



# WEST WIMMERA SMALL TOWNS PLAN

[Draft for Consultation]

July 2025





This report is the Small Towns Plan for the Department of Transport and Planning and West Wimmera Shire Council. It has been prepared with expertise, advice and inputs from the consultant team of Plan2Place Consulting, Tim Nott Economics and Wayfarer Consulting, using background reports and information provided by Council and from other government sources. The report issue date is July 2025.

Every reasonable effort has been made to validate information provided by the client, Department staff, Council staff, stakeholders and other participants in the preparation of this report throughout the project during 2024 and 2025.

The report has been prepared in conjunction with the West Wimmera Shire Council and Department of Planning and Transport and is based upon up-to-date information provided at the time of report preparation and finalisation.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND LEGISLATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Background and Context.....	6
1.2 What Comprises the Small Towns Plan.....	7
1.3 What is a Small Town Plan .....	7
1.4 Stakeholder Engagement.....	7
1.5 Additional Background Reports .....	7
<b>2. POLICY AND PLANNING SCHEME CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 State Policy .....	8
2.2 Regional Policy.....	9
2.3 Council Strategies .....	10
2.4 Victoria Planning Provisions.....	11
2.5 Recent updates to the West Wimmera Planning Scheme.....	12
<b>3. KEY CHANGE FACTORS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Population.....	14
3.2 Housing .....	15
3.3 Worker Accommodation.....	15
3.4 Climate.....	16
3.5 Industry .....	16
3.6 Visitation.....	17
3.7 Ageing.....	18
3.8 Social and Community Infrastrucutre .....	19
3.9 Transport Infrastructure .....	19
<b>4. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITES FACING THE TOWNS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 Issues .....	20
4.2 Opportunities .....	22
<b>5. APSLEY.....</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context.....	26
5.2 Population and Demographics.....	29
5.3 Housing .....	29
5.4 Economic Profile .....	29
5.5 Movement and Transport.....	29
5.6 Physical Infrastructure .....	30
5.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure.....	30
5.8 Built Form and Heritage.....	30
5.9 Landscape and Environment.....	31
5.10 Issues and Opportunities .....	31
<b>6. EDENHOPE.....</b>	<b>34</b>
6.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context.....	34
6.2 Population and Demographics.....	37
6.3 Housing .....	37
6.4 Economic Profile .....	37

6.5 Movement and Transport .....	38
6.6 Physical Infrastructure .....	38
6.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure .....	38
6.8 Built Form and Heritage.....	39
6.9 Landscape and Environment .....	39
6.10 Issues and Opportunities.....	40
<b>7. GOROKE .....</b>	<b>44</b>
7.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context .....	44
7.2 Population and Demographics.....	46
7.3 Housing .....	47
7.4 Economic Profile.....	47
7.5 Movement and Transport .....	47
7.6 Physical Infrastructure .....	47
7.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure .....	48
7.8 Built Form and Heritage.....	48
7.9 Landscape and Environment .....	48
7.10 Issues and Opportunities.....	49
<b>8. HARROW .....</b>	<b>52</b>
8.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context .....	52
8.2 Population and Demographics.....	55
8.3 Housing .....	55
8.4 Economic Profile.....	55
8.5 Movement and Transport .....	56
8.6 Physical Infrastructure .....	56
8.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure .....	56
8.8 Built Form and Heritage.....	57
8.9 Landscape and Environment .....	57
8.10 Issues and Opportunities.....	59
<b>9. KANIVA .....</b>	<b>62</b>
9.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context .....	62
9.2 Population and Demographics.....	66
9.3 Housing .....	66
9.4 Economic Profile.....	66
9.5 Movement and Transport .....	67
9.6 Physical Infrastructure .....	68
9.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure .....	68
9.8 Built Form and Heritage.....	69
9.9 Landscape and Environment .....	69
9.10 Issues and Opportunities.....	70
<b>10. FUTURE SETTLEMENT STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>73</b>
10.1 Determining a Settlement Strategy .....	73
10.2 Strategic Framework.....	74
<b>Appendix A – Content overview from the WWPS.....</b>	<b>76</b>
10.3 Zones.....	79
10.4 Overlays .....	80

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: West Wimmera Towns in Shire Context.....	6
Figure 2: Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP – Settlement Hierarchy .....	9
Figure 3: Existing West Wimmera Strategic Framework Plan, WWPS .....	13
Figure 4: Key External Centres Serving West Wimmera.....	14
Figure 5: Recent and Forecast Population Change, West Wimmera Towns 2011 to 2036 .....	15
Figure 6: West Wimmera Median House Price 2023 .....	15
Figure 7: Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines study area for further investigation - Source: VicGrid, 2024 .....	18
Figure 8: Forecast Change in Age Groups, West Wimmera, 2021 to 2036 .....	18
Figure 9: Apsley Context Map .....	27
Figure 10: Apsley Framework Plan Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L .....	28
Figure 11: Apsley - Existing Zones .....	28
Figure 12: Apsley - Existing Overlays .....	29
Figure 13: Edenhope Context Map.....	35
Figure 14: Edenhope Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L.....	36
Figure 15: Edenhope - Existing Zones.....	36
Figure 16: Edenhope - Existing Overlays .....	37
Figure 17: Goroke Context Map .....	45
Figure 18: Goroke Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L.....	46
Figure 19: Goroke - Existing Zones .....	46
Figure 20: Goroke - Existing Overlays.....	47
Figure 21: Harrow Context Map.....	53
Figure 22: Harrow Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L.....	54
Figure 23: Harrow - Existing Zones .....	54
Figure 24: Harrow - Existing Overlays.....	55
Figure 25: Draft Harrow Flood Map 1% AEP Flood Extent .....	58
Figure 26: Kaniva Context Map .....	64
Figure 27: Kaniva Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L .....	65
Figure 28: Kaniva - Existing Zones .....	65
Figure 29: Kaniva - Existing Overlays .....	66
Figure 30: Station Precinct with VicTrack Boundaries and Vacant Land .....	67
Figure 31: Yellow Crown Land in the Station Precinct.....	67
Figure 32: Proposed Strategic Framework Plan Update.....	75
Figure 33: Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan from the WWPS.....	76
Table 1: Forecast Population Change, West Wimmera Towns, 2021 to 2036 .....	14
Table 2: West Wimmera Change in Industrial Groups, 2011 to 2021 .....	16
Table 3: Apsley Settlement and Key Recommendations .....	32
Table 4: Edenhope Settlement and Key Recommendations .....	41
Table 5: Goroke Settlement and Key Recommendations.....	50
Table 6: Harrow Settlement and Key Recommendations .....	60
Table 7: Kaniva Settlement and Key Recommendations.....	72
Table 8: Current Settlement Designations .....	73

## ABBREVIATIONS AND LEGISLATION

### Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BAL	Bushfire Attack Level
BGLC	Barengi Gadjin Land Council
BMO	Bushfire Management Overlay
C1Z	Commercial 1 Zone
Council	West Wimmera Shire Council
DEECA	Department of Energy Environment and Climate Change
DELWP	Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
DDO	Design and Development Overlay
EPAV	Environment Protection Authority Victoria
ESO	Environmental Significance Overlay
ESD	Environmentally Sustainable Development
FZ	Farming Zone
FO	Flooding Overlay
HO	Heritage Overlay
IN1Z	Industrial Zone 1
IN3Z	Industrial Zone 3
LSIO	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
LDRZ	Low Density Residential Zone
MPS	Municipal Planning Strategy
PCRZ	Public Conservation and Resource Zone
PPRZ	Public Park and Recreation Zone
PPF	Planning Policy Framework
PUZ	Public Use Zone
RRV	Regional Roads Victoria
RLZ	Rural Living Zone
TZ	Township Zone
TRZ	Transport Zone
VIF2023	Victoria in Future 2023
VPP	Victoria Planning Provisions
WWPS	West Wimmera Planning Scheme

### Numeric Abbreviations

ha	hectares
%	percent
m <sup>2</sup>	metres squared
kms	kilometres
sqm	square metres

### Related Legislation and Regulations

*Planning and Environment Act 1987 (P&E Act)*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Wimmera Small Towns Plan (STP) has been developed to guide the role, function and purpose of the five largest towns in the Shire of West Wimmera (the Shire) and confirm the Municipal Settlement Strategy for West Wimmera.

Despite the significant change in population in the Shire, there have been limited updates to the planning policy framework in the West Wimmera Planning Scheme over the last 10 years. No new settlement policy has been introduced into the planning scheme since the new format schemes was introduced in February 2000.

The existing planning scheme settlement policies for Apsley, Edenhope, Goroke, Harrow and Kaniva are now outdated and do not reflect the population loss and ageing population, the challenges maintaining community services and environmental risks relating to threatened species and climate change. As a result there is a need to review and update the local settlement policies in the West Wimmera Planning Scheme to provide a framework for planning, development and investment decisions based on the current and projected social, environmental and economic context of the Shire.

Key findings and recommendations of the STP include:

- A clear settlement hierarchy, classifying each of the five towns according to their current and future role.
- Updated strategies and policies for each of the five towns, reflecting the settlement hierarchy.
- An updated Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 that includes a settlement framework.
- A suite of planning scheme amendment documents to support the implementation of the STP, including changes to the MPS and PPF.
- Finalise and implement flood studies for Edenhope and Apsley.
- Prepare a structure plan for Kaniva to further develop:
  - A vision for the town.
  - Identify key actions and priorities for capital works
  - Identify implementation of any changes to the MPS and PPF of the WWPS.
  - Prepare design guidelines for new development.

- Prepare a structure plan for Edenhope subject to funding.
- Prepare structure plans for Goroke, Harrow and Apsley subject to funding.
- Map flood risks as appropriate, as part of the preparation of structure plans for Edenhope and Harrow.
- Review existing heritage and marketing of Harrow and resident/visitor needs in terms of signage, trails networks, heritage interpretation and promote the experience of Harrow to the visitor market.
- Map fire risk as part of the preparation of structure plans for Harrow, Goroke and Apsley.

The existing settlement strategy for the small towns is identified in the WWPS. This reflects the designations applied in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP and outlined below. While the hierarchy has been analysed and reviewed, no change is recommended to this settlement hierarchy as a result of the STP shown below.

### Current and Proposed Settlement Designations

Town	Existing planning scheme designation	Regional Growth Plan designation	Proposed planning scheme designation
<b>Apsley</b>	Small settlement	Small settlement	Small settlement
<b>Edenhope</b>	District Town	District Town	District Town
<b>Goroke</b>	Small settlement	Small settlement	Small settlement
<b>Harrow</b>	Small settlement	Small settlement	Small settlement
<b>Kaniva</b>	Town	Town	Town

In addition to updating the local settlement policies several recommendations are provided to guide detailed planning for each of the five towns. Future work including structure planning, will provide guidance on the most appropriate planning including zones and overlays for Apsley, Edenhope, Goroke, Harrow and Kaniva. Recommendations specific to each of the five towns are also included.

The Small Towns Plan will be implemented via an update to the MPS and updates to local planning policy and further strategic work.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and Context

The West Wimmera Shire straddles the Western and Wimmera Highways, situated midway between Melbourne and Adelaide. It is bordered to the north by the Rural City of Mildura, to the south by the Glenelg and Southern Grampians Shires, and to the east by Hindmarsh Shire and the Rural City of Horsham. To the west, it shares a boundary with the South Australian border.

Approximately 30 percent (%) of the Shire consists of public land, featuring significant natural attractions such as the Big Desert and Little Desert National Parks, part of the Natiumuk-Douglas Chain of Lakes, as well as part of the Mount Arapiles – Tooan State Park. The Shire is home to over 3,000 wetlands, which make up 25% of Victoria's total wetlands, serving as vital natural assets for both the municipality and the wider region.

Covering around 9,000 square kilometres, the Shire ranks among the largest municipalities in Victoria. Despite its expansive area, the Shire had a population of 4,006 people at the 2021 census, a slight increase from 2016 which was 3,903. Prior to that, the Shire experienced population decline, attributed to shifts in agricultural practices, an increase in average farm sizes, and the movement of individuals seeking other educational and employment prospects.

As one of Victoria's most diverse and productive agricultural regions, the local economy is closely linked to the performance of the agricultural sector. With dryland cropping and grazing being the dominant agricultural practice, the trend toward larger farms for greater viability has diminished the demand for services in the small rural towns that support them.

The predominant towns in the Shire are Apsley, Edenhope, Goroke, Harrow, and Kaniva. There are also several smaller townships located throughout the Shire, including Dergholm, Chetwynd and Serviceton.

The West Wimmera Small Towns Plan (STP) will guide the role, function and purpose of each of the five towns in the Shire and confirm the municipal settlement strategy.

The towns and the Shire's context are shown in **Figure 1**.

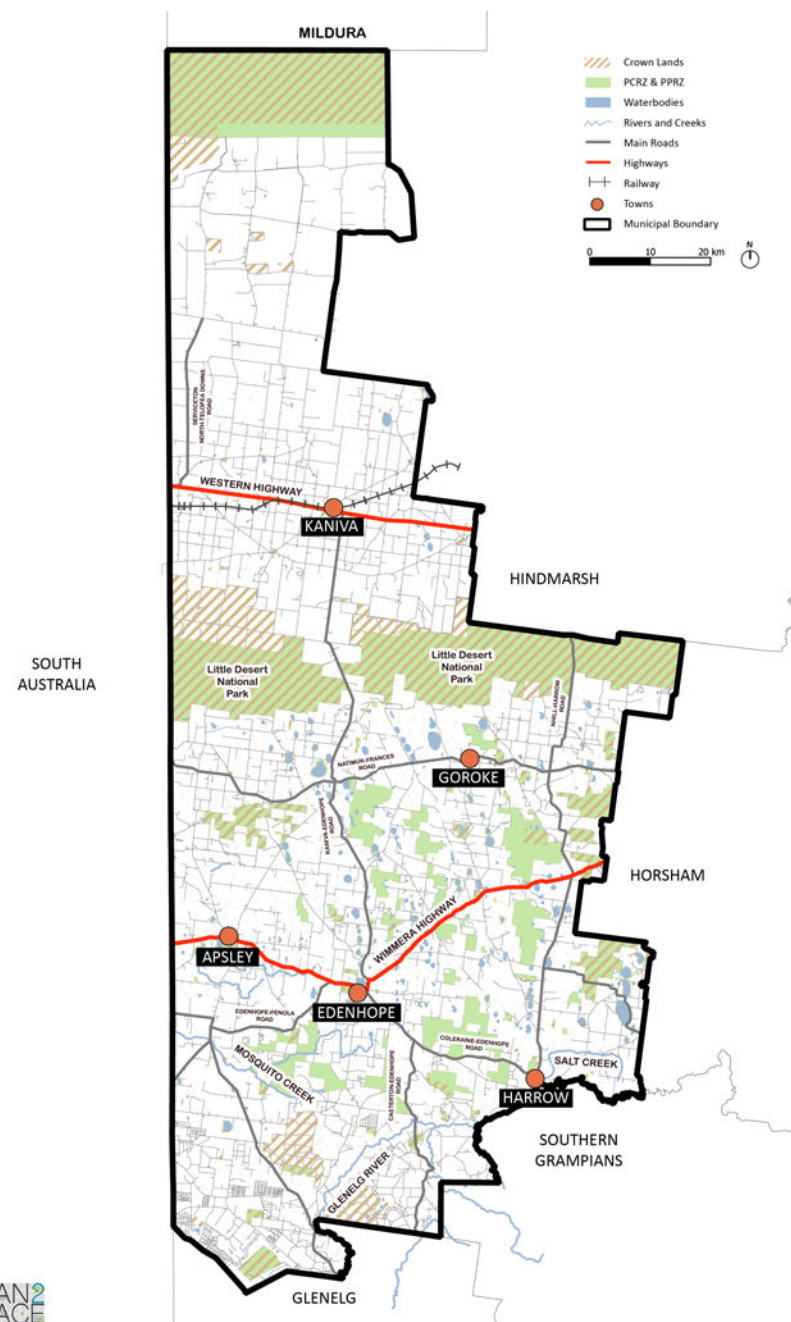


Figure 1: West Wimmera Towns in Shire Context



## 1.2 What Comprises the Small Towns Plan

The STP consists of eleven chapters that address the municipal settlement, policy and planning context, key settlement issues and themes for the towns including:

- Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context.
- Population and Demographics.
- Housing.
- Economic Profile.
- Movement and Transport.
- Physical Infrastructure.
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure.
- Built Form and Heritage.
- Landscape and Environment.
- Issues, Opportunities and Constraints.

## 1.3 What is a Small Town Plan

The STP is a plan that provides direction and guidance on the municipal settlement policies and strategies for the five towns and identifies further strategic work priorities for the towns.

The STP seeks to:

- Identify a clear settlement hierarchy, classifying each of the five towns according to their current and future role.
- Provide updated strategies and policies for each of the five towns, reflecting the settlement hierarchy.
- Form the basis of a planning scheme amendment to update the policies and strategies relevant to the five towns in the West Wimmera Planning Scheme.

## 1.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Many key stakeholders and agencies have been consulted in the development of the STP to date. These include:

- Barengi Gadjin Land Council.
- Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) officers.
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) officers
- EPA Victoria.
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority.
- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water.
- Regional Development Victoria.
- VicTrack.
- West Wimmera Shire Council officers.
- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

## 1.5 Additional Background Reports

Two reports were commissioned to inform the STP including the:

- West Wimmera Small Towns – Social and Community Infrastructure Analysis (Wayfarer Consulting).
- Small Towns Plan – Economic Input (Tim Nott Consulting).

The evidence and findings of these reports have been included in the STP.

## 2. POLICY AND PLANNING SCHEME CONTEXT

### 2.1 State Policy

#### *A Plan for Victoria*

Plan for Victoria was released in 2025 and is structured around five pillars which are:

- Self-determination and caring for Country: underpinning and informing the other pillars.
- Housing for all Victorians: delivering sufficient affordable homes for all Victorians.
- Accessible jobs and services: making sure you have good access to facilities and good jobs.
- Great places, suburbs and towns: creating thriving places that are attractive, safe and welcoming for everyone.
- Sustainable environments: preserving the natural values of Victoria and addressing climate change.

This plan sets out housing targets for every local government area across Victoria, specifying their share of the extra 2.24 million homes that are forecast. The housing targets that have been set for West Wimmera are for an additional 200 dwellings to 2051.

The plan seeks to deliver more jobs near homes by planning for, protecting and readying commercial and industrial land for development in locations well-served with jobs, shops, public transport and community facilities and services.

As part the 2.24 million homes needed in Victoria by 2051, the Victorian Government has set a target to build 425,600 of those homes across the regions. There is a new \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund to deliver more than 1,300 new homes across regional Victoria. The new homes will include a mix of social and affordable housing. There is also a \$150 million Regional Worker Accommodation Fund to provide new housing options for regional communities where key workers are struggling to find affordable places to live. The package will make regional workers' jobs more secure and make it easier for businesses to find and keep staff.

#### *Delivering the Goods: Victorian Freight Plan 2018*

Delivering the Goods 2018 outlines key priorities to support Victoria's freight and logistics infrastructure amidst significant growth, driven by rising demand, global trends, and technological advancements. Freight volumes in regional Victoria are forecast to grow at an annual average rate of 1.5 per cent each year between 2014 and 2051. Towns such as Kaniva are on the Principal Freight Network for both Road and Rail which will mean more trucks on the road.

#### *Victoria's Housing Statement, 2023*

Victoria's Housing Statement has identified housing provision as one of the key challenges of the decade ahead. It aims to refresh Victoria's housing policy settings with a series of initiatives that respond to short-term issues of affordability and supply while still promoting long term economic growth.

The housing statement is supported by Amendments VC242, VC243, VC253 VC267 and VC276 which aim to facilitate well-located, integrated and diverse housing that meets community needs and to support the delivery of housing in Victoria.

Amendment VC267 revised Clause 55 to include the new Townhouse and Low Rise Code for residential multi-dwelling development. Key design changes include:

- Reduced minimum front setback of 6 metres, replacing the previous average setback rule of 9 metres.
- Private open space requirement reduced from 40 sqm to 25 sqm at ground level.
- Tree canopy coverage requirements introduced:
  - 10 per cent of site area for sites up to 1,000 sqm
  - 20 per cent of site area for sites over 1,000 sqm.
- Maximum site coverage increased to:
  - 65 per cent in General Residential Zone (GRZ)
  - 70 per cent in Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) and Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)
- Overlooking standards removed for bedroom windows only.

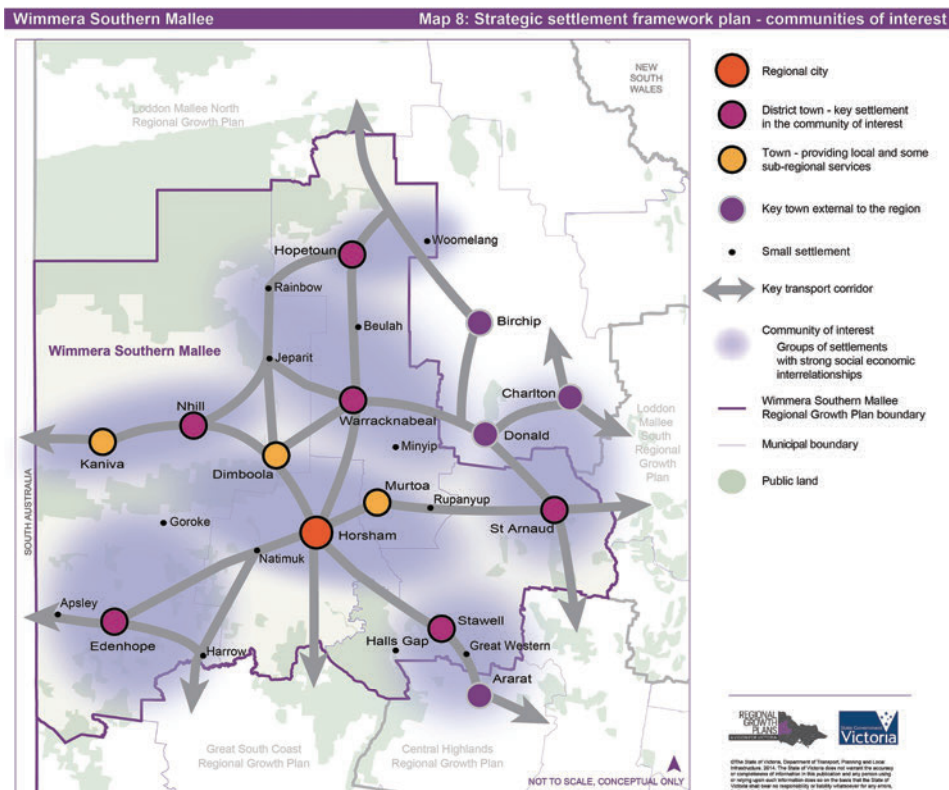


The recent changes to Clauses 55 and 57, as informed by the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Code, have implications for the future building envelope and development standards within the West Wimmera LGA.

Amendment VC 276 amended all residential zone schedules and Neighbourhood Character Overlay schedules to implement the new residential development planning assessment provisions.

## 2.2 Regional Policy

### Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan 2014



Source: DTPLI, 2014

### Figure 2: Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP – Settlement Hierarchy

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan (RGP) covers the municipalities of Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera and

Yarriambiack. The plan provides broad direction for regional land use and development in the region and a more detailed planning framework for the regional city of Horsham.

In **Figure 2**, Horsham is the major centre and provides a wide range of services to the whole region and adjoining areas. Edenhope is recognised as a district town supporting surrounding communities of interest. Kaniva is recognised as a key local service centre. The towns of Apsley, Goroke and Harrow are identified as small settlements.

District towns are identified as performing an important sub-regional goods and service role, meeting smaller town and rural district needs including local government, policing and ambulance services to a surrounding rural hinterland. They have a moderately diverse population and housing base and good access to services and retail. These towns may include some higher order services such as medical / hospital services and a variety of education facilities with some larger towns having post-secondary education facilities. District towns will have utility services with some larger towns having access to reticulated gas.

Towns are similar to district towns but generally service a more localised catchment. They will have a greater reliance on other centres for services and employment.

Small settlements have low population levels. They will have access to services such as a small primary school and usually a general store with postal facilities within a small retail area. These settlements may or may not have connection to reticulated water or sewer connections. Some are popular visitor locations and their role may include a low level supply of visitor accommodation and holiday homes resulting in seasonal variations in population.

Land use policies, strategies and actions for district towns and towns are to:

- Encourage the provision and maintenance of a wide range of services and facilities.
- Provide sufficient land to enable residential and employment growth.
- Prioritise infrastructure investment towards supporting growth.
- Support transport systems that provide access.

In smaller settlements, maintaining services where feasible and encouraging limited incremental growth is supported to allow for their ongoing transition.

For all areas, key priorities are protection of the valued character of urban areas and encouraging urban development that promotes and supports high quality streetscapes and urban design and contributes to attractive and healthy urban environments.

Further direction on Edenhope and Kaniva is also provided. This is summarised in the town profiles in this report.

## 2.3 Council Strategies

### *West Wimmera Council Plan, 2021 - 2025*

The West Wimmera Council Plan sets out a roadmap for West Wimmera Shire, outlining where the municipality is heading and what is needed to get there. The Council Plan is a legislated requirement that is required to be prepared every four years and incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Community Vision and Future Directions outlined in the Council Plan provide a strong platform for the development of the STP as outlined below:

*In 2041 West Wimmera is a great place to live, work and play. We are growing and we are known for our natural environment, resilience and sense of community. We are proud of our heritage and are building new economic capacity based on innovation and tourism, which is creating local employment. Our towns are vibrant and welcoming, offering the services and facilities that meet the needs of our community and visitors. We are a confident community and will empower everyone to be part of our future.*

# Future Directions

Active, healthy and safe – supporting our community to live full and rewarding lives.

Access to the right services – working confidently with partners to ensure health, education and digital services meet our needs.

The natural environment – valuing the time our community and visitors spend enjoying the natural environment.

Our roads – a safe and sustainable road network supporting businesses, our community and visitors.

Attractive and viable town centres – great places to live, visit and do business.

Thriving economy – taking advantage of our strengths in farming, business and tourism to generate employment and share our prosperity.

Sport and recreation – facilities that encourage participation in physical activity and add to community life.

Source: West Wimmera Council Plan 2021 - 2025

### *West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy, 2018*

The West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy (Strategy) provides a 10-year plan to guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and to provide a vision of what the trail network across West Wimmera will look like in the future. The Strategy aims to encourage and support active lifestyles in a positive way and address challenges faced by the Shire's residents. This includes issues related to high rates of physical inactivity as well as overweight, obesity and preventable mortality factors compared to the average across Victoria and other Australian districts. The opportunity to grow the visitor economy is also recognised.

The Strategy identifies a range of opportunities available to grow the trail network across the municipality and within the towns. This aims to build on proximity to international and national tourism features, the Shire's natural attributes, landscapes and features, location between Melbourne and Adelaide and diversity of environments.



There are a range of initiatives identified for each town to elevate the quality and extent of trails within each town.

#### *West Wimmera Economic Development Strategy 2024-2029 (WWEDS)*

The WWEDS sets out the West Wimmera community's vision for the municipal economy along with strategies and actions to achieve that vision. It is aligned to the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) for the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region of Victoria, which is the umbrella economic development strategy prepared by the Victorian Government. The WWEDS is an overarching framework that will be used to guide economic development in the municipality and articulates the role, priorities and approach. It provides the rationale for engaging with identified priority sectors and delivering outcomes through implementation plans.

There are three pillars in the WWEDS Strategy that will drive the economy. These are:

- Continuing to support the growth of the agricultural sector throughout the municipality.
- Enhancing liveability to increase amenity and grow the appeal of the municipality's towns.
- Supporting small business growth.

There are also a range of initiatives outlined for the towns including:

- The preparation of town settlement plans to facilitate development (particularly for key workers).
- Promoting industrial estates in Kaniva and expanding the Edenhope estate.
- Advocating for road improvements.
- Mainstreet activation plans.
- Supporting development of business hubs.
- Formalising caravan and trailer parking in Kaniva's main street.
- Upgrading holiday visitor parks.

#### *Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Economic Development Strategy, 2022 (REDS)*

The REDS was developed by the (former) Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) for the regional partnership area of West Wimmera Mallee. The

REDS should be used to drive strategic, whole of-government activity in the region, informed by a contemporary understanding of economic performance. The document is designed to communicate innovative capacity in the region, now and in the future, support collaboration with government to better understand regional strengths, challenges and opportunities and attract investment to the region based on clearly identified strategic priorities.

There are four strategic directions defined for economic development of the region. These are:

- Strengthen agriculture and food product manufacturing through diversification.
- Promote growth and development of the visitor economy, leveraging natural assets and Aboriginal heritage.
- Support and expand economic opportunities in growing sectors (health and social services).
- Position the region to benefit from emerging growth opportunities in natural resources.

## 2.4 Victoria Planning Provisions

This section provides an overview of the current clauses within the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) relating to strategic directions, policies, zones, overlays and particular provisions applicable to the five towns in the West Wimmera Planning Scheme (WWPS).

State (S), Regional (R) and Local (L) planning policy and provisions are included and discussed. State and regional planning policies are developed and implemented by state and local governments while local planning policies are developed by local municipalities providing greater local direction in addition to state and regional policies where required.

The most relevant provisions in Council's Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Planning Policy Framework (PPF) are included below. Further background on the Victoria Planning Provisions is provided in Appendix A.

**Clause 02.03-1 Settlement** outlines the distinctive pattern of urban development based on separate townships and settlements, with the predominant towns being Edenhope, Kaniva, Goroke, Apsley, and Harrow.

The towns and settlements in the Shire have important roles as service and business centres and as a focus for the local community, visitors and the surrounding rural hinterland. Population decline within towns is a threat to service provision and liveability.

The Strategic Directions for the five towns are to:

- Provide sufficient land and direct growth to the major townships of Edenhope, Kaniva, Goroke, Apsley, and Harrow.
- Enhance the roles of the major townships of Edenhope, Kaniva, Goroke, Apsley and Harrow as the service and business centres for the Shire and as focal points for communities.
- Minimise any detrimental impact of development on the landscape, the environment and existing character.
- Avoid encroachment of residential development on industry.
- Promote Kaniva as a key service centre in the northern part of the Shire for the local and surrounding rural community.
- Promote Goroke as the local community service centre within the centre of the Shire.
- Promote development in Apsley that provides opportunities for service provision, new business initiatives and housing.
- Promote Apsley as a dormitory town for Edenhope and Naracoorte.

The strategic framework plan in the MPS at Clause 02.04 is shown in **Figure 3**.

## 2.5 Recent updates to the West Wimmera Planning Scheme

The West Wimmera Planning Scheme (WWPS) commenced on 17 February 2000. Since that time, amendments relating to the overarching policies have included Amendment C007 which made changes to Clause 21 of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) based on a 2006 review of the WWPS. In 2013 Amendment C030 was approved which introduced a new format MSS to the planning scheme. No local planning policy work for settlements across the Shire has been undertaken or implemented since this time.

The Local Planning Policy Framework of the WWPS was translated into the new MPS and PPF. A selected number of new and updated local schedules to

operational provisions were implemented in a manner consistent with changes to the VPP in May 2011.

These include local policies relating to:

- Settlement for Apsley, Edenhope, Goroke, Harrow and Kaniva.
- Protection of biodiversity and indigenous vegetation.
- Protection of agricultural land, location of forestry and timber production, dwellings and quarry buffers.
- Residential subdivision design from content.
- Recreational facilities and infrastructure design.
- The new and revised strategic framework plan.

In June 2022, the Small Planning Local Schedules updated the West Wimmera Planning Scheme to remove inconsistencies in local schedules with the VPP and the Ministerial Direction - Form and Content of Planning Schemes.

The updated mapping for the Bushfire Management Overlay was introduced into the Planning Scheme in October 2017.

The WWPS was last amended in 2018. The age of strategic planning work underpinning the existing WWPS as well as new challenges and opportunities, makes it timely for the strategic basis of the settlement boundaries for the five towns and their strategic framework to be reviewed through the development of the Small Towns Plan.



### Clause 11 Settlement

**Clause 11.01-1S – Settlement** promotes the sustainable growth and development of Victoria to deliver choice and opportunity through a network of settlements. Regions are planned to reinforce settlement boundaries and provide for population growth and development of facilities and services. Growth is directed into existing settlements supported by a network of major and neighbourhood activity centres and townships of varying size, role and function. Urban consolidation is encouraged with density that supports sustainable transport and retail, office-based employment and community facilities and services.

The STP should clearly identify the network of settlements across the Shire, directing any new development into the existing settlements with a clear settlement boundary. Settlement should seek to consolidate urban uses to ensure a wide range of sustainable transport, retail, commercial and community facilities and services.

**Clause 11.01-1R – Settlement** seeks to support the role of Horsham as the key population and employment centre for the region. Edenhope is identified as a district town and key service hub where growth and development is encouraged while Kaniva is identified as providing local and some sub-regional services. Easy access to housing, education, employment and community facilities is to be provided particularly in Horsham and district towns along with an ongoing supply of infill and greenfield residential land. The regional settlement policy emanating from the RGP is shown in **Figure 3**.

The STP should seek to confirm and support the role of Edenhope as a district town and key service hub while Kaniva should be supported to provide local and some sub-regional services.

**Clause 11.01-01-05L – Settlement** sets out local settlement policies for each town. These are discussed further in the town profiles in the STP.

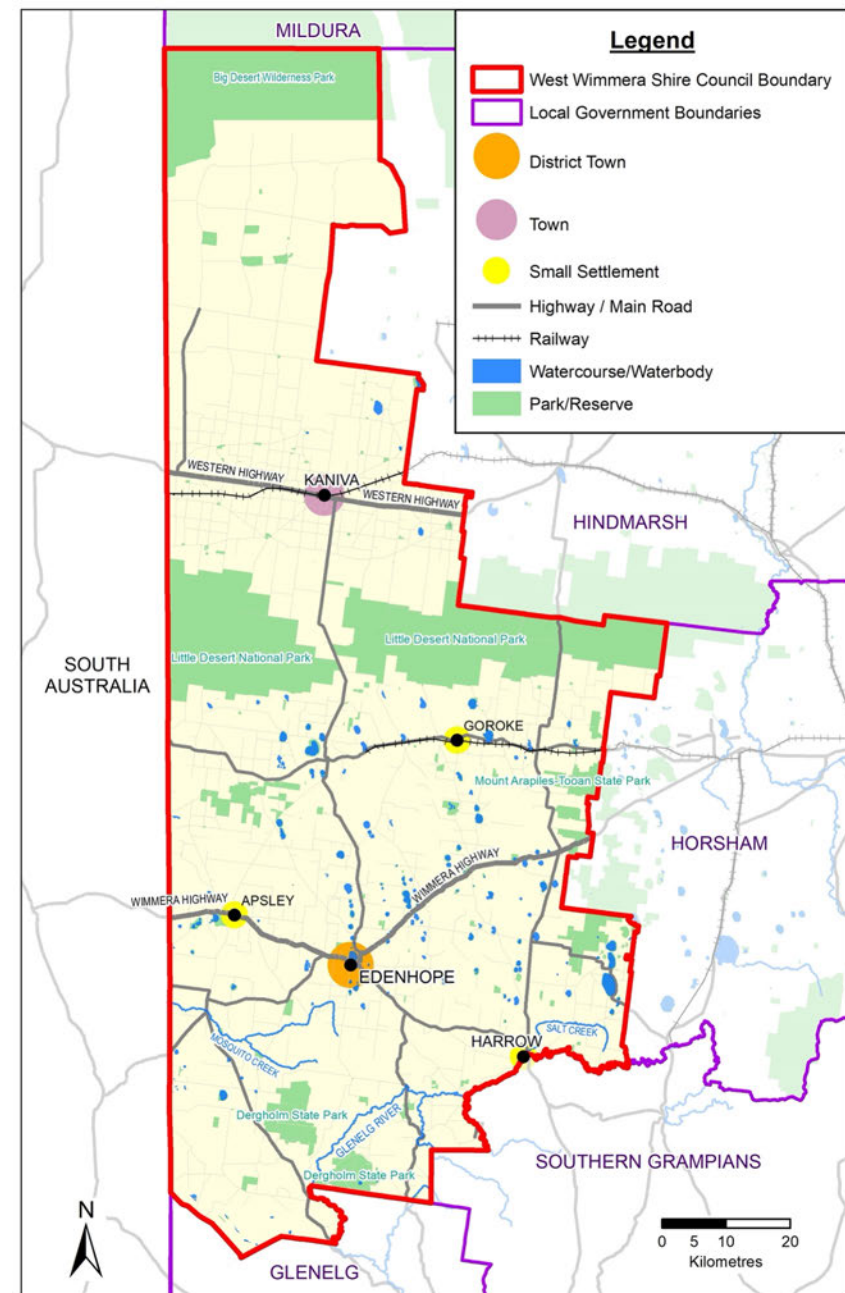
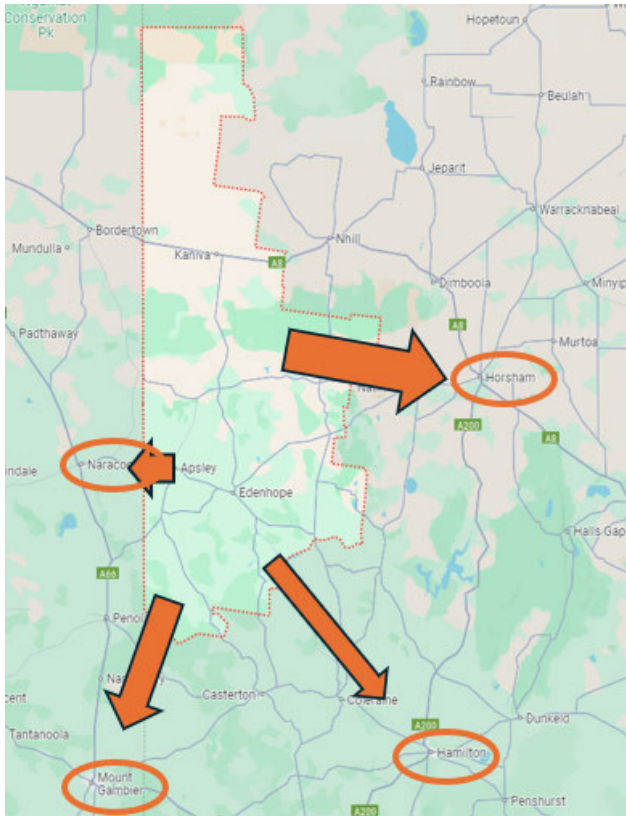


Figure 3: Existing West Wimmera Strategic Framework Plan, WWPS

### 3. KEY CHANGE FACTORS

This section considers the key socio-economic factors that are influencing population change and the demand for housing in the Shire.

The Shire is a farming district, which is served by several small towns providing a range of day-to-day services such as education, front-line health services and local retailing. It is part of a wider, cross-border agricultural region, often called the Green Triangle, that produces a wide variety of farm and forestry goods and in which larger towns act as resource collection and processing centres. These larger centres – Horsham, Hamilton, Mt Gambier, Naracoorte and Portland - provide more complex services for this region, including technical and further education, regional hospitals and sub-regional retailing.



**Figure 4: Key External Centres Serving West Wimmera**

(Source: base map from Google Maps)

Horsham is the closest major centre for most of the Shire; however, the geographic shape and position of the municipality means that its communities can be serviced by different larger centres, as shown in **Figure 4**.

The region remains economically robust, based on farming, forestry, mineral sand extraction, processing of primary produce, renewable energy generation and tourism. However, the population of the region as a whole has been falling, with rural areas declining most rapidly as farming becomes less labour intensive.

#### 3.1 Population

The population of the Shire is forecast to decline by 0.7% per year over the period from 2021 to 2036 (VIF 2023, Department of Transport and Planning, 2023). The following chart shown in **Figure 5**, details the forecast population outcomes for the five main towns, assuming they each take a proportionate share of the change. **Table 1** shows the forecast population change for the five main towns.

**Table 1: Forecast Population Change, West Wimmera Towns, 2021 to 2036**

Change 2021 to 2036 (persons)	Population in 2021	Forecast population in 2036	Total change	Average annual change
Apsley	329	298	-31	-2.1
Edenhope	713	645	-68	-4.5
Goroke	208	188	-20	-1.3
Harrow	184	167	-17	-1.2
Kaniva	683	616	-67	-4.5

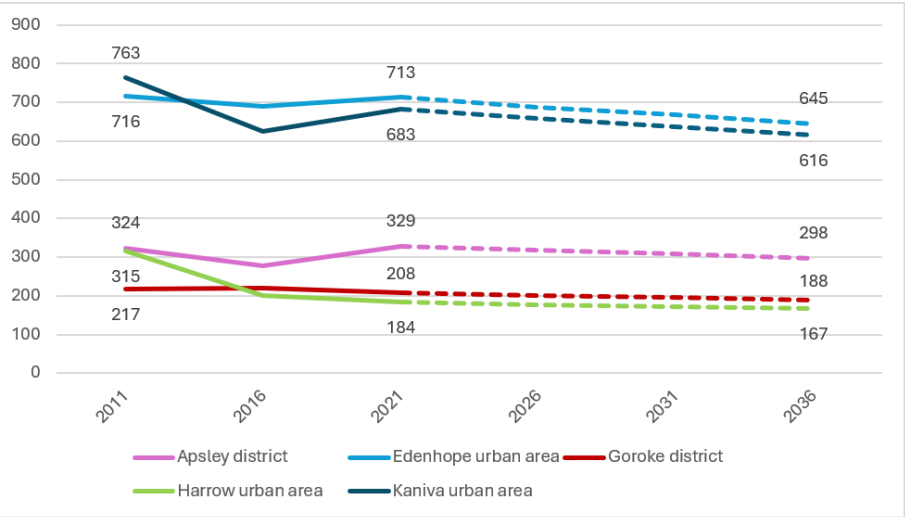
Source: ABS, 2024; VIF23; Tim Nott

Note: Kaniva, Edenhope and Harrow townships have statistical boundaries defined by the ABS as “urban areas”.. Apsley and Goroke do not and are defined here by the SA1 of which they form a part, hence the term “district”.

The loss of farm workers through farm amalgamations and mechanisation means reduced enrolment in schools and less spending at retailers. At certain thresholds, reduced demand triggers further loss of jobs and, with other local jobs not available, workers and their families move away. There is also a flow on effect that leads to the contraction of services including health care, social welfare and education.

This can mean a reduction, for example, in the number of volunteers available and in players to support the local sports teams and a general reduction of

community life. This is a process that has been occurring for decades and to which the community has become accustomed. Nevertheless, a halt to population decline would be welcomed by many local people who wish to maintain their levels of service and community networks. It is important to note that some rural municipalities in Victoria have previously reversed population decline through targeted and proactive interventions. The same could eventuate for West Wimmera.



(Source: ABS, 2022; Department of Transport and Planning, 2023; Tim Nott)

**Figure 5: Recent and Forecast Population Change, West Wimmera Towns 2011 to 2036**

While Victorian Government projections are for continued loss of population in the municipality these are largely trend based and could be reversed through an interventionist, proactive and coordinated settlement planning approach.

### 3.2 Housing

Despite a loss of population according to Census data, Victoria in Future (VIF 2023) is forecasting a rise in the number of dwellings required to 2036 because of a decline in the number of people per household and a growth in the vacancy rate. VIF2023 anticipates:

- A total of 47 dwellings in the West Wimmera SA2 – broadly, the area south of the Little Desert - between 2021 and 2036, or approximately 3.1 per

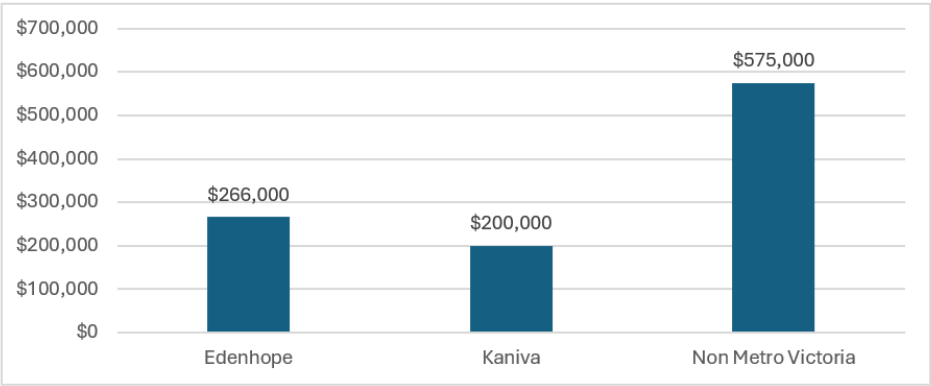
year. Most of these would be likely to be constructed in Edenhope as the largest town in the area, although there may be some demand in the smaller towns of Apsley, Goroke and Harrow and in rural areas.

- A total of 41 dwellings in the area north of the Little Desert, or 2.7 per year. Most of these dwellings would be expected to be required in Kaniva, as the only significant town in the Shire north of the Little Desert.

Each new dwelling generates work for the construction industry as well as in infrastructure, retailing, health and community services. Much of this will be serviced from outside the Shire but there will be some local opportunities.

### 3.3 Worker Accommodation

Local enterprises reportedly find it difficult to attract workers, with a consequent impact on local economic development. This is partly a result of a lack of available accommodation. The Census indicates that the rate of unoccupied dwellings in 2021 was between 13% and 25% across the five main towns. However, many of these apparently vacant dwellings are unsuitable for occupation, or being kept as second homes or holiday homes, or available only as short stay rentals. Further work is needed to understand whether vacant dwellings can be made available. The purchase cost of housing is well below the median for non-metro Victoria as a whole, as shown in **Figure 6** below. These figures are based on actual stock sales. These relatively low prices may deter some investors from constructing additional dwellings. Some subsidies may be required to generate more dwellings.



Source Victorian Valuer General 2024

**Figure 6: West Wimmera Median House Price 2023**



Accommodation for a seasonal harvest work-force may be a special case requiring a collective response from affected farmers. In attracting new workers, it may be worth considering the potential for innovation including, for example, allowing more on-farm accommodation that could be integrated with adjacent townships.

### 3.4 Climate

The climate in the Shire is dominated by warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters. In recent years there has been a significant decrease in average spring and autumn rainfalls. The bushfire season generally runs from November to April. Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bushfire season in the West Wimmera Shire area is warm to hot north-westerly winds accompanied by high temperatures and low relative humidity followed by a cool south-westerly change.

Climate change in the wider region is driving changes in farming and in particular, has caused a conversion from grazing to cropping (see Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy, 2021). Cropping is likely to continue to push down from the north of the Shire, replacing pastureland and animal husbandry as the area dries. This may have further impacts on the number of workers required.

Irrigated agriculture in the wider district that uses the ground-water resource may come under pressure as the ground water fails to recharge to previous levels because of lower rainfall. There will also be increased demand for this resource from urban, recreational and environmental uses which may no longer be able to rely on consistent rainfall.

In addition to the impacts specific to agriculture, climate change will have an impact on outdoor living and the valued natural environment. There are likely to be, on average, more days of fire danger, less cool season rainfall and more intense downpours with risks of flooding (DELWP, 2019). Towns in the Shire are also at risk of climate change impacts especially to infrastructure such as damage to transport infrastructure (e.g. more potholes in roads). The risk of late season frost may also increase.

Under the Victorian Government climate change projections (DELWP 2019), the Shire can expect to:

- Be hotter with the greatest increases in temperature expected in summer
- Be drier with the greatest decreases in rainfall expected in spring

- Have fewer rainy days but increasing rainfall intensity.

### 3.5 Industry

Change in industry is constant, as a result of the introduction of new technologies and techniques, competitive pressures and shifts in market demand. Recent changes in the scale of broad industry groups in West Wimmera are shown in **Table 2**.

	Change 2011 to 2021					Comparison, 2021	
	2011	2016	2021	No	AAGR	West Wimmera	Non Metro Victoria
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	904	816	846	-58	-0.7%	45.1%	7.2%
Mining	10	3	7	-3	-3.5%	0.4%	0.7%
Manufacturing	83	59	45	-38	-5.9%	2.4%	7.4%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	7	3	9	2	2.5%	0.5%	1.4%
Construction	82	63	74	-8	-1.0%	3.9%	10.0%
Wholesale Trade	37	24	16	-21	-8.0%	0.9%	2.2%
Retail Trade	125	99	111	-14	-1.2%	5.9%	9.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	54	53	46	-8	-1.6%	2.5%	6.6%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	83	60	63	-20	-2.7%	3.4%	3.8%
Information Media and Telecommunications	7	11	10	3	3.6%	0.5%	0.8%
Financial and Insurance Services	23	22	12	-11	-6.3%	0.6%	1.9%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	5	9	3	-2	-5.0%	0.2%	1.0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	31	29	38	7	2.1%	2.0%	4.5%
Administrative and Support Services	27	28	39	12	3.7%	2.1%	2.8%
Public Administration and Safety	115	104	114	-1	-0.1%	6.1%	6.3%
Education and Training	131	133	138	7	0.5%	7.4%	8.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	234	229	226	-8	-0.3%	12.0%	16.2%
Arts and Recreation Services	7	13	10	3	3.6%	0.5%	1.5%
Other Services	27	46	35	8	2.6%	1.9%	3.6%
Inadequately described/Not stated	54	61	58	4	0.7%	3.1%	3.9%
Total	2,038	1,863	1,877	-161	-0.8%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ABS, 2022. Notes: AAGR = Average Annual Growth Rate; largest five industries highlighted

**Table 2: West Wimmera Change in Industrial Groups, 2011 to 2021**

The key points are:

- The number of local workers declined over the period 2011 to 2021, more or less in line with population decline. While there appeared to be a slight increase in local workers between 2016 and 2021, this was likely a temporary effect of the COVID19 pandemic.

- Nearly half (45%) of all workers in the Shire work in agriculture and forestry and while the number declined between 2011 and 2021, the share of the labour-force remained broadly the same.
- A number of small professional industries grew slightly over the period. Much of this was also likely a result of remote working by people displaced by the COVID19 pandemic.
- The number of workers in several of the largest industries – manufacturing, retailing, transport – declined by more than average, indicating ongoing structural change.
- Apart from farming, West Wimmera residents are reliant on work in the local population services sectors – health, education, public administration and retailing, all of which are concentrated in the five main towns.

Future change in employment will depend on the unique set of circumstances of each industry.

In agriculture, precision farming techniques are being deployed to improve yields and reduce inputs. These are likely to become more automated over time, further reducing the need for on-farm labour, although work for local technology providers and farm-data analysts could increase. Apart from the large scale agricultural producers, there may be potential for different types of farming that have more direct links to customers or which are satisfying niche and more high value markets. The Shire's Economic Development Strategy (West Wimmera Shire Council, 2024) identifies, garlic, honey, mushrooms, micro greens and flowers as being well-suited to the Shire and having potential for growth.

Automation and the roll-out of increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence techniques will affect all industries to some extent. Whether these changes have a centralising or decentralising effect will depend on the circumstances in each industry and could be impacted by the size of the retail business and their ability to invest in technology. In retailing, for example, ongoing changes in point of sale technology is reducing the need for check-out staff; and the continued growth of internet retailing will affect non-food goods sellers so critical to the needs of small town residents eg pharmacy/hardware/homewares, in particular. However, internet retailing also allows small producers located in the Shire access to global markets.

In the professional services sector, the internet and automated techniques allow small businesses to deliver increasingly sophisticated products from any location.

The ongoing ability of the Shire to attract such businesses will depend on the capacity of the local infrastructure, that is, the excellence of the mobile and internet coverage, and on the relative attractiveness of its towns as places to live.

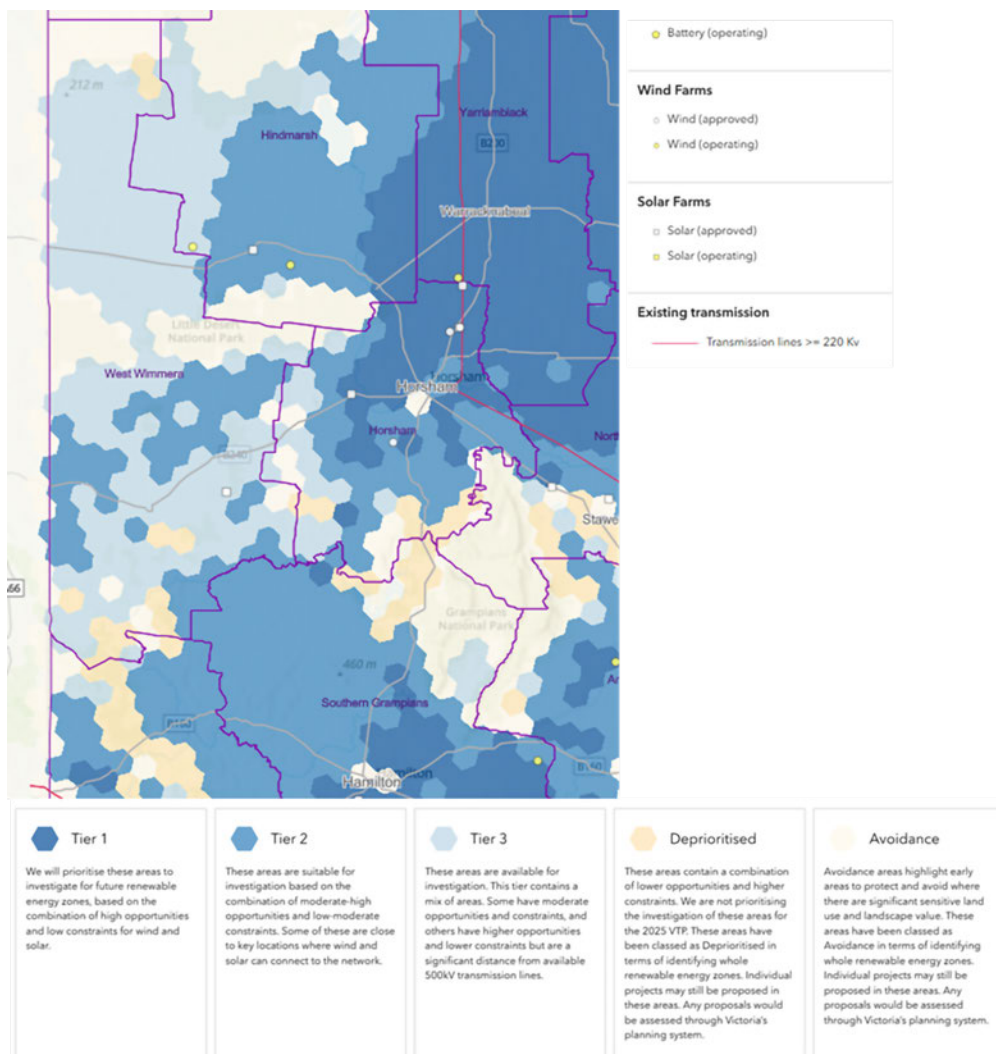
The Shire is on the periphery of the Western and South Western Renewable Energy Zones, which have been identified by the Victorian Government as suitable for concentrated investment in wind, solar and battery farms to power the grid. VicGrid has identified that large parts of the Shire are suitable for investigation as locations for renewable energy investment, as shown in Figure 7. The figure also identifies that a new solar farm has approval in the southern part of the Shire but has not yet been constructed.

There is potential for jobs in new windfarm, solar-farm or large battery projects to be taken up by people from the Shire and for the Shire to offer a home to people moving into the region for these projects. For southern parts of the Shire, there is also potential access to projects in south-east South Australia.

Mineral sands mining projects such as that proposed for Avonbank near Horsham will generate significant numbers of jobs that may be accessible to people living in West Wimmera Shire. All currently proposed projects remain some distance from Shire, with residents usually at least one hour's drive from the five towns within the Shire. This may mean that the Shire would need to incentivise project workers from outside the Shire to attract them to the five small towns. The ability of the five towns to provide unique residential opportunities could be capitalised on to capture some of this key worker growth.

### 3.6 Visitation

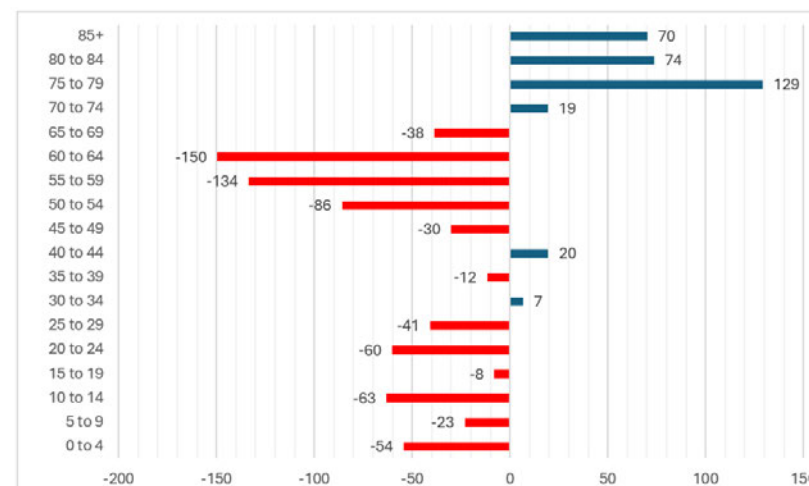
Visitor services – accommodation, food service, specialty retailing, tours – do not currently provide substantial employment in the Shire and tourism is still described as an emerging industry. The Shire's economic development strategy identifies visitor economy growth as one of four key pillars of local economic development for the municipality. The Strategy identifies opportunities to grow the visitor economy including food and farming tourism, ecotourism associated with the lakes and deserts, travellers' rest points and small town events. Potential actions recommended by the economic development strategy include upgrading and expanding lake-side caravan parks to provide accommodation for visitors and seasonal workers.



**Figure 7: Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines study area for further investigation - Source: VicGrid, 2024**

### 3.7 Ageing

In common with most of Victoria, the Shire is ageing and this is forecast to continue (VIF2023). **Figure 8** shows the forecast change by five year age group.



Source: VIF2023

**Figure 8: Forecast Change in Age Groups, West Wimmera, 2021 to 2036**

To 2036, the Shire is forecast to gain 292 people aged over 70 and lose 524 people in working age groups (20 to 69 year olds) or 28% of the current labour force. The number of people under 20 is forecast to decline by 149, so while there is forecast to be lower demand for educational services, there will be more demand for health and aged care services and a range of other “silver economy” services. These are services designed for the over 50s such as financial planning, specialised recreation and travel agencies. Whether these services can actually be provided remains doubtful under this scenario, given the loss of people in working age groups. If investment in these services can be achieved, that may go some way to ameliorate the loss of population that may otherwise occur.

The forecast ageing of the population and the loss of those in working age groups shows the importance of retaining residents and attracting new people to the Shire.



### 3.8 Social and Community Infrastructure

From 2025, four-year-old kindergarten will gradually transition to pre-prep, with programs across Victoria increasing from 15 to 30 hours each week. Additional kindergarten capacity will be needed for 30 hours of kindergarten. The current kindergarten facilities in Kaniva, Edenhope and Goroke are not large enough to deliver on the upcoming kindergarten reforms and there is limited room for expansion. Moving some of the kindergartens to the local school sites would allow for kindergarten expansion and has the potential to keep the school numbers to a viable level. This would also free up space in the current facilities for additional childcare and playgroups to support young families.

Childcare services provide an important service for families, community and the local economy. Access to suitable childcare provides an opportunity for parents and carers to work and helps maintain the local economy. In addition, it is an attractor for young parents to live in the region.

Community vitality, social and community infrastructure can help to maintain activities and events in a community. These have the potential to attract new residents and maintain community viability. There are opportunities for community infrastructure to support business activities (such as events) that are beneficial to the local economy. Likewise moving a service such as the kindergarten to a school site might maintain the school's viability.

There are limited places for young people to meet and those that are available might not meet the needs of this demographic. Providing spaces where young people can gather and interact reduces their need to travel and helps them form strong relationships, helping to anchor them in the community when they are ready to put down their roots.



*Goroke Library*

### 3.9 Transport Infrastructure

Public transport is very limited within the Shire which reduces the capacity of people to travel to access services and activities. Certain groups within the community are likely to have limited access to private transport and as a result require local access to facilities. Children, young people and older adults may have reduced capacity to travel to activities and services.

## 4. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE TOWNS

### 4.1 Issues

There are a range of demographic, economic and social issues facing the small towns of West Wimmera.

#### Population Loss and Ageing

The Shire is losing population. The loss of farm workers through farm amalgamations and mechanisations means reduced enrolment in schools and less spending in shops and services. Future vulnerabilities, including larger landholdings managed by consortiums and serviced by contractors, are likely to lead to further loss of population across the Shire. This demographic, combined with an ageing population, has seen previously robust rural communities being replaced by smaller, older more vulnerable communities isolated from services. The shift in population could potentially lead to delayed fire management suppression activities in rural areas from reduced numbers of volunteers. In some cases, rural municipalities have reversed population decline through marketing, tourism and improved infrastructure.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Population loss needs to be recognised and managed to minimise loss of access to goods and services, community and social services.
- Ensure that housing stock can be upgraded to ensure appropriate housing for ageing in place.
- Promote the desirability of the region as a place to visit.

#### Settlement and Subdivision Beyond Existing Townships

There are areas of farming zoned land within the current settlement boundaries in the towns. This is not an urban zone and should not form part of settlement boundaries unless identified as future residential land.

The location of farming zoned land within settlement boundaries has occurred due to several factors. Some are historical as a result of “soldier settlement” subdivisions established many years ago that were created on title but often never developed for housing. Many of these lots still operate as part of larger farming properties and often comprise what are referred to as tenements.

Other cases involve the excision of a smaller lot from a much larger farming lot usually for a new dwelling, which is permitted under the Farming Zone. Although allowed in some circumstances, excised lots through incremental decisions can result in the loss of productive agricultural land to housing and create conflicts with state and local planning policy.

Some dwellings on small lots have been incorrectly zoned as part of the development of planning schemes in the late 1990s. In some cases, these dwellings were not appropriately identified to reflect existing development on the ground surrounding a town. Reflecting the correct designation of this land is largely an administrative exercise, rather than a significant policy shift and will have no impact on existing agricultural production due to the existing conditions of the land.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Review areas of land zoned for farming in each settlement boundary and consider their current and future use.
- In considering their future use, balance the need for additional residential land with the policy objective of protecting agricultural land.
- Council should investigate undertaking a rural land use strategy to ensure small lots in the Farming Zone within town boundaries are considered from a municipal perspective and prepare local policy for small lots within town boundaries altering town boundaries as appropriate.

#### Local Economy

Future change in employment will depend on the unique set of circumstances of each industry. In agriculture, precision farming techniques are being deployed to improve yields and reduce inputs. These are likely to become more automated over time, further reducing the need for on-farm labour. Automation and the roll-out of increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence techniques will affect all industries to some extent.

In the professional services sector, the internet and automated techniques allow small businesses to deliver increasingly sophisticated products from any location.

The Shire is on the periphery of the Western and South Western Renewable Energy Zones, which have been identified by the Victorian Government as suitable for concentrated investment in wind, solar and battery farms to power

the grid. There is potential for jobs in new windfarm, solar-farm or large battery projects to be taken up by people from the Shire and for the Shire to offer a home to people moving into the region for these projects

Mineral sands mining projects such as that proposed for Avonbank near Horsham will generate significant numbers of jobs that may be accessible to people living in the Shire

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- There is a shortage of key worker housing in the region which is impacting the attraction of staff to local jobs. Local enterprises report finding it difficult to attract workers which is having an impact on the local economic development of the Shire.
- There is a challenge in delivering new housing stock as the current construction workforce is unable to meet demand for new housing development.

### **Flooding**

Extreme short-duration 'rain bursts' are becoming more intense and more frequent especially during summer with thunderstorm rainfall. Existing infrastructure was not designed to cope with these unnatural extremes, and flash flooding is set to be a growing issue. The Shire has towns that are subject to stormwater and riverine flooding. Towns that are prone to stormwater flooding include Apsley and Edenhope. Flood events within West Wimmera have been infrequent over the last decade, however there are areas of significant flood risk in Harrow and Apsley.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Implement flood studies for Edenhope and Apsley into the Planning Scheme as soon as possible.
- Direct housing away from flood prone areas.

### **Fire**

The Shire is vulnerable to climate change, and already experiences significant climate variability, including exposure to extremes in rainfall, winds and drought. This is likely to lead to an increase in bushfires in the Shire. Edenhope, Goroke, Harrow and Apsley have Fire Ready Guides in place for all residents and the towns are covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO). The Fire Ready Guides

are developed by the Wimmera Emergency Management team and aim to help communities prepare for the bushfire season particularly in areas identified as high risk. The entire municipality is categorised as bushfire prone.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Expansion of the towns and any new housing should be directed away from areas at high risk of bushfire.

### **Environmentally Significant Areas**

There are areas of environmental significance and high value habitat that need to be protected and preserved for habitat of endangered flora and fauna such as the Red-tailed Black cockatoo and other environmental considerations.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Areas of environmental significance need to be better understood to ensure environmentally significant areas are identified.

### **Water**

The quality of drinking water of most of the towns is an issue for all residents with many relying on tank water or poor tasting bore water. There is a lack of potable water in all towns except Edenhope and Kaniva. Not all of the towns have access to a reticulated sewage system which will impact on the future development of these towns as lot sizes will need to remain large to service septic systems. While this may be acceptable in some of the small towns, towns like Edenhope and Kaniva have good services and should be able to provide smaller lots to meet the changing needs of the community and provide more affordable housing options. Lack of sewerage also impacts the operations of commercial businesses such as pubs/restaurants and accommodation venues. A lack of maintenance of septic systems can also have public health and environmental impacts to adjacent waterways.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Explore the possibility of connecting the remaining three towns to potable water to improve the drinking water quality for all residents.
- Expand reticulated sewerage in Edenhope and Kaniva to facilitate the towns to grow and attract more residents, enabling smaller lots to meet community needs and minimising environmental impacts.

## Climate Change

Similar to the rest of Victoria, the towns in the Shire are subject to climate change impacts and will need to develop mitigation strategies and improve infrastructure to improve resilience. Increased frequency of extreme heat events will require adaptation of the urban environment such as further shade and urban canopy to provide increasing shade for residents in town centres. An increased risk of bushfire and flooding events is also predicted and should be factored into future towns plans.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Ensure both social and physical infrastructure is designed to mitigate and adapt to the implications of climate change.
- Direct development away from areas of bushfire and flooding risk taking a precautionary approach to the extent of predicted risks.

## Social and Community Infrastructure

Services such as childcare provide an important service for families, community and the local economy. The childcare services in the Shire are limited and have been unable to expand or attract new staff due to a lack of key worker housing. This has limited the access of childcare places and services for parents and carers who work in the Shire. There are limited spaces for young people to meet and those that are available might not meet the needs of this group. Providing spaces where young people can gather and interact reduces their need to travel and keeps them occupied.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Increase capacity to deliver kindergarten and other childrens' services – by providing more key worker housing.
- Create spaces for young people to meet.

## Transport and Movement

Movement networks within a town and connecting out to surrounding towns need to be accessible, safe and reliable. Public transport is very limited within the Shire which reduces the capacity of people to travel to access services and activities. While passenger rail infrastructure passes through Kaniva, it does not currently stop and is unlikely to have transit stops in the medium term given the

current population level and projected demand. Other options to meet regional movement needs will be required.

It is important for people to move easily and safely within their town. This means walking and cycling options and accessing local public transport. Good movement networks also support the community's health by encouraging daily physical activity, providing easy access to local services and reducing social isolation and increasing social interaction.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Provide a local bus service to access services for residents between Apsley, Edenhope and Harrow. An aging population will need to be able to access services easily via public transport.
- Provide more footpaths and cycling paths within and around the towns to create safe movement pathways for people.

## 4.2 Opportunities

### Locational Advantages and Assets

The towns all have their own unique characteristics and identity which is important for future service delivery and planning for the towns.

Kaniva is well placed to capitalise on its access to the highway attracting and growing the local agricultural industry and is a rest stop for travellers through to South Australia. Edenhope has Lake Wallace as the main drawcard and focal point. It is also the major service centre for the local agricultural industry. Harrow is a quaint, historic riverside town in a rural setting that attracts visitors. Apsley has a tranquil rural character and is close to the Coonawarra wine region just over the border in South Australia. Goroke is a small rural town providing access to the Little Desert and is a service centre for the local hinterland community.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Kaniva could continue streetscape upgrades to encourage more through traffic to stop in the town and increase wayfinding signage to attract more visitors to the Kaniva Wetlands and Fauna Park.
- Edenhope could increase wayfinding signage to draw more visitors down to Lake Wallace.



- Harrow could increase marketing and raise the profile of the town and its heritage assets.
- Goroke plays a complimentary function to larger nearby towns. It could also increase marketing to raise the profile of the town and continue to upgrade streetscape works and seek funding for capital works to upgrade the theatre/hall and events at the community facilities.
- Apsley could further promote the quarterly market, capitalise on sporting infrastructure and continue to upgrade/maintain the town hall.

## Economy

There are a number of new investments in the Shire and surrounding region that may provide economic opportunities for the towns. There has been investment to date in renewable energy including a new solar farm. There is also potential for a new windfarm or large battery projects as part of the Western Renewable Energy Zone which will create new employment in the Shire. Mineral sands developments are proposed for Avonbank near Horsham which will generate a significant number of jobs that may be accessible to people living in the West Wimmera Shire. For southern parts of the Shire, there is also potential access to projects in south-east South Australia. These may provide opportunities for the towns to capitalise on the needs of these workers including permanent and temporary housing with flow on effects for community services and local shops and hospitality services.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Explore opportunities to incentivise project workers from outside the Shire to attract them to the five Small Towns.
- Identify opportunities to provide more key worker housing including by leveraging the development of Council owned land.

## Tourism and Accommodation

The accommodation offering is important to support and grow the local tourism market with each town having opportunities to tap into different tourism markets. Currently there is a lack of local accommodation available to support the needs of visitors and house seasonal workers in the Shire. This needs to be increased and addressed to allow the local tourism market to grow and attract more seasonal workers to the Shire.

There are opportunities for eco-tourism in the Shire including the Kaniva Wetlands and Fauna Park, the Glenelg River and access to the series of lakes and wetlands in the Shire. There are opportunities to expand the tourism offerings to service the 'silver economy' with specialised recreation and travel catering to this expanding market. The disused rail line between Goroke and Natimuk could be developed into a rail trail for cyclists attracting more people to the Shire.

The Silo Art Trail attracts visitors to the Shire as Australia's largest outdoor gallery, linking the Wimmera Mallee's treasured small towns across 700km through the region.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Create more short-term accommodation options for new and seasonal employees in the region.
- Investigate further expanding caravan park accommodation to house key workers.
- Work with local traders and local producers to enhance the local food offerings in the Shire.
- Increase marketing for the Silo Art Trail as part of marketing for West Wimmera attractions.
- Encourage more food and accommodation offerings especially in Edenhope and Kaniva.
- Explore opportunities for a café and nature based recreation in Harrow.
- Explore opportunities for town retailers to capitalise on any local farm gate produce that is available.

## Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC)

The Barengi Gadjin Land Council (the local Registered Aboriginal Party) would like to work with Council to provide skills training programs for the local community to support a local construction industry for housing. There is also an opportunity to work with the BGLC to produce cultural interpretive signage for place names, and wayfinding signage, as this could also provide signage in local language for local birds, flora and fauna in areas such as the Kaniva Wetlands.

### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Develop a workforce training program to support the local industry and community.

- Work with the BGLC to develop cultural interpretive signage for the Shire.
- Work with BGLC to identify opportunities for economic independence.

### **Township Amenity and Character**

Amenity and character is important to the people that live in the towns creating a sense of place. There are many heritage buildings in the five towns that could be further preserved and enhanced. Towns that have character are more appealing to visitors and will enhance their attractiveness as places to stay and spend money.

Continuing the streetscape improvements in Kaniva and implementing this program to the other four towns subject to budgetary considerations will be an important future piece of work.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Develop a strategy to implement streetscape improvements for the five towns.
- Advocate for external grant funding for streetscape improvements.
- Plant more trees in the town centres to create shade, cooling the environment, reducing heat in the towns and improving amenity.
- Continue to build footpaths in the five towns to enhance pedestrian comfort and support walkability.
- Explore the long term upkeep and maintenance of heritage buildings.

### **Housing**

Council owned land could be leveraged to encourage investment by housing providers and/or to engage in direct housing and infrastructure provision. This could also help to provide more key worker housing for the Shire and provide housing close to town for an ageing population.

#### *Implications for the Towns:*

- Explore options for Council owned land to be developed as medium density housing to meet residential requirements for an ageing population and address the key worker housing shortage in Kaniva and Edenhope.
- Work on a strategy to deliver medium density housing.
- Further work is needed to understand whether vacant dwellings can be made available for key worker housing.
- Investigate opportunities to work with landowners to enhance the image of their properties.
- Investigate whether on farm accommodation is an option for seasonal workers.





## 5. APSLEY

Apsley is a small town set among red gums located approximately 10 kilometres east of the South Australian border. The town grew significantly in the late 1860s. Apsley's fertile agricultural land is highly valued and recognised as a prosperous agricultural district, supporting various land uses that contribute millions of dollars to the local economy. The town continues to provide a local service function for the surrounding community with a CFA, police station and post office. The town context map is shown in **Figure 9**.

### 5.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context

Apsley is defined as a Small Settlement in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP. Access to services, economic diversification, providing infrastructure and managing change from significant investment are important for Apsley.

The RGP states that *“a small settlement (urban centres of less than 500 people) will play a role in providing for complementary functions to the larger nearby towns. They will need to continue to share services and facilities with other settlements in their community of interest and maintain services for their local communities. Larger towns will generally provide the size and critical mass to support higher services”*.

In the RGP, future directions for a Small Settlement are to:

- Plan for small settlements to manage local challenges and help these communities to be adaptable and resilient.
- Encourage small settlements to contribute to their local communities of interest to enable good access to key services.

#### West Wimmera Planning Scheme Clause 11.01-1L-03

Clause 11.01-1L-03 Settlement - Apsley provides the existing settlement framework for the town. There is one strategy to the clause, which seeks to support the establishment of cycling and horse-riding trails as a way of attracting visitors to the area. The Clause 11.01-1L-03 settlement framework for Apsley is

shown in **Figure 10**. There is an opportunity to undertake further work to improve the settlement directions to look at growth, development and ongoing maintenance for Apsley. There is also an opportunity to create a policy to support the framework plan in the scheme and look at housing, recreation and education in the town.

Apsley experienced significant urban growth when thousands of European gold seekers passed through on their way to the gold fields. Many Chinese gold seekers also made their way to the diggings after arriving at the Port of Robe in the late 1850s. The introduction of the Free Selection Land Act in the 1860s led to an increase in the district's population and the expansion of Apsley. By 1897, approximately 60 children were enrolled at Apsley State School, along with several smaller schools in the area.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Historic information drawn from <https://www.apsley.vic.au/>



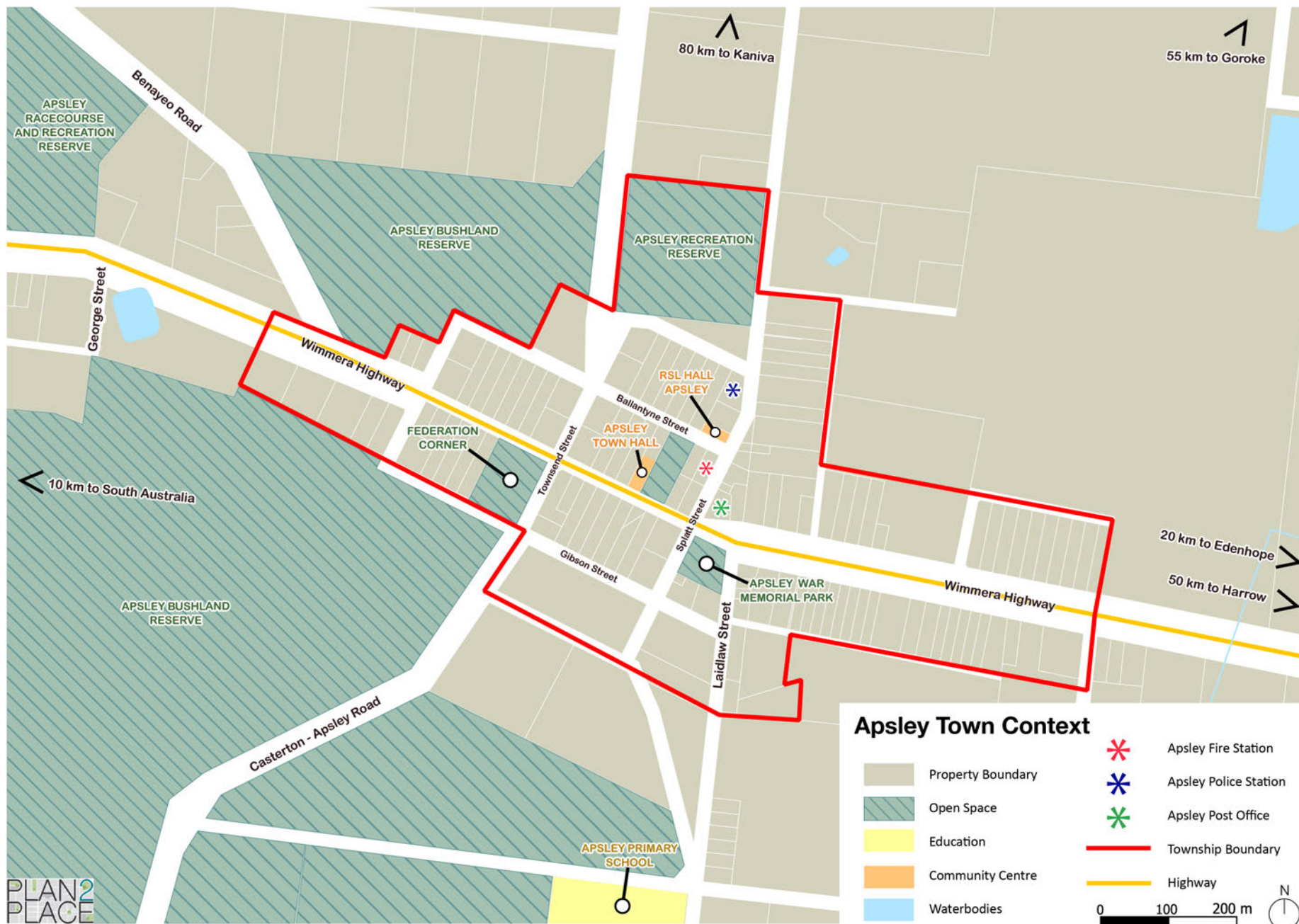
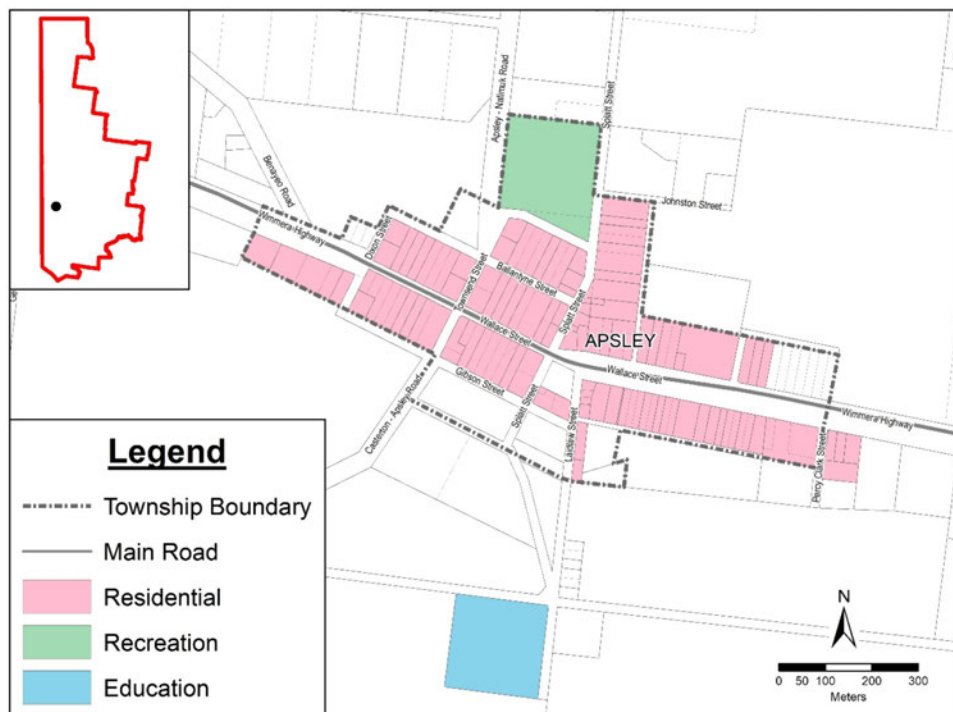


Figure 9: Apsley Context Map



**Figure 10: Apsley Framework Plan Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L**

Relevant zones within the WWPS affecting Apsley are shown in **Figure 11** and summarised below:

- The Township Zone (TZ) applies to land within the Apsley town boundary.
- The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) applies to the Apsley Recreation Reserve.
- The Transport Zone (TRZ) applies to the Wimmera Highway that runs through the centre of Apsley.
- Outside the town boundary, the Farming Zone (FZ) applies to agricultural land.
- The Public Use Zone (PUZ) – Schedule 2 (PUZ2) applies to the Apsley State School Reserve to the south of the town.
- The PUZ – Schedule 5 (PUZ5) applies to the Apsley Cemetery Reserve to the north of the town.

- The PCRZ applies over the Apsley Bushland Reserve and the Apsley Plantation.



**Figure 11: Apsley - Existing Zones**

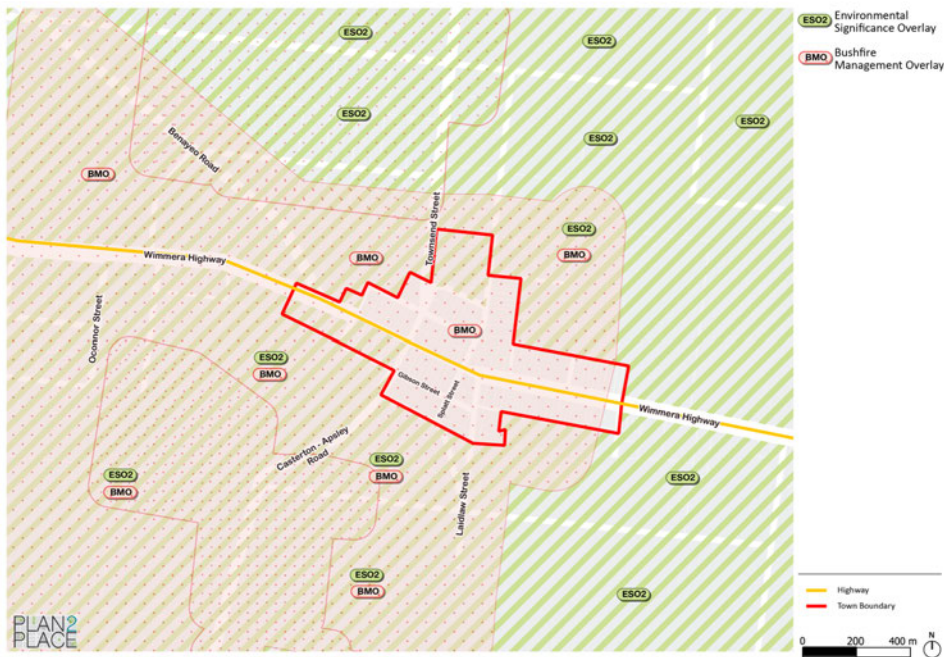
Relevant overlays within the WWPS impacting Apsley are shown in **Figure 12** and summarised below:

- The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) – Schedule 2 (ESO2) applies to all of the land surrounding Apsley to ensure that development protects the habitat of the Red-tailed Black cockatoo. This will ensure that environmentally significant habitat is protected.
- The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) applies to much of the land surrounding Apsley. This will allow development to directed away from fire prone areas.
- The current flood studies underway may result in Flood Overlay (FO) or Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) controls being added.



## 5.2 Population and Demographics

The 2021 Australian census reported Apsley had a population of 329 people. This is forecast to reduce over the period to 2036 to just below 300 people. The town is a small settlement servicing the surrounding agricultural district and is also within easy commuting distance of the larger town of Naracoorte and the Coonawarra wine district in South Australia.



**Figure 12: Apsley - Existing Overlays**

## 5.3 Housing

While the Victorian Government forecasts a decline in population in the general area (see section 4), there may be occasional demand for a new house in Apsley over the forecast period. There are several vacant lots in the Township Zone. Any development needs to take account of the BMO, which covers most of the town, and any forthcoming flood management overlay that might arise from recent work conducted for Council. Therefore, no new rezoning of land for housing purposes is recommended for the town.

## 5.4 Economic Profile

Given the size of the catchment and its forecast decline, resident demand is unlikely to support further retailing, although there may be scope for new businesses that cater to visitors or to community needs. There may be scope to provide space for visiting professionals, which could be located within the community hall.

There is no zoned industrial land in the township. There is no demand or justification for industrial land. There is an industrial precinct in nearby Edenhope that could capture future demand for industrial land.

The town has a quarterly market which attracts people from across the region. There may be potential for further tourism activity including country style accommodation, glamping or camping/caravanning. However, the water supply in the town is not safe to drink according to GWM Water and this is an impediment to further commercial development for visitors, requiring potentially expensive remediation. There may be scope for visitor retailing such as art, food and wine, based on the nearby wineries.

There is only a small range of visitor accommodation in the town, with the art deco style Border Inn providing rooms and bungalows and offers free camping facilities. The wider township has several bushland rest-stops and reserves which provide points of interest for walkers, bird-watchers and cyclists. There are also opportunities to leverage the tourism market at the nearby wineries in the Coonawarra.

Apsley has a strong interdependence with nearby Naracoorte in South Australia. Residents regularly access services and jobs in towns close by and some services and facilities may be shared between the towns in the community of interest. Apsley is playing an increasing role in providing additional housing to service Naracoorte. Many residents in Apsley also access jobs located in Naracoorte.

## 5.5 Movement and Transport

Apsley is on the Wimmera Highway, one of the routes from Victoria to the popular Coonawarra wine district. The primary mode of transport for residents, workers and visitors to Apsley is via private vehicles. There are very limited public transport options available for residents in Apsley with a once a day service between Naracoorte and Horsham on weekdays.

## 5.6 Physical Infrastructure

The town of Apsley is supplied by tank water as there is no reticulated drinking water currently available to the town. Ground and surface water is not safe for drinking, however, water can be used for household activities, such as watering gardens, flushing toilets, irrigation and laundry. It can also be used for showering or bathing if caution is exercised. All houses are serviced by septic tanks as there is no wastewater treatment plant servicing the town with reticulated sewerage.

## 5.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure

The Apsley town centre consists of a concentration of activity around the intersection of the Wimmera Highway and Splatt Street with a corner store/café, post office, hotel, community hall, fire station, RSL hall and police station. The township contains a small town centre, a primary school, recreation reserve golf course, netball courts and a Lions Park playground. There is no library or access to childcare services or kindergarten in Apsley. The Apsley community group is very active and hosts a local playgroup. The nearest health facilities are in Edenhope, around 20 km to the east or Naracoorte, 31 kms to the west.

The Border Inn pub provides a key community service and has a camping ground at the rear. The recent re-opening of the pub through local entrepreneurship and community support has rejuvenated a key social asset and created a strong sense of optimism in the town that can be built on.

## 5.8 Built Form and Heritage

Apsley includes several historic buildings along its wide main street. The township extends along the Wimmera Highway for the most part and is adjacent to large bushland reserves to the south-west. There are several historic weatherboard buildings in the main street that are former commercial buildings. Most of the houses in the town are single storey weatherboard buildings. The main street is lined with mature street trees that provide much needed shade and tree canopy.



*The Store – Main Street Apsley*



*Historic Building - Main Street Apsley*



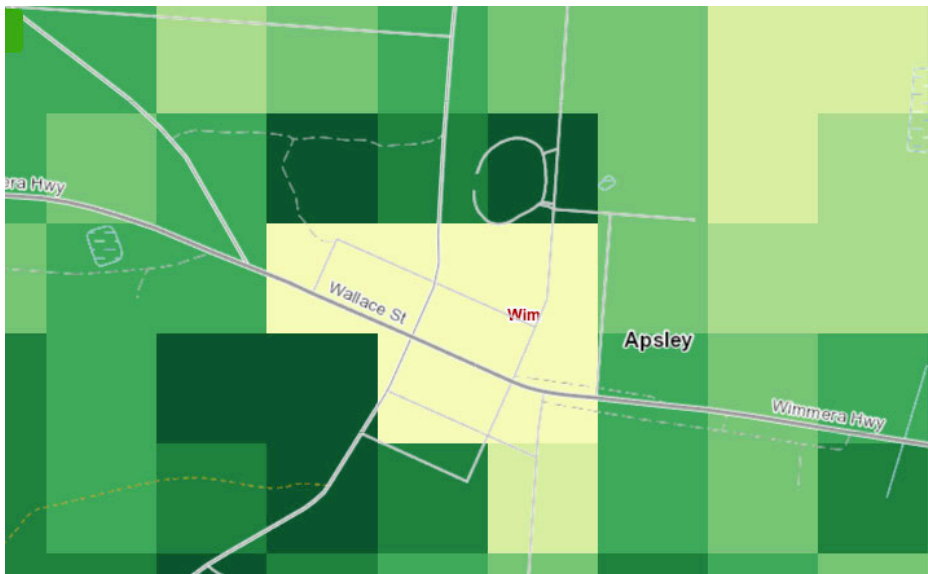
## 5.9 Landscape and Environment

There is a significant risk of flooding in Apsley especially around the main street where there is a dry creek bed that floods during significant rain events. A flood study for the town is currently underway and is expected to be finished shortly.

There is a risk of bushfire in Apsley with the town covered by a BMO . There is a Place of Last Resort in case of bushfire at the Apsley Recreation Reserve in Splatt Street. This is part of the Neighbourhood Safer Places program for West Wimmera Shire.

Apsley is located on flat undulating plains in West Wimmera. The dominant ecosystems are - Plains Woodland, Plains Grassy Woodland, Plains Grassland, Red Gum Wetland and Grassy Woodland. The western part is typified by ancient stranded beach ridges interspersed with clay plains (where there are a mixture of swamp, lakes, lagoons and lunettes in the south) with cracking clay soils and red texture contrast soils. The vegetation on these less fertile plains is dominated by Heathy Woodland and Shallow Sands Woodland.

The NaturePrint map below identifies areas of biodiversity with areas of the highest value in the darkest green.



## 5.10 Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities are identified for the town:

### Issues

- There is significant risk of flood in areas of the town.
- There is significant risk of fire.
- There is a lack of potable drinking water.
- The town is not connected to a reticulated sewage system.
- There are a large number of vacant shops within the town centre.
- Public transport is very limited and residents are reliant on private transport.
- The town is reliant on towns such as Naracoorte for higher-order goods and services including employment, retail, health, and secondary education.
- Without support from increased tourism and growth in population, there is insufficient demand for additional retail development.
- There is a limited accommodation offer with rooms and free camping at the hotel.
- Some of the historic buildings in the town are in need of repair and maintenance.

### Opportunities

- There is an active and strong community advocacy group.
- There is a good range of community facilities for a small town.
- There is a high level of amenity.
- There is a Primary School in the town.
- Original township buildings provide opportunities for tourism and housing including bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Nearby lakes attract people to the region for recreation and tourism.
- The creation of home based and creative industries employment may be made possible by providing high-speed internet (NBN fixed wireless or satellite).
- Leverage existing community groups to advocate for funding to repair, maintain and update significant buildings along the Wimmera Highway.

- The attractive town centre could be further enhanced through place making initiatives and upgrades to infrastructure.
- Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.

The settlement attributes and key recommendations for Apsley are detailed in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Apsley Settlement and Key Recommendations**

Settlement	Apsley
<b>Catchment Population</b>	Up to 500
<b>Role in the Hierarchy</b>	Small Settlement
<b>Existing Infrastructure</b>	No reticulated drinking water, no reticulated sewage system
<b>Other Services Available</b>	Hotel, post office, town hall, emergency services, sport infrastructure
<b>Growth Capacity</b>	Low due to flood constraints, bushfire risk and lack of reticulated water and sewer
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	Negligible Change
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and implement the Apsley flood study to determine the extent of flood risk and to direct any new housing away from flood prone areas.</li> <li>• Ensure new development to respond to local bushfire requirements.</li> <li>• Explore options to provide drinking water and a reticulated sewage system to the town with the local water authority.</li> <li>• Advocate for improved transport services between Apsley and the surrounding towns including community or public transport buses.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to repurpose original township buildings to provide an increase in tourism and housing.</li> <li>• Undertake an audit/review of heritage assets to determine if a further heritage study is warranted for Apsley.</li> <li>• Review demand for further overnight accommodation.</li> <li>• Explore if there is any further Crown or Council land that could be utilised for housing and accommodation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the attractiveness of the town centre by providing grants to landowners for repainting and other streetscape upgrade works.</li> <li>• Review zoning within the town boundary as part of the preparation of a structure plan for the town.</li> <li>• Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider including land zoned Farming Zone between the Wimmera Highway and Benayeo Road into the town boundary and consider rezoning to an urban zone (e.g. LDRZ) to reflect the small lot sizes and current land uses.</li> <li>• Include the Apsley Racecourse and Recreation Reserve (zoned PPRZ) into the town boundary to recognise its role as a public facility.</li> <li>• Consider including the land zoned FZ on the west and east side of Laidlaw Street into the town boundary to reflect the small lot sizes and current land uses.</li> <li>• Include the Apsley State School Reserve zoned PUZ2 into the town boundary.</li> <li>• Consider rezoning FZ land currently within the town boundary on the south side of Wimmera Highway to an urban zone (e.g. LDRZ) to reflect the current lot sizes and current land uses.</li> </ul>





## 6. EDENHOPE

Edenhope is the largest town in the Shire and has a role as an administrative centre. The town has a compact commercial area offering convenience and weekly shopping. Industrial activities are concentrated in the east of the town, with some service industries on the southern edge of the commercial area. The town is located on the shores of Lake Wallace, which has been integral to the formation of the character of the township. The lake provides recreation opportunities as well as a unique residential amenity.

Edenhope developed mainly as a wool grazing area. Several large properties have been subdivided for smaller family farms, particularly for soldier settlements after World War II.

Like many rural townships, Edenhope plays a vital role in providing opportunities for social interaction and civic engagement for residents across a large rural catchment. With its proximity to Lake Wallace and historical and contemporary ties to cricket and Australian Rules Football, Edenhope is viewed as a centre for sports and recreation. The town also offers its community a wide range of social and cultural opportunities across the arts, heritage and natural environment.

Edenhope is one of only two towns in the Shire that has safe drinking water. The town context map is shown in **Figure 13**.

### 6.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context

#### Regional Growth Plan

Edenhope is defined as a District Town in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP. The future directions for Edenhope are to:

- Recognise Edenhope as the district town for the south-western Wimmera community of interest.
- Encourage the provision of a range of middle order health, education, retail, municipal and emergency services.
- Provide for residential growth through infill development.
- Provide additional industrial land to facilitate employment.

The RGP states “*Edenhope is the major centre in the south-western part of the Wimmera Southern Mallee region, providing various services to its community of*

*interest, which includes Goroke, Harrow and Apsley. The town’s proximity to South Australia enables a close relationship with Naracoorte and residents rely on this centre and Horsham for higher order services. The town is located on Lake Wallace, which should be protected as an important focus for recreation, tourism and amenity.*

*Infill development will provide for residential growth in the short to medium-term. Over time, additional residential land supply will be required. This could be located to the south of the town or around limited, discrete parts of Lake Wallace. Development around Lake Wallace will require an extension of the reticulated sewerage system to limit the impact on the lake.*

*There is a need for additional industrial land to support employment growth. The preference is for this is to be located to the south-east of the town. Other key strategic issues for the town include the reliance on treated bore water for drinking supplies and the need to upgrade the airport/airfield to accommodate emergency flights to meet future community needs. “*

The RGP outlines the following land use policies, strategies and actions for Edenhope:

- Focus investment in services and facilities for the south-western part of the region in Edenhope.
- Identify a preferred location for additional industrial land and facilitate development.
- Monitor the need for additional residential land.

#### West Wimmera Planning Scheme Clause 11.01-1L-01

Clause 11.01-1L-01 Settlement - Edenhope provides the existing settlement framework for the town. Strategies to the clause seek to ensure active retail frontages within the commercial precinct and promote low density and rural living development in lifestyle living areas, as identified on the Edenhope Framework Plan. The Clause 11.01-1L-01 settlement framework for Edenhope is shown in **Figure 14**.

The clause encourages use and development to orient towards and activate Lake Wallace and its foreshore and to support the establishment of a pedestrian and cycle trail network for recreational purposes that accesses nearby environmental assets, such as Lake Wallace.



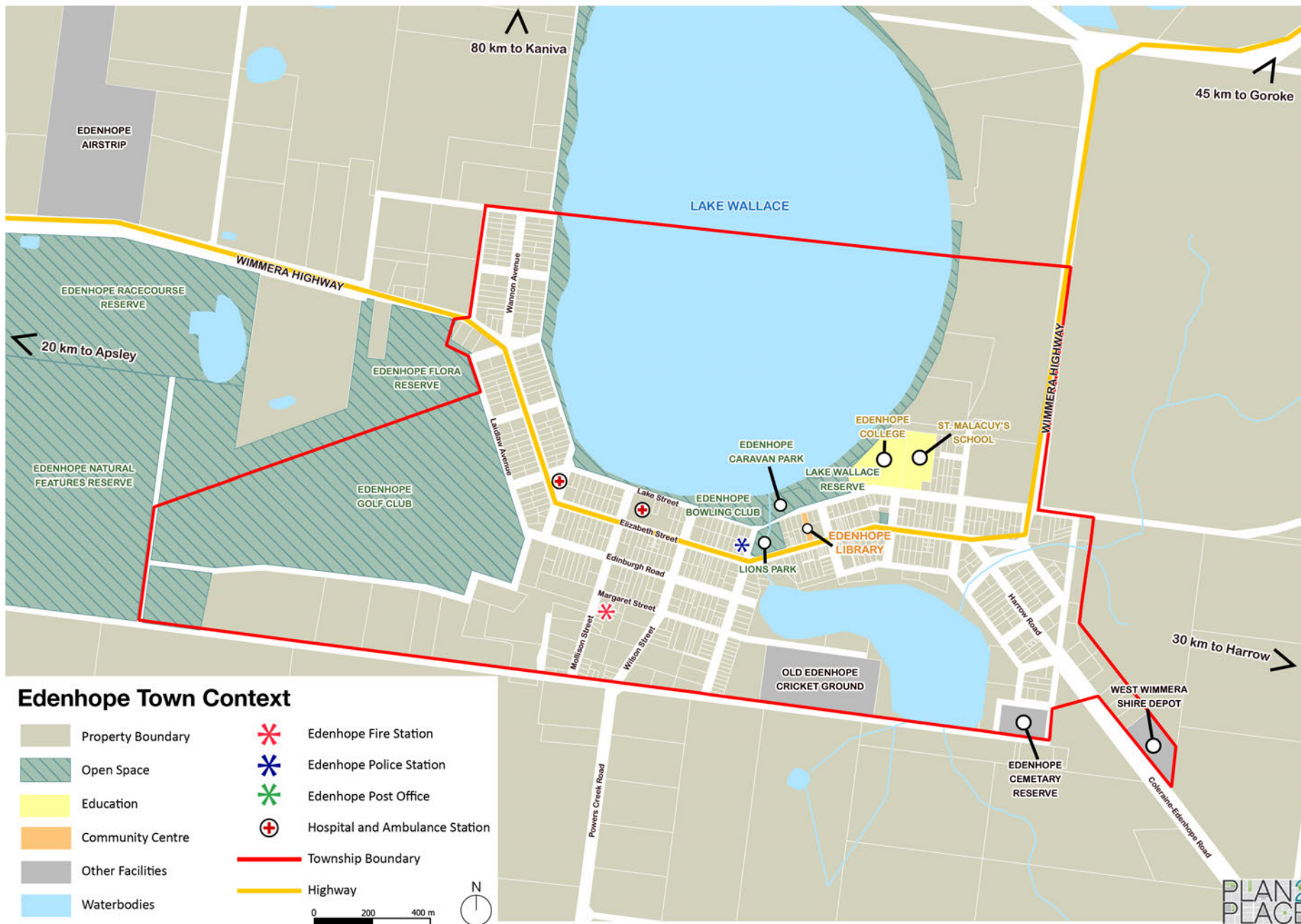
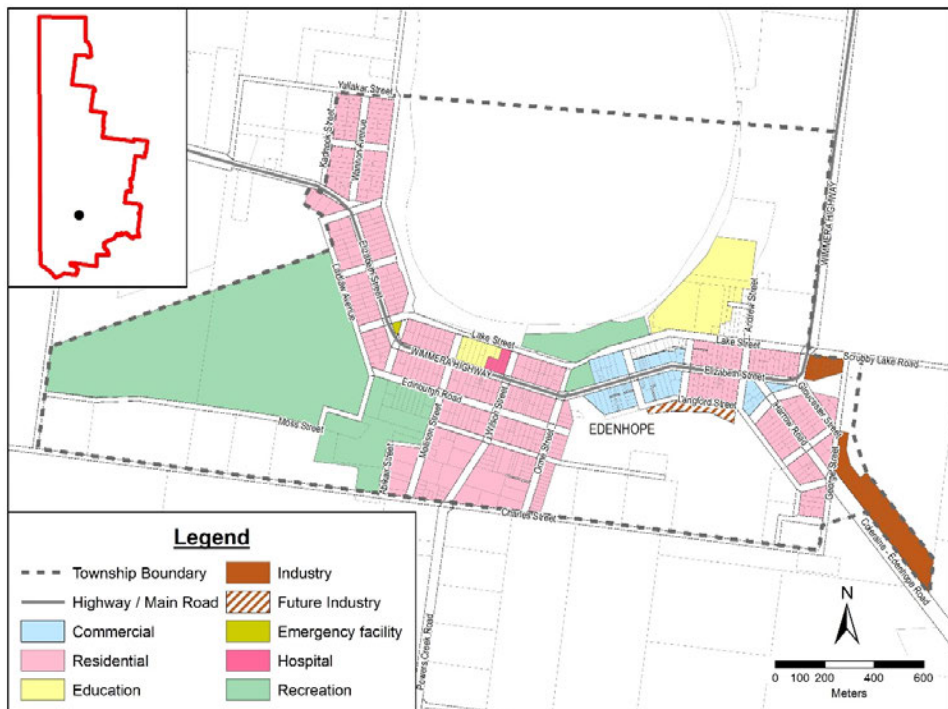


Figure 13: Edenhope Context Map

Additionally, the clause encourages the development and expansion of the Edenhope Industrial Estate and facilitates the relocation of storage uses from Elizabeth Street into the Edenhope Industrial Estate.



**Figure 14: Edenhope Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L**

Relevant zones within the WWPS affecting Edenhope are shown in **Figure 15** and summarised below:

- The TZ applies to land within Edenhope and land surrounding Lake Wallace.
- The Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z) applies to land along the Coleraine- Edenhope Road.
- The Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z) applies to land adjoining the Coleraine-Edenhope Road.
- The Public Use Zone (PUZ5) is applied to the Edenhope cemetery.
- The Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) is applied over Lake Wallace, the Edenhope Aerodrome Bushland Reserve, Golf Course,

Edenhope Flora Reserve, Racecourse and the Edenhope Natural Features Reserve.

- The Transport 2 Zone (TRZ2) is applied along the Coleraine- Edenhope Road.
- The Special Use Zone Schedule 3 (SUZ3) is applied to the Edenhope Airport.
- The Rural Living Zone (RLZ) applies to land outside of the town boundary.
- The Farming Zone (FZ) applies to agricultural and land surrounding the town boundaries.



**Figure 15: Edenhope - Existing Zones**

Relevant overlays within the WWPS affecting Edenhope are shown in **Figure 16** and summarised below:

- The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) applies to all of the land surrounding Edenhope to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.
- The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) applies to much of the land surrounding Edenhope.



- The Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 1 (DDO1) applies to land along the Coleraine – Edenhope Road to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development.
- The Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) applies to selected land in the town to ensure that potentially contaminated land is suitable for a use which could be significantly and adversely affected by any contamination.

households without children, but there are also working age parents with young children. Children in Edenhope are typically under 15 years of age. There are not many residents in Edenhope aged in their 20s and 30s.

### 6.3 Housing

Despite population decline, the town will need to accommodate some growth in dwellings – up to 3 per year according to forecasts. There are adequate parcels of vacant TZ land that could be used for housing, including, for example, a 5 hectare parcel on the corner of the Wimmera Highway and Lake Street as well as numbers of vacant lots in the south west of the town and on the western edge of the town. There are some parcels of land that are zoned TZ but which may not be suitable for housing development, including the Back Swamp area in the south-east of the town and the area on the eastern shores of Lake Wallace around the water treatment facility.

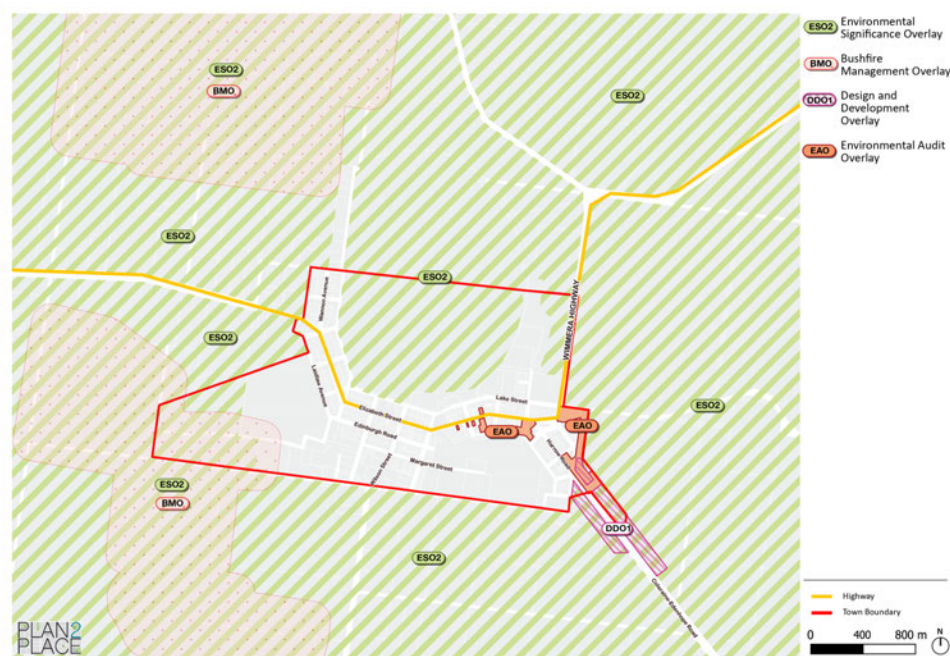
Providing services to the larger parcels of land may make the feasibility of development difficult. In this circumstance, there may be ways in which Council could take a long term interest in the development of the land by, for example, providing up-front funding for infrastructure which is recouped on the sale of lots.

There is an urgent need for key worker housing to allow the town to grow.

### 6.4 Economic Profile

The district produces mainly sheep, beef and broadacre crops with a total gross value of \$303 million in 2021 (ABS, Data by region for West Wimmera SA2). This farming effort directly supports a range of businesses in the town including transport operators and a small abattoir.

The town wraps around the southern end of Lake Wallace, which provides a distinctive backdrop and recreational resource as well as being popular with visitors. Visitation to Edenhope and surrounds is supported by the presence of commercial accommodation including a caravan park and motel as well as short stay homes for rent. The racecourse, golf course, team sports facilities, nature conservation reserve and lakeshore walking trails all provide visitors with ample outdoor recreational opportunities. In the future, there may be potential for specialty accommodation – lakeside glamping, historic homes, ecotourism ventures, farm stays or permaculture farms – as well as potential to capitalise on



**Figure 16: Edenhope - Existing Overlays**

### 6.2 Population and Demographics

The 2021 Australian census reported Edenhope had a population of 713 people. Edenhope remains the largest town in the Shire and has the most significant population catchment. Its services are somewhat threatened by population decline and by the growth of larger centres outside the Shire.

Edenhope has a high number of residents over 45 years, and a very high proportion of residents aged 65 years and older. It also has a very high number of widowed individuals. The family composition of Edenhope skews towards

the unique dune and swale environment of West Wimmera and its local and regional produce through specialty outlets.

Edenhope has an extensive area of land zoned for industrial purposes. The land is located on both sides of the Coleraine-Edenhope Road at the south eastern entry to the town, with a narrow extension along George Street to Scrubby Lake Road. The land comprises approximately 32 hectares to accommodate the Edenhope Abattoir and 13 hectares to accommodate general industry. The general industrial land along the main road has largely been taken up (albeit with a low level of intensity) and includes activities such as the Shire depot. The land along George Street remains largely vacant and undeveloped. In the absence of a substantial incoming investor, the remaining land should be sufficient for local industrial needs, particularly since local industrial sectors have been changing substantially in recent years. Should further land be required, there is ample land immediately to the east of the existing zoned land, although this would need to be subject to environmental and engineering investigations.

### 6.5 Movement and Transport



*Electric Vehicle Charging Station – Edenhope*

Edenhope is on the Wimmera Highway, one of the routes from Victoria to the popular Coonawarra wine district. The primary mode of transport for residents, workers and visitors to Edenhope is via private vehicle. There are very limited public transport options available for residents in Edenhope with a once a day service between Naracoorte and Horsham on weekdays. There is an EV charging station on Anzac Avenue for electric vehicles.

### 6.6 Physical Infrastructure

Reticulated water and sewage are provided to the town and recycled water is also in use. The Golf Club uses recycled water from the water treatment plant. Trade waste stresses the current wastewater system and needs to be augmented. Drinking water quality needs to be upgraded and there are also water quality issues in Edenhope with saline bores.

### 6.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure

The town has a small hospital that accommodates a nursing home and urgent care services. A government P-12 school is one of three secondary facilities in the Shire. There is also a kindergarten and Catholic primary school. Edenhope has childcare and maternal child health services. The town has a library in the community hall, sports facilities and an old court house which is used as a visitor information centre and museum.

The key features of the main street commercial centre in Elizabeth Street are:

- The intact strip of commercial buildings developed mainly between 1930 and 1990.
- The small supermarket.
- Two significant hardware/rural supplies stores.
- The civic and social infrastructure including the Shire Hall, library, visitor information and prominent Catholic church.
- The Lake Wallace Hotel.
- Two banks.
- A small range of specialty shops, cafes and local shop-front services including legal, financial and veterinary services.
- The public amenities and visitor parking on Anzac Avenue.





**Edenhope Community Garden**

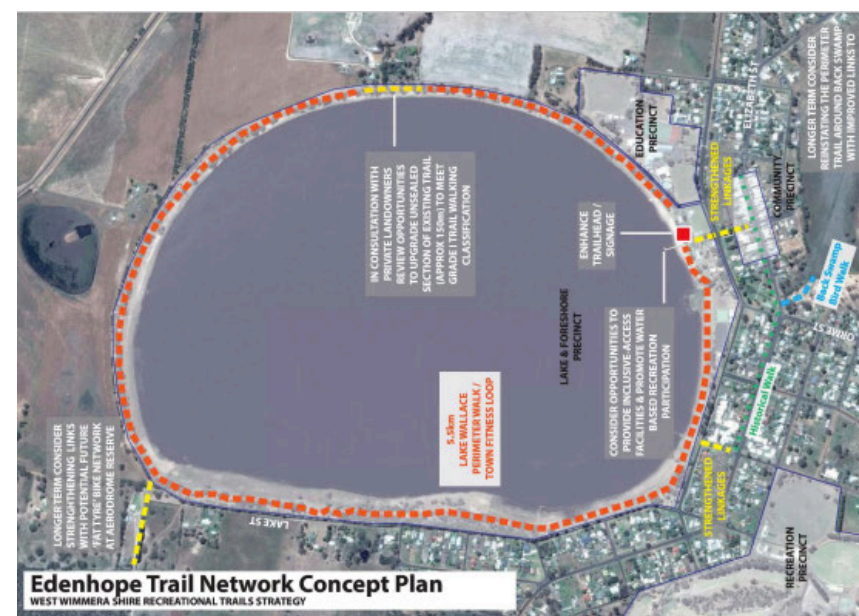
While the strip would once have been occupied principally by retailers, there are now a range of other services – including health, financial, community and galleries. This is in keeping with trends throughout the retail sector.

Nearby Lake Charlegrark and Lake Bringalbert attract people to the region for recreation and tourism and are important cultural and community assets and provide opportunities for the town through visitor services including accommodation and hospitality.

Beyond the retail core of Edenhope, recreational facilities including Lake Wallace are key assets for the Edenhope community and visitors. The image below shows the Edenhope Trail Network Concept Plan.

Most of the Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail will be upgraded to an accessible walking trail with connectivity back to the town centre. There are two properties currently in private ownership that do not wish to have the bitumen Perimeter Trail along their properties. This area has been fenced off and there is a hole in the fence to provide access to a gravel path for local residents. The Edenhope Fat

Tyre Cross Country Bike Loop is also a high priority project for the Shire as well as upgrading the Edenhope to Apsley Cycling Route.



Source: West Wimmera Recreational Trail Strategy – Volume 1: The Strategy November 2018

## 6.8 Built Form and Heritage

Edenhope is comprised of several historic buildings along its wide main street. The intact strip of commercial buildings was developed mainly between 1930 and 1990. The township extends along the Wimmera Highway for the most part and the key feature of Edenhope is Lake Wallace. Most of the houses in the town are single storey weatherboard buildings with some newer houses fronting Lake Wallace.

In 1866, the Edenhope cricket club recruited Thomas Wills who had played for the Rugby School football and cricket teams in England, cricket for Marylebone and for the Victorian cricket team. He became a coach of an Aboriginal cricket team which was the first Australian team to tour England in 1868. The team's famous batsman, Johnny Mullagh, is buried at Harrow, and there is a memorial to the cricket team in the grounds of the Edenhope secondary college, beside Lake Wallace, where Wills coached the team.

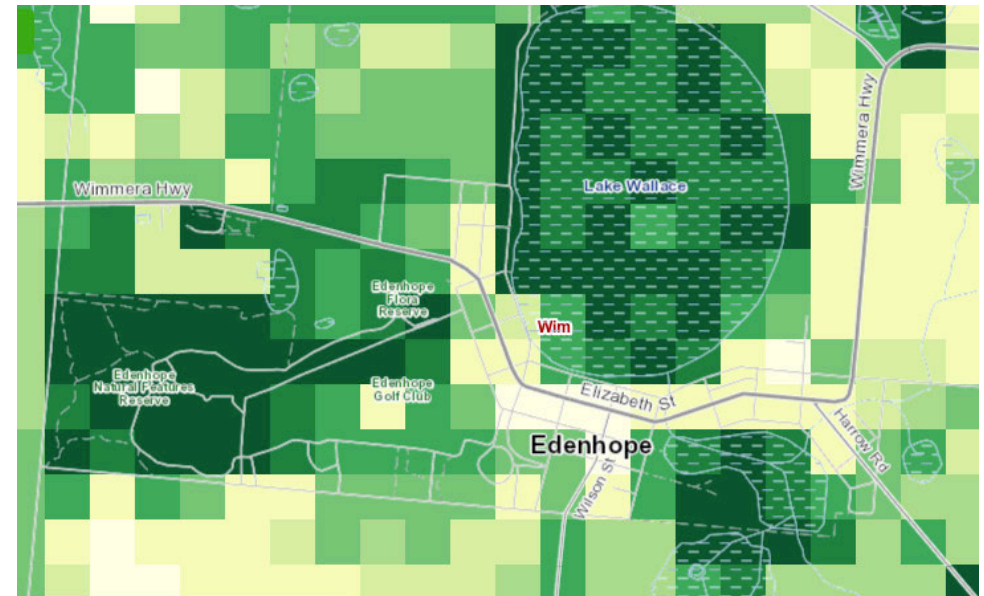
## 6.9 Landscape and Environment

There is a risk of flooding in Edenhope. A flood study for the town is currently underway and is expected to be finished in 2025. A consistent water level in Lake Wallace is an ongoing issue for the town and there are also frequent blue-green algae blooms.

There is a risk of bushfire in Edenhope with areas outside of the township boundary covered by a BMO. There is a Place of Last Resort in case of bushfire sited at the Lake Wallace Reserve corner of land and Anzac Avenue. This is part of the Neighbourhood Safer Places program for the West Wimmera Shire.

Edenhope is located on flat, undulating plains. The dominant ecosystems are - Plains Woodland, Plains Grassy Woodland, Plains Grassland, Red Gum Wetland and Grassy Woodland. The western part is typified by ancient stranded beach ridges interspersed with clay plains (where there are a mixture of swamp, lakes, lagoons and lunettes in the south) with cracking clay soils and red texture contrast soils. The vegetation on these less fertile plains is dominated by Heathy Woodland and Shallow Sands Woodland. A Biodiversity audit is needed for the Back Swamp site. There is an ESO over the town to protect and preserve habitat for the Red Tail Cockatoo.

The NaturePrint map below identifies areas of biodiversity with areas of the highest value in the darkest green which are in Lake Wallace and the Edenhope Natural Features Reserve.



## 6.10 Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities are identified for the town:

### Issues

- A consistent water level in Lake Wallace is an ongoing issue for the town.
- There are frequent blue-green algae blooms in Lake Wallace.
- There is risk of flood in some areas of the town.
- There is risk of fire.
- Public transport is very limited and residents are reliant on private transport.
- There are not enough staff or places for childcare.
- The quality of the drinking water needs to be upgraded for the town.

### Opportunities

- Recreational tourism is a major driver of the economy and this could be further enhanced to service the “silver economy” as well as selling regional produce.

- Need to ensure that the town centre remains attractive and that there is sufficient zoned and serviced land for growing activities and supporting local enterprises to grow.
- The usage of the foreshore space and infrastructure on the Lake Wallace foreshore could be further optimised and connectivity improved back to the commercial centre.
- Provide more seating, shade and barbecues in the Lake Wallace foreshore area.
- Wayfinding signage around Edenhope and to Lake Wallace could be improved/increased.
- Place activation at the western end of Elizabeth Street could be promoted.
- A community bus service could be provided allow travel between the towns for community services.
- Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.
- Original town buildings could provide future tourism and housing opportunities.
- Provide marketing of the town's connection to cricket and rugby to attract visitors to the town.
- Tourism opportunities would be enhanced by increases to the overnight accommodation offer in the town.
- The creation of home-based businesses and creative industries employment would be facilitated by high-speed internet (NBN fixed wireless or satellite).
- The Back Swamp site should be protected from future development.
- More key worker housing would allow the town to grow.

The settlement attributes and key recommendations for Edenhope are detailed in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Edenhope Settlement and Key Recommendations**

Settlement	Edenhope
Catchment Population	Up to 2,700
Role in the Hierarchy	District Town
Existing Infrastructure	Reticulated drinking water, reticulated sewage system
Other Services Available	Hospital, hotels, professional civic and recreational services, some retailing including hardware and agricultural services
Growth Capacity	The town has capacity to grow
Expected Outcomes	Minimal growth expected
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and implement a Structure Plan for Edenhope.</li> <li>• Complete and implement the Edenhope flood study to determine the extent of flood risk and direct any new housing away from flood prone areas.</li> <li>• Prepare a bushfire study and direct any new development away from areas of high bushfire risk.</li> <li>• Advocate for upgrades to the town's drinking water.</li> <li>• Advocate for a community bus service between Edenhope and the surrounding towns</li> <li>• Work with businesses to strengthen the overnight accommodation offer.</li> <li>• Undertake a biodiversity audit for the Back Swamp site to inform appropriate zoning for that area.</li> <li>• Ensure that the town centre remains attractive and that that there is sufficient zoned and serviced land for growing activities and supporting local enterprises to grow.</li> <li>• Optimise usage of the foreshore space and infrastructure on the Lake Wallace foreshore and improve connectivity improved to the commercial centre.</li> <li>• Improve wayfinding signage around Edenhope and to Lake Wallace should be</li> <li>• Promote place activation at the western end of Elizabeth Street commercial centre.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities to repurpose original township buildings to provide an increase in tourism and housing.</li> <li>• Market the town's connection to cricket and rugby.</li> <li>• Advocate for high-speed internet (NBN fixed wireless or satellite) to facilitate the creation of home-based businesses and creative industries employment.</li> <li>• Facilitate key worker housing to allow the town to grow.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to enhance recreational Tourism as a major driver of the economy and this could be further enhanced to service the "silver economy" as well as selling regional produce.</li> <li>• Review the extent of urban growth outside the settlement boundary particularly surrounding Lake Wallace.</li> <li>• Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider extending the town boundary to include all of Lake Wallace to recognise the importance of this asset to the community and its contribution to the town's recreation and amenity.</li> <li>• Consider including the Industrial 1 and 3 zoned land on Coleraine-Edenhope Road into the town boundary to reflect its existing use and to provide clear direction on where industrial uses should be located.</li> <li>• Consider including the Township Zoned land on the west side of Lake Wallace into the town boundary to reflect its current residential land uses and Township zoning.</li> <li>• Include the Edenhope Racecourse and Edenhope Flora Reserve and Natural Features Reserve (PCRZ) into the town boundary to recognise the importance of these facilities to the town's recreation and community facilities.</li> </ul>





## 7. GOROKE

Goroke is a rural township in the centre of the Shire, midway between Horsham and the South Australian border. It is 10 km south of the Little Desert. The name is thought to have been derived from an Aboriginal word meaning magpie.

Goroke was established to serve the surrounding farm district which produces mainly wool, lamb, beef and cereals. The town is close to Lake Charlegrark and Lake Boorooopki and many other district lakes, which provide for various visitor and recreational pursuits including yabbing, fishing, bird and wildlife watching. The Goroke town extends along Main Street with the Community Health Centre and Goroke College well separated from the hub of the town, located some 900 metres east of the centre. Rural land separates the hub of the town from the school, health centre and a handful of dwellings. The town context map is shown in **Figure 17**.

The Goroke area was occupied for pastoral runs in the mid-1840s. Farm allotments were taken up in the Goroke area in the late 1870s. A school was opened at Gymbowen, 10 km east of Goroke in 1881, and the Goroke school was opened in 1885. Goroke township was surveyed in 1882. Within a few years, the Victorian municipal directory recorded Goroke as having some stores, a flour mill, a hotel and a mechanics' institute. An agricultural and pastoral society was formed in 1887. The railway line was extended from Natimuk to Goroke in 1894, connecting it to Horsham.

Between 1910 and World War II, Goroke maintained a population of about 350-400 people with a bush-nursing centre and a memorial hall. In 1927 the railway line was extended further west to Carpolac. After World War II there was an influx of population as large pastoral holdings were subdivided, some being taken up by soldier settlers. In the early 1950s, several small district primary schools were closed and pupils bused to a consolidated school at Goroke. Education to years 10 and 11 was provided during the 1960s, with an active Young Farmers' Club attached to the school.

### 7.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context

#### Regional Growth Plan

Goroke is defined as a Small Settlement in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP. Access to services, economic diversification, providing infrastructure and managing change from significant investment are important for Goroke.

The RGP states that *"a small settlement (urban centres of less than 500 people) will play a role in providing for complementary functions to the larger nearby towns. They will need to continue to share services and facilities with other settlements in their community of interest and maintain services for their local communities. Larger towns will generally provide the size and critical mass to support higher services"*.

In the RGP, future directions for a Small Settlement are to:

- Plan for small settlements to manage local challenges and help these communities to be adaptable and resilient.
- Encourage small settlements to contribute to their local communities of interest to enable good access to key services.

#### West Wimmera Planning Scheme Clause 11.01-1L-04

Clause 11.01-1L-04 Settlement - Goroke provides the existing settlement framework for the town. Strategies to the clause seek to encourage commercial and industrial activities to locate along the main street or in the vicinity of the grain receiving silo. The clause supports the establishment of a walking and bicycle path alongside the train line that can connect with other rail trails emerging throughout the Wimmera region. The Clause 11.01-1L-04 settlement framework for Goroke is shown in **Figure 18**.



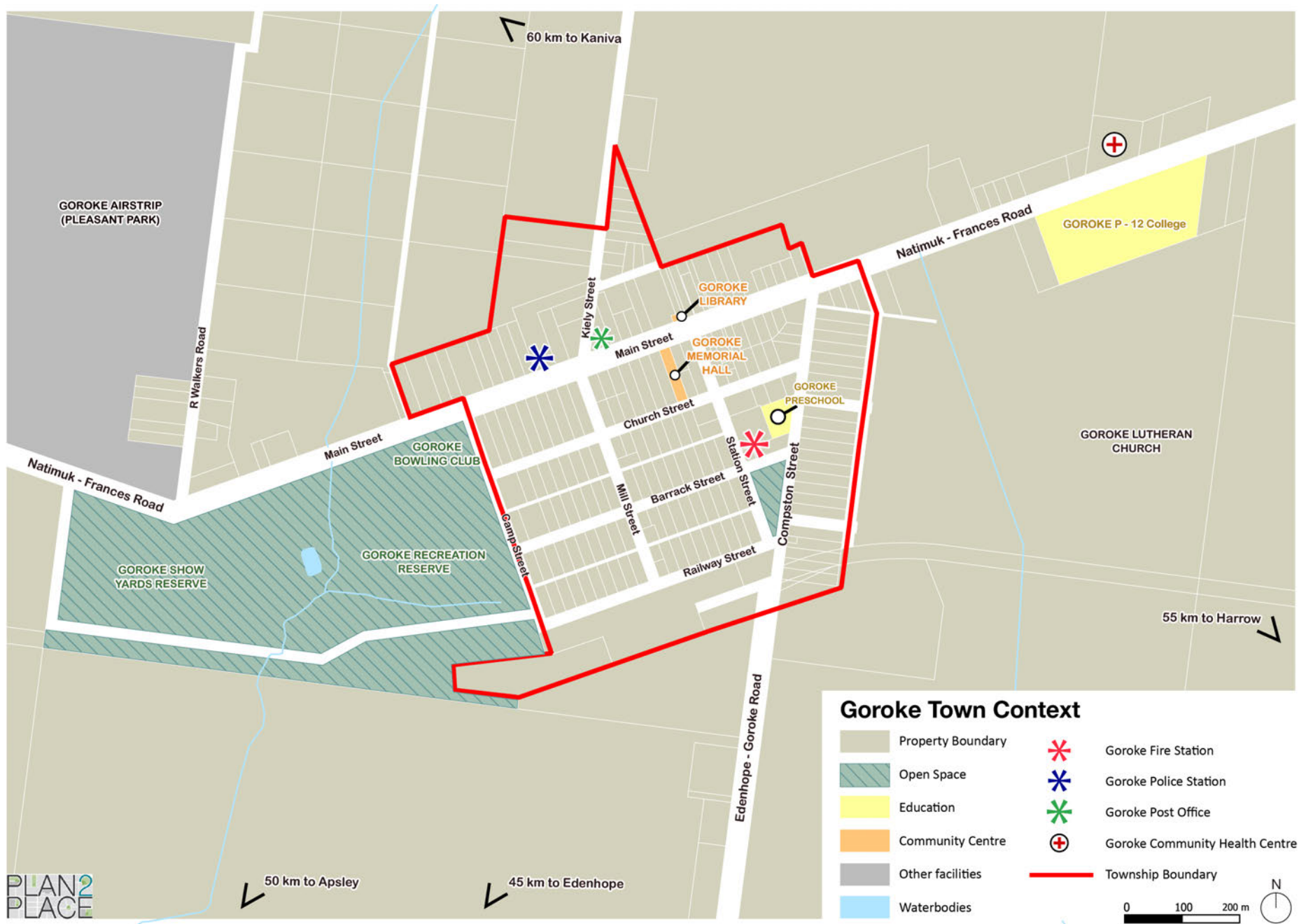
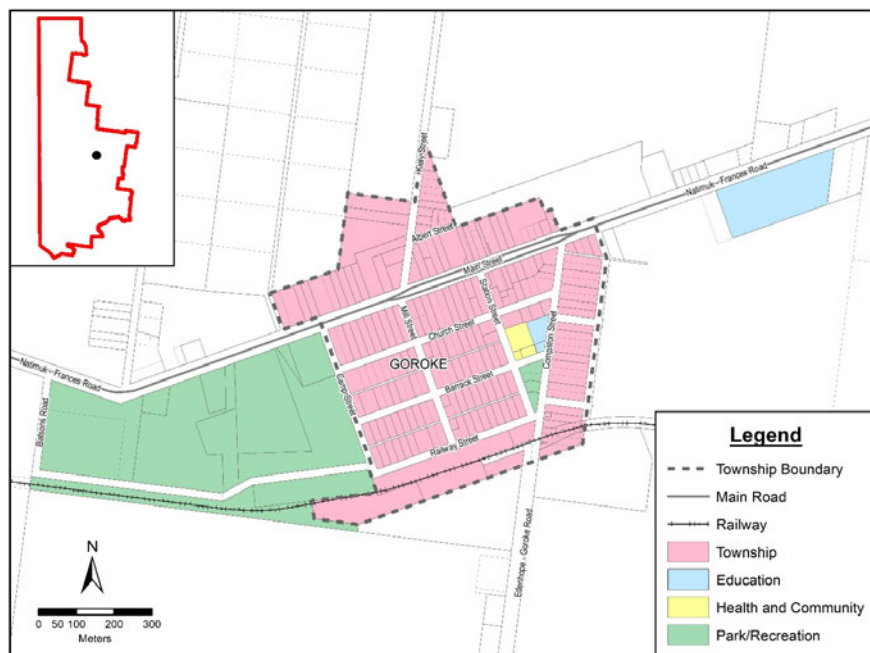


Figure 17: Goroke Context Map





**Figure 18: Goro Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L**

Relevant zones within the WWPS affecting Goro are shown in **Figure 19** and summarised below.

- The TZ applies to land within Goro.
- The FZ applies to agricultural land surrounding the town boundaries.
- The PUZ2 applies to the Goro P-12 college site and to the Goro Preschool site.
- The PUZ5 applies to the Goro Cemetery Reserve.
- The PUZ – Schedule 3 (PUZ3) applies to the Goro Fire Station site.
- The PPRZ applies to the Goro Recreation Reserve.
- The TRZ2 has been applied to the Natimuk Frances Road that runs through the centre of Goro.



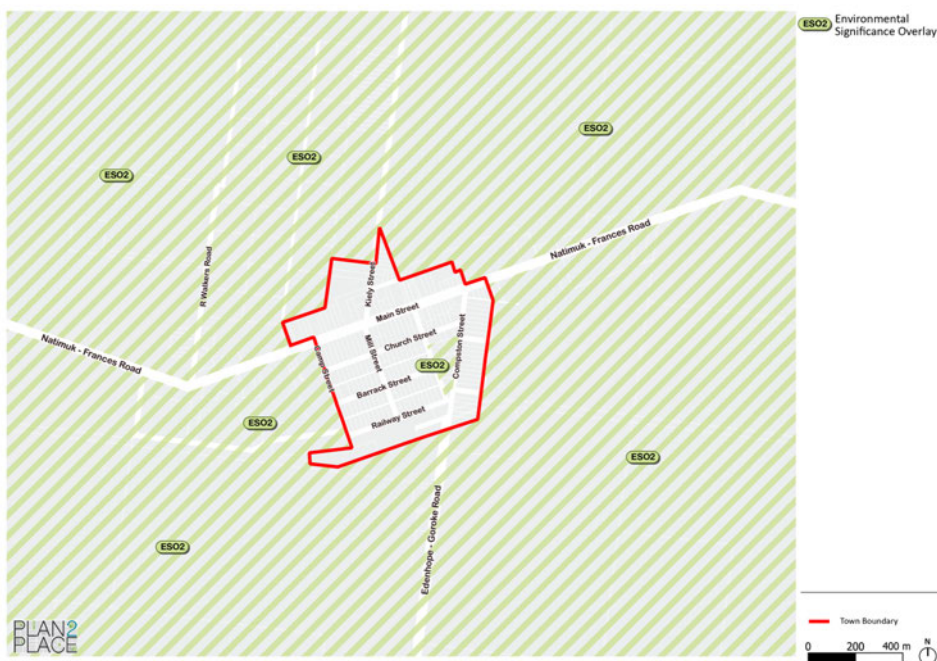
**Figure 19: Goro - Existing Zones**

One relevant overlay within the WWPS affecting Goro is shown in **Figure 20** and summarised as follows.

- The ESO2 is applied to all of the land surrounding Goro to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.

## 7.2 Population and Demographics

The 2021 Australian census reported Goro had a population of 208 people. Goro is experiencing a reducing population, which in turn is placing pressure on the ability of the town to provide services to residents in the town and the region.



**Figure 20: Goroke - Existing Overlays**

### 7.3 Housing

The local population is expected to continue to decline slowly but there may be occasional demand for a new house in the town. This may include demand for homes suitable for older people from the town and district who would like to age in place but do not want a large house.

The town is sewered, but the reticulated ground water is not safe to drink according to GWM Water. This may reduce demand from new residents who could seek to locate elsewhere. Within the town grid, there are several vacant lots in a range of sizes that would be suitable for single dwellings or multi-unit development.

### 7.4 Economic Profile

Goroke is on the Silo Art Trail and has some visitation associated with trips to the Little Desert, just to the north. The disused railway line (the old Carpolac Line) appears to provide a largely intact trail from Goroke to Natimuk which could be developed as a rail trail in the future. There is potential to formalise this trail as a

cycle route as far as Horsham. There is potential to attract visitors from the regional centre of Horsham which is around 47 minutes to the east. Visitors could be attracted by food and wine offerings, art, retail offer and services to local outdoor pursuits. These kinds of activities would depend on the willingness of local entrepreneurs and Council may be able to assist by ensuring that streetscapes remain attractive. Shade trees are likely to be increasingly important for visitor and resident comfort.

There is no designated industrial land in Goroke. Grain Corp silos operate from land zoned TZ and there is, or has been, small farm-related engineering works on Main Street. No significant industrial activity is anticipated for the township and any such demand should be redirected to towns with designated industrial precincts.

Given the forecast decline in population, resident demand is unlikely to generate support for new retail activity in the centre. There may be some scope to reuse vacant buildings to deliver temporary services or to provide co-working spaces for residents and visiting professionals. The centre has several buildings that could be adapted for new activities. There may also be potential for some of the buildings in the centre to be reused for housing temporary workers on assignment in the district, this could include farm-workers, or those involved in infrastructure projects.

Should there be any future demand for development in the town centre, priority should be given to the repurposing of existing buildings.

### 7.5 Movement and Transport

Goroke is centred on Natimuk – Frances Road. The primary mode of transport for residents, workers and visitors to Goroke is via private vehicle. There are very limited public transport options available for residents with a once a day service between Naracoorte and Horsham on weekdays.

### 7.6 Physical Infrastructure

Goroke is supplied by tank water as there is no reticulated drinking water currently available to the town. GWM Water has worked with the West Wimmera Shire Council investing in Goroke to provide a new sewerage system. The Goroke Sewerage Scheme will provide residents with a reliable, and effective wastewater collection and treatment system. The sewerage scheme will use current septic

tanks on properties and deliver a reliable and effective wastewater collection and treatment system which will contribute to the prosperity and future growth of the town. The Goroke Caravan Park is now connected to the sewerage scheme.

Construction of Stage 1 of the Goroke Sewerage Scheme was completed in October 2021. In March 2022 the Goroke Wastewater Treatment Plant was completed. Stage 2 of the Goroke Sewerage Scheme was completed in June 2024.

### 7.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Goroke has some community infrastructure including a Community Health Centre and Goroke College, however they are not well connected to the main township and are separated by rural land and some dwellings. There is also a kindergarten in the town.

The core social infrastructure including the library, town hall, public toilets, Men's shed, agricultural services, farm engineering and parkland are all located within two blocks of the town centre. The commercial core supports a mix of local businesses, including an IGA supermarket, café, service station, post office and The Goroke Hotel.

VicTrack currently owns land in Goroke which was part of the former part of the former Carpolac Railway line which branched off from Horsham. The line has been closed since the 1980s and the railway station grounds were disposed of some time ago. There is an opportunity to create a rail trail from Goroke to Natimuk along the disused rail line.

Goroke is close to wetlands and lakes including Lake Charlegrark that could possibly be further utilised for ecotourism. There is also a town walk trail that is being created by the West Wimmera Shire Council in partnership with the community.

### 7.8 Built Form and Heritage

The residential street network forms a grid pattern to the south of the main road, and houses within easy walking distance of the town centre, churches and other community services and facilities. Church Street has three churches and Railway Street includes the railway siding and silos which are visible from the surrounding area. Goroke is 'book-ended' by the Prep-Year 12 school, and health centre at its eastern edge.



*Goroke Men's Shed*

The highway splits into a dual carriageway through the town centre Main Street with a median strip that has shade trees and parking. There are several vacant commercial premises as well as many former commercial buildings that appear to have been repurposed for housing. A series of recreational facilities are located to the west of the town, including a sports ground, outdoor swimming pool, showgrounds and a caravan park.

### 7.9 Landscape and Environment

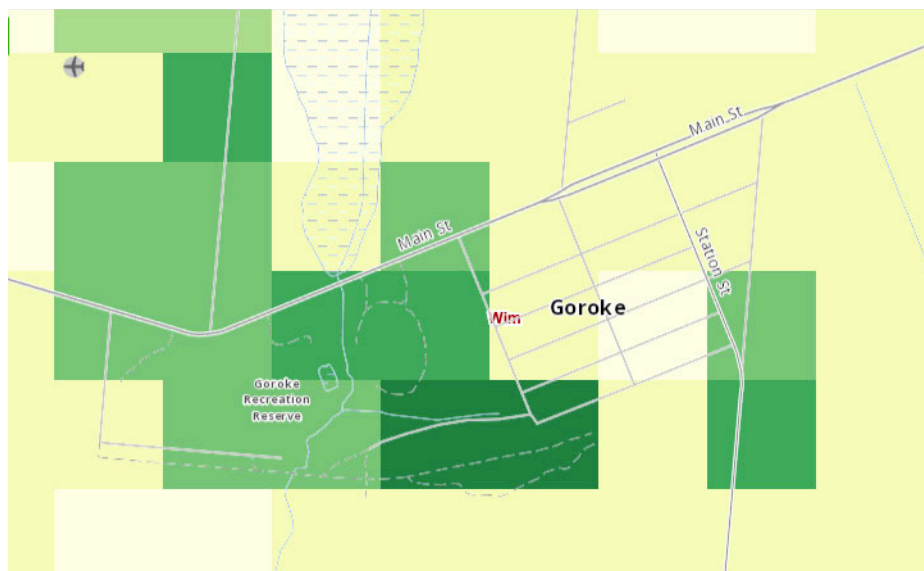
Roadside vegetation on the way into Goroke is of high value. Connectivity in the landscape is important for biodiversity and to provide biodiversity corridors. There are also several registered Trust for Nature blocks just outside of town.

Goroke is part of the Wimmera bioregion, located in the far west of the central Victoria, and is typified by flat to gently undulating plains in the east, with black and grey cracking clay soils (Vertosols). Plains Woodland, Plains Grassy Woodland, Plains Grassland, Red Gum Wetland and Grassy Woodland are the dominant ecosystems. The western part is typified by ancient stranded beach



ridges interspersed with clay plains (where there are a mixture of swamp, lakes, lagoons and lunettes in the south) with cracking clay soils and red texture contrast soils (Vertosols and Sodosols). The vegetation on these less fertile plains is dominated by Heathy Woodland and Shallow Sands Woodland.

The NaturePrint map below identifies areas of biodiversity with the area of the highest value in the darkest green which is part of the Goroke Recreation Reserve.



## 7.10 Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities are identified for the town.

### Issues

- Drinking water needs to be upgraded for the town.
- There is very limited public transport available for the town and residents are reliant on private transport.
- There are no childcare services available for residents.
- Needs key worker housing to allow the town to grow.
- An ageing population and population loss which impacts viability of the school and investment in retail.

- Challenges to accessing health care services.

### Opportunities

- Provide a community bus service to surrounding towns.
- Many of the main street buildings are currently empty and could be upgraded subject to funding.
- A rail trail from Goroke to Natimuk through to Horsham along the old Carpolac Line.
- There is potential for some of the buildings in the centre to be repurposed for housing temporary workers on assignment in the Shire.
- There is an economic development opportunity for ecotourism in the area.
- Plant more street trees to provide more shade in summer.
- Provide a greater diversity of housing for older people to age in place and stay in the town.
- Goroke is part of the Silo Art trail which attracts visitors to the town.
- Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.

The settlement attributes and key recommendations for Goroke are detailed in **Table 5**.

**Table 5: Goroke Settlement and Key Recommendations**

Settlement	Goroke
<b>Catchment Population</b>	Up to 500
<b>Role in the Hierarchy</b>	Small Settlement
<b>Existing Infrastructure</b>	No reticulated drinking water, Septic Tank Effluent Drainage sewerage system
<b>Other Services Available</b>	Hotel, take away, Post Office, Library, men's shed, community health, community hall, agricultural services, silo art
<b>Growth Capacity</b>	Low due to lack of drinking water and Septic Tank Effluent Drainage sewerage system
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	Negligible Change
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore providing drinking water to the town.</li> <li>• Advocate for community bus services between Goroke and the surrounding towns.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for childcare services to meet the needs of residents.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to upgrade Main Street buildings to provide an increase in tourism (building on the Silo Art trail) and housing.</li> <li>• Investigate creating a rail trail from Goroke to Natimuk through to Horsham along the old Carpolac Line.</li> <li>• Work with land owners to reuse buildings in the centre to house temporary workers on assignment in the Shire.</li> <li>• Support economic development opportunities for eco-tourism in the area.</li> <li>• Plant more street trees to provide shade in summer.</li> <li>• Explore options to diversify the housing stock to enable people to age in place.</li> <li>• Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the Goroke P-12 College into the town boundary.</li> <li>• Consider including land on the north side of Natimuk-Frances Road into the town boundary to reflect the</li> </ul>

	<p>small lot sizes and current land uses and consider rezoning to an urban zone (e.g. LDRZ).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the Goroke Show Yards Reserve, Recreation Reserve and Bowling Club facility into the town boundary to reflect their important role as community facilities.</li> </ul>
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## 8. HARROW

Harrow is a small pastoral town located on the banks of the Glenelg River, beneath the rolling hills and grand old red gums. Harrow is particularly picturesque, boasting several heritage buildings which significantly contribute to the town's beauty and visitor potential. The town is located in the south of the Shire and served by the Coleraine-Edenhope Road. The town is a historic service town for the surrounding farm district where wool, lamb and beef are the main products. The town context map is shown in **Figure 21**.

Harrow is situated at a crossing place on the Glenelg River. In 1849, a postal receiving place, the Foresters Arms Inn, a store and a blacksmith were constructed. In 1852 the township was surveyed. The surveyor renamed the place Harrow, presumably inspired by Harrow, England. A police post was established in the town in 1853.

Harrow is a very early distant inland town, although Apsley (closer to the border) was surveyed a year earlier. Its oldest surviving building is a log gaol (1859). A Presbyterian church was constructed in the early 1860s and served as the first school building which opened in 1869.

The town is set in hilly surrounds, beyond which are plains occupied by several historic pastoral properties. They include Clunie Estate with a large bluestone woolshed, Pine Hills (c1858), Mullagh Station (1866) and Kout Norien (c1855). A slab cottage, woolshed and other outbuildings (1848) at Kout Norien are on the Victorian Heritage Register. Mullagh Station's name was attached to an Aboriginal cricketer, Johnny Mullagh, who was in Australia's first touring side in 1867. He is buried in the Harrow cemetery. The annual Mullagh Cricket Cup (1995) is contested each year in Harrow between the Indigenous descendants of the first Australian team versus cricketers from the Western District of Victoria. A mechanics' institute was opened in 1878, a flour mill in 1890, and by the turn of the century Harrow had several stores, two hotels and a population of about 250 people.

### 8.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context

#### Regional Growth Plan

Harrow is defined as a Small Settlement in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP. Access to services, economic diversification, providing infrastructure and managing change from significant investment are important for Harrow.

The RGP states that *"a small settlement (urban centres of less than 500 people) will play a role in providing for complementary functions to the larger nearby towns. They will need to continue to share services and facilities with other settlements in their community of interest and maintain services for their local communities. Larger towns will generally provide the size and critical mass to support higher services"*.

In the RGP, future directions for a Small Settlement are to:

- Plan for small settlements to manage local challenges and help these communities to be adaptable and resilient.
- Encourage small settlements to contribute to their local communities of interest to enable good access to key services.

#### West Wimmera Planning Scheme Clause 11.01-1L-05

Clause 11.01-1L-05 Settlement - Harrow provides the existing settlement framework for the town. Strategies to the clause seek to avoid development within the floodplain of the Glenelg River. The clause ensures built form is responsive to Harrow's rural valley setting and that development enhances the town's historic 19<sup>th</sup> Century pastoral character. The Clause 11.01-1L-05 settlement framework for Harrow is shown in **Figure 22**.

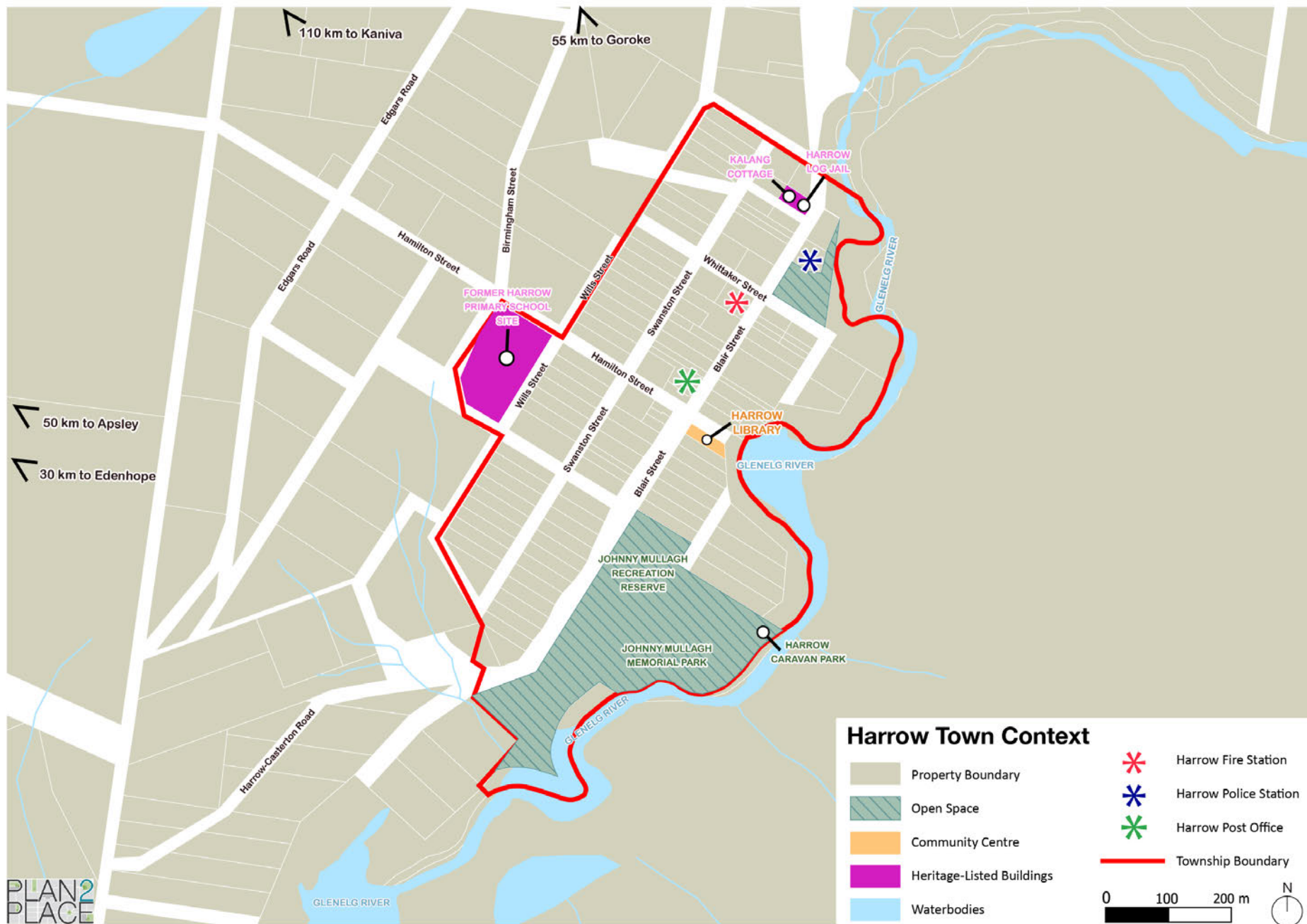
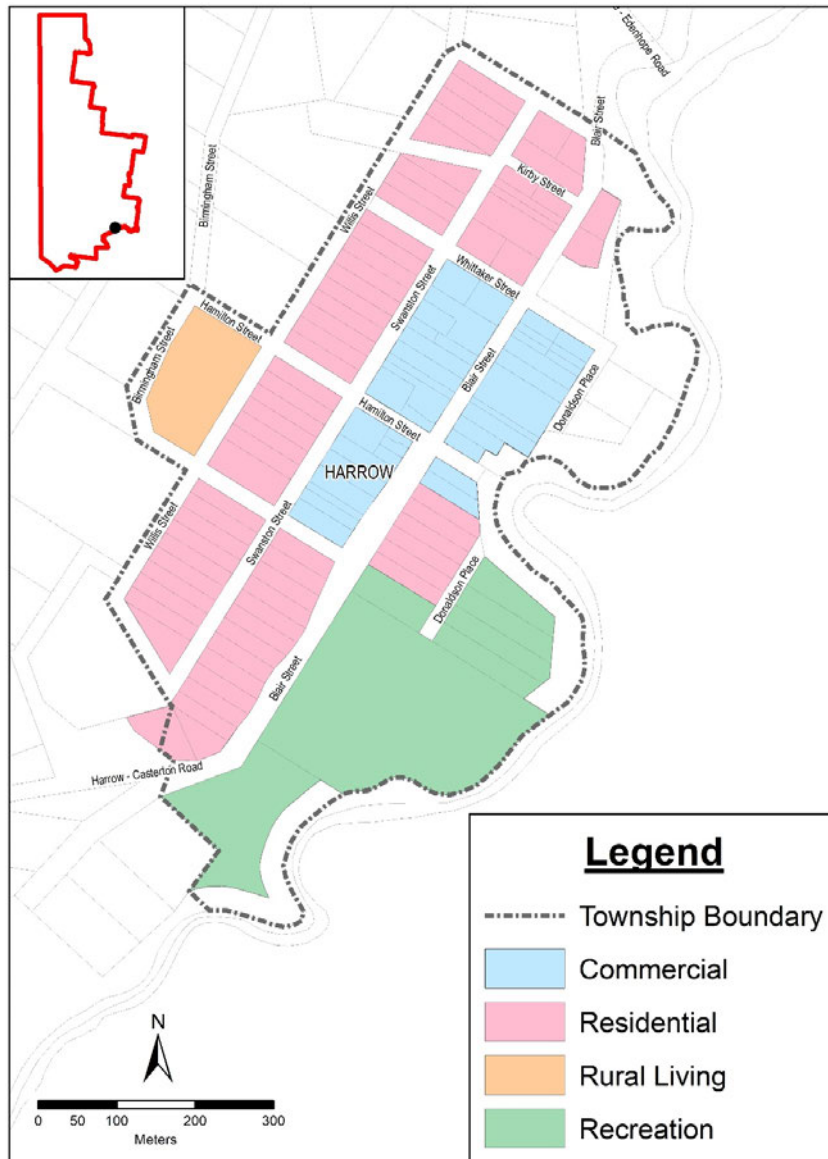


Figure 21: Harrow Context Map

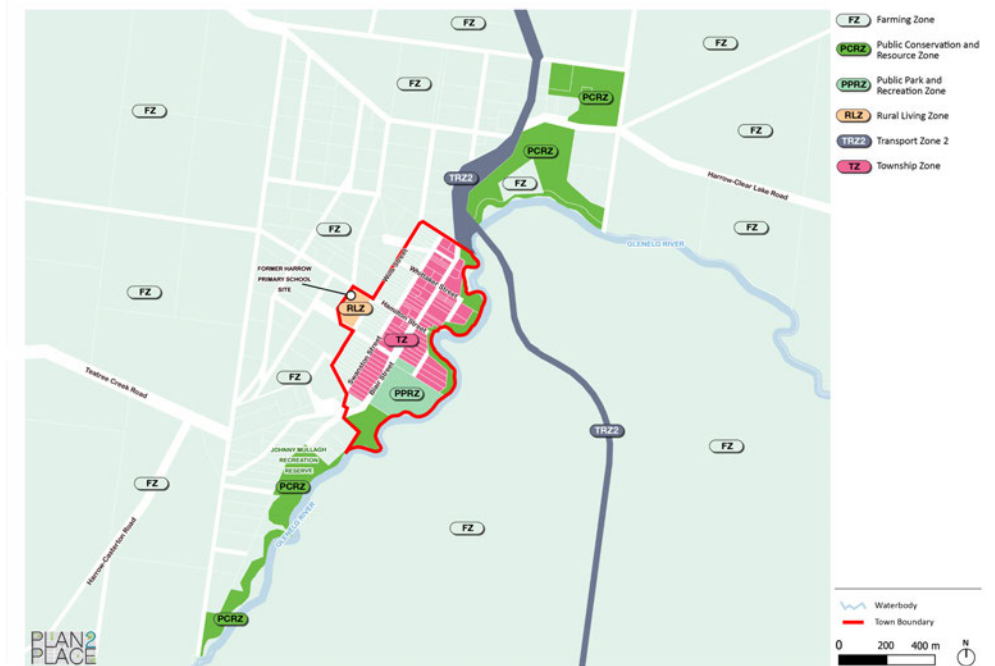


**Figure 22: Harrow Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-11**

Relevant zones within the WWPS affecting Harrow are shown in **Figure 23** and the are summarised below.

- The TZ applies to land within Harrow.

- The RLZ applies to the former Harrow Primary School site.
- The PPRZ applies to the caravan park.
- The FZ applies to agricultural land surrounding the town boundaries.
- The PCRZ is applied to the Johnny Mullagh Recreation Reserve to provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes and to provide for appropriate resource based uses.
- The TRZ applies to the Coleraine - Edenhope Road that runs through the centre of Harrow.



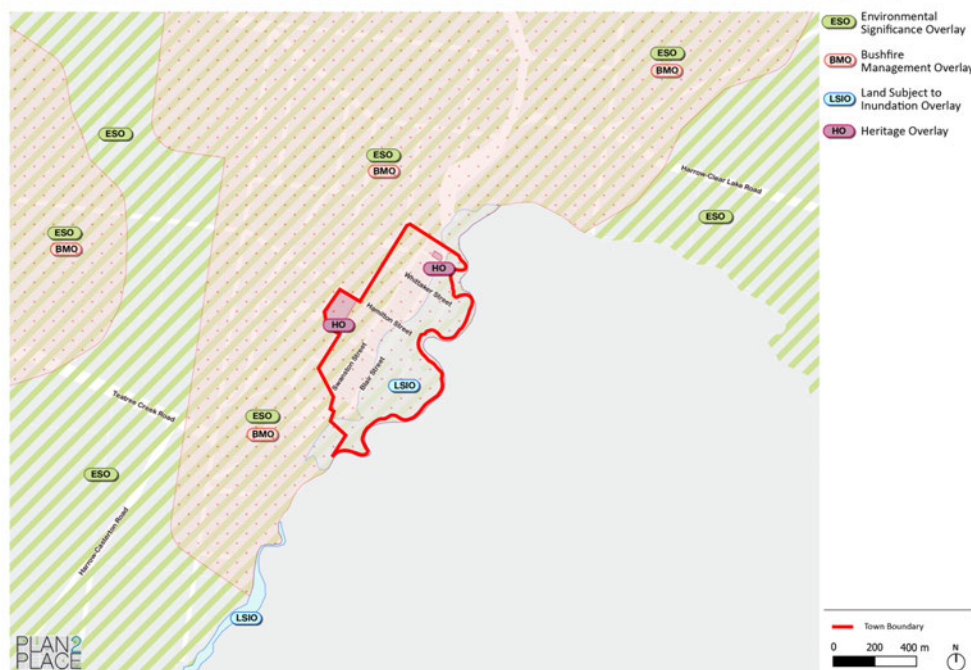
**Figure 23: Harrow - Existing Zones**

Relevant overlays within the WWPS affecting Harrow are shown in **Figure 24** and are summarised below.

- The ESO2 applies to all of the land within and surrounding Harrow to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.
- The BMO applies land within Harrow and much of the land surrounding the town.



- The HO applies to two sites within Harrow which are the Log Gaol built in 1859 and the Presbyterian church which was constructed in the early 1860s and served as the first school building which opened in 1869.
- The LSIO applies along the edge of the Glenelg River in Harrow to identify flood prone land that will be affected by the 1 in 100 (1 per cent Annual Exceedance Probability) year flood.



**Figure 24: Harrow - Existing Overlays**

The LSIO has been placed in Harrow along the Glenelg River to ensure that any development in Harrow:

- Maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, responds to the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.
- Minimises the potential flood risk to life, health and safety associated with development.
- Reflects the declaration under Division 4 of Part 10 of the Water Act 1989.

- Protects water quality and waterways as natural resources by managing urban stormwater, protecting water supply catchment areas, and managing saline discharges to minimise the risks to the environmental quality of water and groundwater.
- Ensures that it maintains or improves river, marine, coastal and wetland health, waterway protection and floodplain health.

## 8.2 Population and Demographics

The 2021 Australian census reported Harrow and the surrounding area had a population of 184 people. The town has a current population of approximately 170 which is forecast to continue to decline over the period to 2036.

## 8.3 Housing

The township has a unique, heavily treed setting in which the main commercial centre, Blair Street, runs beside the river floodplain, although many of the houses of the town are on the hillside above Blair Street to the west.

The local population is projected to continue to decline but there may be occasional demand for a new house in the town with people attracted to the natural beauty of the town.

The town is not served by sewerage and the reticulated ground water is not safe to drink according to GWM Water. These factors may reduce the demand from new residents who could seek safer options.

The Township Zone (TZ) covers only the land either side of Blair Street and not the land in larger allotments on the slopes to the west and north. Given the lack of sewerage services, the larger lots may be the only ones capable of accommodating new dwellings and the necessary septic tanks. There appears to be several vacant lots in this area, although the land is subject to the BMO.

## 8.4 Economic Profile

Harrow is a town with a significant heritage, being one of the first towns to be gazetted in Victoria. This is reflected in many of the buildings on Blair Street. This heritage and the bush-setting is attractive to visitors and provides a substantial underpinning of the commercial activities of the town, including several accommodation providers. There may be opportunities to expand this visitor

offering to include destination accommodation, food, wine, art and indigenous heritage.

There is no industrial land in the township and little industrial activity. Given the sloping topography and the fire risk, the township is not suited to industrial development, which should be redirected to industrial precincts at Edenhope and elsewhere.

## 8.5 Movement and Transport

Harrow is located along Blair Street just off the Coleraine-Edenhope Road. The primary mode of transport for residents, workers and visitors to Harrow is via private vehicle. There is currently no public transport currently available for residents of the town.

## 8.6 Physical Infrastructure

Harrow is supplied by tank water as there is no reticulated drinking water currently available to the town. Ground and surface water is not safe for drinking, however, water can be used for household activities, such as watering gardens, flushing toilets, irrigation and laundry. It can also be used for showering or bathing if caution is exercised. Drinking water could be piped in from Edenhope or Coleraine in the future subject to funding.

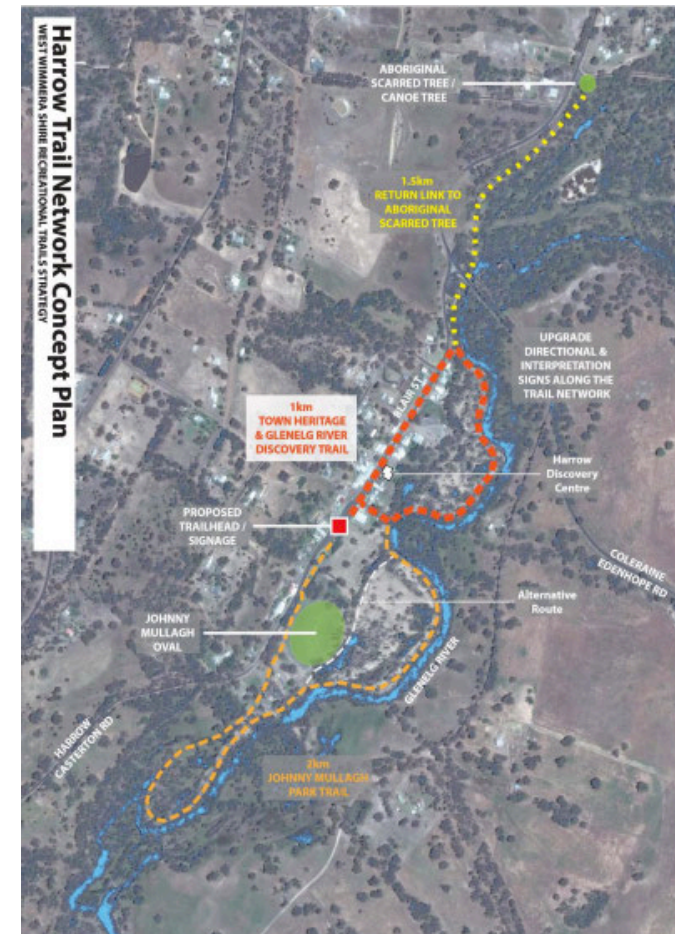
All houses are serviced by septic tanks as there is no wastewater treatment plant servicing the town with reticulated sewerage.

## 8.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure

The township has a small commercial and community centre. The town centre activities are dispersed along Blair Street and includes a combined post office/café and general store which provides a very limited range of fresh food and a stand alone general store. The Hermitage Hotel includes accommodation and there is a gift shop and a collectibles shop. There is the Harrow discovery centre, a garage and service station and an agricultural supplies outlet.

Harrow has a police station, fire station and a bush nursing centre. There is an RSL and Mechanics Institute (the library). The nearest schools are at Edenhope and Balmoral.

At the southern end of Blair Street, away from the town centre, is a Caravan Park with recently developed cabins owned by DEECA run by a Committee of Management.



Source: West Wimmera Recreational Trail Strategy – Volume 1: The Strategy Nov 2018

The Glenelg River is used for recreation activities such as fishing and canoeing. No powerboats are allowed on the river. There is a popular swimming hole near the caravan park along with riverside parks and walking trails. The West Wimmera Recreational Trails (2018) lists the Glenelg River Walking Trail at Harrow as a high priority project to be upgraded. This walking trail is designed to include signage that speaks to the local Indigenous history of the area as well as the early European contact in the area. There is also scope to introduce a horse riding trail

between Harrow and Dergholm and to develop the Glenelg River Canoe Trail from Harrow to Dergholm.

### 8.8 Built Form and Heritage

The town enjoys a very high level of amenity due to its well preserved heritage architecture, its location on the Glenelg River and the associated corridor of open space. Views into Harrow are limited due to the rolling landform and dense native vegetation screening. This creates a great sense of arrival entering from the highway as the road drops down to the centre of town. Once in the township, the steep, vegetated hills and limited sightlines create a sense of enclosure.

Harrow's sense of history resulted in the formation of a historical society in 1969, with an eye to the preservation of the log gaol. The gaol has since been listed on the Australian and Victorian heritage registers. Mullagh and Pine Hills homesteads are also on the Australian register, along with old bluestone offices which served the Kowree Shire during 1872-87.

The Presbyterian church was by far the grander, replacing an earlier structure in 1884 and the Anglicans built a church in 1933. Unusual in a town of such size, a bush nursing centre was opened in 1913, and it was rebuilt in 1995 at a time when such facilities were at risk of closure.



**Historic Building – Harrow**

Harrow has three church buildings, the bush nursing centre, the mechanics' institute, the Hermitage Hotel, a general store, a museum, a recreation reserve, a golf club and tennis courts. The school closed in 2002. The Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre was developed by the Harrow community as a means of celebrating the story of the 1868 Aboriginal cricket team and the history of the Harrow township.<sup>2</sup>

There is ample on-street parking for residents, visitors and tourists in the central area of town. The majority of Harrow is zoned TZ, with the exception of the river corridor (PCRZ) and the Jonny Mullagh Reserve (PPRZ). A small area of land to the north of the town is zoned rural living (RLZ), and Council has identified this area as suitable for additional rural living development.

### 8.9 Landscape and Environment

The Glenelg River is a Victorian Heritage River. It is a regulated river system with water storage at Rocklands that was built in 1944 being kept 70% full due to structural issues with the dam. Water is periodically released downstream into the Glenelg River.

<sup>2</sup> History. <https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/harrow>



The Glenelg River provides habitat for rare and engendered fish and aquatic species. The estuary and has an ESO to protect habitat for the Red Tail Black Cockatoo.

Harrow is subject to flooding from the Glenelg River and land to the east of Blair Street is subject to an inundation overlay and the recent 2022 flood was approximately 1 metre deep. Harrow is in a valley that is at risk of significant flooding.

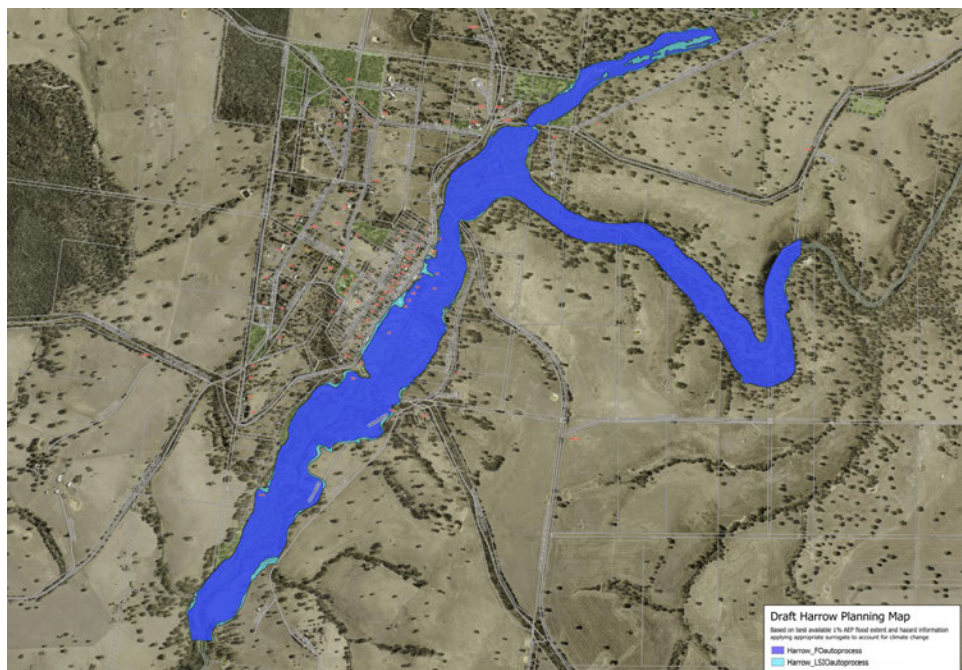
Current flood mapping was prepared in 2017 and may not be consistent with current climate change risk mitigation standards. These maps need to be updated to be compliant with current standards. A flood investigation report is currently underway for Harrow and new flood maps are being prepared for implementation into the WWPS. **Figure 25** shows the extent of flooding in a 1% AEP Flooding event.

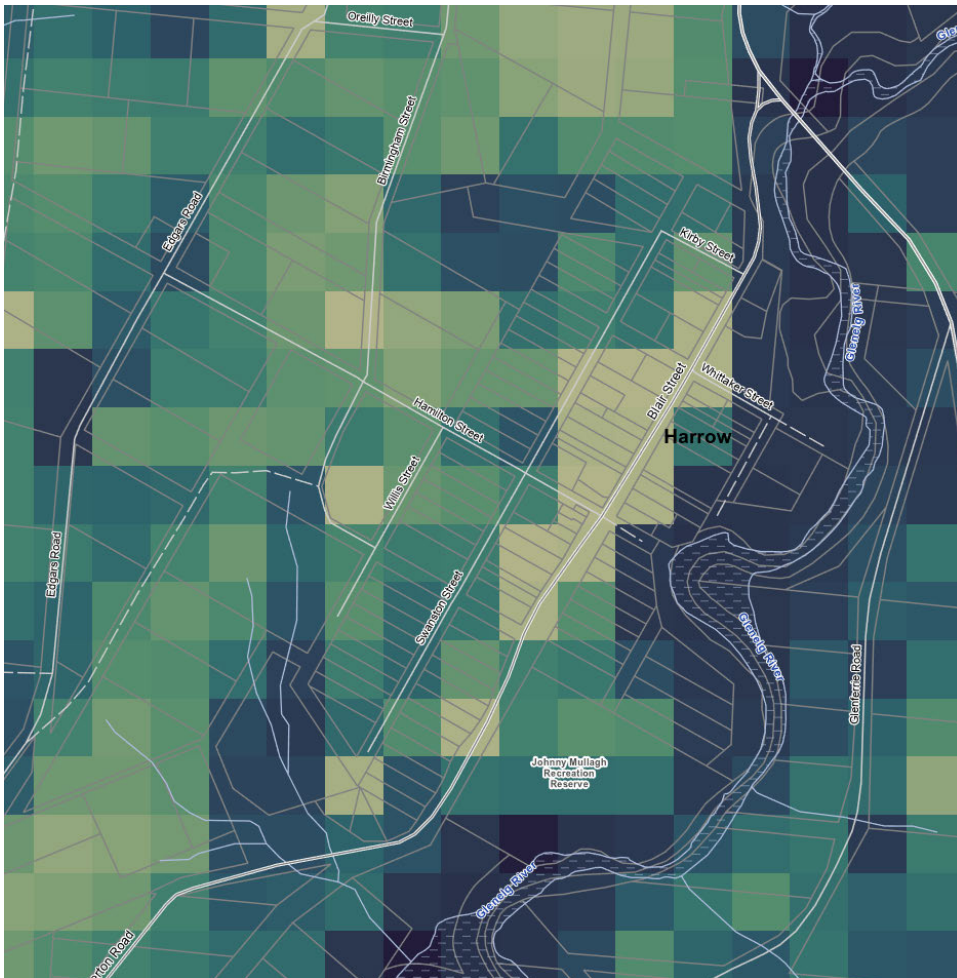
Harrow and its surrounding area is affected by a BMO. There is a high risk of bushfire for the town as experienced in the summer of 2024-25. There are access constraints for residents and visitors in the case of bushfire as there is only one road into the town and one road out.

### Figure 25: Draft Harrow Flood Map 1% AEP Flood Extent

Harrow is part of the Dundas Tablelands Bioregion and is located in the south-west of the State. The land is made up of a hard ironstone layer which resists erosion. Streams have cut deep narrow valleys across the tablelands. Black earths (Dermosols) dominate the valleys and the dissected Merino Tablelands, yellow texture contrast soils (Chromosols and Sodosols) and cracking clays (Vertosols) dominate the rest of the table tops. The bioregion includes an area south of the Grampians which does not have such strongly expressed tableland features but supports a similar range of ecosystems.

The vegetation is a complex mosaic of Plains Grassy Woodland, Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland, Grassy Woodland and Creekline Grassy Woodland ecosystems. There are many areas of high value habitat close to Harrow that need to be preserved and protected. The NaturePrint map below identifies areas of biodiversity with the area of the highest value in the darkest green along the Glenelg River.





## 8.10 Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities are identified for the town:

### Issues

- There is significant risk of flooding from the Glenelg River, with the eastern side of Blair Street subject to flooding.
- There is significant bushfire risk with one road in and one road out.
- There is a steep escarpment creating a barrier to movement and potentially development.

- The town is serviced by septic tanks.
- Drinking water needs to be upgraded for the town.
- There is no public transport available for the town and residents are reliant on private transport to move between towns.
- A bushfire assessment will need to be undertaken before any new development or structure planning work can commence.
- Currently projected for a reduction in population.

### Opportunities

- The historic built form and natural beauty is an opportunity to attract residents and grow tourism in the town.
- There are under-utilised buildings and vacant lots that could accommodate new commercial and residential development along with visitor accommodation.
- Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.
- There may be potential for some additional services.
- Additional tourism retailing is an opportunity including arts-related facilities.
- Provide a community bus service to surrounding towns.
- Capitalise on the history of Harrow while ensuring that the heritage of the township is preserved and enhanced.
- Land high on the escarpment is out of the flood area and could be suited to future development, noting this land is subject to the BMO.
- Plant more street trees to provide more shade in summer.
- Consider opportunities for growth of the town subject to environmental constraints.

The settlement attributes and key recommendations for Harrow are detailed in **Table 6**.

**Table 6: Harrow Settlement and Key Recommendations**

Settlement	Harrow
<b>Catchment Population</b>	Up to 500
<b>Role in the Hierarchy</b>	Small Settlement
<b>Existing Infrastructure</b>	No reticulated drinking water, no reticulated sewage system
<b>Other Services Available</b>	Nursing post, accommodation, café, emergency services, hotel, library, heritage centre
<b>Growth Capacity</b>	Low due to fire and flood constraints
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	Negligible change
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and implement the Harrow flood study to determine the extent of flood risk and to direct any new housing away from flood prone areas.</li> <li>• Prepare a bushfire study and direct any new development with high bushfire risk.</li> <li>• Work with GWM Water to explore options to provide drinking water to the town.</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of providing a reticulated sewerage in consultation with GWM Water.</li> <li>• Advocate for a community bus services between Harrow and the surrounding towns.</li> <li>• Support the activation of under-utilised buildings and vacant lots to accommodate new commercial, residential and visitor accommodation development, subject to a bushfire assessment, noting that the eastern side of Blair Street is subject to flooding and would not be suitable without expensive building modifications.</li> <li>• Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.</li> <li>• Support additional tourism retailing, including arts-related facilities.</li> <li>• Support the consolidation of Harrow's role as a visitor destination.</li> <li>• Work with the community to capitalise on the history of Harrow while ensuring that the heritage of the township is preserved and enhanced.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the opportunity for future development on land located high on the escarpment out of the flood area.</li> <li>• Plant more street trees to provide shade in summer.</li> <li>• Undertake a bushfire risk assessment for the town.</li> <li>• Prepare and implement a structure plan for the town.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Boundary Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider undertaking a bushfire risk assessment to explore opportunities to appropriately zone land on the west side of Harrow to a zone that more accurately reflects its lot size and land uses. This could include the RLZ or LDRZ.</li> </ul>





## 9. KANIVA

Kaniva is the largest town in the north of the Shire, located on the Western Highway and the Melbourne-Adelaide Railway. It is surrounded by agricultural land the Little Desert National Park to the south and the Big Desert Wilderness Park to the north. The town provides services to the surrounding farm districts and to travellers on the Western Highway.

Kaniva is a small but robust community and economy. Its location on the Western Highway provides significant strategic advantages relating to economic growth and land use. It has a wide range of community infrastructure to support its population, including sport and recreation facilities. Its economy is anchored by agriculture and farming. Kaniva is the gateway to the he Silo Art Trail and home to Sheep Art.

Kaniva functions both as a service centre for the surrounding agricultural area and as a popular rest stop for travellers on the way to regional destinations and Adelaide. The commercial area is centrally located along the Western Highway, putting it in a prime position to capture freight and logistics-oriented activity. The local community sees the location of the town on the Western Highway and the railway as a major asset and its location has significantly contributed to the formation of the town's character. The town context map is shown in **Figure 26**.

The first town in the area was Lawloit which developed in the 1860s. The first selector arrived in 1875 and many others followed, particularly from 1879. They established wheat farms and 'mullenised' the land, which is to say it was cleared with a red-gum roller invented by a South Australian named Mullens. Three metres long and one metre in diameter, it was hauled over the land by a team of 10 bullocks. This process squashed the mallee trees, after which the land was burnt then ploughed. The township of Lillimur South developed in the late 1870s and was soon followed by Lillimur North. Another settlement, initially named 'Budjik', (meaning stone axe) as it was situated on Budjik Hill, began to develop when a flour mill and grain shed was built there in 1881. The opening of a post office on the site in April 1882 saw the town officially change its name to Kaniva.

### 9.1 Existing Policy and Planning Scheme Context

#### Regional Growth Plan

Kaniva is defined as a Town in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP. Kaniva will continue as a key service centre. Residential development within the town's boundaries will also be promoted with recent upgrades to water infrastructure providing potable water to the town. Kaniva is similar to a district town but generally services a more localised catchment. It has a greater reliance on other centres for services and employment.

The future directions for Kaniva as outlined in the RGP are to:

- Recognise Kaniva as a key local service centre.
- Encourage the provision of a range of services appropriate for the local community.
- Provide for infill residential development within the town boundaries and provide for some additional low density and rural living land adjacent to the town.

The RGP states *"Kaniva will continue to provide services for its local community of interest which includes small rural settlements such as Lillimur, Miram, Serviceton and Telopea Downs. Kaniva's location on the Western Highway corridor means it has good access to Nhill and Horsham for higher order services."*

*Kaniva has a compact and contiguous built form and is contained within the TZ with some zoned industrial land. Infill development will be encouraged to consolidate the existing urban form. Several small lots on the immediate western side of the town, currently located in the FZ, should be zoned for low density and rural living residential purposes. Industrial land is provided on the eastern side of Kaniva and is expected to meet demand for the immediate future."*

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan outlines the following land use policies, strategies and actions for Kaniva:

- Promote residential development within current town boundaries
- Investigate rezoning small lots to the west of Kaniva to allow for low density residential and rural living development
- Provide a single zone for the town's aerodrome.



- Monitor the need for additional industrial land.
- Support improvements to the town's drinking water quality.

#### **West Wimmera Planning Scheme Clause 11.01-1L-02**

Clause 11.01-1L-02 Settlement - Kaniva provides the existing settlement framework for the town. Strategies to the clause seek to encourage development of the Kaniva Industrial Estate that is mindful of residential growth in the town and to retain community and commercial facilities in the town. The Clause 11.01-1L-02 settlement framework for Kaniva is shown in **Figure 27**.



*Commerical Street Kaniva*



## Kaniva Town Context

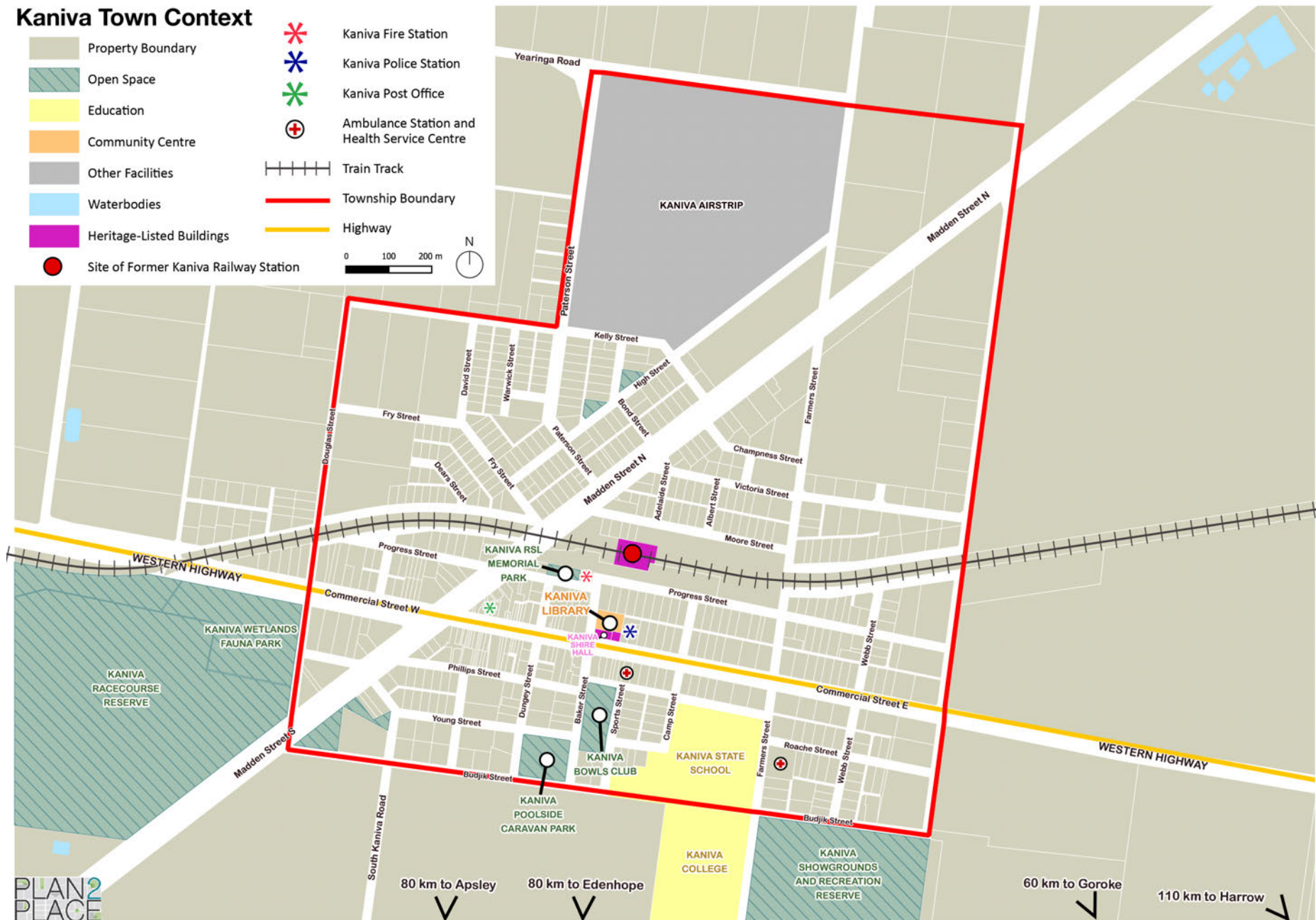
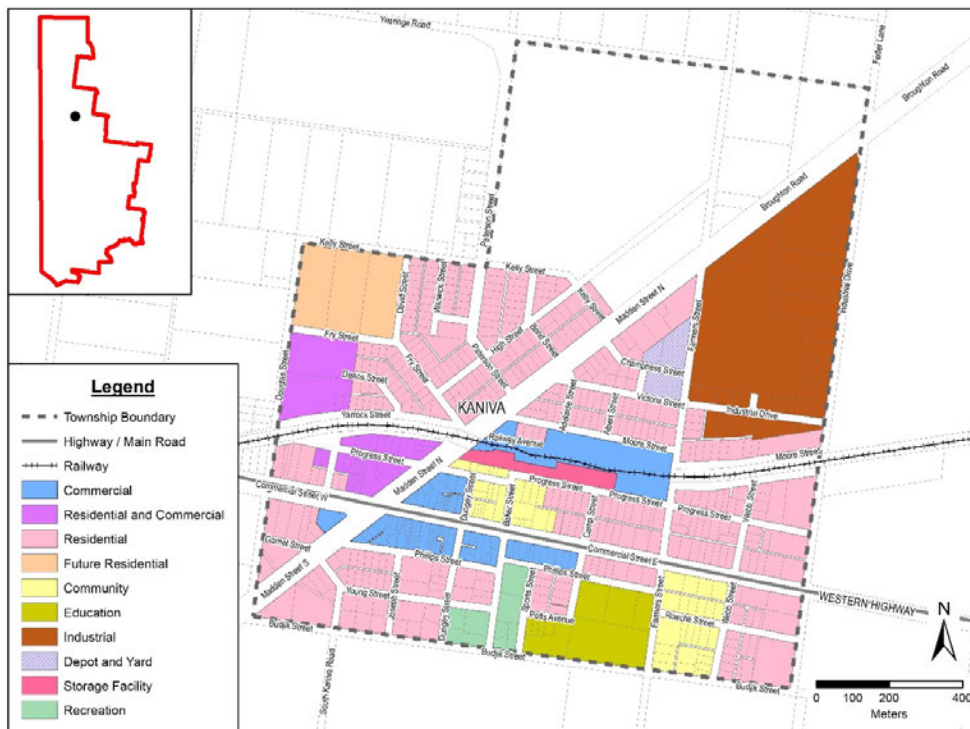


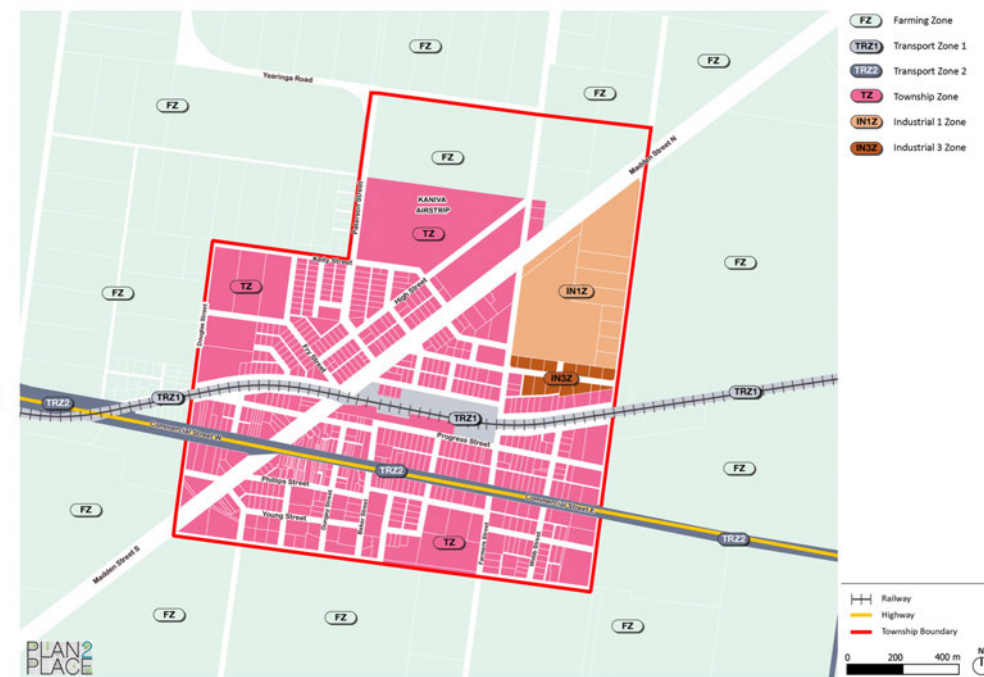
Figure 26: Kaniva Context Map



**Figure 27: Kaniva Settlement Plan at Clause 11.01-1L**

Relevant zones within the WWPS affecting Kaniva are shown in **Figure 28** and are summarised below:

- The TZ applies to land within Kaniva.
- The INZ1 applies to land within the existing township boundary.
- The INZ3 applies to land adjoining the INZ1 zone behind some residential housing that abuts the train line.
- The FZ applies to agricultural land surrounding the town boundaries.
- The TRZ applies to land for declared roads, railways and other important transportation infrastructure representing state and local designations. The TRZ1 is applied to the railway reserve land and the TRZ2 is applied to Commercial Street E.



**Figure 28: Kaniva - Existing Zones**

Relevant overlays within the WWPS affecting Kaniva are shown in **Figure 29** and are summarised below:

- The ESO2 applies to land at the southern end of Kaniva to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.
- The HO applies to several sites within Kaniva close to the railway line. The former Kaniva Station Building is heritage listed but is no longer standing however the platform remains intact.
- A DDO2 applies to land to the south of Madden Street North to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development.





**Figure 29: Kaniva - Existing Overlays**

## 9.2 Population and Demographics

The 2021 Australian census reported Kaniva had a population of 683 people. The population of the residential catchment area for the Kaniva town centre is currently around 1,200. Trends have it steadily reducing over the forecast period to 2036. It should be noted the population of Kaniva did grow between 2016 and 2021. However this is likely as a result of Covid-19 pandemic and the 2026 Census will enable a greater understanding of the long term impacts of the trends that occurred during the pandemic.

The number of travellers on the Western Highway, on the other hand, is likely to continue to grow in line with traffic forecasts and will provide a slowly expanding market for visitor services. A key concern for residents will be to ensure that the food and grocery offering can be maintained and updated as required. The local supermarket has recently been renovated and there are two food banks in operation to assist the community with the high cost of food.

## 9.3 Housing

The population of the town is forecast to decline despite taking account of dwelling downsizing due to demographic changes and an ageing community. The town will however need to accommodate some growth in the number of dwellings – up to 3 additional dwellings per year according to forecasts.

There are parcels of land within the TZ that are largely vacant and which could be suitable for residential development. This includes, for example, land in the north-west of the town in the area around Douglas Street; land on the south-eastern edge of the town; and the Council-owned land fronting Kelly Street which presently accommodates a little-used airstrip. Whether the privately-owned land is available for development is uncertain. Council may be able to help facilitate housing diversity and development by leveraging some Council owned land to encourage investment by affordable housing providers and/or to engage in direct housing and infrastructure provision.

The demand for new dwellings is likely to be for older age groups. Many of these people will prefer to be in smaller homes close to the services of the hospital and the town centre. There are some vacant lots among the existing development where there is potential to encourage redevelopment at higher densities and for previous farm owners to downsize to rural residential lots.

The town is connected to sewer and now potable water as a result of an extension to the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline. This new infrastructure may spark an upsurge in investment in housing and other activities in the town and is a factor that should be planned for now.

## 9.4 Economic Profile

Kaniva is roughly midway between Adelaide (3 hours and 20 minutes) and Melbourne (4 hours and 40 minutes) and is a convenient place to stop or rest on the journey. This has given rise to a local visitor services industry that comprises cafés, pubs and a service station in the town centre as well as two motels and a caravan park located in town as well as B&B accommodation and free pub camps. Kaniva provides places to rest, including the Madden Street car-park and the Wetlands and Fauna Park on the western edge of the town. The town is also the gateway to the Silo Art Trail, providing the western-most painted silo in Victoria as well as the home of Sheep Art.

While the number of travellers on the Western Highway will continue to grow, Kaniva faces competition for visitor expenditure from the nearby towns such as



Nhill, Bordertown and Dimboola which are slightly larger and with more services. In the case of Dimboola, there is direct access to the Wimmera River and the Little Desert National Park. In improving Kaniva as a travellers' rest stop, the provision of shade will be increasingly important. When upgrading the streetscape of the town centre, consideration should be given to the planting of shade trees, as well as extending verandas for the length of the pedestrian strip (particularly on the north side). Strengthening the provision of electric vehicle charging stations would also be beneficial. Council could also consider the provision of improved trailer and caravan parking spaces.

Kaniva has an industrial precinct located at the north east edge of the town. This comprises:

- Approximately 18.8 hectares of IN1Z land which is mostly vacant apart from three businesses on lots of 0.4 hectares or less.
- Approximately 3 hectares of IN3Z land on an adjacent site of which about 2 hectares is vacant.
- Approximately 2.7 hectares of adjacent land being used for industrial purposes in the TZ.

The zoning of land for industry in the precinct is somewhat problematic, with the TZ in particular, which allows housing to be interspersed with industrial activities. There may be some scope to reform the town's zoning to ensure that existing and future housing is kept separate from the industrial activity and to support industrial activities. The area of industrial land should be ample for likely future investment over the forecast period.

Agricultural supplies, storage and works depots are currently the principal activities in the precinct.

The residential and commercial areas of the town are currently covered by a TZ. If more functional zones were to be introduced, it would be a straightforward matter to identify an appropriate area for the Commercial 1 Zone to cover the town centre. There is only one vacant parcel of land in the main commercial centre.

## 9.5 Movement and Transport

Kaniva is on the Western Highway and it has an infrequent bus service to Horsham that runs once a week. The primary mode of transport for residents, workers and

visitors to Kaniva is via private vehicle. There is an EV charging station on Madden Street North.

Kaniva is on the Serviceton line however the train no longer stops at Kaniva. The rail corridor is under lease to the ARTC. VicTrack boundaries are marked in dashed dark blue in **Figure 30**. The land under ARTC lease is orange and the land which is bright green is vacant land not under lease. Land shown yellow in **Figure 31** is Crown land within the station precinct.



**Figure 30: Station Precinct with VicTrack Boundaries and Vacant Land**



**Figure 31: Yellow Crown Land in the Station Precinct**

## 9.6 Physical Infrastructure

Since the discovery of alleged illegal dumping of waste 15 km south of Kaniva, GWM Water has been working closely with the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPAV), local government and other relevant agencies to ensure the safety of Kaniva's water supply.

Potable water is now available to the town. Water is available for industrial fire flows however industrial customers need to pay a fee to meet the building code's requirements.

There is a gravity sewer system in Kaniva to treat wastewater. However, the capacity of the waste water treatment plant needs to be increased to support growth in the town. Some homes remain on septic tanks and are not connected to the sewage treatment system.

## 9.7 Community Facilities and Infrastructure

The town has a commercial services centre on the main Highway. The Kaniva hospital provides urgent care, acute care, residential aged care and community health services. Kaniva College P-12 Government school is one of three in the Shire. The Kaniva Kindergarten provides pre-school education services.

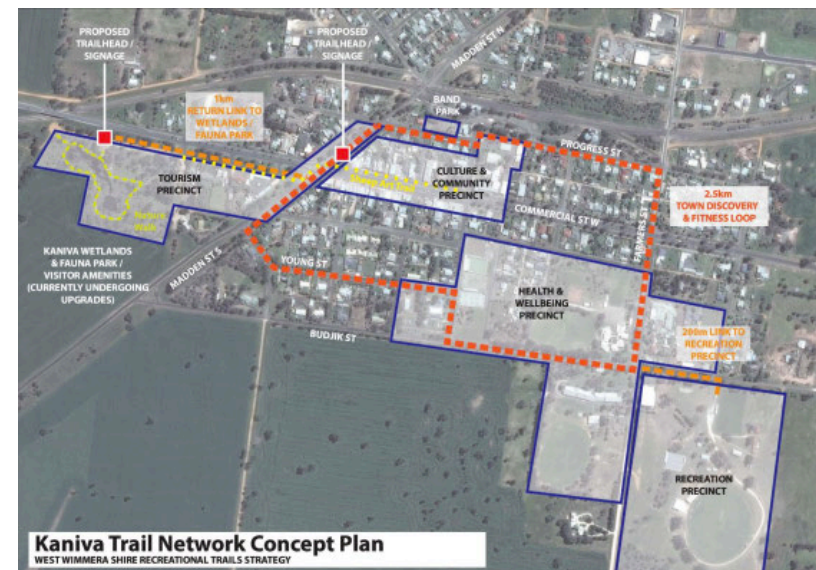
The main food and grocery outlet is a small IGA supermarket of approximately 650 sqm. There is a small selection of speciality retailers, including cafés, a butcher, pharmacy, hardware/agricultural supplies, hairdresser, thrift shop and puppet shop as well as a tattoo parlour, beauty salons, a post office and a homewares shop.

There are two hotels with accommodation in the town centre, catering to residents and visitors. The eastern end of the centre around Baker Street has a number of civic functions including the Kaniva Shire Hall, Council offices, library and police station. There are a limited number of professional services. The town has a combined service station and café which is a community enterprise, saved from closure by residents of the town. The strip has some vacant shops. There are also several former commercial buildings that appear to have been repurposed for housing. There is no bank, although there is a post office which has some banking facilities. There is extensive visitor parking on the service roads as well as in Madden Street North where there are public toilets.

Kaniva has a Recreation Reserve that houses active sports groups including cricket, hockey football and netball. This land is owned by DEECA and managed by a Committee of Management. There is also a tennis, bowls club and a rifle range. Funds are being sought for an upgrade to the Kaniva swimming pool including a splash park.



**Kaniva Bowling and Croquet Club**



Source: West Wimmera Recreational Trail Strategy – Volume 1: The Strategy Nov 2018



The Kaniva Wetlands and Fauna Park is a popular spot with locals and visitors. The Wetlands and Fauna Park was upgraded in 2018/19 as part of a community partnership project instigated by Kaniva & District Progress Association. There is the Sheep Art Trail connecting the Silo Art, Kaniva Wetlands and Fauna Park to the main street. Council has recently upgraded the Kaniva Town Walk, a town discovery and fitness loop, starting at the Kaniva Wetlands and Fauna Park and connecting back to the town centre. For further details see the Kaniva Trail Network Concept Plan above.

## 9.8 Built Form and Heritage

The Kaniva town centre extends along the Western Highway but is principally concentrated in the area from just east of the intersection with Baker Street to just west of the intersection with Madden Street.

The Western Highway is a major through-route and the commercial activities on the northern and southern side of the road are accessed via two service roads, each separated from the Highway by a median strip. This acts as a barrier to movement between the two sides of the main street.

The core centre has had extensive landscape treatment including planting of vines on verandas and paving as well as some public art in the form of decorated grazing sheep scattered throughout. There is a rest area including a small shady park on the former Methodist church site at the corner of the Highway and Baker Street.



*Painted Sheep – Kaniva*

## 9.9 Landscape and Environment

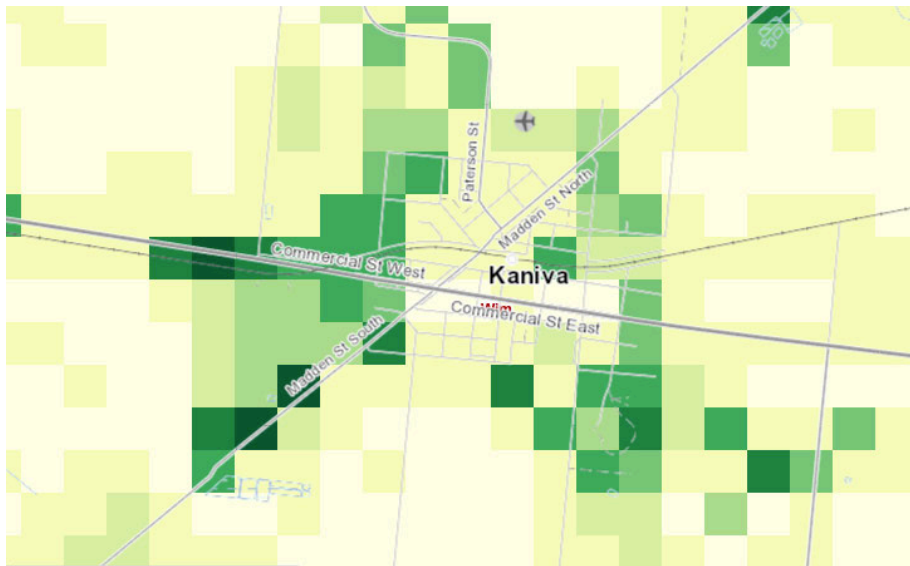
Kaniva is not at significant risk of bushfire, however Terramatrix has led a bushfire assessment and the delivery of a Bushfire Development Report (BDR) that meets the requirements of the WWPS Clause 13.02. This has taken into account relevant building and bushfire regulations for the town. Kaniva has limited flooding issues, mainly from stormwater flooding. Kaniva sits on land that was once a retreated ancient sea and there is a limestone aquifer which sits under the Kaniva district.

Kaniva is located in the Wimmera bioregion in the far west of the central Victoria, typified by flat to gently undulating plains in the east, with black and grey cracking clay soils (Vertosols). Plains Woodland, Plains Grassy Woodland, Plains Grassland, Red Gum Wetland and Grassy Woodland are the dominant ecosystems.

The western part is typified by ancient stranded beach ridges with interspersed with clay plains (where there are a mixture of swamp, lakes, lagoons and lunettes in the south) with cracking clay soils and red texture contrast soils (Vertosols and Sodosols). The vegetation on these less fertile plains is dominated by Heathy Woodland and Shallow Sands Woodland.



The NaturePrint map below identifies areas of biodiversity with areas of the highest value in the darkest green.



## 9.10 Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities are identified for the town:

### Issues

- While the trainline runs through the town, passenger services are no longer available to residents to board in Kaniva.
- There is insufficient public transport available for the town and residents are reliant on private transport.
- Manage any impacts from industry runoff into the wetlands that may cause pollution.
- There is a lack of key worker housing.
- Current trends are that population loss will continue.
- There is limited short term or long term rental accommodation available in Kaniva.
- There is a mismatch between the cost to build a house and the market value of a house making it unviable to build dwellings unless property prices were to increase or housing building costs were to decline.

- There is a limited local housing construction industry to provide new housing in the town.
- There is a need for more key worker and higher quality housing.
- Land banking is an issue.
- There are not enough staff or places for childcare.
- Kaniva is bisected by the Western Highway which is a major truck route day and night.

### Opportunities

- Leverage the potential for town development provided by potable water infrastructure.
- Kaniva has a slowly reducing residential catchment but there is growth in the demand for visitor services as traffic on the Western Highway continues to increase.
- Kaniva is part of the Silo Art Trail which attracts visitors to the town.
- Attract more visitors and visitors to the area by improving wayfinding signage to the Wetlands and Fauna Park.
- Opportunity to collaborate with the BGLC to develop and install culturally relevant signage that identifies local plants and animals in traditional language, fostering education, language revitalization, and connection to Country.
- Bird watching and ecotourism could be a major attraction for visitors in the area and should be explored further.
- Kaniva location provides opportunities to promote itself as Victoria's 'Bordertown' including new billboard signage.
- Overnight accommodation offerings could be expanded and upgraded to attract more tourists and visitors to the area.
- There are likely to be opportunities in the "silver economy" as well as visitor services.
- Explore the development of a free camp on the old racecourse, at the Wetlands and the Recreation Reserve.
- Greater low cost and affordable housing options in the town.
- Diversify the housing stock to enable people to age in place.

- Providing apprenticeships for local people to upskill in building and construction.
- Maintaining the liveability of the town including the attractiveness of the town centre, as well as ensuring that there is sufficient serviced and available land for commercial, industrial and residential development.
- Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.
- Provision of electric vehicle charging stations in easily accessible locations for visitors and travellers.
- Improvements to trailer and caravan parking spaces in the town.
- Exploring opportunities for additional key worker housing.
- Further development of the local construction industry would assist in providing new housing for Kaniva.

The settlement attributes and key recommendations for Kaniva are detailed in **Table 7**.

**Table 7: Kaniva Settlement and Key Recommendations**

Settlement	Kaniva
<b>Catchment Population</b>	Up to 1,200
<b>Role in the Hierarchy</b>	Town
<b>Existing Infrastructure</b>	Potable water is now available. Limited reticulated sewage system available.
<b>Other Services Available</b>	Accommodation, hotels, professional, civic and recreational services. Some retailing including hardware, and agricultural services
<b>Growth Capacity</b>	The town has capacity to grow.
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	Minimal growth expected
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and implement a Structure Plan for Kaniva.</li> <li>• Advocate for increased public transport to and from Kaniva.</li> <li>• Facilitate key worker housing and increase quality of housing.</li> <li>• Explore options to provide more places for childcare for residents in the town and the staff to facilitate places.</li> <li>• Improve wayfinding signage to attract more visitors to the Kaniva Wetlands and Fauna Park. .</li> <li>• Work with the BGLC to provide signage of local plants and animals in language.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to grow bird watching and eco-tourism.</li> <li>• Promote Kaniva as Victoria's 'Bordertown' encouraging people to stop and stay on way to Adelaide.</li> <li>• Expand and upgrade overnight accommodation offerings to attract more tourists and visitors to the area.</li> <li>• Explore options to work with a housing provider to provide low cost and affordable housing in the town.</li> <li>• Explore options to diversify the housing stock to enable people to age in place.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for apprenticeships for local people to upskill in building and construction.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is sufficient serviced and available land for commercial, industrial and residential development.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate more electric vehicle charging stations.</li> <li>• Consider the provision of improved trailer and caravan parking spaces.</li> <li>• Leverage opportunities associated with being part of the Silo Art Trail.</li> <li>• Explore adaptive reuse of civic buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the Kaniva Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve in the town boundary.</li> <li>• Include the Kaniva College in the town boundary.</li> <li>• Include the Kaniva Wetlands Fauna Park and Kaniva Racecourse Reserve into the town boundary to recognise their important recreation and tourism roles.</li> <li>• Consider including land on the west side of Paterson Street between Kelly Street and Yeararinga Road in the town boundary to reflect the small lot sizes and current residential land uses. Consider rezoning to an urban zone to reflect the residential land uses.</li> </ul>



## 10. FUTURE SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

### 10.1 Determining a Settlement Strategy

The Small Towns Plan (STP) provides improved strategic directions for the West Wimmera Shire for the management and direction of its five towns. A revised settlement hierarchy is proposed that promotes settlement growth or containment, consistent with the availability of infrastructure, environmental constraints, existing supply and demand, and state and local government policy and strategy. The STP has been developed in response to increasing pressure to maintain and enhance the sustainability of the small towns and settlements within the Shire.

Growth in West Wimmera is influenced by many factors, including population loss, bushfire and flood risk, community infrastructure, transportation infrastructure and the availability of utility services. Reticulated water is available in Edenhope and Kaniva. Reticulated sewerage is not provided to all of towns in the Shire and the provision of these services is the responsibility of water authorities and private sector utility providers. These factors have been considered in informing the recommendations for future growth in the Shire.

Key findings and recommendations of the STP include:

- A clear settlement hierarchy, classifying each of the five towns according to their current and future role.
- Updated strategies and policies for each of the five towns, reflecting the settlement hierarchy.
- An updated Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 that includes a settlement framework.
- A suite of planning scheme amendment documents to support the implementation of the STP, including changes to the MPS and PPF.
- Finalise and implement flood studies for Edenhope and Aspley.
- Prepare a structure plan for Kaniva to further develop:
  - A vision for the town.
  - Identify key actions and priorities for capital works
  - Identify implementation of any changes to the MPS and PPF of the WWPS.
  - Prepare design guidelines for new development.

- Prepare a structure plan for Edenhope subject to funding.
- Prepare structure plans for Goroke, Harrow and Aspley subject to funding.
- Map flood risks as appropriate, as part of the preparation of structure plans for Edenhope and Harrow.
- Review existing heritage and marketing of Harrow and resident/visitor needs in terms of signage, trails networks, heritage interpretation and promote the experience of Harrow to the visitor market.
- Map fire risk as part of the preparation of structure plans for Harrow, Goroke and Aspley.

The existing settlement strategy for the small towns is identified in the WWPS. This reflects the designations applied in the Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP and outlined in **Table 8**.

While the hierarchy has been analysed and reviewed, no change is recommended to this settlement hierarchy as a result of the STP as shown below.

**Table 8: Current and Proposed Settlement Designations**

Town	Existing planning scheme designation	Regional Growth Plan designation	Proposed planning scheme designation
<b>Apsley</b>	Small settlement	Small settlement	Small settlement
<b>Edenhope</b>	District Town	District Town	District Town
<b>Goroke</b>	Small settlement	Small settlement	Small settlement
<b>Harrow</b>	Small settlement	Small settlement	Small settlement
<b>Kaniva</b>	Town	Town	Town

## 10.2 Strategic Framework

The WWPS could be enhanced to provide clearer direction for land use and development in the five small towns. This includes direction provided through the MPS, through local planning policy and the application of zones and overlays.

### *MPS Recommendations*

The following recommendations are made to the MPS in the WWPS:

- Update Clause 02.03-1 Settlement with the settlement hierarchy for the five towns and related strategic directions.
- Strengthen the strategic directions around bushfire and flooding at Clause 02.03-3 in relation to the five towns.
- Update Clause 02.04 to reflect the settlement hierarchy for the five towns, show agricultural land and include identified environmental risks.
- Update Clause 02.03-5 Built environment and heritage with strategic directions to incorporate recommendations such as the need for additional tree planting to mitigate climate change impacts and opportunities to incorporate aboriginal cultural heritage into the built environment.
- Update 02.03-6 Housing to reflect the challenges for the towns in supplying housing and introduce a strategic direction in relation to key worker housing.
- Update Clause 02.03-7 Economic development to provide strategic directions on tourism opportunities in the towns.
- Update Clause 02.03-9 Infrastructure to highlight the challenges of water and sewerage infrastructure in the towns and the implications on development of the towns.

### *Strategic Framework Plan*

The current Strategic Framework Plan for West Wimmera currently reflects the hierarchy included in the STP. However, several improvements to the cartography and content of the map could be made to provide clearer directions on land use and development for the municipality. **Figure 32** outlines a proposed map for inclusion at Clause 02.04 of the WWPS.

### *PPF Recommendations*

The following recommendations are made to the PPF in the WWPS:

- Update Clause 11.01-1L-01 Settlement – Edenhope to reflect the recommendations of the Small Towns Plan and replace the map with an updated Framework Plan.
- Update Clause 11.01-1L-02 Settlement – Kaniva to reflect the recommendations of the Small Towns Plan and replace the map with an updated Framework Plan.
- Update Clause 11.01-1L-03 Settlement – Apsley to reflect the recommendations of the Small Towns Plan and replace the map with an updated Framework Plan.
- Update Clause 11.01-1L-04 Settlement – Goroke to reflect the recommendations of the Small Towns Plan and replace the map with an updated Framework Plan.
- Update Clause 11.01-1L-05 Settlement – Harrow to reflect the recommendations of the Small Towns Plan and replace the map with an updated Framework Plan.

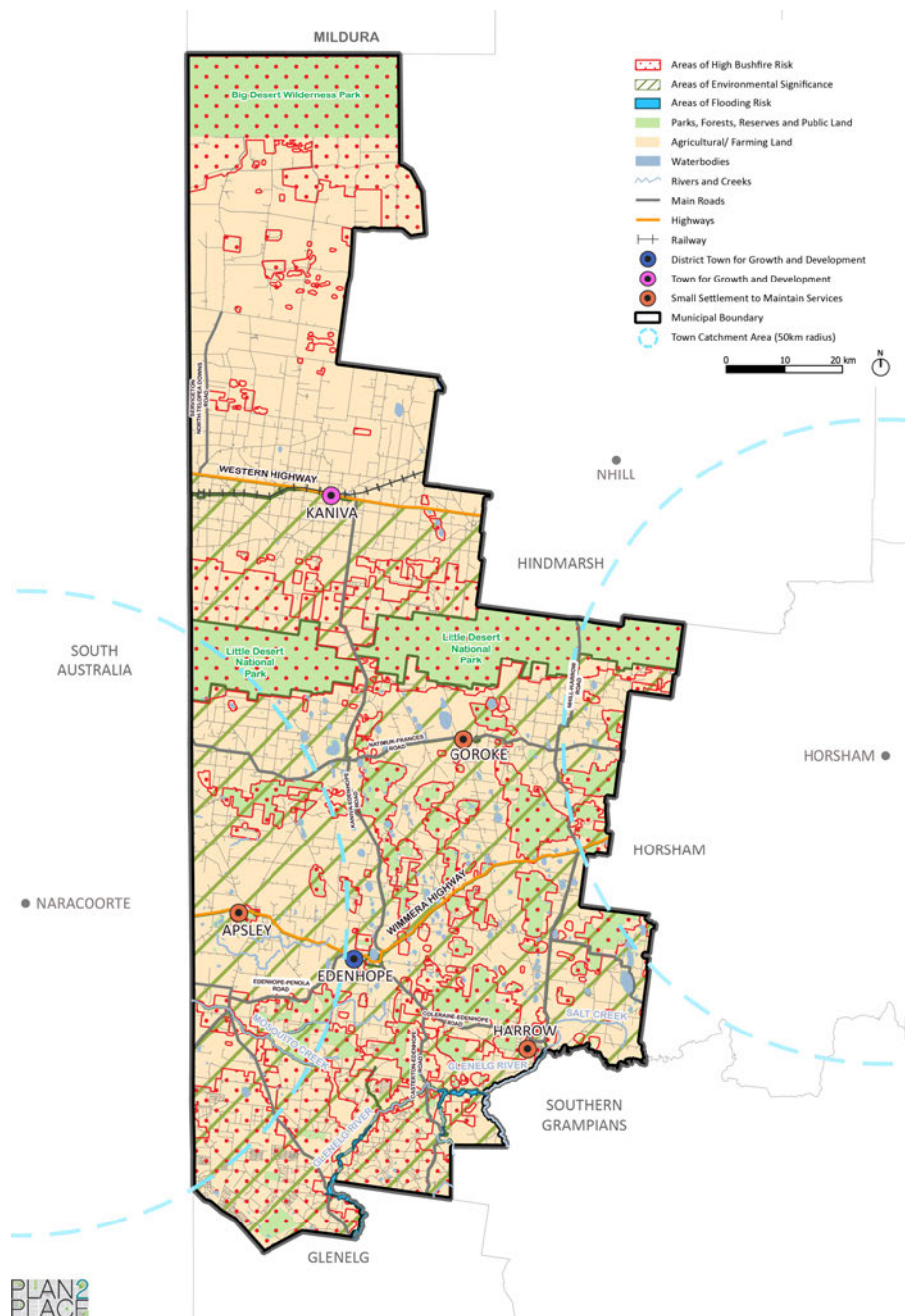


Figure 32: Proposed Strategic Framework Plan Update



## Appendix A – Content overview from the WWPS

### Clause 11 Settlement

**Clause 11.01-1S – Settlement** promotes the sustainable growth and development of Victoria to deliver choice and opportunity through a network of settlements. Regions are planned to reinforce settlement boundaries and provide for population growth and development of facilities and services. Growth is directed into existing settlements supported by a network of major and neighbourhood activity centres and townships of varying size, role and function. Urban consolidation is encouraged with density that supports sustainable transport and retail, office-based employment and community facilities and services.

Settlement should seek to consolidate urban uses to ensure a wide range of sustainable transport, retail, commercial and community facilities and services.

**Clause 11.01-1R – Settlement** seeks to support the role of Horsham as the key population and employment centre for the region. Edenhope is identified as a district town and key service hub where growth and development is encouraged while Kaniva is identified as providing local and some sub-regional services. Easy access to housing, education, employment and community facilities is to be provided particularly in Horsham and district towns along with an ongoing supply of infill and greenfield residential land. The regional settlement network from the RGP is shown in **Figure 33**.

**Clause 11.01-01L-05L – Settlement** sets out local settlement policies for each town.

### Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape Values

**Clause 12.01-1S – Protection of biodiversity** focuses on protecting and enhancing Victoria's biodiversity by identifying and strategically planning for the protection and conservation of important areas of biodiversity through recognition of various international conventions.

**Clause 12.01-1L – Protection of biodiversity – West Wimmera** – seeks to protect the Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo and Jumping Jack Wattle habitat within the Shire through clear delineation of boundaries and protection from incursion by adjacent land uses. Planting of native species and management of weeds is encouraged.

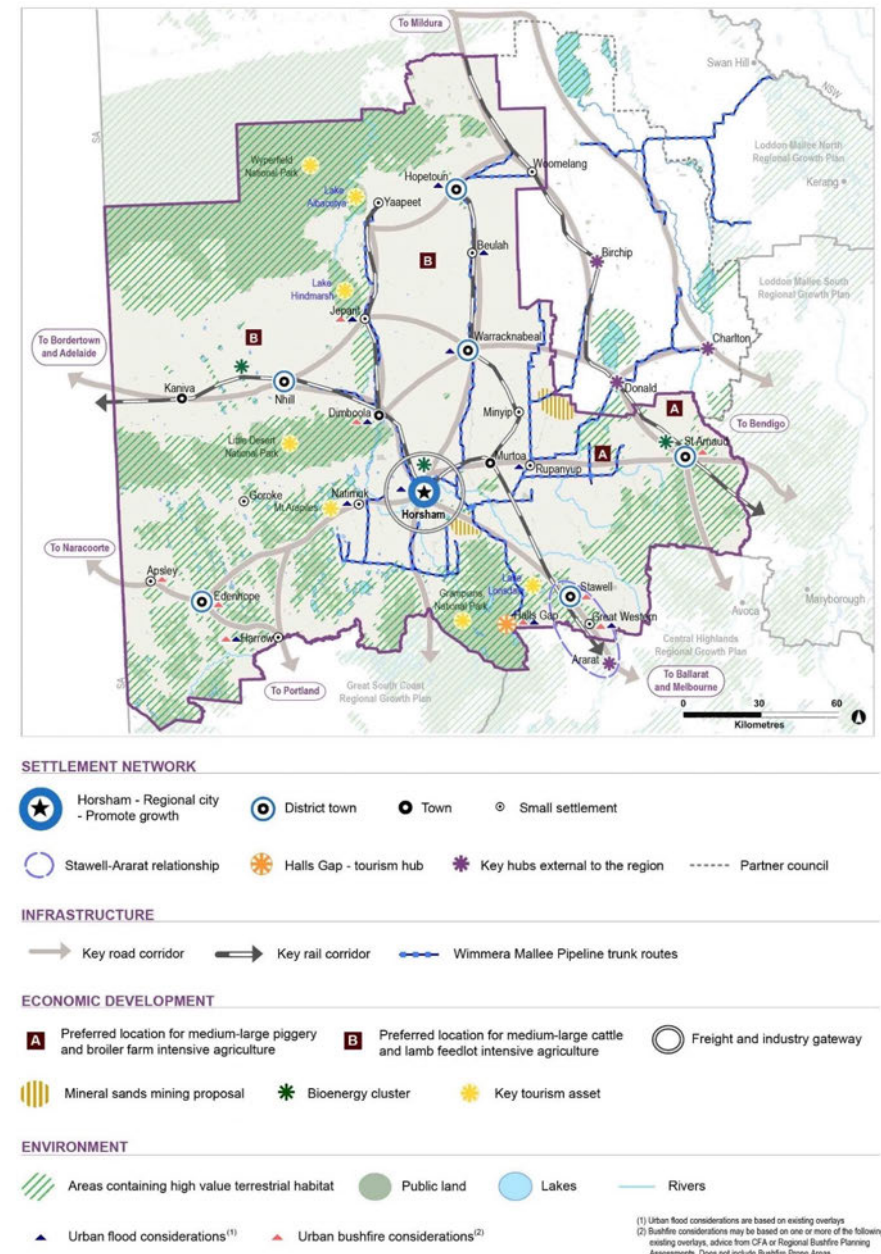


Figure 33: Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan from the WWPS

**Clause 12.01-2S – Native vegetation management** aims to ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation by avoiding the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation, minimising impacts where vegetation removal cannot be avoided and providing offsets to compensate for biodiversity impacts where vegetation removal is required.

**Clause 12.03-1S – River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs** seeks to protect these areas for their significant economic, environmental and cultural assets by conserving surrounding systems and landscapes and environmental values. Design and development should be sensitively designed to protect the waterway system while recreation and amenity values and a sense of place and landscape are also to be protected.

#### *Clause 13 Environmental Risks and Amenity*

**Clause 13.02-1S – Bushfire planning** prioritises the protection of human life over all other policy considerations, directing growth to low risk locations. It identifies and assesses bushfire hazard, applying the Bushfire Management Overlay and considering bushfire hazard on the basis of the site, neighbourhood and local conditions. Strategies promote future land use and development that will not result in increased bushfire risk to existing and future communities.

**Clause 13.03-1S – Floodplain management** focuses on protecting life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard along with the natural flood carrying capacity of these areas enabling flood storage to occur. Intensifying development in areas impacted by the 1 in 100 year flood event is to be avoided including the consideration of cumulative impacts.

#### *Clause 14 Natural Resource Management*

**Clause 14.01-1S – Protection of agricultural land** aims to protect the state's agricultural base by preserving productive farmland. Strategies seek to identify areas of productive agricultural land, including land for primary production and intensive agriculture and to protect it from incompatible uses or loss due to changes in land use without consideration of the economic importance of the land for agricultural production. New housing in rural areas should be avoided by directing housing growth into existing settlements and discouraging development in isolated small lots in rural zones. When considering proposals to use, subdivide or develop agricultural land, land capability and compatibility between the

proposed development and the existing use of the surrounding land should be assessed.

**Clause 14.01-1L – Protection of agricultural land – West Wimmera** seeks to consolidate land holdings in the Farming Zone to increase economies of scale and ensure viability of farms and ensure a clear link between the need for a dwelling and the agricultural use of the land.

**Clause 14.01-2S – Sustainable agricultural land use** encourages sustainable agricultural land use and ensuring that agricultural and productive rural land use activities are managed to maintain the long-term sustainable use and management of existing natural resources.

**Clause 14.01-2R – Agricultural productivity – West Wimmera Southern Mallee** seeks to support local industries, activities and infrastructure that complements and enhances the region's agricultural sector and facilitate opportunities presented by the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

**Clause 14.02-1S – Catchment planning and management** aims to protect and restore catchments, waterways, and marine environments. The clause seeks to ensure clean drinking water by safeguarding catchments, considering downstream impacts on water quality, maintaining natural drainage corridors, minimising stormwater runoff, filtering sediment and wastes, enhancing waterway environments during development, and reducing nutrient contributions and sediment discharges. Coordination with catchment management authorities and designing infrastructure to minimise harm to surface waters and groundwater are also emphasised.

#### *Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage*

**Clause 15.01-1S – Urban Design** aims to create environments that are safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity.

**Clause 15.01-2S – Building Design** aims to achieve building design and siting outcomes that contribute positively to the local context, enhance the public realm and support environmentally sustainable development.

**Clause 15.01-3L – Subdivision design – West Wimmera** encourages residential subdivision to include permeable fencing of landscaping in areas adjacent to roads and reserves.

**Clause 15.01-4S – Healthy neighbourhoods** seeks to achieve neighbourhoods that foster healthy and active living and community wellbeing.

**Clause 15.01-5S – Neighbourhood character** seeks to recognise, support and protect neighbourhood character, cultural identity and sense of place.

**Clause 15.01-6S – Design for rural areas** seeks to ensure development respects valued areas of rural character.

**Clause 15.03-1S – Heritage conservation** aims to ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance by identifying and protecting through the planning scheme. Providing protection, conservation and enhancement of significant places and encouraging appropriate development is also identified.

**Clause 15.03-2S – Aboriginal cultural heritage conservation** aims to ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance by identifying and protecting through the planning scheme. Providing protection and conservation of both pre-contact and post-contact places and ensuring that permit approvals align with any relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan are also identified.

#### *Clause 16 Housing*

**Clause 16.01-1S – Housing supply** aims to ensure an appropriate quantity, quality and mix of housing types and lot sizes are provided, with an increased portion of housing provided in established urban areas that are well served by jobs, services and public transport. Development should provide well designed housing that provides a high level of amenity and provides an adaptable internal design.

**Clause 16.01-2S – Housing affordability** aims to improve housing affordability by ensuring a continued land supply to meet demand. The policy also aims to facilitate a choice of housing type, tenure and cost in suburbs, activity centres, infill and surplus government land and encourage a significant portion of new development to be affordable for low to moderate income households.

**Clause 16.01-3S – Rural residential development** aims to manage rural residential development to avoid hindering future urban growth opportunities and discourage reliance on irrigation water supply. The clause advocates for diverse and flexible lot sizes to mitigate low density residential “sprawl”. Existing character, density patterns, site constraints, infrastructure provision and land

capability should be considered when determining appropriate lot sizes and development.

#### *Clause 17 Economic Development*

**Clause 17.01-1S – Diversified economy** aims to diversity the economy by protecting existing and planned new employment areas, facilitating regional relationships to harness emerging economic opportunities. Growth is to be facilitated building on the emerging and existing strengths of the region. Improving access to jobs and supporting rural economies to grow and diversify is also supported.

**Clause 17.01-1R – Diversified economy – West Wimmera** aims to capitalise on the municipality’s opportunities including agriculture, energy, mining and tourism. Facilitating the use of secure water supplies to develop the economy is also encouraged.

**Clause 17.03-1R – Industrial land supply – Wimmera Southern Mallee** aims to provide ongoing supply of industrial land particularly in towns including Edenhope and facilitating new opportunities due to the investment of the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline.

**Clause 17.04-1R – Tourism – Wimmera Southern Mallee** aims to support and provide direction on the location of tourism development. Facilitating nature based tourism around key attractions including the Little Desert National Park and major lakes is encouraged along with economic opportunities presented by the region’s wetlands and lakes to encourage more tourism.

#### *Clause 18 Transport*

**Clause 18.01-1S – Land use and transport integration** seeks to protect existing and planned transport infrastructure from encroachment and development that could prejudice such development and to plan movement networks and land uses to minimise disruption to residential communities. Strategies also seek to plan for the timely delivery of transport infrastructure to support changing land uses and transport demands, including public transport, walking and cycling within existing urban areas.

#### *Clause 19 Infrastructure*

**Clause 19.02- 4S – Social and cultural infrastructure** aims to ensure a fair distribution of, and access to, social and cultural infrastructure. The clause seeks to identify and address gaps in facilities, encouraging their location in activity



centres, and ensuring they are accessible. It emphasises early delivery of social infrastructure in growth areas, adaptable design of community buildings to accommodate changing populations, and innovative service delivery in areas with limited growth.

**Clause 19.02-4R – Social and cultural infrastructure – Wimmera Southern Mallee** seeks to maintain and enhance social and community facilities in key service centres particularly district towns ensuring they are sustainable and continue to attract new residents.

**Clause 19.02-4L – Recreational facilities** seeks to ensure recreational facilities provide for year-round activities and seeks to encourage water based activities and facilities in suitable locations.

**Clause 19.02-6S – Open space** aims to develop a diverse and integrated public open space network that meets community needs. It seeks to include planning regional and local open spaces for recreation and conservation, ensuring connectivity through walking and cycling trails, maintaining public access to waterways and coasts, and improving the quality and distribution of open spaces.

**Clause 19.03-1S – Development and infrastructure contributions plans** aims to facilitate the timely provision of planned infrastructure to communities through the preparation and implementation of development contributions plans and infrastructure contributions plans. Strategies also promote the integrated provision of water supply, water resources, sewerage, drainage and stormwater as well as utilities such as electricity, gas (not new connections) and telecommunications.

**Clause 74.02 – Further strategic work** is a concise list of strategic planning projects that Council intends to complete before the next planning scheme review. For West Wimmera there are no projects identified in the schedule to the clause.

### 10.3 Zones

There are a range of zones applied to the towns in the WWPS as summarised below. The relevant zones affecting the towns are shown in the town profiles.

#### *Clause 32.05 Township Zone (TZ)*

The Township Zone (TZ) is applied to small towns with no specific structure of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses. Development should be connected to reticulated sewerage unless an alternative potable water supply is provided to the satisfaction of Council.

#### *Clause 33.01 Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z)*

The Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z) is applied to land where the industrial land uses and associated commercial uses are promoted. Other than a caretaker's house, all other forms of accommodation are prohibited.

#### *Clause 33.03 Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z)*

The Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z) serves as a transitional buffer between industrial and residential areas, addressing issues like industrial traffic, noise and emissions. It is applied in industrial zones needing special attention to minimise conflicts and promote less hazardous uses. The zone includes amenity standards based on specified separation distances. A schedule restricts maximum office floor space, shops and supermarkets outside the Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and accommodation and hospitals are prohibited uses.

#### *Clause 35.03 Rural Living Zone (RLZ)*

The Rural Living Zone (RLZ) seeks to provide for residential use in a rural environment and supporting agricultural land uses that do not affect surrounding amenity. It aims to protect and enhance natural resources, biodiversity, and landscape and heritage values, while promoting sustainable land management and infrastructure provision.

#### *Clause 35.07 Farming Zone (FZ)*

The Farming Zone (FZ) is applied to encourage the retention of productive agricultural land and employment and population to support rural communities. The zone provides a minimum lot size of 40 hectares unless an alternative is specified in a schedule to the zone. The creation of smaller lots is allowed under particular circumstances.

#### *Clause 36.01 Public Use Zone (PUZ)*

The Public Use Zone (PUZ) is applied to public land recognising land use for public utility, infrastructure and community services. It requires the public land manager's approval/consent for land management and development. The PUZ2 relates to education land uses, the PUZ3 relates to health and community land uses while the PUZ5 relates to cemetery/crematorium land uses.

#### *Clause 36.02 Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)*

The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) is applied to public parkland including reserves and parks recognising areas for public recreation and open space and protecting and conserving areas of significance where appropriate.

#### *Clause 36.03 Public Conservation and Recreation Zone (PCRZ)*

The Public Conservation and Recreation Zone (PCRZ) is applied to places where the primary intention is to conserve and protect the natural environment or resources such as public conservation reserves and parks and allows associated educational activities and resource-based uses.

#### *Clause 36.04 Transport Zone (TRZ)*

The Transport Zone (TRZ) is applied to land for declared roads, railways and other important transportation infrastructure representing state and local designations. The TRZ1 is applied to railway land and the TRZ2 is applied to main roads.

#### *Clause 37.01 Special Use Zone (SUZ)*

The Special Use Zone (SUZ) provides for tailored provisions for a wide range of purposes, such as showgrounds, freight logistics centres and tourism precincts. It forms part of a suite of special purpose zones that are used when a standard zone cannot address the individual circumstances of a site.

### **10.4 Overlays**

There are a range of overlays applied to the towns in the WWPS. These are summarised below. The relevant overlays affecting the towns are shown in the town profiles.

#### *Clause 42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)*

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) is applied to areas where the development of land may be affected by either environmental constraints such as the effects from noise or industrial buffer areas or issued related to the significance of the natural environment. ESO2 relates to the protection of the Red-tailed black cockatoo habitat.

#### *Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay (HO)*

The Heritage Overlay (HO) is applied to a heritage place with a recognised citation identified through the Victorian Heritage Register or in a local heritage study. A heritage place should include a statement of significance, establishing the importance of the place, and can affect land, buildings, trees and/or vegetation.

#### *Clause 43.02 Design and Development Overlay (DDOO)*

The Design and Development Overlay (DDO) manages built form and the built environment through building height and setback provisions. DDO1 applies to the Edenhope Industrial Precinct while DDO2 is applied to the Kaniva Industrial Precinct, with both aiming to ensure high quality development.

#### *Clause 44.04 Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO)*

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) is applied to land that is subject to inundation related to flooding from waterways but is not part of the primary floodway as identified by the relevant floodplain management authority.

#### *Clause 44.06 Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)*

The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) identifies areas where the bushfire hazard requires bushfire protection measures to be implemented, seeking to ensure that development of land prioritises the protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire. Development is permitted only where the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level.

#### *Clause 45.03 Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO)*

The Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) is applied to sites that have known, identified or reasonably suspected contamination or potential contamination.

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Small Towns of West Wimmera that form the subject of this report are located on the lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagalk Nations and Gunditjmara people. They are acknowledged as the Traditional Owners of their traditional lands and waters.

A Recognition and Settlement Agreement has been signed between the Victorian Government and the Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) on behalf of the Wotjobaluk Nation. The State is to facilitate relationships between local government and the BGLC under this agreement.

The Local Government Engagement Strategy provides direction on how this could occur, which will inform the development and implementation actions of the Small Towns Plan. This includes:

- Opportunities for renaming, signage and interpretive information.
- Consulting in relation to the preparation of studies/plans that impact issues including roadsides, public health, wellbeing, and fire management.
- Recognising that Traditional Owner businesses can make valuable and unique contributions to local economies and communities: driving innovation, providing access to new markets, creating new jobs and attracting visitors.
- Management of Council controlled lands and waters that should be undertaken with WJJWJ People recognising their role as sole managers of their lands and waters.
- Developing a framework for ensuring alignment of each planning scheme with WJJWJ People's rights, interests and aspirations.
- Identifying, assessing and documenting places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance for inclusion in the planning scheme



## CONTACT

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**Paul Buxton**  
Director  
Plan2Place Consulting



**Kellie Marks**  
Principal  
Plan2Place Consulting



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We respectfully acknowledge that every project enabled or assisted by Plan2Place Consulting in Victoria exists on traditional aboriginal lands which have been sustained for thousands of years.*

*We honour their ongoing connection to these lands and seek to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians in our work.*