

**02.03**24/06/2021  
C80hors**02.03-1**24/06/2021  
C80hors**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS****Settlement**

**Horsham** regional city is the main urban centre for the municipality, the Wimmera Southern Mallee region and adjoining areas. It provides a wide range of retail, government, community, industrial and agribusiness services that are generally concentrated in the town centre.

Connecting Melbourne and Adelaide and a network of towns and communities in Victoria's western region, Horsham will continue to be diverse, responding to changes in residential and commercial needs, revitalising existing urban areas, innovations in industry, and business opportunities with a focus on agricultural research and production.

Horsham North is a significantly disadvantaged area of the city with a pronounced shortage of community services, economic activity and educational opportunities. Horsham North is physically separated from the town centre by the railway corridor and adjoining industrial land uses. A significant urban regeneration opportunity within Horsham includes facilitating improved connections between areas bisected by the railway corridor. A key limitation of developing Horsham rail corridor land for urban uses is potential land contamination resulting from prolonged industrial land uses in the area. As Horsham expanded southwards, Haven and Horsham have merged. The former rural settlement now functions as an outer suburb. Much of Haven is yet to develop to its full potential.

**Natimuk** is the municipality's second largest town. Although a relatively small community, Natimuk provides a range of services and is located within commuting distance to Horsham. There is limited land available for residential development, however demand for housing in the town remains constant. Natimuk Creek skirts the northern fringe of the township, its floodplain imposing some restriction on urban development. The township benefits from the influx of visitors to Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, which has supported local businesses and encouraged the establishment of tourist accommodation and other services, as well as attracting additional permanent residents.

A number of smaller settlements are established throughout the municipality. While most provide lower service levels than larger settlements, residents are attracted to these localities as an alternative to living in Horsham, by affordable property prices or rental opportunities, and by natural attractions such as nearby parks or lakes. The municipality's small towns are experiencing population decline and loss of services and infrastructure. These settlements will benefit from land for rural living being made available where social and physical infrastructure can be efficiently provided.

Council's strategic directions for settlement are to:

- Encourage development that capitalises on Horsham's location, protects it's unique character, and enhances the "sense of place".
- Focus urban growth opportunities for Horsham regional city in:
  - Town Centre (Horsham Central Activity District (CAD)).
  - Existing Urban Area (outside of CAD).
  - Strategic Infill Sites.
  - Regeneration and growth areas to the north and west of Horsham.
- Facilitate the redevelopment of the Horsham Rail Corridor.
- Support development in Haven in an integrated manner.
- Encourage residential development and other land uses in Natimuk and other small settlements.
- Direct low density residential and rural living developments to locations adjoining existing settlements.

**02.03-2**

24/06/2021  
C80hors

**Environmental and landscape values**

The Shire has been extensively cleared as a result of its agricultural heritage. Remnant vegetation is valuable in terms of biodiversity, habitat, water table management and soil stabilisation. The municipality features 77 of Victoria’s rare and threatened plants and 46 species of threatened fauna. Road and railway reserves frequently contain important remnant vegetation and habitat.

Council’s strategic directions for environmental and landscape values are to:

- Protect the quality of the land and water resources of the municipality through sound environmental management.
- Reverse the long-term decline in remnant vegetation and associated biodiversity.
- Assist in the re-establishment of native vegetation across the region within identified locations.
- Protect the habitat of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.
- Protect surface and ground water quality.
- Preserve important wetlands and areas of environmental significance.
- Protect the landscape character, environmental features and scenic qualities of the Grampians National Park, Black Ranges and Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park.

**02.03-3**

24/06/2021  
C80hors

**Environmental risks and amenity**

Climate change projections for the municipality predict:

- Increased temperatures, particularly in summer.
- Drier conditions with greater decreases in rainfall expected in spring.
- Increases in the intensity of rainfall but a decrease in the number of rainy days.
- Increased risk of bushfire and a longer fire season.

With increased temperatures and less rainfall, water will be a key issue in the future for the community, council, primary producers and businesses.

Bushfire threat across the municipality varies based on vegetation type, topography and seasonal influences. A forest fire risk exists around the Grampians National Park, Black Range State Park and other State Parks. A grassfire risk exists through much of the remainder of the municipality, with the potential for grassfires to impact on Horsham and smaller townships and settlements.

Some land in ~~Horsham Rural City~~ the municipality is subject to flooding, especially. ~~Areas of major risk are~~ along the Wimmera River and other ~~waterways. Dadswells Bridge on the Western Highway is located within a floodplain. Development in these areas is at risk from flooding, and can also impact on the capacity of the floodplain to contain and convey flood waters~~ major and minor waterways and affect both urban and rural areas, including the Horsham township. Flood studies undertaken by the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority have identified flood prone areas with recommendations to include these areas in either the Floodway Overlay, Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and Special Building Overlay. -

Council’s strategic directions for environmental risks and amenity are to:

- Adapt to the impacts of climate change to withstand hotter, drier conditions and severe weather events.
- Design development to respond to bushfire risk.
- Ensure development does not expose the community to increased risk from bushfires.
- Minimise flood risk and maintain the capacity of the floodplain.

## Natural resource management

### Agriculture

Horsham's combination of soils, landform and climate provide a rural environment that is inherently suitable to broad acre agricultural production.

Protection of land and water resources and support for agricultural productivity improvements will enhance the region's economic base and help meet growing export demands. Agricultural diversification and value adding to primary production is taking place in the region, which will lead to a further strengthening of the local economy. Investment in infrastructure, including road and rail transport and interchange, and the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline project have been facilitated to improve the productivity of agriculture. These investments should not be undermined by the encroachment of non-farming related land uses. There is also significant risk to Horsham's agricultural activities by ad hoc land use change that can compromise the viability and growth of the sector.

The municipality is particularly well suited for further expansion of the agricultural sector due to its established infrastructure. The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline is upgrading water supply to towns and rural areas, providing improved water security. Horsham has sufficient land and infrastructure to cater for related transport, logistics and industry functions associated with growth of the agricultural sector. Niche agricultural uses in the municipality include horticulture, viticulture, and animal production. Intensifying agricultural land uses has the potential to increase detrimental impacts on the environment and surrounding areas to much higher levels.

Fragmentation of rural land by inappropriate subdivision can detrimentally affect the productive capacity of the land. The subdivision of land to less than the minimum lot size is of particular concern in the Wartook area adjacent to the Grampians National Park.

Council's strategic directions for agriculture are to:

- Protect productive agricultural land for agriculture and sustainable resource use.
- Avoid the fragmentation of productive agricultural land.
- Develop a more diverse and productive intensive agriculture industry.
- Encourage land use and development that facilitates value adding, new commodities, specialist services, research and education and improved transport connections to export markets.
- Support the development of animal production industries.
- Avoid small lot subdivisions in productive agricultural areas.

### Water

Land use and development can have effects on the quality and quantity of water available for use. The Wimmera and Glenelg Hopkins regional catchment strategies establish the land and water management priorities within the region.

Council's strategic directions for water are to:

- Protect water supply catchments, reservoirs, floodplains and channels from the impacts from development.
- Discourage subdivision within potable water supply catchment areas to protect water quantity and quality.

### Earth and energy resources

Mineral sand resources are in abundance in various locations in Horsham. Mining of the sands provides employment opportunities and significant economic benefits for the municipality.

Transport and energy infrastructure is critical to enable earth resources projects to proceed as they can place significant demands on infrastructure.

The introduction of sensitive land uses can constrain opportunities for the future extraction of resources.

Council's strategic directions for earth and energy resources are to:

- Encourage the use and development of land in areas of abundant mineral sand deposits for the earth and energy resources industry and associated activity.
- Direct urban growth and rural residential development away from areas where it would limit the ability to mine and extract earth resources.
- Support infrastructure and services associated with mining and extractive industry.

## 02.03-5

24/06/2021  
C80hors

### Built environment and heritage

The built and urban environment influences community health and wellbeing and providing safe footpaths for pedestrians, sufficient lighting, access to services and places for people to connect is a Council priority.

The buildings, monuments and organizations which had their origin in Horsham's history play a continuing role. Studies of the municipality's cultural heritage identify places and precincts of heritage significance and value to the community. The periodic review and update of the studies is important to enable the protection, conservation and enhancement of identified heritage assets.

Council's strategic directions for built environment and heritage are to:

- Create a built environment that supports active living and social connectedness.
- Conserve the places and sites of cultural heritage value within the Horsham municipality.
- Protect notable historic sites within the CAD and support proposed modifications that enhance the character of the precinct.

## 02.03-6

24/06/2021  
C80hors

### Housing

Approximately one quarter of Horsham Rural City's population reside outside of the Horsham urban area in townships and settlements. Horsham's population is projected to grow, although is likely to see a significant increase in population of older residents, and decline of younger residents.

Growth estimates indicate there will be a demand for additional dwellings, much of which could be accommodated through the existing supply of residential land and infill opportunities.

A substantial proportion of recent medium density development has involved the redevelopment of sites with good access to the CAD. Medium density housing in a central location is particularly attractive to older members of the community. Surplus council land, adjacent to the CAD in Selkirk Drive, presents an opportunity to increase the supply of medium density housing close to existing services.

Rural living offers the opportunity for residential use in a rural environment, however can lead to the sprawl of dwellings across farming and rural areas, conflicts between residential and agricultural uses, and increased exposure for those residents to environmental risks. Conversely, when located close to existing townships, where investment in physical and community infrastructure and services has occurred, lower density or rural living development can provide benefits in the form of sustaining population and service provision.

Low density residential development is popular in Horsham however providing infrastructure to support further low-density development needs careful management. Low density residential development in existing smaller settlements can cater for housing choice and support the sustainability and liveability of the towns.

The largest areas of rural living are close to the Horsham regional centre, including areas of Farming Zone land, such as Haven, Riverside and Quantong. Where small agricultural holdings have been developed for rural living, yet remain in the Farming Zone, there is now a need to protect residential uses from the impacts of incompatible farming activities. Infrastructure requirements also need to be addressed for these areas.

Council's strategic directions for housing are to:

- Encourage increased densities in areas that can capitalise on existing physical and social infrastructure.
- Improve the diversity of housing options available within Horsham.
- Facilitate lower density residential or rural living development, where infrastructure and services can be provided at locations adjoining existing settlements.
- Determine the suitability of land for rural living based on the ongoing use of land for agriculture, right to farm and avoidance of land use conflict.

### 02.03-7

24/06/2021  
C80hors

## Economic development

### Agricultural sector

Agriculture is and will remain the key economic driver of the Wimmera Southern Mallee region. Horsham is the centre of agricultural research and development in the region, including associated industrial development, with government and private agencies leading the way in innovative agriculture and agro-processing. The Grains Innovation Park and Longerenong College provide a significant focus for agricultural research in the region.

Council's strategic directions for the region's agricultural sector are to:

- Support land use and development for research and innovation in agriculture.
- Support further development and intensification of agriculture and associated innovation and processing activities as an important element of the municipality's economic and employment base.

### Industry

There are a number of industrial areas around Horsham including small scale industrial and service premises with limited adverse amenity potential to the south-east of the CAD, larger operations south of the Wimmera River close to wastewater treatment facilities, and on highway entrances to the city with good access for heavy vehicles.

Horsham is well supplied with vacant industrially zoned land.

Residential uses encroaching on industrial land create impediments to the establishment of industrial business that require buffer distances to sensitive uses. Some restructuring of industrial land has occurred in the vicinity of Golf Course Road and Plumpton Road to address this, however there are several other areas where residential development has encroached on industrial activity.

Additional land for business and industry is also available in the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal (WIFT) Precinct and the Horsham Aerodrome.

The WIFT Precinct in Dooen of about 470 hectares is a major intermodal freight and logistics hub for the Wimmera-Mallee region. The development of the precinct will facilitate a range of businesses and jobs for the municipality and wider region relating to freight and logistics. The precinct comprises six industry sub-precincts to assist in managing potential inter-industry conflict and to maximise the opportunities associated with the proximity to the key freight handling facilities.

Council's strategic directions for industry are to:

- Support industrial development in industrial areas.

- Avoid encroachment of sensitive land uses near land identified for industrial development.
- Provide for the staged development of the WIFT Precinct as a major intermodal freight and logistics hub for the Wimmera-Mallee region.

### **Tourism**

Horsham is near popular tourist attractions including the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd), Mt Arapiles-Toosan State Park, Little Desert National Park, Black Range State Park and various lakes. The protection of these significant natural and cultural landscapes will enhance opportunities for the local tourist industry.

The development of the Grampians Peaks Trail offers an opportunity for business and tourism operators within the vicinity to provide complementary services and facilities. The proposed Grampians Way ring road around Gariwerd, being readily accessible from Melbourne and Adelaide, may further increase visitation of the area from those enjoying surrounding tourism routes.

The Wartook Valley area is an area of high landscape, environmental and rural values, that have combined to make the area an attractive place to live, work and recreate. Numerous conservation-oriented covenants have been placed on various properties, that influence future use and development of the land.

Mt Arapiles is located west of Natimuk township in a productive farming area. Mt Arapiles-Toosan State Park is an international rock-climbing destination that will continue to create demand for tourist services in the area. The lack of development around the mountain assists to maintain agricultural activity and the wilderness experience for visitors, and ensures that visitors make use of services and facilities in Natimuk, to the benefit of the local economy.

Council's strategic directions for tourism are to:

- Encourage use and development that will enable visitors to stay longer within Horsham.
- Support the Grampians Peaks Trail, the Grampians Way and associated tourist development.
- Encourage development in the Wartook Valley that protects the National Park and surrounding landscape, allows for greater tourism activity and protects farming land and other agricultural uses.
- Support tourist services in Natimuk township, and limited, sustainably developed tourist facilities outside the township area.

### **02.03-8**

24/06/2021  
C80hors

### **Transport**

Areas currently bisected by the current railway corridor within Horsham are in need of improved transport connections for road, bicycle and pedestrian movements. Council aims to make Horsham and the surrounding communities more pedestrian and cycling friendly.

The main road transport corridor in the region is the Western Highway. Other important road corridors include the Henty Highway, which provides access to the Port of Portland and the Wimmera Highway. Department of Transport's proposed Western Highway Bypass for Horsham will help improve the amenity and function of the regional centre's commercial area and improve opportunities for industrial activity in Horsham.

The Horsham Airport, located north of the city, provides a range of services to the region. The opportunity exists to develop adjacent land for related industries and other business that will benefit from co-location with the airport. Height restrictions are imposed upon development in the regional centre and surrounding areas to ensure safe functioning of the airport.

Council's strategic directions for transport are to:

- Facilitate improved transport connections (road, bicycle, pedestrian) across the rail corridor.
- Encourage road corridors and improved connections to link developing areas to established areas.

- Support upgrades to the regional road network that provide:
  - Amenity benefits to Horsham residents.
  - Connection to the Wimmera Highway and the Henty Highway.
- Support upgrades to the cycling network to improve safety and cater for all levels of cyclist.
- Protect the air safety of Horsham Airport.
- Facilitate further development of Horsham Airport and land adjacent the airport for air service related businesses.

**02.03-9**

24/06/2021  
C80hors

**Infrastructure**

**Community infrastructure**

Community and cultural infrastructure is important to support community connections and health, wellbeing and vitality. Several early years centres are proposed in Horsham to respond to children's health, wellbeing and intellectual needs.

A medical services precinct around the Horsham Base Hospital will reinforce its role as the regional health provider. The expected increase in the aged population of the region is likely to result in a demand for more health services.

Council's strategic directions for community infrastructure are to:

- Locate community facilities in places that are easily accessible to members of the community.
- Provide health facilities that meet the needs of the local and regional community.
- Facilitate the establishment of early years centres throughout Horsham.
- Facilitate the development of sporting facilities throughout the municipality.

**Development infrastructure**

Additional development infrastructure requirements to service Horsham's growth are considered when identifying areas for development. The efficient delivery of infrastructure is fundamental to providing affordable and diverse housing, generating economic growth and facilitating sustainable development that meets the needs of communities.

Some land within Horsham is affected by overland flow associated with stormwater flooding. Development in this area needs to be managed to ensure that risk is minimised and does not exacerbate stormwater flooding of adjacent land.

Access to telecommunications is important to better connect services and attract business within the region.

Council's strategic directions for development infrastructure are to:

- Facilitate agreements with developers for contributions towards the cost of infrastructure.
- Encourage a consistent approach to the design and construction of infrastructure across the municipality.
- Minimise risk associated with overland flow of stormwater and improve stormwater harvesting.
- Promote water sensitive urban design initiatives for new development.
- Facilitate the supply of telecommunications infrastructure to service the municipality.