



ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS

Latrobe City Council

Retail Strategy

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for



by

Essential Economics Pty Ltd (Ethos Urban)

May 2019

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Draft report V2	Jack O'Connor	5 April 2019	Nick Brisbane Latrobe City Council	5 April 2019 9 April 2019
Final draft report	Nick Brisbane	11 April 2019		
Final report V1	Jack O'Connor	14 May 2019		
Final report V2	Jack O'Connor	18 June 2019		

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategy Background

Latrobe City Council engaged Essential Economics and Ethos Urban to prepare the Latrobe City Retail Strategy (the Retail Strategy) which provides the strategic basis to co-ordinate future planning and development of the municipality's retail sector and activity centres.

The Retail Strategy comprises two documents which should be read in conjunction:

- A **Background Research and Analysis Report** (the **Background Report**) which provides the analytical basis and background research supporting the Retail Strategy; and
- The **Retail Strategy & Implementation Plan (this document)** providing the vision, objectives and actions to guide future decision-making with respect to retail centre development.

Latrobe City Retail Strategy Context

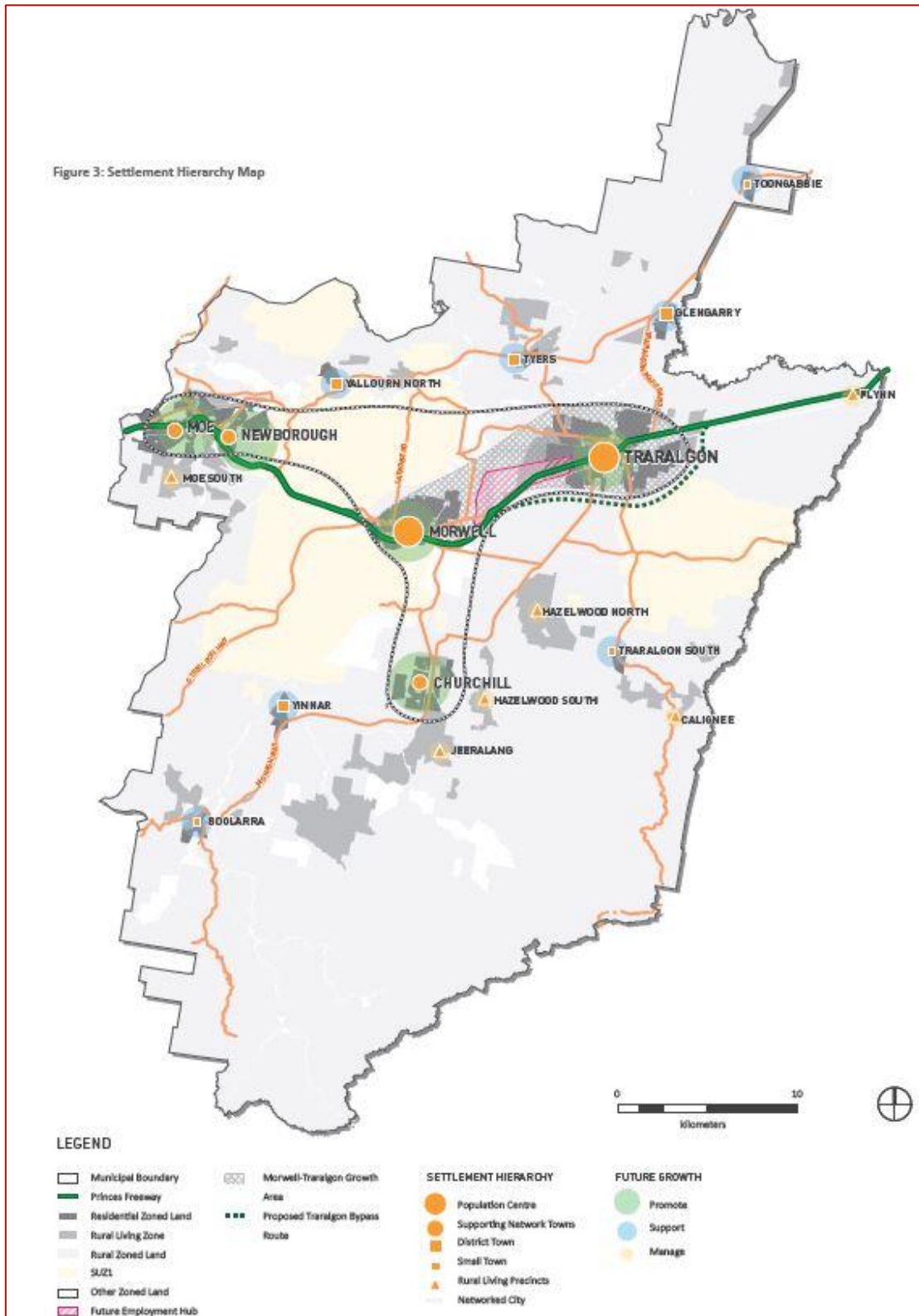
Latrobe City is located in the Gippsland region of Victoria, just under two hours' drive from metropolitan Melbourne. The municipality's four major towns – Moe-Newborough, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill – function as a networked 'regional city' by virtue of their relative proximity and interconnectedness. Refer Latrobe City Settlement Hierarchy (figure on the following page).

Population growth is a major factor that drives demand for new retail development. Latrobe City's population is forecast to increase by +8,720 persons over the next 15 years (to 2033). For reference, a catchment of 8,000-10,000 persons typically supports a full-line supermarket. Growth is projected to be broadly in-line with recent historic trends, with Traralgon to accommodate the majority of forecast growth.

Demand for approximately +42,000m² of additional retail floorspace is forecast over the 2018-2033 period, with the majority of additional retail floorspace (+35,000m²) attributed to non-food retailers, retail services and bulky goods retailing.

Accounting for approved developments (which amount to some 9,000m² of floorspace) and potential for existing vacant floorspace to absorb up 10,000m² in future demand, potential exists for approximately +23,000m² in new retail floorspace. As noted above, the majority of this floorspace demand is for non-food merchandise. Consequently, limited scope exists for new local or neighbourhood centres to be developed (outside of already approved developments) in the 15-year horizon due to the limited anticipated demand for food, liquor and groceries retail.

Latrobe City Settlement Hierarchy



Source: Latrobe City Council

Key Considerations for the Retail Strategy

The **Latrobe Retail Strategy – Background Report** highlights a number of important considerations that form the basis for the preparation of this Strategy and Implementation Plan:

- The Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework provide a robust strategic basis which the Latrobe Retail Strategy can build upon.
- Latrobe City contains an established hierarchy of retail centres which is a legacy of historic urban development and significant investments in the retail and commercial sectors and urban infrastructure.
- Traralgon has been the historic focal point for population growth and private sector investment in Latrobe City; forecasts indicate that Traralgon will continue to be the major focus for population growth in the municipality.
- A number of centres in Latrobe City are currently experiencing high retail vacancy rates, including Moe CBD (south of the railway line), Morwell CBD (north of the railway line), Mid Valley Shopping Centre, and a number of local centres.
- Current trends influencing the retail sector include demographic changes, an historically high level of household debt, the emergence of online shopping and digital platforms, and increased competitive pressures from new retail formats and market entrants.
- Local centres and small town centres play an important role in providing convenience retail for residents. Local centres are particularly vulnerable to competitive pressures from higher-order centres and can suffer from high vacancies and dereliction. Retailing in small towns is often supported by the spending of tourists and other visitors.
- Retail trade is the second largest sector (after Health Care & Social Assistance) in Latrobe City's economy and will play an important role in the broader transition of Latrobe City's economy to a more diverse economic base.

Latrobe City Retail Strategy Vision

Latrobe City's vibrant retail centres provide access to retail services for residents and visitors, contribute to the municipality's diversified employment and economic base, and are places where community members meet and interact. Collectively, the role and function of individual retail centres is complementary in nature, supporting the viability of individual centres in view of Latrobe City's unique settlement structure and function as a regional 'networked city'.

Local and Neighbourhood Centres foster liveability through their accessibility and convenience, while higher-order centres provide an expanded range of products, services, brands and experiences expected in a Regional City. Rural town centres, both small and large, facilitate local access to convenience retail, are also places of interest for visitors, and support community solidarity.

Retailers and centres are at the forefront of new trends and respond to the ever-changing nature of retailing, including changes in consumer preferences and new market entrants.

Objectives and Implementation Plan

The following six Objectives are derived from the Vision Statement and form the basis of the Action and Implementation Plans:

- Objective 1:** Support the viability of Latrobe City's Retail Centre Hierarchy.
- Objective 2:** Support the trading performance and viability of Latrobe City's higher-order retail centres.
- Objective 3:** Ensure convenient and accessible retail services through viable neighbourhood centres, small town centres and local centres.
- Objective 4:** Reduce retail vacancy rates and improve trading performance of under-performing centres.
- Objective 5:** Ensure retail centres in Latrobe City are well-designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business and participating in community activities.
- Objective 6:** Support a dynamic retail sector that is responsive to changing consumer preferences and market trends.

Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy

Retail centres form part of a 'hierarchy' of centres, with different levels or centre categories within the hierarchy performing different roles and functions. Larger centres perform higher-order functions in the delivery of regional and sub-regional services, while smaller centres perform functions that are typically focused at the neighbourhood or local level. Collectively, retail centres form a network of centres that provide residents and visitors with convenient access to essential facilities and services.

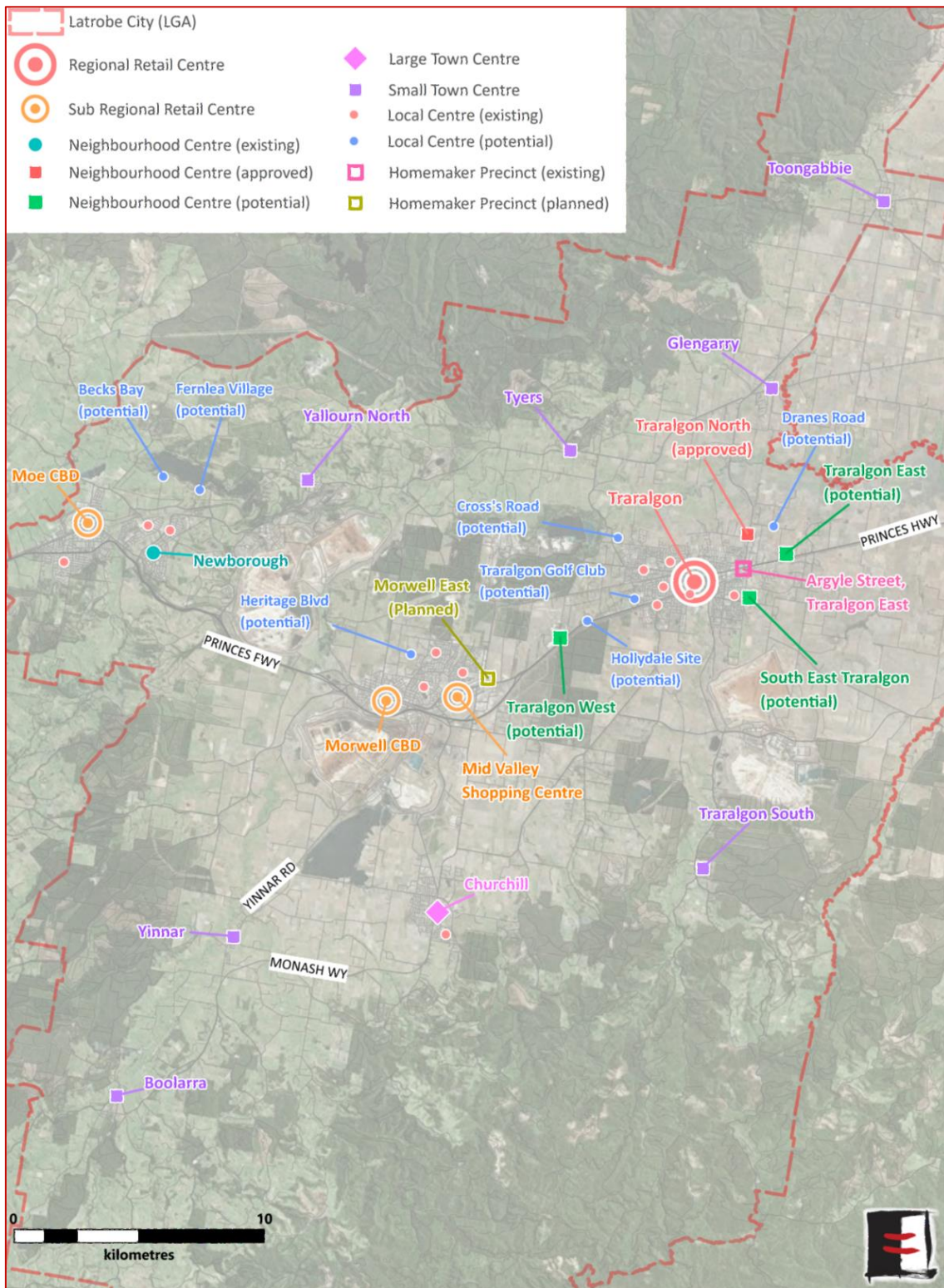
The identification of a retail hierarchy in land use planning and development policy is a means of:

- Providing high-level guidance in terms of the location, scale and nature of investment and land uses intended for retail centres.
- Ensuring policy reflects the very different but complementary role and function of various centres within the hierarchy.
- Creating a coherent network of retail centres which meet the various needs of the community at the locations where these needs can, and should, be met.
- Directing the planning and provision of transport infrastructure and other aspects of urban development influenced by retail centres.

The hierarchy of retail centres in Latrobe City consists of the following:

- One Regional Retail Centre (Traralgon CBD)
- Three Sub-Regional Retail Centres (Moe CBD, Morwell CBD, Mid Valley)
- One Large Town Centre (Churchill)
- One existing Neighbourhood Centre (Newborough – junction of Monash Rd and Rutherglen Rd), one approved (Traralgon North) and three potential (Traralgon East, South East Traralgon, and Traralgon West)
- Seven Small Town Centres (Glengarry, Yallourn North, Boolarra, Yinnar, Tyers, Traralgon South and Toongabbie)
- Numerous Local Centres (eg. Henry Street, Traralgon)
- One existing Homemaker Precinct (Argyle Street, Traralgon) and one planned (Morwell East).

Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy



Essential Economics with Map Info, Streetpro and BingMaps

Note: Further work will be required to determine the exact location of 'potential' centres.

INTRODUCTION

Latrobe City Council commissioned Essential Economics and Ethos Urban to prepare the Latrobe City Retail Strategy 2019 (the Retail Strategy). The purpose of the Retail Strategy is to provide the strategic basis to co-ordinate the future planning and development of retailing in Latrobe City.

The previous municipal-wide strategic assessment of the Latrobe City's retail sector was the *Latrobe City Council Retail Strategy Review*, undertaken by MacroPlan in 2007. Now is an opportune time to prepare a new Retail Strategy in view of the passage of time (11 years), changes in the strategic planning context at both a State and Local level, and new trends affecting the retail sector.

Purpose

The main purpose of this Strategy is as follows:

- 1 To guide retail planning and development in Latrobe City over the next 15 years.
- 2 To provide an indication of the retail development opportunities for the City to 2033, including the quantum and type of new retail floorspace that may be supported.
- 3 To provide guidance on the appropriate location, format and timing of future retail development.
- 4 To identify a retail (or centres) hierarchy, as well as an overarching vision, objectives and actions that will guide the future planning and development in Latrobe City.
- 5 To identify and make recommendations for modifications to the Local Planning Policy Framework in the Latrobe Planning Scheme to provide guidance for assessing development applications.

Report Format

The Retail Strategy comprises two documents which should be read in conjunction:

- A **Background Report** providing the background research and analysis, including a detailed assessment of the demand and supply for retail development. The Background Report comprises two parts:
 - Part A – Background Report and Analysis – outlines the locational, economic, development and policy aspects that currently influence the planning and development of retail and activity centres in Latrobe City.
 - Part B – Centre Profiles – provides an overview of each main retail centre in Latrobe including layout, key statistics, issues and opportunities.

Preparation of the Background Report was informed by detailed fieldwork, including a survey of retail floorspace of Latrobe City retail centres undertaken by the Consultant in September 2018, as well as stakeholder engagement workshops and one-on-one interviews with local businesses and government representatives (undertaken in October 2018). Issues and opportunities associated with Latrobe City's retail and activity centres were identified and discussed during consultations.

- The **Retail Strategy & Implementation Plan (this document)** which identifies the future hierarchy and roles of retail centres in the Latrobe City, and provides the overarching vision, objectives and actions to guide future decision-making, planning and development of the municipality's retail sector. In addition, high-level statutory planning input is provided regarding possible modifications to the Planning Policy Framework arising from recommendations and actions outlined in the Retail Strategy.

This Report

This Report (the **Retail Strategy & Implementation Plan**) includes the following content:

- 1 An overview of the **Latrobe City Retail Strategy Context**.
- 2 An overview of the **Retail Market Outlook for Latrobe City** based on research and analysis provided in the Background Report.
- 3 A summary of the **Key Considerations** derived from the analysis and discussion provided in the Background Report.
- 4 A **Vision Statement** which provides the overarching guidance for future retail development and planning in Latrobe City.
- 5 A description of the **Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy**, including the preferred roles of each centre type.
- 6 A set of **Objectives** to contribute to the realisation of the Vision and provide additional guidance.
- 7 An inventory of detailed **Actions** – suggested measures to achieve the Objectives, as well as associated **Implementation Plans** which identify roles, responsibilities and timing.
- 8 An outline of **Planning Considerations** relating to the Local Planning Policy Framework from a statutory planning perspective.
- 9 A set of **Retail Planning Assessment Criteria** which provides guidance on assessing retail development applications.
- 10 A process for **Monitoring and Review**.

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with other strategies and policies adopted by Latrobe City Council.

Terms and Definitions

Retail Activities

Retail activity is defined according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) classification adopted for the 1991/92 Retail and Services Census but excludes garden supplies, marine equipment and motor vehicle and related traders. This definition of retail is consistent with the normal practice for undertaking retail-economic analysis in Australia.

Retail Categories

For the purpose of this Retail Strategy, estimates of retail floorspace, spending and sales are provided in the following retail categories:

- **Food, Liquor and Groceries (FLG):** Comprises household spending and floorspace involved in the selling of take-home food, groceries and liquor.
- **Food Catering:** Household spending and floorspace associated with cafes, restaurants and take-away food stores.
- **Non-Food:** Spending on non-food retail products such as apparel, homewares, bulky merchandise, leisure goods, other general merchandise and spending on services such as hairdressers, dry cleaning, etc.

GST

All spending and turnover figures expressed in this report are inclusive of GST.

Activity Centres

Activity centres are hubs where people shop, work, meet, relax and often live – they range from local shopping strips to larger activity nodes including white collar employment, community services and regional shopping malls. The planning policy framework identifies four main activity centre categories: Metropolitan Activity Centres, Major Activity Centres, Regional Activity Centres and Neighbourhood Activity Centres (refer www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/activity-centres/activity-centres-overview).

Retail Centres

Retail centres are shopping strips or nodes where people traditionally undertake 'bricks and mortar' shopping activities. Retail centres in Latrobe City are the specific focus of this Retail Strategy.

Individual retail centres form part of a centres hierarchy which identifies the complementary role and function of individual retail centres within a defined region. The retail centres hierarchy in Latrobe City is identified in Chapter 5 of this report.

1 LATROBE CITY RETAIL STRATEGY CONTEXT

Latrobe City is centrally located in Gippsland and easily accessible from Metropolitan Melbourne. Recognised as one of Victoria's four major regional cities, Latrobe City is the fourth largest city in regional Victoria by population and is a major service centre for Gippsland and eastern Victoria. The municipality is well serviced by transport infrastructure, with major freeway access, V/Line service and an airport.



The municipality includes the major towns of Moe-Newborough, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill, as well as the smaller townships of Yallourn North, Tyers, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Yinnar, Boolarra and Traralgon South.

The Latrobe City's settlement structure of four major towns located in relatively close proximity is unique and a historic legacy of the municipality's brown coal mining and electricity generation activities. The proximity of Moe-Newborough, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill has resulted in a significant degree of inter-connectedness between the major towns. Accordingly, the four major towns are referred to collectively as a 'networked-city'. Ensuring these centres perform complementary roles, as opposed to directly competing with each other, will be important to their future viability.

Community infrastructure such as Federation University, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Latrobe Regional Gallery, and various recreational and regional sporting facilities are spread across the main townships of Moe, Morwell, Churchill and Traralgon. The seven smaller rural townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Newborough, Traralgon South, Toongabbie, Tyers, Yallourn North and Yinnar also provide an attractive rural community lifestyle choice.

Robust retail planning relies on a strong understanding of population growth trends and locations. Traralgon's primacy as Latrobe's population growth centre is forecast to continue

broadly in-line with historic trends. Latrobe City's population is forecast to increase by some +8,720 persons over the next 15 years, with 62% of this growth forecast to occur in Traralgon. Both Moe-Newborough and Morwell are forecast to experience moderate population growth in the longer-term (beyond 2023). Encouraging population growth beyond Traralgon will contribute to the improved performance of other centres.

Demand for approximately +42,000m² of additional retail floorspace is forecast over the period 2018-2033, with the majority of additional retail floorspace (+35,000m²) attributed to non-food retailers, retail services, and bulky goods retailing. Both the Moe and Morwell CBDs currently have high vacancy rates and potential therefore exists for these centres to accommodate a proportion of the future demand, providing that efforts to revitalise these centres are successful.

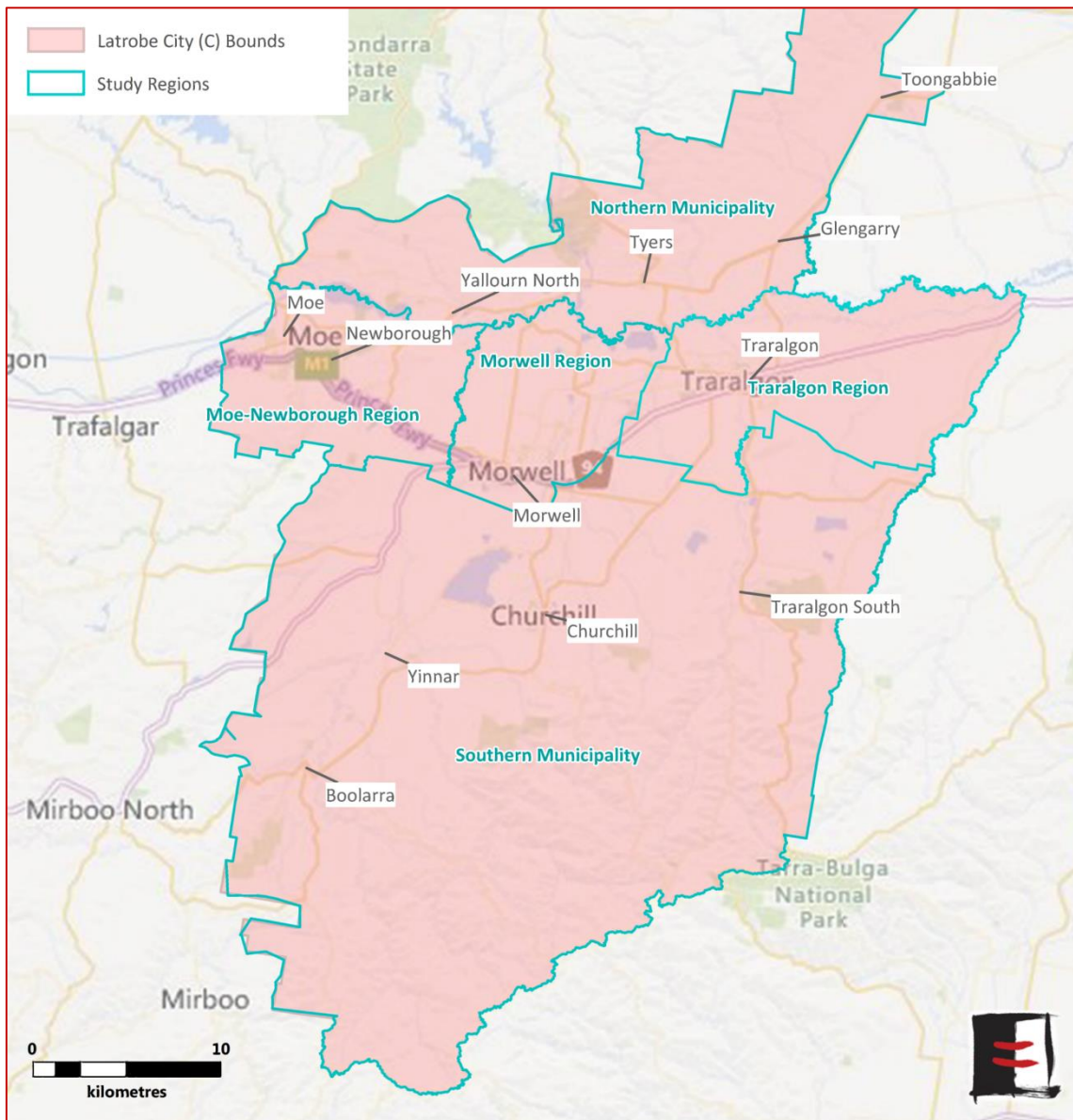
The approved Marshalls Road Neighbourhood Centre in Traralgon North is the only approved centre of any significance to the retail hierarchy. Although numerous other neighbourhood and local centres have been identified in various strategic documents; demand for these centres is only likely to occur in the longer-term and will be dependant on population growth in local catchments.

Importantly, if demand for new Local or Neighbourhood Centres does eventuate, a key role for the Retail Strategy will be to provide a robust decision-making framework to assist Council officers in assessing development proposals from a retail planning perspective.

Latrobe City and the Study Regions identified for the purpose of analysis and discussion are shown in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1: Latrobe City Overview and Study Regions



Essential Economics with MapInfo, BingMaps & StreetPro

2 RETAIL MARKET OUTLOOK FOR LATROBE CITY

Latrobe City's retail market outlook is framed by the following factors: (Refer to the Background Report for more detailed discussion and analysis.)

Moderate Population Growth: Latrobe City's population is forecast to increase over the next 15 years by approximately +8,720 persons; Traralgon is forecast to account for the majority of Latrobe City's population growth over this period (+62% or +3,370 persons). In 2033, Latrobe City's population is forecast to reach approximately 83,860 persons (refer Figure 2.1).

Occupied Floorspace: Approximately 227,190m² of occupied retail floorspace exists in Latrobe City's retail centres and comprising (refer Figure 2.2):

- 49,940m² of Food, Liquor and Grocery (FLG) retail floorspace.
- 27,360m² of Food Catering retail floorspace.
- 149,890m² of Non-Food retail floorspace.

The largest individual centres or precincts for occupied retail floorspace are: Traralgon CBD with 62,470m²; Argyle Street Homemaker Precinct (Traralgon East) with 43,440m²; Moe CBD with 34,930m²; Morwell CBD with 31,280m²; and Mid Valley Shopping Centre with 24,520m².

Vacant Retail Floorspace: The Latrobe City's retail vacancy rate is estimated at 11% of total floorspace, which is above the vacancy level generally desired for a large regional retail network (around 5-7%), refer Figure 2.3. The following selected centres and specific areas in centres contribute to a high overall vacancy rate for Latrobe City:

- Mid Valley Shopping Centre, with a vacancy rate of 22% influenced by the closure of Target and Coles in 2018.
- Morwell CBD, with a vacancy rate 16% which includes a high 30% vacancy rate for shopfronts located to the north of the railway line.
- Moe CBD, which has a vacancy rate 11% influenced by a concentration of vacant shopfronts located to the south of the railway line.

Retail Sales and Market Share: In 2018, activity centres in Latrobe City achieved total estimated retail sales of \$1,163m, representing an average trading level of approximately \$5,120/m² expressed in 2018 dollars and inclusive of GST), see Figure 2.4. Latrobe City retailers capture a retail market share estimated at 81%, taking into account a share of retail spending escaping to other centres and a share of sales captured from visitors to Latrobe City. Thus, 81 cents in every dollar spent on retailing by Latrobe City residents is estimated to be spent at shops in the municipality. This represents a relatively captive retail market.

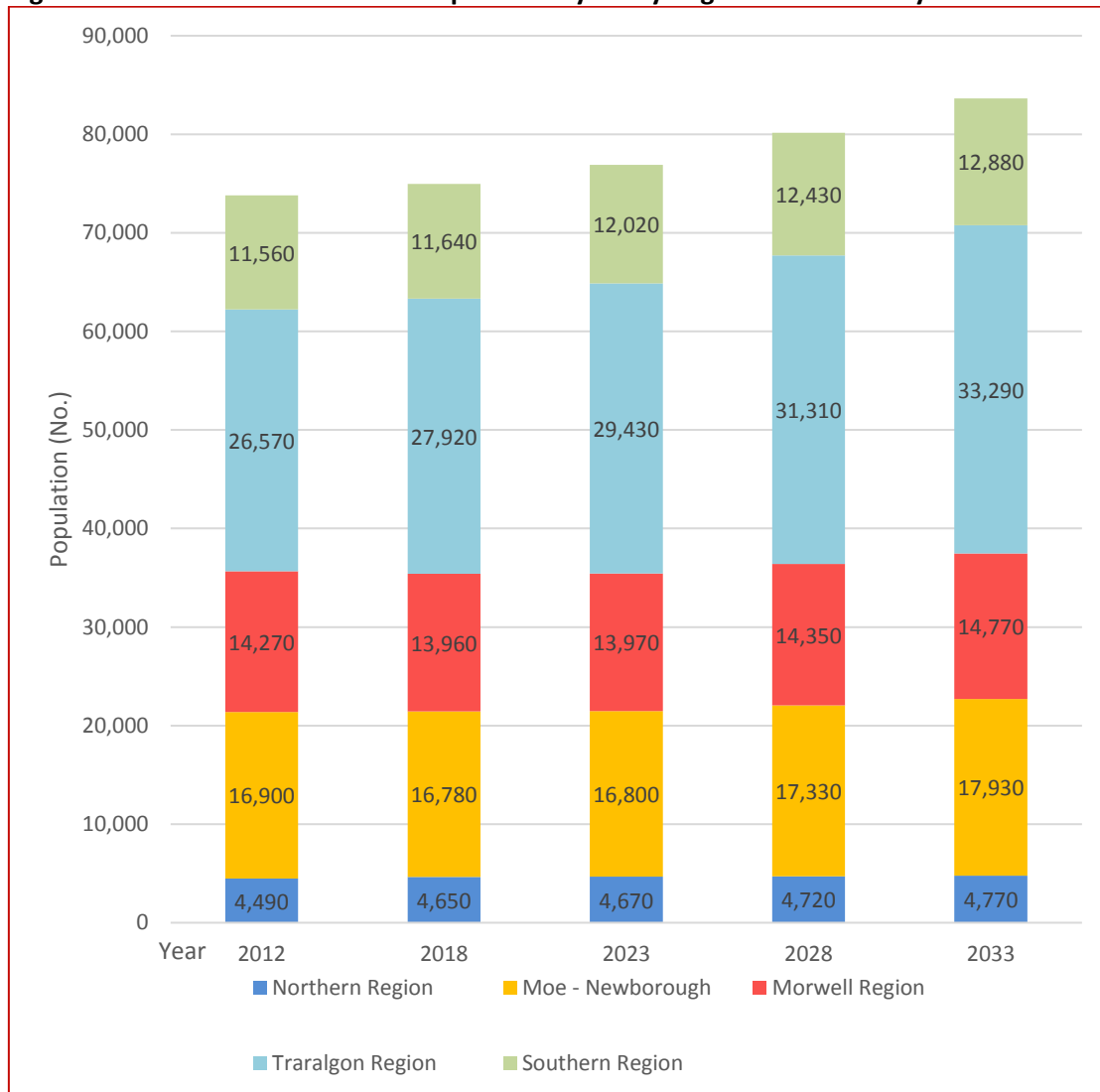
Total retail sales in centres located in Latrobe City are forecast to increase from \$1,163m in 2018 to \$1,496m in 2033, representing annual growth of 1.7% per annum (in constant 2018 dollars). This assumes retail market shares and the share of sales from beyond Latrobe City residents remain constant.

Development Potential 2018-2033: Demand for approximately +42,000m² of additional retail floorspace is forecast over the period 2018 to 2033, comprising: +4,200m² of food, liquor and grocery floorspace; +3,100m² of food catering floorspace; and +35,000m² of non-food (bulky goods, homemaker etc), as shown in Figure 2.5.

This analysis is intended to provide only an indication of the potential level of supportable retail development.

Section 3.5 of this Report provides an overview of future retail development opportunities, including support for planned retail developments, re-use of vacant floorspace, growth in food catering and non-food retailing, and the potential for new Local and Neighbourhood Centres.

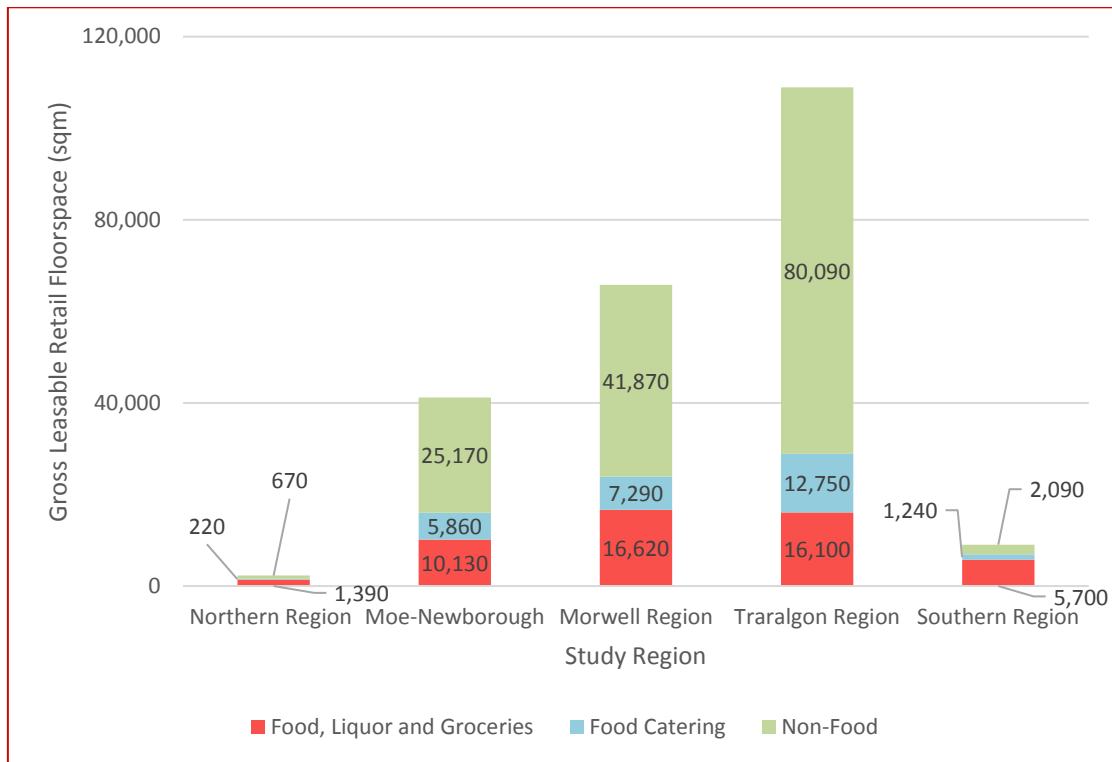
Figure 2.1: Historic and Forecast Population by Study Region – Latrobe City



Source: Essential Economics

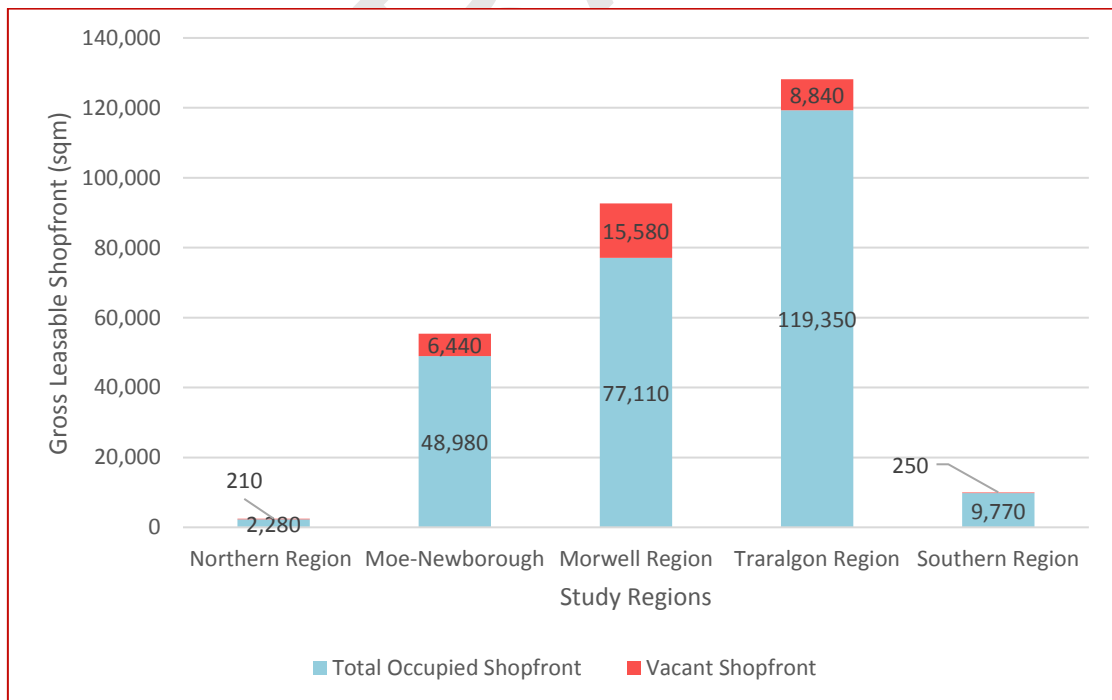
Note: Study Regions do not aggregate exactly to the whole of Municipality population (refer Background Report, Section 1.2)

Figure 2.2: Retail Floorspace (m²) by Study Region – Latrobe City



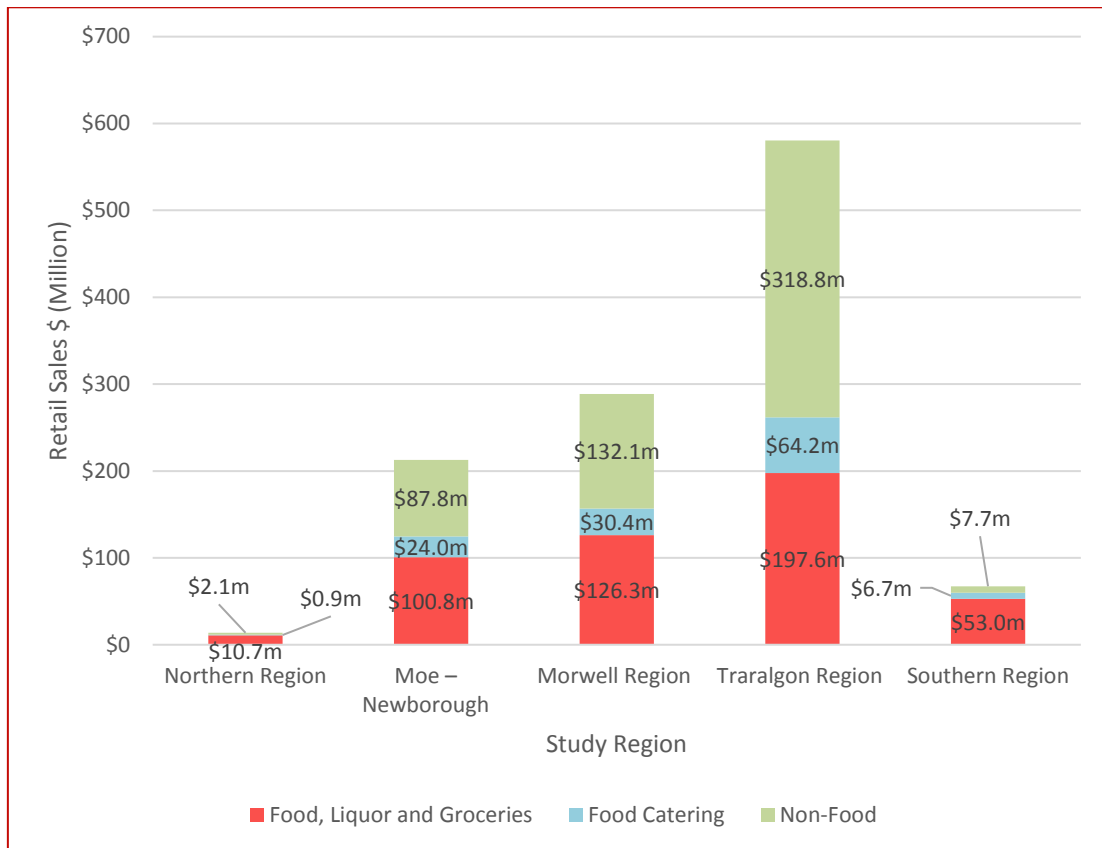
Source: Essential Economics

Figure 2.3: Shopfront Floorspace (m²) by Study Region – Latrobe City



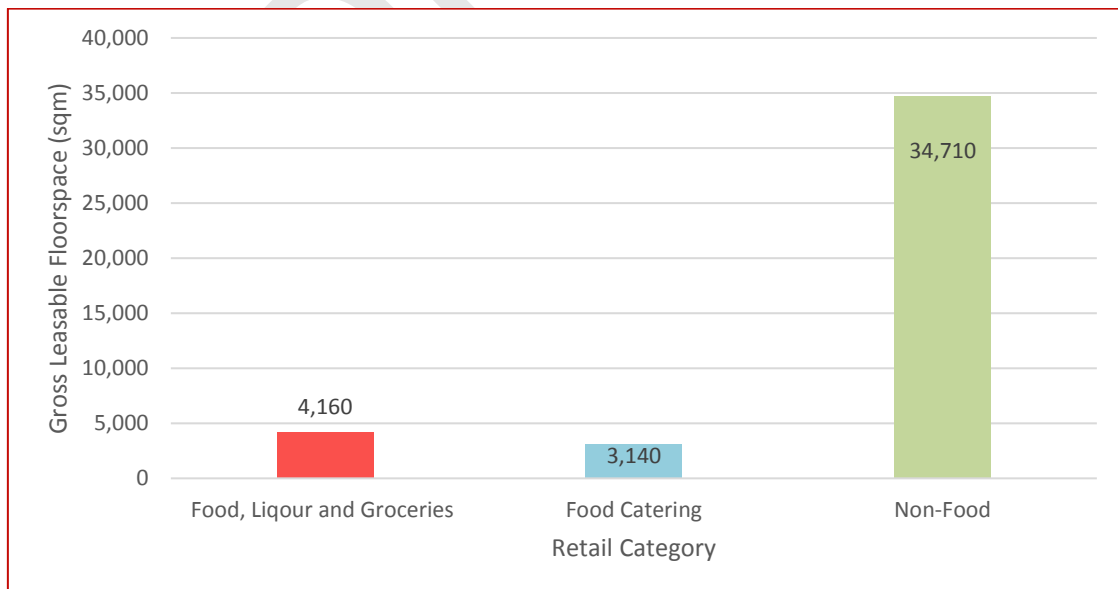
Source: Essential Economics

Figure 2.4: Retail Sales by Study Region – Latrobe City



Source: Essential Economics

Figure 2.5: Retail Development Potential (2018-2033) – Latrobe City



Source: Essential Economics

3 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE RETAIL STRATEGY

The research and analysis presented in the **Latrobe Retail Strategy – Background Report** highlights some important considerations that form the basis for the preparation of this Strategy and Implementation Plan. These considerations are outlined below (more detailed discussion and analysis is provided in the Background Report).

3.1 Build on Existing Planning Policy

The Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework presented in the Latrobe Planning Scheme provide a robust strategic basis which the Latrobe Retail Strategy can build upon (refer Chapter 3 in **Background Report**).

In particular, *Clause 21.07 (Economic Development)* in the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) outlines the key issues, objectives and strategies for activity centre planning in the municipality. In broad terms, *Clause 21.07-2 (Activity Centres)* states that Council supports the existing main town, neighbourhood and small-town centres, and that “*no new centres should be supported unless demand can be demonstrated*”, as well as substantiating that existing centres should not be detrimentally affected. *Clause 21.07* also states that centres should continue to perform complementary roles.

Other State and local clauses, plans and policies of particular relevance to future retailing in Latrobe City include *Clause 11.01-1R (Settlement – Gippsland)*, *Clause 17.02-1R (Commercial Centres – Gippsland)* and *Clause 17.02-1S (Out-of-centre development)* from the Planning Policy Framework (PPF); *Clause 21.02 (Housing and Settlement)*; the *Traralgon-Morwell Growth Framework Plan* (refer *Clause 21.02*); *Live Work Latrobe* (2018); *Traralgon Activity Centre Plan* (2017); *Traralgon Growth Areas Review* (2013, TGAR); *Latrobe City Council Economic Development Strategy* (2016-2020); and numerous structure plans, masterplans and development plans for individual centres. It is noted that Morwell CBD is the only sub-regional centre that does not have a current activity centre plan.

3.2 Support the Existing Retail Hierarchy

Latrobe City contains an established hierarchy of retail centres, a legacy of historic urban development and significant investments in the retail and commercial sectors and urban infrastructure.

A focus of this **Retail Strategy & Implementation Plan** is to ensure that each centre has an identified role and function that contributes to the commercial viability of individual centres, local service provision and a complementary retail offering at the regional level. Latrobe City’s retail hierarchy is defined in Chapter 5.

3.3 Implications of Traralgon-centric Investment

Traralgon has been the historic focal point for population growth and private sector investment in Latrobe City. Forecasts indicate that Traralgon will continue to be the major focus for population growth.

Accordingly, this forecast growth will support retail development opportunities and improved performance of retailers in Traralgon. The comparatively lower population growth forecast for Moe and Morwell is likely to limit the prospects for significant investment in the retail sectors of these towns compared to Traralgon. Accordingly, support should continue to be provided to existing retail centres in Moe, Morwell and other settlements in the municipality which are important regarding their retail service provision and civic function for residents.

3.4 Under-performing Centres

Moe CBD, Morwell CBD and Mid Valley are currently all experiencing high retail vacancy rates. Reasons for the underperformance of these centres include lack of population and spending growth, lack of private sector investment, poor urban environment and public realm, and growth of Traralgon as the major retail centre in the region. Avenues to improve the viability and activity levels within these under-performing centres need to be considered, and include:

- Options to improve urban environments and the public realm.
- Consideration of the optimal land use type in poor-performing precincts. This may involve updating activity centre plans (or preparing an activity centre plan for Morwell) which in turn, will inform any possible changes to land use zones or schedules.
- Consideration of how to connect and integrate poor-performing precincts with better-performing precincts.
- Continued support for higher-density residential uses in close proximity to centres.
- Options to increase office employment in appropriate locations (eg Gov Hub project in Morwell CBD).
- Support the development of niche retail which complements the wider retail offer.
- Support innovative methods of re-use of vacant floorspace that may assist in improving activity levels.



3.5 Future Retail Development Opportunities

Demand for approximately +42,000m² of additional retail floorspace is forecast over the period 2018-2033. This floorspace growth is anticipated to present the following retail opportunities over the next 15 years:

- Support for approximately 9,200m² of approved retail floorspace, including the Traralgon North neighbourhood centre and a small Foodworks supermarket in Moe.
- Potential to re-occupy up to approximately 10,000m² of vacant floorspace in Moe CBD, Morwell CBD and Mid Valley Shopping Centre. For this to occur, the overall operating environment for Moe and Morwell will need to improve in order to attract new retailers and other businesses.
- Potential for the development of vacant Commercial 2 Zoned land in Traralgon and Morwell for dedicated bulky goods retail precincts.
- Incremental growth in food catering is expected to occur as activity centres continue to evolve into more important social and meeting places, providing a wider range of uses than traditional retailing.

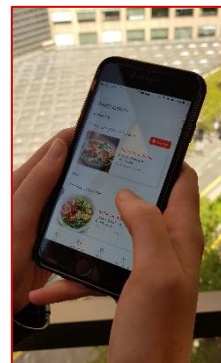
The approved Traralgon North Neighbourhood Centre and the proposed small Foodworks in Moe are anticipated to account for the majority of future demand for FLG floorspace, effectively limiting the scope for new Local or Neighbourhood Centres to be developed in the 15-year horizon (noting that these centres should continue to form part of long-term strategic plans).

*The analysis of retail development opportunities described above and in the **Background Report** is intended to be indicative only. The retail sector is ever-changing, with new retail formats being developed that respond to constantly changing consumer trends. Changes to the structure of retailing and the introduction of new market entrants will continue to influence the analysis of retail development opportunities.*

3.6 Changing Market Conditions and New Entrants

Retail is a dynamic industry which is constantly responding to changing consumer demand and market trends. Current trends influencing the retail sector include demographic changes such as an aging population, smaller household units, historically high levels of household debt, and an increasingly diverse ethnic base; the emergence of online shopping and digital platforms; and increased competitive pressures from new retail formats and market entrants.

Continuous change and innovation in the retail sector is an ongoing challenge for land use and planning policies, and in particular retail and activity centre strategies. For example, the recent arrival of international brands (especially in fashion) and rapid growth in online shopping has contributed to increased pressure on department stores and discount department stores, resulting in some brands closing or down-sizing stores. The recent collapse of menswear chain Roger David is noted in this context. The introduction of ALDI, however, to the Australian market has



contributed to a more competitive supermarket sector, providing downward pressure on prices and contributing to a greater range in consumer choice. All are changes which have implications for how retail activity is accommodated in regions such as the Latrobe Valley.

A more recent example is the German supermarket chain Kaufland, which is a new market entrant in Victoria (and Australia). The population in Latrobe City is sufficient to likely attract the interest of Kaufland. The Kaufland model requires significantly larger sites (of around 2ha) than conventional supermarkets and this may, in some instances, limit Kaufland's ability to locate in established activity centres.

The introduction of new retailers to a local market can provide significant benefits to the region, including new investment, expanded employment opportunities, increased consumer choice, downward pressure on prices, and potential to add further anchor stores to centres, thereby improving the overall level of activity. These benefits need to be considered alongside the potentially undesired outcomes associated with 'out-of-centre' development and the implications such development may have for centres in the retail hierarchy.

Accordingly, an appropriate level of policy flexibility is required when considering the potential for new retail formats or market entrants to Latrobe City. Flexibility in retail policy needs to consider, among other matters, the net community benefit and the implications of new development on the centres hierarchy.

3.7 Support for Local Centres

Local centres are important in providing local residents with a high level of access to day-to-day convenience retail goods and services. Local access to retail facilities promotes walkable neighbourhoods and better health outcomes. These centres are particularly vulnerable to competitive pressures from higher-order centres and changing consumer preferences, and can suffer from high vacancies and dereliction.

High vacancy rates in Local Centres can be attributed to a range of factors, for example, increased trading pressures from other retail formats; changing consumer preferences; lack of investment in the amenity of the centres; poor tenancy mix; a lack of experienced business operators; and limited population growth or even population decline in the immediate surrounding catchment. Several local centres in Latrobe City are observed to have a high level of vacancy, for example Bruton Street and Rintoull Street in Morwell, and Boolarra Avenue and Old Sale Road in Moe-Newborough. Other Local Centres in Latrobe City are observed to be trading well, with Bridle Road in Morwell being one example. Council's Live Work Latrobe – Housing Strategy (2017) seeks to deliver higher densities proximate to Local Activity Centres which will contribute positively to their viability.

In broad terms, local centres in Traralgon are observed to trade at higher levels and have less vacancy issues than local centres in Moe-Newborough or Morwell. This can be primarily attributed to Traralgon's larger and expanding population and higher level of average per capita retail expenditure. While Municipal planning should explore ways to continually improve the performance of local centres the policy 'levers' available to Councils are often limited. Possible ways in which Council can assist Local Centres remain commercially viable include improving streetscapes, ensuring accessible parking for customers, being flexible

regarding policies such as limitations on street-based dining, and being proactive in attracting businesses to the municipality.



3.8 Support for Small Town Centres

Small towns centres serve a retail convenience role for local residents and are also important regarding their business, civic and recreation aspects. The community function of centres in small towns is also important, providing places for people to meet and socialise. This situation is particularly pertinent for rural communities where some residents can be physically isolated, and therefore socially isolated, for reasons that range from distance from main towns, to limited availability of public transport.

Often the level of local resident spending is insufficient to support the retail accommodated in small town centres, with retailers remaining viable by drawing a level of retail sales from tourists and other visitors. This is true to a varying extent for most small towns in Latrobe City.

Council should consider ways to continually improve the performance of centres in small towns, particularly those centres subject to low levels of visitation by locals, tourists and others. Spending from visitors is often critical to supporting retail uses in small towns, particularly instances when a small town's population provides insufficient spending to support basic retail services. Accordingly, the promotion of small town tourism is an increasing focus of regional Council's throughout Australia.



3.9 Importance of Retail in Latrobe City's Economy

Retail trade is the second largest sector in Latrobe City's economy and comprises 3,540 jobs or 11.6% of total employment, as highlighted in the ABS 2016 Census. From 2011 to 2016, the retail sector added approximately +240 jobs. Latrobe City's retail sector is important in the context of the municipality's ongoing economic transition from a high dependence in the mining and energy generation sectors to a more diverse economic base with a greater emphasis on business and consumer services, including retail.

A successful retail sector is also critical to the viability and vitality of activity centres. As the dominant land use in most activity centres, retailing attracts significant patronage to a centre which supports many other commercial, community, civic and entertainment uses. Retailing also performs the important function of distributing goods and services to the local and wider community. A well-planned retail centre hierarchy provides these goods and services in a convenient which is convenient for consumers and supports commercial viability.

The retail sector also plays an important role by providing entry-level jobs opportunities for persons with limited qualifications. A retail job is often the first workplace experience for many young people, typically on a casual basis while still attending secondary school. Retail also provides employment opportunities for mature age persons with limited qualifications.

Given the importance of the retail sector to local employment opportunities, potential exists for the retailing as an industry to have a greater emphasis in Council's Economic Development Strategy.

4 RETAIL STRATEGY VISION

A Vision Statement has been prepared in order to guide the ongoing development of Latrobe City's retail centres. The Vision Statement provides a basis for the identification of Latrobe City's future retail hierarchy in Chapter 5, the *Objectives* in Chapter 6, and the *Action & Implementation Plan* in Chapter 7.

The Vision for retail centres in Latrobe City is as follows.

Latrobe City's vibrant retail centres provide access to retail services for residents and visitors, contribute to the municipality's diversified employment and economic base, and are places where community members meet and interact. Collectively, the role and function of individual retail centres is complementary in nature, supporting the viability of individual centres in view of Latrobe City's unique settlement structure and function as a regional 'networked city'.

Local and Neighbourhood Centres foster liveability through their accessibility and convenience, while higher-order centres provide an expanded range of products, services, brands and experiences expected in a Regional City. Rural town centres, both small and large, facilitate local access to convenience retail, are also places of interest for visitors, and support community solidarity.

Retailers and centres are at the forefront of new trends and respond to the ever-changing nature of retailing, including changes in consumer preferences and new market entrants.



5 LATROBE CITY RETAIL CENTRE HEIRARCHY

Retail centres are shopping strips or nodes where people traditionally undertake 'bricks and mortar' shopping activities. Retail centres in Latrobe City are the specific focus of this Retail Strategy.

Retail centres support a diverse mix of facilities and services beyond retailing, including office, showroom, entertainment, recreational, health, cultural and civic uses – all of which are important from an economic development and community perspective.

As focal points for the community, it is important that retail centres operate in an effective manner. This means ensuring an appropriate level of retail and other services are available in convenient locations, with opportunities for centres to further develop their roles and functions where appropriate.

Retail centres form part of a 'hierarchy' of centres, with different centre categories within the hierarchy performing different roles and functions. For instance:

- Larger centres perform higher-order functions in the delivery of regional and sub-regional services
- Smaller centres perform functions that are typically focused at the neighbourhood or local level.

Collectively, retail centres form a hierarchy of centres that provide residents and visitors with convenient access to essential facilities and services.

The identification of a retail hierarchy in land use planning and development policy is a means of:

- Providing high-level guidance in terms of the location, scale and nature of investment and land uses intended for retail centres.
- Ensuring policy reflects the very different but complementary role and function of various centres within the hierarchy.
- Providing a network of retail centres which meet the various needs of the community at the locations where these needs can, and should, be met.
- Directing the planning and provision of transport infrastructure and other aspects of urban development influenced by retail centres.

In identifying Latrobe City's future retail centre hierarchy, consideration is given to:

- State and Local Policy Frameworks which provide a robust strategic basis for the identification of a retail hierarchy and development of up-to-date policy regarding the roles and functions of retail centres.

- The unique settlement pattern of the Latrobe Valley, whereby the four major towns of Traralgon, Morwell, Moe-Newborough and Churchill function as a collective ‘networked city’ by virtue of their proximity and inter-connectedness.
- Each centre’s size in terms of retail floorspace, the presence (or otherwise) of major retail tenants such as supermarkets and discount department stores, and overall mix of tenants.
- Each centre’s role in providing community, recreational and civic services, the presence of major office or government tenants, and the centre’s tourism role are also taken into consideration.

Of importance to the Latrobe City’s Retail Hierarchy, is the overarching policy aspiration that Latrobe City’s major towns of Traralgon, Morwell, Moe-Newborough and Churchill to function as a single ‘networked city’ – a description which speaks to the Latrobe Valley’s unique settlement structure of four major towns situated in relative proximity. Accordingly, in identifying Latrobe City’s Retail Hierarchy, a key consideration is the nature in which the major towns (aforementioned) provide complementary services that contribute to a higher order retail offer at the regional level which supports access to retail services and commercial viability.

The Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy is described in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1, and comprises:

- Existing centres: centres currently operating.
- Approved centres: future centres for which development schemes have been approved.
- Planned centres: future retail centres in which land has been rezoned to facilitate development, but no development permits/applications have been approved.
- Potential centres: centres identified in strategic planning documentation which are yet to be subject to detailed planning or demand assessments.

The Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy includes the following categories as outlined on the next page.



Regional Retail Centre

- The major retail centre serving Latrobe City and beyond, providing a wide range of retail and non-retail uses. Traralgon CBD is Latrobe City's regional retail centre.

Sub-regional Retail Centre

- Serves a broad region, although not as large as the regional centre, and provides a range of convenience and comparison-shopping facilities. Sub-regional centres can also provide a range of non-retail uses. Moe CBD, Morwell CBD and Mid Valley Shopping Centre are the three sub-regional retail centres in Latrobe City

Large Town Centre

- Large Town Centres provide a comprehensive range of day-to-day and weekly convenience retailing, including supermarkets. A range of non-food retailing and services is also provided, the extent of which depends on the size of the catchment served by the centre. Large Town Centres serve the immediate township and surrounding rural areas and small towns. Churchill is currently Latrobe City's only Large Town Centre.

Neighbourhood Centre

- Provides access to day-to-day and weekly convenience shopping facilities for the surrounding community. Neighbourhood centres can vary in size and typically include at least one supermarket. Neighbourhood centres are also referred to as Neighbourhood Activity Centres.

Small Town Centres

- Provides limited convenience retailing to the surrounding township and rural areas. These centres are important focal points for the community and, where appropriate, may include tourism-related retailing.

Local Town Centres

- Typically containing up to 10 shopfronts which provide convenience retailing facilities and services. Local centres are also referred to as Local Activity Centres.

Homemaker Precincts

- Provide a range of large-format retail and restricted retail premises that would otherwise be difficult to accommodate in traditional retail centres.

Table 5.1: Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy

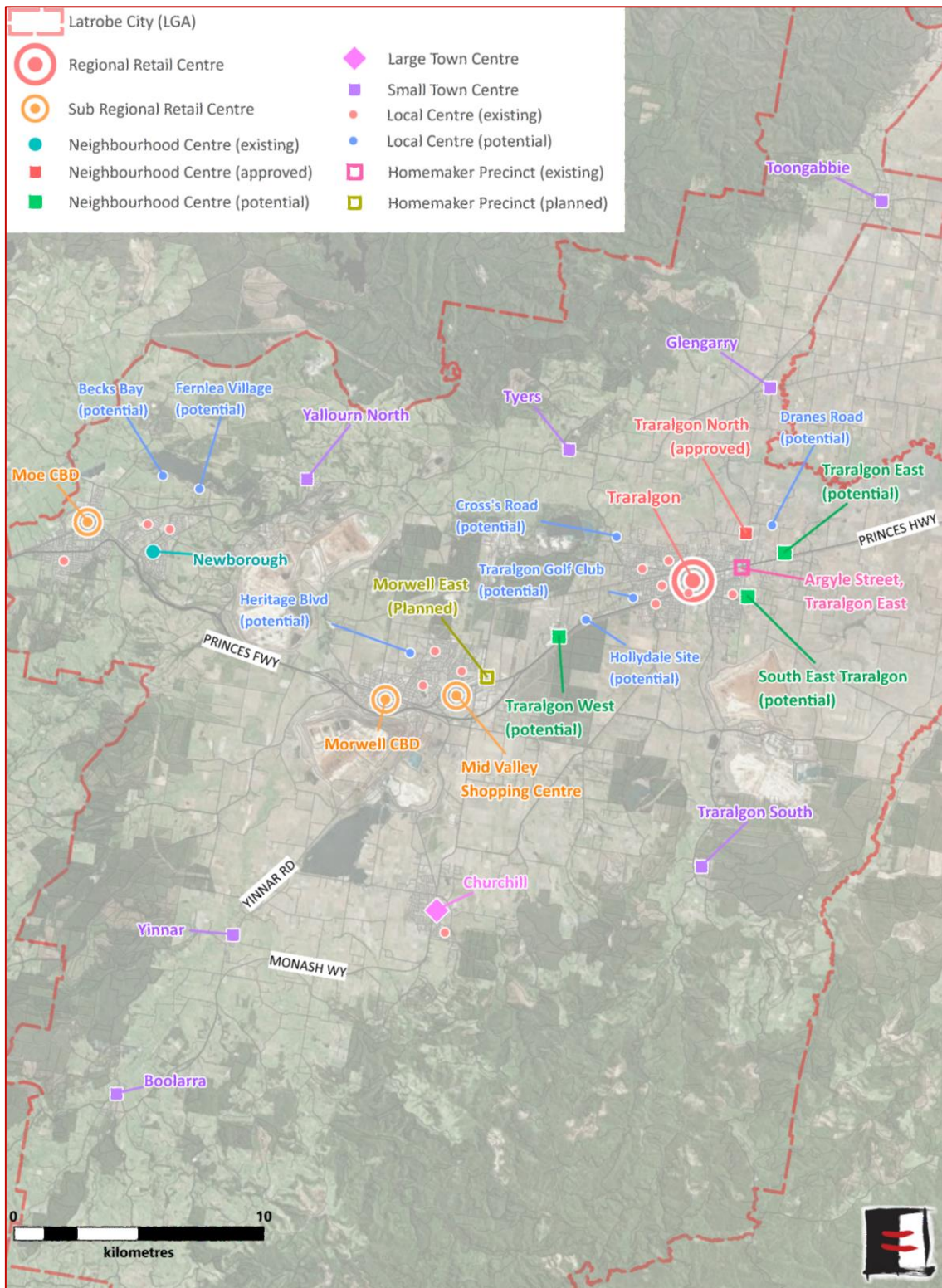
Centre	Retail Role	Retail Floorspace /Major Tenants	Complementary Role
Regional Retail Centre			
Traralgon CBD	Pre-eminent retail centre serving Latrobe City and beyond with the full-range of retailing.	Retail floorspace 2018: 62,470m ² Stockland Traralgon (Kmart, Coles), Woolworths, Target Country, Dan Murphy's, Chemist Warehouse.	Traralgon CBD also provides a wide range of entertainment, dining, commercial, community and recreational facilities and service. The Traralgon CBD is the main commercial office precinct in Latrobe City.
Sub-Regional Retail Centre			
Moe CBD	Full-range of convenience retailing serving the surrounding region and workers. Centre includes multiple supermarkets, café/restaurants /takeaway food and limited range of non-food retailers.	Retail floorspace 2018: 34,930m ² Kmart, Woolworths, Coles, ALDI, Dimmays, Harvey Norman	Moe CBD also provides a range of civic, community and entertainment facilities and services (e.g. library, hotels, RSL, employment services, etc); and a commercial office sector focusing on business and personal services (e.g. Banks, accountants, real estate, insurance, etc).
Morwell CBD	Full-range of convenience retailing serving the surrounding region and workers. Centre includes multiple supermarkets, café/restaurants/ takeaway food and limited range of non-food retailers.	Retail floorspace 2018: 31,280m ² Coles, ALDI, Cheap as Chips, NQR and Harvey Norman	Morwell CBD also performs an important government sector role, including Latrobe City Council offices and other local and state government agencies. A limited range of entertainment, community and commercial offices are also provided.
Mid Valley Shopping Centre	Range of convenience and comparison shopping serving a sub-regional catchment, including multiple supermarkets, discount department store and a range of non-food speciality retailing.	Retail floorspace 2018: 24,520m ² Big W, Woolworths	Mid Valley also serves a key entertainment role with the presence of a Village cinema complex.

Centre	Retail Role	Retail Floorspace /Major Tenants	Complementary Role
Large Town Centre			
Churchill	Range of convenience retail anchored by a major supermarket serving the township and the surrounding rural catchment.	Churchill Retail floorspace 2018: 7,860m ² (Woolworths, IGA)	Large town centres also provide a range of commercial, civic (e.g. libraries and community centres), health and other uses serving the township and a wider rural catchment. Churchill is unique in that it also accommodates Federation University.
Neighbourhood Centre			
Newborough (Monash Road) Traralgon North (approved) Traralgon East (potential) South East Traralgon (potential) Traralgon West (potential)	Neighbourhood centres provide a limited range of convenience retailing, typically anchored by a supermarket. Retail floorspace ranges from approximately 2,500m ² to 10,000m ² .	Newborough Retail floorspace 2018: 2,750m ² Traralgon North (approved): 4,700m ²	Limited role in providing local community, civic and health services to the surrounding communities.
Small Town Centre			
Glengarry; Yallourn North; Boolarra; Yinnar; Tyers; Traralgon South; Toongabbie	Small town centres provide convenience retailing to the immediate surrounding catchment and visitors. Centres vary in size depending on the size of the catchment they serve.	Glengarry 850m ² ; Yallourn North 750m ² ; Boolarra 300m ² ; Yinnar 620m ² ; Tyers 560m ² ; Traralgon South 150m ² ; Toongabbie 120m ²	In addition to convenience retail, town centres also provide a limited range of commercial, community (e.g. community hall/centre), and personal services (e.g. post office).

Centre	Retail Role	Retail Floorspace /Major Tenants	Complementary Role
Local Centre			
<p>Traralgon: Queens Parade, Hyland Street, Hazelwood Road, Henry Street, Grey Street, Pax Hill, Dranes Road (potential), Cross's Road (potential), Traralgon Golf Club (potential), Hollydale Site (potential);</p> <p>Morwell: Bridle Road, Rintoull Street, Bruton Street, Heritage Boulevard (potential);</p> <p>Moe/Newborough: Boolarra Avenue, Old Sale Road, Elizabeth Street, Lake Narracan – Becks Bay (potential), Lake Narracan – Fernlea Village (potential);</p> <p>Churchill: Churinga Drive.</p>	Local centres provide limited convenience retailing, including general store, takeaway food/café, and personal services. Retail floorspace is typically less than 1,500m ² .	<p>Queens Parade 550m²; Hyland Street 680m²; Hazelwood Road 280m²; Henry Street 500m²; Pax Hill 300m²;</p> <p>Bridle Road 760m²; Rintoull Street 400m²; Bruton Street 440m²;</p> <p>Boolarra Avenue 830m²; Old Sale Road 170m²; Elizabeth Street 740m²;</p> <p>Churinga Drive 180m²</p>	Local centres may co-locate to provide community and/or education facilities, and may provide limited commercial services.
Homemaker Precinct			
Argyle Street, Traralgon Morwell East (planned)	Provide a range of large format non-food retailers that would otherwise not be suited to an in-centre location.	Argyle Street, Traralgon (43,440m ²) (The Good Guys, Harvey Norman, Bunnings); Morwell East	May co-locate with trade suppliers, restricted retail, car yards and light industrial uses.

Source: Essential Economics

Figure 5.1: Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy



Essential Economics with Map Info, Streetpro and BingMaps
Note: Further work will be required to determine the exact location of 'potential' centres.

6 OBJECTIVES

The Vision for retail centres in Latrobe City is supported by a set of six Objectives. These Objectives form the basis for more detailed actions and implementations set out in Chapter 7.

- Objective 1: Support the viability of Latrobe City's Retail Centre Hierarchy.
- Objective 2: Support the trading performance and viability of Latrobe City's higher-order retail centres.
- Objective 3: Ensure convenient and accessible retail services through viable neighbourhood centres, small town centres and local centres.
- Objective 4: Reduce retail vacancy rates and improve trading performance of under-performing centres.
- Objective 5: Ensure retail centres in Latrobe City are well-designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business and participating in community activities.
- Objective 6: Support a dynamic retail sector that is responsive to changing consumer preferences and market trends.



7 ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Chapter identifies a set of Actions to achieve the Objectives outlined in Section 6. A supporting rationale is provided for each Objective, together with detailed actions, timeframes and responsibilities.

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

- Short-term: Within 0 to 3 years
- Medium-term: From 3 years to 5 years
- Longer-term: Beyond 5 years
- Ongoing: An existing action that continues into the future.

7.1 Objective 1: Support the viability of Latrobe City's Retail Centre Hierarchy

Supporting the viability of the retail hierarchy will contribute to Latrobe City residents and visitors having access to a range of retail services, experiences and business opportunities, contributing to the municipality's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Future development or redevelopment of existing centres should have regard for the role each centre performs in the hierarchy.

Formal adoption of the identified retail hierarchy in the Latrobe Planning Scheme will reinforce the importance and influence of the retail hierarchy. The Latrobe City Retail Strategy will guide future planning and development of the municipality's retail centres. It is recommended that the Retail Assessment Criteria (refer Chapter 9) is implemented as Local Planning Policy to provide the strategic rationale that informs Council's decision-making.



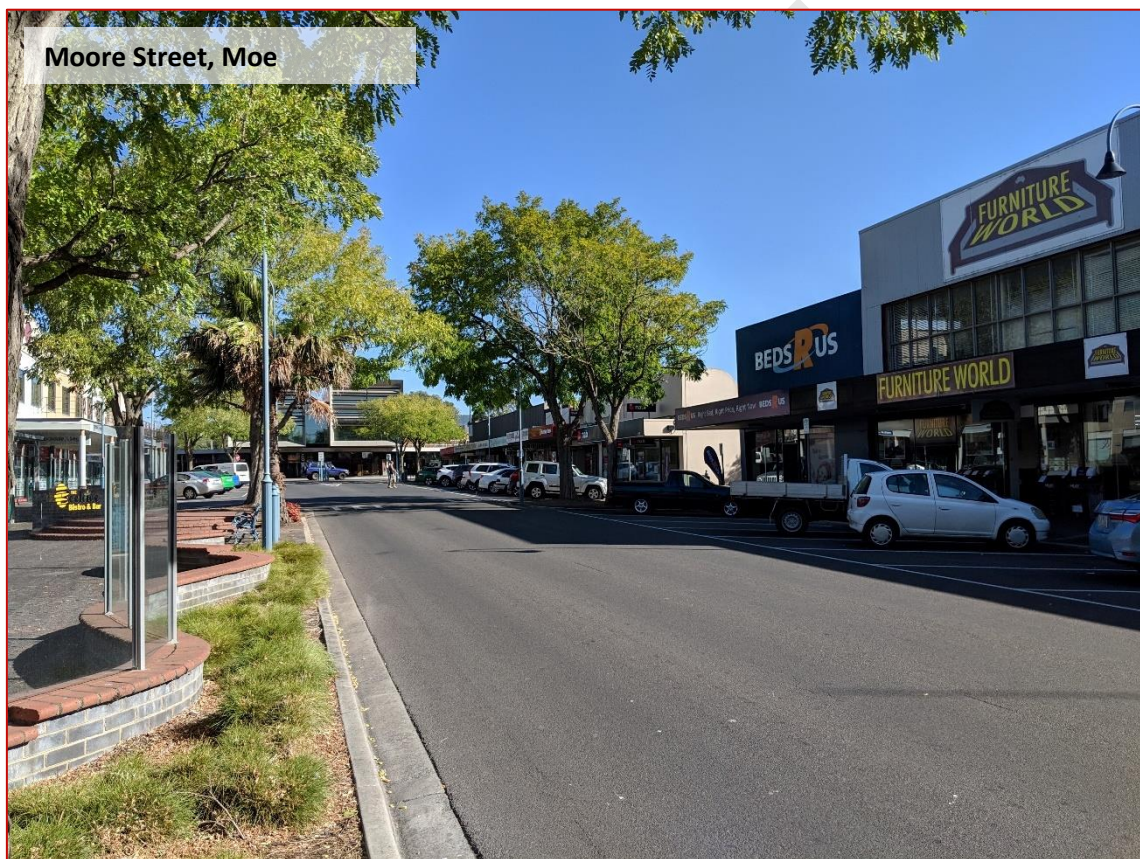
Objective 1: To support the viability of Latrobe City's Retail Hierarchy

No.	Action Description
1.1	<p>Endorse the Latrobe City Retail Strategy and progress to a Planning Scheme Amendment to ensure it is adequately reflected in the updated Local Planning Policy Framework of the Latrobe Planning Scheme. Refer Chapter 8 for guidance.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Short-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: not applicable</i></p>
1.2	<p>Utilise the Retail Hierarchy (refer Chapter 5) and Retail Planning Assessment Criteria (refer Chapter 9) as decision-making tools when assessing future retail proposals.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: not applicable</i></p>
1.3	<p>Support redevelopment and expansion of existing centres provided they meet the objectives identified in the Latrobe City Retail Strategy, contribute to a net community benefit, and do not adversely affect the operation of the Retail Hierarchy.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Property owners, developers, retailers</i></p>
1.4	<p>Avoid out-of-centre retail development unless the proposal can demonstrate a net community benefit without undermining the identified Retail Hierarchy. Each proposal should have regard for the decision-making framework as outlined in the Retail Strategy.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers, retailers</i></p>
1.5	<p>Support the Better Approvals Project which aims to streamline permit application processes for business operators and provide networking opportunities.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing (or until project ceases)</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Property owners, developers, centre managers, trader's associations, individual businesses</i></p>
1.6	<p>Monitor the progress of the Latrobe City Retail Strategy, the retail sector in general, and the health of activity centres. Refer Chapter 10.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Property owners, developers, centre managers, trader's associations, individual businesses</i></p>

7.2 Objective 2: Support the Trading Performance and Viability of Latrobe City's Higher-Order Centres

Recognise and support the important roles performed by Latrobe City's higher-order centres, namely Traralgon CBD, Morwell CBD, Moe CBD, Churchill and Mid Valley Shopping Centre. These centres provide retail services at the regional or sub-regional level and are key focal points for investment, employment and the community.

Ensuring that these higher-order centres remain viable and are recognised as places of significant activity will be important in providing a high level of accessibility to a range of retail facilities and services and supporting economic development in the municipality and wider region.



Objective 2: To support the viability of Latrobe City's larger retail centres

No.	Action Description
<u>General Actions</u>	
2.1	<p>Support development that provides for a unique yet complementary retail offering within each of the larger retail centres.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Traders associations, centre managers, developers, land owners</i></p>
2.2	<p>Support higher-density residential development in and around activity centres as outlined in the <i>Live Work Latrobe-Housing Strategy</i> (2017).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers</i></p>
2.3	<p>Direct major retailers (excluding homemaker retail) to the larger retail centres where they contribute to increasing the profile and overall levels of activity within the centre.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers, retailers</i></p>
<u>Centre Specific Actions</u>	
<u>Traralgon CBD (Regional Retail Centre)</u>	
2.4	<p>Support the development and redevelopment of key sites as outlined in the <i>Traralgon Activity Centre Plan</i> (2018).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers, retailers</i></p>
2.5	<p>Support the preparation and implementation of a Public Realm Masterplan for the Traralgon CBD as identified in the <i>Traralgon Activity Centre Plan</i> (2018).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Short to medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners</i></p>
2.6	<p>Support increase residential density in and surrounding the Traralgon CBD as outlined in the <i>Traralgon Activity Centre Plan</i> (2018).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers, land owners</i></p>
2.7	<p>Support the implementation of the <i>Traralgon Station Precinct Masterplan</i> (2011).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development, infrastructure, V/Line and VicTrack)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers, land owners</i></p>

No.	Action Description
<u>Morwell CBD (Sub Regional Retail Centre)</u>	
2.8	<p>Prepare and implement the <i>Morwell CBD Activity Centre Plan</i> which focuses on the revitalisation of the centre (including areas to the north of the railway line), and which consolidates recent urban design and other strategic work to provide a comprehensive up-to-date land use and development vision.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Short-medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Traders associations, land owners, developers, local businesses</i></p>
2.9	<p>Support the implementation of the recommendations from <i>Future Morwell/Future Latrobe Valley</i> (2017).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Short to medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Traders associations, land owners, developers</i></p>
2.10	<p>Develop and implement an action plan for the Morwell CBD's night-time economy in order to support on-street activity at night and to provide after-hours opportunities for retailers and other service providers. This may involve events, street-fairs, pop-up bars, and other hospitality and entertainment features.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Short-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (economic development, arts and events department)</i> <i>Partnerships: Traders associations, land owners, developers, local businesses</i></p>
2.11	<p>Support mixed-use and office development to broaden the appeal of the centre and attract a higher level of spending available to retailers.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers, landowners</i></p>
<u>Mid Valley Shopping Centre (Sub-Regional Retail Centre)</u>	
2.12	<p>Support development applications that provide a wider mix of land-uses in the centre (entertainment, community, medical etc) where such uses contribute to the centre's viability.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Centre management</i></p>
2.13	<p>Support development applications that improve the attractiveness of the centre's outdoor environs and legibility of the centre.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Centre management</i></p>
2.14	<p>Liaise with centre management to understand the future plans and opportunities for Mid Valley.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Short-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Centre management</i></p>

No.	Action Description
2.15	<p>Support land owners to maximise the opportunities associated with the future use of undeveloped or vacant land in the centre, ensuring that any future development of the land contributes to the ongoing viability of the centre.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owner/centre management</i></p>
<u>Moe CBD (Sub-Regional Retail Centre)</u>	
2.16	<p>Prepare a revised <i>Moe Activity Centre Plan</i> that considers revitalisation of the centre, improved integration of land uses, quality of the public realm as a catalyst for generating on-street activity and private sector investment, and the most appropriate land use zone for land to the south of the railway line.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, capital works)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, land owners, developers, traders' associations, community groups</i></p>
2.17	<p>Support new investment and the redevelopment of derelict buildings and sites to improve public realm, perception of the centre, attract new investment and support the viability of the centre.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, traders' associations</i></p>
2.18	<p>Support the future development of residential land in Moe and Newborough as a means of stimulating population growth and retail spending in the catchment.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers</i></p>
2.19	<p>Continue to support and implement the <i>Moe Rail Precinct Revitalisation Project (2012)</i></p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, capital works)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, land owners, developers, traders' associations, community groups</i></p>
<u>Churchill (Large Town Centre)</u>	
2.20	<p>Prepare and implement a revised Town Centre Plan in order to provide an updated vision for the town centre and which assesses the future requirements for commercial land (refer Action 2.21), taking into consideration recent development trends.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers, traders' associations</i></p>
2.21	<p>Undertake an assessment of the Commercial 1 Zone land supply in the centre which considers development for non-retail uses (e.g. residential).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium to long-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers</i></p>
<u>Homemaker Precincts (Argyle Street, Traralgon and Morwell East)</u>	
2.22	<p>Direct large-format bulky goods and homemaker retailing to Argyle Street Traralgon and to the Morwell East Homemaker Precinct.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: On-going</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers</i></p>

7.3 Objective 3: Ensure Convenient and Accessible Retail Services through Viable Neighbourhood Centres, Small Town Centres and Local Centres

Access to local convenience retail to meet day-to-day household needs is provided by a viable network of neighbourhood centres, small town centres and local centres. When well-planned, these centres serve local catchments, encourage walkability, and are important places for the community to meet and socialise.

The viability of smaller convenience centres has been adversely impacted by increased competition from higher-order, large-format retail and by changing consumer tastes and preferences. Many small town centres increasingly rely on spending attributable to tourists and other visitors to remain viable. Small town centres are also important in providing retail services to their rural catchments.



Objective 3: To provide convenient and accessible retail services through viable neighbourhood centres, small town centres and local centres

No.	Action Description
	<u>General Actions</u>
3.1	Support the network of existing and planned neighbourhood centres, small town centres and local centres as identified in the Latrobe Retail Hierarchy. <i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers, land owners, traders' associations</i>
3.2	Support retail uses that attract visitor spending and support the integration of destination retail uses (e.g. cafes, restaurants, gift shops). <i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, community groups</i>

No.	Action Description
<u>Centre Specific Actions</u>	
<u>Newborough (Neighbourhood Centre)</u>	
3.3	<p>Support moderate housing growth areas outlined in the <i>Live Work Latrobe-Housing Strategy</i> (2017).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers</i></p>
3.4	<p>Support businesses to develop centre branding to reflect unique attributes.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, community groups</i></p>
3.5	<p>Review the appropriateness of the Mixed Use Zone applied throughout the entire centre in facilitating desired land use outcomes and its identified neighbourhood centre role in the Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: not applicable</i></p>
<u>Small Town Centres</u>	
3.6	<p>Support the implementation of the <i>Glengarry Community Plan</i> (2018).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, community groups</i></p>
3.7	<p>Support small towns in the preparation and implementation of Community Plans to capture the voice and vision of the community and to document a list of local priority projects that the community would like to work towards achieving.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium to Long-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development, community strengthening)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, community groups</i></p>
3.8	<p>Explore opportunities to attract increased visitation to each small town centre, acknowledging each town's unique features and attractions. This may involve creating a small town trail, promoting local food, produce, arts and holding festivals and events.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium to Long-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development, arts and events)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, community groups</i></p>

No.	Action Description
	<u>Existing Local Centres (Numerous)</u>
3.9	<p>Support the continued viability of Local Centres in view of the increased competitive pressures these centres face. Encourage individual businesses and landowners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a unique convenience retail offer • Invest in derelict buildings and vacant sites to avoid the centres becoming run-down and derelict. • Explore innovative ways to activate vacant shopfronts where possible (e.g. community noticeboards, arts displays etc) <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, land owners, community groups</i></p>
3.10	<p>Consider ways in which Council can support the viability of Local Centres, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving streetscapes • Ensuring accessible parking for customers • Retaining flexibility regarding policies such as street-based dining • Being proactive in attracting businesses to Latrobe City. <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Businesses, land owners, community groups</i></p>
	<u>Potential Neighbourhood & Local Centres (Numerous)</u>
3.11	<p>Plan for neighbourhood and local centres when undertaking detailed land use planning for relevant areas such as a Structure Plan or Local Area Plan, including identification of the preferred location, size and role of a centre to serve future residents.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Long-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: Developers, land owners</i></p>

7.4 Objective 4: Reduce Retail Vacancy Rates and Improve Trading Performance of Under-Performing Centres

Selected centres and specific areas within centres are underperforming, and this is reflected in a high level of retail shopfront vacancy. These centres include:

- Morwell CBD (north of the Railway Line), with 30% of shopfronts vacant
- Moe CBD (south of the Railway Line), with 16% of shopfronts vacant
- Mid Valley Shopping Centre, with 22% of shopfronts vacant.
- Bruton Street and Rintoull Street in Morwell, with shopfront vacancy rates of 24% and 31% respectively
- Boolarra Avenue and Old Sale Road in Moe-Newborough, with respective vacancy rates of 28% and 51%.

Vacant tenancies reflect poorly on the surrounding area and have negative impacts on the level of amenity and sense of place in centres. The need exists, therefore, to reinvigorate centres as places where people want to spend time, undertake their shopping, and socialise

with friends. Numerous examples exist where the revitalisation of centres has occurred, with innovative methods to occupy vacant tenancies.

Objective 4: To reduce retail vacancy rates and improve trading performance of underperforming centres

No.	Action Description
4.1	Support proposals and development applications that diversify the retail and non-retail offering in under-performing centres. <i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning).</i> <i>Partnerships: Retailers, traders' associations</i>
4.2	Support land owners and encourage investment in derelict buildings and vacant sites. <i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers, centre managers</i>
4.3	Facilitate initiatives that activate long-term vacant tenancies in under-performing centres by connecting landlords with start-up businesses and entrepreneurs. Potential first steps include investigating a potential model that is appropriate for Latrobe City, establishing a register of long-term vacancies, and undertaking an Expression of Interest for potential tenancies and land owners. <i>Timeframe: Short-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, centre managers, local businesses</i>
4.4	Facilitate innovative consultation with businesses, land owners and traders' association representatives to identify opportunities for centres, with appropriate actions and roles identified. <i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Land owners, local businesses, centre managers</i>

7.5 Objective 5: Ensure Retail Centres in Latrobe City are Well-designed Places where People Enjoy Shopping, Doing Business and Participating in Community Activities

Successful retail centres are most often easily accessible, characterised by a walkable and attractive public realm, with investment by individual property owners. Quality design emphasising high levels of amenity and personal service is increasingly important for retail centre viability in view of the emerging share of retail sales captured by the online sector and digital service platforms.

Increasingly, the success of future retail centres will be attributed to the 'sense of place' that attaches to these centres and the high level of amenity enjoyed by shoppers and other visitors. Importantly, retail centres should be places where the broad spectrum of community members actively enjoy spending time and socialising with friends and family.

Objective 5: Ensure retail centres in Latrobe City are well designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business and participating in community activities

No.	Action Description
5.1	<p>Prepare and implement Town Centre Plans and Urban Design Guidelines to ensure new development contributes positively to the public realm and character of centres.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium-term</i></p> <p><i>Responsibility: Council (planning, urban design)</i></p> <p><i>Partnerships: Land owners, developers, businesses</i></p>
5.2	<p>Provide a high-quality public realm through appropriate investment in street furniture, signage, plantings and other physical works and initiatives that add to the appeal of centres.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Responsibility: Council</i></p> <p><i>Partnerships: Traders associations, local community, businesses</i></p>
Source:	Essential Economics

7.6 Objective 6: Support a Retail Sector that is Responsive to Changing Consumer Preferences and Market Trends

The retail environment is constantly changing due to a range of factors including the introduction of new brands, products, formats and platforms; trends in store design and layout; and changing consumer preferences. Change in Australia's retail sector is also currently being driven by the emergence of online retailers and digital services platforms such as Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Menulog, etc, as well as the introduction of new market entrants such as large format retailers Decathlon (sporting goods) and Kaufland (supermarket).

New operators, brands and formats typically benefit consumers through increased competition resulting in lower prices and greater choice. Importantly, planning at the municipal level should support the dynamic nature of the retail sector. A sensible starting point is to ensure Council officers are aware of latest trends impacting the retail sector and for this knowledge to be reflected in planning and development decisions.

Objective 6: Support a dynamic and responsive retail sector

No.	Action Description
6.1	<p>Consider proposals to rezone land for retail development on a case-by-case basis. This will ensure that each proposal is strategically justified, will not undermine the Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy, contributes to a net community benefit and the considers the latest trends in retail and activity centre development are considered.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning)</i> <i>Partnerships: not applicable</i></p>
6.2	<p>Facilitate regular information sessions and seminars for businesses on the latest trends in retailing (e.g. technological change, trends in digital marketing, business practices, consumer and competitive trends etc).</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Traders' association, businesses, centre managers, training providers, industry experts</i></p>
6.3	<p>Improve Council officers' awareness of relevant trends in the retail sector by attending retail industry events and seminars, internal briefings, other forms of information- sharing, and subscribing to retail industry publications (e.g. Inside Retailing, Shopping Centre News)</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Ongoing</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (planning, economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: Main Streets Australia, Property Council, Regional Development Victoria</i></p>
6.4	<p>Consider providing a greater emphasis on the retail sector in future revisions of Council's <i>Economic Development Strategy</i>.</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Medium-term</i> <i>Responsibility: Council (economic development)</i> <i>Partnerships: NA</i></p>
Source:	Essential Economics

8 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Latrobe Planning Scheme is the most appropriate mechanism to implement the Latrobe Retail Strategy (2019). Implementation would be in the form of an amendment to the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF), predominantly in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) at Clause 21.07 – Economic Development, as well as potential changes to zone and overlay controls.

DELWP's Smart Planning program is currently implementing reforms to all Victorian Planning Schemes. This includes reforms to the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP); and restructuring the State Planning Policy Framework and aligning local policies.

As such the translation of local planning policies into the integrated Planning Policy Framework is yet to be completed. The translation will most likely affect the Clause numbering in all Planning Schemes.

This section of the Latrobe City Retail Strategy and Implementation Plan references the current Clause numbers in the Latrobe Planning Scheme. Modifications will most likely be required prior to progressing to a Planning Scheme Amendment to the Latrobe Planning Scheme.

Relevant clauses of the Latrobe Planning Scheme where recommended amendments are required to implement the Latrobe Retail Strategy are identified in this Chapter. Draft planning controls or specific text changes to existing policy in the Latrobe Planning Scheme as not provided.

8.1 Municipal Strategic Statement

The MSS provides the opportunity to outline the municipal profile, vision and objectives at a municipal-wide level. In theory, the MSS should provide high-level and strategic guidance for any issues that arise within the municipality.

Latrobe City's MSS identifies economic development as a key theme and influence for the municipality. The Retail Strategy (2019) should be referenced under this theme and the implementation of the Strategy would primarily be achieved through an amendment to the relevant Clause 21.07 Economic Development. The inclusion of any new objective in the MSS should also be supported by relevant strategies or actions to achieve those objectives.

Clause 21.07 Economic Development

Clause 21.07-2 relates to the key issue of activity centres in Latrobe City. The planning strategies relevant to retail centres and other related aspects identified in this document can be implemented as revised objectives and strategies through this Clause.

The Objectives relevant for inclusion in a revised Clause 21.07-2 include:

- Objective 1 – Support the viability of Latrobe City's Retail Hierarchy.

- Objective 2 – Support the trading performance and viability of Latrobe City’s higher-order centres.
- Objective 3 – Ensure convenient and accessible retail services through viable neighbourhood centres, small town centres and neighbourhood centres.
- Objective 4 – Reduce retail vacancy rates and improve trading performance of under-performing centres.
- Objective 5 - Ensure retail centres in Latrobe City are well-designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business and participating in community activities.
- Objective 6 – Support a dynamic retail sector that is responsive to changing consumer preferences and market trends.

Strategies in the existing Clause 21.07-2 overlap with actions identified as part of this Retail Strategy. These strategies would be shifted to the appropriate Objective outlined above to provide consistency and clarity between Objectives.

Action 1 of this Retail Strategy regarding endorsement of the identified Retail Hierarchy is importance in terms of the Strategy’s inclusion in the LPPF. The Retail Hierarchy establishes specific roles and functions for retail centres in order to contribute to the development of a retail offer at the municipal level that fosters convenient access to a range of retail services and commercial viability.

A key role of the identified Retail Hierarchy is the promotion of a local retail network in which individual centres complement one another with respect to their retail offer, rather than directly compete for trade. This outcome would reinforce the Latrobe City’s function as a ‘network city’ and contribute to the improved viability of centres. The Retail Hierarchy should be included as part of Clause 21.07-2 at the proposed Objective 1, to encourage specific land use strategies in identified retail centres. A revised retail hierarchy map could also be included as a figure within the Clause.

The Latrobe Retail Strategy, 2019 should be listed as a reference document in the MSS.

8.2 Zones

Rezoning considerations are provided as part of the Latrobe Retail Strategy. Specifically, Moe CBD south, Morwell CBD north, Churchill and Newborough will require further investigation to determine whether the current land zoning is appropriate or if an alternative zone would more adequately facilitate their proposed role as identified in the Retail Hierarchy. Potential rezoning of these retail centres, or specific parcels of land in the centres, will need to undergo a separate investigation and this may include an Activity Centre Planning or Structure Planning process, informed by the Retail Strategy. While these areas have been identified as part of this strategy, other rezoning needs may be discovered through the undertaking of further strategic work.

The Retail Strategy does not recommend any land zoning changes at this stage.

8.3 Retail Centre Design

Actions outlined in the Retail Strategy relate to the urban design of retail centres and their surrounding environments, especially in relation to Objective 5 - *ensure retail centres in Latrobe City are well designed places where people enjoy shopping, doing business and participating in community activities.*

Urban design guidelines implemented through a Design and Development Overlay would be the most appropriate tool to achieve the outcomes of this Objective. A further work action in the MSS at Clause 21.07-2 could be included to undertake an Urban Design Framework or similar for each centre, as appropriate.

8.4 Application Requirements

The 'Retail Planning Assessment Criteria' should be referenced as an application requirement for any proposals that include the provision of retail floorspace, either as part of the MSS at Clause 21.07 or as a new particular provision for retail development. The 'Retail Planning Assessment Criteria' are outlined in Chapter 9 of this Strategy.

9 RETAIL PLANNING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Retail Planning Assessment Criteria have been prepared as a reference point for Latrobe City officers when assessing development proposals for new or expanded provision of retail floorspace. The Criteria should also be used by developers for guidance regarding information required by Council to facilitate the planning approvals.

The Criteria consist of three components:

- The main considerations when assessing retail development proposals;
- Information which an Applicant should provide to Council in order to facilitate the planning approvals process; and
- A checklist of issues to be addressed when assessing major retail development proposals.

In assessing a retail development proposal, reference should be made to the application of various other aspects of this Strategy.

9.1 Considerations for Retail Development Proposals

In assessing retail development proposals, Council will have regard for how the proposal addresses the *Vision, Objectives* and *Actions* described in the Latrobe Retail Strategy. In addition, a proponent would be required to show how the proposal addresses the following key considerations:

- 1 Is there demand for additional retail facilities, and how does the proposal meet this demand?
- 2 How will the proposed development impact on the role of the centre, and on the viability of other activity centres in the hierarchy?
- 3 Will the proposal contribute to employment in both construction and retail operation?
- 4 Will the proposal provide an overall contribution to net community benefit?
- 5 Does the proposal adhere to local and State policies for planning and urban design?

9.2 Information Applicants must provide when Seeking Planning Approval for a Retail Proposal

- 1 Address of the subject site and Title particulars.
- 2 Details of the proposed retail component:
 - Amount of retail and non-retail floorspace (in square metres)
 - Number of retail and non-retail tenancies and sizes

- Type of retail floorspace (e.g., supermarket, discount department store, specialty stores, etc)
 - Car parking (if applicable).
- 3 Details of any other (non-retail) component where applicable, including office floorspace, entertainment uses, residential component, etc.
- 4 An economic impact report (or retail economic assessment) is required for major new retail developments (at the discretion of Council), but generally comprising those proposals involving the development of a new centre, or the provision of a key major tenant such as supermarket, etc. The report should provide the following information:
- Supporting evidence of retail demand
 - Assessment of any potential impact on existing or planned (i.e. approved) retail facilities
 - Impact the proposed development would likely have on the role of the centre and the wider activity centre hierarchy
 - Description of anticipated benefits to the community (measurable and non-measurable)
 - Estimated contribution to employment (in both construction and retail operation), and noting the indirect flows (although these generally accrue to a wide area, including the State and national economies)
 - Overall contribution to net community benefit.

Section 9.3 elaborates further on the above.

- 5 Council will decide on the extent of the supporting economic impact information required from the applicant on the basis of the size of the retail floorspace component for which approval is being sought. A brief statement may be sufficient for a small retail development (at the discretion of Council, say, up to 4,000 m², and depending on the place in the hierarchy of centres). Council would require a more detailed economic assessment if proposals involve the development of a major shopping facility. Prospective developers should discuss their proposals with Council officers prior to formal submission of a Planning Permit Application or rezoning request so that the extent of supporting information required by Council can be ascertained. Council reserves the right to request additional information on economic impact from the applicant, if required.
- 6 The proposal should be accompanied by an analysis of the development in the context of relevant planning policies, including State and Local Planning Policies.

9.3 Considerations to be Addressed for Major Retail Development Applications

The following considerations are provided as guidance in assessing applications for major retail developments in Latrobe City. These considerations are provided also as guidance to

proponents in terms of the level of information required to support development applications. The level of information required to support an application will be at the discretion of Council.

Retail Economic Assessment

The application/proposal must show a need or demand for new or expanded retail floorspace provision to serve the catchment. This may involve:

- Identification of a trade area or catchment served by the proposal, including current and forecast population and retail spending growth.
- Analysis of the extent to which the proposal would be expected to draw trade from beyond the catchment, or from passing trade.
- Indication of the existing supply of retail floorspace serving the catchment, including existing and proposed competing centres.
- Overview of any other proposals for new or expanded retail development in the catchment or beyond, which could have an effect on the viability of what is presently proposed.
- Indicate the main features of the existing hierarchy of centres which serve the catchment and show where the proposed new or expanded retail provision would fit within this hierarchy.
- Provide evidence as to whether the existing supply of retail floorspace is or is not adequate to meet existing and foreseeable demand levels (say, over the next five to ten years).
- Indicate whether any retail gaps exist in merchandise/services which the proposal will fill.
- Provide details as to the existing level of vacant retail premises in the catchment and in any other affected centres, and assess whether these premises are suitable to accommodate modern retail needs.
- Indicate the level of sales at the proposed development and the extent to which sales would be captured from within the catchment and beyond.
- Prepare an analysis of the effect on total retail sales levels (expressed in dollars and as a percentage of total sales) at existing retail facilities if the proposal for new retail floorspace is approved.
- Show how the trading performance of existing facilities would be affected by the introduction of additional retail floorspace.
- Show the extent to which the proposal is expected to lead to an overall improved provision of retail facilities to the catchment, and especially with consideration given to any adverse trading impacts on existing centres.
- Prepare an analysis of the employment impact of the proposed new or expanded retail facilities, including the potential loss in employment at centres negatively impacted by the proposal.

The retail economic assessment (or economic impact assessment) should outline all assumptions used in the analysis. The report should be able to be read and understood by non-economists.

Urban Design Issues

- The application must meet planning, design and other requirements specified in the planning scheme or in other approved planning policy documents.
- The planning application must include – where requested by Council – an assessment of the proposed development in the context of relevant urban design policies.

Net Community Benefit

The planning application must provide an indication of the development proposal's contribution to Net Community Benefit (NCB) in terms of:

- Employment generation (or loss) during construction and operation.
- Impact on retail choice and availability of goods and services.
- Impact on overall levels of vibrancy and sustainability.
- Contribution to levels of public transport use.
- Contribution to liveability, social interaction and other community-related goals.

The application must specify how the proposed development contributes to NCB, including consideration of the following factors:

- Potential positive factors, including increased choice in retail goods and services available to the community, increased retail competition, retention of a share of escape spending, increased employment and multiplier effects, etc; and
- Potential negative factors, including loss of sales at existing shops/centres, loss of employment, possible business closures, possible vacant shops, possible multiplier effects associated with these potential negative outcomes, etc.

For larger projects, as determined by Council, the proposal must also consider non-retail impacts such as traffic circulation and parking demand, environmental effects on adjoining activities, local character and amenity impacts.

10 MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

Monitoring will assess how the Strategy is performing and whether or not changes are warranted as a result of new and emerging trends.

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

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

Indicators for monitoring and review purposes are listed in Table 10.1. These indicators are based on readily available and relatively inexpensive data, including official data sources, Council planning approvals and commencements data, land use and floorspace surveys, and reference to consultant reports.

Table 10.1: Indicators for the Monitoring and Review Process

Indicator (indicative timing)	Source	Comment
1. Activity Centre Floorspace (3-7 years, dependant on the extent of development and change)	Land use and floorspace surveys	Implement retail/commercial floorspace survey in order to allow an up-to-date estimate of total floorspace and the mix of retail/office activities. The floorspace survey presented in the Retail Strategy will serve as the base-year survey. Alternatively, Council planning and approvals data could be added to the floorspace data presented in this Strategy.
2. In-centre surveys (1-2 years)	In-centre surveys	Undertake a series of short in-centre surveys in the Latrobe City's higher-order centres of businesses and customers on a regular basis (e.g. every one or two years). The survey could cover issues such as the local community's views on the centre, changes in people's perception of the centre as a place to visit, views on competing centres, issues they identify and actions that need doing, trends in employment levels, etc. The surveys would be a helpful reference point in assessing potential impacts of the initiatives contained in the Strategy.
3. Property development proposals and projects (ongoing)	Council records	Track development applications, proposals, and completions through Council data.
4. Retail trading performance (ongoing)	Consultant reports; Property Council; industry liaison	Especially track official sources of data. Note numbers of new or expanded businesses and estimate of new jobs on an annual basis.
5. Increased floorspace and value of buildings and works (ongoing)	Council and ABS data for planning and building approvals, and building completions	This measure uses regular and up-to-date data, and is therefore very useful.
6. Vacancy rates for retail and commercial floorspace and/or tenancies (2-3 years)	Land use and floorspace surveys	Can be undertaken at any time. As a guideline, the acceptable retail floorspace vacancy rates average around 5-7% of total retail floorspace for street-based centres. Vacancy rates provide a useful measure of the general health of a centre.
7. Changes in property values and rates (annually)	Council rate records; property industry	Useful indicator, especially as a relative indicator (e.g. different rate valuations for different centres).
8. Viewpoints on health of centres as expressed by those in property, real estate, retailing, and in other relevant industry sectors (ongoing)	Regular contact with real estate agents, property owners, developers, retail industry, other businesses, business associations, and the wider community.	Possible annual forum organised by Council at a venue for information exchange between property and retail industry, local traders, other businesses and stakeholders, Council and other community representatives.

9. Business confidence surveys (annually)	Survey completed by businesses	Conduct business confidence surveys for businesses in centres. The survey can track level of sales levels (higher or lower than 12 months ago), future sales expectations (in 12 months), employment levels, identification of issues/threats, etc.
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Source: Essential Economics Pty Ltd

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