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# HORSHAM CITY TO RIVER

## BACKGROUND REPORT

HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL | JANUARY 2020 | FINAL



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## **VERSION: 1**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Urban Enterprise would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by Horsham Rural City Council, businesses, referral agencies, special interest groups, community representatives and residents for attending consultation sessions and providing input into this project.

## ACRONYMS

**AAGR** – Average Annual Growth Rate

**ABS** – Australian Bureau of Statistics

**ANZSIC** – Australian New Zealand Standard Industry Classification

**AVPCC** – Australian Valuation Property Classification Code

**C1Z** – Commercial 1 Zone

**C2Z** – Commercial 2 Zone

**CAD** – Central Activities District

**CBD** – Central Business District

**DELWP** – Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

**EMT** – Executive Management Team

**EO** – Executive Officer

**ERP** – Estimated Resident Population

**FLG** – Food Liquor Groceries

**FO** – Flood Overlay

**GDP** – Gross Domestic Product

**GWM** – Grampians Wimmera Mallee

**HRCC** – Horsham Rural City Council

**IVS** – International Visitor Survey

**LGA** – Local Government Area

**LQ** – Location Quotient

**LSIO** – Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

**MCH** – Maternal Child Health

**MTA** – Main Trade Area

**NSW** – New South Wales

**NVS** – National Visitor Survey

**PPRZ** – Public Park and Recreation Zone

**RDV** – Regional Development Victoria

**SEIFA** – Socio Economic Index For Areas

**SRV** – Sport and Recreation Victoria

**TRA** – Tourism Research Australia

**VIC** – Visitor Information Centre

**VPA** – Victorian Planning Authority

**WCMA** – Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

**WDA** – Wimmera Development Authority

**WIFT** – Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal

**WSMP** – Wimmera Southern Mallee Partnership

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Backward Linkages** - The industry sectors which spend the most on locally sourced intermediate goods and services per dollar of output. These industry sectors may not necessarily make the largest contributions to the region's economy at present however due to well-developed local supply chains these sectors have a significant capacity to deliver broad based economic benefits for the region.

**Domestic day trip visitor** - Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.

**Domestic overnight visitor** - People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.

**Gross Regional Product** - The total value of final goods and services produced in the region over the period of one year.

**Horsham** – Horsham is defined as the locality (suburb) and generally includes the Horsham CAD and surrounding residential areas. The area is shown in Appendix A of the Technical Report.

**Horsham (RC)** – The Horsham Local Government Area.

**International visitor** - A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia for less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

**Local Expenditure** - Represents the value of intermediate goods and services purchased by local industry sectors within the region. A high level of local expenditure on intermediate goods and services proportionate to total output is indicative of well-developed local supply chains and also that any expansion in this sector would typically deliver broad based benefits for the region's economy.

**Output** - Represents the gross revenue generated by businesses/organisations in each of the industry sectors in a defined region. Gross revenue is also referred to as total sales or total income.

**Propulsive Industry** - Key drivers of the Horsham economy in terms of regional exports, employment, value-added and local expenditure on goods and services (backward linkages)

**Regional Exports** - Represents the value (\$) of goods and services exported outside of the defined region that have been generated by businesses / organisations in each of the industry sectors within the region.

**Value-Added** - represents the marginal economic value that is added by each industry sector in a defined region. Value-Added can be calculated by subtracting local expenditure and expenditure on regional imports from the output generated by an industry sector, or alternatively, by adding the Wages & Salaries paid to local employees, the gross operating surplus and taxes on products and production.

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) engaged Urban Enterprise, in conjunction with Tract Consultants and Twin Prism to prepare a Vision and Masterplan for the revitalisation of Horsham's Central Activities District (CAD) and Wimmera River Precinct.

The overarching aim of this project is to identify, justify and assess a suite of priority projects that will improve and revitalise Horsham's Wimmera River Precinct and Central Activities District, making it a more attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in.

This work will be used by Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) to attract public and private sector interest (and investment) and to provide a clear vision and action plan to support employment and economic growth in the municipality.

The project builds on the extensive existing economic development and strategic planning strategies delivered by Council in recent years. These studies seek to strengthen Horsham as a Regional City with extensive influence and service provision to approximately 60,000 persons across the broader Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

This **Background Report** summarises and updates the substantial strategic work that has been undertaken to date through further research, consultation and analysis relating to Horsham's population and housing needs, the local and regional economy, the property market, tourism opportunities and community and sport/recreational facility needs. Detailed research, data and consultation findings are included in the supporting Technical Report.

This Background Report provides the basis for the preparation of a Vision and Concept Plan for the CAD and riverfront.

## 1.2. REPORT STRUCTURE

This Background Report is presented in the following structure:

### Strategic Context

This section provides the strategic and economic context for the study area, Horsham Rural City and the broader region. An assessment of macroeconomic conditions provides the current overview of the state's economic performance and outlook.

This section also summarises the current state of play for major investment projects in Horsham and the broader region and provides an overview and assessment of strategic work that has been undertaken for the study area.

### Considerations

Technical work and consultation identified a range of issues that will influence the role and function of the CAD and riverfront over the coming years. This section identifies the key issues and considerations that should be taken into account in the Vision and Concept Plan.

### Vision, Objectives and Key Directions

Consultation with community, business and government representatives through this and previous projects led to the formulation of a Vision statement for the study area which is set out in this section.

The section then shows the broad objectives and key directions which will guide the achievement of this vision over the study period, drawing on the strategic context and considerations identified in the previous sections.

### 1.3. STUDY AREA AND PERIOD

The study area generally includes Horsham's Central Activities District (CAD) and riverfront precinct, as shown in Figure 1.

The study area is the Western Highway and the Wimmera River to the east, Baillie Street and Dimboola Road to the north, Park Drive and Wotonga Drive to the west and the Wimmera River to the south.

Figure 2 shows the study area planning zones and Figure 3 shows the study area planning overlays.

The core commercial area (CAD) is within the Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) and provides a mix of retail, commercial and civic uses. A precinct on and near O'Callaghans Parade is within the Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z) and provides a mix of light industrial, residential and retail uses.

The riverfront precinct is predominantly within the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and includes City Oval, Sawyer Park, a caravan park and the Botanic Gardens. There is one commercially zoned (C2Z) property within the riverfront precinct. This site is currently occupied by an automotive dealership.

The riverfront precinct is partially affected by a Flood Overlay (FO) and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). Flood mapping (2001) is provided in Appendix B and shows flood scenarios for a 1 in 5, 20, 50, 100 and 200 year flood event.

Residential uses in the study area are generally concentrated to the periphery of the CAD; to the east of Urquhart Street, the west of Darlot Street and to the west of Madden Street.

The Horsham Showgrounds Precinct is within the Special Use Zone 4 (SUZ4) and is partially subject to a Flood Overlay (FO) and a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO).


#### Study Period

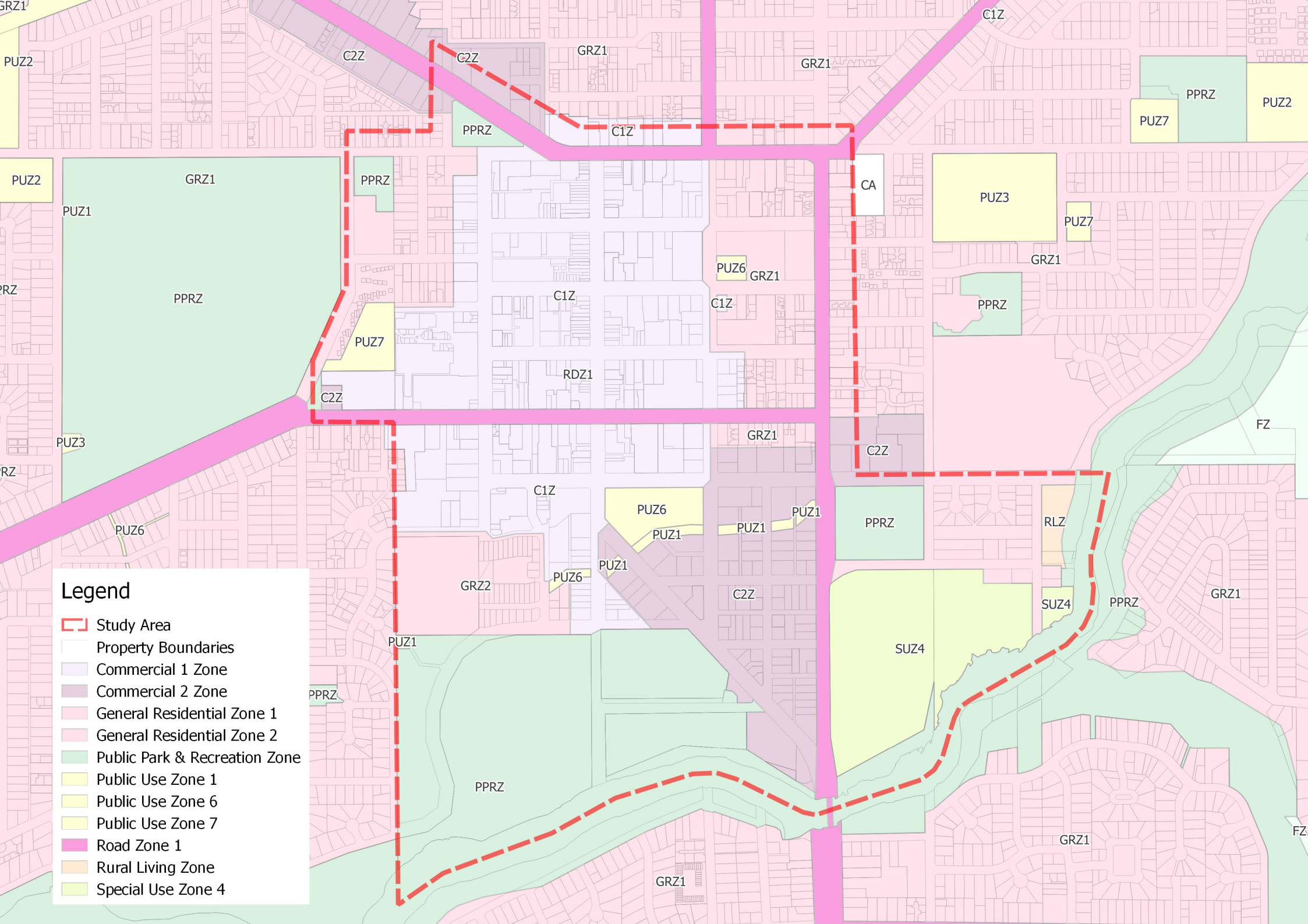
A strategy of this nature requires a long time horizon for projects to be planned and delivered and for key steps towards the transformation and revitalisation of the study area progressed.

The research, analysis and directions of this study are designed to position Horsham for prosperity and sustainability over a 20-30 year period.



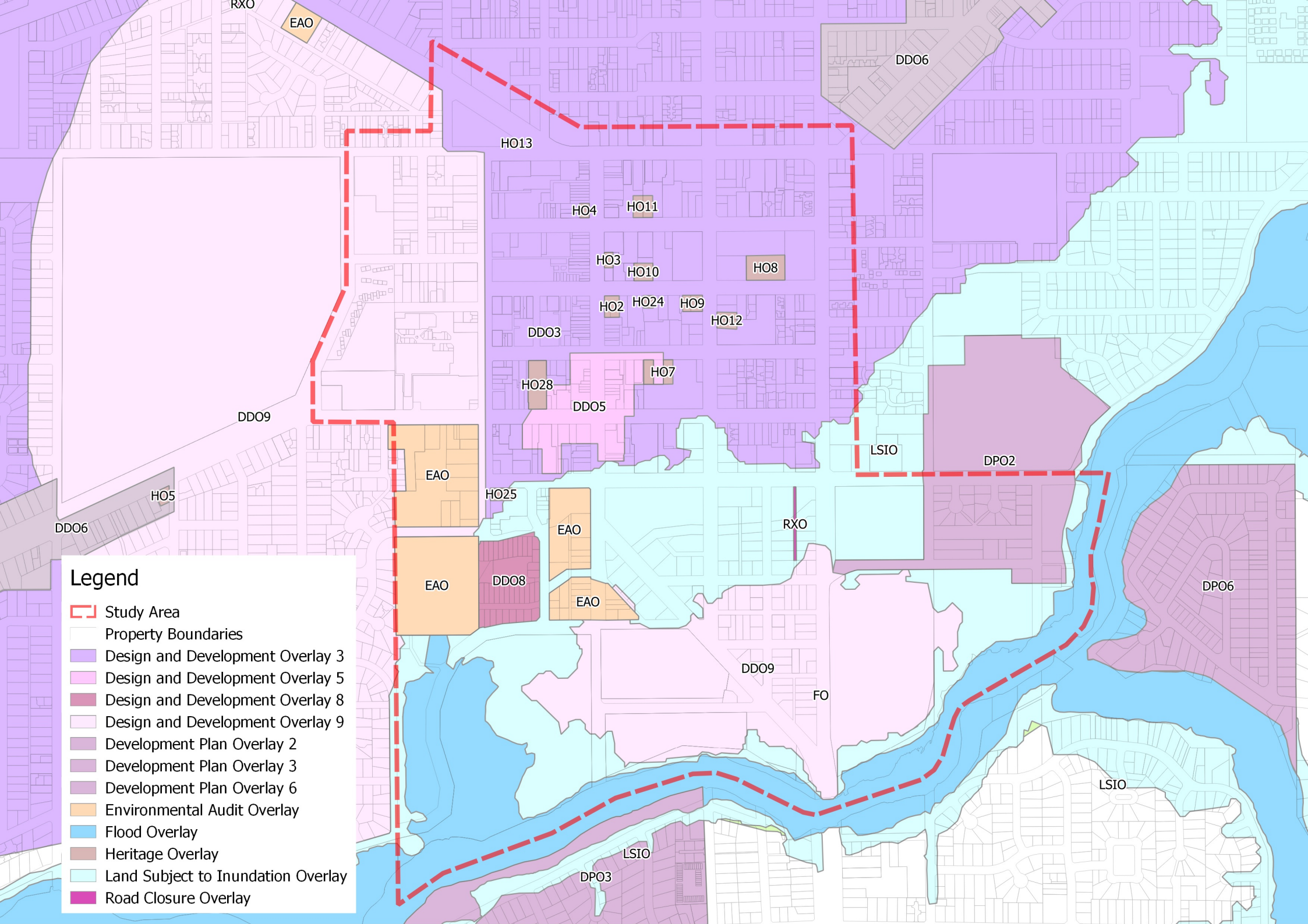
Legend

 Study Area



**Legend**

- Study Area
- Property Boundaries
- Commercial 1 Zone
- Commercial 2 Zone
- General Residential Zone 1
- General Residential Zone 2
- Public Park & Recreation Zone
- Public Use Zone 1
- Public Use Zone 6
- Public Use Zone 7
- Road Zone 1
- Rural Living Zone
- Special Use Zone 4



## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides the strategic and economic context for the study area, Horsham Rural City and the broader region. An assessment of macroeconomic conditions provides the current overview of the state's economic performance and outlook.

This section also summarises the current state of play for major investment projects in Horsham and the broader region.

This section also provides an overview and assessment of strategic work that has been undertaken for the study area.

A detailed literature review is provided in the accompanying Technical Report.

### 2.2. LOCATION CONTEXT OF HORSHAM

Horsham Rural City is located approximately 300 km west of Melbourne and 400 km east of Adelaide.

The township of Horsham is well serviced by road infrastructure, located at the juncture of three major highways: Western Highway, Wimmera Highway and Henty Highway.

Horsham is the regional service centre for the broader Wimmera Southern Mallee region, attracting residents from across the Wimmera for employment, as well as a range of retail, entertainment, health/medical, and professional and financial services.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee region includes the Local Government Areas of Horsham, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera and Northern Grampians.

### 2.3. MACROECONOMIC CONDITIONS

#### STATE & NATIONAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE & OUTLOOK

2018 marked the 27th consecutive year of economic growth in Australia. This is expected to continue into 2019 with an improving global outlook and favourable domestic conditions.

An upturn is increasing global growth above trend for the first time since 2011, with trade, capital expenditure and employment all increasing. Given the commodity boom in Australia has come to an end, a resulting recession posed a strong risk, particularly due to stagnation in wages growth. However, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has returned to pre-2011 growth. As a result, company profits and government revenues have been increasing.

Other factors supporting growth in Australia are rising resource exports, an increase in infrastructure spending and improved investor sentiment. Although residential construction has slowed recently, significant negative impacts have been mitigated due to strong population growth.

Weak income growth, a more stringent lending environment, declining house prices, rising electricity and gas prices and a reduction in household spending pose the most significant risks to the state economy in 2019.

As at October 2018, Victoria ranked first in Australia for economic performance, attributed to strong population growth driving construction activity, particularly in residential and large-scale infrastructure.

The key economic indicators for Victoria are as follows:

Economic growth: Economic activity is 26.7% above its 'normal' or decade-average level of output.

Retail spending: Retail spending is 17.7% above decade-average levels, supported by residential building activity, population and employment growth.

Unemployment: the unemployment rate stands at 4.7%, 17.4% below the decade average. Employment is also 13% above the decade average.

Construction activity: Victoria has moved past NSW into top spot with construction work done is close to 39% above its decade average.

Population growth: Growth is 11% above the decade average.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst overall the economic conditions in Victoria are favourable and the general outlook is positive, Horsham's economy is presented with a number of unique challenges and opportunities, such as a low level of historical and forecast population and dwelling growth, an ageing and declining regional population, weak employment growth and a wide range of major tourism, resource and construction investment proposals. These are discussed further in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> State of the States, CommSec, CBA, Oct Qtr 2018

## **2.4. MAJOR PROJECTS**

There are a number of major economic development projects that have either been recently delivered, are currently underway or are planned to occur in Horsham (RC) and the broader Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

Public and private sector investment can often provide a catalyst for attracting further investment and generating flow-on economic benefits to a local or regional economy.

This section summarises the current state of play for major investment projects in Horsham.

### **2.4.1. HORSHAM RURAL CITY**

#### **HORSHAM TOWN HALL REDEVELOPMENT**

Horsham Rural City Council commissioned a Cultural Facilities Review in 2009 to assess the condition of existing facilities, the needs of the community and determine the effective way to provide high-quality cultural facilities for Horsham.

The Review resulted in the redevelopment of the Horsham Town Hall. The project was completed in January 2016 at a final cost of \$19.8 million. The resulting product was the Horsham Town Hall complex, comprising the Heritage Hall, a 500 seat Theatre and the Regional Art Gallery.

The redevelopment of the Horsham Town Hall and Horsham Regional Art Gallery is the largest infrastructure project ever embarked upon by Horsham Rural City Council.

The Town Hall provides world-class performance, visual arts and conferencing facilities. Performances, events and exhibitions attract visitors from across the Wimmera region. The facility has significantly bolstered the arts and cultural product

offering in the region and has been a catalyst in attracting new and repeat visitor markets to Horsham.

**Status:** Complete

### WIMMERA CANCER CENTRE

The Wimmera Cancer Centre was completed in early 2019. The \$3.5 million Centre significantly bolsters the health services in the region. The Centre includes nine new day chemotherapy chairs, a wellness service, six renal dialysis chairs and modern accommodation facilities for palliative care.

**Status:** Complete 2019

### BROADBAND INITIATIVE

The Victorian Government announced that a \$1.7 million broadband project will be undertaken in Horsham to provide homes and businesses with high-speed internet services, similar to services provided in metropolitan Melbourne.

The project will provide Horsham businesses and residents access to the latest wireless infrastructure. The service will provide symmetrical gigabit broadband, with speeds up to one gigabit a second. The project was first announced in April 2018, as part of the government's Connecting Regional Communities Program.

The fixed-wireless service will cover all of Horsham including the central business district and industrial estate, plus the city's aerodrome and Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal.

**Status:** Underway. Estimated completion is mid to late 2019

### KALKEE ROAD INTEGRATED CHILDREN HUB

Horsham's Kalkee Road Children's and Community Centre is located in Horsham North (outside of the study area) and officially opened in March 2018. The Hub was jointly funded with the Victorian Government (\$2.6 million), the Federal Government (\$900,000) and Horsham Rural City Council (\$810,926).

The Hub delivers a range of education, health and support services to children and their families. Further, the Hub provides a multitude of uses and services including Maternal Child Health (MCH) services, childcare and kindergarten services, playgroup, Uniting Wimmera's parenting training and other specialist services like Barwon CASA and the Horsham Toy Library.

**Status:** Complete 2018

### WIMMERA INTERMODAL FREIGHT TERMINAL (WIFT)

WIFT's establishment in 2012 has increased the region's use of rail as an efficient mechanism to transport grain.

The 2016 harvest was close to a record for the region, contributing to a significant increase in container throughput at the site. Container numbers increased from 900-1,200 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) per month, to 2,000-3,000 per month since harvest.

In 2016/17, The WIFT recorded a throughput of 23,567 TEU, which is above the 2020-21 projected activity for the site (22,900 TEU).<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, throughput in January was close to the design capacity of the site, and February was marginally greater than the design capacity of the site of 105 TEU per day.

Due to the increase level of throughput activity on the site, the WIFT requires more infrastructure to expand operations. Specifically, infrastructure is required to increase

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<sup>2</sup> WIFT Business Case, 2006

the storage capacity of empty containers, increase capacity and accommodate increasing throughput, and improve access and manoeuvrability.

In August 2017, the State Government announced \$1.25 million for Stage 1 of the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Industrial Precinct development.

The 100-hectare precinct will see the establishment of industrial lots with bitumen road access, street lighting and other amenities for agribusinesses and food and fibre processors establishing operations at the precinct.

The development will create enabling infrastructure to support development, generate up to 80 jobs and attract further commercial opportunities.

The \$2.5 million development will be delivered by Horsham Rural City Council with support from the State Government.

**Status:** Funding Received

## **AERODROME**

Horsham Aerodrome is a CASA registered aerodrome owned and operated by Horsham Rural City Council, located approximately 6 kilometres from the CAD.

The current operations at the Aerodrome include a range of aeronautical activities including general aviation, flying training, gliding activities, joy flights, regular air ambulance services, emergency support during major emergency events such as bushfires and floods, and some limited RAAF operations.

Council has recently commenced a review of the Horsham Aerodrome Business Plan 2010 and preparation of an Aerodrome Master Plan to consider long term opportunities to improve and upgrade the Aerodrome in terms of extending the runway, utilities, aviation support facilities, painting and repairs, fuel, ground transport facilities and movement area facilities.

With potential upgrades and improvements to infrastructure and services at the Aerodrome, there is an opportunity to expand existing activities and operations. Similar to Mangalore Airport, the Horsham Aerodrome could support cadet pilot

training, and capture cadets from existing airports that are at capacity, such as Moorabbin and Mangalore.

**Status:** Planning Phase (ongoing)

## WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE PIPELINE

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, established in 2010, replaced 17,500 km of inefficient channels providing approximately 9,000 km of rural pipeline.

It is estimated that the pipeline saves an average of 103 billion litres of water per annum and provides a continuous water supply to approximately 7,000 rural customers and townships across the Wimmera and Mallee.

The Pipeline provides water security for the Agriculture sector and is of major benefit to the region. The Pipeline is promoted to potential new agri-business that are looking to establish in the region.

**Status:** Complete 2010

## 2.4.2. REGIONAL

### MINERAL SANDS

The Wimmera region is home to a significant proportion of natural mineral deposits. Donald (Minyip), Avonbank, Drung South and Bungalally are the four key sites for mineral sands.

The Avonbank Project is projected to produce 488 million tonnes of Heavy Mineral Sands (HMS) and has a projected mine life of 32 years. Avonbank is forecast to commence mining in 2021.

The Bungalally HMS project incorporates over 20% Zircon (mineral). The project is located approximately 10 km south of Horsham.

Whilst these projects are either in pre-feasibility or feasibility stage, once construction commences and operations are underway, they will generate significant economic benefits to Horsham including output, wages and salaries, and jobs.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Mining Sector Plan (2012) considers the opportunities, constraints and key enabling factors required to further develop and grow the mining industry within the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region. The Plan found that the Wimmera Southern Mallee region has significant competitive advantages that can enable the local industry to develop. These key advantages include:

- Accessible, large scale and high quality resource quantities;
- Secure water resources;
- High levels of liveability for the workforce, particularly compared to other mining regions;
- Established, experienced and responsive support industries;
- Experienced, stable and low cost workforce;

- Excellent transport linkages with an intermodal freight terminal at the heart of the region in Horsham, road and rail access to the Ports of Portland, Geelong, Melbourne, and Adelaide;
- Access to high quality research and training institutions;
- Competitively priced, reliable and accessible power and gas connections;
- Proactive State and Local Governments; and
- Regional social infrastructure - schools, health, sporting and cultural.

Growing the sector will have significant spill over benefits to the broader region. The sector is a high value adding activity and is therefore a driver of regional economic prosperity. Within the Wimmera Southern Mallee regional economy, mining produces the highest rates of return per job, and more than two times the value added benefits to the economy than any other sector from the same level of output growth.

These projects typically attract a significant number of workers who settle in the region for the duration of the mining period, generating significant economic benefits to Horsham.

**Status:** Planning Phase (ongoing)

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

The 4,250 ha Murra Warra Wind Farm, located approximately 25km north of Horsham is currently under construction and is expected to be operational by 2020. The farm will accommodate up to 116 turbines and a terminal station that will connect to the 220kV grid network.

The Murra Warra Wind Farm Economic Benefit Assessment (2016) identifies that the \$650 million investment will support 235 direct and 375 indirect FTE jobs during the construction phase. Once operational, the project will support 15 direct and 45 indirect FTE jobs.

Furthermore, the project has the capacity to supply sufficient clean energy to power approximately 250,000 homes and, in the process, reduce Co2 emissions by an estimated 1.3 million tonnes per annum.

Biomass is another renewable energy opportunity that could be further explored and developed in the City. Biomass refers to the fuel that is developed from organic materials, a renewable and sustainable source of energy used to create electricity or other forms of power.

Some examples of materials that make up biomass fuels are scrap lumber, forest debris, certain crops, and manure. The use of these materials would create a significant opportunity in the supply chain.

Development in renewable energy and becoming energy efficient is a concept that is widely received and promoted by the Horsham community.

Natimuk Community Energy (NCE) is an organisation with a vision for the community to achieve self-sufficient energy production by 2030. To achieve this vision, NCE are proposing a community owned renewable energy facility (solar farm).

Whilst solar and wind farms generally support lower proportions of ongoing employment, they generate major capital expenditure and create employment opportunities throughout the planning, design and construction phases.

Horsham Rural City is well positioned to attract investment in large scale renewable projects, specifically solar and wind. Key advantages of establishing in Horsham include a large availability of land and long periods of sunlight. Council are aware of two solar farm proposals; one has submitted to receive planning approval, the other is in pre-application phase.

In recent years, there has been lobbying with State Government to develop a third interconnector extending from Horsham into South Australia. The interconnector is required for energy storage and distribution.

## GRAMPIANS PEAKS TRAIL

The Grampians Peaks Trail is one of the key attractions in the Grampians National Park and the broader Grampians region due to the unparalleled natural and cultural landscapes it offers.

An extension and enhancement of the trail is currently underway and when complete, will provide a world-class long distance hiking experience, in which visitors can undertake a 13-day/12-night walk across the entire National Park.

Stage one of the Grampians Peaks Trail is completed and operational and is located in the central area of the Park, in close proximity to Halls Gap. This stage allows visitors to undertake a three-day/two-night loop hike that commences and finishes in Halls Gap.

The estimated completion date for the full extension and enhancement is 2020/2021. Once complete, the attraction of the Park, which is already considered a drawcard domestic and international destination will be further strengthened. This game-changing project will have implications for the broader region, particularly in terms of servicing visitation with accommodation, retail and hospitality.

## SILO ART TRAIL

Starting with the silo in Brim, the Silo Art Trail was conceived in 2016 and is Australia's largest outdoor gallery. It currently stretches over 200 kilometres through Yarriambiack Shire, with painted silos currently in Brim, Lascelles, Patchewollock, Rosebery, Rupanyup and Sheep Hills. Horsham is the closest regional city to the southern end of the trail.

The project consisted of a team of renowned artists from Australia and across the world visit the region, meet the locals and transform each grain silo into a work of art; each telling a unique story about the host town.

Artists include Fintan Magee (Patchewollock), Adnate (Sheep Hills), Julia Volchkova (Rupanyup), Rone (Lascelles), Kaff-eine (Roseberry), and Guido van Helten (Brim).

Since opening, the Trail has grown in popularity and is well-visited across the region.

## 2.5. ACTIONS/PROJECTS IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS STUDIES

The need to revitalise Horsham's CAD and Riverfront Precinct was identified and prioritised through a range of strategic projects that were commissioned by Horsham Rural City Council. This section provides a summary and review of the existing work that has been undertaken.

Given that there has been a significant amount of work undertaken in recent years across a broad range of areas, a summary of recommended actions and priorities is provided across 5 key areas:

1. Central Activities District (Streetscape, Public Realm, Transport & Connectivity);
2. Wimmera River Precinct / Wimmera River Corridor;
3. Sport and Recreation;
4. Tourism; and
5. Land Use: Study Area (Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Retail).

This section provides a summary of the actions/projects identified in previous strategic and technical work undertaken by and for Council.

**Please refer to the accompanying Technical Report for supporting research.**

*Please note that recommendations detailed in this section are based on existing work only and do not consider independent research and analysis which is discussed in section 3.*

### 2.5.1. CENTRAL ACTIVITIES DISTRICT

The following actions/projects were recommended by previous projects for the Central Activities District:

- Upgrade footpaths;
- Introduce water sensitive urban design principles into Council planning to ensure low water-use street trees, garden beds and other landscaping elements;
- Upgrade power supply to improve power supply resilience;
- Install energy efficient public lighting systems;
- Roll-out free wifi in the CAD;
- A town square;
- Pavement modifications;
- Tree plantings and landscaping in median car parking areas, incorporating water harvesting and reuse;
- Provision of shade and shelter;
- Intersection upgrades:
  - Tightening intersection geometries to slow traffic, improve safety and ensure more direct paths for pedestrian crossings;
  - Reduce road widths;
  - Install raised pedestrian crossings at intersections to slow traffic, improve pedestrian safety and increase accessibility for all users;
  - Reconsider the use of roundabouts at key intersections.
  - Propose signalisation of Wilson Street and Darlot Street.
- New mid-block crossings:
  - Mid-block zebra or wombat crossings should be introduced in areas with high pedestrian activity (e.g. Roberts Avenue).
- Providing for bikes:
  - Priority lanes for on-street bicycles;

- Reduce traffic speeds to 30 km/hr and ensure one lane of traffic per direction;
- Removal of on-street parking or replacement of angle-parking with parallel parking on selected cycle routes.
- Car Parking:
  - Introduce a parking overlay to reduce the standard car parking rates for new CBD development;
  - Commit to initiatives to reduce car dependence in Horsham;
  - Manage CBD time restrictions to encourage parking in peripheral areas;
  - Defer any plans to increase CBD parking supply.
- Make Horsham the 'world's most walkable rural city';
- Short to medium term urban growth opportunities for Horsham should be focused in Town Centre (Horsham CAD), existing urban area (Outside of CAD), strategic infill sites, which may include open space sites;
- Establish and improve pedestrian and cycling routes in strategic locations;
- Improve connectivity between the Horsham CAD and surrounding urban area.

### **2.5.2. WIMMERA RIVER PRECINCT / WIMMERA RIVER CORRIDOR**

The following actions/projects were recommended by previous studies for the Wimmera River Precinct and Wimmera River Corridor:

- Activate the Wimmera River Precinct for the community and visitors (including lights and greater presentation);
- Encourage the development of a riverside café;
- Recognise and promote the river's character, culture and history:
  - Engage with the Barengi Gadjin Land Council to identify, protect and manage Wotjobaluk Peoples' cultural elements along the river corridor;
  - Identify, protect and manage post contact significant cultural elements along the river corridor;
  - Develop and implement appropriate education and interpretative materials along the river corridor.
- Improve access opportunities to the river from surrounding areas of Horsham:
  - Plan and develop a network of connected urban trails incorporating the river corridor.
- Establish new linkages across the river to better connect north and south Horsham:
  - Incorporate universal design principles in any proposed bridges or river crossings.
- Ensure inclusive and equitable recreational and social use of the river corridor through provision of appropriate infrastructure and programs:
  - Encourage events that are appropriate to the river corridor;
  - Deliver public realm design outcomes which encourage and support recreational activity.
- Provide opportunities for improved integration of activities in the Horsham Central Activities District with the river corridor:

- Create linkages between the Central Activities District and river corridor as identified through the Horsham Central Activities District revitalisation project.
- Ensure commercial activities within the Wimmera river corridor are compatible with the primary use of the corridor for environmental and recreation purposes:
  - Support the development of riverside catering/dining venues.
- Activate areas fronting the river to attract patronage and stimulate activity around the river corridor;
- Investigate the establishment of new walking and cycling linkages, including:
  - A connection between Firebrace Street and the southern bank of the Wimmera River;
  - Showgrounds and land to the south east of the Wimmera River.
- Encourage recreation opportunities along the Wimmera River corridor:
  - Consider small scale restaurant/café uses in the Wimmera River corridor that are subordinate to the dominant use of the corridor as passive open space.
- Prepare a Masterplan for the Wimmera River trail to examine ways to accommodate uses such as:
  - Additional recreation opportunities;
  - Walking and Cycling;
  - Small scale business that supports the recreational aspects of the corridor.

### 2.5.3. SPORT AND RECREATION

The following actions/projects were identified and recommended in previous studies relating to sport and recreation in the study area:

- Proceed with plans to develop a multipurpose indoor sport and recreation centre, located as close as possible to the existing Basketball Stadium, either adjacent to, or on the Showgrounds;
- Give priority to funding the capital and ongoing maintenance of a multipurpose, multiuser venue, over a single purpose facility;
- Develop and progressively implement a plan for the redevelopment of the Horsham City Oval precinct; and
- Encourage redevelopment of community facilities at the Horsham Showgrounds.

### 2.5.4. TOURISM

Based on a review of existing strategic work, the following actions/projects were recommended in relation to tourism in the study area:

- Promote and attract conferences to Horsham;
- Facilitate the attraction of major sporting events;
- Leverage greater benefit from the Horsham Town Hall precinct by exploring:
- Establishing a pedestrian and performance zone opposite the Town Hall theatre in Ward Street;
- Attraction of entertainment and dining businesses to the precinct; and
- Business/conference market.
- Develop a destination brand for Horsham;
- Explore the establishment of the Wimmera River Art Trail;
- Encourage diversification of the regional economy through building on the region's assets, particularly agriculture, energy, mining and tourism.

### 2.5.5. PROPERTY & LAND USE

The following actions/projects were identified in relation to property and land use in the study area:

- Encourage the development of strategic infill sites identified in the Horsham CAD Strategy and existing residential land which is yet to be developed;
- Encourage medium density residential development within a 400 metre radius of the Horsham CAD;
- Encourage opportunities for mixed use development;
- Encourage compact urban forms and infrastructure;
- Encourage light industrial businesses to continue to locate outside of the Horsham CAD;
- Encourage the location of State Government Departments within Horsham;
- Encourage opportunities for home-based businesses and enterprises;
- Support the on-going growth and development of the retail and commercial sectors within Horsham CAD;
- Encourage retail and business activities within the Horsham CAD;
- Consider alternative uses for surplus industrial land;
- Encourage the development of office accommodation in the CAD; and
- Investigate the potential to redevelop and expand the Wimmera Business Centre to meet contemporary business needs.

### 2.5.6. KEY FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

The suite of recommendations across the 5 focus areas are significant and differ in terms of scale, cost and potential benefit.

Given the sheer number and varying types of proposed recommendations, it is highly unlikely that HRCC will have the capacity or resources to deliver all of the recommended projects. Therefore, it is important that recommendations are prioritised in order to identify the projects that are expected to deliver the greatest benefit to the local community and economy.

Another key consideration will be for HRCC to explore potential funding avenues and partnership opportunities, particularly with Federal/State Government and the private sector.

Government is not expected to deliver all of the recommended projects to revitalise the study area; a portion of projects/actions will need to be delivered by, or in partnership with the private sector. Therefore, it is important for local Government to provide and encourage an economic environment that is conducive to attracting private investment. Council can assist private investment by providing leadership, brokerage services, creating a consistent and predictable regulatory environment, conducting market research, and business case development.

Landmark projects that are supported and delivered by the public sector can often provide a catalyst for generating flow-on public and private investment.

## 2.6. FUNDING AVENUES / OPPORTUNITIES

HRCC will need to explore funding avenues and opportunities to partner with key State Government agencies such as Regional Development Victoria (RDV), Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), as well as Federal Government counterparts.

This section provides an overview of a number of funding avenues and opportunities that are available to HRCC and may contribute to identifying projects for the study area.

Several State Government agencies offer potential sources of funding based on an alignment of strategic government objectives and opportunities and projects identified for Horsham that could result in the achievement of a shared vision (e.g. enhanced liveability, economic growth) for the study area.

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) is Victoria's lead agency responsible for rural and regional economic development. RDV provides numerous funding and collaborative opportunities to Victoria's regions, and are motivated by the following objectives:

- Provide better infrastructure, facilities and services;
- Strengthen the economic and social base of communities;
- Create jobs and improve career opportunities for regional Victorians; and
- Support local project development and planning<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/about-rdv/about-rdv>

<sup>4</sup> Based on discussions with RDV

Much of this is achieved through development of community infrastructure projects that are designed to increase community accessibility and engagement, which is critical for population retention and attraction.

Another approach to improving liveability and diversifying regional economies is through growth in the Visitor Economy, which can be supported by RDV (as well as Visit Victoria). Development of priority infrastructure projects that activate the riverfront and CAD could generate increases in visitation and provide a stimulus for Horsham's visitor economy (and increase local business activity).

RDV could provide additional assistance by promoting opportunities with private investors to support visitors, including the provision of more tourism product and accommodation.<sup>4</sup> These opportunities could help establish Horsham as a 'hub' for visitors to the Grampians Region and broader Wimmera, which could, in turn, be promoted by Visit Victoria.

### SPORT AND RECREATION VICTORIA

Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) is a key partner for major improvements to sporting infrastructure within the Horsham CAD. SRV is driven by its vision to improve liveability (including health and wellbeing), community engagement and the economy via the development of sporting facilities. Where possible, SRV focus on projects that increase usage of existing assets, and/or creating flexible facilities that can support multiple sports as well as a broad catchment area (thereby creating efficiencies).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://sport.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do>

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, LAND, WATER AND PLANNING

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's (DELWP) primary objective is to improve and maintain Victoria's liveability by responding to the effects of climate change; and protecting Victoria's natural environment, infrastructure and heritage.<sup>6</sup> DELWP could potentially utilise its funding streams to enhance Horsham's liveability and sustainability, which would improve population retention and attraction as well as economic development and local government sustainability.

Funding priorities for the Horsham Riverfront and CAD could include the following:

- Development of 'green' infrastructure in public spaces and promote efficient use of public land (e.g. water reuse, shade, etc.), which could increase community access and engagement;
- Supporting increases in housing stock and accommodation, to improve population attraction and attract growth in visitation; and
- Supporting the biodiversity and health of the Wimmera River corridor.

## VICTORIAN PLANNING AUTHORITY (VPA)

The Streamlining for Growth Program is funded by the Victorian State Government and managed by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). It aims to provide support and capacity building for councils in regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne. The program assists to unblock delays in the strategic planning system and speed up the delivery of projects that provide employment growth and/or increased housing choice, diversity and affordability. The core aims of the program for Regional Councils include:

- Build council capacity through grants and assistance;
- Ensure a land supply pipeline to facilitate regional growth;
- Implement Regional Growth Plans; and

- Undertake master planning for strategic sites.

This funding stream, along with any relevant future programs, could support land use and infrastructure planning for sites within the study area that are identified as suitable for land use transition/urban renewal.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/our-department/what-we-do>

### 2.6.1. KEY FINDINGS

There is a high degree of alignment of objectives and principles for funding criteria across State Government agencies, and in many cases the existing recommendations for revitalising the study area in Horsham are well placed to address these principles and objectives.

Based on the above and consultation outcomes, two overarching principles have been formulated to guide the decision making process when considering projects for the study area.

#### PRINCIPLE 1 LIVEABILITY

The principle of liveability underpins the objective to create a liveable regional city for existing and future residents, providing the necessary infrastructure and services to support the local community. This includes:

- Providing improved and quality infrastructure, facilities and services;
- Strengthening the social fabric of communities; and
- Improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

The recommendations for the study area will consider implications for liveability.

#### PRINCIPLE 2 ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The principle of economic resilience is a key focus for the study area, particularly given the economic role of the study area and its importance in supporting commercial activities, business, employment and entertainment not only for Horsham but the broader Wimmera Southern Mallee region. This includes:

- Strengthening the economic base of the regional economy;
- Creating jobs and improved career pathways; and
- Improving population and labour force attraction and retention.

The recommendations for the study area will consider economic implications, with a view to promoting economic growth and creating a more resilient and prosperous local economy.

## 3. CONSIDERATIONS

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section summarises the issues that emerged through the technical work (detailed in the Technical Report) and should be considered in the preparation of the vision and masterplan for the study area.

- Considerations are summarised for the following:
- Population and housing;
- The local and regional economy;
- Retail, property and land use;
- The tourism industry; and
- Sport and Community Assets.

### 3.2. POPULATION & HOUSING

#### POPULATION

**Horsham is forecast to experience low to moderate population growth.**

Since 2001, Horsham's population has grown at an average rate of 0.5% per annum, which is well below the regional Victorian average (1.1%).

This level of growth is forecast to continue into the future, with Victoria in Future projecting that Horsham will grow at an average rate of 0.6% per annum to 2031; increasing from 19,887 in 2016 to 21,793 in 2031.

The low to moderate population growth that has occurred and is forecast to continue in Horsham suggests that the opportunities for the study area should consider the needs of existing residents and cater to the differing needs of the community demographics as they change over time.

**Whilst the proportion of senior and elderly cohorts are projected to increase, there is a replenishment of young and middle-aged families that is forecast to occur in Horsham.**

Forecasts for Horsham's residents indicate that there will be notable growth in young to middle aged families, as well as senior and elderly cohorts.

20% of the increase in residents is forecast to occur in children aged between 0 and 14 years. A further 30% of growth in residents is projected to occur in persons aged between 30 and 44 years. This indicates that young to middle aged families are projected to account for approximately half of the growth across all cohorts.

Overall, Horsham's resident population is forecast to move into older age cohorts, with a projected 46% growth in cohorts aged over 70 years. The notable increase in

seniors and elderly will have implications for demand and accessibility of housing, infrastructure, services and amenity in the study area.

**The population of the Wimmera Southern Mallee region is declining. This trend is forecast to continue.**

The population of the Wimmera Southern Mallee region is declining, partially due to an ageing workforce in the farming sector and population movements to larger regional centres to be closer to supporting infrastructure and services such as health, medical and retail.

Horsham continues to attract residents from surrounding Council areas, highlighted by the large proportion of rural migration that has occurred from nearby municipalities including Yarriambiack, West Wimmera, Northern Grampians and Hindmarsh.

**Horsham's community is relatively disadvantaged.**

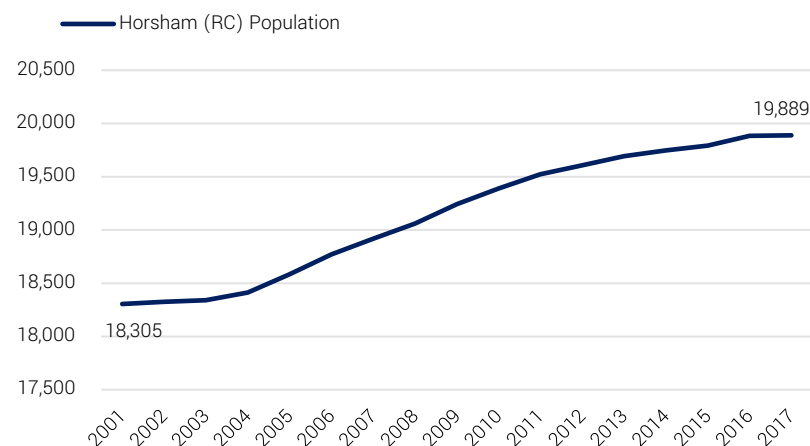
Horsham has a relatively high level of socio-economic disadvantage when compared with other areas in Regional Victoria. This is consistent with the higher proportion of low-income earning households and the lower proportion of persons attaining higher education qualifications (Bachelor Degree or higher).

This could also be attributed to the more limited access to high-quality education, community and sporting infrastructure and services compared with other regional centres in Victoria.

## HISTORICAL POPULATION GROWTH

Between 2001 and 2017, the population of Horsham (RC) experienced average growth of 0.5% per annum increasing from 18,305 residents in 2001 to 19,889 residents in 2017 as shown in Figure 4. The historic rate of growth is less than the regional Victoria average of 1.1% per annum and the Victorian average of 1.8% per annum.

**FIGURE 4** ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION GROWTH – 2001 TO 2017



Source: Population, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 to 2017 (ERP)

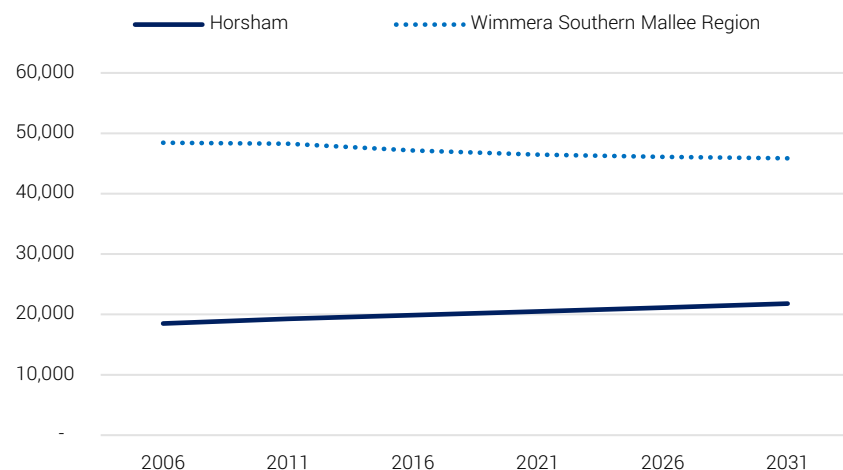
## PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH

Horsham's historically low rate of population growth is forecast to continue. Horsham (RC) is projected to experience an average annual growth rate of 0.6% per annum between 2016 and 2031 increasing from 19,887 people in 2016 to 21,129 residents in 2031.

All of Horsham's growth is projected to occur in the urban area, whilst the population in rural areas is forecast to decline.

Figure 5 shows the forecast population growth of HRCC compared with the Wimmera Southern Mallee region. The figure shows that whilst Horsham Rural City's population is projected to increase, the population of the Wimmera Southern Mallee is expected to decline.

**FIGURE 5** POPULATION GROWTH IN HRCC / WSMR – 2006 TO 2031



Source: Census of Population & Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006, 2011 / Forecast Population, Victoria in Future 2017

## HOUSING

**Horsham's housing stock is characterised by detached, homogenous dwellings.**

The housing stock in the municipality is characterised by detached, homogenous dwellings, indicated by the fact that separate houses account for 87% of all dwellings in the Council area.

The number of dwellings in Horsham (RC) increased by 329 between 2011 and 2016; growing at an average rate of 66 per annum. This level of growth (0.7% p.a.) is not significant but indicates that dwellings and development activity is occurring in Horsham; notably in Horsham East (Waterlink Estate), Horsham South (southbank) and Horsham West (Dumesny Street).

**Approximately two thirds of Horsham households are families and one third are lone person households.**

The housing market in Horsham is primarily being driven by families and older adult couples.

According to local agents, demand for dwellings in Horsham's growth areas is being driven by the family market seeking large, new dwellings. Housing in the study area, however, is generally sought by a different buyer profile. Demand for dwellings in the study area is being driven by older cohorts, notably semi-retirees, retirees and second and third home buyers seeking to be closer to the amenity of the CAD.

Demand for future housing stock in the CAD will primarily be for smaller, single storey dwellings that are lower maintenance and have good access to the CAD. There is a current lack of rental housing stock and high rents due to high volume of short term construction workers based in the region.

**Horsham is a relatively affordable place to live.**

As at 2017, Horsham's median house price was \$265,000. This is significantly less when compared with Victoria (\$533,000) and Regional Victoria (\$343,000). House prices in Horsham Rural City and surrounding council areas are the most affordable in the State.

The affordable nature of Horsham could be attractive to prospective new residents, particularly given the affordability challenges in larger regional and capital cities.

#### **Horsham's annual dwelling growth is forecast to accelerate.**

Dwelling requirements are expected to increase over the next 20 years in Horsham. According to Victoria in Future (VIF), average dwelling growth in the Council area is projected to increase to an estimated 94 dwellings per annum.

Given that the age profile is forecast to experience notable change over the next 20 years with an increase in senior and elderly cohorts in particular, there will be a need for additional residential uses and aged care in the study area. Parts of the CAD have attractive attributes such as access and proximity to retail, open space, transport, community services and amenity that will be highly attractive to future residents.

The demand for housing in the study area in the short to medium term is expected to be for semi-detached and detached dwellings on smaller allotments due to the lesser requirements for property maintenance and the more efficient use of land.

Given the lack of suitably zoned residential land in the CAD, there is potential to explore infill urban renewal opportunities at strategic locations to meet this demand.

**TABLE 1** DWELLING PROJECTIONS – HORSHAM (RC) – 2016 TO 2036

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	GROWTH (2016 – '36)	AAGR
Dwellings	9,232	9,956	10,490	11,000	11,110	+1,878 (20%)	1%

Source: Census of Population and Housing, ABS 2016 / Dwelling projections, Victoria in Future (VIF) 2016

### 3.3. ECONOMY

Horsham's economy is largely driven by primary, industrial and public sector industries.

Horsham Rural City's economy is largely driven by Agriculture; both dry land broadacre farming (grain and pulse production) and livestock grazing, Manufacturing; specifically cleaning, food, metal and transport products and equipment, Construction, as well as public sector industries including Health, Education and Public Administration and Safety. These industries are vital to the local economy in terms of employment, wages and salaries and local supply chain networks.

Given Horsham's role in servicing the broader Wimmera Southern Mallee region, population-led service industries are also critical, particularly in supporting a labour force. Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Other Services and Arts and Recreation Service account for a quarter of total employed persons in Horsham.

#### **Horsham experienced a decline in jobs between 2011 and 2016.**

Horsham experienced a 1% decline in employment between 2011 and 2016. This was mainly due to the decline in employment across the Manufacturing (-161 jobs), Wholesale Trade (-99 jobs) and Retail Trade (-88 jobs) sectors.

The notable decline in employment across these sectors was partially offset by growth in employment across the Education and Training (+104 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance (+93 jobs), Professional Service (+55 jobs), Arts and Recreation (+36 jobs), Accommodation and Food Service (+35 jobs) sectors. Employment growth across these sectors is a good indication of sector growth overall and could potentially highlight specialisations for the local economy in the future.

#### **Retail has recently experienced a minor decline in employment and businesses.**

Whilst the Retail Trade sector remains a critical industry to the health of Horsham's economy, particularly in supporting business and employment in the CAD, the sector has experienced a minor decline in business and employment in recent years.

Between 2015 and 2017, the number of local retail businesses declined by 7%; decreasing by 11 businesses. Further, the sector experienced an 8% decline in jobs between 2011 and 2016; decreasing by 88 jobs.

This is a consistent trend across much of the state as online retailing becomes more prevalent and continues to disrupt traditional forms of retailing. The changing nature of retail and the changing preferences of buyers / shoppers may have implications for the sector in Horsham.

There are three main pillars of the local and regional economy.

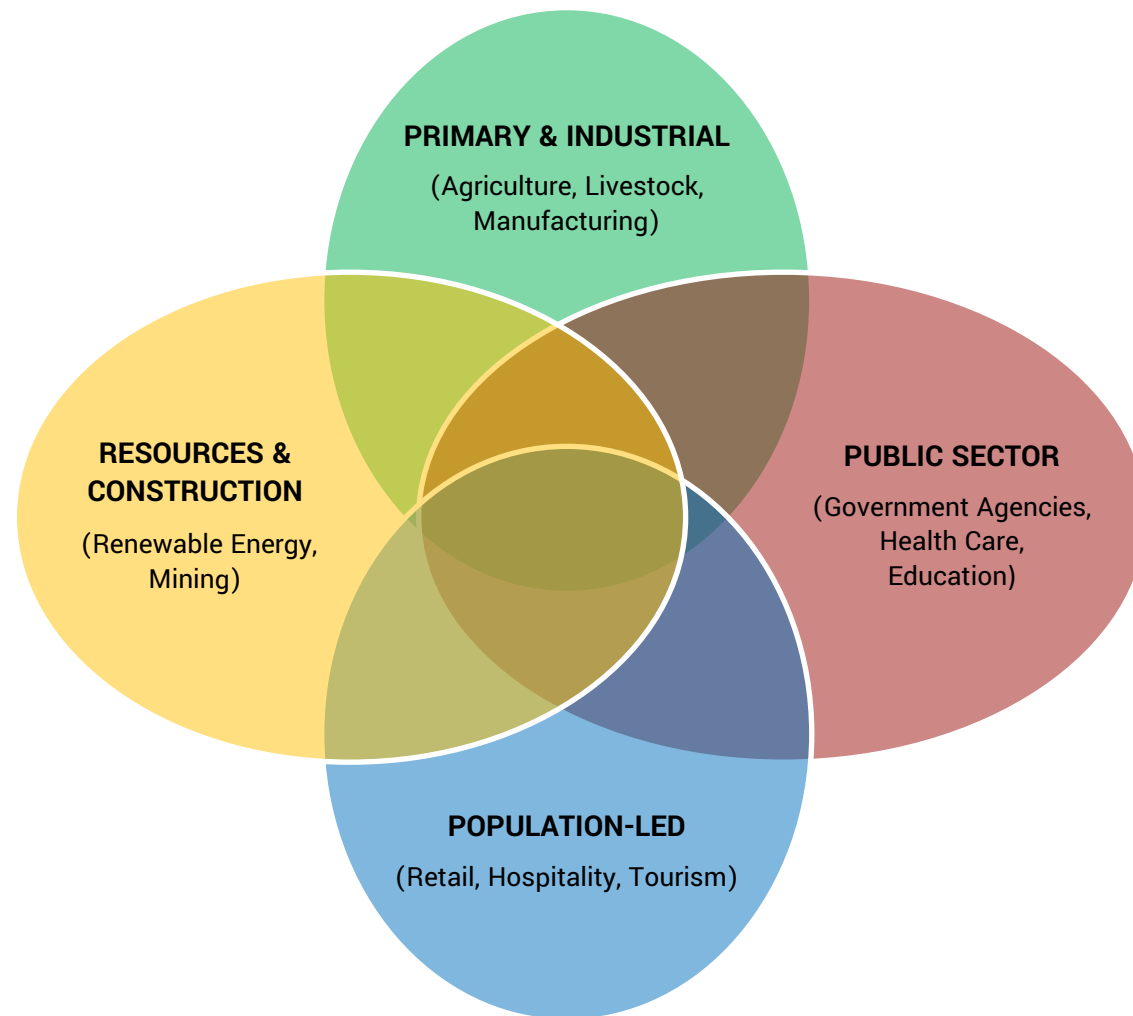
Figure 6 shows the three main pillars of the Horsham and Wimmera Southern Mallee regional economy. These include:

- Primary and Industrial – Agriculture, Livestock, Manufacturing;
- Public Sector – Government Agencies, Health Care and Education;
- Population-Led Industries – Retail, Hospitality, Tourism; and
- Primary, industrial, public-sector and population-led industries have traditionally underpinned the local and regional economy.

The Resources and Construction sector is emerging as a considerable economic opportunity for the region, linked to the large-scale renewable energy and mining projects that are underway or planned in the region. These projects are attracting temporary labour force to service these projects, which is driving demand for housing, accommodation, retail and other services in Horsham.

Population retention and attraction will be important to service the existing and growth sectors into the future.

**FIGURE 6** DRIVERS OF HORSHAM'S ECONOMY



### 3.4. RETAIL, PROPERTY AND LAND USE

**Horsham is the highest order regional centre in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.**

Horsham is the highest order retail centre in the Wimmera Southern Mallee. Horsham attracts shoppers from smaller towns within the broader region of Yarriambiack, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Northern Grampians, as well as parts of South Australia.

Although major regional centre retailers are located within 2 hours drive in Bendigo and Ballarat, Horsham will need to continue to perform a regional retail role into the future.

**There is a potential oversupply of retail floorspace in the study area.**

Although Horsham's retail catchment extends across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region, there is a potential oversupply of retail floorspace in the study area. The current provision is in the order of 4 sqm per Horsham resident, significantly higher than the national average (2.2 sqm/person).

The current commercial vacancy rate across the study area is above 5%. Unoccupied commercial floorspace is generally concentrated to larger floorplate premises, which are often unsuitable for niche and boutique retailers and does not often meet contemporary retail business needs.

**There is a potential over provision of non-food retail.**

Of the 79,000 sqm of occupied retail floorspace in the study area, approximately 70% is categorised as non-food retail. This is a very high proportion of non-food retail, particularly given that comparable regional centres such as Swan Hill's CBD has a current ratio of 53% (non-food retail).

Discussions with local agents revealed that there are recent examples of a transition of use across larger vacant retail space, whereby larger retail premises typically suited to larger format goods; are transitioning into shop front office uses.

Given the potential overprovision of non-food retail in the study area, there is an opportunity to encourage a more diverse retail mix in the future. This includes a higher provision of food catering retail (i.e. hospitality uses), as well as supporting more of an entertainment and service offering.

**There is a limited amount of vacant commercially zoned land in the study area, but there are clear opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment.**

There is an estimated 2.1 hectares of vacant commercial land dispersed across 17 properties in the study area. The vacant supply of commercially zoned land in the study area is limited. There are, however, clear examples and candidate sites for reinvest or redevelopment. Sites and precincts that present as potential candidates for re-investment and/or redevelopment include:

- Council depot;
- Concrete batching plant (Selkirk Drive);
- Commercial/light industrial precinct on O'Callaghans Parade; and
- Lower-value retailers dispersed throughout the CAD.

**Forecast demand for retail floorspace in Horsham to 2036 is negligible.**

Horsham's retail catchment is forecast to experience low population and expenditure growth over the next 20 years. The level of retail floorspace that is supportable in Horsham to 2036 is estimated in the order of 2,000 sqm.

This level of growth is negligible and could be absorbed within existing unoccupied premises. The estimate indicates that there is a sufficient and potential oversupply of built retail floorspace in the study area.

**Some parts of the Commercial 2 Zone Precinct on O'Callaghans Parade present an opportunity for urban renewal.**

The commercial precinct on O'Callaghans Parade primarily consists of light industrial uses (manufacturing, wholesale trade), bulky goods retail and a number of residential dwellings.

Given the ad-hoc nature of development that has occurred in this precinct over a long period of time, there is an absence of business clustering and very limited examples of new businesses that have established in the precinct.

The precinct is strategically located between the CAD and the Wimmera riverfront and contains some areas which are candidates for urban renewal.

Some industrial uses in the study area are considered unsuitable and difficult to integrate with surrounding urban uses and opportunities to re-locate to dedicated industrial precincts outside of the urban area should be considered. There is a significant supply of vacant industrial land in both Horsham South and the proposed WIFT precinct and are considered more suitable areas for heavier industrial uses.

The western section of the O'Callaghans Parade precinct should be considered as candidates to accommodate housing, tourism and commercial uses, particularly those with proximity to retail and civic services and those in proximity to the riverfront precinct and near Firebrace Street.

### 3.5. TOURISM

#### Horsham has a small tourism industry relative to comparable regional centres.

The tourism industry in Horsham generates \$91.3m in economic output per annum and supports 582 jobs. For comparison purposes, the tourism industry in Mildura Rural City generates an economic output of \$259m.

Horsham's tourism industry is small relative to comparable regional centres. This is partly attributed to its relatively isolated location and distance from metropolitan areas (i.e. capital cities) but could indicate a shortfall in tourism product and supporting infrastructure.

#### Domestic overnight has experienced negligible growth in a decade.

Domestic overnight visitation to Horsham grew by 0.4% between 2008 and 2017, which is low compared with overall trends in regional Victoria.

The proportion of domestic holiday/leisure travellers visiting Horsham (34%) is significantly lower than the Regional Victorian average (53%). Horsham is typically recognised as a stopover destination for self-drive visitors due to its location approximately halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide.

#### Horsham has a strong business / corporate market and caravan / touring market.

Horsham performs well in attracting business and corporate travellers which are critical to the local visitor economy.

The significant business base across the government, Agricultural, Health Care and Construction industries attracts a large proportion of business travellers to Horsham, providing local commercial accommodation operators with strong mid-week occupancy.

At present, construction projects in the region are driving very high demand for short term accommodation, especially serviced rooms with kitchens.

#### Tourism product development opportunities.

Horsham's under representation of holiday/leisure domestic overnight visitors could be attributed to a number of factors including the relatively isolated location/distance from major metropolitan markets, as well as a potential lack of investment into new tourism product, attractions and infrastructure.

The Horsham Economic Development Strategy (2017) identifies three key focus areas for Horsham to develop as a destination an increase visitation and include:

- Further leverage the success of the Horsham Town Hall;
- Increase sports tourism through development of sport and recreation infrastructure and events; and
- Ensure development of the Wimmera riverfront precinct considers tourism uses.
- Other opportunities that could be considered for tourism development include:
  - **Food and beverage** - The most common and popular activity for domestic overnight visitors in Regional Victoria is eating out at a restaurant and/or café, with 58% participating in the activity.

In order to further develop Horsham as a destination in its own right, the development and provision of high quality food and beverage product presents a key opportunity to achieve this, particularly given the regional produce strengths in agriculture (e.g. grain/pulse product and livestock). High quality dining options such as cafés, a gastronomic pub/hotel, provedore, microbrewery and/or wine bar should be considered for Horsham's CAD and riverfront to provide an anchor attraction and contribute to a vibrant precinct.

Horsham's strengths in regional product sees it well placed to strengthen this market segment.
  - **Strengthen the overnight touring market** - A key visitor market to Horsham is the holiday / leisure self-drive, caravan and touring market. Typically, this

market uses Horsham as a base to tour the broader region including the Grampians, Mount Arapiles, the Silo Art Trail and Pink Lake.

The investment in regional tourism product such as the Grampians Peaks Trail is expected to increase the number of domestic and overnight visitors to the region, providing opportunities for Horsham to attract more visitors, particularly for accommodation, food and beverage.

During consultation, the Horsham Riverside Caravan Park indicated that they attract strong occupancy from this market and are not affected by seasonality. This presents opportunities for a potential expansion of the Park.

- **Attract investment into the accommodation sector and address accommodation gaps** - Much of the existing stock is standard hotel/motel (3 to 3.5 star) and there is an under provision of high-quality accommodation establishments (i.e. 4+ star) when compared with regional Victoria.

There is an opportunity to diversify the accommodation supply and improve the offering to meet the need and preferences of the business/corporate market, as well as segments of the holiday/leisure market. Based on the consultation findings and a review of existing strategies, the current accommodation gap in Horsham is a high quality serviced apartment and/or hotel establishment.

### 3.5.1. TOURISM PRODUCT STRENGTHS

Horsham's tourism strengths include outdoor and adventure, water-based, arts and culture, and sport and recreation.

#### NATURE BASED / OUTDOOR AND ADVENTURE

An abundance of natural assets including lakes, rivers, National & State parks are within a 50-kilometre radius of Horsham. Major assets such as the internationally renowned climbing destination; Mount Arapiles Tooan State Park, as well as Mount Stapylton, Mount Zero and in the Grampians National Park attract a significant level of annual visitation.

The internationally renowned rock climbing destination; Mount Arapiles is located in Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, approximately 7 km from Natimuk and 30 km from Horsham. This natural asset is a major draw card for domestic and international visitors as it caters to differing levels of climbing abilities. The Mountain is estimated to attract 70,000 visitors per annum.<sup>7</sup>

The Council area and broader region is home to many lakes and rivers. Wimmera River, Green Lake, Taylors Lake, Natimuk Lake, Lake Toolondo, Lake Wartook and Rocklands Reservoir provide opportunities for locals and visitors to undertake water-based activities such as swimming, fishing, water-skiing, wind surfing and recreational boating.

Another natural area of significance is the Wartook Valley, located to the west of the Grampians mountain range. Attractions in this area include bushwalking, 4WD, horse riding, rock climbing, abseiling, fishing, mountain biking and quad bike tours.

The Laharum area, to the north of the Wartook Valley, is known for its olive groves and organic farming.

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<sup>7</sup> Submission to Amendment C75, Parks Victoria

## ARTS AND CULTURE

The Horsham Town Hall underwent a redevelopment and was officially completed in January 2016. The revitalised facility incorporates the original Town Hall, a 500 seat Theatre and the Regional Art Gallery.

The Town Hall provides world-class performance, visual arts and conferencing facilities. Performances, events and exhibitions attract visitors from across the Wimmera region.

The Town Hall and Regional Art Gallery is recognised as a game changing project for Horsham, as it attracts visitors from across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region and captures visitors who are travelling through. It will be critical to build on the success of this game changing attraction and to strengthen its appeal as a destination in its own right.

Natimuk is recognised as a hub for community arts and culture. Arapiles Community Theatre (ACT) is responsible for operating Natimuk's flagship facility; the Goat Gallery, which is an art gallery showcasing works from local and regional artists.

ACT are also responsible for the Natimuk Frinj Festival is the township's signature boutique visual performance and arts event. The Festival provides an avenue for local artists and attracts visitors looking for a rural community art experience.

Arts and Culture is an emerging tourism strength in Horsham. The success of the Town Hall redevelopment could be further leveraged through events in music, performing arts and fine/public art.

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

According to TRA, between 2012 and 2016, and average of 4% of domestic overnight visitors to Horsham visited for the purpose of attending an event. This is higher than the average for Regional Victoria (2%).

Tourism events are an effective method of attracting visitors from outside of the region that wouldn't ordinarily visit.

The annual event calendar in Horsham supports a proportion of visitation to the Council area. The existing event calendar predominantly consists of music, performing arts, art and cultural events. This is largely due to the emergence of arts and culture as a result of the Horsham Town Hall redevelopment.

The Cultural Department and the management team at the Town Hall indicated that events held at the Town Hall capture audiences that extend beyond the Council area, attracting visitors from Ballarat, Warrnambool and townships along the Victorian and South Australia border.

The Wimmera Event Centre is a purpose built large-scale event venue, located on approximately 23 hectares of land. The venue includes two large scale pavilions, a number of smaller pavilions, meeting rooms, facilities for on-site camping, catering areas, sheds and outbuildings.

The Centre has the capacity to accommodate a range of large scale events, from music concerts and festivals to conferences, shows and exhibitions. The Centre can also accommodate smaller functions and events such as seminars, meetings, and social functions. An existing major event held at the Centre is the Wimmera Machinery Field Days.

### 3.6. SPORT AND COMMUNITY ASSET CONSIDERATIONS

#### SPORT AND RECREATION ASSETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

**There is a lack of passive open space in the core of the CAD.**

Most open space areas and sport and recreation assets/facilities in the study area are concentrated to the southern portion of the CAD, particularly the riverfront precinct and Showgrounds precinct.

With the exception of May Park, which is the key area of open space in the northern portion of the study area, there is an absence of passive open space in the core of the CAD.

**Sporting facilities and open space areas in the study area are disparate, inefficient and poorly integrated with other sports and land uses.**

Whilst Horsham is generally well supplied in terms of the number of sport and recreation facilities, the current sporting facilities and open space areas in the study area are disparate; with very limited examples of consolidation and co-location of infrastructure that can cater to multiple sports and users. This is particularly the case with City Oval, which includes high perimeter fencing and is not inviting for use by the general public and visitors for public use. Given its strategic and favourable location in the riverfront precinct, City Oval does not integrate well with Sawyer Park and the Botanic Gardens precinct.

**City Oval and Horsham Lawn Tennis and Croquet have facilities which do not meet current standards and as a result cannot host certain events or accommodate participation from a broad cross section of the community.**

City Oval is currently limited in its scope to host regional events, issues/constraints identified for the facility include:

- No universally accessible clubroom or pavilion;
- The size of the field is too small to host premier regional events;

- The field is poorly orientated for cricket matches resulting in short straight boundaries;
- Insufficient number of publicly accessible toilets on site;
- There is only one netball court;
- The spectator grandstand is orientated to the south and can be subject to cold southerly winds;
- There are issues with the gravel embankment surrounding the field, including the quality of the surface and in providing universal access;
- The club pavilion is not currently accessible to all clubs and users;
- Generally, there is limited access available to the public (perception of private facility).

Horsham lawn tennis is also a key local sport facility within the botanic gardens precinct, and is located adjacent to the regional croquet facility. Horsham Law Tennis includes 24 grass courts, however, only 16 are maintained. The tennis facility is not currently capable of hosting regional level tennis events.

The facility also does not have lighting, has no formal licence in place and the pavilion has no accessible toilets. Its future position within the precinct should be considered having regard to future opportunities for tennis facilities noted in the *Horsham Sports Facilities Demand Assessment*.

**There is a pressing need to develop a multi-purpose indoor sporting facility in Horsham.**

Although there is an adequate number of indoor courts in Horsham to support local indoor sports needs, existing facilities are generally non-compliant, ageing, do not meet contemporary facility standards, do not cater to all demographics and cannot host regional events.

Previous work<sup>8</sup> has determined that there is a pressing need to develop a multi-purpose indoor sporting facility in Horsham. A number of sites were assessed for this facility, with the McBryde street site identified as the preferred location. Centrally located sites, close to existing businesses would be beneficial for an indoor sports stadium for a number of reasons, including:

- Enabling the consolidation of regional sporting infrastructure within the central area, producing spin off benefits for existing businesses within the town centre when events are hosted in town;
- Providing an equitable location from an access point of view for residents;
- Providing access to existing infrastructure and services such as accommodation, cafes and restaurants for events visitors;
- Consolidating and enhancing the role and primacy of the CAD;
- Providing the opportunity to showcase modern infrastructure to both visitors and residents (existing and potential).

## COMMUNITY ASSETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

**Although the CAD contains a number of important community assets, there are few examples of multi-use and integrated facilities.**

Horsham's community facilities are predominantly concentrated in the CAD, with the exception of the Kalkee Integrated Children's Hub in Horsham North. Many of the community facilities in the CAD are disparate and are not well integrated.

There are limited examples of a co-location of community uses in the study area. Community uses are shifting towards a co-location model, whereby a multitude of uses are provided within the one facility (or Hub). This can encourage greater utilisation, as well as help realise efficiencies in management, operations and achieve economies of scale. Successful examples of co-located community hubs can be seen throughout Regional Victoria including the Echuca Library/Community Hub, Civic Hall Ballarat and the Tallangatta Integrated Community Centre.

Whilst the Kalkee Integrated Children's Hub and the Horsham Town Hall are successful examples of integrated models for community uses, there is an opportunity to improve and strengthen this in Horsham, particularly in the CAD.

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<sup>8</sup> Horsham Multi-Use Indoor Sports Stadium Plan-Phase One: Feasibility (2016) and Wimmera Sports Stadium Business Case and Concept Design Report (2017)

## 4. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND KEY DIRECTIONS

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides a vision statement, objectives and key directions for the study.

### 4.2. VISION STATEMENT

A draft vision statement has been prepared for the study area and is based on input from the community and other stakeholders during the consultation phase.

**Horsham is the heart of the Wimmera and supports the region's economy and communities.** The success of the City is linked to its rich history, strong community and resilient economy.

**The centre of Horsham is a thriving commercial, cultural, civic and recreation hub** that will continue to evolve over time to meet the needs of the community, support and grow businesses activity and support and grow visitors to the region. The CAD will be better connected to highly accessible and quality open spaces, will incorporate substantially more shade, and active transport opportunities and accommodate more housing.

**Horsham celebrates its connection to the Wimmera River, its greatest natural asset.** The cultural, recreation and tourism potential of the riverfront precinct will be maximised to increase recreation, socialising, play, events, activities and infrastructure for visitors and residents. The riverfront will be better connected with surrounding areas, provide opportunities for public and private investment and creatively communicate the history and ongoing importance of Indigenous culture in the area.

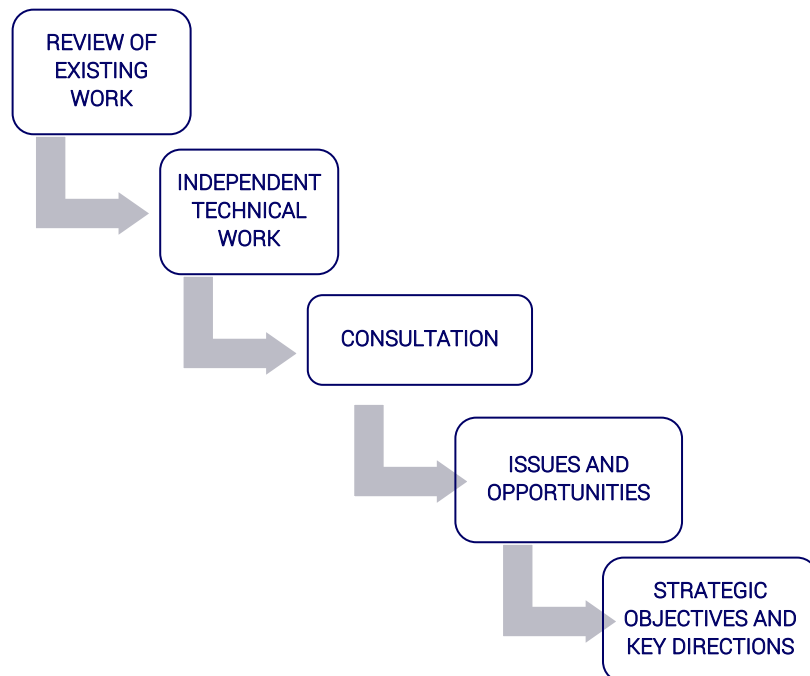
By focusing on improvements which support liveability and economic resilience, the area will promote the attraction and retention of population and investment which will preserve the City's critical role for Horsham and the Wimmera region. Together, the Horsham Central Activities District and the Wimmera riverfront will form an attractive, prosperous and sustainable destination that residents are proud of, businesses thrive within, investors covet, and visitors enjoy.

### 4.3. OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTIONS

Four strategic objectives have been identified to guide the achievement of the vision – the objectives are shown in Table 2. The objectives respond to issues and opportunities identified in previous studies, technical analysis prepared as part of this study and consultation as shown in Figure 7.

The objectives and key directions will guide the preparation of the Vision and Concept Plan for the study area.

**FIGURE 7** PROCESS TO IDENTIFY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTIONS



**TABLE 2** OVERARCHING PROJECT OBJECTIVES

NO.	AREA OF FOCUS	OBJECTIVE
1	WIMMERA RIVER PRECINCT	Activate, connect and add-value to the Riverfront Precinct to establish an iconic community, recreation and tourist destination.
2	HORSHAM'S CAD	Improve the amenity of the CAD and the diversity of land uses to strengthen the existing business environment, attract more visitors and accommodate greater housing, hospitality, open space and events.
3	TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY	Better integrate and improve the connection between the CAD and the Riverfront and improve access to, and connectivity within the study area.
4	SPORT & RECREATION	Adopt a long term strategic approach to developing sporting infrastructure that meets contemporary standards, promotes participation, accommodates regional events, makes efficient use of public land and integrates with urban and river areas.

#### 4.3.1. WIMMERA RIVER PRECINCT

##### OBJECTIVE

Activate, connect and add value to the Wimmera Riverfront Precinct to establish an iconic community, recreation and tourist destination.

##### KEY DIRECTIONS

1. Activate the riverfront to increase utilisation by residents and visitors.

Consider the following opportunities:

- Construct a dedicated meeting place;
- Formalise and upgrade walking/cycling trails;
- Introduce a water play area;
- Develop and upgrade recreational fishing and boating infrastructure;
- Upgrade the soundshell at Sawyer Park;
- Public art and indigenous interpretive content;
- Improve street furniture, upgrade lighting and public toilets.

2. Improve the integration and accessibility of existing areas within the Riverfront Precinct

- Including City Oval, Sawyer Park, Caravan Park, Botanic Gardens and the Showgrounds precinct and consider the need to relocate existing uses to achieve optimal integration and accessibility.

3. Leverage activation to establish commercial and tourism development opportunities

Consider the following opportunities:

- Hospitality – destination restaurant / café;
- Visitor accommodation;
- Business events; and

- Arts and cultural product (e.g. Horsham Museum).

##### ISSUES

- The riverfront is a major recreational asset but is significantly underutilised.
- There are limited attractions to draw locals and visitors to the precinct;
- Existing riverfront precinct uses are poorly integrated;
- Tourism is a key growth sector for the region however visitation growth is low; and
- There is a lack of private land available to leverage riverfront opportunities.

##### RATIONALE FOR DIRECTIONS

- Works will support increased utilisation by locals and visitors, as identified in consultation and demonstrated by similar projects in other regional cities.
- Greater visitation to and awareness of the riverfront will improve business conditions for hospitality, tourism activities and accommodation in the precinct.
- Creation of new development sites will enable a new type of tourism product to be introduced to Horsham and an opportunity to address gaps in accommodation and opportunities in hospitality.
- Opportunity to use a formal trail to communicate important indigenous values and heritage relating to the river, Horsham and the region.
- New infrastructure will support health and recreation benefits, particularly through linear trails, play areas and access to water-based activities.
- A new riverside park would help address the lack of formalised open space and well defined meeting places in the study area.
- Improvements will support the events sector (an important part of the existing tourism economy) and encourage greater length of stay and visitor spend.
- The rationale meets both the 'liveability' and 'economic resilience' principles.

Strategic support:

- Horsham Rural City Council Plan 2018-22 (2018)
- Horsham Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021 (2017)
- Horsham Wimmera Corridor Plan (draft) (2018)
- Wimmera River Project Report (2018).

#### 4.3.2. HORSHAM'S CAD

##### OBJECTIVE

Improve the amenity of the CAD and the diversity of land uses to strengthen the existing business environment, attract more visitors and accommodate greater housing, hospitality, open space and events.

##### KEY DIRECTIONS

1. Implement the recommendations of the CAD Revitalisation Strategy - Including improving streetscapes, prioritising pedestrian/cycling transport and connectivity and better integrating the CAD and the riverfront precinct with clear visual connections and landscaping.
2. Develop of a series of meeting places in the CAD - In consultation with residents and the business community, investigate the opportunity to develop a meeting place/series of meeting places in the CAD. This could link with other CAD anchors (e.g. the Town Hall, May Park, the Riverfront).
3. Investigate the potential to redevelop/develop a high-quality purpose-built Government facility in the CAD – Co-locate a range of Government agencies (e.g. Local and State Government departments, agencies, Police).
4. Identify sites or precincts suitable for urban renewal between the riverfront precinct and Wilson Street. These sites could both transition unsuitable

industrial uses to other locations and accommodate new housing and commercial uses in the CAD. This should include relocating the Council Depot to an alternative location and encouraging land use transition along key pedestrian routes between the riverfront and CAD. Consider Burnt Creek Estate or Enterprise Estate as a location for any industrial uses wishing to relocate.

5. Transform the Wimmera Business Centre - To meet contemporary business needs including reconsidering the operating model, physical requirements and optimum location. Potential to provide an integrated model that co-locates multiple uses including permanent and co-working office accommodation, temporary meeting rooms, community uses (e.g. small library space / gallery space / education facilities) and a café.

##### ISSUES

- There is a significant lack of shade in the CAD.
- The community has aspirations for a new meeting place in the CAD.
- There are limited examples of outdoor dining in the CAD.
- Although the retail sector is not performing strongly, there are opportunities for an improved food and beverage offering for visitors and residents.
- The ageing population will require safe and legible movement infrastructure.
- Wide road reserves and roundabouts prioritise vehicle movements and create a difficult environment for pedestrians.
- The Council depot and Concrete Batching Plant are not suitable to the CAD environment and alternative industrial land exists.
- Residential is becoming a highly attractive land use within and near the CAD.
- The Wimmera Business Centre infrastructure and operating model is outdated.
- Many Government buildings within the CAD will require reinvestment or redevelopment within the study period.

## RATIONALE FOR DIRECTIONS

- An improved streetscape environment will support safety and amenity gains for pedestrians, active transport users and motorists.
- Greater pedestrian footfall, street amenity and footpath space would strengthen conditions for retail and hospitality uses in certain parts of the CAD.
- Greater active transport usage will support health and recreation outcomes.
- Public realm could lead to property values uplift in certain areas, encouraging greater private sector investment and occupation of space.
- Open spaces and meeting places in the CAD will encourage greater dwell times, community interaction, worker amenity and opportunities for temporary events, supporting employment retention, social capital, business conditions and leveraging Horsham's strength in arts and culture.
- Encouraging urban renewal in key areas will present the opportunity to new investment and construction, particularly in the residential sector, contributing to employment, housing options for new and existing residents and potentially improving rental market conditions.
- Transforming the Wimmera Business Centre will present the opportunity to better align this service with market needs with a view to increasing utilisation and underpinning business and employment creation.
- A high-quality and purpose-built government agency facility would improve public sector labour force attraction and retention and create operating efficiencies across a range of government agencies. Redevelopment of the precinct could also create opportunities for new civic open spaces in this section of the CAD, addressing existing shortfalls.

### Strategic support

- Horsham CAD Revitalisation Strategy (2017)
- Imagine Horsham, Community and Stakeholder Engagement (2016)
- Horsham Growth Management Framework (2012).

### 4.3.3. TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

#### OBJECTIVE

Better integrate and improve the connection between the CAD and the riverfront and improve access to, and connectivity within the study area.

#### KEY DIRECTIONS

1. Implement the transport recommendations of the CAD Revitalisation Strategy - including improving streetscapes, prioritising pedestrian/cycling transport and connectivity and better integrating the CAD and the riverfront precinct with clear visual connections and landscaping.
2. Create safe crossing points over the Western Highway and advocate for the downgrading of the road / creation of an alternative truck route to remove large vehicles from the CAD given proximity to schools and the need to improve access to recreation facilities to the east of the highway.
3. Improve north-south routes connecting the riverfront with the CAD. This should consider using existing road reserves as well as opportunities for 'off road' or laneway connections.
4. Establish an east-west linear trail along the existing drainage easement commencing at Hamilton Street and Wimmera Highway and travels in a south west direction, past the Aquatic Centre to Madden Street.
5. Establish a pedestrian bridge at Hamilton Street to provide an off-road connection between residential areas, schools, the river corridor and the CAD and to create a continuous north and south bank trail loop along the river in conjunction with the ANZAC bridge.

#### ISSUES

- Wide road reserves, multiple roundabouts, substantial on-street car parking and large vehicles create an uninviting public realm for pedestrians and visitors
- Connections across the Western Highway are important due to schools and recreation assets to the east and CAD uses to the west, however this movement is difficult given the wide road and high vehicle and truck volumes.
- Connections between the CAD and the riverfront precinct are weak, and wayfinding is poor.
- The study area is poorly connected with residential areas south of the river.
- There is a lack of formal off-road linear trails within the study area.
- Young families and older residents are projected to increase as a share of the population – each group requires opportunities for safe pedestrian movements.

#### RATIONALE FOR DIRECTIONS

- Significant improvement in safety for active transport users in the study area by prioritising pedestrians and cyclists on key routes.
- Greater pedestrian footfall improves trading environment for CAD businesses.
- Improved connections between the CAD and riverfront will encourage greater visitation to each and potential for expenditure growth in the CAD.
- Active transport usage has health and recreation benefits, in particular the creation of a complete riverfront loop will encourage informal recreation.
- Greater riverfront visitation is an important step in supporting tourism industry growth and yield.

#### Strategic support:

- Horsham CAD Revitalisation Strategy (2017)
- Integrated Transport Strategy Stage 1 (final draft) (2016)
- Horsham Municipal Bicycle & Shared Path Plan 2012 to 2016 (2012)
- Horsham Municipal Parking Strategy (2017)

- Imagine Horsham Community and Stakeholder Engagement, Village Well (2016)

#### 4.3.4. AREA OF FOCUS: SPORT AND RECREATION

##### OBJECTIVE

Adopt a long term strategic approach to developing sporting infrastructure that meets contemporary standards, promotes participation, accommodates regional events, makes efficient use of public land and integrates with urban and river areas.

##### KEY DIRECTIONS

1. Upgrade City Oval as Horsham's premier regional AFL/cricket venue – Upgrade City Oval to a regional standard to enable regional AFL and cricket sporting events and other non-sporting events to be hosted. Upgrades required may include expansion of the size of the field, a new multi-purpose pavilion and clubrooms (including fully accessible and female friendly facilities) and covered spectator areas. Delivery of a second netball court would assist in club training and matches.
2. Develop a Regional Indoor Sports Precinct – Develop a regional indoor sports precinct at the McBryde Street site, providing for basketball, netball, badminton, table tennis, volleyball and squash. This project should build on the work completed as part of the *Wimmera Sports Stadium Business Case and Concept Design Report* (2017) and reflect the outcomes of consultation with key stakeholders during 2019.
3. Develop an outdoor multi-purpose sports precinct – plan for and develop a new multi-purpose shared infrastructure outdoor sports precinct. The *Wimmera River and CAD Project* has identified the opportunity to transition the Crown land reserve at the Horsham Showgrounds precinct, currently occupied by the Horsham Regional Greyhound Racing Precinct, to an active sports, passive recreation and tourism precinct, which aligns to the opportunity for a multi-purpose sports precinct. As a preliminary concept this should include provision of multipurpose sporting facilities. Key sports facilities considered for inclusion include Athletics

(including 8 lane grass track and associated athletics facilities), soccer/rugby fields and a synthetic hockey pitch. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of a shared use oval for AFL/Cricket training and matches, this could be delivered as part of a multi-purpose grass field that has the capacity to accommodate multiple sports (i.e. soccer, rugby, AFL, cricket). Consideration could also be given to the inclusion of tennis courts with the synthetic hockey facility, however this would require two hockey pitches to deliver the required amount of courts to service regional events (i.e. 16 courts) and would be subject to site capacity and appropriate shared surfaces. Any new tennis courts delivered at the Showgrounds would result in the need to consolidate existing tennis facilities in central Horsham due to the existing over supply of courts. Further work is required to deliver on this concept, including an assessment of facility and site requirements and the preparation of a masterplan and business case to support investment.

##### ISSUES

- Sporting facilities and open space areas in the study area are disparate, inefficient and poorly integrated with other sports and land uses.
- City Oval and Horsham Lawn Tennis and Croquet have facilities which do not meet current standards and as a result cannot host certain events or accommodate participation from a broad cross section of the community.
- There is a pressing need to develop a multi-purpose indoor sporting facility in Horsham.
- The Showgrounds is a significantly underutilised public land asset located adjacent to existing and proposed sporting infrastructure and with rover frontage.

##### RATIONALE FOR KEY DIRECTIONS

###### City Oval:

- Increase utilisation of an existing asset and infrastructure.

- Provide facilities that are commensurate with Horsham's designation as a regional City.
- Attract regional level sporting events driving increased tourist visitation and expenditure and supporting the local economy.
- Deliver modern community infrastructure, which improves liveability and assists in the attraction and retention of population.
- Provide compliant sporting facilities.
- Support increased participation for all ages and demographics, including through provision of universally accessible and all gender facilities.
- Improve integration with surrounding areas, in particular Sawyer Park and Riverfront precinct.
- Opportunities for use by other sporting codes for regional events and non-sporting events.

#### Indoor Sports:

- Demand from indoor sports for an appropriate facility to host training, events and matches.
- The need to provide compliant sporting facilities.
- The need to provide additional courts to meet current and projected demand.
- Providing facilities that are commensurate with Horsham's designation as a regional City.
- Support increased participation for all ages and demographics, including through provision of universally accessible and all gender facilities.
- To attract regional level sporting events driving increased tourist visitation and expenditure and supporting the local economy.
- Opportunity to attract non-sporting events.
- Delivering modern community infrastructure, which improves liveability and assists in the attraction and retention of population.
- The need to co-locate and share infrastructure so asset utilisation is maximised.

- Support and justification as identified through the *Wimmera Sports Stadium Business Case and Concept Design Report* (2017).

#### Outdoor multi-purpose sports:

- Demand from sports for appropriate and suitable facilities for training, matches and club facilities (little athletics, soccer, rugby and hockey).
- Demand for an additional AFL field for training, matches and catering for future growth opportunities.
- Demand from cricket for an additional 'hard wicket' facility.
- Demand from Hockey for a venue/surface capable of hosting matches in Horsham (currently utilise Dimboola for matches) and an appropriate training surface.
- Demand from soccer for an appropriate venue for training and matches, including a full-sized soccer pitch.
- The need to support increased participation for all ages and demographics, including through provision of universally accessible and all gender facilities.
- Encouraging growth and participation in grass roots sports;
- Providing facilities that are commensurate with Horsham's designation as a regional City.
- To attract municipal sporting events including creating new opportunities for little athletics, soccer, rugby events (and hockey).
- Driving increased tourist visitation and expenditure and supporting the local economy.
- Delivering modern community infrastructure, which improves liveability and assists in the attraction and retention of population.
- The need to co-locate and share infrastructure so asset utilisation is maximised.
- Improve the southern gateway to Horsham (e.g. along the Western Highway) by providing a high-quality and well-designed facility.

- Generate economic benefits for Horsham by hosting regional events in a facility close to the CAD.
- Potential to access the Wimmera River for irrigation purposes.

**Strategic support:**

- Horsham Sporting Facilities Demand Assessment;
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2013-18 (draft) (2013)
- Wimmera Sports Stadium Business Case and Concept Design (2017).

#### **4.4. NEXT STEPS**

The objectives and directions will inform the preparation of a Vision and Masterplan for the study area which will set out the preferred location, land use vision and potential design outcomes for key sections of the study area.

Public comment will be invited on the Vision and Concept Plan before an action and implementation plan is prepared.



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