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## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## Settlement

## A networked city

Churchill, Moe-Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon together form a ‘networked city’ where each town provides services and facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Traralgon and Morwell form the primary population centre in Latrobe, supported by Churchill and Moe-Newborough. Transport corridors form key elements of the networked city. The Morwell to Traralgon Employment Corridor’s gradual development over the next 20 years will link Morwell and Traralgon together to form a continuous urban area.

Each town has developed its own function, with Traralgon as a regional retail centre; Morwell as a centre for government offices and industry; Moe-Newborough as a service centre and Churchill as a university town.

**Churchill** has several significant education providers including the Federation University. It operates as a local service centre, though its industry and commercial activity is smaller in comparison to the other major towns (Churchill is identified as a Large Town Centre within the Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy). It has a sufficient long term supply of residential land that contributes to the diversity of residential land and housing in Latrobe.

The **Moe** and **Newborough** urban areas are joined, creating a single urban settlement (Moe-Newborough) that is serviced by the Moe Primary Activity Centre (Sub-Regional Retail Centre within the Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy). Moe-Newborough has the potential to be a peri-urban settlement. It is the first of the four major towns within the Latrobe Valley from Melbourne and consequently is identified as the ‘Gateway to Latrobe’.

**Morwell** accommodates transport and government services, as well as manufacturing, power and other industrial activities. Morwell has two Sub Regional Retail Centres, the traditional Primary Activity Centre and Mid Valley shopping centre to the east. Major industry is located and established in and around Morwell, with significant opportunity to locate large format heavy industries to the south of the Princess Highway. Industrial zoned land to the east of the township has access to infrastructure that supports high level research, manufacturing, food processing, service industry and transport/distribution capabilities.

**Traralgon** is the largest of the four main towns in Latrobe. It is the key Regional Retail Centre for Gippsland. Compared to other towns in Latrobe, due to its role as a commercial centre, Traralgon is experiencing higher population and urban growth. This trend is expected to continue.

## District towns, small towns and rural living precincts

Latrobe’s smaller towns and rural living settlements provide diversity in housing and lifestyle choice that is alternative to options available in the main towns. Some are also service centres with commercial and community facilities.

**Glengarry, Tyers, Yallourn North** and **Yinnar** are district towns that serve as key retail and service centres for a moderate population base and the hinterland, providing residential opportunities within commuting distance of the larger centres.

**Boolarra, Toongabbie** and **Traralgon South** are small towns providing a limited range of educational, retail and recreational services for residents and the surrounding rural areas. Urban infill and diversification of housing choice in small towns make efficient use of existing infrastructure so residents can remain in the town whatever their housing need.

Rural living precincts, including **Flynn, Jeeralang, Yinnar South, Hazelwood North, Hazelwood South, Callignee** and **Moe South**, comprise clusters of housing on small rural lots and have limited services. These areas support farming and rural living communities, providing an attractive lifestyle choice in a rural setting.

The Settlement Plan in Clause 02.04 establishes the settlement growth patterns Council wants to achieve across Latrobe.

Council's settlement planning seeks to:

- Integrate the four centres of Churchill, Moe-Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon to support them functioning as a single urban system by:
  - Promoting growth in Traralgon-Morwell as the primary population centre, serving as the dominant residential, commercial and retail node.
  - Promoting growth in the Morwell to Traralgon Employment Corridor to provide a range of development opportunities for health, aviation, industrial, commercial and residential uses.
  - Promoting growth in Moe-Newborough and Churchill as supporting network towns, serving as secondary urban centres.
- Strengthen Traralgon's role as the Regional Retail Centre for Gippsland.
- Support Morwell as a key industrial and government office centre.
- Support Moe-Newborough's role as a key service centre and a peri-urban lifestyle option near Melbourne.
- Support Churchill's role as a University town.
- Support growth in district towns that reinforces their role as key retail and service centres for a moderate population base and the hinterland.
- Support growth in small towns to provide a limited range of services for residents and the surrounding rural areas.
- Facilitate the growth of towns to be commensurate with access to services, infrastructure, transport and the protection of natural resources.

### Activity centres

Latrobe City's retail sector plays an important role for the municipality's ongoing economic transition from a high dependence in the mining and energy generation sectors. The continued creation of a diverse economic base with a greater emphasis on business and consumer services, including retail will support the long term viability and economic strength of Latrobe City (*Latrobe City Council Retail Strategy 2019*).

Approximately 42,000 square metres of additional retail floor space will be required to 2033 to service the City. The majority of this floor space demand is for non-food merchandise, which could be accommodated within the existing commercially zoned areas (*Latrobe City Council Retail Strategy 2019*).

The Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy outlines specific roles and functions for retail centres.

A key role of the retail centre 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 (*Latrobe City Council Retail Strategy 2019*).

The Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy is as follows:

- Regional Retail Centre (Traralgon): The major retail centre servicing Latrobe City and beyond, providing a full range of retail and non-retail uses such as community and recreation facilities and offices.
- Sub-Regional Retail Centre (Moe, Morwell, Mid Valley Shopping Centre): Serve a broad surrounding region, although not as large as a regional centre. They provide a full range of convenience and comparison retailing. Sub-regional centres can also provide a range of non-retail uses such as community and recreation facilities and offices.

- Large Town Centre (Churchill): 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. Large town centres also provide a range of commercial, civic, health and other uses serving the township and a wider rural catchment.
- Neighbourhood Activity Centre (Numerous): Provide access to day-to-day and weekly convenience shopping facilities for the surrounding community. Neighbourhood activity centres can vary in size and typically include at least one supermarket. Retail floor space ranges from approximately 2,500 square metres to 10,000 square metres. Limited role in providing local community, civic and health services to the surrounding communities.
- Local Activity Centre (Numerous): Provides limited convenience retailing, including general store/supermarket (small), takeaway food/café, and personal services. Typically containing up to 10 shopfronts. Retail floor space is typically less than 1,500 square metres. Local centres may co-locate to provide community and/or education facilities, and may provide limited commercial services.
- Small Town Centre (Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Traralgon South, Tyers, Yallourn North and Yinnar): Provides limited convenience retailing to the immediate surrounding township and rural areas. These centres are important focal points for the community and, where appropriate, may include tourism-related retailing. In addition to convenience retail, small town centres also provide a limited range of commercial, community (e.g. community hall/centre), and personal services (e.g. post office).
- Homemaker Precinct (Morwell East and Traralgon East): Provide a range of large-format retail and restricted retail premises that would otherwise be difficult to accommodate in traditional retail centres.

These areas are identified on the Latrobe City Retail Hierarchy Plan in Clause 02.04.

Planning for Activity centres seeks to:

- Support the development of a network of activity centres that satisfy a range of local and regional retail, entertainment, commercial, government and community service needs in accordance with the Latrobe City Retail Centre Hierarchy.
- To facilitate the growth and viability of Latrobe's Activity Centres.
- Create vibrant, high quality, walkable, safe and active retail areas.

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### Environmental and landscape values

Latrobe enjoys one of Australia's most beautiful natural environments. The current level of native vegetation in Latrobe Valley is 22 per cent of that which existed prior to European contact (c. 1750). However, coverage is not consistent across the rural areas.

Core biodiversity sub-catchments and linking corridors have been identified, including the College Creek catchment and the nationally significant habitat of the Strzelecki Koala. There are opportunities to strengthen a corridor of remnant vegetation clusters between the Strzelecki ranges bioregion to the Southern Fall bioregion.

Planning for the environment and landscape values seeks to:

- Enhance Latrobe's native vegetation, biodiversity, habitats and natural ecosystems.
- Balance development with the protection of the natural environment.

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**Environmental risks and amenity****Climate change**

Climate change will impact the daily lives of Latrobe's community. Changes in rainfall patterns pose challenges for water supply and agriculture and can increase the risk of severe flooding. Higher temperatures increase the number of hot days and heatwaves, which place substantial pressure on health services. It will also increase the likelihood of intense fires, and the severity of days of fire danger.

Built form and urban infrastructure can contribute substantially to the demand for energy, which needs to be reduced to meet the challenges of the changing climate.

Planning for climate change seeks to:

- Support use and development that can adapt to the impacts of climate change and seeks to minimise its negative impacts.
- Encourage energy-efficient building design including the incorporation of energy efficient technologies.

**Bushfire**

Most of the municipality is within a bushfire prone area. The highest risk areas are subject to the Bushfire Management Overlay and include rural residential areas in the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges and the southern fall of the Alpine Ranges.

Fires in bushland reserves, grasslands and plantations also pose a risk to development across Latrobe.

Planning for bushfire seeks to:

- Reduce bushfire risk through various bushfire protection measures.
- Decrease the level of risk to life, property, the environment and biodiversity from bushfire.

**Floodplain management**

Flooding is a natural hazard that can severely disrupt communities and may cause extensive damage, stock loss and, in extreme cases, loss of life.

Planning for flooding seeks to:

- Reduce the damage and costs associated with flood events.

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**Natural resource management****Agriculture**

Most rural areas in Latrobe contain high quality agricultural land that supports dairy farming, broadacre farming and forestry.

There are some rural areas that are highly fragmented. These areas provide opportunities for rural residential living, tourism, niche rural industry and small scale farming.

The Rural Framework Plan in Clause 02.04 illustrates the intent of rural use in Latrobe.

Planning for agriculture seeks to:

- Enhance the viability of agricultural activity.

- Retain large lots and discourage the establishment of sensitive or non-agricultural related land uses on high quality agricultural land (Farming Zone Schedule 1) to retain its productive viability.
- Facilitate non-agricultural related use and development that respect settlement patterns, landscape, amenity and environmental values and adjacent land uses in highly fragmented rural areas (Farming Zone Schedule 2).

### **Intensive agriculture**

Latrobe is well positioned to capture growing investment in intensive agriculture across primary production, processing, manufacturing and distribution. Areas that are suitable for intensive agriculture are identified on the Rural Framework Plan in Clause 02.04. These areas are in the Farming Zone Schedule 1 and include:

- Flat and unencumbered land in large land holdings.
- Plantation areas that offer isolated locations for enterprises with biosecurity needs.
- Land affected by coal reserve zones and overlays that are undeveloped and distant from sensitive uses.
- Land near irrigation resources, transport, infrastructure, manufacturing, labour force and industrial resources.

Planning for intensive agriculture seeks to:

- Direct intensive agriculture to the intensive agriculture precincts shown on the *Rural Framework Plan* in Clause 02.04.
- Facilitate the use and development of land for intensive agriculture in a way that enhances the surrounding environment and does not cause detriment to nearby sensitive uses.

### **Timber**

Latrobe has a productive timber and commercial forestry industry providing softwood, value-added hardwood and paper products. It has one of the largest paper manufacturing facilities in the southern hemisphere, Australian Paper Mill, which is a significant economic asset for the area. Council seeks to continue to grow the timber industry. However, this should occur in a way that protects the amenity of residents.

Planning for timber seeks to:

- Support the expansion of the timber industry.
- Minimise the impacts of timber coup operations on surrounding land, including the impact of logging trucks near surrounding properties.

### **Water**

Water is among Latrobe's most valuable resource. The area contains the Latrobe River and a number of proclaimed potable water catchments that support a variety of ecological functions. The region also has the most secure water supply and largest capacity sustainable waste water system in Victoria. Reducing water use and improving Latrobe's water quality and security are therefore key priorities.

Planning for water seeks to:

- Encourage the improvement of water quality and environmental values of waterways.
- Promote the use of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) in all developments.

### Stone resources

Latrobe contains significant stone resources including basalt, gravels, sands and limestone. There are significant resources in the extractive industry, including mineral sands north of Morwell and Traralgon, that need to be protected. These areas are identified on the Extractive Industries Framework Plan in Clause 02.04.

Planning for stone resources seeks to:

- Balance use and development with the protection of stone resources.

### Coal

Latrobe has one of the largest brown coal reserves in the world and is recognised as the centre of Victoria's electricity industry. The coal resource in the Latrobe Valley is of national and state importance and significantly contributes to the economy of Latrobe.

Development in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon are constrained by open cut mines at Yallourn, Hazelwood and Loy Yang and buffers to the coal resource. Coal resource development and use needs to be integrated with state and local strategic planning, taking into account:

- The interests of both the Victorian and local community.
- The equitable provision of employment, housing and community services, including urban amenity and productivity of land.
- Social and environmental impacts of development.

Latrobe supports planning for the remediation of existing mines and for the future use of brown coal in order to best manage urban growth. Many infrastructure assets are in areas that are at danger from mine and timber plantation fires.

Planning for coal seeks to:

- Minimise land use conflict with coal resource development.
- Ensure development does not compromise coal resources.
- Protect urban amenity, coal resource development and the productive use of land in the coal resource and buffer areas.
- Minimise the risk to life, property and the environment in and around mine sites.
- Minimise the risk of timber plantation fires around mines.
- Remediate brown coal mines to a useable and stable landform.

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### Built environment and heritage

#### Heritage

Latrobe has a diverse pre- and post-contact heritage that is evidence of how the landscape has been changed throughout history. Gippsland was occupied by the Gunaikurnai people for thousands of years prior to European settlement. The first European explorers and pastoralists developed agricultural industries such as grazing and dairying, that led to the loss of native forest cover over much of the land. The greatest change to the cultural landscape came in the twentieth century with the exploitation of the vast brown coal reserves. The heritage legacy that these changes have left behind include archaeological sites, township precincts, buildings, memorials, gardens, factories and trees.

Planning for heritage seeks to:

- Protect places of heritage, cultural and social significance.

### Neighbourhood character

Housing in Latrobe shares common elements including simple building forms, dwellings usually constructed with brick or weatherboard, aluminium frame windows and shallow pitched roofs in a garden and landscaped setting. Dwellings are generally large with generous spacing in between each dwelling. These elements form Latrobe's regional suburban character.

However, there is a recognisable difference between the character of established areas and newer suburbs in the main towns. Special character areas have been identified in Traralgon, Moe and Churchill as follows:

- Garden Suburban: spacious residential areas in a garden setting with a mix of older buildings located along linear street patterns and pockets of established vegetation.
- Lifestyle Suburban: dwellings on large lots in spacious landscaped settings, located on curvilinear and court street patterns with a strong rural character.
- Bush Suburban: residential areas of large, informal lots visually dominated by landscaping with built form typically hidden behind canopy trees and a well-established garden setting.

Planning for neighbourhood character seeks to:

- Retain the regional suburban character of established and growing neighbourhoods where they are identified as limited change areas or where special neighbourhood character values have not been identified.
- Protect areas with special neighbourhood character values.
- Maintain the rural character of district and small towns.
- Balance development and consolidation with respecting residential amenity and neighbourhood character.

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### Housing

Council has aspirations to grow the municipal population to 100,000 by 2050, which is expected to be dominated by a high proportion of older people (Latrobe City Council, 2019). A significant shift to smaller households is expected, with one and two person households expected to represent 76 per cent of all new households over the next 15 years (Latrobe City Council, 2019).

Given the land use constraints and decreasing household size, urban renewal and housing intensification will play a key role to diversify housing choice, accommodate growth and maximise access to infrastructure and services. There is also a need to ensure an adequate supply of specialised housing for the aging population.

Housing Framework Plans have been prepared for all towns and they provide direction on the location of preferred housing change including areas of 'Substantial' Change, 'Incremental' Change, 'Limited' Change and 'Minimal' Change.

Planning for housing seeks to:

- Encourage a substantial increase in housing density and diversity to maximise access to existing services, transport and infrastructure in Substantial Change Areas.
- Support increased density development that provides a sensitive interface with adjoining streetscapes, buildings and residential areas in Incremental Change Areas.
- Encourage housing growth that reinforces the spacious regional suburban character in Limited Change Areas.
- Support minimal housing growth in Minimal Change Areas to preserve and enhance its environmental, heritage or neighbourhood character attributes.
- Promote opportunities for infill development in all main urban settlements as a priority.

- Support the renewal of underutilised industrial sites for residential use in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.
- Provide aged care facilities within residential growth areas close to Neighbourhood Activity Centres.

### **Rural residential development**

Residential use of land in a rural setting is a popular lifestyle choice and it is accommodated in the Low Density Residential Zone in urban areas and in the Rural Living Zone in rural areas.

There are a range of rural residential opportunities in Churchill, as well as in smaller townships, particularly Tyers.

An emerging issue with rural living options relates to resident amenity concerns with animal husbandry, forestry operations and intensive agricultural pursuits.

Planning for rural residential development seeks to:

- Support rural living and associated land use that does not compromise agricultural productivity.
- Avoid impeding the long term urban growth of settlements.

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### **Economic development**

#### **Economic growth**

The main industries in Latrobe are related to coal, timber and food processing. As the economy seeks to decarbonise, Latrobe is presented with opportunities to diversify its economy, by attracting new industries as well as capitalising on its existing strengths in manufacturing and engineering. These strengths present Latrobe with many economic opportunities, including research and development, information technology, education and training, new energy production and advanced manufacturing. Emerging industries are establishing close to existing infrastructure at the University in Churchill and east of Morwell. The health care sector will also be one of the fastest growing employment sectors in Latrobe due to the aging population.

Planning for economic growth seeks to:

- Enable the community to prosper from the transition to a low carbon future by supporting the diversification of employment opportunities.
- Encourage alternative energy industries, including renewable energy and clean coal in locations with convenient access to existing energy distribution infrastructure.
- Facilitate the growth of service sector jobs targeting regional health services, tertiary education, retail, entertainment and government administration.

#### **Industry**

Latrobe has a large industrial sector that is divided into three main areas:

- The heavy industry precincts that are associated with the coal and timber industries.
- Large format industry (including food and fibre) in vacant industrial land within the Morwell – Maryvale Industry Growth Corridor.
- Other general industrial areas.

Land use conflicts may arise between industry and sensitive land uses and need to be managed.

The Industrial Framework Plan in Clause 02.04 illustrates the direction of industrial development in Latrobe.

Planning for industry seeks to:

- Develop the Morwell – Maryvale Industry Growth Corridor as the main industry growth area of Latrobe.

- Facilitate the supporting role that industrial land in Moe, Churchill and Traralgon play in Latrobe's industrial development.
- Provide buffers between industrial and sensitive use areas where amenity is impacted.

### **Tourism**

Latrobe attracts 1.1 million visitors annually, with tourism contributing to 5 per cent of the City's total employment (Latrobe City Council, 2018). Events, major attractions and business tourism will enhance local retail, food and entertainment businesses, while the farming industry and the natural assets of Latrobe present other tourism opportunities.

Planning for tourism seeks to:

- Facilitate the development of major destination attractions.
- Facilitate tourism in rural areas that respect existing settlement patterns, landscape, amenity and environmental values.

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### **Transport**

Latrobe is the hub of road networks for greater Gippsland. Rail service is also available to link residents of the four main towns to Melbourne.

Public and active transport are increasingly important modes of transport as Latrobe's population ages. As a result, Latrobe's public and active transport network, particularly bus routes within and between towns, needs to expand in a well integrated manner. A development pattern that integrates housing, activity centres, employment nodes with active and public transport will assist in supporting a more sustainable city that is less reliant on cars and has more walkable neighbourhoods.

Planning for transport seeks to:

- Facilitate expansion of public transport options in growth areas and integrate it with other modes of travel.
- Consolidate urban areas to provide for shorter travel distances, walking, cycling and access to public transport.
- Facilitate infrastructure that encourages alternative transport options including walking and bicycle transport options.

### **Latrobe Regional Airport**

The Latrobe Regional Airport is integral to the region's transport network and provides a range of employment and recreation opportunities. The airport's supply of serviced industrial land has been expanded to facilitate aeronautical development, which has created opportunities for aviation-related businesses to establish.

Planning for Latrobe Regional Airport seeks to:

- Facilitate and protect the operations of Latrobe Regional Airport and its environs.

### **Freight**

A centre for the efficient movement of freight to and from the Gippsland region at the Gippsland Logistics Precinct (GLP) has been planned three kilometres east of Morwell. It is anticipated to have direct access to the national freight network. As part of the establishment of the GLP, the Gippsland Intermodal Freight Terminal, a dedicated rail siding that serves the needs of the GLP and broader region, will be located in the northernmost portion of the GLP adjacent to the main Melbourne-Sale railway line, while a large-scale logistics and distribution precinct will adjoin the terminal.

Planning for freight seeks to:

- Develop an intermodal terminal and logistics precinct at the Gippsland Logistics Precinct that supports increased efficient handling of freight through rail.
- Encourage road, rail and air freight capabilities that connect to regional and national networks.

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### Infrastructure

#### Infrastructure assets

Development in Latrobe is constrained by many existing or planned infrastructure assets, including waste water treatment plants, the Gippsland Water Regional Outfall Sewer and emergency storage facilities, and the proposed alignment of Traralgon Freeway Bypass. Several high pressure gas transmission pipelines licensed under the *Pipelines Act 2005* also run through Latrobe.

These assets need to be protected. Use and development near these assets, particularly the pipelines, can also pose risks to human life if they are not planned for properly.

Planning for infrastructure assets seeks to:

- Protect infrastructure assets from encroachment of development that would compromise their efficient functioning and safety.
- Manage land use and development in the vicinity of the pipelines to minimise risks to human life and the functional operation of the pipelines.

#### Community infrastructure

Latrobe is the principal service centre for Gippsland that boasts a wide range of health, community and education services, including Latrobe Regional Hospital in Traralgon West and Federation University at Churchill.

Latrobe's aging population will have future implications on the provision of community infrastructure. To achieve a vision for a connected and inclusive built environment, it is important that accessibility of community services is enhanced.

Planning for community infrastructure seeks to:

- Support a range of health, social and recreational facilities including the expansion of educational facilities.
- Support hubs of integrated community services.
- Encourage community facilities to locate in or near activity centres and be accessible by public transport.

#### Open space

Open spaces are important places for people to meet and grow community networks, no matter their culture, age or ability. As the sporting hub of Gippsland, Latrobe will continue to develop its open space network between and within towns in support of emerging and growing recreational pursuits across the region.

The open space network is made up of large scale open spaces that are linked to other open spaces, community destinations and employment precincts, usually via interconnected linear parklands, such as those along waterways and floodplains. The establishment of linear parklands within residential areas are necessary to improve access through and amenity within residential areas. Development of open space needs to complete missing open space links and ensure local reserves are accessible in emerging urban growth areas.

Planning for open space seeks to:

- Design public open spaces so they are accessible and can be used by people of all abilities, ages and interests.

- Encourage the provision of a connected open space network that extends from urban to rural areas and has both north-south and east-west linkages.
- Encourage the development of linear parks, habitat corridors and linkages between key open spaces, community destinations and employment precincts to improve connectivity.
- Extend open space corridors along major waterways where open space linkages can be achieved.

### **Development infrastructure**

Precinct Structure Plans and Development Contributions Plans are critical in funding and providing infrastructure in a coordinated way, particularly in the growth areas of the main towns.

Planning for development infrastructure seeks to:

- Align development with the delivery of key infrastructure items and economic and employment growth.
- Encourage a consistent approach to the design and construction of infrastructure across the municipality.