

# Sherwood Heights - Racecourse Road

Lancefield Road PSP

## Amendment C208 - Hume Planning Scheme

Urban Design & Landscape Evidence prepared by Craig Czarny, Hansen Partnership for the Victorian Planning Authority

August 2017



## **CONTENTS**

Introduction	2
The study area	3
Existing planning & design controls	6
The proposed amendment	7
Urban design assessment	9
Conclusion.	18

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – curriculum vitae: Craig Czarny

Appendix B – relevant existing controls



Site identification showing proposed development extent (dashed)



## Introduction.

- My name is Craig Czarny and I am a director of design at Hansen Partnership. I have over 29 years' experience in urban design and landscape architectural projects in Australia and overseas. I hold a Bachelor degree in Planning and a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture and have provided urban design, streetscape, public domain and landscape advice on a number of development projects of varying scale. My projects have received National and State awards from the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA). I have also served as a sessional lecturer at Melbourne University, a sessional member of Planning Panels Victoria and judge of local and international design projects. My experience is set out in Appendix A.
- 2. I have a strong appreciation of the urban design, neighbourhood character, landscape and public domain issues associated with residential, commercial and townscape settings, having provided advice on a number of activity centre, residential and neighbourhood character studies in Metropolitan Melbourne and the Victorian region for more than 2 decades. I also have a clear understanding of urban and landscape character matters within Hume, having completed design studies on behalf of Council and private clients within the City for more than a decade.
- 3. On this occasion, I have been engaged by Harwood Andrews on behalf of the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to undertake an assessment of the urban design and landscape attributes of proposed Amendment C208 (Lancefield Road PSP) to the Hume Planning Scheme as it relates to land on the eastern side of Racecourse Road leading downhill to the Jacksons Creek (forming part of 3-5 Macedon Street, Sunbury). Under the proposed PSP, the land is to be rezoned from a Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ1) to an Urban Growth Zone (UGZ10) with a Section 96A Planning Permit Application seeking subdivision of the land for 406 residential lots. I was briefed in relation to this matter on 21st July, 2017 and inspected the site and surroundings on 2nd August, 2017. I have also reviewed the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment documentation, including exhibited PSP documentation, the Section 96A permit application, relevant strategic background reports and submissions received during the exhibition process. I have also met with the VPA to clarify strategic background and reviewed the design controls and 'proposed revision to development area' circulated by the VPA on 2nd August 2017.
- 4. In summary, I believe that the PSP's designation of the land for urban settlement is appropriate from an urban design and landscape perspective, subject to the provision of more rigorous site design guidance in relation to sloping land abutting the Jacksons Creek corridor. Furthermore, I consider the proposed residential subdivision as set out in the permit application to be broadly acceptable, conditional upon a series of discrete refinements relating to the extent of developable land and the provision of meaningful physical and visual connections across topography. I note that both the PSP and permit application also indicate the opportunity for a strategic transport link as an east-west bridge crossing the Jacksons Creek, which I believe requires further detailed appraisal in terms of its implications upon the scenic qualities of the Creek corridor and the associated Racecourse Road neighbourhood design. To this end, I would recommend adoption of the proposed Amendment and approval of the Permit Application, subject to further infrastructure investigations and design conditions as set out in this report.



## The study area.

- Amendment C208 applies to approximately 1095ha of land within the Sunbury / Diggers Rest growth corridor, located approximately 30km to the north of Melbourne's CBD. This design assessment is however confined to land to the east of Racecourse Road forming part of the larger parcel of 3-5 Macedon Street, Sunbury. The subject land is a discrete 49.87ha portion of a large irregular pastoral lot of approximately 247.3ha to either side of the Jackson Creek. The larger parcel has a frontage to Racecourse Road of approximately 1.2km bound by private land to the north-east, a rail reserve to the south-east and residential land to the south-west. The site is largely void of structures and currently contains a telecommunications tower at its highest elevation (AHD 242m) adjacent to the Elizabeth Drive roundabout. The site comprises undulating land with scattered vegetation and water bodies leading down to the western bank of the Jacksons Creek, with a steep escarpment rising to a flat plateau to the east. In terms of the subject site's immediate interfaces, I note the following:
  - To the north, the site abuts Emu Bottom Wetlands, a 32ha public reserve to the west of Jacksons Creek comprising walking trails, grassed areas and wetlands. Further to the north are large low density residential lots typically comprising single storey dwellings surrounded by canopy vegetation and permeable 'agricultural' fencing. Open views to the subject land to the south are available from public open space and the Creekside conservation area.
  - To the south, the site partly abuts the rear of residential properties with an address to Hopbush Avenue and Correa Way within the Sherwood Hills estate comprising a mixture of single and two storey contemporary dwellings (constructed in the early to mid 2000s). Lots within this estate are generally larger than 1000m2 arranged around a curvilinear street network comprising narrow carriageways, rolled curbs and native street trees.



View of the site from the west toward Jacksons Creek



View of the site from the south from Correa Way



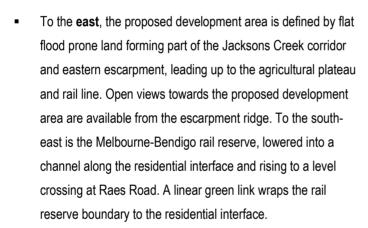
View of the site from the east overlooking Jacksons Creek



View of the site from the north along Racecourse Road

7

Riddells Road in the south (adjacent to Sunbury Secondary College) to Williams Rise and Valley View Crescent in the north. A pedestrian/ cycle trail extends from Riddels Road through the residential area to the west to Dunrossil Drive and along the Racecourse Road reserve to Emu Bottom Wetlands and Homestead to the north. Opposite Racecourse Road is the Sunbury Fields development, a neighbourhood (under construction) accessed from Elizabeth Drive, comprising residential lots, commercial uses as well as large areas of grassland reserves and recreational open space. This location is proposed for further local Activity Centre provision.



6. In the surrounding context (refer to place values diagram on the following page) the site sits immediately to the north of Sunbury's residential hinterland, with established lower density housing to its west and north. The Sunbury Town Centre is located approximately 2km to the south, with several schools including Salesian Catholic College, Sunbury Secondary College, Sunbury Primary School, Kismet Park Primary School and St Annes Catholic School within close proximity. While well serviced, the land sits in a clear zone of transition between conventional urban land to the south and larger lots (LDRZ and GWZ) within heavy vegetative cover to the north. The open exposed condition of the land allows for a reading of topography, with a convex sloping landform leading down to the Jacksons Creek floodplain.



Elizabeth Drive roundabout to the west



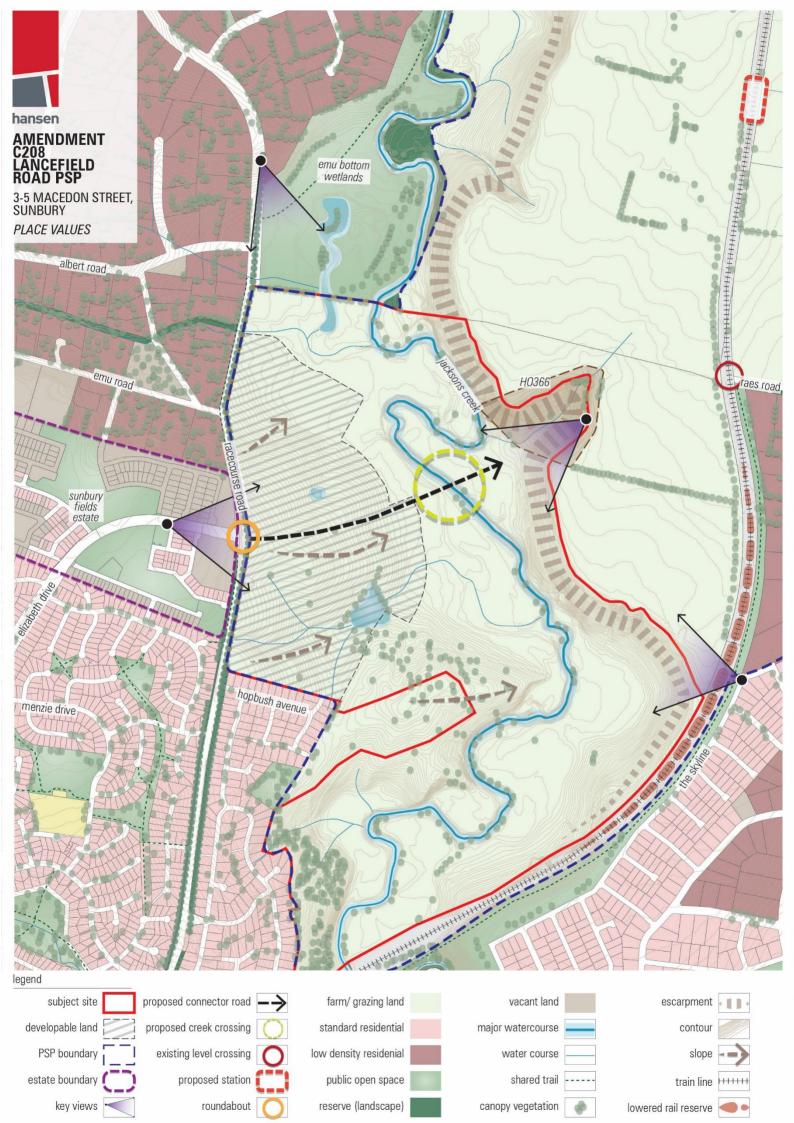
Emu Bottom Wetlands to the north



Edge of escarpment to the east (within PSP boundary)



Convex landform leading south to existing housing





## Existing planning & design controls.

- 7. The land affected by the Amendment and its surroundings are currently influenced by a range of design related Policies, Zones and Overlay controls. The site is subject to the **Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ1)** which seeks to:
  - To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.
  - To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.
  - To encourage development and use of land consistent with sustainable land management and land capability
    practices, which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.
  - To provide for agricultural use consistent with conservation of environmental/ landscape values of the area.
  - To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.
- 8. The site is also subject to the **Environmental Significance Overlay** (**ESO10**) relating to Rural Conservation Areas.
- 9. Relevant State and Local polices relating to urban design in the study area as set out at Appendix B are as follows:
  - Clause 09: Plan Melbourne;
  - Clause 11.02: Urban Growth;
  - Clause 11.06: Metropolitan Melbourne;
  - Clause 15.01: Urban Environment;
  - Clause 16.01: Residential Development;
  - Clause 21.05: Natural Environment and Built Environment;
  - Clause 21.06: Local areas:
  - Clause 21.08: Particular Uses and Development; and
  - Clause 56: Residential Subdivision.
- 10. In addition to these State and Local Policy directions, a series of relevant reference documents and strategic studies have been prepared including:
  - Sunbury Hume Integrated Growth Area Plan (HIGAP) Spatial Strategy (July 2012).
  - The Sunbury/ Diggers Rest Growth Corridor Plan (June 2012).
  - Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines (2013);
  - Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors (June 2013); and
  - Urban Design Charter, 2010.



Existing zoning plan



Existing Overlay plan



## The proposed amendment.

- 11. The Amendment seeks to incorporate the Lancefield Road Precinct Structure Plan (the PSP) into the Hume Planning Scheme. In accordance with the Vision set out in Section 2 of the PSP report, the Lancefield Road precinct will facilitate:
  - The creation of an attractive 'boulevard' outcome for Lancefield Road that defines and connects the neighbourhoods of the precinct, rather than divides it.
  - Development that sensitively responds to, improves community access to, and protects the fragile twin creek valleys of Jacksons and Emu Creek.
  - Improved local access to neighbourhood-level shopping and services for existing communities east of Jacksons Creek, while also supporting the day to day needs of future residents.
  - Delivery of regional sporting and recreation assets to service the broader Sunbury Township, complementing
    existing facilities within the western part of Sunbury.
  - Reinforcement of the established arterial road network within Sunbury, while supporting the logical extension
    of the local road network, including provision for a crossing of Jacksons Creek
  - Provision for an orderly and sensitive transition of existing rural-residential areas to support more conventional urban density.
  - Urban development that responds appropriately to the undulating landform within the precinct, with housing
    design that responds to key viewlines, and sensitive planning for key landscape assets, in particular the twin
    creek corridors, and the undulating land adjacent to Racecourse Road.
  - The protection and recognition of the important and highly valued cultural significance of the area, and in particular the Jacksons Creek corridor and adjacent culturally significant sites.
  - A natural extension of the established Sunbury Township, preserving and reinforcing the township and heritage character of the settlement.
  - Protection of habitat for Matters of National Environmental Significance within conservation areas 18,19, 20 &
     21.
  - Protection of important populations of Growling Grass Frog with in conservation areas fronting the Jacksons and Emu Creeks.
- 12. With regard to the proposed Planning Scheme changes in relation to the subject site, the Amendment seeks to rezone part of the land from Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ1) to Urban Growth Zone (UGZ10) to enable residential development and remove the Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 10) from this developable area. The remainder of the land to Jacksons Creek Corridor will remain under the current Zone and Overlay regime. The Amendment also seeks to remove the Public Acquisition Overlay Schedule 2 from the site as this no longer relates to the preferred alignment of any future crossing over Jacksons Creek.



- 13. Section 96A of the Act provides for a combined permit and amendment process. The provisions allow the VPA to consider applications for planning permits concurrently with an Amendment to a Planning Scheme. Amendment C208 includes 2 applications for permits. My evidence relates to the planning application at 3-5 Macedon Street, Sunbury (the subject site) by Villawood Properties. This Application seeks approval for a multi-lot staged subdivision for residential development. With reference to application plans, dated 16th December 2015 the application specifically comprises:
  - A total of 406 lots arranged in 11 stages;
  - Lot size ranges between 440m² to 2220m² with approximately 95% of lots greater than 500m²;
  - A new boulevard connector road extending from the Elizabeth Drive roundabout at Racecourse Road to a proposed bridge across Jacksons Creek;
  - An internal street network largely shaped around the existing landform;
  - A proposed tree and landscape reserve to the Racecourse Road frontage;
  - An east-west aligned encumbered reserve to the south of the site; and
  - 2 landscape reserve 'links' to the north of the proposed connector street, 1 to the south and a landscape reserve at the site entry.
- 14. The remainder of the lot will form part of the Jacksons Creek conservation area and public open space. The plan also outlines the indicative alignment of a proposed future bridge crossing over Jacksons Creek (subject to further analysis).



Excerpt of subject site from Plan 4 of the PSP (Land Use Budget) & proposed permit application by Villawood Properties



## Urban design assessment.

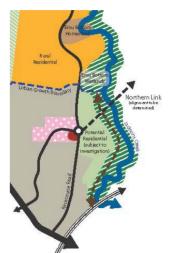
- 15. In reviewing Amendment C208 to the Hume Planning Scheme, I have considered the key urban design and landscape ambitions spelt out in the supporting background documents and the various design based issues raised in submissions received by the VPA following exhibition of the proposed Amendment in November 2016. I note that 193 submissions were received by the VPA, with the key urban design issues pertaining to the capability and appropriateness of the land to accommodate residential development, the impact of any development on landform and the adjacent Jacksons Creek corridor and the impact of views to the Jacksons Creek corridor from surrounding residential areas and public open space. Further, I understand the VPA have proposed a number of modifications to the PSP and the associated Schedule to the Urban Growth Zone to address a number of these concerns.
- 16. In determining the appropriateness of the proposed Amendment to the Hume Planning Scheme, I have considered the following key matters, which in my opinion serve as a suitable measure for the appraisal of any urban design and landscape assessment. These themes for investigation are:
  - Can the subject site accommodate residential development?
  - Are the proposed controls (requirements and guidelines) outlined in the PSP appropriate?
  - Does the proposed development (Section 96A Permit Application) appropriately respond to the PSP?
- 17. I have set out my statement of evidence accordingly to these themes below:

#### Can the Subject Site Accommodate Residential Development?

- 18. In advance of any detailed assessment of the Lancefield Road PSP or the proposed Villawood residential development of the subject land at 3-5 Macedon Street, Sunbury, it is first necessary to appraise the suitability of the land for housing in both a strategic and site design context. Having inspected the background documentation, including strategic assessments and the condition of the site today, I am satisfied that the elevated parts of the land enjoy favourable attributes in terms of its potential as a residential development and neighbourhood precinct. There are a several factors that have influenced my assessment, including:
  - A number of strategic directions have indicated that the land has the potential for urban redevelopment, while recognizing the sensitivity of its landscape context. The land is located inside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and, consistent with other such areas, has the potential to be investigated for urban infill. This is also highlighted in the 'Sunbury/Diggers Rest Growth Corridor Plan', which identifies the land as part of the broader metropolitan area. While the land was then identified as public open space (and in the current zoning regime as a Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)), it is also recognized as an 'investigation area', including a designated road link with a clear distinction between it and the open landscape of the Jacksons Creek floodplain to the east itself recognized for its biodiversity values.



The subsequent HIGAP (Hume Integrated Growth Area Plan) study of 2012 further sets out the opportunities for redevelopment of land in the northern Sunbury precinct. With cognizance of the substantive redevelopment of former Council land at 275 Racecourse Road (to the west of the subject land) and the potential for a northern linkage to Sunbury North, the capacity of the elevated land to the eastern side of Racecourse Road is further contemplated. This strategic analysis continues to recognize the role of the land as a Conservation Area (refer page 50), however there is consistent recognition of potential residential opportunity (subject to investigation). This is further reinforced in the HIGAP's calling for further work to:



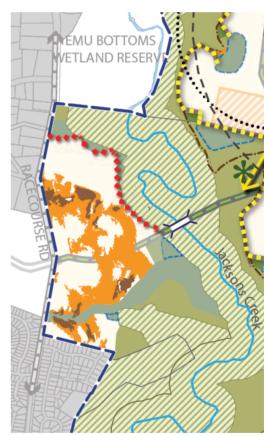
HIGAP Excerpt of Sunbury North Precinct

'Undertake further investigations on land zoned Rural Conservation Zone (shown as Conservation Area on Map 5.5) to determine the extent of environmental constraints; the required mechanisms to ensure the provision of the Northern Link; and the mechanisms to ensure the provision of an open space link from Sunbury Town Centre to Emu Bottom Wetland'.

- An examination of the physical context of the land shows that considerable change has been realised since the conceptual framework of the Growth Corridor Plan and HIGAP in 2012, most notably in the residential subdivision of the infill urban block to the western side of Racecourse Road, encompassing Elizabeth Drive. This land has served over time as the elevated ridgeline and 'non-urban break' between conventional subdivision within Sunbury to the south and the larger lot development located to the north located around the undulating topography of the Emu Bottom Wetlands and Homestead. With the encroachment of urban development and the proposed Local Activity Centre on Elizabeth Drive (the elevated point of Racecourse Road), I believe that it is entirely appropriate to invite development to the east, encompassing the land overlooking the Jacksons Creek. This is, in my opinion, consistent with the orderly planning of the precinct (subject to necessary design management controls) and appropriate in terms of optimizing the use of land within the UGB.
- Given this strategic background, it is in my opinion clear that there are opportunities for residential development on the eastern side of Racecourse Road, in particular on elevated land overlooking the Jacksons Creek as a continuum of the conventional residential subdivision occurring to the south along Hopbush Avenue. I acknowledge however that the Racecourse Road land is not flat, unencumbered or 'development ready' (ie accessed and serviced from all sides) like other land within the PSP area. To this end, it is appropriate in my opinion to enforce more rigid parameters relating to the siting design and layout of residential subdivision (and associated infrastructure) to ensure that there is sensitivity to the significant landscape of the Jacksons Creek corridor and the associated landscape values of the precinct.



- One physical feature of the land that sets it apart from other parcels designated for redevelopment within the PSP boundary is slope, which ranges between 10 to 15%, with more discrete areas up to 20% (1:5). While I do not advocate viable redevelopment on substantially sloping land (greater than 20%), I believe that careful site planning and design can achieve a successful redevelopment outcome within the intermediate range of 10 to 15%. It is notable from on-site inspection that the land in question represents a local highpoint, with varied graded slopes leading down to Jacksons Creek. As opposed to land which is consistently steeply sloped or severely constrained by drainage and/or vegetation matters, the 'convex' topographical condition of the land provides the opportunity for development on its elevated area, with greater sensitivity required at its lower reaches leading towards the Jacksons Creek floodplain.
- New development approaches to areas at the urban/natural transition are also relevant in contemplating the opportunity for land within the Racecourse Road precinct. As illustrated to the north of Sunbury, a traditional (and somewhat dated) module of subdivision seeks a 'soft transition' between conventional fine grained suburban parcels to larger lot arrangements with more generous grounds and landscape cover (i.e. LDRZ and GWZ). While this has a certain aesthetic quality, more recent analysis (and research relating to bushfire threat and community safety) indicates that there is merit in a more definitive 'hard' urban to natural boundary. To this end, I support the realisation of a carefully managed conventional subdivision arrangement on the subject land, noting the need to invite open space and green linkages to permeate the floodplain and Creek corridor. This ensures that urban development does not create a 'barrier' at the Creek, rather a carefully curated address (typically with a street frontage) presenting to the creek and its notable open space assets, with public access assured.



Areas of significant slope (PSP pg 14)



Panorama to the eastern escarpment from within the subject site.



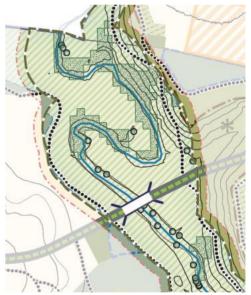
#### Are the proposed controls (requirements and guidelines) outlined in the PSP appropriate?

19. The exhibited Lancefield Road PSP (November 2016) sets out the framework for development of the urban area and particular parameters for the Racecourse Road precinct. The vision statement (Part 2.1) identifies the opportunity for:

'Urban development that responds appropriately to the undulating landform within the precinct, with housing design response to key view lines, and sensitive planning for key landscape assets, in particular the twin creek corridors, and the undulating land adjacent to Racecourse Road'.

The Future Urban Structure (Plan 3) identifies a large area of land on the eastern side of Racecourse Road for future 'residential' development, with a dissecting connector boulevard and future bridge connection to the east from Racecourse Road to the eastern Lancefield Road PSP development area. The Plan also indicates landscape belts leading down to the Conservation Area (and the drainage/waterway corridor). The Plan sets out implementation Requirements and Guidelines in Part 3, which form the basis for the assessment of any development application. I make the following comments:

The Future Urban Structure (Plan 3) illustrates an irregular shaped parcel designated for future residential development bound to the north and north east by a drainage/waterway Conservation area and Service Open Space to the south east by a combined credited open space, service open space, regionally significant landscape values and conservation area interface. Examination of the Future Urban Structure Plan and related Conservation Areas 20 and 21 (western section B) suggests the extent of the settlement area is largely defined behind a 30m conservation interface from the Jacksons Creek waterway (and the associated Nature Conservation Area). This broadly complies with areas of flat flood prone land (LSIO - Land Subject to Inundation Overlay) abutting the Creek which is not suited for development. While I support this approach, it would in my opinion be appropriate to reinforce the sensitive landscape and visual characteristics of the corridor through a more rigorous definition of a settlement area, preferably through identification of a relevant contour (i.e. of 207m) positioned uphill from the Conservation Area boundary, beyond which urban development should be limited.



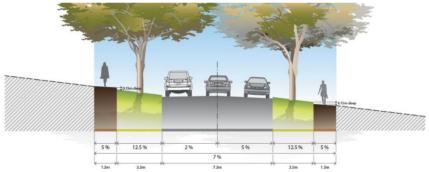
Conservation Area at Jacksons Creek (PSP pg 34)



View toward creek environs from site



While the proposed PSP provides the basis for a consolidated redevelopment precinct on the eastern side of Racecourse Road, there is somewhat limited guidance in relation to the potential connectivity and street network opportunities within the land (including both vehicle and pedestrian accessibility). The proposed Street Network (Plan 9) shows a Boulevard Connector Street leading downhill towards Jacksons Creek, with a bridge connection (road alignment subject to review) to elevated land above the escarpment on the eastern side of the Creek. Further, PSP R51 indicates that streets in areas of slope greater than 10% 'must run generally with the contours where practical and include canopy street trees to minimise the visual impact of development'. Given the topographical condition of the Racecourse Road land, it is in my view appropriate to invite a street network which broadly follows the radial array of contours leading down to the floodplain. This represents best practice with regard to slope management and may provide the basis for the necessary benching of developable land to either side of the streetscape. I also support the continuance of Elizabeth Drive as a central spine crossing Racecourse Road leading into the subject land. This serves as an important visual connection to the Jacksons Creek corridor and provides an accessible framework for a neighbourhood to either side.



Example of street cross-section on significant slope: Local Access Street Level 1 12.5% Slope (PSP, Pg 67)

The proposed PSP shows an east-west aligned bridge crossing of Jacksons Creek, realizing a strategic transit connection between Racecourse Road (at Elizabeth Drive) and the north-south connector boulevard forming part of the elevated eastern neighbourhood. Furthermore, in response to this opportunity PSP R54 seeks to ensure that 'the Jacksons Creek Crossing must respond sensitively to landform and amenity of the Jacksons Creek Corridor'. While the ultimate implementation of this initiative is subject to detailed design, it is in my opinion fundamental for any future bridge crossing to be **carefully aligned to minimize visual impact** within the Jacksons Creek corridor, in particular from within the floodplain and the open aspect from the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. Furthermore, any 'over engineered' outcome (ie, subject to height, form and the structure of support systems and road plane) could detrimentally affect the function and arrangement of residential development on the Racecourse Road site. As such, more detailed landscape and visual impact assessment of any bridging proposal should be undertaken. While I accept that there may be strategic rationale for transit connections between neighbourhoods to either side of Jacksons Creek, this should not occur to the detriment of the landscape and environmental values at this important location.



The profile of development on elevated land and hilltops should be clearly subject to landscape and visual amenity tests from key vantage points, including publicly accessible roadways, surrounding land, the Creek Corridor and elevated positions within the new development area to the east. Having undertaken site inspections surrounding the Racecourse Road site, I am satisfied that development on the rising land leading to the Racecourse Road frontage will not compromise the scenic and landscape values of the setting, noting that an appreciation of undulating topography leading down to the Jacksons Creek and the escarpment to the east remain as key landscape elements. Furthermore, I note that views towards the hillside from Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve and other positions along Racecourse Road to the north, include development in the foreground of the ultimate ridgeline (behind this road to the west). In this regard. I believe that future development will sit within the landscape (as opposed to defining its ultimate silhouette). This represents appropriate practice in urban fringe areas, strongly supported by the PSP requirement for substantive landscape cover to parcels, which further aids integration into the setting. To this end, the PSP is appropriately framed in terms of a viewshed analysis.



View of site from Emu Bottom Wetlands



View of site from Racecourse Road (north)

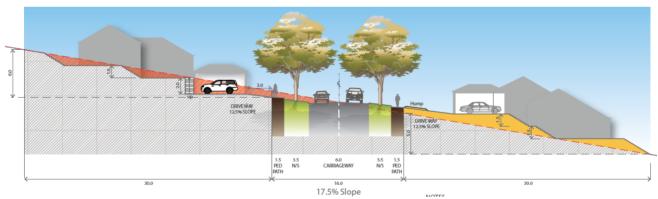


View of site from escarpment (east)

The PSP as exhibited provides a limited suite of Requirements and Guidelines in relation to **visual** sensitivity, which typically forms an important basis for neighbourhood design in environmentally or scenically sensitive areas. In general terms, PSP G1 seeks to ensure that subdivisions 'respond to the topography and enhance the landscape features and view lines, and in relation to more sensitive locale', PSP R4 requires that 'subdivision of land adjacent to a sensitive visual interface and must provide for an interface outcome consistent with those set out in the Regionally Significant Landscape cross sections'. While the site on Racecourse Road has an interface with a Conservation Area to the north and north-east of the designated residential land (and is therefore a Sensitive Visual Interface), there is no relevant cross-section guiding development in this particular location. I note that cross-sections at Appendix 4.2 specifically relate to Regionally Significant Landscapes with escarpment top development and not development at the interface with a conservation area. In my opinion, further design guidance is required at this interface (preferably through cross-sections) illustrating development setbacks and the preferred landscape response.



The PSP provides considerable guidance in relation to the management of development on sloping land. Generally, land with graded slopes between 5-20% require particular design refinements to ensure functional obligations and the sensitivity within the broader Creek Corridor and hillside landscape. The PSP outlines several Requirements and Guidelines in relation to subdivision and development of land in excess of 10% slope. These include R14 '...development must minimise landscape scarring and avoid the need for large amounts of cut and fill, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority' and G11, 12, 15, 17 and 18 which each seek to set clear parameters for the relative height of excavation, retaining walls and associated fill. In particular I note 'G18: 'earthworks exceeding 1.0 metre depth in cut or 1.0 metre depth in fill should be avoided within 1.0 metre of any side, rear or front boundary'. Given the characteristics of the Racecourse Road land and its topography, including sloping land of between 5% and 20%, it is, in my opinion, entirely appropriate to include such parameters. These parameters are broadly suitable given they provide the opportunity for larger lots and terraced retaining walls to absorb changes in level to allow for a flat building footprint. Further, I note that the VPA has recommended the 'Racecourse Road Site - Design Controls' (dated August 2<sup>nd</sup>), which provides more detail in relation to building siting and design. While these may require some refinement (ie. clarification of overall extent of cut or fill), I accept that they represent an appropriate regulatory response noting the opportunity for 'other' design solutions (including split-level housing or other modules) which may be successfully accommodated on sloping land – as found in other natural urban contexts such as the Dandenong Ranges, Nillumbik and elsewhere.



Example of street and residential development cross-section on significant slope: 15-20% Grade (PSP pg 70)



View of existing topographical conditions of subject site (10-20% slope)



#### Does the proposed development (Section 96A Permit Application) appropriately respond to the PSP?

- 20. I have reviewed the proposed Permit Application and subdivision design for the Racecourse Road site, identified as Sherwood Heights, Sunbury set out in Drawing ref 7989-UD\_SLP01\_V9 dated 16th December, 2015 which shows an indicative Subdivision Layout across 45.62ha. The subdivision represents an 11-stage development extending radially downhill to either side of the proposed Elizabeth Drive Boulevard, with a drainage/ environmental corridor to the south, and a separated street network connected to the existing Correa Way and Hopbush Avenue (Sherwood Hills) neighbourhood to the south. In urban design and landscape terms, I make the following comments:
  - The layout and configuration of the proposed subdivision, including the array of streets to either side of the Elizabeth Drive boulevard, and the general sizing of lots on the sloping land is appropriate having regard to the Requirements and Guidelines provided in the PSP. In particular, I note the definition of the central access boulevard leading from elevated land on Racecourse Road to the north-east, and the orderly arrangement of perpendicular streets (and junctions) to either side, which broadly follow the existing topography as required. The alignment of streets and positioning of 'back to back' lots will result in streetscapes with 'high or low' sides with (I expect) an address to the street, but an orientation of views to the eastern Jacksons Creek escarpment. Subject to slope management and appropriately scaled (and stepped) dwellings, this represents a promising urban design outcome.
  - The extent of the proposed development is defined by the boundary with the Jacksons Creek Conservation
    - Area (and associated LSIO and flood plain), which steps in and out to the north and eastern edge of the development area. A review of contour levels at this location suggests (consistent with my opinion above) that curtailment of Stages 5, 6, 7 and 8 is required to respect the 'spaciousness' of the Creek Corridor and a more 'regular' definition of the urban boundary. This would (in this instance) be well formed by the 3rd radial roadway (the outward edge of Stage 3), as it extends to the north and south, broadly corresponding with contour level 207. This outcome is in my view preferred in that it provides a consistent frontage to the Creek at an intermediate elevation that is clearly distinguishable in long and closerange views from the flat Creek flood plain and its conservation threshold. I note that this is also consistent with the VPA's 'proposed revision to the development area' circulated on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017.



Illustration of proposed subdivision arrangement with existing topography highlighting the preferred contour extent for residential development.



To the northern quadrant of the subdivision, a series of short street connections with open space corridors that **permit visual and physical linkages** between the higher reaches of the site and the open space corridor encircling the land alongside the Jacksons Creek. While this is not a complete linear open space network, it represents an integrated approach to local open space and accessibility (and likely drainage management) that should be further advanced on this site. This is particularly relevant to the southern quadrant (Stages 8, 9 and 10), where there are few linear linkages from high ground towards the passive open space to the east. Given the topographical condition of this area, the subdivision design should be adjusted to provide such linkages or 'green fingers' in association with selected larger lots as illustrated below.



Illustration of permeable open space, streetscape and visual links through subdivision

- The edges of the proposed development have in my opinion been suitably addressed. While the western profile of the neighbourhood to Racecourse Road presents its 'back' of lots to the main road, this is behind a linear vegetation spine containing existing canopy vegetation generally downhill from the Racecourse Road reserve. Given the difficulty in accessing lots from Racecourse Road and the likely easterly outlook from these elevated lots, I support this model of development. I also note the addition of Stage 2 to the south forming part of the existing Sherwood Hills neighbourhood. The design and configuration of this precinct is generally sound; however I would recommend adjustments to those lots which present their rear interfaces to the linear open space which is atypical in the neighbourhood design.
- Finally, I note that the Elizabeth Drive corridor connects with a future Jacksons Creek bridge crossing (subject to further analysis). Given the profile of the escarpment on the eastern side of the Creek, I believe that it would be likely that any such bridge structure would need to 'launch' from an elevated position within the Racecourse Road site. While I have not undertaken any detailed investigations, it would in my opinion be sensible to gauge the relative levels of such a structure in comparison to prospective dwellings to either side of Elizabeth Drive to ensure an orderly and amenable design response. While I accept that the transport connection across the Creek is a strategic direction, its design should not in my opinion compromise the viability of this residential development parcel, or for that matter the visual amenity of the Creek corridor. To this end, I would recommend that any such bridge structure is of lightweight structure and appearance and confined in its visual extend across the valley viewshed, principally within the flatter flood plane profile beyond the defined development area on elevated land to the west.



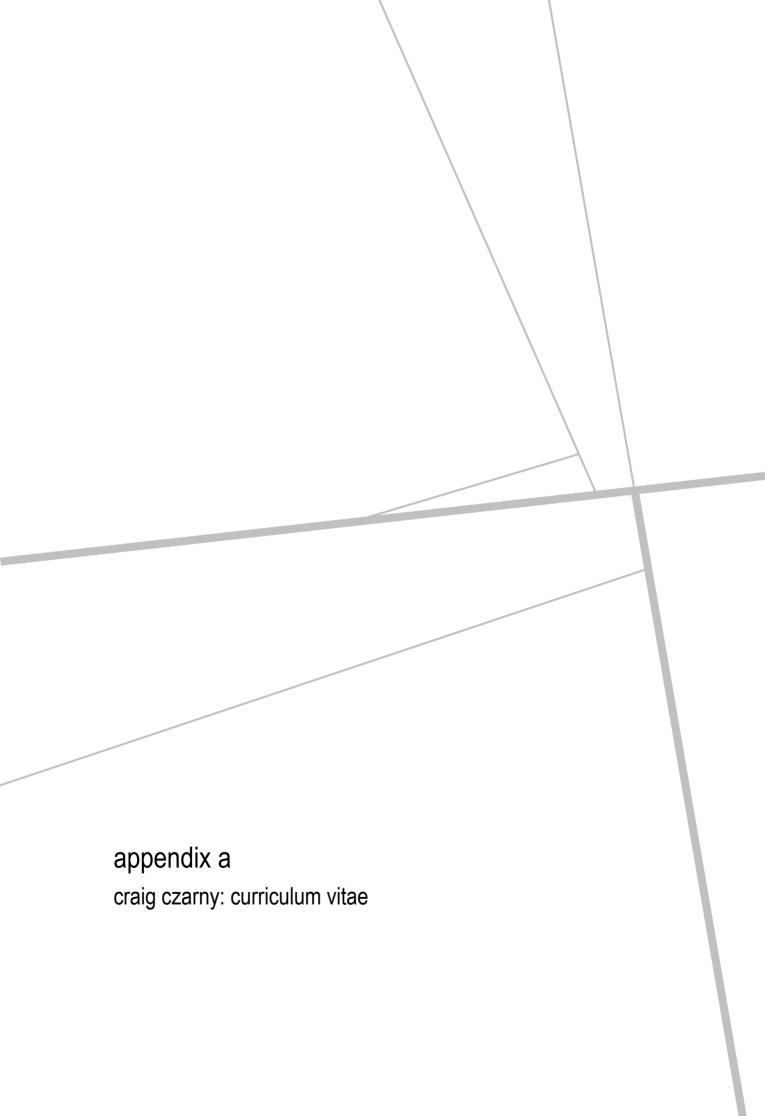
### Conclusion.

- 21. Having considered the relevant background documents informing the proposed Amendment C208 (Lancefield Road, Sunbury PSP) relating specifically to the prospective development to the eastern side the Racecourse Road leading down to the Jacksons Creek, I am satisfied that the land can support a sensitively designed residential neighbourhood. My assessment has found that:
  - a) Development on the east side of Racecourse Road can be strategically justified in light of the policy and physical context, and the established recognition of the precinct's potential for housing subject to environmental and landscape investigations.
  - b) While the capacity of the land to support housing will be determined by conservation and floodway boundaries, there is merit in defining a 'contour' that serves as the limiting extent of residential (or other) development, recognizing the landscape and scenic qualities of the creek corridor.
  - c) The PSP provides useful guidance on the format and nature of residential development in broad terms, however additional parameters would be helpful in defining the Creek corridor cross section.
  - d) The extension of Elizabeth Drive into the subject land represents a logical connection to the east, however further investigations are required to confirm the necessary form and elevation of any future bridge structure to determine its visual impacts and influence on adjacent housing.
  - e) The proposed subdivision in the Section 96A application represents an appropriate design response, subject to a more confined contour limitation to the eastern Creek interface and additional green 'fingers' realizing visual and physical connectivity to the east.
- 22. Given the above findings and the nature and content of the PSP Objectives, Requirements and Guidelines as applying to the land, I would recommend further Overlay Control measures (either a DDO or other tool) or equivalent condition applying to any development permission on the land to specifically address relevant matters regarding the extent, format, siting and design of future residential development. These are addressed 'in part' through the VPA's recent 'Racecourse Road Site Design Controls', however greater clarity is required with regard to the testing of particular housing development outcomes on sloping lots within the site.
- 23. I note that this statement has been prepared in accordance with Planning Panels Victoria Guideline No. 1 Expert Evidence and I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

May Sam

craig czarny
MLArch BTRP AAILA RLA FPIA
director
hansen partnership pty Itd:

11th August 2017



## Craig Czarny: BTRP MLArch AlLA RLA

qualifications	Master of Landscape Architecture, University of Melbourne 1991. Bachelor of Town & Regional Planning, University of Melbourne 1986.
position:	Director, Urban Designer & Landscape Architect Hansen Pty Ltd, Melbourne
professional affiliations:	Associate, Institute of Landscape Architects, AAILA Fellow, Planning Institute of Australian, FPIA Registered Landscape Architect, RLA
awards: special competence:	Melbourne University, Postgraduate Scholarship 1990 RAPI Award for Planning Excellence (NSW) 1996 PIA Project Awards & Commendations (VIC) 03/4/5/6 Victoria Medal for Landscape Architecture 2008
	Master planning, Design Development & Documentation of Public Domain projects. Townscape and Streetscape Design Assessment. Urban Design & Landscape Project Management. Urban Design Education and Training.
	Craig Czarny is a Director of Hansen and an Urban Designer and Landscape Architect with over 28 years' experience in local and international practice. He has worked on a variety of urban planning and design projects, from broad urban character analysis to local area site planning, design and documentation. He has also served as a sessional lecturer in urban design and landscape planning at the University of Melbourne.
professional experience	2016: Secondment to World Bank 2002- present: Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd Sydney & Melbourne, Australia. Director: Urban Designer/ Landscape Architect
	1995-2002: Context Conybeare Morrison Pty Ltd Sydney & Melbourne, Australia. Ass Director: Urban Designer/ Landscape Architect
	1993-1995: James Cunning Young & Partners, Glasgow & Edinburgh, Scotland. Senior Urban Designer/ Landscape Architect
	1988-1993: Wilson Sayer Core, Melbourne, Australia Urban Designer & Planner.

1989: Design Workshop, Colorado, USA Urban Design/ Landscape Intern

#### **PROJECT EXPERIENCE:**

#### **CRAIG CZARNY:**

#### site redevelopment projects

Mordialloc Built Form Review
Bonbeach TAFE Site Redevelopment Framework
Queenscliff High School Site Development Study
Knox Strategic Sites: Urban Design Review
ADI Development Footscray & Maribyrnong,
Cape Cabarita Residential Development
Essendon Airport Redevelopment Study
Dandenong Treatment Plant Site development
Marolt Ranch Community Village Project
Horsham Tech Park: Urban Design Guidelines
Victoria Park Housing Urban Design Masterplan

#### retail & commercial town centre design

Rosebud Activity Centre Structure Plan
Moonee Valley Activity Centres Structure Plans
Geelong Western Wedge: Design Framework
Knox Central Urban Design Framework
Forrest Hill Retail Centre Planning & Design.
Sydenham Town Centre Urban Design Plan.
Ringwood Town Centre Design Masterplan
Melton Regional Centre.
Oakleigh Urban Design Framework.
Carrum Urban Design Framework.

#### townscape & streetscape projects

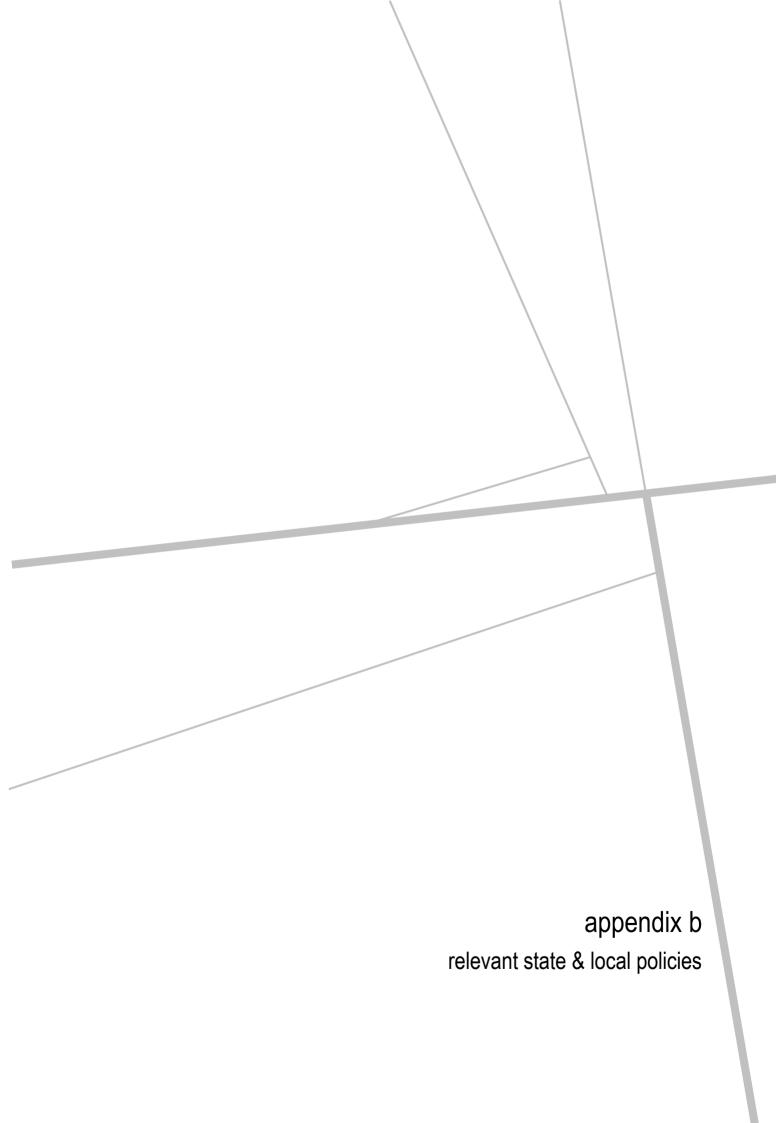
Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento Saigon Riverfront Masterplan, Vietnam Mersey Bluff Masterplan, Devonport Hastings Urban Design Framework Victoria St, Richmond Framework Plan Bayside Height Control/ Urban Design Study Punt Road Hoddle Street Urban Design Vision CBD Lanes Built Form Review. Manly Corso Streetscape Masterplan. St Kilda Foreshore Urban Design Study. Tunstall Square, Doncaster. Glasgow's Townhead Improvements. Ballarat Streetscape Study. Paddington Townscape Study. Liverpool Street Spanish Quarter. Petersham Streetscape Study. Queenscliffe Urban Character Study. Orchard Road Streetscape Upgrade, Singapore. Point Lonsdale Urban Design Framework

#### community planning & design

Viengxay Town Masterplan, Viengxay, Laos RedCliffs Residential Development Plan Jackass Flat New Development Area Riverwood Housing Improvement Masterplan. MacQuarie Fields Improvement Masterplan. Ferguslie Park Common. Sydney Olympics 'Look of the Games'. Niddrie Mains Urban Design & Housing Project.

#### urban/landscape design documentation

Wollongong Foreshore Plaza Western Sydney Park Masterplan/ Entries. Rouse Hill Regional Park. Bass Hill Plaza Memorial Parkland.



#### Relevant State and Local Polices include:

#### Clause 09: Plan Melbourne

 Where relevant, planning and responsible authorities must consider and apply the strategy Plan Melbourne 2017-2050: Metropolitan Planning Strategy (Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning, 2017).

#### Clause 11.02: Urban Growth

- To ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses.
- To facilitate the orderly development of urban areas.
- To locate urban growth close to transport corridors and services and provide efficient and effective infrastructure to create benefits for sustainability while protecting primary production, major sources of raw materials and valued environmental areas.

#### Clause 11.06: Metropolitan Melbourne

- To provide housing choice close to jobs and services.
- To create a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity.
- To create a city of inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods that promote strong communities, healthy lifestyles and good access to local services and jobs.
- To create a more sustainable and resilient city that manages its land, biodiversity, water, energy and waste resources in a more integrated way.
- To protect the green wedges of Metropolitan Melbourne from inappropriate development.
- To strengthen the integrated metropolitan open space network.

#### Clause 15: Urban Environment

- To create urban environments that are safe, functional and provide good quality environments with a sense of place and cultural identity.
- To achieve architectural and urban design outcomes that contribute positively to local urban character and enhance the public realm while minimising detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.
- To improve community safety and encourage neighbourhood design that makes people feel safe.
- To recognise and protect cultural identity, neighbourhood character and sense of place.
- To encourage land use and development that is consistent with the efficient use of energy and the minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions.
- To ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

#### Clause 16.01: Residential Development

- To promote a housing market that meets community needs.
- To locate new housing in or close to activity centres and employment corridors and at other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport.
- To identify strategic redevelopment sites for large residential development in Metropolitan Melbourne.
- To provide for a range of housing types to meet increasingly diverse needs.
- To deliver more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services.

#### Clause 21.05: Natural Environment and Built Environment

- To protect and where possible restore the integrity of the City's biodiversity
- To appropriately manage, protect and where possible restore the integrity of the City's catchments and broader land management practices.
- To promote ecologically sustainable development across the City.
- To protect and enhance the unique landscape qualities and features that contribute to the urban and rural character of the municipality and which give the different suburbs and towns in the City their own identity.
- To provide a network of open spaces which meets the varied recreation and leisure needs of the community.
- To provide for the protection and appropriate management of sites of heritage and cultural significance.

#### Clause 21.06: Local areas (Rural Areas)

• To recognise the demand for rural residential and rural living developments, and to provide for this development where it is closely integrated with an existing township or urban areas.

#### Clause 21.08: Particular Uses and Development

- Enhance the amenity and appearance of the City's employment and residential areas, activity centres, open spaces, gateways and approach roads. (21.02-5)
- To protect and enhance the unique landscape qualities and features, that contribute to the rural character of the municipality and which give the different suburbs and towns in the City their own identity.

#### Clause 56: Residential Subdivision

#### 56:04 Lot diversity and distribution objectives

- To achieve housing densities that support compact and walkable neighbourhoods and the efficient provision of public transport services.
- To provide higher housing densities within walking distance of activity centres.
- To achieve increased housing densities in designated growth areas. To provide a range of lot sizes to suit a variety
  of dwelling and household types.

#### 56.05 Urban Landscape

- To provide attractive and continuous landscaping in streets and public open spaces that contribute to the character and identity of new neighbourhoods and urban places or to existing or preferred neighbourhood character in existing urban areas.
- To incorporate natural and cultural features in the design of streets and public open space where appropriate.
- To protect and enhance native habitat and discourage the planting and spread of noxious weeds.

#### **Reference Documents**

#### Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines (GAA, 2013)

The Guidelines apply to the preparation of precinct structure plans for new residential communities and new employment areas. The purpose of these Guidelines is to set out what should be addressed in preparing or assessing a precinct structure plan. They seek to:

- Increase consistency and certainty in growth area planning;
- Assist in the timely preparation and completion of precinct structure plans;
- Support the drafting requirements of the Urban Growth Zone and related parts of the Victoria Planning Provisions;
   and
- Facilitate the creation of unique new communities that are better places to live and which respond to the challenges of the future.

#### Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors (June 2013)

The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) for Melbourne's growth corridors has been prepared in response to obligations arising from the strategic assessment conducted under Part 10 of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The requirement to prepare the BCS arises from the program report, which committed to:

• An overarching Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be prepared for each of the expanded growth corridors. These Strategies will inform the preparation of the Growth Area Framework Plans and ensure high level guidance. They will outline how the areas of biodiversity value (State and Commonwealth) within the growth areas will be managed and will spatially identify how outcomes for matters of national environmental significance will be delivered

#### Sunbury HIGAP Spatial Strategy (July 2012)

This Strategy and the accompanying Draft Delivery and Infrastructure Strategy are the culmination of a comprehensive review of planning for Sunbury by Hume City Council and when adopted will be Council's plan for the township. It will inform Council's planning for Sunbury and be the basis for its advocacy work with State Government and developers. Strategic Objectives

- Ensure Sunbury is different and separate to Melbourne but well connected by high quality transport and technology networks:
- Retain Sunbury's rural outlook and increase public access to its high quality heritage and natural environment;
- Encourage use and development in the surrounding non urban areas that is supportive and complimentary to the urban area;
- Increase the number and diversity of jobs within Sunbury;
- Prioritise and intensify activity in the town centre and create new supporting smaller activity centres;
- Develop places of activity and walkable neighbourhoods linked by well designed and efficient transport connections;
- Increase the potential for the Sunbury and wider community to access its housing, health, leisure, cultural and education needs in the township;
- Increase the provision of sustainable energy, waste and water services; and
- Deliver logically sequenced development supported by appropriately funded and timely infrastructure.

#### The Sunbury/ Diggers Rest Growth Corridor Plan (June 2012)

In June 2012, State Government approved the Growth Corridor Plans which outlines at a broad level their view on how the Sunbury and Diggers Rest Area should change, focusing principally on the urban growth areas.

Key Issues to be addressed in the future development of Sunbury and Diggers Rest are:

- The need to improve local transport links, including creek crossings and improved capacity on the main approach roads to the town;
- Improving the range of local jobs and services available to the community:
- Strengthening the role of the Sunbury Principal Town Centre, as well as providing for quality local access to complementary shopping and community facilities within a connected network of Local Town Centres;
- Increasing the population of Diggers Rest to a size that will sustain a broader range of local shopping, education and community facilities;
- Preserving and enhancing the semi rural and natural setting of Sunbury as the township develops; and
- Establishing an accessible open space system, particularly along Jacksons and Emu Creeks.

#### Victorian Government, Urban Design Charter (2010)

- Structure: organise places so their parts relate well to each other
- Accessibility: provide ease, safety and choice of access for all people
- Legibility: help people to understand how places work and to find their way around
- Animation: stimulate activity and a sense of vitality in public places
- Fit and function: support the intended uses of spaces while also allowing for their adaptability
- Complementary mixed uses: integrate complementary activities to promote synergies between them
- Sense of place: recognise and enhance the qualities that give places a valued identity
- Consistency and variety: balance order and diversity in the interests of appreciating both
- Continuity and change: maintain a sense of place and time by embracing change yet respecting heritage values
- Safety: design spaces that minimise risks of personal harm and support safe behaviour
- Sensory pleasure: create spaces that engage the senses and delight the mind
- Inclusiveness and interaction: create places where all people are free to encounter each other as equals