one-in-four residents over the age of 15 participating in volunteer activity. These trends indicate the importance of community groups and community facilities like the Recreation Reserve in providing focal points for activity and engagement.

Like most towns in the Pyrenees, Waubra is also substantially dependent on cars for transport: nearly 31% of all homes have three or more cars, compared to the Victorian average of 18.6%. Despite this, the percentage of employed residents driving directly to work is only slightly higher than the Victorian average.

This is associated with a trend of 17% of Waubra residents working from home, significantly above the Victorian average, and yet the percentage of homes without internet access (28.8%) is more than twice the Victorian average. This suggests the importance of bolstering internet connectivity in the town, but also the importance of agriculture in providing jobs close to homes with 22% of employed residents working in sheep and cattle farming.

**Ballarat's north and westward growth:** The City of Ballarat is currently planning to accommodate another 40,000 people to the north and west of Ballarat, bringing the settlement boundary closer to Waubra. In addition, the Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ) is planned to create several jobs within closer commuting distance of Waubra. This may bring about further pressure for housing subdivision, particularly due to Waubra's attractive rural amenity. There is a need to plan for and manage the risks posed by pressure for unplanned residential growth and encroachment into productive agricultural land.

The opening of the Central Victoria Livestock Exchange south of Waubra at the end of the Sunraysia Highway may result in further truck movements through the town centre, and also indicates potential for expanded grazing activity.

## **The findings in a nutshell...(5 themes)**

This plan is centred on five themes identified through community engagement in Waubra.

A summary of the engagement findings is provided in the Appendix of this report. The themes are:

- 1. Links to Landscape and History**
- 2. Connections and Directions**
- 3. Consolidating the Centre**
- 4. A Family and Farming Town**
- 5. Safer Movement.**

The plan is set out with actions distilled from each theme. These actions include core planning policy and strategy measures, urban design interventions and matters that can be addressed through Council advocacy or working with other agencies. These actions then flow through to an implementation plan, and new township planning policy that will be incorporated into Council's Municipal Strategic Statement to guide development and manage change.

These themes are explored in further detail from pages 10 to 15.

# Current policies and strategic directions

A key plank in analysis and planning is an assessment of Waubra's strengths, opportunities, and threats facing the town. This assessment has been based on the Pyrenees Futures Ecological Framework, and informed by research, community engagement and the existing community-developed analysis in the Waubra Community Action Plan.

## Research activities conducted as part of the Waubra Township Framework plan include:

- Audits of current planning policies.
- Reviews of policies, plans, written histories and archaeological documents.
- Data including ABS Census information and reviews of building permit data.
- Observational activity mapping in the town centre to better understand pedestrian movement.

## Community engagement activity conducted as part of the plan includes:

- A township walk with local residents.
- A community drop-in session.
- Community surveys.
- Workshops with agencies and Council staff.

The next section includes a brief policy and literature review. A summary of community engagement findings was released in April 2018 and can be found in the Appendix of this report.

## A number of documents have informed this plan's development, including:

- Current policies that influence local and regional land use planning in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme (including the Municipal Strategic Statement, Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan and an audit of current zoning and overlays). It should be noted that these policies are under review via the Waubra Framework Plan.
- The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. Planning policies for Waubra must integrate with this framework.

## Existing documents that are guiding this project, including:

- Pyrenees Shire Council Plan 2017-2021
- The Waubra Community Action Plan
- Pyrenees Shire Council Heritage Precinct Study (2001).

This literature review has further augmented engagement and research conducted as part of this plan's development.

Current spatial planning policy recognizes Waubra's strong links with Ballarat, anticipates a future demand for residential land and Waubra's role as a service centre for surrounding farmland.

## Current policies also:

- Seek to restrict expansion of Waubra Heights into steeper and visually sensitive areas.
- Outline the potential for development on the north side of the town, subject to the provision of sewerage and an outline development plan being prepared.
- Indicate potential for low-density residential development along the Beaufort Road.
- State Planning Policies at Clause 14.01 of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme commit Council to protecting high quality agricultural land, and directing housing growth into existing townships. This raises the importance of consolidation in Waubra's growth.

Pyrenees Shire Council's Council Plan for 2017-2021 commits Council to reviewing its planning framework through Pyrenees Futures, as a settlement planning approach that is forward-looking and works with communities including Waubra.

The Waubra Community Action Plan 2016-2020 (CAP) has been produced through a partnership of community groups. It mostly focuses on social infrastructure projects that are outside the scope of this document, but also includes relevant information that guides future land use and urban design. This includes:

- Identifying the diversity of landscapes, built services and facilities, Waubra's role as a social anchor (being able to meet and do things together) and the town's proximity to Ballarat and Melbourne as particularly valued elements of the town.
- Overarching actions across the social, economic, natural environment and leadership realms. These can be summarized as:
  - Promoting community links, and building infrastructure to promote interaction.
  - Building local employment and economic activity.
  - Improving the natural environment.
  - Promoting effective local leadership.

These themes demonstrate the particular importance of consolidating a stronger town centre that promotes social activity, and opportunities for Council and the community to work together to improve public spaces.



# Opportunities and Threats

	STRENGTH/OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
<b>Place character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong viewlines to surrounding hills that provide a distinctive setting.</li> <li>■ Current tree planting in median strip of Sunraysia Highway, which needs to be extended.</li> <li>■ Identification of heritage precinct, which has a level of protection through existing planning policy.</li> <li>■ Opportunity to better connect to important surrounding landscapes (including hills, spring and swamps).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of clear thresholds to the north and south of the town centre (which may be addressed by exotic street tree planting).</li> <li>■ Disconnection and jarring transition between town centre and Waubra Heights.</li> <li>■ Lack of public use of heritage buildings.</li> <li>■ Need for more sociable streetscape that provides places to linger.</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Presence of Recreation Reserve, Primary School and General Store as important social and community gathering places.</li> <li>■ Fertile soil and water supplies contributing to agricultural sector.</li> <li>■ Sewerage infrastructure allowing potential smaller lot subdivision while allowing improved wastewater management.</li> <li>■ Strong community organisations and clubs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dependence on Ballarat for a range of services.</li> <li>■ Lack of public transport connections to surrounding towns.</li> <li>■ Disconnection between town centre and Waubra Heights, leading to reduced walking/cycling access to town centre and potential for social isolation.</li> <li>■ Risk of future subdivision (if poorly planned) eating into productive agricultural land or creating “right to farm” issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic prosperity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High-value agricultural land that needs to be protected from unplanned subdivision.</li> <li>■ Opportunities for small-scale residential/ infill growth in the town centre, and for infill/more intensified subdivision on edges of Recreation Reserve.</li> <li>■ Rural and renewable energy businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of commercial/industrial activity in the town centre.</li> <li>■ Need to form a better-defined, more pedestrian-friendly town centre as a place for locals and travellers to stop and linger (through public seating, improved amenities and streetscaping).</li> </ul>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Constant connection to surrounding rural landscapes and nature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Need for further public transport connections to nearby centres.</li> <li>■ Dependence on nearby centres for health, retail and education.</li> <li>■ Limited footpath network.</li> <li>■ Safety implications – traffic along Sunraysia Highway.</li> </ul>
<b>Connectedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Opportunities for growth within walking distance (400m – five minutes walk) of General Store and Recreation Reserve.</li> <li>■ Deliver more places for meeting and social activity in town centre (including socially-designed seating).</li> <li>■ Opportunity to create well-defined walking/cycling link between Waubra Heights and Waubra town centre via Recreation Reserve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of wayfinding makes Recreation Reserve, cemetery and Waubra Heights, in particular, difficult to access.</li> <li>■ Lack of clear, direct shared path and road connections (apart from Sunraysia Highway) between Waubra Heights and Town Centre.</li> <li>■ Mobile phone/internet connectivity.</li> </ul>

## Links to Landscape and History

### Background



Waubra's links to landscape provide a rich grounding for an evocative sense of place. Rolling hills, rugged peaks, lush pastures, nearby swamps and springs, geology combining volcanic soil and granite; and more recently wind turbines are key elements. Within the town itself, exotic street trees and hedging create a strong, distinctive and seasonal character that provides cues for future development.

The Pyrenees Futures process and the Waubra Community Action Plan (2016-2020) reveal significant pride in local history and special places, along with a desire to bring these elements forward. This can be done through heritage listing of particular places, and through seeking opportunities to tell the stories of these places in the township. Many of the places listed in the Community Action Plan include informal or vernacular places in the town centre including the Cobb and Co Creek Crossing and Trough (in the median strip of the Sunraysia Highway and Service Road), the former public well and the Mount Bolton Lookout, as well as the general rural landscape.

Others include buildings listed and protected under the Heritage Overlay of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. Local heritage buildings in Victorian styles with materials like bluestone, white render and clinker red brick provide a rich pallet of materials that are key in defining the local character. Places like the bluestone creek bed and former horse trough in the Sunraysia Highway median strip introduce a quirky vernacular feel.

While a number of potentially significant heritage places in the town centre are protected, several potentially significant heritage places on the fringes of the town are not protected. These include the former spring site/old public well, railway station precinct and the lookout at Mount Bolton.

The stories of these places could be better told through interpretive signage, displays or other information. Wayfinding signs can also raise the profile of important local places that define links to landscape and tell important stories.

A major challenge in planning future growth involves retaining connections between the town centre and surrounding rural landscapes, which are important in promoting the character of the town. This involves ensuring future development consolidates the town centre, and ensuring future growth is limited in its encroachment on to productive agricultural land.

Most buildings in the town centre are set back 3-5m from the front boundary. However, outside former commercial buildings along the Sunraysia Highway, houses in Waubra feature generous side and rear setbacks of more than 8m each side to neighbouring property fencelines. This contributes to a sense of openness in the town and preserves viewlines to adjacent landscapes. Any future greenfield development areas should require building envelopes on lots to ensure that this character can be preserved.

The Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study (2001) references the importance of visual connections in the township to surrounding hills and heritage places including the town's three original churches. Viewlines to surrounding hills and agricultural areas are also significant and need to be preserved by ensuring future development patterns allow for side and rear setbacks, and generous road reserves.



## Planning Policy Reform

- Review the list of potential heritage places documented in the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study for Waubra, and set aside resources to complete expert studies into their significance.
- Require any future township subdivision to allow for generous side and rear setbacks for dwellings to preserve viewlines to the surrounding landscape.
- Introduce tree controls to protect the significant grove of street trees immediately south of the war memorial.
- Limit any further Rural Living subdivision on productive agricultural land.



## Urban Design and Place Activation

- Work with the community to develop a local heritage walking trail through the town, with maps available online and at the General Store.
- Extend tree planting from the war memorial along the Sunraysia Highway using complementary species (such as redwoods and oak).
- Use the material and colour palette (refer page 24) in this Framework Plan in all future public realm projects.
- Encourage public art based on Waubra's agricultural sector, landscape history and Aboriginal country at key points (as marked on the Place Activation Plan).
- Use public art to better define connections between places, town entrances and the town centre.
- Work with VicRoads to promote the wind turbine viewing point as a stronger northern threshold to the town, as a way of slowing traffic on the Sunraysia Highway.





# Connections and Directions

## Background



For a town its size, Waubra can be hard to get around. Planning and urban design improvements are important in making it easier for people to get oriented (through wayfinding) and make travel through the town easier (by promoting connectivity). Wayfinding refers to cues, like directional signage or subtle urban design prompts, that allow people to figure out where they are and where they need to go. Community feedback suggests that the cemetery and Waubra Heights estate are places that are often difficult to find; and that accessing these places from the Sunraysia Highway can be difficult due to the lack of turning lanes, directional signage and the speed of vehicles travelling through the town.

Connectivity is linked to wayfinding, and refers to the structure of the township and how its different parts are joined by paths or roads. A major and complex issue facing Waubra is the spatial disconnect between the Waubra Heights estate and the town centre, caused by historic patterns of development. The introverted design of the Waubra Heights Subdivision has limited access to the subdivision to one road connection via Mark Street and the Sunraysia Highway, disconnecting the estate from the town centre. All lots in the estate front on to a circular road network, with no through road connections back into the town centre.

Addressing this physical design issue is a major priority for promoting social cohesion and walkability in the town. This can be done incrementally by:

- Consolidating development in Waubra Heights on the edge of the Recreation Reserve by allowing corner blocks along Kimberley Drive to be subdivided into smaller allotments that retain a direct road frontage. Rezoning the area to Low Density Residential Zone would also remove one planning permit trigger for development in the Rural Living Zone.
- Upgrading and better defining an existing walking trail that links Waubra Heights with the Recreation Reserve through public art, seating, and signage.
- Working with the Waubra Recreation Reserve Committee to use this trail as a clear alternative connection between Waubra Heights and the town centre and further promote the Recreation Reserve as the heart of the town.
- In the longer term, Council should seek to work with land owners to identify subdivision opportunities that can allow for more pathway or road links between Waubra Heights and the town centre that avoid the Sunraysia Highway.

## Strategies and Actions



### Planning Policy Reform

- Rezone corner blocks in Waubra Heights near the Recreation Reserve and blocks on the northern side of Kimberley Drive to Mark Street, to Low Density Residential Zone with a minimum subdivision size of 4000m<sup>2</sup>.
- Prioritise infill growth and incremental township growth in areas to the south and west of the town centre that have access to sewer, including using the road reserve network around the Springs to activate block frontages.
- Require any future development to have direct pedestrian access to the town centre, and avoid cul-de-sacs or loop roads.

### Urban Design and Place Activation

- Use public art and surface upgrades to formalize a shared pedestrian/cycling link between Waubra Heights, the Recreation Reserve and town centre.
- Consider using unused road reserves to create further pedestrian and/or traffic links between Waubra Heights and the Sunraysia Highway.
- Work with VicRoads to develop a slip lane and clear signage to allow safer and clearer access to Waubra Heights via Mark Street.
- Provide directional signage along the Sunraysia Highway service road indicating the location of the Waubra Cemetery.
- Provide an orientation signage board at the Waubra public toilets, outside the Recreation Reserve, showing the location of key attractions.



# Consolidating the Centre

## Background



Changes in Waubra's function, closure of businesses over several years, lack of civic infrastructure and urban design issues including the combined width of the Sunraysia Highway and its service road have compromised the ability of Waubra's town centre to act as a social anchor. Urban design improvements are vital in making the town centre a more appealing place for locals and visitors alike to visit and stop.

The town centre is dominated by an expanse of asphalt, creating a visual issue and an opportunity to reconfigure unused road space for public amenities. It is clear that the areas of the town centre that work best are those with tree planting providing shelter and breaking up the roadway. There is particular potential to break up the scale of the roads through more tree planting. The centre's ability to work as a social anchor can be improved by installing seating designed to promote social interaction in outstands extending from the median strip into the service road. This can be of particular assistance in supporting the General Store, providing potential opportunities for mobile food vendors outside store trading hours or providing space for informal gathering and local events.

Consolidating the centre also involves urban design improvements to promote a clear sense of arrival in the town centre. This can be done by using public art or sculptural elements and further tree planting to create clear thresholds along the Sunraysia Highway. Heritage buildings are a major asset of the town centre, and interpretive signage should be installed to help tell the stories of these places that are integral to the town's identity. While many heritage buildings are currently in residential use and are generally being maintained, planning policies should encourage responsible adaptive reuse especially for community, cultural or tourism-related uses.

Because of the importance of agricultural land surrounding the town and the need to support the ability of the town centre to function as a community gathering space that provides more services, the primary direction for township growth should focus on urban infill south of the Sunraysia Highway and along the Waubra-Beaufort Road, within walking distance (around 400m) of the town centre. This provides opportunities to strengthen the town core, the ability for future residents to walk to key destinations (including the school, shop and recreation reserve) and prevent unplanned growth into productive agricultural land.

## Strategies and Actions



### Planning Policy Reform

- Encourage business to congregate between Waubra-Talbot Road and the General Store.
- Encourage suitable adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, including potential tourism or cultural activity.
- Prioritise infill development to the south and south-west of the town centre, applying the Township Zone in areas that have access to sewer.
- Apply the Low Density Residential Zone to existing lots of less than 1ha along the Waubra-Beaufort Road, south-west of the Sunraysia Highway.

### Urban Design and Place Activation

- Break down the scale and combined width of the Sunraysia Highway and its service road by extending tree planting along the median strip, and developing public seating/tables in outstands extending into the service road.
- Use public art and sculptural elements to mark the north and south thresholds of the town centre.
- Work with VicRoads to reduce speed limits on the Sunraysia Highway and allow for safer traffic movements into the town centre and Recreation Reserve.
- Provide a dedicated location for mobile traders and food vendors immediately north of the Waubra-Talbot Road intersection, along the edge of the median strip between the Sunraysia Highway and its Service Road.



# A Family and Farming Town

## Background



Waubra has a rich history of growing people and produce: The town has an agricultural heritage, and the surrounding farming districts retain strong links to the town. This is particularly expressed through involvement in local sporting clubs, the Waubra Primary School and in community groups such as the Horticultural Society. There is a widespread view that planning needs to protect local agricultural productivity, and an important part of this involves ensuring poorly planned residential development does not encroach on productive farming operations or cause “right to farm” issues. This is in line with Victorian State Planning Policy at Clause 14.01 of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme, which among other things seeks to limit new housing in rural areas, requires that housing growth is directed into existing settlements and requires that the productive capacity of land is considered in planning decisions.

Community feedback, economic and planning considerations all prioritise the preservation of productive agricultural land around Waubra. At the same time, Waubra’s school and sporting club make the town an important base for a wider community. There is a local desire for young people to have more options for activities, focused at the Recreation Reserve and surrounds. Planning needs to manage this tension by minimising sprawl into agricultural land around the township, while identifying sustainable opportunities for community infrastructure and for residential growth around the town centre that reflects local character.



## Strategies and Actions



### Planning Policy Reform

- Discourage further Rural Living growth into productive agricultural land to the west, north-east and north of the township.
- Work with the City of Ballarat to encourage sustainable low-density residential zoning of small lots (>2ha) located within Waubra’s town boundary in the City of Ballarat.
- Protect large agricultural holdings surrounding the township from unplanned rural subdivision.
- Draft a Development Plan Overlay (based on built form and design) for Township-Zoned land on the northern side of the Sunraysia Highway. This should focus on small-scale built form, side and rear setbacks to prevent crowding of viewlines, and on preventing loop roads/cul-de-sacs as part of any new development.

### Urban Design and Place Activation

- Review pathway connections between the Waubra Primary School, town centre, Waubra Recreation Reserve and surrounding recreation areas to encourage walking to school.
- Work with the Waubra Recreation Reserve Committee to develop efficient public facilities for all ages, including outdoor park exercise equipment and small-scale skate infrastructure.
- Use public art to reflect Waubra’s agricultural heritage, particularly in grazing, cropping and dairy. Potential locations are detailed on the place activation plan on page 20.





# Safer Movement

## Background



Directly related to other themes in this plan is the issue of road safety, chiefly created by the design of the Sunraysia Highway running through the town and the fact that movement within the town is so dependent on the highway. Community engagement conducted as part of this plan's development revealed a number of stories of near misses involving:

- Right-turning movements from the Sunraysia Highway into the Waubra Recreation Reserve or Sunraysia Highway service road.
- Left-turning movements into the Waubra Recreation Reserve or Waubra Heights, via Mark Street.

Addressing these issues involves slowing down vehicles travelling through town, redesigning the road to allow safer movement and creating better awareness among drivers of the need to slow down in a township environment. This requires a multi-pronged approach including reduced speed limits, urban design improvements including extended tree planting to create the sensation of entering a town at Waubra's boundaries, and turning lanes or line marking at the Waubra Recreation Reserve and Mark Street.

Some residents in Waubra Heights have also raised concerns about street lighting in the area, while others have raised a want to preserve the area's rural character. This is a balance that requires careful management, however installing solar lights on main corners within the estate is recommended to promote safer traffic movement.



## Strategies and Actions



### Planning Policy Reform

- Constrain further outward expansion of the Waubra Heights Estate to the north-west.

### Urban Design and Place Activation

- Use exotic street tree planting and sculptural installations to create a clear sense of entry and threshold from Waubra's southern and northern boundaries.
- Place additional street lights at the corner of Mark Street and Kimberley Drive.
- Work with VicRoads to, as a priority, reduce the Sunraysia Highway's speed limit through Waubra to 60km/h and develop a signage plan to promote awareness of key turning spots (Waubra Recreation Reserve and Mark Street).
- In the medium term, work with VicRoads to redesign the Sunraysia Highway to allow safer turning movements into the Waubra Recreation Reserve and Mark Street; possibly by providing dedicated turning lanes.
- Use sculptural elements to further delineate key turning points at Waubra Recreation Reserve, the town centre and Mark Street to help foster awareness and the perception of a need to slow down.



# Land Demand Assessment

To understand potential growth pressures on Waubra, an assessment of indicative demand for residential land and dwelling construction has been done. This information is important in guiding potential future land releases.

The assessment has used current building permit data, current population information and regional population projections conducted through the Victorian Government's Victoria In Future (2016) report.

In Waubra, the assessment has focused on housing because of the limited amount of commercial and industrial development that has occurred in recent years.

*Peri-urban growth pressures are expected to become increasingly prominent in Waubra, particularly as Ballarat grows westward.*

Over 2014-2016, 11 building permits for houses were issued for Waubra and surrounds (including Evansford). This equates to an average increase of just under four dwellings in the area annually, to 8.3% of all building permits issued for dwellings across the Pyrenees Shire.

VIF does not provide a full population or dwelling growth projection for Waubra. It does provide figures covering a broader region within Pyrenees Shire. This region also

takes in Beaufort, Raglan, Snake Valley and districts in between. VIF report projects a demand for 266 dwellings across that region between 2016 and 2026 (or 26.6 per year).

On the basis of recent building permit data, Pyrenees Futures projects that Waubra will cater for around 10% of this demand (2.5-3 homes annually) with Beaufort providing for around 70%, Snake Valley 15%-20% and Raglan the remainder.

On this basis, an annual demand for 2-4 new dwellings can be expected in Waubra over the next five years. In the short term, this demand can be filled through infill growth; with potential further subdivision along the Waubra-Beaufort Road and north of the town centre (across the Sunraysia Highway). It should be noted that planning policies will focus on concentrating this growth in the existing town centre, rather than allowing for sprawling growth into surrounding agricultural land.

It should be noted that Ballarat's westward growth may cause this to increase, so land releases should be monitored on a five-yearly basis.

## Place-based approach and Ecological Framework

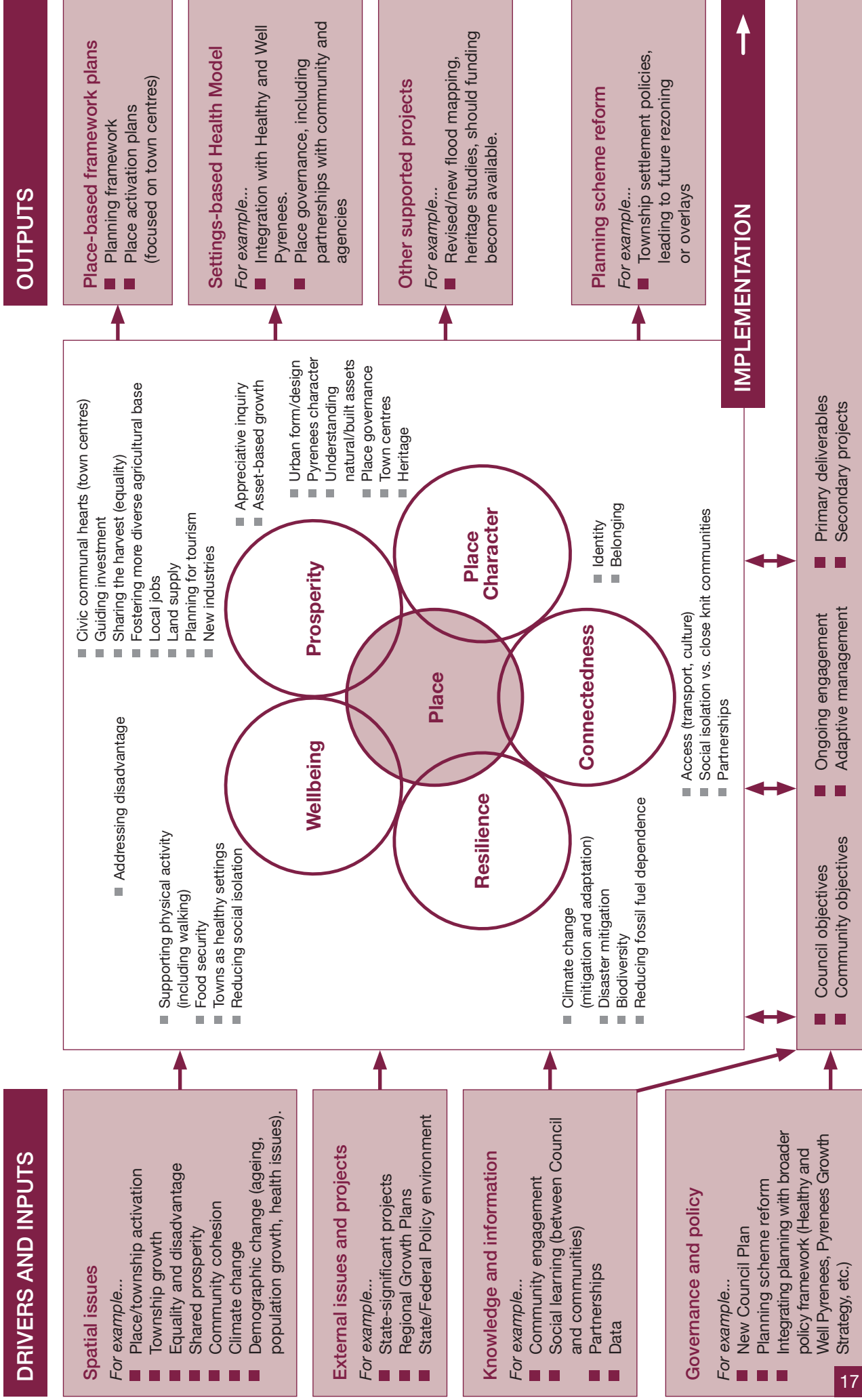
The Waubra Township Framework Plan is one of nine settlement plans Council is producing as part of the Pyrenees Futures project. Each settlement plan is based on an ecological framework that recognises five interlinked factors that sit at the heart of a place.

This framework sets the strategic environment in which the Pyrenees Futures strategy works and the broad areas that the Waubra Township Framework Plan will consider.

Page 17	<i>Pyrenees Futures Ecological System</i>
Page 18	<i>Existing Conditions Plan</i>
Page 19	<i>Framework Plan</i>
Page 20	<i>Place Activation</i>



# Pyrenees Futures Ecological System



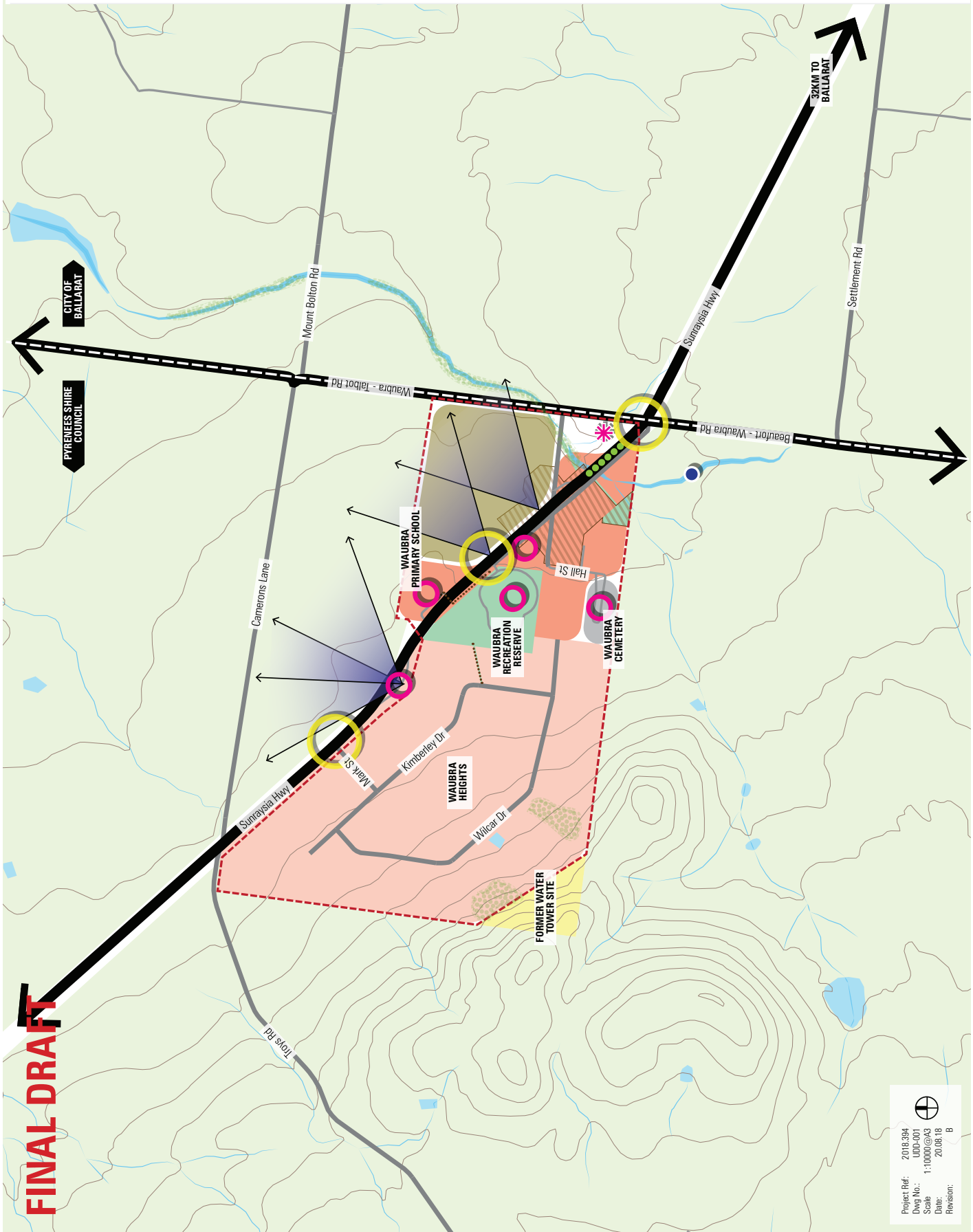




Pyrenees Futures:  
Waubra

Existing Conditions  
Plan

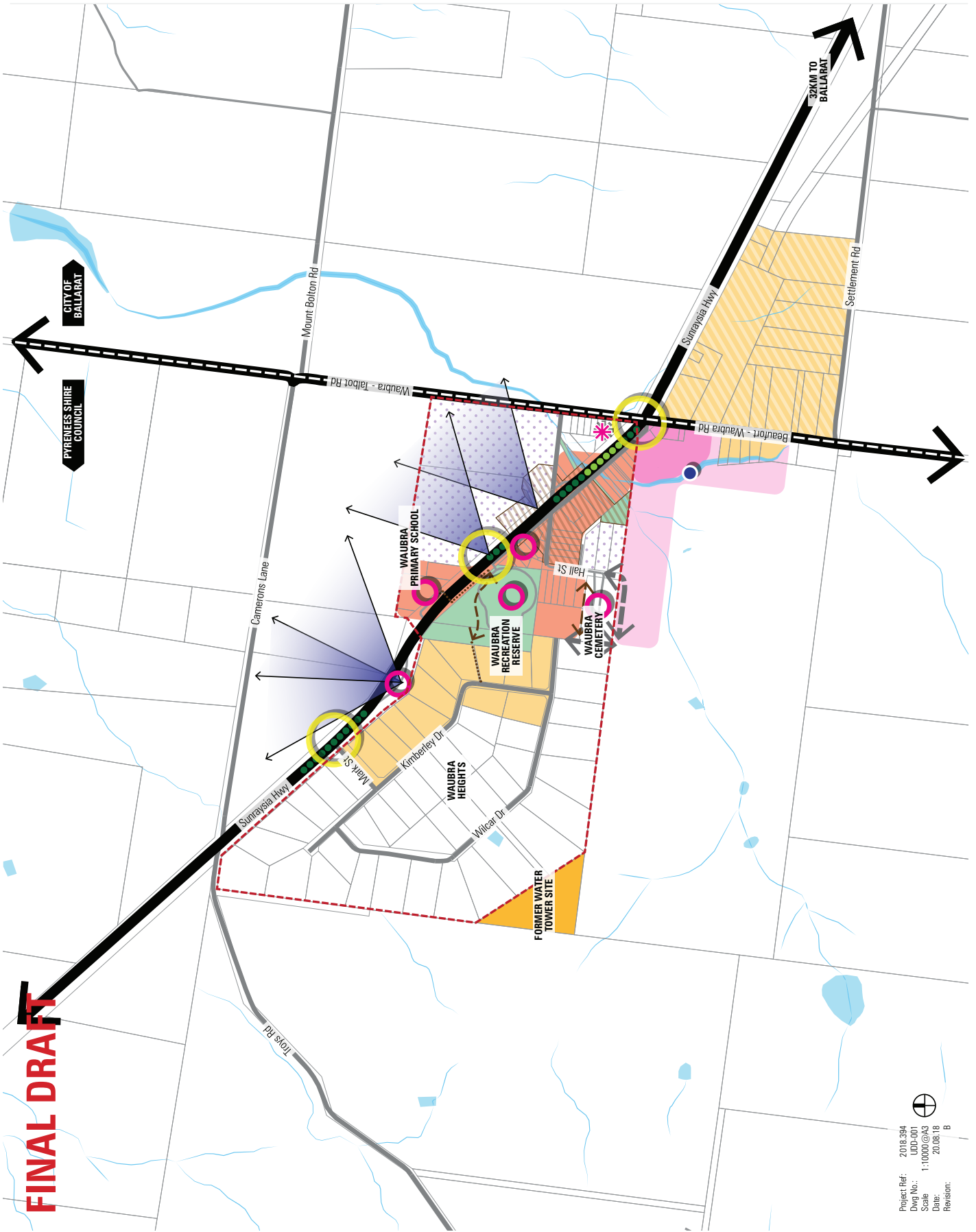
- Town boundary
- Municipal boundary
- Town entry
- Node
- Landmark
- Springs
- Existing trees
- Escaping views to hills
- Arterial road
- Local street
- Rural lane
- Pedestrian path
- Core township area
- Township
- Public open space
- Existing heavily vegetated area
- Decommissioned water tower
- Undeveloped township zone land
- Farming zone
- Cemetery
- Heritage overlay
- Waterbody
- Contour



**FINAL DRAFT**

Project Ref: 2018.394  
 Dwg No.: UDD-001  
 Scale: 1:10000@A3  
 Date: 20.08.18  
 Revision: B

**FINAL DRAFT**



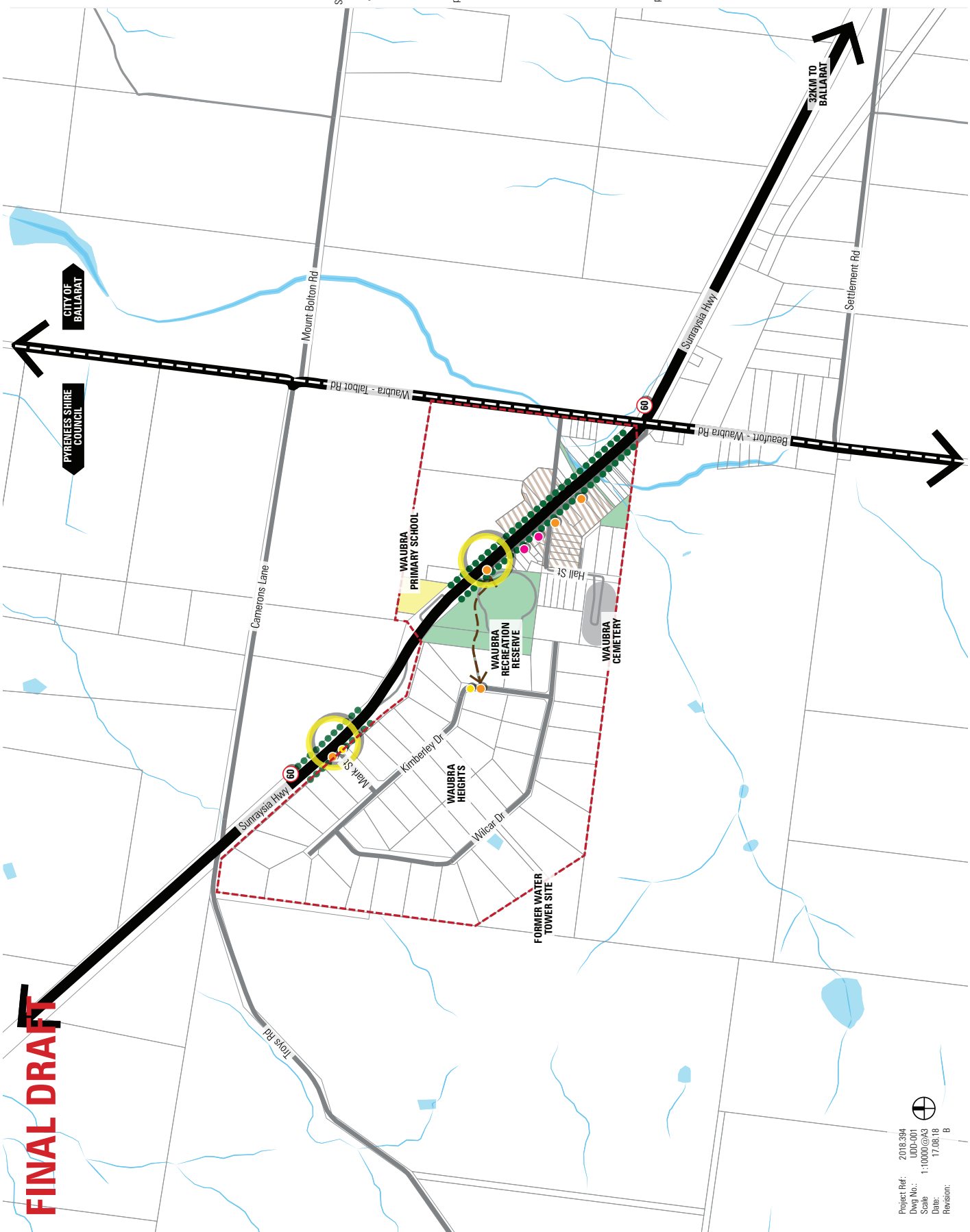
Pyrenees Futures:  
Waubra

Framework Plan

- Legend
- Town boundary
  - Municipal boundary
  - Town entry
  - Node
  - Landmark
  - Springs
  - Existing trees
  - New trees
  - Escaping views to hills
  - Arterial road
  - Local street
  - Rural lane
  - Potential new road
  - Pedestrian path
  - New pedestrian link
  - Core township area
  - Potential future township zone
  - Future investigation area
  - Proposed rural living zone subdivision
  - Proposed low density rural zone
  - Potential LDRZ to reflect current function (for City of Ballarat consideration)
  - Key development site (within township zone)
  - Public open space
  - Heritage overlay
  - Waterbody

Project Ref: 2018.394  
 Dwg No.: UDD-001  
 Scale: 1:1000@A3  
 Date: 20.06.18  
 Revision: B

**FINAL DRAFT**



Pyrenees Futures:  
Waubra

Place Activation

- Legend
- Town boundary
  - Municipal boundary
  - Intersection upgrade (safer turning movements)
  - Seating outside general store (indented from median)
  - Wayfinding / public art
  - Lighting upgrade
  - Reduce speed limit to 60km (in consultation with VicRoads)
  - Complete median planting (exotic canopy tree)
  - Arterial road
  - Local street
  - Rural lane
  - Upgrade pedestrian connection
  - Public open space
  - Primary school
  - Cemetery
  - Heritage overlay - potential heritage walk & interpretive signage
  - Waterbody

Project Ref: 2018.394  
 Dwg No.: UDD-001  
 Scale: 1:10000@A3  
 Date: 17/08/18  
 Revision: B



# Implementation plan

## Urban Design and Place Activation

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Develop a heritage walking trail within the township, with maps online and available at the General Store	High	1-3 years	\$10,000/in-kind work	Work with local community groups
Provide a dedicated location for mobile traders and food vendors immediately north of the Waubra-Talbot Road intersection, along the edge of the median strip between the Sunraysia Highway and its Service Road.	High	1 year	<\$1,000	Local Law permits required to use dedicated space.
Extend tree planting from the war memorial along the Sunraysia Highway using complementary species (such as redwoods and oak)	High	1-3 years	\$5,000	
Develop public seating in outstands extending from the median strip into the service road around the General Store	High	1-3 years	\$15,000	Refer Public Seating Design Guidelines – use vegetation to soften edges and trees to provide shelter where possible
Extend tree planting along the north-eastern side of the Sunraysia Highway within the township, using complementary exotic species	High	1-5 years	\$4,000	
Use public art and surface upgrades to formalize a pedestrian/cycle link between Waubra Heights, the Waubra Recreation Reserve and town centre	High	1-3 years	<\$20,000	
Provide directional signage along the Sunraysia Highway service road indicating the location of the Waubra Cemetery.	High	1-2 years	<\$1,000	
Review pathway connections between the Waubra Primary School, town centre, Waubra Recreation Reserve and surrounding recreation areas to encourage walking to school.	High	1-3 years	<\$5,000 (Costs of potential upgrade works to be determined)	

## Urban Design and Place Activation continued

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Work with VicRoads to develop a slip lane and clearer signage to allow safer and clearer access to Waubra Heights via Mark Street	Medium	1-5 years	Cost to be determined	Advocacy to VicRoads in first instance. Seek road improvement grant funding (such as Black Spot Program).
Work with the Waubra Recreation Reserve Committee to develop efficient public facilities for all ages, including outdoor park exercise equipment and small-scale skate infrastructure.	Medium	2-5 years	Costs to be determined	Pending co-design facility development exercise
Commission public art works to highlight the northern and southern entrances to Waubra along the Sunraysia Highway	Medium	2-5 years	<\$40,000	



# Further planning work

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Draft a replacement Local Planning Policy for Waubra and incorporate it into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme	High	1-2 years	<\$15,000	Planning scheme amendment to be bundled with other Pyrenees Futures townships to save resources
Draft a Development Plan Overlay for Township Zoned land on the north side of the Sunraysia Highway	High	1-2 years	\$10,000	
Introduce tree protection controls in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme's Heritage Overlay to protect significant trees south of the war memorial	High	1-2 years	\$5,000	
Review the list of potential heritage places in Waubra and set aside resources for further studies into their significance	Medium	1-3 years	<\$10,000	
Rezone corner blocks in Waubra Heights near the Recreation Reserve and blocks on the northern side of Kimberley Drive to Mark Street, to Low Density Residential Zone with a minimum subdivision size of 4000m <sup>2</sup> .	Medium	1-3 years	<\$10,000	Potential yield of 2-4 further lots, facing on to the Recreation Reserve. Means of breaking down barrier between town centre and Waubra Heights.
Rezone land south of the township along Beaufort-Waubra Road to Low Density Residential Zone (as shown on framework plan)	Low-Medium	3-5 years	<\$10,000	Prioritise depending on land take-up

# Advocacy

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Work with VicRoads to reduce speed limits on the Sunraysia Highway to 60km/h, and allow for safer traffic movements into the town centre and Recreation Reserve.	High	1-3 years	Internal advocacy	
Work with the City of Ballarat to encourage sustainable low-density residential zoning of small lots (>2ha) located within Waubra's town boundary in the City of Ballarat.	Refer to City of Ballarat	1 year	Planning support	



# Urban Design Guidelines

These guidelines focus on the design of public realm in and around Waubra's town centre. They provide guidance for colour palettes, guidance on plant species selection, materials and themes for public art projects.

## Colour Palette Design

Materials should focus on links to Waubra's granite/bluestone geology, farming heritage as well as prominent colours and materials on public buildings (such as cream render, bluestone, corten steel and red brick). Colours can include bluestone, heritage Indian Red and creams.

## Public Seating Design

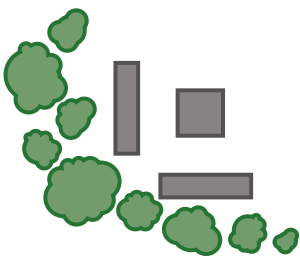
- Public seating in the town centre should be designed to encourage social interaction (including, for example, the use of benches at right angles to promote conversation).
- Seating placed as outstands in the service road should have particular focus on social interaction, and use existing trees to provide shelter where possible.
- Public seating in the town centre should use the backs of seats or structures like fences to provide an edge, and take advantage of viewlines to the creek or surrounding hillsides.

- Permanent seats should include backs and focus on providing for ergonomic design.
- Temporary seats and tables can be used outside the General Store as a trial to assess optimal layout.

## Public Art Themes

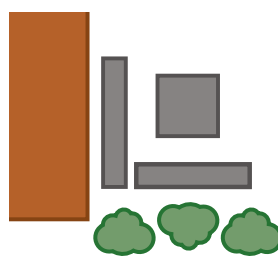
- The hillscape around Waubra, and the springs that gave the town its initial name and location.
- The wind energy industry that has become established around Waubra.
- The town's agricultural heritage including dairy, cropping and potato growing.
- Aboriginal landscape themes including links to creeklines and surrounding significant places such as Lake Burrumbeet.

### Seating Concept 1



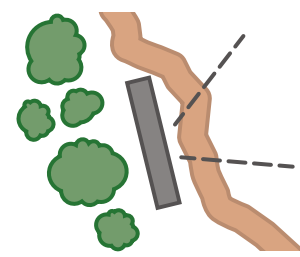
Benches placed at right angles with their backs to established vegetation, promoting social interaction and a safe edge.

### Seating Concept 2



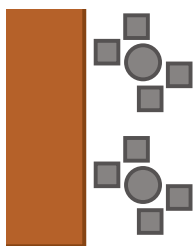
Benches placed at right angles to promote social interaction - one bench sitting against the wall of an established building, with plantings behind the second to provide a softer edge to roads or pathways. Potential for table in the middle.

### Seating Concept 3



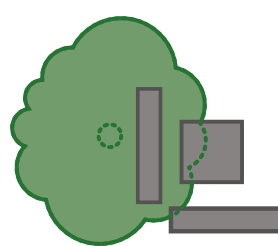
Lone bench placed along a path, facing an attractive landscape viewline. Single benches should be placed in locations that encourage contemplation and taking in an attractive view, but otherwise avoided.

### Seating Concept 4



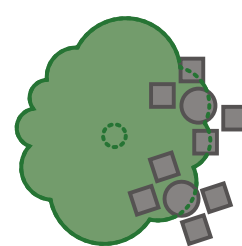
Temporary seats and tables can be placed in configurations that encourage social interaction, against building edges and oriented so minimise exposure to prevailing winds.

### Seating Concept 5



Benches can be placed at right angles under canopy trees to provide shelter. Picnic tables may also be used. These benches should where possible be oriented to take advantage of viewlines and access to paths.

### Seating Concept 6



Chairs and tables can be placed in social configurations under canopy trees. These should be oriented to take advantage of any available viewlines, pathway access and preferably provide shelter from the north-west.



### Urban Design - Town Centre

- Encourage traditional construction materials including exposed timber, cream render, red brick and non-zincalume sheet metal.
- Encourage signage to reflect colours of commercial and public buildings.
- Construct any concrete kerbs and channels of a form, scale and pigment that is reflective of bluestone construction
- Discourage the use of fences that obscure views of places or building frontages from the streetfront.
- Use exotic canopy trees to promote a sense of enclosure and reflect the agricultural landscape in the area.
- Maintain viewlines to significant buildings within the town centre and hillscares.

### Urban Design - Residential Areas

- Promote wide road reserves (15-20m) with swale drains in new residential development areas to preserve the openness of landscape character.
- Promote exotic street trees in any new streets to provide for a consistent sense of character with the surrounding township.
- Promote social cohesion by preventing cul-de-sacs or loop roads in any new developments.

### Species Guide

Tree planting within the town centre should focus on using exotic canopy trees to create a stronger sense of threshold and arrival in the township, while preserving viewlines to surrounding hills.

Tree planting should particularly focus on further promoting the sense of character generated by trees around the war memorial, providing shelter in summer and on creating a sense of arrival in the town and around Mark Street to the north in order to slow traffic.

Tree planting in residential areas should focus on Indigenous species in order to promote a sense of connection to native landscape.

### Exotic/Canopy Species

- *Cedrus atlantica* (Atlas Cedar)
- *Cedrus deodora* (Himalayan Cedar)
- *Taxodium distichum* (Swamp Cypress)
- *Pyrus ussuriensis* (Manchurian Pear)
- *Quercus canariensis* (Algerian Oak)
- *Quercus Robur* (English Oak)
- *Malus sp.* (Scented Crab Apple)
- *Sequoia Sempervirens* (Coastal Redwood)
- *Schinus mole* (Peppercorn)
- *Ulmus Glab ra* (Scotch Elm)

### Indigenous Species

- *Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood)
- *Eucalyptus leucoxyton* (Yellow Gum)
- *Eucalyptus obliqua* (Messmate Stringybark)
- Swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca Ericifolia*)

## References

- Cunningham, S; Hossain, H; Romeijn, H 2016 *Future Landscapes: Pyrenees Biodiversity Action Plan 2016*, Deakin University, Geelong.
- Tully, J 1997, *Djadja Wurrung language of Central Victoria : including place names*, Dunolly, Vic. : John Tully, 1997.

## Pyrenees Futures in Waubra: Your Views

### What's this all about?

Over February and March 2018, Council worked with Waubra residents to inform a framework plan that will guide future development and urban design across the town.

These sessions revolved around people's direct experience of Waubra, what they love about the town, what characteristics need to be preserved or build on, and what people would like to see happen in the future.

This work is important because of the need to update planning policies that will guide and influence change in Waubra over the next ten years. This plan also seeks to deliver quick, low-cost improvements to the public realm in Waubra.

This process has involved more than 40 people in a range of forums including:

- Drop-in sessions at the Waubra General Store
- A town walk involving a group of local residents
- Discussions with service authorities and Council staff
- Surveys run online and in hard copy at the Waubra General Store.
- Outreach with local community groups.

Thanks to all who have been involved in helping shape this plan and Waubra's future.

This summary collates what we've heard into a series of themes that we're drawing on to produce a Framework Plan to guide future planning policy and land use; and Urban Design Guidelines that will focus on how the town looks, feels and functions. These themes are linked and form the basis of plans that will be placed on public exhibition around mid-2018.

The information from this engagement process will be blended with research and technical analysis Council has completed on a range of issues as the draft Framework Plan and Urban Design Guidelines are developed.

*For more information, please visit our Pyrenees Futures website at [www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au/futures](http://www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au/futures) or contact Council's Planning Department on 5349 1100 or via [futures@pyrenees.vic.gov.au](mailto:futures@pyrenees.vic.gov.au)*

### Theme 1: Links to landscape and history

Waubra is nestled between a series of hills on prime agricultural land, and many residents enjoy the viewlines and sense of attachment this provides. The views to adjacent hills and links to places like Quoin Hill and Mount Bolton are important for local residents. Thanks to rainfall and the springs that once named the town, Waubra's landscape is often lush but always seasonal, following agricultural production and deciduous street trees.

The town also has a legacy of heritage buildings and rich stories that could be better told through interpretive signage, displays or other information. These stories are largely untold in the current landscape and present important opportunities.







## Theme 2: Connections and Directions

Historical development patterns have seen Waubra form in a line along the Sunraysia Highway, with limited connections through blocks and between the town centre and Waubra Heights. Pedestrian connections through the Recreation Reserve and surrounds could be improved to encourage people to walk through to the town centre. Future development needs to focus on avoiding the fragmentation and isolated sections that have resulted from the design of past rural living subdivision.

Wayfinding is another important issue, with opportunities for themed signage to popular destinations such as Quoin Hill Winery, turbine viewing shelter and the cemetery which continue to bring people to town.

## Theme 3: Consolidating the centre

While Waubra is spread along the Sunraysia highway, its centre has character that can be brought out with some simple design improvements. A big part of Waubra's charm is in the street tree plantings, with exotic species including conifers, redwoods and oaks adding much to the verdant landscape. These trees provide a sense of shelter, welcome and arrival in the town. There is potential to foster this character by extending these plantings with complementary species.

Council is now working on installing public toilets in the town centre, and another important improvement that can be made is introducing more public seating near the General Store and along the median strip to take advantage of shade trees. This forms the town centre as a place to gather and would encourage visitors to stop, as well as better linking the town centre to the Recreation Reserve.

“(I love) the lovely street trees including the few Californian redwoods in the town. The small but important historical buildings and the mountains behind the town.”

- Survey response

“Make sure links to the school, footie ground and shop work well, expand the housing on the southern side of the highway and leave the north side rural.”

- Survey response

Because of the need to protect agricultural land and promote the town centre, future growth should be focused on infill and incremental subdivision close to the town centre mostly focusing south of the highway. Council can also consider planning policies to promote preferred density, setbacks and connectivity including design to preserve a sense of openness.

## Theme 4: A Family and Farming Town

Waubra has a strong historical association with agriculture. While primary industry has changed, the fertile soils and availability of water have preserved traditions of agricultural activity. There is a widespread view that the productivity of agricultural land needs to be protected from the pressures of residential development or town sprawl. This tension may become more pronounced as Ballarat's westward growth continues, encouraging more people to look for a rural lifestyle within easy commuting distance.

At the same time, Waubra's school and sporting club mean the town is an important base for families throughout the region. There is a local desire for young people to have more options for activities, both focused at the recreation reserve and surrounds. Planning needs to manage this tension by minimising sprawl into agricultural land around the township, while identifying sustainable opportunities community infrastructure and for residential growth around the town centre that reflects local character.

## Theme 5: Safer Movement

The safety of traffic movements around the town is another important issue that needs to be addressed. Turning movements from the Sunraysia Highway into the recreation reserve, General Store and Waubra Heights via Mark Street can be hazardous, due to the lack of turning lanes and the 80km/h speed limit through the town centre. Council will need to advocate to VicRoads safety upgrades, as well as considering improving street lighting in the Waubra Heights area without compromising local amenity.



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SHIRE



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