



Credit: Daylesford Macedon Tourism

Clunes Structure Plan

Conversation Starter

May 2023



Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL

Purpose of a Structure Plan

The Clunes Structure Plan is being developed to manage growth and development of the town to 2050. It is part of Council's Future Hepburn project which aims to protect and enhance the existing character of our towns and rural settlements.

The purpose and function of the Clunes Structure Plan is to plan for the future of Clunes by protecting the distinctive positive elements of the township and build upon its opportunities. This will guide the physical and natural environment, amenity and activities of the township and its growth.

A shared long-term vision for the future will guide appropriate development, protect what we value, improve liveability and empower our communities to thrive. Actions in the plan will provide the first steps towards achieving the vision.

Let's start a conversation

This 'conversation starter' aims to begin a community conversation about the future of Clunes. We want to know your priorities, understand the things you value and your ideas for the town. Along with some background information, you'll find questions to prompt your input into this process. Six themes provide the basis for the structure plan:

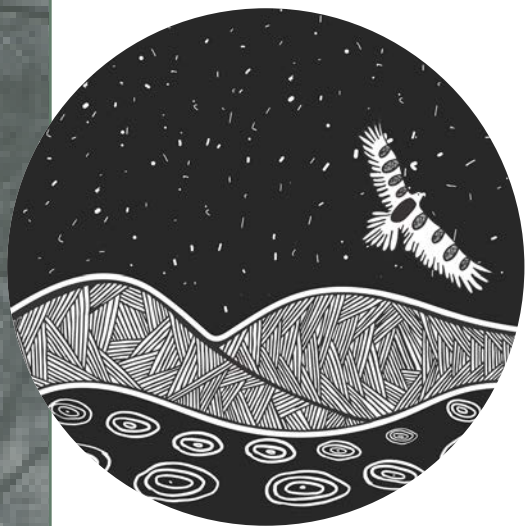
- **Housing**
- **Business and economy**
- **Environment and heritage**
- **Movement and access**
- **Community and social assets**
- **Urban design**

This information will be used to form a structure plan that responds to the needs and expectations of the community.

**Have
your
say**

Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving. We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.



Snapshot

Clunes is deeply connected to the Gold Rush era, with many remnants of this history visible in its built form, in particular in the wide main street lined with historic buildings and public facilities. Comprising a wide variety of shops, it is often host to many weekend visitors. The town boasts several large events during the year including Clunes Booktown Festival, the Clunes Show, the Historic Vehicle Show and the monthly Clunes Market.

Clunes is a small town spread out across hilly terrain. Creswick Creek runs through its centre, within a steep, confined valley. The creek section, between Service Street and Camp Street, has heavily silted creek beds and thick vegetation. Today Clunes is the third largest town in Hepburn Shire, with a population of 1850 people. The town services its local and nearby residents, while the railway and access roads provide access to work in surrounding areas.

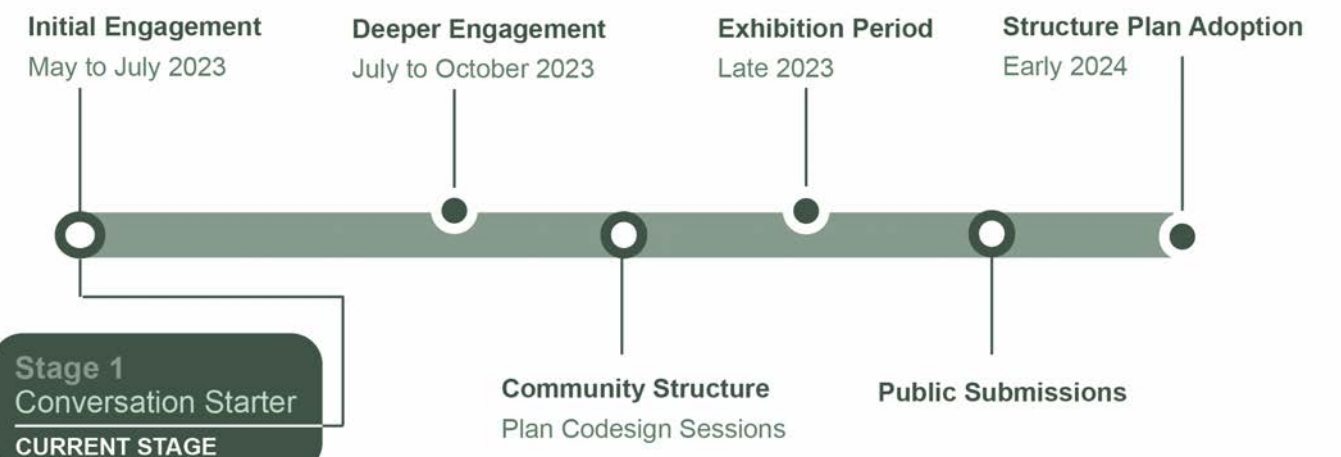
Djarra land management practices shaped local ecosystems over thousands of years. The town is located within the Victorian Volcanic Plains and had scattered River Redgum over wildflower rich grasslands and the significant wetland of Middle Swamp. Nearby, various kinds of forests and woodlands occur within the 'islands' of Central Victorian Uplands bioregion at Mt Beckwith and Goldfields bioregion at Dunach.

The Central Highlands Growth Plan identifies some growth for Clunes, with greater growth to be focused on Creswick and Ballarat. The town's cultural role and its significance to the goldfields heritage region is very important.

Have your say

What is your vision for Clunes in 2050?

Timeline



Housing

Clunes is an attractive location, with housing options ranging from small cottages and large heritage houses, through to newer suburban style development on large lots. It is popular for people who travel to work in the Ballarat and Creswick corridor.

Council's Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan is under way. It has identified several housing challenges facing the Hepburn Shire:

- Population is growing, and given the large proportion of short-stay accommodation (from our tourism centred economy), there is a high rate of unoccupied dwellings at certain times of the year.
- A lack of diversity in housing types, with most houses being detached with three or more bedrooms.
- High and rising rents with a lack of long-term rental stock.
- Expensive house prices. This creates challenges as needs change: people can be priced out of their local community and struggle to age in place while reduced availability of affordable housing can force local workers to move away.

Clunes has some capacity to accommodate additional housing, with a recent report showing demand for around 150 additional dwellings by 2041. It also found sufficient capacity to accommodate these within the existing town, on vacant lots and through subdivision. Its strategic location, with links to Ballarat and Maryborough, supports this further housing growth.

The structure plan can show where new forms of housing can go, while ensuring that Clunes' natural and heritage places are protected.

QUESTIONS:

What do you see as the most significant housing need for your community?

What sorts of housing does your town need?

**Have
your
say**



Credit: NEARMAP



Credit: Hansen Partnership

Environment and heritage

Ensuring Clunes can respond to the impacts of climate change is a key challenge, with hotter, drier, more frequent and intense weather events predicted. Hepburn Shire has already felt the impacts of these types of events in the last few years with major storm events.

In Clunes, the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay planning control has been used to manage flood risk and development along the Creswick Creek.

Protection of human life and risk anticipation are very important guides for Clunes' present and future.

Originally managed by age-old practices of the Djaara people, the natural ecosystems of the area have been significantly disturbed by mining, land clearing, grazing and pasture improvement, weed invasion and permanent human settlement.

Remnant vegetation patches exist in Clunes. This includes fragments of nationally endangered vegetation communities and endangered species such as the Golden Sun Moth and Growling Grass Frogs.

The structure plan could identify actions to further restore Creswick Creek and patches of remnant vegetation to strengthen wildlife protection, increase appreciation and enjoyment of natural ecosystems. This may provide opportunities to reinstate some traditional land management practices and significant species.



Credit: Hepburn Shire Council

Places of cultural significance exist in and around Clunes, including scar trees, ring trees, middens, sites of birthing and massacre, and places of spiritual connection to Country..

Hepburn Shire's remnant 19th century gold mining landscapes are of state, national and potentially international significance showing the progression of the gold rush era within Australia.

Clunes is best known as the site of Victoria's first gold discovery in 1850. Fraser Street, its historically significant and intact main street, is representative of the era and has featured in international films.

Hepburn Shire's built, natural and cultural heritage are fundamental to its sense of identity. Preserving and protecting Clunes' extraordinary history is a major priority for Council and the creation of this Structure Plan.



Credit: Hepburn Shire Council

QUESTIONS:

Are there areas in your town that you think should not be developed due to biodiversity, flooding or fire risks or other environmental constraints?

What is the most important heritage place or building to you in your town?

Do you have any stories about your town and what makes it special?

**Have
your
say**

Business and economy

Clunes' economy is built on history and heritage, agriculture, and its proximity to Creswick and Ballarat. Major employment sectors include education, health, retail, farming and hospitality. Employment in agriculture is decreasing while employment in aged care and social assistance is rising. More employment opportunities in the town's retail and commercial areas would reduce the need for commuting.

Clunes has a strong history of tourism and economic development activities built on its rich heritage and architecture. Its establishment as one of fifteen 'Booktowns' across the world, has been a region development success. Booktown, along with other initiatives, has helped to revitalise Clunes. The structure plan could identify opportunities to further support these initiatives, providing economic opportunities for residents. Balancing this with providing retail options for local residents is key.

The need for additional commercial floorspace will be driven by modest population growth and changing demographics such as meeting health

and education needs. These may include increased demand for health and education services. Clunes currently has no industrial land. Population growth is expected to demand approximately 500 sqm of industrial land.

The structure plan could explore and set out any opportunities for industrial land within the town boundary including the economic development initiatives and infrastructure required to support this.

QUESTIONS:

What types of businesses and services would you like to see added to your town?

What would make your town more attractive for businesses?

**Have
your
say**



Credit: Plan2Place Consulting

Urban design

People are attracted to the exceptional heritage character of Clunes, with its historic town centre and rural township feel.

Neighbourhood character is a combination of the features of a neighbourhood in both public spaces and the private realm. Everything from the streetscapes to the siting and design of dwellings contributes to the overall character, creating a distinct feeling or sense of place.

A focus on urban design will assist to ensure that Clunes' town centre is more functional, sustainable and attractive. Well-designed public spaces, buildings, streets and landscapes ensure that these are great places for the community and add to the overall town character.

Council is undertaking a Neighbourhood Character Study for residential areas and an Urban Design Framework to guide the public realm and built form outcomes for the town centre. These studies will provide a physical framework for managing change

and setting new directions over time, while respecting community values and needs. They will be a vital input to the creation of the structure plan.

The structure plan will explore opportunities to improve the connections to Creswick Creek, provide better wayfinding to the town centre, and create safer pedestrian crossings. The structure plan could also explore neighbourhood character elements such as minimum lot sizes, preferred building styles and setbacks.

QUESTIONS:

What are the most important features that contribute to the character of your town?

What is it about your local area that is important to you and the overall character, amenity, and feel of your neighbourhood?

**Have
your
say**



Credit: Plan2Place Consulting

Movement and access

Clunes is well connected to surrounding areas with main roads to Maryborough, Ballarat, Creswick, Daylesford and Newstead, and beyond. Twice-daily V/Line trains run to Creswick, Ballarat/Melbourne and to Maryborough via Talbot (supplemented by V/Line buses at times). The railway station is about 1km from the centre, on the south side of the town. There are no regular local buses.

Many streets are without footpaths, and there are some unpaved roads. Vehicles sometimes travel at high speed, especially on the approaches to the town.

There are few walking and cycling connections to open space areas, and very few dedicated cycling facilities. Opportunities exist to make improvements for walking and cycling, but the low traffic volumes on local streets mean that they are relatively safe for all users.

Increased public transport options are needed to improve daily access to nearby larger town and mobility of residents. Options may include more regular train services on the Ballarat-Maryborough line or local bus services.

The structure plan could be a platform for public transport advocacy also setting out needs and priority locations for road improvements and active transport facilities such as footpaths.

QUESTIONS:

Tell us where and/or how walking facilities could be improved?

Tell us where and/or how cycling facilities could be improved?

**Have
your
say**

Community and Social Assets

Clunes has a range of community and social assets that make the town fairly self-contained. These include a primary school, Clunes Health facility, The Warehouse - Clunes and neighbourhood house. Recreational facilities include an outdoor 25 metre pool and skate park.

Master-planning is underway for three recreation reserves in Clunes. An Indoor Aquatics Provision Feasibility is underway across the municipality.

A range of facilities and major events support the tourism and cultural role of Clunes including Clunes' museums, heritage places and the Booktown Festival. Further facilities to support events could be a priority of the structure plan.

The structure plan could identify priorities for community and cultural facilities, and ensure these are well located in proximity to the town centre. Improving access to the creek, open spaces, sporting facilities and increasing tree planting could also be explored.

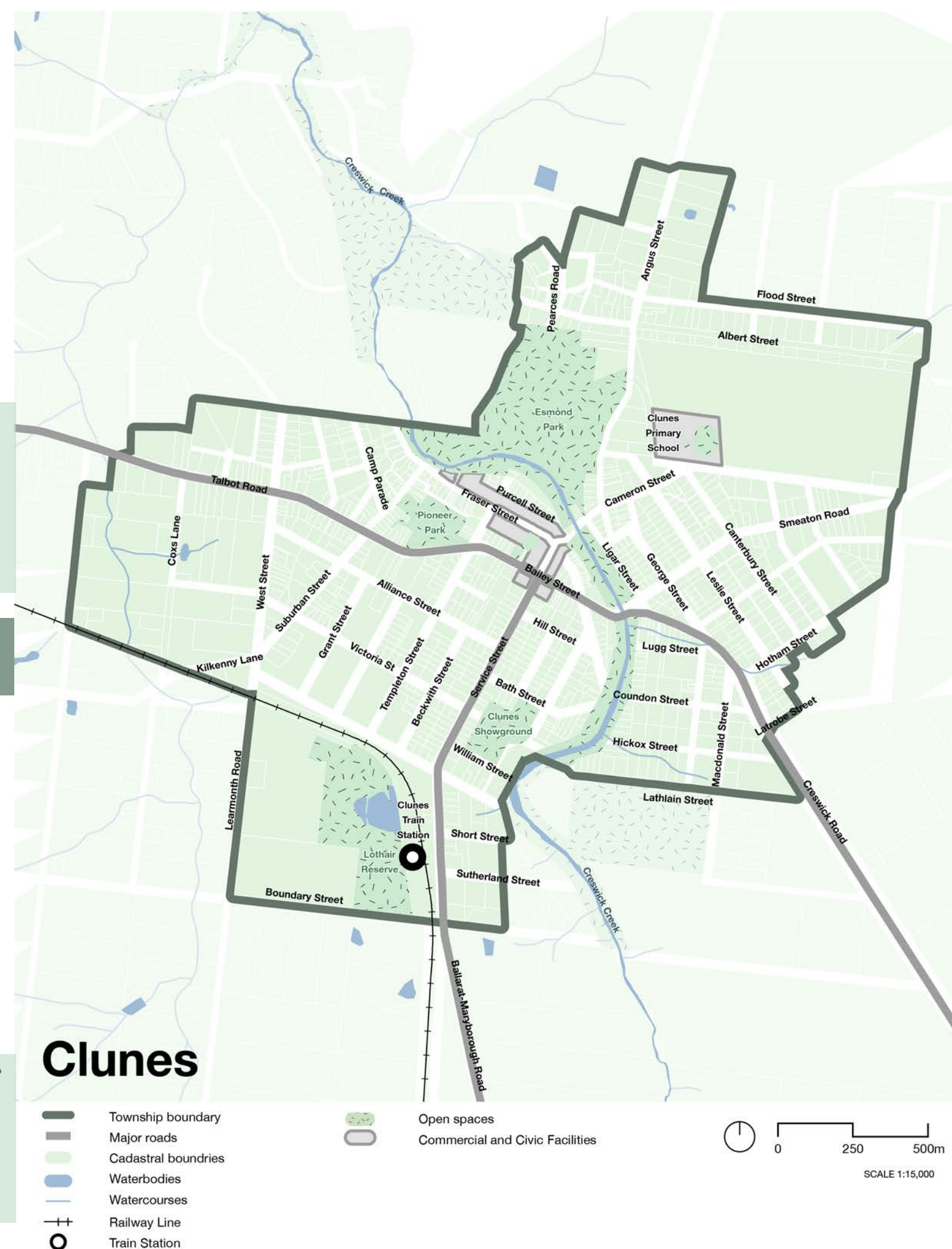


Credit: Visit Victoria

QUESTIONS:

What additional community or cultural infrastructure is needed in your town?

**Have
your
say**





Have your say at

<https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au/future-hepburn>



Future Hepburn
Participate Page

