

PYRENEES
— S H I R E —



Snake Valley

Township Framework Plan 2018

A Story of Place

Pyrenees Shire Council recognises the Wathaurong people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which Snake Valley has grown today.

Snake Valley's name has become a cornerstone of the town's story. A commonly accepted rendering has it that early miners who flocked to the town in the 1850s found copious numbers of snakes to contend with amid their prospecting. Another theory links the name to the serpentine patterns formed by seasonal creeks as they cross the landscape.

Either way, the name provides compelling cues to interpret the town's past, present and its future.

The creeklines referred to above are key to Snake Valley's landscape and sense of place. The main north-south creekline runs parallel to the Carngham-Linton Road, which runs north-south in a broad curve through the town. This unnamed creek runs into Baillie's Creek further north, a tributary of the Mount Emu Creek that runs to the north and west of the town.

The Wathaurong people are the traditional owners of Snake Valley area. The Carnum-Ballac clan inhabited the region, and records indicate Snake Valley and surrounds were traditionally known as Nimluck (*Smyth, 1878*). The name Carngham, given to the settlement and pastoral runs north of Snake Valley, is thought to derive from both the local clans name and the term Kurnum, believed to have been applied to hunting grounds in the area (*Smyth, 1878; Anderson, 1969*).

The waterways in the district form the lifeblood of the Country. Regionally, Mt Emu Creek, Mt Emu, Lake Goldsmith and Lake Burrumbeet are particularly significant places for Aboriginal people.

The Wathaurong clans in the area managed the landscape and took advantage of seasonal food and water where it was available. Accounts from the 1830s revealed the presence of Aboriginal ovens (myrnongs) that were likely used to cook tubers which the Wathaurong are known to have cultivated (*Pascoe, 2014*).

Pastoralists came to the area from the early 1830s on accounts of the fertility of the landscape; no doubt influenced by the Wathaurong's stewardship of the land. The area and around Mount Emu (known to the Wathaurong as Tarrecurrumbeet) is described from early European accounts as:



“A succession of beautiful flats, remarkably well-watered, and covered with luxuriant pasture. Springs and creeks, or rivulets, are numerous in this part of the country, and the grass is much mingled with wild herbage, of which sheep are remarkably fond.” (Anderson 1969, 7)

The first European settlers in the area were the Baillie Brothers, who ran merino sheep. Their name has been given to a creek north of Snake Valley, from which the waterways running through the town flow.

Gold strikes at Linton and Smythesdale in the late 1840s brought more settlers and by 1854, a common school was founded in Snake Valley. It wasn't until a significant gold discovery near the junction of the roads to Linton and Skipton in September 1857 that the population began to boom.

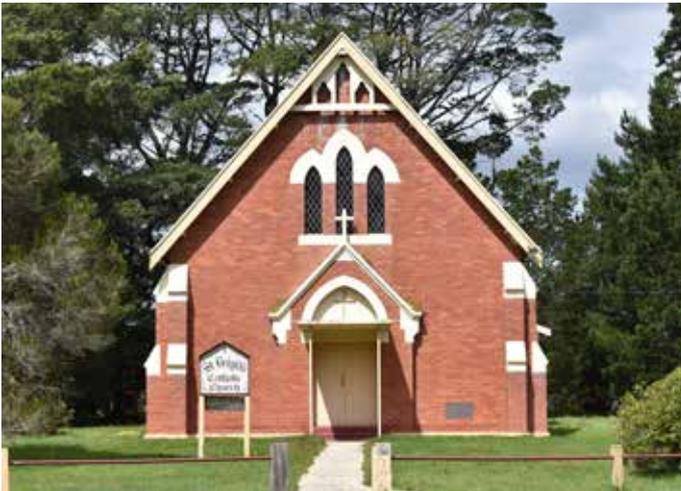
More discoveries followed, one bringing the name “Golden Point” to a hill north of the town. A shanty town of stores, butchers' shops and hotels rapidly sprung up along the creek near the main road and before long, the population peaked at some 10,000 miners including a contingent of around 1,000 Chinese. The landscape was quickly dotted with mine holes and mounds (*Wilson, 1983, 15*).



The width of today's main street is by and large a legacy of the size of early Snake Valley. By the end of the 1850s, 35 acres were occupied by mining with the first company, Ancient Briton, taking five acres at the northern end of the Snake Valley lead. Other mines that sprung up also took Anglo names: Prince of Wales, Great Britain, Sherwood, Red Lion, Bedfordshire and Rob Roy.

holding some 1,000 books and four hotels: The Man of Kent, Greyhound, Prince of Wales and United States. The population at the turn of the century was 490.

The 1920s-30s brought a boom in construction in Snake Valley, as recognised in the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Study:



“It appears that because of the increased productivity of the mines, in agriculture and other areas, new cultural and community buildings and houses were erected in the Snake Valley precinct.

Apart from the interwar Bungalow post office and store (also known at the time as Digger's Store), and some houses along the south end of Main Street, was the construction of St. Brigid's Catholic Church in 1924 and the Snake Valley Hall in 1926.”

The trajectory of mining in Snake Valley from the 1870s to the early 1920s followed a “boom-bust” pattern typical of much of the goldfields, with technological advances late in the 1890s allowing more deposits to be exploited.

Aside from gold and grazing, early settlement was marked by a volatile climate with droughts and floods. The Black Thursday bushfires in 1851 devastated the region, causing major stock losses and destroying a number of huts around Carngham.

In 1908, a large flood washed away many roads, bridges and infrastructure while early crops of wheat, oats and potatoes suffered in hot summers.

By 1900, Snake Valley effectively swallowed the township of Carngham. The town included a state school, three churches, five stores, a police station, a petty sessions court, a mechanics institute, a free library

In the 1930s, many men hit by the depression camped at the football ground and sheds in Snake Valley, getting jobs on farms where they could. After World War Two, 17 farms were granted to soldier settlers, but the regional population fell through the 1940s and 1950s.

As the 1950s approached, larger acreages were created around town for cropping. The introduction of electricity in 1957 brought a land boom for hobby farm style settlement. Snake Valley today is increasingly popular with “tree change” settlers today.

Population growth has generally been slow and steady since the 1980s, with a small drop between 2006 and 2011. Today, Snake Valley's proximity to Ballarat, unique character, landscape and rural feel are particularly valued characteristics.



Urban form

Snake Valley has grown as a straggly, long settlement with an irregular form as a result of the spindly creeks flowing through the town (all of which do not have registered names) and the early arrival of gold mining. The main creekline, flowing north-south and to the west of the Linton-Carngham Road, is a tributary of Baillie's Creek which runs from Lake Burrumbeet to Mount Emu Creek north of Snake Valley.

The township is generally confined to the east of this creekline and is spread along the Linton-Carngham Road, which is the main street. A loose town core has formed around a series of focal points including:

- The intersections of Linton-Carngham Road and the Snake Valley-Smythesdale Road; and Linton-Carngham Road and Murray Street.
- The town's General Store, Hall, St Brigid's Catholic Church, the Royal Hotel and the local campus of the Woody Yalock Primary School.



Houses are dotted between these commercial and community buildings. The commercial buildings generally address the street or have small front setbacks (up to 3m) while houses in the township generally feature 8-10m setbacks and are often behind small front fences. This inconsistency has contributed to the lack of definition of the town's heart. The main street is wide and has a feeling of openness. This width is a legacy of the bustling gold mining settlement of the latter 1800s, and presents opportunities for community activity in under-used road reserve space. It also presents difficulty in calming traffic movements and creates barriers for pedestrian movement.

Another characteristic of the town is the disconnection of many community assets from the town centre. Some 2km west of the main street and across a creek valley is the Carngham Recreation Reserve, which is fronted by a small number of dwellings. Mag Dam, to the south of the town centre, is a former mining dam that is now an attractive area of wetland open space valued by the community. The disconnection of these assets from large sections of the township requires a careful approach to planning and wayfinding (making the town easier to navigate).

Conventional housing in the township generally fronts the Linton-Carngham Road; Murray Street, which runs east from the main street, and the Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road. These houses often feature horizontal weatherboards, generous side setbacks and are on lots ranging from 800m² to 4000m².

To the south of the main town centre are larger rural living subdivisions, some of which are on bushfire-prone land. State forest to Snake Valley's south and south-east prevents further urban expansion in this direction. All 270 houses in Snake Valley are detached dwellings.

A number of traits define Snake Valley's urban form and development patterns:

- A sense of openness, created by wide streets, generous road reserves in many areas and large side setbacks between dwellings.
- Natural barriers including creeklines and forest that inform the town's sense of place but present barriers to development in some areas.
- A mix of setbacks in the core, with commercial buildings almost directly fronting the street and houses maintaining setbacks.
- The materiality of buildings, many of which include horizontal weatherboard facades, and skillion roofs. Commercial and community buildings generally include prominent skillion verandahs.
- The disconnection between a number of centres of activity, including the school, general store, pub, hall, Mag Dam wetland and the Carngham Recreation Reserve.



Heritage

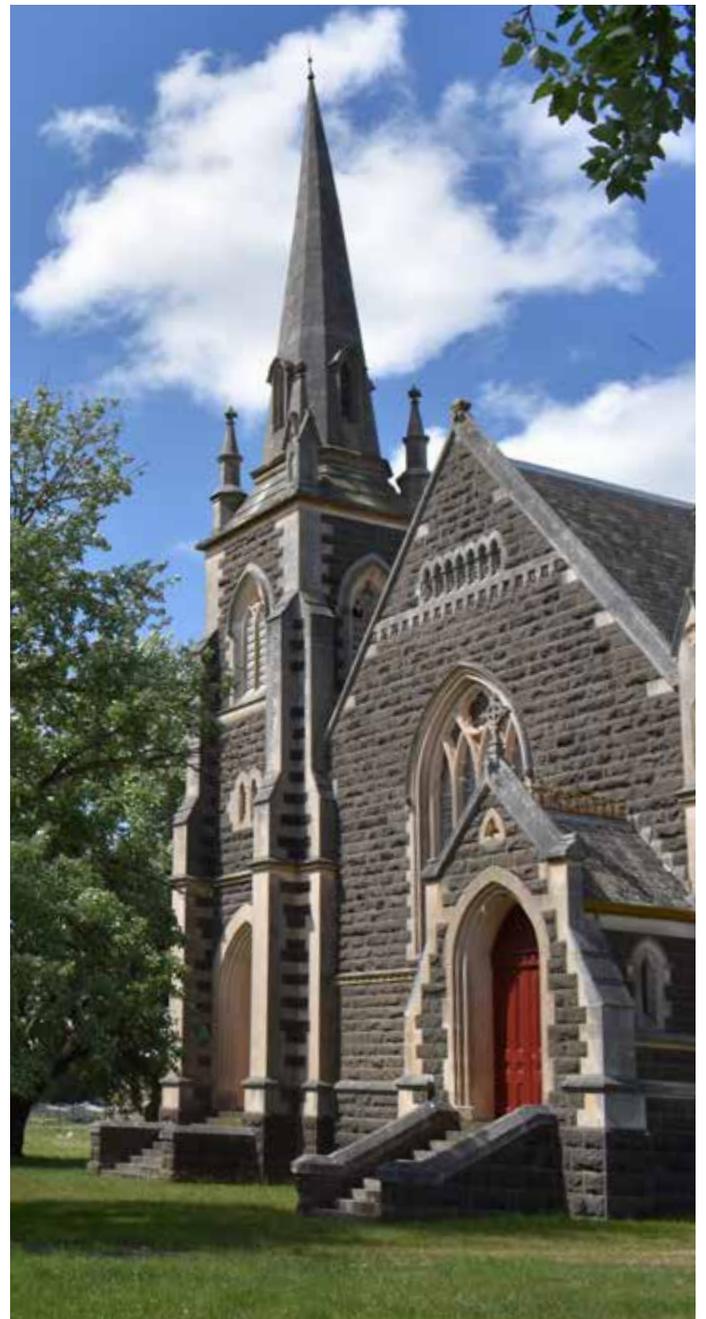
While many commercial buildings in Snake Valley have been lost, the town's mining history and early development has left a legacy of important heritage buildings, most of which are along the Carngham-Linton Road. The Pyrenees Planning Scheme has two precinct overlays covering sections of Snake Valley including an overall Snake Valley Heritage Precinct (covering much of the town centre) and the Snake Valley War Memorial Heritage Precinct in the north of the town.

Two heritage places form important landmarks at the northern entrance to Snake Valley. The Carngham Uniting bluestone church with its tall spire, provides a significant visual focal point that defines the town's northern approach, along with groves of conifers that form the avenue of honour. This church is one of seven places listed on the Victorian Heritage Database across the Pyrenees Shire.

The War Memorial on the western side of the road is also a significant heritage place and a marker of the town's northern threshold.

St Bridgid's Catholic Church, built on a large allotment, is unusual in the town for its orange brickwork and surrounding open space, including a lot on the corner of Murray Street and the Carngham-Linton Road in church ownership. This area of land now functions as the town's Neighbourhood Safer Place, in case of bushfire.

Aside from the churches, most significant buildings in Snake Valley feature horizontal weatherboards with galvanized hipped or gabled roofing. The Royal Hotel and General Store buildings in particular have prominent verandahs that project over footpaths, with signage placed on timber parapets on commercial buildings.



Why do we need this plan?

Snake Valley, 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 Snake Valley 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 23.

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

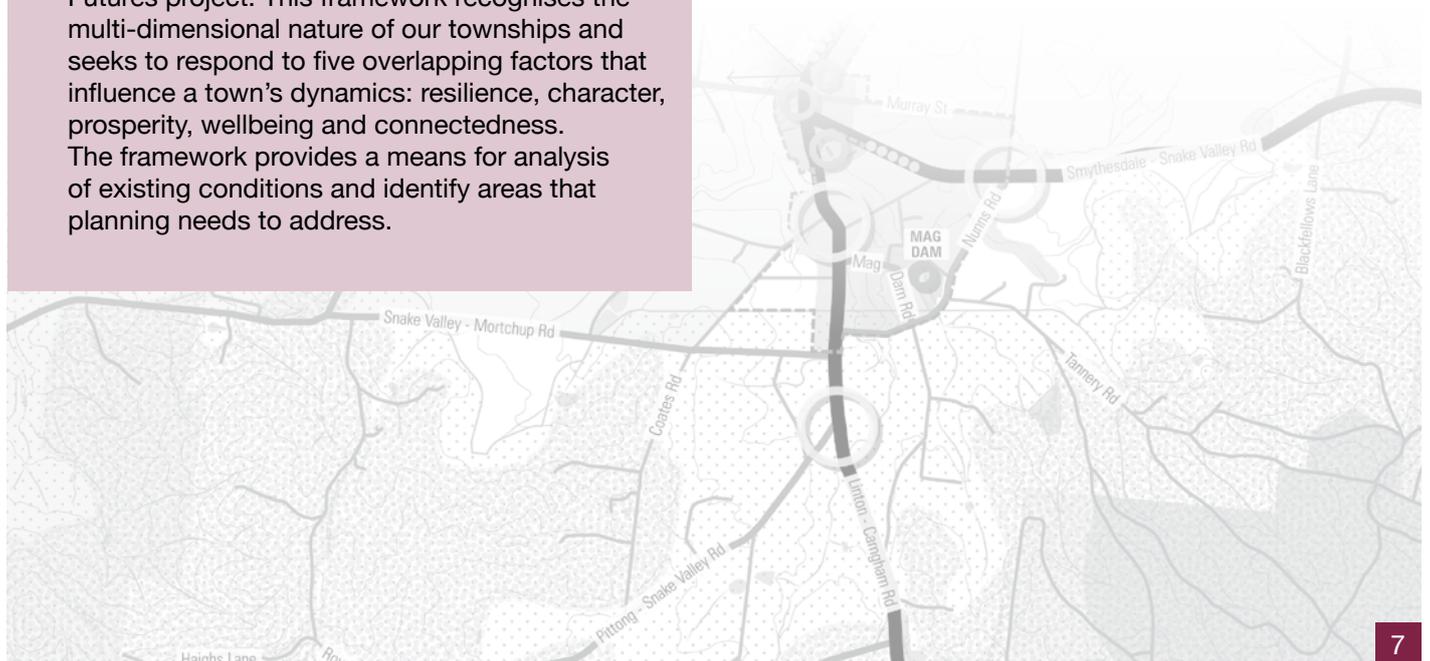
This framework plan is vital in ensuring that growth and change does not overwhelm the town's character or its fabric, but rather contributes to it.

The plan's structure is based around:

- Seven themes (or principles for managing change) identified through community engagement in Snake Valley. The plan's actions are all drawn from these themes, and then channeled into an implementation program.
- Analysis, including an overview of the town's history, physical characteristics, current plans and policies, state-level planning framework and an overview of land supply.
- 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 seven 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 and activation that relate to how Snake Valley looks, feels and works as a town.



What's driving change?

A number of factors are currently driving change in Snake Valley, whether it is planned or not. Chief among them are:

Peri-urban growth: Snake Valley is located 20km south-west of Ballarat, and is increasingly known for its attractive landscape, big skies and as an attractive alternative to living in a larger city.

ABS Census data suggests the town centre's population has grown from 293 in 2011 to 308 in 2016, but population in the town and broader hinterland (known as a "state suburb") has risen from 587 in 2011 to 743 in 2016. This hints at the popularity of rural living areas outside the town centre, but also a dispersed settlement pattern.

Many locals that responded to the Pyrenees Futures survey talk about the town as an unpolished gem, with a rural ambience close to Ballarat. Snake Valley's peri-urban relationship to Ballarat manifests itself in many ways. The 2016 Census suggests 72 percent of employed people in Snake Valley travel to work by car, which is above the Victorian average; while 3% walked to work and 2% travel by public transport; both well below the Victorian average. Community engagement conducted as part of Pyrenees Futures further suggests many residents commute to Ballarat regularly for work or services, while Ballarat's urban growth to the west will bring the city closer to the valley.

Building permit data for Snake Valley also suggests the town is experiencing an increasing demand for housing. Over 2014-2016, Snake Valley recorded the second highest number of building permits for houses issued in any Pyrenees Shire town. Most of these were concentrated in rural living or farming districts outside the town centre, suggesting an emerging demand for tree change or lifestyle opportunities within commuting distance to Ballarat. Careful planning is required to ensure this demand does not overwhelm landscape character or bring unacceptable environmental impacts.

Snake Valley's demographic structure is also distinct from other settlements in the Pyrenees, in that the community has a higher proportion of young people (aged 0-18), young workers and students (aged 18-25) and young families (25-39) but a much lower portion of residents aged over 70. This pattern hints at growth in commuterism to Ballarat for work and secondary education and may also be the result of a lack of smaller, low-maintenance housing in Snake Valley for people to access as they age.

Climate change: will also likely affect Snake Valley in a number of ways. Since European settlement of the area in 1836, bushfires and flooding have been frequently reported. This is in part due to the forest south of town, and a network of ephemeral creeks that winds through the township.

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.
- Regions around Snake Valley will remain suitable for growing pasture grasses, and conditions will likely become more suitable for growing wheat.
- Rainfall is likely to increase slightly across the Pyrenees by 2030, but may decline substantially by 2070 under a high emissions scenario.
- Forests and plains grassy woodlands to the south and west of Snake Valley are particularly important biodiversity assets that have the capacity to adapt to climate change. However, plains grassland vegetation is likely to decline substantially amid unfavourable conditions up to 2070.

The likelihood of more extreme weather conditions means planning will need promote Snake Valley's ability to respond to flooding, bushfire and extreme heat.

The major, recurring element in this framework plan is the need for planning and design to make Snake Valley more connected. This manifests itself in many ways: from the need for a better defined town centre, to wayfinding, connections to important places and walkability.

The findings in a nutshell...(7 themes)

This plan is centred on seven themes identified through community engagement in Snake Valley. A summary of the engagement findings is provided in the Appendix of this report. The themes are:

1. **A rural atmosphere:**
Off the beaten track, close to Ballarat.
2. **A town with heritage, quirk and character.**
3. **Kickstart the heart**
4. **Dark Skies**
5. **Design for community cohesion**
6. **Linking it all together**
7. **Plan with nature.**

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 11 to 17.

Current policies and strategic directions

A key plank in analysis and planning is an assessment of Snake Valley's strengths, opportunities, and threats facing the town. This assessment has been based on the Pyrenees Futures Ecological Framework, and informed by research and community engagement.

Research activities conducted as part of the Snake Valley 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:

- Targeted outreach sessions with community groups including the Snake Valley Progress Network.
- Township walks with local residents and the Woody Yaloak Primary School community.
- A community drop-in session and workshop.
- Community surveys.

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 Snake Valley Framework Plan.

Existing documents that are guiding this project, including:

- Pyrenees Shire Council Plan 2017-2021
- The Snake Valley 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 identifies Snake Valley as a residential dormitory township for Ballarat, likely to experience growth because of the attractive opportunities it provides for rural living.

Policies in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme also seek to consolidate development along the roads from the main junction between Linton-Carngham Road and Smythesdale Road, and undeveloped areas west of Nunns Road. Policies also:

- Seek to prevent the individual development of small lots along the west side of Linton-Carngham Road.
- Allow for rural living development south of Mortchup-Snake Valley Road and Nunns Road.

While the Pyrenees Planning Scheme recognises Snake Valley as being intrinsically attractive for residential growth, the town is not referenced as a growth area in the *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan*, a Victorian Government document that guides planning across seven municipalities. The *Regional Growth Plan* does however consider the potential for Snake Valley to grow significantly due to a demand for housing in commuting distance to Ballarat, and suggests this situation needs to be monitored.

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 Snake Valley.

The Snake Valley Community Action Plan (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 directions that have informed this framework plan including:

- A need to keep Snake Valley beautiful and ensure that infrastructure projects can be maintained.
- Establishing a community park, which is being addressed through a proposed development of a linear park along Carngham-Linton Road north of the town centre. This project is referenced in the Framework Plan, which considers how such a park might connect with and be integrated into the surrounding township.
- Improving signage to boost wayfinding and recognise key attractions.

Opportunities and Threats

	STRENGTH/OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Place character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rich history stretching back thousands of years (Aboriginal and post-European settlement). ■ Heritage assets including buildings and sections of streetscape. ■ Distinctive topography and Dark Skies. ■ Natural defining features (forests, creeklines). ■ Emerging local artistic community. ■ The name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Potential for growth to undermine character in future. ■ Lack of planning policies guiding building design. ■ Car-dominated main street.
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Potential to consolidate central core of township, which includes school, General Store, Hall, Royal Hotel, CFA station and Bushfire Neighbourhood Safer Place. ■ Strong community groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural disaster risk (bushfires and flooding), potentially exacerbated by climate change and landscape character. ■ Dependence on Ballarat for a range of services.
Economic prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unique opportunity provided by Dark Skies for visitation and activity (if appropriately managed). ■ Potential for cottage industries to develop around local agricultural base (such as crafts, small-scale boutique livestock breeding). ■ Opportunities to capitalise on character and emerging artistic community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of commercial/industrial activity in the town centre. ■ Limited commercial buildings around town centre. ■ Location away from major roads. ■ Lack of tourism promotion – perception the town lacks drawcards.
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Access to natural environments (such as Mag Dam and Linton State Forest) provide important opportunities for recreation and interaction with nature. ■ Land use pattern provides opportunities for activities like small-scale food growing and horse agistment, which are locally valued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Need for further public transport connections to nearby centres. ■ Dependence on nearby centres for health, expanded retail and secondary education services. ■ Limited footpath infrastructure and community concerns about walkability. ■ Poorly designed intersections in town centre discourage pedestrian activity.
Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Potential for a strong town core to develop by connecting the Snake Valley Hotel, school, hall, General Store and CFA Station as key centres of activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of wayfinding makes local services and attractions difficult to access. ■ Creekline/topography makes accessing Recreation Reserve from town centre challenging. ■ Dispersed historical settlement patterns, including extensive rural living subdivision south of the town centre, have contributed to social isolation and bushfire risk.

Seven Principles for Managing Change

A rural atmosphere: Off the beaten track, close to Ballarat

Background



To many, Snake Valley offers the best of two worlds: A convivial, rural atmosphere; a short drive away from a thriving regional city. This poses opportunities and challenges: As more people seek a slice of the rural life in Snake Valley, great care will need to be taken to ensure this atmosphere remains.

Being “off the beaten track”, away from major highways, brings a sense of tranquility to the town. Population demographics in Snake Valley indicate the town has higher numbers of young families and retains a higher proportion of young people than other rural centres, which suggests younger families are attracted by the atmosphere and proximity to Ballarat.

Community survey responses suggest that rural activities like horseriding are popular around Snake Valley, and observational visits from the project team have observed horseriding in the main street, with niche livestock breeding and agistment occurring in small agricultural lots to the west of town.

The rural feel is also informed by the sense of openness in the landscape, wide road reserves (particularly noticeable on the Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road) and large side setbacks between dwellings.



Strategies and Actions



Planning Policy Reform

- Preserve a non-urban break between Greenbanks Lane and the Pyrenees Shire boundary to the east of Snake Valley.
- Encourage boutique and small-scale rural activities on small lots to the west of Snake Valley that reflect the capacity of the land. This could be supported through a rezoning of the area from Farming Zone to Rural Activity Zone; with a lower minimum lot size introduced for as-of-right dwellings and farm/land management plans introduced as application requirements.
- Encourage future residential development to retain generous side setbacks and wide road reserves that contribute to the town’s open landscape feel.
- Use the Municipal Strategic Statement to focus future commercial development in the current town centre along Carngham-Linton Road, between the CFA station and Royal Hotel.

Urban Design and Place Activation

- Work with St Brigid’s Catholic Church to use the block on the corner of Linton-Carngham Road and Murray Street as a Village Green and focus for community events.
- Consider horseriding and sheep grazing activity in the area as potential themes for public art or placemaking activity.
- Work with the Registered Aboriginal Party to explore potential for public art relating to Aboriginal links to waterways and the story of Tarrecurrumbeet.

A town with heritage, quirk and character

Background



Snake Valley's topography, heritage places, growing artistic community and connection with nature all help inform a unique sense of character.

The town is well-positioned to benefit from public art and placemaking projects completed in partnership between Council and the community. These investments can be concentrated:

- In the town centre
- On key approaches to the town centre to create a sense of threshold and arrival
- At other focal points (Mag Dam and the Carngham Recreation Reserve).

The town's name and character lend themselves to a local signage scheme and the development of distinctive sculptural wayfinding signs.

The town has distinctive heritage assets, many of which are protected under the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. Notably, the Carngham Uniting Church is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, which makes it eligible for grant funding to cover maintenance work under the Victorian Living Heritage Program.

Some elements that contribute to the town's heritage character, such as bluestone kerbing, has been removed. Urban design should seek to re-introduce this material through the design of pedestrian and tree outstands.

An emerging focus on astronomy, addressed further into this strategy, can also form a base for town character.



Strategies and Actions



Planning Policy Reform

- Encourage commercial and community buildings to be developed with skillion verandahs, horizontal weatherboards and signage located to parapets.

Urban Design and Place Activation

- Re-introduce bluestone into the urban environment through the design of pedestrian cross-walks, tree planting outstands and public amenities.
- Encourage bluestone coloured concrete to be used for kerb, channel and drainage infrastructure where bluestone is unavailable/impractical.
- Encourage public art at key activity points in the town centre: around the school, CFA Station, General Store (including the nearby road reserve), Royal Hotel and Hall. This is important in filling the town centre with local narratives, and better connecting existing focal points of activity.
- Develop art-informed wayfinding, such as snake-themed pedestrian crossings or sign posts.
- Introduce a themed wayfinding sign at the intersection between Carngham-Linton and Ballarat-Carngham Roads that points the way into town.
- Introduce a themed wayfinding sign at the intersection between Carngham-Linton and Smythesdale Roads, to show directions to local attractions.
- Work with the Uniting Church community on grant applications for heritage restoration through the Victorian Living Heritage Program.
- Use Dark Skies and Aboriginal interest in astronomy as a potential catalyst for public art and placemaking.
- Work with interested community groups to develop a heritage walking trail around the township.
- Promote local environmental attractions (such as Mag Dam and significant vegetation pockets) on interpretive signage outside the Snake Valley Hall

Kickstart the Heart

Background



Snake Valley's sprawled settlement pattern, the disjointed nature of development and the historical removal of commercial buildings have all over time undermined the sense of a centre in the town. The town's main street is wide, which is understood to be a legacy from larger regional populations during the mining era.

This said, the potential remains for a strong village-style centre to form, by connecting the existing foci of activity (the CFA station, school, General Store, hall and pub). The notion of connection has a physical dimension (through, for example, paths, pedestrian crossings and seating) and a symbolic dimension that can be brought about through themed design elements (such as uniform street furniture, plantings or themed sculptural elements).

Slowing traffic by reducing the speed limit to 50km/h along Carngham-Linton Road and introducing a series of design measures to the north and south (along Carngham-Linton Road) and east (from Smythesdale Road) is also vital. These measures can include public art, tree planting and sculptural elements to create a sense of arrival in the town, pedestrian outstands to narrow the road at crossing points and locally-themed street signage. They may also include engineering solutions like speed humps (in neutral colours), rumble strips and traffic islands to break up the roadway.

The town centre is based around the intersection between Smythesdale Road and Carngham-Linton Road, which needs to be reconfigured to slow down traffic movement and make crossing both roads easier for pedestrians. Redesigning the roadway outside the Royal Hotel is also critical to promote pedestrian safety and improve the public realm around this important gathering point.

A short-term program of place activation focusing on public art work (such as sculptures), more seating and tree planting in road reserves is vital in making the scale of the main street more pedestrian friendly, and creating a sense of arrival in the centre.

Strategies and Actions



Planning Policy Reform

- Encourage future commercial development to locate around the current town centre.
- Focus residential/township growth to the north-east of the town centre, within 400m (conventional walking distance).

Urban Design and Place Activation

- Use public art and plantings to define a sense of threshold in the town centre.
- Focus vegetation in the town centre on deciduous canopy trees, located on the street edges or in outstands protruding into the street from the pedestrian realm. Preferred species are listed in the urban design guidelines.
- Encourage future commercial buildings to directly face the streetfront with large windows.
- Encourage public art, seating and community activity in under-used sections of road reserve in the town centre.
- Realign the Carngham-Linton Road outside the Royal Hotel to make pedestrian crossing from the pub safer and provide a more pleasant space for al fresco dining.
- Mark out a public viewing point at the car park opposite the Royal Hotel to take advantage of west-facing views and sunset photo opportunities.
- Work with shop owners to introduce more seating and planter boxes outside the General Store and Royal Hotel; with further seating outside the church.
- Where possible, use bluestone blocks and planter boxes in rustic materials (such as timber and corten steel) to mark out pedestrian cut-ins into main roads to slow traffic and reduce crossing distances.
- Promote pedestrian links in the town centre.
- Replace traffic signage north of the Royal Hotel with pedestrian signs and use sculptural elements in the road reserve to create a sense of arrival in the town centre.
- Introduce pedestrian signage south of the CFA Station along Carngham-Linton Road and sculptural elements in the road reserve to create a sense of arrival in the town centre.

Dark Skies

Background



Snake Valley's topography, altitude, lack of intensive development and location all give it a sense of openness and a "dark sky" at night that has spurred a local interest in astronomy. The dark sky is widely appreciated, and provides a point of difference for the town. Equally, the town's topography and lack of light pollution can create stunning daylight views, particularly to the west of the town centre around sunset.

Imagined through an astronomical lens, the network of places in the town centre can be seen as a constellation of places on land that radiate activity. The Dark Sky theme has the potential to attract visitation by providing a point of difference. It also provides cues to inform urban design and public art.

The Dark Sky, however, is an element that requires significant stewardship and care. Planning needs to ensure that development does not introduce significant light pollution, or compromise the sense of openness that helps form the town's viewlines.



Strategies and Actions



Urban Design and Place Activation

- Introduce a set of "Dark Sky Steward" guidelines for residents and business to better inform choices about lighting.
- Consider place-based local laws regulating the use of floodlighting in Snake Valley.
- Through urban design guidelines, ensure that street and public lighting is suitably baffled and directed to minimise spill.
- Support small-scale accommodation offerings near the town centre and rural hinterland that can support night time visitation.
- Offer observation points in the public realm to observe night skies and sunsets (such as the car park across the road from the Royal Hotel).
- Work with the Snake Valley Astronomical Association to develop interpretive signage around astronomy education in the township.
- Use astronomy, the town's skyline and Aboriginal interest in astronomy as potential themes for public art and placemaking.

Advocacy

- Work with regional organisations (such as Ballarat Regional Tourism and the Central Highlands Regional Partnership) to promote the notion of Snake Valley as a Dark Sky Town.
- Seek to work with City of Ballarat and Golden Plains Shire Councils to limit light pollution from future regional urban growth.

Design for community cohesion

Background



A town's form and design can have an important bearing on its sense of community, cohesion and resilience. Snake Valley's historical straggling development pattern has brought about four particular design traits that affect cohesion:

- The historical development of rural living areas that are isolated from town facilities. In some cases these developments are in fire-prone areas, creating further challenges.
- A lack of focused development around the town centre and the historical removal of many commercial buildings.
- The width of the main street and confusing footpath designs that discourage walking to and around the town centre.
- The separation between the town centre and Carngham Recreation Reserve, created by creeklines, topography and historical development patterns.

Addressing these issues presents a vital opportunity to create a more cohesive, resilient community in the medium-long term. Many actions covered in other themes, such as Kickstarting the Heart, are important in this context.

Focusing growth close to the town centre is important in providing more opportunities for people to walk to school or shop and participate in community life. This is key to promoting social cohesion.

At the same time, rural living development in isolated and fire prone areas (particularly to the south of town) needs to be constrained.

Strategies and Actions



Planning Policy Reform

- Prevent further rezoning of land for rural living in fire prone areas south of Snake Valley.
- Introduce Design and Development Overlays for future growth areas to ensure a sense of openness is maintained (through side setbacks, maintaining generous road reserves and restrictions on fencing material).
- Encourage development on land to the north-east of the town centre (particularly within 400m). Use the Township Zone and Low Density Residential Zone in these areas to encourage appropriate lot sizes.
- Run a community design process to develop an outline development plan for new growth area north-east of the town centre, and use the results to inform a Development Plan Overlay applied to the site.

Urban Design and Place Activation

- Support the proposed Snake Valley Linear Park and ensure it is designed to connect to adjacent township areas through safe pedestrian crossing points and wayfinding signage.
- Promote street crossings and links in new development areas to key public facilities (including the future Linear Park and current town centre).
- Use footpath design and informal crossing points to knit the future Linear Park into Snake Valley's fabric.
- Investigate and design safe pedestrian/cycling connections to the town centre from the Pittong-Snake Valley Road intersection through a future Snake Valley Walkability Plan.
- Cluster any future community or health facilities within walking distance (400m) of the primary school/town centre, with links to future growth areas and the Linear Park.

Linking it all together

Background



As the name suggests, this theme both unites and defines the main opportunities and challenges planning must address in Snake Valley. The importance of linking existing foci of activity to create a stronger town centre has been discussed elsewhere in this plan (see page 13).

There are also other important places, such as the Carngham Recreation Reserve and Mag Dam, that can be better tied into the town's fabric.

It is also vital that future infrastructure projects (such as the Linear Park) are connected to the rest of the town through clear pedestrian/cycling access, and through links into new development areas.

Strategies and Actions



Planning Policy Reform

- Use a Development Plan Overlay in new growth areas to ensure they have appropriate pedestrian links to important places such as the town centre and future Linear Park.

Urban Design and Place Activation

- Connect the Recreation Reserve, Town Centre and Mag Dam through improved wayfinding (signage and public art) and pedestrian paths.
- Remove surplus signs around the town centre and introduce more visible wayfinding at major intersections (Carngham-Linton Road and Smythesdale Road, Carngham-Linton Road and Murray Street).
- Develop a walkability plan to further identify and focus on pedestrian links around the town and surrounding rural living areas.



Design with nature

Background



Respecting Snake Valley's unique natural environment and topography is vital to the town's resilience and sense of place. The town has a history of bushfire and flood, and future development needs to mitigate against these risks by avoiding fireprone areas and respecting the ecological function of creeks and drainage lines. Many of Snake Valley's creeklines are on private land, which limit Council's capacity to conduct direct works.

Planning does have an important role in encouraging future development to work with the local environment through better subdivision design, encouraging revegetation in important areas and requiring land owners to commit to appropriate land management as part of the planning application process in sensitive areas.

The Pyrenees Biodiversity Action Plan (Cunningham et al 2016) earmarks bushland to the south and west of Snake Valley (including and outside the Linton State Forest) as being important or of focal importance for their strategic value for biodiversity conservation, and the suitability of predicted future climates.



Strategies and Actions



Planning Policy Reform

- Require land management plans to be submitted with any applications to construct dwellings on land between the town centre and Carngham Recreation Reserve. These plans should detail measures to manage pest plants and animals, and replant native species along creeklines.
- Develop guidelines for residents on indigenous plantings and plantings along drainage lines.
- Discourage any development that involves changing the flow of creeklines or drainage lines.
- Encourage future development to improve the ecological function of creeklines by planting indigenous wetland vegetation.
- Discourage further development in well-vegetated, fire-prone areas to the south of Snake Valley.
- Through further strategic work, develop Environmental Significance Overlays to regulate activity on along creeklines and on blocks covered by bushland (particularly to the south and west of the town centre).

Urban Design and Place Activation

- Seek to promote and restore the ecological function of creeklines on public land by planting indigenous wetland vegetation.

Land Demand Assessment

To understand potential growth pressures on Snake Valley, 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 Snake Valley, the assessment has focused on housing because of the limited amount of commercial and industrial development that has occurred in recent years.

Population growth and peri-urban growth pressures are expected to become increasingly prominent in Snake Valley, particularly as Ballarat grows westward.

Over 2014-2016, 18 building permits for houses were issued for Snake Valley, which is the second highest number behind Beaufort. This equates an average increase of six dwellings in Snake Valley per year, to 14% of all building permits issued for dwellings across the Pyrenees Shire. Many of these dwellings were located in rural living areas outside the town centre, and if left unchecked this trend will contribute to the fragmentation of the town.

VIF does not provide a full population or dwelling growth projection for Snake Valley. It does provide figures covering a broader region within Pyrenees Shire. This region takes also takes in Beaufort, Raglan, Waubra 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 Beaufort will provide for around 70% of this demand, with Snake Valley catering for around 15%-20% and Raglan and Waubra the remainder.

On this basis, an annual demand for 6-8 new dwellings can be expected in Snake Valley over the next five years. While some of this demand can be catered for via infill growth, a staged incremental release of land immediately north-east of the town centre (north of Murray Street) over 5-10 years is desirable as a way of strengthening the town centre.

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

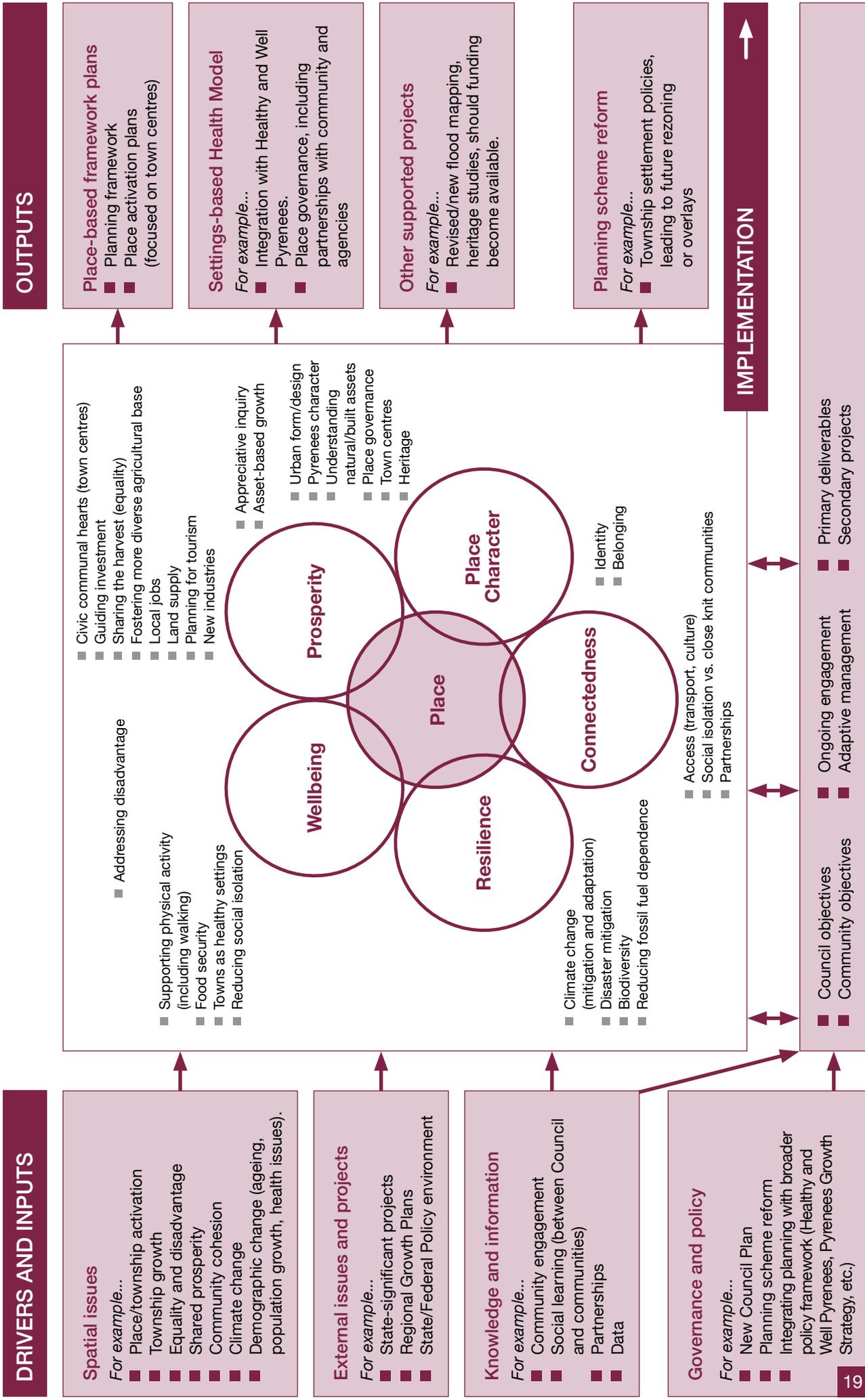
The Snake Valley Township Framework Plan is one of nine settlement plans Council is producing as part of the Pyrenees Futures project. Each settlement plan is based on an ecological framework that recognises five interlinked factors that sit at the heart of a place.

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

Page 19 *Pyrenees Futures Ecological System*
Page 20 *Existing Conditions Plan*
Page 21 *Framework Plan*
Page 22 *Place Activation*



Pyrenees Futures Ecological System

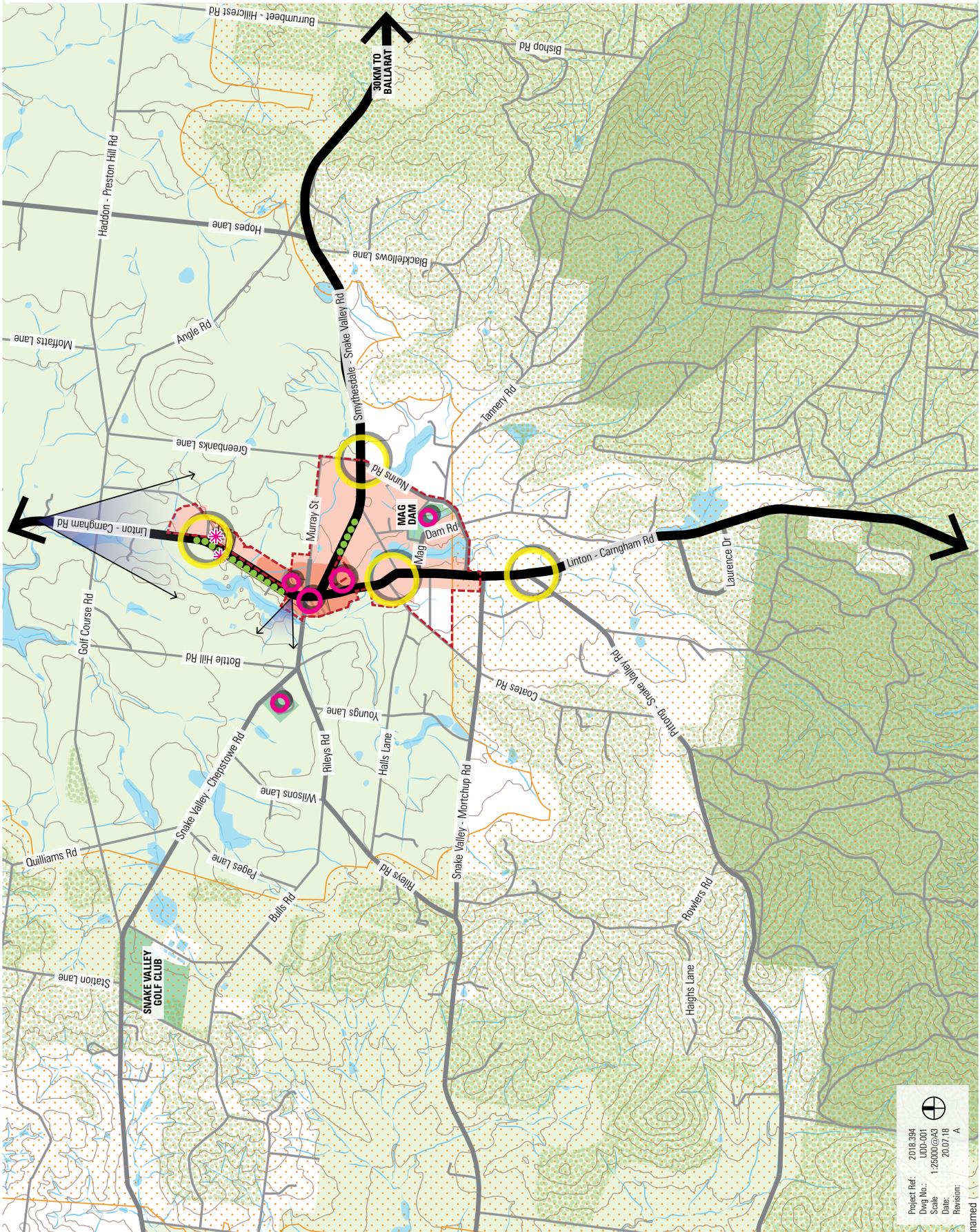




Pyrenees Futures: Snake Valley

Existing Conditions Plan

- Town boundary
- Town entry
- Node
- Landmark
- Existing trees
- Key view
- Arterial road
- Local street
- Rural lane
- Core township area
- Township
- Public open space
- Existing heavily vegetated area
- Farming zone
- Public conservation and resource zone
- Bushfire management overlay
- Heritage overlay
- Waterbody
- Contour



Project Ref: 2018.394
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: 1:25000@A3
 Date: 20.07.18
 Revision: A

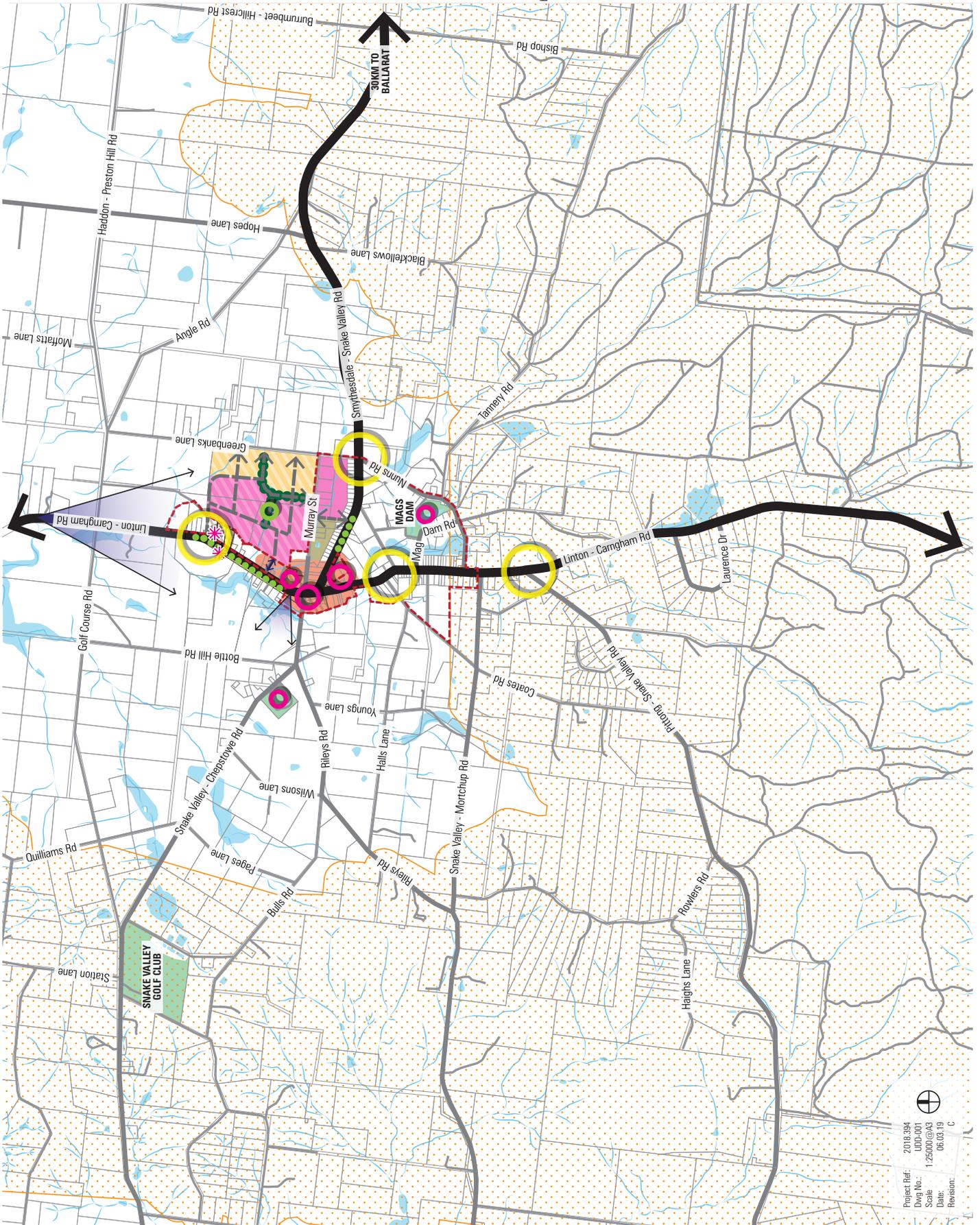
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Pyrenees Futures: Snake Valley

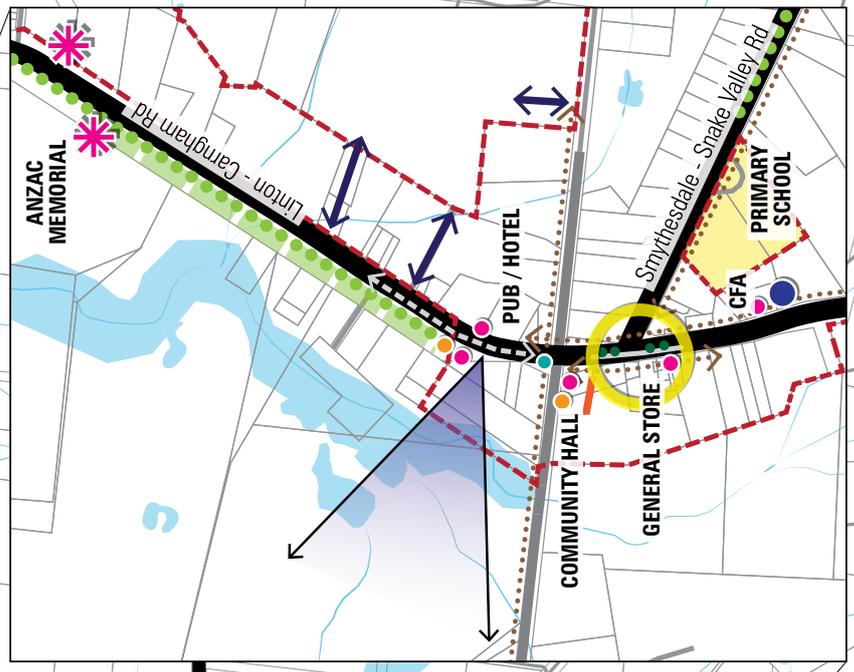
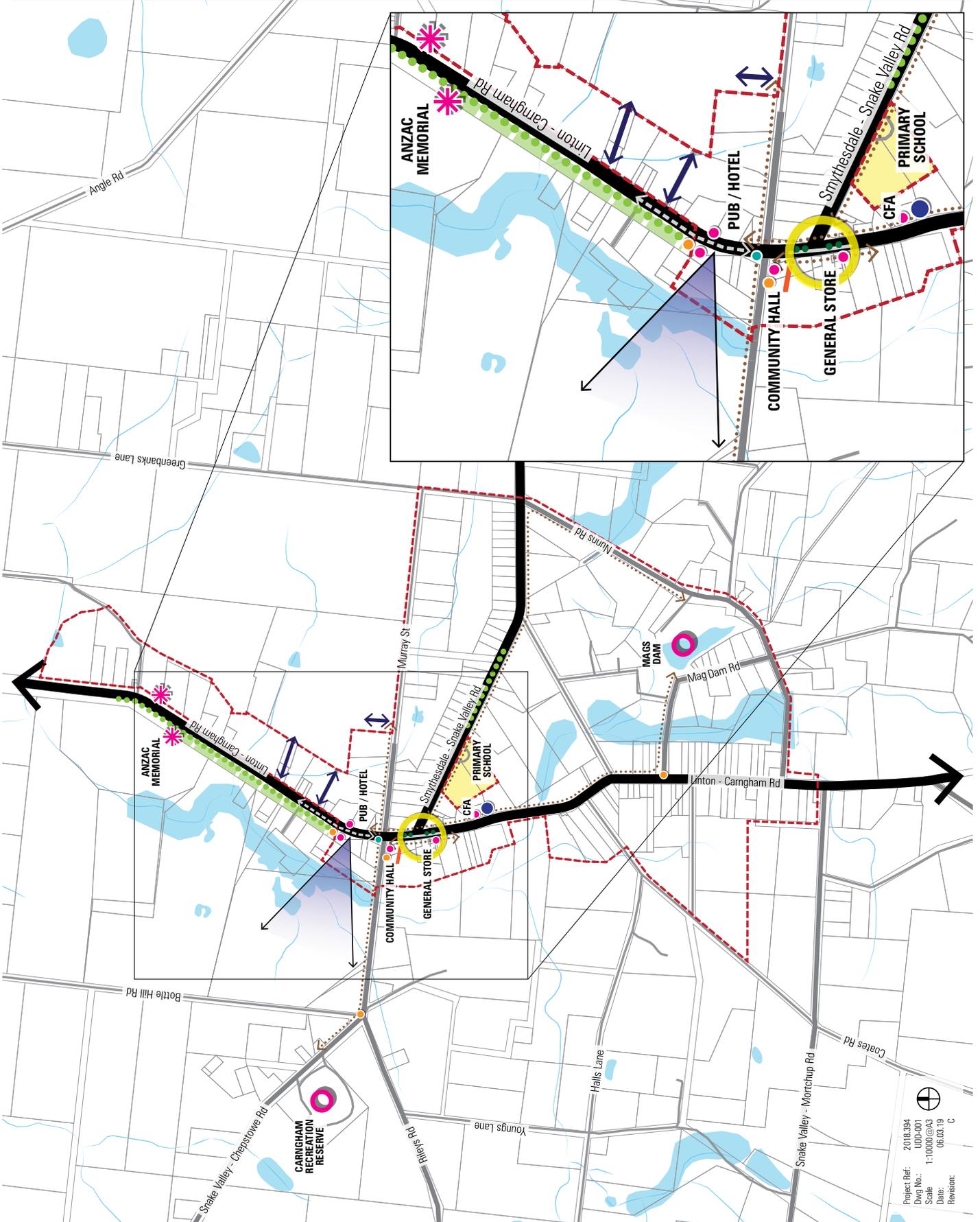
Framework Plan

- Legend**
- Town boundary
 - Town entry
 - Node
 - Landmark
 - Existing trees
 - Potential future open space
 - Key view
 - Arterial road
 - Local street
 - Rural lane
 - Indicative new road
 - Promote connections between linear park and future development
 - Green corridor and pedestrian connection
 - Core township area
 - Growth area (potential future township zone with DPJ)
 - Proposed low density rural zone
 - Key development site with current permit
 - Remove restructure overlay
 - Public open space overlay
 - Bushfire management overlay
 - Heritage overlay
 - Waterbody



Project Ref: 2018.394
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: 1:25000@A3
 Date: 06.03.19
 Revision: C

- Legend**
- Town boundary: [Red dashed line]
 - Node: [Pink circle]
 - Landmark: [Pink starburst]
 - Redesign intersection for pedestrian safety: [Yellow circle]
 - Defining threshold element: [Blue circle]
 - Artwork / mural: [Orange rectangle]
 - Seating node: [Pink circle]
 - Wayfinding / public art: [Orange circle]
 - Signage reconfiguration: [Green circle]
 - Existing trees: [Green circle]
 - New trees: [Green circle]
 - Key view: [Black arrow]
 - Arterial road: [Thick black line]
 - Local street: [Thin grey line]
 - Rural lane: [Thin grey line]
 - Road narrowing: [Thin grey line]
 - Road reconfiguration: [Thin grey line]
 - Potential key connection to future development area: [Blue double-headed arrow]
 - Upgrade pedestrian connection: [Dotted line]
 - Linear park: [Green rectangle]
 - Public open space: [Light green rectangle]
 - Primary school: [Yellow rectangle]
 - Waterbody: [Light blue rectangle]



Project Ref: 2018.394
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: 1:1000@A3
 Date: 06.03.19
 Revision: C

Implementation plan

Urban Design and Place Activation

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Support Snake Valley Linear Park and ensure designs include pedestrian links to surrounding pathway network	High	Ongoing	Grant funding (TBC)	Grant applications made to Sport and Recreation Victoria
Complete upgrades to pedestrian crossings at intersection of Carngham-Linton and Smythesdale-Snake Valley Roads	High	Within 1 year	Council capital works, estimated <\$40,000	
Develop traffic calming (including a speed hump and customized signage) on the Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road approaching the Woody Yaloak Primary School	High	Within 1-2 years	Council capital works, estimated <\$30,000	Work with school community to design signage.
Work with the Snake Valley CFA to develop a public sculptural point and seating area to define the southern entry point to the town centre	Medium	Within 1-2 years	Capital works/ grant funding, estimated \$10,000	Potential for joint funding applications
Re-align the Carngham-Linton Road outside the Royal Hotel to provide for safer pedestrian movement, slow down vehicles and provide more room for outdoor seating	High	Within 1 year	Council capital works, estimated <\$40,000	
Review wayfinding signage at the intersection of Carngham-Linton and Snake-Valley Chepstowe Roads to provide clearer direction to Recreation Reserve	High	Within 6 months	Council capital works, estimated <\$2,000	
Re-mark the car park across the road from the Royal Hotel, with one row of car parking	High	Within 1 year	Council capital works, estimated \$5,000	
Mark out the public sunset/dark sky viewing point opposite the Royal Hotel with themed signage, Google mapping, concrete surface, seating and a safe pedestrian crossing	Medium	Within 1-2 years	Council capital works, estimated \$10,000	

Urban Design and Place Activation continued

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Commission a Dark-Sky related sculpture for the viewing point and to provide a southern terminus for the future Snake Valley Linear Park	Medium	Within 1-2 years	<\$20,000	
Provide public seating in a social configuration outside the General Store and Hall	High	Within 1-2 years	<\$10,000	
Work with interested community groups to develop a landscaped seating area in the road reserve south of the General Store	Medium	Within 1-3 years	<\$15,000	
Develop pedestrian outstands using bluestone along Carngham-Linton Road between General Store and bus stop to provide for a safe crossing point and tree planting.	Medium	Within 1-3 years	<\$15,000	
Provide a 1.5m wide concrete connecting path between the town centre and Carngham Recreation Reserve	Medium	Within 5 years	<\$100,000	
Design a customized wayfinding sign at the intersection of Mag Dam Road and Linton-Carngham Road, based on waterbirds/wetland themes	Medium	Within 2 years	<\$5,000	Work with Mag Dam Committee of Management and Woody Yaloak Primary School
Develop an outdoor art exhibition space on the southern wall of the Snake Valley Hall, which can be used for community exhibitions	Medium	Within 2 years	<\$5,000	Work with Hall Committee
Develop a wombat crossing along Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road, outside the entry to the school.	High	Within 1-2 years	<\$20,000	

Further planning work

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Develop Dark Sky Steward guidelines for residents and businesses	High	Within 1-2 years	Internal resources	Collaborate with Snake Valley Astronomical Association
Develop Local Laws fostering improved amenity, management of car bodies and litter in township area	High	N/A	N/A	Refer to Council's Local Laws review
Develop a walkability plan for Snake Valley, including an audit of current pedestrian infrastructure, surface material guidelines, current gaps and key projects	High	Within 1-2 years	\$15,000	Draw on engagement conducted as part of Pyrenees Futures to help identify key routes.
Produce outline development plan for north-east growth area	Medium	Within 1-3 years	\$15,000	Run design charette involving community groups and servicing authorities. Pre-requisite before rezoning is pursued.
Pursue rezoning and application of Development Plan Overlay to north-eastern growth area	Medium	Within 2-3 years	\$5,000	Unlock once outline development plan completed
Review of planning controls along creeklines (including flood modelling and environmental significance mapping)	Medium	3-5 years	\$20,000	

Advocacy

ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Work with City of Ballarat to mitigate light pollution from westward development	High	Ongoing	Establish internal working party across Councils	
Support Snake Valley Linear Park	High	Ongoing	Feasibility study Supported concept designs	Grant funding application through Sport and Recreation Victoria
Work with Ballarat Regional Tourism to promote Dark Sky Town status	Medium	Ongoing	Develop dark sky viewing point	In collaboration with Snake Valley Astronomical Association.



Urban Design Guidelines

These guidelines focus on the design of public realm in and around Snake Valley'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 promoting a rustic sense of place, links to landscape and the geology of the region (including bluestone and quartz), as well as prominent colours and materials on public buildings.

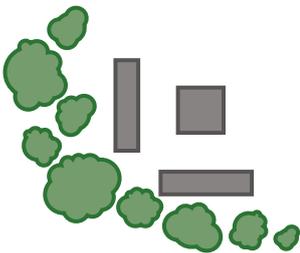
Public Seating Design

- 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).
- Public seating in the town centre should use the backs of seats or structures like fences to provide an edge.
- Seating should be provided on pedestrian trails around the town in locations with attractive viewlines and landscape shelter (from trees or buildings).
- Permanent seats should include backs and focus on providing for ergonomic design.

Public Art Themes

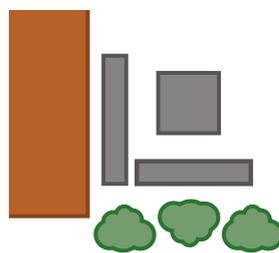
- The Dark Sky town, including prominent constellations and links to Aboriginal astronomy.
- Wetland environmental themes to mark out signage and sculpture as wayfinding links along Mag Dam Road.
- Wathaurong links to landscape (in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party), including the story of Turrumcurrumbet and the use of stone ovens.
- Links to waterways and the natural environment of the state forest around Snake Valley.
- Horseriding and sheep grazing heritage.

Seating Concept 1



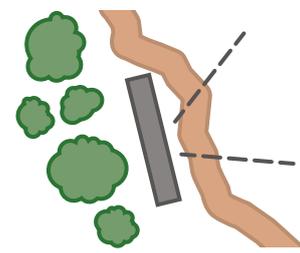
Benches placed at right angles with their backs to established vegetation, promoting social interaction and a safe edge.

Seating Concept 2



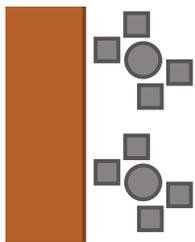
Benches placed at right angles to promote social interaction - one bench sitting against the wall of an established building, with plantings behind the second to provide a softer edge to roads or pathways. Potential for table in the middle.

Seating Concept 3



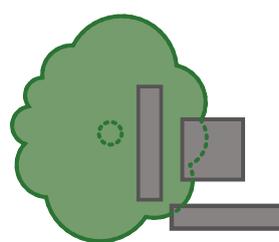
Lone bench placed along a path, facing an attractive landscape viewline. Single benches should be placed in locations that encourage contemplation and taking in an attractive view, but otherwise avoided.

Seating Concept 4



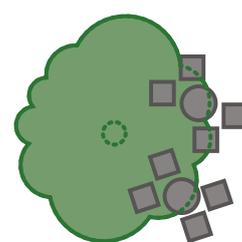
Temporary seats and tables can be placed in configurations that encourage social interaction, against building edges and oriented so minimise exposure to prevailing winds.

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

Promote provisions of the Pyrenees Shire Heritage Precinct Study relating to urban design in Snake Valley, including:

- The use of traditional construction materials including horizontal white weatherboard cladding and non-zincalume sheet metal.
- Encourage signage to reflect colours of commercial and public buildings.
- Discourage the use of fences that obscure views of places or building frontages from the streetfront.
- When constructing concrete kerbs and channels, use pigment and forms that reflect bluestone construction.
- Use bluestone blocks to create street outstands to protect tree plantings and the edges of pedestrian crossings.
- Use bluestone blocks or pigmented concrete to create a bluestone appearance on traffic islands.

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 indigenous tree species in new residential areas, while using deciduous canopy trees in the town centre.
- Promote social cohesion in new development areas by preventing culs-de-sac or loop roads.
- Require new development areas to have direct links to the Snake Valley Linear Park, and access to a pedestrian path link to the town centre along a spine road.

Species Guide

Tree planting within the town centre should focus on using exotic canopy trees to create a stronger sense of threshold, while using strappy green leafed vegetation to soften edges and promote a link to the town's creeklines.

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

Exotic/Canopy Species

- *Quercus canariensis* (Algerian Oak)
- *Lagerstroemia indica* (Crepe Myrtle)
- *Quercus robur* (English Oak)
- *Quercus coccinea* (Scarlet Oak)
- *Ulmus glabra* (Scotch Elm)

Indigenous Species

- *Acacia implexa* (Lightwood)
- *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle)
- *Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood)
- *Allocasuarina littoralis* (Black She-oak)
- *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping She-oak)
- *Banksia marginata* (Silver Banksia)
- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum)
- *Eucalyptus ovata* (Swamp Gum)
- *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna Gum)
- *Callistemon paludosus* (River Bottlebrush)

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Pyrenees Futures in Snake Valley: Your Views

What's this all about?

Over July and August 2017, Council worked with Snake Valley 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 Snake Valley, what they love about the town, characteristics that need to be preserved or built on, and what people want 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 Snake Valley over the next ten years. This plan also seeks to deliver quick, low-cost improvements to the public realm in Snake Valley.

This process has involved more than 80 people in a range of forums including:

- Dedicated community workshops
- Outreach sessions with community groups and representatives
- A Saturday morning drop-in session at the Snake Valley General Store
- Joining the Woody Yalloak Primary School's weekly Woody Walk
- Discussions with service authorities and Council staff
- Surveys run online and in hard copy at the Snake Valley General Store.

This summary breaks down 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 guide how the town looks, feels and functions. Many of these themes are linked and the plans that they will inform will be placed on public exhibition early in 2018.

The information from this engagement process will be blended with research and technical analysis that 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 or contact Council's Planning Department on 5349 1100 or via futures@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

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





Theme 1: A rural atmosphere: Off the beaten track, close to Ballarat

Snake Valley has a special sense of place, informed by the area's topography, the sweeping rural landscape, rich history and its location away from major highways but within a short commute of Ballarat.

The town has an openness that people value, formed by wide streets, generous side setbacks on housing lots, low-rise built form and wide viewlines. People want to ensure development does not compromise the town's peaceful, rural feel, and that the interface to Ballarat is carefully managed.

Part of the town's rural feel involves opportunities to access state forest to the south and to participate in activities like horseriding and cycling. There are varying views on future subdivision sizes, with many wanting to see lot sizes above 800m², while others would like to see some provision for well-designed housing that is suitable for older people that cannot maintain larger holdings. There is a widely held view that future subdivisions will need to be carefully planned to consolidate the town centre while preserving the town's distinct ambience.

Theme 2: A town with heritage, quirk and character

What's in a name? Well, potentially a lot. Local residents recognise the potential to draw from Snake Valley's name through public art, urban design and other activities to further entrench a unique character and sense of place. The town has many artists and community groups that can inform and promote and co-create this sense of place, as well as a strong sense of pride in the area's Aboriginal and post-European settlement heritage.

Snake Valley retains a spine of important heritage places, mostly located along the Carngham-Linton Road, that contribute to its character. The spire of the bluestone Carngham Uniting church stands out like a beacon on Snake Valley's northern approach, while town's other churches, the pub, hall, general store and war memorial are among other special places that are heritage listed and contribute to the town's look and feel. People value these places as landmarks and as centres for social interaction.

Many residents have encouraged the use of specific materials such as bluestone in the public realm to help promote and re-instate a distinctive sense of place. There is a desire to avoid generic infrastructure design that may compromise local character.

The town's character is also informed by its interaction with nature through Mag Dam, a place many locals see as an under-promoted but much loved gem, and the Linton State Forest to the south.

“ I love the old buildings in Snake Valley. The appearance of the general store, the church and it's large grounds, the quaint little pub and the community hall all create a feeling of age, history, strength and community, things not as abundant in new suburbs.” - Survey response

“ Snake Valley's Township is unique and distinctive because it hasn't been built up with modern buildings. It is still quite a simple looking little town, which is not a bad thing. And has the potential to be enhanced by introducing subtle installations that complement the environment.” - Survey response

Theme 3: Kickstart the Heart

Many community members recognise the potential for a more defined, people-friendly town centre to develop around the general store, pub, hall and school, which are particularly important centres for social interaction. Some of these responses focused on a need to green the town centre, improve its amenity and provide more points of interest along the main street. Planning and urban design can support this by providing a more pedestrian-friendly environment and beautifying the public realm to provide a more pleasant place to stay, visit and linger.

Many residents raised concerns about vehicles speeding through the town, particularly past the school along Smythesdale Road and all along the Carngham-Linton Road. A range of planning and urban design elements will need to be deployed to slow vehicles down and create a sense of arrival in the town centre.

There is also interest in improved promotion of the town centre, including improved signage from nearby arterial roads, and within the town linking the town centre to other facilities and attractions.



Theme 4: Dark Skies

Unlike many towns, Snake Valley lights up at night from above. The dark skies, influenced by a relative lack of light pollution and hilly topography around the town, are internationally recognised and have formed a focus for a local observatory.

The Dark Sky is widely valued and recognised as a point of difference that can be supported through sensitive urban design that minimizes light pollution, by not over-developing the town and by seeking to work with the City of Ballarat around light spillage from the city's western growth.

Snake Valley's topography and west-facing viewlines also provide great vantage points for sunset views and stargazing, which can be promoted through urban design. Astronomy may also provide interesting cues for public art and urban design.

Theme 5: Design for community cohesion

Snake Valley's sense of community is widely valued, and should be further supported through appropriate design and planning. Better defining the town centre is important in this regard, and there is wide support for a proposed linear park along the Carngham-Linton Road that is being considered as part of a separate Council project. It should be noted that this Framework Plan will include measures to ensure this linear park links in with the town centre.

Some community members raised the need to minimise the development of rural living lots that are isolated from the main town centre, while others raised the potential for small-scale events or markets to be held on public land around the main street.

Theme 6: Linking it all together

Snake Valley's straggling form has made linking important public places challenging. Wayfinding, signage and walkability are highlighted as areas for improvement. People on main roads near Snake Valley don't necessarily know what's there, and better signage can bring people into town to access shops, businesses and facilities.

There is a broad desire for an improved quality and maintenance of walking trails in the town, including connections to Mag Dam, the school, recreation reserve and paths around the town centre.

Signage and urban design are vital in better linking local assets like the recreation reserve and Mag Dam with the town centre, as well as encouraging people to explore the area's natural assets such as the Linton State Forest and Mount Emu.

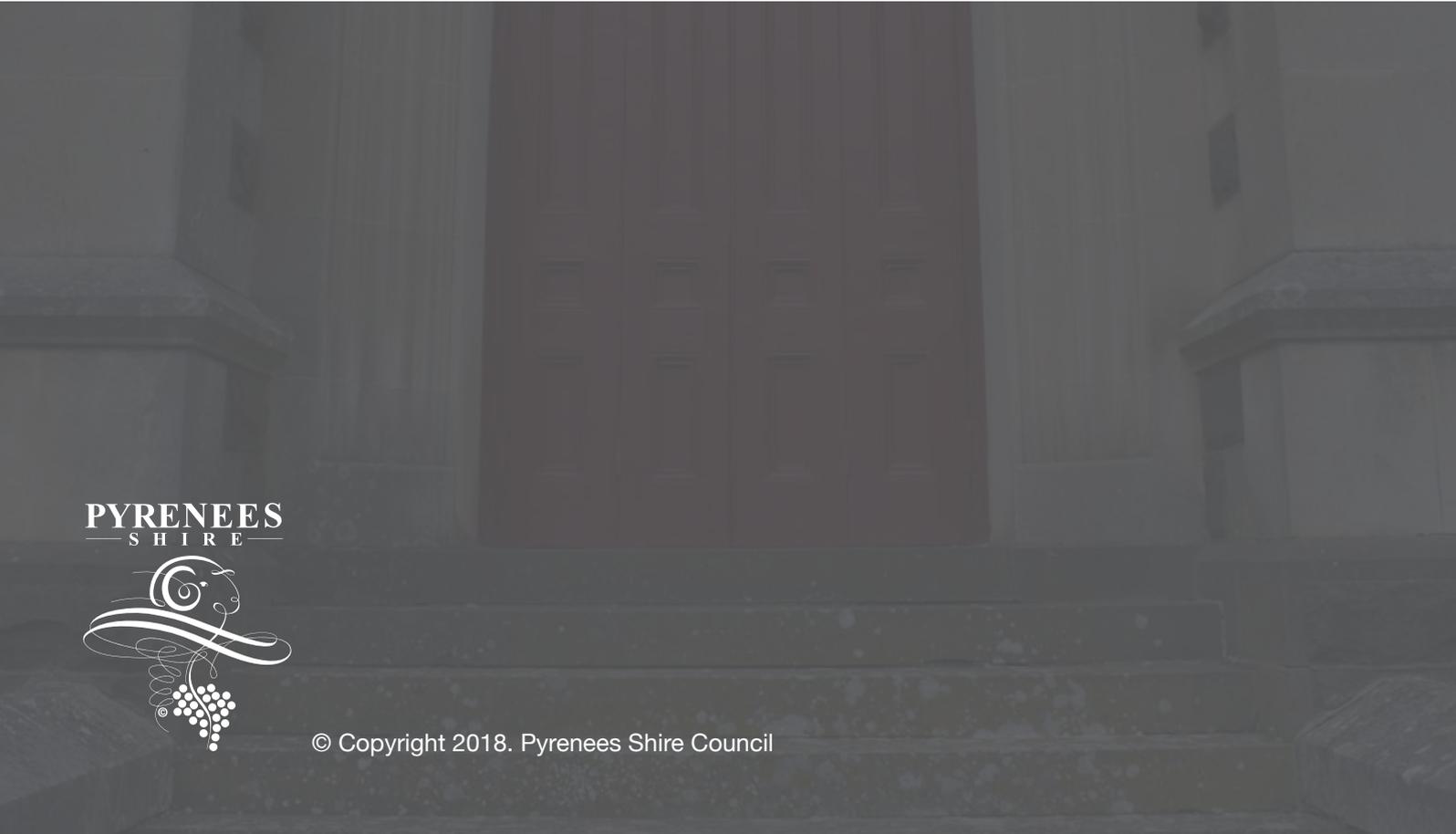
Another element of linking the town is better defining its entrances, particularly from the south and west. This provides a range of benefits including potentially slowing down traffic through town and creating a stronger sense of arrival.

The town's character is also informed by its interaction with nature through Mag Dam, a place many locals see as an under-promoted but much loved gem, and the Linton State Forest to the south.

Theme 7: Plan with nature

The creeklines and bushland around Snake Valley contribute to the town's character, but they also constrain the town's development and require a sensitive approach to environmental management.

The need for planning to focus growth away from fire-prone bushland to the south and west of the town centre is recognised. Many responses also raise the importance of planning with the waterways that flow through Snake Valley in addressing drainage issues, protecting the environment and mitigating potential flooding in future. These waterways and seasonal drainage lines are also an important part of Snake Valley's character.



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