



FINAL REPORT

# Colac Structure Plan

February 2007

**Connell Wagner**

## Document Control



Document ID: P:\PES\6519 - COLAC STRUCTURE PLAN\REPORTS\FINAL REPORT\8 FEB 2007\FINAL COLAC REPORT 080207A.DOC

| Rev No | Date              | Revision Details                                | Typist | Author | Verifier | Approver |
|--------|-------------------|---|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| 0      | 14 June 2006      | Draft   | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |
| 1      | 11 July 2006      | Draft revised with Council Officer comments     | CNL    | CNL    | NM       | PJ       |
| 2      | 28 July 2006      | Final Draft v1                                  | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |
| 3      | 23 August 2006    | Final Draft v 2                                 | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |
| 4      | 15 September 2006 | Final Draft 3                                   | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |
| 5      | 21 September 2006 | Final draft 4 (Council review)                  | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |
| 6      | 13 November 2006  | Final Draft Following Community Consultation    | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |
|        | 8 February 2007   | Final Draft following council officers comments | CNL    | CNL/PJ | NM       | PJ       |

A person using Connell Wagner documents or data accepts the risk of:

- a) Using the documents or data in electronic form without requesting and checking them for accuracy against the original hard copy version; and
- b) Using the documents or data for any purpose not agreed to in writing by Connell Wagner.



## Table of Contents

| <i>Section</i>   | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>1. Executive Summary</b>                              | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 Conclusions and Recommendations                      | 1           |
| 1.2 Ongoing Management of the Structure Plan             | 9           |
| <b>2. Introduction</b>                                   | <b>10</b>   |
| 2.1 Purpose  | 10          |
| 2.2 Methodology  | 10          |
| <b>3. Strategic Framework</b>                            | <b>12</b>   |
| 3.1 Demographic Snapshot                                 | 12          |
| 3.2 Key Issues   | 17          |
| 3.3 SWOT Analysis  | 23          |
| <b>4. Vision and Objectives</b>                          | <b>26</b>   |
| <b>5. Consultation</b>                                   | <b>28</b>   |
| <b>6. Urban Design Framework</b>                         | <b>29</b>   |
| 6.1 Introduction   | 29          |
| 6.2 Approach to UDF                                      | 29          |
| 6.3 Issues and Considerations                            | 30          |
| <b>7. Industrial Land Use Strategy</b>                   | <b>38</b>   |
| 7.1 Context  | 38          |
| 7.2 Colac Industry Profile                               | 43          |
| 7.3 Consultation Outcomes                                | 45          |
| 7.4 Vision and Objectives Statements                     | 45          |
| 7.5 Industrial Development in Colac                      | 46          |
| 7.6 Recent Industrial Development                        | 47          |
| 7.7 Issues and Implications of Industrial Development    | 48          |
| 7.8 SWOT Analysis  | 50          |
| 7.9 Requirements for Industrial Land                     | 51          |
| 7.10 Potential Industrial Areas in Colac                 | 51          |
| 7.11 Assessment of Potential Industrial Areas            | 52          |
| 7.12 Strategy for Future Industrial Development in Colac | 53          |
| 7.13 Staging of Development                              | 59          |
| <b>8. Residential Land Use Strategy</b>                  | <b>63</b>   |
| 8.1 Context  | 63          |
| 8.2 Colac Housing Profile                                | 70          |
| 8.3 Consultation Outcomes                                | 70          |
| 8.4 Vision and Objectives Statements                     | 70          |
| 8.5 Housing Trends                                       | 72          |
| 8.6 Issues and Implications of Residential Development   | 73          |
| 8.7 SWOT Analysis  | 76          |
| 8.8 Strategy for Future Residential Development in Colac | 76          |
| 8.9 Staging  | 88          |



|            |  |            |
|------------|--|------------|
| 8.10       | Conclusions  | 89         |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b><i>Commercial Development Strategy</i></b>                  | <b>93</b>  |
| 9.1        | Context  | 93         |
| 9.2        | Policy and Strategic Context                                   | 93         |
| 9.3        | Consultation Outcomes  | 94         |
| 9.4        | Vision and Objective Statements                                | 94         |
| 9.5        | Commercial Development in Colac                                | 95         |
| 9.6        | Recent Rezoning Requests                                       | 95         |
| 9.7        | Issues and Implications of Commercial / Retail Development     | 95         |
| 9.8        | SWOT Analysis  | 96         |
| 9.9        | Strategy for Future Commercial and Retail Development in Colac | 96         |
| <b>10.</b> | <b><i>Recreation and Open Space Framework</i></b>              | <b>104</b> |
| 10.1       | Open Space and Leisure Trends                                  | 104        |
| 10.2       | Standards for Open Space Provision                             | 105        |
| 10.3       | Existing Open Space in Colac                                   | 105        |
| 10.4       | Open Space and the Structure Plan                              | 107        |
| 10.5       | Open Space Recommendations                                     | 108        |
| <b>11.</b> | <b><i>Education, Recreation and Community Precinct</i></b>     | <b>109</b> |
| 11.1       | Introduction   | 109        |
| 11.2       | Vision and Objectives  | 109        |
| 11.3       | Site Activities  | 110        |
| 11.4       | Guiding Principles   | 111        |
| 11.5       | Views and Visual Connections:                                  | 114        |
| 11.6       | Built Form   | 114        |
| 11.7       | Landscape and Vegetation                                       | 115        |
| 11.8       | Design Themes Colours and Materials                            | 115        |
| 11.9       | Environmentally Sustainable Design                             | 115        |
| <b>12.</b> | <b><i>Traffic Management</i></b>                               | <b>117</b> |
| 12.1       | Context  | 117        |
| 12.2       | Community Feedback   | 118        |
| 12.3       | Other possibilities – Railway Land                             | 119        |
| 12.4       | Future Traffic/Transport Considerations                        | 120        |
| 12.5       | Recommendations  | 123        |
| <b>13.</b> | <b><i>Implementation Plan</i></b>                              | <b>125</b> |
| 13.1       | Methods of Planning Scheme Implementation                      | 125        |
| 13.2       | Funding Opportunities  | 125        |
| 13.3       | Sequencing, Roles and Responsibilities                         | 126        |
| 13.4       | Monitoring and Review  | 127        |
| <b>14.</b> | <b><i>References</i></b>                                       | <b>128</b> |



## ***Appendix A***

Barwon Water Sewerage District Map

## ***Appendix B***

Summary of Consultation

## ***Appendix C***

Urban Design Framework Plans

## ***Appendix D***

Questionnaire

## ***Appendix E***

Outcomes of the Education, Recreation and Community Precinct Forum

## ***Appendix F***

Guiding Principles for Assessing Subdivision Applications





# 1. Executive Summary

In December 2005 Connell Wagner was commissioned by the Colac Otway Shire Council to undertake the preparation of the Colac Structure Plan. The core objective of this project is to address the future potential for growth and development of the Colac and Elliminyt areas and identify means for which appropriate residential and commercial/industrial development can be accommodated whilst having regard to key issues of amenity and major transport movement.

The aim of the Colac Structure Plan project is to integrate previous studies with information gathered through consultation with stakeholders and the general public and investigation of the Colac Township, to produce a workable document that will guide the development of Colac over the next twenty years.

This report presents the key outcomes of the structure plan in the form of objectives and strategies, and also provides strategic justification for each of the directions. Specifically, the report presents:

- A brief background on Colac as it exists in the context of the surrounding region.
- A summary of the key issues derived through the review of previous studies, discussions with key stakeholders and community consultation.
- An urban design framework (UDF) for the Colac Town Centre.
- Discussion regarding future directions for industrial, commercial, rural and residential development.
- Discussion and identification of actions to address future traffic management scenario's for Colac's commercial centre and surrounding road network.
- A concept plan for the proposed Education, Recreation and Community Precinct
- A recreation and open space framework.

## 1.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Structure Plan (see Figure 1) seeks to reflect the planning needs of the Colac community as identified through the background research and consultation undertaken, and produce a set of usable recommendations that can be easily implemented into the Colac-Otway Planning Scheme.

The Structure Plan provides key recommendations in response to the main issues identified through early consultation with the community, agency stakeholders and Council representatives. These include:

- Strategic recommendations for residential, rural living, industrial and business zoned land.
- An increase in the amount of open space (both linear and non-linear) and development of policy direction supporting future open space provision for residential development.
- Urban design improvements for the enhancement of the Colac Town Centre.
- Consolidation around the town centre and activity nodes.
- Increased opportunity for recreational linkages between key activity areas.
- Suggestions to improve amenity in the main street of Colac.
- Strategies to address traffic management issues in Colac and the surrounding areas.



- Strategies to create a precinct to focus community learning through a multi-purpose education, recreation and community precinct.
- A township boundary encompassing residential, industrial, commercial and rural living development to clearly identify the extent of future development and enable the protection of valuable farming land that surrounds the township.

Lake Colac

# LEGEND

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>BOUNDARIES</b>  |  |
|                    | TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY                              |
|                    | MODIFICATION TO TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY              |
|                    | LONG TERM BOUNDARY                             |
| <b>RESIDENTIAL</b> |  |
|                    | REZONE TO RURAL ACTIVITY ZONE (RAZ)            |
|                    | OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT           |
|                    | REZONE TO RURAL LIVING ZONE (RLZ)              |
|                    | REZONE TO RURAL LIVING ZONE (RLZ) IN LONG-TERM |
|                    | REZONE TO RESIDENTIAL 1 ZONE                   |
| <b>INDUSTRIAL</b>  |  |
|                    | REZONE TO FARMING ZONE (FZ)                    |
|                    | REZONE INDUSTRIAL 1 ZONE (IN1Z)                |
|                    | POTENTIAL FUTURE (LONG-TERM) INDUSTRIAL        |
|                    | REZONE TO INDUSTRIAL 3 ZONE (IN3Z)             |
| <b>COMMERCIAL</b>  |  |
|                    | EXTEND BUSINESS 4 ZONE (B4Z)                   |
|                    | REZONE TO BUSINESS 3                           |
|                    | REZONE TO BUSINESS 1                           |
|                    | REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING B4N1 ZONE BOUNDARY     |
|                    | OPEN SPACE NETWORKS                            |
|                    | BEECHY RAIL TRAIL                              |
|                    | NEW LINEAR OPEN SPACE LINKAGE                  |



Colac Otway  
SHIRE  
Naturally Progressive

## COLAC STRUCTURE PLAN 'TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES'

Connell Wagner







### **1.1.1 Industrial Land Use Strategy**

In developing the Colac Structure Plan consultation with stakeholders identified that existing industrial zoned land between Lake Colac and the Princes Highway was inappropriate in so far as it was outside the serviced district, had the potential to interrupt views from the Highway to the Lake and presented potential environmental concerns to the Lake environment. Feedback also indicated the need to protect Colac's economic base and ensure land is available to accommodate new industry and commercial activities as they arise.

Furthermore, existing industrial zoned land to the west of Colac is also outside of the Barwon Water Sewerage District and hence development should be discouraged due to servicing constraints.

Accordingly, the Colac Structure Plan proposes several strategic recommendations which aim to address these issues.

Existing industrial land located outside of the boundaries of the Barwon Water Sewerage District in Colac East and West is recommended to be back zoned and replaced by a new industrial area proposed in east Colac adjacent to Forest Street. The back zoning to Farming (formerly Rural Zone) will ensure the retention of views and vistas to the Lake and protection of the environmental quality of Lake Colac. The proposed new industrial area provides Colac with the ability to increase the role that manufacturing and warehousing can play in supporting the town's economic base, by facilitating the establishment of large and diverse businesses in an area that will be well serviced by main roads in to and out of Colac.

The industrial activity proposed is represented by two different zones permitting varying intensity of industrial uses. To date, Colac's industrial land has been restricted to the Industrial 1 Zone thereby limiting industrial activity to light and general industrial uses. The proposed changes include the introduction of a new Industrial 3 Zone which promotes 'softer' or less detrimental types of industrial / commercial uses e.g. warehousing that can act as an appropriate buffer between sensitive land uses (residential) and the more traditional industrial zonings which may include processing and manufacturing uses.

This also adds a new opportunity for the relocation of some businesses in the Colac Town Centre that are no longer suited to their retail location. This will have the added benefit of 'freeing up' land for more appropriate retail activities that will ultimately add value to the core commercial centre of Colac.

The following strategies are recommended for Industrial Land in Colac:

- **Prevent any additional or new industrial development adjacent to Lake Colac by rezoning existing Industrial 1 Zone north of Treatment Works and Flaxmill Roads to Farming.**
- **Rezone land in east Colac to Industrial 1 and Industrial 3.**
- **Identify and encourage the relocation of existing 'inappropriate' industrial uses out of the town centre by promoting new industrial land**



**opportunities and zones. These new zones will provide areas suited to a diverse range of light to general industrial activities.**

- **Improve existing industrial development in West Colac, and prevent further development of the Industrial 1 Zone by back zoning to Farming Zone.**
- **Designate additional land for future industrial development if required.**

### ***1.1.2 Residential Land Use Strategy***

The Plan recognises the significant role that the district of Elliminyt currently plays in offering an alternative housing choice to the traditional areas surrounding Colac, and proposes an increase in the current community / commercial facilities to serve the needs of the growing resident population. A review of land uses between Colac and Elliminyt has been undertaken with a view to understanding the potential for land use change that better reflects recent use and development issues in the region.

Unlike the coastal towns of Colac Otway Shire, the Colac-Elliminyt district does not have land supply and demand issues that present as constraints to future growth and diversification. Instead there is a large amount of existing suitably zoned residential land which is also serviced by power, water and sewer that is already appropriately zoned for traditional residential development and low density development.

The Residential Land Use Strategy recognises the potential for increased densities in established areas of Colac through the promotion of infill development. More particularly, the area bounded by Armstrong Street, the railway line, Queen Street and Calvert Street has been selected as an appropriate area to encourage higher density development given the proximity to the town centre, community services, recreational facilities and business activity areas.

Whilst it is recognised that some of the existing residential land is influenced by its planning scheme overlay classification known as 'Land Subject to Inundation' and therefore potentially less attractive for development, opportunity exists for future development in the residential parts of the overlay to explore new forms of residential estates that respond to sustainable development practices including water sensitive urban design, stormwater re-use and ecological enhancement e.g. wetlands. In order to achieve this it is recognised that on-going consultation with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority is required to clarify the means to achieving development in these areas. However, a blanket prohibition of development in low lying areas should not be imposed on the basis that new development can accommodate design outcomes which appropriately manage these landscapes.

Additionally, much of the Farming zoned land between Colac and Elliminyt is also held in fragmented titles formed via historical subdivisions. These fragmented parcels have undermined the rural status of this land which draws greater value from larger, unrestrained parcels devoid of development to protect its rural productivity.



This Farming zoned land is located close to services, infrastructure and facilities (within the Barwon Water Sewer District) which are valuable assets for land that can be developed more intensively. As there is ample Residential 1 zoned land available, the Colac Structure Plan has promoted two areas of this fragmented, serviced rural land as appropriate for 'rural living' on the basis that this land is highly sought after land within close proximity to town centres and which fits an immediate form that need not be further subdivided. Policies restricting subdivision in this zone to a minimum of 2 hectares and no more than 1 dwelling per lot would be promoted to ensure the low density nature of rural living can be achieved and sustained.

Consolidating development within the broad township boundary of Colac and Elliminyt (including proposed Rural Living areas) will enable Council to protect valuable farming land that surrounds the township.

The following strategies are recommended for residential land in Colac:

- **Encourage medium density development in the existing Colac town centre.**
- **Rezone allocated areas of current Farming zoned land between Elliminyt and Colac (east and west of Colac - Lavers Hill Road) to Rural Living zone.**
- **Create additional Residential 1 Zone opportunities close to the Colac town centre.**
- **Designate land for future conventional residential development.**
- **Rezone allocated areas of current Farming Zoned land in north-east Colac to Rural Activity Zone.**

### ***1.1.3 Recreation and Open Space Framework***

The Structure Plan recognises that a Recreation and Open Space Framework is required for Colac and Elliminyt to respond to changes in the type of recreational facilities provided for the community and expectations by the public for improved public open space areas in new development estates.

The ability to rely upon existing features such as Lake Colac and linear open space corridors as key recreational assets will be extended through their enhancement through both physical and aesthetic means. Exercise circuits, dedicated bike/walking lanes and multiple activity points (playgrounds, viewing points, activity areas etc) create continual stimulation for users of these areas and promotes wellbeing across the community.

An Open Space framework is required to ensure that new residential subdivisions are provided with open space areas that extend beyond retention basins. The Structure Plan strongly supports the provision of open space requirements which are consistent with the provisions of the Subdivision Act. It is recognised that as a minimum, both a monetary requirement of 5% and a physical requirement of 5% exists through the Act and that the imposition of these requirements will need to be reviewed on a case by case basis.



In summary the Structure Plan supports the inclusion of:

- **An increase in the amount of open space (both linear and non-linear) to support recreational land uses and linkages between activities**
- **The development of policy framework supporting future open space provision for residential development in new and established residential areas**
- **Urban design improvements for the enhancement of the Colac Town Centre.**
- **Enhanced recreation and pathway connections particularly around Lake Colac and in relation to the proposed Education, Recreation and Community Precinct.**
- **Further investigation and consideration of the former Bruce Street landfill being used as a recreation area or other appropriate use linked to Lake Colac.**

#### ***1.1.4 Colac Education, Recreation and Community Precinct***

Embraced within this Structure Plan is an opportunity for development of a new secondary school in Colac, near Central Reserve, that can benefit the whole community for decades to come. A concept plan and corresponding design guidelines has been developed to guide development of this integrated site which has the potential to include the new secondary school, leisure facilities and community services.

The objective of this new precinct for Colac will be to provide a focus for an active, learning community. The precinct will focus around the new secondary school, which has been announced as the site boarding Queen and Hearn Streets, and Central Reserve which is Colac Otway Shire's premier sporting and recreational facility. The further development of the Old Beechy Rail Trail will provide links for the precinct to the South of Colac and to the civic Centre precinct and the CBD precinct.

The vision for the site also aims to support the continued sustainable growth of the Colac Otway Shire economy by encouraging an innovative and 'whole of community' approach to education, learning, health and wellbeing, and community development.

The precinct will aim to set a new standard for educational precincts in rural Victoria providing a safe, accessible and functional school precinct with high amenity spaces and quality environmental conditions.

As a result of the Community Forum held on August 1, 2006 in Colac activities to be promoted in the precinct will result in the integration of secondary school, post compulsory, community, recreation, cultural and performing arts facilities, with a significant focus on shared use of facilities by different groups and community members.

Some facilities will be available for use by the community at most times, other facilities will be used by the secondary school during school hours and for the other





members of the community outside these hours. Facilities will be subject to joint use agreements.

#### **1.1.5 Traffic Management Strategy**

During the development of the Draft Colac Structure Plan options were put forward for an alternative (heavy) vehicle route and a major traffic bypass. The key drivers for these options included:

- The need to address concerns over the ongoing use of Murray Street by heavy vehicles and increased traffic congestion,
- The need to identify the potential for adverse impacts on the amenity and safety of pedestrians and smaller vehicles in the Colac commercial centre
- A requirement to undertake future strategic planning linking a possible arterial bypass with Colac's future industry needs and surrounding road networks.

The community's response has been very positive in that it has given Council a strong understanding of heavy vehicle and bypass options that are not supported.

This clear feedback will ensure that future investigations of alternative arterial and bypass options are targeted at areas that received community support and consider local and regional factors. In this context, the Structure Plan recommends further investigations including an Integrated Transport Plan and volume, origin and destination surveys as part of future traffic management planning in the Colac area.

The incorporation of these traffic management issues into the Structure Plan also has strong linkages to the development of future industrial land and managing access to areas of residential and commercial growth. Notably, environmental and economic factors will also prove to be of paramount importance when further detailed traffic management studies are undertaken.

#### **1.1.6 Commercial and Other Land Uses**

Whilst not specifically an element of the project brief, a number of instances have come to light during the development of the Structure Plan, where a review of the current situation, or opportunities for future commercial development have been identified.

One of the primary action areas is related to Elliminyt, where a commercial node should be established. This will provide for the convenience needs of residents of Elliminyt, and create a focal point for the Elliminyt community.

Further strategies have been recommended with regards to bulky goods retailing, and the area on the Princes Highway in east Colac has been designated for the primary bulky goods retailing area in Colac.

The following strategies are recommended for commercial land in Colac:

- **Designate land in Elliminyt for a community / commercial node.**
- **Provide for commercial type uses on Colac-Lavers Hill Road.**
- **Provide opportunities for expansion of the east Colac Business 4 Zone.**
- **Enhance the west Colac Business 4 Zone.**



## **1.2 Ongoing Management of the Structure Plan**

The implementation of the Colac Structure Plan will very much depend on the effective management of the Plan in addressing the identified strategic actions as well as the ongoing monitoring of progress against the key milestones.

This process of implementation should also provide a mechanism for ongoing liaison with key user and interest groups by establishing a programme of implementation and funding for the various individual projects as well as ensuring that records of all initiatives are kept and updated with progressive implementation of the Structure Plan.

Further work will need to be performed prior to implementing some of the actions of the Plan. This will particularly relate to recommended rezonings, where additional physical, social and economic justification may be required to support the case for rezoning.



## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Purpose

The core objective of this project is to address the future potential for growth and development of the Colac and Elliminyt areas and identify means for which appropriate residential and commercial/industrial development can be accommodated whilst having regard to key issues of amenity and major transport movement.

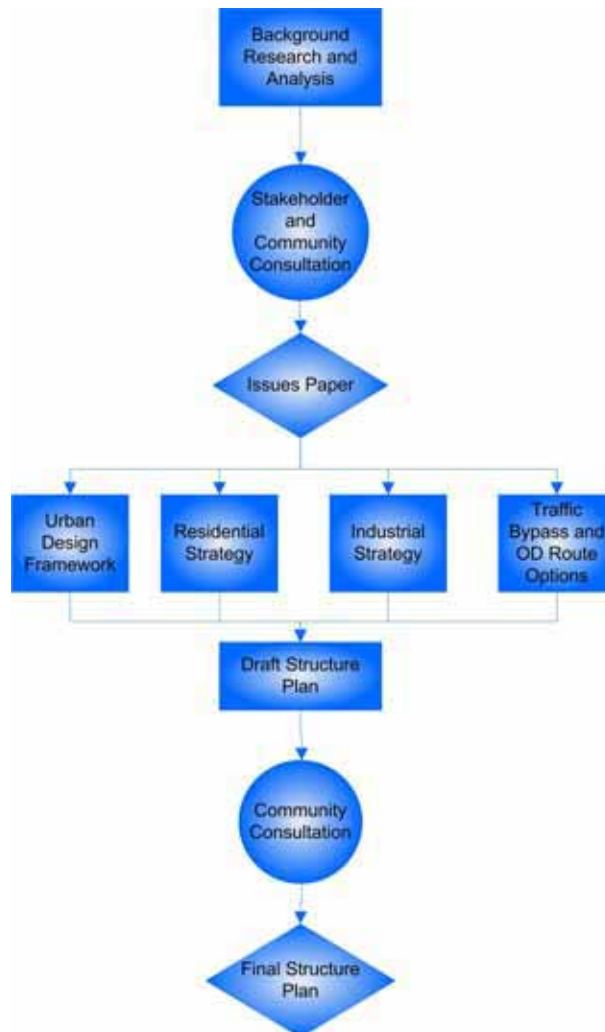
Specifically the Colac Structure Plan will result in:

- Improved housing direction through the implementation of various recommendations of the *Colac Housing and Accommodation Strategy 2002*, and identification of new growth and infill opportunities for housing with sustainable design and socially responsive outcomes;
- Direction for the development of industrial land in Colac, with particular regard to servicing and buffer issues;
- An urban design framework for Murray Street, that will enhance the commercial heart of the town, delineate gateway statements, indicate opportunities for general streetscape improvements and linkages to Lake Colac;
- An enhanced and coordinated economic direction for Colac, combining key outcomes of the various studies already undertaken into a coherent framework, providing guidance in enhancing public infrastructure;
- Ensuring that the growth in Colac is matched with the timely provision of infrastructure; and
- Providing direction for the management of heavy vehicle traffic through Murray Street, identifying strategic connections to surrounding road networks and Colac's economic base and establishing measures to improve the management of parking, and accessibility within the CBD.
- A concept plan and design guidelines for the proposed Education, Recreation and Community Precinct.

All of these objectives are to be considered in the context of understanding and improving the cultural identity of Colac, integrating Lake Colac and other influences to consolidate Colac's future and attraction as a place to live and invest.

### 2.2 Methodology

The Colac Structure Plan project involves inputs from a variety of sources and is based upon a strong community consultation component. Figure 2 outlines the methodology used in preparing the Structure Plan.



**Figure 2 Structure Plan Process.**

There have been several outputs at different stages of the project, including:

- Issues paper
- Urban Design Framework
- Residential Land Use Strategy
- Industrial Land Use Strategy
- Traffic Management (Bypass options)
- Education, Recreation and Community Precinct Strategy

The above form the basis for the complete Structure Plan, which are enhanced by visual mediums and supported by an implementation plan to provide direction in obtaining funding opportunities and achieving physical outcomes from the Structure Plan.





### 3. Strategic Framework

Colac is situated on the southern shore of Lake Colac, with the Princes Highway running through the town centre. The town is approximately 151km from Melbourne, 76 kilometres from Geelong, 100km from Ballarat and 120km from Warrnambool. The following map depicts Colac in the context of the wider region.



Figure 3. Great Ocean Road Region. Source: Visit Victoria, [www.visitvictoria.com](http://www.visitvictoria.com)

Elliminyt is effectively a suburb of Colac, and is located approximately 2.3km south of the Colac town centre.

#### 3.1 Demographic Snapshot

Following is a summary of the key aspects of the Colac community, based upon Community Profile and Forecast reports recently prepared by the Shire of Colac-Otway and ID Consultants (2005). The reports are based on ABS statistics as well as the Victoria in Future projections, but using more locally informed assumptions. As such, the ID Consulting projections are likely to be more accurate than using ABS or Victoria in Future projections alone.

For the purpose of some parts of this analysis, Colac and Elliminyt have been presented separately to highlight differences in trends.

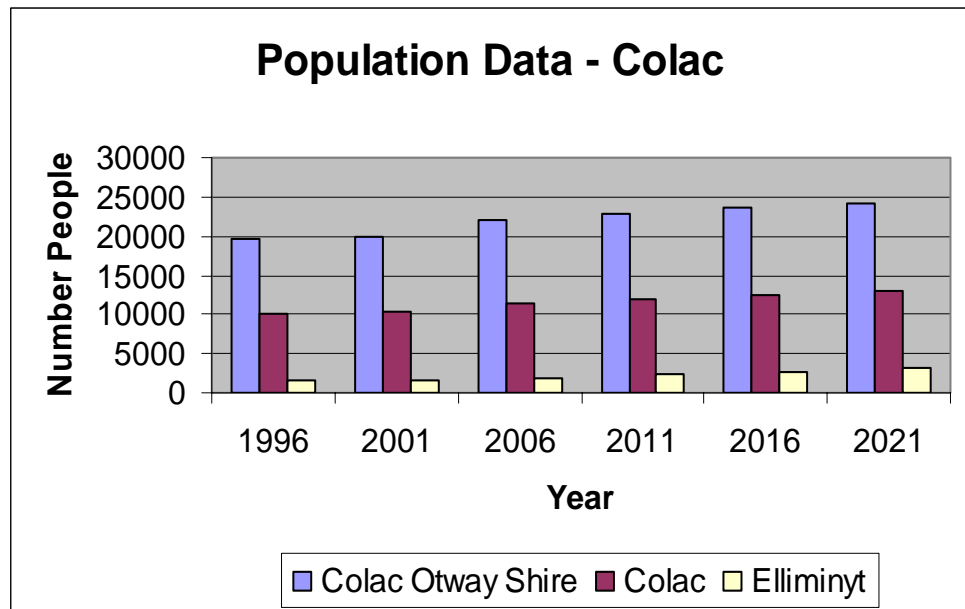
##### 3.1.1 Population

In 2001 Colac Otway Shire had a population of 19,997, which was a 1.95% rise from the 1996 population. The census district including Colac, Colac West and Colac East identified a population of 8690 in 2001 and the census district of Elliminyt a population of 1669. During this time (1996-2001), Elliminyt experienced a high growth rate of 11.42%, well above the shire average.

Population growth has and is projected to rise steadily within the Colac region over time; however, the rate of growth differs throughout the regions. This is shown on the graphs below which assess current and forecasted future population data for



Colac from 1996 until 2021. This is done by assessing the previous growth rates (1991-2001) and the forecasted population for three areas, the Colac-Otway Shire as a whole, Colac and Elliminyt.



**Figure 4 Projected population for Colac Otway Shire, Colac and Elliminyt.**  
Source: ID Consulting, 2005

The above graph, *Population Data* shows an increase in population from 1996 until 2001, the graph below, *Change in Population* shows the population rates of change that are forecasted to increase over time for all three regions.

Forecasted population projections show the Colac Otway Shire and Colac itself slowing the rate of population change from 2011, with Elliminyt's population change having a much more rapid rate of growth. This shows that out of all three areas, Elliminyt is forecasted to be having the greatest increase in population over that time.

Hence, Elliminyt is an anomaly compared to the overall projected population growth within the region. Reasons for such differences relate to the amount of available residential property within the Elliminyt area allowing migration to occur, also the steadying of the Colac and whole Shire rates shows little available free land and a settled population. Such population change over time can be seen in the graph below.

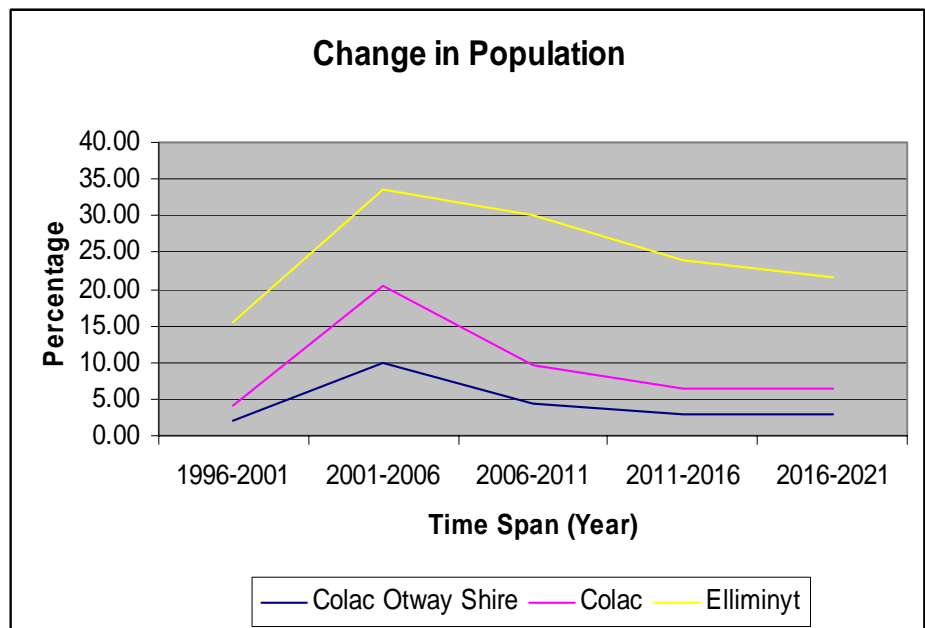


Figure 5 Change in population (Population Rate) Over time Source: ID Consulting, 2005

### 3.1.2 Age Structure

Figure 6 below depicts the predicted change in age structure in Colac and Elliminyt to the year 2011. From the graph it is clear that the greatest change will occur in the 45-74 age bracket, which reinforces the fact that Colac has a large ageing population.

Also worthwhile noting is the predicted decline in the number of people aged from 0 to 34, which is most pronounced in the 15-24 age bracket. This could be due to the fact that many young people may leave Colac to pursue educational, recreational (eg. travel) and employment opportunities that are not available within the town.

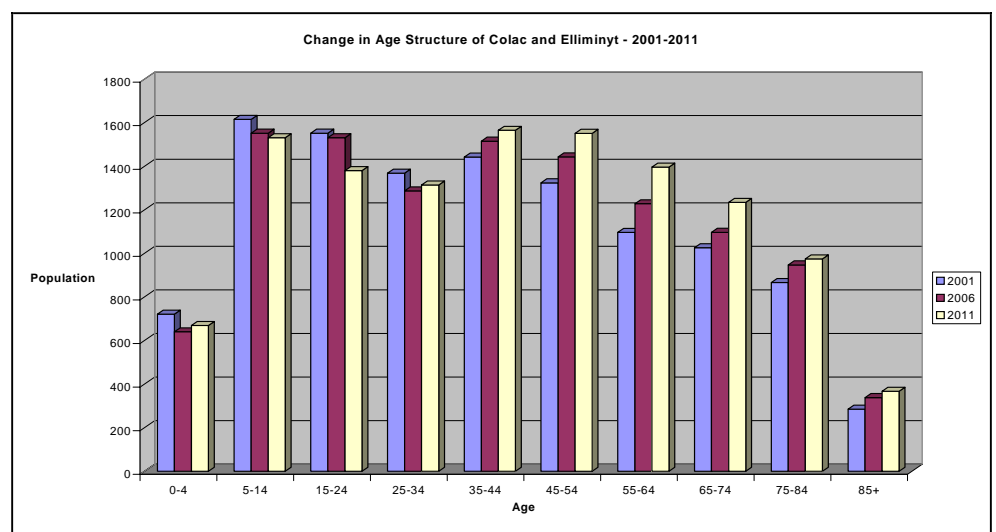


Figure 6. Forecasted change in Colac and Elliminyt Age Structure – 2001-2011. Source: ID Consulting, 2005.



### 3.1.3 Housing

In 2001, housing in Colac and Elliminyt was predominantly in the form of detached housing, which comprised 80% of all housing. Semi detached and flats/units made up only approximately 10% of the total dwellings, and approximately 9% of all dwellings were vacant (ID Consulting, 2005).

Figure 7 depicts the breakdown in housing tenure for four areas within Colac and Elliminyt. It is clear from the graph that there is a high level of home ownership in both Colac and Elliminyt, and that renting also makes up a significant portion of housing tenure.

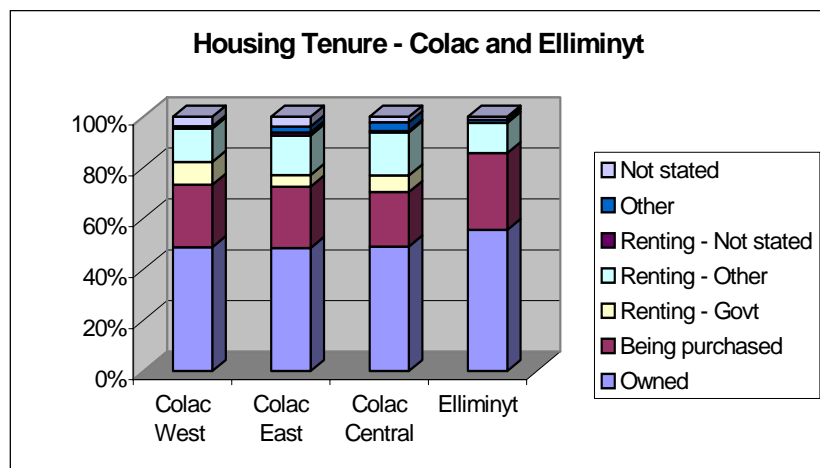


Figure 7. Housing Tenure in Colac and Elliminyt, Source: ID Consulting, 2005

### 3.1.4 Employment

The 2001 Census indicates that the three key employment industries in Colac were:

- Wholesale and retail trade (25.2%)
- Education, health and community services (19.4%)
- Manufacturing (16.5%).

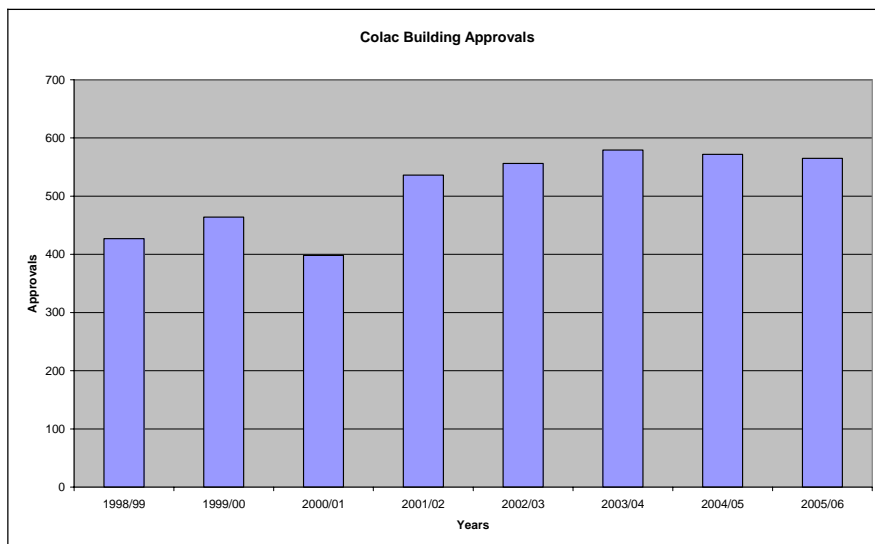
This reflects the fact that Colac functions as a service town to the surrounding region, and the presence of several large industries that employ a significant number of Colac residents.

The unemployment rate in Colac Otway Shire was lower than the Barwon Statistical Division in 2001 (5.5% compared to 8.1%). The unemployment rate decreased between 1996 and 2001 in Colac Otway Shire, while the Barwon Statistical Division also decreased substantially over this period (ID Consulting 2005).

### 3.1.5 Building Approvals

Figure 8 below shows the following building approval numbers for domestic, residential, commercial, retail, industrial, hospital/healthcare and public buildings in the Shire of Colac Otway.





**Figure 8. Building Approvals for Colac Otway Shire Council 1998/99 to 2005/06**  
Source: Building Commission, 2006.

The graph demonstrates a reasonably consistent level of approvals since 2001/02 with a substantial rise in approvals having occurred between 2000/2001 and 2001/02. The table below shows that domestic approvals which include extensions, additions, new single dwellings and multi-unit developments are the most significant contributor to approvals.

**Table 1 Building Approvals for Colac Otway Shire Council 1998/99 to 2005/06**  
Source: Building Commission, 2006.

| Colac-Otway (S) |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|                 | Domestic                   | Residential                | Commercial                 | Retail                     | Industrial                 | Hospital/he                | Public                     | Municipal                  |
|                 | Number of building permits | Number of building permits | Number of building permits | Number of building permits | Number of building permits | Number of building permits | Number of building permits | Number of building permits |
| Year            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
| 2005/06         | 438                        | 13                         | 64                         | 15                         | 11                         | 5                          | 19                         | 565                        |
| 2004/05         | 480                        | 9                          | 28                         | 20                         | 12                         | 6                          | 17                         | 572                        |
| 2003/04         | 478                        | 8                          | 45                         | 14                         | 14                         | 3                          | 17                         | 579                        |
| 2002/03         | 460                        | 6                          | 36                         | 24                         | 15                         | 1                          | 14                         | 556                        |
| 2001/02         | 449                        | 13                         | 27                         | 16                         | 17                         | 3                          | 11                         | 536                        |
| 2000/01         | 326                        | 7                          | 27                         | 15                         | 7                          | 6                          | 10                         | 398                        |
| 1999/00         | 380                        | 10                         | 21                         | 19                         | 15                         | 4                          | 15                         | 464                        |
| 1998/99         | 361                        | 14                         | 18                         | 6                          | 19                         | 3                          | 6                          | 427                        |
| Totals          | 3372                       | 80                         | 266                        | 129                        | 110                        | 31                         | 109                        | 4097                       |

Definition of "Domestic": One or more buildings which in association constitute - A single dwelling, being - (i) a detached house; or (ii) one or more attached dwellings, each being a building, separated by a fire-resisting wall, including a row house, terrace house, town house or villa unit, which is not located above or below another dwelling or class of building other than a private garage. A non habitable building being a private garage, carport, shed or the like. (BCA Class 1m, 1a or 10a)



## 3.2 Key Issues

Following is a brief summary of the key issues relating to Colac as it currently exists.

### 3.2.1 Physical Form

The town of Colac has been developed on the southern shore of Lake Colac, with hills to the east and south forming a natural physical boundary and providing a backdrop for the Town. However despite its lakeside location, there is a lack of physical connections between Colac and the Lake.

Entrances to Colac currently do not provide a strong statement and are not well defined.

### 3.2.2 Servicing

Colac is serviced by a number of infrastructure providers, including Barwon Water, TRU Energy and Telstra. The major issue in terms of infrastructure provision is in regards to sewerage infrastructure, which is only provided to properties that lie within the Barwon Water sewerage district, as defined on the map in **Appendix A**.

### 3.2.3 Land Use Planning

Development in Colac is primarily focused along the east-west axis of the Princes Highway; however more recently has developed towards Elliminyt in the south.

Lake Colac forms a natural boundary for development to the north, and, with the exception of a small amount of land around Stodart Street in the northwest, there is no development that has absolute lake frontage.

The eastern area of town comprises a mix of residential and industrial land which unfortunately does not enjoy definitive buffers other than some areas which are separated by the rail line. The interface between residential properties on Church Street and industrial properties on Forest Street is perhaps the strongest example of the inadequate buffers between these zones.

The southern boundary of development in the area is less defined however as this area provides significant opportunity for redevelopment given the amount of residential zoned land it is important to note the manner in which development has occurred to date.

Adopting Colac-Lavers Hill Road as a key spine, development has not extended far eastward beyond Hearn Street but is more extensive to the western side. Residential development picks up again in Elliminyt South along the ridgeline and this is expected to increase as the intended Wyuna Estate subdivisions continue to occur. Overall residential development in this area does not appear as intensive as it does in the established areas of Colac yet as mentioned, the amount of land zoned residential allows this to occur. Whilst land is low lying, not all is encompassed in a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and therefore opportunities exist to intensify residential development in these areas.



To the west of the town, Cants Road and Lemy Court is the extent of the developed area, with the exception of the isolated pocket of business and industrial zoned land around Rossmoyne Road.

A number of ad hoc rezonings have occurred in the past, which have sought to capture opportunities on prime land.

Farming Zoned land on the outskirts of Colac is quite fragmented and utilised primarily for rural living purposes.

#### **3.2.4 Natural Environment**

Colac has several key environmental features, which include the Lake to the north of the town, and the surrounding Otway foothills to the south. As identified in the Lake Colac Master Plan, there are a number of factors that affect the quality of Lake Colac, with a major issue being runoff of stormwater from surrounding land uses and disposal of treated effluent from the Sewerage Reclamation Plant. Whilst upgrades to the reclamation plant have occurred to improve the quality of water discharged to the Lake, stormwater runoff from other land uses continues to be an issue.

Lake Colac has a history of degradation and poor water quality due to previous direct discharges from industry that severely impacted upon water quality. Such discharges have ceased with improved environmental regulation.

#### **3.2.5 Salinity**

A recent study entitled *Colac Otway Salinity Management Overlay: Salinity Occurrences and Mapping* (Dalhaus Environmental Geology Pty Ltd, 2006), has shown that there are several areas where salinity is encroaching into Colac. These areas are shown on Figure 9 below, and are primarily located in the south east where land is zoned Farming.

The report states that “any further subdivision of the rural-urban zone in these areas would threaten buildings, roads and services with damage due to salinity” (Dalhaus Environmental Geology, 2006: 7). Already salinity is posing a threat to infrastructure, including roads and essential underground services, which have implications for maintenance of these assets.



**Figure 9. Salinity encroaching into Colac. Source: Dalhaus Environmental Geology, 2006**

The results of this report were used to inform the development of a Salinity Management Overlay (SMO) for the Shire. The areas shown on the Overlay are those where salinity exists, plus a buffer around this area. The provisions of the overlay would require a permit to be obtained for buildings and works, subdivision and removal of vegetation. Permit applicants must submit a detailed report containing information on water supply and disposal, removal of vegetation and proposed landscaping, soil types, geology types, recharge and discharge areas etc.

The proposed SMO maps for Colac are shown in Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13 below and the Overlay will require an amendment in order for it to be incorporated into the Colac Otway Planning Scheme. Note however that many of the recommended responses to manage salinity are building design and construction techniques that are addressed in the Building Code of Australia and hence may not warrant a planning scheme response. The salinity report will be considered further as part of Council's Planning Scheme Review.



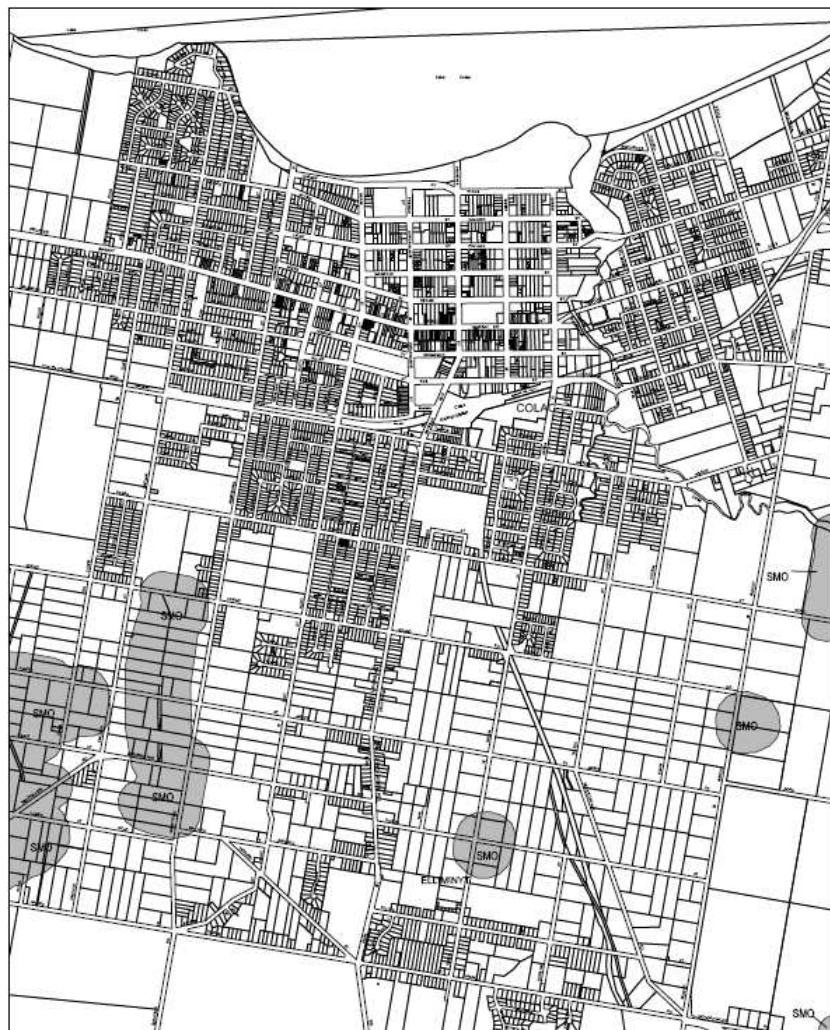


Figure 10. Proposed SMO Map for Colac urban area.

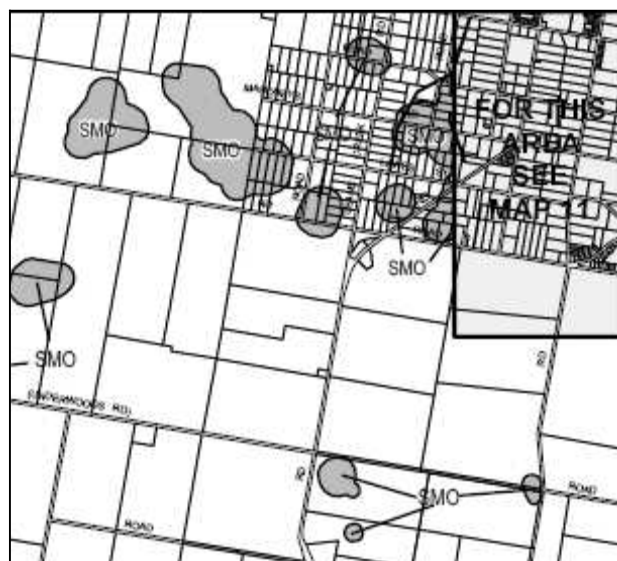


Figure 11. Proposed SMO Map for south west Colac urban area.



Figure 12. Proposed SMO Map for north east Colac area.

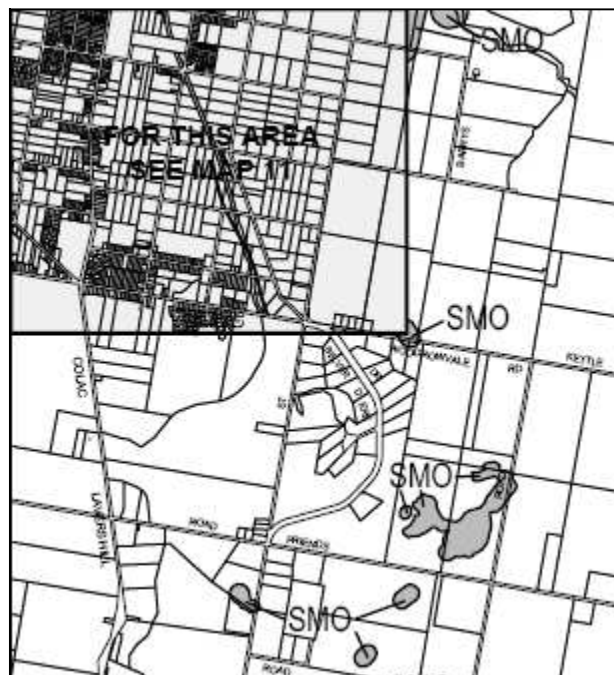


Figure 13. Proposed SMO Map for south east Colac area.



### **3.2.6 Climate Change**

In recent years climate change has become an increasingly pertinent issue. One of the anticipated effects of climate change will be an increase in the number, frequency and severity of storm events. Corangamite Catchment Management Authority has advised that if these effects occur in Colac, there will potentially be minor flooding if climate change is not considered in the planning and implementation of stormwater plans.

Implementation of Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in new development will be important in ensuring the ability to manage stormwater into the future. In this regard, a strict implementation of the Integrated Water Management objectives of the Planning Scheme will be necessary.

### **3.2.7 Traffic**

The Princes Highway (A1) is the key east-west route in south-western Victoria. It provides a strategic transport link between Melbourne and the South Australian border, and beyond to Adelaide. The highway is a vital connection between the major provincial centres of Geelong, Colac, Warrnambool and Mount Gambier, and also provides access to Portland via the Henty Highway.

The highway serves important State industries including grain, livestock, dairying, logging and smelter products. Regional agricultural and fuel distribution centres rely on the route for the movement of freight. Tourism is a significant factor in the region with the highway being the major access to Warrnambool and the nearby Great Otway National Park via the Great Ocean Road.

VicRoads data indicates that, between Geelong and Colac, traffic volumes along the Princes Highway are approaching 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) (VicRoads, 2000). With the theoretical capacity of an undivided rural road being in the order of 15,000 vpd, it is expected that based on current growth trends duplication will be required by the year 2020 to ensure that an appropriate level of service is maintained (VicRoads, 2000). The necessity of this duplication is further compounded as the current crash rate exceeds the typical rural casualty crash rate for similar type roads in Victoria. The duplication of the highway is included in the G21 Region Plan as a key project.





### 3.3 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis below, which identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Colac and Elliminyt areas, summarises the observations derived from the visits by Connell Wagner to the area and from discussions held with key stakeholders to date.

**Table 2. SWOT Analysis.**

| Strengths  | Weaknesses  |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diverse population present within Colac and Elliminyt</li> <li>▪ Availability of residential zoned land</li> <li>▪ Good base of recreation facilities</li> </ul> <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong presence of industrial businesses located in Colac and surrounds</li> <li>▪ Strong commercial centre</li> </ul> <p><i>Environmental</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prime location of the town adjacent to Lake Colac</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Location of Colac in relation to the Princes Highway</li> <li>▪ Proximity to both Geelong and Melbourne, as well as coastal towns and regions such as Apollo Bay and the Great Ocean Road</li> <li>▪ Attractive open space within the town centre</li> <li>▪ Availability of developable land</li> </ul> | <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Middle to lower socio-economic profile</li> <li>▪ Lack of affordable housing to cater to range of social demographic. Relatively low education levels and poor access to post compulsory education</li> </ul> <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unharnessed potential for further industrial development</li> <li>▪ Commercial businesses may lack competition that could lift the quality of businesses and the services they provide</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate businesses / activities in commercial centre</li> </ul> <p><i>Environmental</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Historically poor condition of Lake Colac and water quality issues</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of integration with Lake Colac</li> <li>▪ Necessity for through-traffic to utilise Princes Highway / Murray Street, travelling through the town</li> <li>▪ Limitation created by defined sewerage district imposed by Barwon Water</li> <li>▪ Poor accessibility between the town centre and surrounding residential areas and Lake Colac</li> <li>▪ Lack of integration between car parks and the town centre, leading to a perception of insufficient parking provisions</li> <li>▪ Lack of open space linkages within the town</li> <li>▪ Limited opportunity to create bypass / alternative arterial route solutions due to linear expanse of town</li> </ul> |
| Opportunities  | Threats   |
| <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Available land to provide adequate housing to the current and future population of Colac, subject to suitable re-zoning</li> </ul> <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sufficient and suitable land to attract</li> </ul>  | <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conservative population projections for Colac's future development</li> </ul> <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of appropriately skilled labour</li> </ul>   |



| Opportunities  | Threats  |
|--|--|
| <p>industry to the area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lake foreshore land has the potential to be developed for recreational/tourism activities</li> </ul> <p><i>Environmental</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures introduced to increase water quality of Lake Colac, resulting in greater foreshore activity</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integration of Colac town with Lake Colac through design features and foreshore development</li> <li>▪ Elevated land towards Elliminyt, allowing views of Lake Colac</li> <li>▪ Provide a major traffic bypass around Colac, to benefit both residents and industry</li> <li>▪ Provide an interim local arterial bypass option in lieu of a major bypass</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian / cyclist links between residential areas and Colac town centre through use of open space corridors</li> </ul> | <p>force to service possible future industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unsuitable land zoning will discourage industries from locating in Colac</li> </ul> <p><i>Environmental</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pockets of industrial land located within close proximity to Lake Colac</li> <li>▪ Lack of appropriate measures to reduce further degradation of Lake Colac water quality will result in irreversible damage</li> <li>▪ Potential effects of climate change e.g. increase in storm severity and frequency</li> <li>▪ Problems associated with existing and potential saline areas</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Physical boundary created by Lake Colac</li> <li>▪ Current Barwon Water sewerage district</li> <li>▪ Physical, social and environmental factors influencing the potential provision of a arterial bypass around Colac</li> </ul> |





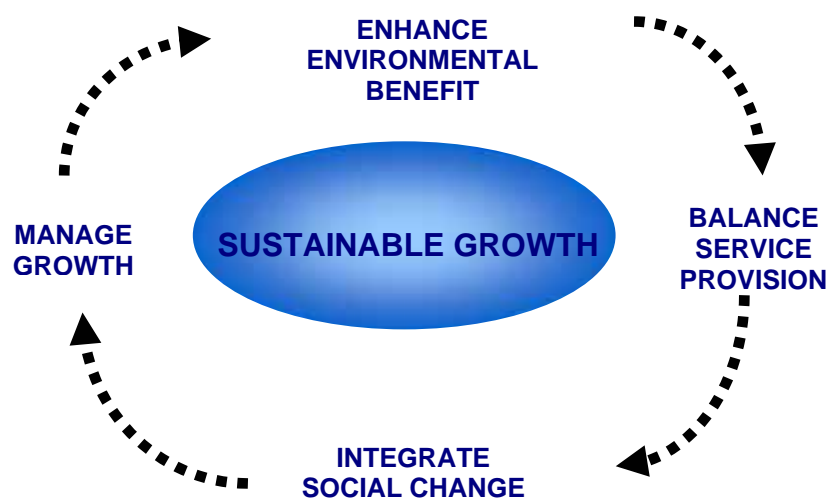


## 4. Vision and Objectives

The vision for Colac is:

*Colac will be a thriving town with a vibrant town centre that takes pride in its Lakeside location, is responsive to the housing needs of its residents and offers a variety of opportunities for employment and economic development.*

The objectives to achieve this vision have been developed to align with the broader goal of sustainability, as illustrated in the following diagram.



Following are the objectives for the Colac Structure Plan:

### *Managing Growth*

- Provide increased opportunities for higher density housing in areas that are close to existing services and facilities.
- Increase the availability of affordable housing in Colac.
- Ensuring sufficient land is available in Colac to meet the needs of industries.
- Provide appropriate buffer distances between industrial and residential development.

### *Enhancing the Environment*

- Protect Lake Colac from inappropriate development on surrounding land.
- Ensure new development incorporates water sensitive urban design principles.
- Protect significant landscapes and viewsheds from inappropriate development.

### *Balancing Service Provision*

- Ensure new development occurs within the boundaries of the Barwon Water sewerage district.
- Ensure that the necessary social and physical infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner.
- Encourage walking and cycling as alternative methods of transport within Colac.



#### *Integrating Social Change*

- Ensure that a variety of residential densities and lifestyle opportunities are provided to meet the changing needs of the Colac community.
- Enhance links between residential areas, employment opportunities, education and community nodes.

These have been used to inform the vision, objectives and principles for residential and industrial development in Colac, as outlined in the Residential and Industrial Strategies.



## 5. Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with state and local government representatives, servicing authorities and the Colac community throughout the development of the Structure Plan. The following consultation activities were undertaken prior to the preparation of the Structure Plan:

- Discussions with key stakeholders;
- Questionnaire sent to key stakeholders;
- Education, Recreation and Community Precinct Forum;
- Public display session; and
- Councillor workshop.

Feedback from the consultation outlined above was incorporated into the development of the Structure Plan.

The Draft Structure Plan was presented to the Colac community by way of an information session, held on 17 October 2006. Approximately 350 submissions were received following this process and additional consultation was undertaken with servicing authorities and state agencies in response to the issues raised.

A summary of the outcomes of this consultation is contained in **Appendix B**.





## 6. Urban Design Framework

### 6.1 Introduction

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) is one of the tools that translates the vision of the Structure Plan into practical urban design initiatives. The UDF provides direction for those actions which will shape the appearance of Colac by influencing the design and visual expression of open spaces, buildings, streetscapes and the landscape at large. The UDF also seeks “to integrate non-physical actions and opportunities with built form outcomes (helping) to coordinate physical development issues with other actions such as social, economic and management strategies across the full range of council activities” (Urban Design Planning Note 3, September 2002, Department of Infrastructure).

The Brief called for a UDF to be prepared for Colac by way of a Central Business District (CBD) revitalisation Concept Plan with a streetscape focus. The scope of the Concept Plan was further defined by agreement to the following statement and task list:

#### **Commercial Centre Enhancement (Urban and Landscape Design)**

*It has been identified that there is a need to enhance the appearance of the commercial centre that recognises the significance of the main road through the town and provides a linkage to the town centre.*

*Having regard to land use, the role of urban design and landscape will be important for projecting the potential visual outcomes of the Structure Planning process for the commercial centre. The key tasks would be to:*

- *Review existing form and identify areas for improvement*
- *Capture the identity of Colac*
- *Review pedestrian movements -vs.- vehicle movements and identify opportunities to improve accessibility and integration*
- *Review factors affecting business exposure and identify ways to improve commercial opportunity through enhanced design outcomes*
- *Review existing signage and public infrastructure, and identify themes to improve consistency in signage appearance*
- *Review landscaping characteristics and identify opportunities to enhance the streetscape through appropriate planting treatments.*

Early consultation extended this list to address the key issue of links between the Central Business District and Lake Colac. Such links are seen as vital to the ongoing development of Colac and the utilisation of Lake Colac, one of the town’s greatest assets.

### 6.2 Approach to UDF

The approach to the UDF began with the task of obtaining background knowledge and an appreciation of Colac. A study was undertaken of aerial photography, contour mapping and zoning mapping to provide an understanding of the form of Colac and Elliminyt, street and road layout, the pattern of development and open spaces, vegetation distribution and the relationship between the elements of the Town.





This study was followed by an examination of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme and relevant items of the Reports and Studies provided by Council, including the Premier Sport and Recreation Reserve Study, Heritage Study, Central Business Area Structure Plan, City Entrances Project and the Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan.

These studies provided familiarisation with the Town and formed a reference framework for an extensive site survey and analysis which included walking all of the streets of the Central Business District and the Lake Colac Foreshore. An extensive library of photographs was generated during this activity. Major and minor entries to the Town were also inspected and photographed with a view to developing schemes for enhancement.

Once the background information was established and a familiarity with Colac was developed, consultation was undertaken with Council and Council Officers with a view to defining specific issues and concerns. Those issues and concerns and concepts for enhancement are explored in the next section. Reference should be made to the accompanying drawings Figure 1 (Urban Design Framework) and Figure 2 (Urban Design Framework Details) in **Appendix C**. The issues are not arranged in any order of priority at this stage.

### 6.3 Issues and Considerations

The following section outlines the observations made in Colac and resulting issues, and proposes concepts to resolve these issues.

#### Murray Street



Issue: The streetscape west of Corangamite Street is of a lower quality than that to the east of Corangamite Street and does not present the best possible image of Colac.

Concept: Improve the streetscape in the western section by adopting the design principles used in the eastern section. Build upon existing liaison with companies which have prominent facades to Murray Street through encouraging attractive, active and interesting facades.

#### Consideration:

The eastern section has a relatively high density, small retail shop character, mixing one and two storey buildings abutting each other. In the western section the character is generally that of rural retail and repair single storey businesses with spaces between. Streetscape improvements should respect and retain this character. Urban Design Guidelines should be established to preserve the character of the eastern section and create a suitable character in the western section.

The design principle of parallel parking will result in some loss of car parking spaces. The loss is likely to be of the order of 6-7 spaces per block – the south side is currently arranged for parallel parking while the north side is a mix of parallel and angle parking so losses are minimal.



One of the urban characteristics which differentiates the west from the east section is the absence of verandas in the west. Coupled with the wide footpaths, the absence of verandas creates the opportunity for extensive landscaping in the footpath reserve with planters and street trees to create an avenue effect. Powerlines are generally on the north side only and will not prevent an avenue effect. The block between Armstrong and McDonald Streets illustrates the potential for avenue planting. Refer also to Figure 2 Urban Design Framework Details in **Appendix C**.

Issue: The mid-block pedestrian crossings east of Corangamite Street are not obvious and do not create a sense of safety or refuge.

Concept: Increase visibility of crossings.

Considerations:

- Raised planter boxes in contrasting colours on departure side of crossing.
- Paint island on approach side the same colour.
- Signage in median.
- Refer also to Figure 2 Urban Design Framework Details in **Appendix C**.

Issue: Some existing large industrial type premises present an unattractive and pedestrian unfriendly façade to Murray Street. The land use and presentation of these premises should be in character with the rest of Murray Street.

Concept: Work with inappropriate premises to review façade treatments or alternatively discuss the possibility of relocating these premises to an industrial zone and encourage replacement by an appropriate land use which promotes active retail frontage.

Consideration:

This is a medium to long term action.

### **Upgrade to CBD and Cross Streets**

Issue: The current upgraded streetscape of the eastern end of Murray Street is very two-dimensional, being restricted to the width of Murray Street – the cross streets are unimproved and present an unattractive view to people travelling along Murray Street. Whilst there is currently a lack of incentive to tempt business to develop and spread “around the corner” into the side and cross streets and into the remainder of the CBD, future safety and amenity enhancements encouraged as part of overall traffic management improvements to the CBD, will assist in encouraging businesses to locate in these areas.

Concept: Extend the upgraded streetscape one block north to Dennis Street, south to Connor, Miller, Gellibrand and Bromfield Streets and extending around the health and medical precinct and the civic centre.

Refer to Figure 1 Urban Design Framework and Figure 2 Urban Design Framework Details in **Appendix C**.



**Consideration:** This is medium to long term action which can be introduced in a staged program.

An improved amenity for CBD users will result from a better quality streetscape of street trees, planters, medians, street furniture, etc.

The civic centre and health and medical precinct will be more closely drawn into the CBD, creating a more cohesive and integrated town centre.

Minor loss of carparking (8 maximum 6 per block where angle parking currently occurs) will occur. Observations indicate that there is not currently an undersupply of carparking in the CBD and that any losses can be readily absorbed on the perimeter.

### The Centre of Town



**Issue:** The intersection of Murray and Gellibrand Streets is the geographic and conceptual centre of Colac with the intersection of Murray and Corangamite Streets also presenting a high profile activity point, particularly as traffic reaches Murray Street from the south (see “*Entries to the CBD*” below). These central locations are not noted in any way and their importance as landmarks and milestone are not celebrated. The potential to provide urban design features at both intersections is a key opportunity for the streetscape.

**Concept:** Emphasise the “Centre of Town” by increasing the visual impact of these two intersections with urban design elements and quality buildings.

#### **Consideration:**

Pave the intersections with a material other than grey/black asphalt – coloured aggregate asphalt, segmental paving, inset coloured bands especially at pedestrian crossings.

Erect groups of banner poles or flag poles in each of the medians leading into the intersections.

At the corner of Murray Street and Gellibrand Street, the architectural qualities of the Austral Hotel and the former Commonwealth Bank are high and they contribute attractive elements to the intersection. Those qualities should be protected by Urban Design Guidelines. The buildings on the other corners are less attractive. Urban Design Guidelines should ensure better quality buildings in these locations when redevelopment opportunities occur.

### Entries to the CBD



**Issue:** Entries to the CBD from south, east and west vary in quality and impact upon arrival. The South Entry is unremarkable but with good potential for development, the East Entry is of good quality and requires only minor enhancement while the West Entry is unattractive and requires major redesign.



Concept: Develop the South Entry, exploiting the railway bridge as a threshold to the CBD.

Improve the East Entry developing the carparking and toilet area east of the bridge and integrating it into the Visitor Centre area.

Create an entry feature at the West Entry to signify arrival in the Colac CBD.

Reinforce the role of Colac- Lavers Hill Road (Gellibrand Street) as providing a key entry point to Colac from the south and its function in servicing through traffic to the intersecting point with the Princes Highway.

Consideration:

*For the South Entry*

- Exploit the elevated viewpoint offered by the bridge to direct views along an improved Corangamite Street to the Centre of Town (Section 1.3.3)
- Maintain clear lines of sight to Centre of Town.
- Clean, repaint bridge structure in a bright, welcoming colour.
- Repave bridge in different coloured, patterned or textured material to create a threshold to the CBD.

*For the East Entry*

- Redevelop Carpark and construct new toilet on Barongarook Creek reserve on north side, east of bridge.
- Link to Visitor Centre by giving prominence to path under bridge.
- Post advanced signage of Visitor Centre parking, Information, etc., about 300 metres east of bridge.
- Remove blue fingerboard signs in Queen Street intersection or reduce amount of information to readable content. Preferably relocate to a position east of the bridge.
- Request VicRoads to relocate green A1 Princess Highway sign to east of bridge (both fingerboard sign and Highway sign provide information overload when concentrated together. They also detract from pleasant appearance of the older building (former Post Office and Shire Offices) which frame the intersection).

*For the West Entry*

Extending the upgraded streetscape west to Armstrong Street will improve the east ward view of approaching motorists – median and footpath plantings will be more welcoming than the current unattractive vista.

Groups of banner poles erected on footpaths and median within 50-60 metres east of Armstrong Street will celebrate the Entry and signify the change from a residential area to the CBD.

When the north-east and south-east corners of the Murray/Armstrong Streets intersection are to be redeveloped, Council should ensure that the redevelopment provides significant landmark buildings to further define entry into the CBD.





## Links to Lake Colac and Botanic Gardens

**Issue:** Lake Colac is something of a hidden asset of the Town which has great potential to be further enhanced. The lake is physically close to the town but visually remote from the CBD. The potential exists for the lake to play a much greater role for residents and tourists alike. Similarly, the Botanic Gardens should be connected to the CBD. The Lake Colac pathway has recently been constructed along the lake foreshore between the Botanic Gardens and yacht club. This has greatly improved access along and use of the lake foreshore. Work to extend the pathway is ongoing.

**Concept:** Develop stronger visual links between Lake Colac, the CBD and areas of tourist activity. Provide an attraction on the foreshore which will promote visitation (see 1.3.11) and improve infrastructure including safe pedestrian links to the Lake and Gardens precinct.

### Consideration:

- Develop streetscape schemes in Queen, Hesse, Gellibrand, Corangamite, Grant and Armstrong Streets which make them more attractive and inviting to walk, cycle or drive from the CBD to the lake. The wide road reservations afford opportunities for innovative schemes to achieve this. The schemes should be considered in association with the streetscape upgrade discussed in 1.3.2. Refer to Figure 1 in **Appendix C**.
- Corangamite and Gellibrand Streets should be the first streets to be developed as links to the lake. Corangamite is the most important cross street in the CBD, creating the Centre of Town with Murray Street and is the direct connection for motorists entering from the south. Gellibrand Street at its northern end offers the most direct access to the foreshore and to a Carpark within easy walking distance of the foreshore.
- Some of the streets terminate at the Botanic Gardens and Fyans Street should be treated as a cross-link between the north-south streets to ensure arrival at the foreshore.
- In addition to the above, the entrances to the Botanic Gardens near Queen and Hesse Streets should be promoted as entries to both the foreshore and the Gardens.
- Establish safe and direct access linkages between Lake Colac and the Botanic Gardens.
- Refer also to "Lake Colac Foreshore Masterplan", February 2004 for concepts for development of the foreshore.
- Investigate the potential for tourism opportunities such as high quality hotel/restaurant to take advantage of the Lake precinct.

## Pedestrian Links through the CBD – Murray Street to rear Streets and Carparks

**Issue:** There are very few connections to the shops in Murray Street from rear streets and carparks. Permeability is desirable between front and rear for shopper convenience.

**Concept:** Whenever opportunities arise through redevelopment, Council should seek the provision of walkways and arcades to link Murray Street to back







streets and carparks. Walkways and arcades are convenient for shoppers and ease parking and traffic problems by reducing parking demand in Murray Street and by reducing the number of traffic movements (Shoppers are more inclined to walk rather than to drive between shops). Arcades and walkways can provide opportunities for retail diversity and friendly spaces. “The Lane” is an excellent example of what can be offered by walkways and arcades.

Consideration:

- This is a long term action depending on redevelopment activity.
- Urban Design Guidelines should be established to ensure a high quality, consistent standard for walkways and arcades.

### Urban Design Quality

Issue: Colac has an opportunity to set and maintain a consistent high standard for all urban design and streetscape works.

Concept: Prepare a Colac Urban Design Style Guide which establishes a restricted palette of urban design elements such as signage, paving, bollards, lights, seats, litter bins, etc., which can be applied across Colac and Elliminyt.

Consideration:

- A Style Guide will ensure a coherent and unified appearance throughout Colac and Elliminyt and help to generate a consistent sense of place.
- There are economies for purchasing and for maintenance in having a restricted palette of urban design elements.

### Signage



Issue: Signage within the CBD of Colac is confusing and unlikely to achieve its aims of directing people to destinations. For instance, a west bound motorist in Murray Street, approaching Gellibrand Street is confronted with traffic lights, traffic advisory signs, street signs, road markings and a fingerboard sign containing twenty-two items of information (destination and direction) a total of twenty-six items to be quickly read and understood in a very short time. It is unlikely that any motorist has the ability to absorb this information and make a correct decision without stress or without creating a dangerous traffic situation.

Concept: Develop a Signage Policy with the aim of producing clear and timely directions to motorists. Develop a distinctive “Colac” style for signs.

Consideration:

- Establish directories of town facilities and features at town entries where motorists will have the opportunity to stop and absorb information in better circumstances.
- Limit in-town information to two or three directions per intersection, concentrating on important functions and attractions, eg: Police, Hospital, Lake Colac.
- Rationalisation and simplification of signage should be an integral part of the design or redesign of entries to the CBD and also the Town Entries.



## AI Fresco Dining

Issue: Colac has the benefit of wide footpaths and shading verandas, especially on the south side of Murray Street, between Queen and Corangamite Streets. This asset is largely undeveloped.

### Concept:

- Seek to exploit and enliven the footpath by developing an AI Fresco Dining and Footpath Activity Policy.
- Encourage traders to make use of the footpaths.
- Consider landscape and urban design measures in the Policy, eg. planter boxes, street furniture, footpath materials.

### Consideration:

The south side of Murray Street between Hesse and Gellibrand Streets has a direct outlook to Memorial Square and is an ideal location to focus the outdoor dining area of Colac, with good views and sunny exposure.

The Policy should consider not only outdoor dining but also sales racks and gondolas, and other activities to enliven the footpath.

The Policy should take account of DDA requirements with respect to locations of objects on the footpath.

## Urban Design Guidelines for Buildings

Issue: Parts of Murray Street have a high urban design quality and consistent character derived from buildings constructed late in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. These buildings set the character of the Colac CBD. That character should be maintained.

Concept: Produce Urban Design Guidelines which demonstrate how new buildings can contribute to Colac CBD in a sympathetic manner, preserving its attractive character.

### Consideration:

The attractive character of the CBD is established by buildings which have a maximum height of two storeys, horizontal parapets with some decorative elements including triangular pediments, concealed roofs, mixed materials of face brickwork and render and a pleasing rhythm of solid to void (brickwork panels to windows) at first floor level. These factors should be taken into account in framing the Guidelines.

The Guidelines should set out a reference framework of buildings heights, proportions, materials, colours and design elements which building designers can use to produce buildings sympathetic to the Colac CBD.

The Guidelines should not demand or expect imitative copying of good buildings. The Guidelines should set out a reference framework only.



The Guidelines should acknowledge opportunities to conserve and enhance historic and landmark buildings within the CBD which will strengthen the character and visual interest of the town.

### **Commercial and Recreational Opportunities at Lake Colac**

Issue: Visitor levels to Lake Colac do not reflect its attractiveness and its potential as a day visitor tourist destination.

Concept:

Investigate commercial and recreational opportunities for Lake Colac to assist in the development of the Lake and Gardens Precinct.

Identify potential for commercial enterprise on Lake Colac foreshore of sufficient scale and attractiveness to increase visitor numbers.

Consideration:

Commercial opportunities may be a restaurant, an accommodation facility, an entertainment or recreational facility or a combination of these activities which is designed to extend the visitation experience of the area.

Any commercial development should be prominently located where it can respond to pedestrian and vehicle access, where it maximises the value of the visitation experience of the Lake and where it is close to the Botanic Gardens to exploit any synergies which might exist.

Vistas created on the axis of Gellibrand or Corangamite Streets should be considered in the siting and function of any commercial development in the area.

The Lake Colac Commercial Development Feasibility Study that is currently underway will further explore the possibility of a commercial attractor at Lake Colac. This project will examine the potential for commercial investment and community and recreational enterprises within the Lake precinct with the aim of creating new opportunities for business, tourism and community development.

### **Industrial Activities**

Issue: The land uses currently located in the area bounded by Bromfield, Corangamite and Queen Streets and the railway line are industrial in nature, are inappropriate in their location and may inhibit future development of the CBD.

Concept: Encourage these inappropriate industrial uses to move to the proposed south east Colac industrial area.

Consideration:

This is a short to medium term action. The vacated sites could be considered for new retail / commercial development. It is noted that Aldi, Rivers Clearance Store, The Reject Shop and Best and Less have moved into this area.