Inquiry into Liveability Options in Outer Suburban Melbourne
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission is presented to the Inquiry into Liveability Options in Outer Suburban Melbourne by Mitchell Shire Council.

Mitchell Shire is Melbourne’s newest growth municipality. When the State Government changed the Urban Growth Boundary in 2010, it included parts of the Mitchell Shire.

Within the body of this submission, the following points are raised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wallan &amp; Beveridge have a greater proportion of people with higher incomes. This is likely to result in high expectations for quality services and infrastructure.</th>
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<td>The data suggests that attracting and retaining health professionals from the metro area to a growth municipality like Mitchell remains a challenge for planners.</td>
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<td>“Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas” Wyndham City Council, City of Whittlesea and others – April 2008 could be used as a template for minimum standards of infrastructure provision.</td>
</tr>
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<td>In simple terms, the existing roads won’t cope with the population growth.</td>
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<td>Developers will need encouragement to contribute more to liveability activities or tackle the issue themselves. A Developer Contribution Plan template for growth areas would assist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often shopping facilities lag population growth for usually sound economic reasons but strategic planning needs to address this issue at the early planning stages.</td>
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</table>
The State Government has created regions across Victoria and Mitchell Shire sits in the Hume Region – whose administrative headquarters sit in Benalla, Wangaratta or Shepparton. The distances result in a disjoint, as Mitchell has far more in common in its South with Melbourne than with Wangaratta or Benalla.

Where significant investment in public transport has taken place, the public transport network has contributed to the overall vitality and cohesion of the community. A connected community is a health community.

Additional incentives to encourage skill development and training are needed.

There is a need to address the provision of appropriately zoned industrial land urgently.
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Introduction

Mitchell Shire is located in central Victoria, between 35 and 100 kilometres north of Melbourne. Mitchell Shire is bounded by the City of Greater Bendigo and Strathbogie Shire in the north, Murrindindi Shire in the east, the Cities of Whittlesea and Hume in the south, and Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander Shires in the west.

Mitchell Shire includes the townships and rural districts of Avenel (part), Beveridge (part), Broadford, Bylands (part), Clonbinane, Flowerdale (part), Forbes, Glenaroua, Glenhope, Glenhope East, Heathcote Junction, Heathcote South, Highlands (part), High Camp, Hilldene, Kilmore, Kilmore East, Mangalore (part), Mia Mia (part), Moranding, Northwood, Nulla Vale, Puckapunyal, Pyalong, Reedy Creek, Seymour, Sugarloaf Creek, Sunday Creek, Tallarook, Tarcombe (part), Tooborac, Trawool, Tyaak, Upper Plenty, Wallan Wandong, Waterford Park, Whiteheads Creek and Willowmavin.

Mitchell Shire is predominantly a rural area, but has substantial residential areas in the townships of Beveridge, Broadford, Heathcote Junction, Kilmore, Pyalong, Seymour, Tallarook, Tooborac, Wallan, Wandong, Waterford Park and the Puckapunyal Army Base. Seymour is the main business, industrial and population centre in the Shire, followed by Wallan then Kilmore and Broadford. Most of the rural area is used for agricultural purposes, including beef and wool farming, forestry and timber production, viticulture, olive production and hobby farms.

Mitchell was named after Major Thomas Mitchell, who explored large areas of New South Wales and Victoria in the 1830s.
1. Population Trends

The Wallan and Beveridge communities are located in the South of Mitchell Shire. Each community is situated within 60 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD (Wallan 60km, Beveridge 54km).

Rapid population growth is being experienced in these areas, with a significant proportion of new residents commuting to Melbourne for employment. Population forecasts show that the communities will continue to maintain high growth rates.

The Victoria in Future (2008) report forecasts that the Mitchell Shire will have strong population growth over the next 20 years. The exurban growth will be accompanied by strong household growth. Mitchell Shire will gain population across all age groups; the largest increase will be in the 20 to 24 year age category. There will also be a large increase in the number of people aged over 60 years. This will increase from 14.4% of the population in 2006 to 21.5% in 2026.

Total Mitchell Shire population forecasts are summarised in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2026</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>32,040</td>
<td>37,055</td>
<td>42,510</td>
<td>48,624</td>
<td>55,290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following tables depict projected population trends in the South of the Shire. Figures DO NOT incorporate recent Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) amendments. Indicative figures from UGB changes are likely to increase population projections in these communities ten-fold.

### Beveridge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>1,956</td>
<td>6,523</td>
<td>6,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11 years</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-24 years</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54 years</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>3,151</td>
<td>2,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years and older</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wallan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,269</td>
<td>10,114</td>
<td>11,909</td>
<td>3,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td>291</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11 years</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-24 years</td>
<td>1,552</td>
<td>1,866</td>
<td>2,170</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54 years</td>
<td>3,625</td>
<td>4,413</td>
<td>5,108</td>
<td>1,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years and older</td>
<td>1,271</td>
<td>1,668</td>
<td>2,123</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average annual population growth rates for Mitchell Shire are consistently forecast to be double that of the Victorian annual growth rate figures. (Mitchell Shire 2.5 to 3%, Victoria 1.2 to 1.5%)

(Source: Victoria in Future, 2008)
2. Median House Prices

**Median House Prices**

In December 2010, the median price of houses sold in Wallan was $287,000 and for a two bedroom unit it was $215,000. The median price paid over the past 24 months for a house in Beveridge was $380,000.

In September 2010, the median rent for a two-bedroom unit in the Mitchell Shire area was $222 per week, and the median rent for a three-bedroom house was $260 per week.


**Weekly household income 2006**

An assessment of the household income levels in Wallan and Beveridge from the 2006 census data compared to the Melbourne Statistical Division shows that there was a larger proportion of high income households (those in the Highest group – top 25%) but a smaller proportion of low income households (Lowest group).

Overall, 40.4% of the households earned a high income, and 12.9% were low income households, compared with 38.9% and 19.3% respectively for the Melbourne Statistical Division.

The data is shown as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Melbourne Statistical Division %</td>
<td>number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest group</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium lowest</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium highest</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest group</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wallan & Beveridge have a greater proportion of people with higher incomes. This is likely to result in high expectations for quality services and infrastructure.
3. Medical / Health and Support Services

Issues and Priorities Facing Health and Support Services in Mitchell South

The Mitchell South Place Management Project “Partnerships, Possibilities Place” 2006 indicates the following issues and priorities facing the provision of health and support services to the Mitchell South area.

- Limited capacities of services often covering extensive geographic areas
- Limited community infrastructure, resources and specialised services
- While a number of service have outreach services to Mitchell South, many are based in other parts of the Shire
- Family, youth and mental health services currently struggling to meet service demand
- Lack 24 hours medical services including GP’s and pharmacies
- Lack information on local services and supports
- Social isolation of young mothers
- Lack of adequate facilities for service providers
- Lack of adequate transport provision to access services

The Wallan and District Community Network (WDCN) consisting of over seventy members whose organisations service the Mitchell South area have identified the provision and coordination of services for families as one of their key platforms.

The Mitchell Shire Council Health and Wellbeing plan 2009-2013, indicates that the Urban Growth Boundary movement and resultant demographic changes will present major health and wellbeing challenges for the community. Community consultation conducted to inform the plan revealed that there was a perceived concern about the lack of services for the future in Mitchell South.

The plan identifies the importance of an integrated planning and partnership approach to meeting the challenges of a growing community. The Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership plays an important role in driving this planning.

Obesity, diabetes and risky alcohol consumption are key health priorities for Mitchell. (Victorian Population Health Survey report 2008.) Current funding to support health promotion approaches to these issues is currently deficient.

It is likely these issues will be exacerbated with anticipated growth in Mitchell South in the near future. Delivering an integrated and centralised community health infrastructure to the emerging population is a major challenge for Council and community and health stakeholders in Mitchell South. Health and support services will need to be flexible to accommodate demographic and service need changes over short periods of time.
Support and Community Services for Young People in Mitchell South

The Mitchell South Place Management Project plan has identified that there is currently a lack of services and information about services to young people. Research has demonstrated that growth areas such as Mitchell can experience difficulties where support, health and community services for young people are not adequately planned. This can result in young people becoming bored and demonstrating anti-social behaviour that can be detrimental to both community infrastructure and community wellbeing. (Building Lives, Building Community in Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park, 2009) Effective youth engagement is needed to include young people’s ideas during the planning phases. These issues will present challenges to Mitchell Shire in the development of new communities in the south.

Challenges of Demographic Changes to Service Delivery

The newly established Mitchell/Murrindindi Cultural Diversity Network has identified the challenges associated with potential demographic changes to urban growth zones in Mitchell. It is difficult to plan for culturally appropriate services when there is a lack of current and future mapping of the changes to the demographics of the newly establishing communities in the south of the shire. There is currently no provision for service needs assessment for these newly emerging communities. (LL)

Table 1 from Mitchell Shire Estimated Economic Output, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mitchell (N)</th>
<th>Mitchell (S)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Contribution to Shire GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heath &amp; Community Services</td>
<td>$33.2m</td>
<td>$30.5m</td>
<td>$63.7m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From Table 1, Health and Community Services is an important contributor to the Shire’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, Table 2 below shows that Health Care and Social Assistance employment levels are below that of both Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victorian benchmarks.
Table 2 from Employment by Industry for Resident Population, Selected Locations, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSIC Industry</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Mitchell - North</th>
<th>Mitchell - South</th>
<th>Mitchell Total</th>
<th>Regional Victoria</th>
<th>Metro Melbourne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health care &amp; social assistance</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The data suggests that attracting and retaining health professionals from the metro area to a growth municipality like Mitchell remains a challenge for planners.
4. Urban Renewal Best Practice relating to established outer suburbs

Urban renewal through appropriate planning and development will create a vibrant living and working environment in Mitchell Shire. This also:

- manages growth by planning for high growth areas
- increases housing and employment opportunities
- improves public transport
- provides more open space and public open space access

This can be achieved by:

- creating strong partnerships through community engagement
- providing strategic advice during the development assessment
- being proactive towards investment opportunities

Whilst any Urban Renewal programme is undertaken, the following issues are extremely important to Mitchell Shire Council. These issues are:

- The relationship between Wallan and the communities “inside” the Urban Growth Boundary.
- The short to medium term treatment of existing Beveridge Township.
- The inter-urban break to the south of Wallan.
- The relationship between UGB, Wallan and Kilmore.
- Sequencing of PSP preparation.

Melbourne @ 5 Million acknowledges that the growth of Melbourne has occurred at a much faster rate than that predicted by Melbourne 2030 initially. Melbourne @ 5 Million indicates that a minimum of 10,500ha of land within the Hume-Mitchell-Whittlesea investigation area will be required for residential purposes.

The inclusion of Mitchell Shire Council, (in particular the Township of Beveridge) within the UGB highlights that in Melbourne’s northern growth area demand is significantly outstripping current supply of land.

Given the unprecedented population growth of Melbourne in the last decade and its forecast continued growth, demand for residential land will increase. The challenge for State and Local Government will be how this growth is accommodated.

Beveridge is strategically located to provide part of the solution to the land supply issue within the Northern Corridor of Melbourne, without compromising existing state planning policy directions. Furthermore given its location on major transport and growth corridors, Beveridge should be afforded the opportunity for it to be developed into a sustainable entity so that the township can be better positioned to support the long term planning of Metropolitan Melbourne.

Beveridge Central presents an opportunity for revitalisation due to its transport infrastructure and proximity to Melbourne city, Melbourne airport, employment opportunities, shopping, education and health facilities.
Revitalising the area and managing growth means this precinct can retain a community feel and be places where people live, work and enjoy recreation. Beveridge Central area will be developed with the principles of transit oriented development, which will involve:

- high quality architecture
- better streetscapes and public spaces
- a good range of local shops and services
- excellent public transport, walk and cycle connections

The introduction of the Urban Growth Zone in 2010 in and around Beveridge places greater emphasis on the use of precinct structure plans to guide development and the need for integrated planning at an early stage in the process.

The Wallan Township shares its proposed southern, urban boundary with the northern edge of the proposed Urban Growth Boundary of Melbourne. Wallan is the fastest growing township within the Mitchell Shire experiencing unprecedented demand for new residential areas, commercial facilities and employment opportunities.

The expansion of urban growth along the Hume Corridor must give consideration to the likely future impacts on the township of Wallan. The location of the Urban Growth Boundary and positioning of the interstate freight terminal will directly determine the future development of Wallan. Additional implications for Wallan will be the lack of infrastructure charges available to Council to help provide the same quality of services proposed in Beveridge.

Council must seek to achieve an optimal planning outcome. Beveridge needs to be developed as a separate sustainable township providing a focus for local employment, achieving a level of self-containment, and providing an attractive lifestyle that contrasts with those provided in Metropolitan Melbourne. Wallan is a fast-growing township located in the southern part of Mitchell Shire. Residential development in and around Wallan is providing the need for the increased provision of town-centre services and industrial activities. In order to provide these services, an adequate amount of zoned land is required.

With a more substantial population base Wallan also has the potential to provide for a more sustainable urban form, with increased availability of local employment, particularly in the service sector, and a more complete range of facilities and services.
Growth will require a long term view and a planned approach that ensures a critical mass of population around key centres to drive jobs, hard and soft infrastructure and services to facilitate sustainable urban environments for people to live in.
5. Options for enhanced Liveability

- Which comes first - population or infrastructure?

Basic infrastructure has always come first, such as roads and paths. Changes in community expectations mean that open space, recreation reserves, community services and facilities are all needed in the early days of the development. If these services and facilities are not provided in the early days, there are frequently long delays. As the newest growth area Council, Mitchell Shire looks to documents such as Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas (Prepared by Australian Social and Recreation Research Pty Ltd, April 2008).

- If you build it will they come?

There is a strong argument that "they will come" regardless of whether we build. People need places to live and will choose them on the basis of desirability and affordability. Provision of services and infrastructure make a huge difference to desirability and liveability. It's how we build it, rather than if we build it.

- Co-location
  - Hubs

Planning for co-located facilities and services, creating service and community hubs is now well-established in municipal planning. Securing appropriately sized areas to develop such hubs is a challenge when negotiating with developers.

Provision of multiple services from hubs will require willingness from the services (Government & Non Government Agencies) for co-location and shared facilities. This has not always been evident. A new model could emerge that places local government as the facility developer, leasing space back to the government and non-government agencies to ensure service provision.

- Open Space

Council is to embark upon an open space study to identify the gaps in the provision of open space across the Shire. The study will focus upon developing a planning and development framework that achieves a balance between the equitable distribution of a diverse range of open space opportunities and facilities for all people that live work and visit the Shire.

The study will provide Council with the enhanced planning principles, policies and tools to ensure that the future provision of open space is identified, well planned and is embedded in the municipal planning scheme; where development occurs through consistent design standards; it can be maintained to a consistent standard (underpinned by good design and maintenance principles), whilst addressing the demands of increased participation through population growth and effectively
catering for the increase in the range of opportunities available to the Mitchell Shire community.

- **Sports**

The anticipated population growth will increase the demand on existing sporting infrastructure.

The Shire must contend with the challenges of a growing population, particularly in the Kilmore/Wallan/Beveridge corridor, and ensure that sporting infrastructure development does not lag behind. This will require the Shire to adopt a formal planning and development framework that achieves a balance between the development of new facilities and the upgrade and maintenance of existing facilities, equitably across the Shire.

The challenge also will be to effectively address the sporting aspirations and needs of the growing population in the southern area, many of whom will have ‘metropolitan’ influenced needs and expectations whilst recognising that this will create tensions and potential conflicts in the provision of sport infrastructure across the entire Shire.

The Shire continues to rely heavily on its Section 86 Committees of Management to manage its sporting reserves and facilities. As the number of volunteers and the time that they can commit decreases, there will be increased pressure to provide more support and assistance in the coming years. The level of maintenance required at these facilities will continue to be a challenge for many of these committees.

To address many of these issues Council will:
- Identify the gaps in the provision of sporting opportunities as well as community needs and demands for sporting facilities and services within the municipality;
- Develop strategies that address the identified gaps and improve the level and standard of sports provision within the municipality;
- Develop a framework for the effective and efficient development, maintenance and management of sports facilities and services within the municipality.

**Standards for Provision**

The Interface Councils in Melbourne’s growth areas created a template for infrastructure provision that guides their Councils and developers on minimum standards expected for their municipalities. The guide is called:

“Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas” Wyndham City Council, City of Whittlesea and others – April 2008

As Melbourne’s newest growth municipality, Mitchell Shire is using the guide to plan future growth.
Transport Isolation – Private and Public

The road infrastructure will be one of the largest changes for Mitchell south as part of the growth in that community. Infrastructure provisions are currently of a very minimal standard to cater for the likes of Beveridge. The only service provided to Wallan CBD is a local bus service. The train is distant from town and serviced poorly by bus links. In terms of main road arterials is the Hume Highway is the only infrastructure that services the community of Wallan for travelling to Melbourne.

The ongoing challenge will be to ensure that infrastructure provision plans that set a framework for transport are provided in a timely fashion, as current road infrastructure is unsustainable for the communities being proposed via the Beveridge corridor.

In simple terms, the existing roads won’t cope with the population growth.

Many roads are unsealed and sealed roads are at a narrow sealed standard. Those roads will be unable to service large block communities that are proposed. Therefore, it is critical that within the precinct structure planning work, infrastructure improvements are provided and staged plans are structured in a way to ensure that gaps in infrastructure are not left for long periods of time.

Public transport, local community buses service the communities of Wallan. Currently no buses service the community of Beveridge and V/Line services travelling up and down the corridor are limited at best. Further expansion of those bus services will obviously be the interim solution. In the longer term, provision of a railway station at Beveridge and an upgrade of the rail services coming up the corridor, including the potential need for mass transport support services such as bus services up and down the transport corridor are within the domain of the Department of Transport (DOT) for consideration.

The communities of Beveridge and Wallan will be tied very strongly to car transport and ongoing pressures of congestion will occur as a result. There are also very limited bicycle paths in the corridor north of Craigieburn, so the potential for cycling is limited.
Community cohesion

According to the Growth Areas Authority Checklist for Liveability Planning, liveable communities are defined as being healthy, safe and socially connected. Research by both the University of Melbourne and Monash University has demonstrated that indicators of liveability include community engagement and participation, safety, urban sociability, and community cohesion.

Community Engagement

There is evidence to support the benefits of community engagement in achieving high liveability outcomes in growing communities. (Promising Practice: A Book of Good Practice, Case Studies – Creating Liveable Communities, 2008) These benefits include increasing communities understanding and acceptance of change, the development of community leadership, and the enhancement of community pride and ownership. Successful engagement works when there is participation with the community, other key stakeholder and existing networks. In Mitchell South key networks such as the Wallan and District Community Network, and the Better Beveridge Group are important assets for Mitchell Shire, and developers to engage in planning for urban growth. The incorporating of key community leaders and champions in specific area of interest in planning is also vital. Groups such as Friends of Wallan Creek are vital to engage in planning processes. The management of community concerns about rapid growth in the Mitchell Shire needs addressing. According to the Building Lives, Building Community report (2009) (that investigated retrospectively rapid development in Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park), managing community concerns about service provision, traffic, and relationships between existing communities and new communities is vital. As highlighted in the Mitchell Shire Community Engagement Strategy 2010, engagement needs to occur early in the planning process. Council is currently under resourced in its ability to engage stakeholders and community in these early but quickly emerging stages.

Urban Sociability

Liveability in urban areas is characterised by the degree of urban sociability that exists. (Community Strengthening through Urban Sociability, John Montgomery, 2006) Urban sociability includes the importance of place, activity, image, and diversity in a community.

Liveability is intrinsically linked with the community’s sense of place. In the Mitchell South area there are communities already in existence that have a history of place. In Beveridge the existing community describe the historical significance of the school building and Ned Kelly’s house as an important part of their identity. As development occurs around these existing communities, these places will assist the community to retain their identity and connections. They will also be vital in assisting new residents to feel that the community into which they have moved is unique. Resources need to be allocated either at Council or through developer’s contributions to enhance and protect these special places.
A sense of place is created where structural elements include formal and casual meeting places, landmarks, corners for reflection, outdoor rooms, and comfortable places to sit and wait. Mitchell Shire Council will need to work with developers to ensure these elements are included. The importance of ensuring places where people are most likely to meet in Mitchell south, are places to encourage social interaction such as train stations and shopping precincts will also be challenging.

Urban sociability is also created through activity or what is known as the “soft aspects” of development. The importance of making streets active places to celebrate, the existence of cultural activities, festivals and events all contribute to the liveability of outer suburban areas. To date there are no resources to encourage these activates to occur in these newly developing communities.

Developers will need encouragement to contribute more to liveability activities or tackle the issue themselves. A Developer Contribution Plan template for growth areas would assist.

Community Cohesion

Community cohesion or the social capital of a community consists of three components which include the:

- Physical infrastructure that support connections;
- Formal structures such as volunteers and community groups and organisations; and
- Informal connections that exist in neighbourhoods through friendship and family.

Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) measures levels of community wellbeing using a number of factors. Data highlights that Mitchell Shire rates lower in both the Hume region average and Victorian average in their acceptance of diverse cultures and lower than the Hume average for levels of volunteerism, and civic participation levels. These figures demonstrate that in the context of fast population growth and changing demographics that there is a need to address these issues in the south of the shire. The development and support of communities through community cohesion in Mitchell South as development occurs will be a core task for Council in coming years. Community Development resources will need to be committed to ensuring this vital work occurs.

Rapidly developing communities emerging around existing communities such as Wallan and Beveridge in Mitchell South will be a threat to community cohesion. The Inquiry into Building New Communities Final Report by the Outer Suburban Interface Services and Development Committee (2006) identifies that new residents often bring different values and expectations with them and many of these can be
incongruent with existing community’s values. Community development resources are needed to assist in change management within these communities.

The inquiry also highlights the difficulties that rapidly growing communities have in recruiting volunteers. The economic health of a community relies heavily on the presence of the volunteer sector. In larger population where community infrastructure is still developing and where people are focussing on settling into the community, this can present a demand that will be challenging to meet. Resources to support volunteer recruitment, retention and building capacity will become vital in the development of a liveable community. Organisations such as CFA can be a good starting point for recruitment of volunteers in new communities; however support will need to be provided to such groups in successful strategies development. Resources to develop a Volunteer Resource centre similar to the successful Volunteer resource centre in the growing suburb of Whittlesea should also be sought. Challenges in outer suburban areas for volunteers also include longer work hours, and time taken to commute to work. These challenges will also need to be addressed.

The presence of community banks in emerging suburbs is also seen as a successful strategy for developing community cohesion.

Council will need to manage higher expectations from large numbers of new residents, which will necessitate increases in staff resources into the near future.

- Proximity to employment

Approximately 55% of people in the growth areas of Mitchell Shire travel outside the Shire for work (Journey to Work data, ABS 2006). The majority of these are moving to the south obviously to access employment in metropolitan Melbourne. To address this issue, which causes community cohesion, transport congestion and escape spending issues it is clear that the attraction of industry closer to the source of the growth areas, as well as planning for improved transport options (both private and public) are important.

Structure Plans for future

Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) are master plans for whole communities which are usually for between 10,000 to 30,000 people. PSPs are fundamental to making Mitchell Shire’s growth areas great places to live, both today and for future generations. PSP’s lay out roads, shopping centres, schools, parks, housing, employment and the connections to transport.

Precinct structure plans are created to set the blueprint for development and investment that will occur over many years. They provide an up to date approach to address current global issues such as adapting to climate change, reducing carbon emissions, rising living costs and pressures of increasing travel distances as our cities grow. Precinct structure plans provide a balance between meeting complex policy requirements and providing affordable development.
Our goal is to create diverse, compact and well connected communities that are affordable and rich in local jobs, transport access, services and culture. We must also protect our valuable natural and historic features and use land more efficiently.

The PSPs can be prepared and funded by Council, the Growth Area Authority with funding provided by the Victorian Government or other agencies directed to do so by the Minister for Planning. In all cases the process will require the active involvement of land owners, developers, service and infrastructure providers and councils.

Council can prepare development contributions plans to fund with a development infrastructure levy. The following works, services or facilities may be funded from a development infrastructure levy:

(a) Acquisition of land for:
   - roads
   - public transport corridors
   - drainage
   - public open space, and
   - community facilities etc

(b) Construction of roads, including the construction of bicycle and foot paths, and traffic management and control devices.

(c) Construction of public transport infrastructure, including fixed rail infrastructure, railway stations, bus stops and tram stops.

(d) Basic improvements to public open space, including earthworks, landscaping, fencing, seating and playground equipment.

(e) Drainage works.

(f) Buildings and works for or associated with the construction of:
   - a maternal and child health care centre
   - a child care centre
   - a kindergarten, or
   - any centre which provides these facilities in combination.
6. Identify existing public and private infrastructure provision

- including schools, hospitals, commercial and shopping precincts, transport and roads, telecommunications, water and power.

Primary schools are located in Wallan and Beveridge. The ‘Mandalay’ development currently under construction in Beveridge and the ‘Wallara Waters’ development in Wallan also include future primary school site provisions. Secondary Colleges are situated in Wallan and Broadford, with significant private secondary schooling options available in nearby Kilmore (Assumption College and The International School).

The closest public hospital is located in Kilmore, with residents also travelling to the Northern Hospital for treatments and admissions. General practitioners are located in Kilmore and Wallan.

Mitchell Community Health Services provide a range of community health, counselling and community support services to the residents of Mitchell Shire. Offices are located at Broadford and Wallan.

Throughout the Shire there are eleven recreation sporting reserves in Mitchell Shire: Kings Park and Chittick Park in Seymour, Harley Hammond Reserve in Broadford, JJ Clancy Reserve in Kilmore, Greenhill Reserve in Wallan, LB Davern Reserve in Wandong, Tallarook Recreation Reserve, Tooborac Recreation Reserve, Beveridge Recreation Reserve, Waterford Park Reserve, and Pyalong Recreation Reserve.

Major environmental reserves within the Shire include the Australian Lighthorse Park and the Bushland Park Reserve, both located in Seymour. Council is also responsible for approximately forty local parks and reserves within the Shire.

Public and community halls managed by Council include Broadford Hall, Pyalong Community Centre, Wandong Hall, Wandong Community Centre, Beveridge Community Centre, Tooborac Mechanics Institute Hall, Tallarook Mechanics Institute Hall, Kilmore Mechanics Institute, Pyalong Hall, Wallan Multi Purpose Centre and the Seymour Old Courthouse.

Drainage

Gaps exist in drainage infrastructure. Examples of this include Beveridge in which sections of the town are subject to inundation. No planning controls are in place to identify these issues and limit development and drainage schemes have not been prepared to address flooding or isolated flash flooding problems.

Melbourne Water has done preliminary work on identifying these problems. The potential outcomes of these plans will be a limiting of development as well as the potential acquisition overlays and projects being referred to Developer Contribution Plans.
Minor drainage infrastructure will also need to be addressed in some old township areas as legal point of discharge and easement drainage do not exist and need to be established. As new developments come on stream they are developed to appropriate engineering standards but infill development will continue to be a challenge for Mitchell Shire Council due to the potential interface with gaps in drainage infrastructure.

National Broadband Network (NBN)

NBN need to be resolved at a Federal level. The current issue in Liveability is the target, nature and level of rollout.

Some developments are providing Broadband provisions as a marketing tool. An example of this is Mandalay where optical fibre has been laid through the whole estate back to a server hub and distribution program which includes security, television etc.

This sets a differential of service between Beveridge in the older township area which is still on copper dial up and the areas of Mandalay which will be on high speed internet connection. This creates an obvious disjoint between the two communities in service provisions.

Sewer

Sewer is probably the major challenge for the northern growth area as the capacity for sewer systems extension is limited at the Wallan Treatment Plant. Until the provision of a further treatment plant for the area has been identified and funding allocated, development will be limited.

A large amount of existing allotments in the Beveridge township are only served by septic systems which have a number of effluent runoff issues due to the nature and conditions of soil types which are being addressed through inspections of septic systems.

The limitation on the development of the sewer system will represent a time constraint for further development and certainly restrict infill development areas such as between the freeway in Wallan and the Northern Highway as the primary example which is currently unsewered.

Shopping facilities and precincts

There is a hard top shopping centre of around 7,000 square metres in Wallan (Wellington Square). There is also an associated strip shopping precinct adjacent to this. Proposed shopping precincts are planned for the Wallara Waters development to the east of Wallan and further south in Beveridge (Mandalay). In addition there is also a proposal to expand the current Wellington Square Shopping Centre. However re-zoning of this land will be required before this can occur.
Often shopping facilities lag population growth for usually sound economic reasons but strategic planning needs to address this issue at the early planning stages.
Assess the capacity of existing infrastructure to accommodate increased population growth

Mitchell’s South will be:

People rich and growing – Asset/Infrastructure poor

The Shire must contend with the challenges of a growing population, particularly in the Kilmore/Wallan/Beveridge corridor, and ensure that supporting infrastructure development does not lag behind. This will require a formal planning and development framework that achieves a balance between the development of new facilities and the upgrade and maintenance of existing facilities, equitably across the Shire.

The challenge will be to effectively address the aspirations and needs of the growing population in the southern area, many of whom will have ‘metropolitan’ influenced needs and expectations whilst recognising that this will create tensions and potential conflicts in the provision of sport infrastructure across the entire Shire.

Mitchell’s North is:

Asset/Infrastructure rich

The capacity of this infrastructure will accommodate increased population growth, but is not part of this inquiry’s examination.

Population Growth poor

 Provision of services to many outer suburban areas is frequently as “simple” as moving outward from inner and middle Melbourne for service providers. In Mitchell’s case this is not a simple exercise.

The State Government has created regions across Victoria and Mitchell Shire sits in the Hume Region – whose administrative headquarters sit in Benalla, Wangaratta or Shepparton. The distances result in a disjoint, as Mitchell has far more in common in its South with Melbourne than with Wangaratta or Benalla.
8. Investigate options, based on intrastate, interstate and international evidence, which reduce pressures on infrastructure and essential services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTION</th>
<th>STRENGTH</th>
<th>WEAKNESS</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITY</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DCP’s</td>
<td>Detailed cost estimates, sequencing etc. is available.</td>
<td>Complicated process to establish.</td>
<td>Ability to secure levy for infrastructure works.</td>
<td>Can leave authorities with out of pocket expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S173 Agreements</td>
<td>Relatively easy to negotiate and implement.</td>
<td>May not cover detailed cost estimates, sequencing etc.</td>
<td>Can be negotiated at the time of development assessment.</td>
<td>Can be challenged at VCAT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Partnerships</td>
<td>Can achieve high yields.</td>
<td>Difficult to reach consensus due to several stakeholders.</td>
<td>Proper incentives can attract investment.</td>
<td>Can be open to legal challenges and can be affected by political environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Transport and Mitchell

Passenger transport

The projected growth of population in Mitchell South due to the expansion of the Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary has significant implications for passenger transport in the area.

In relation to transport, Mitchell South is currently characterised by:

- older residential areas based on a grid system with unsealed roads and no drainage;
- newer subdivisions designed with a street pattern that can prevent access to, or efficient routing of, buses (e.g. minimum width roads, cul-de-sacs with restricted turning space, tight roundabouts);
- train stations located at a distance from town centres;
- limited public bus services – where services exist, they are generally infrequent, poorly marketed, and have limited geographic coverage;
- very high levels of car ownership and use;
- limited community transport – the only operator is located at Seymour and is funded to provide transport for HACC clients. Two community buses garaged at Seymour and Broadford have been available for hire by community groups and, to date, have not been used to provide route services to fill transport gaps;
- minimal pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure with lack of continuity, permeable street layouts and direct connections to key destinations.

Implications of population growth

(a) Public transport and taxis

The Melbourne - Sydney railway line which bisects Mitchell Shire provides an important means of transport for those wishing to travel in a north-south direction. It has become the principal mode of travel for many commuters to Melbourne in response to better timetabling and increased service frequency, reduced fares and rising fuel costs. It is also a major carrier of students attending schools and post secondary training establishments both within and outside the municipality. The growth in passenger numbers over the past three years, however, has resulted in crowded peak hour trains and full station car parks. Without a sizable increase in fixed infrastructure and rolling stock on the Seymour line, the train service will be unable to cope with the increase in passengers likely to flow from the rapid influx of new residents in the Beveridge and Wallan area.

Getting to and from train stations, health services and retail centres in Mitchell Shire can be very difficult for people who live some distance from the railway line and who do not drive or have access to a car or public transport. Intercity bus services, local bus services and community transport are limited both in number and geographic
coverage. Many people, particularly those residing in rural areas, do not have access to any of these services. The cost of taxi fares for rural journeys can be prohibitive because of the distances covered whilst the small number of taxis operating can mean long waiting periods or lack of service due to unavailability of a vehicle.

The introduction of new bus services, the extension of existing services and the granting of additional taxi licences will be necessary to cater for residential growth. Increased population in Mitchell South where public transport is mediocre, without improvement, will simply increase traffic congestion.

(b) Community transport

There is only one dedicated community transport operator in the Shire. Based in Seymour, the operator provides transport services to Home and Community Care program (HACC) clients. Two community buses in the Shire are available for hire by non-profit community groups. To date, the buses have not been used on scheduled services to fill transport gaps.

With the projected population growth and a rising proportion of older residents and young people, this service sector is likely to be increasingly demanded. However, in the absence of additional funding or the entry of new operators, community transport in Mitchell Shire does not have the resources or assets to meet the transport needs of new residents. At best, it may assist in providing mobility to people who are transport disadvantaged but it should not be viewed as a substitute or cheap alternative to public transport.

(c) Car ownership

Due to limited public transport services, residents of Mitchell Shire have become highly car dependent. According to the 2006 Census, 88.4% of households in Mitchell Shire owned at least one vehicle with 60.5% owning two or more vehicles.
The equivalent figures for the Wallan-Beveridge area are 90.5% and 69.7% (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car ownership (vehicles per household)</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Wallan-Beveridge area</th>
<th>Mitchell Shire</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>Wallan-Beveridge area</th>
<th>Mitchell Shire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No vehicles</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 vehicle</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 vehicles</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more vehicles</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,563</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The higher level of vehicle ownership in the Beveridge-Wallan area is influenced by the relatively poor access to public transport and the larger proportion of higher income households (See Section 1.) compared to Mitchell Shire as a whole. In places such as Beveridge and Hidden Valley where there is no public transport, residents are heavily reliant on private cars to travel anywhere.

This level of dependency is extremely difficult to change once people have invested in one or more vehicles and have become accustomed to the flexibility and immediacy of car travel. The full cost of owning and operating a car is not always known by households or is accepted as a necessary, non-discretionary item. Some degree of modal shift from car to public transport may be achieved when a transport service is introduced that offers the same level of perceived convenience as a private car (for example, door-to-door, frequent, comfortable, affordable service). A change in the car culture can also be assisted by rising fuel costs, restrictions on parking by limiting space and/or increasing cost, and financial incentives from government (e.g. through the tax system) or employers.

To prevent car use from becoming habitual, it is essential that land use planning decisions take account of, and encourage, public transport use, walking and cycling. Bus access, stops, shelters, pedestrian and bicycle networks, bicycle parking etc. must be designed into residential, commercial and industrial subdivisions from the outset. The infrastructure should be constructed at an early stage and services brought into operation when people begin moving in, rather than decades later when car dependent habits have been established. New residents relocating from
metropolitan Melbourne and accustomed to using public transport in their former place of residence are likely to look for and use local transport services.

If these services are not available, new residents will continue the current trend of high car ownership adding to traffic congestion; road deaths and injuries; transport greenhouse emissions; the incidence of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases from particulates and noxious gases; obesity and other adverse health effects from inactive lifestyles associated with excessive car use; and the amount of land needed for roads and car parking.

(d) **Transport disadvantage and social isolation**

Transport disadvantage can result from:

- inadequate public transport for people who do not drive or own a car (or enough cars to meet the needs of all household members); and
- the financial burden of car ownership for those who are forced to have cars (or more cars than they might want) because of poor public transport.

According to Professor Graham Currie, there are strong relationships between where disadvantaged people live and the lack of public transport. Lower income and financially marginalised residents tend to be concentrated in fringe urban areas where public transport is poor or non-existent. This has encouraged many low income families to become car dependent. As a result, a large share of low income households living on the fringe of Australian cities have high car ownership and spend an excessive proportion of their income on running one or more cars. According to the RACV, it costs over $220 per week to purchase and run an average large car with operating costs increasing by an average of 3.3 percent over the past five years. Outer suburban and rural and regional people with high car use are particularly vulnerable to rising oil prices.

Lack of public transport creates inequalities between car owners and those who do not drive or have access to a car. Non-car owners usually require more time and effort and pay a higher marginal cost to reach the same destinations as people with cars. In addition, they are more likely to experience social isolation because lack of transport options restricts their ability to participate in activities which would be considered normal in their society.

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1 Prof G. Currie, Submission to The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, *Inquiry into Investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services*, August 2009, p30


Mitchell South already faces many social challenges from a growing population. There is a lack of community and social infrastructure to service future population. The delay in delivery of community infrastructure has meant that residents have to travel longer distances to reach employment, education, health care and social services. People without private transport experience a lack of real transport choice which restricts their choice of activities and destinations. It can lead to exclusion from education, work, health services, shops, family and community life. The implications for young people, people with disabilities and other key groups can be severe.

The addition of large numbers of new residents will exacerbate this situation and leave more people socially isolated unless there is adequate investment in public transport.

Where significant investment in public transport has taken place, the public transport network has contributed to the overall vitality and cohesion of the community. A connected community is a healthy community.

Existing services in Mitchell South

(a) Beveridge

Beveridge has no passenger transport services other than contracted school buses. Intercity buses travel via the Hume Freeway, bypassing Beveridge, and there are no local buses linking the township with retail, health and other facilities in the larger towns or outer metropolitan area.

Lower Hume Community Transport (LHCT) transports Home and Community Care (HACC) clients to medical appointments and for shopping and other services. Although Mitchell South falls within its catchment area, the bulk of LHCT’s passengers come from northern and central Mitchell. There is no dedicated community transport service based in Mitchell South.

The decision to cease V/Line train services to Beveridge and then to demolish the railway station has left residents with no direct access to the train which had previously been the key connector to Melbourne. No connecting bus service to Wallan East or Donnybrook stations was provided by V/Line to compensate for cessation of the train service at Beveridge.

The proposed relocation of the station further south to the Lockerbie residential development will continue to leave the Beveridge residents without immediate access to the train service despite the growth in the town’s resident population.
The old township consists primarily of unsealed roads which create major dust problems in summer. There are very few footpaths with residents having to walk on the grassed verge or the edge of the road. Many of the roads have a rough surface which prevents access by a low floor vehicle. The new residential subdivision of ‘Mandalay’ to the west of the old township has sealed roads and footpaths but the latter do not connect to the old township. Residents face a long walk from the estate to the old township; there is no transport service connecting the two areas.

(b) Wallan

In addition to contracted school buses, Wallan has a town bus service which links the town centre with the train station located several kilometres to the east. The service is delivered by a large low floor bus which maximises passenger access but restricts travel on rough, unsealed or narrow roads and through housing estates which have no effective through roads. The town bus provides a partial coverage of residential areas but excludes major estates such as Hidden Valley. Older residents in Hidden Valley who do not drive must walk or seek the assistance of a car owner to drive them to Wallan town centre or train station.

Some of the older residential subdivisions have unsealed roads which are unsuitable for the low floor bus. Footpaths are minimal away from the immediate town centre and are not continuous.

There are several V/Line intercity bus services which travel between Melbourne and the Murray River/Riverina via Wallan. These mostly run once each way per day, seven days a week.

Along with Beveridge, Wallan is serviced by Lower Hume Community Transport (LHCT) which provides transport services for HACC clients.

Transport needs

Connecting Mitchell, which is funded under the Victorian Government’s Transport Connections Program, undertook a residential survey of Beveridge in December 2010 to determine the travel patterns and transport needs of residents. The survey yielded the following results:

- 81 per cent of people who responded found access to transport difficult
- The most popular destinations were Wallan, Melbourne and Epping
- 90 per cent used a car the most as a driver or passenger
- the main reasons for travel were shopping, health, employment and for social/family purposes
- the preferred time and days of travel were 9am-12noon on Thursday and Friday.

The highest priority needs were for:
- a connector service to Wallan town centre and train station for shopping, health appointments and train travel to Melbourne, 2-3 days a week;
Discussions with Wallan community members and Hidden Valley residents have indicated the following transport needs:
- extension of the weekday town bus service to include Saturday and Sunday;
- a late night train from Melbourne;
- a transport service between Hidden Valley, Wallan town centre and the train station;
- a transport service between Wallan and Epping.

Recommendations

Existing public transport services in the Wallan – Beveridge area are inadequate to cater for the rapidly increasing population. The system will need to be upgraded and extended if a continuation of the high car dependence is to be avoided and people who do not drive or own a car are to have a real transport choice.

It is recommended that

- higher priority should be given to public transport with subdivisions designed with a street pattern that permits access to public buses and allows buses to be routed efficiently and with good pedestrian access from bus stops to the surrounding area. As the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee commented “Building urban fringe developments in a way that makes it inevitable that more than 90 per cent of the residents’ trips will be by car should be regarded as no more acceptable than building on contaminated land”\(^4\)(para 3.58, p29).
- less priority be given to roads and cars. This will improve urban amenity and allow land to be reallocated for other uses eg. widening of footpaths, bikeways, parks and community spaces.
- public transport infrastructure and services be provided from the outset, rather than being put in years later after new residents have established car dependency. Creating real mode choice in outer areas as people move into new areas can help families think twice about the need for a second or third car.
- a new train station at Beveridge be constructed to accommodate the increase in patronage that will be generated by population growth in the immediate area.
- consideration be given to the introduction of flexible, door-to-door transport services to provide comparable convenience to the private car and to enable all people to utilise the service.

\(^4\) The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee, *Inquiry into Investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services*, August 2009, para 3.58 p29
• smaller, accessible buses be procured for use on services that require travel on narrow roads and subdivisions with limited turning spaces and where passenger numbers are relatively low.

• continuous pedestrian and cycle networks be constructed that provide connectivity to key destinations and other transport modes. Funds should be allocated by the State Government to councils in regional Victoria to help reduce the backlog of footpath construction in rural towns.

• policies and incentives that discourage car use and encourage behaviour change be introduced (eg. reduced parking space, tax and other incentives for public transport use, removal of concessionary fringe benefits taxation of cars).

• State Government increase its commitment to funding of transport in metropolitan fringe and regional areas so that there is equity between metropolitan and regional public transport.

• more co-operative use of resources be made and routes opened up to permit the addition of more flexible and innovative transport services to meet needs not filled by contracted services.
10. Provide options for skills training and retention

Economic Data

Compared to regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne, Mitchell Shire has a higher proportion of resident workers employed in manufacturing; construction; warehousing; and public administration & safety. In contrast, a lower proportion of resident workers are employed in financial, business and professional services; education & training; and health services.

The following characteristics are observed for each SLA:

Mitchell South resident workers are mostly employed in manufacturing (16.6%); retail trade (12.2%); construction (11.4%); health care and social assistance (8.9%); and transport, postal & warehousing (8.5%).

Mitchell North resident workers are mostly employed in public administration & safety (20.9%); retail trade (10.6%); health care and social assistance (9.9%); manufacturing (9.6%); and agriculture, forestry & fishing (7.4%).

These employment patterns tend to reflect the location of the Shire in respect to job opportunities in the Hume corridor (especially in manufacturing and related activities) and in the public service / armed forces jobs in Seymour and at Puckapunyal.

Employment information is shown in Table 1.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.4: Employment by Industry for Resident Population, Selected Locations, 2006 ANZSIC 2006 Industry</th>
<th>Mitchell (S) - North</th>
<th>Mitchell (S) - South</th>
<th>Mitchell (S) Total</th>
<th>Regional Victoria</th>
<th>Metropolitan Melbourne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture\ forestry &amp; fishing</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity\ gas\ water &amp; waste services</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; food services</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport\ postal &amp; warehousing</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABS Census 2006 shows that Mitchell Shire has a strong blue-collar occupational base. In this context, 41% of the Shire’s working residents are employed in manual occupations (technicians & trades, machinery operators & drivers and labourers) and this compares to 36% for regional Victoria, and 29% for metropolitan Melbourne. The Shire also has a higher proportion (34%) of service workers (community, clerical, sales etc) compared to regional Victoria (31%), but similar proportions to metropolitan Melbourne (35%).

Only 26% of the Shire’s working residents are occupied as managers or professionals, and this compares to 33% for regional Victoria and 36% for metropolitan Melbourne.

This information is shown in Table 3 below.
### Table 3: Employment by Occupation, Selected Locations, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Mitchell (S) - North</th>
<th>Mitchell (S) - South</th>
<th>Mitchell (S) Total</th>
<th>Regional Victoria</th>
<th>Metropolitan Melbourne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians &amp; trades workers</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; personal service workers</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical &amp; administrative workers</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery operators &amp; drivers</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Usual Resident Employment*</td>
<td>4,582</td>
<td>9,286</td>
<td>13,868</td>
<td>585,759</td>
<td>1,685,869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anecdotally, skills shortages exist in traditional trades even though the Shire is well represented compared to regional Vic and metro Melbourne. In addition a shortage of people with management skills and higher level/professional engineering, business services and health services skills are evident in Mitchell.

Additional incentives to encourage skill development and training are needed.
11. Examine the role of small business, local councils and community groups in developing local expertise

**Community groups’ role in developing local expertise**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/organisation</th>
<th>Role in developing local expertise in growing urban communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres | • Low cost provision of ACE and other courses to community  
• Offer opportunities for volunteer participation and skill development in governance and project management  
• Inform communities about issues that affect them  
• Model civic participation and involvement in community decision making |
| Men’s Sheds | • Learning environment for men of all ages to share skills and knowledge  
• Creates a safe environment where men can share their health and wellbeing issues |
| Community networks | • Provide opportunities to build community leadership  
• Increase community understanding of civics  
• Advocate for resources for particular communities  
• Provide support and networking opportunities that build community capacity |
| Rotary/Lions Clubs | • Opportunities for community to learn new skills including leadership and personal development  
• Raise money to be spent on local projects  
• Support youth development in leadership training |
| Historical Societies | • Collection, researching and sharing history in the community  
• Give advice and assistance to individuals, researchers, business and government agencies on local history |
| Local radio stations | • Owned operated by local community.  
• Provide a mechanism for facilitating individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own stories, and to share their experiences |
To ensure that the existing groups and organisations in Mitchell South can continue to enhance the liveability in as it grows, Council will need to consider:

- Staff continue to be in place to support these groups
- Advocacy for continued and increased State funding to extend courses as population grows.

As new communities develop in its south, Mitchell Shire will need to consider the following:

- spaces for community centres, ideally within a multi-purpose place where a range of other services and opportunities for community connection can occur
- additional Council staff to provide support to centres/groups
- spaces for men’s sheds and other spaces for men to meet
- funding to support development of new facilities

**Chambers of Commerce**

Local council as well as community groups, and in particular, Chambers of Commerce can have positive influence on skills development. By facilitating relationships with training providers and the business community, skills shortages and skills development opportunities can be identified and addressed in a timely fashion.

Often though, in smaller fragmented communities which lack community cohesion and management level skills the groups themselves struggle to operate effectively. In addition sometimes leaders with these skills are so in demand that their time becomes limited to assist where they can only. Many seem to suffer “burn out” at some stage and withdraw from these community roles to focus on their own business. The role of government in this instance therefore is to strengthen, broaden, support and develop the management and cohesion of these groups.
12. Investigate the value of sister city relationships with key trade and innovation markets

There would appear to be some value in the establishment of sister city arrangements. A number of local government authorities do participate in sister city arrangements. Mitchell Shire Council has had a long standing relationship with Honbetsu, Japan. This sister city relationship has been based more on a cultural exchange rather than any sort of trade or innovation exchange. There may be potential in the future to see how trade and innovation could be developed between sister city arrangements, however this would require a more formalised strategic approach that would perhaps need to be auspiced by Regional Development Victoria or the Department of Business & Industry.

Should such a relationship be developed, the key to operating these relationships is to establish business involvement. It is unlikely that smaller councils or even medium sized councils have the capacity to adopt a vibrant sister city relationship as there are significant funds required to both develop the marketing material and maintain the relationship.

State governments are better equipped to handle these relationships with more resources and the expertise to cultivate and grow the relationships. Councils could have a role in supporting this effort.
13. **Identify local manufacturing capacity and highlight export development opportunities**

There is a huge opportunity to plan and develop the manufacturing sector in the outer suburbs of Melbourne. For a number of years the Growth Areas Councils have been asking for the development of an investment and attraction strategy for the growth areas, specifically in relation to identifying suitable businesses based in Melbourne that are seeking to move onto larger sites.

Clearly with the high level of transport infrastructure that has now been located in the outer suburbs, it is logical to encourage migration outwards from the city for those people employed in these areas, rather than further choking the city with commuters and employees trying to access jobs within the CBD of Melbourne. The provision of infrastructure will always drive opportunities for manufacturing. The more certainty organisations have about where large scale infrastructure, such as water, gas and sewer will be located, the more likely organisations are to move into these areas.

Businesses seeking to establish themselves in the manufacturing sector often seek to go on larger lots, i.e. 10 hectares. These lots then allow these businesses to either co-locate their transport and logistics on the same site or encourage some of their second tier suppliers to locate in close proximity to them. This is the example of the existing Ford factory surrounded by the tier 1, 2 and 3 facilities in Campbellfield.

There is also the opportunity to undertake export through bonded trade areas that directly supply to intermodal facilities or airports. These bonded areas that potentially could become enterprise zones in the longer term, can be located in areas in close proximity to transport. These areas need to be located on the edge of Melbourne, allowing for higher security to be put in place as well as the necessary infrastructure.

There are opportunities for local manufacturing to occur in these areas, however there is a need for a clear and concise plan to be created that informs and markets the growth areas to existing companies. It is obvious in the future that the level of manufacturing that will be undertaken by Victorian firms will diminish, however the facilitation of high quality and competitive manufacturing organisations does not necessarily have to diminish at the same time.

It is clear that export development opportunities can occur in niche markets through specialised firms providing high quality product. This should be the focus of many of the strategies that are currently being developed at the moment. It is unrealistic to think that Australia or Victoria will remain the home of manufacturing that only aims to focus on volume production, rather than quality production.

Suitable land availability (i.e. industrial zone) in the short to medium term appears on the surface to be adequate (Mitchell Shire Industrial and Commercial Land Demand and Supply Assessment, Essential Economics).
However it is also recognized that in the south of the Shire where residential growth is to occur, that servicing issues will be prevalent in the future as demands on water, roads, power and water treatment infrastructure accelerates. In addition, lack of previous good quality strategic planning in the south of the Shire around Wallan and Beveridge has meant there is little competition and a lack of choice exists in the industrial land market (e.g. one owner controls supply of all Industrial 1 zoned land and there is no supply of Industrial 3 land) and therefore constraints on development and possibly export growth have occurred.

There is a need to address provision of appropriately zoned industrial land urgently.

Export development opportunities in the Shire will be greatly enhanced by the construction of the Intermodal Freight Terminal at Beveridge and related infrastructure. Good quality strategic planning surrounding the facility is also required to allow for this growth in export potential to occur.