

birregurra structure plan final report

prepared by hansen partnership pty ltd

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urban planning | urban design | landscape architecture

acknowledgements

steering committee

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- Cr Brian Crook, Councillor Colac Otway Shire
- Doug McNeill, Manager Planning and Building Colac Otway Shire
- Don Lewis, Senior Strategic Planner Colac Otway Shire
- Gemma Browning, Strategic Planner Colac Otway Shire
- Ian Seuren, Manager Recreation Arts and Culture Colac Otway Shire
- Greg Fletcher, Manager Health and Community Services Colac Otway Shire
- Paula Gardiner, Manager Capital Works Colac Otway Shire
- Mick Cosgriff, Economic Development Officer Colac Otway Shire
- Greg Hayes, Regional Planner Department of Planning and Community Development

community reference group

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- Geoff Downard
- Peter Falkiner
- Ian Fox

- Sarah Handscomb
- George Johnson
- Vicki Jeffrey
- Phillip Kennon
- Christine West

project team

- Hansen Partnership
 - David Barnes: Project Director and Urban Planner
 - Suzannah Bigolin: Project Manager and Urban Planner

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1 introduction

1.1 background

The Birregurra Structure Plan is the key strategic planning document that will assist in the management and monitoring of growth and development in the township of Birregurra. Colac Otway Shire Council engaged *Hansen Partnership*, a planning, urban design and landscape architecture consultancy, to work with key stakeholders and the community to prepare a structure plan for the town.

Birregurra is a small rural township located in the heart of the Colac Otway Shire. The town is relatively compact and has a strong focus on a traditional Main Street, which accommodates a range of small local commercial and community uses. Birregurra is relatively self-contained in relation to local community facilities with a primary school, churches, public hall, recreation reserve, train station and other well established community assets.

The town has recently been connected to reticulated sewerage, and along with road and rail improvements to Geelong, it is expected that an increased demand for residential development may occur in the future. At the same time the community sees it as important to ensure that an appropriate 'fit' exists between the existing character of the town and new development, in order to retain the valued qualities of Birregurra.

The Birregurra Structure Plan seeks to balance these competing objectives by critically examining potential residential land supply and demand, reviewing opportunities and constraints to urban development in the town, examining the role the town plays in the wider region, and through engagement with Birregurra's highly interested and active community.

1.2 draft structure plan 2010

The Birregurra Structure Plan project was originally commenced by *CPG Planning Consultants* in 2010. A draft structure plan report was prepared and placed on public exhibition that year.

There was considerable community feedback to the 2010 draft Structure Plan, particularly in relation to the possible expansion of the urban boundary of the town. As a consequence, the 2010 draft plan was not adopted by Council. Council resolved to prepare a neighbourhood character study to assist in identifying the potential to accommodate additional residential infill development within the existing urban boundaries of Birregurra. That project was undertaken by *Hansen Partnership* and has now been completed. *Hansen Partnership* was also engaged to finalise the Structure Plan based on the work commenced by *CPG Planning Consultants* and having regard to the findings of the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012* and further consultation with the community. The draft Structure Plan and background documentation prepared by *CPG Planning Consultants* has been used, where relevant, in the preparation of this Structure Plan.

Additional matters addressed in this Structure Plan include:

- An update of State, regional and local policy context.
- A more detailed residential land supply and demand analysis.
- A consideration of retail needs.
- Consideration of infrastructure planning and design principles, particularly in relation to roads and drainage.

1.4 what is a structure plan

A structure plan is a strategic planning document that aims to give effect to the policies and objectives set out for the use and development of land in the State Planning Policy Framework. It also seeks to provide effectively for changing community needs. Structure plans provide the framework for the long term development of a place by defining the preferred direction of future growth and by articulating how change will be managed.

Structure plans guide the major changes to land use, built form, access and movement networks, and public spaces that together can achieve environmental, social and economic outcomes for a place.

A coordinated and holistic plan allows a wide range of stakeholders, service authorities, State Government departments and internal Colac Otway Shire departments to all 'read from the same page' when considering development in Birregurra. This produces a coherent outcome and certainty for residents, developers and Council (as the Responsible Authority). A structure plan also provides the framework for statutory planning controls that can be implemented through the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

Structure plans are informed by extensive public consultation and discussion. While not everyone may agree with every aspect of the plan, it should generally reflect broad community values.

1.5 purpose

The purpose of the Birregurra Structure Plan is to:

- Guide land use and development in a coordinated manner over the next 20 years.
- Provide a long term vision and greater certainty for all stakeholders regarding Birregurra's preferred future.
- Provide direction relating to management of Birregurra's sense of place, character and identity following connection of the township to the reticulated sewerage network.
- Establish clear policy directions and important land use and development outcomes related to Birregurra's future settlement patterns, economic development, built form and heritage, natural environment and landscape, and access and movement networks.

1.6 land affected

The study area for the Birregurra Structure Plan focuses on the existing township boundary (see Figure 1), which includes:

- Land within the Township Zone and Low Density Residential Zone.
- The golf course and other recreation facilities within the township.
- The railway station and land within the Industrial 1 Zone to the north of the town on Roadknight Street.

birregurra structure plan aerial

legend

settlement boundary 

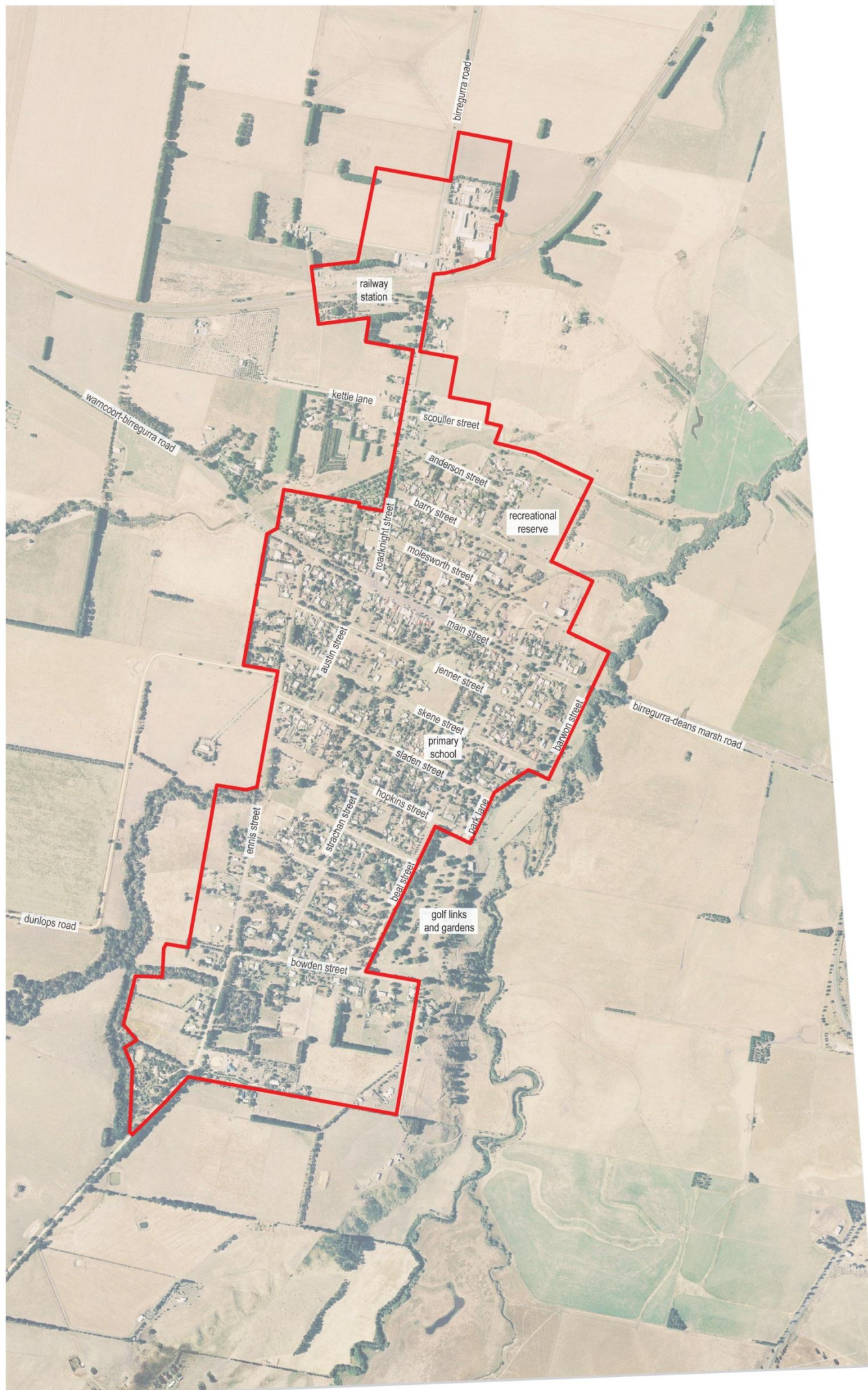


figure 1



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1.7 how the plan will be used

The Birregurra Structure Plan will be used to:

- Introduce new planning policies, and zone and overlay controls into the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.
- Guide planning decision-making, including assessment of planning permit applications for development, subdivision and land use, and requests for planning scheme amendments to rezone land.
- Guide non-statutory initiatives, arrangements or partnerships to assist in realising potential future opportunities within the township.
- Assist the community to understand how Birregurra is likely to change in the future.
- Assist community and sporting groups to prioritise future work, seek funding for projects and make long term plans.
- Provide certainty to landowners and / or developers about the future potential of their land and the matters that will be considered by Council in assessing land use and development applications.
- Provide certainty to business operators about opportunities for development and growth in regard to Birregurra's future direction.
- Inform Council's capital works program, including funding needs for recreation, community and health facilities and programs.
- Inform community services groups and physical infrastructure authorities, including Barwon Water, of future growth and the implications of this on forward infrastructure planning and service provision.

2 regional role and context

Birregurra's regional role is influenced by its location between Colac and Geelong and within the Geelong G21 Region, which includes the municipalities of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Surf Coast, Queenscliffe and Golden Plains.

Within the region, Geelong is identified as a 'Regional City', where urban growth is to be directed (Clause 11.05 of the State Planning Policy Framework and the G21 Regional Growth Plan, 2012).

The G21 Regional Growth Plan designates Colac as a 'district town' that provides food production activity and services to settlements within the rural hinterland, including the Otways and Great Ocean Road, and acts as a gateway to the Great South Coast. This aligns with the identification of Colac as a Regional Centre for residential, service and manufacturing industry, retail, office services, recreation and education facilities in the Planning Scheme. Colac is the Shire's main growth node with a target population of 20,000 people by 2050, which is significantly higher than its current population. Growth in Colac is recognised as being essential to ensuring the Centre fulfils

its regional role and continues to provide a range of services to surrounding areas.

With a population of 475 people, Birregurra currently functions as a small rural settlement with a strong identity and sense of place. The heritage and character elements that define the identity of the town, which include wide rural roads, a main street, large vegetated lots, and open views to the surrounding rural hinterland, are important in maintaining a rural feel to the town in the future.

Growth in Birregurra has historically been slow despite the township being recognised as one of the least constrained settlements in the Shire. Whilst Birregurra is not specifically targeted for growth, the *Colac Shire Rural Living Strategy, 2011* identifies the town as having moderate potential for future growth. According to the Municipal Strategic Statement, future development of townships such as Birregurra should proceed in a manner that contributes to the economic development of the towns, acknowledges and responds to environmental constraints, and protects the broader landscapes within which the townships are located



3 community consultation

In a town with such a small population, it is vital that the values of the community are heard and included in the planning process. The community is the heart and soul of a small town and has an intimate understanding of the town, its values and opportunities and constraints to growth.

Whilst consultation was undertaken during 2010 as part of the original structure plan process, additional consultation has been undertaken through the preparation of more recent projects, including the Neighbourhood Character Study and the Community Infrastructure Plan.

A Community Reference Group (CRG) was established to guide the preparation of this Structure Plan. Throughout the project, a number of CRG meetings were held at key stages, which provided an opportunity for the community to actively participate in the generation of the future direction for Birregurra. Additionally, an open public meeting was held in November 2012, which included presentation of initial residential land supply and demand findings and recommendations for the Structure Plan.

Public exhibition of the draft Structure Plan took place between March and April 2013. This included a street stall display in front of the General Store on 13 April 2013, which provided the community an opportunity to ask questions and find out about the key recommendations of the draft report.

The resulting feedback from all consultation sessions and written submissions has shaped the vision and objectives of this Structure Plan and is summarised in the Background Report.



4 the vision

A vision statement has been prepared for Birregurra. The vision seeks to encapsulate the needs and aspirations of the community and other stakeholders, as well as the outcomes sought in this Structure Plan.

The vision states a preferred future for Birregurra and provides direction as to how this will be achieved. The vision provides directions to achieve the preferred type and function of future urban form, and identifies infrastructure items that will meet a wider regional need.

The vision is derived from the Draft Birregurra Structure Plan (CPG, 2010), but has been modified to reflect the community consultation that has been undertaken since that report was prepared.

VISION

Birregurra is a small town offering a village lifestyle in an attractive rural setting to its diverse, creative and active community, which includes young families, couples, single people and older people.

The town has a relatively compact urban form based on an attractive and connected network of grid streets and open space links, and sits discretely within its rural surrounds.

Housing opportunities provide a range of choices that meet the varied needs of residents, including smaller dwellings closer to Main Street which allow people to retire and age in place. Housing is generally characterised by single storey dwellings on relatively generous lots with large gardens, creating a vegetated setting for houses consistent with the traditional character of the town. The size of lots and the amount of landscaping increases, and the intensity of development and potential for resubdivision decreases, moving up the hill to the south of town.

Birregurra's historic past is celebrated through its heritage buildings, main street, public art and provision of heritage information. The sense of township identity is in part defined by these elements and by the strong sense of community that is established through the range of community and recreation opportunities in the town.

Birregurra contains a consolidated commercial town core and community node that provides retail, community and health services that cater for residents' local needs and provides support to surrounding farming areas.

Tourism in Birregurra continues to grow with a range of accommodation, hospitality and other activities emerging to cater for this market.

5 key elements of the structure plan

The Birregurra Structure Plan establishes the key directions that will shape the growth and development of the town over the next 20 years. The Plan specifically provides guidance on the township's future land use, built form, movement, environmental and open space networks.

Birregurra has recently been connected to reticulated sewerage, and along with road and rail improvements to Geelong, it is expected that an increased demand for residential development may occur in the future. The extent and rate at which this additional growth may occur is uncertain. Preserving Birregurra's valued rural township character and natural setting, whilst allowing for and guiding modest potential future growth, is therefore a key element of the Plan. However, the Plan does not establish detailed directions for the protection of the character of the township. That has been completed in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012*.

Birregurra will continue to function as a small rural township with a commercial centre that will cater for the needs of local residents and tourists to the area. In light of modest residential growth, the role of the commercial area is likely to expand incrementally overtime, however non-essential shopping will continue to be undertaken at larger regional centres such as Colac and Geelong. Tourism, health, retail and related services will continue to perform a key role in providing local employment, as will anticipated growth in service based industry which may expand over time to respond to the needs of the population.

Birregurra's character, combined with heritage elements and geographical location proximate to the coast and Colac, create the ingredients for the town to expand its role as a tourist destination. Broadening the range of tourist accommodation and activities is an important part of this role, including potential expansion into temporary accommodation such as camping and caravan sites to meet the changing dynamics of the tourist market.

On this basis, the key elements of the Structure Plan are:

- Moderate population growth and demand for additional residential development over the next 20 years.
- Existing urban boundary of the town to be retained to maintain Birregurra as a compact rural town catering for modest growth relative to its current size.
- Infill development within the boundaries of the existing Township Zone to be given priority and to be strongly encouraged, to make efficient use of existing larger lots now that reticulated sewerage has been provided and to avoid the need for urban expansion (i.e. rezoning), if possible.
- Rate of infill development to be monitored over the next 3 to 5 years to make sure that the substantial infill development opportunities that exist are being realised.
- No urban expansion onto greenfields land to be contemplated as part of any future review of the Structure Plan, unless a review identifies that infill development is not occurring at a sufficient rate to accommodate the demand for new housing.
- The town centre is to be consolidated and strengthened through opportunities to expand commercial uses within a contained retail area.
- Opportunity for an expanded community and health node provided for within the town centre, to cater for the growing and changing needs of the population.
- Existing industrial area to the north of town to be retained and recognised as the primary location for any industries that may seek to locate in Birregurra.
- Whilst allowing existing industrial and related uses in the Township Zone in the Molesworth Street area to continue to operate under existing use provisions, encourage their relocation to industrial zoned land to the north of town, if and when reinvestment in, or expansion of those uses is proposed. This allows the opportunity for infill residential development to occur in the longer term.

- Recognition of the strong tourism role of Birregurra and the opportunities this provides into the future, and the importance of retaining and enhancing the heritage and character qualities of the town in order to realise the tourism opportunities that exist.
- Establishment of a connected open space network.
- Support for planned improvements to the Birregurra Recreation Reserve and club facilities.
- Opportunities to increase pedestrian activity through improved movement networks and pedestrian amenity.

The Structure Plan is illustrated in Figure 3.

A description of the key elements of the Structure Plan and the objectives and strategies required to realise them is described in the following sections of this report.

birregurra structure plan

structure plan

legend

- settlement boundary 
- existing residential 
- existing low density residential 
- main street heritage precinct 
- reinforce commercial town core 
- designated industrial area 
- protect timber mill and encourage screening of storage yard 
- puz4 - public use zone 4 
- existing industrial activities (maintain existing use rights) 
- public open space 
- public conservation land 
- primary school 
- future community garden on primary school land 
- municipal transfer station 
- enhance town entries 
- consolidate community hub 
- railway station 
- railway 
- main road 
- collector road 
- local sealed roads 
- future open space link 
- future shared bike and pedestrian path 
- upgrade pedestrian path 
- land subject to inundation 
- barwon river 
- existing watercourses 

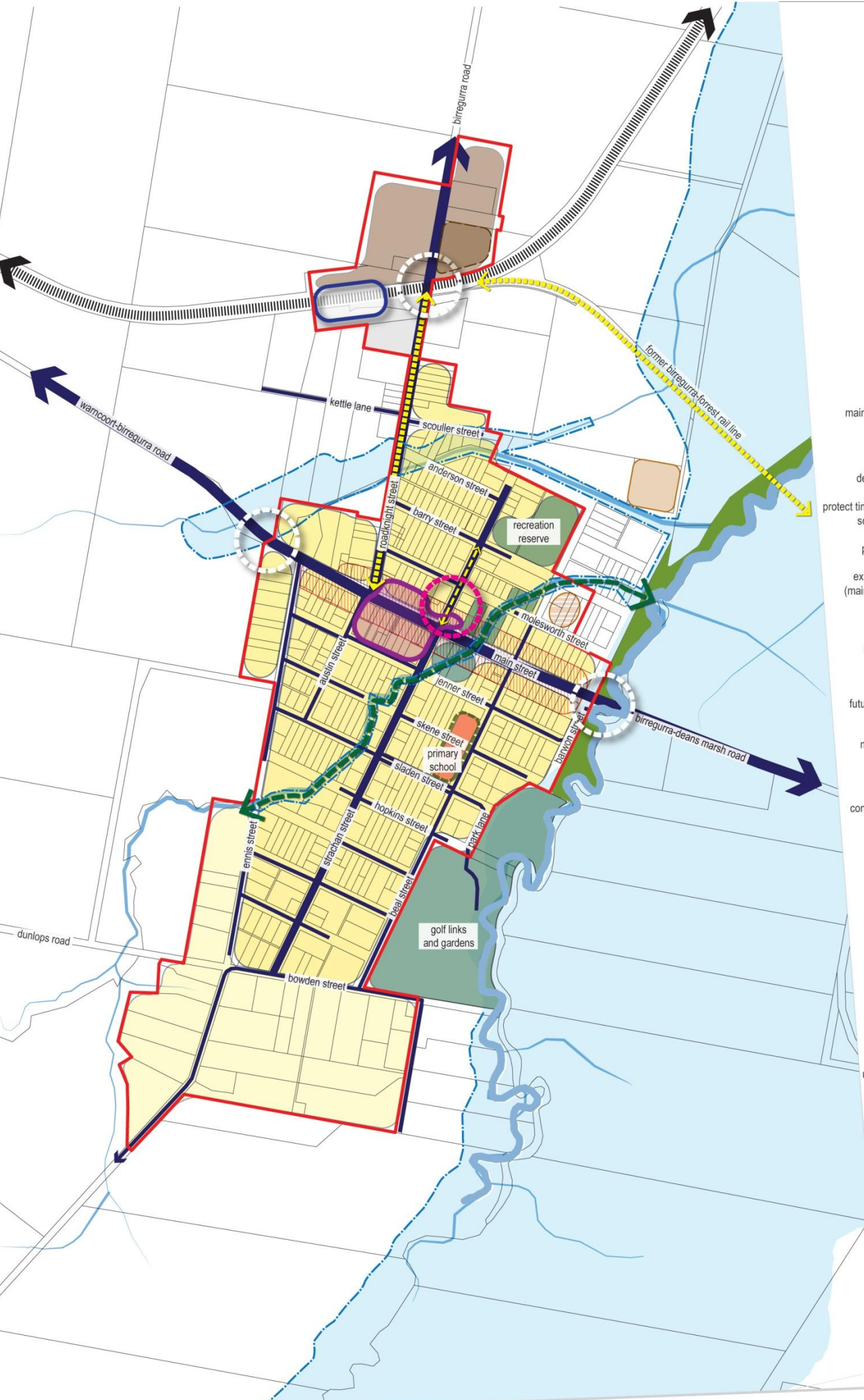


figure 3

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7 settlement

7.1 population

Birregurra is a small rural town with modest potential for future residential growth. The advent of reticulated sewer, road and rail improvements to Geelong, and increased pressures for tourism and residential lifestyle opportunities ('tree change') are likely to be key drivers of growth in the future.

The degree to which these factors will influence development in Birregurra is uncertain and the rate of population growth and residential development will need to be monitored over time to identify ongoing trends.

At the time of the 2011 ABS census the population of Birregurra was 475 people (based on place of enumeration). The following table provides population scenarios for the next 20 years based on the residential demand assessment undertaken and presented in the Background Report for this project.

	Current growth rates	Scenario 1 (low growth)	Scenario 2 (medium growth)	Scenario 3 (high growth)
2031 total persons	683	845	1,087	1,329
additional people (2011 – 2031)	208	370	612	854

As can be seen from the above table, the increase in population expected to occur over the next 20 years varies from 208 people to 854 people. Scenario 1 assumes a doubling of the past dwelling approval rates (from a low 4 to 5 new dwellings a year, to 9 dwellings a year). This is considered to form the basis for the minimum level of population increase likely to occur. Scenarios 2 and 3 are based on annual new dwelling construction rates of 15 and 21 dwellings a year.

7.2 housing

There are presently some 239 dwellings in Birregurra, both in the Township Zone and the Low Density Residential Zone (as of 2011). Existing lot sizes in the Township Zone are generally larger than more typical urban areas (ranging from 2,000 to 3,000sqm). The urban structure of Birregurra is based on a traditional grid layout comprising rectangular lots and rectilinear block patterns. Lots within the town all have at least one road frontage, with some comprising two road frontages.

supply and demand

The following table identifies the expected number of new dwellings in Birregurra over the next 20 years. As shown, it is forecast that a demand for between 180 and 420 new dwellings could exist.

	scenario 1	scenario 2	scenario 3
2031 total dwellings	419	539	659
additional dwellings (2011-2031)	180	300	420
additional dwellings per year	9	15	21

The supply and demand assessment presented in the Background Report identified the following:

- That there are presently 107 vacant lots in Birregurra.
- The theoretical number of new dwellings that could be established in Birregurra, both on existing vacant lots and lots occupied by dwellings that may be further subdivided, is between 401 and 678. This is based on the recommended minimum lot sizes for single dwellings and medium density dwellings in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study*.
- Given the difficulty of further subdividing lots with existing houses, and the fact many vacant lots may not actually 'come onto the market', a more realistic estimate of the potential for new dwellings within existing zone boundaries is between 198 to 320 new dwellings. Of these, around 17 are in the Low Density

Residential Zone, the remainder being within the Township Zone.

- Based on historic trends there is an estimated average annual demand for around 4 to 5 new dwellings per year. If that trend continues over a 20 year period it equates to demand for between 80 and 100 new dwellings.
- If that rate doubles (Scenario 1), there would be an estimated demand for around 9 dwellings per year and a need for 180 new dwellings to 2031.
- More optimistic scenarios (i.e. Scenarios 2 and 3 - 15 and 21 dwellings per year respectively) would see the need for between 300 to 420 new dwellings to 2031.

Given the significant potential for infill development (between 180 to 320 new dwellings) within current zone boundaries, it is considered that priority should be given to encouraging infill development and avoiding the rezoning of farmland around Birregurra for urban expansion purposes. However, given the uncertainty of the rate of infill development that will occur in the future, it is recommended that Council monitors dwelling approvals and house and vacant land sales over the next 3 to 5 years, to enable it to ascertain what impacts reticulated sewerage provision will have on residential demand.

Anecdotal evidence from other recently seweraged towns such as Bannockburn in the Golden Plains Shire, have revealed that infill development post sewer generally takes longer to develop than available greenfield land. This is due to the relative ease of subdividing, developing and bringing to market larger consolidated parcels versus relying on the inclinations of individual owners to subdivide and sell single parcels. Notwithstanding this, in order to preserve Birregurra's rural town character, as well as address the aspirations of the community, no additional residential land is proposed to be included in the township boundary at this time.



7.3 rectifying errors and anomalies

A number of zoning errors and anomalies have been identified through preparation of this Structure Plan which will be rectified via the structure planning process.

7.4 investigation areas for potential residential expansion

Despite the priority given to infill development within existing zone boundaries, it is appropriate for this Structure Plan to consider and identify possible preferred areas for residential expansion. This is required to preserve Birregurra's long term planning options, so that development / subdivision does not occur on such land in the interim, whilst it remains in a Farming Zone, which could prejudice the future long term growth of Birregurra.

Whilst it is important for such areas to be discussed in the Structure Plan 'report', it is not considered appropriate to identify them on the structure plan itself, so as not to raise expectations about their potential to be rezoned for urban expansion within the timeframe of this Structure Plan. The formal designation of future residential growth areas is considered beyond the planning horizon of this Plan.

Given the constraints posed by the Barwon River and its floodplain to the east of town, and the topography / escarpment to the south, options for future urban expansion are limited to the north and west.

Three areas have been identified for consideration in the future, if and when the need for urban expansion is confirmed (see Figure 4).

Land to the west of the town, along Warncoort-Birregurra Road, has not been considered due to the potential impact of urban expansion on the visual amenity of this important western entry to the town.

area 1

- West of Roadknight Street, either side of Kettle Lane and north of Atkin Creek.
- The area is approximately 9 ha (excluding land along Roadknight Street that is developed with existing dwellings).
- The area provides a logical extension to the township to the north-west. It also integrates the Railway Station with the existing urban fabric of the township.

- A scattering of existing houses and the vegetation pattern presently existing along Roadknight Street, between the existing boundary of the Township Zone and the railway line, already give the appearance that this area is part of the township. It is noted that the draft Structure Plan report (CPG, 2010) included this area within the designated township boundary.
- The Atkin Creek and associated floodplain could be utilised for environmental and passive open space purposes.
- There are plans for a shared pedestrian / bicycle path along the west side of Roadknight Street to connect the Railway Station with Main Street.

area 2

- Area 2 is east of Roadknight Street and south of the railway line.
- The investigation area is approximately 11 ha.
- The area provides a logical extension to the township. It also integrates the Railway Station with the existing urban fabric of the township.
- The area appears low lying, is less vegetated and is more open to views from Roadknight Street than Area 1 to the west. It is also considered to have lower amenity than other potential areas due to the proximity to the municipal transfer station.

area 3

- Area 3 is west of Ennis Street.
- The area is approximately 12 ha in size.
- The area would have little visual impact on main road approaches to the town if developed.
- It could also be integrated into the existing street grid network through westerly extension of Ennis Street.
- Physical boundaries also define the possible extent of the area, being a road to the north and west, and an unnamed waterway to the south.

7.6 objectives

- To maintain Birregurra as a small rural township with modest growth potential.
- To manage growth and development in Birregurra in a coordinated and sustainable manner that ensures Birregurra retains its rural township character.
- To encourage infill development on vacant lots within the settlement boundary.
- To support further subdivision of larger developed lots within the existing township boundary.

7.7 strategies

- Contain urban development within the existing defined township boundary.
- Encourage sensitive infill development as the priority for accommodating growth within Birregurra, in particular support the development of dwellings to the second street frontage where existing lots have two street frontages.
- Support subdivision of land and multi-unit development in the Township Zone consistent with the minimum lot sizes recommended in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012* as follows:

Preferred Character area	Min. lot size Single dwelling	Min. lot size Multi unit dev.
A	1,000sqm	500sqm
B	700sqm	500sqm
C	1,000sqm	600sqm
D	1,000sqm	discouraged
E (LDRZ)	4,000sqm	-

Refer Figure 5 for character area identification

- Wherever possible, existing laneways and / or roads should be used as a means to provide access to subdivisions in preference to the development of battleaxe block configurations.
- Apply the following decision guidelines to a proposal to create a battleaxe allotment where the 'handle' of the lot provides vehicle access:
 - The availability of alternative access to the new allotments i.e. whether or not there is a made or unmade road reserve adjoining the site.
 - The ease of access for emergency vehicles.
 - The length, layout, width and design of driveways and whether these will have a negative impact on the informal rural township character of Birregurra.
- Avoid the creation of battleaxe lots for service provision (i.e. where the 'handle' is used for services such as water, sewerage or drainage to a road other than the road the lot fronts), where this raises the potential for ongoing property maintenance issues, or detracts from the character of the area.
- Rezone the skate park land from a Township Zone to Public Park and Recreation Zone to reflect that actual land use of the site.
- Rezone non-railway land contained in the Public Use Zone to the Farming Zone, to reflect actual land use.
- Monitor the rate of infill development over the next 3 to 5 years to make sure that the substantial infill development opportunities that exist, are being realised.
- No urban expansion onto greenfield land is to be contemplated as part of any future review of the Structure Plan, unless a review identifies that infill development is not occurring at a sufficient rate to accommodate the demand for new housing.
- If or when a need is identified for urban expansion, the following principles should be applied in identifying and assessing potential areas for future rezoning:
 - The land is contiguous to the existing urban boundary and has the ability to be integrated into the existing grid road network to improve overall permeability and movement between new and older areas of town.
 - The land is located close to existing services and facilities (Railway Station, Primary School and Main Street).
 - The land is not constrained by slope or flooding / drainage issues.

- The location will have minimal or no visual impact on the appearance of main road entries into Birregurra.
- The need to avoid high quality agricultural land.
- The need to avoid impacts on significant vegetation.
- The site has clearly defined and defensible boundaries i.e. physical features such as roads, watercourses etc. that form a natural or a clearly defined boundary.
- The land is desirable for residential use.
- The land is not subject to high bushfire risk.
- Development of the land will provide for market choice.
- The area can be efficiently serviced by physical infrastructure with a preference for gravity sewer and gravity fed water supply systems in accordance with Barwon Water's servicing requirements.

birregurra structure plan

long term investigation areas

legend

- settlement boundary
- existing residential
- existing low density residential
- future long term investigation areas
- commercial town core
- farming
- open space
- public conservation land
- designated industrial area
- existing industrial activities (maintain existing use rights)
- municipal transfer station
- community
- public use zone
- railway station
- barwon river
- railway line

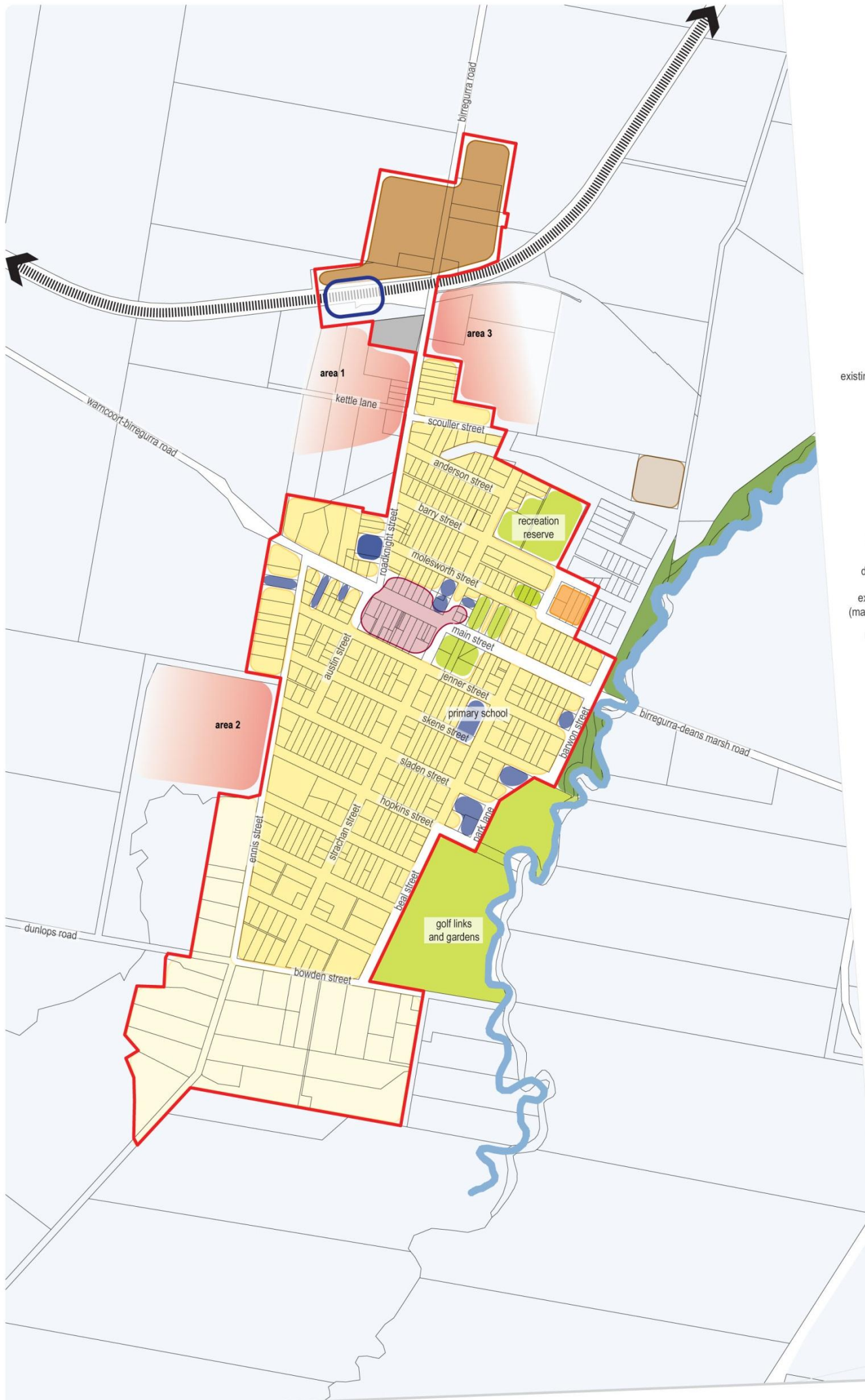


figure 4



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8 housing choice, diversity and affordability

8.1 discussion

Proximate to the coast and Otway Ranges, and to major regional centres, Birregurra provides housing choice in an alternative, easily accessible and high quality rural lifestyle and tourist location. Currently the population profile of Birregurra is mixed, with a large number of older residents as well as young families. Modest population growth will increase the mix of people in Birregurra and will influence the type and style of housing required to meet their needs.

At present, housing stock is wholly single detached dwellings from a mix of eras and a mix of price points. Achieving diversity in housing, through the arrangement of lot sizes and housing types, will increase the mix of people living in the community. A mix of people will help enhance social capital and encourage more sustainable communities.

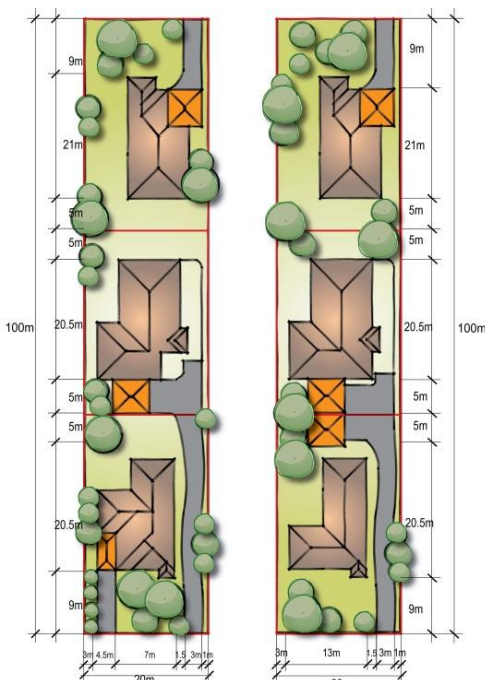
Housing diversity is particularly important for older people in the community who may seek alternatives to the traditional family home as they age. Being able to provide housing options, including smaller dwellings and units or retirement living, is very important to ensure that people can 'age in place' and remain a vital and important part of the community. This housing mix is also important for young families, first home owners and single and shared households.

8.2 objectives

- To encourage housing diversity and affordability.
- To encourage a mix of housing types and styles.
- To encourage a housing market that responds to the community's lifecycle needs.
- To encourage sustainable housing siting and design.

8.3 strategies

- Support multi-unit developments, medium density housing and retirement / aged care living in appropriate locations.
- Medium density housing to be encouraged at a scale, density and design that respects the preferred character of the town, in areas closest to the town centre, services and facilities, including in Preferred Character Areas A, B and C as identified in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2011*.
- Retirement / aged care living should occur in proximity to the community and health node, and Main Street.



9 character and heritage

9.1 character

Birregurra's small rural town appeal is very much part of its unique character. A range of landscape character elements, buildings, materials, architectural styles and streetscape elements combine to create the existing informal rural township character of Birregurra. As development occurs and change takes place over time the character qualities of a town such as Birregurra may be jeopardised. As such, the Structure Plan seeks to preserve those elements of Birregurra which contribute to its valued rural township character, and ensure new development does not result in a loss of this character. Primarily this will occur through the implementation of the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012*.



9.2 heritage

The heritage aspects of the town are very prominent in Birregurra, ranging from heritage houses to the historic Main Street, the timber mill and the Railway Station. The ability to retain and celebrate this heritage into the future is an important aspect of maintaining the sense of place and unique identity of Birregurra.

Recent work initiated by the community at the Birregurra Train Station is an example of the local value of the historic building stock and has re-invigorated the station as a key element of the tourist appeal of the town. The Heritage Walk provides a great opportunity to connect the heritage places in the town and tell the story of Birregurra to locals and visitors alike. Ongoing maintenance and further improvements to the Heritage Walk and interpretative signage is encouraged.

In Main Street, the historic nature of the town is represented not only in its building stock but in design features including ornate parapets, antique retailing, historic shop signage, the width of the street (to cater for bullock carts), horse watering areas and the use of heritage materials, colours and finishes. Use of heritage style lighting and signage could be sensitively incorporated into Main Street without impacting on authentic heritage elements.

9.3 objectives

- To retain and enhance the informal rural township character of Birregurra.
- To ensure new development does not result in a loss of the rural township character of Birregurra.
- To retain and protect the township's significant and contributory heritage places.
- To articulate Birregurra's history in the public realm.

9.4 strategies

- Ensure all new development has regard to the preferred character area recommendations and guidelines contained in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012*.
- Retain low building heights throughout the township.
- Recognise the role that exotic vegetation, including street trees, plays in determining the character of the town.
- Maintain / encourage a dominance of landscape over built form in residential areas.
- Implement the recommendations of the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012* by way of a planning scheme amendment.
- Develop guidelines for public realm and streetscape works to ensure the character of the township is a key consideration in decision-making relating to physical infrastructure.
- Retain the Heritage Overlay where it applies in the township and apply it to additional heritage places as appropriate.
- Ensure new development has regard to the Heritage Overlay and provides a sympathetic design response as appropriate.
- Encourage adaption and re-use of heritage buildings, especially in Main Street.
- Complete the Heritage Walk along the Barwon River.
- Share the town's story with visitors through an interactive display in the community centre and the introduction of Main Street history boards / interpretive signage.
- Introduce heritage themed public art through key streets as part of a 'way finding' strategy.

preferred
character areas

legend

- settlement boundary
- non-residential zoned land
- preferred character area A
- preferred character area B
- preferred character area C
- preferred character area D
- preferred character area E



figure 5



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birregurra structure plan

heritage

legend

- settlement boundary
- protect aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity areas
- retain heritage overlay
- provide interpretive signage along heritage walk
- existing watercourses
- timber mill - protect and enhance heritage gateway
- support opportunities to upgrade golf course

heritage places

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| wesleyan methodist church | HO71 |
| railway station | HO72 |
| water tower | HO73 |
| golf links and gardens | HO80 |
| christ church vicarage | HO81 |
| buntingdale mission cairn | HO82 |
| uniting church | HO83 |
| stone pine avenue main street | HO84 |
| riverside inn | HO85 |
| native youth hotel | HO86 |
| steven's corner store | HO87 |
| war memorial | HO88 |
| house 52 main street | HO90 |
| post office | HO91 |
| commercial bank | HO92 |
| shops 79-81 main street | HO93 |
| catholic church and presbytery | HO98 |
| masonic hall | HO100 |
| house 48 strachan street | HO101 |
| birregurra main street precinct | HO303 |
| birregurra church precinct | HO304 |

other destinations

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| public park | ① |
| birregurra primary school | ② |
| view of mt gellibrand | ③ |
| view of birregurra township | ④ |
| otways view at the top of niagara | ⑤ |
| the old cricket ground | ⑥ |
| birregurra historical centre | ⑦ |
| birregurra water tower | ⑧ |
| birregurra butter factory | ⑨ |
| birregurra timber mill | ⑩ |

figure 6



Project Ref: 11.494
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10 town centre

10.1 discussion

Birregurra's traditional main street town centre is a focus for locals and visitors. Its historic qualities and rural character create a distinct and unique identity for the town. To reinforce the role of the town centre and respond to modest future population growth, opportunities to provide for additional small scale commercial facilities in and around the town centre need to be retained, in order to avoid the possibility of 'out-of-centre' development undermining the town centre in the long term. This includes expansion of restaurant and café facilities, tourist facilities, and either the expansion of the existing general store or the possibility of a small supermarket in the longer term. It also includes the provision of commercial space for professional services or a possible petrol station.

Currently, retail uses are generally located on the southern side of Main Street, maximising the solar orientation. The presence of café tables and chairs spilling into the street creates an attractive and inviting atmosphere that is supported. Linear expansion of the town centre should be avoided to maintain its compact form, village charm, walkability and overall retail activity and vibrancy. It is preferable that retail / commercial activities be consolidated on either side of Main Street between Roadnight Street / Austin Street to the west, and the creek / Strachan Street to the east.

The community has expressed a desire to maintain the fine grained, small scale atmosphere and nature of the heritage buildings and shops in Main Street. Notably there has been support for specialty shops such as a butcher or bakery, expansion of the general store and / or establishment of a food co-op. It is considered that there is a need to retain the potential for expansion of the general store, or for a larger commercial premise such as a small supermarket in the longer term, if and when the need may arise for such a facility. Whilst the current general store offer may meet existing community needs, population increases in the future may demand a higher level of retail services. The ability to provide necessary services and facilities to support potential population

increases within the town centre has a number of benefits in terms of generating activity which leads to an increased range of available goods and services, increased vitality of street life, and a reduced need to travel by vehicle to other towns, all of which will contribute to a sustainable long term future for Birregurra.

10.2 objectives

- To reinforce Main Street as the commercial town centre of Birregurra.
- To broaden the commercial, retail and tourism offer in the township.
- To contain linear expansion of the commercial town centre.

10.3 strategies

- Support new commercial uses and re-development of existing premises on both sides of Main Street between Roadnight Street / Austin Street to the west and the unnamed watercourse / Strachan Street to the east. This is referred to as the Commercial Town Core of Main Street.
- Support commercial activities which build on Birregurra's rural township character such as arts and crafts, health and wellbeing, and food related tourism.
- Support and encourage the establishment of additional speciality shops such as a grocers, bakery or food co-op etc.
- Support the expansion of the general store, if and when demand warrants such.
- Retain the potential for additional retail and commercial businesses that may seek to locate in Birregurra (including either an expanded general store or a small supermarket) in the following locations:
 - North side of Main Street, between Roadnight Street (west) and the unnamed watercourse (east).
 - If a Main Street location is not possible, behind existing shops in Jenner Street, preferably with a main public access from Main Street.

- Consider complementary uses and activities such as bed and breakfasts, civic facilities or medium density housing on the north side of Main Street, between Roadknight Street and the creek, providing the potential for longer term retail and commercial uses fronting the street is not lost.
- Direct any potential petrol station to locate in or close to the town centre. Appropriate locations for any petrol station include land at the eastern and western edges of the town centre, away from the heritage core and identified township gateways.
- Ensure all new buildings demonstrate a sympathetic design response to the heritage qualities of Main Street.
- Retain the single storey built form of Main Street and discourage second storey elements.
- Ensure new development in Main Street has regard to the design guidelines prepared as part of the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012*.
- Encourage active street frontages to develop within the Commercial Core to Main Street over time.
- Ensure any new commercial development to the rear of properties on Main Street has regard to sensitive residential interfaces.
- Maintain the current street cross-section in Main Street, with more formalised parking areas on the north side of the street as commercial uses expand.
- Prevent visual clutter from advertising or other signage.
- Rezone the 'town centre' to the Business 1 Zone to encourage consolidation of business uses in this area and to manage the intrusion of non-business related uses.
- Retain the flexibility provided by the existing Township Zone elsewhere in Birregurra, to allow discretion for smaller scale businesses to be considered, provided they are compatible with adjoining residential uses.

birregurra structure plan land use and activity

legend

- settlement boundary 
- residential 
- low density residential 
- farming 
- reinforce town centre and encourage commercial uses 
- limit expansion of commercial core 
- public open space 
- public conservation land 
- designated industrial area 
- protect timber mill and encourage screening of storage yard 
- existing industrial activities (maintain existing use rights) 
- municipal transfer station 
- public use zone 
- community 
- future open space 
- future community garden on primary school land 
- future open space link 
- future shared bike and pedestrian path 
- railway station 
- 500m EPA buffer 
- enhance town entries 
- consolidate community hub 
- barwon river 
- railway line 
- encourage expansion of tourist activities including accomodation 

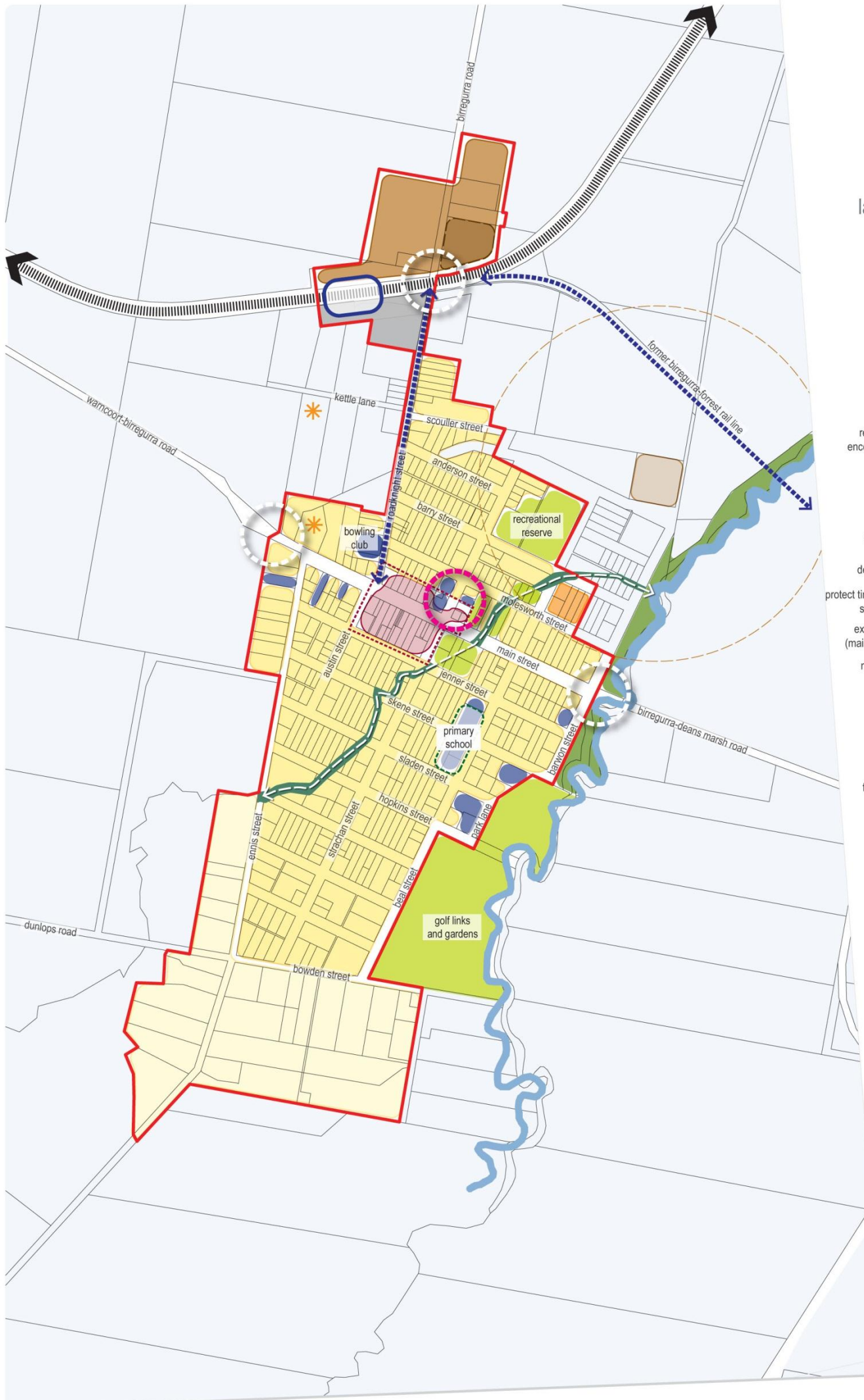


figure 7

Project Ref: 11.494
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11 industry

11.1 discussion

The provision of local employment is important in Birregurra, as a way of contributing to overall sustainability of the township in the longer term. Birregurra currently contains two industrial nodes, one is zoned for industry and is centred on the northern gateway to town. It comprises the historic (operational) timber mill. The other location is an informal area occupied by existing uses, in Molesworth Street. That area is included in the Township Zone. Whilst there is no demonstrated need to provide for additional industrial land in Birregurra, it is important to protect the ongoing integrity of industrial activities and provide scope for any appropriate industrial uses that might seek to locate in the town in the future.



The existing industrial zoned land to the north of the town should be maintained as a focus for industrial land use and development into the future. Whilst the Structure Plan seeks to maintain the flexibility provided by the Township Zone for appropriate small scale business uses to locate throughout Birregurra, this does not extend to industrial uses. Any future industrial uses should locate in industrial zoned land. New development needs to have regard to the role that this gateway location plays in the presentation and image of Birregurra.

There is also a small parcel of land on the north side of the railway line, which is currently incorrectly zoned Public Use Zone. That land is privately owned and currently being

used for light industrial uses. It represents a logical extension of the existing Industrial 1 Zone and should be zoned accordingly. Future development of that land should have regard to the railway line / station interface and associated heritage matters.

The prominent location of the timber mill and its historic structure are important to the community as a reminder of its past. However the current use of the site in terms of storage yards appears unsightly from the road. As a key gateway to town it is considered that opportunities to screen the storage areas through the use of onsite or roadside vegetation, or some form of opaque fencing, would be opportune. Screening should avoid loss of sight lines to the heritage built form from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.

Existing uses in Molesworth Street will be permitted to continue to operate under existing use rights. However, they will be encouraged to relocate to the designated industrial area should there be proposals to reinvest or expand those uses.

The Birregurra Transfer Station at the end of Scouler Street is a municipal landfill site. In accordance with the recommended EPA Landfill Guidelines, it requires a 500m buffer and sensitive land uses should be avoided within this area.

11.2 objectives

- To encourage local jobs where possible.
- To protect the ongoing integrity of industrial activities in the Industrial 1 zoned land to the north of town.
- To encourage existing industry in Molesworth Street and future industrial uses that might seek to establish in Birregurra to locate in the industrial area to the north of the town.

11.3 strategies

- Retain existing industrial zoned land to the north of town, on Birregurra Road, as the focus for industrial activities and direct industrial development and all new industrial uses to that area.
- Encourage any existing industrial uses within the Township Zone to relocate to industrial zoned land, if and when those uses are looking to expand or reinvest in their activities.
- Support the establishment of service related industries such as plumbers, panel beaters, builders and mechanics etc. in the designated industrial area to meet local needs.
- Encourage the screening of storage yards on the timber mill site. Screening in the form of low vegetation or low fencing is encouraged. Screening should avoid impacting on the visibility of or sightlines to the historic timber structures.
- Apply the following decision guidelines when considering any application for development in Industrial 1 zoned land:
 - Encouragement of low scale building heights, and building colours and materials that reflect the rural township character of Birregurra, especially along those walls of a building that are visible from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.
 - Provision of generous building setbacks from front and side boundaries to provide the opportunity for substantial landscaping within the front boundary and along any side boundaries visible from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.
- Provision of landscaping and visual screening of any open storage yards associated with a development that is visible from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.
- Establishment of a grid based subdivision pattern (if subdivision is proposed) to ensure connectivity with Birregurra Road and continuation of the grid based urban structure of the township.
- Provision of appropriate interfaces with the railway line and the historic Birregurra Railway Station to the south.
- Use of sustainability measures such as water reuse and water sensitive urban design treatments.
- Ensure sensitive uses do not encroach into the Birregurra Transfer Station's EPA recommended buffer.
- Correct a zoning anomaly of land in the northern industrial area to ensure that the Industrial 1 Zone boundary matches property boundaries.
- Rezone non-railway land at 452 Birregurra Road currently contained in the Public Use Zone to the Industrial 1 Zone, to reflect that existing use of the land as well as a logical extension of the existing industrial zoning to the north.

12 tourism

12.1 discussion

The heritage and rural township character qualities of Birregurra and its location proximate to key destinations such as the Great Ocean Road and Otway Ranges attract many tourists. Opportunities to further enhance tourism are important in enhancing the local employment base and are encouraged by the Structure Plan. This includes increasing the availability and range of tourist accommodation, increasing the type of tourism activities in the town, increasing tourism packages that capitalise on local events (such as the Birre Festival) or recreation (i.e. golf tournaments), and highlight the strong arts and food and wine interests of the local community.

Maintenance and enhancement of the existing heritage and character of the town is fundamental to retaining and growing tourism. The main street is a strong heritage feature. The community has focussed considerable effort on highlighting and enhancing the heritage qualities of the station and its surrounds, as a major heritage and tourist destination of the town.

Birregurra has a strong and active arts community which contributes significantly to the social and economic dynamics of the town, and to opportunities for tourism into the future. The community is also pro-active in terms of organising events and activities to attract people to Birregurra. The Celtic Festival, Teddy Bear Parachuting from the Church Tower, Open Studio Weekend and Arts Show are examples. Community members have identified the need for an art gallery or space to support and showcase the local arts community.

Food and wine, and accommodation, are key tourist attractors in any region. Several businesses in Birregurra are actively involved in the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. There are also a number of B & Bs operating within the town. The opportunity exists to build on these aspects of tourism in Birregurra. The monthly Sunday markets from December to April are a regular feature of the town which combine these interests.

It is understood that during the Birre Festival the recreation reserve is used as a camping ground. There may be scope to provide more formal camping facilities within the town or on its outskirts in locations that are accessible to key features such as the Barwon River.

The establishment of a rail trail along the alignment of the former Birregurra to Forrest railway is a major initiative being pursued.

To meet the needs of the tourism market, ongoing opportunities for rural, heritage and tourism based retail and hospitality uses should also be supported.



12.2 objectives

- To support an increase and diversification of tourist based activities in Birregurra.
- To increase the type and offer of tourist accommodation.

12.3 strategies

- Build upon existing arts and crafts, food, and health and wellbeing tourism related activities.
 - Encourage tourist accommodation including bed and breakfasts and small scale hotel / serviced apartments within the township. Opportunities for tourist accommodation along Main Street are encouraged.
 - Actively support and facilitate planning permit applications and proposals for well-presented and conceived tourism uses that are consistent with the heritage and character qualities of Birregurra, and which do not have unreasonable amenity impacts.
- Support the continued informal use of the recreation reserve for camping during the Birre Festival.
 - Ensure tourism developments are designed to sensitively respond to Birregurra's rural setting and heritage character.
 - Council to investigate the provision of an art gallery or space in Birregurra.
 - Council and the community to vigorously pursue the establishment of a rail trail along the alignment of the former Birregurra to Forrest railway i.e. the Birregurra-Forrest Tiger Rail Trail. A feasibility study is required to determine the viability of this project.

13 landscape and environment

13.1 discussion

Birregurra is located on the west bank of the Barwon River and is dissected by two of its tributaries (Aitken Creek and an unnamed watercourse). The township is well recognised for its treed character and topographic diversity associated with flat, low-lying land to the north, and steeper land and escarpments to its south. A range of exotic and native vegetation scattered throughout the township contributes to significant canopy tree cover.

The northern half of the town is relatively flat and has several areas of poorly drained land that is prone to flooding. In comparison, the ridgeline along the southern area of the town provides a magnificent setting for housing, with significant views of the Barwon River floodplain and of surrounding rural areas extending as far north as Mount Gellibrand.

The three highway entries into Birregurra play an important role in determining the landscape character of the town. They provide a first impression of the township upon arrival. The visibility of land along these approaches needs to be taken into consideration in making decisions about possible future township expansion and the form in which any such expansion might occur.

The importance of these landscape and environmental features means that they must be carefully managed to ensure future development is sympathetic and responds to them.

13.2 objectives

- To protect main road entrances to Birregurra from inappropriate and unplanned development.
- To protect key views and vistas to the rural surrounds.
- To encourage the retention of trees where possible and the planting of new canopy trees and understory vegetation.
- To preserve and enhance the Barwon River corridor and connected waterways.

- To recognise flood risks associated with the floodplain of the Barwon River and tributaries.

13.3 strategies

- Retain the existing Farming Zone on main road approaches to the township.
- Protect and enhance the landscape character and view lines of township entrances as defining elements of the north, east and west gateways.
- As infill development / subdivision occurs require public open space to be provided along the unnamed waterway running south-west to north-east through the middle of the town and develop a linear shared pedestrian /cycle path connecting to parkland adjoining the Barwon River. An indicative cross section of this open space corridor is provided on the following page.
- Encourage built form along this open space corridor to:
 - Be appropriately setback from the waterway in accordance with Corangamite CMA requirements.
 - Provide an active interface through the provision of windows and no solid fencing to this boundary.
 - Provide pedestrian access to the corridor where possible.
- Protect and extend areas of native vegetation, including endangered EVCs along waterways.
- Require the use of building envelopes to protect vegetation on lots that contain significant trees.
- Encourage environmental enhancement of waterways in the township through weed removal, water quality treatments and removal of rubbish.
- Council, in conjunction with landholders and the Corangamite CMA, to conserve, enhance and link patches of endangered Grassy Woodlands along Aitken Creek, and the unnamed waterway running north-east, as important local and regional assets which should be conserved.
- Direct future growth of the township away from designated floodplains.

- Retain low building heights across the township. In accordance with the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012* single storey building heights are preferred throughout the town and are mandated along Main Street (Preferred Character Area A). Where a second storey is proposed it should be recessed from the ground floor on all sides or incorporated into the roof space.
- Ensure development responds to topography, particularly in areas covered by the Erosion Management Overlay.
- Rezone public land at the intersection of Scouller Street and Barwon Street, and east of Skene Street that contains endangered vegetation (EVC 56 Floodplain Riparian Woodland) to a Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

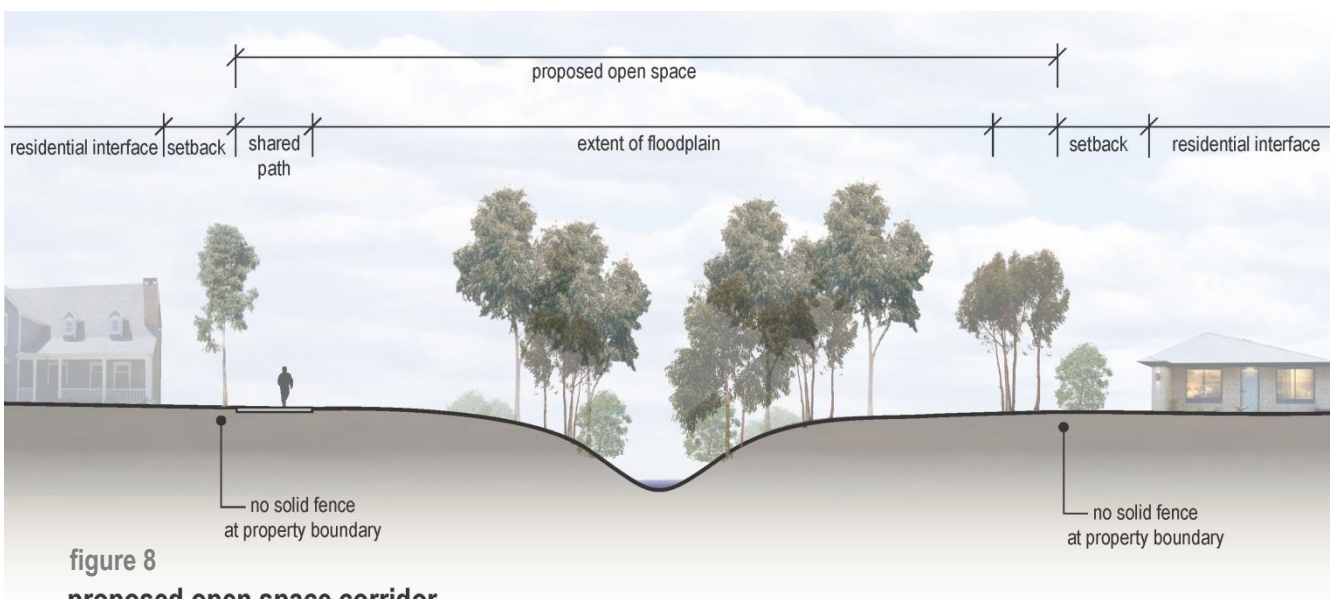


figure 8
proposed open space corridor
 1:200@a3

birregurra structure plan

landscape and natural environment

legend

- settlement boundary 
- public open space 
- recreational uses 
- public conservation reserve 
- future community garden within primary school land 
- golf course-support opportunities to upgrade and expand 
- future open space 
- proposed open space link 
- existing pedestrian path 
- future shared cycle and pedestrian path 
- municipal transfer station 
- EMO - erosion management overlay / steep land 
- LSIO - land subject to inundation overlay 
- FO - floodway overlay 
- existing watercourses 
- 2 metre contours 
- vegetation 
- high point 
- protect panorama views to township 
- main axis views 
- enhance town entries 
- 500m EPA buffer 

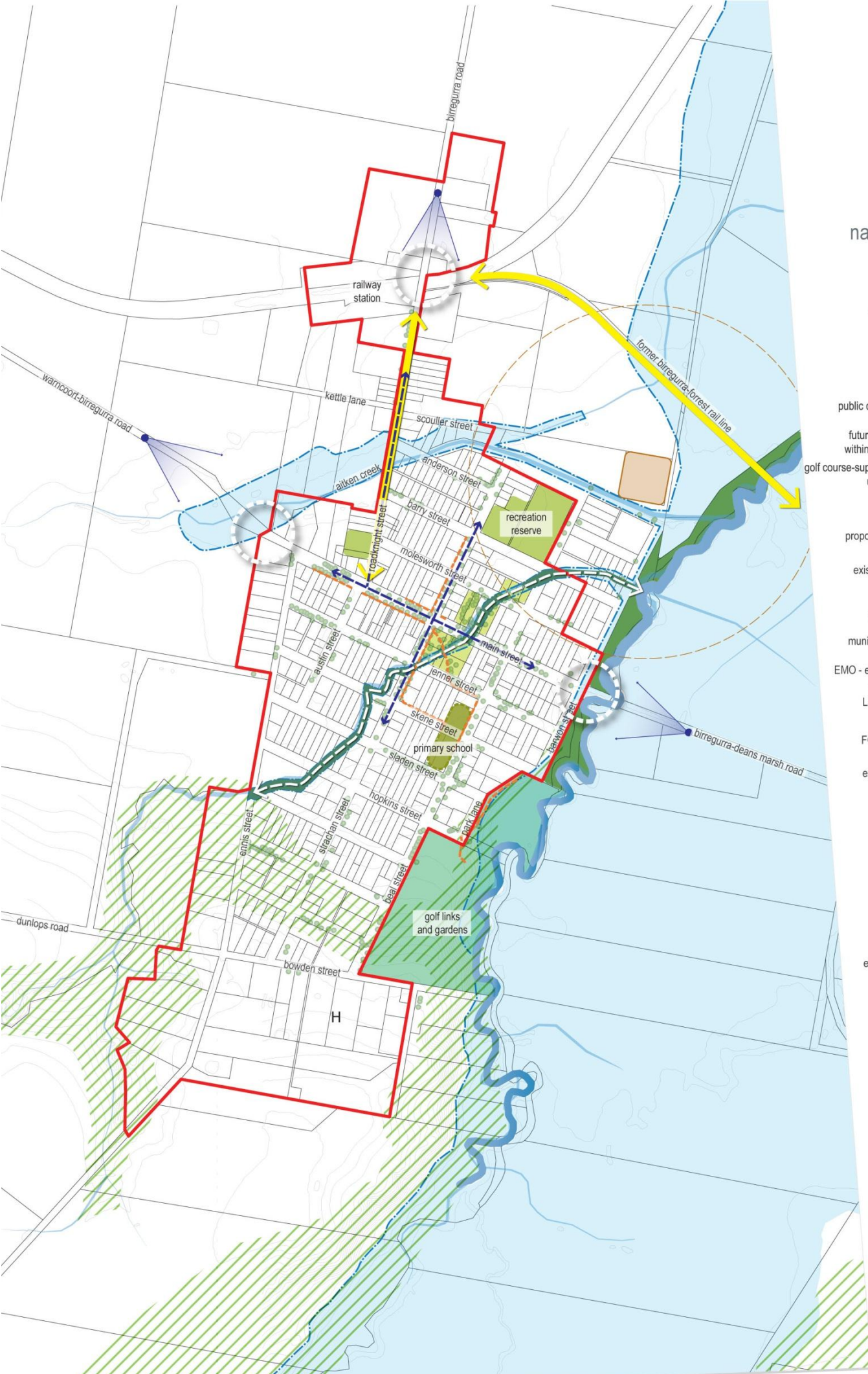


figure 9

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14 access and movement

14.1 road network

Like many regional towns, Birregurra is largely reliant on cars for transport. The existing road network has an informal nature, consisting of wide road reserves, some sealed, some gravel (unsealed) and others unmade.

Main Street is currently used by local traffic, regional traffic and heavy vehicles accessing the Otways. Despite the mix of user groups, traffic is distributed throughout the day in a manner that generally minimises impacts on pedestrian movement and access.

With modest future growth some road upgrades are likely to be necessary as vehicle movements increase. This will include improvements to Strachan Street and its intersection with Main Street, as well as Jenner Street associated with the town core. In addition, as infill development occurs within established township areas, existing gravel and unmade roads will need to be provided or upgraded. The design, type and location of new and improved road infrastructure will play an important role in maintaining Birregurra's rural township character. In addition, the means by which Council requires roads to be upgraded also needs to be carefully managed.

Council is aware that there are a number of Government Roads within the township of Birregurra which are subject to Unused Road Licences issued by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI). This has the potential to limit the ability to re-subdivide land and gain access to roads. Under the provisions of the *Land Act 1958* Council is able to request DEPI to either cancel or amend an Unused Road Licence on the basis that it can be demonstrated that the road is required for public traffic.

14.2 walking and cycling

The Structure Plan seeks to establish a high level of universal accessibility to the community and to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling. Currently, the compact form of the town and the grid network enables walking and cycling to key uses and facilities including the primary school, shops, health / community uses and

recreation facilities. However, due to the rural character of roads in the township, there are limited footpaths and people often walk on roads. Community consultation revealed that this condition was preferred to a more urban street cross-section, although the need for a shared off-street path along Roadknight Street has been identified.

14.3 public transport

The Warrnambool – Geelong passenger rail service stops at the historic Birregurra Station three times a day. This service connects residents to key urban centres for employment, education, shopping, social outings etc. The Railway Station has recently been re-opened as a result of efforts by the local community. There is ample room for drop-off and pick-up of passengers in the car park outside the station. For people choosing to walk to and from the station, there are no footpaths provided along key streets to town.

Bus services to town are limited to a seasonal service linking Colac to Lorne. Opportunities to re-route bus services through the town need to be pursued to improve local public transport options to meet the needs of a growing population.



14.4 way finding

To improve overall legibility and safety, as well as enhance the public realm and pedestrian environment, a series of way finding initiatives are proposed. As the name suggests, these initiatives seek to assist people to 'find their way', through the introduction of both physical and natural visual cues linking key destinations and pedestrian routes.

Way finding initiatives will:

- Improve the experience of visitors.
- Improve legibility to the station, town centre, primary school and community node.
- Create a safer environment with opportunities for passive surveillance.
- Introduce public art to create visual cues for pedestrians to key destinations.
- Contribute to the visual appearance of town.

14.5 objectives

- To ensure roads provide safe access.
- To ensure roads are designed to provide for all road users.
- To ensure road upgrades retain and enhance the character of Birregurra.
- To provide safe and improved opportunities for walking and cycling throughout the town.
- To encourage walkable neighbourhood design in new developments.
- To maintain the informal nature of road reserves throughout Birregurra.
- To ensure appropriate provision of public transport.
- To provide a shared path to establish a walking / cycling connection to the railway station.
- To encourage way finding treatments to improve legibility and safety of the township.
- To encourage public art to create visual cues for pedestrians, cyclists and others.

14.6 strategies

road network

- Recognise Strachan Street as the main collector road from residential areas to the north and south of the town, to the town centre and to Main Street. The upgrading of Strachan Street to a 'collector road' standard should be considered if traffic volumes reach 1,000 vehicle movements per day (vpd). The capacity of Strachan Street should be reviewed as part of a Structure Plan review in 3-5 years. To the north of Main Street, this should include upgrades to an urban standard of road with a shared path on one side. To the south of Main Street, the upgrade should minimise impacts on the existing character of the street.
- Sladen Street and Ennis Street are encouraged as alternative routes as traffic increases in the town, subject to population growth. These streets may require upgrading to cater for this role. The capacity of these streets should be reviewed as part of a Structure Plan review in 3-5 years. Any relevant upgrades should minimise impacts on the existing character of these streets.
- New road and street design should be consistent with cross sections provided in Appendix 1. Flexibility will exist to vary pavement widths etc, if required to cater for existing utilities or street trees. Strachan Street is identified as a collector road. All other streets are identified as local roads.
- All intersections with Birregurra Road and the Birregurra – Deans Marsh Road must be designed and constructed in accordance with the requirements of VicRoads, being the responsible authority.
- New subdivisions should include a grid-based road network that easily integrates with the existing surrounding road network.
- Avoid cul-de-sacs and battleaxe driveways as a means of providing access to new residential lots.

- Investigate the possibility of reducing the speed limit on Main Street to 40km/hr, in the commercial core between Roadknight Street and Strachan Street, to improve community safety.
- Maintain the informal nature of roads, with wide open grass verges, where practicable from an engineering and traffic management perspective. There should be a consistent treatment along a street.
- New roads should be aligned to avoid the removal of existing trees, where possible.
- Apply the following principles in the consideration of road upgrades at the time of subdivision. These principles also apply to the provision of drainage, where relevant:
 - Minimise cost to developer so as not to preclude development.
 - Minimise cost burden on Council / community.
 - Require all developments to be provided with all-weather access as required by the Colac Otway Planning Scheme and / or *Subdivision Act 1988*.
 - Where a constructed road exists but requires upgrading, any road upgrading is to be provided by the landowner of the land being developed.
 - Where an unmade road reserve exists, the first allotment to be subdivided along that road reserve is responsible for constructing the length of the road to the front boundary of the subject allotment.
 - Any development requiring extension of an existing road must match the existing road standard of road construction, to the satisfaction of Council.
- All new roads should have a bitumen seal to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
- Extension of existing roads may have a surface treatment and design consistent with the road being extended (i.e. gravel), unless there is a need to upgrade the existing road leading to the extension, to accommodate higher levels of traffic.
- Overtime, as subdivision of existing lots and additional housing occurs, as traffic increases, and as amenity expectations demand, all roads should be required to have a bitumen seal, whilst retaining an informal design with open grass verges and swale drains.
- Monitor rates of subdivision and new housing, and as rates of development increase consider the need to prepare a funding strategy for the upgrading of existing roads / drainage throughout Birregurra. This is likely to be implemented by way of a special charge scheme, development contribution, or combination of the two.

walking and cycling

- Introduce shared pedestrian /cycle paths on key streets where possible, including Roadknight Street, Strachan Street north of Main Street, and Sladen Street, as appropriate.
- Develop a shared pedestrian /cycle path within the future linear open space corridor through the township that connects with the Barwon River.
- Support the development of the Birregurra-Forrest Tiger Rail Trail. A feasibility study is required to determine the viability of this project.
- Improve the pedestrian environment and overall safety / line marking on shared paths and bike lanes throughout the town. Changes in pavement treatment at key intersections should be explored, particularly in higher pedestrian areas such as the near the recreation reserve, the school, the skate park and in the town centre.
- Improve the pedestrian environment along Main Street, including the introduction of seating, lighting, rubbish bins etc.
- Provide bike racks in Main Street in convenient and accessible locations. Bike racks should be functional but also innovative in design.
- Develop a footpath on the north side of Main Street, in the town centre.
- Encourage the use of exposed aggregate for new footpaths as a material that best reflects the rural character of the town. The use of plain brushed finish concrete footpaths is discouraged.

- Footpaths are required in accordance with Clause 56 of the Planning Scheme. Where a rural road profile is maintained on existing local streets in the Township Zone, formal footpaths will not be required, unless required for safety reasons.

public transport

- Council should explore opportunities with local bus service providers to re-route the Colac – Lorne bus route and timetable to divert it through town and provide a local link in the current service.
- In accordance with the recently completed Birregurra Community Infrastructure Plan, pedestrian access to the train station should be improved through the introduction of a footpath along Roadknight Street between Main Street and the station. The footpath should be located on the west side of the road within the road reserve. Lighting should be strategically located along the footpath to improve pedestrian access.

way finding

- Encourage a consistent street lighting theme along key collector streets including Roadknight Street, Strachan Street and Barry Street that create a visual link to key destinations.
- Incorporate a heritage style lighting theme in Main Street which signifies arrival into the town centre.
- Introduce a landscape hierarchy for key streets to create visual cues to key destinations. The landscape hierarchy should be based on the road hierarchy identified in the Access and Movement Plan (see Figure 10).
- Incorporate public art and universally accessible street furniture that links key elements of town together in a subtle and innovative manner. Public art should draw links to the historic past, with installations encouraged along Roadknight Street, Strachan Street, Barry Street, Barwon Street, Beal Street and Main Street

birregurra structure plan access and movement

legend

- settlement boundary
- town entries
- railway station
- railway
- main road
- collector road
- local sealed roads
- existing pedestrian path
- proposed open space link
- proposed shared pedestrian and cycle path
- upgrade pedestrian path
- river
- bridge
- potential bus stop

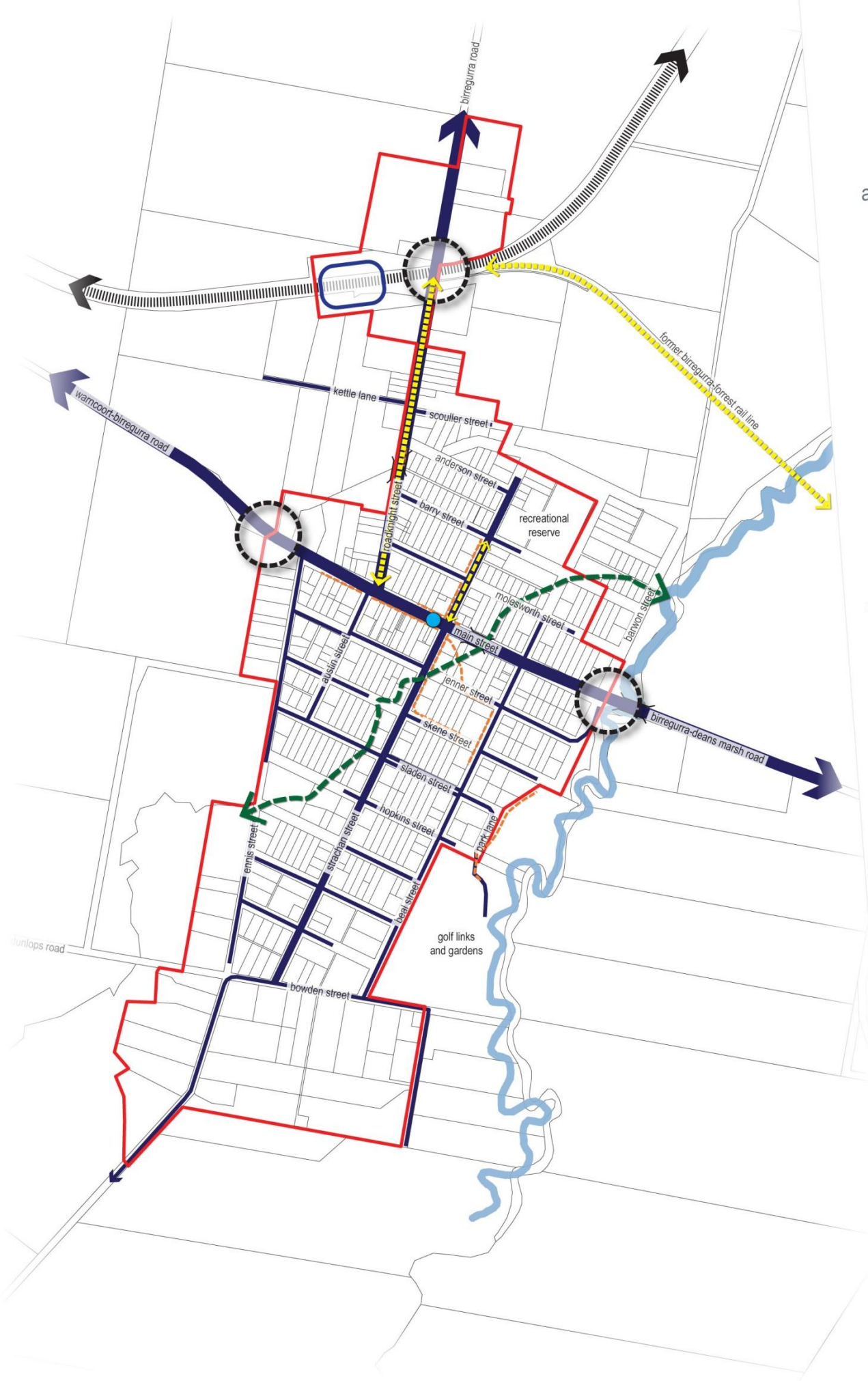


figure 10

Project Ref: 11.494
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 Revision: C

15 community services and facilities

15.1 discussion

The Birregurra Community Health Centre is a key location for social interaction and the provision of community and health services and facilities. The multi-purpose centre is well used by members of the community and is located proximate to the chemist, providing business synergies. Located at the north-east edge of the town centre, and on a key pedestrian link between the recreation reserve to the north and the primary school to the south, the location provides a key opportunity to expand and consolidate community services in a highly accessible location.

Expansion and enhancement of community services and facilities is likely to be required to support the needs of a growing and ageing population. An expanded community node should incorporate greater connectivity with the park / public amenities, the chemist and town centre. It may include additional health services, a more permanent library, additional community meeting rooms and performance space, and an expanded kindergarten / child care facility. To enhance the overall accessibility and vibrancy of this 'node', existing vacant land on Molesworth Street could be used for retirement living.

More localised community initiatives recently identified in the *Birregurra and Forrest Township Community Infrastructure Plan 2012*, are also supported by the Structure Plan.

15.2 objectives


- To provide a mix of community and health related services and facilities within Birregurra.
- To consolidate civic, community and health facilities in a community node on the north-east edge of the town centre.

15.3 strategies

- Encourage consolidation of community, civic and health related services around the centrally located community node. The community node should be limited to the area shown on the Structure Plan, including the northern side of Main Street, extending to Strachan Street. An indicative concept plan for the consolidated community node is shown in Figure 11.
- Support the establishment of consolidated medical and pharmacy facilities within or adjacent to the community node, at a scale that meets the needs of the local population.
- Support retirement living on vacant land in Molesworth Street.
- Prepare a detailed master plan for the community node to manage and direct expansion. The master plan should include an assessment of required services, including new and expanded services to meet the needs of a growing population. The master plan should include a concept design that provides: a high level of urban design, including quality, human scale built form; streetscape and landscape treatments including seating and footpaths and canopy trees for weather protection; and a highly walkable environment. The master plan for the community node could be prepared concurrent with any recreation needs assessment that might be prepared, if population growth begins to increase, as identified in the following section.
- Support the community infrastructure initiatives identified in the *Birregurra and Forrest Township Community Infrastructure Plan 2012*, including establishing a community garden either at the Birregurra Primary School or in a central location within the township.

birregurra structure plan community node concept plan

legend

- community services 
- community infrastructure 
- potential community infrastructure 
- public open space 
- recreational uses 
- upgrade or provide pedestrian and cycle shared path 
- community hub- support consolidation of community uses, encourage higher density residential within the facility 

destinations

- community health centre **1**
- senior citizen centre **2**
- public toilets **3**
- war memorial **4**
- community hall **5**
- residential **6**
- masonic hall **7**
- residential **8**
- birregurra pharmacy **9**
- post office, ATM and supermarket **10**
- public park, playground and sunday market **11**
- potential community retirement village **12**



figure 11



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16 recreation and open space

16.1 discussion

The need to plan for healthy and active communities has become an increasingly important element of structure planning process. The Heart Foundation has established “healthy by design” guidelines to inform the design of cities and spaces to enhance overall opportunities for recreation and more active lifestyles. Those principles are supported by this Structure Plan.

Birregurra contains a mix of active and passive recreation and open space assets, which serve a broad cross-section of the community. These assets include the recreation reserve (for football, netball, tennis and cricket), the bowls club, the golf club, the skate park and the Barwon River.

The Birregurra Recreation Reserve is a highly valued recreation and social hub within the town. A master plan has recently been prepared for this important facility. The master plan identifies a series of future priorities including undertaking detailed planning for the development of a new multi-purpose community sports facility. This may also provide space for expanding cultural activities, and foster more opportunities for social interaction and gatherings in the community.

The Structure Plan Background Report revealed that there are a number of activities that are currently not catered for in town that require people to travel to Colac. With the forecast modest population growth of Birregurra, this condition is likely to remain the same into the future.

Overall, demand for recreation and support for new facilities will depend on the rate of population growth and profile of the population.

16.2 objectives

- To provide a range of passive and active recreation opportunities within the township.
- To establish a connected network of accessible public open space and recreation facilities.
- To recognise the Birregurra Recreation Reserve as the primary recreation and sporting precinct in the township.

16.3 strategies

- Monitor population growth in the town to determine if a recreation needs assessment is required to determine appropriate provision of facilities in the town, if considerable population growth begins to occur.
- Support the implementation of the recommendations of the *Birregurra Recreation Reserve Master Plan, 2012*.
- Support the development of additional complementary community and recreation uses around the Birregurra Recreation Reserve.
- Improve walking trails along the Barwon River, including completion of the Heritage Walk.
- Establish linear open space corridors along waterways running through the town.

17 physical services and utilities

17.1 discussion

The key items of physical infrastructure addressed in the Structure Plan are sewerage, water and local roads (see Section 13) and drainage infrastructure.

Barwon Water has recently sewered the town. As a consequence land within the existing Township Zone has access to reticulated sewerage. This will provide greater opportunity for infill residential development as existing large lots will have the potential for resubdivision.

Colac Otway Shire is the responsible authority for local drainage, whilst the Corangamite CMA is responsible for the protection and management of designated waterways throughout the town. The existing local drainage network in Birregurra is in poor condition and / or does not exist. Drainage infrastructure is sporadic and consists of kerb and channel (where it exists), swale drains and grass verges. There are known localised drainage issues and as development occurs these issues, as well as upgrades to existing drainage infrastructure, will need to be addressed. Whilst the sewerage of the town has increased the potential for infill residential development, this potential may well be restricted by a lack of drainage infrastructure and the costs associated with upgrading drainage and road infrastructure throughout the town.

17.2 objectives

- To ensure an efficient and cost effective provision of physical infrastructure that addresses the ongoing needs of the community, while protecting the landscape and township character values of Birregurra.

- To ensure that necessary physical infrastructure is adequately funded and delivered in a timely fashion.

17.3 strategies

- Requirements of the relevant servicing authority or provider are to be met.
- As part of the Structure Plan review in 3-5 years, Barwon Water should assess the take-up of sewerage infrastructure and determine future service requirements.
- Encourage consistency of drainage treatments with priority given to use of water sensitive urban design treatments, such as swale drains, throughout the township, where appropriate.
- Include guidelines within Council's Infrastructure Design Manual relating to the form of crossovers from dwellings that will not impact on the functionality of the drainage swales. These guidelines should be consistent with the treatments recommended in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012*.
- Require new developments to optimise on-site stormwater collection and detention.
- All subdivisions must be provided with a legal point of discharge for drainage, approved by Council, and must demonstrate that predevelopment stormwater flows can be achieved.
- Ensure water quality and quantity objectives outlined in '*Urban Stormwater – Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines*', 1999 are met.

18 implementation and review

18.1 discussion

The realisation of the 'vision' for Birregurra and the objectives and strategies presented in this Structure Plan will only occur if the following actions are implemented. This includes a range of statutory and non-statutory implementation actions.

To give greater certainty to the implementation of the vision for the Birregurra, it will be necessary to ensure key elements are included in the Colac Otway Planning Scheme. This Structure Plan will therefore play an important role in supporting Council in its decision-making in relation to planning permit applications and requests for planning scheme amendments.

The first implementation action in realising the objectives of the Structure Plan is the establishment of planning policies and controls. The suite of policies, zones, overlay and design controls recommended as part of this Plan must initially be approved by the Council, and then incorporated into the Colac Otway Planning Scheme. Incorporation in the Scheme requires authorisation by the Minister for Planning and formal public exhibition

It should be acknowledged that growth and change in Birregurra will unfold over a long period of time and that the needs and aspirations of the community will change over time. Therefore the Structure Plan and planning controls that implement it need to be sufficiently flexible to be able to adapt to changing circumstances, be they economic, social or environmental considerations.

Continued monitoring and evaluation of the Structure Plan must be undertaken by the Council to ensure that it remains relevant to future planning policies and community needs and expectations. Generally the plan may need to be reviewed every 3 to 5 years.

18.2 local planning policy framework

In conjunction with the proposed zoning and overlay changes recommended below, the Structure Plan should be implemented through changes to local policy within the Colac Otway Planning Scheme. Within the planning scheme, the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) at Clause 21 sets out the Shire's strategic directions for planning across a range of issues. Clause 22 of the Planning Scheme provides more specific direction on a range of matters where additional guidance is required for the exercise of discretion. The following changes are recommended:

- Revise and update the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement (specifically Clause 21.03-4), to give immediate effect to the vision, objectives and strategies identified in this report.
- Include the Structure Plan as a Reference Document in Clause 21.06 of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.
- Set out the further strategic work that should be undertaken to enable the full implementation of the Plan.

18.3 zoning and overlays

Proposed zoning and overlay controls are discussed below and are identified on Figure 12.

One important consideration is the proposed introduction of new zones in the Victorian Planning Provisions as proposed by the Minister for Planning. The rezoning recommendations contained in this plan consider only the existing suite of zones given the draft nature of the proposed zones. However, it is noted that the reformed commercial zones have recently been finalised. The Commercial 1 Zone will replace the Business 1, Business 2 and Business 5 Zones. The reformed commercial zones will be introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions and planning schemes on 1 July 2013.

zoning

As part of a future amendment to the Colac Otway Planning Scheme the following rezonings are recommended:

- Retaining the residential areas of the town within a Township Zone, rather than rezoning them to Residential 1 Zone. This is considered appropriate in order to retain the flexibility provided by the Township Zone for a variety of smaller scale cottage industries and / or business uses and home based occupations, compared to the Residential 1 Zone.
- Rezoning the commercial core of the town centre on Main Street to the Business 1 Zone / future Commercial 1 Zone. This will more clearly define the town centre and provide additional control over residential uses, to ensure longer term options for retail and commercial uses fronting Main Street are retained within the town centre.
- Rezoning of the skate park land from the Township Zone to Public Park and Recreation Zone, to reflect that actual land use on the site.
- Rezoning of non-railway land contained in the Public Use Zone to the Farming Zone, to reflect that actual use of the land and ownership.
- Rezoning of non-railway land at 452 Birregurra Road contained in the Public Use Zone to the Industrial 1 Zone, to reflect that existing use of the land as well as a logical extension of the existing industrial zoning to the north.
- Correcting a zoning anomaly of land in the northern industrial node, to ensure the Industrial 1 Zone boundary matches property boundaries.
- Rezoning public land at the intersection of Scouler Street and Barwon Street, east of Skene Street, that contains endangered vegetation (EVC 56 Floodplain Riparian Woodland) to a Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

- Correct a zoning anomaly that exists at 40 Birregurra-Yeodene Road, where land has recently been consolidated, by including the triangular parcel of Farming Zoned land in the Low Density Residential Zone.

overlays

Overlay controls exist to provide an additional layer of control for specific areas where zone controls are not considered sufficient to manage development. Overlays should be used where appropriate in preference to local policy. As such the following overlay controls are recommended:

- Application of the Design and Development Overlay to implement the recommendations of the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study 2012*.
- Application of the Design and Development Overlay to the land in the Industrial 1 Zone on the north side of the railway line. Presentation of industrial land fronting Birregurra Road / Roadknight Road and the Railway Station plays an important role in the overall presentation and image of Birregurra. As such, it is important that minimum standards be established for these properties to ensure they appropriately reflect Birregurra's rural image.

This overlay should:

- Encourage low scale building heights and building colours and materials that reflect the rural township character of Birregurra, especially along those walls of a building that are visible from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.
- Encourage provision of generous building setbacks from front and side boundaries to provide the opportunity for substantial landscaping within the front boundary and along any side boundaries visible from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.
- Encourage provision of landscaping and visual screening of any open storage yards associated with a development that is visible from Roadknight Street / Birregurra Road.

- Encourage grid based subdivision patterns (if subdivision is proposed) to ensure connectivity with Birregurra Road and continuation of the grid-based urban structure of the township.
- Encourage appropriate interfaces with the railway line and the historic Birregurra Railway Station to the south.
- Encourage use of sustainability measures such as water reuse and water sensitive urban design treatments.
- Application of the Design and Development Overlay to the commercial core of the town centre. This overlay should:
 - Ensure all new buildings demonstrate a sympathetic design response to the heritage qualities of Main Street.
 - Seek to encourage low-rise single storey buildings.
 - Implement the design guidelines prepared for Main Street as part of the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012*.
 - Encourage active street frontages on Main Street.
 - Ensure any new commercial development to the rear of properties on Main Street has regard to sensitive residential interfaces.
 - Discourage visual clutter from advertising or other signage.
 - Be structured to only trigger a planning permit where development is proposed which does not meet established requirements.
- Application of the Vegetation Protection Overlay to part of the town, as recommended in the *Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study 2012*.

18.4 non-statutory actions & further work

In addition to implementing the Structure Plan through the Colac Otway Planning Scheme, there are a number of other actions both the Council, other authorities and local stakeholders can pursue which will play a role in achieving the 'vision' of this plan. Furthermore, there is additional work which has been identified as being required to implement the Structure Plan. These are outlined in the following table.

18.5 drainage and local road construction strategy

In order to address the need for considerable local road and drainage upgrades, as infill development occurs, a strategy for the upgrading of these facilities should be prepared. The strategy should clearly identify:

- The standards of provisions required.
- The source of funds i.e. special charge, development contribution, by way of permit conditions etc.
- The conditions to be placed on planning permits for subdivision and development.
- The priorities and staging of the infrastructure upgrades.

In the interim principles to guide planning permit conditions are included in Sections 13 and 16 of this report.

18.6 monitoring and review

The Birregurra Structure Plan should be reviewed every 3-5 years to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with Council's strategic policies, MSS and Council Plan. Such a review period will also identify any changes required in response to new development trends, policies or changing circumstances, such as ongoing residential demand and the need for additional retail floorspace.

It is recommended that the first review occur at 3 years, to monitor and review the progress of key recommendations. In particular the first review should assess the take up of land for infill residential development, in order for Council to review the residential land supply and demand outlook, based on actual rates of development that have been achieved after the sewerage of the town.











birregurra structure plan

proposed rezoning and overlays







legend

settlement boundary 

zoning

- township zone 
- low density residential zone 
- business 1 zone 
- public park and recreation zone 
- public conservation and resource zone 
- public use zone 1 
- public use zone 4 
- public use zone 6 
- industrial zone 1 
- farming zone 
- road zone category 1 
- areas with zoning amendments 

overlays

- land subject to inundation overlay 
- floodway overlay 
- erosion management overlay 
- heritage overlay 
- proposed vegetation protection overlay 
- proposed design and development overlay 

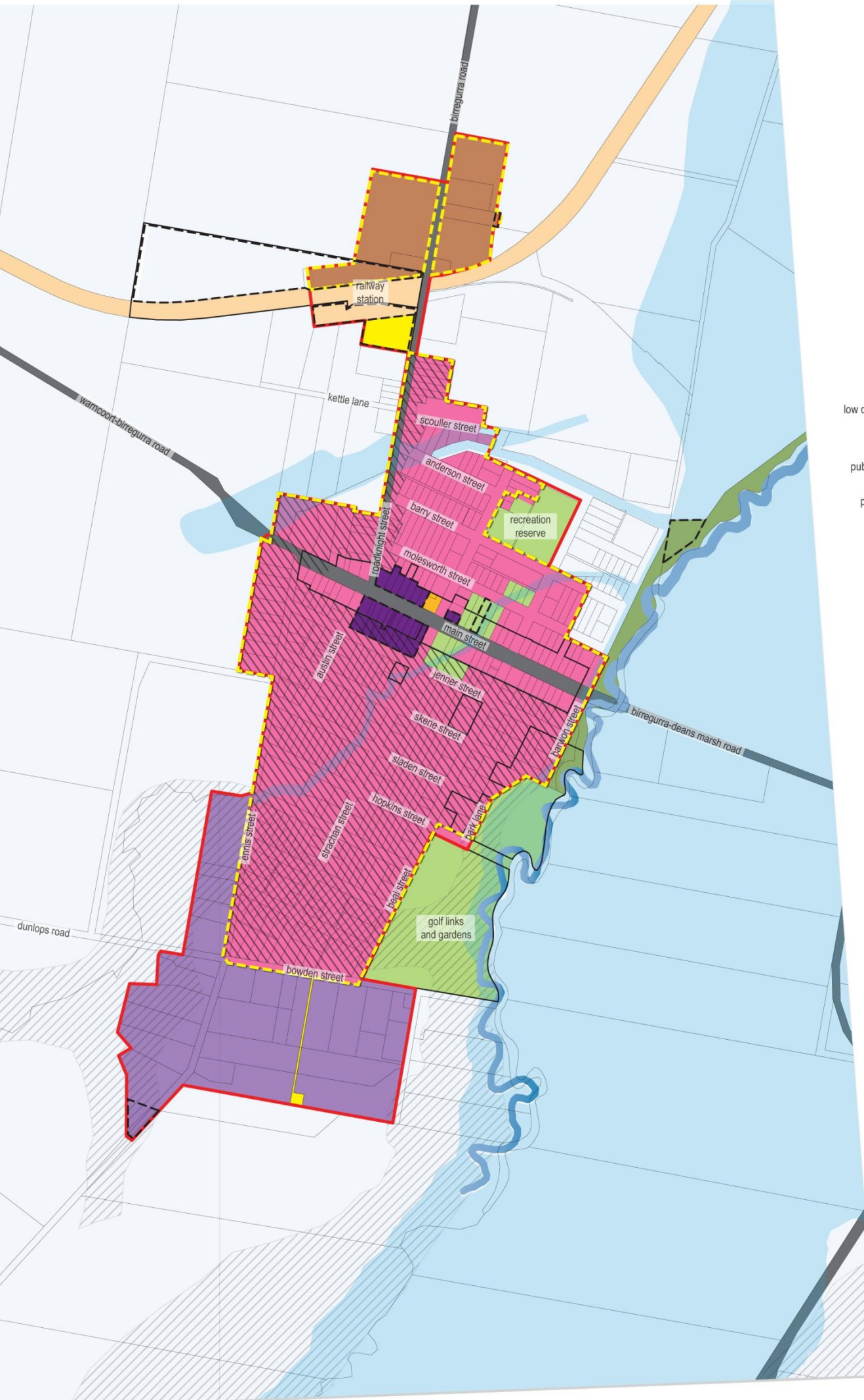


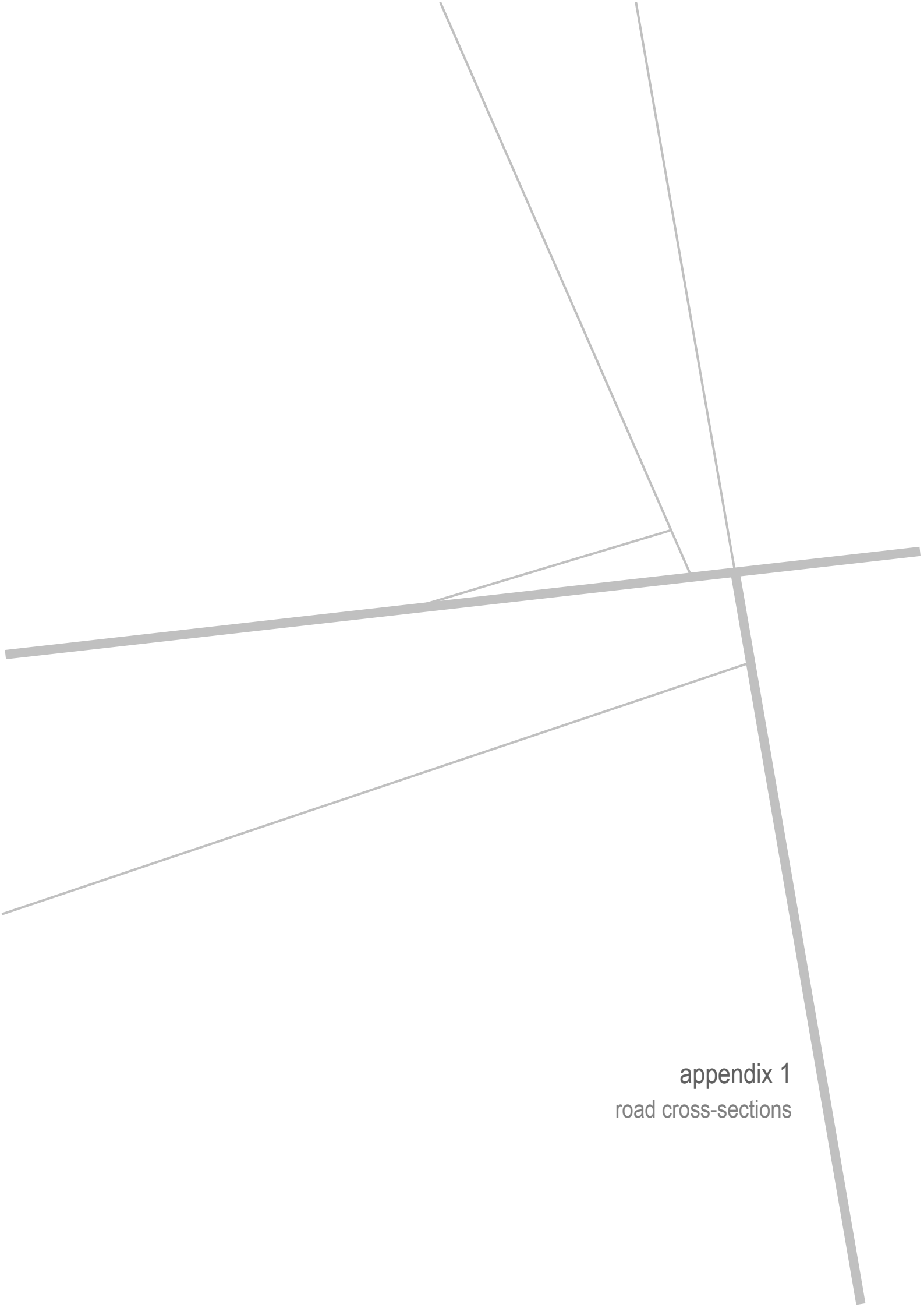
figure 12



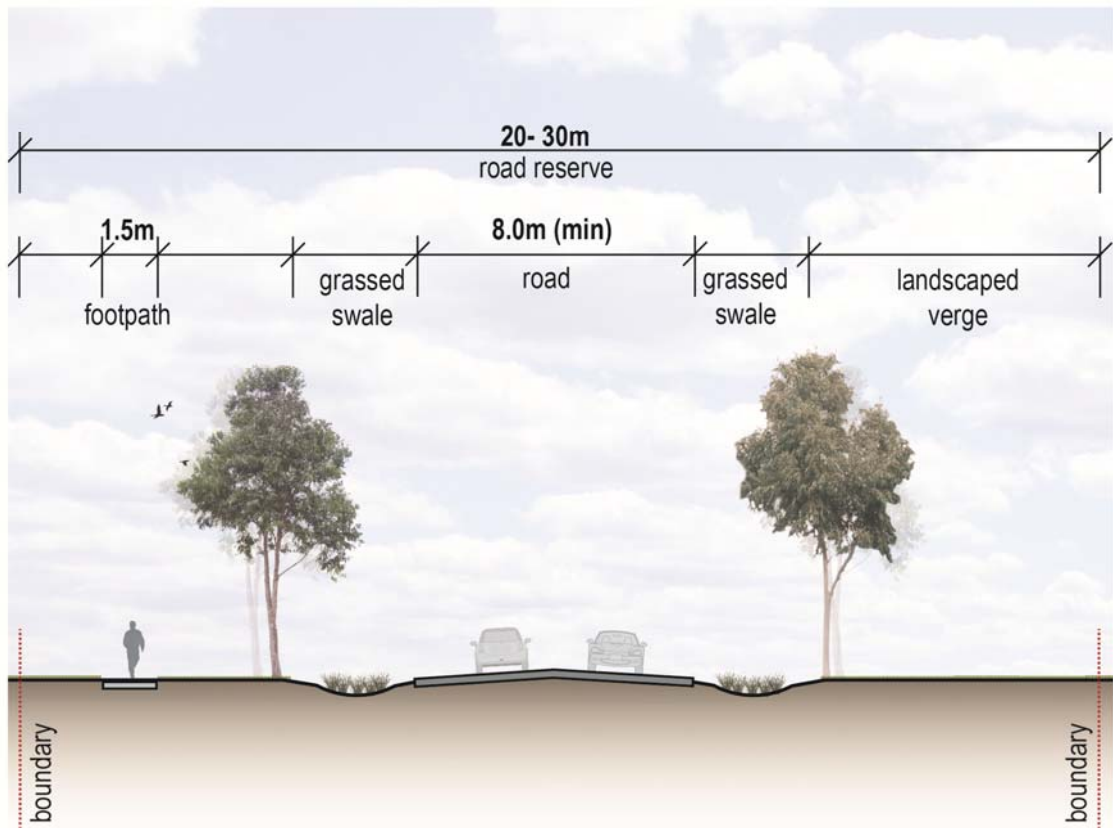
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 Scale: 1:2500@A1
 Date: 17.05.13
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summary of implementation actions					
no.	action	responsibility	comment / details if required	priority	indicative cost
1	Prepare an amendment to the Colac Otway Planning Scheme in order to implement the recommendations of this Structure Plan and also the Birregurra Neighbourhood Character Study, 2012	Colac Otway Shire Council Strategic Planning Unit	The amendment should implement the local planning policy, zoning and overlay recommendations made above, as well as introduce the recommendation of the Neighbourhood character Study into the Planning Scheme.	Short term	\$5,000 - \$25,000 (if a Panel is required)
2	Establish an ongoing monitoring program to track the rate of residential development and subdivision that is occurring in Birregurra	Colac Otway Shire Council Strategic Planning Unit	This work could be undertaken in house by Council's Strategic Planning Unit.	Short term	n/a
3	Prepare an integrated road and drainage strategy for Birregurra	Colac Otway Shire Council Capital Works Unit	-	Short term	\$50,000
4	Undertake / facilitate the preparation of a master plan for the community node	Colac Otway Shire Council Health and Community Services	-	Medium term	\$15,000
5	Undertake / facilitate a review of the capacity of Strachan Street as part of the 3-5 year Structure Plan Review	Colac Otway Shire Council Capital Works Unit	-	Medium term	\$7,500
6	Monitor population growth to determine if the need arises to undertake a recreation needs assessment to determine appropriate provision of recreation facilities in Birregurra	Colac Otway Shire Council Recreation Arts and Culture	-	Medium term	\$15,000
7	Investigate the possibility of reducing the speed limit on Main Street to 40km/hr, in the commercial core between Roadknight Street and Strachan Street, to improve community safety.	Colac Otway Shire Council VicRoads	Lobbying of VicRoads	Medium-term	n/a

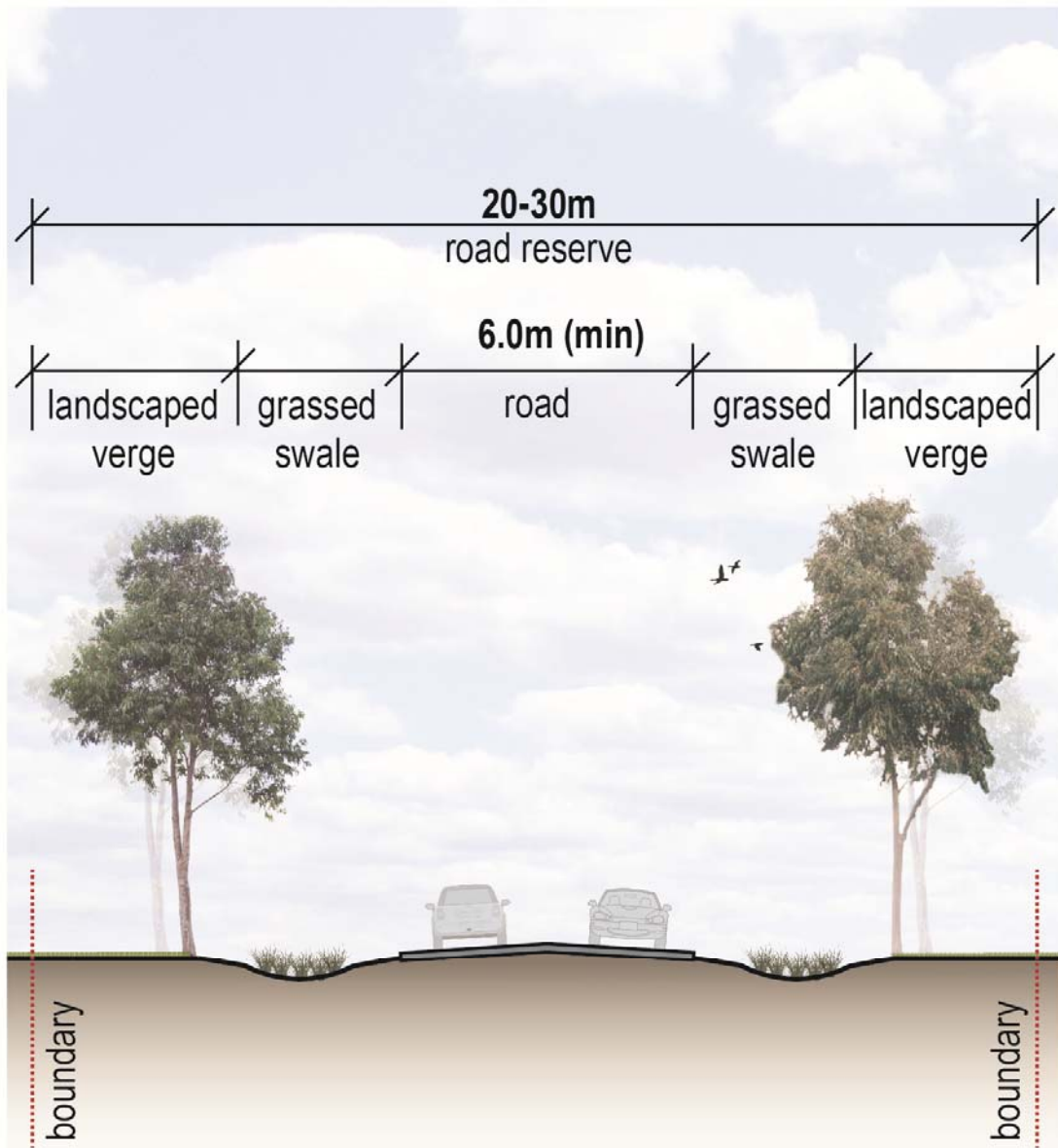
8	Prepare a way finding strategy for Birregurra	Colac Otway Shire Recreation Arts and Culture	-	Long term	\$12,000
9	Investigate the provision of an art gallery or space in Birregurra.	Colac Otway Shire Recreation Arts and Culture	Investigation / research only	Long term	\$3,000
10	Pursue the establishment of a rail trail along the alignment of the former Birregurra to Forrest railway i.e. the Birregurra-Forrest Tiger Rail Trail. A feasibility study is required to determine the viability of this project.	Colac Otway Shire Recreation Arts and Culture Community groups	-	Long term	\$50,000



appendix 1
road cross-sections



collector street
1:200@a3



local road
1:200@a3

hansen

hansen partnership pty ltd

melbourne | vietnam

level 4 136 exhibition st

melbourne vic 3000

t +613 9654 8844 **f** +613 9654 8088

melbourne | **vietnam**

apt. 15-10 block a

360c ben van don st, ward 1

district 4, ho chi minh city vietnam

t +84 8 3945 1401 **m** +84 903 927 048

e info@hansen-online.com.au

w hansen-online.com.au

ABN 20 079 864 716 | ACN 079 864 716