

# HORSHAM CBD REVITALISATION STRATEGY

May 2017

## CONTENTS

---

Introduction	3
Horsham CBD today	4
Objectives	5
Principles	6
Interventions	7
Impacts	13
Implementation	19
References	21

# INTRODUCTION

Horsham Rural City Council is planning a programme of infrastructure works to support a revitalised Central Business District (CBD) area. The purpose of this document is to:

- Identify how the planned CBD revitalisation programme supports broader Council strategy and policy ('Objectives' section)
- Articulate key principles that will guide development of the revitalisation programme ('Principles' section)
- Summarise Council's current plans for the programme and provide recommendations on the approach to further developing public realm and transport improvement projects ('Interventions' section)
- Provide evidence on the impacts that can be expected from the programme, including economic, social and environmental benefits ('Impacts' section).
- Summarise the current implementation plans for delivering the programme ('Implementation' section).

This strategy document focuses on guidance for infrastructure and Council-asset improvements that will form the core of the CBD revitalisation programme. Alongside infrastructure improvements ('hardware'), a wider set of complementary 'software' interventions including events, promotional activities and community and business engagement can be considered for further activating the Horsham CBD and reinforcing the impacts of improvements to physical assets.

This document builds on guidance provided for urban design improvements in the Horsham CBD by the Central Activity District (CAD) Strategy (2013). It provides more specific guidance on developing a set of effective interventions to strengthen the CBD as the hub of the Wimmera region.



# HORSHAM CBD TODAY

The Horsham CBD is the economic and social centre of the Wimmera region. It serves the Horsham urban area population of approximately 15,000 residents and a broader rural hinterland with a population of approximately 50,000.

The region's major export industry is broadacre dryland agricultural production and the Wimmera is one of the largest grain growing regions in the world. Major employment sectors for the Horsham urban area include agriculture, retail, healthcare and social assistance.

The Horsham CBD is particularly important in providing consumer and producer services for the region. Within the Horsham Central area (including the CBD and surrounding urban area), there are 4,800 consumer service jobs (47% of the Wimmera's jobs in this sector) and 1,500 producer service sector jobs (54% of the region's). Overall, 38% of the Wimmera's 20,000 jobs are located within the Horsham Central area (2011 Census).

Horsham is located north of the Grampians National Park and is on the Western Highway between Melbourne and Adelaide, attracting a growing number of visitors to the town. Tourism to the Grampians has grown strongly in recent years, with domestic and international visitor numbers increasing from 1.1 million in 2011 to 2 million in 2015 (Grampians Tourism).

Horsham is also the cultural and social centre of the Wimmera for its resident population and functions as a meeting place, not only for economic exchange but social interaction and for community events.

The Horsham CBD has generally retained its vitality, despite ongoing challenges to main street retailing. While some retail sectors have seen declining levels of activity in recent years, the hospitality sector has seen growth. Maintaining Horsham's role as a vibrant economic and community hub for the Wimmera is a key focus area for Horsham Council.

Going forward, employment projections to 2020 forecast modest growth in jobs numbers with particularly strong growth in the Health Care and Social Assistance,

Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade sectors (Department of Employment 2016, forecasts for the Victoria North West region).

The shift in employment toward these sectors that locate in downtown environments is likely to strengthen the importance of the Horsham CBD in determining the future economic performance of the region.



# OBJECTIVES

The Horsham CBD revitalisation programme is designed to strengthen the economic performance of the region, improve social outcomes, including health and community wellbeing, and future proof infrastructure by adapting to climate change. It also responds to some of the key challenges facing the CBD and the broader region.

## Alignment with local policy

The programme closely aligns with the objectives of key strategy and policy documents for Horsham including:

- The Horsham Rural City Council Plan 2016-2020
- The Municipal Strategic Statement (2016)
- The Horsham Central Activities District Strategy (2013)
- The Horsham Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013).

The programme will support the following major themes from the Council Plan:

### Community and Cultural Development

The CBD revitalisation programme supports the Council Plan goals for a “vibrant and diverse community” with enhanced access to cultural activities. It strengthens the CBD as the cultural and social hub of the region. It supports three of the seven priority areas identified by the Health and Wellbeing Strategy; ‘social connection’, ‘physical activity’ and ‘healthy, safe, liveable environments’ - by providing a high amenity CBD environment that supports walking and social interaction.

### Sustaining the Economy

The CBD revitalisation programme supports the Council Plan priorities for increased visitor numbers and promotion of Horsham as a regional city. It makes the CBD a more attractive location for business to locate and for visitors to spend time.

### Asset Management

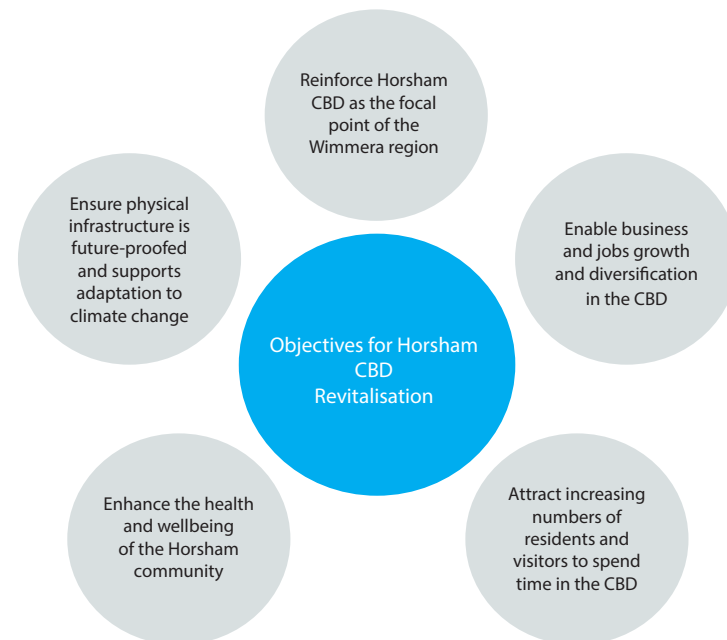
The CBD revitalisation programme supports the Council Plan priority for “developing and maintaining council’s physical assets for long term sustainability, amenity and safety” by improving the quality of infrastructure within the CBD.

## Alignment with state policy

In addition to supporting local policy, the programme is well-aligned with state-level policy that aims to strengthen regional Victoria (eg Outcome 07 of Plan Melbourne). Revitalisation of the Horsham CBD contributes to vibrant regional towns that provide Victorian’s with more choice about where to live and helps manage the state’s population growth.

## Objectives to guide the programme

A set of specific objectives have been established for the planned CBD revitalisation works. These will provide key indicators for the success of the programme.



# PRINCIPLES

---

The following principles will assist in guiding the CBD revitalisation package of works and in making trade-offs between competing priorities. These principles draw on best-practice international experience with successful town centre revitalisation programmes in regional contexts.

## Prioritise place function over movement function

The movement (or 'link') and place street design paradigm calls for consideration of streets' functions as both movement conduits that form part of the transport network (links) and as places that support and enables human interaction and economic exchange (places). Streets within CBD environments generally need to prioritise place over movement functions to maximise the value that the street space can provide. This may mean prioritising pedestrian space over traffic lanes or attractive slow speed environments over fast traffic movement.

## Maintain a compact CBD

Economic and social activity thrive in dense and compact environments, and this is not limited to metropolitan contexts. It can also be achieved in regional settings such as Horsham. While Horsham has been relatively successful in curbing the outwards expansion of its retail and residential development, further possibilities exist to unlock potential opportunities to intensify retail, hospitality, community and even residential function within the CBD.

## Prioritise walkability

Walkable towns are more prosperous, interesting, and diverse. A town that prioritises walkability is a town that supports economic and social development and the health of its citizens. Horsham is endowed with strong bones that support walkability. Over 75% of the town's residents live within 3km of the CBD, enabling high potential for mode shift to walking and cycling.

## Connect the CBD with its surrounds

Pedestrian connectivity is a key attribute that supports an attractive walking environment for people of all ages. Horsham's grid network of streets is conducive for walking however this could be enhanced through interventions in laneways, across surface car parking areas and links to surrounding residential areas. There are also opportunities to connect the CBD with surrounding natural and recreational assets such as the Botanical Gardens and Wimmera River.

## Focus on the main streets

Main streets in regional contexts need to be retained as the focal point of social and economic activity. Concentrating activity within a main street or compact grid of central streets is crucial to ensuring sufficient 'buzz' and density of activity to ensure an attractive central destination for residents and visitors. There are risks in attempting to extend the CBD to fringe areas because that density of activity will be diluted.

## Celebrate heritage

Heritage built form is visible in the Horsham CBD which supports the visual richness of the town as a place to visit and linger. Heritage is a key asset that is a critical factor in attracting visitors and building local connection with place. Horsham should stand to benefit from tourism markets due to its heritage value and location within close proximity to the Grampians and other regional attractions.

# INTERVENTIONS

## A package of interventions

Horsham Rural City Council is planning a package of works for the CBD revitalisation programme including:

- Foundations – upgrades to basic infrastructure
- Public realm improvements – improvements to streetscapes and public spaces
- Transport improvements – improvements to the transport network.

This section outlines interventions currently planned or under investigation and outlines some recommended approaches to consider when implementing the improvements.



## Foundations

Current initiatives under consideration by Council for improvements to infrastructure assets in the CBD include:

### Footpaths

- Upgrades to footpaths ensuring a standardised pavement aesthetic and material providing legibility and uniformity. Improved footpaths will provide a cohesive walking network and is critical for supporting Council's objectives to revitalise the CBD, encourage walking, and boost retail turnover from increased foot traffic.

### Water supply

- Upgrades to water supply to meet fire regulations and enable new building and business development.
- Introduction of water sensitive urban design principles into Council planning ensuring low water-use street trees, garden beds and other landscaping elements.

### Electricity and lighting

- Upgrades to power supply including burying overhead cables to improve power supply resilience to unexpected events including accidents and extreme weather. The upgrade will also declutter the street environment which will support improvements to the public realm.
- Installation of energy efficient public lighting systems, including LED light fittings. The use of LED street lighting could potentially achieve energy savings of 50 per cent compared with the existing lights ([reneweconomy.com.au](http://reneweconomy.com.au)).

### Wifi

- Completing the roll-out of free wifi in the CBD. This initiative will support Council's tourism, marketing and business growth objectives while opening up the community to knowledge platforms and e-commerce opportunities.

## Public realm improvements

The public realm refers to the publicly owned streets, spaces and places that are shared by the community. It comprises all built form elements, exterior places and streetscape linkages that support an environment for social engagement and economic activity. Public realm improvements currently in planning or investigation phase for the Horsham CBD include:

- A Town Square
- Pavement modifications in areas with median parking areas to calm traffic and enhance pedestrian access
- Tree plantings and landscaping in median car parking areas, incorporating water harvesting and reuse
- Provision of shade and shelter to enhance shop fronts, and connecting parking areas to retail areas for pedestrian access, including intersection improvements to encourage safer pedestrian crossings.

When considering public realm interventions, it should be recognised that three factors that can influence the public realm are:

- The buildings that line, enclose and define the space
- The space itself
- The people that inhabit the public realm and the way they use the space.

Successful interventions will combine physical asset upgrades (hardware) with complementary activities to activate the public space (software). This may include Council facilitating events and regular 'programming' of public space.

### Creating successful town squares

An initial "design rationale" has been prepared considering the potential locations and design concepts for a Town Square in the Horsham CBD. A Town Square is a quality public realm instrument that can provide important public space for passive recreation and gathering in town centre environments. Town squares are particularly effective in supporting adjacent businesses and activating adjoining spaces.

When town squares are designed in appropriate locations, these spaces act as focal points for the civic and social life of a city and become places where impromptu gatherings and people watching naturally occur. Town squares are best suited to environments of dense pedestrian activity as they are required to sustain a high level of use through each and every day.

A Town Square in Horsham could provide an important focal point for social interaction and community activities in the CBD should the community support a proposal in the future.

In further planning and engagement with the community on this proposal, Council should assess whether the preconditions exist for a successful town square. Public squares are most successful in environments with intense land uses and high pedestrian volumes that provide activity and passive surveillance around the clock. It will be appropriate for Council to consider the proposal alongside other options for improving the public realm throughout the CBD area.



---

## Transport improvements

Horsham Rural City Council has recently prepared two significant strategies that will guide transport-related interventions in the CBD. The Horsham Integrated Transport Strategy (while not yet completed) and the Horsham Municipal Parking Strategy identify strategic transport objectives that CBD improvements should help achieve.

The Horsham Integrated Transport Strategy is to be developed over three stages and proposes to address a broad range of transport related issues across the municipality. The Municipal Parking Strategy was recently made available to Council in draft form and is primarily focussed on issues arising from parking management in the Horsham CBD. It reveals that current parking supply is plentiful and caters for current and forecasted demands. It also provides further detail on wider issues associated with car parking including the impact parking can have on vibrant street life, foot traffic, retail turnover and transport mode shift.

Both strategies follow earlier policy documents for Horsham including the Central Activities District Strategy, which, among a broader set of findings, revealed that the town centre has been influenced by traffic engineering approaches that supported the addition of roundabouts in the CBD, wider road widths and increases in car parking. Future interventions will need to take a fresh approach if revitalisation objectives are to be achieved. The following transport improvements should be considered:

### Intersection upgrades

Intersections with high pedestrian use and safety problems should be targeted for early improvements. Potential changes can include:

- Tightening intersection geometries (eg turning radii) to slow traffic, improve safety and ensure more direct paths for pedestrian crossings
- Reducing road widths or numbers of traffic lanes at intersections to slow traffic and simplify pedestrian crossings
- Installing raised pedestrian crossings at intersections to slow traffic, improve

pedestrian safety and increase accessibility for all users.

- Reconsidering the use of roundabouts at key intersections. Roundabouts provide efficient flow of vehicles, but provide little support or safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Proposed signalisation of Wilson Street and Darlot Street, should improve traffic flow while providing a safer environment for walking and cycling.

### New mid-block crossings

Mid-block zebra or wombat crossings should be introduced in areas with high pedestrian activity. They are suitable in areas where the road width is narrower or the speed limit reduced and can support easier pedestrian use of the town centre. Roberts Avenue is an exemplar crossing in the Horsham CBD and should be a benchmark for new crossings.

Crossings should be introduced in conjunction with other street features including street trees, water fountains and landscaping to fully integrate with the crossing design and traffic treatments.

### Providing for bikes

Cycling allows travel of 4-5 km within a 20-minute ride, which in Horsham, could see a large section of the population cycle to the CBD with ease. Infrastructure improvements will be necessary to enable this shift. The Horsham Municipal Bicycle and Shared Path Plan provides a range of recommendations to improve the broader cycling network however future planning activities need to focus more on the CBD, with a priority to provide safe on-street bike lanes, protected from traffic and integrating with the streetscape and more broadly with the CBD environment.

Reducing traffic speeds to 30km/ hr and ensuring a maximum of one lane of traffic per direction will provide significant improvements to the safety and attractiveness of the cycling environment. Removal of on-street parking or replacement of angle-parking with parallel parking on selected cycle routes can also improve safety for cyclists.

On high traffic-volume and high-speed roads (50km/ hr+), cycle lanes that are physically-separated from traffic will be required to attract a broad range of users. It is recommended that key cycle routes are identified for the CBD that connect legibly with a broader network of paths throughout Horsham.

## Car parking

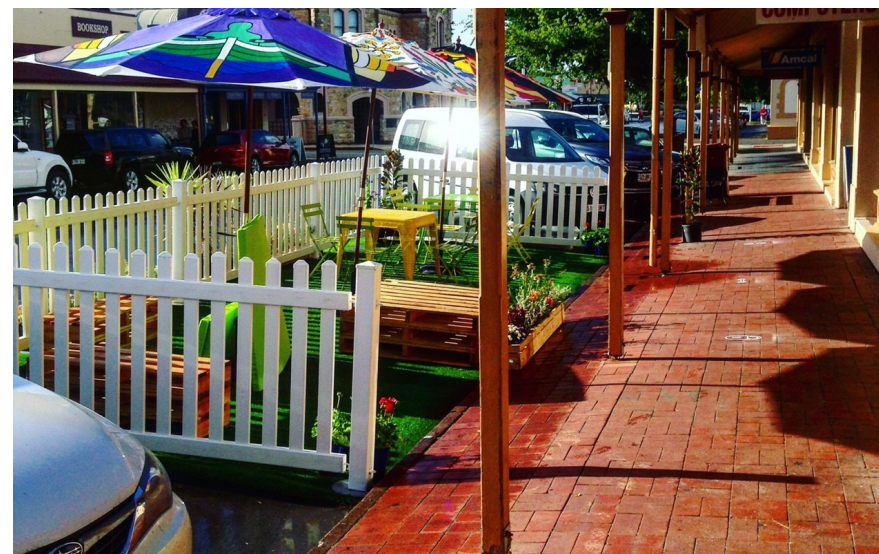
Car parking is to be managed with consideration to revitalisation programs, transport mode shift and retail turnover. Council can seek guidance through the draft Municipal Parking Strategy for Horsham.

Of particular interest, the Draft Municipal Parking Strategy recognises the impacts that an oversupply of car parking can pose on the economic and social health of a town centre environment like the Horsham CBD. Recommendations for this strategy extended beyond car parking management themes to include advice to support Council's mode shift objectives and options to revitalise the CBD.

Relevant recommendations:

- Introduction of a parking overlay into the Horsham Planning Scheme to reduce the state standard car parking rates for new CBD development.
- Commit to strategies and initiatives to reduce car dependence in Horsham and achieve a shift to more sustainable modes of transport.
- Manage CBD time restrictions to encourage parking in peripheral areas in order to increase foot traffic in the CBD
- Defer any plans to increase CBD parking supply and retain current levels on the basis that peak period occupancy in the CBD is currently low (approximately 62%).
- Enable the development of residential dwellings and/or re-use of existing buildings in the CBD with the waiving of parking requirements.
- Make Horsham the "Worlds most walkable rural city"

The Draft Municipal Parking Strategy provides an important way forward for Horsham in its management of car parking and mode shift and is also aligned with the principles and visions that are important in achieving a successful revitalisation programme in the future.



## Case study: Precedents for transport improvements

The images on the previous page display alternative ways to use car parking space. The top image is from Strathalbyn (SA) where a 'parklet', which is a temporary tactical intervention, was used to demonstrate how car parking space can be used to provide on-street gathering space for social interaction.

The parklet formed part of a community engagement component of a CBD revitalisation project and was used to test how the community would respond to the loss of three car parking spaces on the mainstreet and whether there was scope to introduce such a treatment on a permanent basis.

The bottom images on the previous page provide before and after shots of Cecil Street, South Melbourne where a seperated bike path was introduced to separate cyclists from vehicle traffic. This involved reallocating road space by flipping bicycle lane space with the car parking spaces, with the addition of a concrete buffer in between the bike lane and parking bay to protect cyclists from cars.

The top image on this page illustrates a main street environment that is supported by slow traffic speeds and opportunities for pedestrians to cross the street freely using an improved crossing point. The environment is enhanced by generous street trees and soft landscaping providing a welcoming environment for informal gathering and lingering.

The bottom image is a concept design developed for Lakes Entrance as part of a CBD streetscape master plan that provided a package of interventions aimed at boosting pedestrian activity and improving the general 'pulse' of the town. Here an extremely wide main street makes crossing to the waterfront cumbersome and unsafe for pedestrians while encouraging high vehicle speeds. By removing some car parking and reducing the widths of the road, the concept design provides an environment that naturally slows down traffic while supporting cyclists and pedestrians with seperated bicycle lanes and a zebra crossing.



## Case study: Ararat town centre

2008 - 2010. Project cost: \$668,000

High Street, Ararat, underwent design works to improve the amenity and safety of the CBD for pedestrians and visitors. The new town plaza has re-activated High Street and it is now the main arrival and departure point for walkers, cyclists and bus passengers.

Historically, the area has primarily supported private vehicles and did not offer good connectivity for pedestrians or cyclists travelling into the town centre.

The project was focussed on improving the pedestrian accessibility and public realm of the centre. This was achieved by reallocating road space from vehicles to pedestrians and cyclists. This involved the removal of a split grade median in High Street and the reallocation of 2.8 metres of road space and the existing on-road bicycle lane into a new three metre off-road bicycle path with accompanying landscaping which segregated cyclists and motorists.

The final result has culminated in a design outcome that has uncluttered the existing town centre to enable cohesive and legible links for walking and cycling.

### Project outputs:

- two pedestrian crossings
- connection between Barkly and High Streets through Target car park
- town centre bus stop
- town plaza
- three metre off-road bicycle path.
- Bicycle parking

Source: DEDJTR



# IMPACTS - ECONOMIC

---

CBD revitalisation programmes focused on upgrading physical infrastructure can have a broad range of positive economic impacts. Impacts can be monitored through indicators such as pedestrian footfall, business and job numbers, retail spending or GDP.

Economic impacts from improving CBD infrastructure and amenity arise through complex chains of interacting factors and attributing direct connections between infrastructure interventions and indicators such as employment or GDP levels is often challenging. Economic impacts from the Horsham programme are likely to include:

## Increased provision of retail, hospitality and other services

Upgrading the Horsham CBD's core infrastructure including footpaths, transport and water supply will provide the foundations for supporting business to locate in the CBD. Improving amenity through streetscape upgrades and high quality public spaces can attract increased visitation and longer dwell times by local and visiting customers which in turn increases the viability of a more diverse retail and hospitality offer.

Wide footpaths and slower road traffic can make activities such as outdoor dining possible, enabling enhanced provision of hospitality services. CBD enhancements can also attract a broader range of businesses to locate in Central Horsham, with professional service firms attracted by the increased amenity of the area.

## Higher business turnover from increased local and tourist visitation to the CBD

Increased local and tourist visitors can increase consumer spending within the Horsham CBD. This can increase the profitability of existing businesses and increase the viability of new business openings. Consumer spending within the CBD may be more likely to focus spending within independent locally-owned businesses. International research suggests that a dollar spent at an independent business generates about three times as much benefit to the local economy than a dollar spent at a chain retailer (Tolley, 2011). Higher economic multiplier effects result from more linkages between retailers, employees and local suppliers.

## Increased employment opportunities

A more economically vibrant CBD and increased consumer service business activity will provide increased job opportunities for Horsham residents. Increased job opportunities are most likely within the retail, accommodation and hospitality sectors. Wider flow-on effects from CBD revitalisation could create employment in property, construction and professional services.

From the modelled increase in output attributed to CBD revitalisation interventions totalling \$3.250 million, there will be a direct expansion in the economy, and flow-on industrial effects in terms of local purchases of goods and services are anticipated. It is estimated that these indirect impacts would result in jobs growth in Horsham (REMPAN, 2016).

## Impacts output

Economic modelling has been undertaken for Horsham detailing impact scenarios associated with future CBD revitalisation interventions. It is estimated that the demand for intermediate goods and services would rise by \$2.417 million based on an increase in output of \$3.250 million. These industrial effects include multiple rounds of flow-on effects, as servicing sectors increase their own output and demand for local goods and services in response to the direct change to the economy. This would ultimately lead to wage growth and an increase in the workforce participation which will lead to greater local consumption. A proportion of this expenditure is captured in the local economy with consumption effects under this scenario estimated at \$0.869 million (REMPAN, 2016).

## Impacts on wages and salaries

CBD revitalisation works totalling \$3.250 million is expected to increase total wages and salaries in Horsham, including all direct, industrial and consumption effects to an estimated \$1.079 million (REMPAN, 2016).

## Improved liveability and ability to attract and retain residents

An attractive CBD can be a source of civic pride and create a high-value destination that improves the everyday liveability of Horsham for its residents. This can assist in retaining existing residents and attracting new corners from beyond the region.

## Increased property values and property development

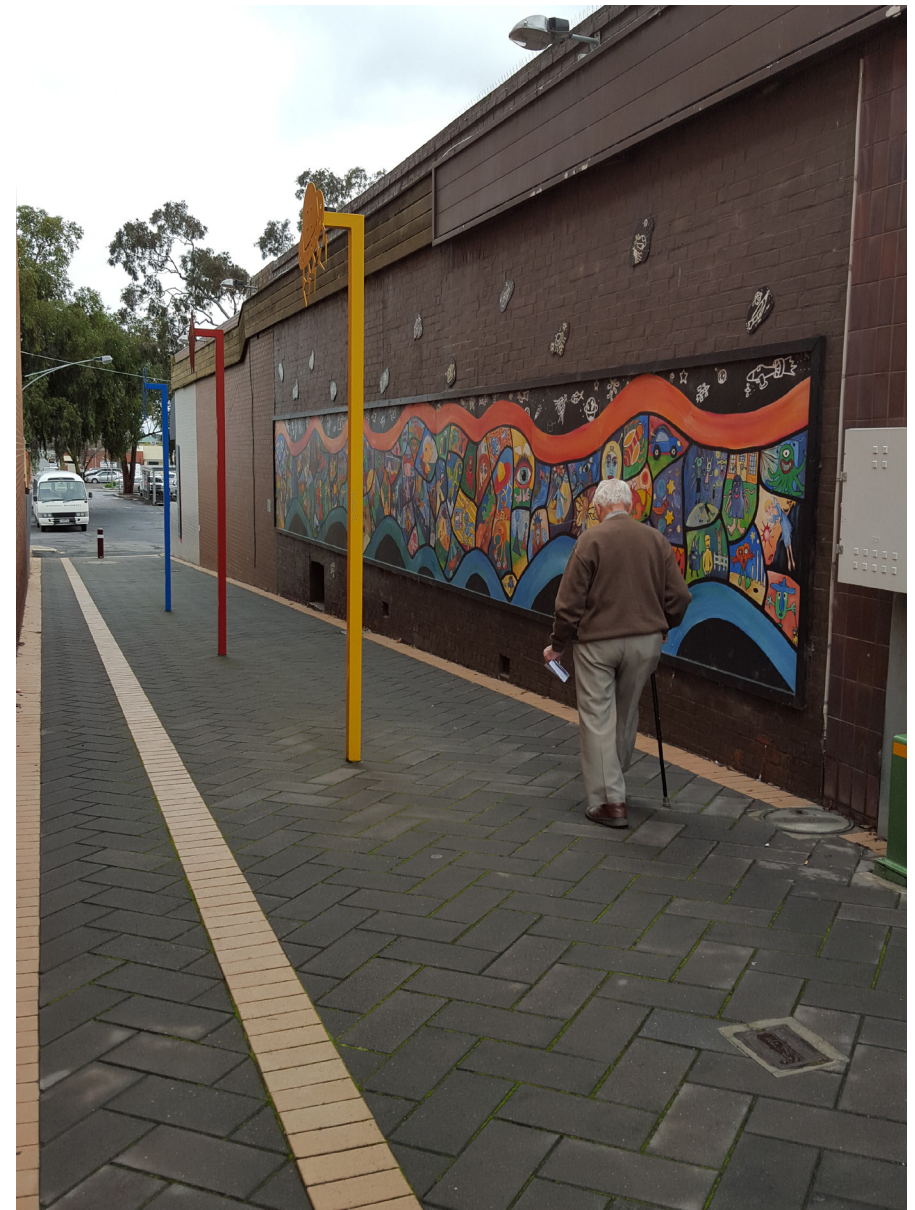
Higher business turnover for retail and hospitality businesses and a stronger customer base for producer service firms can, over time, promote higher commercial rents. International research has found that improvements in street design quality add an average of 4.9% to retail rents for retail shops on main streets (CABE, 2007). Improved 'walkability' scores have also been associated with higher retail, commercial and residential property values, with a 10-point increase in walkability (on a 100 point scale) increasing property values by 5-8% (Pivo and Fisher, 2010).

Growing property values can, in turn, encourage increased levels of property development activity and in the long term increased provision of space for further business and residential growth. Upgrading the physical infrastructure of the Horsham CBD can be a catalyst for setting in train a virtuous cycle of increased consumer spending, business growth and ongoing improvements to the town's built form.

## Impacts on value added

Modelled impacts associated with revitalisation works in Horsham totalling \$3.250 million is anticipated to provide \$0.720 million in value add benefits to Horsham. From this direct expansion in the economy, flow-on industrial effects in terms of local purchases of goods and services is anticipated, and it is estimated that these indirect impacts would result in an additional \$0.895 million of value-add benefits.

Furthermore, the increase in direct and indirect output and the corresponding boost to jobs in the economy is anticipated to lead to positive growth in wages and salaries. The anticipated growth in wages and salaries is expected to cause flow on effects into the local economy through greater consumption. The consumption effects under this scenario are expected to provide a further \$0.508 million in value-add (REMPAN, 2016).



## Case study: Fort Street upgrade, Auckland, New Zealand



Auckland Council undertook a significant streetscape upgrade of Fort Street in the Auckland CBD in 2011. The upgrade involved introducing a 'shared space' where traditional street kerbs separating footpath and carriageway were replaced by a continuous paved surface for pedestrians, vehicles and bicycles.

The Council's post-implementation evaluation report found that peak-hour foot traffic increased by 50%, retail spending in surrounding shops almost doubled and hospitality spending increased by 400%. Five new hospitality businesses opened outdoor dining areas after the upgrade.

The Fort Street upgrade was a significant investment in a much larger city than Horsham, however the study illustrates the direct local economic benefits of streetscape upgrades.

Further reading: <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/planspoliciesprojects/plansstrategies/ccmp/Documents/fortstareevaluationexecsummary.pdf>



## IMPACTS - SOCIAL

---

Transport, streetscape, and CBD infrastructure upgrades can result in a range of social impacts for Horsham's residents. Health, road safety, and community wellbeing can all be positively influenced by an effective CBD revitalisation programme.

### Health

The interventions planned for Horsham's CBD will improve the walkability of the town by providing enhanced pedestrian links, improved road crossings and a generally more attractive walking environment. Horsham's relatively compact CBD, close proximity between CBD and residential areas and connected grid street network all provide excellent foundations for walkability and helping residents meet National Physical Activity Guidelines (30 mins moderate activity per day) through everyday walking.

Concentrating retail and business activity within the CBD can enable a density of shopping activity that enables walking, rather than driving between shops. Safer and slower roads can encourage increased cycling and accompanying health benefits from physical activity. Research on the impact of streetscape upgrades in Brighton, UK found a 162% increase in pedestrian activity after implementation of a shared space project (Living Streets, 2011). A wide range of evidence confirms that regular walking has substantial health benefits, particularly reducing coronary and cardiovascular-related illnesses (PWC, 2011).

The Australian Heart Foundation sees that the local physical environment has a significant influence on how easy it is to incorporate physical activity within everyday life. Local research for Horsham suggests that 30% of Horsham Residents do not meet physical activity guidelines, a higher rate than the Victorian average (Horsham Rural City Council, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013). An effective CBD revitalisation programme that encourages increased everyday walking can help address these health challenges.

### Accessibility for all

Footpath upgrades and improved road crossings will improve the accessibility of the CBD for all users, including vulnerable users such as older people and people with

disabilities. This can provide for increased social and economic opportunities for Horsham's most vulnerable residents.

### Road safety

Enhancements to road crossing points, traffic calming to slow traffic speeds and improved design of parking spaces can have road safety benefits for the Horsham community. Improved road safety from slower traffic speeds and improved street design can have particular benefits to children and the ageing population who are at most risk of pedestrian-related road crashes.

### Community wellbeing

The high quality streetscape and public space upgrades planned for Horsham can strengthen community identification with the town centre and provide a platform for increased everyday socialisation and for social and cultural events such as performances, markets and fairs. Increased everyday visitation and pedestrian activity within the CBD can assist in connecting the community and building social capital by making spontaneous streetside interaction more likely. A range of international research has confirmed that walking-friendly environments are associated with greater levels of social interaction, sense of community, social capital, and place attachment (Living Streets, 2011).



## Case study: Warrnambool Foreshore Promenade

The Warrnambool City Council's recent initiative to develop a 5.7km Foreshore Promenade has exceeded expectations for use by local residents and visitors. It provides walking and cycling access to local facilities and views across the coastal landscape.

The facility accommodates walkers, joggers, cyclists and wheelchairs and successfully provides a recreational asset that also encourages increased physical activity, community interaction and a strengthened sense of place.

## Case study: Put the town back on the map through food

Regional town rejuvenation benefits from innovative small businesses, particularly restaurants and small gourmet food producers who choose to locate to rural locations to leverage off regional produce and nearby suppliers. This can broaden the appeal of an area to tourism markets and has been particularly successful in putting small towns on the map as a desirable place for weekend trips and rural food experiences.

Beechworth, Daylesford, Dunkeld, Mildura, Healesville, Birregurra, Forrest and Port Fairy are just a few examples where food and produce have played a significant role in drawing new visitors to a town and developing new tourism industries and markets.

## Case study: Bendigo CBD

The City of Bendigo has in recent times progressed considerably with restoring pedestrian priority in the CBD as an approach to revitalise the inner areas, promote walkability and connectivity, and boost economic and social development. Here we provide some project details for works undertaken in Bendigo 10 years ago which have contributed significantly to city's recent success

Project outputs:

- Removal of 4 pedestrian barriers and 2 formal pedestrian crossings
- Removal of signage and other non-essential control infrastructure
- Streets narrowed by 3.6 metres to 6.5 metres
- Installation of informal 1500m<sup>2</sup> shared zone
- Three bluestone rubble strip entry treatments
- Footpaths widen to 7.0 metres
- Pavement constructed to provide level surface throughout intersection
- Installation of 8 water fountains and 6 entry plinths.

Project commenced: October 2007 Construction completed: April 2009 Project cost: \$1.07M Key design principles:

- Slow-speed environments
- Creating a well-defined urban precinct
- Provision of a continuous pedestrian network
- Altering spatial priorities retaining just essential traffic control infrastructure.

Source: DEDJTR

## IMPACTS - ENVIRONMENTAL

Planned public realm and transport improvements for Horsham CBD can result in environmental benefits. Upgrades to the Council's physical assets and provision of street trees will strengthen the ability of Horsham to adapt to climate change, including increased extreme weather events and risk of drought. Transport improvements that encourage mode shift to walking and cycling will reduce the local and global environmental impacts of Horsham's transport system.

### Improved adaptation to climate change

Climate change will result in increased numbers of extreme weather events, including drought, heavy rainfall storms, and extreme high temperatures. Planned interventions for the CBD including increased planting of street trees and increased provision of shopfront verandahs will assist in preparing Horsham for climate change. Shade provided by street trees and verandahs can reduce the impacts of extreme temperatures on residents and visitors using the CBD and have positive effects on local micro-climates. This can reduce the health impacts of extreme heat days on vulnerable populations including young children and Horsham's growing ageing population. It can also reduce potential negative effects on retail and hospitality sectors from extreme heat days by making CBD streets more attractive, cooler places to be.

Planting of CBD gardens and trees can utilise drought-tolerant plants to increase the town's preparedness for climate change. This reduces Horsham's water requirements and strengthens the ability of the town to respond to increased risk of drought.

### Reduced environmental impacts from the transport system

Horsham's transport system is currently highly dependent on the use of fossil-fueled cars and trucks, with accompanying environmental impacts on local air quality (particulate and other toxic emissions), levels of streetside noise, and contributions to global climate change (carbon emissions). CBD revitalisation interventions such as improving the town's walkability and providing for cycling can encourage shifting some passenger transport trips from cars to walking and cycling, reducing local noise and air pollution from the transport sector, and contributing to responsibilities to reduce climate-

changing carbon emissions. Local noise and air pollution and dust can be further reduced by vegetation and street trees that filter air pollutants.

### Improved stormwater management

There are opportunities for streetscape upgrades in the Horsham CBD to incorporate stormwater management infrastructure that allows for filtering of stormwater in kerbside raingardens, reducing demands on stormwater infrastructure and reducing water pollutants and road runoff before entering streams and rivers. Bio-retention of stormwater can be improved by large street trees that absorb water runoff.

#### Case study: Street trees for climate change adaptation

The benefits of trees in urban areas for responding to climate change are being increasingly recognised by cities across the world. Street trees can reduce temperatures and the health impacts of extreme heat events, reduce the urban heat island effect and reduce building energy consumption associated with cooling. The City of Melbourne's Urban Forest Strategy aims to increase public realm canopy cover from 22% to 40% by 2040 (City of Melbourne, 2011). Its Urban Forest Strategy also has goals to increase urban forest diversity, improve vegetation health, improve soil moisture and quality and improve biodiversity.

Research finds that planting trees is one of the most cost effective strategies for urban cooling. Trees can reduce ambient temperatures by around 2.5°C. Trees cooling effects can also reduce building energy consumption, with studies finding up to 25% savings in electricity consumption for air-conditioning (Victorian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation Research, 2012).

With increasing extreme heat days predicted, street trees provide an important tool for local councils to help prepare their communities for climate change.

# IMPLEMENTATION

---

## Roles and responsibilities

An effective package of interventions will require collaboration between Council, private sector and the community, particularly:

- Property developers and owners
- Traders
- Local residents
- Community organisations

The completion of infrastructure upgrades and maintenance works outlined in the 'Foundations' section of this report will be critical improvements to the town which can be rolled out into the future. These projects include water system upgrades, paving works, installation of energy efficient street lighting, water fountains, street trees and burying power lines underground all of which are aligned to, and support plans to revitalise the CBD through public realm interventions, which are outlined in this report.

## Funding

Delivering on a variety of revitalisation works in the CBD will require funding streams coordinated through collaboration between Council, State Government and the private sector.

Horsham Rural City Council is one of ten members of the Regional Cities Victoria group of councils. Nominally, some funding has been targeted at CBD revitalisation in these cities.

Furthermore, Council can generate up to \$400,000 per year from its Car Parking Reserve for CBD infrastructure projects. Through an accumulation of funds, Council will have \$2.5 million available in the CBD Reserve Fund by the end of the 2016-17 financial year to contribute to stage 1 and stage 2 of proposed revitalisation and infrastructure upgrade projects.

While Horsham Rural City Council is committed to revitalising the CBD through available revenue, government grants and other revenue streams, private sector involvement will be required to complete the proposed works.

## Constraints

Due to the economic profile of the region, there is currently limited scope for private investment or for public/private partners to develop enhanced CBD infrastructure. Improvements to the public realm of Horsham through investment in revitalisation packages and use of available state government funding will redefine the economic profile of Horsham as a place to for new business and industry to invest therefore opening up greater opportunities for private sector involvement while increasing Council revenue.

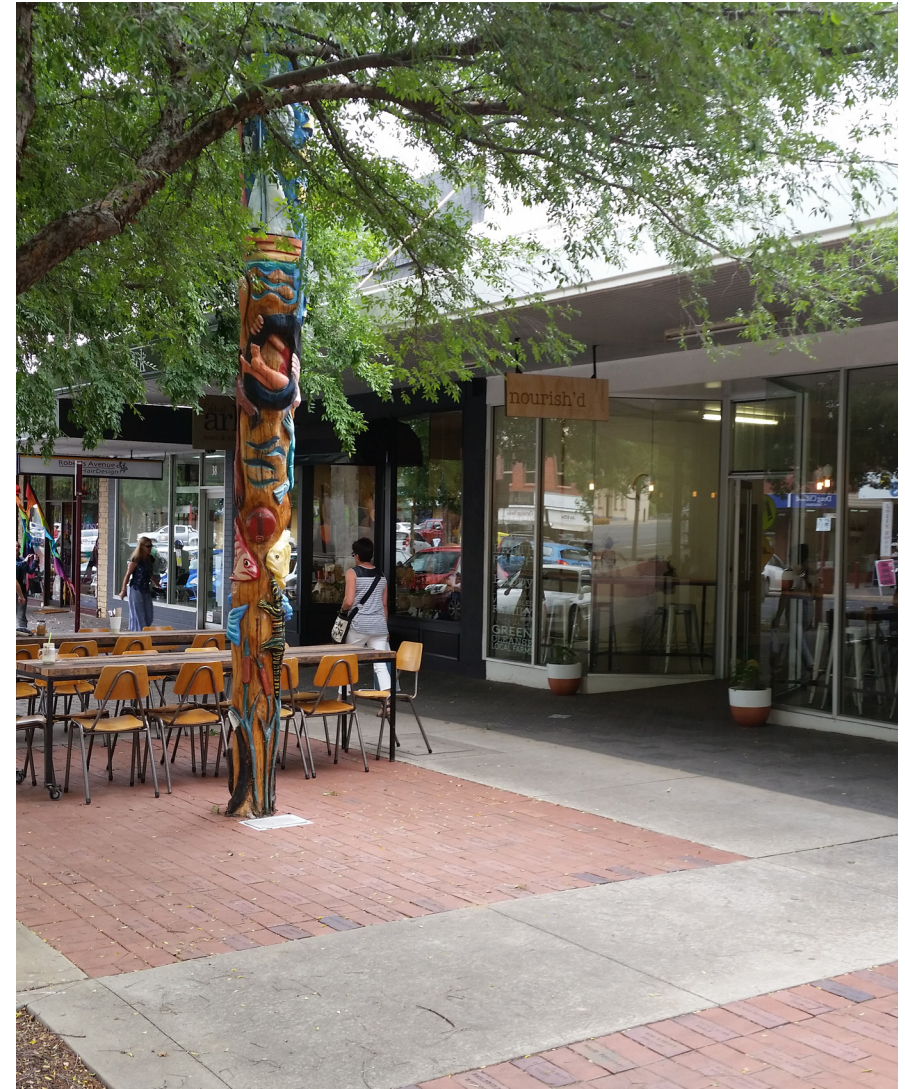
## Monitoring outcomes

Monitoring outcomes from the CBD revitalisation programme will be important to demonstrate value for money and contribute to future knowledge about effective interventions.

Data on the following key performance indicators are recommended to be collected to monitor the impacts of interventions:

- Retail sales within the CBD
- Pedestrian counts on key CBD streets
- Occupied commercial space
- Visitor impressions (qualitative survey)
- Cyclist volumes
- Traffic volumes
- Job numbers within the CBD.

Reporting on key performance indicators on an annual basis will provide information on the success of the programme.



## REFERENCES

---

- Botanic Gardens of South Australia (2017) Green Infrastructure Evidence Base. Available at: <http://gievidencebase.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/contents/6-climatic-modification#Climate-change-adaptation>
- CABE (2007) Paved with Gold: The real value of good street design. London, UK.
- City of Melbourne (2011). Urban Forest Strategy: Making a great city greener 2012-2032. Melbourne, Vic.
- Department of Economic Development Jobs Transport and Resources (2012) regional city case studies, [http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1091898/](http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1091898/)
- Horsham Rural City Council (2013) Central Activities District Strategy
- Horsham Rural City Council (2016) The Municipal Strategic Statement
- Horsham Rural City Council (2013) Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Living Streets (2011) Making the case for investment in the walking environment.
- Pivo, G. and Fisher, J. (2010) The walkability premium in commercial real estate investments. Available at: <https://arizona.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/the-walkability-premium-in-commercial-real-estate-investments>
- PWC (2011) A walking strategy for NSW: Assessing the economic benefits of walking.
- Reneweconomy.com.au, <http://reneweconomy.com.au/leds-could-slash-street-light-energy-usage-by-97-16446/>
- REMPLAN (2016) Impact Report for Horsham (RC), Impact Scenario – Horsham CBD Revitalisation – Stage 1
- Tolley, Rodney (2011) Good for Busine\$\$: the benefits of making streets more walking and cycling friendly. The National Heart Foundation of Australia.
- Victorian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation Research (2012) Responding to the Urban Heat Island: A Review of the Potential of Green Infrastructure <http://www.vcccar.org.au/sites/default/files/publications/VCCCAR%20Urban%20Heat%20Island%20-WEB.pdf>
- Victorian Government, Plan Melbourne, 2014